Urban Music Studies series

Volume: **The Street as a Stage: Exploring Interconnections between Music & Sound, Urban Territories and Collective Action**

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Call for Papers

This edited volume sheds light on the manifold interconnections between music/sound, 'urban territories' (Schmid 2015) and collective action – with a special focus on the street as a stage. 'The street' is a synonym for confined urban areas, such as streets, squares, parks, stadiums and other enclosed city spaces.

This includes a critical engagement with the concept and materiality of 'the street' as a multifaceted and symbolic terrain where social, cultural and political processes unfold and where different forms of collective life are negotiated. Streets, in their diverse manifestations, are used as stages for buskers and political movements, as sites of vibrant musical scenes and transcultural learning and as contested spaces where different forms of access, free artistic expression, participation and belonging meet. The street is not merely a passageway or backdrop; it is a lived, embodied and performed space, created and shaped in everyday life, which holds different meanings for various groups. From protests and demonstrations to public celebrations, cultural rituals and everyday rhythms, from marginalised communities creating, negotiating and transforming their presence in public space to ordinary performances of belonging, the relationship between music/ sound and the street reveals profound insights into the social and cultural urban life.

Of particular interest is how 'the street', as a site of daily life, as a stage for artistic expression, as a realm of activist contestation and cooperation, social interaction and political expression, becomes a focal point for sound practices. We seek to explore how sound mediates these relationships, foregrounding the tensions, solidarities, and possibilities that move the city when grooves meet the streets and when different social worlds encounter one another.

We invite contributions that address (but are not limited to) the following questions and themes:

- **Street performances and busking as situated practices**, and national – and time-specific policies, regulations and power dynamics that shape(d) the experiences and possibilities of musical expression in the street. Mapping, ethnographic and other situated approaches to city-specific features and related contested regulations and claims;

- **The street as rehearsal room and workplace;** experiences of inclusion and exclusion in public space in relation to intersectional categories of social inequality (gender, ethnic and social origin, age, disabilities, among others) and the music performed; mobilities and repertoires in street musicians' biographies in relation to their specific sense of space and place;
- **Eventisation of street music** and the **proliferation of urban music festivals** in the course of **neoliberalism** in late modern societies; feedback effects of economic policies and neoliberal efforts on busking/street music practice; transformation of street music practice in the context of changing urban conditions, cultural economies and social relations;
- The **political and social significance** of street music and performing music together in public spaces; the role of street music in urban everyday life and as dimension of social movements, collective action and forms of belonging;
- **Soundscapes and sonic practices of the street** and how they produce, mediate and transform experiences of urban life; politics of sound in urban contexts; sonic and musical interventions in the street; historical and current social conflicts related to sound; text sources, documentation and archives of diverse acoustic phenomena in the urban realm;
- Music's role in **protests, social movements** and **everyday forms of activism**; how music interacts with struggles over urban space, questions of access, recognition, belonging and the right to the city and practices of collective care; focus on **collaborative and grassroots musical practices** that foster shared urban cultures, solidarity and a reimagining of public spaces as commons;
- Music's functions in city development and planning **if viewed from an urban sociological perspective;** why and how are urban structures and processes **sociologically consequential for music**, and why and how is music **sociologically constitutive of urbanity**, when dealing with issues such as, e.g., spatial segregation and urban inequality, urban cosmopolitanism and parochialism, spatial identity and rootlessness.
- **Theoretical and methodological questions** related to the fields of urban music studies, sound studies urban sociology, cultural studies, ethnomusicology, anthropology and related fields and their intersections, including ethnographic, historical, sonic, participatory and other approaches to music, sound and collective action in urban contexts.

Submission details:
Please submit your abstracts (maximum of 300 words, with a tentative title and five keywords) via email to street-stage@mdw.ac.at by November 30, 2026. You will get notification over acceptance by March 15, 2027.

In case your proposal is accepted, the full paper (7000-8500 words including references) has to be submitted by September 15, 2027 and thereafter will be peer-reviewed (double-anonymous process).

For revisions based on the reviews there it time between winter-spring 2028; the publication of the volume is planned for Fall 2028.

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