

# **AUDIO GHOSTS Symposium 2025**

**mdw – University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna (Fanny Hensel-Hall)**

**[Anton-von-Webern-Platz 1, 1030 Vienna]**

**SP·CE Listening Gallery**

**[Billrothstraße 6/2, 1190 Vienna]**

**November 14-15, 2025**

# AUDIO GHOSTS: Illusive perceptions – Perceptual illusions

Towards a practice-based exchange between psychoacoustics and installative sound art

## Symposium

Date November 14-15, 2025

Place a) Fanny Hensel-Hall, mdw – University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna

[Anton-von-Webern-Platz 1, 1030 Vienna]

b) SP·CE Listening Gallery

[Billrothstraße 6/2, 1190 Vienna]

Link <https://www.mdw.ac.at/audio-ghosts/symposium/>

Two-day international symposium critically reflecting on the findings of the FW-PEEK art-based research project AUDIO GHOSTS to date, a practice-based exchange between psychoacoustics and sound art. Including the premiere of a new sound installation as well as discursive and artistic contributions. Together with experts from the fields of arts-based research, musicology, psychology, and sound art, we will discuss the project in a broader context.

Including insights into the creative practice of the AUDIO GHOSTS team and invited guest artists:

- Kai Fagaschinski, Berlin (AG Guest Artist #4)
- Bernhard Gál, Vienna (PI, AUDIO GHOSTS)
- Christopher Haworth, Birmingham (AG Guest Artist #5)
- Christine Schörkhuber, Vienna (AG Guest Artist #1)

In cooperation with the Artistic Research Center, University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna and the Acoustics Research Institute (ARI), Austrian Academy of Sciences.

Symposium language: English.

Food and beverages will be provided.

Free admission.

AUDIO GHOSTS: Illusive perceptions – Perceptual illusions is funded by the Programme for Arts-based Research (PEEK) of the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) [AR 774-G].

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## Symposium

### Programme

#### Friday, November 14, 2025 @ mdw – Fanny Hensel-Hall

[mdw – University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, Anton-von-Webern-Platz 1, 1030 Vienna]

- 10:00 Welcome address | Artistic research glimpse 1
- 10:20 Bernhard Gál: An introduction to AUDIO GHOSTS
- 11:00 Artistic research glimpse 2
- 11:10 Piotr Majdak: Psychoacoustics behind auditory illusions (Majdak, Pausch, Gál, Maier) (ARI)
- 12:10 Artistic research glimpse 3
- 12:20 Christopher Haworth: Boundary Objects: Perceptual and epistemic slipperiness in WSS  
(weirdo sound synthesis)  
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- 14:30 Artistic research glimpse 4
- 14:40 Piotr Majdak: A composer's tool kit for selected auditory illusions (Pausch, Majdak, Maier, Gál)
- 15:50 Artistic research glimpse 5
- 16:00 Summary | Feedback Day 1

#### Friday, November 14, 2025 @ SP-CE

[Billrothstraße 6/2, 1190 Vienna]

- 18:00-21:00 Christopher Haworth: Demonstrations – sound installation (opening)

#### Saturday, November 15, 2025 @ mdw – Fanny Hensel-Hall

[mdw – University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna, Anton-von-Webern-Platz 1, 1030 Vienna]

- 10:00 Artistic research glimpse 6
- 10:10 Barbara Barthelmes: Sound art and the aesthetics of illusion
- 11:00 Artistic research glimpse 7
- 11:10 Richard Parncutt: Virtual pitches as auditory ghosts
- 12:00 Open discussion | Recap

#### Saturday, November 15, 2025 @ SP-CE

[Billrothstraße 6/2, 1190 Vienna]

- 18:00-21:00 Christopher Haworth: Demonstrations – sound installation

Further presentations: November 16-19, 2025, 6-8 pm

## Symposium participants

### **Barbara Barthelmes**

Barbara Barthelmes studied musicology, art history and philosophy in Würzburg and Berlin and wrote her doctoral thesis on "Space and Sound. The musical and theoretical work of Ivan Wschnegradsky". She has brought her interests in contemporary music, sound art, music and visual arts, music aesthetics and music education into various work contexts: as a teacher in schools, in university teaching (UdK Berlin, University of Bielefeld); in project work, including in the New Music Network of the German Federal Cultural Foundation; in the field of communication as co-editor of the magazine *Musica*, as an editorial advisor to the magazine *positionen* and as music editor at the Berliner Festspiele.

### **Bernhard Gál**

Austrian composer, sound artist, artistic researcher and musicologist Bernhard Gál is equally at home in the domains of contemporary music, installation art and media art. He has presented sound installations and intermedia art projects around the globe, as well as music for acoustic instruments and electro-acoustic music, and has worked with ensembles as well as musicians in the electronic and improvisation scene. Since 2006, he has been producing the transdisciplinary avant-garde festival shut up and listen! in Vienna. In 2021, he received a PhD from the University Mozarteum Salzburg with an inter-university dissertation about site-specific aspects of sound art. From 2020 to 2025, Gál held a teaching position at the Certificate Program in Electroacoustic and Experimental Music (ELAK) at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. As head of the three-year FWF-PEEK project AUDIO GHOSTS, he is currently engaged in the artistic exploration of auditory illusions in sound art.

<http://www.bernhardgal.com>

### **Christopher Haworth**

Christopher Haworth is a composer and musicologist. His creative work brings methods associated with modernist composition into dialogue with popular electronic music in ways that emphasise the surreal and absurd. In 2023, *Auditory Distortion Synthesis*, a short record collecting different methods he has developed for synthesising difference tones, was released by Superpang; also that year, his work expanding on these techniques (with Rodrigo Cadiz and Esteban Guittérez) won the ICMC best paper award. Other research papers have been published by *Computer Music Journal*, *Organised Sound*, *Leonardo Music Journal* and others.

<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/profiles/music/haworth-christopher>

### **Piotr Majdak**

After completing a technical school for electrical engineering, Piotr Majdak studied audio engineering at the University of Technology in Graz (TU-Graz) and at the University of Music and Dramatic Arts in Graz (KUG). During his studies, he developed hardware and software for measurement tools and process-controlling devices. Piotr Majdak graduated with the Master's thesis entitled "Implementation of a head related binaural technique", in which he dealt with a real-time binaural system called Ambisonics. In that project, Ambisonics allowed the inclusion of the listener's head movements without the need for time-variant filtering, and therefore a reduction of the computational power. As part of the thesis, the binaural system was implemented for a digital signal processor platform including a head-tracker. The Master's thesis was done jointly with Markus Noisternig. In 2002, he joined ARI as a junior researcher being involved in setting-up the group "Psychoacoustics and experimental audiology". In 2008, he finished his PhD about sound lateralization in cochlear-implant listeners, in which the effects of different aspects of the interaural time differences on sound lateralization are described. In 2015, his habilitation for the area "Acoustics and audio engineering" was approved, which allows him to supervise PhD students at the KUG.

<https://www.oeaw.ac.at/en/ari/our-team/majdak-piotr>

### **Richard Parncutt**

Richard Parncutt is a systematic musicologist, music psychologist, and psychoacoustician. Recent research contributions addressed global warming, human rights, and academic travel. From 1998 to 2023, he was Professor of Systematic Musicology, University of Graz, Austria, where he directed the Centre for Systematic Musicology (2009 to 2023). He was president of the European Society for the Cognitive Sciences of Music (ESCOM) (2015-2018) and chair of the 15th International Conference on Music Perception and Cognition (ICMPC) combined with the 10th triennial conference of ESCOM (Graz, Montreal, La Plata, Sydney, 23-28 July 2018). His qualifications include Bachelor of Science (physics) and Bachelor of Music (performance) from the University of Melbourne (1981); Bachelor of Science with Honours (physics) and Doctor of Philosophy from the University of New England, Australia (1987); Habilitation in Systematic Musicology from the University of Graz (1998); and Habilitation in Music Psychology from the University of Klagenfurt (2021). In 2024 he received a Sustainability Award (Silber in der Kategorie Verankern) from the Austrian federal government for a project entitled "The global multi-hub academic conference: Sustainable and inclusive" (more). Given the growing contribution of aviation to global warming, he avoids flying and has not flown to an academic conference since 2016. Many European conferences can be reached by train and bus.

<https://homepage.uni-graz.at/de/richard.parncutt/>