

On drums,

In Paul Abbot's music a drum kit is a medium of time & figuration: 'When I started to play drums, the music began with movement, feeling: I had heard other drummers and felt, heard, something emotionally substantial I thought must be 'time.' In trying to release this 'time' in my own novice playing I moved all limbs across all parts of the kit in a constant search, producing a cloudy stream of sounds and energy. The more I played the more there were fleeting moments of definition, and increasingly, 'shapes' would emerge. This intuited method necessitated an ongoing process of tuning from within performance, to attempt to make these fleeting structured feelings more perceptible, legible.'

The drum kit, in Abbott's music, is the medium & the object of an ongoing investigation into the (dis)integration of oppositions, like writing and drumming: '*Ductus* (2019), *Nsular* (2021) and the broader work which facilitated these records involved a lot of writing. At the time of making *Knees Elbow Bag* words came less easy, which coincided with wanting the body to take a clear lead. The words which accompany this record have emerged more collectively: through dialogue with others, rather than any writing (down) in advance to direct or structure the music.'

In *Knees, Elbow Bag*, the drum kit, a dialogical, discursive, narrative medium, foregrounds a fiction of the recording process, the presentation of a unity of thought, time & space: 'There are synthetic sounds produced concurrently/by the drum-kit playing as well as before and after 'live' play, during the preparation of some synthetic sounds and the editing/post-production of the recorded material. In this sense the rhythmic aspect also extends to the editing of/within each track. There are multiple levels of 'editing': done with the imagination in preparing drum-materials; by the limbs during play, and through editing/post-production technologies. (This is nothing new!)

There is, in the album's references to historiographical and poetic writing, an enfolding of a concern with sonic & socio-political liminality: 'When I was working with the material for the album I was thinking about the title of the book 'All Knees and Elbows of Susceptibility and Refusal: Reading History from Below' by Anthony Iles and Tom Roberts. I was thinking

about marginalised sonic/musical material, unorthodox or peripheral (music) learning practices and the title of this book, together.’

Through novelist Wilson Harris, Abbott locates the drum kit’s materials of marginality in lineages of struggle. The drum kit is a Harissian ‘cross-cultural dream book’, a way of understanding the drum kit and its activations in ‘histories, traditions, genealogies, and a present context informed by multiple multi-directional flows: ideas, sounds, geographic and temporal specificities’.

As imaginary as it is actual, a drum kit, in *Knees, Elbow Bag*, is as much an image in a dream as it is a time machine, time perceived here as a differential & differentiating, omni-directional medium for the convergence of divergent states of alterity: ‘The aspect of the ‘dreamer(s)’ encourages that all this be thought of/felt in a non-linear or multi-temporal way: hauntings, presence and memory all together’.

Edward George, Spring 2024, London.