IF WE ARE HABITS, NOTHING BUT HABITS, IS MUSIC A FEMINIST FAILURE?

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This article begins, to some extent cautiously, by trumpeting the achievements of the institution in which I work for its recent recognition as the world leader in gender equality. The *Times Higher Education* Impact Rankings (April 2019) place Western Sydney University first in the world for addressing gender equality and second in the world for reducing inequalities, promoting inclusive and equitable quality education (Western Sydney University 2019). The criteria for each category include: the quantity of research the University contributes to the study of gender, its policies on gender equality and its commitment to recruiting women as well as the quantity of research the University conducts on social inequalities, its policies on discrimination and its commitment to recruiting staff and students from under-represented groups. These rankings determine how well the participating universities are performing against the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In addition to these successes, Western Sydney University is touted as offering a world-class education with 'a reputation for academic excellence and impact-driven research' (International Corporate Profile, Western Sydney University), implying that excellence is available to anyone, regardless of their social status. These latest achievements will undoubtedly buttress the position of the university in the higher education market.

For what follows, importantly without detracting from the university's exceptional performance, is an exploration of whether the research on gender and social inequality in the broader University translates to the inclusiveness of women in the University's music curriculum. Specifically, do the listening examples taught in the music program reflect an equal number of men and women composers or composer-performers, understanding that, by 'equal', I mean the quantity of music that is available for inclusion?[1] I will show that the listening examples, as surveyed in 2018, not surprisingly do not pay attention to gender equality and represent more men composers or composer-performers than women. This finding resonates with those in several other studies (de Boise 2017; Crispin 2017; Shibhabi 2016; Born and Devine 2015; Macarthur 2007) but, as I will argue, the way in which the music curriculum and listening examples are determined is not so much to do with a set of intentions that deliberately exclude specific identity groups. It is, rather, more than likely bound up with habit in which the known and the familiar are repeated over and over again until they become habit-forming. I am interested, then, in the role played by habit in

cultivating a disposition towards certain kinds of music and, as habit is formed and reformed, whether there is any hope for change. Specifically, I want to ask how the habit-forming processes of music in higher education (HE) are established and how they might be broken, moderated or transformed.

Habit is a key component of music, associated with practice routines and the mechanics of skill development and technical work. It is central to the formation of attitude and mindset, often manifesting as value judgement about musical quality which, when inculcated over time, can be difficult to shift. Habit is typically understood to inhibit thought, creativity and freedom (Grosz 2013: 217). Such an idea is captured by Eva Cox (2016) who, in arguing that 'feminism has failed and needs a radical rethink', resorts to the feminist habit of blaming the 'macho power structures' and men for the inequalities of gender in the workforce. Darla Crispin (2017), in a similar move focused on artistic research in music, argues that her discipline is powerless to change the patriarchal power base of HE music institutions and therefore unable to fix the gender and race inequalities. Her solution is to heed Donna Haraway's call for a 'feminist humanity' that has 'another shape', resisting representation, resisting literal figuration, giving shape to 'powerful new tropes, new figures of speech, new turns of historical possibility' (Haraway 2004: 49). This utopian ideal assumes that women's creative research-led practice is equal to anything else in the corpus but Crispin neglects to pick up on and further develop Haraway's immanent thinking. Both Cox and Crispin resort to divisive arguments in which one category is polarised against another, potentially triggering a hostile reaction and, at best, achieving only short-term solutions.

Drawing on the philosopher, Gilles Deleuze, Elizabeth Grosz (2013) repositions habit as a positive, creative force, able to transform while simultaneously being transformed by its encounters[2]. She says that 'habit not only anchors a site of regularity in a universe of perpetual change; it initiates change in the apparently unchanging' (Grosz 2013: 233). Music and feminism are sites of regularity but, when music connects with feminism, habit changes both, giving formation to change as a state of perpetual variation. Habit organises the feminist-music assemblage, modifying the arrangement of bodies, changing the dynamics, the identities, the ratios of men to women, and generating a point of transition between the bodies that inhabit the assemblage and their encounters with music and feminism. Addressed to the future, habit potentially shifts the bodily architecture towards a politics of becoming in which becoming-woman disrupts the dominant male form of subjectivity (Hickey-Moody and Malins 2007: 6). In Deleuzian philosophy, becoming-woman is not understood as oppositional to becoming-man given that the world is already prefigured as male. The concept of becoming-woman, applying to men as much as women, suggests a movement away from the male norm[3].

The dominant approaches used to study feminist work in music will mostly obscure this positive conception, turning women and their music, through the processes of capture, into conditions of subordination. For example, the neo-liberal instrument of gender mainstreaming produces the exceptional woman composer. This normalises gender inequality by assuming that women are the same as men. They must perform as well as, if not better than, men on men's terms, thus becoming like men (Macarthur 2014: 38). One of the aims of feminist research in music has been to leverage better outcomes for women composers. As I will show, however, approaches founded on polarising categories will mostly fail to achieve such an aim. Statistics have often been used in feminist music research to demonstrate the need for change. In relying on stable categories, such as men and women, statistics will mostly end up supporting a narrative of victimhood in relation to women, reinforcing the negative conception of woman. Statistical work will tend to concentrate its effort on gathering evidence from a narrow data pool, such as the concert hall, to validate what is already known. Statistical data may well signal that a problem exists but is unlikely to produce long-term positive changes.

Many statistical surveys (e.g. Macarthur 1997; Adkins Chiti 2003; Hirsch 2008) have shown that the performance of women's music in the concert hall ranges from 0 per cent to 2 per cent of all the works performed. Figures compiled in 2018 from advertised concert programmes of 15 major orchestras worldwide suggest that nothing has changed. It was found that, of 1,400 concerts presenting 3,524 works, only 82, or 2 per cent, are by women (Brown 2018). A particularly vivid example that uses statistics to paint a depressing picture is drawn from the 2018 Peggy Glanville-Hicks lecture (Hope 2018). I extracted these statistics, as displayed in Table 1, from the narrative version of the lecture. The statistical evidence represented here, as in the other examples cited above, is repeatedly presented and, while the statistics point to a significant continuing problem, they fail to identify solutions.

Table 1. Statistics drawn from the Peggy Glanville-Hicks Lecture 2018 (Cat Hope)

Data Source	What it purportedly demonstrates
Gender Equality, World Economic Forum 2018	Ranked 35 (of 144)
Gender Equality, World Economic Forum 2006	Ranked 15
Gender pay gap	Men earn $27,000 more than women
Gender pay gap in the creative arts	Men's median income 106% higher than women's
Superannuation	Men have twice as much superannuation
Representation of gender on Boards	Males aged 40-69 years make up 8.4% of the population but represent the majority (70%) on boards
Representation of gender on music peak bodies	35% are women; 0% of women on ARIA boards
Junior roles in key industry bodies	58% are women
Senior strategic roles in industry bodies	28% are women
Record Managers	80% are men
Blind auditions into orchestras since 1997	Increases women's chances from 10% to 45%
Blind review of films for screening in Tropfest	Increases women's chances from 5% to 50%
Top 100 songs played on commercial radio	28% are by women
Musicians working in Australia	32% are women
Composers working in Australia	27% are women
Representation of gender in new music concerts	11% are women
Screen composition	13% are women; 50% women vs 1% men believe gender has negative impact on career
Jazz instrumentalists	5% are women
Triple J	71% featured artists are men
Commercial Radio	31% of 100 most played songs are female act or act with female lead
Spotify	21 of top 100 are women but none in top 10
Students enrolled in tertiary music programs	50% are women but curriculum dominated by male creativity
Making Waves online podcasts or recorded music	50% are women, indicating an agenda to be inclusive

The statistics, in the examples above, reduce the men-women dualism, to quote Maurizio Lazzarato (2006: 174), 'to a collective whole which totalises and unifies the irreducible singularities' of the multiplicity. In Deleuzian philosophy, the multiplicity is not a fragmented part of a greater whole (Stover 2017: 6; Roffe 2005: 176). Rather, it is continuous and ever emergent, 'founded on the multiplicity of factors that condition the possibilities for its emergence' (Stover 2017: 6; Massumi 2011: 27). The statistics above are stratifying acts that capture the numerical information from the multiplicity into grid-like categories, fixing them as numerical entities that do not account for the complexity of information that they represent. They are then ripe for repeated use. Further, the processes used for gathering evidence and analysis in the recent research on women's music will often recycle the statistics used in earlier research to arrive at similar conclusions. We might ask, then, why repeat the same processes if the conclusions are the same? Why use statistics if each time they are repeated they remain the same, thus reinforcing the status quo? And, given that music creation, performance, transmission and consumption have radically changed since the turn of the twenty-first century, why are we still focused on the exclusion of women's music from the concert hall?

In Deleuzian philosophy, statistics are molar entities[4], presenting themselves as stasis but, to paraphrase Christina Gordon (2003: 102), they normalise the status quo while also engaging in the productive process of making-the-same. Such an idea is exemplified by the above statistics in which the first instance capturing the performance of women's music as two per cent (Macarthur 1997) can be read as a repetition in advance of all the instances of women's music in the future. This is not the positive thinking that characterises Deleuzian thought. Yet, it is a style of thinking that is dominant and leads to the conclusion, as drawn by Crispin (2017), that music is a feminist

failure. And it prompts the question for this article that, if 'we are habits, nothing but habits' (Deleuze 1991b: x), is music a feminist failure? Specifically, I will ask whether music is a feminist failure in HE[5]. In the third section of this article, I will explore what a positive Deleuzian conception of habit might do to shift from the negative implications of this question.

There is no shortage of feminist work that has attempted to determine what has led to women's marginalisation in music. The comprehensive literature review of the field reported by Macarthur et al. (2017) demonstrates the breadth and depth of this research. Women composers and feminist researchers have been asking for better access to the options open to men (Bennett et al. 2018), but these options for women are, as Cox (2016) points out, unquestionably on men's terms. Measuring up as a composer involves conforming to sets of social norms that are fed by the dominant neoliberal paradigm, which emphasises innovation, progress, entrepreneurialism and competition. The languages of marketing replace the languages of aesthetics to promote new music (Macarthur 2014) and, together with the imperative to conform to the norms of the profession, these mechanisms serve to render invisible the social equity issues that would possibly improve the situation for women composers.

In the next section, drawing on Lazzarato (2006), I will map the way in which women's music is actualised as capture, integration and differentiation in HE music institutions. I will suggest that all the possible instances of women's music are homogenised, crystallising as the opposition between men and women and, in so doing, ignoring the intersectional differences within men and women[6]. But, as Lazzarato points out (2006: 174), even the most irreducible singularities are ultimately related back to the men and women dualism, manifesting as the heterosexual norm and suppressing the multiplicity. In his book on Foucault, Deleuze (1984), as paraphrased by Lazzarato (2006: 173), distinguishes between institutions and power relations, suggesting that institutions have a negative reproductive function as they integrate, stratify and fix the forces of the multiplicity into their precise forms. Through repetition they become habit-forming in the negative sense. Power relations are, in contrast, 'virtual, unstable, non-localisable, non-stratified potentialities' (Lazzarato 2006: 174), directed to the future, thus enabling change. The task for this paper is to understand how the territorialising networks of listening materials become rigidly coded according to gender norms. I will then seek to discover the ways in which these territorialising networks might be challenged through the deterritorialising processes of the desiring machine that open a space for habit to become creative through its affective encounter. According to Grosz (2013: 217), habit is creative if it is 'addressed to the future rather than consolidating the past'.

I will chart the ways in which the neoliberal HE music institution represses the multiplicity, showing how statistical evidence representing men and women composers or composer-performers confirms what is already known, that women's music is under-represented. In the third section of the article, I will consider the forces that are at play in the spaces of a student music performance, drawing on an example of students performing at Western Sydney University. The example will illustrate how the power relations of gender are contested through the deterritorialising processes of musical performance in which the performing bodies that are constituted by the performing assemblage are continuously transitioning from one affective state to another. Here, the interactions of forces that derive from the musical performance give rise to affective states that cut across the assemblage. In this conception, a musical performance that is constituted by habit is transformative, for it produces music (and the bodies making the music), as Grosz (2013: 217) would observe, as 'open-ended plasticity'.

Mapping Music in Higher Education: the Repression of the Multiplicity

Conceived as a molar entity, the neoliberal HE music institution fixes the corporeal collection (teachers, learners, administrators and researchers), and the non-corporeal apparatus (learning materials, university policies, computer technology, musical instruments and much else) into their tangible forms. The institution in which music is situated projects a majoritarian tendency, reducing chaotic difference to uniformity and sameness. Echoing Lazzarato (2006: 175), I am suggesting that music in HE is constituted and coded according to the norms of music practice in which the multiplicity or the virtual (the possibilities of other becomings that are not yet actualised) are repressed. The institution, driven by economic imperatives, implements the neoliberal techniques of defining, measuring, managing, disciplining and controlling to determine how well it measures up and conforms to these imperatives. The molar lines running across the institutional assemblage produce inequities borne of hierarchical difference. It is often the case, for example, that music will struggle for legitimacy and recognition in the university, which is caught up in the hierarchical debates that privilege science (Cohen 2001;

Moxham 2016; Perez-Grogan 2014). Within this framework and in agreement with a broader observation by Gordon (2003), music in HE suppresses the notion of a becoming-woman, fostering instead a woman-becomingt-man (or woman-becoming-the-norm). As Gordon states:

> popular feminist refrains (the third wave) capture the revolutionary aspects of women's movements into molar categories of 'woman' and capitalist being. They thereby force the active politics into a repressive desire for a mirroring of patriarchal hierarchies and power structures (Gordon 2003: 39).

The molar binary identities habitually produced by the institution reinforce the hierarchical division between men and women, ignoring the intersectional differences that fragment these stable categories into thousands of pieces. As an abstract machine[7], the hierarchical system captures and conditions desire, irrespective of gender, organising it into a gender-neutral power system (Gordon 2003: 101). Furthermore, Gordon argues that 'feminism's attempt to critique the binary does little to actually dispense with its mode, and in fact only confirms and repeats its operation' (Gordon 2003: 102). Accordingly, 'the abstract-machine of molarity … over-codes the positive passions and struggles of women's movements into a normalising and stable representative "subject" no longer oppositional to the status quo, but fully incorporated into the maintenance of that status quo' (Gordon 2003: 104). In Deleuzian philosophy, such a scenario is understood in terms of the molar line discussed above[4]. Molarity works to contain identity and confine desire. It territorialises the identities and apparatuses of the HE institution, focusing on the end-driven products that are intrinsic to it, and creating an order that stifles creativity.

Molarity and the HE Music Assemblage

The molar HE music assemblage 'is a space of visibility', to transfer Lazzarato's (2006) idea of the prison to the HE institution, 'that makes a mixture of bodies, a corporeal assemblage' (learners and teachers) 'emerge and be seen' (Lazzarato 2006: 175). The corporeal assemblage is captured and coded into binary groupings from an infinite number of possible variations in the incorporeal realm of their sexes and sexualities. These infinite possibilities, 'the thousand possible becomings of sexuality' (Lazzarato 2006: 174), must be coded to relate back to the men and women dualism to make visible a corporeal assemblage that maintains the heterosexual norm. Codified as 'music learning and teaching', the HE music assemblage harnesses the power of its disciplinary machinic expression to transform music learners, irrespective of their gender or sexuality (or any other cultural difference), into educated musicians. Simultaneously, the HE music machinic assemblage 'carries out incorporeal transformations' (Lazzarato 2006: 175) on the bodies of its learners and teachers. In Deleuze, these incorporeal transformations are the multiplicity, the space in which the molecular line oscillates between the known and the unknown. For Lazzarato, however, the mechanisms of the institution are employed to confine the multiplicity. Accordingly, the institution neutralises the power of variation and change (the difference that makes a difference) 'subordinating them to reproduction' (Lazzarato 2006:176). The HE music institution, through its disciplinary apparatus, thus makes everything the same, neutralising gender differences and eradicating 'any possibility of variation, any unpredictability, from action, conduct and behavior' (Lazzarato 2006: 176). Students are subjected to the same conditions. They must produce what is required of them to pass assessments, and they must behave and act according to the policies of the institution. The disciplinary apparatus also contrives a 'more profound repression', separating out 'the forces belonging to the dynamics of the "difference that makes difference"' (Lazzarato 2006: 76). The suppression of the virtual thus neutralises the power of invention and codifies repetition, 'thereby reducing it to a simple reproduction' (Lazzarato 2006: 176). The infinite array of identity markers on the bodies of the corporeal assemblage are homogenised and made to conform to the norms of the institution, and to unite in a common goal of receiving and giving a music education according to a set of strict rules enacted in the institution's policies and procedures. Lazzarato argues that institutions 'do not know becoming …. They brutally prevent the infinity of other possible worlds passing into reality. They block and control becoming and difference' (Lazzarato 2006: 176–7).

The majoritarian tendency of the institution and its molar line, as Gordon (2003: 102) explains, produces the binary machine. It functions to confine the virtual while differentiating man from woman. The binary machine produces a code of identification of its music learners and teachers, reinforcing their molar identities, ignoring all the possible intersectional variations of gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity and much more. Following Gordon, the first operation of the molar line is therefore the establishment of molar identities. This feeds into a

second operation in which the devices of power are employed to regulate the institution, forming a 'majoritarian collective' (Gordon 2003: 204). Continuing with this logic, the third operation is its alignment with the dominant modes of production and consumption. Accordingly, women who speak for other women will, by necessity, appropriate the very patriarchal languages that women's struggle has opposed. At the level of the molar line, the HE music institution adopts a highly regulated framework, marked by the forces of neoliberal power and state capture. Yet, the HE music institution is also a desiring machine, driven by the desire of the musician's body to empower it. While desire is released by the multiplicity, paradoxically it is simultaneously closed down through the mechanism of capture when, as Gordon claims, it is 'enacted within a system that disempowers to overpower' (Gordon 2003: 153). The HE music institution captures and overpowers desire, forcing its learning and teaching constituents into conformity with the norms of its machinic assemblage. Students are promised fulfilment if they pursue a music degree but, to achieve success, they must acquiesce to the technologies that constrain the institution, thereby subjecting the music learning and teaching machine to a repression of desire. The binary machinic apparatus of the HE music institution pushes all its constituents into the paradigm of white male heteronormativity. Bizarrely, this jars with the mandate of the modern HE institution to promote and value the cultural and social diversity of its population. The HE music institution, at the level of the molar line, is habituated and structured by molar thinking, confining the virtual and codifying repetition.

These three operations of the molar line are exemplified in recent research exploring gender in HE music institutions. A study in the United Kingdom by Georgina Born and Kyle Devine (2015) can be read to find that there are significant social and cultural impacts according to the molar lines passing through the identities of gender, class and ethnic background. The authors claim that undergraduate music technology degree programs, by which they mean degrees that focus on contemporary popular music or sound art or sound design or sound engineering or music technology are a relatively new phenomenon and have exploded in popularity over the past fifteen years. They point out that these degrees are in contrast to the traditional music degree focused on the classical music canon and its associated instrumental and vocal training. The binary machinic assemblage, as it is revealed in this study, suppresses difference, bifurcating the two kinds of degree and the demographics associated with each. The authors claim that traditional music degrees are dominated by students with a middle- to upper-class pedigree in which 55 per cent are women (Born & Devine 2015: 146) and are educated in the music of the male canon. Music technology degrees tend to be populated by white male students (90 per cent) from working-class backgrounds and are also educated in a male canon.

The authors suggest that student populations 'diverge markedly in terms of both their gender and social class profiles' (Born & Devine 2015: 136), leading them to speculate that social differences are being reproduced, amplified, or otherwise transformed through these developments in HE music programs. They claim that discriminatory discourses 'effect the exclusion of women composers from the music-historiographic canon' (Born & Devine 2015: 148) and that, while the gendered characteristics of musical instruments are becoming less pronounced, 'certain musical instruments and technologies are still predominantly associated with men, prominent examples being the electric guitar and turntable' (Born & Devine 2015: 149). In arguing that music technology degrees and traditional music degrees are sustained by a male canon, Born & Devine (2015: 158) note that: first, there has been a negligible impact in traditional music degrees of the critiques of the canon enunciated by the critical and new musicology since the late 1980s; second, music technology degrees are not only based on a male canon but, as reported by Linda O'Keeffe (2017), the creative digital field is 'dominated by male practitioners, male lecturers and male authors'. These British HE music institutions have a reproductive function in which a majoritarian collective qua male norm is established and maintained. This hegemony operates within a framework of habit, to draw on Crispin (2015: 318), 'that conditions how most music is made, transmitted and received'. The findings of Born & Devine (2015) resonate with those of Crispin's later work (2017), as discussed in the introduction of this article.

Expanding the work of Born and Devine (2015), Sam de Boise (2017) examined the gender inequities of HE music institutions in Sweden and the UK, covering the period 2010–2014. Like Born and Devine, his research can be understood to focus on the molar identities of the binary machine, arguing that gender equality is important given that 'in neoliberal societies, universities are increasingly being seen as routes into professional music careers' (de Boise 2017: 23). What students choose to study will consequently have an impact on their subsequent careers in what he perceives to be an already divided music profession and collection of music industries. He argues that if the HE music institution fosters inequality according to gender, then it will reproduce these inequalities in the wider music practices of the music industry. De Boise notes that Sweden has one of the highest gender equality scores of any OECD country (De Boise 2017:

[24](#)), a finding that is echoed in his current study in which he shows that in Sweden there is less discrimination than in the UK towards women at the point of their initial application to study in music degrees ([De Boise 2017: 32](#)). However, as he also argues, discriminatory practices are enacted at the level of subject choices made by male and female applicants. He finds that applicants gravitate to subjects that reinforce gender stereotypes: males tend to choose masculine instruments (electric guitar, double bass, drums, saxophone, and trumpet) and masculine subjects (music and studio production, sound engineering and sound technology), and women make up the larger proportion of students enrolled in feminine subjects (for example, vocal studies) ([De Boise 2017: 32](#)). De Boise concludes that gender norms in HE Music institutions emulate the gendered norms of music more broadly, suggesting that universities must demonstrate a willingness 'to change gendered attitudes' ([de Boise 2017: 36](#)) rather than to simply respond to consumer choice. He speculates, however, that if courses were designed to be deliberately 'gender-subversive', it is likely that they would have catastrophic financial consequences because fewer students would choose to enrol in them ([de Boise 2017: 36](#)). On the level of its molarity, the music institution, in this scenario, is unable to empower its minority groups.

Disempowerment is a theme that runs through much of the research on gender and music in HE, including in a recent study from North America in which the authors, Cora Palfy and Eric Gilson ([2018](#)), argue that despite efforts to broaden the curriculum beyond the Western art music canon, the music theory classroom perpetuates this music as a 'hidden curriculum'. They claim that its associated value system marginalises students from increasingly socially and culturally diverse backgrounds, such as ethnicity, gender, sexuality, nationality and religion. In this and the above studies, the individual's molar lines are captured along with the molar lines of the collective assemblage of enunciation, establishing a majoritarian collective that then speaks with patriarchal languages on behalf of its marginalised identities. Terry Threadgold argues that to be competent in any discipline:

> is to learn to embody, to perform, and to enact [habitually] on a daily basis … as everyday pedagogy, not only the academic genres that constitute the theories and practices of the discipline, but also the genres of social relations and embodied subjectivity that construct the discipline as 'a body' of knowledge, and that determine its intersections and social relations with other disciplines, and other institutions, other 'bodies' of knowledge ([Threadgold 1996: 281](#)).

To be competent in music, then, is to embody and habitually perform the theories and practices of the discipline, and to write, speak, and reproduce music's dominant discourses. If those dominant discourses and practices are 'patriarchal to the core' ([Threadgold 1996: 281](#)), female learners will tend to adopt versions of the male 'other'.

In a study involving two universities in Liverpool, U.K., Zaina Shibhabi ([2016](#)), illustrates how the patriarchal nature of the curriculum is predisposed to the careers of male students. She finds that students struggle to name a women composer and that 54 per cent indicate that a lack of female role models negatively impacts their careers. An earlier study that analysed curricula in six Australian HE music institutions, found that women's music was virtually excluded from the content of musicology and music theory subjects ([Macarthur 2007](#)). This research accords with research by Edwards ([1997](#)), Green ([1997](#)), and the British Educational Research Association Music Education Review Group ([2004](#)). With all this work grounded in molar thought, however, the notion of a becoming-woman is suppressed.

Given the claims that the HE music institution plays a crucial role in providing an education that will translate into successful music careers for its graduates, I will now turn to some recent data (2018) gathered from my own institution. My analysis will begin with mapping the molar lines (as statistical representations) associated with listening habits and their connection with a male norm. I ask whether, through an ingrained force of mechanistic habit, the listening tasks that are included in the lectures and workshops of musicology, composition and music theory and music technology subjects potentially give rise to the concept of 'woman-becoming-the-norm'.

Music Listening at Western Sydney University: Molar Lines and Lines of Descent

Western Sydney University is one of 35 HE institutions in Australia that offers undergraduate and postgraduate programs in music. Its undergraduate music program is situated in the School of Humanities and Communication Arts. When the degree was

inaugurated in 1994, it quickly gained a reputation for its distinctiveness. One of the central tenets of the program, then (as now), is that all music is worthy of study, and that diversity in musical genre and style should be valued. This outlook differed from most degree programs in Australia at that time. With focus given almost exclusively to Western classical music, the traditional music degree in Australia's conservatoriums and universities in the 1990s resembled that discussed in Born and Devine (2015). Philip Brett (1994: 14) points out that the patriarchal ideology and discourses associated with Western classical music are entwined with specific notions of 'what it means to become a musician' in which musicality and talent are 'inextricably linked with power relationships' where they are 'negotiated and … constructed'. He suggests that the traditional music institution inculcates the very values associated with the music 'in such a way as to produce a certain understanding of what music is' (Brett 1994: 14). Brett goes on to elaborate how the musicianship and harmony subjects that students must master, which are seemingly abstract and benign, are loaded with patriarchal meanings. While the music degree at Western Sydney University has not exclusively attached itself to or engaged deeply with the highly valued discourse of Western art music, it has tended to valorise popular music as a heroic discourse and fetishise the discourses of music technology. Furthermore, the contested site of what constitutes good music is hotly debated, pivoting on a polarising argument about the worth of classical versus popular music.

Music technology has been central to Western Sydney University's music degree since 1994: it constitutes its own sub-major and is a central component in the sub-majors of music performance and composition. Western Sydney University was among the first in Australia to offer what Born and Devine (2015) would call a music technology degree as an alternative to the traditional music degree. But, as we will see, categorising it purely as a music technology degree is misleading, for students are also expected to acquire fluency in the literacies associated with Western classical music. The degree thus promulgates two kinds of music literacy, with each being highly specialised, within the one degree. On the one hand, it focuses on the literacy associated with notation in which students are taught to hear, read, write or notate and understand music theory in the same ways that students in a typical conservatorium would be taught to acquire these skills. On the other hand, in the technology stream it virtually abandons notational training in favour of teaching computer-based sequencing, multitrack programs, studio and music production, and the literacies of electro-acoustic and digital musicianship. These demand an aural literacy in and a vocabulary for the sonic textures and arrangements that are predominantly associated with popular music, electronic music and electro-acoustic music, among others (Born and Devine 2015: 140).

Born & Devine (2015) argue that the two kinds of degree, traditional music and music technology, participate 'in the reproduction or intensification of social class differences through music' (Born & Devine 2015: 157). These degrees, with their divergent

> literacies and competencies, subjectivities and tastes, might well be understood as further augmenting or entrenching the relative class trajectories [lower class associated with music technology degrees and middle- to upper-class with that of traditional music degrees] and future life chances of their different student populations (Born & Devine 2015: 157).

These authors thus claim that, at degree entry, individuals' earlier class formations determine the kind of degree they select; and the degree experience is likely to 'mediate individuals' post-degree class trajectory' (Born & Devine 2015: 157). Given that Western Sydney University straddles both kinds of degree within the one degree, we might ask to what extent it reproduces or subverts these class divisions. Data provided by Western Sydney University shows that 26 per cent of music students are from a low socio-economic background. It is worth noting that this does not seem to mirror the findings for music technology degrees in the UK in which approximately 50 per cent are from low socio-economic backgrounds (Born and Devine 2015: 152). On a side issue, most Western Sydney University music academics tend to buy into the assumption that the music itself is a class- and gender-neutral medium and thus plays no role in reproducing these divisions.

Lazzarato (2006: 182-3) suggests that there has been a transition from disciplinary to control societies in which the techniques of domination in the latter have been superimposed on the former, making them 'more and more invasive' (Lazzarato 2006: 183). One such technique is the use of the technologies of action at a distance, which act as vehicles of expression for the collective public opinion that circulates in the ether. Deleuze would call this public opinion the 'collective assemblage of enunciation'[8]. According to Lazzarato (2006: 181), the omnipotence of public opinion has been made possible through the technologies of television and the internet. Action at a

Table 2. Bachelor of Music Course Enrolments, Western Sydney University

Course Enrolments	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 (5 Nov)
Full-Time	197	216	236	252	240	216	205	216	171	165	149
Part-Time	14	14	26	44	45	64	46	41	61	36	34
Total	**211**	**230**	**262**	**296**	**285**	**280**	**251**	**257**	**232**	**201**	**183**

Table 3. Number of Male and Female Enrolments in the Bachelor of Music, Western Sydney University

Course Enrolments	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 (5 Nov)
Female	60	62	81	86	75	75	61	73	76	64	61
Male	151	168	181	210	210	205	190	184	156	137	122
Total	**211**	**230**	**262**	**296**	**285**	**280**	**251**	**257**	**232**	**201**	**183**

Table 4. Percentage of Male and Female Enrolments in the Bachelor of Music, Western Sydney University

Course Enrolments	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 (5 Nov)
Female (%)	28	12	31	29	26	27	24	28	33	32	33
Male (%)	72	88	69	71	74	73	76	72	67	68	67
Total	**211**	**230**	**262**	**296**	**285**	**280**	**251**	**257**	**232**	**201**	**183**

distance thus occurs in an open space, formerly the space of the multiplicity and, through the processes of capture, it enables a significant increase in control over the multiplicity. These distancing mechanisms reinforce competitive, ego-driven individualism in which collegial, collective dialogue that was once a feature of academic culture, is shut down.

Academic staff workloads are defined by numbers in a workload spreadsheet, reflecting the division of labour between research (the most desired category), teaching and governance. The distancing instruments of competitive individualism force the academic corporeal body to engage in power negotiations with colleagues, mostly to achieve a higher research workload with the aim of reducing the amount of teaching and governance undertaken. A high research workload will, in turn, necessitate the employment of a casual workforce to cover the teaching, putting stress on the school's budget. Furthermore, the dedication to the institution by a casual workforce is not the same as that of the permanent workforce, thereby potentially sending a signal to the student body that it is not valued. Whether this is a factor in the decline in student numbers in recent years in Western Sydney University's music program is a moot point but, as Table 2 shows, the enrolments have been steadily trending downwards since 2015.

Despite the problems with categorisation (as discussed above), I have presented the data for music at Western Sydney University according to the categories of men and women, thereby demonstrating that, when viewed through the molar lens of the category, the emerging men and women dichotomy reinforces the heterosexual norm. The descriptive statistics in the figures below, vividly illustrate the limitations of reducing the data to these rigid categories. As the last section of the article will suggest, however, it is only when music learning and teaching escapes this rigid coding, such as the movement of learners and teachers into the unpredictable spaces activated by musical performance, that an infinite array of possibilities begin to emerge.

Another distancing mechanism that continues to have real consequences for the academic and student constituencies is the Student Feedback Survey, which is used to provide feedback on the quality of teaching as experienced by students. The anonymous feedback is then used to adjust and improve future feedback. These instruments of action at a distance capture and actualise the multiplicity. They are exploitative, for they micromanage and police the performance of the academic workforce. In the 1990s, the demographics of gender in music at Western Sydney University were approximately 50 per cent each of female and male students. As Tables 3 and 4 show, with data sourced from Western Sydney University for the period of 2008 to 2018 (inclusive), female students now constitute less than one-third of all students studying in the degree, echoing data reported by Born and Devine (2015) for students studying in music technology degrees in Great Britain. Born and Devine also make the point that music technology degrees are cheaper to deliver than traditional degrees.

As constructed in the listening materials presented to students at Western Sydney University, the degree sends a signal that music is a male pursuit and musicians are, by and large, men. The listening materials were sourced from the units of study in composition,

musicology and sound production studies in 2018. They provide a glimpse into the quantity of music composed or performed by individual men and women, and women and men in collaboration, and the quantity of popular versus classical music. These listening materials are used as examples in lectures and tutorials in two sub-majors (composition and sound production studies) and in five core musicology units.

As expected, there is a bias to music composed or performed by men. Of the 16 units, constituting 531 listening examples, surveyed, 380 (72%) are by men composers, 96 (18%) are by women, and 55 (10%) are by a combination of men and women composers or performers. See Fig. 1. Figure 2 shows that of a total 232 listening examples in the five musicology units surveyed, 153 (66%) of the listening examples are by male composers, 61 (26%) are by female composers, and 18 (8%) are by a combination of male and female. Figure 3 shows the gender distribution in two music theory and four composition units. Of a total of 216 listening examples, 162 (75%) are by male composers, 19 (9%) are by female composers and 35 (16%) are by a combination male and female composers. Figure 4 shows the gender distribution of listening materials in four music production studies units and one music production and performance unit. Of a total of 83 listening examples, 65 (78%) are by male composers, 16 (20%) are by female composers and 2 (2%) are by a combination of male and female. A bias towards classical music was also anticipated. However, this is not borne out by the data which show that of a total of 513 listening examples taught in 16 units, 221 (43%) are in the Western classical tradition and 292 (57%) are from popular music (see Fig. 5). Does women's music fare better in terms of its representation in the popular music listening examples? Figure 6 shows that they do not fare better: of a total of 250 popular music listening examples in 16 units surveyed, 185 (74%) are by male composers and 65 (26%) are by female composers. Figure 7 demonstrates the number of women composers represented in the listening examples of the classical music taught in 16 units. As expected, the number of women represented is even less than for popular music (Fig. 6): of a total of 218 listening examples taught in 16 units, 192 (88%) are by male composers and 26 (12%) are by female composers.

If we accept that the musical examples presented to students will model what (acceptable) music is, then, in this analysis, music is characterised by its association with men. In 2018, 33 per cent of the student cohort were women. Yet, in the music theory and composition sub-major, only nine per cent of the music they heard was by women. As composers, then, it is likely that students at Western Sydney University will understand that their success will depend upon how well they are able to reproduce the male norm. Coupled with the distancing instruments of capture, these statistics appear to reflect the values of the institution, suggesting that it is more than likely that mechanistic habit manufactures ways to deliver these materials in the most time-efficient manner such that they are repeatedly taught to students every year.

These statistical representations, however, demonstrate what we already know, that music is governed by the male norm. According to Alexander Monea (2016: 457), as repeatable statements, abstracted from specific cases to form a universal truth, statistics only make explicit what already exists and fail to offer a solution. Statistics invoke a form of hierarchical difference based on a negative relation between two identities and, as Monea (2016: 457) puts it, they are 'too broad and general to be of any use'. Monea quotes Deleuze to amplify this point: 'The combination of opposites tells us nothing; it forms a net so slack that everything slips through' (Deleuze 1991a: 44–5). In this section of the paper, I have mapped the ways in which the institution captures and controls the multiplicity, reducing chaotic difference to uniformity and sameness. In the next section, I will briefly explore how the multiplicity might escape these control mechanisms through the affective encounters of bodies and instruments in a musical performance.

Habit as Becoming-Woman in HE Music

How do we adjust habit so that, following Grosz (2013: 225), who draws on Bergson (1959), it enables 'free acts, acts that remain inherently unpredictable … movements that address an open relation to the world, a relation that is not the constraint on behaviour that instincts are but that, by degrees, is the promise of freedom'? How does music produce new kinds of subjectivity? What does habit look like in the HE music institution when it is conceived as a becoming-woman in which the molar lines are freed up, becoming more flexible and molecular? For Grosz, sensations are the key to understanding how unpredictability and degrees of freedom can emerge through habit. Sensations, such as pleasure and pain, are 'antidotes to automatism' (Bergson 1959: 225), provoking new actions 'whose repetitions will also yield pleasure' (Bergson 1959: 225). Acts are free, not because they inhere in an essence of identity but because the acts themselves enable an individual to be transformed and engaged through his or her acts, to become through his or her acts (Bergson

Figure 1. Number of listenting examples according to gender in musicology, composition and music production units 2018
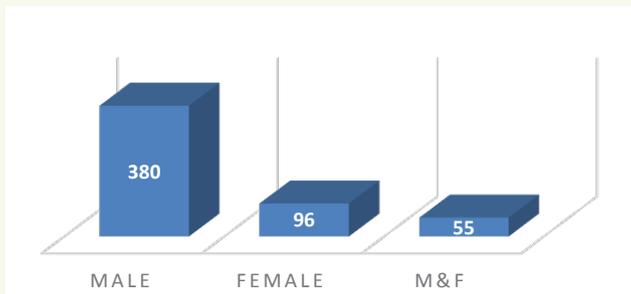

Figure 2. Number of listening examples according to gender in five musicology core units 2018
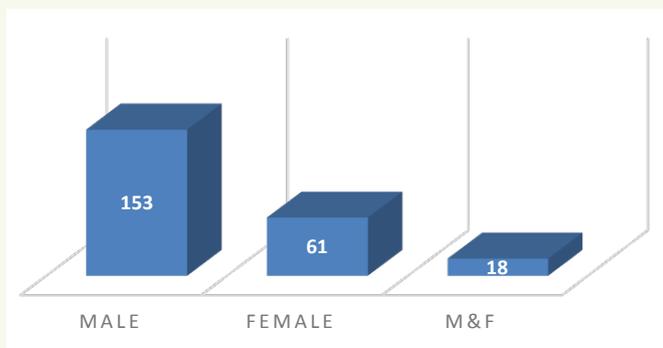

Figure 3. Listening Examples According to Gender in six Composition & Music Theory Units 2018
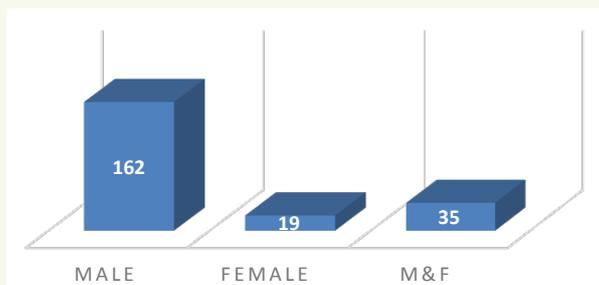

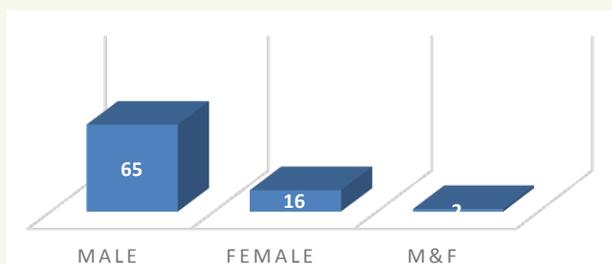**Figure 4**. Listening Examples According to Gender in 5 Music Production Studies Units

Figure 5. Number of Listening ExamplesAccording to Classical Popular Music in Musicology, Composition & Music Production Units 2018
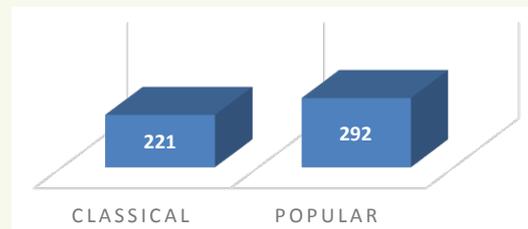

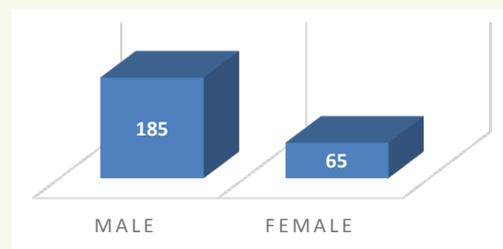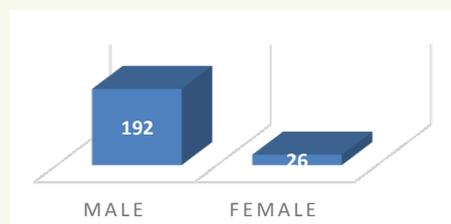**Figure 6**. number of Popular Music Listening Examples According to Male and Female in all Units

Figure 7. Number of Classical Music Listening Examples According to Male & Female in all units

1959: 227). In this view, freedom is in the act itself, enabling the individual to harness the power of the act to suit her or his purposes. Habit, in this understanding, is a form of desire or what Deleuze would call a 'desiring-machine'. It transforms the milieu, rather than having the milieu impose itself negatively on habit.

To illustrate this idea, I will discuss a student performance of Bruno Mars' song, *Chunky*, mashed with Michael Jackson's *PYT (Pretty Young Thing)*, at a Western Sydney University Art of Sound Concert presented in the Playhouse Theatre in October 2018[9]. The six-piece student band, loosely categorised as jazz-electro-funk, which is still groping for its distinctive voice and working on polishing its technique, comprises one female lead singer, two female guitarists, one playing bass and the other electric guitar (subverting the masculine stereotype for these instruments), and three males, one on drums, one on keyboard and the other on synthesiser. The student band's arrangement and performance of the song depart from the original version, which is a highly accomplished pop techno rendition with the recording made up of a lead vocal (Bruno Mars), vocal backing harmonies, drum machine, synthesisers and 'popping' bass (released in Australia, November 2017)[10]. The composition of the song in the original, which is adopted by the student band, is in a standard structure which, to recapitulate some of the analysis above, can be read as a metaphor for the molarity of the institutional assemblage: verse 1 — pre-chorus-chorus — verse 2 — pre-chorus-chorus — bridge — chorus — chorus. But do the mechanisms of habit that execute the performance in this standard format confine the multiplicity, neutralising the power of variation and change, 'subordinating them to reproduction' (Lazzarato 2006:176)? Do the strict rules of the song's composition, which potentially give rise to a stereotype, prevent new becomings from occurring? I want to argue that this student performance constitutes its own plane of immanence[11]. While it follows

the outline of the *a priori* melodic and harmonic plane, it engages in a continuous dialogue between the actual and the virtual where, as Stover puts it:

> communication between stratifying acts (encounters with histories, syntactic particularities, and other conditioning factors of a practice) on the one hand and gestures of coding and decoding (drawing lines between constituent elements in the singular ways that define *any particular* utterance, and drawing lines of flight into new spaces) on the other are enacted .... In other words, the temporally unfolding performing/performed subject is in dialogue with the historically and textually bounded nature of the musical material, and the acting out of this dialogue is what defines the context of some specific performed utterance (Stover 2017: 6).

The bodies engaged in this student performance are much more than the sum of their male and female identities, each bringing into the space of the performance their own histories and family backgrounds, multiple histories of encounters and trajectories that can be traced back to their own multiple musical lineages. The affective space of the performance, informed by this multiplicity of experience and encounter, is ripe for constituting a desiring machinic assemblage in which the bodies and instruments in the space of the performance interact with and act upon one another, as Stover (2107: 6), drawing on Brian Massumi would put it, cutting 'transversally across the persistent division', such as male and female or subject and object, as produced by the binary machine. The performance thus becomes a social, affective space that cuts across traditional hierarchies and undoes any flows of power that represses the multiplicity.

Chunky is the last item in the band's set at the concert in the Playhouse. The theatre is dimly lit with subdued bluish light. Acts of habit of the mechanistic kind are necessarily involved in realising the music, which has been arranged to suit the combination of instruments and voice, putting into practice the rules associated with the music. The performance begins in a typical manner: the lead singer announces the song, then turns to the performer on the synthesiser, indicating that she is ready for him to begin. He sets the music in motion. She then renders the first line of the lyric and melody after the drumsticks have indicated the tempo. The rest of the band join in. The desiring machinic assemblage of sonic materials and bodies begin to open into a virtual future, capitalising on the gutsy rawness of sound as it unfolds, moment by moment. A few rough edges in the intonation and rhythm are detected, ever so slightly. The structure stays intact. But the affective space of instruments and bodies is highly charged, seducing at the level of contagious affect.

The original version, which has informed the student version, is slightly slower, almost holding back on the beat. Its rendering of the song is highly refined, a slick performance designed for the mass pop market. The student performance is searching for an expressive dimension, something different from the original, unfolding a hint of syncopation, as it moves through and across the performance assemblage, projecting an airy bright and breezy rhythmic feel, projecting the feeling of funky jazz. The Mars version is highly accomplished but, as with Jonathan Dunsby's discussion of Roland Barthes' comparison of two singers of classical music, its slickness leaves it bodiless such that 'it is the soul that accompanies the song, not the body' (Dunsby 2009: 122). In contrast, the audible and physical presence of the student lead singer, fully embodying the music, projects the sensation that it is the body that fully accompanies the song, not the soul. She strives for vocal virtuosity but falls short. In the context of a student performance, however, where delivering vocality as high-level technique is out of reach, falling short of the mark is barely noticed. The student rendition of Chunky, delivers a singular performance, to draw again on Stover (2017: 29), that 'unfolds as a process of territorialization and deterritorialization', generating musical activity as the continuously unfolding actualisation of the multiplicity. As the performance ensues, it sets up ongoing relations between singer and instrumentalists as 'encounters, interactions, and affective exchanges' (Stover 2017: 28). It makes connections with the audience, inviting them to participate in the call-response moments of the chorus. The performance infects the auditorium in countless ways as it responds to the stimulus of music or sonic material as pure affect. The sonic material, and the bodies producing it, are transformed through their mutually constitutive acts and exchanges that are brought about by the performance. With the music moving towards an ending, the drummer takes the music away until the singer takes hold of the tune and the lyrics to bring the song back to its original, catchy tune, in its original key. As she drives the song up the straight to its conclusion, the appreciative audience, caught up in the sensations of the desiring machine, bursts into applause.

Conclusion

In this article, I have argued that music in HE is characterised by the assemblage of disciplinary power, which is highly structured and organised or, as Deleuze would put it, highly striated. Its striation is heightened by techniques of control, which are superimposed on disciplinary power and characterised by technologies such as action at a distance, which are then used to capture, control and constrain the multiplicity. The micro-managed academic workforce is obliged to comply with workload policies, which reduce the work of an academic to numbers on a spreadsheet. The regulatory systems of the university require that its population of students and academics follow procedures and meet deadlines, and that the strictures of assessments that are referenced against rigid criterion grids are painstakingly observed. In the neoliberal university, measuring up means acquiescing to techniques of control that monitor how well the institution is performing, including how well the student body is rating the academic body in feedback questionnaires. For all its rhetoric about diversity, the university will paradoxically operate within a hierarchical structure that subordinates minority groups. In this article, I have explored the impact of the disciplinary qua control university on the music of women composers which, in the curriculum of the Western Sydney University music program, as elsewhere (indicated by the studies cited), continue to be subordinated.

I have argued that habit, in the negative sense, enlists statistical science to perpetuate the image of the hierarchy of difference, subordinating female to male. The choice of listening materials used in music curricula, not just at Western Sydney University but elsewhere (as the studies cited make clear), suggest that they are derived from unthinking, automatic habitual processes that keep reproducing the same. Habit, as reflex action, reinforces the marginalisation of women by repetitively drawing on the known and familiar, forcing conformity with the norm. Statistics were also found to lack the capacity to tell us something that we do not already know, and to offer solutions.

Moving into the third section of the article, I argued that there are moments in which the multiplicity is apt to evade the seemingly all-pervasive control mechanisms of the highly regulated music institution. Habit was posited as a creative force, especially when it is linked with the affective encounters of the musical performance. In the example of the student performance, I illustrated how the negative habit-forming processes of music learning and teaching are broken, moderated and transformed through the affective spaces of the performance assemblage. Accordingly, I proffered the idea that sensations and affect elude the capture and constraint mechanisms of the neoliberal music institution. Music performance creates new sensory landscapes that are constituted by an infinite array of affective encounters. Adapting Grosz (2013: 18), I suggested that musical performance is ripe for empowering all who partake in it: the habits and behaviours that propel the music-performance machine are positive and productive as they emerge in the moment in which they are continuously being constituted and reconstituted. The musical performance engages the processes of a becoming-women, deterritorialising the molar identities of the performers and instruments, turning them into acts of freedom that foreground 'the identity defining force of relations, encounters, affect, dialogue, and feelings' (Stover 2017: 44). As Stover says, 'all of this points to the *embodied* nature of affect' (Stover 2017: 44). Finally, I have endeavoured to think differently about the capture and control mechanisms of the neoliberal university, using the processes of mapping them to unpack what they are doing. If the musical performance is a metaphor for these striated controlling mechanisms, it is also a becoming that escapes the boundaries of the metaphor. In this article, I have thus performed a methodological intervention, showing how the performance-in-action slides into the territory of sensation. In so doing, it encounters affect as a productive force and launches creative lines of flight into the unknown.

ENDNOTES

1. While it is difficult to ascertain the exact quantity of music that is available, it is possible to estimate that it would be roughly equivalent to 27 per cent which, in Australia, is the percentage of women composers represented by the Australian Music Centre.

2. In this article I am deliberately using the term 'habit' instead of Bourdieu's concept of 'habitus'. As Tony Bennett et al. (2013: 11–12) point out, the Bourdieusian notion of the 'habitus', the embodied past comprising the dispositions of which the habitus is constituted, does not adequately account for the role that material devices might play in enabling change, such as the use of techniques to review and change behaviour patterns. Because the habitus is formed by events of the past that emerge from its internalisation of pre-established social norms, it is inclined to be reproductive of the past, thus having limited capacity to be transformative. In contrast, 'habit', as posited by Elizabeth Grosz (2013) and discussed in this article, conceives of habit as generative of both internal and external forces, thereby having the capacity to be both transformative and reproductive.

3. As discussed by Grosz (1993), Deleuzian philosophy has been criticised, however, by feminists for representing masculine interests, including its use of masculine metaphors and an 'apparently phallic drive to plug things, make connections, link with things' (Grosz 1993: 167). Accordingly, despite its movement away from the male norm, the Deleuzian concept of 'becoming-woman' has been argued to privilege the art and music of men. As Grosz points out, for Deleuze, however, the movement away from the male norm is not based on the recognition of woman as a molar identity with a physical, female form, stating that 'for women, as much as for men, the process of becoming-woman is the destabilization of molar identity' (Grosz 1993: 177). I will discuss becoming-woman, as conceived by Deleuze, and Deleuze with Guattari, in more detail throughout this article.

4. Deleuze conceptualises three lines of force: molar lines, molecular lines and lines of flight. Accordingly, molar lines produce a majoritarian tendency and they are the most pervasive, organising the world into rigid segments that yield binary oppositions within a hierarchical structure. For Deleuze and Guattari, molar lines subject bodies to essentialising principles. Molecular lines are a movement away from the essentialising principles of segmentarity and hierarchies. They are a space in between the known and the unknown. In relation to 'the great binary aggregates, such as the sexes or the classes', they write that 'it is evident that they cross over into molecular assemblages, of a different nature, and that there is a double reciprocal dependency between them. For the two sexes imply a multiplicity of molecular combinations bringing into play not only the man in the woman and the woman in the man, but the relation of each to the animal, the plant, etc.: a thousand tiny sexes' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 213). For Deleuze and Guattari, lines of flight articulate a pure movement of change, breaking out of one form of organisation while moving towards another. See Ashley Woodward (2007: 69–70). Discussing becomings, which Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 277) say must 'begin with and pass through becoming-woman', they go on to exemplify the line of flight:

    When the man of war disguises himself as a woman, flees disguised as a girl, hides as a girl, it is not a shameful, transitory incident in his life. To hide, to camouflage oneself, is a warrior function, and the line of flight attracts the enemy, traverses something and puts what it traverses to flight; the warrior arises in the infinity of a line of flight' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 277).

5. While this article is grounded in Grosz's concept of 'habit', I note that her work is grounded, in turn, in the work of Ravaisson, Bergson and Deleuze. Drawing on Bergson, Grosz (2013: 226) observes that 'automatism begins the gradual evolutionary movement that directs itself to freedom: habit is an intermediary state between instincts and free acts'. She suggests, from Bergson, that habit has three characteristics: it is acquired through repetition; it decomposes and recomposes various actions and practice; and that these are 'stored up in a mechanism which is set in motion as a whole by an initial impulse, in a closed system of automatic movements which succeed each other in the same order and, together, take the same length of time' (Grosz 2013: 228). Above all, they have the 'capacity to transform living beings into free beings' (Grosz 2013: 226). From Deleuze, Grosz focuses on the virtual and its capacity to transform itself in the process of actualising habits (Grosz 2013: 230). For Deleuze, as explained by Grosz, the virtual actualises difference ('forces of differentiation') and these forces transform themselves as they are being actualised while simultaneously generating new virtual realms (yet to be actualised). As Deleuze, in Deleuze and Parnet (2002: 148), quoted by Grosz (2013: 230), puts it: 'Every actual surrounds itself with a cloud of virtual images'. This idea vividly illustrates the transformative potential of habit. The phrase, 'We are habits, nothing but habits' derives from an observation by Deleuze (1991b, x), drawing on Hume, that relations are external to their terms: 'We start with atomic parts, but these atomic parts have transitions, passages, "tendencies", which circulate from one to another. These tendencies give rise to habits'. For Deleuze, if we are only habits, which gives rise to 'the habit of saying "I"', then 'there is no more striking answer to the problem of the Self'. This article is not concerned with this understanding of 'habit'.

6. Intersectionality refers to the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender, regarding these as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage: a theoretical approach based on such a premise (*Oxford Dictionary*). Intersectionality theory is interested in the intersection of multiple identity markers that make people disadvantaged or oppressed e.g. race, sexuality and gender.

7. In Deleuzian thought, an assemblage is a coming together of the corporeal and the incorporeal, the animate and the inanimate, and the organic and inorganic, in the moment of their formations as connections rather than as static objects or bodies that exist inside a predetermined template in the way that a jigsaw puzzle might be assembled. The assemblage is linked with the idea of the machine. For Deleuze, a machinic assemblage is always in flux and movement, continuously made up of multiple machinic connections. The abstract machine is used as a tool for thinking about the way in which connections come about and the way in which they are apt to change and transform that with which they come into contact. The machinic assemblage is often fuelled by desire, hence conceived as a desiring machine. For Deleuze, as Carfoot (2004: 68) writes, 'life is actually a machine: all of life is made up of multiple machinic connections from which we form our image of the world'.

8. In Deleuzian thought, the collective assemblage of enunciation is 'the acts and statements of incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 88). Its power lies in its ability to utter statements that seem to come from nowhere, but are, in fact, everywhere, that is, 'all the voices present within a single voice' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 80).

9. See the performance of the student band at Western Sydney University playing Bruno Mars' song *Chunky* at: <youtu.be/qN60UFnIvFg>·

10. See Bruno Mars' version of *Chunky* at: <youtube.com/watch?v=oacaq_1TkMU>.

11. In Deleuzian philosophy, immanence and transcendence refer to the way in which relationships between things and beings in the world arise. As James Williams puts it, if it is a relationship to something, then it is transcendence. If it is a relationship in something, then it is immanence (Williams 2010: 126). This idea applies to the musical performance under discussion. Deleuze and Guattari (1987: 266–7), explain immanence as follows:

> there are no longer forms or developments of forms: nor are there subjects or the formation of subjects …. There are only haeccities, affects, subjectless individuations that constitute collective assemblages …. We call this plane … the plane of consistency or composition (as opposed to the plan(e) of organization and development). It is necessarily a plane of immanence and univocality'.

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ABSTRACT

As an exterior force of relations and habits, feminism is conceived as a failure that needs a radical rethink. In this conceptualisation, feminism has failed to remove gender bias from institutions of work and in music it has failed to solve the inequalities of gender and race. Drawing on the philosophy of Deleuze as applied by Elizabeth Grosz, I explore what an immanent approach to thinking about the dynamics of feminist work and its habits in music might do to generate new understandings. I begin from the premise that the disciplinary apparatus of the modern institution makes everything the same, neutralising gender differences and eradicating any possibility for variation and unpredictability. I then shift into immanent thinking, arguing that when music performance in the higher education music institution is separated from the strictures of music curriculum and assessment regimes, transformations become possible. To illustrate this idea, I discuss a student performance of Bruno Mars' song, *Chunky*, mashed with Michael Jackson's *PYT (Pretty Young Thing)*, at a Western Sydney University Art of Sound Concert presented in the Playhouse Theatre in October 2018. I argue that the performance, moves out of the rigidly coded gender norms of the institution into the plane of immanence.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Associate Professor Sally Macarthur is a musicologist whose research draws on Deleuzian philosophy and feminist poststructuralist theories to investigate twentieth and twenty-first century music in the Western classical tradition. She is the author of *Towards a Twenty-First-Century Feminist Politics of Music*, published by Ashgate in 2010, and co-editor of *Music's Immanent Future: The Deleuzian Turn in Music Studies*, published by Routledge in 2016. Her earlier books, *Feminist Aesthetics in Music* and *Musics and Feminisms*, continue to be widely cited. She has been a lead investigator with Distinguished Professor Dawn Bennett, Curtin University, Associate Professor Sophie Hennekam, School of Business, La Rochelle, France, Professor Cat Hope, Monash University, and Talsha Goh, DCA student, Western Australian Academy Performing Arts, Edith Cowan University on the International Study of Women in Music, 2015-18, publishing seven articles in international journals, including *Musicology Australia* and the *British Journal of Music Education*. Associate Professor Macarthur is Director of Academic Program for the Bachelor of Music and Master of Creative Music Therapy programs at Western Sydney University and she is an Honorary Adjunct Associate Professor at the Elder Conservatorium, The University of Adelaide.
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