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SPECIAL ISSUE: THE ART OF HEARING

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**Interstitial Redemption: Wagner's *Tannhäuser* and the
Dramaturgical Vicissitudes of Music Drama**

Wagner's published writings repeatedly model a motivating tension between spectacle and narrative, attraction and absorption, grand opera and German romantic opera. The recurring terminological clusters provide a suggestively bifurcated aesthetic field on which to launch the project of music drama, which sees itself as a sublation of these oppositions. More important, Wagner's stage works repeatedly allegorize this aspiration, rendering the bipolar appeals and manifest shortcomings of spectacle and absorption to clear the way for the advent of Wagner's own aesthetic practice. To probe this point, the article focuses on a particular moment in *Tannhäuser*, the shepherd's song in act 1, which serves as a marginal—an interstitial—beacon of expressive authenticity. As such, it stands apart from—and arguably heralds an alternative to—two distinct and much more powerful musical cultures portrayed in the work, one excessively pleasurable, the other drastically bureaucratic. (DJL)

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Rilke's Rumbblings and Lang's Bang

This article explores what it might mean to be a modern listening subject. Based on close readings of a short passage in Rainer Maria Rilke's novel *Die Aufzeichnungen des Malte Laurids Brigge* (1910) and of the opening sequence of Fritz Lang's film *M* (1931), I argue that what made modern hearing modern was its ability to recognize the essential messiness, instability, and potential failure of sensory perception in modernity. Confronted with fundamental ruptures between the acoustical and the visual in industrial society, listeners became modern to the extent to which they learned how to negotiate conflicting sensual input and abandon traditional visions of perceptual wholeness and unity. (LK)

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The Ear against the Eye: Vertov's Symphony

According to Vertov, media-induced perception (the Cine-Eye and the Radio-Ear) trains modern eyes to see simultaneity and speed and modern ears to register non-tempered sounds (industrial and urban noises). His position recalls Futurist programs and discussions in Russian circles that elaborated the distinction between music, sound, and noise. Vertov structured his first sound film, *Enthusiasm* (1931), however, as a four-movement symphony with a specific musical narrative that employs the principles of repetition, variation, contrast, and counterpoint of visual and acoustic leitmotifs. Vertov developed transformed noises into a musical symphony by using montage and varying the speed of recorded sounds in post-production. The notion of a new kind of hearing as staged in Vertov's film may be interpreted as an appeal to a new sensuality and to new bodily experiences, an appeal to create a utopian, "techno-equipped" human being endowed with cine-eyes and radio-ears who develops a synaesthetic apperception of the fragmented world of modernity. (OB)

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Blindness and "Showside": Non-Visual Aspects of German Radio and Radio Plays in the 1950s

The connections and gaps between modes of sense perception played a role in 1950s West German broadcasting media and more specifically in the genre of the radio play. Radio programs possess a fantastical quality insofar as their acoustic suggestiveness cannot and does not rely on visible evidence. This

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explains the radio play's predilection for plots set in a dream-like, surreal, and dark realm. The world without light of the radio broadcast and the blindness of those listening complement one another. In post-war West Germany the widely held link between the radio play and blindness assumed a new meaning as the war blind became symbolically and institutionally the defining core of an audience intensely listening to the radio plays' inner voices. A close reading of Günter Eich's two versions of *Blick auf Venedig* (1952, 1960) both confirm and destabilize this link. His blind characters are aliens in the world of social conventions, which puts them on par with the author Eich, who in poetological statements has sketched out a kind of poetics of blindness. (JF)

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