Phantom Music: radio, memory, and narratives from auditory life

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Radio and memory form a radical coupling, stitching together musical cultures with personal psychologies. I pursue such relations in Phantom Music by focusing on, and unpacking a project I developed for exhibition in 2005. The project, *Phantom Radio*, is based on forming a library of radio memory. Collecting stories from 105 individuals from around the world, the library consists of written statements and CDs of all the songs mentioned. Through the project, questions of broadcast technology, and the work of memory, are brought forward. To pursue such questions, the following article maps out the territory explored in the project. Reflecting on various threads, from habits of listening to the *effects* of music on individual lives, leads to a tracing out of the 'phantasmic' and the 'social' aspects of radio. And further, how music supplies a form of shared ground to the individual instances of unexpected experiences.

1. INTRODUCTION

> The accident was as vivid in my mind as if it had happened last week. But the date was hazy until I opened a Billboard chart book and saw that 'Summer Breeze' by Seals & Crofts had entered the Hot 100 in September 1972. So, yes, it must have been late Fall '72. I was 21 years old and living in the university section of Minneapolis. But one cold, clear Saturday, I found myself miles from town, an unknown party guest on a stranger's farm. I remember the humid atmosphere in the rundown farmhouse, and the view of the bare, frozen fields from the kitchen window. There was reefer, there was whiskey, there was a keg of beer and some pills of the 'downer' strain. The day passed, and early dark was falling. Somebody mentioned a ride back to town, and I climbed into a crowded Volkswagen van. I recognised the driver a someone I'd seen 'knocking back Jack' (Daniels) throughout the afternoon. We started down the dirt road towards the highway, travelling at perhaps eight miles per hour. Less than a mile from the house, the van gently eased off the road and fell on its side in a shallow ditch. Inside, passenger reaction was not one of panic but of surprise ('*Hey!*'). This was followed by disappointment ('*Shit!*') at the realisation that now we'd be forced to awkwardly climb out of the van, then walk back to the house in the cold and dark. We did, hunched and shivering against the wind off the fields, and eventually I found another ride back to Minneapolis in another vehicle. As the car radio played, the DJ's metallic voice scraped against my adrenaline, my regret and relief. 'Summer Breeze' is the song that played as I checked again for bumps and bruises, feeling lucky to be alive.

The dynamic of sound, as ephemeral and potent, finds radical parallel in the dynamic of memory, as fluid, complex, and deeply ingrained, for both seem to uncover difficult and engaging relations to the archive, the collectible, and the concrete. To grab hold of the certainty of experience, knowledge, or sensation is often difficult when confronting both sound and memory. While both could be said to leave deep traces, each flirts with a diffuse and vaporous ontology. As Steven Connor so aptly describes, 'the self defined in terms of hearing rather than sight is a self imaged not as a point, but as a membrane; not as a picture, but as a channel through which voices, noises, and musics travel' (Connor 2004: 57). Such auditory descriptions echo notions of memory as a montage of voices and images flitting through the mind, triggered by sensory association, random experiences, the passing of detail throughout daily life. Thus, it seems sound and memory live by being absolutely and always already present, while at the same time posing challenges to the permanent. Yet such challenges can be understood as integral to what both sound and memory offer, as productive and positive forces. For it is in their oscillation between the ephemeral and the concrete, the diffuse and the certain, that personal narrative, the titillation of meaning, and the recurring concoction of identity may take place.

2. *PHANTOM RADIO*

To follow the interchange between memory and sound I want to talk through a recent project I developed for exhibition. By teasing out some of the related issues of this project I hope to explore how music gives expression to the turbulent intensities of living, and in what way radio contributes to an auditory psychology.

In response to an invitation from the Archipel festival in Geneva, I developed the project *Phantom Radio*. *Phantom Radio* came by way of thinking through aspects of radio based not on the identifiable object or science of radio, but more on the psychological, imaginary, and what Allen S. Weiss calls, the 'phantasmic' (Weiss 1995). That radio has from the beginning

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initiated a wide range of radical, eccentric, and idiosyncratic theories and designations reveals with what intensity radio insinuates itself into the imaginary. As Weiss' own theories propose, radio activates a feverish response by operating through psychic mechanisms. Radio as the absolute machinery of the disembodied voice brings with it a total reworking of the human body, of *being* itself, by always leaving the body behind while at the same time delivering it up all too fully. Voices on air, ethereal ghosts from cosmic storms, mouths travelling through the black magic of transmission, broadcasts from outer-space, amplified through and by the machinery of electrical current, at X-number of reception points, always and already alive with spirits and ghouls. Radio is total nightmare and euphoria all in one; it is fantasy and fantastic. Such designation can be found in numerous declarations made in the Modern period, from Khlebnikov's vision of 'lightning birds' to Artaud's spasmodic blasphemies, when radio found its way into the collective psyche, culminating in what Marinetti would call the 'wireless imagination'– radio as the ultimate industry for promoting his *parole in libertà*. 'Just thinking about this oceanic expansion to all ends of the earth and the possibility for its instantaneous and simultaneous communication to a single moment of consciousness meant that the potent force of an unstructured, chaotic space was sent hurtling down onto individual means of expression, splintering them into fragments' (Kahn 1992: 22). The promise of transmission set the stage for a radicalised force of sonicity – electricity mobilised by the body's own expelled breath, replacing syntax with sensation and raising the volume on the Modern split subject.

A device of global proportions, radio inaugurates a new form of being by supplying the imagination with a vision of the future based on amplification and projection. Whereas the mechanics of the industrial age binds us to the materiality of the immediate and local, broadcast technology offers the body its own escape and splintering, making manifest the very potential of flights of fantasy through the vision and channels of transmission. Beyond the material impositions of machinery and bodies, radio spawned new visions for imaginary flights while securing opportunities for economic expansion through networks of capital and exchange. The broadcast song could thus produce social groups and their collective imaginary, while dealing up corporate product and its dissemination. In this way, radio's influence upon song writing may exceed the material conditions of the 7" record, which limited a single song to roughly three minutes, to effect the very notion of the itinerant hobo, the rambling drifter, or the lovesick rocker, and related fantasies, all of which gain momentum through the very promise of *airplay*.

3. TALES OF TRANSMISSION

These radiophonic ideas and symptoms allowed me to develop the connection to memory, and further, to run after the phantasmic tracings generated by transmission. To begin the *Phantom Radio* project, I started by sending out an email to various friends requesting them to 'tell their radio memories'. What I sought were those memories inextricably linked to songs overheard from broadcast systems, whether actual radio or other sound sources, such as car stereos and public announcement systems. These are memories that everyone has, from instances in their lives where something profound takes place and in part is produced by the introduction or intrusion of a particular song. Whether Bob Dylan or Bo Diddly, Iannis Xenakis or Jimi Hendrix, music finds its way to a particular moment in a particular life to envelope that moment with melody, lyric, or the beat of a drum piercing with a given emotional register the unfolding of an event. Thus, these events become memorable, that is, available for recollection or riveted to consciousness, by being stitched together *with* music.

After receiving an initial collection of memories, I requested the call be sent out randomly, to friends or strangers, with the hope that I would receive as many stories as possible, from as wide a group as possible. I wanted to hear from individuals from all over the world, from every age group and background. In the end, I received 105 contributions, from Europe, Australia, the US, Japan, Mexico, and South America. Memories from as far back as 1946, experienced from around the globe, from the remote outback of Australia and the deserts of Jordan to suburbs of Philadelphia and farms in Sweden. Each memory was unique and at the same time each was somehow recognisable, as part of a larger collective picture. As I gathered the stories, and began to catalogue them, I was struck both by their individuality and their contribution to a broader sweep. Reading the memories, the question as to the relation of music, and sound, to individual experience came to the fore in unexpected ways. It led me to view and hear radio, and by extension music, through appreciating how it finds its way into our lives to leave an indelible mark.

What these tales teach are the lessons learned within the very space of radio. This space, while finding definition since broadcast technology was first intuited, continues to surprise. It's this space that I want to further explore.

4. MEMORY AND EMBODIED THINKING

Sound has often been discussed as tactile and bodily, operating through vibrational intensities and corporeal resonances. It speaks through the body, slipping past the routes of representational operations to arrive

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at sensation, perception, and tactile knowing. Such theories may reveal the degree to which sound's significance brings into relief the 'thinking body', undermining and leaving behind notions of the duality of mind and body. As Gemma Fiumara suggests, listening promotes 'holistic' relations to knowledge by putting us in dialogue with 'the inexhaustible complexity of phenomena' within reality (Fiumara 1990: 21). By adopting listening as a general attitudinal relation to philosophical inquiry, Fiumara seeks to move beyond the predominance of logo-centric models, which for her situates a particular form of 'arrogance' onto the field of knowledge. 'An aversion towards listening to the rich multiplicity of "reality" seems to be linked with a background of profound fears and to the resulting defensive postures that express themselves in a tendency to reduce knowledge in general to a set of principles from which nothing can escape' (*ibid.*). Listening thus provides a link or passage toward a renewed sense of inquiry by allowing us to remain susceptible and receptive, and impassioned less by our own thinking than by what it may converse with. 'Listening becomes cultural work where the ground rules are not established' (Carter 2004: 44). The discourse of listening continually introduces into the frame of knowledge a productive ambiguity, which for Carter, functions as a 'communicational mechanism for creating new symbols' (*ibid.*).

The *thinking body*, which is a body that remains bound to listening, may in turn highlight and suggest processes by which memory comes to leave its mark, producing understanding and sense of knowing. For while knowledge grants us access to hierarchies of information, knowing allows us to negotiate through the continual motions of living. I would suggest that memory is a key medium through which knowledge and knowing come to perform and inform the other. For memory allows us to integrate forms of information into the actions performed through daily life, while enlivening such actions with a degree of creativity, uncertainty, and appropriation by remaining vulnerable to its own oscillations and fixations. Memory slips, regains its control, fixates on ghosts, and then proceeds. Memory, like listening, undermines forms of arrogance. As a *thinking body*, memory performs by allowing us to reshape experience against the knowledge gained through life.

With the *Phantom Radio* project, memory appears as a form of knowing/listening based on past experiences. With each new hearing of a particular song, such experience and the knowing it entails or instils finds its place in the present, integrated into the lessons gained through living. Here, listening makes memory festive by bringing it to the surface, to replay the pains and the pleasures, which may in the end find their way into the writing of other knowledge.

From this perspective I may suggest that sound and memory both make contingent the lessons by which we gauge the world. Yet they do so by providing a continual staging of the experiential, which comes to refresh the degree to which such lessons remain important and relevant. In being concrete and diffuse, immediate and forever distant, sound and memory recur as processes. Through hearing and remembering, listening in and recalling, whether a familiar voice or the same memory, one must attend to each because of their temporal urgency: to hear another's voice calls one into attention, and to follow the stream of a certain memory is to attend to its stages of evolution, both of which trigger the senses by requiring a radical perceptivity and embodied acts of interpretation.

5. SONOROUS ENVELOPES AND THE OVERHEARD

In correspondence with theories proposed by the French psychoanalyst Didier Anzieu, overheard music may be understood as a 'sonorous envelope' through which the self finds points of reference and security. A 'bath of sounds', the sonorous envelope is first experienced by the child through the mother's voice, which caresses with auditory plenitude. This initial caress leaves an impression on the child, creating a kind of backdrop to the auditory experiences found throughout life. This sonorous exterior for Anzieu is wed to the processes by which the self finds its own interior. In this way, the exterior world of music and the internal processes of listening echo through life the replaying of an original auditory bliss. With radio memory, such replaying seems prominent. For what such memories point to are the ways in which events of both trauma and excitement are given definition *through* music – we may begin to wonder in what way the music overheard provides a form of organisation to often difficult, enthralling, and radical experiences. Whereas the sonorous envelope bathes us in a wash of sound, as found in the voices of loved ones, or the sounds of home, overheard music creates a kind of scaffolding upon which intense experience may be structured, fixed in the fluids of the interior. It may be how memory becomes endurable. In turn, the pleasures of such events may find their amplification and prolonged resonance through the replaying and rehearing of the given song: to hear again the song, throughout one's life, is to receive an extremely available source of recollection, bringing the memory to life.

Such processes echo what Tia De Nora suggests in her pursuit of 'music in everyday life' and how music provides a form of auditory constitution:

> Music can be invoked as an ally for a variety of world-making activities, it is a workspace for semiotic activity, a resource for doing, being and naming aspects of social reality, including the realities of subjectivity and self . . . (De Nora 2000: 40)

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As an ally, music grants an internal investigation for fashioning the self, aligning subjective rhythms, flows, and their disruptions with that of musical force, while in turn providing points of contact to social reality. Music moves in and pushes out, creating routes of circulation by which an individual may negotiate and work through worldly experience. For De Nora, such a process of auditory constitution and musical incorporation allows us to act as embodied agents in a dynamic way, for 'music's effects are generated by a describable addition, whose sum is greater than its parts' (*ibid*.: 43). A *describable* addition . . . – I want to linger over this describability, for on one hand I understand this as part of De Nora's own narrative and her lending *description* to music's insertion into life. At the same time, the describable addition is also the ways in which we as listeners, as embodied musical agents, may find the means to describe that musical addition supplying life with a space for other modes of action, reflection and correspondence. Radio memory, and the ways in which this fixes itself onto the field of auditory constitution, can be understood as part of the allied musical partnership. For if music is understood as a means for 'world-making activities' and for fashioning 'subjectivity and self', then radio memory is a distinct and dynamic form of musical understanding. And a library containing descriptions of these memories is a powerful articulation of that describable addition. In contrast to the Walkman or iPod user, the radiophonic witness selects no soundtrack to the drifts of everyday life. Rather, soundtrack is always only heard at the moment of memory-making, provided by the very stage of the event itself. Whether a loudspeaker buried in the dark corner of a café, or a car radio that accompanies one on an errant ride. A particular song bobs up from the oceanic flow of sound to prick the skin at the very same instant an experience arrives to staple itself onto the cartographic form that event may take, articulating a kind of map of the heart.

Thus, on a certain level I'd counter trends within soundscape studies that promote 'hi-fi environments' (Schafer 1994; Truax 1994). That hi-fi design seeks to acoustically clear the airwaves of excess noise – that is, sounds which may occlude or obfuscate the communicational link of any and all messages – such design may unfortunately strip the soundscape of the unexpected radio song blasting from a neighbour's window. While on one hand we may long for the day of clearer airspace for the necessity of being able to hear the world in all its communicational urgency, how are we to judge what is communication and what is noise? For on one level the overheard radiophonic intrusion may block out, invade, and territorialise the ecological fluidity of natural exchange, it may in turn lend significance to the very noise of life by providing auditory rivets to the durational difficulties of experiencing the unexpected.

> I was sitting in a cafe talking with my lover when Caetano Veloso's version of Coucouroucou Paloma was played over the sound system. We were speaking in generalities about relationships. This song is a beautiful Mexican song of longing. It seemed to me as if it was speaking to us about our longing and the fragility of our affair, of its impossibility even though at its inception it seemed that we had crossed so many barriers to begin with. I looked over at her watching her breathe as she looked down at her hands. What is one to think of the breath that escapes from their lover's mouth, of the intimacies shared? It all seemed so impossible as if each moment we were under erasure, so frail. It made me think of Almodovar's film Talk To Her. This song also appears in this movie. A movie about impossible loves, impossible attractions and as in other Almodovar films the production of subjectivity in the sense of Deleuze and Guattari and in the case of Almodovar how it constructs libidinal flows in relation to sexual preference and social mores. There I was holding the hand of my lover a lesbian as if we were in an Almodovar film being serenaded by Veloso singing us this song of longing for our impossible love.

The communicational imperative espoused by soundscape studies seeks to clear the airwaves so as to support the relational exchanges between individuals and their environments, and between species and their locational sharing. What radio memory reveals are the ways in which noise may contribute, on an emotional and psychological level, a communicational link or fluid through which negotiation, exchange, and sharing may take place, finding further footing in how location gets defined. From heartbreak to love's blossoming, from car crashes to drug-induced adventures, from revelations to terror, radio memory speaks, through a kind of minor literature, buried auditory lives. Hidden just under the surface, these memories are a tapestry of individual experience threaded through with sonic intensity; it is a tapestry that in turn tells the story of individual negotiation with outside influence, as locational conditions. The song comes from the environment, whether radio broadcast from a particular ghetto-blaster or from someone else's sound-system, intertwining with an individual's experience with others in particular social situations – weddings, hospitals, bus rides, parties in foreign cities, heart-to-heart talks in noisy cafés, listening in the dark, and bedrooms, each is cast as scene for shaping the self. For radio is a form of sociality through which location is riddled with unexpected dynamic. Whether annoyance or excitement, it brings with it new encounters. This may hint at ontology of radio itself, as that which interrupts social reality with alien information, supplying the life of fantasy and the conditions of sharing with new blood. Through radio I then understand location as the very place by which the same and the different, order and disorder, come into contact.

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It is a meeting point by which communication may occur, through sudden spaces. Such propositions may support Richard Sennett's investigations of personal identity and city life in his book *The Uses of Disorder*. Countering trends within urban planning that seek to rid social experience of the anxiety of the other (as exemplified in the secluded, planned suburb), Sennett espouses a flourishing of anarchic confrontation. For Sennett, 'to permit the freedom of deviation would be to care about the unknown, the other, in social contacts' (Sennett 1970: 43). Thus, disorder supplies us with opportunities for sharing in diverse and complex social possibilities, which only come about by caring for the unknown.

6. IMAGINATION OF MEMORY

What I want to underscore are the ways in which individual experience is in turn participant of collective sharing and how radio provides an unexpected and undefined space of sociality. As I've tried to tease out, the relation of radio and event are inextricably united. And further, the memory of the event is also the memory of the song, a song that arrives through unexpected and unplanned means – it is there, as background – and which only becomes memorable by being a surprise. The interwoven complex here of music and memory must be heard to form not only an individual story or tapestry, but also a shared sociality that finds its place in the very space defined by the intermingling of radio broadcast and locational reception.

Two contributed memories may serve as an example. These memories are particularly special as they come from two different individuals, from two different parts of the world, yet both describe an extremely similar experience generated and produced by the very same song. The song is *Holiday in Cambodia* by the Dead Kennedys. Released in 1980, the song quickly became an anthem of punk sensibility, coupling political content with musical aggression. Originating in Helsinki and Los Angeles, the memories each happen by way of secretly listening to late-night radio shows while at home in their bedrooms. Through description and reflection, each memory describes the event as a revelation:

> Memory 1: Trying desperately to not wake up my parents, I would lie in my bed with my ear leaning right on the loudspeaker. I would listen and sometimes record with my tape recorder straight off the old radio. Every 5 minutes, the signal would become faint, and I would have to tune in again. And here is the unforgettable memory: I must've been 15 years of age. Suddenly, I hear something I have never heard before. It is 'A Holiday in Cambodia' by Dead Kennedy's. I was in awe of the temper of the sound and the lyrics. Without exaggeration: My life changed in that instant. From being merely a good student in school – a glittery disco dancer, I became personally engaged and acerbic in regards to history and politics.
>
> Memory 2: sometime in 1983/4 I heard *Holiday in Cambodia* by Dead Kennedy's on the famed 'cutting edge' radio station 91X. I was staying up a bit late for school the next day, still a good boy, empowered to mine the night air. Something about the song moved me, more than the combined efforts of style, technique, skill, and technology. It got me thinking there was more to the cutting edge than post-new wave rock gruel, to feel there was a world outside of my hip suburban enclave where pathos and beauty could co-exist. It was a transcendent sonic assault, beyond the writing, the licks, the chops, names, ideas; it was a revolt of feeling, a kind that rose through my skin. I was only aware of sound washing over me, through me, cleansing, purging, pulling me out to deeper waters and bigger waves than I had known before, a cliché now, but visceral and provocative then, sharpening my edge, nudging me towards cutting through conformity and commercial culture, pushing music where it had not gone before . . .

The effect of hearing that one song coming across on radio is still extremely present in the re-telling. Each inexplicably personal and individual, and yet each tied to a shared map of being in the world. In this way, radio may point to a cultural history not solely through its local transmission and promotion of social groups, but through its dissemination across nocturnal landscapes.

For the final presentation of the *Phantom Radio* project, in Geneva, I organised the 105 memories into ten sub-headings. This functioned as a way to divide the library into loose themes, including Party Music, Hearing Things, Intrusions and Revelations, Silent Night, Blind Alleys & Dead Ends, ESP, etc., Sonorous Landscapes/Cultural Viewpoints, and finally, Haunted House. These themes developed by appreciating parallels amongst individual stories (like the above) – I wanted to allow resonances to occur, within somewhat lyrical parameters, so as to hint at how radio memory is both individual and shared. As a kind of shadow to this categorisation, I imagined each sub-heading as a radio programme, as if I were a DJ organising various play lists. In this way, I wanted to position the work as a form of archive *and* play list for future broadcasts. Each sub-heading was ultimately presented as an individual CD containing all the songs mentioned in the respective memories. These CDs were played on ghetto-blasters housed within constructed wooden boxes, standing roughly one metre tall and fifty centimetres square, and mounted on wheels, so as to allow each box, and ghetto-blaster, to be moved freely by visitors throughout the exhibition space. Through such presentation, it was my hope the work would operate as a means for *performing* the memories, allowing their original event to phantasmatically find place. For transmission operates through a covert transversal, secretly infiltrating all

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kinds of places. That radio could be listened to in the middle of the night, undercover from parents' gazes, attests to the force of broadcast technology. To pass on secret messages, to trigger the imagination, to supply the self with new images of its place in the world – radio writes history in the cracks.

7. LOCATING SHARED GROUND

The cosmological view that purports sound as the primary matter of all things, from the Pythagorean theory of the 'harmony of the spheres', which aims to attune to the proportional harmonics of the celestial bodies, to Joachim-Ernst Berendt's notion that sound links all bodies and beings together through vibrational, ethereal, and undulational movement. For Berendt, sound in a sense is always already there:

> Since time immemorial human beings have sensed the existence of a *third eye*, lying between and just above the eyebrows and making possible spiritual 'insight'. Perhaps people conceived such a visionary idea because they felt the incompleteness of our two seeing eyes and sensed there simply must be something taking them further . . . The *third eye* is a myth – a necessary myth. The situation is different with regard to the ear. Transcendence, a going beyond, is implicit in the act of hearing, so our first and second ears already imply the existence of a third. There has never existed any myth of a third ear. No one needs it. The two ears we have already take us into the realm of the 'third'. (Berendt 1992: 120)

To listen then is to already participate in the 'realm of the third', which we might understand as both a space of audition as well as a space of negotiation, that is, a mythic space through which the self and social reality find means for exchange. The exchange I want to get at is one that straddles what we might call major and minor forms of sociality. The major forms decided upon through national identity, governmental policy, educational bureaucracy, and even familial functions, have their counterpart in those found on the terrain of everyday life governed more by whimsy, spontaneity, intrusion, and the attention paid to others while getting through the day. Thus, minor forms of sociality exist like a flexible web in and amongst major forms, offering reservoirs of experience by which one may judge and negotiate major steps in life. To underscore the 'third ear' as a site of negotiation is to suggest that it provides an arena through which one moves in and out of social reality; that to collect experience from the radiophonic dial is to in turn find recourse to subjective constructions of how one might become a participant.

Such views may counter the sociological and musicological viewpoints that position music as either inherently relational amongst social groups, or territorialised by the patterns of compositional method, history, structure, and the evolutionary strides marked out from composer to composer, artist to artist (Shepherd 1991). The *Phantom Radio* project potentially suggests links across these arguments or methodologies. For, while the radiophonic instant of musical transmission is bound to a sociological understanding of the operations of mass communications, it nonetheless makes its mark by fixing points with an individual's world-view. Memory here counts for the psychological patterns and secret constructions by which individual lives are led, either through shadowy impulse or conscious act. Reading the collection of radio memories, the profound way in which instances of banal event or startling experience are wed to the retaining of a music or song highlights not so much the exchange of sociological information, or the participation in particular social groups (of which we know so well music lends meaning to); rather, it opens up a discovery of the ways in which individual lives are *effected* by music, and how the life of memory is in turn a form of radio. Further, the notion of composition residing in the hands of the maker or the text according to a musicological viewpoint, contrasts with radiophonic witnessing in which composition is inextricably bound to the weaving of experience as memorable and locational: memory pieces together a kind of musical tapestry in which melody, rhythm, lyric, and energy are given meaning by how they fix themselves to recollection, bound to place and the unfolding of its sudden force. To hear a song again is not only to hear structure but that structure as totally fixed and riveted to larger auditory scaffolding.

Arjun Apparudai's notion of the 'work of the imagination' may lend to pursuing radiophonic witnessing (Appadurai 1998). His generous understanding of the work of the imagination recognises that one is always negotiating difference. To approach difference, or to be *approached by difference*, whether in the form of projected images, migrant bodies, or the possibility of future experience, requires a virtual appropriation and remodelling of the present. One has to *imagine* means for achieving communication or stability, for gaining access to the future, and for realising a relation to others. For Apparudai, contemporary culture necessitates an intensification of such work, for globalisation demands a continual confrontation with difference.

The confrontation with difference as a continual negotiation in everyday life echoes the radiophonic experience I've been pursuing here. From the psychic metabolism of radio's phantasmic presence as an active reservoir for imagining previously unheard of voices or languages, to the individual lessons derived from radio memory, where musical broadcast is harnessed for extending and resolving personal decision or crisis. By turning to radio, and the ways in which the work of memory is in fact radiophonic, we may recognise ways in which radio is still a stimulus for modelling the present, as a radical form of telematic being. For radio may be used to imagine routes toward

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confronting the radical impossibilities of enduring the unexpected. From car cashes, heartaches, and death, to sudden love, musical pleasures, and epiphanies, the unexpected requires not only a leap of imagination, but the working out of its reality.

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