

Imaginary gestures of *specta(c)torship*: Darie Nemeș Bota's 'Urban Seashell'

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Abstract

This article considers the process of *specta(c)torship* afforded for by Darie Nemeș Bota's *imaginary music score Urban Seashell*, recently published in the collection *Redescoperind Muzica Imaginară* (2020, ed. Irinel Anghel). *Urban Seashell* asks the spectator to perform a series of simple movements on a sidewalk near a busy road, movements that modulate the sound experience of the traffic noise. At the same time, the spectator is asked to imagine a sound and develop it in their imagination according to the indications of the score. I take the (im)materiality of the resulting musical experience, the conjunction of 'real' and imagined sounds, as the starting point for theoretical considerations into the consequences of this performative experience of *specta(c)torship*.

After briefly considering the meaning of *imaginary music* for Octavian Nemescu, the avant-garde composer who proposed this practice in the mid '70s, the article explores the paradoxical conjunction of active/passive listening, movement, and imagination that *Urban Seashell*, as a work of *imaginary music*, opens up for the spectator. Building on insights from Gilles Deleuze's philosophy, I explore a possible understanding of imagination—as it emerges from the experience that *Urban Seashell* proposes—that allows us to glimpse the (de)construction of embodied subjectivity and of its *associated milieu* (in the understanding that Gilbert Simondon gives to this term) as the fundamental stakes of the process of *specta(c)torship* that *Urban Seashell* offers.

Keywords: *imaginary music, imagination, spectatorship, critique of representation, Deleuze.*