

On the Sensorial of Imagination

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The senses appear on the boundary between the inside and the outside of human experience. They are like an open door through which light, impressions, and air enter, are exchanged, and merge with the light, impressions, and air that were there before, exchanging inner and outer. While perception and sensoriality appear to be experiences that happen in real time, the sensorial can and most of the time does inhabit imagination in very precise ways. Sensorial imagination is related to human experience, to sensorial remembrance, and is based on sensorial knowledge. It happens in the present, is sustained by the sensorial knowledge of the past, and projects itself by way of sensorially driven expectations towards the future. Our sensorial imagination leads our interpretations, expectations, and actions. Offering background information as well as projecting expectation, it is an important cue for understanding the world, for creating synaesthetic associations, and for making connections between our experience and knowledge and those of others.

Sensorial imagination has for a long time been linked mainly to visual imagination. The word imagination even contains a visual reference to “image.” However, not all our experiences are related to the visual. Just start to think about everyday experiences like the wind, water, a dark country path, a hidden heap of rubbish: all these experiences are sensorial in different modalities: haptic, olfactive, auditory, motoric. In the context of art, and specifically music, this multi-sensory presence—involving a synaesthetic approach—is of uttermost importance. A musician sees a score, hears the music, has a haptic and motoric sense of how to interact with both, and can anticipate this in an imaginary multi-sensorial mode.

In this text, we will approach sensorial imagination as a powerful tool for acting and for obtaining a desired outcome in the arts. While not totally pre-determined, sensorial imagination is still not the same as whatever could be possible, and thus is different from mere fantasy. In life, it makes possible an exchange between humans concerning non-present events and situations. In artistic experience, it stirs an aesthetic reception by opening up potential interpretations and associations. Conversations, stories, and books often involve sensorial imagination, as this imagination fills in the experiential context and

background behind the words. While an audience, when confronted with an artwork or art representation, will tend to use sensorial imagination to enhance and contextualise aesthetic interpretation, artists continuously use sensorial imagination to prepare or plan their work, as a powerful tool of orientation towards the desired outcome. In artistic practice, the sensorial “fore-feeling” or “fore-thinking” of a possible realisation pushes artists to continuously bridge the gap between embodied action and artistic reception, between the ideal sensorially imagined artistic output and the present and resulting real output. Musicians need to imagine perceptually what the possibilities of different sounds and phrases in a music piece are, and how the next harmonic and melodic development must sound. Visual artists need to imagine visually whether this or that piece of wood can become a statue and then imagine haptically how it can be carved to obtain the desired artistic image; such imagination will then lead the hand and the eye in the realisation. An artist’s imagination can be considered a guiding tool that, in advance of each realisation, projects for the artist him- or herself the potential artistic outcome, and offers a selection of possible or desired high-level expectations. As such, sensorial imagination continuously sustains and enriches the trajectory of an artistic practice and directs the unfolding of an artistic creation, work, or performance.

FROM PERCEPTION TO PERCEPTUAL IMAGINATION

An experience of imagination is different from a real perceptual experience. In real perception, what can be experienced has to exist. The content itself is independent of the perceiver: it is part of the environment. How it can be perceived depends upon the physiological and sensorial capacities of the perceiver. The different senses offer the medium or link between the outer world and the inner. Similar perceptual experience is shared by members of the same living species, thus allowing intersubjectivity, the possibility of interaction, and sharing the same world. The similarity of perceptual experience is an outward move, which is sharable to quite a large degree: there is a high level of similarity between what you see and what I see when we are looking at the same mountain, just as there is a high level of correspondence between what you hear and what I hear when attending the same music performance—the condition is of course that we share similar human perceptual capacities as well as similar temporal and spatial situations.

In contrast to real perceptual experience, perceptual imagination is an experience in which the content is much more dependent upon the perceiver. Instead of directing the attention outwards, the imagining person focuses inwards. When you and I imagine a dog barking, our experiences will have a lower similarity than when we hear a real dog barking—I might think of a small dog with a fast, rather high-pitch sound while you might think of a dog you know whose bark is very heavy and low. However, there are limits to what we can imagine. On the one hand, by sharing human physiological characteristics and the same world we still share some level of similarity. Take the example of the dog barking: our perceptual imagination of the sound will depend upon real-

life situations and upon the experience and life trajectory of the perceiver—for example, how many dogs you have already heard barking, whether you have a dog yourself. On the other hand, as we all have more or less different trajectories in life and some differences in physiological constitution, some idiosyncrasy will always impose itself.

While we will not discuss here the philosophical and phenomenological literature or studies on different kinds of imagination, we can briefly mention that perceptual or sensorial imagination is but one specific kind of imagination. The main other kind of imagination is what is called conceptual or propositional imagination (Williams 2003, 188). Conceptual imagination implies the conception of possibilities in which elements of argumentation, of hypothetical construction or heuristics, are at work developing an understanding of “imaginative situations.” Such a proposition is usually “imagine that x .” The order or content of things as well as its logic can be extremely unreal in relation to life situations. Propositional imagination often includes or plays with beliefs or desires (McIver Lopes 2003, 207).

Both kinds of imagination are not exclusive: while possibility is more a part of conceptual imagination and extension than of sensorial imagination, there are no sharp boundaries: both can play a part in possibility and/or extension (Williams 2003, 193). Both kinds of imagination allow for certain free manipulations: “All imaginative activity allows a free variation of its contents” (Ihde 2007, 207). We can find conceptual approaches to imagination in music, for example, when certain musical structures and music theories offer a tentative framework for a composition. In these developments, the music is imagined not (only) in a perceptual way, but in its conceptual construction—or is first imagined in a conceptual way before being perceptually imagined.

In sensorial imagination, the author approaches the “quasi-perceptual”: the order of things imagined is continuous with the world order we inhabit and perceive (Williams 2003, 192). The experience offers an extension of the perception and awareness of the world and often involves a personal, rather subjective recall or revival of past experiences. As such an extension, it “occurs” as an experience, having a certain duration and location. It necessarily calls into action one or more of the senses to create a “quasi-perception” inwards. The instruction is usually “imagine x ,” where x is something that is selectively available to perception, depending upon the kind of perception and upon sensorial memory and remembrance. For example, imagine running barefoot on gravel—this may give you an immediate (imagined) sensation of what the real experience would be like.

When we state that sensorial imagination relies upon the different senses that can direct themselves inwardly, we seem to enter into a conflict between the notions of the senses and of imagination. Perception and imagination seem to be opposites: the first is the real-time mediator between the outer and inner worlds, while imagination is something exclusively inward, detached from real time and the world. However, the capacity for imagining perceptual experiences, as in real life, is a powerful ability of human beings that can function as a pre-mediator for actions or experiences to come. Human beings thus have a

sensorial capacity that extends beyond the here and now and is related to past and future experiences.

While some experiences of sensory imagination involve only one sensorial modality, others often involve different senses—they are multi-sensorial or synaesthetic. A synaesthetic translation or interaction can be part of imagining a certain sensorial experience—I can imagine for example the smell of someone's house only by first imagining the interior visually. A certain specific sensorial imagination can also be part of a much larger complex of sensorial imagination. When you imagine the dog barking, the auditory imagination could be accompanied by the visual remembrance of a dog you know, its smell, and so on.

One instruction to imagine something can also be realised independently by way of different senses. "Imagine a cube" can be visual as well as haptic. While the instruction "imagine a cube" is the same, the haptic imagination—concerning shape, texture, corners, and edges—will be experienced in a very different way than the visual one, where symmetry, plane, and three-dimensional vision occur (McIver Lopes 2003, 214).

SENSORIAL IMAGINATION AND EXPERIENCE

Perceptual imaginative experiences are highly complex. Moreover, the ability to sensorially imagine is deeply linked to the experience of the person imagining: it relies upon physiological abilities as well as cultural affordances, objective situations as well as subjective interpretations, life history, conceptual and perceptual possibilities, and past experiences and future projections.

If in real life one had not experienced a cube or heard a dog barking, imagining such situations would be impossible or totally fantastic: "The creative activity of the imagination depends directly on the richness and variety of a person's previous experience because this experience provides the material from which the products of fantasy are constructed. The richer a person's experience, the richer is the material his imagination has access to" (Vygotsky 2004, 14–15). The closeness between imaginative experience and real-world perception is indeed an important factor of having a satisfying experience, because "imagining an object interferes with the ability to perceive it" (McIver Lopes 2003, 217).

The line between perception and sensorial imagination thus also runs through experience and the remembrance of these experiences. Perception itself is loaded with previous perceptual experiences and thus with the remembrance and imagination of these experiences, feeding perception again and again: "There is no perception which is not full of memories. With the immediate and present data of our senses we mingle a thousand details out of our past experience" (Bergson 1911, 24). From the moment something is perceived, each subsequent perception of something else related to it is influenced, sustained, and interpreted by way of previous perceptual experiences, and so is each imagined perception that follows. Remembrance and the memory of previous perceptual, lived situations not only offer a framework for further observation of and interaction with the world, but also enhance the capacity and richness

of perceptual imagination and its role in knowledge and creation. Perceptual experience and sensorial imagination form a deeply entangled complex and dynamic web for coping with and understanding the world.

In *The Perception of the Environment*, Tim Ingold (2000) describes how imagination is an activity of uttermost importance in our relation with the world. Dynamical and respective intentional movements between imagination and action, between preparation, expectation, and enactment show that imagination—and sensorial imagination as mentioned previously—is an undeniable part of (artistic) creation.

Ingold refers to three important aspects of imagination in the practical experience of the world, which are even more important to the notion of developing skills and creation. A first point concerning imagination is its part in a design process where reality and imagined elements merge. Myriad products from one's own imagination—like a virtual world—are present in the attention to this world. Thus attention, while originally fed by sensorial and other experiences, is “turned inwards on the self: in other words it becomes reflexive” (Ingold 2000, 418). Second, realising an artwork involves holding this imaginative world in place through an activity that draws continuously upon this imagination. Plans, strategies, projections, and representations are part of the present and prepare the future activity of the craftsman or artist. These feed the practical realisation, both in advance and during the process of creating. A deep relationship between ongoing practice and imagination develops, like a kind of intentional movement between what can be and what is, between imagined realisation and practical enactment. It is interesting here that it is possible to “go over,” to “simulate” in one's imaginative world future actions and creations, as in a mode of preparation. Ingold's third point refers to temporospatially dependent characteristics of the possibilities of imagination: “However much he may be ‘wrapped up’ in his own thoughts, the thinker is situated in a time and place and therefore in a relational context” (Ingold 2000, 418). This deep relationship, in which imagination starts from the experienced world, is primordial: “We do not have to think the world in order to live in it, but we *do* have to live in the world in order to think it” (Ingold 1996, 118). Similarly, we have to listen to the world to develop imaginative listening and create music.

While memories play a continuous, not always clearly defined, role in everyday life, perceptual imagination is of utmost importance in understanding ways of knowing, linking space and time through experience and meaning-making. Imagination is at the heart of perception and of intentional action, as is stressed by both Henri Bergson, from a point of view of time and remembrance, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, from the point of view of the body. We “know” a table has four feet, even though often we only see two or three of them. Our previous perceptual and embodied interactions with tables offer us a coherent idea of the constitution of a table. Great would be our surprise if, pushing down on the table, we suddenly realised that the fourth foot was missing—and our sensorial imagination false. This example of a table also involves the possibility that perceptual imagination turns out to be false. This means that the use of sensorial imagination to enhance knowledge and understanding needs

to be done in a methodological way. In a previous intermezzo, we referred to Goethe's exploratory experimentation. Goethe's proposed notion of real sensorial imagination is one of the steps for a method of experimentation relying upon human experience and exploration.

EXACT SENSORIAL IMAGINATION IN THE ARTS

Following Goethe, three conditions have to be fulfilled to use sensorial imagination as a reliable tool for acquiring knowledge: time, perception, and observation. To perceive the whole of a situation, to understand an object or an action in its totality, a durable engagement between the observer and the observed, between subject and object, is needed: "My thinking is not separate from objects; that the elements of the object, the perceptions of the object, flow into my thinking and are fully permeated by it; that my perception itself is a thinking, and my thinking a perception" (Goethe 1988, 39). This means that the observer takes an active part in the whole unfolding of the phenomena to be known. The observer's perceptual or sensorial attention is directed by a continuous intention to understand better and more completely (S. T. Miller 2009).

Goethe gives the study of a plant as an example of the method of exact sensorial imagination: one can only understand a plant and its process of living by observing the plant over a long period of time, from different angles, very deeply and methodically, making diverse observations, starting from an outward point of view, and moving inwards toward a complex image of what it is "to be a plant." Each independent observation offers only a partial, separate insight into the plant, which is related to an individual perceptual moment and offers only parcelled knowledge. However, we can never perceive the totality of the plant: in neither an absolute way nor a temporal way. By bringing together all our different observations and interactions with the plant in different contexts, we can fill the gap between all the different individualised moments to build a more complete understanding of it: "This imaginative filling in of the gaps yields a sort of inner time-lapse movie that coherently morphs from state to state. But it is much more than an inner visual experience—rather it is filled with dynamic relations between unfolding *qualities*, qualities carried initially through the process of sensation, but which begin to have a life of their own, and which take on more and more significance" (S. T. Miller 2009, 14). Such exact sensorial imagination, when developed in a highly methodological way, offers the most complete image or knowledge possible when we think about the totality of a certain flower: we have some kind of afterimage of all our experiences with a flower, we have a memory of it, a creative imagination where the concept and idea work simultaneously and reveal a sensorial knowledge of the flower where all observations of it and interactions with it come together in an independent idea of that flower (D. Miller 1988, xix). A correct description and understanding of a flower is only possible after a coherent (re)construction of experiences that can only be brought together in human imagination—as different perspectives and insights never exist together in reality. It is only

by way of imagination that separate experiences in time can be conflated and that “the fullness of time can be grasped and represented” (Simms 2005, 170). Such imagination then becomes something very concrete: it is simultaneously experienced as outer and inner, both perceptually experienced and cognitively abstracted. It offers a way out of time dependency, as it is “a matter of retaining past forms of the phenomenon while anticipating the forms the phenomenon will likely take as it unfolds into the future” (Robbins 2005, 120).

We can extend exact sensorial imagination to become a strong method for both aesthetic appraisal and artistic creation. Sensorial imagination as a methodological tool in music creation—both interpretation and composition— involves observation and interaction of great depth, where time, insistence and persistence, accuracy and attunement of body and mind, integration of the instrument, and score and sound, by way of sensory driven action, repetition, and variation, are necessary elements. Such a method offers us insights into how artists adapt to constantly changing environments; how performers engage with outside objects (scores) and translate them through their perceptual and embodied practices into expressions from within; and how composers move observation, perception, and imagination towards transformation and creation.

In the first place, exact sensorial imagination makes possible a potential overview and deep sensorial understanding of an artistic creation’s complex process, components, and potentialities. By way of meticulous observations and try-outs of numerous sensorial perspectives, the artist develops embodied, sensorial, and intellectual schemata—ways of interpreting, acting, and reacting—of what can be realised, relying upon this growing network of sensorial and embodied imagination. Think of a pianist who for years has sensorially explored and observed all possible interactions between his or her body and instrument. Bringing together all these specific and individual moments of observation and interaction with the instrument results in a dynamic, complex, and very sensible and sensorial tool of imagination encompassing artistic expertise as a whole.

Second, and following from this, exact sensorial imagination makes possible a continuous adjustment in time and a reflection upon time-based actions and processes of artistic creation, in relation to the range of potentialities that could take place. Before an artist realises an artwork, he or she has continuously to produce something that lies behind the bounds of experience—it is in the domain of still unrealised potential. The range of possible intentions and expectations of a pianist’s exact sensorial imagination tool allows the pianist to adjust his or her actions in a situation to realise a specific sound. Thus, real sensorial imagination permits intentional activity for anticipation and for realisation.

Two brief examples of musicians, composers Pierre Schaeffer and Béla Bartók, will give an idea of what exact sensorial imagination can mean.

Pierre Schaeffer's aesthetic reflections in *A la recherche d'une musique concrète* (1952) were complemented by a very systematic study of sounds in his *Traité des objets musicaux* (1966). He was fascinated by extra-musical noises—*objets sonores* (sound objects)—and patiently observed and collected them, unleashing them from their physical sources, and reconfigured them as building blocks of a potentially infinite new language. This new anthropology of sound evolving into composed music developed from Russolo, via Varèse and Schaeffer, to the contemporary technological and electronic creation of soundscapes. It led to archives of sounds and perspectives on sounds, and became part of a new line of music creation.

Béla Bartók provides another example; his subject of observation and exploration was folk music, “in the form in which it lives, in unbridled strength . . . and not by means of inanimate collections of folk music” (1976, 318)—a quotation that reflects the Goethean notion of “entering the experience.” Exploration and variation are present in the recordings, scores, and annotations Bartók made in his notebooks, which led to authentic creations by way of his sensorial imagination—which was highly sensitive to voice and speech-like rhythms and sounds (Durey 1955, 10). Bartók's focus on a methodology similar to exact sensorial imagination led him to revise transcriptions he had made of folk songs, years after first hearing the music, on the basis of his remembrance of the original songs, and to add some annotations to his transcriptions.

Artists and musicians like Schaeffer and Bartók were fascinated by sensorial information about the outer world—ecological, instrumental, cultural sounds—and had a deep interest in exploring, transforming, and experimenting with these materials, once they had gathered all possible points of view in their overarching exact sensorial imagination.

FROM AUDITORY IMAGINATION TO IMAGINATIVE LISTENING

What does it mean for a being to be immersed entirely in listening, formed by listening or in listening, listening with all his being? (Nancy 2007, 4)

What does it mean to exist according to listening, for it and through it . . . ? (Ibid., 5)

To be listening is always to be on the edge of meaning. . . . But what can be the shared space of meaning and sound? (Ibid., 7)

Listening happens on different levels of awareness. Because the world already exists before we become present in it, we enter an “already” sounding world. That is also what Bartók's and Schaeffer's works refer to.

Our first auditory experiences engage with what Don Ihde calls primary listening, which is the listening that precedes one's own speech: “I hear the voices of others, of things, of the World long before I speak my own words” (Ihde 2007, 115). The world is full of sounds. Our first words and noises disappear in our experience and memory of the sounds of the world. We don't remember when we said our first word. We don't remember how we listened to that word before it had meaning. The human voice more and more echoes,

resonates, and sounds with the world, answering and questioning it. Over time, the auditory realm moves towards more and more signification. Some of these primary experiences disappear forever: once we speak a mother tongue, and once that language makes the world significant, we can no longer move towards our previous experience of its “primary” sound or listen to it as we did before it made the world significant. We can experience that primary listening again when hearing an unknown language—like when listening to the sounds of another culture. Once signification becomes part of experience, auditory perception is doubled through previous experiences; thus, the experiential perceptual mode of listening is coupled with the imaginative mode (Ihde 2007, 117): the sounds and voices of the world are doubled with one’s own sounds and voices. New experiences are enriched with old experiences, and thus potentially with imagination, as the sounds of the outer world find resonance in the inner world—they merge with my remembrances of multiple auditory experiences and with my own voice. Ihde’s phenomenological writings point to the notion of polyphony between outer and inner, between the perceptual and the imaginative modes of experience (Ihde 2007, 119).

An outer experience and an inner experience of hearing and listening evolve and become richer and potentially more varied over time. The first is perceptual listening, the second, imaginative listening.

The notion of imaginative listening is a kind of auditory imagination. Like all sensorial imagination, it can be part of a larger whole of imagination, including different sensorial imaginative approaches, links, or translations. While imaginative listening relies originally upon perceptual experiences and remnants of ulterior experiences, it is potentially an experiential and complex activity of its own.

By exploring and experimenting with imaginative listening in a musical situation, Vanessa Tomlinson wanted to unravel aspects of its nature. Her composition *Music of the Imagination* (2013) is a work for audience and timekeeper. Each audience member receives a small envelope containing eight cards—the first seven cards have listening instructions on them, while the final card asks the audience member to return to their favourite sound. The following introductory instruction is read aloud to the audience: “In this work you will be asked to undertake a series of ‘imaginative listenings.’ You will receive a series of cards with instructions on them such as ‘Listen to the sound of’ Your task is to try, as hard as possible, to listen to that sound—in your imagination. You look at the *first card only* until the cue from the timekeeper (after around 30”). Then you will change to the next card. This process continues. At some point, one of your cards will say ‘return to your favourite sound.’ Enjoy.”

The audience is in a concert setting—whatever that may be in the particular situation. Each envelope contains cards that will inspire a variety of listening experiences: two for experiential listening, two for material listening, two for conceptual listening, and one for internal listening. Each listening attitude, provoked by the written prompt, helps provide a lexicon of listening approaches, hypothetically transferable to other musical settings. These prompts provide multi-sensorial gateways into our imagination and memory,

placing the act of sound production in the imagination of each individual performer and audience member, all of whom are required to locate sound—through memory, experience, and context. The sonic residue discovered as well as the transitional or liminal space between the located sounds forms a private listening experience for each active audience participant mapped onto the geo-cultural specificity of the individual. Material, existential, conceptual, and internal kinds of listening all refer to different kinds of sensorial imagination.

In material listening there is an external object to listen to; the sound being imagined can be found, recorded, documented, and listened to by another, in alignment with notions of sensorial imagination. The imagined sonic object can also exist as an example of the sound, repeatable in different locations with a similar set of variables. For instance “Listen to the sound of water as it falls over rocks” is a broad enough invitation that a listener will be able to scroll through a number of locations—possibly through visual recall—to locate a particular example of this sound. At that point sonic analysis comes into play—how wide is the waterway, how deep is the waterway, how big are the rocks, how steeply does the water fall, how fast is the water flowing, is it in an open space, is it sheltered, are there reflective surfaces near by, am I listening alone? What may begin as location scouting in the memory, soon amasses a wealth of detailed information, necessary to cognise the particularity of that sound. Alternatively, a generic version of “water over rocks” can be located, which has the sonic tendencies of the aforementioned attributes, but without a specific site. Material listening is an imagined analysis of sound; it recalls one’s awareness and experience of sound quality. The longer the listener can focus on the sound, the more detail they will discover in the imagined sound.

Experiential listening relies on personal memory of lived experience and relationships. In this instance a prompt such as “Listen to the sound of your grandmother’s kitchen” requires a process very different from material listening to access sonic material. The sonic material resides within memory but another sense may be required to reach the sound because these “sound memories” may not be vivid and may need to be *reconstructed*. For instance, in this example it may help if one thinks about the size, shape, and layout of the kitchen. It might also be useful to think about the kitchen’s function—who uses it, what is being talked about in it, is there laughter, crying, or chatter, is it crowded or spacious, what does the hum of the room sound like, what does it sound like when the washing-up is being done, what can be smelt, what is the temperature? All these aspects together make it possible to reconstruct the memory of a place, and listen to the sound of that place, merging imagination with remembrance of multiple auditory experiences. It may be a particular event, day, or time or it might be a generic memory, but whichever way it cannot be revisited, recorded, or verified. The sonic material exists only in the memory of the individual, and, once again, the more time one has to reconstruct the environment, the more vivid the details will become.

Experiential imaginative listening requires us to go through different sensory gates to access the auditory. We have first to recall the most entrenched or the most vivid perception (be it visual, haptic, atmospheric, olfactory, aural)

and from there move to the sound. The access of auditory imagination linked to private remembrances is thus often synaesthetically mediated.

The third layer of listening explored is conceptual listening—which is the most intangible, imaginative, and multi-sensorial. Conceptual listening requires a deeply internal search, which may in fact recall specific material sound, shared by others, or it may recall aspects of experiential listening. The instruction “Listen to the sound of autumn” is clearly culturally and geographically specific—dependent on the presence or absence of deciduous trees, on meteorological transformations and climate. Other conceptual listening may depend on coinciding with other celebratory activities such as birthdays or similar anniversaries. As with other prompts in this category—such as Listen to the sound of the desert, Listen to the sound of urgency, Listen to the sound of happiness—the first step is to relate this ideal to personal experience. And, in fact, it may lie beyond personal experience—if one has never been to a desert—and rely instead upon the fantastical imagined soundworld of one’s built up database of information about deserts. In conceptual listening it may be possible to relocate the exact site of one’s experience, but it is almost impossible to record the soundworld as one has imagined it. Conceptual listening exists only in the imagination, but may be triggered by a universal concept of sound—for example, laughter, leaves, or insects.

This category seems to imply the creation of a multi-sensorial realm that can then be translated into the auditory. It starts to question sound that becomes symbolic, transcendent, or metaphorical. Can this be? Why does a certain sound stand for “happiness”? Could you sonify that sound? Would others agree that that sound stands for happiness?

These three concepts of auditory imagination can be considered in terms of internal, subjective listening or external, objective listening—relating back to our notions of perceptual and conceptual listening. This affords us the opportunity to go deeper into the internal, and actually listen to ourselves with prompts such as Listen to the sound of your heart beating, Listen to the sound of yourself crying, and Listen to the sound of your hands caressing your body. While these sounds are externally verifiable, they are not reproducible from the perspective of internal listening. And they are extremely difficult sounds to locate. It seems logical that you can hear the sound of your heart beating, but trying to listen to it takes extraordinary effort. And to hear oneself cry, one has to imagine how one cries, when one cries, and obviously what that might sound like either from an external perspective or from an internal perspective. It is almost impossible to imagine this without imagining the trigger for crying in the first place—which loops straight back to concepts of experiential listening.

The score *Music of the Imagination* invites an auditory exploration and directs the imagination, while remaining uncontrolled. However, it is not pure introspection, as the instruction cards, which change after a fixed time, force the listener/performer to engage with the next step. The listeners deal with a disturbing situation: they are asked to respect the time and space of the score, the instructions, and the signal for changing cards, but their composition and

related listening is totally free. It explores deep private experiences, happening in the sensory world of each listener's mind.

The score and its categories of sounds provide new windows into understanding our relationship to listening in general. How do we listen to Beethoven? How do we listen to new music—as in music that has not been heard before? How do we listen to our surroundings? How are we attentive to our sounding environment? We listen to what we know, what we remember, and what we imagine. We listen from the perspective of our most private experiences, and we listen from the perspective of a shared experience.

CONCLUSION

The questions concerning auditory imagination remain open; we have only proposed some possible pathways. The Jean-Luc Nancy quotations that opened this section can only be answered by an open ended view of sound that, like all sensorial imagination, resonates between inner and outer: “To sound is to vibrate in itself or by itself: it is not only, for the sonorous body, to emit a sound, but it is also to stretch out, to carry itself and be resolved into vibrations that both return it to itself and place it outside itself” (Nancy 2007, 8).

However, we have demonstrated that sensorial perception, embodied aesthetics, and exact sensorial imagination are intertwined elements needed to understand the world. For artists, they are the basic tools to intervene and create. A musician needs a strong auditory imagination tool: a dynamic framework that relates the acquired schemata of the body and the senses with the musical expectations and intentions of artistic realisation. Sensorial imagination is part of a web of artistic practice in all its mental, physical, and sensorial components. When applied in detail and exactness, it offers a fine methodological approach that can be shared and may grow through education and artistic training, but that is also a tributary of individual experiences, sensibility, and emotion.

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On the Sensorial of Imagination

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