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Juliet Pascal Glazer

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[Review] Inter-medial openings in *Sonic Ethnography*

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Lorenzo Ferrarini and Nicola Scaldaferrri invite readers to “play and experiment” (2021, p. 19) with ways to encounter *Sonic Ethnography: Identity, Heritage and Creative Research Practice in Southern Italy*, an ethnography about “what sound does, and... what it enables people to do” (p. 5) in religious festivals, heritage practices, and collective memory formation in the Basilicata region of Southern Italy. Begin your experiment by following Steve Feld’s suggestion in the Afterword to listen to *Sonic Ethnography*’s sound chapters before reading the text or viewing the photographs (p. 189). The first sounds you will hear are of men shouting and wood creaking under great tension, followed by the buzzing drone of the zampogna (a central and Southern Italian bagpipe). Voices of two male singers flow around the zampogna, forcing above its wall of sound and blending with it in taught, sustained resonances; a crowd claps rhythmically. This is the beginning of Feld’s 2005 soundscape composition, made with field recordings from the village of Accettura. I imagine it complements the cover photograph by Ferrarini, which shows at close range a man’s hand playing the zampogna, and at farther distance and disorienting angle the maypole tree trunk of the Accettura *maggio* festival, cranked into place with a gigantic winch (the topic of Chapter 1).

Sonic Ethnography’s key approaches are already at hand. The first approach is collaborative research resulting in collaborative representation. The text, for example, collects chapters authored by Ferrarini and Scaldaferrri with an Afterword by Feld. The second approach is the chapter-internal juxtaposition of text with photographs by Ferrarini and Stefano Vaja, and with “sound chapters” by Scaldaferrri, as well as Feld’s soundscape (available online). In this move beyond multimodal anthropological representation, the meaning of each of the book’s components emerges through its synchronies and asynchronies with other components (2021, p. 18), or what Feld calls “inter-medialities” (p. 188). Openings for reader-listener-viewer interpretation appear when anthropological and ethnomusicological representations in text, image, and sound rub against each other or take off in different directions. I offer here responses to several such inter-medial openings.

The juxtaposition of Scaldaferrri's sound chapter, "Rhythms in the Dark" (2021), with Stefano Vaja's photo essay in Chapter 2 creates an affective opening. Participants in many European festivals involving cowbells wear facemasks while using bells to create sonic chaos. In the village of San Mauro Forte, *Campanaccio* participants don't obscure their faces, but use bells to create "soundmasks" representing their identities (p. 53). They walk at night through the streets in teams ringing oversized cowbells, one rhythm per team. Rhythms echo off buildings and clash when teams collide, the deafening sounds once thought to purify villagers after winter animal slaughter (p. 61). The clangor of bells in Scaldaferrri's sound chapter overwhelms my ear, which shifts focus rapidly between rhythms. In contrast, the cloaked figures in Vaja's black and white photographs crystallize from the dark, the cameras flash illuminating their faces and reflecting in their enormous bells. When I listen while viewing, the photographs unmask the bell ringers, provoking an eerie feeling not produced by either medium alone. The eeriness resolves—perhaps purified—when the din of the humans' bells fades into the pastoral rhythms of bells worn by a local herd of cows. The animals remain masked, unrepresented in Vaja's photo essay, their identities confirmed only in the sound chapter's final moments by their plaintive lowing as they walk into the distance.

Giuseppe Chiaffitella's story in Chapter 5 presents an opening between sound recording practices for personal and research use. Scaldaferrri's text tells readers that Chiaffitella emigrated from the Basilicata Arbëresh village of San Costantino Albanese to New York before World War I. During regular return trips he took photographs to share with members of his Brooklyn emigree community. Throughout the 1950s, he taped recorded audio "souvenirs"—greetings from friends and relatives, music performances, and local "soundmarks"—which he transported between the two communities in lieu of transatlantic phone calls (2021, p. 131). Scaldaferrri composed the accompanying sound chapter from these souvenirs, beginning with Chiaffitella's proud acousmatic voice: "We are sure living in a marvelous age." In the decade that Chiaffitella was discovering the new technology of tape recording, Italian ethnomusicologist Diego Carpitella was collaborating with Italian anthropologist Ernesto De Martino and Alan Lomax, including on recordings of Arbëresh music in the same region of Basilicata (p. 141).

Scaldaferrri claims Chiaffitella built and sustained diasporic "listening communities" through ritualized recording and playback sessions in community members' homes (2021, pp. 135, 147). How do these resemble contemporary Basilicata listening communities that coalesce around heritagization processes incorporate DeMartinian representations of local religious ritual (e.g., p. 12)? How do these resemble listening and musicking communities that Scaldaferrri's own research practices sustain when he uses his local positionality and in-demand skill on the *zampogna* to provoke and record musical events (the topic of Chapter 6)? These questions emerge in the rub between Chiaffitella's personal archive, DeMartinian anthropology's distributed archive and "afterlife" (p. 12), and *Sonic Ethnography's* multi-perspectival ethnographic archive. Ferrarini and Scaldaferrri might expand upon how they intend *Sonic Ethnography's* circulating archive to generate its own reader-listener-viewer publics (Warner, 2002), not only in terms of politics of heritagization in Basilicata, but also in academic anthropology and ethnomusicology.

To close I return to the start: the inter-mediality of Ferrarini's cover photograph juxtaposed with Feld's soundscape composition. Like *Voices of the Rainforest* (Feld, 1991), Feld's Accettura soundscape constructs the time-compressed perspective of a single listener at the *maggio* festival with layered recordings from multiple microphones (2021, p. 32). Ferrarini's photograph works the opposite delight. In a single image, it fragments perspective between the zampogna player and the *maggio* tree, leaving the viewer no solid footing. The contrasting perspectival strategies evoke Scaldaferrri's earlier comment that the multifaceted *maggio* festival requires "multifaceted representation" by many researchers in many mediums and styles (2019, pp. 92-93). He compares the approach to "a cubist painting, where unexpected aspects are revealed by looking at the subject from different perspectives" (ibid). I hope this response adds another opening for interpretation, another small facet to the inter-medial whole.

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Juliet Pascal Glazer is a PhD student in the joint program in Anthropology and Music (ethnomusicology) at the University of Pennsylvania. Her research focuses on contemporary violinmakers in the United States and Italy, asking questions about aesthetic and economic value, heritage, and the transnational circulation of craft knowledges and commodities. She has an abiding interest in multimodal ethnography in and about sound.

Web: <https://anthropology.sas.upenn.edu/people/juliet-glazer>

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2421-2545>