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## The Cambridge Companion to Electronic Music

2nd Edition

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### THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO ELECTRONIC MUSIC

Musicians are always quick to adopt and explore new technologies. The fast-paced changes wrought by electrification, from the microphone via the analogue synthesiser to the laptop computer, have led to a wide range of new musical styles and techniques. Electronic music has grown to a broad field of investigation, taking in historical movements such as *musique concrète* and *elektronische Musik*, and contemporary trends such as electronic dance music and *electronica*. This book, winner of the 2009 Nicolas Bessaraboff Prize, brings together researchers at the forefront of the sonic explorations empowered by electronic technology to provide accessible and insightful overviews of core topics and uncover some hitherto less-publicised corners of worldwide movements. This updated and expanded second edition includes four entirely new chapters, as well as new original statements from globally renowned artists of the electronic music scene, and celebrates a diverse array of technologies, practices and music.

Nick Collins is Reader in Composition at Durham University. His research interests include live computer music, musical artificial intelligence, and computational musicology, and he is a frequent international performer as composer-programmer-pianist or codiscian, from *algoraves* to electronic chamber music.

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## **THE ACOUSMATIC versus the WORLD WIDE WEB**

Electroacoustic music was born as a revelation and stimulus for creative spirits in search of new resources and compositional forms.

Schaeffer's ideas followed by the rise of electronic music, were to be disseminated throughout the musical world providing new creative avenues and establishing the bases of a new sonic culture for a new world.

These ideas bring with them a new way of listening that favours pure hearing, stimulates imagination and enriches the musical experience with new artistic values linked to matter, energy and space.

In this context, new sound diffusion systems appear with the aim of extending the perceptual field and creating immersive environments. These, applied to stereo acousmatic material are given a new lease of life with the availability of new multichannel audio formats. This also requires adequate physical spaces: the concert hall.

The advent of digital media and later the World Wide Web, brought with them a new dissemination paradigm that would offer greater visibility and accessibility to electroacoustic production. These media place creative musical resources within reach of all, yet they often result in poorer sound quality and fewer chances for acousmatic listening. A dichotomy arises, one that pits Acousmatics against the World Wide Web as a medium.

Further, the live concert experience is weakened by a vast offer of listening contexts. The idea of the musical 'work' also seems to be dissolving. The latter is often substituted for a collective process of continuous transformation, which results, at times, in residual and contingent audio derived from a naïve manipulation of music technology.

I do not wish to play down the advantages of the WWW and those offered by similar interactive media in their role to extend resources and diffuse music throughout the planet, yet I believe that knowledge obtained from acousmatic practice deserves careful attention. By the same token, we need to renew our consideration of the musical author's rights and copyright, which constitute the composer's income.

New generations of electroacoustic composers will need comprehensive support to prevent acousmatic practice from disappearing and, in the process, becoming mere subjects manipulated by an all-powerful media dominated world

Elsa Justel  
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