

Shopping Choir joyously proclaim, “the Earth is rising up!” as they perform an exorcism of the Monsanto Corporation. Rounding up the pesticide Round-Up from the shelves of a Home Depot, they sing a catchy gospel refrain: “Monsanto is the Devil, cast him out!” Such guerilla performance tactics and “subversive spirituality” (Apffel-Marglin, 2011) are admittedly quite foreign to much of what goes on under the name *music education*, where music is often conceived as a relatively autonomous realm of human activity unrelated to “extra-musical” political and ecological issues. Yet amidst the churning waves of viral contagion and accelerating climate change that continue to profoundly reshape our field, such a conception of music seems woefully inadequate for meeting the challenges we face. Indeed, if our performances are restricted to concert halls and familiar musical boundaries they are, in Ronald Grimes’ words, “no answer to the problem of saving then planet...” (2006, 149). But what if Rev. Billy’s variety of radical ritual and “transformative spectacle,” performed for and with the Earth, offers precisely the kind of performance practice music education might adopt in order to live up to our educational responsibility?

Hannah Arendt affirms that “education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to assume responsibility for it...” and thus calls us to “prepare [children] in advance for the task of renewing a common world” (1961, 196). Although Arendt speaks from a decidedly humanist perspective, her concern with natality and renewal resonates deeply with much contemporary environmental, Indigenous, new materialist, and posthumanist philosophy that asks us to attend, not to an already given world of Nature apart from the human, but to a shared world of “vibrant matter” (Bennett, 2010; Robinson, 2020) whose renewal is performed “intra-actively” (Barad, 2007; 2012; 2019) through the ongoing participation of human, nonhuman, and other-than-human beings (Apffel-Marglin, 2011; Kirby, 2018; Viveiros de Castro, 2014). That the nature of this worldly intra-activity is *shared* also implies a relation of hospitality in which life is a matter (literally) of giving and receiving. Thus, what comes to matter is “infinitely indebted” to an “unfathomable multitude” of others whose generosity is the condition of possibility of mattering (Barad, 2019).

In these ways, musical performance might be conceived not merely as human representational activity, but as specific material-discursive configurations of the world that have real consequences for what comes to matter and what is excluded from mattering (Barad, 2012). Rather than something specifically for and about humans, music can be seen to involve “collective actions engaging humans, non-humans, and other-than-humans for the purpose of generating and regenerating...a livable common world,” where the ongoingness of life is never simply given, but an accomplishment of specific, sustained actions among the entire “inter-collectivity” of beings (Apffel-Marglin, 150-159). Such actions, however, “require the participation of the entire council of creatures, not just some special class like scientists or priests or band leaders or professors or artists or even humans” if they are to make a difference for the possibility of livable common worlds (Grimes, 151). Therefore, what Earthly collectivities might music education engage in the task of renewing a common world? How might we perform music for the mutual flourishing of all life? Perhaps, per Rev. Billy, it begins with a resounding “Earth-a-lujah!”

Apffel-Marglin, Frédérique. *Subversive Spiritualities: How Rituals Enact the World*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Barad, Karen. *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and The Entanglement of Matter and Meaning*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007.

\_\_\_\_\_. “After the End of the World: Entangled Nuclear Colonialisms, Matters of Force, and the Material Force of Justice,” *Theory & Event* 22, no. 3 (2019) : 524-550.

\_\_\_\_\_. “On Touching—The Inhuman that Therefore I Am,” *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 25, no. 3 (2012): 206-223.

Grimes, Ronald L. *Rite Out of Place: Ritual, Media, and the Arts*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo. *Cannibal Metaphysics: For a Post-Structural Anthropology*, trans. Peter Skafish. Minneapolis: Univocal Press, 2014.