

## Music, Sound, and Voice in Somaesthetics: Overview of the Literature

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**Abstract:** *During the last ten years, somaesthetics has been increasingly applied in studies of music, sound, and the voice. In this overview, I will map out the most interesting articles and books in this field after briefly introducing somaesthetics and considering how its various dimensions could be utilized in issues related to sound and music. In addition, I will discuss the role of the body in previous academic approaches to music. In the first main section of the article, I will introduce some texts by Richard Shusterman, the developer of somaesthetics, in which he deals with music, sound, and the voice. After that, I will present the writings of other scholars who apply somaesthetics in their music-, sound-, and voice-related approaches. This article is intended to give an overview, not to comprehensively deal with the content of these texts, and to offer some entry points for readers interested in applying somaesthetics to research and/or artistic practices involving music, sound, and the voice.*

**Keywords:** *music, sound, voice, body, embodiment, somaesthetics, musicology, music education.*

Somaesthetics is a line of philosophy introduced by the American philosopher Richard Shusterman in the 1990s (see, e.g., Shusterman, 1999b, 2008, 2012c). It has been particularly influenced by John Dewey's pragmatism as well as the philosophies of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Michel Foucault, Simone de Beauvoir, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and William James, among others (Shusterman, 2008). One of the main ideas of somaesthetics is that bodily experience can be cultivated. By practicing body consciousness, one can free oneself from harmful bodily manners and improve one's overall quality of life. Shusterman suggests that a researcher working in the field of somaesthetics should not only approach things analytically but also critically examine the physical practices of our culture, suggest new forms of somatic conventions, and put them into practice. Therefore, in addition to analytic and theoretical considerations, somaesthetics involves pragmatic examination and practical implementation of bodily disciplines (Shusterman, 2012c, p. 42–45).

Analytic somaesthetics examines the nature of bodily experiences and practices and how knowledge and reality are constructed in them. This field deals with body-related ontological and epistemological issues as well as socio-political considerations, such as bodily norms

(Shusterman, 1999b, p. 304; 2012c, p. 42). In research on sound and music, this could mean, for example, critically analyzing the experiences and conventions of producing and listening to sound as well as discussing the relationship of sound to the environment, culture, social practices, power, and norms.

Pragmatic somaesthetics is prescriptive and suggests new kinds of somatic practices and methods. In addition, it involves critical review of existing somatic methods and proposes potential improvements. (Shusterman, 1999b, pp. 304–305; 2012c, pp. 42–43) In regard to sound and music, pragmatic somaesthetics may critically examine, for example, methods of playing instruments, singing, and teaching music. Also, practices of listening as well as the physical and experiential aspects of different sonic environments may be evaluated, and new innovations may be proposed. Furthermore, new ways of developing our sonic culture may be proposed to better serve our bodies, aesthetic tendencies, and well-being.

The third dimension of somaesthetics is practical, and it concerns the actual practice of somatic methods and self-development through them. The practical dimension has been largely excluded from previous academic philosophy. (Shusterman, 1999b, p. 307; 2012c, p. 45) Somaesthetics differs from earlier philosophical approaches to the body, as the researcher or philosopher is encouraged to act bodily and put into practice and test the somatic methods and conventions he or she is exploring. In studies on sound and music, this can come very naturally, as many researchers already have a background in the field they are studying, such as music, theater, or sound design.

The somatic nature of sound and music may be self-evident to musicians. The embodiment of music is tangible, as Arnold Berleant (2002), a scholar of philosophy and music, highlights:

*Musical sounds are more than auditory sensations; they are produced in some way, executed by the bow of a stringed instrument, a person's breath into a woodwind or brass instrument, the movement of fingers on piano keys, or hands and feet on the organ.* (pp. 92–93)

In academic approaches to sound and music, this has not been so obvious. In the past, the embodiment of music has been largely ignored or seen only as a metaphorical phenomenon. It has been common to think of music as something located in a musical work and to approach it visually with the help of notation.

Music has also been seen as a direct communication from the composer's mind to the listener's mind, and the importance of the body in this communication has often been overlooked (Maus, 2010, pp. 15–16, see also Cusick, 1994, p. 16). Music historian and musicologist Suzanne Cusick (1994) writes,

*As a performer, I act on and with what we ordinarily call music with my body; as a musicologist I have been formed to act on (and with?) what we ordinarily call music with my mind, and only with my mind.* (p. 9)

According to Cusick, the body has been ignored in music. This is related to the mind/body problem that still deeply affects Western culture. According to her, this denial of the body has theological, moral, and class- and gender-related causes in our culture. (Cusick, 1994, p. 16)

Since then, musical sounds and the body have been taken into consideration in research. Often, though, sounds have been approached as an acoustic, measurable phenomenon and the

body has been approached as a physiological entity. The perception of sound and music has been explained by cognitive research and neuroscience. When examining the effects of music on body, physiological and measurable impacts on heart rate, breathing, blood flow, or brain function are often considered. These are fascinating approaches to the physicality of music and sound, but as I see it, it is necessary to consider the bodily experience, especially the aesthetic experience, to complement them. In the fields of phenomenological and feminist musicology, as well as sound and voice studies, embodied and aesthetic experiences have gained a foothold (e.g., Clifton, 1983; Eidsheim, 2015; Jankélévitch, 2003; Le Guin, 2005; Sudnow, 1993; Thomaidis & Macpherson, 2015). Some of these approaches have features that are comparable to somaesthetics, although they are not explicitly related to it. This comparison is relevant, given the strong link between somaesthetics and the traditions of phenomenology and sociology. These are some of the fields to which somaesthetic studies of sound and music could relate in the future.

I suggest that we rethink our established ideas of sound and music with the help of somaesthetics. For example, in Western thinking, some elements of music (e.g., rhythm) are traditionally understood as more bodily than others (e.g., harmony, melody). In formalist theories of music in particular, rhythm has traditionally been seen as less important than melody or harmony. Joel Rudinow (2010), a philosopher of music, wonders if this is because melody and harmony tend to contain “higher frequencies” and are therefore perceived to be more “mental,” while the rhythm is somehow perceived as more “bodily” (p. 110). With the help of somaesthetics, such generalizations in the traditions of music and philosophy can be challenged by examining sound and music in the body in more subtle and comprehensive ways. Rhythm is undoubtedly a bodily element, and it is always present in our bodies, for example, in the form of heartbeats and breathing. However, different pitches and timbres also manifest in our bodies in palpable ways. For example, a singer senses different vowels and pitches in different ways throughout the body; open vowels and lower pitches are felt more in larger cavities, such as the chest cavity, while closed vowels and higher pitches resonate more strongly in smaller cavities, such as the nose and forehead. Thus, it is not only rhythm, but various qualities of sounds, that are felt in the body.

### **Shusterman’s Observations on Music, Sound, and the Voice**

In Shusterman’s thinking, sound, especially music, has been a relevant theme for a long time. Unlike most other philosophers, he does not use music and sound only as metaphors, but writes about them as concrete practices, revealing their real bodily origins and consequences. His analyses cover not only individual bodies but also the somatic aspects of sound and music in regard to culture, society, values, and power. Shusterman’s philosophy offers a lot of intriguing entry points for researchers, philosophers, pedagogues, composers, musicians, and sound artists who want to increase their understanding of the embodied aspects of sound and music. He has written about music, especially to highlight the aesthetic value of popular art, which has long been recognized in popular music research but not in the fields of philosophy and aesthetics. Therefore, Shusterman’s mission to illuminate the aesthetic potential of popular music within the philosophical debate has been most welcome.

One of Shusterman’s most well-known texts is his article “The Fine Art of Rap,” which was first published as an essay in the journal *New Literary History* in 1991 (Shusterman, 1991). An expanded version of the article appeared later in his book *Pragmatist Aesthetics: Living Beauty, Rethinking Art* (Shusterman, 1992a), and again a few years later in his book *Performing Live:*

*Aesthetic Alternatives for the Ends of Arts* (Shusterman, 2000b). The latter book also contained an article on country music that was also published a year earlier in the *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* (Shusterman, 1999a; 2000a). In the above texts, Shusterman provides insightful aesthetic analyses of these two genres of music. In one of his interviews, Shusterman said that he wanted to bring forth “the aesthetic qualities, values, and strategies of this [country] music” (Väkevä, 2000, p. 9). When talking about his analysis of rap music, he highlighted the embodied essence of the music in both its production and appreciation (Väkevä, 2000, p. 7).

Throughout his career, Shusterman has written numerous articles related to rap music (1992d; 1992e; 1995a; 1995b; 2005), including a two-part version of “The Fine Art of Rap” in the *Journal of Rap and Hip Hop Culture* (1992b, 1992c). Later, Shusterman’s discussion on rap music inspired other writers, like Robert Dobrowolski (2012), who wrote “Sampling (No)Body,” and Max Ryyänen (in press), whose article “Living Beauty, Rethinking Rap: Shusterman’s Philosophy of Hip Hop Revisited” will soon be published in the *Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics*.

Shusterman has a solid pragmatist view of the value of art as embodied practices that are intertwined with our daily lives. According to him, by examining popular and world music, we can distance ourselves from the Western tradition, which sees music as “transcendental works of genius” (Väkevä 2000, p. 6). Instead, we should approach music from the perspectives of playing, performing, and listening—the actual practices of music (Väkevä, 2000, p. 6) In his article “Form and Funk: The Aesthetic Challenge of Popular Art,” Shusterman (2000d) argues, “my Deweyan pragmatism makes me not only critical of the alienating esoterism and totalizing claims of high art, but acutely suspicious of any essential and unbridgeable divide between its products and those of popular culture” (p. 169).

Shusterman also discusses the democratization of art in his 2002 article “From Natural Roots to Cultural Radicalism: Pragmatist Aesthetics in Alain Locke and John Dewey,” which was included in his book *Surface and Depth: Dialectics of Criticism and Culture*. In this article, which was written in the spirit of pragmatism, he addresses music from the perspective of its functional value. For example, music can have a “dance value” in contexts where it is used for dancing (Shusterman, 2002b, pp. 131, 134) Shusterman does not hold on to conventional forms of aesthetic appreciation in each musical genre. Instead, in his other article from 2002, “Home Alone? Self and Other in Somaesthetics and ‘Performing Live,’” he addresses how different kinds of music are used and experienced diversely in our everyday lives. For example, classical music can play in elevators, and rock can be listened to in an academic setting, in which listeners sit quietly and contemplatively (Shusterman, 2002c, p. 103).

What about the role of somaesthetics in the field of aesthetics? In his 1999 article introducing somaesthetics, Shusterman explains how somaesthetics, with its embodied insights, could complement the established aesthetics of different art forms:

*We can easily see, for example, how somaesthetics’ improvement of sensory acuity, muscular movement, and experiential awareness could fruitfully contribute to the understanding and practice of traditional arts like music, painting, and dance [...], and how it could also enhance our appreciation of the natural and constructed environments that we navigate and inhabit.* (Shusterman, 1999b, p. 308)

As mentioned earlier, somaesthetics can be seen as not only an analytic consideration of bodily practices but also as having constituent pragmatic and practical dimensions (Shusterman, 2012c, pp. 42–45). In addition to studying bodily–aesthetic actions and experiences, Shusterman (2008) emphasizes the need for their practical cultivation (2008, pp. 1, 6–7). In this sense, I believe that somaesthetics could have particular potential for the development of music pedagogies and music education.

In his 2012 article “Body and the Arts: The Need for Somaesthetics,” Shusterman argues that practicing music is not just about mechanically absorbing external bodily habits into the body. He highlights how sensing sound, especially rhythm, is a profound ability of our bodies that is related to our body rhythms, such as heart rate, respiratory rhythm, and muscle function: “Underlying such embodied musical phenomena is, I think, a more basic idea: our sense of timing and rhythm are based ultimately on somatic experiences such as the beating of our hearts, the rhythms of breathing and regular muscular contractions” (Shusterman, 2012b, p. 15).

Shusterman (2012b) points out that we need our bodies—our hands, feet, and voices—to produce music, just as we need our bodies to appreciate it (Shusterman, 2012b, p. 15). This may sound self-evident, but the academic research on music has not always noted this fact. In Western music culture, the body is still largely seen as an instrument. This view separates the body and mind and elevates the role of the mind as a “leader.” Shusterman’s somaesthetics, however, profoundly questions this simplification of the body as mere matter without agency (Shusterman, 2012c). Somaesthetics also offers opportunities for developing sound production so that such practices are healthier and less stressful for the body. In his article “Thinking through the Body, Educating for the Humanities: A Plea for Somaesthetics,” Shusterman (2006) wrote on the development of bodily habits, which are not simply mechanical repetitions but require cultivation of true somatic consciousness, among musicians.

Shusterman has written more about somatic methods than the voice or music themselves, although they have long been recurrent themes in his thinking. He has stated,

*If I devote less time to the somaesthetics of music than to disciplines of body awareness (such as Feldenkrais Method), it is not out of disrespect for music but because I believe that other philosophers will want to perform such work on music and can do so as well or better than I can.* (Shusterman, 2002c, p. 103)

Along with the texts mentioned here, Shusterman has written about music in the context of popular culture aesthetics (e.g., Shusterman, 2003, 2012a), and social action (Shusterman, 2014). He has also highlighted the significance of music in Confucian philosophy, which understands music as something that creates order and “purifies the inner mind” (Shusterman, 2012a, p. 112). His text on music in Confucian philosophy later inspired James Garrison (2015), who wrote more broadly about this subject in his article “Reconsidering Richard Shusterman’s Somaesthetics: The Confucian Debate Between Mèng Zǐ and Xún Zǐ.”

Of particular interest to researchers of music is Shusterman’s (2010) article in the special issue of *Action, Criticism & Theory for Music Education*, which focuses on somaesthetics and music. In this article, Shusterman comments on other articles on the same issue and discusses, among other things, the extent to which the performer’s and listener’s experiences of music are different or similar and whether there is some symmetry between them. He brings up the theory of mirror neurons and embodied empathy associated with listening, which would indicate some kind of symmetry. He also highlights how peoples’ experiences of the same work of art can differ

and still be equally accurate and authentic (Shusterman, 2010).

In addition to organized sound (i.e., music), Shusterman has also made innovative insights into less organized sounds and vocalizations. He points out that while vocality is an essential part of our embodiment and aesthetic perceptions, it is not limited to speech and singing; there are a wide variety of different bodily sounds that express our embodied style and bodily processes. Shusterman writes,

*Our auditory appreciation of somatic style goes beyond the voice of speech. There are styles of laughing – like the deep and easy full-bodied guffaw or the tense yet uncontrollably explosive and repetitive high-pitched giggle – and ways of crying or sighing that contribute to a person’s somatic style [...]. The sounds of somatic style include also ways of coughing, gasping, sneezing, grunting, burping, and snoring. (Shusterman, 2012c, p. 327)*

This insight opens a completely new set of visions and possibilities for researchers of the human voice. One does not have to focus only on certain vocal sounds used in speech or singing, but can expand his/her perspective to the whole spectrum of sounds that the human body can produce. And, most importantly, one does not have to focus only on the auditive aspects of these sounds. Instead, one can broaden investigations to the sensations that these sounds evoke and the aesthetic potential these experiences have. In addition to these approaches, somaesthetics offers a fertile theoretical frame for looking at the ways in which these sounds are controlled and cultured and how we deal with unwanted bodily sounds in our everyday lives. Such analyses on bodily sounds have been carried out before in the field of sound research (e.g., Connor, 2014; LaBelle, 2014), but I believe that somaesthetics could add something to this stream of literature, especially from the experiential point of view.

In his article “Somaesthetics and the Fine Art of Eating,” Shusterman (2016) develops an unconventional and fresh approach to embodied sounds. He examines sounds related to eating (i.e., the actual sounds of the eating body), and writes about eating noodles in Japanese culture:

*There is an enjoyable feeling of micro-muscular power and focused energy through the vigorous suction movement, a pleasure that may be related but cannot be reduced to its symbolic association with our initial infant sucking bliss nor to the amusing sound that noodle-sucking makes. (Shusterman, 2016, p. 268)*

In his 2012 book *Thinking Through the Body: Essays in Somaesthetics*, Shusterman reminds us that culture, social power positions, and customs shape—and even create—our bodies just as much as our own will does. This is particularly evident in regard to the human voice. Shusterman writes about non-normative, difficult vocal situations in which our bodies and voices can deceive us as we become unable to vocalize what we intended, and instead end up shaking uncontrollably or crying. (Shusterman, 2012c, p. 32)

All in all, Shusterman’s observations on the human voice, its embodied nature, its vulnerability, and its cultural implications are worth reading for voice researchers who want to understand the experiential meanings of the human voice.

## Somaesthetics Applied by Scholars of Music, Sound, and the Voice

So far, it seems that researchers of music and music education have been the most eager to apply somaesthetics in their fields. The special issue of the journal *Action, Criticism & Theory for Music Education* (2010, issue 1) mentioned before includes articles on music and somaesthetics related to Shusterman's book *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics*. This issue, which was edited by Wayne Bowman, a professor of music and music education, is a must-read for anyone interested in the somaesthetics of music. In addition to Bowman's introductory article, the journal includes seven articles, four of which explicitly deal with music. A researcher interested in the embodiment of music will find a number of good writings in this journal that may inspire him/her to approach somaesthetics.

In his article, music theory scholar Fred Everett Maus (2010) discusses the somaesthetics of music and its potential in the context of classical instrumental music. He provides examples of how embodiment has been addressed in previous studies of classical music, highlighting the somatic features of experiencing music and the fundamental importance of body movement for understanding musical gestures. Although listening to classical music does not put as much emphasis on the body as, for example, dance music, it may involve bodily sensations, such as chills and feelings of tension. Maus approaches the body from both the performer's and listener's point of view, and he argues that the listener's and performer's experiences do not necessarily have the same qualities. According to him, this topic is central to the somaesthetics of music. He writes,

*In general, whether one starts from the performer's or listener's perspective, an interesting question for musical somaesthetics is the extent to which, and ways in which, performers and listeners may share embodied responses to music, despite their very different bodily relations to the musical event. (Maus, 2010, p. 19)*

In his article, music education researcher Sven-Erik Holgersen (2010) discusses the importance of bodily awareness and somaesthetics in music education. He comprehensively presents the different levels of consciousness proposed by Shusterman and their significance in the musical experience and process of learning music. Holgersen also presents an in-depth discussion on musicians' bodily skills and how somaesthetic reflection can help develop them. According to him, musicians' motor habits—and the development of these habits—require conscious practice:

*Musicians not only memorize and learn music by heart, they literally incorporate the music. If they need to correct body habits in order to improve their musical performance, they often focus attention on the musical rather than on the somatic problem. So far, I agree with Shusterman that the correction of bad habits requires reflection: It cannot be approached solely as a motor problem, unconnected to deliberate reflection. (Holgersen, 2010, pp. 38–39)*

In her article, Roberta Lamb (2010) reflects on how Shusterman's book *Body Consciousness: A Philosophy of Mindfulness and Somaesthetics* speaks to her as a musician-teacher and scholar. Among other things, she wonders how somaesthetics could illuminate the embodiment of performance as well as talent, genius, and virtuosity—the ideals of Western music education culture. According to Lamb, all three branches of Shusterman's somaesthetics—analytic, pragmatic, and practical—are relevant for teaching music: "It seems to me that these three

branches of somaesthetics would never be completely isolated from each other in educational practice and thought, or thought and practice, precisely because education is in itself a process of movement and change” (Lamb, 2010, p. 51).

According to art education scholar Kimberly Powell (2010), discipline and training are central themes in music education. In her article, she asks what the roles of somatic training and experiences could be. She also discusses how sensory perceptions are culturally formed and writes about the embodied practices of music based on her ethnographic study of the Japanese-American practice of taiko drumming. Powell finds that the same practices that Shusterman has written about in regard to somaesthetics—breathing, bodily attunement, and mindfulness—are present among people learning taiko. In addition, she writes about elements specific to practicing taiko: repetition and slowed action. Powell (2010) describes the process of learning as follows: “In taiko drumming, repetition and slowed action helped to refine muscular action of hands and arms as well our sense of correct tone or pitch when the drumhead was struck in the right manner” (p. 81). She also writes about the importance of language and verbal reflection in music learning. According to her, language can be used to “facilitate somatic awareness” (Powell, 2010, p. 82). In conclusion, she argues that musical experiences have a transformative power that can even advance social justice (Powell, 2010, p. 89).

In 2007, Wayne Bowman and Kimberly Powell published “Body in a State of Music.” In this article, they point out that the role of the body in making and listening to music has only rarely been the subject of empirical research and has been widely ignored in philosophy (Bowman & Powell, 2007, p. 1088). In their article, they review previous studies of music and embodiment, including literature from the fields of philosophy, music education, and social sciences. They write about somatophobia and the role of the body in aesthetic theories and music education. They also present different bodily methods, such as the Dalcroze, Kodaly, and Orff methodologies. Bowman and Powell link their review to Merleau-Ponty’s and Dewey’s approaches as well as Shusterman’s somaesthetics. They consider not only the materiality of the body but also the social and cultural aspects and the situationality of the body, arguing, “music is distinctively, perhaps uniquely, a form of embodied agency; the unity of the body-mind is a fact that musical experience demonstrates vividly, compellingly, irrefutably. Not all modes of embodied experience are musical, but all musical experience is embodied” (Bowman & Powell, 2007, p. 1101). They also point out the significance of an embodied approach to the politics of music education. Understanding the embodied nature of music gives us insight into the controlling practices that shape the body in music education, an issue that has largely remained undiscussed to date (Bowman & Powell, 2007, p. 1101).

In his article “A Somaesthetic Approach to Rock Music: Some Observations and Remarks,” musicologist Stefano Marino (2018) looks at the reception of rock from a somaesthetic perspective. He points out that the importance and power of listening to rock music can be understood when we consider the somatic dimension of listening. He introduces Theodor W. Adorno’s thoughts on popular music and responds to them by arguing that we cannot put all popular music in the same category when it comes to aesthetic potential. According to Marino (2018), “somaesthetics [...] may provide a valuable contribution by amending some prejudices and thus arriving at a better understanding of the specific kind of aesthetic experience that popular music involves” (p. 115). He argues that the somatic and emotional aspects of the aesthetic experience highlighted by the somaesthetic approach can be mental and intellectual as well.

In his article, music researcher Simon McKerrell (2012) explores the concert audience of traditional Scottish music. His main point is that instead of the dualistic Cartesian approach,

listening practices in this music culture are based on somaesthetic experience and a bodily understanding of music. He believes that Shusterman's somaesthetics can provide a good theoretical basis for ethnographic research on proprioceptive and aesthetic experiences. He writes about the results of his study as follows:

*Significantly, almost none of the participants in these interviews could remember the semantic content of any of the songs within a week to two weeks after the gig. They could, however, remember the feelings that they had, and I would argue that this more affective reception has more lasting value.* (McKerrell, 2012, p. 86)

McKerrell puts forward the idea that somatic sensory perception of music is not referential, but actual and proprioceptive. The somatic essence of music carries with it cultural-aesthetic features and categories that are based on the body and are transmitted bodily.

Joel Rudinow, a philosopher of music, writes about rhythm as a somaesthetic element in his 2010 book *Soul Music: Tracking the Spiritual Roots of Pop from Plato to Motown*. He points out how, in the philosophy of music, the formalist view has emphasized the melody of the music while largely ignoring rhythm. This may be because rhythm has been interpreted as more of a bodily element than a mental element of music. He draws upon Susanne Langer's work, which views rhythm as an organic element that engages the human body and is not mechanical in its repetition but constantly changing and varied. Rudinow points out that rhythm is not only an aurally perceived element of music but also a factor that affects the whole body. He writes,

*From the point of view of somaesthetics, to say that the slow and measured rhythm of a funeral march mirrors the way sadness slows and measures our expressions of it is as good as to say that rhythm in music feels like emotions feel.* (Rudinow, 2010, p. 118)

He then emphasizes how such processes are related to the accumulation and release of somatic stress in the body and its muscles. Interestingly, Langer's thoughts, as described by Rudinow, are based on Dewey's philosophy and thus have the same philosophical root in pragmatism as Shusterman's somaesthetics.

Stephen Paparo (2016), a professor of music education and a choral conductor, explores the effect of the somatic Feldenkrais Method on singers' performance in his article "Embodying Singing in the Choral Classroom: A Somatic Approach to Teaching and Learning." In addition, he examines how singers' somaesthetic body awareness increases with this kind of facilitation. He concludes, "Through somaesthetic perception and reflection, participants began to understand how they embodied their singing" (Paparo, 2016, p. 496). Due to the enhanced body awareness achieved through this approach, the singers' physiological vocal performance improved. The results of the study include reduced muscle tension, improved coordination, better alignment, and freer movement of the vocal mechanism, leading to better coordination of singing and breathing as well as improved resonance of the vocal cords. (Paparo, 2016, p. 496)

In his article on rock drumming, drummer and researcher Gareth Dylan Smith (2017) explores drumming auto-ethnographically and phenomenologically. Based on his diaries, he addresses the bodily knowledge associated with playing drums. He bases his analysis on Shusterman's idea that aesthetic experience is valuable and enjoyable, vividly felt, and meaningful. Smith describes his own experience of playing drums as a contrast to present-day life, in which communication media scatters the everyday experience and breaks concentration. To Smith, playing drums is something that lifts him out of the nervousness and stress of everyday life:

“Perhaps this why I find rock drumming to be such a sanctuary – it is when I feel the most awake, the most *me*” (Smith, 2017, para. 8). Smith’s ideas are based on Shusterman’s somaesthetics, especially heightened somatic consciousness and the cultivation of bodily experience, which resonate well with his experiences as a musician.

In 2017, Helen Phelan, a professor of art practice and a singer, published the book *Singing the Rite to Belong: Ritual, Music, and the New Irish*. In her text on singing and belonging, she applies Shusterman’s somaesthetics as an approach. According to her, the belonging created by singing is physiological and emotional to a great extent, and “[t]he ability to communicate beneath cognitive and rational structures is proposed as one of the key ways in which song facilitates belonging” (Phelan, 2017, p. 9). According to Phelan, resonance, somatics, performance, temporality, and tacitness are the key elements that connect us as we sing. For her, the body is not only a passive representative of cultural values; instead, through bodily practices, we can change and create those values.

In his article “The Sound of Somaesthetics: Ken Ueno’s *Jericho Mouth*,” Martin Jay (2018) discusses the vocal work of the avant-garde composer and performer Ken Ueno from a somaesthetic point of view. Jay combines Roland Barthes’ thoughts on the geno-song and feno-song, looking at how Ueno uses his voice to vibrate an entire acoustic space and, through the disfigured character of his expression, questions traditional aesthetic ideals of harmony and order. In this regard, Jay writes about somaesthetic appreciation:

*Rather than contemplating objects from afar, assuming a position of elevated disinterestedness, somaesthetics involves an experiential unification of subject and object in a moment of bodily intensity, as often painful as pleasurable, in the place of an eternity of formal, cold beauty.* (Jay, 2018, p. 88)

In her articles, ethnomusicologist and researcher of singing Anne Tarvainen (2018a, 2018b, in press) develops vocal somaesthetics by exploring the bodily–aesthetic experiences of vocalizing and listening to the human voice. Particular attention is paid to the proprioceptive dimension of experience, which has been neglected in previous research on the voice. Tarvainen looks at the forms of vocalization that are challenging or differ from cultural aesthetic vocal norms. In her texts, she has discussed topics such as the voices of deaf singers and the experiences of singers with reflux disease. The aim of vocal somaesthetics is to analyze and challenge the musical and vocal ideals of our culture and, thereby, democratize the practices of singing and vocalizing. This area of research not only focuses on singing or speech but also enables study of all kinds of vocal activity and proposes new practices for developing vocal experiences. Tarvainen’s method of voicefulness, in which one’s own voice is used to enhance bodily awareness, is an example of such a practice.

In addition to the texts presented above, I would like to mention a few more writings that more or less discuss somaesthetics and the embodiment of music: Barbara Montero’s (2006) “Proprioception as an Aesthetic Sense,” Brandon Polite’s (2014) “The Varieties of Musical Experience,” Njörður Sigurjónsson’s (2009) “Variations on the Act of Listening: Twenty-One Orchestra Audience Events in Light of John Dewey’s ‘Art as Experience’ Metaphor,” and, of course, those that were mentioned above, including Robert Dobrowolski’s (2012) “Sampling (No)Body,” Max Ryyänen’s (in press) “Living Beauty, Rethinking Rap: Shusterman’s Philosophy of Hip Hop Revisited,” and James Garrison’s (2015) “Reconsidering Richard Shusterman’s Somaesthetics: The Confucian Debate between Mèng Zǐ and Xún Zǐ.”

It goes without saying that one should also explore the articles in this special issue of the *Journal of Somaesthetics*, “Somaesthetics and Sound” (2019, issue 2). In this issue, Stefano Marino (2019) writes about improvisation with jazz drums; Grace Han (2019) discusses playing cello in the Western classical music tradition; Salvatore Morra (2019) presents the embodied aspects of crafting and playing a Tunisian musical instrument, *‘ūd ‘arbī*; Charulatha Mani (2019) writes about singing Indian Karnatik music; Peter Bruun (2019) addresses experimental theatre performance with a choir; and Alexis B. Smith (2019) discusses sound figures and the human body in the writings of early German Romantics.

There are interesting approaches in the arts and design that apply somaesthetics to explore and modify sound, among other things (e.g., Feng, 2015; Höök, Jonsson, Ståhl, & Mercurio, 2016). Unfortunately, I cannot go into these in detail in this article. Also, it should be noted that Dewey’s philosophy has been used widely in the research on music education (e.g., Boon, 2009; Väkevä, 2012; Westerlund, 2003; Woodford, 2004). I will not go further into this topic either, but these studies may be of interest to researchers and pedagogues applying Shusterman’s somaesthetics based on Dewey’s pragmatism.

It is no wonder that researchers of music, sound, and the voice have increasingly begun to use the somaesthetic approach in their examinations. Somaesthetics provides concepts and a solid theoretical base for looking at the body and embodied experience from an aesthetic perspective. With this in mind, music, sound, and the voice, as embodied aesthetic phenomena, are fruitful targets for somaesthetic inspection. As this article has revealed, somaesthetics has been applied in a variety of contexts and by many different researchers, artists, and educators. People from the fields of musicology, music theory, the philosophy of music, ethnomusicology, music education, and art education as well as musicians, singers, and teachers have written some of the most interesting texts about embodiment, experience, and aesthetics.

In what kinds of contexts related to music, sound, and the voice could somaesthetics be applied in the future? As I see it, in addition to the fields of research and education that have already been mentioned, the fields of performance research, artistic research, voice studies, vocology, ergonomics for musicians, and soundscape studies could benefit from the somaesthetic approach to complement their own approaches. In addition, there is great potential for somaesthetic applications in arts, design, and technological innovations. I hope that increasingly more sound and music scholars, pedagogues, musicians, sound artists, designers, literary scholars, and philosophers will begin to consider sound, music, and the voice as somaesthetic phenomena.

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