Corpo-Realities: Keepin' It Real in "Music and Embodiment" Scholarship

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In 1980, Abbie Conant, a white American trombonist living in Germany, won the solo trombone chair of the Munich Philharmonic, beating out thirty-two other candidates, all male.[1] Invited to the audition via a letter addressed to *Herr* Abbie Conant, the trombonist achieved this success as a disembodied performer—from behind an auditioning screen. With the entire orchestra and director listening, as is the custom when auditioning solo chairs, Conant's sound was consumed as pure musical expression; indeed, her winning performance was exactly the realization the orchestra hoped for. However, when she stepped out from behind the screen, this seemingly unproblematic purity of sound was disrupted: for there stood a female body. Although she received no formal or informal reprimands, Conant was nonetheless demoted after her probationary year. Director Sergui Celibidache made his reasoning clear, telling her, "You know the problem, we need a man for the solo trombone" (Osborne 1994).[2] Conant then embarked on a twelve-year court battle with the Munich Philharmonic while enduring continual harassment from the director and orchestra members. She eventually triumphed, but not without grievous suffering and insult. In this article, Conant's story in Munich and the separate case of the Vienna Philharmonic's behavior toward women and racial minorities are touchstones for two salient issues in recent scholarship on music and embodiment: the implications of live music versus recorded forms and the ramifications of intercorporeality in musical performance. After challenging the often vision-centered and universalizing conceptions of corporeality in these discussions, I turn to scholarship that focuses primarily on the performer's sentient body. I believe such research affords an important new means to situate embodiment (and its promise) more fully within cultural studies, a contribution music scholars may be uniquely situated to offer. However, I begin with a hard look at some tough corpo-realities.

Recordings versus Embodied Performance

Recent trends in music scholarship have worked to overturn the hegemony of the score in musical analysis and to emphasize the embodied act of musical performance. However, I caution against simply reversing the hierarchy by privileging performance, which implicitly or explicitly relegates recordings

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to second place, behind performance and just above the score. The path-breaking work of Susan McClary, Suzanne Cusick, and others has provided long-overdue analyses of gendered meanings in the aural dimension of music. Music *means* aurally, as McClary in particular has shown through her detailed textual and hermeneutical analyses, yet such aurality also harbors a potential for resistance through misfired meanings, misconstruals, and aural drag performances.[3]

Many scholars have investigated the impulses toward and effects of preserving music in recordings. Remarking on the arrival of the phonograph at a time when Western artists and philosophers were engaged in destabilizing identities and meanings, Charles Grivel writes,

> Just as Rimbaud was writing that "*je est un autre*" (I is someone else), Mallarmé that a blank volume is his expression, . . . and Nietzsche, of course, that since God is dead, the voice, without reservation, dissolves . . . a machine arrives in the nick of time to capture all this and give it an appearance. (1992:33)

Here, recording provides a specious bulwark against the necessary decline of Western enlightenment. For Susan McClary, recording technology palliates Western culture's discomfort with music as a particularly corporeal practice. She writes, "The advent of recording has been a Platonic dream come true, for with a disk one can have the pleasure of the sound without the troubling reminder of the bodies producing it" (1991:136). Such observations highlight the view that recording changes music from an ephemeral and embodied evocation to just another signifier in the play of signification: a disembodied, interchangeable commodity awaiting its turn on the CD player. These concerns carry particular weight with music educators, among whom the plague and promise of recordings continually riddle pedagogical decisions. Writing on the Afro-Brazilian music and martial art form, *capoeira*, ethnomusicologist Greg Downey states,

> In many ways, recordings are a blessing, saving my audiences from a slew of adjectives and vague metaphors, but they also leave me uncomfortable. Music objectified as a recording . . . generates its own distortions in our understanding of musical events . . . I fear that by presenting an objectified recording as "the music," I may seem to imply that the musical object alone determines musical experience. (2002:487)

Downey's essay concerns the phenomenology of hearing and how culture "shapes the way we hear." And indeed, capoeira is an art form that begs a visual understanding. I want to use Downey's comments, however, to explore what it may mean for a recording to "generate its own distortions

in our understanding of musical events." Music, unlike painting, film, performance art, theater, and dance, is not necessarily dependent upon sight, and although scholars are doing fascinating work on the visual element of music (particularly Leppert 1988 and 1993),[4] I find music's most radical feature is its disruption of vision's authority.

In his best-selling book *Blink: The Power of Thinking without Thinking*, Malcolm Gladwell lays bare the cultural context of a symphony orchestra in terms of viewed embodiment, and includes a section on Abbie Conant's experience with the Munich Philharmonic. Since the advent of screened auditions in American orchestras (and the consequent rise in female and minority placements), Gladwell states that, "What the classical music world realized was that what they had thought was a pure and powerful first impression—listening to someone play—was in fact hopelessly corrupted" (2005:250–51). Some people look as if their playing sounds better than it actually does because of confident behavior or good posture. Others may look belabored but sound great. Julie Landsman, principle french horn player in the Metropolitan Opera orchestra, states, "I've been [on the panel in] auditions without screens, and I can assure you that I was prejudiced. I began to listen with my eyes, and there is no way that your eyes don't affect your judgment. The only true way to listen is with your ears and your heart" (quoted in Gladwell 2005:251). Contemporary scholars may chortle at the suggestion that "true listening" demands the disappearance of the performer. However, live music fully ensconced in its context cannot lay claim to any higher "authenticity," at least not without problematizing what such authenticity entails. The Vienna Philharmonic, which eliminated blind auditions just after the Second World War when a Japanese applicant qualified as the best (Gladwell 2005:246), is the hallmark of such musico-cultural authenticity.[5] It would seem that the Philharmonic and many of its listeners prefer a less competent-sounding orchestra over an orchestra consisting of female or Asian bodies because they, like many music scholars and other listeners, appreciate music as the situated, embodied phenomenon. Allowing for the phenomenological perspective that culture shapes the way we hear and that part of the listening experience involves perceiving musicians visually, the music presumably sounds better to these listeners if performed by less musically competent, but more "culturally authentic" musicians.[6]

Since we seem to hear with our eyes, it is not surprising that women use recordings as opportunities to be heard without prejudice (that is, to harness the prejudice that they are men). An MSNBC online article on the Vienna Philharmonic's exclusion of women maintains a side bar with anonymous recorded brass performances, asking, "Can you tell if a man or a woman is playing?" (Herman 2000).[7] Vocalist, producer, and educator Carol Comer

begins her jazz workshops by playing recordings where students guess which instrumentalist is male and which is female.[8] Press materials for the all-women big band Diva assert that in playing a recording of them "no one would be able to identify the gender of the players" (meaning of course, no one would be able to tell they were women).[9] Clearly, women's experience contradicts the implications that recorded music is less authentic than live, for it would seem that women instrumentalists often create "real" music *only* when they are not seen. Even at a live performance, Stanley Kay, the creative director of Diva, continually exhorts listeners to, "*Turn around* and tell me if women or men are playing" (quoted in Hentoff 2005:D8, emphasis added). Their excellence, which equals "playing like men," is best perceived when one is not looking at them. With the "embodied" experience, the music is embedded in its cultural context—a context where women are not commensurate with lead trombone players, nor with "real jazz."

The fact that blindfold tests need to be routinely enlisted in defense of women instrumentalists seems to reveal the tests' short-lived effect. Women take refuge in this disembodiment again and again because once their identity is revealed, a retroactive re-reading often takes place that necessitates yet another blindfold test. I wonder, however, if we could actively engage the slippage present in recordings as a new counterhegemonic practice of listening. When listening to an unfamiliar recording, if we remember *to ask*, we are forced to admit that *we don't know*—that there could be an aural cross-dressing performance going on where we *just can't tell*. Certain instruments (piano, violin, clarinet, jazz flute) more easily beg the question: man or woman? Others are disruptive after our assumptions have been revealed: trombone (woman!). One practice could be to imagine that all the brass sections, guitar soloists, or berimbau artists we listen to for two weeks are women. Do they sound the same? Does our evaluation sink as rapidly as the price for artworks ascribed to male painters did when revealed to be of female provenance?[10] Such information about our listening habits is necessary if we want to recognize our own stereotypes about musical authenticity. Indeed, such stereotypes help to explain why women instrumentalists still face resistance as they try to enter musical communities.

Intercorporeality in Music

Music scholars, particularly those working in the areas of improvisation and intercultural popular music, have proposed that intercorporeality (face-to-face embodied collaborations) involving musicians of diverse backgrounds may offer productive models of communities that both encompass difference and generate unity.[11] Ajay Heble and Daniel Fischlin hosted a colloquium and produced an important anthology on the potential of improvising ensembles

and communities to offer "critical modes of resistance" (Fischlin and Heble 2004:2) through their "discrepant engagement," a foundational concept for the conference.[12] Poet Nathaniel Mackey writes that he,

> coined ["discrepant engagement"] in reference to practices that . . . accent fissure, fracture, incongruity . . . , [and that] engage discrepancy rather than seek to ignore it . . . [It voices] reminders of the axiomatic exclusions upon which positings of identity and meaning depend. (Mackey [1993] 2000:19)

In the exhortation to hail improvising communities or intercultural exchanges as exemplifying such practices, however, I often find meanings cohering around "community" and "intercorporeality" that inadvertently reinforce rather than disrupt axiomatic exclusions.[13] Indeed, some scholars seem to take music's distinctive relation to embodiment as the only necessity to produce this valued intercorporeality, as if intercorporeality in itself were the goal.

In his essay cited above, Greg Downey lauds music's communal aspects, describing "musical tuning-in" (how musicians perform together in rhythmic time) as an "archetypal example of the intersubjectivity demanded by everyday life" and characterizing capoeira as "emphatically intercorporeal," with musicians and dancers deeply enmeshed in the performance (Downey 2002:502). While performing in or listening to a live musical group is often a profoundly intercorporeal experience, it is not necessarily a progressive one. To return to the Vienna Philharmonic, when asked how he would feel about performing with a woman instrumentalist, Helmut Zehetner, a second violinist in the orchestra, said,

> We would be gambling with the emotional unity that this organism currently has . . . When the orchestra [really starts] cooking with a Mahler symphony, I sense very strongly and simply that only men sit around me . . . I would not want to gamble with this unity. (quoted in Osborne n.d.)

Dieter Flury, the orchestra's principal flutist, added,

> From the beginning we have spoken of the special Viennese qualities, of the way music is made here. [It] is not only a technical ability, but also something that has a lot to do with the soul. The soul does not let itself be separated from the cultural roots that we have here in central Europe. And it also doesn't allow itself to be separated from gender. (quoted in Osborne n.d.)

These gender and racially specific souls animating one unified organism espouse their treasured form of collaboration in order to keep women and

racial minorities out of their orchestra. Indeed, paeans to intercorporeality may simply put a new name on some very old phenomena: male bonding, racial segregation, heteronormativity, and the good ol' boys network.

Abbie Conant's problems sprang directly from male desires for homosocial intercorporeality in music. When the topic turned toward music communities in a personal interview, I sensed her discomfort with criticizing the communal aspect of music, and I eventually offered, "It just sounds like communities . . . have posed a lot of difficulties [for you]." Conant responded,

> That's exactly the problem . . . the community part. Through working on the individual level you come to the point [where] you sort of go beyond wanting to be part of things. Maybe that never really goes away, of course. We all want to be part of things, a community, to be nurtured and also to be able to do some nurturing—you know that give and take, feeling a part of the flock of humanity. But there is a point of no return, "Well OK, it's not going to happen in this life." (Conant 2006b)

Clearly, Conant is not against the idea of community, but the concrete manifestations of these communities posed real problems for her. She also described the problems presented when groups of outsiders form their own communities. Her work with the all-women trombone quartet Prisma in the early 1990s was initially a powerful opportunity to share experience, provide support, and acknowledge the difficulties of being a woman trombonist. She said,

> I don't think any of us realized how powerful it was going to be, just the fact that we decided to get together and form this group. And all kinds of things came up for each one of us and we just started telling each other our stories and sometimes we . . . couldn't get down to actually rehearsing because we had so much processing to do. (Conant 2006b)

Conant stayed with the group for only one year, however, and the ensemble disbanded in 1995. Acknowledging the downside of these communities, she stated that, unfortunately,

> It didn't last too long before it got destructive, because this kind of repression and sexism [in our musical worlds] creates illness. It creates all kinds of problems and so not only is there the liberating part of it, but there's also the concentration of poison and the inability to distinguish who is friend and who is foe. (Conant 2006b)

Conant's description of her collaborations with other "women on the margins" is as eloquent as it is heartbreaking. Even as these outsiders

attempted to work together, the prejudice they endured continued to wreak its consequences.

Aware of the hegemony enforced in many musical collaborations, some scholars make difference central to their analyses. In a recent essay, George Lipsitz heralds pianist Horace Tapscott's (2001) autobiography as a model of new jazz historiography in its emphasis on diverse collectivity in the jazz tradition. Even here, however, Lipsitz must acknowledge that "the collectivity Tapscott celebrates included women, but in subordinate and secondary roles" (Lipsitz 2004:21). And in writing on Pan-African musical collaborations, Jason Stanyek emphasizes "African [music's] ... tendency to promote embodied interaction and dialogue between people with disparate personal and cultural histories" (2004:87). For him,

> The most profound thing that Pan-African jazz has offered the world ... has been the ability of musicians to use Pan-Africanism as a basis for constructing a collaborative space in which they make direct contact with each other and communicate and create in spite of extreme differences of musical style and despite profound linguistic, historical, and cultural disjunctures. (2004:91)

And although Stanyek mentions the participation of a few women musicians, he does not describe how gender presents examples of "extreme differences" or "cultural disjunctures" for them or their male collaborators. Both scholars are doing important work in highlighting the promise of "discrepant" musical collaborations; however, I believe it is imperative to present an analysis of the way these forms of collaboration also work against "emancipatory ends."[14] Indeed, the cultural juncture of male hegemony poses a strong delegitimization to their conclusions. I fear that scholars may limit their conception of cultural difference, eliding the complex and ongoing intersections of race, class, sexuality, and—most pointedly in these examples—gender, in the service of making a claim for the exemplary status of certain musical communities. While there are lessons to be learned from Tapscott's collectivity and from Pan-African jazz, by presenting these collaborations as models or bases for interaction while simultaneously obviating such complexity, these analyses tend toward master narrative, rather than producing the disrupture that Mackey encourages.[15]

If "community" is to resist becoming a new master narrative of "progressive" music scholarship, we cannot continue to view it as a noun, but, following Mackey, must understand it as a verb, much like Sherrie Tucker's designation of the marginalized group, "women-in-jazz": an ongoing methodology that interrogates comfort-zone-communities (Tucker 2004). However, a methodology that may be even more flexible and resistant to

master narrative than the linguistic model of the verb is one that places emphasis on the in-the-moment bodily *practice* of a performer.

Sentient Corporeality

Theorizations of corporeality that do not recognize the *displeasures* of musical embodiment cited above would benefit from distinguishing the body as something viewed from the body as a site of sentience and audition. In this last section, I focus therefore on the body not as a sign but as a site of practice experienced by the musician.[16] Although the aurality of recorded music can interrupt hegemonic visual cues, such disruption is often attenuated when stereotypes are simply reinscribed retroactively after discovering the musician's identity. When aurality is understood in terms of its visceral power *in* the body, however, I believe the rewriting of subjectivities can be more radical and abiding.

Recent feminist music scholars (who are also active musicians) have analyzed music from the performer's perspective, and more specifically from the vantage point of the performer's sensuous body. Positioned in a lineage that recognizes the personal as political and the necessity of interrogating "the body" in Western theoretical and popular discourse, these scholars have integrated firsthand experience as performers into their analyses. In her dissertation, *Diva Dogs: Sounding Women Improvising*, scholar/improviser Julie Dawn Smith argues for the power of aurality, corporeality, and improvisation to create new subjectivities, writing that,

> Sound writes upon the exterior surfaces and interior substances of the body with an invisible ink that leaves its mark as it evaporates and disappears. The invisible presence of sound complicates the visual basis of intelligibility to underscore the corporeal as an improvisational process of sounding, audition, (re)writing, and transformation. (Smith 2001:ii)

Moving within the body, sound complicates our usual vision-based epistemologies and draws attention to our resonating bodies as sites of reconfiguration.

Suzanne Cusick has argued for the inclusion of the performer's "actual body" into music theory as a possible solution to the "mind/body problem," suggesting that emphasis on corporeal performance can relocate music away from the "mind side" of Western culture, toward a space that includes mind and body (Cusick 1994:15). Developing the idea that the performer's perspective can be a valid analytical stance, scholar and cellist Elisabeth Le Guin employs a "carnal musicology" that "pays very close attention to . . . the sensations and experiences of playing [a piece]" (Le Guin 2006:3). Le Guin

describes an intimate intercorporeality joining composer and performer during performance, and she demonstrates how information gleaned from this experience provides an approach to musical analysis based in performance. Perhaps idiosyncratically, I take Le Guin's book also as an exaltation of the deep pleasure of practicing an instrument: of working with the body to deepen knowledge of one's instrument, one's body, and of a musical work. For example, she writes,

> No music I have ever played seems so to invite and dwell upon the nuances of physical experience as does Boccherini's: one can count on tiny variations of position, weight, pressure, friction, and muscular distribution having profound structural and affectual consequences. (2006:5)

In Le Guin's words I recognize the deep attention that I relax into over the course of practicing. I believe it is this space of pleasure that provided a source of strength for Conant during her ordeal with the Munich Philharmonic, to which I now return.

Conant's body was an explicit site of contention in her confrontation with the Munich Philharmonic. Unable to provide any evidence of her alleged incompetence as a musician, Munich city lawyers presented this general statement: "The plaintiff does not possess the necessary physical strength to be a leader of the trombone section" (Osborne 1994). To counter this accusation, Conant received testing at the Gautinger Lung Clinic, breathing inside a sealed cabin and having blood taken from her ear to see how efficiently her body absorbed oxygen. She blew into machines to measure the capacity of her lungs and the speed at which she could inhale and exhale, and a doctor examined her rib cage and chest (Osborne 1994). Conant's results were far above average, but as she said in our interview, the idea that she was physically unable to perform the task was never the real problem. Claims against her "interior, measurable body" were merely a cover for the orchestra's dismay at its surface.[17]

Rather than turn against her body, however, Conant turned to it. She discovered the body alignment and relaxation techniques developed by Frederick Matthias Alexander (1869–1955), known as "Alexander Technique," "right after it all blew up" (Conant 2006a). Like other musicians, she used the method to improve musical performance through a heightened awareness of her body. She was then drawn to "every body-related activity I could find," interested in developing creatively and personally (2006a). She studied yoga and pantomime, attended dance workshops, and performed in Beckett's "Act Without Words," a purely physical theater piece, among other activities. The techniques Conant acquired through these activities opened up creative channels, reduced emotional stress, and improved concentra-

tion, and she soon discovered she could apply them to the harassment she encountered in rehearsals. When taunts or direct hostility were aimed at her, Conant practiced "keeping [her] body neutral," a technique she learned in pantomime (2006a). The procedure is used to create a "clear palette" between motions, but Conant began using it to reduce her reactivity to taunts, the physical practice of "neutrality" being a powerful embodiment of the mental position to which she aspired. Similarly, she used breathing exercises and body awareness (relaxed posture, feet firmly planted, etc.) to maintain composure in tense encounters. On the performer's stage (which always includes some form of adjudicating audience), Conant rehearsed for the larger societal stage that measures individuals according to expectations of gender, race, class, and sexuality. Using these corporeal practices to learn to maintain composure and excel on the first stage, the trombonist found these same practices could help her do the same on the second.[18]

The predominant corporeal practice Conant used in dealing with both of these stages, however, was her method with the trombone. Her emphasis was on embodied pleasure as an active and ongoing practice against the pervasive idealism of "getting the body out of the way" in the pursuit of "mastering" one's instrument.[19] She says,

> It is an utter pleasure to practice, to play. When you are playing correctly it is a tremendous pleasure, it is very freeing. Your body is resonating as much as the instrument. You become one resonating animal if you will. I don't like the word "mastering," I've always been appalled by that word. [I think of it] more in terms of coming to an agreement with the trombone in the sense that we are resonating together, it's a relationship. (2006b)

In describing how she maintains this pleasure in her practice, she says,

> [I stay] away from music I don't want to play, music that makes my body hurt, or makes my soul hurt. I practice according to what you might call a pleasure principle. I usually start off with a sensing of a note that is the first note I want to play. Depending on how that feels, how it makes my body feel, how it sounds, how it resonates, I kind of go from there and actually try not to interrupt the sense of feeling good . . . I ask, "Ah, what would feel good today? Oh these . . . trills. Ooh, that's nice. That's not working so well, I'll do some of these. I just need to breathe a little more freely here, and ah, that feels good. Ooh, let's play some low notes." I will go through a routine but I will make that routine as conscious and pleasurable as I possibly can. (2006b)

In answer to my questions, "How has the pleasure principle of practicing been of benefit?" and "Do you find it helpful also in life, in living your life?" she says,

> Absolutely, no question. Part of the palette of sexism, racism—all of those "isms"—is sort of the repression of pleasure, isn't it? Pleasure is out of control, is dangerous, is non-intellectual. It is all of these dangerous things. It's definitely second class . . . to come from pleasure. And yet pleasure is an intelligence in itself. It has a wholeness, a sanity to it, a peace-loving nature. I think getting older I understand . . . on just about every level that that is the way to go, that it is the clue, what you should follow. There's always this pull, "I'll practice that until my lips bleed," that idealism, that transcendental . . . dedication, where you just, you make yourself into a object that you torture until you reach this transcendent state of Great Musician. I'm [not about] that, I'm all about that pleasure principle. (2006b)

Conant's philosophy is rich, containing many opportunities for fruitful investigation.[20] My interest here is in how Conant reworks her subjectivity from "outsider" to "insider" by emphasizing corporeal balance and pleasure. And although Barthes, Irigaray, or Kristeva would seem likely thinkers to enlist in the elaboration of the transgressive nature of pleasure, I find that Baudrillard's ([1981] 1994) discussion of symptoms and simulated illness provides the most illuminating framework for Conant's practice.

For Baudrillard, simulation involves pretending to have what one does not have, but in simulating illness one actually generates real symptoms, throwing into contention meanings of real and imaginary.[21] Entering the world of professional classical music, Conant soon discovered from various diagnosticians (Munich Philharmonic director Celibidache and others) that she had an illness—the cultural illness of Woman Playing Lead Trombone (WPLT). Of course, Conant did not realize she was sick—she was told so, and confronted with the diagnosis she had to make a decision. She could "cure" the disease, which would involve excising the W from PLT, that is, relinquishing her position as solo chair in the orchestra. This was something she was unwilling to do. Another alternative was to consider the finding a misdiagnosis: that indeed, there was nothing whatsoever sick or abnormal about WPLT. However, her painful daily experiences with the orchestra belied this thought. Clearly something was wrong with her body; to deny the sickness would be to deny her experience. Conant therefore recognized that this disease was both real (her body causing dis-ease for many, including herself) and not real (conferred upon her only after she stepped from behind the screen)—a conundrum that I assert she resolves through ongoing corporeal practice.

As we have seen, Conant employed sensuous corporeal practices in order to find strength, centeredness, artistry, and creativity to fuel her career despite significant obstacles. Indeed, through such practices, Conant resolves the paradox of the real/unreal disease caused by her body in music: she simulates the (false) disease of WPLT, taking on its real symptoms.

Those musical endeavors that confer masculinity (playing jazz saxophone, rock guitar, or orchestral trombone) also harbor the fear that somehow women will so completely perform them that the conferred cultural illness of Woman Playing Masculine Musical Role will become "real": a worry that women will actually produce the performance not as an anomaly, not as an illness that is aberrant—either you're cured, or you die, or you're perpetually weakened—but as if this role were "normal" and commensurate for women, which would undercut its designation as normatively male. It is a disease conferred upon women out of a fear that they might really *catch* it.

By continually reinforcing sensations of pleasure, relaxation, connection, and balance while minimizing those associated with pain, competition, domination, and hierarchy, Conant simulates: she elevates subtle bodily sensations into more manifest ones—thereby creating new sensations entirely. Through this she (re)writes and (re)performs the meaning of her body in music from the inside out.[22] Stated simply, the "real symptom" that Conant generates is the commensurability of W and PLT, changing WPLT's status from disease/conferred/periphery to ease/real/center—from aberration to fully embodied illness/health—and undermining the "transcendental truth" of Man Plays Lead Trombone.[23] This is, of course, the very symptom of commensurability the diagnosticians feared—the body that doesn't need a cure, the illness that is now the definition of health, the simulator that is most authentic. However, this generated symptom is first, and most importantly, real *for her*. Whereas WPLT may have been commensurate for the young Conant auditioning behind the screen, her subsequent experience necessitated a new approach to embodying this commensurability. By returning again and again to her body in music, Conant transforms her relationship from "outsider" musician (back) to an "insider," a sense of being inside the music—full, complete and centered within it. Thus, by manufacturing WPLT as real for herself, Conant can begin to transform her body as sign, producing this meaning for others.

My research into this form of "performance practice" is in the early stages, but I am gaining inspiration from the scholars cited above and others who are "analyzing from the body."[24] Like Le Guin, many scholars are demonstrating how attention to embodiment can reveal new insights in musical analysis (Fisher and Lochhead 2002; Iyer 2002). Others, such as Julie Dawn Smith (2001; 2004) and John Shepherd and Peter Wicke (Shepherd and Wicke 1997), describe music's and sound's resonance and vibration in the body as a way to open up to new possibilities of being, unconfined by our usual visualist ontologies. For these scholars, the power and practice of music offers means to thrive in a diverse and still prejudiced world. Because detrimental generalities about "the body," race, ethnicity, or styles of music

can sometimes appear in scholarship on embodiment, however, I advocate a particularist approach that is based in a musician's own physical experience, something Fisher and Lochhead also propose (2002:45). As cultural theorist Elizabeth Grosz has argued, "there is no body as such, there are only bodies" (1994:19), and music scholarship seems especially poised to examine the potential of the individual body and its performance in culture. Since each musician's relationship to her or his body, and to the racial, gender, and other corporeal expectations prevalent in the given style of music will be unique, each will have a different question to answer and challenge to overcome. Their answers may suggest ways that all of us can improve our performance on the larger cultural stage.

Conant's practice and performance demonstrated how she was able to incarnate WPLT for herself in a community troubled by the sight of her female embodiment. By establishing and reinforcing a musical world based in the pleasure of her physical experience rather than on the gaze of the Other, Conant's method suggests how women can keep going, gigging, working, playing, creating—enjoying music despite/with "the disease." In this Conant was not working to change others, or even to change the story, but rather to embody (catch) the disease so fully as to reveal its salubrious soundness. Conant continued with the important, indeed heroic and nearly sacrificial, work of litigating against the Munich Philharmonic and eventually succeeded, receiving back pay and total vindication in court.[25] As great as her success has been, it was also draining, painful, and at times overwhelmingly disheartening. And unfortunately, women musicians continue to be diagnosed as diseased. In answer to this continual diagnosis, Conant found a joyful, resonant, and sound praxis that led her to a new configuration of her body as Woman Playing Lead Trombone. She became her disease against all doctors' orders, offering inspiration for all women unwilling to cure their deviant bodies.

Notes

1. My title makes reference to Susan Leigh Foster's book *Corporealities: Dancing Knowledge, Culture, and Power* (1996). Dance scholars have been at the forefront of theorizing the body and performance within cultural studies. See, for instance Desmond (1997a; 1997b), Foster (1995; 1996; 1997), and Thomas (2003).

2. Composer William Osborne is Conant's husband. He has compiled a history of her experience with the Munich Philharmonic on their website, www.osborne-conant.org.

3. Sherrie Tucker's research into gender and sexuality in jazz has unearthed many examples of women jazz musicians depicted as borderline transvestites. She notes how in the Swing Era "skilled women musicians were described as cross-dressers of sorts: 'the female Louis Armstrong' or 'a Gene Krupa in girls' clothes'" (Tucker 2002:294).

4. Leppert (Forthcoming) also addresses the power of aurality to disrupt the visual in a forthcoming chapter on Werner Herzog's *Fitzcarraldo*.

5. According to Gladwell, the orchestra's former chairman, Otto Strasser, described this as a "grotesque situation: . . . as the screen was raised, there stood a Japanese before the stunned jury." Gladwell goes on to write, "In the past thirty years, since screens became commonplace, the number of women in the top US orchestras has increased fivefold. 'The very first time the new rules for auditions were used, we were looking for four new violinists,' remembers Herb Wekslebatt, a tuba player for the Metropolitan Opera in New York, who led the fight for blind auditions at the Met in the mid-1960s. 'And all of the winners were women. That would simply never have happened before. Up until that point, we had maybe three women in the whole orchestra. I remember that after it was announced that the four women had won, one guy was absolutely furious at me. He said, 'You're going to be remembered as the SOB who brought women into this orchestra'" (Gladwell 2005:250).

6. I am not arguing that disembodied music is free of cultural context. Indeed, McClary maintains that disembodied music is a particular construct of Western culture. While tropes of "world music" presume authenticity through the inclusion of bodies in the musical experience, Western classical music is more authentic without its bodies. For McClary's discussion of Western music as "the sound itself," see McClary (1991:136). In the Munich Philharmonic, Conant's female body would doubly reveal its corporeality by being both a body and, in being female, a signifier of body. Whenever music is forcibly written as "mind," the female body becomes an undesirable semiotic element. In such cases, a woman performing is offensive not for having a body, but for having a body that bears the signification of corporeality. Conant's body also unveiled "pure" musical expression as a gendered expression, an assumption of maleness. This circumstance may seem obvious, but it persists as a problem when scholars look for authentic musical expression without acknowledging how such authenticity rests on visions of gender and race.

7. The MSNBC article (Herman 2000) chronicles William Osborne's activism against the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra. In 1997, after a proposed US tour was threatened with demonstrations and the Austrian government applied pressure to abandon their "men only" rule, the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra finally made their long-standing harpist, Anna Lelkes, a full member. In the past nine years they have accepted no other women as members (Buzzarté 2006). There are some in the pipeline, however, but the road is steep. For a recent update on their progress, see Osborne (2006).

8. Comer states: "When I give workshops, I use a blindfold test with a tape of men and women musicians. I ask the participants to guess who is the man and who is the woman. For piano, for example, I play Gil Evans and Joanne Brackeen. Guess who they pick!" (quoted in Ottinger 1997).

9. See page 15 of the Diva e-press kit, available at http://www.divajazz.com/e-press/e-press.html. Such tests are reminiscent of the famous Roy Eldridge blindfold test where the trumpeter boasted to Leonard Feather that he could easily discern white from black players. In the test, however, Eldridge was correct less than half the time. For a recounting of this blindfold test, see Gennari (2006:56). A similar claim was made regarding women jazz musicians by a recent online commentator. He wrote, "When women play jazz, they don't sound at all like men. I think there is something to that. Something mentally that makes the two sexes think different, attributes to women playing so differently than men do. I wish I could describe this better, but it's hard to explain. It's just weird, but I can usually tell which players are male, and which are female, just by listening" (posted August 19, 2000, by josh [*sic*] Appleby on a forum at the website, JazzCorner, http://jazzcornertalk.com). It is important to acknowledge that whereas racialized meanings in jazz aurality produce a complex story of cross-pollination and include misreadings in various directions among black, white, Latino, Jewish, etc.,

women instrumentalists are still perceived as playing "like a man" until it is revealed that they are "good—for a woman." This essay "brackets out" the question of the gendered nature of musical sound that equates superior instrumental performance with male instrumental performance.

10. Whitney Chadwick has shown that famous artworks by men that were later attributed to women lose their value and indeed, regain value if re-attributed again to a man (2002).

11. Following Jason Stanyek, I employ Gary Weaver's use of the term "intercultural," which emphasizes the "actual interaction of people from various cultures," as opposed to the term "cross-cultural," which involves "comparing and contrasting," and I use Patrice Pavis's phrase "face-to-face embodied collaborations" to describe intercorporeality in musical collaborations. See Stanyek (2004:90).

12. The 1998 colloquium's theme was "Collaborative Dissonances: Jazz, Discrepancy, and Cultural Theory." In the anthology, Nathaniel Mackey recounts the topics for consideration in the original call for papers, which sought to investigate "the 'cognitive dissonance' that results when creative practitioners enter [into] collaboration from different disciplinary and/or cultural locations" and "the extent to which the dissonances that result from collaborative practices might be seen to reduce the effects of hierarchies in the production and valuation of knowledge" (Mackey 2004:367).

13. Fischlin and Heble acknowledge that "not all minority communities in which improvisation is practiced necessarily exist in opposition to dominant social structures, nor is all musical improvisation necessarily rooted in alternative communities and activist practices" (Fischlin and Heble 2004:2). Essays contributed by Sherrie Tucker (2004) and Julie Dawn Smith (2004) offer important critiques of the utopian conception of improvising communities, highlighting how such communities often reinforce stasis rather than rupture when dealing with women. Both authors stress a type of cultural improvisation that would continually break open definitions of woman, jazz, community, and other fixed identities. Tucker's essay in particular offers examples of how the marginalized category "women-in-jazz"—following Norma Coates's (1997) work on "women-in-rock"—could provide productive methodologies for keeping the borders, as well as the concept, of community fluid.

14. For example, Pan-African jazz could be analyzed in terms of the creation or performance of an essentialized (male) blackness. Focusing on African American music and its historiography, Ronald Radano describes how "what [holds] black music together as a story [is] blackness as such." The historians Radano cites in the paragraph from which the quote is drawn (Amiri Baraka, Dena J. Epstein, Lawrence Levine, Roger Abrahams, Claudia Mitchell-Kernan, and Eileen Southern) "uncritically [employed] tropes of the colonial legacy ... especially the fixities of 'black music' as a racial-musical category" (Radano 2003:58). Such ideas of blackness may factor into the desire for Pan-African musicality even when musicians hail from countries other than the US. Likewise, one could investigate how constructions of masculinity established through musical production limit the desirability of collaborations with women. Through such analysis we can continue to work across boundaries of identity, rather than within and behind them.

15. I want to stress that private music ensembles or collectives do not have a magical immunity to the stereotypes and discrimination of society at large and may actually participate more fervidly in sexist practices when the style of music is strongly coded as masculine (jazz, rock, brass sections, etc.). Despite such discrimination, sexual harassment laws or protections for victims do not exist in the vast majority of these groups. To think that musical communities are free of the types of discrimination and unfairness that universities and corporations protect their members from is frighteningly unrealistic.

16. I am not saying the scholars above focus only on the body as a sign. Indeed, I believe they neglect to theorize how different bodies signify differently. However, their discussions implicitly consider the body as viewed—the being- and seeing-there-ness of performance.

17. Conant herself initiated these tests in order to provide some "objectivity" in the situation. Eerily, they may call to mind the long-standing scientific pursuit for biologically based categories of difference. For a recent installment in this ongoing saga, see the investigation into how gay men allegedly react differently than straight men to "pheromones" (Savic, Berglund, and Lindström 2005). I thank Sherrie Tucker for this reference.

18. Note that Conant's focus has been on embodied performance. Indeed, she does not like to record her music. She states, rather poignantly, "A lot of musicians play in a sense to become invisible, to become only sound. And I guess maybe I started out that way, you know, but I changed. And I think [it is important], the fact of me, a female being playing the trombone . . . showing myself . . . : That I have a big horn! [*Laughter*] That my voice can be loud, my voice can reach the ends of the earth. Trying to show myself that all my life and never getting it, quite." Although I would argue that Conant is "getting it" more than she realizes, I also surmise that Conant's sensuous corporeal practices may be even more emancipatory than, or at least a necessary foundation to, the courageous act of "showing herself" to herself and others. When listeners still must "look away" to hear the "truth" of women instrumentalists, the use of corporeal practices to feel her body in music, to practice it, to listen to it, and to train it over a period of time, may more effectively produce the belief, knowledge, and actuality that she is commensurate with "solo trombone chair" than would any effort to show it.

19. To "get the body out of the way" is a common explanation made by musicians and teachers for why we practice: to eliminate any awkwardness the body presents to instrumental facility, making us less and less burdened by such limitations. I thank Vijay Iyer for reminding me of this phrase and its connection to the pervasive idealism of much Western art music.

20. For instance, Conant's relationship with the trombone demands consideration alongside scientist Barbara McClintock's intersubjective approach as famously documented in Ellen Fox Keller's *A Feeling for the Organism* (Keller 1984).

21. Baudrillard writes, "To dissimulate is to pretend not to have what one has. To simulate is to feign to have what one doesn't have. One implies a presence, the other an absence. But it is more complicated than that because simulating is not pretending: 'Whoever fakes an illness can simply stay in bed and make everyone believe he is ill. Whoever simulates an illness produces in himself some of the symptoms' (Littré). Therefore, pretending, or dissimulating, leaves the principle of reality intact: the difference is always clear, it is simply masked, whereas simulation threatens the difference between the 'true' and the 'false,' the 'real' and the 'imaginary'" (Baudrillard [1981] 1994:3).

22. I am not arguing that Conant finds some pure interiority from which to construct her own subjectivity. Indeed, I recognize that conceptions and experiences of the sentient body are embedded in culture and history. Late twentieth- and twenty-first-century Western musicians' experiences of sentient embodiment are often informed by meditative philosophies from India, Tibet, and Japan, as can be seen in the wealth of pedagogical books on instrumental performance influenced by such philosophies (Bruser 1999; Chase 1981; Werner 1996). Additionally, feminist theory, queer theory, phenomenology, and critical race studies are influencing how we experience, understand, and view the body. Although a detailed investigation into these constructions is beyond the scope of this article, I want to make clear that I am not asserting a culturally neutral space found "in the body." Indeed, bringing aurality and sentience into discourse is both challenged by, and disruptive of, our usual visualist linguistic models based in Debordian spectacle (Debord [1967] 1995), Foucauldian panopticism (Foucault

[1977] 1995), or visualist Lacanian psychoanalysis (Lacan [1966] 2002). And while I do not want to debate the superiority of one sense over another, John Shepherd and Peter Wicke have noted that whereas vision functions to separate and locate, establishing a world that is "out there," "sound . . . enters the body and is in the body . . . Visually disposed language, furthermore, favors thinking about sound as an object, but sound functions poorly in this regard: it dissipates, modulates, infiltrates other sounds, becomes absorbed and deflected by actual objects, and fills a space surrounding them (Shepherd and Wicke 1997:127–28). This point underscores the locations of pleasure and displeasure Conant encountered in her experience of music and embodiment. While separated and dislocated from the Philharmonic after appearing from behind the auditioning screen, Conant nonetheless could return to musical pleasure through attention to her corporeal resonance with sound.

23. Conant reveals the truth of men playing lead trombone as a simulation and indeed her performance is also a simulacrum. As Baudrillard quotes Ecclesiastes, "The simulacrum is true" (Baudrillard [1981] 1994:1).

24. This is the title of an important essay on music and embodiment by George Fisher and Judy Lochhead (2002). The article gives a very helpful primer on the main philosophical theorizations of embodiment and how these theorizations relate to extant scholarship on music and embodiment. The authors then offer various approaches to analyzing music via embodiment theories and conclude with two examples of such analysis, examining Joan Tower's *Fantasy (those harbor lights)* and the third movement of Johannes Brahms's Sonata in E♭ for Clarinet and Piano, op. 120, no. 2.

25. For a full accounting of Conant's experience in Munich, see Osborne (1994). From 1979 to 1980 Conant had been solo trombonist of the Royal Opera of Turin before winning the solo chair in Munich where she stayed until 1993. In 1992 she became full professor of trombone with tenure at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik in Trossingen. Recently she has focused on a solo career, performing in over 115 American and European cities. Her International Trombone Camp is popular with students from around the world. For more information on Conant and Osborne, see http://www.osborne-conant.org/index.html.

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