



cello and the function of the prepared 'guiro-bow' to look at new instrumental encounters engendered by the work. He proposes that virtuosity in *Invisibility* requires a performer's relationship with the instrument to acknowledge it as an active agent and co-creator in the work, rather than as a passive object, while Ros Bandt (Chapter 14) explores the distribution of virtuosic processes between collaborators, acoustic spaces and audience participants in a selection of site-specific works. She presents collective creativity and an embrace of uncertainty as engendering virtuosity. This is complemented by Cathy van Eck's (Chapter Ten) exploration of the technical virtuosity developed when performers use sensors in electronic music, a virtuosity often unappreciated by an audience. Similarly, Iran Sanadzadeh (Chapter 11) explores bespoke electronic instruments for which visible performative actions are less overt. Drawing on the Terpsichora Pressure-Sensitive Floors as an example of virtuosity that constructs a performance vocabulary on an electronic instrument, she destabilises the direct association between gesture and sound.

Maggie Nicols' chapter (Chapter Seven) on 'social virtuosity' explores her work as part of FIG (Feminist Improvising Group), Contradictions and The Gathering. She uses the term 'social virtuosity' to express excellence from collective music-making across varying levels of ability. She marks individual virtuosity and social virtuosity as having important yet distinct roles in the arts, with varying cultural impacts, which she traces in alternative arts scenes. A similar emphasis on collectivity is found in Chapter Nine, where Margaret Anne Schedel and Suzanne Thorpe write about 'virtuosity and the commons', pointing out the disconnect between the aura surrounding a virtuoso performer and the material reality of the time, effort and labour of the performer and the communities from which they come. They argue that this disconnect allows an operationalisation of virtuosity to reinforce hierarchies of Western art music that de-emphasise community in favour of prioritising singular figureheads. They offer an auto-ethnographic perspective that explores the distribution of labour that 'makes a virtuoso possible' (p. 105).

Experimental, non-linear, informal and unfinished forms of knowledge are presented alongside traditional scholarly essays. Chapter 13 presents an email dialogue between Louise Devenish and Jennifer Torrence. The two percussionists, who are collaborator-composer-performers, explore the nature of virtuosity in a demotic, conversational way. Echo Ho, Hannes Hoelzl and Alberto de Campo's chapter (Chapter 12), 'Always Preparing for Spontaneity', invokes Brian Eno and Peter Schmidt's *Oblique Strategy* 'Gardening, Not Architecture' and presents an experimental non-linear conversation exploring a variety of flavours of virtuosity – exploring how these various strands (virtuosity of unknowing, virtuosity of listening, virtuosity of cultivation, virtuosity with coding and more) have the potential to shape new branches of music-making. Chapter Eight reproduces 'The New Virtuosity' manifesto, by the editors of the volume, along with brief commentary.

The book is expansive in its open-ended exploration of formations of contemporary virtuosities and is an excellent contribution to this burgeoning field of scholarship. While I'm sympathetic to the intention to forego a conclusion, so as not to assert a singular authorial voice in lieu of the diverse range of contributors, this leaves the reader without critical comparison of the chapters. One of the beauties of plurality is that it allows for rich and deep comparison that can provide new theoretical insights; yet here the plurality is left disconnected, which inhibits the ability to draw wide-ranging theoretical conclusions from the individual contributions. Some of the theoretical precedents for the move to (re)define the historical concept of virtuosity are also missing – such as Goehr's rendering of the work concept historically contingent, Adorno's writing on virtuosity, Jankélévitch on the socio-aesthetics of virtuosity and Bourriaud and Born et al. on relational aesthetics.<sup>3</sup> But overall this volume represents a substantial destabilisation of notions of virtuosity, collapsing them into an altogether more plural, embodied and situated phenomenon that bodes well for future research.

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<sup>3</sup> Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994); Theodor W. Adorno, *Towards a Theory of Musical Reproduction: Notes, a Draft and Two Schemata* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006); Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Liszt et la rhapsodie: Essai sur la virtuosité* (Paris: Plon, 1979); Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Paris: Les Presses du réel, 2002); Georgina Born, Eric Lewis and Will Straw, eds, *Improvisation and Social Aesthetics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2017).