

OPEN CALL FOR AUDIO PAPERS & WRITTEN PAPERS
SEISMOGRAF PEER

Vocal imaginaries

Technologies, practices and futures

From sound studies we know that voices are complex, variable and diverse; the minute nuances of tone of voice influence the affective tonality and interpretation of what and how we are trying to communicate in sociocultural contexts (Meizel 2020). Voice is both a matter of expression and of being heard, and connects deeply to feelings of intimacy, identity, sociality and performativity (Weidman 2014). Voices have social and emotional meaning as they express subjectivity, cultural identity, markers of class, race, geographic origin, age, political authority and life stage (Eidsheim 2019).

Today voice AI, voice recognition, language processing algorithms and voice synthesis found in smart speakers, smart watches, mobile phones, tablets and other devices publicize the sonic spaces of homes, transportation and public institutions, especially in the Global North. Most of these voice-based technologies engage through linguistically and conversationally designed and performed vocal personality traits that mimic human voice qualities and mannerisms (Christian 2023; Duque et al. 2021). These vocal technologies do not only speak but also listen, thereby transforming human voices and perhaps other sonic elements from the soundscape into big data. These vocal technologies and conversing machines pose new questions regarding what human and non-human voices consist of, what economies, ethics, norms, politics, futures and imaginaries they are imbued with and how they come to matter differently.

With this special issue we invite scholars to consider e.g. sound works, practices, art, design and performances that explore speaking and singing styles, vocal technologies, and the affective, emotional, as well as the imaginary dimensions of vocal expression beyond semantics (LaBelle

2014). We invite critical reflections on the aesthetic, creative, critical and imaginative engagement with vocal practices and imaginaries that explores questions such as:

- How do voices and the material qualities of voices – e.g. pitch, timbre, pace and rhythm – come to matter on a bodily, social, technological, cultural, political and imaginary level?
- How do vocal practices connect to emergent, ethereal, and mythical dimensions of voices?
- How are vocal expressions understood as being shaped by as well as informing sociocultural, technical and affective relational practices of speaking and listening?
- What aural experiences, sonic cultures and acoustic politics are at play in vocal expressions?

We invite audio papers and written articles that investigate the concretely situated and located individual listening experience of humans as well as non-human vocal expressions, or papers that explore voice in specific sonic cultures, collective practices shaped by and shaping speakers and listeners. We also welcome studies of the structural institutionalized discourses and norms for speaking, singing, performing and listening.

The aim with this special issue is to provide a spectrum of perspectives on how human and non-human vocal practices, listenings and technologies come to matter in a world full of affective speech, singing performance and tonal possibilities for expression and imagining.

REFERENCES

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EDITORS OF SPECIAL ISSUE

Stina Hasse Jørgensen, University of Copenhagen and Jonas Fritsch, IT University of Copenhagen
For more information, please contact Stina Hasse Jørgensen (smhj@hum.ku.dk).

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

AUDIO PAPERS

ABSTRACT

DEADLINE

December 1, 2025

REQUIRED ELEMENTS

- Audio abstract 60-90 sec.
- Written abstract of 150-200 words
- Bibliography following the Harvard Standard author-date format
- Biographies for all authors of up to 100 words. Portraits are welcome, but optional (please include photo credit)

SUBMISSION

Please transfer / send audio file (MP3) and the written abstract file, including bibliography and biography (Word), to vocal@seismograf.org

EDITORIAL RESPONSE

After editorial review of the received abstracts, a selection of authors will be invited to send in audio papers:

FULL AUDIO PAPER

DEADLINE

March 2, 2026

REQUIRED ELEMENTS

- Audio paper, length 12-15 minutes
- Written abstract of 150-200 words
- Bibliography following the Harvard Standard author-date format
- Biographies for all authors of up to 100 words. Portraits are welcome, but optional (please include photo credit)

SUBMISSION

Please transfer / send audio paper file (MP3) and the written abstract file, including bibliography and biography (Word), to vocal@seismograf.org

All submissions will undergo rigorous peer review, based on initial editor screening and anonymized refereeing by at least two anonymous referees. Submitted contributions have to be original and not been published or submitted elsewhere.

FORMAT OF THE AUDIO PAPER

The audio paper is a 12-15 minute-long audio production presenting a research question or focus. The audio paper combines speech and narratives with “sonic argumentation” which can be composed through sound recordings, sound productions or any other sound practices, voice practices, the audible use of one’s body, everyday tools, gadgets, musical instruments, computer software or all kinds of objects and agents. All audio papers are being peer reviewed by reviewers within the given field. The reviewers are asked to assess after these guidelines: A clear and contextualized research question / focus of exploration; a clear and vivid argumentation and exploration of the research question / focus; meaningful and original use of sound as medium and content to support, present and materialize the argumentation; coherence between dramaturgical composition (tempo, density, narrative structure) and content; appropriate references in the accompanying text (abstract and bibliography) and/or in the audio production. Please visit seismograf.org/fokus/fluid-sounds for further thoughts on and examples of audio papers. All submissions will undergo rigorous peer review, based on initial editor screening and anonymized refereeing by at least two anonymous referees. Submitted contributions must be original and not have been previously published or submitted elsewhere during the review process.

Please visit seismograf.org/fokus/fluid-sounds for further thoughts on and examples of audiopapers.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

WRITTEN RESEARCH PAPERS

ABSTRACT

DEADLINE

December 1, 2025

REQUIRED ELEMENTS

- Written abstract of 150-200 words
- Bibliography following the Harvard Standard
- Biographies for all authors of up to 100 words. Portraits are welcome, but optional (please include photo credit)

SUBMISSION

Please send abstract file including bibliography and biography to vocal@seismograf.org

EDITORIAL RESPONSE

After editorial review of the received abstracts, a selection of authors will be invited to send in written research papers:

FULL WRITTEN PAPER

DEADLINE

March 6, 2026

REQUIRED ELEMENTS

- Written paper of 6000-8000 words
- Written abstract of 150-200 words
- Bibliography following the Harvard Standard author-date format
- Biographies for all authors of up to 100 words. Portraits are welcome, but optional (please include photo credit)

SUBMISSION

Please send research paper and abstract file including bibliography and biography to vocal@seismograf.org

All submissions will undergo rigorous peer review, based on initial editor screening and anonymized refereeing by at least two anonymous referees. Submitted contributions have to be original and not been published or submitted elsewhere.

FORMAT OF WRITTEN PAPERS

The audio paper is an experimental format – but we are also inviting written articles of a more performative character. But, as with the audio paper, this does not mean that anything goes. Seismograf is an independent journal concerning aesthetics and art forms within the fields of sound, sound art and contemporary music. The readers of this journal are therefore not academics only, but cover a variety of people – dedicated listeners, artists, critics, curators etc. We are open towards written submissions that stretch the format beyond traditional academic publishing – but that are still being peer reviewed. The review guidelines concern: Strength, originality and clarity of the overall argument in the article; originality of and insight into the empirical material; strength and originality in presentation, argumentation and discussion; relevance of the literature references referred to.