

Season 1 Episode 6: “Animals and Music, Music and Animals”

Matthew: [00:00:00] Hi listeners, welcome to *Everything But the Music*. We're a group of undergraduates and former undergraduates from the UCLA musicology program [here to] talk about, among other things, horror music, the sounds of [other] animals, modern opera, Billie Eilish conspiracy theories, protest anthems, and Disney nostalgia. Today, we'll be having a conversation with J.W. about [other] animals and music.

Let's get down to business.

J.W.: [00:00:24] So I was just thinking that I can do a little intro talking about the stuff that I thought would maybe be interesting discussion points, and then just kind of open it up. I want to make it kind of like a freeform discussion, so if anybody has, like, thoughts or, literally on anything, questions about the stuff that was on there or about anything else, I think it would be good to just kind of, like, just talk about what's on people's minds.

So like I put on the syllabus, I was thinking we could discuss kind of a broad range of topics concerning the relationships between non-human animals and the thing we call music. So I said that these may include studies and music-making capacities and other species besides humans, human musical representations of other species in our own musical practices, the use of "the animal in performance and other art forms" or kind of anything along those lines. So to start, I just wanted to kind of delineate specifically what I was talking about. I don't want to categorize the readings of the texts, but I selected them more or less wanting them to correspond to kind of, like, slightly different, like, directions of inquiry, if that makes sense.

So the first being zoomusicology, which, as you read in some of the texts, 'cause they mentioned a lot, it was coined, the term, at least, was coined by this guy, Francois-Bernard Mache and his book *Music That's in Nature*. I think it was originally published in '83 and there was an English translation in '93. So that kind of brings the term into the lexicon and that was popularized by this kind of group of scholars/artists, which was kind of what the supplement was on. That was on the syllabus with Emily Doolittle

and Dario Marinelli, most prominently. And Marinelli is like a semiotician/musicologist/cultural theorist, so he does a lot of, it's an interesting mix of things he does, but he works on, like, biosemiotics, zoosemiotics and stuff like that. So he's, from what I'm gathering, he's primarily responsible for kind of bringing it into the mainstream and using it to talk about, like, a general, like, specific subdiscipline of musicology, as opposed to just like, a nebulous, I don't know, critical tool, I guess, even though it still kind of is that. So most of zoomusicology is concerned with...I think his definition is "the aestheticized use of sound communication in non-human animals or animals in general, not just non-human animals."

And so it's looking at music-making in other species and it kind of, the primary animals that are looked at are birds, because birdsong has been talked about forever and everybody loves birdsong and it's pretty close tonally to most human or at least a lot of human musics, so studies of bird songs, whale songs beginning in the 1970s, when the Roger Payne recording comes out, *Songs of the Humpback Whale*, because people didn't really know that humpback whales made these songs. And so that generated a whole 'nother kind of wave of interest in that sort of thing. So it's looking at communication as well as, like, aesthetic use of sound, and by that, I think Martin is talking about stuff that isn't, I guess, strictly functional. Because there's a tendency, at least historically, in the natural sciences, when you're talking about non-human animal communication, to kind of describe that in functional terms, especially just hearkening back to like the animal as like automata, where you get like the Cartesian split, so like animals aren't really considered to have, like, a soul. And so they're these, like, machines, right? So a lot of the behavior, not even just communication, but behavior in general is conceptualized as this, like, functional thing that it's always like instinct or innate or stuff like that, and it's just responding to stimuli in the environment, whereas in reality, now people are starting to realize that there are all these non-functional behaviors, particularly calls in this case, or songs that are disseminated in different ways and maybe productively thought [of] as somewhat analogous to human music making in certain regards. So that's one dimension, there's a lot of stuff, if you can go into there, obviously. And most of those studies are, there's a lot of, like, ethological or behavioral studies there, and it falls kind of more on the empirical side, but then like Marinelli talks about in this article, the like, introduction article, like what he envisions as, like, the different facets of

zoomusicology or it's like, there's like the anthropological side and the theoretical side, which deals more with what humans, or like human, cultural and musical outputs involving the animal. And so that's kind of what Emily Doolittle's article was on, like the history of animals in Western music. So it's not, it's not focused on actually the behavior and animals, it's focused on, like, human representation of animals and songs. So there's that. And then there's also like the ethological and kind of empirical fieldwork that goes on. That's probably more kin to ethnomusicology, methodologically. So there's all this stuff that you could talk about when you talk about zoomusicology, but I think primarily nowadays it's the empirical stuff that [unintelligible] the most work or the artistic endeavors, like if we're talking about, like, collaborative performance, like in the Paul Horn piece or the Jim Nolan piece, "**Haidda**" and playing with music with animals, it's introducing the actual animal cries into music as well as facilitating live performance. So that's another avenue that he goes into.

Another thing that I thought would be interesting to talk about are the dimensions of representation and human representation of non-human animals is an extremely broad kind of area that you can go into, because it bridges not only, like, every art form, but basically it underlies a ton of structures of human behavior more generally, so when we conceive or conceive of, or represent another species in some way or flex our own conceptions of not only the animal, depending on the ways you're conceiving it or representing it, but the human as well. So if maybe if we want to kind of focus our dimension, since representation is such a broad topic and kind of slippery there, we can focus on how that's occurring in the musical practices with which we're familiar.

So some questions that we could keep in mind, maybe, so how do we hear "the animal," how do we hear specific species? How do we construct or reinforce species' boundary through our musicking? This is kind of, this is what Rachel Mundy's talking about when she's like, drawing comparisons to musical style criticism and stuff like that.

And then, like, within this subset, there's...we can talk about, like, explicit imitation of animal song, animal cries, like, in the Beethoven or to a lesser degree than the sound. Or more abstract representation, like when I was saying, *Oh, choose a piece that evokes the animal*, something like that, where it

doesn't have to, like, maybe directly imitate, but it's, it's still meant to convey animalness in some sense.

And so these questions are, like, inherently tied up in questions of representation of any group more broadly. So otherness and animal go hand in hand often. And these notions of constructing and depicting taxonomies are closely related to human treatments of race, gender, sexuality, and disability, and other categories like that, which is another thing that Rachel Mundy gets at.

So there's that, like, representational aspect of it and kind of what I was talking about before, when, when we're talking about collaborative performance, um, it introduces kind of this fault. It doesn't introduce, it necessitates more closely, or a more close attention of the ethical ramifications of interacting with another agent.

So when we include actual non-human animals in our musicking practices, there's like, there's also like another spectrum there. If we're talking about representation, there's, like, the animal sounds as samples, like Karen's piece, um, among others. And then at the other end, there's actually like performing with the animals live, which like Jim Nolan is doing and playing music with animals.

But even then there are all these stipulations that come into play. Like when, when Jim Nolan was reporting these pieces, they're often with groups of animals, not individuals. And they're often in captivity. Yeah. So, well, okay. So Jim Nolan, he's playing with groups and they're in captivity a lot of the times.

And then you even get stuff like R. Murray Schafer, like his *Soundscape*, where it's just the whole kind of, like, ecological listening. And there's, there's a ton of stuff you can talk about that. Yeah. So when someone's doing a collaborative performance with a non-human animal, like, how do we deal with matters such as consent and mutual awareness and even further, like, what are the situations in which interspecies musical collaborations might occur?

So what kind of conditions, ideal conditions should those kinds of things operate under? So, yeah, I don't know. I just kind of rambled for a long time, but if anybody wants to bring their questions, any questions that they thought of, they can just, we can talk about specific pieces. Oh, I guess I can

talk about like why I chose the readings I did real quick and then we can get into it. I mean, the quick guide to zoomusicology and Martinelli's introduction are kind of, self-explanatory. The whole sample in that, in the *Trans Revista* article was interesting and I haven't found another substantial, like, issue on zoomusicology in general yet, and that was in 2008. So that's something that we can note. Already talked about Emily Doolittle a little bit. Oh yeah. The Lockwood piece, the, on the singing mouse, I included that just to kind of give a comparison to more historical ways of talking about the animal and then bringing in the idea of like transcription of non-human animal vocalizations into Western notation, which I think could be an interesting topic to discuss.

And then Rachel Mundy talking about kind of how we reinforced the species boundary through style criticism and kind of critiques the genre. Oh yeah, and then I included the Chaudhuri piece to kind of broaden the scope a little bit. And cause this is like, the animal turn for the past few decades is kind of like gotten into all the humanities more or less, still not like, it's not everywhere, but, um, they're really interesting intersections between particularly the arts and scholarship on the arts. Um, so, and they can't really be considered in isolation because the animal is such a pervasive thing in artistic practice. I think Jon Birger, he suggested that the first, uh, like, paint was animal blood, and then Doolittle was talking about, yeah, how like imitations of animals could have been considered like the first music.

And then it evolved slowly into more like symbolic abstract stuff, which is just, I mean, that's just speculation obviously, but it's not hard to see how that could have been the case. Um, regardless of if that's actually true. Um, and then the last reading, I included Rachel Mundy again, her little blog piece in *Musicology Now*, I think that tied everything together really well and kind of gave a little bit of urgent import to critique how we're listening, which we're all trying to do all the time, I guess.

And as far as the musical examples that I put. It's kind of obvious how I organized them, but it kind of goes from, okay, abstract, like historical representation, where you have the Beethoven where he's actually doing like the, he actually specifies in the score of the pastoral symphony at that little section that I highlighted in the second movement, he, like, attributes

the flute to the Nightingale, the quail to the oboe and the cuckoo to two clarinets.

Um, actually in the score, which is interesting, Ravel's ballet has interesting considerations that we talk about, when we talk about imitation, because another thing about animal media in general is that historically it's often satirical in nature, which I think Ravel's is definitely operating like that in this case.

Um, at least the specific number that I picked up with the two cats and then Messiaen, is often talked about as this, like, like really responsible, uh, composer. That's using bird song, like very thoughtfully because he's doing it in such a way that it's not meant to imitate as such. It's more of, to kind of evoke a general, like his general perception of like the soundscape with the bird in it.

And they're not singular birds. They're like, It's an interacting sonic space of a variety of species, even though he's attributing different pieces to different species. Um, they're more like different regions of where the bird is from than actually the bird itself. But he's, his viewpoint is interesting because it's tied up into this kind of like Christian mystic worldview, which I think has interesting ramifications when you're talking about nature and representations of nature and like the shallow versus deep ecology and stuff like that. Um, so that's one thing. And then Laurie Spiegel's mouse operetta, if you read the great stuff. It's so good. It's trying to get at the, the, like, mouse's perspective, which you can't, right. But it's an interesting effort to kind of imagine the perspective of a mouse in her apartment or family of mice in this case. And then she introduces like cross-species stuff with her dog and that's like a key facet of a lot of the, like, biosemiotic, literatures, this guy, uh, [unintelligible], his theory which is basically just like, if you're a being you're experiencing the world in a certain way, but like another species of animals is going to experience the world in an entirely different way.

And that wasn't really thought of formally until he kind of introduced this to like ecology and animal behavior studies. It was like, okay, we gotta like, try to get out actually with this organisms perception of the world, like what kind of sensory input is coming in and what, what are they basing their behavior off of?

Because it's not how we perceive the world more or less. So that was an interesting consideration. Um, and then like, if we're talking about just the incorporations of animals song, it's music, there's the spectrum I was talking about. So like Yoko Kobayashi, "Cat Canon" is the bunch of little like samples. Cat sounds put together in a certain way. And then you get Paul Horn's hyena, which is supposed to be him. He was, he was, um, actually like tasked with playing his flute, like for like depressed, captive whale named Haidda. And so this is kind of modeled off of that encounter, but it's not the live recording, it's sounds from Haidda the orca and actually like another, uh, another orca named Chimo, and they're kind of mixed together. And then there's like added reverb and then his flute sounds are like added after the fact. So it's not, it's not actually the interaction, which I thought was really interesting, even though it's pretending to be to some degree. So that's, that's like a, another layer of it's like, okay, we're approximating this interaction, but we're also, it's all in post. Like it's not really real. And then Jim Noman is like, I talked about, he's playing and they are, they are actually live encounters, but they're almost always with groups of captive animals. They're not modified in production, but they are cut down significantly. So they only like the best parts of the session because he does this thing for like two, three hours per session. And then he just kind of picks out like the most interesting moments. Yeah. And then the Roger Payne. Well, I guess I'll skip the Wiener and Schoener, *Animal Music*. That's just a recording of this one dude's, like, sled dog team. There's not really any human interview. You mentioned there, but we're just recording it. And then Roger Payne's, *Songs of the Humpback Whale* is the kind of seminal recording. It was actually, he was a set autologist, it's like an instance of crossover from, uh, natural sciences into kind of like the pop culture vein because it got really popular then. And then you get like discussions of personhood. which are now becoming more important and more mainstream, legally, politically philosophically with people like Peter Singer and Donna Haraway and like the academic vein, but then also just like animal rights in general. Um, I'm going to stop talking and somebody tell me. Anything, because we can discuss literally anything.

People have anything we could just begin by, like talking about the pieces you

Matthew: [00:17:38] I was just going to say, I was thinking about, I hate to be like unspecific, although I think that's all I really ever am. But I remember

hearing about this, this Native American quilt making practice. So there was a tribe of Native Americans and I wish I could remember which, which tribe, but they made quilts.

And colonizers, white settlers, came in and found them and said, Oh, this beautiful Native American art. And so they were in museums for a long time before someone else does it. I don't know the name. I don't know the names of any of these people realized like, Oh, that's not art. Quote, unquote. It's its language like that's a written form of this specific native American language.

It's, it's sewn into the quilt, you know, in the same way that we, as descendants of Europeans write in language. And so that for me is kind of like a parallel to this discussion. It's like, this is why I'm not that I have problems with it, but like, this is like the main question that I have with it.

It's like almost like a scribing music to animal sounds and noises, it kind of places it like, Oh, we're granting you this thing that is like higher than just animal noises. It's like, Oh, that's actually music. Which means it's better because it's like human music. So for me, it's kind of like an appropriation thing.

It's like appropriating animals into the human world and that's like my main issue. So maybe so persuade me or you don't have to persuade me, but like, that's kind of the thing that comes to my mind when I was reading about all this stuff. And maybe you can convince me why I'm wrong or why, like that's not what is being talked about.

J.W.: [00:19:21] I think that's perfect. That's right on the nose, because it's, I think it is really productive to talk about this as appropriation of some sort, not in the same way we talk about cultural appropriation and stuff like that. And I mean, in a similar way, because it's the key kind of principle we're working with and human-animal studies.

Is the notion of anthropocentrism right? So when you're ascribing qualities, you can't get outside of it, but you can be very critical of it and thoughtful of it and incorporate into your discourse to kind of try and cover your biases. So the, the epigraph that I put on the syllabus, um, from music myth in nature is kind of mash talking about this.

It's like, okay, if we find out that other other species have music other than us, um, that calls into question. Not only what music is, but how we define species or man, I think he says, right. So music in this case, in a lot of these discussions, I think is just a practical term because even within human musical practices, it's the, it's the whole, like all of the, I didn't put it on the syllabus. It was part of the supplement. It was Martin Ellie's second piece about, I think it was called "Zoomusicology and the quest for musical universals" or something like that. Um, and he talks about how all of the problems that arise in historical ethnomusicology are the exact same problems that are coming about in zoomusicology. Um, because it's, it's like, Oh, we want to learn about this other musical tradition. And then you end up recontextualizing it in the form of, like, your own musical traditions. Right? So he's like, okay, we can, we can learn a lesson about this historical trajectory of ethnomusicology and use that to avoid these kinds of issues, or at least try to mitigate these types of issues, in zoomusicology.

And then the question of agency is super central as well. Because like, there's a linguistic barrier between a lot of non-human animal species and humans. And it's like, okay, why? Like what is happening when we're representing animals in this way? When is it problematic? When is it not? So I guess what I'm most interested in is how these things construct like how our uses of the animal and music and art more specifically construct notions of specific species or specific animals, which is kind of, there is formed through this cultural, like reinscribing of animalness onto the animal, regardless of if it's there or not. Um, I don't know if that answers anything that you were trying to get at, but I think a lot of the scholarship, it's that's, it's operating with that kind of point of troubling anthropocentrism and then they're going from there, depending on what they're trying to do. So like, I see this less in the worst of the artists, like David Rothenberg and Jim Noman, also pieces in the supplement they're on the more performance side.

So like, *Oh, I wonder if we can perform with these animals and like actually communicate.* And a lot of that stuff, I feel like the artists aren't as well...okay. That's not the case. It depends on the individual, but it's more as like, *Okay, what can I make this interesting out of this contact with the other?*

Right. Whereas like a lot of the, at least the animal studies scholarship and the human animal study scholarship that I've read is more like, okay, how

do we not? Or how do we mitigate the issues of appropriation when it's so, these practices are so deeply ingrained in human life because I mean, Rachel Mundy's whole thing is like, okay, this way of conceptualizing difference through musical sound, because she talks about birdsong and how to record birdsong in certain developments within like audio recording technologies and how that, uh, really solidifies, like, the species boundary at like human and animal. And that's what she's trying to, like, get away from. And she even kind of coined the new term, animanities, uh, to try to like, do work and, and talking through how we can, it's just expanded like the humanitarian project and expanding it, so as to maybe get rid of human access exceptionalism as much as possible within human scholarship.

So it's, it's an interesting, yeah. Music is not, it's thought of in so many different ways here. Um, you get people, especially like the naturalists, and when I thought of her saying like, *Okay, calls are one thing because they're aesthetic and non-functional*, or no, yeah. *Songs are songs are non-functional calls are functional*. So there's not really any consensus on like what the best way to call like vocalizations are. And you already get like, even within some musicology, you get inherent speciesism from the get-go. Because it's all it's working with usually animals that come closest to human musical practices and their vocalizations, like birds and whales and stuff that can be like, you can eat.

If you think about it for a little bit, you're like, *Oh, this is, I can see how this is music for the lay person*, right? But like, even when you're trying to get outside that I haven't found maybe insects are the exception, but they're all working within like, like Chordata and they're mostly mammals too. So there's this like whole other realm of like, built-in that you're not even getting, or even considering there are a lot of this scholarship, but I think it's just the nature of inquiries because you're going to start with what's most familiar and what's easiest to digitalize at that point. And then hopefully it'll get beyond that. I was rambling again. I don't know what to say, but.

Matthew: [00:24:51] That was my frustration kind of with, I know you didn't assign it for this thing, or not assign it, but I know you didn't ask us to read it for this, but Martin Daughtry's article about music and the end of the world, and partially I was upset because he got to write it before I did, but the other thing that upset me was like, his kind of solution was like, *Oh, I'm going to write music for flies and it's going to be like microseconds long*. It's like, to me, that

is not the solution or the, you know, like I get the imperative behind it, but for me, and this is kind of what Timothy Morton writes about, I'm not gonna pretend that he has all the answers to this, but that part of it starts with recognizing the ways in which we already are in partnership. And that's what I liked about the article that was mentioning all the ways that like farmers, for example, or cow herders, for example, learn different, you know, can kind of actually communicate with cows using different calls, but like, it's the same thing, and that's kind of, again, not to bring me up, but like, that's kind of like, what I'm interested in is, like, we already have partnerships with wood, for example, like we could not make human music without wood. And so what are the ways in which we're already oriented towards the, our environment and the, and the world that we live in in ways that aren't strictly human? And then recognize, and then kind of turning our attention to that and saying, how does...? But anyway, so I just think that that's an interesting point to make and, and to just bring up like what you said right at the beginning, it's like, you can't escape anthropocentrism because you're a human, like, you know, so to try to feels like the, the wrong direction, but that's what I liked about some of the ones that were the ones that you were mentioning where it's like, they're not trying to, they're kind of just taking a critical look and really trying to trouble that distinction.

Liv: [00:26:26] I was wondering about animal music beyond vocalizations. So I think in the examples that you provided, the, the example of that that's coming to mind right now, it'd be the dog squeaking its toy in Spiegel's mouse operetta, but is there much scholarship on animal musicality that is not defined by, like, a voice?

J.W.: [00:26:50] I don't think there's too much scholarship because...

Liv: [00:26:53] is there anything interesting, even in that realm?

J.W.: [00:26:55] There's um, I mean, it goes back to like the YouTube video of the parrot bobbing his head, like snowball, you know what I'm talking about?

Matthew: [00:27:03] That's exactly what I was thinking of.

J.W.: [00:27:05] Yeah. It's, it's the, because a popular kind of categorization people invoke when they're talking about. Uh, music-making in other species is like the vocal learning category. Um, so species that their calls aren't necessarily innate and they have to actually learn them from other

members of the species, um, which a lot of birds are vocal learners were vocal learners. Some citations are vocal learners and then gray seals, I think, and maybe even wolves, gray wolves among others, right? So there, there's always, it's funny because it's such like, they're all these, like, crossover, like pop culture things. They're like, *Oh, look, it's a bird dancing to this music.* Sometimes it's, it's just not, they're just like, it's a learned behavior from watching the owner, and they're not actually like doing anything with the sound, because obviously they're not perceiving the sound the same way we perceive the sound, but then sometimes they are, and it's, it's fun to like go in and actually kind of look at that stuff. And then there are, I know there are a number of projects, I don't know, specifically Off the top of my head, what they're called or how many there are, but they're there. I've heard of projects where they just put, like, I don't know, like a piano out, and then they have elephants come and play on the piano. Right. And make noise. So there's that kind of stuff. I haven't come across too much scholarship yet on stuff like that. Well, because like non vocalizations usually would take the form of like some kind of like using tools, right? If you're talking about instruments or like, I guess like crickets rubbing their legs together, that may be classified as non-vocal. So I don't know. It's interesting.

Liv: [00:28:39] Should we ask more questions if you want to do the pieces that we do?

J.W.: [00:28:45] Yeah. Why don't we, why don't we go into the pieces, if everyone wants to explain their choice and their thoughts?

Torrey: [00:28:52] I was thinking about, you know, animal sounds and music and. Um, my, my first thought was, um, "**Atomic Dog.**" That sounded bad, but you know I'm not a singer. Anyway, so, um, also it's just an awesome song. Um, so that, that was why I picked that song. And with the whole, like, you know, kind of creating the animal to be more than just an, an animal, but also like this kind of alien kind of character, you know, an atomic dog, and so I thought that was almost a different form of no relating animals to humans, 'cause I, my other thought was like Disney and you know, Disney does a ton of stuff of, like, making animals like humans. But I feel like this song almost takes it a step further by making them also kind of this, like, magical being, which I guess also Disney does, but in kind of like the super funky, awesome songs. So that was a long way to say. That's why I picked "**Atomic Dog.**"

Matthew: [00:30:07] yeah. I don't know. I, you, you asked us to pick a song and I thought about...the first thing that my mind jumped to was the songwriter that I picked, Walter Martin, who writes, I mean, they're not like children's songs, but they are kind of like reminiscent of children's songs in a lot of ways. And I really liked him. I used to listen to him a lot when I would go walking. And I'd never heard that the specific song that I chose, which is "**We Like the Zoo ('Cause We're Animals Too).**" I think that's what it's called, but I thought that kind of fit the theme, although it's kind of really troubling. Like, I don't think that that's why we like the zoo and I dunno, I thought it was a really funny idea. That's why I picked it.

Liv: [00:30:48] I also picked sort of one of the first things that came to mind. I picked "**Hello Little Girl**" from *Into The Woods* because obviously I grew up watching *Into The Woods* and this song, um, it's sort of equating animalness with sex, trickery, danger, growing up, all of these things. And you've got a man dressed up as a wolf who then the character dresses up as granny and then eats the little girl. We all know how the story goes, but *Into The Woods* is pretty interesting, recasting of all these fairytales that we know and love. And it's also intriguing, the different levels to which the wolf is sexualized in different productions in 1991. Just what I linked to you guys to, that's pretty, pretty sexualized. The Disney movie version, they cut all of that entirely for obvious reasons. And then in the version that I saw at the Hollywood Bowl last year, it wasn't even, it was beyond sexualized, it was just sexy, which is a little bit creepy because, you know, it's a little girl and I mean, it's all, it's just heavy handed metaphor basically, so I guess don't. Yeah. Don't think too much about the implications of, you know what I mean? But it's like using the figure of the wolf to be like predator and prey, like this sort of moral ambiguity through the animal representation and this dance of seduction that's going on, and then this, I picked it also because I thought it related to the Chaudhuri piece, um, because that talks a lot about animals and performance and specifically theater and references Derrida's, like, event-like nature of the encounter with the animal. Now I'm just quoting, "The way in which it's forced jumbled his experience of time, self and being," so that also, that I connected "**Hello Little Girl**" with, and *Into The Woods* in general, the concept of going into the woods into this dark windy place, where everything is ambiguous and dangerous, and you're finding your way towards an understanding of how the world works. I

thought that very much mirrored that, um, that articulation of encounter with the animal.

J.W.: [00:33:14] I mean, but it relates in really interesting ways with your episode, where we're talking about intersections of like otherness in horror and sexuality, specifically with *Hannibal* and like sexuality, cannibalism, murder or stuff like that. I don't know if I have anything specific to say, but, uh, but yeah, I mean, when you take on animal allegory, you can do really interesting things or not so interesting things because you get to play with things that are outside human, normal, like life experience and ways of being, which I think is one of the appeals, because you can't do like predator/prey stuff in interesting ways. And then when that's kind of like standing in for certain human metaphors, it's interesting. But I think it's more interesting when it's not, it's just like kind of some kind of abstract concept that you can play with. I think it was when I was reading the Chaudhuri article, I was like, *Oh yeah, this could, this applies*. You can, or no, it was what it was. Even when I was reading *Tracking the Vampire*, it was like, okay, a lot of the same things that are happening in terms of, like, gender and sexuality, portrayal and horror and like the other, and the monster is the same thing. You can like wrap that into like animality and performances of animality and stuff like that, which I think is really interesting, but I don't really have any specific thoughts on that matter right now.

Liv: [00:34:32] Well, definitely because so many of the monstrous figures have animal characteristics or they turn into animals or they just are animals. And a lot of the behaviors that we associate with animals are the same ones that humans, like, perform in horror contexts. So it is very much the same. It's just fear of what's different.

Matthew: [00:34:57] And I don't want to get too close to dangerous territory, but it it's kind of the way that like civilized societies often characterize themselves as being the opposite of like savages, um, or, I mean, uncivilized people, but you know, it's like, those are savages. Those are barbarians. It's like they are at the whims at the same whims that animals are. It's like, there's just, no, they don't have reason like us. They don't have rationality like us. So it is an interesting parallel to just, conceptions of the other at all.

J.W.: [00:35:28] Well, part of the reason why I had people come up with their own examples to bring in the first place was to kind of like start getting at how pervasive different species of animal are in like, just like cultural and

social life in general. Once you start like looking for like things like animal related, you see them everywhere. Like it's, if you took them out, we'd have no culture, essentially. That's like, that's me being provocative, but it's productive to kind of like critically look at that and see like what that is actually doing in terms of like the stuff we're familiar with, because it's constantly just influencing conceptions of the animal, specific animals, the human species boundary line. Because even the species boundary line, it's not like it's problematic in certain ways. And it's not a card agreed on in any field and it constantly shifts. It's more of like a cultural thing than actually like hard scientific thing and troubling that line, I think is, I mean, that's, that's the goal of a lot of human-animal studies and I think it's really important to do, um, because it opens and then it opens up the, like, then you have like, uh, inherently post-feminist sentiments going on there. It's like, okay, the line between living, not living, human and non-human, non-living and stuff like that, which I think is always productive.

Liv: [00:36:50] I was thinking about spaces while reading about animal musics and things and, oh shoot, I wish I could remember which piece it was that said, "Oh, we have, now we have animal sounds and animal music in concert halls, but the animal bodies are not in the car." And that it's all in the spaces that are like anthropocentric. And just human exclusive. Yeah. Thank you. "**Crickets in the Concert Hall**," Doolittle, right. Um, and then just before this, I was listening to the R. Murray Schafer wolf music, or what's the actual title of that work, it's like...

J.W.: [00:37:32] Yeah, okay. So for people who are not familiar, it's... so R. Murray Schafer is like this avant-garde, somewhat ecological composer who does like...his whole thing was like the Hi-Fi soundscape and like listening to the environment. His motivations are interesting. I won't really talk about them, I guess it's not really important, but he has this piece and it's a cycle, I think, of like 12 pieces. Um, and it's called *And Wolf Shall Inherit the Moon*. And it has this whole like lore kind of thing where...I forget the exact, like, narrative, but it's like this being-like wolf when he has to like, reconcile with the princess of the moon. And they almost reconciled once, but like, then he messed up and, like, hurt her some way. And so then they're wandering like the earth and then they're trying, they always sometimes get close to reconciling, but then they don't. So it's this whole like, kind of like ritualistic mystic thing that's going on that has its own, like, lore. And it may, I think it may be based in like, Um, Alaskan or Canadian indigenous traditions. I'm

not sure about that though, but he, so part one of the pieces, pieces in this cycle is like colloquially known as the Wolf Project. And so like every year, I think like in August, I forget. Sometime in the summer, every year, for like the past 20 or 30 years, R. Murray Schafer and like a bunch of people who want to come, uh, some of them are professional musicians, some of them are just along for the ride. They go out into like the same spot in the Canadian wilderness and they do this, like, a nine, nine or something day thing where they just like kind of camp out and they play like certain pieces, like with the environment. Um, so like they have certain pieces that you play, like right when you get up and like the unspoken rules, like you can't talk before these pieces are played, and then like the same thing happens at night. Like once the last piece is played at night, usually you can't talk. And then they culminate with like, this kind of like ritual thing where they have like different clans that like go and like meet up and like play with each other over far distances. So it's like this really interesting, uh, I didn't even know what to call it anyway. So you can't really find recordings for obvious reasons because it's this thing that happens, like the whole point is that it's interacting with the environment outdoors and it's, you just can't like, listen to it, not out there, right? Because you're doing certain things that you're trying to play with the environment, stuff like that. And so, but there's, there's, uh, the only thing I found on Spotify was this one, a recording, it's just called like "**Wolf Music**" and I assume, I think it's like an excerpt from, or excerpts from one of these Wolf Project gatherings. And so they, each, each track kind of starts with him, just like giving a quasi poetic, like, reading of like what's going on. And it's, it's awesome. And then, and it just goes into like an excerpt of like some, or a few musicians, like playing with the wilderness and they're great. It's like, it's pretty cool if you can get past his, like, stuff that he says at the beginning of each check, but yeah, I just interrupted you.

Liv: [00:40:35] No, that's great. Thank you. Basically, my, my question deals with, uh, ideas of responsibility, sort of like Matt was talking about and space, like what...this is pretty broad and open-ended, but what, um, do you all think is, like, how, how do we use the space in which musicking happens, uh, in a way that's responsible towards the environment towards animals? And yeah, what are the issues around that?

Matthew: [00:41:06] Once again, going to annoyingly, bring up Timothy Morton as I always do, because he gives a really great kind of a metaphor

about the idea of like human efficiency, with the idea of like a parking space, and like, you can work really hard to get good at parking and park perfectly in the lines, like exactly in the middle. You know, you can be a really, like, if you can think of efficiency as, like, doing something, you know, perfectly, or like, you know, being the most efficient you can be as, as similar to like parking really perfectly, you know, completely in the lines and like really straight, he says like, that's, that's great and all. Like, you know, if that's what you're interested in, but if you're like a snail and you're in the parking space already, and the car comes in and crushes you to death, because you're just a snail, then it doesn't matter how efficient you are, because like you're not paying attention to the, to the actual, like, thing that's already there. I know that's kind of a weird kind of a metaphor, but it's like this idea that like, there's, there's no, there's no such thing as being sustainable or being, um, like eco-friendly in the sense that like, what are you sustaining? Like you're sustaining a system that exploits natural resources and, um, does not take other beings into account. And so I think that this question of like, how do you, I don't remember the exact words that you use, but like, you know, The places that we make music and the spaces that we use, it's like, how do we incorporate or think about other beings? It's kind of like, well, it's probably not going to happen within the system that we have set up is I think my answer, because you have to, the way that we do it now is we, you know, clear an area of everything that's there and then build these huge buildings that only humans are allowed in, different things like that. And there's no way to kind of rethink that, or there's no space to rethink that without just kind of starting over almost. I don't know that that's totally true, but like, I just think, like, human life as it is right now built on all things and like concerning the history, you know, given all the history of things that have already happened, it's like, we're not attuned to living on a planet with other things that also need to be cared for.

J.W.: [00:43:18] Yeah.

Matthew: [00:43:19] But that's kind of a diatribe that I just decided to go on right now.

J.W.: [00:43:22] No, yeah. And I mean, cause any, any kind of reformulation of practices in general, it has to be radical and it has to be like hyper political, I think. Um, and that way, 'cause it has to change the structures. And that's even with like, not even with ecology, like, generally, but like

within the human and then you can parse it on differently. I mean, that's what we're dealing with. Like it's now at the forefront with, like...structural racism is most prominent, at least right now, but it's, it's all these issues that are going on and they're compounded in the same...compounded and impounded in the same ways.

Torrey: [00:43:54] I was thinking that, like, because like Matthew said, we probably can't really make a space for it, I wonder if we could almost do like a tour, or it's like, we go to them, but I was thinking about like a Vine, I'm sorry to say that. But, um, where like a guy who plays saxophone for a bunch of cows and they go up and they're like, *Oh, this is awesome*. So I feel like maybe that would be a decent option is like being like a touring musician for animals. But like, I don't know, in a loving, loving way and obvious, you know, I'm just trying to think of, like, positive ways to bring music and thinking also like, if, if you have like a pet and you play music for them, I don't know if this actually happens, 'cause I've never had a pet, but I think bringing it to, safely and justly, like bringing music to them might be because we can't create this space, to like hold music for their animals. That's just what I was thinking of. I'm not a good person to answer this question. Cause like, just yesterday I was like playing a sound on YouTube that was like, "Spiders hate this sound," to get a spider out of my car, 'cause like...I'm the wrong person to be answering this question, but that's just my thought.

J.W.: [00:45:17] I just think we have to be careful [with] the whole, like, colonial enterprise in a different way now, but it's the same sort of thing. It's like, okay, how do we respectfully draw the line? Do we draw a line, in terms of...I'm being vague. In terms of like, imposing human structures on things. Right? A lot of the popular, um, sentiments around, like, animal rights activism is, like, interestingly anthropomorphic, because it's, it's doing it in a way, in order to try and appeal to a wide array of people, but they're imposing like human qualities on animals. That could be problematic, but it's for a seemingly altruistic cause, although a lot of the time it's not, it's what we think they want when in reality, it's not really the case.

And even, even the notion of a pet is very interesting in terms of agency. Um, and then like the history of domestication, and especially with like farming, meat, animals too. It's just like, there's so many things wrapped up where I, I think we just have to like re...completely re-imagine how we're

thinking about these issues, because I mean, my, my interest is doing that and like looking at already existing, like Matt, [what] you're talking about are already existing relationships, specifically musical ones, but they don't have to be two other forms of life. But, um, I think it's also really important to, to kind of look at what language is doing and like, looking at how something as simple as..."Atomic Dog," brought this up for me because it's like dog, like the colloquial use of "dog," like, *Yo, what's up dog?* contrasted with the animal, but they're like, they're connected obviously. Stuff like that, like just invocations of the animal or just in language. And we use them without even thinking. And I'd argue that a lot of those things are pernicious to, to other beings in ways that aren't exactly explicit.

The thing, okay. The interesting one that for me was, is, or has been really prominent is the whole, like "all cops are pigs," that kind of stuff. And a lot of, like, pig imagery, a lot of, like, pig imagery is going on. I'm like, why are you wrapping pigs into this? Because of what? Because of like social connotations with the pig, right? But it's like, a lot of those are unfounded. First of all, those were like facilitated by our use of them as farm animals. And so it's this, it's this negative connotation that everybody gets, right? But it's like, I'm not saying this to like, try to take away from the sentiment behind it, but it's like, in doing this, we're wrapping up other beings into our own like negative imagery. And that's just the thing that has been on my mind recently.

It happens all the time. Just in like commonplace expressions and like, *Oh, like you're an animal*. Like, *You're crazy. You're like...*stuff like that. So it's, I mean, I think the way is to just actually break those down, identify them, do something else, which is a tall goal, but I don't know. It can't, it can't be structurally invisible, right.

Matthew: [00:48:24] It reminds me, not what you just said. Although that was, I think a really great example and I liked Torrey's little comment that pigs deserve better than that. The animal, it reminds me of the kind of shifting debate around zoos and how for a long time in the late 20th century, zoos were like, very, uh, considered very unethical.

It's like you're trapping these animals and doing all these things. And now that kind of opinion has shifted towards SeaWorld. Rightfully I think, although who knows? Maybe 20 years from now, that'll be the opposite opinion, but, and now zoos are kind of looked at as like, well, no, because in

many ways they they're the forefront of conservation and, you know, they provide a really safe, um, environment for these animals and you know, we're kind of projecting what happiness is onto what, you know. So like the San Diego Zoo, which me and Torrey have presumably been to many times.

Torrey: [00:49:23] Um, I had an annual pass, so it's less about me.

Matthew: [00:49:28] Like the San Diego Zoo is famous worldwide for being like a really, really great conservation effort for like, um, pandas, like they had for a while, like some of the only pandas outside of mainland China. So I just think that that, that kind of goes back to our discussion about places and, um, animal places specifically. It's like, we're just used to building things on a human scale. And then when we, you know, there's really no way for us, except to try to start thinking about other scales, of being in other scales that don't necessarily anthropomorphize animals and say like, *This is what's good for animals*, because ultimately we just don't, we're never, we don't know. And there are arguments to be made about zoos. I'm not arguing for or against zoos.

I just think it's an interesting kind of parallel to this discussion about are zoos good or bad or ethical or unethical. And I realized that I was bringing that up because I submitted my song about zoos. And just to say, like in the song, he says, *We like the zoo because we're animals too*, but he doesn't really say what about the zoo we like. Like, it's not like we like going to the zoo or we like being at the zoo or we like the, you know, he just, *we like the zoo* as a concept. I thought that was an interesting point.

J.W.: [00:50:39] Yeah. The Jon Birger piece that Rachel Mundy mentions and, well, that she fashions her title off of it's like, *why look at animals*, is an interesting look at zoos. I'd have to go back to like, actually remember specifically what he says. So I don't trust myself to summarize, but if you're interested, it's a good little, a good little piece.

Liv: [00:51:01] There's a book, right? At least, what's it?

J.W.: [00:51:05] Yeah. It's about looking. The essay is "**Why Look at Animals.**" I thought since we have been talking about mostly like the para-musical stuff, I'd be interested in hearing if anybody has any thoughts on, like, how specifically do we hear the animal or in what instances have they encountered within music that a specific species is signaled? How has it

signaled? What does it do? So like actual, actual, like formal characteristics of musical works. Um, just to get a grounding, but if nobody has anything on that, then we can maybe wrap up. I just thought it'd be interesting to talk about that. Anybody have any specific thoughts? Or like imitation versus like symbolic obstruction or just naming specific pieces that come to mind? I'm just interested in hearing people's experiences with animals and music, I guess, because it's like, it's such a diverse category.

Liv: [00:52:08] Similarly, I, I can speak most to musical theatre, I think. And when animals are represented in musical theatre, um, on the whole, you can very, like it's very obvious and intentionally, so that it is a person in an animal costume. So it's very blatant in that regard. And I think that reflects musically as well. I mean, the two first things that come to mind for me are *Into The Woods* where you have just humans making animal noises and it's very exaggerated to the point where it's just funny or it signals something human. Um, and as well as *A New Brain*, you have the main character sort of hallucinates his boss as a frog, um, and this frog dude is ridiculous and rides around on a little scooter and just like makes weird noises and does a weird laugh. And it's, it's just very overdramatic and kind of signals like a person like a human character's fear, or some sort of like, bastardization of humanity, almost. And so it's just human voices, like "making" animal sounds.

Torrey: [00:53:22] I was thinking about, um, how I first kinda mentioned, like Disney really came to my mind first. It came to my mind again and. I was thinking about how in the actual music for, um, like *The Jungle Book*, for example, if you just listened to the music, you wouldn't really know there, there are no like sonic signifiers that are like, *Oh, this is this animal*. And so other than in the, the lyrics, obviously, and even the lyrics are kind of just like, for example, like, "I want to be like you," but I, uh, you know, you get the, what the animal is based on the animation. And I think animation has, has a big foot in like how we perceive animals, right? You know, to this day, I mean, certainly how I perceive animals and, you know, *Oh, maybe this, this animal is not as good as this one*, you know, or something like that. Or like, now I see lions as wise, thanks to *The Lion King*, you know, or something like that. So that's just what I was thinking about how, you know, animals can be perceived as, or as shown in like certain movies specifically Disney, may not even have sonic signifiers, but simply just visual signifiers. And I wonder

what that says, you know, about how we are told to be perceiving animals and the ethics of that as well.

J.W.: [00:54:54] Animation is so interesting in regard to this topic, because I wager that at least within a Western context, maybe, maybe more to be within an American context, like most people's familiarity and conceptions of certain animals are, I'd say predicated in animation. It's insanely pervasive at this point. And it's just ingrained, like, I mean, think of all the children's programming that is cartoon animals and then going on up, it's all over the place. Um, which is an interesting parallel to musical theatre and opera in general because when you're on a stage, as you were saying, Liv, it's like very obvious that these are human people in animal costumes. So you're already working with that degree of anthropocentrism. And yet when you translate that to the screen by animation, there's a distance there that allows, I think people to, so like, no, no, like this is more like, they're not saying this obviously explicitly, but this like, *Oh yeah, this is like the animal*, like *this is a wolf*, this is, uh, *this is a turtle*. And then it's a feedback loop, but it just each represents each like next representation is predicated on the previous and it goes all the way back and all the way back. Yeah. And cause I first started thinking about this kind of thing. I was, I wrote a short paper on Leoš Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen*, the opera. And that's an interesting case because it's opera as performed on stage. And it depicts a cast of forest animals. Um, but it also depicts humans as well. It's not just the animals, so it's like the split that's going on. But the different stage productions of this opera serve to do different things. If you're talking about *Into The Woods*, it's like the degree of anthropomorphism is on like a sliding scale and it does different things depending on that. So you can either just, like some productions, just dressing, like, like, okay. the fox is red, the frog is green and they don't do anything else besides that. Um, so it's like distancing from this like actual, like explicit animal imagery. Whereas some try to get as close as possible to like what the actual animal looks like or what, what we think the actual animals should look like, right. And it goes the opposite way. And then there's even, like, there have been animated, I think just one, an animated film form of the opera where it's just like 2d hand-drawn and then...I don't think it's the whole opera, but it's like probably about two thirds of it. And it's just sung on screen with animation, which is also super interesting. Yeah, it's an interesting sliding scale. And

each one does different things in terms of forming cultural constructions and attitudes.

Liv: [00:57:49] Yeah, I agree. Especially because reading that last Rachel Mundy essay just made me realize how much work there is to be done in this area and how salient it is right now in terms of ecological and post-human considerations as well. So it is a very exciting line of inquiry.

J.W.: [00:58:10] Yeah, and, and just the way, like language is also not only wrapped up like language in terms of how people think about it, mostly in just terms of, like, vocalization, but it's also wrapped up inherently in like visual signs as well, like glyphs, hieroglyphics or pictorials. And then you have, like, cuneiform plays a really interesting role. Like, a little interesting tidbit that I've found in doing some reading was that the actual, like, there's this symbol, I think it's like "ka5." I'm not sure exactly how you pronounce it, if people know how to pronounce it still, but it's, it's the symbol for [a] fox and it's also the symbol for [a] musician, and so already there's this association. And it's reflected in, like, early dynastic, third period stuff where, like, the musician and the animal are depicted almost always intertwined and then various other cultures have similar things. And then that's what, that's what Emily Doolittle was talking about in terms of like, actually culturally, not only just companion species, but just like relationships, longstanding relationships with other species in general, in lifestyle, as well as like artistic practice.

Maybe I'll end with a quote from Rachel Mundy. This is at the end of her essay, "**Why Listen to Animals?**"

"Listening to animals allows us to confront notions of the invisible self that are built upon the limited foundations of human identity. "**Why Listen to Animals?**" is, in the end, a question about the relationship between identity, alterity, and the categories of modern humanism. Alterity badly created doesn't even foster good humanism. It just keeps lagomorphs', macaques', nits', or pelicans' questioned rationality satisfying to unctuous vanity, wherein xenophobia yields zoo-ontology. That was a sentence. Listening has much to tell us about the way categorical notions of alterity set the terms of selfless subjectivity and human identity.

Understanding those connections means understanding how nature becomes, or became rather a disposable resource, how non-human lives

became invisible and silent. Now human life came to be circumscribed by notions of subjectivity that privilege only some types of selves. We are only beginning to recognize the ways that we measure subjectivity through sound and that we measure alterity in so many ways by comparing ourselves with other species, music scholars and scholars of animal studies have much to teach one another. And I very hope this essay encourages interested readers towards new collaborations and interests."