Georgina Born (Ed.), **Music and Digital Media: A Planetary Anthropology,** London, UK: UCL Press, 2022, 526 pp., $40.00 (paperback).

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Due to numerous advancements of digital technology, the music industry has undergone significant changes in recent years. Théberge (2015) notes that this transformation has not been the result of a single technological breakthrough but the culmination of various changes happening at different times and in different aspects of the music industry. In this regard, the book *Music and Digital Media: A Planetary Anthropology*, edited by Georgina Born, is a valuable resource, as it examines how digitization has impacted music and provides insight into the relationship between music and digital media in the context of globalization and cultural exchange. It draws on perspectives from anthropology, musicology, and media studies to explore how digital technology has transformed the production, distribution, consumption, and reception of music across different cultures and societies.
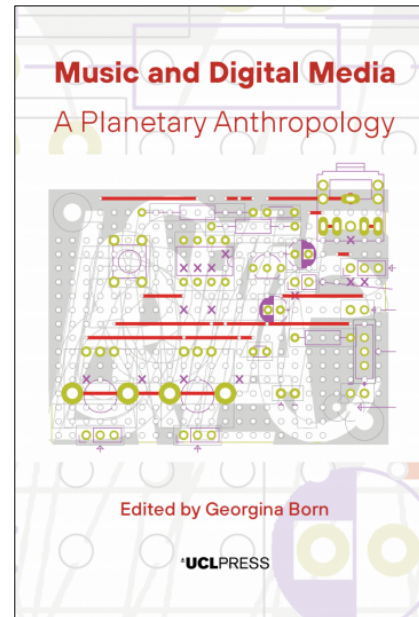
The chapters each represent an ethnographic study, all part of a research project entitled "Music, Digitisation, Mediation: Towards Interdisciplinary Music Studies" (MusDig). The publication's initial chapter delves into the MusDig project, which acted as its driving force. Born delivers a comprehensive rundown of the project's goals, techniques, and fundamental concepts for each section.

In chapter 2, Andrew J. Eisenberg describes the rise of Kenya's new music industry. He argues that the emergence of the digital recording industry was aided not only by technology but also by a number of historical and social shifts. Using interviews and observations of three groups of new industry agents, he describes how they created new genres of music by adapting their "urban" sound to local aesthetic preferences. He also argues that the local new recording industry is primarily driven by individual projects that encompass both musical and entrepreneurial endeavors, employing musical moves and tactics to foster the creation of new business models, organizations, and aesthetic goals.

In chapter 3, Geoff Baker reports on a field study of Buenos Aires' music scene. After describing the plight of independent Argentinian musicians and record labels, he points out that the conservative attitude of the old "institutional bloc" (p. 31) toward digitization has severely hampered the development of

the local music industry. In support of his argument, Baker gives the example of ZZK Records. This digital *cumbia* label critically examines its relationship with digital technologies. Despite its successful media strategies, the company is not generating profits. Baker examines how the state influences the digital culture industry, which is under the control of two levels of the Argentine government with opposing ideologies.

Ana María Ochoa Gautier (2006) once put forward a concept of "aural public sphere," which refers to the spaces and practices where individuals engage in public discourse through sound. Based on it, Aditi Deo examines in chapter 4 the digital archiving of oral vernacular music, which plays a central role in shaping public discourse in North India. Using an ethnographic approach, she explores three Indian digital archiving initiatives. In her essay, she highlights how their results are impacted by the intricate social network and factors like caste, gender, religion, class, ethnicity, ideology.

The fifth chapter, coauthored by Blake Durham and Georgina Born, investigates the circulation and consumption of online music. In doing so, they compare the identities and technical and social designs of two Internet-based music platforms: Spotify and Jekyll. The former is the well-known commercial streaming service offering individualized, rental-based consumption, while the latter is a peer-to-peer file-sharing site without licenses, where users are ranked in hierarchy and expected to pay for access. The authors propose that distinct forms of sociality distinguish the two platforms and that these socialities are more intertwined with users' musical and affective experiences than with musical ownership per se.

Similarly, chapter 6 discusses a digital platform for music processing. Joe Snape and Georgina Born analyze Max, a powerful music program, and show how its internal mechanism operates, how it functions in cultures of use, and how social mediation relates to institutional changes. Their findings demonstrate the inseparable relationship between aesthetics and technology and confirm their initial hypothesis that digital music environments are not merely invisible conduits but frequently play an active role in influencing, extending, and transforming the way music is created and perceived.

In chapter 7, Patrick Valiquet discusses the eclipse of Montreal's electroacoustic traditions due to the evolution of digital technologies. By examining various political, artistic, and intellectual developments, he illustrates how digital technology has supplanted electroacoustic traditions and identifies it as a significant economic growth driver. However, Valiquet argues that even though technological advancements lead to a diversification of electroacoustic aesthetics, such changes cannot eradicate the institutionalized inequalities that grant access to positions of power.

The eighth chapter of Born's book examines the effects of the digital revolution on art music. Still, in contrast to the previous chapter, it focuses on the growing pluralism that technologies bring to the field. The author first analyzes the reasons for the increase in music technology degrees in the United Kingdom and discusses a range of educational practices associated with these studies. She pays particular attention to the embodiment of the four species of the logic of ontology. In her view, educational reforms encourage the diversification of music technology courses in musical, technical, and conceptual terms, which reflects the ontology of acousmatic music. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the paradoxes of pluralism.

Chapter 9, coauthored by Christopher Haworth and Georgina Born, examines the impact of the Internet on music production and consumption. In their analysis of five musical genres (microsound, hauntology, hypnagogic pop, chillwave, and vaporwave), the authors utilize the digital sociology tool Issue Crawler to examine the interplay among actors, practices, and mediations within the online ecology of these genres. The tool provides a visual representation of these interactions, shedding light on the dynamics at play in the online realm. The authors then engage in a discussion in which they redefine the concept of aesthetics in these genres by considering both the material and the social aspects. Finally, Haworth and Born evaluate their findings in relation to how time and history are depicted in two media theories: media archaeology and cultural techniques. These appear to be insufficient to explain the complex and reflective relationships between these genres and media, platforms, and formats.

In an afterword, Born discusses the research conducted in the previous chapters. She juxtaposes the various ethnographic studies to generate comparative insights from a variety of vantage points, including aesthetics as well as the material, technological, and social mediation of music. Such a comparative approach exemplifies MusDig's relational musicology, which seeks to identify and comprehend the underlying causes of similarities between music from the global South and the North.

The contributions in this publication represent current efforts to push the boundaries of music digitization. First, incorporating anthropology, sociology, musicology, ethnomusicology, digital and media studies, and science and technology studies, these papers expand the theoretical and methodological potential of the field, enabling a better understanding of new objects of study like music digitalization (Bowker, 2018, p. 207). Second, the book emphasizes the importance of context in understanding the impact of digitization on music. The authors argue that the effects of digitization are not uniform across different regions and cultures. For example, in some contexts, digitization has led to the democratization of music production and distribution (e.g., in India in chapter 4), while in others, it has reinforced existing power structures (e.g., in Argentina in chapter 3). Third, the book encompasses a range of ethnographic methods. These include both traditional approaches, which are tailored to suit the researcher's individual interests and experiences (chapters 2, 3, 4, 7, and 8), and innovative methods that deviate from traditional approaches by emphasizing digital platforms or utilizing digital tools (chapters 5, 6, and 9). The analysis provided offers a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between music and digitization, going beyond a simple description. The intersection of histories provides methodological insights for future research.

Despite this otherwise outstanding compilation of works, it could be argued that more attention to the intersection between digital music and ethics, an area that requires greater attention (Miladi, 2021, p. 3), would have made the collection even more thorough. The insights of this publication are still extremely valuable. It is a compelling attempt to bring academic attention to the interplay of music, digital media, and anthropology. It provides a fresh theoretical perspective to understand digital media through music that restores anthropology's frequent overlooking of music as a subject of study.

References

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