

Cultural Transfers 2018-2019

Music, Memory, Immersion

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“The Institutionalization of Musical Memories of the Colombian Armed Conflict: The Center for Historical Memory and *Las Alabaoras de Pogue*”

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Music has played a major role in the construction of collective memory for Afro-Colombian victims of violence and forced internal displacement. Within the context of an ongoing armed conflict between communist guerrillas, right wing paramilitary groups and the national army, the Colombian government created the National Center for Historical Memory (CNMH) in 2005, as a form of reparation for victims of the armed conflict, through the reconstruction of truth and the right to memory. The CNMH created a website, which has allowed for the documentation of local memory initiatives through different media such as documentaries, plays, music, and pedagogical materials. This institution has played a central role in promoting the music of *Las Alabaoras de Pogue*, a group of Afro-Colombian women singers from Pogue, a community located in the municipality of Bojayá, in the Colombian Pacific coast, an area where the majority of the population is Afro-Colombian. This group emerged as a response to the Massacre of Bojayá (2002), where many civilians were killed during a battle between guerrillas and paramilitary groups, leading to the displacement of most of the inhabitants of the town. *Las Alabaoras de Pogue* have repurposed the traditional funerary genre of *alabao* to sing their memories of violence and displacement. Through the analysis of audio and video examples of music composed and performed by *Las Alabaoras de Pogue*, I will explore the relationship between music and memory, and I will locate these musical expressions within the context of global and local trends on the institutionalization of memory.



“Klang-Opus á la fin de crépuscule: Improvising Place and Space in the Cape Spear Proj”

Dr. Ellen Waterman (Helmut Kallmann Chair for Music in Canada)

When Delf Maria Hohmann was asked to design a sonic event for the 2018 Sound Symposium—a festival of experimental music and sound in St. John’s, Newfoundland—he set out to create a nested environment of recorded soundscapes, improvised music, acoustic space, and multi-channel sound diffusion. The site-specific work would take place at the wild and majestic Cape Spear National Historic Site. Musicians would perform in WWII bunkers set into the cliffs, and

the audience, seated outside, would receive the resonant echo of those concrete chambers diffused through an eight-channel sound system and accompanied by the composer's recorded soundscapes blended with the natural seascape. Weather intervened and at short notice the event was moved to a neo-gothic Anglican cathedral in town, drastically changing both its presentation and its signification. This paper considers the "circle of conversation" comprising improvised music, technological mediation, acoustic space, place, and memory in *Klang-Opus á la fin de crépuscule*. Based on documentation of the concert and interviews, the performance is analysed in relation to acoustic ecology as developed by Schafer and the World Forum for Acoustic Ecology (e.g. Westerkamp, Järviluoma, Brandt, and Drever), problematized through theories of mediation (Ouzounian 2017) and generative listening (Voegelin 2011). When we listen, we conjure up sonic affect in the form of feelings, memories, and associations and this is surely where the performative force of sound art lies. In this paper, I turn environmental sound art on its ear and speak instead of the improvisatory and performative nature of environmental listening.