The absence of notation - exploring a haptic aurality

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Notation

Latin: notationem
"a marking, explanation"

from notatus, pp. of notare
"to note, observe, mark carefully" (early 13c.)

"letter, note, mark, sign"
Notation

1540s:
the musical sense - “brief writing”
In Music

Composer = writer of signs; ‘creator’
Performer = realising of signs; ‘executor’
“Werktreue” = truthfulness/faithfulness towards the work;
the work itself becomes elevated

Jan Broeckx (1979)
Contemporary Views on Musical Style and Aesthetics

Carl Dahlhaus (1983)
Foundations of Music History

The cornerstone of music history is the work not the event
Jerrold Levinson
“[works are] “the centre and aim of the whole enterprise of musical activity”” (1990: 67)

Contemporary Philosophy
(Deleuze and Guattari, 1980s)

the work rather than the performance of the work

Christopher Small’s argument for musicking as a totality of musical performance (1998)


Notation - colouring of signs, rather than the simple the execution of signs
Absence of Notation

Free music improvisation questioned notation (and much more!) and revels in the absence of notational signs.
Haptic Aurality

Creative Space for turning / tuning inward; for straining toward self

Jean-Luc Nancy (2002/2007): Listening – ‘a turning inward, a making resonant of the world’

In listening one is in a constant state of being on the ‘lookout for a relation to self’ (Nancy: 12)

Listening involves constructing and consolidating the self (identity)

Alain Savouret (2011): Free improvisation is “not a matter of fingers but of ears,… to promote the virtuosity of the ear”.
Haptic Aurality

An absence of notated signs allows for a deeper reverence for musical, cultural and social engagements with others.
Notational Revival?

Stefano Kalonaris, 2016: Probabilistic Graphical Models: Bayesian and Markov networks
Notational Revival?
Notational Revival?

Return for the desire to instruct

What will this mean for ‘free’ improvisation as a practice?

Will it expand, rather than solidify, practice?
Practice needs to question, expand, evolve this (any new) notational system.
Thank you!

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