

Habilitationsvortrag

27.5.2024 • 17:45-19:15

seminar room at the institute
of musicology • and online via zoom

Haus der Musik, 4. Stock
Universitätsstraße 1
6020 Innsbruck



Bernd Brabec

University of Innsbruck • Institute of Musicology

Time to Listen – Decolonising Hearing and Knowing for an Auditory Anthropology in a More-than-Human World

When examining current dialogues, conferences, and publications in the fields of musicology, ethnomusicology, and anthropology, it becomes evident that some of the most pressing debates center around (post-)colonialism and decolonisation. Another related and equally contentious area of concern involves the increasingly porous boundaries of characteristics traditionally attributed to our species. Consequently, the analysis and comprehension of music, sound, and their agencies have expanded beyond the human. Thirdly, conventional notions of knowledge and epistemology face challenges not only from Indigenous research methods but also from approaches seeking to offer alternatives to traditional scholarly methods, such as artistic and arts-based research. Music, sound, and listening are by their very nature so different to vision, common views on evidence, and dominant ideas of objectivity, that musicology should obtain its new mission in permanently decolonising minds by decolonising perception and expression in sound. Therefore, we have to take time to listen, enough time in order to listen as closely as possible to phenomena, and especially to research associates. It is high time to listen (and to shut up while doing so), because many errors have occurred when scholars had started to talk and teach before they had finished listening. In this talk I will take on these challenges and this mission, and try to provide unique insights into various facets of deep colonialism, always with an auditory stance, from a point of hearing, on ear-level with research associates, and by listening closely to them and to their environment.



Bernd Brabec received his M.A. (Mag. phil., 2003) and Ph.D. (Dr. phil., 2012) in musicology from the University of Vienna. He has been working for five years in the field among Indigenous People in the Peruvian lowland rainforests. After returning to Europe in 2006, he has been teaching and researching, among other institutions, at the Phonogrammarchiv of the Austrian Academy of Sciences, at the department for social and cultural anthropology at Philipps-University Marburg, at the centre for systematic musicology of Karl-Franzens-University Graz, at the institute of musicology at the University of Vienna, at the institute of ethnomusicology at the University of Music and Performing Arts Graz, and as an associate researcher at Yunnan University. Currently he holds a tenure track position at the University of Innsbruck, Austria. He published a couple of books, among them *Die Lieder der Richtigen Menschen* [Songs of the Real People] (2015), *Sudamérica y sus mundos audibles* [South America and its auditory worlds] (2015), *Auditive Wissenskulturen* [Auditory knowledge cultures] (2018), and *Autoritätsbildungen in der Musik* [Authority constructions in music] (2024); as well as research articles in the areas of Indigenous vocal music, medical ethnomusicology, sound perception, and auditory knowledge.