

Editorial Introduction

2020: "I've Seen It All"

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What would provide a sensorial snapshot of a restless and tangibly morphing year for future readers? As the COVID-19 pandemic resurges in late 2020, palpable unrest continues alongside the largest global civil rights movement of our time, ushered in by Black Lives Matter organizers. After speaking with a popular music scholar living in Hong Kong, I search for news on the protests there, and Google autofills: "People also ask... Is Hong Kong Safe 2020?" The answer provided, "Hong Kong is still safe. As long as you stay away from the protest frontlines...". I have just finished two days of the Scholars Strike for Black Lives in Canada, where online classes were suspended by those striking, to draw attention to the issues in solidarity through online panels. Simultaneously, scholars are scrambling to get resources on mental health to support students during massive changes to Higher Education in response to the new conditions of life and learning.

The live music and gig industries ground to a halt in 2020, an issue we will address further in the just announced upcoming issue for 2021 on crisis in popular music. Film productions have started up again. (Toronto has had a surge in productions due to their rigorous health and safety regulations, although this doesn't appear to be reported in the media.) Live music has been happening at drive-thrus, rehearsing new models of social distancing to see what comes of this.

With this backdrop, our 10.1 *JASPM Journal* issue captures a liminal space, as scholarship researched before the pandemic faces an uneasy grappling with insights of the present. Many of these articles were conceived and submitted before the pandemic began, and so much has changed in the areas they have analyzed. Rosemary Hill and Molly Megson explore the possibilities for change in music industries where sexual violence and gender inequality are pronounced, yet largely understudied areas of popular music research. They write of their ongoing project, "Our larger goal is to explore the role of anti-violence work in changing music culture and fostering a more welcoming environment for women and gender non-conforming people as audiences, musicians, sound engineers and in other live music roles." Notably, their research identifies how women in more prominent roles within the industry have typically been the ones to push for training and

support in their organizations. What does this mean in 2020? Hill and Megson's research points to possible pivots for the industries that will come.

For some, being housebound and isolated during the pandemic might make revisiting Björk's performance in the film *Dancer in the Dark* surreal timing, transforming the meaning for this audience of songs like "It's Oh So Quiet," or "I've Seen it All." Pascal Rudolph's article also addresses music videos, only this time in their connection to film meaning and pop stardom. As Rudolph writes, this analysis of Björk in *Dancer in the Dark* dives into "the heightened potential for exploring our own engagement with concepts of fiction when we actively confront such performances by popstars on film." The article also explores the troubled relationship between Björk and director Lars Von Trier; and how notions of authenticity and persona are exponentially complicated by Björk's role as Selma, composing the music she sings, and making up lines, in the spirit of von Trier's Dogme rules (vows). It is revealing to revisit the ethical issues of this film in a contemporary context. Paul Carr and Ben Challis provide an English translation of their previously published theoretical work on loop-based compositions and the role of repetition, related to genres centered on the practice.

Our section of IASPM Branch Reports continues in this issue with contributions from Serbia, Spain, and Hungary by Bojana Srđan Radovanović, Ruth Piquer, and Emilia Barna respectively. All of the branch reports provide excellent resources for our IASPM members to become attuned to the larger debates within the international field. Ruth Piquer's article is particularly encyclopedic, and a great resource for those looking for authors and subject areas in Spain. These Branch Reports also serve effectively to draw attention to work that is geographically marginalized at the "peripheries" of popular music studies; to borrow a turn of phrase from one of our editorial board members, Christina Ballico, who would suggest the periphery is key in the study of popular musics.

We would like to welcome Gayle Wald and Laura Wiebe to the editorial board this issue, and thank them for their detailed editorial work through the pandemic. I am, as always, in awe of the generosity of IASPM members who volunteer their time and energy to provide detailed peer reviews and editorial work for our members' journal. The peer review process has been a challenge in 2020 as the world organized around the pandemic and people's priorities were shaken. It was hard to hear from some of our invited peer reviewers that they were recovering from COVID-19 after hospital stays. We are thinking of you, as well as offering our sincerest condolences to our members who have lost loved ones during this time.

References

Discography

Björk —

2000. "I've Seen It All". In *Selmasongs: Music from the Motion Picture Soundtrack "Dancer in the Dark"*, One Little Indian Records.

1995. "It's Oh So Quiet". In *Post*, One Little Indian Records.

Videography

Dancer in the Dark. 2000. Dir. Lars von Trier, Zentropa et al.