

## *Preface*

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Dedicating an issue of a journal to a reflection on acousmatic music might seem out of place and outdated, given that in recent years there has been debate about the post-acousmatic phase of electroacoustic music. However, I believe it is important at this moment to reflect on acousmatic music, its linguistic characteristics, and the structural elements that distinguish it from other experiences in electroacoustic music.

Another topic that this issue aims to explore concerns the examination of certain characteristics of acousmatic music from different perspectives. Two of these, form and space, though inherently linked, are addressed here, as far as possible, separately, in order to better focus on the distinctive traits and peculiarities of these two fundamental aspects for acousmatic music.

In his essay, John Young raises the issue of form and its relationship between its scale and the acousmatic sound project, mainly related to the typology of sounds used or shaped its form. If the relationship between sound discourse and material is one of the key elements of electroacoustic music (Emmerson 1986), it is specifically so for acousmatic music, especially in relation to the spectromorphology (Smalley 1997) of sound matter.

Annette Vande Gorne addresses another problem considered fundamental since the early experiences of electroacoustic music: that of space, one only needs to think of the early experiences with Schaeffer's space potentiometer (*potentiomètre d'espace*) or Stockhausen's "pentaphony" in *Gesang der Jünglinge* (1956). In addition to providing a precise and detailed taxonomy of spatial modes and behaviours, Vande Gorne highlights their characteristics and functions, framing them in the context of acousmatic music.

But does acousmatic music rely solely on sound fixation on a support (Chion 1991), or does it also extend into the relationship between acoustic and electroacoustic dimensions? The inclusion of one or more instrumental, acoustic sources might seem contradictory if one does not consider that the issue is not so much the use of instrumental identity in relation to sounds fixed on support, but the ways in which it is used at the discursive level and in sound manipulation. If we take, for example, a piece like Denis Smalley's *Clarinet Threads* (1985), for clarinet and tape, the clarinet

is used as a sound producer to manipulate beyond its conventional characteristics. Similar considerations could be made for another piece involving interaction between fixed sounds and an instrument, such as Daniel Teruggi's *Crystal Mirage* (1997) for piano and tape.

It is precisely Daniel Teruggi's essay that addresses this theme, the extension of acousmatic music in relation to the instrument. A reflection that highlights how in this context the central element is always the methods by which sound is composed both as sound, but also through sound; sound is not only seen as material, but also as a carrier of syntactic and formal elements through its specific spectromorphology.

My contribution seeks to highlight some specific characteristics of acousmatic music, starting from different statements and considerations of François Bayle. My hypothesis, furthermore, is that one of his specific works, *Espaces Inhabitables* (1967), examined in the essay, draws a demarcation line between the experience of *musique concrète* and that of acousmatic music.

Returning to the initial question of whether it is appropriate today to seek to produce a series of reflections on the various facets of acousmatic music, I believe the answer lies in the variety of issues raised and examined in the essays of this journal issue.

In an essay from 1960, when the true acousmatic adventure had not yet begun, speaking of the acousmatic condition of *musique concrète*, the writer Peignot identifies two aspects that will become characteristic of music of this kind.

«In 'acousmatic' music, composition is a struggle, a dance with matter.» (Peignot 1960)

A struggle and a dance with sounds and among sounds.

### *References*

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