

FRASER MACDONALD

University Of Waikato

RAPTURE MUSIC: INTENSITY AND ESCHATOLOGY WITHIN  
CHRISTIAN REVIVAL MOVEMENTS

"Music is never tragic, music is joy. But there are times it necessarily gives us a taste for death; not so much happiness as dying happily, being extinguished."<sup>1</sup>

EFFUSION

Walete, 1975. "The pentatonic melody is undoubtedly derived from a non-Huli source, although the Huli claim that they invented it as *they created the thousands of verses sung during the revival*" (Pugh-Kitingan 1981, 291, emphasis added)."<sup>2</sup>

Binandere, 1976. "It starts in one place and spreads throughout the nation...When everybody catches on, that's where all the new songs come in, because everybody gets different impartations and different revelations, and they write about them."<sup>3</sup>

Koroba, 1975. "The happiness the people feel about their close relationship to God has bubbled over into very vital hymn singing. Many new hymns have been written and are sung with fervour. At times though, hysteria has come into hymn singing which has needed correction."<sup>4</sup>

Orokana, 1974. "All night they sang, till 5 a.m....The movement spread rapidly through the nightly testimony, praise and singing till dawn."<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 1987), 299.

<sup>2</sup> Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan, "An ethnomusicological study of the Huli of the Southern Highlands, Papua New Guinea." Ph.D dissertation, University of Queensland, St Lucia: 1981.

<sup>3</sup> Digby Ho Long, qtd. in: Michael Webb, "Every Creative Aspect Breaking Out! Pentecostal-Charismatic Worship, Oro Gospel Music, and a Millennialist Aesthetic in Papua New Guinea" *The Spirit of Praise: Music and Worship in Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity* ed. Monique Ingalls and Amos Yong (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2015), 86.

<sup>4</sup> Glenda Giles, "Spiritual Revival." Unpublished Newsletter (1975).

<sup>5</sup> John and Moyra Prince, *No Fading Vision: The First 50 Years of A.P.C.M* (Asia Pacific Christian Mission, 1981), 194-195.

Kapuna, 1977. "Many have cassette players and practically only Christian cassettes are played on them. Singing is very much a part of the life here and Christian songs can be heard all day long."<sup>6</sup>

Duke of York Islands, 1978. "In addition, many young indigenous Christians are writing gospel songs which are indigenous in sound...it is a spontaneous expression of their faith...This spontaneous indigenisation is the result of the spiritual renewal that is sweeping across this nation."<sup>7</sup>

Baiyer River, 1973 "At the time when the Holy Spirit of God moved in our churches, our Heavenly God saw and understood our need and gave us new revival songs to sing in our churches...Now we have many songs to sing. Before we had four or five songs. But now we have 1-200 new songs to sing with which we praise the name of God."<sup>8</sup>

Kandep, 1979. "Their main activity is to sing praising the Lord in strange languages from one sunset to another. All their songs and prayers are in strange languages...they spend days feasting, singing songs to God, and seeing visions and dreams."<sup>9</sup>

Pisi, 1977. "Singing was an important part of these meetings and the younger people composed many new Christian songs with Gogodala words and set either to western or to traditional tunes."<sup>10</sup>

Intense social movements call forth effusions of musical composition. The two move in unison. It is not only that music works to "establish and maintain collective identity, leads to vitalizing emotions, takes advantage of free space afforded by political opportunities, and helps establish and maintain social

---

<sup>6</sup> Lin Calvert, "A Renewal Movement in the United Church, Kapuna, Gulf Province" *Religious Movements in Melanesia: A Selection of Case Studies and Reports* ed. Wendy Flannery (Goroka: The Melanesian Institute, 1983), 192.

<sup>7</sup> Andrew Midian, *The Value of Indigenous Music in the Life and Ministry of the Church: The United Church in the Duke of York Islands* (Port Moresby: Institute of Papua New Guinea Studies, 1999), xxxi.

<sup>8</sup> Wiya Tramulia, *The Story of the Revival among the Enga People 1973-2004* (Unpublished manuscript: 2004), 29.

<sup>9</sup> Gary Teske, "The Holy Spirit Movement Among Enga" *Religious Movements in Melanesia Today* (2), ed. Wendy Flannery (Goroka: The Melanesian Institute, 1983), 131.

<sup>10</sup> Ross. M. Weymouth, "The Gogodala Society: Adjustment Movements 1966-1981" *Religious Movements in Melanesia: A Selection of Case Studies and Reports* ed. Wendy Flannery (Goroka: The Melanesian Institute, 1983), 48.

movement culture.”<sup>11</sup> In such a straightforwardly Durkheimian view, music is a capsule loaded with the emotions and interests of the aggrieved – musical morale boosting, “serving the movement.”<sup>12</sup> Beyond these sociological implications are those of an ontological character. New being is new music. An intensification of life brings with it a corresponding intensification of musical creativity. Music does not so much capture, embody, or crystallize the ethos of a burgeoning social movement but is an intrinsic dimension of this emergent, proliferating life. The focus must rest on creativity and composition, on the coming to fruition of new multiplicities: intense practices, beliefs, politics, cosmologies, and musics.

The same holds true for religious intensification. When ritual and spiritual worlds rapidly accelerate, musical composition and creativity quickens apace. Religions, like societies, move through periods where they are moving faster or slower, with heightened intensity or broad dilation. Such speed and slowness are invariably musicalised. Probably the most far-reaching development in modern Christian history was the ‘First Great Awakening’ of the 1730s. Such a seismic shift in spirituality etched into history the names of John Wesley, Jonathan Edwards, and George Whitfield, sermons like “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” as well as the theological doctrine of the ‘new birth.’ But this trans-Atlantic groundswell brought with it a tremendous upsurge in musical creativity. Charles Wesley, for instance, “wrote between six thousand and nine thousand hymns and sacred poems,”<sup>13</sup> while countless other songwriters compulsively created under the force of religious intensities. *New songs for new being: ontomusicogenesis*. Similarly, the Jesus Movement within which hordes of young people across America surged toward conservative, eschatologically focused Christianity in the 1960s and 1970s gave rise to “a formidable niche genre known as contemporary Christian music (CCM).”<sup>14</sup> Even on the scale of surging individual churches, such as the black Pentecostal Church of God in Christ (COGIC) in Mississippi described by Booker, under possession by the Holy Spirit “each person sang his own song, telling about his

---

<sup>11</sup> William F. Danaher, “Music and Social Movements” *Sociology Compass* 4, no. 9 (2010): 818.

<sup>12</sup> Rob Rosenthal, “Serving the movement: The role(s) of music” *Popular Music and Society* 25, no. 3-4 (2001): 11-24.

<sup>13</sup> John R. Tyson, *Assist me to Proclaim: The Life and Hymns of Charles Wesley* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2008), viii.

<sup>14</sup> Shawn David Young, “Apocalyptic Music: Reflections on Countercultural Christian Influence” *Volume!* 9, no. 2, (2012): 64.

condition."<sup>15</sup> Heightened intensity was realised as a prolific musical creation.

The Melanesian Great Awakening of the 1970s exemplifies this model of ontomusicogenesis. During this time, a polynucleated eruption of charismatic intensity catalysed the region, particularly the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea. A massive wave of new music expressed this surge in life. A German missionary stationed in the Sepik region during the 1970s stated that "*Sapos bel i nupela, song tu i nupela,*"<sup>16</sup> which we can accurately translate as "where there is new life, there are new songs." The small list of ethnographic snippets provided above, excised from an extensive historical record of religious intensification in Melanesia during the 1970s, which itself is merely the visible part of a momentous, largely undocumented, regional becoming, attests to this ontological axiom.

A few important dimensions of this creative eruption can be tentatively established as principles common to explosions of charismatic-pneumacentric Christianity across the world and throughout history. Most obviously, we should note the sheer mass of new compositions. Over the space of just a few years, religious intensification produced "thousands" of new songs among the Huli of the Papua New Guinea highlands,<sup>17</sup> at least hundreds among their Engan<sup>18</sup> and Telefomin<sup>19</sup> neighbours, and while not accompanied by numerical estimates, reports from communities across Melanesia during this era indicate similarly prolific composition. Religious intensification does not just create, it creates profoundly. Whether in 1730s England, or 1970s Melanesia, communities and individuals under the force of surging religious forces do not simply compose new songs, they compose prolifically – not a stream but a tidal wave.

A second point is the concomitant ease and rapidity with which creative profundity is realised. Composition not only occurs extensively but compulsively. Songs do not gradually emerge from a lengthy creative process but are knocked into shape quickly, spontaneously, and instantaneously. Intensity is movement, excitement, and speed. This kind of being brooks no

<sup>15</sup> Queen Booker, "Congregational Music in a Pentecostal Church" *The Black Perspective in Music* 16, no. 1 (1988): 37.

<sup>16</sup> Peter Jost, *Rivaival Long Is Sepik 1976* (Unpublished Manuscript, 2001): 30.

<sup>17</sup> Pugh-Kitingan, "An ethnomusicological study of the Huli of the Southern Highlands, Papua New Guinea," 291.

<sup>18</sup> Tramulia, *The Story of the Revival among the Enga People 1973-2004*, 29.

<sup>19</sup> Keith Bennett and Lindsay Smith, "A revival movement among the Telefomin Baptist churches" *Religious Movements in Melanesia: A Selection of Case Studies and Reports* ed. Wendy Flannery (Goroka: The Melanesian Institute, 1983), 144.

compromise with time and demands immediate expression. Around Ialibu, in the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea, “Songs are composed at the drop of a hat,”<sup>20</sup> many among the neighbouring Duna possessed “the gift of singing extempore hymns in the services,”<sup>21</sup> and revival music among the Duke of York islanders was a “spontaneous expression of their faith.”<sup>22</sup> A few examples from American religious accelerations exemplify this pattern. Booker tells of how Pentecostal songs were “usually something made up during the week about his or her condition,”<sup>23</sup> Johnson describes how spiritual movements among black Christians in the 19<sup>th</sup> century slave period were marked by “extemporaneously composed songs to emphasize and affirm aspects of sermons,”<sup>24</sup> and Marina and Wilkinson portray the musicality of a Brooklyn Pentecostal as “a spiritual kind of singing – unprepared and unrehearsed...It’s spontaneous, unpredictable, and fluid moving as the Holy Spirit moves.”<sup>25</sup> Religious intensity does not patiently and cautiously manifest in laboriously constructed masterpieces but relentlessly punctures the surface of extended life with on the fly – earworm choruses and melodies.

Finally, and as a way of gathering the threads of the preceding, we can say that a new era of religious and spiritual intensity is heralded, *inter alia*, through the prolific and rapid appearance of a new corpus of musical compositions. As communities heave under surging forces, new songs appear in vast quantity and with astonishing speed. To capture the heightened intensity so central to this process, we might even call this *hyperontomusicogenesis*. In any case, the emphasis must be placed on creativity, on the coming into being of unprecedented musical compositions, styles, and genres, as part of a broader upsurge in religious intensity. For the Huli there emerged during this time *Ngodenaga Iba Gana* or “God’s Songs,” a term which “refers specifically to songs created spontaneously by the indigenous

---

<sup>20</sup> Roger White, “Family Prayer Movement at Imbongu, Ialibu, Southern Highlands” *Religious Movements in Melanesia: A Selection of Case Studies and Reports* ed. Wendy Flannery (Goroka: The Melanesian Institute, 1983), 163.

<sup>21</sup> Giles, “Spiritual Revival,” 1.

<sup>22</sup> Midian, *The Value of Indigenous Music in the Life and Ministry of the Church: The United Church in the Duke of York Islands*, xxxi.

<sup>23</sup> Booker, “Congregational Music in a Pentecostal Church,” 37.

<sup>24</sup> Birgitta J. Johnson, “Back to the Heart of Worship: Praise and Worship in a Los Angeles African-American Megachurch” *Black Music Research Journal* 31, no. 1 (2011): 108.

<sup>25</sup> Peter Marina and Michael Wilkinson, “Pentecostalism as Cultural Resistance: Music and Tongue-Speaking as Collective Response in a Brooklyn Church” *PentecoStudies* 16, no. 2 (2017): 228.

church during the 1973 to 1976 Christian revival.”<sup>26</sup> A new kind of music for a new ontological epoch, this process was repeated across Melanesia during the 1970s and is a feature common to eruptions of charismatic Christian intensity around the world.

### JOY AND HEAT

‘...intensity is the means by which musical art secures the renewed creation of affects’<sup>27</sup>

Eruptions of musicalised religious intensification are powerfully affective. Following Deleuze, Spinoza, and Bergson, we can say that affect is an intrinsically relational, nascent force or intensity that incessantly propels a body, with relative speed or slowness, from one state of capacity to another, located across a spectrum of joy (heightened capacity) to sadness (diminished capacity). As a force or intensity ceaselessly foreshadowing the actualisation of concrete thoughts and actions, affect never possesses a fixed, stable identity but exists in action as a continuous state of active becoming.<sup>28</sup> It is the wellspring of emergent life: the ongoing, dynamic calibration of our body and mind to its surrounding environment. Our passage to greater or lesser power, contraction or dilation of capacity, is totally determined by its affection from other bodies. These affecting bodies are necessarily determined, in turn, by other bodies, so that the Deleuzian ontology of affect amounts to an “infinite concatenation of bodies”<sup>29</sup> contagiously and constantly determining each other, for better or worse. “For the affect is not a personal feeling, nor is it a characteristic; it is the effectuation of a power of the pack that throws the self into upheaval and makes it reel.”<sup>30</sup> The world of bodies within which we exist and that ceaselessly affect and determine us are not solely human but can be any other existent thing, including musical and spiritual.

Understanding *music* affectively is “to understand how the music or sound event creates intensities in the lived experience...to truly understand the properties of the sound event, as a

<sup>26</sup> Pugh-Kitingan, “An ethnomusicological study of the Huli of the Southern Highlands, Papua New Guinea,” 290.

<sup>27</sup> Jean-Godefroy Bidima, “Intensity, Music, and Heterogenesis in Deleuze” *Sounding the Virtual: Gilles Deleuze and the Theory and Philosophy of Music* ed. Brian Hulse and Nick Nesbitt (London: Routledge, 2010), 148.

<sup>28</sup> Brian Massumi, “The Autonomy of Affect” *Cultural Critique* 31 (1995): 88.

<sup>29</sup> Amy Cimini, “Gilles Deleuze and the Musical Spinoza” *Sounding the Virtual: Gilles Deleuze and the Theory and Philosophy of Music* ed. Brian Hulse and Nick Nesbitt (London: Routledge, 2010), 137.

<sup>30</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 240.

vibrational body, which empowers it to interact and affect other bodies...this is precisely because it orients towards the *surface* of the event, the layer which most poignantly affects/wounds the body of the listener."<sup>31</sup> In other words, "contact, which is to say sensation, is primary to everything else. Sensation lies beneath and distinction between thought and feeling, or between science, philosophy, and art."<sup>32</sup> But we do need to go further than simply saying that music is affective because it mobilises intensities within interactive reverberations. Indeed, the whole idea of affect is about becoming, a movement towards greater or reduced powers to act and feel. Through the generation of immediate prepersonal resonances between interacting bodies, music catalyses profound passages between different intensive states. Music can augment us immeasurably before we are able to say how or in what way. Unspeakable joy. Because of its ability to move us contagiously, directly, and powerfully, music is an affective machine *par excellence*. To access and organise the world of becoming intensities is to be musical.

It should come as no surprise to note the centrality of music to the "affective-experiential"<sup>33</sup> modes of Christianity. Religious intensities are articulated most powerfully through music due to its privileged access to the affective ontological substrate. As the poster child of the anthropology of Christianity, Pentecostalism trades in heightened affective intensities, albeit those that are predictable and institutionalised.<sup>34</sup> Adherents are struck by the Holy Spirit, speak in tongues, convulse, have visions, and so on; but these intensities are part of a ritual code that Pentecostals learn to perform through mimetic repetition.<sup>35</sup><sup>36</sup> Planned spontaneity. In any case, as a deeply affective-intensive religiosity, Pentecostalism is crucially articulated through its musical repertoire. In the Aotearoa/New Zealand context, Miller and Strongman<sup>37</sup> note that "the music used in P-C church

---

<sup>31</sup> Srđan Atanasovski, "Consequences of the Affective Turn: Exploring Music Practices from without and within" *Muzikologija* 18 (2015): 71-72.

<sup>32</sup> Brian Hulse, "Thinking Musical Difference: Music Theory as Minor Science" *Sounding the Virtual: Gilles Deleuze and the Theory and Philosophy of Music* ed. Brian Hulse and Nick Nesbitt (London: Routledge, 2010), 31.

<sup>33</sup> Kenneth J. Archer, "Pentecostal Hermeneutics and the Society for Pentecostal Studies: Reading and Hearing in One Spirit and One Accord" *Pneuma* 37 (2013): 322.

<sup>34</sup> B. Meyer, "Mediation and immediacy: sensational forms, semiotic ideologies and the question of the medium" *Social Anthropology* 19, no. 1 (2011): 29.

<sup>35</sup> Meyer, "Mediation and immediacy: sensational forms, semiotic ideologies and the question of the medium," pp. 23-39.

<sup>36</sup> Josh Brahinsky, "Pentecostal Body Logics: Cultivating a Modern Sensorium" *Cultural Anthropology* 27, no. 2 (2012): 215-238.

<sup>37</sup> Mandi M. Miller and Kenneth T. Strongman, "The Emotional Effects of Music on Religious Experience: A Study of the Pentecostal-Charismatic Style of Music and Worship" *Psychology of Music* 30 (2002): 10.

services is a major facilitator of emotional effects on the congregants' religious experiences." Marina and Wilkinson describe how for Afro-Caribbean Pentecostals in New York City, "Music fuels the excitement and intensity of the church service. It is bodily and emotional and embodies the culture of the congregation."<sup>38</sup> On a general level, Yong underscores the "expressive, intense, and participatory nature of Pentecostal singing, dancing, and worshipping."<sup>39</sup>

Movements of religious intensification, or "revivals," can be distinguished from institutionalised Pentecostalism on the basis of their affective economy. These dramatic explosions of intensity are largely, but never totally, spontaneous affective embodiments of metaphysical transformation. Intensive capture of cosmological slippage. While they may be prayed and prepared for, they are not rehearsed, repetitive iterations – not going through the motions but setting things in motion. Elsewhere I have phrased the distinction as wild/domesticated affect. Pentecostalism is religious intensity that has come indoors, having been trained and contained. Wild religious intensification has an internal structure but roams free, ceaselessly forging lateralized circuits and webs of intensity.

While Pentecostalism and religious intensification operate under fundamentally different affective aspects, their musicality exhibits an obvious intensive resemblance. Using the example of the Toronto Blessing, Althouse and Wilkinson discuss how intensified music works to facilitate an affective "'mutual tuning-in,' a form of social interaction that is nonconceptual and precognitive,"<sup>40</sup> though following Zerilli<sup>41</sup> we should be careful not to overstate the absence of conceptuality to our corporeal being-in-the-world. Such calibrations of embodied intensity are evident within the Melanesian movements of the 1970s. Webb describes the singing of Oro Christians, derived directly from the 1970s movement, as "a harmonious cloud of contained

---

<sup>38</sup> Marina and Wilkinson, "Pentecostalism as Cultural Resistance: Music and Tongue-Speaking as Collective Response in a Brooklyn Church," 226.

<sup>39</sup> Amos Yong, "Conclusion: Improvisation, Indigenization, and Inspiration: Theological Reflections on the Sound and Spirit of Global Renewal" *The Spirit of Praise: Music and Worship in Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity* ed. Monique Ingalls and Amos Yong (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2015), 281.

<sup>40</sup> Peter Althouse and Michael Wilkinson, "Musical Bodies in the Charismatic Renewal: The Case of Catch the Fire and Soaking Prayer" *The Spirit of Praise: Music and Worship in Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity* ed. Monique Ingalls and Amos Yong (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2015), 34.

<sup>41</sup> Linda M. G. Zerilli, "The Turn to Affect and the Problem of Judgment" *New Literary History* 46 (2015): 261-286.

exuberance.”<sup>42</sup> Throughout surging United Church congregations on the Gazelle Peninsula, East New Britain, Namunu described “everyone unanimously joining in the singing of the favourite verses. The expression of joy can be marked by the tone of the voice.”<sup>43</sup> Griffiths similarly underscores how the singing of Māori evangelist John Pipi within one of the numerous religious intensifications that swept Malaita, Solomon Islands, in 1970, precipitated deep sorrow and repentance for abiding sin that dramatically metamorphosed into overwhelming, profuse joy. The Holy Spirit, a melody, a singer, thousands of spiritually hungry individuals. Bodies in an assemblage, reverberating with each other, catalysing profound passages in states of intensive capacity.<sup>44</sup>

Beyond its obviously affective quality, the musicality of religious intensification in Melanesia contains particular elements of broader theoretical significance. The eruption of contagious charismatic intensity is NOISY. Excited bodies produce more movement and sound: amplified affect. A groundswell in affective intensity is captured in music that is not simply enthusiastic, energetic, or passionate, but which sonically overflows, manifesting the abundant and rapid ontological movement that underpins its emergence. A momentous shift in the basic parameters of life does not occur quietly. Violent musical earthquakes; sonic tectonics. Handman’s work among the Guhu-Samane of Morobe Province describes the music that arose during a rapid acceleration in worship that occurred in 1977 as “extremely noisy,” and also that “people were shouting prayers and ‘amen’ at an incredible volume.”<sup>45</sup> Among the Enga people living in the Baiyer River area of the Papua New Guinea highlands, Dawia reports that during the singing within a 1978 revival “at times the noise was deafening. During this time Pastor Yukuwa who was in charge of proceedings made no attempt to quieten the people down.”<sup>46</sup> The aurality of religious intensification is not obedient, pliant, and guided carefully down well-worn affective tracks, but surges rambunctiously,

<sup>42</sup> Webb, “Every Creative Aspect Breaking Out! Pentecostal-Charismatic Worship, Oro Gospel Music, and a Millennialist Aesthetic in Papua New Guinea,” 79.

<sup>43</sup> Simon Namunu, “Charismatic Renewal on the Gazelle Peninsula” *Religious Movements in Melanesia Today* (2) ed. Wendy Flannery (Goroka: The Melanesian Institute, 1983), 62-63.

<sup>44</sup> Alison Griffiths, *Fire in the Islands! The Acts of the Holy Spirit in the Solomons* (Wheaton, IL: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1977), 173.

<sup>45</sup> Courtney Handman, *Critical Christianity: Translation and Denominational Conflict in Papua New Guinea* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2015), 230.

<sup>46</sup> Alexander Dawia, “A Revival Convention, Lumusa Baptist Church, Baiyer River” *Religious Movements in Melanesia: A Selection of Case Studies and Reports* ed. Wendy Flannery (Goroka: The Melanesian Institute, 1983), 123.

compulsively searching out higher and louder sonic peaks and plateaus.

Radically intensified musical affect is intensely corporeal. Spiritually catalysed musical eruptions don't just bring people together, they compel violent, stifling, exhausting collisions. Performance is brutal, incendiary, depleting. Emerging out of their 1977 'revival', Urapmin *spirit diskō* famously described by Robbins in *Becoming Sinners* (2004) entail

nighttime possession dances of great energy and near-violence that go on for hours in darkened churches...Once several people become possessed, bodies fly about wildly, and people get bumped and banged. With the dancers pounding and the possessed stomping and flailing, large slats of the church's bark floor break...The feeling of intense energy that pervades the dance...a sense of violence and danger pervades the ecstasy of the rite.<sup>47</sup>

Near Ialibu, in the highlands of Papua New Guinea, in 1981, while singing "Children between the ages of 7 and 15 and many older women and some men would smile and be very happy and weave [sic] their hands and arms over their heads. The tempo would increase until it was almost a frenzy!"<sup>48</sup> During the spread of religious intensity around the Lake Kutubu area in 1974, "People began to shake in the all night singing, the constancy of which made people so tired that husbands or wives went home and left their spouses in the company of others, clean contrary to tribal custom."<sup>49</sup> Exhausting and wild, overflowing sonic intensity is also hot to the touch. During their performances, the Urapmin felt "extremely hot"<sup>50</sup> for instance. But affective heat may not just be corporeal, but also ontological. As molecular bodies relentlessly and contagiously careen into each other within musical performances, the temperature of being is raised. Thus, Handman speaks of traditional ritual heat interpolated into revivalist musical performance among the Guhu-Samane.<sup>51</sup> Further afield in Haiti, Butler similarly describes how songs "become most powerful when they "heat up" ("chofe") the space. Heating up occurs as worshippers use joyously energetic

---

<sup>47</sup> Robbins, *Becoming Sinners: Christianity and Moral Torment in a Papua New Guinea Society*, 281-285.

<sup>48</sup> White, "Family Prayer Movement at Imbongu, Ialibu, Southern Highlands," 159.

<sup>49</sup> Prince and Prince, *No Fading Vision: The First 50 Years of A.P.C.M.*, 196.

<sup>50</sup> Robbins, *Becoming Sinners: Christianity and Moral Torment in a Papua New Guinea Society*, 284.

<sup>51</sup> Handman, *Critical Christianity: Translation and Denominational Conflict in Papua New Guinea*, 234.

worship to invite the Holy Spirit into their midst.”<sup>52</sup> Not an individual ‘strangely warmed heart’ but a region of communities whose outer and inner dimensions are burning to the sound of music. Ontological pyrotechnics.

#### HUMAN NO MORE: MUSICAL TRANSONTOLOGY

The profound affective movements that occur within religiously intensified music dislodge the coordinates of the body and trace out emergent webs of non-human power. Human no more, religiously intensified individuals assume manifold existential aspects. The reconfiguration of human ontology by forces of intensity is a staple feature of many religious systems. Deleuze and Guattari maintain that in many indigenous societies,

their semiotic is nonsignifying, nonsubjective, essentially collective, polyvocal, and corporeal, playing on very diverse forms and substances. This polyvocality operates through bodies, their volumes, their internal cavities, their variable exterior connections and coordinates (territorialities)...becomings-animal involve an animal spirit...that takes possession of the body's interior, enters its cavities, and fills its volumes instead of making a face for it.<sup>53</sup>

Religious intensity conduces ontological metamorphosis as one modality of life supplants another. Bodies transmit different essences as the intensive interior is excavated and refilled with fresh, often unforeseen capacities. In Deleuzian parlance, Viveiros de Castro’s<sup>54</sup> discussion of pan-Amazonian shamanism and cosmology underscores a ‘chiastic distribution of identity and difference’ whereby humans, animal spirits, and shamans become ontologically reversible, shifting between different planes of immanence according to ritual and cosmological contexts. We might label such fluidity of being as *transontological*.

Music has a special affinity with this kind of ontological gymnastics. As Kielian-Gilbert argues, “music offers a singular milieu for actualizing and thinking about an ontology of change, effects of becoming, and their promise for life....Encountering musical difference as expressive, productive, and affirmative in

<sup>52</sup> Melvin L. Butler, “The Weapons of Our Warfare: Music, Positionality, and Transcendence Among Haitian Pentecostals” *Caribbean Studies* 36, no. 2 (2008): 39.

<sup>53</sup> Gilles and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 175-176.

<sup>54</sup> Edward Viveiros de Castro, “The Crystal Forest: Notes on the Ontology of Amazonian Spirits” *Inner Asia* 9 (2007): 155.

temporally and metamorphically changing relational dynamics of subject, frame and other(s) actualizes the new and unforeseen.”<sup>55</sup> Within religious contexts, heightened musical intensity produces transontological movement by facilitating the body’s population with spiritual entities, thereby reconstituting its essence and perspective. Spiritual infilling; becoming-spirit. In her article espousing a “theology of sound,” Hagedorn describes the central role played by music within Cuban Santeria: “The *batá* drums, with their consecrated godhead inside, call the *orichas* [deities] in this sacred tongue and persuade them to come to earth.” She continues that a song or rhythm is deemed efficacious if it “has already invoked a deity, or *oricha*, to possess the body of a religious adherent, or seems about to accomplish such a feat.”<sup>56</sup> Feld’s lauded monograph on Kaluli (Papua New Guinea) aesthetics, *Sound and Sentiment* (1982), also describes musically catalysed transversals. As he states, “becoming a bird” is the foundational metaphorical base for Kaluli:

“expressive modalities of weeping, poetics, and song. Birds are mediators because they are both natural beings and *ane mama*, the ‘gone reflections’ of Kaluli who have left the visible world upon death and reappeared *øbe mise* ‘in the form of birds.’ Sound is the behaviour of birds that is both indicative of their natural lives and actions and expressive of their feelings as *ane mama* to those who are living.”<sup>57</sup>

The central objective of Kaluli aesthetics is the reproduction of bird sound-*qua*-ancestral presence. Becoming a bird through song is to talk from the dead.

The established propensity of humans to use intense musical forms to explode bodily coordinates and diagonally traverse planes of immanence is vividly exemplified within contexts of Christian religious intensification. Musically produced transontological movement is first and foremost an affection of the Holy Spirit. It is this intensive force that usurps existential perspective, displacing and inhabiting the body’s interior. The wilful dispossession and abandonment of one’s modal essence: not so much *spiritual inspiration*, but *becoming-spirit*. After all, the pillars of human agency – speech, bodily control, cogency, etc. –

---

<sup>55</sup> Marianne Kielian-Gilbert, “Music and the Difference in Becoming” In *Sounding the Virtual: Gilles Deleuze and the Theory and Philosophy of Music* eds. Brian Hulse and Nick Nesbitt (London: Routledge, 2010), 200.

<sup>56</sup> Katherine J. Hagedorn, “Toward a Theology of Sound: Drum talk, oricha worship, and other ecstatic phenomena” *Harvard Divinity Bulletin* 34, no. 2 (2006): 2.

<sup>57</sup> Steven Feld, *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 218.

are jettisoned as the unruly, surging spirit invades and dominates internal space, giving rise to an explosion of otherworldly manifestations. As Butler states, Haitian Pentecostals in the midst of intense musical performance “sing and dance their way across a boundary between earthly and spiritual realms, transcending the self to bring mind and body in contact with the Holy Spirit.”<sup>58</sup> Similarly, Althouse and Wilkinson describe how musical processes within charismatic “renewal meetings,” events specifically designed to heighten religious intensity, “produce an atmosphere of emotional arousal and dissociative states.”<sup>59</sup> In her work on two American evangelical conferences with clear revivalist emphases, Ingalls begins to trace such transversals among her participants. They described how “worship times were ‘a taste of heaven’” and that singing was “the ‘sound of heaven.’”<sup>60</sup> Also in the American context, Marina and Wilkinson maintain that music “converts profane time and space into sacred time and space inviting the supernatural world into the church building.”<sup>61</sup> Musicalised intensity prizes open the ontological canopy, allowing a deluge of spiritual immanence to overwhelm humanity.

The musical propulsion of transontological movement is well evidenced in reports of the Melanesian Great Awakening. The Urapmin *spirit diskō*, which emerged during their 1977 revival, are specifically designed to explode the body’s parameters and flood its interior. As described by Robbins

So central is possession to the *Spirit diskō* that if it is not achieved in a reasonable time, those gathered halt the ritual and declare its performance a failure...during possession, the Holy Spirit wrestles with the sins in one’s body and ultimately “throws them out.”<sup>62</sup>

Being-human gives way to becoming-spirit as the body’s excavated volumes teem and convulse with performative intensity. Jan Pasterkamp, a Dutch Pentecostal missionary centrally involved in the eruption of charismatic revivalism on

---

<sup>58</sup> Butler, “The Weapons of Our Warfare: Music, Positionality, and Transcendence Among Haitian Pentecostals,” 25.

<sup>59</sup> Althouse and Wilkinson, “Musical Bodies in the Charismatic Renewal: The Case of Catch the Fire and Soaking Prayer,” 37.

<sup>60</sup> Monique Ingalls, “Singing Heaven Down to Earth: Spiritual Journeys, Eschatological Sounds, and Community Formation in Evangelical Conference Worship” *Ethnomusicology* 55, no. 2 (2011): 255-279.

<sup>61</sup> Marina and Wilkinson, “Pentecostalism as Cultural Resistance: Music and Tongue-Speaking as Collective Response in a Brooklyn Church,” 223.

<sup>62</sup> Robbins, *Becoming Sinners: Christianity and Moral Torment in a Papua New Guinea Society*, 282.

Malaita, Solomon Islands, in 1970, also reports a dramatic musical possession:

After we prayed for a woman she started to sing in the Spirit while she raised her hands. The language and melody were beautiful. She was totally lost in the Spirit. It was tremendous to see and to hear. Later she was asked if she knew what happened to her. She did not know, except, that when she was praying she had seen a vision, in which she saw the Lord Jesus, sitting on the throne and angels singing a beautiful song to worship Him! In the vision she had joined the angels and sang that song!<sup>63</sup>

Not just affected or inspired by the Holy Spirit, but inhabited and permeated by it. For the duration of her ecstasy, this lady's interior was invaded and utilised by the Holy Spirit and its angels, making her sing and speak not as a different kind of human but as a different kind of being altogether: 'Totally lost.' Not a human singing in the key of spirit but a spirit singing in the key of human. This radical transontological movement through musicalised intensity is also evinced through her partial ignorance of what had happened. 'She did not know.' This isn't amnesia – forgetting something that happened to her. After all, how can one remember an experience that belonged to *somebody else*? 'She did not know' because it was not her. Rather, her memories were simply a trace, impression, or image left upon her intensive core by the moving spirit. A becoming-spirit entails an eventual return to being human, but this ontological loop retains its secrets.

Religiously intense becomings may entail crossings into animality. Animal crossings. Surreal visions and dreams of becoming-animal feature within several accounts of religious intensification in Melanesia during the 1970s. In the thrall of ecstatic trance, one student at the Duranmin Bible College in 1977 described how he "saw a 'Kakaruk Man' (a man with a rooster's head) piloting a plane over Duranmin."<sup>64</sup> Among the Enga, during 1973, a pastor's wife had an elaborate prophetic dream also about a becoming-bird:

At this point, the man changed and changed into a dove or large bird and sat on the table...Two women...stood up and raced each other to catch hold of the bird...The two women left off and the bird looked severely at me and spoke to me and said "SEIKO, SEIKO." I spoke to the

---

<sup>63</sup> Jan Pasterkamp, Unpublished Newsletter (1970): 2.

<sup>64</sup> Bennett and Smith, "A revival movement among the Telefomin Baptist churches," 130.

bird and said, "I don't understand what you are saying."<sup>65</sup>

The Holy Spirit may thus not only overwrite and colonise religiously intense bodies but may compel them to seek out planes of immanence within which the human and animal intermingle. Importantly for our purposes here, this emergent animality is manifest within musical performance. One particular example stands out from the intensification of Melanesian Christianity in the 1970s, again from the Enga area of the Papua New Guinea Highlands. Dawia explains how:

At some points in the singing some of the women would cry out in a peculiar fashion much like dogs yapping. Others would laugh, and yet others stood up and gyrated or flung their arms about in a windmill fashion in time with the singing. The yapping noise and laughing was accompanied by violent jerkings of the head.<sup>66</sup>

Overwhelmed by affective intensity, bodies decompose and then recompose as new assemblages. But what should conduce not only an intense becoming-animal, but also a specifically *canine* metamorphosis into a singing dog-woman? Dogs possess a powerful sense of smell. They are also skilled hunters. Within instances of religious intensification, the identification and resolution of sin is paramount. To enter the Kingdom, one must not be carrying any moral overburden. *Becoming-canine is to sniff out sin.* Such an interpretation is shared by other observers of the Enga upheavals, who noted similar articulations of animalised fault finding.<sup>67</sup> This form of transontology moves beyond human abilities of discernment and appropriates the dog's powerful olfactory ability to expose hidden human folly. Intensification, religiously motivated and musically articulated, precipitates such hybridised becomings, crossings, and reconfigurations.

The musicality of religious intensification also propels crossings into dream worlds. It is in this fantastical realm, and not in the cold light of quotidian life, that composed songs exist, waiting to be retrieved. The dreamer/the visionary/the prophet enters an otherworldly reliquary and returns back to human life with new music brimming with intensity. In this context we should speak not of musical composition but *song capture*. Composition is a thoroughly human process; the rapid or gradual assembly of

---

<sup>65</sup> Tramulia, *The Story of the Revival among the Enga People 1973-2004*, 7.

<sup>66</sup> Dawia, "A Revival Convention, Lumusa Baptist Church, Baiyer River," 123.

<sup>67</sup> Geoff Cramb and Mapusiya Kolo, 1983. "Revival among W. Highlands/Enga Baptists" In *Religious Movements in Melanesia Today 2* (Goroka: The Melanesian Institute, 1983), 100-101.

sound molecules into a coherent musical form. Dream-songs, to the contrary, do not participate in worldly labour. They are not crafted but caught on dream-flights. Ecstasy and intensity place the surging individual on an ontological plateau where their own intentionality and creativity dissolves; songs are not fashioned but appear, are given, or come to those who can see. In 1970s Melanesia, Osborne reported how "Many of the best new songs were given to women or girls in dreams and visions."<sup>68</sup> At Imbongu, in the Southern Highlands Province, White states that during widespread charismatic upheavals, "Most songs we learned came from people's dreams. We would teach each other the songs we learned in our dreams."<sup>69</sup> Robbins's reports of Urapmin revival songs similarly "came to people, usually in dreams and visions."<sup>70</sup> Songs obtained from dream-crossings are also inextricably related to the production of embodied intensity. As Kale observed of the 1970s Enga revival, dream-songs were "sung repeatedly until...trembling was induced."<sup>71</sup> We can also note that the intermixture of song, dream, affective intensity, and transontology is an established Melanesian propensity. In striking parallel to the processes just described, the Kaluli séances described by Feld require that "The medium leaves his body and journeys into the invisible. Throughout the course of the evening, different spirits...come up through his mouth, sing *gisalo*, and talk with the audience...mediums theoretically claim no prior knowledge of the songs they sing" and that such spiritually acquired music "provoked tears and sing weeping."<sup>72</sup> Groundless music, floating in the ether, plucked and deployed for affective upheaval.

## SONIC NOMADOLOGY

"Since any given genre or style consists to a significant degree of musical and technological parts arising elsewhere, it is reasonable to believe that vagrancy, migration, importation, appropriation and the modular alchemies they cluster into are essential conditions of music."<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>68</sup> Ken Osborne, *Winds of Change in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea* (Newcastle: Jennings Print Group, 2016), 47.

<sup>69</sup> White, "Family Prayer Movement at Imbongu, Ialibu, Southern Highlands," 157.

<sup>70</sup> Robbins, *Becoming Sinners: Christianity and Moral Torment in a Papua New Guinea Society*, 284.

<sup>71</sup> Joan Kale, "The religious movement among the Kyaka Enga" In *New Religious Movements in Melanesia* eds. Carl Loeliger and Garry Trompf (Suva: University of the South Pacific and University of Papua New Guinea, 1985), 68.

<sup>72</sup> Feld, *Sound and Sentiment: Birds, Weeping, Poetics, and Song in Kaluli Expression*, 182.

<sup>73</sup> Hulse, "Thinking Musical Difference: Music Theory as Minor Science," 45.

The heterogeneous elements that comprise musical or performative assemblages are not held to each other through an intrinsic relationship but are free to decompose, flow, and recombine. The sudden emergence of new, powerful intensities compels existing cultural forms to literally break apart and regather as a new extensive shell for these immanent forces. Existing musical modes cannot accommodate new intensive movements. The existing channels are unable to carry the massive burden. *Affective flooding*. The overwhelming burst of energy running through a community seeks out, indeed necessitates, the creation of new forms to inhabit. Performative assemblages transform from solid blocks to floating molecules that then combine in unexpected mixtures to express a new orientation to life. *Heterogenesis*. The only logic that determines their integration is that they are able to operate in the appropriate intensive key. In such a pressing scenario, calculation, reflection, and deliberation are tortuously slow. Intensity is rapid or quickening movement and it is approached only through dynamic action, like trying to saddle a runaway horse. Stopping to think and represent the situation ultimately arrests flow and the magic escapes. ‘Whatever works’ is the mantra of the intensifying body. Dueck rightly honours the spirit of the *bricoleur* when he states that “most characteristic musical activities are acts not of ‘invention’, but of historically situated cobbling together, of fabrication from the musical materials we have at hand in a particular place and time.”<sup>74</sup> But to do justice to the musicality of religious intensification, we must add that the gathering and combination of materials operates to rapidly envelop a new affective-intensive plateau; and also that the music’s emergent structure depends fully upon acts of decomposition.

Charismatic Christians are not the rupturists that the Anthropology of Christianity first made them out to be. Probably the most vehement declamation of the rupturist position is Casanova’s statement that “Pentecostals are, for instance, everywhere leading an unabashed and uncompromising onslaught against their local cultures.”<sup>75</sup> Robbins would then go on to build up a new subdiscipline following this same logic, an enterprise made all the more worthwhile since it steers us away

---

<sup>74</sup> Jonathan Dueck, “Making Borrowed Songs: Mennonite Hymns, Appropriation and Media.” In *Christian Congregational Music: Performance, Identity and Experience*, eds. Monique Ingalls, Carolyn Landau, and Tom Wagner (London: Routledge, 2013), 85.

<sup>75</sup> Jose Casanova, “Religion, the new millennium, and globalization” *Sociology of Religion* 62, no. 4 (2001): 437.

from the “perils of continuity thinking.”<sup>76</sup> But these views contain two interrelated errors. Firstly, they reify an ideology of world breaking; ‘making a complete break with the past’ is tantamount to really making a complete break with the past. Secondly, rupture is equated with change; absolute discontinuity is the only modality of charismatic religious transformation.

Such a model is at odds with an understanding of music as an emergent heterogeneous multiplicity. The musicality of religious intensification is not formed through the dialectic of monolithic wholes but emerges from the innovative synthesis of a plurality of influences. Not static molar blocks but dynamic molecular flows. The recognition of ostensibly ‘traditional’ elements in this mix does not place us on the side of continuity. Quite the opposite. To see traces of tradition in the effusion of new religious music indicates acts of intensive transversal, not the complication of a divide erected between Christianity and culture. As Campbell states, all creative innovation “is said to involve processes of deterritorialization in which concepts break down and are uprooted from their context only to reassemble with other heterogeneous elements to form new assemblages, perhaps on a different plane altogether.”<sup>77</sup> The melodies, instruments, lyrics, adornment, and dances that comprise ‘traditional’ performance are not imprisoned by analytic designation but are so many elements free to detach, roam, and recombine. Their cohesion as a ‘style’ only reflects the relative stability of the intensive plateau (territory) they articulate.

The music of intense Christianity across the world shows the deterritorialization of ‘tradition’ with striking clarity. Kalu describes how in the midst of renewal, African Pentecostal musicians “dug deep into indigenous music and appropriated both the lyric and the rhythm,”<sup>78</sup> and thereby “reconstructed indigenous music for Christian use within a decade.”<sup>79</sup> Navajo revivalists studied by Marshall utilise dimensions of their traditional expressive culture within Christian song, exemplifying what she calls “resonant rupture,” where “although the aesthetics of the form remain the same, the meanings have changed.”<sup>80</sup> Rommen’s work on the musicality of spirit-filled

---

<sup>76</sup> Joel Robbins, “On the paradoxes of global Pentecostalism and the perils of continuity thinking,” *Religion* 33 (2003): 222.

<sup>77</sup> Edward Campbell, *Music after Deleuze* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 39.

<sup>78</sup> Ogbu U. Kalu, “Holy PraiseCo: Negotiating Sacred and Popular Music and Dance in African Pentecostalism,” *Pneuma* 32 (2010): 36.

<sup>79</sup> Kalu, “Holy PraiseCo: Negotiating Sacred and Popular Music and Dance in African Pentecostalism,” 37.

<sup>80</sup> Kimberly Marshall, “‘Soaking Songs’ Versus ‘Medicine Man Chant’: Musical Resonance Among Diné Oodlani (Navajo Believers)” In *The Spirit of Praise: Music and*

Christians across several Caribbean and American contexts demonstrates a similar transformation, whereby “Reggae as sound is adopted and adapted with relative ease.”<sup>81</sup> No wholesale acrimony between tradition and culture, only a pragmatic redefinition of existing elements to fit new intensive demands. A process of cultural decomposition and reconstruction “where the past returns to infuse and inflect the present, where the past renews itself in the present, transforming both.”<sup>82</sup>

Religious intensification across Melanesia in the 1970s bears witness to the deterritorialization of ‘traditional’ musical forms and their reterritorialization upon new Christian plateaus of intensity. Even Robbins, the prophet of rupture himself, observes how exuberant Urapmin revival songs “borrow their melodies from traditional women’s songs sung at drum dances (*wat dalamin*).”<sup>83</sup> Not far away in Enga Province, Tramulia<sup>84</sup> explains how the prolific eruption of new music during the early 1970s leaned heavily upon intensively recoding five core traditional song patterns. Among the Guhu-Samane of Morobe Province, religious intensification “put drums into the hands of adult women,”<sup>85</sup> a facet of intensification also in Mt. Hagen.<sup>86</sup> As communities surge with dramatic accelerations of intensive force, the constituent elements of traditional performative styles decompose, flow, migrate, and regather within unprecedented configurations. The prolonged excitement, motion, and joy precipitated by the Holy Spirit’s sudden saturation of life demands the *immediate* creation of a musically expressive face. Urgently furnishing a sonic dwelling for the surging force, elements of existing, sometimes dormant, local styles are quickly recoded to play in a new intensive and metaphysical key.

But let us not lose sight of the key fact that religious intensification breeds *heterogeneous* multiplicities. While we have shown the mobile capacities of traditional performative elements to freely regroup and regather on new intensive planes, they do

---

*Worship in Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity* eds. Monique Ingalls and Amos Yong (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2015), 158-159.

<sup>81</sup> Timothy Rommen, “Protestant vibrations? Reggae, Rastafari, and conscious Evangelicals” *Popular Music* 25, no. 2 (2006): 259.

<sup>82</sup> Hulse, “Thinking Musical Difference: Music Theory as Minor Science,” 39.

<sup>83</sup> Robbins, *Becoming Sinners: Christianity and Moral Torment in a Papua New Guinea Society*, 284.

<sup>84</sup> Tramulia, *The Story of the Revival among the Enga People 1973-2004*, 29-30.

<sup>85</sup> Handman, *Critical Christianity: Translation and Denominational Conflict in Papua New Guinea*, 238.

<sup>86</sup> Guido Schwarz, “The Catholic Fellowship in the Mt Hagen Area” In *Religious Movements in Melanesia Today* (2), ed. Wendy Flannery (Goroka: The Melanesian Institute, 1983), 75.

not do so as a unitary sonic block. Intensification engenders the multiplication of difference, not the consolidation and establishment of stable entities. The music that wraps around and expresses a tremendous upsurge in spiritual intensity within a community will not draw upon one, but rather all available sources in its becoming. It is a diversified force welling from the depths, a plurality arriving at the surface, not a practice already constituted as a repeatable object. We should not think of musicalised intensity as emerging from a carefully orchestrated synthesis of *this and that*, but rather an urgent scramble to connect *this to this to this*, followed to the maximum extent. The rebranding of tradition is not a dominant motif within this mosaic, but rather only one important thread in a broader process of detachment and recoding.

One important current found within heterogeneous musicalities is contemporary popular music, whether country, rock, funk, hip hop, and so on. The use of these idioms within Christian worship is quite well documented, for example in Netherlands,<sup>87</sup> Brazil,<sup>88</sup> and with the “praise and worship” music associated with globalised megachurches like Hillsong.<sup>89</sup><sup>90</sup> While these examples highlight the importance of popular music styles within Christian worship, it is vital that we go further to recognise that music produced under conditions of intensification always tends toward a heterogeneous aspect. Stating that Christian worship repurposes popular or traditional music in effect returns us to a dualistic reification of analytic categories. We must instead seek out the novel pluralistic mixes that issue from underlying multiplicity. As Dueck states, “On their long diasporic journeys, Mennonite groups have borrowed and repurposed *many* musics.”<sup>91</sup> The elements that comprise the musicalised extension of heightened intensity rapidly migrate from diverse homelands to their new territory. The gathered molecules are not an army march under order, but a nomadic pack with a common vision –

---

<sup>87</sup> Miranda Klaver, “Worship Music as Aesthetic Domain of Meaning and Bonding: The Glocal Context of a Dutch Pentecostal Church” In *The Spirit of Praise: Music and Worship in Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity* eds. Monique Ingalls and Amos Yong (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2015), 109.

<sup>88</sup> Jaci Maraschin and Frederico Pieper Pires, “The Lord’s Song in the Brazilian Land” *Studies in World Christianity* 12, no. 2 (2006): 96.

<sup>89</sup> Tom Wagner, “Branding, Music, and Religion: Standardization and Adaptation in the Experience of the ‘Hillsong Sound’” In *Religions as Brands: New Perspectives on the Marketization of Religion and Spirituality* eds. Jean-Claude Usunier and Jörg Stolz (Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), 64.

<sup>90</sup> Monique Ingalls, “Introduction: Interconnection, Interface, and Identification in Pentecostal-Charismatic Music and Worship” In *The Spirit of Praise: Music and Worship in Global Pentecostal-Charismatic Christianity* eds. Monique Ingalls and Amos Yong (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2015), 6.

<sup>91</sup> Dueck, “Making Borrowed Songs: Mennonite Hymns, Appropriation and Media,” 86. my emphasis.

less itinerary and more itinerant. Examples from 1970s Melanesia illuminate these purer mixtures. From the Sepik region, a missionary eyewitness to unfolding eruptions across the area remarked on emergent musicality: "Some lyrics were in Tok Pisin, some were in local language. Some of the music resembled traditional performances, and some mixed with new music."<sup>92</sup> The revival songs of the Guhu-Samane of Morobe Province expressed a similarly complex synthesis:

The melodies are either 'revival' tunes, adaptations of popular Papua New Guinean guitar songs, or traditional melodies, nearly always with instrumental accompaniment. The songs are sung in *tok ples*, Pidgin or, occasionally, English, or with an alternation of these languages in the repetition of a particular song.<sup>93</sup>

Or consider Gillespie's ethnomusicological research among the highlands Duna, revealing a simultaneous "cross-fertilisation between Christian and stringband/secular musical forms" as well as "a combination of Duna and Tok Pisin languages to present their message."<sup>94</sup> But perhaps the clearest example of sonic nomadology comes from the neighbouring Huli, whose enormous corpus of revival songs exhibit an abundance of recoded heterogeneity. As reported by Pugh-Kittingan, a pervasive pentatonic melody was

undoubtedly derived from a non-Huli source, although the Huli claim that they invented it as they created the thousands of verses sung during the revival. Joan Rule has heard the same tune sung as a quiet benediction at the end of services amongst the Foe E.C.P, at Lake Kutubu, from where the revival spread into the Huli area, and thinks it may have been unconsciously acculturated from a popular coastal melody. This opinion is shared by Ken Macnaughtan, who believes it has developed from several sources particularly the Pan-Pacific string band music heard over the radio. Unlike the quiet, reflective Foe benediction, this melody is used as a basis for most of the noisy, joyous Huli Christian songs.<sup>95</sup>

---

<sup>92</sup> Jost, *Rivaival Long Is Sepik* 1976, 30.

<sup>93</sup> Wendy Flannery, "Bilip Grup" In *Religious Movements in Melanesia Today* (2) ed. Wendy Flannery (Goroka: The Melanesian Institute, 1983), 173.

<sup>94</sup> Kirsty Gillespie, *Steep Slopes: Music and Change in the Highlands of Papua New Guinea* (Canberra: ANU E-Press, 2010), 68; 73.

<sup>95</sup> Pugh-Kittingan, "An ethnomusicological study of the Huli of the Southern Highlands, Papua New Guinea," 291.

During the revival, the Huli utilized several melodies for their verses. One of these was the Indian song "I have decided to follow Jesus" which is popular amongst student fellowships on campuses throughout the world.<sup>96</sup>

Musicalised intensity exhibits a plurality of influences indivisibly united around an emerging common articulation – a qualitative multiplicity. We must also underscore not only the deep heterogeneity, but also the broad trajectories of these elements. Nomadology is not only a metaphor for recoded performativity, but a description of geographic wanderings. Sonic molecules from the local, the regional, and the global coalesce and commingle upon an intensive plane laid out by the surging Holy Spirit. Floating melodic elements from neighbouring ethnic groups, wider cultural regions, and even transnational Christian songs, are seized upon to musicalise an urgent intensive becoming. Unfolding eruptions of religious intensification, much more than institutionalised modes of charismatic Christianity, allow us to immediately and clearly see the cultural process through which diverse performative materials migrate to new intensive territories. Heterogeneity in the making. Or rather *heterogeneity repeating*. Multiplicities disintegrate into components that leave home to settle in new qualitative mixtures. The combination of elements waxes and wanes under the pulsing of intensive force.

Describing the musical dimensions of religious intensification thus becomes, first of all, an exercise in multiplying connections and elements across cultural and spatial dimensions. But, more importantly, there needs to be a strong emphasis placed upon the transversals and diagonals produced by intensive agglomeration. That intensified musics are composed of materials from diverse origins and qualities is true, but not an especially original insight. The point is to appreciate how the diverse sonic molecules comprising this qualitative multiplicity have been detached from a former assemblage, traversed physical and cultural space, and then spontaneously recombined to musicalise a new intensified ontology centred upon the radical immanence of the Holy Spirit. Attesting to the ability of music to not capture but embody emergent intensities, Prieto maintains that "Music is constantly creating new planes of consistency, whose primary value is in the way they cut across existing boundaries, breaking down barriers between different levels of thought and establishing new and unforeseen connections."<sup>97</sup> Religious intensification turns stable

---

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 300.

<sup>97</sup> Eric Prieto, "Deleuze, Music, and Modernist Mimesis" In *Essays on music and the spoken word and on surveying the field* eds. Suzanne M. Lodato and David Francis Urrows (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), 13.

musical populations (genres, styles) into innumerable nomads who must metaphysically transform to reach their destination. To operate in a new intensive territory, the musical nomad does not require a new face, but rather *becomes a new face* by speaking in tongues with their fellow travellers.

## HIGHER GROUND

"The refrain may assume other functions, amorous, professional or social, liturgical or cosmic: it always carries earth with it; it has a land (sometimes a spiritual land) as its concomitant; it has an essential relation to a Natal, a Native."<sup>98</sup>

The emergent intensified ontology that propels musical decomposition and recomposition traces out metaphysical territories. Surging intensities inhabiting reassembled performative materials bear territorial motifs that loom over and express these forces. The radical immanence articulated through song always has a name and it always opens out on to broader cosmic terrain. What, then, is the metaphysical hallmark of musicalised religious intensity? Where does the current of intensive traversal ultimately lead? What is the name of the intensive plateau laid out by the Holy Spirit upon which detached sonic molecules congregate? Heaven. Beyond life.

"Music doesn't awaken a death instinct, that isn't why it gives us a taste for death; it confronts death, stares it in the face."<sup>99</sup> The joyous music of intensified Christianity aims to catapult believers across the mortal threshold to a paradisiacal *afterlife*. Recoded musical nomads speed across the surface of radical immanence towards the *eschaton*. Ecstatic Christian music ceaselessly pursues the end of time and its soteriological culmination. It is to the actualisation of this divine realm and moment that the musicality of religious intensification always tends. The prodigious wave of new songs that accompany charismatic eruption triumphantly celebrate the return of Jesus and excitedly position their performers as natives of the coming kingdom of God. Paeans of *parousia*. Rapture music.

Musicalised immersion into an imminent apocalypse is a feature of charismatic Christianity across a wide range of contexts. In her study of evangelical youth conferences in the United States, Ingalls speaks of the "eschatological discourse" embedded within worship, entailing "a conversation about heaven or the end of time" and an experientially rich "foretaste of worship with the

<sup>98</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 312.

<sup>99</sup> Ian Buchanan, "Introduction: Deleuze and Music" In *Deleuze and Music* eds. Ian Buchanan and Marcel Swiboda (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), 15.

heavenly community.”<sup>100</sup> Klaver’s work on a Dutch revivalist church similarly underscores how “revival songs portray God as the coming king who will descend from heaven and bring revival, a depiction connected to eschatological notions of the dawning of the kingdom of God.”<sup>101</sup> Perhaps the most lucid distillation of the relation between music, intensification, and eschatology is Webb’s notion of a “spatiotemporal millennialist aesthetic.” The term denotes how “music style, song repertoires, and embodied communal performance practices can be understood as enfolding an apocalyptic sense of space and time that anticipates the coming reign of God.”<sup>102</sup> Of direct relevance here is that Webb ethnographically and historically positions the emergence of this intense musicalised eschatology within the charismatic movements that swept across Melanesia in the 1970s. The lyrics of many songs during this time attest to a deep preoccupation with the Second Coming and its promise of millennial glory and abundance:

Jesus is coming, Jesus is coming. My brothers and sisters let us gather together. Brothers, His sun is setting. Jesus is coming, HE is coming here. There let all of us go (with him).<sup>103</sup>

Jesus Christ will come. ‘Take me,’ you will say. ‘Do you know me?’ He will say.<sup>104</sup>

When sky and earth will finish. At that time I will say: where have I gone? Give me, Give me (present of Holy Spirit). Jesus, give me. Because you understand fully, and you are not turning away from me<sup>105</sup>

Jesus was killed on Friday because of my sin. Jesus rose from the dead on Sunday, and after being raised He went back to Heaven. Jesus is in Heaven, and later on He’ll come back to be here. When Jesus comes, Christians will go together to Heaven.<sup>106</sup>

---

<sup>100</sup> Ingalls, “Singing Heaven Down to Earth: Spiritual Journeys, Eschatological Sounds, and Community Formation in Evangelical Conference Worship,” 256; 263.

<sup>101</sup> Klaver, “Worship Music as Aesthetic Domain of Meaning and Bonding: The Glocal Context of a Dutch Pentecostal Church,” 107.

<sup>102</sup> Webb, “Every Creative Aspect Breaking Out! Pentecostal-Charismatic Worship, Oro Gospel Music, and a Millennialist Aesthetic in Papua New Guinea,” 90.

<sup>103</sup> White, “Family Prayer Movement at Imbongu, Ialibu, Southern Highlands,” 172.

<sup>104</sup> Dawia, “A Revival Convention, Lumusa Baptist Church, Baiyer River,” 126.

<sup>105</sup> Kale, “The religious movement among the Kyaka Enga,” 70.

<sup>106</sup> Pugh-Kitingan, “An ethnomusicological study of the Huli of the Southern Highlands, Papua New Guinea,” 292.

Jesus died, but I believe – he is with us. He sent the Bible here to us – I am going to see him. The time is passing quickly, I am going to see him – the time is passing. The time is passing quickly – passing quickly. Christ is the heavenly man – Mary is the heavenly woman.<sup>107</sup>

The musical multiplicities created by intensified life carry Christians into millennial glory. But let us not forget that not only the living, but the dead too, seek out divine territory. Indeed, within the premillennial dispensationalist theology that pervades contemporary charismatic, Pentecostal, and evangelical Christianity, the resurrection of the dead is a key aspect of the *parousia*. One striking example from 1970s Melanesia shows how this additional soteriological route may be performativised:

Many clans cleaned up their cemeteries. Belief in the resurrection of the body made these a place for rejoicing. Great excitement accompanied the practice of dancing in the cemetery.<sup>108</sup>

Dancing to the tune of death. The rapid intensification of religious life is expressed by emergent novel musical heterogeneities that deliver faithful Christians (above and below ground) to the promised land.

A prolific, spiritually infused, surge in musical creation and performance, then, indicates not only immediate, profound joy and a vivid pneumacentric ontology, but, most broadly, heralds an immense metaphysical shift. It is like an oceanic megathrust earthquake producing a gigantic tidal wave. Slippage, displacement, force. A sudden tectonic shift offsetting a massive volume of water that radiates across the landscape. We can extend this geological metaphor to the understanding of religious intensification across Melanesia. The tidal wave and the landscape are the visible components: affective eruption, intensive transversals, radical immanence, a paradisiacal eschatological territory. But where is our generative moment? What changed in the fundamental substrate of life to set in motion a musicalised rush to the end of the world? Might there exist a component, even if not determinant, singular, or original, that is common to the series of individual surges and which thereby allows us to partially account for a historically situated regional intensification and its musical extension? One major

---

<sup>107</sup> Tony Krol and Simon Es, "Enga Catholics and the Holy Spirit Movement" In *Religious Movements in Melanesia Today* (2) ed. Wendy Flannery (Goroka: The Melanesian Institute, 1983), 140-141.

<sup>108</sup> Krol and Es, "Enga Catholics and the Holy Spirit Movement," 139.

existential rupture stands out as capable of triggering an affective landslide: release from colonisation.

Papua New Guinea gained self-government in 1973 and full independence in 1975, Solomon Islands in 1976 and 1978, milestones we can surround with an intense anticipation and enduring afterglow respectively. Mirroring this process, the era also witnessed the localisation of many missions across Melanesia. Whether portrayed as a celebratory liberation from European oppression, an anxious and reluctant step into the breach, or a political decision made at an extreme remove, from the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s until the early 1980s, the dawning prospect and formal accomplishment of political and religious decolonisation abruptly called into question life's basic coordinates. In the Solomon Islands, for example, from the mid-1960s onwards, "Britain's gentle amble toward the protectorate's internal self-government rapidly escalated into a breakneck gallop toward independence."<sup>109</sup> Until this historical juncture, the social, political, and spiritual worlds of Melanesians had been subject to the paternalistic oversight and domination of expatriates, even if from a distance. Now, the demise of the metaphysical colonial kingdom across the region came rushing into view, thereby opening a wide berth for the redefinition of reality in its widest angle. Moreover, we must assume that such an existential watershed dramatically quickened into a state of high tension the imaginations and bodies of the populace. The perfect conditions for an emergent *zeitgeist*. Primed for absolute transformation. If not colonisation, then what?

The hastened collapse of the Melanesian colonial order coincides with the period of widespread religious intensification within which people across the region fervently pursued a new, paradisiacal metaphysical territory. As the imperial cosmos began to crumble, Melanesians intensively and affectively constructed an alternative, millennial future to inhabit. In this sense, a passionate embrace of Christian eschatology marks the tipping point of decolonisation. *Parousia* as nationalism. Not failed or weak states – *Saved states*. The surging Holy Spirit as springboard between metanarratives, recoding colonised Melanesian Christians as divine subjects. Immense volumes of spontaneous ecstatic intensity rolling towards the *eschaton*. Generated by the sudden subsidence of colonisation. The affective fruit of cosmological subduction. The implementation of divine models for human life in an independent nation state is shown in a speech by Reverend Leslie Boseto, the head of the United Church in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands

---

<sup>109</sup> Judith Bennett, *The Wealth of the Solomons: A History of a Pacific Archipelago, 1800-1978* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press), 311.

(UCPNGSI), on Solomon Islands Independence Day, July 7<sup>th</sup>, 1978:

A newly independent nation must face the future with a choice between good and evil and between life and death (Deut 30:15-16)....All people within a nation must know that the government of their nation is purposely given by God as a servant for carrying out His good service and justice (Romans 13: 1-7)...God calls us today to raise from our own tribal and one-talk experiences to belong to a national tribe and national level of one-talk.<sup>110</sup>

One must hold in mind that such statements are taking place within the context of widespread charismatic eruptions across the region: a new Christian nation brought into being through intense propulsions toward the Second Coming. Musicalised articulations of intensive-affective movements toward the *eschaton*, thus simultaneously announcing the passage to social and spiritual autonomy. Revival music as the first cries of a newborn country. Webb thus argues that the simultaneous explosion of intensified religious music and approaching political independence occurred "probably not coincidentally,"<sup>111</sup> especially since revivalist music serves to "prepare individuals and the PNG nation, as part of the Christian transnation, for God's future blessing."<sup>112</sup>

In this light, Pugh Kittingan observed among her Huli participants that one of their prominent revival choruses "refers to God's light shining on Papua New Guinea in readiness for Christ's return,"<sup>113</sup> while Midian describes the music of religious intensification among the Tolai as the "young people's cry for religious independence."<sup>114</sup> The synergy between musicalised eschatology and nascent nationalism has a wider field of application than just Melanesia. As Butler maintains, through their praise and worship "many Haitian Christians have asserted a Pentecostal brand of cultural nationalism," within which "they race with hope and with Bibles in hand toward a better future for

---

<sup>110</sup> Quoted from a newsletter published in September, 1978, by the United Church in Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands (UCPNGSI).

<sup>111</sup> Webb, "Every Creative Aspect Breaking Out! Pentecostal-Charismatic Worship, Oro Gospel Music, and a Millennialist Aesthetic in Papua New Guinea," 84.

<sup>112</sup> Webb, "Every Creative Aspect Breaking Out! Pentecostal-Charismatic Worship, Oro Gospel Music, and a Millennialist Aesthetic in Papua New Guinea," 81.

<sup>113</sup> Pugh-Kitingan, "An ethnomusicological study of the Huli of the Southern Highlands, Papua New Guinea," 295.

<sup>114</sup> Midian, *The Value of Indigenous Music in the Life and Ministry of the Church: The United Church in the Duke of York Islands*, 47.

their families and their country.”<sup>115</sup> More incisively, Marina and Wilkinson contend that in the American setting, “Music and tongue-speaking facilitates the Pentecostal church’s capacity to defy the modern forces of rationality where the attempt to solidify into an institutional bureaucracy threatens to trap religion and its ability to make social change,” ultimately seeing the music of intensified Christianity as “the collective roar of the disenchanted.”<sup>116</sup>

All of these examples attest to the fact that the musical component of religious intensification embarks upon a concerted drive towards a new metaphysical future away from oppressive bureaucratic state and colonial apparatuses. A musicalised ethos indelibly stamped by the vicissitudes of political history. The (Holy) spirit of the (end) times.

---

<sup>115</sup> Butler, “The Weapons of Our Warfare: Music, Positionality, and Transcendence Among Haitian Pentecostals,” 32; 54.

<sup>116</sup> Marina and Wilkinson, “Pentecostalism as Cultural Resistance: Music and Tongue-Speaking as Collective Response in a Brooklyn Church,” 218; 239.