6.2 Shazam Walks & voice notes: Soundscape, sociality & joy

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✖ Abstract

The global pandemic temporarily transformed the way music was listened to in East London. In the absence of licensed premises or large corporate music festivals, most of the music that was heard in public spaces was generated by the communities that live there. I propose that, rather than branding portable sonic expressions with pejorative and moralising terms such as 'sodcasting', we need to learn radical, empathetic listening that transcends taste and the perceived right to silence and develops an expanded sense of collective joy. East London has been experiencing increasing privatisation and homogenisation of space. When venues closed for lockdown, this highlighted what many residents instinctively know – that the creation of ad-hoc, temporary music spaces is a joyful aestheticisation of the city.

Keywords: gentrification, sodcasting, joy, sociality, soundscape, urbanism.

1. Shazam Walks

Early in 2020 I began collecting field recordings of London's markets, squares and parks. Originally, I planned to use these recordings in combination with the original pieces of music (sourced using the music-discovery app Shazam), juxtaposing the two in abstract digital DJ performances that celebrated music as an integral part of the urban soundscape. Soon after the initial recordings were made, however, the COVID pandemic hit the UK and lockdown was imposed. This changed the nature of the project somewhat. Not only did the project become focused on my immediate area of Hackney, East London, as we entered Spring and then Summer of 2020, *all* the music heard locally was community-generated — either played in public spaces or overheard through windows and over garden walls. Not only were there increasing numbers of people out in the parks and squares with mobile phones, bike speakers and portable sound systems, but all music heard was juxtaposed with an absence of music from commercial venues (pub gardens that mainly cater to the wealthier residents of the area, for example) and large, expensive ticketed festivals that have begun to dominate the summer in East London over recent years. COVID also had the effect of localising the recording process to my immediate surrounding area (Clapton): it became an exercise in listening to the musical life of those who live around me.

2. Portable Music, Grayson Perry & Gentrification

In August 2020, when my recording process had been in full swing for some time, visual artist Grayson Perry tweeted:

> *Hot days in London: I'd quite like five minutes when I'm not forced to listen to someone else's music, in my house, in the garden, in the street, even from other cyclists, it's relentless. If playing music please be aware, everyone else HATES YOU. (Perry, 2020, n/p)*

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This sentiment seemed to strike a chord amongst his followers and a thread that numbered nearly 600 replies or quote tweets followed. Out of these, over 500 supported the statement. This discourse is reminiscent of the debate following Pascal Wyse's entry in his Wyse Words column in the Guardian where, 10 years previously, he coined the phrase 'sodcasting':

> *Sodcast [noun]: Music, on a crowded bus, coming from the speaker on a mobile phone. Sodcasters are terrified of not being noticed, so they spray their audio wee around the place like tomcats. (Hancox, 2010, n/p)*

Here Wyse presents his speculations about the sodcaster's motivations as fact and assumes anti-social intent, as indeed do many of the replies in the Perry thread. The issues surrounding mobile music have been addressed in several articles and book chapters on the subject. Richard Bramwell (2011) examined the sonic life of London's buses, particularly the participation of racialised youth in mobile musicking. A common suggestion in Perry's replies was that, when playing music in public, people should wear headphones so as not to be 'anti-social'. However, the activities of group singing, rapping, dancing, and sharing tracks via Bluetooth are inherently social. Bramwell describes the young people's creative aestheticisation of the bus as opening possibilities for interactions outside of the group. Interest shown in the music is received positively. Similarly, in his rebuttal of Wyse's piece, Dan Hancox reframes these ephemeral musical moments as "a resocialisation of public life through the collective enjoyment of music; it's friends doing the most natural thing imaginable – sharing what makes them happy" (Hancox, 2010: n/p).

Perry lives in Islington, a borough with one of the highest wealth disparities in London (Segal, 2017). Neighbouring Hackney, where I live and the recordings were made, has undergone intense gentrification in the last 20 years, creating a similar disparity (Travers et *al*., 2016). In *Terraformed*, Joy White starkly lays out the implications of gentrification for the musical landscape in nearby Newham, where the public musicking of the local black youth was vital to the development of grime (2020). The presence of local youth on the streets has become increasingly policed as the area is developed for post-Olympic gentrification and local pubs cater for the new 'communities' that are formed. Across London, parks have been subjected to neo-liberal ideology and councils have been put under increasing pressure to monetise them. This has led to more and more high-price festivals taking over public space for many weeks during the summer months (Smith, 2019). There is also data showing that noise complaints to the police increase as the demographic of an area changes (Misra, 2018).

> *I quite like it. I feel connected to other humans this way. It feels like the heat brings out something primal in us that seeks connection through joy. And music brings joy universally. Obv we might have different tastes but its just them sharing pleasure. Justsayn (X, 2020)*

A small number of the replies in the Perry thread speak to what I experienced as various small-scale manifestations of collective joy in Summer 2020. I don't have any detailed demographic information for Grayson Perry's Twitter followers, but obviously they are only a small sample of society. However, they do seem to reflect a liberal, individualistic entitlement to peacefulness as a commodity which runs counter to my own field recording observations and experiences. The listening to and, in one case, participation in this public musicking struck me as intrinsically joyful. Together, these mostly quotidian events were a collective celebration of the diversity and multiplicity of East London (London Borough of Hackney, 2020). It also seemed like a celebration of music itself, and the multitude of ways it is manifested in everyday social life, particularly given the almost total lack of commercial music contexts. The musical and the social were reconstituting each other in real time (DeNora, 2000).

In the following paper I will examine ideas of collective joy in relation to music, highlight the importance of macro-social context in such examinations and describe in some detail the many and varied micro-social music encounters I had whilst collecting recordings for the project.

3. Music, Sociality & Joy

Tia DeNora proposes that music's meaning is shaped by the social situations in which it is manifested. Rather than focusing on semiotics, DeNora (2000, p. 81) is concerned "with what it 'does' as a dynamic material of social existence". Her extensive interviews with women detail how they use music as a 'technology of

the self' allowing for intimacy, sociality, mood enhancement, catharsis and more. Georgina Born builds on these ideas to stress that it is important to look not only at the immediate micro-social site of the musicking, but to examine musical activity across four planes of social mediation: first, the micro-social situation of the musicking itself; then the 'imagined communities' that the music invokes; third, the wider social context of the musical activity; and fourth, how the musicking relates to the power structures of the distribution or performance of the music (Born, 2017). Whilst neither of these theories are inherently radical in themselves, they provide useful tools for examining the concept of collective joy in relation to music.

But what is collective joy exactly? Barbera Ehrenreich (2007) has charted a history of group ecstatic experience and describes a broad range of activities including sporting events, religious rites, carnival (both European and Black) and rock concerts. These are framed as "expressive of our artistic temperament and spiritual yearnings as well as our solidarity (…) distinctively human, and deeply satisfying" (Ehrenreich, 2007, p. 496). Through an examination of the sites of my field recording during COVID, I hope to show that it doesn't take a mass event to do this: in fact, collective joy can be found in these more everyday encounters. First, however, I would like to look at the importance of macro-social context in examining group experience and its political potential.

In relation to music, raves are often cited as prime examples of the power of collective joy in action, particularly the era of the late 1980s/early 1990s before the Criminal Justice Bill and the subsequent extreme commercialisation of dance events (Gilbert, 2013). It is not surprising that raves are seen as contributing to this history of ecstatic joy. They tend to be more 'collective' than other music events due to the focus being on the dancing crowd rather than the DJ or band. The have also provided important spaces for solidarity and safety for marginalised groups and can channel vital subaltern energy. Jeremy Gilbert frames them as sites of what John Protevi calls joyous affect, or an affect which increases the "potential power of bodies, enabling them to form new and potentially empowering encounters" (Protevi in Gilbert, 2013, p. 419). Here Protevi and Gilbert are invoking a Spinozian model of affect that links emotions to power in the sense of emergent potential and ability. However, positioning rave, even at its peak, as a model for the political power of ecstatic collective joy is to miss some of the complications posed by the macro-social context in which it became popular. One of the foundational venues for late 1980s/early 1990s acid house and rave in East London was Club Labyrinth in Dalston, which is credited with hosting the Prodigy's first live appearance. Club Labyrinth was a renaming of the 4 Aces nightclub after a change of management in the late 80s. The 4 Aces was setup by Charlie Collins and Newton Dunbar in the 60s to provide a space for the black community of the area, who were often refused entry into West End clubs. Over its 20-year history it hosted acts such as Desmond Decker, Bob Marley and Stevie Wonder. After persistent police raids throughout the 1980s the venue finally closed its doors and reopened as Club Labyrinth and the demographic of the crowd changed from majority black to around 80% white (Geldher, 2018; Oppenheim, 2014). This is a long time prior to the aggressive gentrification of Dalston, which we can perhaps trace to the compulsory purchase order of the space by Hackney Council in 1997 to build the luxury apartment complex that was subsequently built on the site. This is not to diminish what was a vibrant and influential scene, nor the significant (but often overlooked) contribution to rave by local black artists such as Shut Up & Dance (Bennett, 2011). However, it is important to note that, unwittingly or not, many urban raves benefitted from a clearing-out of spaces by racist over policing and economic marginalisation and were a whitewashing of Black music scenes and musical forms[2]. Interestingly, Gilbert is co-organiser of a party called Lucky Cloud that is been held regularly in Dalston since 2014. The event is explicitly modelled on David Mancuso's the Loft, a club now legendary for providing a safe space for queer NYC residents of colour to dance, commune and party. Lucky Cloud, however, whilst retaining a music policy and style informed by Mancuso, and undoubtedly generating a joyful atmosphere, appears (based on personal observation) to be mainly attended by middle class white people. If we are looking for political potential, Black carnival may be a better site, given its actual history of very real resistance through joyous dancing (Ehrenreich, 2007; Henriques & Ferrara, 2014; James, 2021), and it is surprising that it is not talked about more in this context. Either way, the joy I experienced whilst recording for my project, whilst still collective, was on a much smaller, everyday scale than any of these events and provides a different, but equally valid lens into the political, perhaps precisely because it is such an everyday occurrence.

2. For a description of how similar dynamics played out in the North of England during the development of bleep techno see Matt Anniss' *Join the Future* (2019).

Like Perry, Lynne Segal is a resident of the 'distinctly desirable' London borough of Islington. In *Radical Happiness* (2017), she explores the history, conceptions, and potentials of joy, informed particularly by her experiences as a feminist organiser since the 1960s. She situates joy in opposition to the neoliberal 'happiness' industry, with its insistence on individual responsibility and refusal to acknowledge structural causes of the current epidemic of depression, anxiety, and loneliness (Hertz, 2020). She explores joy from several angles, including the ecstatic histories explored by Ehrenreich. She also looks at squatter communities, feminist activists, communal gardens and the park occupations in Athens all as examples of "joy's traditional ties with things that are larger, better and more exciting than we are individually" (Segal, 2017, p. 127). The UK feminist activist group Sisters Uncut are mentioned, and it is worth noting that their use of music at protests is a powerful affective force. There is a video that circulated Twitter of their young black members dancing and singing along defiantly to Nadia Rose's track *Squad* in front of a wall of police who were protecting fascists that were marching that day (Brinkhurst-Cuff, 2017). Segal frames joy as something that "jolts us out of the ordinary" but also, significantly, the possibility of "communalizing the everyday" through "a diversity of creative endeavours" (Brinkhurst-Cuff, 2017, p. 118). It is this everyday communalising and creativity that seems significant to my research, the extra-ordinary embedded in the quotidian constructed by music's unique affordances for world-building (DeNora, 2000). Or, as Kathleen Stewart puts it in her remarkable book *Ordinary Affects*: "the ordinary is a circuit that's always tuned in to some little something somewhere. A mode of attending to the possible and the threatening, it amasses the resonance in things" (Stewart, 2007, p. 33).

Rather than assessing the significance of large-scale 'ecstatic' events, in the next two sections I will examine the micro-social encounters of my own field recording practice through this reading of small-scale, everyday collective joy that was particularly visible in Summer 2020. This is not to further entrench a taste-based good/bad dichotomy that is present in the Perry Twitter thread, but to further explore the affective potential of public music within social context.

3.1 Musical Parklife in E5, Summer 2020

In Springfield Park two young women walk past speaking intensely and a speaker plays Hozan İsmail's version of the traditional Kurdish folk song *Şev Tari Tari*. A small group of young people sit around a bench listening to the summery UK rap track *Spin Around* by Wretch 32. There is chatting, birds tweeting and then all sound is drowned out by a police helicopter flying overhead, a daily occurrence during lockdown. In the bandstand young black girls are learning dance routines to Nigerian producer DJ Spinall's *Dis Love*. A nearby couple are working out to some high-energy Euro trance. On the canal towpath a cyclist gives us a fleeting yet energising taste of Soca delivered by Fadda Fox's *Ducking*.

In Millfields park a group of young mothers congregate with their prams near the playground listening to Sweet Female Attitude's *Flowers (Sunship Mix)*. More old-school garage music is heard from the filter beds, and on Hackney Marshes a father pulls his son along in a cart, with a kite attached, soundtracked by DJ Luck & MC Neat's *Masterblaster 2000* and MJ Cole *Crazy Love*. A solo middle-aged man with a contented look on his face rolls a cigarette under the A12 underpass staring at a sizable Bluetooth speaker playing unidentified pumping dance music. Ghostly, disembodied opera singing, and trumpet playing is heard across the water at different points. Elsewhere soul, jazz, disco, classic pop and drum and bass mix with the sound of birds, traffic and conversation from over garden walls, through open doors and car windows. An open-topped truck drives down Leaside Road, orthodox Jews broadcast a meditative chant to the neighbourhood, as they are unable to go to synagogue. Over in Markfield park, Noel Gallagher's voice singing Wonderwall comes into focus. The source is revealed to be a young man on a bike wearing a ski mask and brightly coloured leisure wear (he is a regular fixture on the towpath). As he passes our group an abrasive EDM dubstep beat drops on the chorus and a small group spontaneously starts dancing and laughing.

There are many more examples from my recordings of E5 in Summer 2020, but this gives a broad overview of the different musical scenarios that played out in parks, streets, marshes canals and so on. Similar scenarios play out every spring/summer in the area but, as I have highlighted, the context was different. There was a marked increase in the number of people out on any given day. It was an exceptionally favourable summer weather-wise, and a proportion of people were on furlough. Most significantly, there were no commercial gathering spots to visit in day or night. Whilst local cafes and bars serve a narrow section of local residents, it felt like I was listening to a soundscape that was truly representative of the diversity of the area, and this is reflected in the music discovered using the music recognition app Shazam. This is certainly music in everyday life, music that facilitates and aestheticises the social. Technologies of self-expression play out in a myriad of small ways. It would be a stretch to suggest that these encounters were akin to the radical expressions of

collective joy in claiming the commons such as the ongoing occupation of parks in Athens or a Sisters Uncut protest. However, there are some thresholds of possibility.

Stavros Stavrides (2016) also writes about the park occupations in Athens and the distinctions between public and common space - common space being actively created and constantly negotiated. Michael Warner's influential conception of the 'pubic' is actually similar to this idea of 'common': it only comes into being via participation (Kosnick, 2010). Is this happening in these cases? Are the protagonists in the recordings using music to aestheticize the public space, like the young people in Bramwell's bus? Or is this simply municipal park use as intended, with the addition of inconsiderate noise-making that infringes on others' ability to do the same in 'peace'? Stavrides defines an urban threshold as a porous social border as well as a spatial one. If we see music as being exceptional at creating porous boundaries (LaBelle), then these scenes are thresholds into these micro-social worlds and imagined communities. "The prospect of a city of thresholds might represent an alternative to the city of enclaves" (Stavrides, 2016, p. 180). Perry and his followers are demanding that their peaceful enclaves are not bothered by the noise of others and that public music should be contained by headphone listening. However, none of the scenarios described here could be played out with headphones. The solo bike riders cannot wear them for safety reasons, but I also suspect they wouldn't want to. There is a clear element of broad- (or narrow) casting here. The people on their own appear to have their speakers as company, but also as an invitation for potential engagement, either to enjoy the music with them or at least a provocation to engage with it and its players' existence. They are literally sharing the music (with discovery possibilities as highlighted) but also creating a threshold to a discursive social imaginary. This was summed up succinctly by one of the few dissenting voices on the Perry thread. As a counter to the much-repeated suggestion that the most considerate and least anti-social way of listening to music was through headphones, they simply wrote "OK, so what if you're not alone" (Karim, 2020, n/p).

3.2 Karaoke Encounter

In the other recording situations described, I am participating only as a resident of the neighbourhood with ears and a mobile phone in what, at times, felt like quite a voyeuristic set of field recording / sound walks. This scenario was different as I, and a small group of friends, were actively participating in the music and space creation. In June 2020 I was tasked with throwing a 40th birthday karaoke party for my then partner. Lockdown rules still dictated no indoor gatherings and only small groups outside. The solution I found to this challenge was to enlist the help of some friends who lived on a narrowboat on the Lea Navigation canal near our house. A powerful speaker was attached to the roof, a screen to the end of the boat where there was a seating area, mics were provided and a subscription to the online Lucky Voice karaoke service was obtained. For approximately four hours on a sunny Saturday afternoon, we cruised up and down the Lea navigation taking turns to sing songs, some solo and some duet, whilst other members of the group joined in and danced on the roof. The idea was that, if we kept moving, the noise wouldn't annoy any one set residents of the canal or nearby flats for too long. As a group, our composition was 4 white men, 4 white women and one South Asian man (who's enthusiastic rooftop dancing was undoubtedly a memorable part of our visual makeup), all in middle age, and a 1-year-old baby.

We had no preconceptions about how the people we encountered would respond to our activities. As it was a sunny weekend afternoon, there were many people out walking on the canal towpath as well as boat residents sitting out on the bank and on various vessels also travelling on the navigation. The response from passers-by was generally very positive – smiles, waves, dancing, clapping, song requests, participation etc. It was the overriding feeling of the group that we seemed to be generating positive affects well beyond what we might have expected. As a group we attributed this to (a) the timing of people just starting to come out of the first lockdown, (b) the fact that it was karaoke rather than just playing music / having a party. It was noted that some of the observers' expressions visibly changed from initial bemusement / possible annoyance or disapproval to smiling when they realised what was happening.

On the return leg we passed a low-rise council estate whose front doors face the canal with a communal area in between. There were two middle-aged black women in the area and a man who was starting a BBQ. We were singing TLC's *No Scrubs* as we were passing, and this was a song that they knew. They started to join in and beckoned us over to moor up by the estate. What followed was the most interesting and layered exchange of the day, which was unfortunately only partly documented in 2 short video clips. After the TLC song had finished, we tried to collectively find another song we would all know. Sean Paul was suggested but the selection I made, *Get Busy*, proved to be difficult to sing due to its fast pace, and not something any of the women seemed particularly enthused about. After this awkward moment, one of the women

suggested a contemporary dancehall track, *Rubberband* by Jahvilliani. This was not something I was familiar with, nor was it on Lucky Voice. However, I found the original track on Youtube and played it. The track wasn't a karaoke version and, instead of singing along, one of the women then proceeded to MC over the track in a style that evoked a dancehall party or carnival (Henriques & Ferrara, 2014). Captured on the recording is the woman shouting-out the event of the 40th party, the one-year-old baby that was part of our party and the small crowd that had gathered on the towpath on the other side of canal. "We see you you're still here", she shouts. A number of people are filming the scene on their phone. A cheer goes up with the chant of "pump pump pump". The party continued with another dancehall track, Kranium's *Gal Policy*. One of the women went inside the house and brought their mother to meet us and passed round a bottle of brandy. After the second track we were invited to "play some of our music". A few of us on the boat had an urgent conversation about what this should be. After some suggestions of Elton John and others were rejected, we decided on a reprise of TLC to avoid any more awkward moments, such as the one created by the unsatisfactory Sean Paul track, that might risk ruining what we all acknowledged as a special vibe. This is captured in the second video. Following this we headed off, with both parties waving fondly to each other and having been affected in seemingly quite a deep way. Well, almost everyone – as we drove away, we noticed two younger teenage boys playing just off to the side of the estate, who seemed non-plussed by, what might have seemed to them, a rather embarrassing musical encounter between old people.

This encounter was certainly extraordinary. In the other recording scenarios I've described, although the context was unique, any singular event is also just a slice of ordinary sonic life in East London. In my experience, it is unusual that a narrow boat would come floating past a housing estate in the middle of the afternoon having a full-blown karaoke party. The disruption appeared to have strong affective reactions from those we passed, many appearing to be positive. The most notable of these was the opening-up of the micro-social encounter at the Homerton housing estate. This situation was improvised by those involved and supported by the observers on the far bank. It felt like an ephemeral communing of space and subtle negotiations were required for all to feel included. We also literally created a threshold space between the boat and the women's homes. After its usefulness as an icebreaker, for the encounter to successfully continue the conventions of karaoke had to be jettisoned in favour of those of a dancehall party. Feelings of togetherness were thickened by the reprise of the TLC song that we all knew. It is, given the dynamics of urban segregation in the area, unlikely that either group would have ended up at a party in either of our backyards.

The encounter did not seem to afford any kind of explicit examination of macro-social contexts. As there has been no follow-up interview with the estate residents, I don't have any way of knowing whether either gentrification or the recent BLM marches in London were at the forefront of their minds. Either way, the imperative seemed to be to uphold the party atmosphere and convivial exchange. In this respect it seemed to be an example of what Luis-Manuel Garcia (forthcoming) terms 'liquidarity'. He coins the term to refer to dancefloor interaction in minimal house clubs that creates "a state of fluid cohesion that generates a sense of inclusion uncoupled from identity or other forms of categorical belonging". What does seem undeniable was that the music and convivial atmosphere generated by the karaoke party afforded this extraordinary encounter and it's resulting joyous affect, that did indeed seem to increase potential power to form new connections.

Finally, it should be added that it was not just the teenage boys who were dubious of the floating event. Although I was not able to save it before it expired, a friend reported that MC Grindah of the TV show People Just do Nothing, a mockumentary about a Brentford Pirate radio station, had posted on an Instagram story a picture of our boat with the word 'GENTRIFICATION' emblazed across it. To the actor Allan Mustafa, the aesthetics of our temporary sonic territorialisation epitomised the negative effects of the changing demographics of the area. Alongside the positive effects of this experiment, it is necessary to accept that a narrow boat with a group of mostly white middle class, middle-aged people singing karaoke could certainly engender these feelings.

4. Thresholds of Possibility

Given the sociability and potential joyous affects detailed here, why the extreme negative emotions expressed by Perry and his followers? It is certainly true that neighbour noise can be obnoxious to the point of being genuinely distressing. Urban (sound) space must be negotiated. Given the number and variety of different noises present in the urban soundscape however, it seems unreasonable to expect to be only able to hear the

ones you personally find to your taste. Some of the tweets explicitly state that neighbours have turned their music down when asked. A lot of the ire directed at public musicking seems to speak to what Gilbert (2013) describes as liberal freedom being the freedom to be left alone. Within neo-liberal, individualist ideology you have earned the right, through hard work, not to have to interact or think about others. 'A man's house is his castle' – with very high walls.

Richard Sennett (1970) posits that the desire to enclose, as was being made real by the rapidly expanding suburban developments in the US in the 1970s is born in adolescence – the desire to escape an increasingly confusing world on the part of those with the means to do so. Nigel Thrift (2005) warns us to not discount the comfort people find in misanthropy. Garcia builds on Thrift's 'light-touch intimacy' (Forthcoming) to form the concept of liquidarity in regard to the necessary smoothing of social relations amongst club-goers, allowing them to participate in the micro-social collective joy of the rave. However, he is keen to also point out that this approach can cover over macro-social inequalities and issues that have been recently highlighted within the dance music industry. Sennett proposes architecturally designed sites of disorder that encourage 'contact' points between diverse people, even if this involves conflict. Gillett Square in Dalston, an earlier site of recording for this project (Williams, 2020), shows how this light touch and self-policing can have a positive effect on inclusive conviviality in public space.

However, viewing whiteness as a Deleuzian assemblage, Arun Saldanha (2007) devastatingly demonstrates how 'contact points' are not sufficient to break down colonial lines of flight remanifesting themselves (in this case at Goa trance parties). He points to possible creativity in creating new lines of flight to counter the cleverness of the whiteness machine. There are parallels between the whiteness assemblage described by Saldanha and the kind of aggressive gentrification demonstrated in East London. This is white-capital-as-machine erasing and appropriating both physical and discursive space. Pubs that cater almost exclusively to new residents play legacy disco and reggae; expensive street food markets are soundtracked by grime. Returning to adolescence we should remember that it is the young people that are the big losers in this, subject to constant policing of their public gathering (White, 2020).

Beyond taking more Bluetooth speakers out into public spaces and engaging in more floating karaoke/dancehall parties, which I thoroughly encourage, what further strategies can be adopted to promote a representative soundscape and encourage collective joy in urban environments that is not mediated by capital? Much is said about the importance of the night-time industry and economy; but in divorcing music from its industry, we also need to value the power of music in everyday life. What can be done to encourage convivial space-commoning and new lines of flight? The activist sound artist collective Ultra-red has been fighting gentrification in Boyle Heights (Desarrollismo, 2019) and exploring the ways sound can be used to focus and facilitate activism. Maybe similar approaches can be used in education to promote pro-activist approaches to urban soundscape and placemaking? Can London's public space be reclaimed for more inclusive musical events for all the residents of an area? Historically there are examples of radical musical events in London's parks (Transpontine, 2012), as well as more recent joyous scenes at Hackney Carnival's LGBTQI sound system. It is these local legacies we need to build on.

And for those thinking of calling the police on your neighbours, maybe I can draw your attention to potentially the most provocative of the replies to Perry's tweet, which was simply a link to a conversation between the composers Morton Feldman and John Cage from 1966. Feldman was bemoaning the sonic intrusion of rock-and-roll radios playing on the beach and the inability to think. Cage, after suggesting he simply listen to it as one of his own compositions, suggests that it is Feldman's desire to think that is imposing on the radio[3]. Or, as a friend of mine recently said in relation to being kept up by an all-night Jamaican wake that happened in his neighbourhood recently, "if you can't beat them, Shazam them".

For more details on the creative project this paper is based on and to hear a playlist of the music mentioned, please visit http://www.jfbwilliams.com/shazam-walks-voice-notes/

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3. It is worth noting, however, that John Cage was somewhat dismissive of Black music (Lewis, 1996).

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