

Check it out: Sasha Frere-Jones's "Noise Control"

Liana M. Silva

Blog post published May 20, 2010 in *Sounding Out!*

<https://doi.org/10.59350/d4yy0-p3575>

Abstract

The May 24th, 2010 issue of The New Yorker includes an article by resident music critic Sasha Frere-Jones titled "Noise Control." (You can access the article here if you don't have the print version.) I am not familiar with noise music, but I know some of our contributors are, and I'm sure some of our [...]

Keywords

Music (Subfield), Listening, Live Music, Music, Noise, Sound Studies

Recommended citation

Silva, L. M. (2010, May 20). Check it out: Sasha Frere-Jones's "Noise Control". *Sounding Out!*. <https://doi.org/10.59350/d4yy0-p3575>

Copyright

Copyright © Liana M. Silva 2010. Distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](#), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.

The May 24th, 2010 issue of *The New Yorker* includes an article by resident music critic Sasha Frere-Jones titled "Noise Control." (You can access the article [here](#) if you don't have the print version.) I am not familiar with noise music, but I know some of our contributors are, and I'm sure some of our readers are as well. However, I find noise music really interesting because, from the little I have heard/read it seems to test our traditional definitions of music. Sasha Frere-Jones gives readers a brief introduction into the roots of noise music (could anyone tell us how accurate or overgeneralized this brief intro is?) and discusses several noise bands who are drawing the attention of a broader audience to an avant garde genre. In the end, Frere-Jones states that "to many people now, noise isn't necessarily an aggressive or alienating element; it sounds more like nature than nature does." I'm not comfortable with that assertion: first, before this quotation, he explains how noise music sounds very similar to what our daily lives sound like: "windows popping up on an open laptop, conversations slipping from the screen to the air while music (or is it noise?) plays in the background." What about this scenario reminds him of "nature"? Or is the problem my narrow definition of "nature"? Could it be that music is commonly thought of as artificial, constructed, and noise music goes against that? Even that would fall flat, because he points out how the musicians in the bands he mentions actually sit down to compose the songs. I think noise music does bear some resemblance to the way we are enveloped in sounds on a daily basis (and enveloped in the same sounds on a regular basis), but I'm still skeptic as to what constitutes "nature"/"natural" for Frere-Jones, and what about noise music seems like "nature."

Check out the article and let us know what you think of Frere-Jones's piece!

