

Music Business Research

Anita Jóri
Martin Lücke *Editors*

The *New* Age of Electronic Dance Music and Club Culture



 Springer

Music Business Research

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Music business research is a new multidisciplinary field that puts a number of different analytical approaches into mutual dialogue. It is located at the intersection of economic, artistic, musical, cultural, social, legal, and technological understandings of this cultural industry and it aims to generate a better understanding of the creation, distribution and consumption of music as a cultural good. As a field it is therefore characterised by methodological diversity and involves linking academic research with music business practices. The book series welcomes monographs and edited volumes that feature groundbreaking research into this dynamic and exciting field.

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Editors

The *New* Age of Electronic Dance Music and Club Culture

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Ewa Mazierska is Professor of Film Studies at the University of Central Lancashire. She has published over 30 monographs and edited collections on film and popular music. They include *Popular Viennese Electronic Music, 1990–2015: A Cultural History* (Routledge, 2019), *Poland Daily: Economy, Work, Consumption and Social Class in Polish Cinema* (Berghahn, 2017), and *Popular Music in Eastern Europe: Breaking the Cold War Paradigm* (Palgrave, 2016). She is currently working on a book about Polish popular electronic music. Mazierska's work has been translated into over 20 languages. She is principal editor of the Routledge journal *Studies in Eastern European Cinema*.

Josef Schaubrich studied music education, German, and philosophy in Mainz and Heidelberg. Currently, he is working on his PhD thesis studying the practice of liveness in electronic dance music cultures with a scholarship from the Leuphana University (Lüneburg, Germany). He has been teaching drums and live electronics for many years, tours as a musician, and has released several recordings.

Patrick Valiquet is a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow in Music at the University of Edinburgh, where he also teaches the construction of music as an artifact of science and technology. He is currently preparing a monograph on the governance of experimentalism in Cold War British and French music education and research policy. His writing has appeared in *Twentieth-Century Music*, *Music and Letters*, *Organised Sound*, and *Contemporary Music Review*.

Botond Vitos is a cultural anthropologist and research assistant on the project *Burning Progeny: The European Efflorescence of Burning Man*. Supported by the University of Fribourg and the Swiss National Science Foundation, *Burning Progeny* is a 4-year comparative, multisited ethnography focused on the European chapters of the Burning Man movement. Vitos' research interests include event cultures, popular music studies, electronic dance music culture, and the mediations of aesthetic experiences. He is part of the editorial team at *Dancecult: Journal of Electronic Dance Music Culture*.

Chapter 1

Introduction



Anita Jóri and Martin Lücke

On June 21, 2017 at Kantine am Berghain, the external floor of the famous Berlin club Berghain, the editors of this anthology organized a symposium with the title *Summer Solstice in Berlin: The “New” Age of EDM and Club Culture* (see more in Resident Advisor 2017). The aim of this conference was to bring together scholars and practitioners from as many varied research and practice fields as possible to discuss actual EDM-related topics and issues.

The one-day event was divided into five interconnected sessions: (1) academic, (2) practice-oriented, (3) workshop-based talks, (4) a panel discussion, and (5) a music program. For the academic session, the cultural studies scholar Botond Vitos; the sociologists Jan-Michael Kühn and Christine Preiser; and the applied linguist Anita Jóri were invited to speak. They all live in Berlin and are avid scholars of electronic dance music culture. Vitos wrote his PhD thesis on techno and psytrance scenes in Melbourne, Australia. At our symposium, he introduced his new research project on experiencing electronic dance floors in Berlin. Kühn published his doctoral thesis at Springer entitled *Die Wirtschaft der Techno-Szene. Arbeiten in einer subkulturellen Ökonomie* (*The Economy of the Techno Scene: Working in a Subcultural Economy*), and he mainly focused on the economical questions of the scene. Preiser gave an overview on her research on the door policies at clubs and she presented her interview results with bouncers. It is getting ever more increasingly important to discuss this topic in Berlin, especially if we think of, for example, the door policy of the world famous Berghain. Finally, Jóri elaborated her new linguistic discourse analytic methodology, which she applies to online communities of EDM scenes.

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In the practice-oriented second session, Aiko Okamoto, from the networks of female and nonbinary artists female:pressure and Meetup Berlin, talked about diversity problems within the local electronic dance music scene. Lukas Drevenstedt, the commercial director of Clubcommission Berlin, highlighted the most striking issues in the club culture of Berlin such as gentrification, cultural changes, and new political and economic policies. Last but not least, Benedikt Brilmayer, researcher and curator at the Berlin Musical Instrument Museum, introduced the exhibition *Good Vibrations: A History of Electronic Musical Instruments*.

With the support of the company Native Instruments, the third session of the day was a DJ workshop with the Berlin-based DJs Camille Darroux, OANA, Red pig flower, and White Lie. The audience could try out digital and analog DJing techniques in a friendly atmosphere, thanks to the four DJs. It was an important point for us to invite female DJs only, with whom women in the audience could feel more comfortable communicating and interacting [see more on this topic in Rodgers (2010) and Farrugia (2012)].

After the workshop, a panel discussion of the most poignant political and economic issues of the local scene closed the symposium part of the day. Our panelists were Katja Lucker, managing director of Musicboard Berlin; the abovementioned sociologist Jan-Michael Kühn; and the Berlin-based musician Roxy from the techno live act PHROND. The musicologist and music economy scholar Martin Lücke moderated the discussion. From this talk, we realized even more that academics and practitioners in the field do not interact and cooperate with each other enough. One of the best examples was the terminology discussion of the panel: Katja Lucker questioned the term EDM in the title of the event. For the present academic scholars it was clear that by EDM one means the umbrella term that includes all music genres of electronically produced danceable or not danceable, mainly club-oriented music (see more in McLeod 2001; Collins et al. 2013). For Lucker, it rather referred to a mainstream electronic music that was popularized after the early 2000s, mostly by the US American music industry. She is, of course, not alone in this opinion—many other protagonists in the scene use this term with that meaning. We also have to add here that the German term Techno is used as an umbrella term for “underground” electronic music. Therefore, in a German language context, EDM means mostly the opposite: a mainstream and business-oriented music genre.

But this was only one of the examples where we realized that scholars and practitioners should work more closely with each other in order to create a common language amongst them, thereby aligning research and practical fields. The panel discussion also showed that being an electronic musician in Berlin is not as easy as it may seem from most of the cases described. The competition is getting more heated since a lot of artists move to the city in hope of a better life.

After the talks and workshop, we closed the day with a music program. We believe that an event on electronic dance music cannot come to a close without listening to music. This last part of the day was opened with a techno DJ set by Tom Talenberg, then the techno live act PHROND played. Right at the end, Nina Pixel closed the evening with her eclectic DJ set.

During the day, Echo Bücher, a Berlin-based bookstore specializing in electronic music, which unfortunately has shut down now, provided us with the latest publications on contemporary music, sound, and club culture.

It was a productive and at the same time eye-opening day in many ways. And it is why we decided to publish this volume about electronic dance music with a main focus on the city of Berlin—to document this fruitful day and also to invite other authors for contributions.

The subject of this volume is broad, and one could also say that it is vague, but our aim was to create an anthology that is as interdisciplinary as possible on the topic of electronic dance music cultures (henceforth EDMCs) in general. This is why one can find very different methodological systems, analyses, and subjects in this book. Also, the authors of this volume have very diverse backgrounds: some of them are scholars in the field of EDMCs or cultural studies in general, some work in the music business, and some have backgrounds as journalists too, thus providing insights from various perspectives. We thought that these different backgrounds might help each other's work.

Every published paper presents actual research or practice-based results. Based on the diverse topics of these articles, the following chapters were divided into three parts: (1) Electronic Dance Music and Club Culture in Berlin, (2) Musicians and Musickers, and (3) Electronic Musical Instruments and Their Users.

In the first part, Berlin is marked as an important epicenter of EDMCs. In the second part we shift this aspect specifically to musicians and musickers (Small 1998). Finally, in the third part, the technological and instrumental background of this culture is highlighted.

Lukas Drevenstedt in his text *Dimensions of Club Culture—Learning from Berlin*, gives a general overview on Berlin's club culture and its diverse dimensions. Drevenstedt also writes about the new regulations and changes in the city that completely shifted the profile of the local club culture in recent years.

In *Only the Echo is Left (Alive)*, Kata Katz analyzes the cultural input of the Berlin-based bookstore Echo Bücher that specialized in electronic (dance) music. Even though the shop was shut down several months ago, it is still important to show how Echo Bücher contributed to the local EDM scene during its active years. Katz also argues in her chapter that this store was a cultural (third) space where new ideas and models in the field of electronic music could be formed.

The cultural activist and anthropologist Bianca Ludewig gives, in *The Berlin Techno Myth and Issues of Diversity*, an overview about the issue of diversity in the field of electronic (dance) music and Berlin club cultures. To do so, she also takes specific examples from German and Austrian avant-garde or transmedia festivals and analyzes the structure of the Berlin-based platform female:pressure. Ludewig's research results also highlight some actual political and economic issues in Berlin that affect the city's club culture and its diversity.

Martin Lücke in his chapter *Club Culture and Electronic Dance Music in Berlin: An Economical, Social and Aesthetical Perspective* summarizes the most striking economic issues in Berlin's present EDM scene. He analyzes Clubcommission's

2019 published comprehensive study of the Berlin club scene, which presented economic, social, and aesthetic aspects.

Botond Vitos introduces his postdoctoral research proposal in *Researching Informal Musical Expertise and Mediations of Aesthetic Experiences Among the Berlin Techno Audience*. The purpose of his study is to identify and compare segments of techno club audiences in Berlin based on their forms of engagement in music-related activities such as audio media and recreational drug use. Vitos' aim is to identify the ways different audience segments attempt to recreate the distinctive socio-aesthetic experience of the electronic dance floor in their everyday life by means of audio media and other arrangements. We thought that it is interesting to also include a proposal like this in order to see what type of new ideas and topics are (or are going to be) discussed in the field nowadays.

The professor of film studies, Ewa Mazierska, in her text *The Influence of Berlin on Austrian and Polish Electronic Musickers* discusses the meaning of Berlin for Austrian and Polish electronic musicians and people involved in the scene. It examines their real and symbolic connections to the city, reflected in such activities as traveling to Berlin for business, playing there, using booking agents from there, collaborating with Berlin musicians, as well as being influenced by the city's music and atmosphere.

Patrick Valiquet, a musicologist specializing in historical and anthropological approaches to experimental music and music technologies, in his text "100% Expert!" *Mastery and Equality in Darsha Hewitt's Sideman 5000 Adventure* examines the tutorial video series *A Sideman 5000 Adventure*, in which the sound artist Darsha Hewitt presents her research on early drum machine technology. The chapter brings Hewitt's work into dialog with the educational philosophies of Pierre Bourdieu and Jacques Rancière.

In *Sound Visions and Visible Sounds: Electronic Musical Instruments and Their Power to Change* Benedikt Brilmayer reports on the abovementioned exhibition at the Berlin Musical Instrument Museum through the history of electronic musical instruments. This history he introduces from an organological point of view, meaning that electronic instruments and their development could be seen from the perspective of not only functionality but also handling and playing.

In her chapter *The Discourse Community of Electronic Dance Music Through the Example of the TB-303 Owners Club*, Anita Jóri presents a new type of methodology system based on the linguistic computer-mediated discourse analysis, which she applies to a sample of the online community *TB-303 Owners Club*. She analyzes the community and identity construction processes within a "virtual scene" (Peterson and Bennett 2004) through its language use and discourse processes. Furthermore, her results also add up-to-date information to the research on computer-mediated communication.

Finally, Josef Schaubruch writes about the Austrian techno band's individual performance styles in *The Human Modular Synthesizer—The Musical Design and Live Performance of Elektro Guzzi's Pentagonia*. The text focuses on Elektro Guzzi's specific constellation of musical production, musical design, and live performance as key elements of electronic dance music. This chapter provides new

insights into the challenging musical practice of the performance of liveness, as exemplified by Elektro Guzzi. Schaubruch is an expert on this theme because his PhD thesis also deals with the practice of liveness in electronic dance music cultures.

As presented in this anthology, the subject of electronic dance music continues to be full of exciting research topics. From our point of view, the connection between theory and practice always remains important, as it is a living, constantly developing field. On the other hand, it is still worthwhile to look at electronic dance music from different disciplines and perspectives. The insights gained from these different perspectives underline the importance of EDM for the scientific community. Electronic dance music is valuable from an entertainment as well as an economic standpoint, and it is a living mirror of societies.

This volume is addressed to a broad audience: from academic scholars, through musicians, to other protagonists of the scene. As mentioned before, we would like to create a bridge between these actors in order to make possible a multifaceted discussion about actual issues of electronic dance music cultures, or in other words “techno cultures.”

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Part I
Electronic Dance Music and Club Culture
in Berlin