

UCLA

CSW Update Newsletter

Title

On Sound as Writing

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/35h4p9r7>

Author

Apolloni, Alexandra

Publication Date

2010-04-01

On sound AS writing

So often, I find myself at a loss for words when I'm writing about music, when I'm trying to turn what I hear into language. To write about music, to turn music into words on paper, is to intervene fundamentally with how those sounds mean. It is an act that both attributes meaning—the writer's meanings, the reader's meanings—to music, but also risks precluding other meanings. Translating music and sounds into words, trying to verbally represent music, feels like an act of power, one that I'm extremely uneasy about, and so I try to leave spaces in my words, to leave room for slippages, to allow other stories room to emerge from the gaps between my words. More and more, though, I find that I can't find that space on the page. With writing failing me, I've turned back to sound as a way of lifting words off of the page and sending them spinning into the air. I started making podcasts simply as a way of translating my academic work into

a popular medium. This project, however, took off in unexpected directions, as sound became not just my object of study, and not just a medium for sharing words and information, but an integral part of the work itself, a vital mode of writing that allowed me to not only talk about music but talk with music.

I can put my voice on record, alongside the music. I can let music twist in and out and around and through my words. I'm trying to use sound itself to write about music, to transform my writing into a medium that is built upon the bodily utterances of voices, that can be experienced corporeally, through the ear, through touch, through vibrations and reverberations. I want to transform my writing into music that is about music, but that is also about so much more: I want it to tell stories and invite stories by carving out spaces in sound and silence, spaces that echo with music's multiplicity of meanings.