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The Virtual is Material: Music Improvisation in Post-Digital Ecologies

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This performance-lecture was originally presented at the DRHA (Digital Research in the Humanities and Arts) conference in 2021 in Berlin. 3BP (Paul Stapleton, Adam Pultz Melbye and John Bowers) presents three views on the creation of an online performance ecology that allows the trio to improvise together, despite living in three separate locations. Rather than trying to overcome the instabilities and artefacts introduced by the fluctuations in data transfer, 3BP describe how such properties become native to the trios understanding of its own practice, affording new areas of creative exploration and consideration. The trio draws on Karen Barad's use of terms such as diffraction and apparatus to discuss how music-making and improvisation embedded in messy technologies afford emergent behaviours that transcend reflection to allow for diverse and unstable non-linear performances.





Link to performance: <https://vimeo.com/640946914>

Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

Author Information

Paul Stapleton is an improviser and sound artist originally from Southern California. He designs and performs with a variety of modular metallic sound sculptures, custom made electronics and found objects in settings ranging from Echtzeitmusik venues in Berlin to the annual NIME conference. Paul is currently Professor of Music at SARC in Belfast, where he teaches and supervises research in new musical instrument design, music performance, sound design and critical improvisation studies. www.paulstapleton.net

Adam Pultz Melbye is a double bass player, composer and audio programmer based in Berlin, currently undertaking a practice-led PhD at Sonic Arts Research Centre in Belfast. Adam has released three solo albums and has appeared on at least another forty releases. He has created sound installations, composed music for film, theatre and dance, and performed in Europe, the US, Japan and Australia, his work appearing at Murray Art Museum Albury (Australia), The Danish National Gallery and Wien Modern (Austria). www.adampultz.com

John Bowers is an independent artist-researcher with an academic background in social and computing sciences, design, music and critical theory. As an improvising musician, he works with modular synthesisers, home-brew electronics, reconstructions of antique images and sound-making devices, self-made software, field recordings, esoteric sensor systems, and spoken text. He often combines performance with walking and the investigation of selected sites to research an imagined discipline he calls 'mythogeosonics'. He has performed at festivals including the Venice Biennale, Experimental Intermedia New York, Transmediale/CTM Vorspiel Berlin, Píksel Bergen, Electropixel Nantes, BEAM London, Aldeburgh Festival and Spill Ipswich, and toured with the Rambert Dance Company performing David Tudor's music to Merce Cunningham's Rainforest.

