

## Summary of the doctoral thesis

The doctoral thesis *Sounds of the I World War or the Audiosphere of the Modern Performative Event* is a transdisciplinary work that combines methodologies of historical sound studies with performance and theatre studies as well as various genres of historiography. The main research questions focus on the influence of the audiosphere of the Great War, understood as a modern performative event, on the processes of sonic modernisations leading to various sonic modernities.

The thesis consists of three main sections as well as an introductory chapter and a two-part conclusion. Introduction tackles the current state of research, discusses various types of sources, outlines the applied methodologies, establishes crucial research questions, and presents the outline of the work.

The first section, *Sonic Methodologies*, serves as a methodological introduction, establishing several key concepts and broadening the context of research questions. Chapter 1.1, *Sonic Performativity, Performative Agency of Sound, Performativity of Sonic Practices*, introduces a triad of concepts mediating between performance studies and sound studies to propose a new approach toward relationships between different elements of the audiosphere and different meanings of performance – based on the vibratory conception of sound. Chapter 1.2, *Modern Performative Event and its Audiosphere*, serves as an overview of the different meanings, uses, and functions of the notion of “event” (*wydarzenie/zdarzenie, événement, Ereignis*) across contemporary humanities: from the poststructural philosophy of the event, through archeology of knowledge and various historiographical paradigms as well as postwar (post-Cageian) aesthetics of musical avant-garde, and different approaches to sound studies, up to contemporary theatre and performance studies. This broad survey serves as a backdrop for the proposed categories of “performative event” (*wydarzenie performatywne*) and “historical event” (*wydarzenie historyczne*) as well as “performative occurrence” (*zdarzenie performatywne*) and “historical occurrence” (*zdarzenie historyczne*). Following Hayden White and Pierre Nora, the modern forms of these categories are also discussed. That segment of the chapter focuses on how performative occurrences transform into performative events, which are subsequently transformed into historical events, and how performative events sustain their power over people, communities, and societies. Chapter 1.3 *Sound Modernities and Sonic Modernisations* shows the understanding of the categories crucial to the research questions – not only setting the stage for answering them but also proposing a broadened history of ensoniment (Jonathan Sterne) intertwined with that of the theatre. Each of those three chapters ends with a reflection on how the discussed topics, notions, and categories functioned at

the turn of the 20th century. The final chapter of that section, *1912 – Titanic* (1.4), presents the possibilities of different types of analysis of the audiosphere of the modern performative event.

The main body of the thesis comprises two complementary sections – *The Great Sonic War and Soundscapes of the Total War*. The first one concerns various sonic practices of the war. It describes how sound and the audiosphere were weaponised and used as tools of modern sonic warfare – as well as the ways in which they later contributed to the sonic modernisations. The second section aims at answering the question of how did the Great War sound? Far from attempts at reconstruction of historical soundscapes, it presents an acoustemological (Steven Feld) perspective in search of how different soundscapes that emerged during the Great War were heard by different people and how various sounds transformed the collective sonic episteme of the times.

*The Great Sonic War* encompasses five chapters, each devoted to different kinds and understandings of sonic performance. *Mobilisation of the Audiosphere* (2.1) serves as an introduction, charting the scope and scale of the collective social performance of military participation. It describes the methods of the titular process: from recruitment of soldiers and workers, through requisition of materials (especially bells), to militarization of various sciences and musical culture. *Sonic Violence* (2.2) is about the performative agency of sound and the direct effects of sound masses on the bodies of soldiers or civilians. The chapter is devoted to the weaponisation of the din of war against the bodies, including the important cultural phenomenon of “shell shock” (*obusite, Kriegszitterer, psicosi di guerra*). It also delves into different kinds of otolaryngological injuries as well as various sonic treatments of shell shock. *Knowledge as Weapon* (2.3) analyses various practices of mediated, enhanced listening that were invented or developed during the war: from auditory communication (radiotelegraphy, telegraphy, telephony) and intelligence, through different types of aural signal detection (radiogoniometry, metal detection), to various types of enhanced, directional hearing (aircraft detection, hydrophony, geophony, artillery detection). *Performing Morale* (2.4) is devoted to various strategies for maintaining high collective social morale. The first segments of the chapter are devoted to the morale of the army – from auditory and kinesthetic dimensions of the military drill to military orchestras and soldiers’ songs. Subsequent parts present different technologies and techniques of sustaining high social participation in collective military performance away from the front lines, such as gramophone recordings, fundraising concerts, recruitment stunts during revue theatre productions, and propaganda spectacles disguised as popular circus shows. Finally, *Techniques of Sonic Mobilization* (2.5) gathers the conclusions from previous chapters and ties up the loose ends, focusing on the influence of the analysed practices on interwar performative arts.

*Soundscapes of the Total War* consists of seven chapters, which present different approaches to the soundscapes of the past. It starts with *Audiosphere and Soundscapes* (3.1), where the notion

of “soundscape” (R. Murray Schafer) is given a reinterpretation as a multitude of subjective soundscapes created in the performative acts of listening. Furthermore, this chapter stresses mobility as a crucial aspect of the Great War soundscapes; mobilized technologies are mobile, and the sound of marching feet forms a „keynote” (R. Murray Schafer) of the war. *The Summer Festival of Militarism* (3.2) investigates the soundscapes of the summer of 1914. From the gunshot of the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo, through the uproar of pro-war demonstrations, to the sounds of mobilization and the rumble of the first cannon firings, this particular chapter asks the question: what is the sound of the outbreak of the war? *Sounds of Maneuver Warfare* (3.3) tackles the sounds and aural consequences of the moving fronts. Its central segment revolves around the soundscapes of the mass migration of war refugees, especially during the 1915 general retreats of the Russian and Serbian armies. Conversely, *Sounds of Positional Warfare* (3.4) is an attempt to present soldiers’ sonic experiences of the trenches of the Great War. It is also a return, albeit from a different perspective, to the military techniques of listening mastered by the soldiers. *Sounds of Non-places and Transitory Spaces* (3.5) underlines the inherently transitory status of the soundscapes experienced by soldiers and other people mobilized for military service during the war. Within this context, the notion of non-place (Marc Augé) is adapted to map the soundscapes of wartime spaces of transience. Of particular interest are two paradoxical types of spaces where soldiers were supposed to be “immobilized” giving them at least a temporary permanence: medical institutions and POW Camps. *Home Fronts, Hinterlands and Occupied Territories: Transformations of Soundscapes away from the Front Lines* (3.6) tries to capture broader changes in soundscapes occurring away from the trenches during the war. The focus here is on the social processes of the time as well as the deep and lasting auditory consequences of the air raids, army retreats, and industrial changes. Subsequently, *Auditory Dramaturgy* (3.7) places different aural experiences, sounds, and soundscapes within the broader acoustemology of the era, focusing on the ways in which auditory imagination was being framed through dramatic imagination and narrative structures. This chapter also serves as a recapitulation of the whole section from the perspective of theatre and performance studies.

A two-chapter conclusion starts with *Audiocommemoration* (4.1), devoted to the audiosphere of collective commemoration of the Great War. The chapter attempts to bridge the gap between the practices that took place during the war (official funerals, spiritual seances) and in the years directly after the armistice (the introduction of the minute of silence, the burial of the Unknown Soldier) and contemporary culture of memory, culminating in the recent centenary of the war. It also serves as an introduction to the final chapter, *War as a Medium* (4.2), in which the author returns to the research questions. In this conclusion, the Great War is considered a

multisensory medium that contributes to sonic modernisations by fundamentally reconfiguring the relations among different senses.