MACHINIC ASSEMBLAGES OF DESIRE

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Music Ritornello and Vertical Time

Assemblage: on the one hand to connect bodies and on the other hand to work on a territory: territorialize, de-territorialize. Two axes: horizontal and vertical. What is remarkable about this machine is that it is always opening or closing a territory, or even territories. But Deleuze and Guattari give us other elements for this game that they call “the ritornello.” The ritornello is a temporal game, a play assembling unformed pieces — a horizontal axe. In between these unformed pieces, motion-images, another kind of images takes place: the vertical time-images. In my reading I propose to read the image-time as the privileged place of experimentation for the musician, where sound objects, musical gestures and formed figures, are micro-envelopes of subtle forces to the “mise-en-forme” of the musical machine. A machine for making time heard, this vertical time: a complex framework of forces, which are put into play on a complex coupling of micro-points.

Vertical time folds infinitely and gives rise to a profusion of local images: the abyss, the distances, the propr ioceptive and exteroceptive relations (the tactility of the texture, the visibility of the figure, the kinetics of the gestures), and also symbolic relationships. In this sense, my objective is to think on this vertical time, which is neither in a striated relation of succession, nor on a smooth relation of the out-of-time spatial presence. So, my purpose is to think this common and experimental space among listeners and musicians, the non-measurable time between unformed objects where imagination holds its place.

Keywords: vertical time; ritornello; Deleuze-Guattari; modulation; music

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Analysing Improvised Music: A Machinic Approach

This paper investigates the process of analysing freely improvised music by using the neologism: the assemblage, developed by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in their book A Thousand Plateaus. Historically, improvised music has been understood as a method of making music that is too ‘subjective’ and ‘amorphous’ to theorise about in comparison to traditionally notated music, and over the years this has resulted in a dearth of critical evaluation of the practice. In response to the limitations of current analysis methods for improvisation, I have developed a method of analysis by utilising the Deleuzian concept of assemblage and its subcategories milieu, rhythm, territory and refrain to more objectively understand its nature. Deleuze and Guattari establish an immanent model of ethics through the idea of assemblage as a machine. I argue that improvised music is also a product of a mechanism or an assemblage, and it is through this prism that we can articulate more clearly ideas concerning form, structure and even style and authorship.

Keywords: improvised music, assemblage, the refrain, music analysis.

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