



Julian Henriques & Andrej Mirčev: Dramaturgy as Sonic Warfare

[00:00:23] INTRO

Duška Radosavljević: Hello, welcome to the Salon!

Our guests today are Julian Henriques and Andrej Mirčev.

Andrej Mirčev is an artist and academic from former Yugoslavia, currently based in Berlin. His interdisciplinary artistic practice engages in possibilities of a critical-dialectical and intercultural dialogue between theory and practice and his research interests include spatial theory, intermediality, memory and archives, critical theory and performance. He is co-editor of the 2019 collection of articles *Left Performance Histories* and co-author of the visual arts project *Red People: Everything Divided* (2019). Andrej is a former research fellow of the International Center for 'Interweaving Performance Cultures' in Berlin, and visiting professor at the arts schools of Berlin, Karlsruhe, and the Institute for Applied Theatre Studies in Gießen.

Julian Henriques is the director of the Topology Research Unit at Goldsmiths College, University of London, where he also convenes MA programmes in Scriptwriting and Cultural Studies. He has worked professionally as a film producer, writer-director and sound artist, and is a founding trustee of the Stuart Hall Foundation. Julian's research interests include street technologies, sonic epistemologies and non-representational meaning-making. His academic publications include monographs on *Sonic Media: the Street Technologies of the Jamaican Sound System* (2018) and *Sonic Bodies: Reggae Sound Systems, Performance Techniques and Ways of Knowing* (2011).

Julian and Andrej met at a conference in Gothenburg in 2010 and have been informally exchanging ideas and insights ever since. Focusing on sonic clashes across different cultural and media contexts, their Salon conversation on this occasion reflects on the aural dimension of affect transmission with reference to contemporary dramaturgical concepts. From a methodological perspective, this conversation is a dialogue between the disciplines of sound, performance and cultural studies. Locating the point of convergence in the figure or trope of the antiphony (or 'call and response'), Julian Henriques and Andrej Mirčev talk about the Jamaican reggae sound system, a Brazilian religious performance in a public space, an attempt to sonically interrupt a choreography in Belgrade, and the ideological sonic warfare between North and South Korea.

This conversation took place between Berlin and London and was recorded on Zoom on 29th June 2020.

[00:03:14] SALON

Julian Henriques: Hi there Andrej. Nice to see you and hear you.

Andrej Mirčev: Hello Julian also, nice to hear and see you.

JH: Okay, so in this strange, virtual world we're having a conversation. Well, we've had many good conversations in the past so I'm looking forward to this one as well. I think we should say – I mean, we know who we are but perhaps it might be useful for the conversation to say who we are in terms of letting the listeners know where our points are coming from. Okay, go on then. [*Laughter.*]

AM: Yes, okay. I'm Andrej Mirčev. I'm basically coming from an area that could be described or framed as performance and theatre studies. However, I have made a few detours in life, meaning that I have been experimenting also with artistic practices, not only discourses of performance or theory. I'm also interested in sound studies, and this whole thing of 'how do you make use of different strategies of sonification' is [linked to] a moment where I realised that the visual information, or that the visual world is reductive, that it keeps you at a distance. I've been trying to understand, and the specific interest I have developed is in audio work where I was able to retrace a memory of an architecture by using sound. So, in that sense, I'm very interested in this relation between affect and



sound, and that's the background from which I'm, in a way, coming from. And the other background is I was interested in this one aspect of my research that goes into the question of icons and how a certain philosophy of images can help us to understand, collect struggles and, let's say, the cultural clash that is happening at this moment, globally. And for this occasion I was inspired by this idea of a 'sonic clash' – I suppose we will talk more about the sonic clash and how sound can be used to understand our contemporary moment. How about you?

JH: Okay, fantastic. Yeah, and are you going to play me something at this stage? Do you have an introductory thing to play?

AM: I actually wanted to start with an example of antiphony, of the sonic clash that I have experienced when I was in São Paulo. So, what you'll hear is a field recording of a performance on a square. It has a very dramatic structure and it is very intense in expression. So, I actually really could not understand the meaning of it but what I realised is that it was actually a very engaged Catholic performance done not by a priest but just by worshippers in the street. And it had, if I may say so, a very stage-like character, and why I was so drawn to the sound is because it was very affective, in a way. So, I will play you a few...

[00:07:16 to 00:09:36] Excerpt from Mirčev's recording 'São Paulo_sound.MP3' (2017)

AM: What was so fascinating about it is actually that I have never experienced such a distributed sonic performance, in a way. You had this guy running around in a circle and as he was approaching other performers or other participants of this performance, they were shouting back or they were talking back to him. So it had this call and response structure, and thematically he was referring to the biblical stories and I found it a very interesting way of affective transmission of something that is very religious in its essence.

JH: Yes. Well, okay. That's very interesting, especially because you've given it a context and stuff. And certainly call and response or antiphony – it's exactly the same thing – is a key trope in very, very many cultures. The one that I've been studying for many years is a Jamaican sound system culture and technology, and there in the streets, in the open air, you do get this relationship between the DJ, or the MC as we call them, who is chatting on top of the music, and the response from the audience. I'm going to play you something in a minute which is a bit like that, but this whole thing of, if you like, drama and sound, which I was encouraged to think about in the light of this conversation is a very interesting one for me because sound is what I've been studying and the affective influences and what sounding does to our bodies is very important and deserves proper depth of study, which is what I've been trying to do for several years. And, the idea of drama and sound, I think we can start off just literally at the level of the sound waves themselves, you know? Because, I mean, drama is about conflict traditionally and I would understand that in a sound wave we've got compression and rarefaction, or constriction and relaxation. And that's what a soundwave is: it's an energetic impulse. So, there in the very nature of sound itself, we've got a dramatic tension between the peak and the trough, which, well, made me think about sound differently! And then, in all the forms of sounding, it is very much for me a kind of a dialogical situation which is exemplified in the call and response. And that's – well, I mean, that's quite a lot of similarities, I think. So let me play you a track. So, as I say, I've been studying reggae music and sound systems for a long time and within the form of the music then there is this a tradition where you have two artists and they're, if you like, calling and answering back each other. And I've picked – I mean, there are many, many examples of this – I've picked a track by the late Tippa Irie, who's a British MC, and Janet K. And so here you see a conversation between – well, here you hear a conversation between two lovers where one is commenting on the other. It's a real, nice gender, kind of, conflict here. Now, let's see if I can play it.

[00:13:45 to 00:15:02] Excerpt from 'Baby I've Been Missing You' (1994) by Janet Lee Davis & Tippa Irie

JH: Okay, so there you have it. It's quite a charming conversation in music, but there's a drama there. Just to repeat what the lyrics say: so the guy is off on tour and he expects this girl to be ready there, waiting for him when he comes back. I mean, it's a very, very ancient story! But in terms of antiphony and call and response for me it illustrates in a very different way what you were saying and that's for me part of the drama of it. And of course, with a crowd with the open-air setting of a dance hall in Jamaica, there is not just a one-to-one because one party in the antiphony is, well, literally the chorus



in the classical Greek sense, responding to the actor on stage. So there you are.

AM: Great. Great, and I think I have a good response to that because when I was thinking, you know, I was somehow motivated to shed some light on maybe something that we could call the genealogy or history of drama, or a history of theatre, although we don't know precisely when was the initial moment when we can say: 'Okay, from here now we have theatre. Does it start already in Egypt or is it--?' But let's say, for this conversation, I think I found this initial moment where Thespis, this first actor, was set to step out of the chorus and responded to the chorus. So you have a collective body and you have an actor who steps out and they enter a sort of an oppositional relation, they enter into something that you could call a conflict, or to bring it even further, a step further, I recalled a text which I was teaching many, many years ago when I actually started my career as a young professor in Croatia, I had a course that was called 'The Tragic Rhythm of Performance'. It was a text by an American performance studies scholar, Francis Fergusson, where he developed this idea that actually in tragedy you always have this sort of an act of assertion that calls forth for a counter-assertion, which in the end produces something of a rhythm. And I was thinking now that one of the possibilities to understand what we have – in preparation for this conversation – named or came up with the idea of 'sonic dramaturgy' is that you could say it's actually a rhythm analysis of affective circulation. Because what it does, it in a way introduces this affective relation, which is always a response between the audience and the stage. So you have this actual circulation that is happening, that can be understood as a rhythm. Why I think it's so interesting and, I would also say, what the field of Performance Studies can learn from Sound Studies is exactly this notion of affectivity, this notion of intensity. How do you develop dramaturgies that are, in a way, enabling a different sort of narration but also a different sort of call and response that is not only verbal, it is not only text based, but that really goes into a sonic dimension, which transmits affects, not only as representations but really does it on a more corporeal level, which is how I understand sound studies in more acoustic terms.

JH: This raises a whole lot of interesting points of departure. I mean, one of them is this emergence from the collectivity, which I think is very interesting and very important because it gives an idea of the fundamental sociality of our consciousness and the nature of ourselves as relational beings. I mean, sounding itself helps to emphasise that, as you've already mentioned, in terms of not having a kind of visual distance between viewer and viewer and having more involvement. Also, the idea of listening, which is not just hearing – the faculty of being able to hear but actually giving a tension. So with sounding you've got these relationalities that emerge very naturally from the medium, you could say. And if you take a step back from that, drama is very much associated with speech but we have to go back, I think, to look at the origins of speaking, of verbal language, in basically in sounds, you know, in sonic audible gestures, which form the basis of a much broader idea of where meaning comes from, in terms of the intonation and prosody and all the information that we give in how we speak in addition or underneath what we actually say. And so this emerging from the collectivity and the opposition and then to be able to set up a rhythmic exchange is a really interesting way of considering it. Because rhythm as part of the prosody, as part of the speaking, is incredibly important, to speech, but also to music. On the Jamaican music scene, to take another example from there, we have a whole thing of rhythm tracks, whereby the producer of the rhythm is, if you like, is a prime mover on the music scene and different artists vocalise on top of that rhythm. What I'm going to try – I want to play you something that does that. It's a particular Bounty Killer track called 'Sufferer' in a particular rhythm. Let me see if I can just find it. Oh yeah, okay, I've got it. This is a particular rhythm. It's by an artist called Bounty Killer. This is ten or 15 years old, the rhythm is called diwali, which is an Indian – kind of taken as an interpretation of an Indian rhythmic track, and he is chatting a lyric on top of that – but so have dozens, literally dozens of other artists, have sung or chatted their lyrics on top of this. So let me just play you this. It's quite hardcore as you'd expect from a track called 'Sufferer'.

[00:22:44 to 00:23:33] Excerpt from 'Sufferer' (2002) by Bounty Killer

JH: Well, you probably only got one word from that, 'sufferer', but you certainly would have also got the rhythm, which we should talk about more.

AM: Yeah, yeah, I think I maybe missed the opportunity to make this, sort of a – I don't know if it's a strong claim – but, anyhow, I think so far I didn't really come to this point where the beginning of theatre in Greece really has this sonic antagonism in its core, which I think could be rethought in light



of an acoustic turn that also has to be applied or rethought in a context of not only the history of the theatre but also in the context of how do we perform today and what is the sonic or acoustic dimension of performance? Or maybe something that I also found very interesting in reading your colleague, Steve Goodman [2009], where he talks about the sound as force, or the seductive power of sound. Actually, something very interesting happened to me yesterday. When we were talking about, when we were preparing our conversation, I mentioned to you that I would like to offer to talk about Antonin Artaud, the French visionary and also a madman of theatre, and that was really super fascinating. Until yesterday, I only had the Serbian version of his text and yesterday going to the flea market I was able to buy the book – and the first thing that I actually, when I took the book and I started reading it, I actually found this exact place, which I think will shed light on what it means to work with sound in theatre, in this performance culture, which he also tries to get away from or to remove from this Euro-centric sphere or culture, if you want. So I will read you just one passage. Artaud says: 'The theatre is the only place in the world and the last collective means we still have of reaching the organism directly and in periods of neurosis and base sensuality, like the one in which we are immersed, of attacking this base sensually by physical means which cannot resist. If music has an effect on snakes it is not because of the spiritual notion it offers them but because snakes are long, because they lie coiled on the ground, because their bodies touch the ground at almost every point, and the musical vibrations, which are communicated to the ground, reach their bodies like very subtle and prolonged messages. Well, I propose that we treat the spectators like snakes that are being charmed and that we let them by the way of the organism to the subtlest notion. This is why in the Theatre of Cruelty the spectator is in the middle and the spectacle surrounds him. In this spectacle sound effects our constant. Sounds, noises, cries are chosen first for their vibratory quality, then for what they represent' [Artaud 1988: 257].

JH: Beautiful passage that, my god. And from Artaud.

AM: And for me that, in a way, totally sums up and also anticipates many of these debates, which are currently happening not only in performance studies but also, I guess, in the field of sound and sonic studies, which also made me recall this whole idea of the futurist performances, which were also about introducing noise as a way to escape representation and as a way to expand the field of what performance can be and how it can actually directly engage and activate sensorially the body, not only of the performer but also of the audience. And I quite like this idea that he talks about the vibratory quality of sound and what the spectacle should be, that it actually should vibrate and should, in that sense, enhance this idea of that you are immersed in a spectacle: not in front, not seeing it as an image.

JH: Absolutely. Well, this is a beautiful passage, and this idea, this phrase I wrote down, about approaching the 'organism directly' and I suppose, I don't know Artaud's work that well, but I suppose the cruelty is actually to – well, I mean, the phrase I use is to go 'under the radar of rationality and language' and to get directly in touch with ourselves, with our bodies, with each other at a more representational, or non-representational, or an infra-representational level. And theatre does do that. Good theatre does do that, and the immersion – and also I have to say that the sound system session, the dance hall session in the streets in Jamaica, with these huge speaker boxes, which generate or which propagate literally thousands of watts of music power. So you can literally feel yourself vibrate with the bass beats and the whole experience is deliberately designed to be immersive, not just through the volume levels, not just through the frequency, low frequency levels, but also interestingly – and this will appeal to you, I think – that a conventional, well, put it like this, the speakers point into the crowd, they surround the crowd. So you have three or four what we call stacks of speakers, pointing into the crowd in the middle. So it's sort of theatre in the round, or rather sound in the round, and that is basically, absolutely the specialty of this particular cultural technological form. And it also makes a nice contrast with conventional theatre where, or in fact, conventional PAs and sound systems when they're used to amplify what's going on stage, right? And, there you replicate the proscenium arch and have your speakers basically on either side of the stage. And that's good for the focus on the performer in the conventional way. But when you don't have a performer because the sound system, basically is phonographic, it's a recording, so there's no visible presence of an artist there. And what I like to describe it as, if you like, is the sound itself becomes the material in which the audience have to become immersed and they're not distracted by the living



presence, or a visual focal point, in the way that a theatre or a conventional gig is sort of configured. That whole business of getting to people through their visceral, immersive experience is – well, I mean, that's an essential part of it, you know, and it's a big contrast. I mean, we're so used to nowadays – we've both got headphones on, right? – of putting the sound into us right from the sound system dance we go into the sound. So the whole orientation is completely–

AM: Turned upside down.

JH: Yeah. Or, no, not upside down, inside out!

AM: Inside out! Yeah, yeah. [*Laughter.*]

AM: Yeah. Inside out. I wanted to play a track, or an example, of something that I found very interesting. It maybe moves the perspective or move the focus on this conflict on how a conflict can be articulated or how it comes to be in this oppositional rhythm of sound and clapping. I will play you a soundtrack of a protest, which happened in 2017, on the occasion of a festival in Belgrade. You had a Kosovo-Albanian artist, Fitore Berisha, doing a live choreography and performance in a youth centre but the trick is that you had right-wing protestors that came with the attempt to stop the performance. They started singing patriotic songs with the intention and ambition to defocus the performance and eventually bring it to a stop. It's an ongoing and long conflict between Serbia, nationalist Serbia and Kosovan Albanians, and for me it was a very interesting moment where actually you had a reaction of the audience that protected acoustically the performance, the choreography so it could be executed until the end, and it protected it by clapping very loudly. So you will hear now how it sounded. Counter-performance with clapping can actually ensure a – I'm prone to think of it as a 'sonic protective shield', that it ensures a territory in which a sound wall is protecting the performance to happen until the end.

JH: Well, I mean, that's interesting but I would see it as slightly simpler, in terms of just a sound, a clash between – where one sound from one side is trying literally to drown out the other side, yeah?

AM: Yes, yes. Here it comes.

[00:35:00 to 00:35:30] Excerpt from Fitore Berisha at "Mirëdita, dobar dan!" Festival, Dom Omladine, Belgrade (2017)

AM: So you hear – I think what is interesting in this constellation is that you have a sort of a double rupture. You have the protestors trying to disrupt the performance by singing loud patriotic songs and then you have a rupture of a rupture – which constitutes then a rhythm, a very interesting rhythmicity is at stake here. And I was quite amazed when actually, at some point, I tried to understand, to reflect it getting back to some positions articulated by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari – what I found very useful is their notion of 'refrain', where they say that actually singing is the force that establishes a territory. And here you could also think of a counter rhythm that actually the clapping produces a counter rhythm, that it produces something of a – it deterritorialises this territory that the singing has been producing. So, in that sense, I found it also again very interesting to think of a sonic dramaturgy that enables us to really closely examine this conflict, but also this relationship and feedback between the audience and the stage.

JH: Well, I mean, this is all very interesting. So if we take this call and response as one rhythmic formation, right? Which is, if you like, from when the actor steps out from the chorus, there's a rapport between them. But, then what you are talking about with your example, and certainly what I can talk about with reggae culture around sound systems, that that is pushed to a next, much more conflictual kind of rhythm. I mean, rhythm is so important in terms of – yes, as you've mentioned, the territoriality that Deleuze and Guattari talk about establishing, if you like, sonic space and sonic spatiality through, which territorial birds, the robin bird, you know, sings their territorial boundaries. And so sound has a spatialising effect, which is very different from the visual because it's more temporary, it needs to be continually propagated, it needs an embodied presence in order for it to exist at all. With the sound systems in Jamaica there is – and there has been for many, many years – this phenomenon, this event called the 'sound clash', which is a competitive situation between two or more sound systems. So you imagine on the streets you have these sets of speaker boxes, at least three for each sound system. Okay, so if you've got two sound systems and you've got six speaker stacks up in a row, and basically the two sounds take it in turns in, sort of like, 15 or 20-minute slots to outplay each other,



right? And it's quite democratic in a way because at the end of the 'clash', as it's called, the 'sound clash', the audience will decide just by their cheers and claps and hoots and hollers which sound has played the best tunes of the evening. And so it's a device for adding excitement and adding drama – literally drama – to an auditory situation. And the way that they win a clash against the other is by having the most exclusive music to play, and there's a whole infrastructure of technology around that: you have these things called dub-plate specials where a sound system will commission a top-line artist to do a special version of their hit song, which mentions the sound system that's paid for them to do that, right? It's quite an expensive business. So you'll have your dub-plates as kind of an ammunition in a sonic warfare situation and the judgement as to when to play which dub-plate, which one, it's like playing a pack of cards, which card, which dub-plate is going to trump the track that the other sound has just played. So that's quite amusing and actually can turn violent. And so the drama is absolutely essential to the musical and cultural experience when it's moved away from the antiphony and it's an actual clash between sound systems, and that's to do with their musical power and their refinement as well as their material. And that's translated at a lyrical level as well, which is kind of interesting, where you'll get two artists who will clash against each other, that they will try and outdo each other in terms of their verbal dexterity, to mix the metaphor. And that's been an absolutely essential part, not just of the Jamaican sound system scene but also the development of grime music in the UK in the last decade or so, where in the pirate radio stations you've got a whole bunch of artists, sort of, sparring, as it were, off each other. So let me play you a track here, which is in fact part of a live sound clash that was broadcast online in the last few weeks – online because of the pandemic situation, it would have been done live otherwise – between two famous artists. As I say, it's not live. Okay, let's try it there. It's a bit random.

[00:41:49 to 00:42:50] Excerpt from sound clash online pirate radio featuring Bounty Killer (2020)

JH: Okay, I don't know if you got enough of that to get the idea, but two guys basically showing off against each other in the clash – and, so, well there you have a lot of drama, I think!

AM: Yeah, yeah. First-off response to this idea, I also found very interesting, and for me, for the topics I'm researching at the moment, how we can develop a more visceral spatial theory, is this idea that there is a vibrational experience of a city, which those examples, especially I guess in such a culture as the Jamaican culture, and the whole system of a public music ongoing performance happening on the streets and on the squares, really makes me rethink this notion that you are isolated, that you are, in a way, an individual because in these circumstances you become part of a collective body. At the same time, you mentioned already that as soon as you have this idea of a clash you could also think of a warfare. You have this resonance of something that is connected to military structures. What I found very interesting is this idea that, actually, there's a militarisation of the audio-sphere happening, and if you look back historically, the idea that the radio was developed in Nazi Germany as a way of mobilising and actually, as a very ideological tool, you could say, that it also had this military and ideological effect, I was, in way, not surprised but a few days ago I came across this state of affairs, this tension, this ongoing tension in South and North Korea where they have the DMZ zone. So it's a demilitarised zone that in a way is a no man's land between the two conflicting ideologies, North and South, and they have been provoking each other all these years with installing big loudspeakers, systems of loudspeakers, where they actually play to each other different ideological messages, different tunes. So you have an acoustic war happening all the time. I thought for this conversation it could be interesting to hear just one such an example. So what you'll hear now and what I will play is this very territorial sound that is being played from the loudspeakers.

[00:45:54 to 00:46:25] Loudspeakers broadcasting across the DMZ (2017)

AM: And in the end this strange – I don't know what we would call it – it's a soundscape but it's so distorted, probably due to this big amount of loudspeakers, turns into a pop song, the intention of which is to convince the North Korean people that the South is offering a better life, or that it offers a dream where you can actually live in a pop song. Which I think is quite – it could be seen as an example of something Goodman also called the 'sonic violence', which I think is quite an interesting figure to think that there is a whole violent dimension of sonic cultures, or sonic performances if you want.



JH: I mean, there certainly is. I mean, especially in war situations and before we had post-traumatic stress syndrome we had shell-shock, right? In the First World War. And it was the term that soldiers were exposed to by explosions and that had literally a traumatic effect and the trauma was such that they couldn't escape from having heard the sound and from hearing the sound and from other smaller sounds that would re-simulate that. The sound of warfare, right, in terms of armies in previous centuries used to march with drums and you have the sounding – well, the retreat as well, the trumpets, the brass instrument as something that could pierce through the battle cries and stuff. I mean, sound has always been violent, a violence. I mean, if you go back to the Bible, the classic story of Joshua in the walls of Jericho being dismantled. Yeah, and so sound certainly isn't always soft and, in fact, the sound of sirens and – because that goes back again in the myths, doesn't it? The siren is both the attraction – if you remember the Odysseus stories passing through the rocks and being drawn and he had to put wax in his ears and the ears of his crew and have himself tied to the mast so he wouldn't be seduced by the beautiful singing of the Sirens. And it again speaks about a gendering of sound and a masculine disempowering through womanly power, which is very interesting stuff. But it's interesting also, if you like, that the pleasurable side of sound has been withdrawn, has been diminished, and now when we say 'siren' we think of it just as a warning sign or signal, not as one of seduction. And so that mix of pleasure and violence is there in the very nature of sounding and how it plays out in society and in our cultures.

AM: Yeah. Uff!

JH: But I'd like to think of it – sort of, changing the tack as we're coming to the end now – it's also a creative, it is a subject of creation as well. And I've been very struck – I mean again going back to the Bible, we're told that: 'In the beginning was the word', and I hear 'word' as logos, as meaning, as ratio, not necessarily as a spoken word. And so the 'word' is something that for the ancients was actually bringing into life. Like in the magic when you say 'abracadabra!', by this performative speaking, by saying it, when the priest says: 'You are now married,' the words themselves change the world, right? And then if you go back in spiritual traditions, in Hinduism and the idea of the 'om' mantra which according to the spiritual text in the Upanishads and so on, it's the speaking of the sound that actually brings the world into being. You could say: the 'drama of creation', right? That you're speaking the world into existence, speaking the universe into existence. And for me, I mean, that's just fantastic, that's just a really exciting prospect: that we have our existence, not just at the beginning of time, because this is what brings time into existence, but that creation is an ongoing, vibrating process that we can mimic, we can enunciate in the 'om' mantra. It's a satisfying way of participating in our being together, in creation. That's for me a pretty fundamental process really.

AM: Maybe just one very last thing. I found this idea that actually the future is anticipated by the ear and by the audio culture, not by the visual culture. So you can actually anticipate the future better by the ear than by the eye. I read it somewhere and I found it quite a good example of also this future-orientedness and potentiality of sounding.

JH: Absolutely. There's an amazing irony, if you like, that sounding is the quickest to fade unlike a mural or an icon or something. It doesn't have a permanence, it needs continual propagation, but yes, because the future is something that we have to imagine because it isn't there, or it isn't here yet, that sounding does that very well. I mean this is the emotional connection that sounding has that Plato was so fearful of, banning the poets and musicians from his rational republic, right? And also Jacques Attali in his book *Noise: The Political Economy of Music* was very good on that: that basically sound anticipates a future. That the future is formed in a non-verbal, non-rational way in sounding in a way that images basically curtail and don't do justice to.

AM: There's always an image of the past, you cannot make an image of – well, you can but, you know, somehow the images are always already absent and the sound is all in the present, in the moment, evolves, it vibrates.

JH: And, so basically, it's like the future has a kind of a long tail, it's not something that's ahead of us, it's something that we're, you know, finding. And for me – and going back to my reggae examples which I love so much, in dub music, in all the echo and reverb, and in one sense, in a literal sense, that's a memory from the past but I see the echo and the reverb as being memories of the future, which we're allowing back into the present because the future is already there for us to inhabit.



AM: So there is a messianic dimension of sound.

JH: Absolutely. Yeah, absolutely. Yes: 'messianic'. Lovely.

Transcription by Tom Colley

Clips Summary

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[00:13:45 to 00:15:02] 'Baby I've Been Missing You'(1994) by Janet Lee Davis & Tippa Irie

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[00:41:49 to 00:42:50] Sound clash online pirate radio featuring Bounty Killer (2020)

[00:45:54 to 00:46:25] Loudspeakers broadcasting across the DMZ (2017)

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