ORPHEUS MANIFESTOS

If It's Magic: Music as a Knowledge Portal

Jonathan Impett

O/I
Orpheus Instituut
Advanced studies and research in music

To mark the thirtieth anniversary of Orpheus Instituut, this series of manifestos reimagines knowledge through music as an essential form of understanding. The eight statements, written by the institute's principal investigators with rigour, humour, and artistic verve, situate musical knowing in the spaces between music-making and reflection. They trace the entanglements between performers and technologies, and the confrontation between archived fragments and virtual entities. Musical understanding here emerges as a makers' knowledge, built upon recursive feedback between minds, bodies, interfaces, and sound. What artistic research in music generates remains multifaceted, provisional, and alive: it can always be produced differently.

Orpheus Instituut
Korte Meer 12
B – 9000 Ghent
Belgium
www.orpheusinstituut.be

Music is a technology:
a human-engineered device
for expanding and enhancing
our knowledge-conceiving,
knowledge-producing,
knowledge-sharing faculties . . .
it is inseparable from the
technologies of its own
conception and production

If It's Magic: Music as a Knowledge Portal

Jonathan Impett

KNOWLEDGE THROUGH MUSIC

In considering the dense nexus formed by music, research, and knowledge, the crucial term to interrogate is *knowledge*. As a first step we need a working understanding of the relationship between aesthetic experience—real, imagined or projected—and knowledge communicable in other modes: visually, symbolically, in language. Lack of reflection on this relationship is at the root not only of unclarity as to the contribution of music to knowledge, but of an unproductive and culturally insidious expressive/formal, phenomenological/noumenal binary.

We assume that the artist or artist-researcher aspires on some level to engage aesthetically through their work: with the field itself, with its history, with other individuals, with a social or cultural body or context, or with themselves as the embodiment of some subset of these. Such engagement through music can in some way be transformative of mental-emotional-physical processes: temporarily or long-term, individually or socially. In this way music changes the structures and dynamics by which:

— knowledge might come about and through which it can be communicated.
— personal and social behaviours evolve.

This is not new: on a human level we could look at the work of Ian Cross (1999), who suggests that music has served as a social laboratory across evolutionary time ("Is music the most important thing we ever did?"); on a social level at Herbert Marcuse's *The Aesthetic Dimension* (1978)—the forms of art as potentially proposing alternative models for individual or social consciousness.

Music tells us about knowledge, enables new knowledge; it embodies and proposes forms, dimensionalities, properties, dynamics and operators. We might say that it engenders new conceptual spaces, but of a dynamic and rich dimensionality that resists lossless compression in mapping to other domains or modes. The nonlinear temporality and referentiality of music, both internal and external, echo those of human thought-affect-physicality. Like the wave phenomena of which it is constituted, the structures, the patterns of music work across dimensionalities, media, and timescales. This is not Schlegelian abstraction but essential human plasticity and model-seeking. We engage and respond as part of the constant search for models, reflections, analogies, tools, and affordances.

Knowledge through music can only come about in our common present, however individually constituted—the milieu we share locally or globally, in terms of social, cultural, technological and ecological structures. This is assumed in references below to contemporary music practices, regardless of the origins of the materials, knowledge or topics they deal with, of the cultural or geographical positions they adopt. Musical work here encompasses its various manifestations—composition, performance, improvisation, curation, and so on—irrespective of genre or style. The production of knowledge through engagement with musical work is not a matter of transmission; attention and emphasis differ in all cases, but the situations of "creator" and "listener" are not fundamentally different in kind. Acknowledgement of and engagement with this common present is the ground on which knowledge might be produced. Historical materialism and critical theory articulate this

situation most explicitly (Benjamin, Horkheimer, Lukácz or Zabala, for example), but the situation obtains in general.

Knowledge through music is both personal in respect of all participants and potentially universal—that is, individual-agnostic. It materially manifests traces of individual and common histories and imaginaries.

Knowledge through music is multidimensional and polytemporal; it burrows wormholes through time; it allows the simultaneity of different actions and understandings, of different temporal planes; it rehearses pasts and it projects futures, finding structure across domains of human perception and action, of thought and representation. This plasticity is a property of humanity, but music manifests and articulates such phenomena materially and in time, such that in engagement with music, models for knowledge emerge. Music offers perceptual and conceptual development through what in an AI-infused world we might call a training process: incremental or state-changing transformation of a complex space of which we can gain selective and partial images.

Through engagement with music, our fragmentary, visionary or analytical understanding constructs knowledge-paths that can be disciplined by external conceptual frameworks, to open new areas of experience or exploration, or alternatively to wind themselves into self-referential knots. This process is a bidirectional transduction between selected faces of the complex surface of music and the world within which we consciously operate. To be effective, it requires acknowledgement of subject, moment, context, the nature of this selectivity and the rationale for a knowledge framework.

Alain Badiou (2001, 28) refers to the potential engendering of *truths* in the encounter of the individual with phenomena of art (or science, or politics, or love—for him these are not commensurable domains). Art is a truth procedure, he insists. Indeed, it is in the emergence of truths that the subject is constituted—through intra-action, to use Karen Barad's term. A truth punctures "the normal pace of things"; it changes the environment for further thought-affect-action (Badiou 2001, 54). Truths may be experienced by multiple subjects in encounters with what they perceive to be the same phenomenon, but such truths are not in themselves communicable. Ultimately, therefore, truths through music can only be known through changed understanding-imagining and subsequently changed behaviour. Like truths in other domains, they are crucially temporal in their inception, atemporal in their effect—their temporality compressed into an impenetrable density. They become autonomous from the context or moment of their origin. They develop continuity, adaptability, and evolution that give them instrumentality.

For Badiou, this sets up a crucial non-identity with knowledge—knowledge, which in its communicability is epistemologically indistinguishable from opinion (2001, 54). Knowledge does, however, exist in a space of dimensions of validity—consensus, materiality, representation, experiment, information, and its modes of acquisition—that allows it to be the currency of human exchange and endeavour. Badiou categorises competent, valid work that does not afford the co-production of truth as "waste product" (2022, 21). This is provocative and challenging. He speaks as a person steeped in modern Western culture, yet in terms of modern Western categories, most art in the world is "decorative" rather than "high." The current, global state of music embodies the three criteria of what Deleuze and Guattari describe as a "minor literature" (1986, 16–17); all musical languages are now minor languages, all music is implicitly political in having to explicitly choose its cultural role, and music tends to the collective in the democratisation of the means of

its production, the demystification of the figure of the artist, and the situated or provisional nature of much of their work. The terms and the articulation of knowledge produced through art assume a more pronounced role in a world in which we have rightly stepped back from cultural truths; the artist has to reflect more consciously about the ways in which their work might, in Badiou's terms, co-constitute a knowledge-producing subject through its intra-action with an individual or group.

COMMONALITY

The cultural role of research, a researching ethos of creativity, becomes vital. We inhabit a moment of dissolution of cultural consensus, historical awareness, and common critical discourse; there is particular expertise or connoisseurship, but in general this situation applies to all areas of music-making, to creators as well as listeners. This is combined with an immense broadening of exposure to different practices and the opening of access to a much greater range of technical means. So much is a truism, but it is not clear whether we now find ourselves in a state of very sophisticated musical culture, or very primitive. Probably both, but the latter is the more constructive starting point.

Knowledge requires a context. A cult of individualism, of universal claims to novelty and uniqueness, can turn on itself to become an impediment to knowledge. The establishment of some kind of commons, however local or provisional, is therefore necessary for truths to be shared or for knowledge to be recognised. The greater the degree to which the work (a composition, a performance, an argument or intervention of any kind) constructs its own context, the more mobile, plastic and accessible it will be. Contemporary musical practices tend towards a sense of co-creation in their presentation: not only in collaborative or interactive work, but in work that forms itself in the presence of the listener, or that in its very ephemerality brings the histories of musician and listener together in co-presence. In the absence of shared context,

shared creation—material or vicarious—becomes more evidently an important property of music.

We might cite Badiou's "Manifesto of Affirmationist Art" (2006, 145): "The subjects of artistic truths consist in the works that compose them." This is echoed by Franco Berardi: "The present ignorance has to be seen as the space of a possibility. We have to start from the ignorance of the general intellect" (2011, 128). He calls for the "re-composition of social subjectivity . . . through the fusion of imaginary and cultural flows" (ibid., 97). For Antonio Negri this is "the moment of the recognition of the common" in contemporary cultural production; it is not a commonality of mode or practice but participation in a "swarm of singularities" (2011, 121). But there must be a shared starting point, whether Badiou's common void—"We must recompose, for our time, a thinking of truth that would be articulated onto the void without passing through the figure of the master" (2005, 52)—or Giorgio Agamben's common cultural ground for art: the empty space, the shared witnessing of the emergence of something from nothing—"the entry into presence has the character of . . . being-at-work, in the work of art" (1999, 65). Knowledge emerges from listening, not proclaiming.

If truths (in the above sense) actually change individual consciousness (by which we usually don't mean just conscious thought, but also the "unthought" described by N. Katherine Hayles), then the communicating of aspects of knowledge in the reduced dimensionality of language allows for the emergence of common discourse, practice, even values (Hayles 2017). Knowledge is a resonance between individuals—however large or small their number—just as truths are a resonance with the work. Regardless of where or from whom the impulse originates, there has to be a tuning. This is the co-production of subject described by Badiou and points to the important role of public discourse: just as the perception of the individual shifts to find relevant parameters and forms in the work, so the wider place and understanding of the work evolves with critical reception, formal or informal.

TECHNICITY

Music is a technology: a human-engineered device for expanding and enhancing our knowledge-conceiving, knowledge-producing, knowledge-sharing faculties, both personally and socially. It is inseparable from the technologies of its own conception and production, now and throughout history.

Musical knowledge is grounded in an inescapable technicity. Knowledge through music is at once utterly physical and completely virtual. Indeed, music offers a long cultural experience of the virtual. No other medium has this property to the same extent. In attending to music, the sound is always mediated. This is what permits the extraordinarily smooth transition from "live" to "recorded" listening. We attend to the echo, the trace, the imprint, and instantly infer its means of production, access our memory of other such sounds. At the same time we wait for its own echo, its repetition; but this may be a change, or another voice, or perhaps in some cases its end—at which point we no longer really retain its beginning. We await a process, a structure, on the basis of something we didn't experience directly, and the procedure proliferates. This anticipation is the basis of the technicity of music, even before we consider the act of deciding to repeat a sound. The simplest repetition or relationship is a technical device—dance groove or folk song, polyphony or complex algorithm, instantiated across any level of human time from decades to the quasi-simultaneous. Any expressive/formal binary is beyond unhelpful—it is false.

MODES OF PRODUCTION

Uncertainty as to the relationship of art and knowledge has been crafted by artists and art institutions, insecurely protecting their special status, rather than by contemporary science, which in its practice has developed a more sophisticated understanding of its own process, role, production and communication.

The modes of production of knowledge in contemporary music practices are contiguous with those of contemporary science. On the basis of knowledge and imagination (that is, the self-organising activity of pluridimensional knowledge, memory and motivating spirit) we work largely by building a space of possibilities (as Manuel DeLanda describes the domain of simulation science [2011, 17]) or space of potentialities (Agamben's term for that of the artist [1999, 64–65]).

In science, this may be a stable space of known or hypothesised parameters, expressed formally, or the more opaque representational space of AI; in art, in music, it may be a space of dynamic dimensionality and contingent parameters expressed in multiple modes. This is a difference in practice, not in kind. In such computational, conceptual or material spaces we seek, observe, encourage, identify or manipulate phenomena that afford feedback with both our latent or nascent knowledge and with the design of the space itself. In both cases, the subject, their present and their history are inscribed in material and process, in data and algorithm.

Michel Serres described this epochal change in scientific practice as a move from declarative to procedural thought (1997, 230). In our contemporary knowledge frameworks, objects of attention accrue information with each interaction, including that of our interrogation. As the paths for knowledge proliferate, strategies for their navigation become the object, in an iterative process. Now, in a fully digitised age, Luciano Floridi talks of the transition from mimetic or descriptive science to poietic or constructionist knowledge production (2019, 194). Poietic knowledge production begins not from its object but from the model. Knowledge results from a design process, however dynamic or contingent the model, however immediate or complex the feedback loops. Tight loops between internality and externality are fundamental to making musical work. Our moment of cultural uncertainty requires and affords greater reflection on the knowledge embodied in these relationships, on its nature, role, assumptions, and frameworks for understanding. At such a

moment we may prise open the loops to examine them more carefully, expand their temporality and articulation, reconfigure them.

This is effectively a post-cybernetic view of knowledge production, but one in which results are perceived-evaluated-responded to not in terms of information but in terms of their capacity to further change, further imagine, further model. Applicable knowledge (a vaccine, an algorithm, a historical or new instrument, a composition) becomes a spin-off, which may beget new models, however vague initially, for exploration in new directions.

In this respect, the knowledge to which music gives us access, which it enables, is of the new kind; it is not propositional, or declarative, not a priori or a posteriori, but what Floridi calls *ab anteriori* or "maker's knowledge" (2019, 180).

DISCOURSE

The affective power of music may be inarticulable in some respects (see the discussion of truths above); that does not make it mystical. The challenge is to avoid becoming anaesthetised by the noise of language to the very things we want to understand (Serres 2008). A vital component of the response is to identify *appropriate* language, to keep the feedback between language and senses both tight in time and broad in spectrum. The easy logic of language tends to hegemony; it disguises its state of provisional analogy. I avoid speaking of "concepts"—this would invite reification and interruption—but at any given point linguistic formulations become a kind of knowledge-lubricant. That is, they do not transmit but rather allow for a resonance of necessarily reduced dimensionality and adaptive, uncertain contingency.

The expressive/formal binary has been a major barrier to the sharing of knowledge through music. The discourse of music, the environment

within which knowledge forms and circulates, must evolve to be consonant with contemporary modes of understanding how the world works. The foundations for an epochal evolution of discourse were already well established by artists a century ago, as Zamyatin's satirical caricature of musical expressivity in his dystopian novel *We* (1993, 18) and the visionary early writings of Varèse exemplify (1966). This is likewise valid for our contemporary understanding of historically produced knowledge. We must rewrite our accounts in terms of our own knowledge production (Impett 2024).

The context for knowledge emergence is a set of assumptions, models and operators—some physically, environmentally, or evolutionarily derived, others induced from cultural surroundings. This set is largely constituted of further knowledge, most of which will be highly incomplete. This property of incompleteness is crucial; it allows for a high degree of plasticity in application. If we take a broad view of technology—to incorporate language, metaphor, mathematics, music theory, physics, and algorithms, for example, as well as all the real or imagined instruments thereof—then we can say that this set of models and operators derives from technology. It constitutes an understanding of how the world can work and how we can operate within or upon it. It is always historically situated: a space bounded by the technologies of investigation and measurement (Bohr 1963; Daston and Galison 2007), by the means for the transmission of ideas or knowledge, and by our common imaginative capacity. In effect this constitutes a cosmology. Arthur C. Clarke's third law (1973, 21n1)—that "any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic"—is the rule, not the exception. We call this "intuitive technology," by analogy with the intuitive ballistics of physicality (Impett 2023). Ours may be a moment of particular technological awareness, but the principle applies across history.

Non-Euclidean geometry, relativity and quantum mechanics may persist in challenging our capacity for visualisation and articulation, but they no longer challenge our sense of being in the world. We encounter

the fundamental ideas of information theory and cybernetics continually in everyday life; we inhabit a world of simulations and virtuality, and networks, big data and AI are all now part of vernacular understanding. What is remarkable is not so much the speed of these developments but the rate at which human understanding has assimilated such ideas as common, plastic, adaptive, instrumental conceptual operators. The contemporary, future-looking, technology-inflected common cosmology—our intuitive technology—will naturally provide the terms for more relevant discussion of musical knowledge, and not only in respect of musical activities that explicitly subscribe to concepts of this kind.

We might begin by abandoning inherited categories and terms that were already uncomfortable a century ago. In the spirit of non-hierarchical musical culture, we set out from the phenomenon as experienced—the musical material, event or trace with which we engage in any capacity, that we listen to, enact or imagine—to understand the moments of decision-making and constraining structures that produce this particular musical surface. Inherited categories thus collapse; nothing is indeterminate at the point of its perception. The shapes of knowledge proposed by music allow us to imagine new modes of understanding. Recursivity is an essential operator in the intuitive technology of our time; applying the lessons from music of polyphony, of temporalities and dimensions to the understanding and imagining of music itself is a natural step. The wider discourse of music has gradually embraced the belated revelations that the score is not the music; that music is situated, embodied, distributed, enacted, and contingent; that creativity is entangled with its materiality; that composition is improvised and improvisation composed; that performance and listening are both highly creative acts; that technology changes the environment and nature of music-making with every epoch. Instead of constantly conditionalising inherited categories, we might rather adopt forms of our own time and work with dynamic reconfigurations of elements of a much finer grain.

The surface—performance, score, software, recording—is the product of ordered networks of moments of inscription, material or mental, distributed through time, space, and people, and mediated by cultural, social, technological, and personal frameworks. We can find new networks within these maps as we trace them, or we can plan new configurations in designing new creative strategies. In terms of the objects of musical attention, dealing with material of which there are already traces or projecting new work into a future are not different in kind: remembering and imagining are neurologically indistinguishable, both being creative-recreative-fictional activities (Hustvedt 2011; Benedek et al. 2023). The knowledge-paths proposed by music, articulated in the discourse of its own time, can be used in reconceiving musical activity itself.

CODA

In light of current technological metaphors we could describe music as an artificial superintelligence (ASI), generating kinds of knowledge with which we can engage but which we could not produce (Genewein et al. 2026). Indeed, we might say that the role of music is precisely to challenge the abstraction barrier: the point at which machines produce concepts beyond those that can be articulated by humans, or the limit on humans perceiving concepts produced by ASI (Lerchner 2026). But *artificial*? This is another term we should now recalibrate; nothing is more human than the "artificial." Rather than Floridi's *homo faber*, we might consider *homo prostheticus*: that a fundamental human behaviour is the constant search for metaphor, analogy, or model, for opportunities to outsource the enacting or constructing of what we half-imagine might be possible. Music is the embodiment of our undecomposable relationship with this extended world. It gives access to temporalities, nonlinearities, simultaneities, and networks of relationship that inform and expand our capacity for producing knowledge in other domains, as well as for constantly reimagining music itself: multiple simultaneous viewpoints, the personal and the common, the material and the virtual,

the present instant and historical or future time. Music does not describe these situations, it embodies them both experientially and as an object of reflection, proposing spaces and vectors for the production of knowledge in other domains.

As for the knowledge inherent in music itself, perhaps it falls within the category of "universal concrete exceptions" envisioned by Badiou:

> . . . my aim is to create the real possibility of claiming that truths exist as *universal concrete exceptions*. This makes it possible to avoid the dilemma of Kant, who thought that either "truths" are only subjective forms of judgment or else they must be granted some sort of transcendence. (Badiou 2022, 19)

REFERENCES

Agamben, Giorgio. 1999. *The Man Without Content*. Translated by Georgia Albert. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. First published 1994 as *L'uomo senza contenuto*, 2nd ed. (Macerata, Italy: Quodlibet).

Badiou, Alain. 2001. *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*. Translated by Peter Hallward. London: Verso. First published 1993 as *L'éthique: Essai sur la conscience du mal* (Paris: Hatier).

Badiou, Alain. 2005. *Handbook of Inaesthetics*. Translated by Alberto Toscano. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. First published 1998 as *Petit manuel d'inesthétique* (Paris: Seuil).

Badiou, Alain. 2006. *Polemics*. Translated by Steve Corcoran. London: Verso. First published 2003–5 as *Circonstances* (Paris: Léo Scheer).

Badiou, Alain. 2022. *The Immanence of Truths: Being and Event III*. Translated by Susan Spitzer and Kenneth Reinhard. London: Bloomsbury Academic. First published 2018 as *L'immanence des vérités: L'être et l'événement, 3* (Paris: Fayard).

Benedek, Mathias, Roger E. Beaty, Daniel L. Schacter, and Yoed N. Kenett. 2023. "The Role of Memory in Creative Ideation." *Nature Reviews Psychology* 2 (4): 246–57. https://doi.org/10.1038/s44159-023-00158-z.

Berardi, Franco. 2011. *After the Future*. Edited by Gary Genosko and Nicholas Thoburn. Translated by Arianna Bove, Melinda Cooper, Erik Empson, Enrico, Giuseppina Mecchia, and Tiziana Terranova. Oakland, CA: AK Press.

Bohr, Niels. 1963. *Essays 1958–1962 on Atomic Physics and Human Knowledge*. New York: Interscience.

Clarke, Arthur C. 1973. *Profiles of the Future: An Inquiry into the Limits of the Possible*. Rev. ed. New York: Harper & Row.

Cross, Ian. 1999. "Is Music the Most Important Thing We Ever Did? Music, Development and Evolution." In *Music, Mind and Science*, edited by Suk Won Yi, 10–39. Seoul: Seoul National University Press.

Daston, Lorraine, and Peter Galison. 2007. *Objectivity*. New York: Zone Books.

DeLanda, Manuel. 2011. *Philosophy and Simulation: The Emergence of Synthetic Reason*. London: Continuum.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. 1986. *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*. Translated by Dana Polan. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. First published 1975 as *Kafka: Pour une littérature mineure* (Paris: Minuit).

Floridi, Luciano. 2019. *The Logic of Information: A Theory of Philosophy as Conceptual Design*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Genewein, Tim, Matija Franklin, Alexander Lerchner, et al. 2026. "From AGI to ASI." Google DeepMind, 12 June, arXiv preprint, 10 June. Accessed 3 July 2026. https://arxiv.org/pdf/2606.12683.

Hayles, N. Katherine. 2017. *Unthought: The Power of the Cognitive Nonconscious*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Hustvedt, Siri. 2011. "Three Emotional Stories: Reflections on Memory, the Imagination, Narrative, and the Self." *Neuropsychoanalysis* 13 (2): 187–96. https://doi.org/10.1080/15294145.2011.10773674.

Impett, Jonathan. 2023. "Music, Discourse and Intuitive Technology." *AI and Society* 38 (5): 1885–96. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00146-020-01126-4.

Impett, Jonathan. 2024. "Nows, Thens, and Truths: Attending to the Present in Performing the Past." In *Early Music in the 21st Century*, edited by Mimi Mitchell, 168–86. New York: Oxford University Press.

Lerchner, Alexander. 2026. "The Abstraction Fallacy: Why AI Can Simulate but Not Instantiate Consciousness." Google DeepMind, 10 March, PhilPapers, 19 March. Accessed 3 July 2026. https://philpapers.org/archive/LERTAF.pdf.

Marcuse, Herbert. 1978. *The Aesthetic Dimension: Toward a Critique of Marxist Aesthetics*. Translated by Herbert Marcuse and Erica Sherover. Boston, MA: Beacon Press. First published 1977 as *Die Permanenz der Kunst: Wider eine bestimmte marxistische Ästhetik* (Munich: Hanser).

Negri, Antonio. 2011. *Art and Multitude: Nine Letters on Art, Followed by Metamorphoses: Art and Immaterial Labour*. Translated by Ed Emery. Cambridge: Polity. First published in French 2009 as *Art et multitude: Neuf lettres sur l'art suivies de Métamorphoses: Art et travail immatériel* (Paris: Mille et une nuits).
Serres, Michel. 1997. *Éloge de la philosophie en langue française*. Paris: Flammarion.
Serres, Michel. 2008. *The Five Senses: A Philosophy of Mingled Bodies*. Translated by Margaret Sankey and Peter Cowley. London: Continuum. First published 1985 as *Les cinq sens: Philosophie des corps mêlés* (Paris: Grasset).
Varèse, Edgard. 1966. "The Liberation of Sound," edited by Chou Wen-chung. *Perspectives of New Music* 5 (1): 11–19.
Zamyatin, Yevgeny. 1993. *We*. Translated by Clarence Brown. London: Penguin Classics. First published 1924.

COLOPHON

Author
Jonathan Impett

For an extended biography of the author, scan



Production manager
Heike Vermeire

Managing editor
Edward Crooks

Orpheus Manifestos editor
Bruno Forment

Lay-out and cover design
Theo van Beurden Studio

Published in 2026 by Orpheus Instituut with support from the Flemish Government and in collaboration with Leuven University Press

All rights reserved. Except in those cases expressly determined by law, no part of this publication may be multiplied, saved in automated data files or made public in any way whatsoever without the express prior written consent of the copyright holder.

ISBN 978 94 6165 416 8
eISBN 978 94 6166 836 3 (ePDF)
eISBN 978 94 6166 844 8 (ePUB)
https://doi.org/10.11116/9789461668448
D/2026/1869/65
NUR: 664

This booklet is only an overture.

Discover sound, thought, and artistic research beyond these pages through podcasts, recordings, videos, and other materials from Orpheus Instituut.

Scan to continue.



This publication is part of the Orpheus Manifestos, a collection of eight statements written by the principal investigators for the thirtieth anniversary of Orpheus Instituut:

— Paulo de Assis, *Artistic Intelligence: Before and Beyond Knowledge Production*
— Paulo de Assis, *Artistic Research: For a Minor Science*
— Tom Beghin, *Making a Case for Materially Entangled Performance*
— Bruno Forment, *The Undisciplined Prism: Artistic Research as Method(s) of the In-between*
— Jonathan Impett, *If It's Magic: Music as a Knowledge Portal*
— Catherine Laws and Emily Worthington, *Embodied Knowledge in Artistic Research*
— Arabella Pare, *"Ungeschickt lässt grüßen": Fragments of Arbitrary Knowledges*
— Luk Vaes, *Variations in se*

Continue the conversation and access all manifestos for free via

Printed in a limited edition of two hundred copies of each manifesto.

With support from the Flemish Government

Flanders
State of the Art

This is a call to reconsider the nature and role of music in relation to other modes of human activity. It points to the essential technicity of music, to the necessary reconfiguration of its elements and discourse, and to the commonalities of contemporary creative practice in art and science. Music is a technology of knowledge-production, engaging with the fullness, the nonlinearity and embodied nature of human complexity. It engenders knowledge through singular, transformative truth encounters, not in direct transmission. Music is thus not "translatable" but in its conceiving, enacting and experiencing it expands the potential for knowledge in other domains.

Jonathan Impett is a composer, trumpet player and writer. His work is concerned with the nature of the technologically situated musical artefact. He leads the Music, Thought and Technology research group at Orpheus Instituut, Ghent.

Orpheus Instituut
Advanced studies and research in music