



## The Ubiquitous Century: Music and the Digital Arts

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## Review Article

# The Ubiquitous Century: Music and the Digital Arts

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Cat Hope and John Ryan

*Digital Arts: An Introduction to New Media*

New York and London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014 (271 pp.)

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Anahid Kassabian

*Ubiquitous Listening: Affect, Attention, and Distributed Subjectivity*

Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2013 (251 pp.)

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In the contemporary tertiary music institution, scholarship is conducted as a knowledge-making enterprise, simultaneously shaping and being shaped by the categories it generates. In Samson's view, 'categories are selective, and their boundaries, like all boundaries, exclude as they select'.<sup>1</sup> However, these categories are also porous. In what might be described as the ubiquitous twenty-first century, in which we barely notice the over-saturation of technologies and musics in our world, these boundaries are increasingly—and continuously—open to the forces of change which make them 'vulnerable, and also contingent'.<sup>2</sup> In the manner of a Deleuzian machinic assemblage, such categories are dynamic and emergent. According to Hope and Ryan, there is no longer a sharply delineated separation between the physical and virtual worlds, or between the sign and its referent. In accordance with the category of 'ubiquitous computing', such divisions are challenged: the ordinariness of computing in the day-to-day world is a sign 'of the fuller integration of society with technology'.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, as Kassabian argues, the ubiquity of listening changes the very nature of listening. It produces a distributed subjectivity that takes place across a network of relations and music media, and music is as much an active agent in this network as is the human subject.<sup>4</sup> The authors of *Digital Arts* write about the ways in which the rapidly changing world of art has been, and continues to be, completely transformed by digitality. The author of *Ubiquitous Listening* suggests that the changing nature of listening is brought about by the ubiquitous world of music that fills our daily

1 Jim Samson, 'Analysis in Context', in *Rethinking Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 35.

2 *Ibid.*, 35.

3 Hope and Ryan, *Digital Arts*, 205.

4 Kassabian, *Ubiquitous Listening*.

lives. These two recent, highly recommended books also demonstrate the workings of a Deleuzian assemblage *par excellence*.

Before proceeding with a discussion about the significant contributions of each book, however, I will briefly contrast a dictionary definition of ‘assemblage’—as ‘the fitting together of a number of components’<sup>5</sup>—with that of the Deleuzian concept of ‘assemblage’. The dictionary definition implies that the various components pre-exist the assemblage, and that the assemblage creates a whole in the manner akin to a jigsaw puzzle. The dictionary definition assumes that the formation of an assemblage arises from its pre-existing connections: the jigsaw puzzle assemblage, then, would arise from assembling the ready-made pieces. Such an idea, however, is the antithesis of the Deleuzian assemblage. For Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, the assemblage is conceived as a ‘becoming’.<sup>6</sup> Its emergence arises from the processes that create it. A jigsaw puzzle assemblage is thus not merely the pieces that form the whole, but is also the hands, fingers and body that connect with the pieces with which the assemblage is formed. One way of assembling a jigsaw puzzle, then, could be to make all the pieces fit together as is commonly intended. But another way of assembling the jigsaw pieces could be to suspend them from a mobile structure, or to attach them to a human body. In these latter examples, the assemblage becomes an entirely different concept from that of its traditional construction, brought about by the interaction of a creative mind with body, fingers, hands and jigsaw parts. Such an idea suggests that there are countless variations on the theme through the interaction of jigsaw parts with connections.

According to Livesey, the Deleuzian assemblage derives from the French concept of *agencement* (arrangement), meaning ‘the *processes* of arranging, organising, and fitting together’.<sup>7</sup> In a Deleuzian conception, then, the assemblage is a continuously evolving process of connection and interaction. In this view, it is always under construction and/or deconstruction and/or reconstruction or, in Deleuzian language, in the process of territorializing, deterritorializing or reterritorializing. In Deleuzian philosophy, the assemblage is dynamic and active, and it is driven by an abstract machine which enables it to function in accordance with other machines with which it is connected. Every new connection changes the nature of the machine. In this review essay, I want to suggest that these two books, which are driven by abstract machines, will potentially change the nature of the academic music machine. Their potential impacts on music scholarship are bound to have long-term effects. As they enter the domain of music scholarship they plug into readers, sub-disciplines within music scholarship, tertiary music institutions, students, technologies, listening devices and listeners, and the wider world. In so doing, they open up an infinite multiplicity.

‘Assemblage’, then, is a useful conceptual tool for thinking about the ways in which these two books have contributed, and will continue to contribute, to the field of music scholarship, and through which to consider their impacts beyond their immediate milieus.

5 Lesley Brown (ed.), *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), vol. 1, 129.

6 ‘Becoming’ is a key concept in the work of Deleuze and Guattari. According to Colebrook, in Deleuzian thought all of life ‘is a plane of becoming, and that the perception of fixed beings—such as man—[and that of fixed events and objects] is an effect of becoming’. Claire Colebrook, *Understanding Deleuze* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2000), xx. Stagoll makes the important point that ‘becoming is neither merely an attribute of, nor an intermediary between events, but a characteristic of the very production of events . . . The only thing “shared” by events is their having become different in the course of their production’. Cliff Stagoll, ‘Becoming’, in *The Deleuze Dictionary*, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 21–2.

7 Graham Livesey, ‘Assemblage’, in *Deleuze Dictionary*, 231; emphasis added.

I will focus on two aspects of the assemblage opened up by these books. The first is the way in which they connect with pre-existing categories in order to amplify a given territory. The second aspect is their deterritorializing impulses, which, I will argue, in the case of Kassabian gives rise to a new assemblage (or field within music studies) and in the case of Hope and Ryan explicitly demonstrates what the mobile and transdisciplinary nature of the digital arts looks like. I will also suggest that these two books 'talk' to each other within the territorial and intra-assemblages through which they are linked. Taken together, they illustrate the ways in which the molar—that is, the category-making and boundary-making dimension of the machine—interacts with the molecular—that is, the openings that dissolve these boundaries and categories.

### **Territorializing and Deterritorializing the Digital Arts**

In the introduction to *Digital Arts*, Hope and Ryan present a cartography of the digital arts. This is an impressive undertaking, not only because it maps the ways in which the various territories within the digital arts have been formed, and continue to be formed, but because it also engages with the key debates and the theoretical issues in the field, accompanying these with a comprehensive survey of the research to enable a lay person or student to undertake further study. The molar dimension of the book clearly marks out the boundaries of the territorial assemblage, plugging into the categories that are well understood in the field and which pre-exist the book. In fact, the introductory chapter is the *modus operandi* for the book as a whole: each chapter, like the introduction, maps the field, provides concrete examples, reflects on key debates and issues for the specific topic being engaged, entices the reader to interact with these by giving her/him some reflective questions through which further to explore the territory, and provides a succinct summary of the key points at the end of each chapter. A supplementary annotated reading list appears in an appendix, while each chapter is itself replete with references, pointing the reader to the significant research in the field. The breadth of coverage of this book is thus thoroughly comprehensive, traversing considerable ground within the territorial assemblage without being superficial. It discusses how the various boundaries have come to be erected and how artists working in music and other art forms, including digital poetry and various forms of new media, slide across and between these boundaries. The book demonstrates not only the ubiquity of the digital arts but also their highly mobile, dynamic nature. As new technologies create new possibilities, so older territories become challenged. In this sense, the book points to the unstable nature of the territorial assemblage that we might label 'digital arts', showing that it is subject to its own vulnerability as new territories are opened up by new technologies. In my view, the territorializing and deterritorializing impulses of the digital arts are set in motion from the outset of this excellent study. In fact, I would go so far as to suggest that this lucidly written and well-structured book is the first study of its kind to make this dynamic field accessible to the lay reader while speaking intelligently to its academic constituents.

The introduction is explanatory. It tells the reader what digital art is: the 'ubiquitous part of our vernacular in today's ever more globalized world' (p. 2); and, importantly, that it is impossible to define (p. 3). Then it rehearses a series of thoughts about how the various labels (which might also be considered as territorial assemblages) have attached themselves to specific digital forms, serving to distinguish one art form from another while also acknowledging the inevitable overlaps. For example, electronic art, 'the most inclusive of our discussion . . . denoting a period in the history of Western art, culture and technology'

(p. 6), is distinguished from Internet art, ‘an umbrella term for various interrelated digital arts practices’, including ‘some software art ... made publicly available over networks’ (p. 8). Behaviourist art, which draws ‘the spectator into active participation in the act of creation’ and which is ‘characterized by an open-endedness, uncertainty, flux, transition and dialogue with the spectator’ (p. 9), is extracted as a category of post-media aesthetics, which ‘rupture the conventional linkages between an artwork’s identity and its medium’ (p. 9). Telematic art, ‘an extension of behaviourist and cybernetic art ... defined as the science of integrating telecommunications and computer technologies, resulting in familiar and commonplace modern technologies, such as email and ATMS’ (p. 10), is posited against virtual art, which ‘exists in a state of limbo’ and for which the hallmarks are ‘interface, interaction, immersion and image evolution’ (p. 11). Finally, unstable media art, encapsulating ‘in particular, the perspectives of conservators and curators’ (p. 12), is explained as a territory that is more interested in the nature of processes, happenings and novelty than in the conceptualization of works as objects. The deterritorializing impulse of the book’s machinic assemblage, however, continuously challenges these labels.

Having mapped the terrain, the remainder of the book is devoted to exploring in more depth the issues raised in the introduction, including the origins of the digital arts, the connection of digitality with the image (photographic and moving images) and the interaction of digital media with live performance, sound arts, including installation, performance and Internet art. It is replete with examples which are accompanied by succinct analyses. *Digital Arts* concludes with speculations about the future and the post-digital art of the future. This book, then, vividly demonstrates the processes of an assemblage. It treats the digital arts as a set of discrete categories—mapping molar lines around the peripheries of one art form and another—and it shows how these boundaries are always open to negotiation. The elastic, flexible and porous nature of these boundaries is shown to reconfigure each category as a set of processes. Hope and Ryan powerfully exemplify the ways in which the emergence of these categories arises from the processes that create them and, as becomings, they show that they are always malleable sites of passage.

### The Molecularity of Ubiquitous Listening

In 2001 Kassabian wrote that, ‘[b]y most reckonings, the omnipresence of music in our lives is a trend that will increase in some years to come’.<sup>8</sup> The present book, *Ubiquitous Listening*, not only demonstrates the fulfilment of this much earlier prophecy but convincingly argues that the overwhelming pervasiveness of music in our everyday lives has led to a different kind of listening; namely, ‘ubiquitous listening’ (p. 9). Kassabian borrows this concept from ‘ubiquitous computing’ (p. 10, a category also discussed by Hope and Ryan<sup>9</sup>), arguing that it is apt for two reasons:

First, it is the ubiquity of listening that has taught us this mode. It is precisely because music is everywhere that Ryan forgot he was doing his assignment and got up to wash the dishes. Second, it relies on a kind of ‘sourcelessness’. Whereas we are accustomed to thinking of most musics, and most cultural products, in terms of authorship and

<sup>8</sup> Anahid Kassabian, ‘Ubiquitous Listening and Networked Subjectivity’, *Echo: a music-centred journal* 3/2 (2001), 1.

<sup>9</sup> Hope and Ryan, *Digital Arts*, 205–6.

location, this music comes from the plants and the walls and, potentially, our clothes. It comes from everywhere and nowhere. Its projection looks to erase its production as much as possible, posing instead as a quality of the environment. (p. 9)

Kassabian suggests that it would be virtually impossible in the twenty-first century to get through a week without coming into contact with music. She views ubiquitous listening, or the omnipresence of music in daily life, as a simultaneous or secondary activity. It is music that is 'listened to without the kind of primary *attention* assumed by most scholarship to date' (p. 9; original emphasis). Accordingly, it has profound implications for changing how we think about music and listening in general. She writes that 'it modulates our attentional capacities, it tunes our affective relationships to categories of identity [and] it conditions our participation in fields of subjectivity' (p. 18).

I will suggest that, as a relatively new field which has emerged during the last decade, ubiquitous listening can also be viewed as an intra-assemblage of the listening or sound studies assemblage. Its deterritorializing processes begin to transform the larger assemblage, carving out a distinct territory of its own. The larger assemblage of sound studies has long recognized that listening is vital to music but has had difficulty pinning it down to a definition. Much of the empirical work has attempted to define listening, thus portraying it as a rigidly differentiated field.<sup>10</sup> In so doing, it establishes a territorial assemblage marked by molar lines that, over a period of time, is difficult to dislodge. As I have written elsewhere, drawing on Jonathan Sterne, one of the common assumptions is that, unlike seeing, in which 'the gaze' is understood as a central trope, there is no central auditory trope that is equivalent to 'the listen'.<sup>11</sup> In its place, as Sterne argues, 'there are dozens of figures and figurations of audition'<sup>12</sup> which give rise to a proliferation of different kinds of categories of listening. Some of these are identified as immersive, attentive, semantic, causal, deep, reduced, heightened, active, passive and virtuosic. Each category attempts to define itself but, in so doing, draws distinctions, not only between the categories themselves but also between listening and hearing, and hearing and seeing. This suggests that it is possible to hear something without listening to it, and that hearing is active and listening is passive. These terms of hearing and listening tend to shift back and forth between active and passive, thus leading to unresolved questions about how these differences manifest themselves. The collective assemblage of enunciation—which for Deleuze and Guattari is an indirect, expressive discourse that 'explains all the voices present within a single voice'<sup>13</sup> and, in the case of sound studies, serves to build it as a constellation of differentiated images—shores up the territorial assemblage, creating a set of signs that form the basis of an identity for the field. In contrast, as I will suggest, Kassabian cracks the assemblage open, demonstrating that these various categories conceal

10 For example, some recent work which situates itself in this field is inclined to do this: Eric F. Clarke, *Ways of Listening: An Ecological Approach to the Perception of Musical Meaning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Joanna Demers, *Listening Through the Noise: The Aesthetics of Experimental Electronic Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); and Jonathan Sterne, *The Sound Studies Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012).

11 See Sally Macarthur, 'Immanent Listening', in *Music's Immanent Future: The Deleuzian Turn in Music Studies*, ed. Sally Macarthur, Judy Lochhead and Jennifer Shaw (Farnham, England and Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, in press).

12 Jonathan Sterne, 'Hearing, Listening, Deafness', in Sterne, *Sound Studies Reader*, 19.

13 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 80.



as much as they reveal about listening and that, furthermore, individuals engaged in particular types of listening inevitably exceed the categories that seek to contain them.

For Kassabian, listening, along with hearing and the 'ear', is implicated in a range of experiences that involve the merging of physical, psychological, historical and cultural factors. In arguing for the ubiquity of listening, she posits that there is a range of engagements, encompassing varying degrees of attention across a variety of sounding phenomena. Accordingly, these engagements with sound are not solely a matter for the sense of hearing but that the other senses, such as touch and sight, play an important role.<sup>14</sup> She suggests that listening is always an active engagement and that it is not just a human-centred activity. Just as the human might attend to sound so, too, in her view, sound and/or music will attend to the human. Listening thus plays a vital role in subject formation. These are among the contested issues in the research about listening that are foregrounded and treated in a fresh way in Kassabian's book.

Kassabian's work is situated against research that has tended to divide the research domain into rigid, over-coded segments, producing a negative structure. One classic and, perhaps, best-known example by Chion, characterizes listening in terms of three modes: causal, semantic and reduced.<sup>15</sup> He explains that causal listening involves associating sounds with their cause. Semantic listening assumes that we listen for the meaning of the sound or that we listen to gain an understanding of what is being transmitted. Reduced listening, originally attributed to Pierre Schaeffer, focuses on the traits of the sound object itself 'independent of its cause and of its meaning'.<sup>16</sup> According to Schaeffer, reduced listening is a 'listening attitude which consists in listening to the sound for its own sake'.<sup>17</sup> Such an idea proposes that the concrete qualities of sound can be isolated from their meanings and that the listener would be unable to identify the basis or origin of the sound. Yet, for Schaeffer, listening and the sound object are correlates of each other, defining 'each other mutually and respectively as perceptual activity and the object of perception'.<sup>18</sup> Given that the listener and the sound object are co-implicated in this way, as Voeglin has since pointed out, reduced listening is not actually 'reducing but freeing [the sonic] and opening it up to a multitude of possibilities'.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to the attempt to separate the sound object from the subject, Kassabian suggests that the narrative paradigm is another classic approach that continues to dominate listening studies. Despite the proliferation of technologies that have radically changed the way we now consume music, she suggests that music analysis and music scholarship continue to focus on score-based lineages that conceive of musical materials in terms of orthodox notation.<sup>20</sup> Theories of narrative are those that are most favoured in the contemporary music institution.<sup>21</sup> The narrative paradigm undergirds Adorno's typology

14 This idea is also explored in recent research which suggests that listening is not just confined to the ear but is experienced in other parts of the body. See Steph Ceraso, '(Re)Educating the Senses: Multimodal Listening, Bodily Learning, and the Composition of Sonic Experiences', *College English*, 77/3 (2014), 102–23.

15 Michel Chion, 'The Three Modes of Listening', in Sterne, *Sound Studies Reader*, 48–53.

16 *Ibid.*, 50.

17 Pierre Schaeffer quoted in Leigh Landy, *Understanding the Art of Sound Organization* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 35; also cited in Linda Kouvaras, *Loading the Silence: Australian Sound Art in the Post-digital Age* (Farnham, England and Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate, 2013), 26.

18 *Ibid.*, 26.

19 Salomé Voeglin, *Listening to Noise and Silence: Towards a Philosophy of Sound Art* (New York: Continuum, 2101), 35; quoted in Kouvaras, *Loading the Silence*, n. 24, 26.

20 Kassabian, *Ubiquitous Listening*, 5.

21 *Ibid.*, xii.

of listeners and privileges the expert listener above all others. It imagines that this individual is 'fully conscious, fully attentive, and able to hear longitudinal, structural relationships in large-scale musical works ... [such a listener] hears the sequence, hears the past, present and future moments together so that they crystallize into a meaningful context'.<sup>22</sup> In this listening model, the music is assumed to embark on a journey in which the theme travels away from home before returning. The expert listener is then expected to describe how the unfolding musical events (or plot) are related back to their past and future events. For Kassabian, this approach to listening is problematic because it fails to encompass the range of music in the present day and the ways in which listeners engage with this music. Given, as she points out, that musicology has vividly demonstrated that particular practices of listening produce and reproduce the canon, predisposing listeners to the very musics of their training, she says that it follows that other modes of listening would also produce and reproduce other repertoires (p. 6).

Kassabian's study thus parts company with the classic approaches, offering a new way to think about some of these issues. It side-steps the inevitable binary relationship that arises from treating the sound object as a separate entity. Instead, it is directed to exploring how listening is shaped by affect, attention (and non-attention) and distributed subjectivity. Kassabian insists that 'all listening is physiological and that many kinds of listening take place over a wide range of degrees or kinds of consciousness and attention' (pp. xxi–ii). She challenges the routine uses of listening in music and sound studies scholarship, making the point that because our sonic environments have radically changed it follows that our listening habits have also changed (pp. xxi–ii). While attentive listening is appropriate for some music, it is not appropriate for all music. Different kinds of listening encounters are entailed in music for film and television, iPods and smart phones, video games and audio books. Such listening has barely made an entrance into the curricula of tertiary music institutions, which still seem to be focused on the acoustic properties or aesthetic values or the ability to reproduce music in notated form as a representation (p. 17). According to Kassabian, musicians continue to be trained to listen to music as if digital (and other) technologies had not been invented.

What, then, is a ubiquitous mode of listening? Kassabian argues that it is a mode that is 'disassociated from specific generic characteristics of the music ... we listen "alongside", or simultaneously with, other activities' (p. 9). Whereas other kinds of listening are strongly associated with the genres that produce them, Kassabian's argument is that each kind of ubiquitous listening engagement creates a different mode of listening. This idea is vividly illustrated through her taxonomy of new technologies, which include a range of pervasive wearable computer technologies and more than 'five hundred thousand apps' (p. 13) that are available for the Apple iPhone: listening apps, music management apps, mixing and DJ apps, music games, instruments, music education apps, music tools and generative music (pp. 13–15). These, in turn, offer users new environments, new 'worlds of possibilities' (p. 17), and new ways of engaging, creating and listening.

How would we track the production of identity through affect? In the ubiquitous listening model, it might emerge through the singing of a mother to her baby as the 'bodily events being shared ... on the plane of immanence' (p. xxviii). These sounds then 'attach to those bodily events, and there begins to be a relationship between the musical features of that song and a certain shared state' (p. xxviii). Then, across the years, the Armenian music

<sup>22</sup> Theodor Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music* (New York and London: Continuum, 1988), 4; cited in Kassabian, *Ubiquitous Listening*, xxii.



that began as a lullaby for the baby comes to be recognized and labelled ‘Armenian’ (or ‘Turkish’ or ‘Near Middle Eastern’), but always maintains its connection with shared bodily events. ‘Each experience [of the music] deposits a bit more affect’ until, ultimately, ‘over time and through repetition’ it produces in the listener ‘a strong and recognizable affective response to Armenian music’, thus giving rise to an Armenian identity (p. xxix). Kassabian admits that this is a simplified process which is necessarily incomplete and, from a Deleuzian perspective, is completely impossible to capture since ‘the plane of immanence is always virtual . . . not actual, but possible, not present, but belonging to the pure past—the past that can never be fully present’ (p. xxix). Nonetheless, from this perspective, and thus diverging from Deleuze, Kassabian proposes that identity does not need to disappear and ‘nor does it need to be the first axis of thought’ (p. xxix). Because it is the residue of affect, rather than the construction of a fixed image of identity, it emerges in this model as a dynamic, continuous process.

Such an idea is explored in depth in Chapter 2, which sets out the conditions of possibility for global communities through their engagements with audio-visual media. These engagements give rise to a ‘distributed subjectivity’ that decentres the individual ‘without losing the very powerful notion—and experience—of subjectivity’ (p. 20). In Chapter 3, Kassabian explores the boundaries between and among the terms ‘noise, sound and music’, focusing on a case study, the soundtrack of the film *The Cell*.<sup>23</sup> This work not only dissolves the boundaries between noise, sound and music, but also challenges the all-pervasive narrative structure. Chapter 4 investigates the modes of listening associated with television musical episodes, Chapter 5 the different modes of listening thrown up by Armenian jazz, and finally in Chapter 6 she turns her attention to music in stores.

In this very readable and well-argued book, Kassabian builds up the territorial assemblage, while simultaneously deterritorializing it. The ongoing ubiquitous listening that fills our daily lives has consequences for our bodies, producing affective responses as ‘bodily events that ultimately lead in part to what we call emotion’ (p. xi). Far from having an ‘invisible’ presence, Kassabian convincingly advances the idea that through a secondary engagement with so-called ubiquitous musics, ubiquitous listening produces a different kind of subject or identity that no longer sustains the dominant narrative of the fixed, coherent, stable individual. Ubiquitous listening produces a non-individual that is not necessarily human. The human and the sonic material engaged by the listener affect each other, creating a ‘distributed subjectivity’ across a network of music and a range of other media (p. xi).

### Future Worlds or Becomings

What can we take from these two books and how might we move forward as educators in our tertiary music institutions? The listening and digital arts practices, as explicated in these two very accessible recent additions to the scholarship, highlight an area—namely, politics—that is worthy of a final word. Indeed, none of this work is without its politics. Hope and Ryan, for example, explain that there is a growing number of contemporary artists who resist the newer, digital practices, preferring to work with the older, analogue media.<sup>24</sup> In another example given as a reflective exercise, they suggest that

<sup>23</sup> *The Cell*, directed by Tarsem Singh (Los Angeles, CA: New Line Cinema), music by Howard Shore (2000).

<sup>24</sup> Hope and Ryan, *Digital Arts*, 27.

democratization of the arts is not the same for everyone in the world.<sup>25</sup> Elsewhere they raise the issue of copyright.<sup>26</sup> Kassabian, similarly, raises political issues, such as the problem of the dominant paradigm ignoring the majority of musics and the ways in which people consume music in the world. In Deleuzian thought, however, politics is not a separate field. To follow Bergen, politics is ‘an orientation operating at the heart of every assemblage; its lines meeting everywhere where an assemblage—individual or collective, of thought or of desire—operates’.<sup>27</sup>

The assemblages constituted as listening and those labelled as digital arts will thus continually arrange and re-arrange themselves in terms of a political cartography. The issues discussed in the present volumes will change as new technologies produce new issues. The encounters between artists, listeners, audiences, sound, music, noise, technologies, and much else will construct diagrams that affect and are continuously being affected by one another. This gives rise to a double process that avoids fixing listeners, politics and sound objects in oppositional relationships: the pole that draws hard boundaries around sounds and listeners, and the pole that seeks to break free of these borders ‘work on each other in a co-functionality which is subject to an incessant dynamism’.<sup>28</sup> When the objects of study open to the plane of immanence, these objects fade. The distinctions between listeners and sound, listeners and hearers, listeners and seers, artists and materials, art and audience, and so on, begin to vanish. These two books, one by Hope and Ryan, and the other by Kassabian, show us, with their eloquent accounts, what a ubiquitous future of music might look like in every aspect of our lives.

### Author Biography

**Sally Macarthur** is Director of Academic Program (Bachelor of Music and Master of Creative Music Therapy), and Associate Professor of Musicology at the University of Western Sydney. Her work focuses on recent musical practices in Australia with a particular emphasis on music of the western classical tradition and women’s music. Her recent monograph, *Towards a Twenty-first-century Feminist Politics of Music* (Ashgate, 2010), applies feminist theory and the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari to the analysis of music. She is currently co-editing with Judy Lochhead and Jennifer Shaw *Music’s Immanent Future: The Deleuzian Turn in Music Studies* (Ashgate, forthcoming 2015).

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 157.

<sup>27</sup> Véronique Bergen, ‘Politics as the Orientation of Every Assemblage’, trans. Jeremy Gilbert, *New Formations* 68/2 (2009), 34.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.