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Reflecting on Bodily Listening in Place: An Intercultural and Intersensory Research-Creation Project

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Article abstract

This article discusses a research-creation process by three interdisciplinary artists who worked across hearing and deaf experience to reorient aurality in musicking through a process of inter-sensorial exploration. For most musicians listening is unquestionably oriented to the sensory regime of aurality. Increasingly, however, this orientation is being challenged through haptic, kinetic, and visual musicking by deaf musicians, and this inspired hearing flutist and vocalist Ellen Waterman to reorient the role of audition in her improvisational practice. In dialogue with multisensory performance artists and critical theorists Paula Bath (hearing) and Tiphaine Girault (deaf), Waterman embarked on a research-creation project to create Bodily Listening in Place, an instructional score for intersensory improvisation. We discuss our iterative and multi-model practice-based research process, which involved the exchange of sonic, haptic, kinetic, linguistic, and graphic media in response to bodies in place. Photographs, sound, and video examples further explain our process. As is well documented in the anthropology of the senses (Howes), sensory perception is constructed and lived differently in different periods and societies, reflecting the diversity through which people perceive and understand their environments. We argue that, through an expanded conception of listening as attentiveness (Hahn; Oliveros), we can move beyond current normative notions of aurality to develop a broader, intersensory awareness and conception of musicking. Such expanded listening affords a means to further establish the links between people, their histories, experiences, senses of place, and environments.

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Reflecting on *Bodily Listening in Place*: An Intercultural and Intersensory Research-Creation Project

Paula Bath, Tiphaine Girault, and Ellen Waterman

Introduction

Bodily Listening in Place is an instructional score for intersensory improvisation commissioned by New Adventures in Sound Art (NAISA) for World Listening Day 2022.[1] It was composed by Ellen Waterman, a flutist and vocalist, improviser, and music researcher, in consultation with Tiphaine Girault and Paula Bath of SPiLL.PROpagation, an Artist Center for Creation and Production in Sign Language in Canada.[2] The score was distributed both as English text and video with ASL (American Sign Language) and people of all backgrounds, experience, and sensory modalities were invited to record and share their own realizations online in any medium (sonic, visual, or textual). World Listening Day is an annual event held on July 18, the birthday of Canadian composer and founder of acoustic ecology, R. Murray Schafer (1933–2021). Normally, the event focuses on the auditory dimension of listening, not surprising given that Schafer's work on the soundscape ([1977] 1994) was designed to highlight the roles of sound and listening in the environment as a corrective to the dominance of visuality in Western society. However, the theme for 2022, "listening across boundaries," suggested the possibility for an expanded approach to listening through different modes of sensory experience. *Bodily Listening in Place* became a research-creation project through which Ellen, Paula, and Tiphaine explored processes of intersensory and intercultural exchange across hearing and deaf experience, and through sonic, haptic, kinetic, linguistic, and graphic media.

In this critical reflection, we discuss our collaboration, which took place between February and June 2022 and comprised an iterative process of conversation, artmaking, photographic and video documentation, and writing. We, Ellen, Paula, and Tiphaine, share our distinct motivations and experiences of the research-creation process and together we reflect on specific moments in our collaboration, illustrated by examples from our documentation. We begin with Ellen's explanation of the score, the inspiration for the piece in signed music, and her desire to decentre audition and adopt an expanded practice of listening through intersensory improvisation. Paula, writing on behalf of herself and Tiphaine, situates the work in SPiLL.PROpagation's commitment to intercultural collaboration. She unpacks the dynamics of language, experience, and exchange, through an ethics of cocreation and the importance of "home" as a site of listening. We propose that intersensory improvisation is a productive research-creation methodology that can reveal new ways of relating to each other and the world.

Paula Bath has studied sign language translation, communications, and institutions & interculturalism, and holds a BA and MA in communications. She is currently completing a PhD in Social and Cultural analysis at Concordia University. Paula lives and works in the intermingling spaces of sign and spoken languages, ASL, LSQ, English and French. Originating from France, **Tiphaine Girault** has a BA in Graphic Novel and works in French, English, and two sign languages. For over ten years Tiphaine has worked as a professional artist in comic arts, printmaking, and sign language translation and performance. Her work has been featured in several exhibitions and documentaries. **Ellen Waterman** is Helmut Kallmann Chair for Music in Canada and Professor in the School for Studies in Art and Culture at Carleton University. She is both a music scholar and a flutist specializing in creative improvisation. Ellen is founder and director of the Research Centre for Music, Sound, and Society in Canada, dedicated to exploring the complex and diverse roles that music and sonic arts play in shaping Canadian society.

Ellen's Perspective

Walk so silently that the bottoms of your feet become ears.
—Pauline Oliveros, *Sonic Meditations*

Listening, as the late great Pauline Oliveros (1932–2016) taught us, is not the same thing as hearing (Oliveros 2005, 2015). But like many hearing musicians, I am hyper-oriented toward aurality. When I improvise, my instinct is to close my eyes, to block out all sensory information that is not immediately connected to sound making and audition. Indeed, both of my preferred musical means, flute and voice, produce sounds at the mouth in close proximity to the ear. Sound is thus an intimate and visceral presence. But as Jonathan Sterne (2021, 74–77) has recently pointed out, vocal sounds are not produced in the mouth.[3] They involve a complex of bodily systems from the lungs to the voice box to resonating space in the chest and head. Both vocal and flute sound production are also kinetic—they rely on the expulsion of breath controlled by intercostal muscles and embouchure. For flutists, tilting the pelvis forward and bending the knees slightly releases tension and opens out the sound (Pearson 2006). It matters how the tongue feels in the mouth, where the glottis lies, the precise deployment of lip and facial muscles, where the lip-plate of the flute is positioned below the bottom lip and whether the skin is sweaty or dry, how the hands sit on the body of the flute and how the pads of fingertips feel on the keys. Sound is affected by the angle of wrists and elbows, the slope of shoulders, and posture. For me, playing the flute is an all-body experience. I sway and dip, and if the sounds I'm making are forceful, I may even feel compelled to jerk a knee up or bend suddenly at the waist like (my daughter jokes) a headbanger at a metal concert. My experience of the sounds I make varies according to my energy level and wellness, the time of day and ambient temperature, the nebulous atmosphere of the space I'm playing in with its sound-reflecting or absorbing materials, electronic amplification and processing, other sound makers present whether human or otherwise (birds, wind soughing in the trees, water lapping, traffic). During the 1990s, when I performed in R. Murray Schafer's annual environmental music theatre project, *Patria the Epilogue: And Wolf Shall Inherit the Moon* (1983–), my experience was informed by the natural beauty of its forest location, playing flute while watching the mist drift over a lake in the cold pre-dawn light (Waterman 1998). All these elements—sonic, haptic, kinetic, and visual—affect my perception of the music. Together, they constitute the intersensory, intentional, attentive, and responsive act of listening. But although I have always had this embodied knowledge, my musical practice and my assumptions about music and sound have, until recently, been unquestioningly predicated on aurality.

In 2020, I went in search of Deaf musicians for a research-creation project in which musicians are asked to create in response to visual art exhibitions.[4] That's how I first learned about signed music, an entirely visual and kinetic form of music that has no truck with audition. Pamela E. Witcher's early piece "Experimental Clip" was a revelation (Witcher 2008).

Through modified ASL signs, abstracted hand movements, facial expressions, other body movements, and video editing, this dynamic piece clearly demonstrates musical features of rhythm, phrase, texture, form, and affect. Jody Cripps, a Deaf ASL linguist who leads the Signed Music Project, defines it as "a form of performance art that arises from within the Deaf community and is distinct and evolved from both ASL poetry and from translated signed songs which initiated from spoken language. It may incorporate ASL literary poetic features such as lines, meter, rhythm and rhyme and also incorporates basic elements of music such as harmony, rhythm, melody, timbre, and

texture, which is expressed as a visual-gestural artistic form" (Understanding Music Through American Sign Language, n.d.).

Pamela Witcher's "Experimental Clip" immediately struck me as musical even though I had no knowledge of the genre. I likened it to experimental films, such as Dziga Vertov's famously musical but silent 1929 film *Man with a Movie Camera*, in which tempo, repetition, rhythm, crossfading and overlapping images evoke musical rhythm and counterpoint. But signed music is more than an aesthetic proposition. It embodies a politics that critiques our society's audism and insists on the legitimacy and force of Deaf cultural expression.

As I took baby steps in learning ASL and educating myself about Deaf culture, my own engrained audism became more apparent to me. I had long been accustomed to teaching my students the twentieth-century composer Edgard Varèse's (1966) famous definition of music as "organized sound" —an open definition that is intended to allow for an endless range of sonic manifestations as music. Encountering signed music, however, made me realize that the unquestioned primacy of sound in discourses of music and listening is no longer tenable. And to honour that position, I needed to explore the roles that my other senses play in my embodied experience of music. As ethnomusicologist, musician, and dancer Tomie Hahn notes, "If we consider that we inhabit different sensory worlds—personally and culturally—then building awareness of the sensibilities *someone else* might be experiencing can expand our knowledge of self/other and open communications" (2021, 2). But I want to emphasize that my developing intersensory approach to musical improvisation is not an attempt to enter into the experience of a Deaf musician or to adopt elements of signed music; rather, my desire is to decentre and reorient audition within my practice.

Improvisation is my musical métier, but it is also an important research-creation methodology. Rebecca Caines describes improvisation as an interdisciplinary research methodology that requires an ethos of a "perpetual state of fragility" through a "commitment to move through, and with, mistakes, admit naiveté, and to let go of control to create together with others" (2021, 325). Instead of starting from a defined research question, prompts, themes, and research questions emerge through improvisation, a relational methodology that encompasses "risk, active listening, collaborative response, and the reconfiguration of mistake into creativity" (325). Similarly, Sara Ramshaw and Paul Stapleton understand improvisation in terms of an ethics of cocreation that embraces "failure and error as a source of learning" (2020, 305). As a research methodology, then, improvisation focuses on process and experimentation, a receptive state in which participants' bodies become "*excitable tissues* for gathering up the energetics and movements of the world, and manifesting these as perception, affect, and action" (Myers and Dumit 2011, 239). Above all, it is deeply relational.

In my approach to improvisation-based research-creation, relationality is fostered through what Oliveros called Deep Listening™, an expansive practice of focal and global attention and responsiveness. For Oliveros, listening "lies deep in the body and is as yet a mysterious process" (2016, 75). Although sound is clearly central to Deep Listening, in my experience of her workshops and performances, Oliveros paid careful attention to diverse stimuli, from bodily movement to the acoustic and atmospheric dimensions of space, including the psychic dimension of dreams. Significantly, such an expanded concept of listening-as-attention takes on an ethical dimension of relationality to all aspects of the environment, biotic and abiotic, including time and space. As Ramshaw and Stapleton note, "Listening with respect, openness, and responsiveness necessarily

enables the listener to meet otherness *as* otherness, without the need to reduce it to "the order of the same" (2020, 305).[5]

What would it take to reorient audition in my own musical practice? How might I express an expanded concept of listening through improvisation, and communicate it to others? Artistic director of NAISA Darren Copeland's invitation to create an instructional score for improvisation to share with other people for World Listening Day 2022 provided the opportunity to explore these questions. In preparation for a residency at NAISA, from May 2 to 9, 2022, during which I wrote the score and recorded several realizations of it, I embarked on a series of consultations with Paula and Tiphaine, in which we exchanged creative offerings, discussed our experiences, and explored the intercultural space between hearing and Deaf cultures.

Paula's and Tiphaine's Perspectives

No worldview ever encompasses or covers the plenitude of what is actually lived, felt, imagined, and thought.

—Michael Jackson, *The Politics of Storytelling*

Tiphaine and I come to a creation process for different reasons and in different ways but, fundamentally, work together with art as a creative product and process of human communication and interconnection. We oscillate between David Howe's concept of "sense" as being both sensation and signification, feeling and meaning, that includes a spectrum of referents (2022, 10), and Ruth Finnegan's concept of communication as something that is found in the creative mutual interacting of individuals or groups in specific contexts rather than in abstract systems of codes or the transmission of bounded "messages" (2002, 7).

Tiphaine, deaf since birth, born in Paris, France, to hearing parents, first understood interhuman communication by flipping through the pages of her father's graphic novel collection at age five. Life became alive in this visual pictorial form. Not only did she appreciate understanding the social world around her, but she began to draw, rooting her drawing practice as the modality to enable the world around her to understand how she experiences the people and things in her environment.

I, Paula, am hearing since birth. Born in Oshawa, Ontario, Canada, to hearing parents, I grew up engulfed in the language and culture of the majority. Then, at age sixteen, I learned that sign language existed and walked into the Deaf Community for the first time. It was a world where I could not speak, in either spoken or signed language. Communication, once taken for granted, was no longer there, and I needed to find new ways to reach beyond language, to connect to people, to deaf people. To do this I first had to relearn to "listen" in new and different ways—visually, haptically, and relationally.

These early experiences formed Tiphaine's and my relationship to ourselves and with our world, and we infused these experiences into our collaborative approach to art creation. We call our approach cocreation and it forms the philosophical underpinning of SPiLL.PROpagation, a non-profit arts organization focusing on creation, collective process and research-creation projects, and public presentations.

Our methodology continued to evolve and later brought together the audacious artistic work of two other women. Jolanta Lapiak is a Canadian Ameslan[6] artist whose multimedia work is influenced by philosopher Jacques Derrida's concept of phonocentrism—a critique of society's rules that reinforce how sound and hearing oneself speak are collapsed into the meaning of presence itself (2016, 13). Lapiak's art installations expose and resist the subordination of sign languages to both spoken and written languages. As part of her resistance, however, she demonstrates how the boundaries of language modalities are fluid, and not categorically fixed (Lapiak 2007). Lapiak's work influenced our desire to work in spaces beyond identity politics (deaf people vs. hearing people). We sought to develop her ideas of a language continuum further and to show how different language modalities (sign-spoken-written) are connected.

We combined these ideas of language continuum and connection via different modalities with the artistic work of Josette Bushell-Mingo, a Swedish-based English theatre actor and director of African descent. Josette's work in theatre production brings people from different backgrounds together and unites them by speaking one common (artistic) language. Her work with deaf and hearing ensembles, in Sweden and Canada, has been particularly influential. We watched as she explored the advantages of a cross-cultural and cross-linguistic ensemble in a production of *The Tempest*, saying that at the place where these two points meet something new emerges (Bushell-Mingo 2019). Josette's work influences us to interweave cultural backgrounds in critical art making and what we find emerges at this art production-communication boundary is that, in their desire to interconnect, people "switch."[7] The switch is a new relationship formation that helps to seed different connections between yourself and others. For example, Tiphaine worked as assistant director with Josette on *The Tempest*, with its cast of hearing and deaf actors. To create the switch, all the actors needed to work more visually, with more and different movements. The directing team also brought water into the experience of performance so that audiences could feel the wetness and further imagine rain and splashes from the ocean waves. Tiphaine's contribution thus went beyond standard translation. Often, integrated performances with deaf and hearing ensembles are written about by the majority group who claim that deaf and hearing people can have the "same" experience at the "same" time (Edmonton Arts Council, n.d.). This characterization, however, misses the significance of the piece, and of Tiphaine's contribution to its creative process and presentation. Tiphaine works to honour the creators in the room and their respective cultural and linguistic norms (Girault 2019). This creation process brings forward what Tiphaine and I call, not an experience of sameness, but a "parallel" experience: different experiences occurring in relationship to each other and at the same time.

Tiphaine also worked closely with the other assistant director and Métis actor Valerie Planche, and with the written Shakespearean text, to decolonize language and communication in ways that honoured values brought forward in sign language. This honouring means that two actors (deaf and hearing) would recite simultaneously the same Shakespearean text on stage, yet in different cultural ways. One scene shows how the text in spoken language sounded dramatic, while the text in sign language was visually bold and humorous.

Interpreting text through image in *The Tempest*, 2019. The Citadel Theatre's *The Tempest*, featuring Ray Strachan, Troy O'Donnell, Elizabeth Morris (seated) and Hodan Youssouf. Directed by Josette Bushell-Mingo. Set and costume design by Drew Facey. Lighting design by Bonnie Beecher. Sound design by Dave Clarke. Photo by Ian Jackson/epicphotography.ca.

The sign language, in particular, was no longer confined and conforming to language-experiential norms established by written or spoken languages. What emerged was how a deaf and hearing ensemble of directors and actors experimented at these artistic-communication boundaries and expanded our normative ways of performing and experiencing stories. Interhuman relationality is thus no longer limited to ideas of language and translation, or even enhancing the visual aspect of the work, but is about how, through a process of self-integrity and cocreation, we are each able to learn to feel the work differently and to experience the world, including our stories and the stories of others, through a variety of sensory ways such as sounds, lights, movements, vibrations, natural elements (e.g., rock, water, or wind), and material objects in combination.

Tiphaine and I work at the interstitial spaces where deaf and hearing people meet and where dominant social ideas, beliefs, and social structures are lived, felt, and discussed. In this way, we advance an interrelational concept we call signecology: a felt awareness of sign language co-existing with its environment. Signecology is a relationality that exists, or is uncovered, between sign language, yourself, other people, and natural or institutional environments (Girault 2017).

We find that this felt awareness includes all senses and is a concept that helps to establish the linkages among people, their histories, experiences, senses of place, and environments.
Tiphaine and I are from different sensory-constructed life worlds, deaf and auditory, but we have both also learned four languages: English, French, ASL, and LSQ. Over the years, however, we have found that, in relation to the variety of ways we can know and experience the world, working within

the confines of any one language is limiting, and this includes working between one language and another language through the process of normative translation.

To move away from this confinement of language and to stretch into the senses, we understand the senses as not just a means by which we receive a stimulus that is generating in our environment; rather, we acknowledge that our senses play an active role in our overall sense of our world (Rodaway [1961] 1994, 5). As such, our creative process calls on participants to consider all of the human senses and to work with different communication modalities, employing sound, sight, touch, smell, and taste, and working multidimensionally with material, narratives, and movement to achieve diverse experiences of communication and interconnection.

In addition to multimodal and multidimensional methods, we also work cocreatively. This means we work with a sense of "home" in ways that offer alternatives to the established oral/auditory/sound normativity in society, and to the idea that meaning is created and structured around centres, such as a deaf centre or a hearing centre. Rather, we create meaning together in an interstitial space, in our own ways and in relationship, while abandoning a bias toward contained and symmetrical meaning and instead valuing interhuman connection as asymmetrical experiences. Our approach is further illuminated by cultural anthropologists Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (1992, 7), who question the "assumed isomorphism of space, place and culture" and call for an anthropology of space to be grounded in an understanding of the realities of boundary erosion, diasporas and dispersal, mobility and movement (qtd. in Feld and Basso 1996, 4). Metaphorically, one could say that instead of a defined centre versus margins, or an entanglement, our approach is like a weave. Each individual material has its own integrity and plays a part in the creation process and final structure that then becomes a part of a new integrity of a whole. The cocreation process, then, must not be prescriptive, but responsive to the relationships produced in the time and space in which it was created in relationship to the materials, tools, time, and creative forces at play. Our cocreative process resonates with the concept of improvisation as an ethics of cocreation, discussed by Ellen above.

For the project *Bodily Listening in Place*, each creator, Ellen, Tiphaine, and Paula (each thread), found themselves on both a language spectrum—spoken and written English, ASL, and LSQ—and on a sensory spectrum. Ellen, a hearing flutist, was in one place with a sound whose register/vibration is high and unpalpable by Tiphaine, a deaf multimedia artist. However, this story is not about Tiphaine's inability to access sound, or other common notions of accessibility. We don't consider this to be a "gap" and find it a mischaracterization to establish our social world based on a series of differences and social disconnections. Rather, we find it to be evidence of how the senses are constructed and lived differently in different periods and societies, and how this reflects the ways in which people understand their environment and the people and things in that environment (Howes 2005, 399).

In the early creation stages, Ellen and Tiphaine connected as artists, working with and through Paula, who facilitated process, language, and cultural knowledges, in ways that were not about working to form a bridge of understanding from one person to another person, but about working interculturally in a weave that honoured the cultural integrity of each person. This meant maintaining each collaborator's individual senses of "place" and "home" in balance, while expanding their sensory range, informed by new sensory perspectives offered by the other person's sense of being in the world. Here, the concept of *home* follows Michael Jackson's notion of home, as a way of being-at-home-in-the world, where one must work out a kind of balance between acting and being acted upon (2013, 32). As we discuss in the next section, working at home was both a pragmatic response

to collaborating during the COVID-19 pandemic, and an important evocation of bodily listening in *place*.

Reflecting on Moments of Discovery

In this section, we reflect on several "aha" moments that occurred during our iterative process of collaboration. Between February and May, we exchanged and responded to each other's artistic prompts, both through Zoom calls and by delivering materials to each other's homes. For example, Tiphaine and Paula asked Ellen to record a short improvisation and send it as an mp3 file. Ellen recorded a short flute improvisation using a painting by Michael Waterman hanging in her music studio as a graphic score.

Audio example: *Ellen for Tiphaine*, improvisation for solo flute, February 24, 2022.

A is for Asparagus (2000), Michael Waterman, acrylic on canvas. Used by permission. Graphic score Ellen used in improvising flute piece *Ellen for Tiphaine*.

Tiphaine played the recording through the Woojer vibrotactile vest, which has six transducers that express sound as vibration. Paula also acted as a sort of "human transducer," interpreting the piece through dialogue, using analogies with nature (e.g., "sounds like the slow start of rain tapping on your face") and, at times, through touch on Tiphaine's back, shoulders, and hands. Tiphaine, in turn, described her experience of Ellen's music through narrative and drawing.

Video example: Tiphaine with Woojer Vest.

Tiphaine drawing her perception of *Ellen for Tiphaine*, March 5, 2022

Using Tiphaine's drawings as graphic scores, Ellen then improvised while consciously employing movement and facial expression in addition to sound.

Video example: Ellen improvising to Tiphaine's drawing of *Ellen for Tiphaine* as graphic score, March 20, 2022.

Haptic Dexterity

Paula particularly liked seeing how, during the early phases when Ellen and Tiphaine were sharing their respective perceptions or "listenings" of various musical notes and rhythms, they communicated their perceptions back to each other in different ways. For example, Tiphaine explored haptically, though the vibrations of the Woojer vibrotactile vest. The decibel limitations of the vest's transducers are such that only lower range sounds are captured and transformed into repeated vibrational movements. As described above, in the spaces of vibrational absence, Paula experimented with listening to the higher frequencies, auditorily, and interpreting the piece not into a visual signed language but rather into a tactile combination of shapes, speeds, and pressures moving along Tiphaine's back, shoulders, arms, and fingers. Tiphaine communicated back that same piece in drawn pictorial and material forms to Ellen. However, neither Ellen (nor Paula) was able to sense or derive substantive meaning from the music emitted from the vibrotactile vest at Tiphaine's

level of sophistication and detail. For Ellen, this was a humbling experience. Despite decades of musical training and experience, she realized that her sense of touch is seriously underdeveloped. She is working to increase her dexterity with haptic sensation.

Material Sensation

One of the early pieces we listened to was Ellen's performance of *Temple on the Lake* (Pura Ulun Danu Beratan), for solo flute and Sundanese gamelan by composer Bill Brennan (2016).[8] The piece includes melodic material on flute and the stratified and interlocking gong and metallophone sounds of the gamelan. Tiphaine was again able to translate her perception of the piece in both pictorial and sculptural media, capturing phrasing, rhythm, texture, and form with great accuracy (especially impressive since she was unfamiliar with gamelan, the traditional ensemble of Indonesia). She offered Ellen her Tibetan singing bowl as an assemblage, with instructions to fill it with water and one or two basalt rocks before striking the edge of the bowl with a wooden mallet. Tiphaine said that, for her, the piece was like watching the series of ripples that formed from the centre to the edge where the water meets the bowl.

Video example: Singing bowl with rocks and water.

These visual and material representations of *Temple on the Lake* could be "listened" to and sensed by both Ellen and Paula. Indeed, Ellen found the experience of putting her fingertips into the water while striking the singing bowl to be intensely affective, perhaps because of the way her fingertips are attuned to touch through flute playing. For her, these watery vibrations were more intense, specific, and meaningful than those generated by the Woojer vest. This illustrates our point that sensorial interconnection is asymmetrical. People come together from different backgrounds but also with different sensory frames, yet interconnection still exists. This intersensory exchange of music is a powerful means for people to communicate their lived experiences and their sense of being in the world.

Video example: Ellen improvising kinetically and haptically with singing bowl, rocks, and water.

When Paula saw Ellen's response, she reflected on something Josette had once told her in Sweden while with the artistic director for Riksteaterns Tyst Teater[9]—a sign language theatre department in Sweden—watching an ensemble of deaf and hearing actors rehearse their performance of the *Odyssey* in 2009. There was no translation from the sign language on stage into spoken language for the audience. She asked Josette, "How will people understand what is being said in sign language? The audience may be confused." Paula remembers Josette replying, "let them." This was a pivotal moment for Paula. Rather than attempting to impose structure, Josette released peoples' self-expression to encourage our different modes and capacities for "listening" and "hearing." In the same way, Paula and Tiphaine wanted Ellen to experience ambiguity and uncertainty while exploring and expanding into new sensory listening experiences.

Home as Place

Tiphaine particularly liked how collaboration could be done from "home," an idea we originally adopted because the Omicron variant of COVID-19 was active in Ottawa/Gatineau during the winter of 2022. Working together with masks would have seriously impeded our ability to communicate in sign language. But home was more than a consideration of convenience; it holds our most intimate senses of place. Each of our inner circles, our living environments, consists of

materials and tools that express how we best sense and relate to the world. Therefore, instead of meeting in an unfamiliar or neutral place, we chose to stay rooted in the times and spaces that best reflect the integrity of who we are. Working at home enabled us to "listen" to the music, to engage in sign language and, most importantly to Tiphaine, to engage during the project with her children, who both hear and sign. Her children are multi-lingual and multi-modal being children of a deaf adult, known as CODA.[10] The transducers in the Woojer vest are calibrated so that they transmit vibrations without an auditory signal, but it is also possible to connect headphones and listen to the audio signal. Tiphaine's son, Léoghan, would sit next to her. Tiphaine felt the music, while Léoghan listened to it. Then with each sound Léoghan would sign back in sign language (LSQ) what musical instruments he imagined made each unique sound in the piece. This provided more cultural insight for Tiphaine into the auditory-music and hearing world of her son and a medium of connection between mother and son through music by way of co-listening.

Video example: Listening at home—Tiphaine and Léoghan.

And while we shared objects (such as the Tibetan bowl and basalt rocks, and Tiphaine's drawings) with Ellen, we also wanted Ellen to explore our offerings and discussion from within her own chosen sensory world, from her "home," where she could use familiar materials to communicate back to us and make offerings of her own perceptions of the music we were exploring together. This iterative and relational process brought forward a nourishing way to self-express and cocreate that aligns well with maintaining the "felt self" while also engaging with people from different backgrounds. It allows for expanded sensory exploration and greater access to "listening" and ways of knowing and relating to people and to the world.

To explore this intimate role of home as place, Ellen began regularly to improvise in a patch of sunlight from a south-facing window that often spills over an old wooden chest and the variegated maple floor of her music room. She experimented with concentrating on the visual and haptic qualities of sunlight, how it intensifies colours and warms the skin, and she focused her improvisation on minute and controlled movements of her feet. Documenting the process in the form of a score, she shared it with Paula and Tiphaine:

> *Improvisation with Sunlight, for Moving Player with Open and Closed Eyes*
> Go to a window through which the sun is directly shining. Explore the space delineated by the patch of sunlight streaming through the window. Treat what you can see and feel—both in front of your open eyes, and behind your closed eyes—as a graphic score. Focus your attention on feeling your body present in this space. Move around in the patch of sunlight. Make music, but let it be a by-product of your exploration of the space.

Sun Patch Place.

In discussing this score with Paula and Tiphaine, Ellen realized that the experience of improvising repeatedly in this sunny spot turned a defined "space" into a familiar and welcoming "place." This insight carried over to the final instructions for *Bodily Listening in Place*, which has four sections.

Bodily Listening in Place

Our focus in this critical reflection is on the iterative collaborative process that preceded Ellen's writing of the score for *Bodily Listening in Place*. As we've already noted, the score and several realizations of the piece, are available online. Here is a basic summary of the score:

1. Select a place, spend time in it, document it, and get to know it through your senses over several days.

2. Before improvising in response to your place, orient your body by moving and warming up in any way that is meaningful to you.

3. Listen (the piece starts now). Listening is not hearing—it is active attention. "Listen" beyond audition—with your eyes, skin, heart, emotions.

4. Improvise in response to the place in any way that makes sense to you.
    a) Sing or play an instrument
    b) Move/dance
    c) Draw
    d) Write

Ellen performing *Bodily Listening in Place* at Warbler's Roost, South River, Ontario, May 8, 2022. Amplified flute, pitch shifter pedal, and maple syrup barrel.

As both a process and a composition, *Bodily Listening in Place* is deceptively simple. Like many exercises in meditation and mindfulness, and within a tradition of instructional scores for improvisation, it calls the participant to pay active attention to their surroundings and to focus on sensory data.[11] Considered in terms of improvisation as a research-creation method, however, performing *Bodily Listening in Place* raises complex questions that merit continued thought, dialogue, and musicking. What does it mean to "make" music? How does music engage the senses asymmetrically across different modalities of perception, across different bodies? How does the privileging of a particular sense (hearing) and a particular medium (sound) work to limit our conception of music? By attending to the diverse ways in which we "listen," and by expanding our

own multi-sensory ranges, we, in turn, expand our opportunities for interconnectedness across both arts practices and human cultures.

Notes

1. *Bodily Listening in Place* was funded in part by the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Arts Council, and the Government of Canada. The score for *Bodily Listening in Place* is available in text and video with ASL interpretation at https://naisa.ca/media-archive/sound-art-text-scores/bodily-listening-in-place/. Waterman's realizations of the piece are also linked here. As the score notes, "Anyone, of any experience and from any location, is invited to participate. You are encouraged to interpret the score and express yourself according to your body's way of perceiving the world, and your understanding of music." Waterman held two improvisation workshops in the lead up to World Listening Day and participants uploaded their own realizations as sound/audio, video, image, or text. We shared our realizations of the score in an online gathering on Sunday, July 17 (the day before World Listening Day). https://www.worldlisteningproject.org/.

2. https://spill-propagation.com/.

3. See Sterne (2021) for a fascinating discussion of voice, vocality, and impairment. He presents a "practice-based model of voice" as a "historical and culturally located practice, connected to people's agency but also to cultural contestation" (65). One might consider listening in the same way.

4. https://carleton.ca/mssc/research/resonance-towards-a-community-engaged-model-of-research-creation/.

5. Ramshaw and Stapleton (2020) here draw on Cobbussen and Nielsen (2012).

6. "Ameslan," a word that combines the concepts of person and language (American Sign Language), is an obsolete term coined in the 1960s that Lapiak (2007) revitalizes.

7. Signed in ASL and LSQ by taking your right hand like you are holding a key, placing it the middle of your forehead and turning quickly to the left and down.

8. Available at http://www.ellenwaterman.ca/performance.htm.

9. Now known as RIKSTEATERN CREA.

10. CODA: Children of Deaf Adults, https://www.handspeak.com/study/index.php?id=146#:~:text=A%20Coda%20is%20a%20child%20of%20Deaf%20adults,of%20children%20born%20in%20Deaf%20families%20are%20hearing.

11. See, for example, Oliveros (1971).

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