

**Prof. Dr. Verena Weidner**

### **Connection through technology? Digital Musicianship between resonance and alienation**

While resonance theory assumes almost ideal conditions for resonant self–world relations in music making or listening to music in general (Rosa 2016; id. 2018), the opposite is assumed to be the case when dealing with digital music technologies. Making music with apps on smartphones is considered as lacking sensuality and unavailability due to the reduced operating possibilities and technical controllability (Rosa 2016, 497). This coincides with music educators' criticism of the algorithmisation of thought and action through computer technologies, the standardisation of musical material, the capitalisation and commercialisation of music through digital media, and the escape into a desensualised, disembodied and lonely synthetic world of the screen (see e.g. Knolle 1995; Thwaites 2014). In contrast to this, there are often almost euphoric assessments in which the diagnosed simplicity and low threshold of newer digital technologies is read as an indication of a democratisation of music and music education, which, precisely the other way round, offers those who have so far been excluded the possibility of their own musical experiences (e.g. Möllenkamp 2017; Väkevä 2013).

Beside these generalised ascriptions, a glance into the musical practices in question reveals a more differentiated picture. It then becomes clear, for example, that cheaper availability and technical simplification have led to changes in the previously clear division of roles between composer, producer and distributor (Slater 2016), as well as to shifts in the competencies required for making music with digital technologies (Leong 2017), and changes in the relationship of body and sound (Harenberg and Weissberg 2010). A systematic investigation of these interrelations against the background of resonance theory is still to be done.

The dissertation project will be based on the aesthetical practice using *Ableton Link*, which takes place, for example in so-called link-jamsessions (in pubs, cultural centers etc.), but also online, in facebook groups, on Twitter and in forums. This specific postdigital practice is of particular interest in so far as the *Ableton Link* protocol, which has been fed into music and VJ apps and software since 2015, has led to paradigmatic changes in digital music making (Weidner et al. 2019). *Link*, comparable to the older MIDI protocol, synchronises soft- and hardware via a common WiFi network. Therefore *Link* (again) enables a joint synchronous interaction 'in time' which has been taken for granted in (electro)acoustic music making but had only been possible in digital music with a huge amount of cables and a wide range of technological infrastructures in the past. In addition to digital instruments, (electro)acoustic instruments also participate in link-jam sessions, which leads to a postdigital coexistence, or blurring/hybridisation of digital and non-digital practices.

With regard to resonant and/or mute self–world relations, the focus will be on the culturally formed resonance sphere as well as the individually created resonance axes around *Ableton Link*. According to the questions of the second phase of the IGDK, **aspects of repetition and the associated ritualisation**, the **power relationships** that constitute themselves in it, as well as

**the effects of material aspects on resonance** relationships will be taken into account. How do performative ritualisations begin? Which power relations are constituted there (e.g. between conductor and player or organiser of the session and visitors or in terms of gender)? How do conventional practices become rules with functional, symbolical and practical meaning? What is the corporeality of that roles? And how does the materiality e.g. of a screen in a Facebook group etc. relate to resonance relationships?

Methodologically, the project is located in (cyber-)ethnography. Secondary evaluations of (interview/video) data collected in the research projekt MuBiTec-LINKED are possible, which are to be complemented by additional data. Conceptually, it is expected that the resonance theory will be supplemented by selected theory elements from science and technology studies (see showcase 'Tango in the technosphere').

## References

- Harenberg, Michael; Weissberg, Daniel 2010. *Klang (ohne) Körper. Spuren und Potenziale des Körpers in der elektronischen Musik*. München.
- Knolle, Niels 1995. "bis wir die Chips in unser Gehirn integrieren und fernsteuerbar sind." – Zur Ideologiekritik der Neuen Technologien in Schule und Gesellschaft und ihre Konsequenzen für die Musikpädagogik', in: Maas, Georg (ed.), *Musiklernen und Neue (Unterrichts-)Technologien*. Essen. 41-59.
- Leong, Samuel 2017. 'Globalization and Technology in Twenty-First-Century Education', in: Ruthmann, A. Alex; Mantie, Roger (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Technology and Music Education*. Oxford. 89-104.
- Möllenkamp, Andreas 2017. 'Musiksoftware und die Demokratisierung der Musikkultur. Zu den Effekten der Digitalisierung für Musiker', in: *Samples* 15. 1-16.
- Rosa, Hartmut 2018. *Unverfügbarkeit*. Wien/Salzburg.
- Slater, Mark 2016. 'Processes of Learning in the Project Studio', in: King, Andrew; Himonides, Evangelos (eds.), *Music, Technology, and Education. Critical Perspectives*. London/New York. 9-26.
- Thwaites, Trevor 2014. 'Technology and Music Education in a Digitized, Disembodied, Posthuman World', in: *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 13.2. 30–47. [act.maydaygroup.org](http://act.maydaygroup.org)
- Väkevä, Lauri 2013. 'Digital Musicianship in the Late Modern Culture of Mediation: Theorizing a New Praxis for Music Education from a Pragmatist Viewpoint', in: *Journal of Pedagogy and Psychology "Signum Temporis"* 6.1. 38-47.
- Weidner, Verena; Stenzel, Maurice; Haenisch, Matthias & Godau, Marc (2019). "... like being in a band baby!!!" Postdigitale Semantiken und diskursive Strategien in der Onlinekommunikation um Ableton Link', in: Weidner, Verena; Rolle, Christian (eds.), *Praxen und Diskurse aus Sicht Musikpädagogischer Forschung*. Münster. 263-278.

#