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6 A Pathway to Wellbeing

Transcending a Compensatory History of Women in Music

I believe that generating descriptions about prehistoric women's sonic experiences and sharing them with others begins to innovatively address the lack of a women-centric music tradition that is situated within deep history: a tradition that provides a spiritually based connectivity across time and place, a tradition that provides a unique pathway to wellbeing. To immediately clarify, the terms "women" or "woman" are to be understood as pragmatic writing tools that do not automatically refer to an abstract universal or one biological sex, but rather, to a spectrum of possibilities. My motivation for engaging with this topic stems from my own years of spirit injury that I experienced throughout most of my professional musical training where I found that many tacit normative customs endure despite their ensuing toxic consequences. I have also witnessed this spirit injury in my young female (and male) university students as well.

In my doctoral thesis, *Women in Music: Letting a Long Story Be Long, Contemplating Women's Sonic, Musical, and Spiritual Experiences in Prehistory*, the wellspring of this chapter, I explore the auditory and spiritual lives of Paleolithic women (Saidel, 2018). I consider their agency in mediating the spiritual power of sound and how doing so contributes to a multifaceted musicality, one that reorients the framework of the narrative of women in music. It makes it possible to rethink how music history is investigated and interpreted, to explore what a more inclusive music history narrative might be, what it might look and sound like. It also makes

it possible to integrate notions of spirituality into the entire women-in-music discourse.

Working on my dissertation certainly moved me toward my academic goal of earning a Ph.D. degree, but additionally it was simultaneously an unanticipated pathway to my overall wellbeing. The research that I conducted facilitated a spiritual healing for me, in part, by allowing me to tell the story about the evolution of my spiritual approach to musicianship, along with my growing feminist awareness of the androcentric hierarchy in academic music. I also discovered that by choosing to investigate the discipline of sound studies and consequently to integrate its perspectives into a depiction of likely experiences of prehistoric women, that I had truly entered exciting and uncharted territory. With the passing of time, the lens of hindsight has facilitated deeper insights into the wisdom of my research choices. Because of where my research eventually led me, along with feedback from colleagues and students, I concluded that broadening the parameters of musical experiences (by including sonic experiences) did resonate with others and could stimulate dialogues about alternative approaches to historical narratives regarding women in music, all of which has been personally empowering.

Western scholars have constructed a narrative of historical musicology whose narrow focus is both androcentric and Eurocentric, a focus in which musical participation by women is rarely sufficiently documented or included. I observed that the transfer of existing musicological methodologies onto the experiences of women has not been authentically transformative or empowering for women in music. Moreover, compensatory historical writing is the most common approach to women's history, which could be viewed as a form of making amends for generally leaving women out of the writing of history. I argue that although women have become aware of some of their musical past, it is truly not a musical *heritage* because compensatory scholarship creates an awareness of some of women's musical past but does not necessarily create an awareness of women in music history on their own terms. It usually features biographical material lauding extraordinary women's accomplishments and provides information about women that are chosen because *they had done what men had done*. They

then can be added to the existing narrative, a hegemonic narrative that remains preoccupied with the experiences of men.

My interdisciplinary project is broad in scope. Within its theoretical framework I grapple with a gamut of topics, from ways of rethinking the writing of history and reckoning with time, to sound studies and the study of acoustics in ancient sites, to a critical examination through a feminist lens of normative disciplinary scholarship in anthropology and archeology (including rock art), religious studies, and musicology. I explore potential audio-visual-lithic relationships for their implications for deepening an understanding of the spiritual aspects of Paleolithic life. Many experiential aspects overlap and are often enmeshed. Through integrative discussions I was able to describe a plausible matrix of Paleolithic women's sonic, musical, and spiritual experiences by constructing a heterarchical network. In this present chapter, which is about formulating an alternative historical portrayal of women in music as a pathway to wellbeing, the primary connective topical thread consists of theorizing Paleolithic audio-visual-lithic relationships via the discipline of sound studies, and then linking them to a gynocentric notion of ancient spirituality.

What attracted me to thinking about women in prehistory is the fact that prehistory constitutes such an immense span of time of people living on this planet. I marveled at how (for the most part) this vast segment of humanity is shunned by the contemporary world, as if they were not real people, which could be referred to as "temporally othering" them. In contrast, my research negotiated the tension of considering our predecessors in the distant past as complex individuals who were situated in a multitude of relationships as I simultaneously emphasized trends and processes more than particular events and persons. Idealistically, I initially wanted uncluttered discursive space free and clear of the strife of how the patriarchy came about or its consequences for women, free from the complexities of reactions to the patriarchy, and a space within which to challenge the uncritical formulation of simplistic popular narratives about prehistoric people. I learned that rather than homogenizing the cultures and lifestyles of the first human populations, one can expect degrees of variation across time and place and by extension, degrees of variation in women's activities and the meaning they assigned to them.

The Paleolithic world I am referring to is archaeologically based on stone tool cultures. Specifically, the Paleolithic Age falls within the same timeframe as the Pleistocene, which is geologically based on the repeating cycles of glaciation (or Ice Ages) during this time, referring to the epoch spanning from roughly 2.6 million years ago to about 12,000 years ago. The Upper Paleolithic (c. 40,000–c. 10,000 years ago), ending when the Ice Age ended and as agriculture began taking over, is the approximate timeframe under discussion. This chronological framework allows me to direct my focus onto the lifeways of foragers, onto spirituality situated within an animistic cosmology rather than one with formal gendered deities, and I also chose this time period because cave art production increased with an apparent uptick in both quantity and diversity (Conkey, 1985).

Bounteous Sound Studies

According to Nordic music archaeologist Cajsa S. Lund (2008), *Homo sapiens* have continued to relate to their sound environments in consistently similar ways for 40,000 years (p. 17). In other words, even though the content, context, and culturally mediated meanings that our ancestors constructed may differ from those of today's world, much of the human process of sonically knowing and being in one's world is remarkably similar. Moreover, the notion that sounds of an ancient place may have been part of its purpose and meaning is gaining momentum.

The field of sound studies is a research area which explores the nature of sound and listening, and their role in experience and perception. From a sound studies perspective, music is regarded as but *one sonic phenomenon among many*. Hence, a sound studies perspective can develop an aural connection to earlier generations that includes everyday sounds. Critical aspects of social and cultural life emerge by paying attention to sonic phenomena that could be overlooked in traditional, visually oriented historical writing. Notions of the acoustic environment can provide insight into the aural aesthetics and musicality expressed by people in prehistoric times.

Because of the breadth of the disciplinary roots of sound studies, the research and methodological approaches engaged in by sonically focused scholars vary greatly. Many sound studies scholars' approaches are situated within a cultural anthropological paradigm, whereas others pursue traditional scientific technological studies. Technical advances and new analytical techniques have enabled scholars to effectively apply their findings to both ancient and current societies. Potential discursive trajectories that focus on either what is heard, or how or where it is heard, can become aspects of a more nuanced narrative about the meanings of the auditory lives of people in the distant past, and by implication, about the spiritual or musical lives of these people.

Auditory archeology is a field of sound studies inquiry that considers the potential of everyday, mundane, and unintentional sounds in the past, and how these may have been significant to people. The approaches to the study of sound within auditory archeology have fostered a range of multi-valent interpretations. Psychologist Alfred Bregman (1994 as cited in Mills, 2014) coined "auditory scene analysis," which is a concept that represents or refers to all the sounds a person can hear at a given time or place. It considers how sound is encoded with information about the world. The concept of a "sonic fabric" posits that places have a sonic fabric or texture which can be used to describe their auditory content. This approach creates a way of thinking about how people come to live in ways specific to their surroundings, how they engage with their world, which is helpful in contemplating the lived experiences of people in prehistory.

Music archeology is a field that has emerged from the intersection of the interests of the traditional disciplines of archeology, musicology, and ethnomusicology, homing in on the musicality of ancient societies. Music archeology was greatly impacted by the digital revolution, with digital technology fostering a new set of possibilities, especially by radically changing the field of acoustics. "New approaches to the analysis of sound transformed fieldwork which allowed researchers to carry out experiments that mixed music archaeology with acoustics, resulting in a new field that was dubbed archaeoacoustics" (Eneix, 2014, p. 24).

Archaeoacoustics has been described as the study of past sounds reconstructing past existence. It is an interdisciplinary field that has no uniform

or generally accepted theories, methodologies, or data. Archaeoacoustic evidence for the ancient use of sound in sacred monuments and other sites has been documented, revealing that the use of sound was far more widespread than previously estimated. The researchers work from the premise that ancient people must have noticed the sound effects of these places. Portable digital technology has allowed acoustic experiments to more readily enter the field. Acoustic fingerprints can be created using a "sine sweep" that records the response of the space to sounds, and it has been discovered that images in Paleolithic caves correspond to areas with the greatest resonance. This suggests to several researchers that Paleolithic people were coordinating the sonic and visual aspects of the caves (Eneix, 2014).

Connecting Sound to Prehistoric Visual Artifacts

At this juncture I am introducing audio-visual-lithic relationship highlights pertaining to prehistoric art as proposed by three eminent archeoacoustic scholars: Iegor Reznikoff, Paul Devereux, and Steve Waller. They have been selected because each one of them has significantly contributed to both the quantitative and qualitative knowledge base concerning sound in very ancient sites.

Iegor Reznikoff is credited with being one of the founders of the field of Archaeoacoustics and is well known for his 1988 pioneering work in collaboration with Michel Dauvois. The duo studied three caves in the Ariège department at the foot of the Pyrenees where they were able to describe a complex acoustic network by documenting a noticeable correspondence between the points of resonance and the locations of paintings within the caves (Till, as cited in Eneix, 2014). These scholars introduced the practice of looking at the entire lithic structure as a sonic production device.

Specifically within the context of cognitive archeology, Paul Devereux (2001) investigates whether it is possible to actually hear what Stone Age people heard. Drawing from quantitative data, he considers possible correlations between the visual artifacts that are embedded in structural rock surfaces, ritual times, and the acoustics of the environment. Devereux explored

locations in England, Ireland, France, Spain, and Central America that included various rock formations such as: caves, cliffs, megalithic chambered mounds, chambered barrows, exposed slabs of dolmen situated on a ridge, Irish stone mounds known as cairns, and recumbent stone circles. He writes about the spiritual implications of sounds (including infrasound waves or silent sound) and how they can affect humans. Devereux describes possible ritualized events where sound serves in a complex array of important functions, illustrating the frequent association of unusual sounds with the presence of spirits. He suggests that the most basic musical sounds would have been percussive ones, naturally occurring when rocks and stones were struck. They are known as "ringing rocks," sounding most closely at times like either bells or drums, and "evidence of their ancient usage is usually found in the form of 'chatter marks' or 'cupules', which are small cup-like depressions created by repeated and carefully aimed striking of the rock's surface with a hammerstone" (p. 119).

Devereux also writes about ringing rock-research that has been conducted by others such as an investigation of the Preseli Hills in Brittany by Bernard Fagg in the 1950s, where Fagg found two massive rock-gongs in one of the villages called Maenclochog (Ringing Rocks). Belgian archeologist Lya Dams (1985) conducted a detailed study of the musical features of stalactites, which came to be known as lithophones (any of a class of percussion instruments that are made of stone and whose sound is produced by striking). Devereux posits that the cave lithophones are compelling evidence of intentionally created sounds by Paleolithic people, and that the places where sounds issued from were regarded as holy.

Archeologist Steve Waller's direct experience of powerful echoes emanating from a cave in France during the 1980s, in answer to sounds made *outside* of it, was the beginning of his research in which he investigates the relationships between the echoes of rock structures and their images and mythology. He initially experimented with single percussive sounds and subjectively judged their characteristics. While doing so "he discovered that when rocks are struck together in the manner of one making stone tools, the echoes sound remarkably like the hoof beats of galloping horses" (Devereux, 2001, p. 113). For Waller, this auditory discovery provided a link between the context and the content of the art.

Waller (2014) eventually formalized an acoustic theory of rock-art motivation in which he referred to rock art as acoustic images. Depictions in the caves are mostly of animals, and he found that rock-art panels of hoofed animals produced the highest decibel levels of reflected sound, the most intense reverberations, whereas unpainted surfaces tended to be flat. Where there were mirror-image mammoths facing one another or two back-to-back images of bison, Waller found echoes to be stereophonically symmetrical with identical sound reflection in each direction. While standing very close to a painted cave wall, Waller inadvertently discovered that his loud yelling instantly rebounded back with such force that it seemed as if the person depicted in the nearby rock wall painting was actually talking to him. He states:

Echo myths around the world attest to the belief that sound reflection was perceived as spirits calling out from rocks, an example of animism. Just as virtual images appear deep within a mirror due to light waves bending, virtual acoustic images can seem to emanate sound from deep within a rock wall due to sound waves bouncing ... The rock art is located at locations with the strongest echoes and there are legends associated with rock art describing supernatural portals through the rock from which sound can be heard to emanate. (Waller, as cited in *Eneix*, p. 100)

Waller argued that it was plausible to consider that perhaps the art was an attempt to depict the spirits and animals responsible for the magical sounds at these acoustic hotspots.

Reznikoff, Devereux, and Waller combined data from the scientific study of sound waves with their personal experiences of interacting with stone structures through sound which provided both quantitative and qualitative evidence for their association of acoustics with rock art. Although some of their work focused on Neolithic sites, their observations and interpretations hold implications for thinking about the experiences of Paleolithic people. I began to envision Paleolithic people seeking magical or spirit-haunted resonant places for paintings as they mapped out complex acoustic networks.

Archaeoacoustics offers a fresh take on the difficult issue of being able to discern intentionality, making it possible for the diverse activities that comprise prehistoric art to be understood not only contextually (in a vast

continuum of cultural and historical specifics), but *as context*. They are contexts in which the auditory sense and visual experience of the landscape combine in a vital interplay, becoming transmitters of different kinds of spiritual wisdom. "Whether visual or auditory, the underlying sense seems to have been that rock surfaces were regarded as the interface between the physical and spiritual worlds" (Devereux, 2001, p. 150). When sonic phenomena is integrated into rock art interpretation, another important dimension for thinking about ancient spirituality/cosmologies emerges, and by implication, ancient musicality.

Notions of Paleolithic Spirituality as Sonic Experiences

Christina Puchalski, MD, Director of the George Washington Institute for Spirituality and Health, contends that "spirituality is the aspect of humanity that refers to the way individuals seek and express meaning and purpose and the way they experience their connectedness to the moment, to self, to others, to nature, and to the significant or sacred" (University of Minnesota, 2016, para. 3). Puchalski's description of spirituality is deeply attuned to how I regard spirituality, and therefore, I offer hers as a working definition for the discussion at hand. Since the late-1800s the spiritual practices of Paleolithic people have been theoretically linked by Western researchers to the painted or engraved images found on the walls of caves, cliffs, megaliths, and open-air sanctuaries (parietal art). However, scholarly focus on the acoustic environment or soundscape of such sites is a much more recent endeavor. Indeed, there are a plethora of theoretical orientations to consider when contemplating Paleolithic spiritual practices. In the third chapter of my dissertation, "Paleolithic Spiritual Practices," where I create a conceptual space for contingency, specificity along with broad patterns, and diversity in ancient lifeways, I explore potential audio-visual-lithic relationships. I do this by systematically introducing the previously discussed disciplines of sound studies and archaeoacoustics and their respective contributions in much more depth, then I address the concepts of musicality and ritual, before turning

to a discussion of the visual components. However, my intention here is not to rehash my dissertation, but rather to draw from it as a springboard to talk about spiritual aspects of life experiences of Paleolithic women, depictions situated within lifeways that emerge from a synthesis of meticulously researched disciplinary threads.

I think the fundamental centerpiece for women's culturally specific expressive or meaning-making practices in prehistory lies in the functional aspects of their daily activities, which were influenced by their circadian rhythms. Speaking here in broad terms or trends, specific sonic events *per se* need not to have been highly organized, but rather, sound-production and sound-interpretation were intrinsically and spontaneously part of their world, often crucial to physical survival. Paleolithic women's expressive practices likely consisted of (but were not limited to) vocal and percussive accompaniment to walking, foraging, pre-hunting rituals and hunting, hygiene regimens, making tools, painting and engraving images on rock surfaces, child-directed prosody, selection of sexual partners, rites of passage, preparation of food, and caring for the dead. Objects incorporated into sound-production (which may also be categorized as music-making) could be made from leaves, sticks, vines, stones, tree trunks, reeds, bark, gourds and seeds, shells, stalactites or ice, and bones. Paleolithic women also possibly imitated the sounds they heard in their environments, which could have emanated from animals and insects or sounds such as flowing water or the effects of the wind. They interacted with their soundscapes and used the sounds they heard; their lives were also shaped by them.

Attitudes to sound are culturally and historically specific and David Tame (1984) argues that "the further we go back in history, the more sacred and vital the significance we find to have been attached to the phenomenon of sound itself" (p. 13). Tame's comment is highly relevant when thinking about the spirituality of prehistoric people, to considering what its characteristics might be. Animism, which is an anthropological construct, denotes a worldview in which people do not see themselves as separate from their environment, an environment that is considered to be sustained by an endless circulation of a distinctive spiritual energy or essence with which humans engage. Moreover, every object, place, physical element of landscapes, type of creature, weather system, climate, and, yes, sound, is

considered to be spiritually alive. As previously described, many ancient cultures considered the blurred reverberations of percussive sounds within caves to come from supernatural beings and also attributed powerful magic to the very loud natural thunderous sounds in the sky. People in prehistory considered humanly produced sound capable of directly affecting changes in their world, as having authority to influence events and people.

Today's scholars widely accept animism as the ubiquitous ancestral mode of experience, and it is also widely accepted that an enduring thread of humanity's oldest spiritual traditions seems to lie in the animistic-based shamanic paradigm. A shaman is an anthropological term for a person who acts as intermediary between the natural and supernatural worlds and whose primary concern is to heal and maintain the spiritual balance within the community. Thomas DuBois (2009) writes about how music/sound functions as it serves both the practitioner and community within the shamanic paradigm. He points out that music/sound is a key tool employed by shamans in order to enter trance states, and it is a medium of multidirectional communication between the shaman, spirits, and community members.

Shamans often deliver their healing word/sounds through songs and, hence, it is through music/sound that they are able to also actualize other realities for the benefit of the world. Often, the consequences of ritual action extend beyond the ritual itself, inspiring far-reaching actions and transforming mindsets in other areas of life. Max Dashu (2010) and Barbara Tedlock (2005) have convincingly shown that women have a long history as active agents or practitioners within the shamanic paradigm and that women have profoundly influenced the development of their respective communities in previously unacknowledged ways.

A different understanding of Paleolithic spiritual practices is possible when one sees that despite there being relatively little material culture, a contextually specific, animistic spiritual-based knowledge system existed that includes the integration of previously ignored or unknown sonic phenomena. Paleolithic women's musical/sonic performances within shamanic ritualized spaces could have simultaneously functioned as a musical performance or sonic experience *and* as a spiritual role. Moreover, this

different understanding recognizes that women were active agents who were essential to the completeness of Paleolithic spiritual practices.

Conclusion

I propose that a more holistic approach to articulating the musicality of prehistoric women is one in which the following are included: a fluctuating coalescence of shamanic musicality co-existing with the everydayness of their auditory worlds, the repetitive sounds of soundscapes, and the music embedded in the functionality of common activities. As Paleolithic women mediated the spiritual power of sound as sound-producers and sound-interpreters, their music-making aligned with the production of culturally specific knowledge-making. Their musicality can be regarded as an enduring form or mode of knowledge in and of itself, as sonic knowledge. Such mediation of sound illustrates a sphere of personal power for Paleolithic women that is also applicable to contemporary women living today. This interpretation (linking sound mediation with spheres of personal power and sonic knowledge) is a connective thread linking generations of women's musical experiences, not in uniformity, but rather in a chain of contextual and culturally specific spiritual expressions. One can also productively rethink what music-making means or signifies, rethink the consequences of extracting it from its context. It is one way to conceptualize a musical heritage for women.

A complexity emerges, leading us to rethink our current accepted knowledge about ancient spiritual practices and in turn, to reconsider what constitutes the modernity of contemporary ones. Recognizing the sonically strategic placement of ancient images of rock art might be of crucial importance, in that it facilitates thinking of the rock art not just as mute representations of primitive superstitions or as cognitive evolutionary milestone markers, nor as decorative – or art for art's sake. But rather, it can influence our spiritual and musical mindset, allowing us to become receptive to the energy or power or principle the images are intended to express.

Music history narratives typically encompass a network of interdependent activities and experiences. Somatic, emotional, and intellectual processing of sound creates relationships and meanings that when attached to musical experiences and through consensus of opinion, become traditions. Lawrence Kramer (1990) encourages musicologists to abandon the myth of music's autonomy as a transcendental experience or object, to welcome the complex situatedness of music in webs of extra-musical forces. Women's lived experiences shape their personal aesthetics and they have again and again participated in valuable music-making, which is a form of meaning making. Women's collective musicality can persist in being understood as multidimensional when and if individual women consciously choose to be aware of their personal power or agency in relationship to sound.

Within my augmented timeline, I acknowledge and value innumerable generations of women's participation as spiritual healers within the shamanic paradigm, providing different types of role models, different criteria pertaining to women's experiences of music-making. Knowing that women have dynamically participated in the production of musical culture across time and space, that they drew strength, inspiration, and direction from their everyday embodied experiences and channeled their individual energy effectively within the most ancient and widespread system of mind-body healing known to humanity, is empowering. Women could choose to view themselves as belonging to an endless tradition or lineage of hierophants – being revelations of the sacred, being emotional conduits, being spheres of power. Furthermore, by situating oneself in such an expanded time frame, one can then look at the Eurocentric tradition from a different perspective, far beyond the confines of a few hundred years of a linear narrative, an alternative perspective within which the Eurocentric tradition now has to fit. Ultimately, it is a matter of ownership. There certainly is no grand counter-narrative regarding music history in the making here. Instead, I offer a way to re-conceptualize traces of ancient practices, perhaps to be inspired enough by them to claim them and benefit from one's authentic connections with them.

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JUNGMIN GRACE HAN

Interlude 1

The Sacred Space Within

Towards Mind-Body Unity through Musical Performance

[A] spiritual experience is an experience of aliveness of mind and body as a unity. Moreover, this experience of unity transcends not only the separation of mind and body but also the separation of self and [the] world. The central awareness in these spiritual moments is a profound sense of oneness with all, a sense of belonging to the universe as a whole. (Capra, 2002, p. 68)

Can a performing musician ever get to this sense of spiritual experience? If so, what does this spiritual experience have to do with one's inner capacity for music and self? June Boyce-Tillman (2016) described in her book "the development of spirituality based on [a] process rather than dogmas" (p. 4). As indicated in the title of her book *Experiencing Music – Restoring the Spiritual*, her notion demonstrates that the experiential and the spiritual are, in fact, intrinsically interdependent elements underlying the nature of music. She elaborated as follows: "In making music, we are participating in these vibratory patterns using our creative agency to influence events and be part of musicking the divine ... this means that by musicking, we can potentially be part of the evolving creativity of the universe" (2016, p. 9).

Music is the art of managing sound. More than any other musical experience, performing musical arts necessitates delicate skilled movements because the performer is a first-hand creator of living sounds. Despite the profound physical nature of music performance, however, text-based compositional abstraction has long been the dominant way of understanding music. In this abstraction, the performing body has been ignored as if it were a finite object. This issue, I extrapolate at large, is a part of the body-mind