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Born, Georgina (ed.): Music and Digital Media: A Planetary Anthropology.
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Music is omnipresent in everyday life and enmeshed in the (digital) transformations of our day-to-day realities. It is therefore surprising that music continues to have a rather marginal position in anthropology. Starting from this observation, the book *Music and Digital Media: A Planetary Anthropology*, edited by Georgina Born, sets out to change this, but as the subtitle reveals, its ambitions go much further. By considering some implications that the study of music has to offer to the discipline, it aims to provide theoretical considerations for an assessment of digital media and their impact on society. Yet the book is not an ordinary collection of papers by different authors compiled at a conference or the like, but presents the results of ten years of research within the European Research Council (ERC)-funded project *Music, Digitisation, Mediation: Towards Interdisciplinary Music Studies (MusDig)*. By furthering and transforming some of her former theoretical innovations, such as the notion of relational musicology, and reconsidering the role of music and aesthetics as social mediators (e.g. Born 2010; 2017), Born is able to draw on several highly original case studies by her co-authors and herself.

These eight predominantly empirical chapters constitute the core of this multi-layered and ethnographically wide-ranging book. Each of them contributes very different aspects and perspectives to this collective anthropological endeavour. The themes range from entrepreneurship, recording studios and digital music production in the field of popular music in Nairobi by Andrew J. Eisenberg (chapter 2) via digitization within the independent music scene in Buenos Aires by Geoff Baker (chapter 3), to the challenges faced in the work of digitally archiving music from oral traditions in India by Aditi Deo (chapter 4). Furthermore, in several co-written chapters, Georgina Born examines online music consumption on platforms like Spotify and Jekyll together with Blake Durham (chapter 5), the aesthetics of and social mediation through music in music production with the 'Max' software together with Joe Snape (chapter 6), as well as the transformation of the perception and consumption of music through internet-mediated music genres such as 'microsound' or 'chillwave' together with Christopher Haworth (chapter 9). Two contributions on the (non-academic) electroacoustic scene in Montreal by Patrick Valiquet (chapter 7) vs. university education in digital art music in the UK by Georgina Born (chapter 8) add still another layer to this rich compilation.

For all their diversity, the chapters are all ethnographically grounded and attempt to examine concrete historical and social situations in which digital music production and reception are embedded, as Georgina Born emphasizes in her introduction (p. 2). At the same time, their aim is not to flatten any disparities, but rather to carve out and compare cultural, regional, or historical nuances and disparities, avoiding simple dichotomies in representations of cases from the so-called Global North and South (p. 18). This leads to an explanation of the subtitle of the book: the idea of the planetary is introduced with the intention of circumventing a supposed levelling out of such nuances via the concept of the global. The author's view is that, as a concept, the 'global' is inadequate because of its homogenizing connotations that only seemingly allow actually distinct phenomena to be captured in an 'abstract equivalence' (p. 15).

To illustrate how these rather programmatic intentions are realized in these regionally and thematically very different chapters, I present two examples in more detail that I think resonate well with some of the overall aims of the book. Andrew J. Eisenberg focuses on a then emerging scene of digital music-producers in Nairobi at the beginning of the 2010s that took shape against the backdrop of economic and media liberalization, separately from an already existing recording industry. The author particularly highlights the broadened opportunities that the computerized production of popular music offered independent producers, allowing them to do every step in the musical production themselves. The individual producers and producer groups he presents in three case studies were thus enabled to act in what he calls an 'aesthetic entrepreneurship': they aimed at capitalizing on these rather new digital opportunities as entrepreneurs by experimenting with and establishing new business models. To do this successfully, however, they had to navigate public expectations of the new urban music styles in combination with 'vernacular' forms of musical expression like 'benga' (p. 54–55), which in one way or another had represented Kenyan identities in the public consciousness already for several decades. The examples reveal three organizationally and stylistically different responses to this challenge, some of which were further complicated by the involvement of foreign cultural centres such as the Alliance Française de Nairobi. Yet they all reflect a process of cultural (re-)formation, mediated through music and cultural production. The chapter very well conveys the regionally, culturally and socio-economically specific circumstances under which these processes evolved.

Joe Snape and Georgina Born also analyse the way in which digital music production affects the intermediating role of music and aesthetics. But unlike the chapter summarized before, their focus is on software and its agentive force. They look at Max, 'a graphical programming environment for media art practices' (p. 220), and the ways in which it is used by music producers in predominantly academic and art-world settings. While the manufacturer advertises the software as a comprehensive tool with no limits to the realization of musical ideas, the authors explore ethnographically how Max nonetheless influences many parameters of the resulting sounds and music, even bringing about specific genres. Building on field research by Joe Snape, who accompanied laptop musicians in their work, the chapter integrates perspectives on the individual

use of Max by the artist 'AI', live performances based on Max by Holly Herndon and others, and the 'institutional ecology' (p. 249) in which the further transformation of the software takes place. Following a theoretical approach from science and technology studies, the authors grasp the intermediating agency of the Max software conceptually as an assemblage that co-determines artistic practice as a 'coproducer' (p. 259), rather than simply determining musical practice.

Georgina Born explores the theoretical potential of the ethnographic chapters in her introduction and in a 'postlude' on 'musical-anthropological comparativism' (chapter 10). In her theoretical efforts, she seeks to unravel how social relations are mediated by music and digital media. She warns against falling into the trap of 'mediacentric tendencies' (p. 27), which she criticizes in much current related research in Sound Studies. By focusing on three main challenges, the book seeks to provide the means to develop more encompassing accounts of respective processes and phenomena: to understand how music changes through the digital and at the same time influences and transforms the digital itself; to develop the necessary interdisciplinary framework to bridge disciplines like anthropology, musicology, Sound Studies or Science and Technology Studies; and to advance different ethnographic, especially digital research methods (p. 9). Here Born explicitly opposes positions that favour the so-called ontological turn. Rather, her aim is to revitalize a critical anthropology in the spirit of George Marcus and Michael Fischer as an important component of a relational musicology by looking at the ways in which mediations of music, digital media and the social are also embedded in political struggles and power relations.

While the ethnographic chapters stand for themselves and can be read independently, Born offers additional comparative and theoretical interpretations in her 'postlude'. There, she reflects on various aspects of the central theoretical notion of a mediation of the aesthetic, the material and technological, and the social in relation to music and digital media. Based on her former work and the new insights from *MusDig*, she expands a model or matrix of formerly four and now five 'planes' of mediation that integrate the different possibilities of how 'socialities and social imaginaries' are enmeshed with musical practice and aesthetic experience, or else how music is shaped by or itself shapes specific social formations or abstractions such as identities, institutional and political-economic forms, or governmentality (p. 480ff.).

Music and Digital Media is a highly interesting attempt to assemble the different studies of a large, partly interdisciplinary research project in one volume and engage them in a theoretically ambitious discussion. The quite dense and comprehensive theoretical overview and discussion in the two framing chapters may appear intimidating at first, like the unfortunately rather unattractive design of the cover and the sheer size of the book. At the same time, the ethnographic chapters might provide the interested reader with an alternative for a first *entrée* into the book. Depending on one's own thematic or regional interest, they offer the lively and concrete approach that Born promises in the introduction. The effort to work through the numerous theoretical and programmatic premises in the book is rewarded with many suggestions for further eth-

nographically grounded thinking about the social mediation of music, digital media and technology in relation to aesthetic formations and experience.

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Frembgen, Jürgen Wasim: Sufi Hotel. Aufzeichnungen aus den Untiefen einer Megacity. 180 S. Berlin und Tübingen: Schiler & Mücke, 2022.
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Jürgen Wasim Frembgens Buch „Sufi Hotel. Aufzeichnungen aus den Untiefen einer Megacity" rückt das im Süden Pakistans gelegene Karachi, das der Autor „[d]ie größte muslimische Stadt der Welt" (S. 11) nennt, in das Zentrum der Repräsentation subalterner Charaktere und Themen. Der Titel des Buchs basiert auf einem real existierenden Ort, indiziert jedoch auch Frembgens spirituelles und ethnologisches Spezialgebiet, den Sufismus, eine lokalisierte Variante des Volksislam. Das „Sufi Hotel", ein Teehaus in der Altstadt Karachis, welches ich im Anschluss an die Lektüre selbst besuchte, wird hier zum Beobachtungsposten und zum Ausgangspunkt einer Verkettung ethnographischer Beschreibungen, vermengt mit allgemeinen Beobachtungen und Anekdoten sowie subjektiven Eindrücken und Bewertungen. In Frembgens eigenen Worten ist diese narrative Ethnographie „kein akademischer Text im eigentlichen Sinn", sondern „ein Versuch der Annäherung an kulturelle Realitäten mit erzählerischen Mitteln" (S. 163–164).

Die Narration thematisiert anhand des Sufi Hotels und der darin verkehrenden Charaktere – Kellner, Sex-Arbeiterinnen, Zuhälter und Freier, Tänzerinnen und Musiker sowie einem Asketen und einem muslimischen Gelehrten – geschickt und schonungslos einige der neuralgischen Streitpunkte, die das öffentliche Leben Pakistans aus einer emischen Perspektive prägen: Einerseits der gleichermaßen von islamischen Reformbewegungen und Orthodoxie bis hin zu Terroranschlägen bedrohte Sufismus. Andererseits patriarchale Normen und Praktiken, welche nicht nur zur Ausbeutung