Future Present. Current Practices in Pop Music Studies

PROGRAM

UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

RIKSBANKENS
JUBILEUMSFOND
THE SWEDISH FOUNDATION FOR
HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Welcome!

It is with great joy and pride that the Department of Musicology at Uppsala University hosts *Future Present. Current Practices in Pop Music Studies*, and welcomes scholars from various regional and disciplinary backgrounds!

In the past, the research conducted at the department has mainly been occupied with Swedish and European music history and Swedish traditional music, whereas popular music has mainly been researched in PhD projects and been part of the teaching curriculum. Therefore, we see a need to engage even more whole-heartedly in contemporary popular music cultures and current topics, theories, and methods of its study. We are excited to take a first important step towards this new direction with this conference.

Future Present. Current Practices in Pop Music Studies seeks to provide a space for deep engagements in pop music and its various contexts. Its primary aim is to explore current theoretical and methodological developments in pop music studies across thematic and disciplinary borders, and to foster discourse surrounding future directions in pop music and its study within Sweden and the Nordic Countries as well as internationally.

The organization committee,

Lars Berglund   Veronika Muchitsch
Head of Department   PhD Candidate

General Information

VENUES

CONFERENCE SITE: MUSEUM GUSTAVIANUM

Akademigatan 3

All presentations will be held at Auditorium Minus on the first floor, while coffee and lunch will be served in the foyer on the same floor.

CONFERENCE DINNER: MUSICUM

Kyrkogårdsgatan 4

TRANSPORT

Public Transport: For information on public transport, please visit ul.se.
Taxi Company: Uppsala Taxi (+46(0)18-100 000)

The conference site as well as the train station are in walking distance from the city center.

Tuesday, June 19

08.30—09.00 COFFEE AND REGISTRATION

09.00—09.15 CONFERENCE OPENING

09.15—10.30 KEYNOTE SPEECH (Chair: Veronika Muchitsch)
ROBIN JAMES: Novelty, Speculation, Heartbreak: How Pop Music Conceives of "The Future" (1983–2017)

10.30—10.45 COFFEE BREAK

10.45—12.15 SESSION 1: BODIES ACROSS TIME AND SPACE (Chair: Lars Berglund)
ABIGAIL GARDNER: Pop Out of Time: Anohni and Transgendered/Transage Transgression
VERONIKA MUCHITSCH: Considering Corporeality, Subjectivity and Voice in ANOHNI's "Drone Bomb Me"
EMIL KRAUGERUD: Constructions of Intimacy in St. Vincent's "Hang on Me"

12.15—13.15 LUNCH BREAK

13.15—14.45 SESSION 2: POLITICS OF RACE (Chair: Elizabeth Gould)
DAVID KAMINSKY: Blackvoice, White Fans: Hip-Hop Authenticity and the Battle of the Azaleas
ANDERS LILJEDAHL: Sound & Color: Racializing Audiovisual Interdependencies in Music Videos
L.J. MÜLLER: Hearing Whiteness? Thoughts on an Elusive Subject

14.45—15.15 COFFEE BREAK

15.15—16.45 SESSION 3: POP MUSIC AS (ECO-)SYSTEM AND APPARATUS (Chair: Per-Henning Olsson)
MATT BRENNAN: On Musical Ecosystems and Sustainability
RICHARD ELLIOTT: Songs as Systems: Objects, Ecologies, Weather, Viruses
MATTHEW LOVETT: Apparatuses of Capture: Disruptive Platforms and Reactionary Musics

19.00 CONFERENCE DINNER

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Wednesday, June 20

08.45—09.15 COFFEE

09.15—10.30 KEYNOTE SPEECH (Chair: Lars Berglund)
ANNE DANIELSEN: Analysing Popular Music in the Digital Age

10.30—10.45 COFFEE BREAK

11.00—12.30 SESSION 4: CURRENT PERSPECTIVES IN ANALYSIS (Chair: Ralf von Appen)
PER-HENNING OLSSON: Playing with Expectations. Ambiguous Metre and Rhythmic Play in AC/DC's Music
JOSÉ GÁLVEZ: Pop Music Analysis: Old Issues, New Perspectives
BERNHARD STEINBRECHER: Analysing Nuances in Popular Music: Toward a Better Understanding of its
Aesthetic Experience

12.15—13.15 LUNCH BREAK

13.15—14.15 SESSION 5: THEORISING NEW SONG FORMS (Chair: Lars Berglund)
RALF VON APPEN: Theorising New Song Forms in Current Pop Mainstream (Part 1)
MARKUS FREI-HAUENSCHILD: Theorising New Song Forms in Current Pop Mainstream (Part 2)

14.15—14.30 SHORT COFFEE BREAK

14.30—15.30 SESSION 6: MOVING BEYOND GENRE? (Chair: Veronika Muchitsch)
MONIKA VOITHOFER: "...It takes harmony and the electric guitar for granted..." The New Discipline as a
Bridge Between Contemporary and Pop Music
VICTOR SZABO: A Design-Oriented Approach to Recorded Music and 'Post-Genre Genres'

15.30—16.00 COFFEE BREAK

16.00—17.00 SESSION 7: LOOKING BACK: NOSTALGIA AND AGE (Chair: Elizabeth Gould)
KAI ARNE HANSEN: Analyzing Pop Personae Across Media: Take That and Aging Masculinities
REBECCA RINSEMA: The Politics of Coming of Age: Nostalgia for Innocence in Millennial Music

17.00 CLOSING

Abstracts

Anne Danielsen (University of Oslo, Norway): Analysing Popular Music in the Digital Age

Creative use of new digital technology has changed how music is produced, distributed, and consumed, as well as how music sounds. In this keynote, I will analyse some examples of new sonic expressions within the field of popular music that have been produced through unorthodox application of the digital audio workstation. I will also touch upon new patterns of personalised use and the so-called "prosumption" practices that have arised in the digital era in the form of remix, sample and mashup.

Robin James (University of North Carolina at Charlotte, United States): Novelty, Speculation, Heartbreak: How Pop Music Conceives of "The Future" (1983-2017)

When we talk about the "future" in or of pop music, what do we mean by "the future"? Has "the future" had a stable meaning across time? How might our concepts of the future change with Western culture's evolving epistemic and ontological frameworks?
Looking at US and UK pop from the Reagan-Thatcher era through today, I will argue that the concept of "future" changes. In the era of modern rock, post-punk, and new wave, "future" means novelty—a very modernist definition not too far from Russolo. "The future"—at least understood as innovative newness—has lost its cache among musicians and fans….perhaps because such "disruption" has been co-opted by the OTHER so-called creative class, entrepreneurs. At the same time entrepreneurs co-opt disruption as a mode of production, neoliberalism shifts our concept of the future, replacing "newness" with cost/benefit speculation. This is why the "we" of the white mainstream no longer think "alternatives" (capitalist realism) or hear anything but repurposed pasts (retromania). Instead, we hear interests, interests that can augment or diminish our human/aesthetic capital. When we hear interests, we listen for success, for the best return on investment. I will connect this concept of neoliberal speculation to contemporary work in gender studies, which argues that neoliberalism privileges girls and femininity as sites of the greatest return on investment. Whereas modernism genders the avant-garde as masculine, neoliberalism genders futurity as feminine— because of sexism, women start so low and have so far to go, they bring big returns on modest investments. The first part of my talk addresses this shifting concept of the future in white music/philosophy. The second part of my paper argues that this shift in white/Western concepts of the future affects a similar shift in black intellectual traditions. Classical Afrofuturisms, such as those of Sun Ra or Kodwo Eshun or Janelle Monae are responding largely to European modernity and its humanisms. I argue that a constellation of contemporary theorists—Christina Sharpe, Katherine McKittrick, Alexander Weheliye, and Ashon Crawley— are re-imagining black and Afrodiasporic temporalities to build under- or beyond-the-radar alternatives to neoliberal concepts of the future as speculation.

Abstracts

Ralf von Appen and Markus Frei-Hauenschild (Justus Liebig University of Giessen, Germany): Theorising New Song Forms in Current Pop Mainstream

In many 21st Century pop songs new trends regarding song structure can be distinguished. Instead of verse/prechorus/chorus designs that have dominated the charts for more than forty years (cf. Appen/Frei-Hauenschild 2015) , today's songs often feature two newly established sections: ‚post-choruses' and ‚pop drops'. Furthermore, songs often make use of multipart verses or prechoruses, thus making it sometimes very hard hard to label the different sections. Instead of using harmonic change as a marker for a new song section, most songs now repeat a single loop of three or four chords throughout. Similar to Electronic Dance Music, formal sections are now defined by different levels of energy as well as by means of arrangement, interior harmonic variation, or melody. In songs that are structured like this, post-choruses (as in Rihanna's ‚Umbrella' or Ed Sheeran's ‚Shape of You') often repeat parts of the chorus' lyrics, sometimes increasing, sometimes decreasing the energy level, while pop drops substitute a vocal chorus for a specific type of instrumental chorus or hook, similar to the ‚core' or ‚drop' in EDM (cf. the Chainsmokers' ‚Don't Let Me Down'). In two joint talks, we would like to present the results of our corpus analysis of the Billboard Year End-Top Ten from 2006 through 2016 and thereby address both applied analyses and meta- analytical considerations. One talk will deal with the rise of the post-chorus and the multipart cycle, the other will concentrate on the most recent success of the ‚pop drop'. Moreover, we will discuss our methods of ‚corpus analysis' and ‚partner analysis' (the latter as a way to reveal different ways of form reception) as models for future analyses. Regarding the main topic of the conference, another important question will be how these rather sudden changes in pop song structures may reflect changes in societal structures. Can these formal changes actually be read as „heralds of the future" in a meaningful way?

Matt Brennan (University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom): On Musical Ecosystems and Sustainability

This paper considers how and why key terms borrowed from the lexicon of environmental science – particularly "ecology," "ecosystem," and "sustainability" – have gained traction in current popular music studies. In recent years, "musical ecosystems" have been proposed as both a lens through which to examine popular music cultures and an alternative to previous frameworks (e.g. Durkheim's milieu sociale, Hebdige's subculture, Becker's art world, Bourdieu's cultural field, Finnegan's pathway, Straw's scene, Brinner's network, or Shelemay's community). This ecological turn shows no signs of disappearing either: the 2015 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are set to underpin the global socio-political agenda until 2030, and therefore "sustainability" in all its guises (economic, social, and environmental) seems destined to remain the watchword of the early twenty-first century, with activists, academics, and politicians all struggling to balance its wide-ranging meanings and interpretations to address the urgent economic, environmental, and humanitarian challenges facing the planet. Sustainability and associated ecological terminology is therefore likely to continue to migrate from the world of policy-speak and embed itself into the discourse of arts and culture. What are the merits of an ecosystemic approach to theorizing and researching popular music practice? This paper pulls together literature from a wide range of areas (e.g. music industry market research, ecomusicology / musicology, ethnomusicology, sociology of music, popular music studies) to compare and critique the deployment of a musical ecosystems framework, including its use as a current buzzword by both scholars and music professionals outside the academy. Indeed, "ecosystem" and "sustainability" have become incredibly slippery concepts, and these terms have now been co-opted (and sometimes abused) for a multitude of diverging purposes by industry lobbying groups, policymakers, and academics across the creative sector. This paper therefore weighs the future prospects of framing popular music through an ecological perspective.

Abstracts

Richard Elliott (Newcastle University, United Kingdom): Songs as Systems: Objects, Ecologies, Weather, Viruses

Recent years have witnessed an intense interest in the roles played by objects in the world. While clear distinctions exist between the influential work of Bruno Latour, the 'thing theory' of Bill Brown, the speculative realism of Graham Harman and the 'new materialisms' proposed by Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, these approaches are bound by a recognition of the vital interdependence of human and non-human actors. My current research aims to establish the importance of music in this new terrain of scholarship by analysing how songs represent objects, how songs themselves become meaningful objects and how songs rely on a wide range of ever-changing objects to assure their survival. Using the connecting thread of materiality, the project offers an approach to musical analysis that both connects with recent object-centred scholarship and overcomes existing musicological distinctions between music as thing and music as process. The approach utilises a tripartite structure encompassing songs about objects, songs as objects and songs in objects. This paper zooms in on a specific aspect of the project's second strand by detailing the way in which systems-related approaches have been applied to the production and reception of pop songs in recent years. Concept albums such as Björk's Biophilia (2011) and Kaitlyn Aurelia Smith's The Kid (2017) are marked by organic approaches to electronic sound that create new song forms. These forms may best be understood in meteorological terms, as weather systems or ecosystems that model an affective fragility and fluidity. Of equal interest, and in seeming contrast, are viral metaphors which focus on the durability of song forms, where song is understood as something that not only sings the singer, but also retains a survival instinct that outlasts specific human and nonhuman songholders precisely by showing adaptability to non-traditional forms. I will illustrate these ideas through analyses of songs by Björk, Kaitlyn Aurelia Smith, FKA twigs, Grimes, David Sylvian and James Blake. In closing I will consider the kind of systems-based song analysis modelled here as an alternative to earlier analytical systems while suggesting that the materiality of song offers new ways of considering object-centred philosophy.

José Gálvez (Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany): Pop Music Analysis: Old Issues, New Perspectives

Over the past few years, philosophy, musicology, gender and postcolonial studies have (re)discovered pop music as an interesting and productive subject of reflection. Particularly, the analysis of pop music has been a fertile and disputed arena of research. Several authors as Robin James, Cora S. Palfy, Johannes Ismaiel-Wendt, Ragnhild Torvanger Solberg or Ralf von Appen have been committed to the task of analyzing pop music as well as dealing with the methodical challenges it implies. Yet some current analytical approaches had not fully considered two fundamental aspects of pop music that have been widely discussed within the popular music studies: industrial structures and technology. It can be argued that both industrial structures (Frith, Negus) and technology (Théberge, Wicke) are constitutive elements of the aesthetics of pop music, and should therefore be integrated in its analysis. By briefly hearing and analyzing selected sonic manifestation of current pop music this paper aims to address and problematize three tensions in current analysis of pop music directly related to industrial structures and technology: (1) Object – Praxis, (2) Narrativity – Materiality and (3) Consume – Appropriation I claim that an analysis of pop music which conceptualizes pop music as an object-related praxis, highlights its materiality and concretizes its modes of appropriation, as some approaches have shown, can provide innovative insights into key issues of humanities, such as corporality, meaning, subjectivation, power and time. Here pop music analysis is always sociocultural analysis through pop music. Indeed, the tactility of sub-bass at Berlin techno clubs, the slippery robotic voices in current hip hop and trap as well as the extreme modularity of EDM can be analyzed as specific sonic means of (re)producing, negotiating, experiencing and even challenging structures and processes of modern societies.

Abstracts

Abigail Gardner (University of Gloucestershire, United Kingdom): Pop Out of Time: Anohni and transgendered/transage transgression

The 82-year-old Black Avant-garde artist Lorraine O'Grady stares out of a black screen, she is unclothed bar a pair of silver earrings and choker; her mouth is painted a bright vermilion red. She lip-synchs to Anohni's single 'Marrow' taken from the 2016 album Hopelessness. This ageing Black female artist is Anohni's avatar, the image that represents her within a popular audio-visual culture, circulating on YouTube. Anohni is a transgender musician whose recent musical work and artistic collaborations emphasise intersectionality and feminism's relationship with ecology. This paper uses the music videos for Hopelessness and Paradise as a springboard from which to argue the complexity of transgressive potential in relation to ageing and 'othered' femininities. All except one of the videos use a similar method of inserting Anohni's transgendered voice into the mouths of Black, ageing, non-normative women in what I argue is a strategy of displacement that doubles up the transgressive potential of Anohni's work. She upsets a singular subjectivity through this process and also, if we think of her voice and its vocalisation as being somehow out of sync, in so far as it is displaced, then her work also prioritises a sense of being 'out of time'. The paper works with two of Judith Halberstam's concepts from her 2005 writing on 'Queer temporality' where she argues for the concept of a 'queer time' that lies beyond the logics of heteronormative and capitalist temporal certitude and trajectory and for the 'patina of transgression' (p.19) that transgendered bodies suggest. It formulates how the audio-visual contributions of one transgendered artist ushers into popular culture versions of liminal and flexible subjectivities in relation to gender and age that also encompass race and sexuality. This is a lot to deal with but it uses O'Grady's work on miscegenation and work on TimeSpace and ageing (May and Thrift, 2001; Moglen, 2008; Baars, 2012; Hawkins, 2016) to ask questions about the transgressive potential of both transgendered voices and of ageing bodies, whose presence is emblematic of a 'queer time' (p.4), and a temporality that is 'wilfully eccentric' (p.1) and subject to a non-normative life-course.

Kai Arne Hansen (University of Oslo, Norway): Analyzing Pop Personae Across Media: Take That and Aging Masculinities

 Popular music is sold largely on the basis of the artist's identity (Hawkins 2002), which is a point that emphasizes the social and cultural significance of music in relation to notions of gender, sexuality, age, class, ethnicity and so on. While this aspect of popular music has been studied both by musicologists and scholars from other fields, recent technological and cultural developments prompt new investigations into the representational strategies that prevail among contemporary pop artists. In this paper, I investigate how artist identities – or pop personae – are articulated across a variety of platforms. As such, I argue for a broader definition of persona than that which dominates current scholarship on popular music (e.g. Moore 2012), and propose an interdisciplinary method that merges critical music analysis and audiovisual analysis with a broader interpretive and interdisciplinary approach. My primary focus falls on British boy band Take That, who are now approaching their fifties. I explore their meticulous staging of gendered identity through and across media channels including sound recordings, music videos, social media, interviews, photographs, artwork, and documentaries, focusing on recent material to provide a fresh and contemporary take on the familiar boy band phenomenon. The term "boy band" quickly becomes a misnomer when members age into their forties and fifties, and I argue that this state of affairs opens up a discursive space within which norms of masculinity can be challenged and contested. Aging masculinities are commonly marginalized and depicted as in decay. Countering such sentiments, I consider Take That's self-ironizing as a point of entry for tackling issues of humor and campness in popular music, and excavate how their advancing age provides them with opportunities as much as challenges for fashioning their masculinities.

Abstracts

David Kaminsky (University of California, Merced, United States): Blackvoice, White Fans: Hip-Hop Authenticity and the Battle of the Azaleas

When a twitter user claiming to represent hacker collective Anonymous threatened to release stills from a sex tape by Iggy Azalea as punishment for her appropriations of hip-hop, the act exemplified a broader trend wherein predominantly white male critics of cultural appropriation target white female blackvoice singers using distinctly misogynist rhetoric. I contextualize this phenomenon by suggesting that appropriation is best understood not as cultural theft (a frame that allows appropriators to cast themselves as outlaw iconoclasts) but rather as cultural plunder, supported by the full force of imperialist violence, and as a performance of dominance that effectively uses those plundered icons to put on a puppet show. In the postcolonial era, however, empire often masks that dominance by projecting an inversion of the traditional gendered relationship of masculine colonizer to feminine colonized—contrasting the putative patriarchy of the Other against women's rights in the enlightened West—as a revised justification for global white supremacy. This inversion also enables white men to appropriate the Other's supposedly inherent patriarchy in order to license and mask their own sexism, a phenomenon exemplified by the cultivation of misogyny within mainstream black hip-hop via the disproportionate buying power of its white male fan base. When white female pop stars start appropriating the (black, masculine) hip-hop voice, that act of cultural plunder reinforces the gender-inverted projection of postcolonial power, but also threatens white male fan ownership of black musical authenticity. This confluence of effects allows white male critics to vent their colonialist/misogynist frustrations by appropriating black outrage at cultural appropriation.

Emil Kraugerud (University of Oslo, Norway): Constructions of Intimacy in St. Vincent's "Hang On me"

In the proposed paper, I will analyze and discuss the vocal staging in the song "Hang On Me" from St. Vincent's recent album, MASSEDUCTION (2017). In the analysis, I will focus on how the production of the voice plays on embodied notions of intimacy in terms of exaggerating certain characteristics of actual intimate voices, resulting in a kind of intimacy that can be regarded as surreal. The exaggeration of intimate vocal characteristics present in this song, as well as in others, resemble how pop music videos often direct attention to the human body in exaggerated ways, which Stan Hawkins (see, e.g., Hawkins, 2013), among others, has addressed with the term hyperembodiment. To address the ways in which recorded intimacy directs exaggerated attention to the embodied voice, I suggest to introduce the term hyperintimacy. Hyperintimacy thus refers to an exaggerated form of intimacy, including, for example, the ways in which an intimate voice can occur in an otherwise unintimate sound setting. While vocal staging and spatiality, and their impact on communication of meaning, are now much-explored topics (see, e.g., Brøvig-Hanssen & Danielsen, 2016; Doyle, 2005; Lacasse, 2000; Moore, 2012; Zagorski-Thomas, 2014), this paper will focus on a specific type of spatiality, namely intimacy. Intimacy is an essential human phenomenon that has been largely explored in other fields, such as in psychology, sociology and literature. While it has been remarked upon in several analyses of musical spatiality, it has yet to be properly theorized, especially in the context of music production. With this paper, then, I will devote attention to some aspects of intimacy in recorded popular sound, as well as investigate the notion of recorded intimacy as an embodied phenomenon.

Abstracts

Anders Liljedahl (University of Copenhagen, Denmark): Sound & Color: Racializing Audiovisual Interdependencies in Music Videos

This paper aims to conceptualize the music video as a medium of understanding intersections between racialization and technology in Western popular culture by analyzing and interpreting clips from Tinashe's video, "Faded Love", and Frank Ocean's visual album, Endless. I argue that music video aesthetics highlights ways in which black American artists are both mechanized and mechanizing. I base myself on Carol Vernallis (2004; 2013) who argues that, in music videos, sound directs the visuals rather than merely emphasizing them, which is dissimilar to other mainstream audiovisual media such as narrative film or commercials. Vernallis shows that, in an otherwise ocular-centric popular culture, the music video is able to equalize the relationship between sound and vision and to highlight the interrelationships between sonic and visual technologies. By means of audiovisual analysis, I argue that (traditional) music video upsets commonly perceived hierarchical notions between audition and vision, and between the phonic-as-ephemeral and the graphic-as-fixed. Finally, utilizing Black studies scholars such as Alexander Weheliye and Fred Moten, the paper contends that the audiovisual and phonographic upset recasts the role of black bodies and their relation to the audiovisual as both mechanized objects and mechanizing subjects.

Matthew Lovett (University of Gloucestershire, United Kingdom): Apparatuses of Capture: Disruptive Platforms and Reactionary Musics

Angela Nagle's 2017 book, Kill All Normies, presented an incisive exploration and critique of the way in which recent, so-called 'online culture wars', waged on boards such as 4chan and platforms such as Tumblr, have led to an increasingly reactionary, and indeed, conservative culture. In a review of the book, Vice Magazine quote Richard Spencer, President of The National Policy Institute and Co-founder of AltRight.com: 'in a culture which offers video games, endless entertainment, drugs, alcohol, porn, sports, and a thousand other distractions to convince us of another reality, we want to cut all of that away' (Spencer, cited in Kiberd, 2017). As such, the article suggests that 'more than anything, Kill All Normies is about a battle for the real.' (Kiberd, 2017). Nagle's book thus lays down a challenge: to engage with the results of her work and use this as a lens through which we can inspect other aspects of contemporary culture, such as popular music, where similar 'battles for the real' may be currently raging... This paper will therefore take three perspectives, Nick Srnicek's work on 'Platform Capitalism', Attali's classic work on the political economy of music, Noise, along with recent strains of contemporary philosophical theory that have sought to identify an inherent contingency within the nature of reality, and use these trajectories to triangulate the ongoing 'platformisation' of music consumption into what could be described in Deleuzian terms, an 'apparatus of capture'. In the context of recent imbalances in chart profiling (for example Ed Sheeran's domination of the UK Singles Chart Top 20 in March 2017), caused by evolving approaches to capturing music streaming data, the paper will argue that streaming and its attendant analysis of big data, is not only emblematic of Attali's framing of music as 'the organisation of noise', but also a signal for the propensity for music and media platforms, themselves apparatuses designed to capture unthinkably large amounts of user data, to propagate what could be seen as an increasingly reactionary tendency in contemporary popular music.

Abstracts

Veronika Muchitsch (Uppsala University, Sweden): Considering Corporeality, Subjectivity and Voice in ANOHNI's "Drone Bomb Me"

In 'Drone Bomb Me', ANOHNI's vocal performance moves subtly between different vocal qualities: at times sounding intimately present and direct, at others shimmering and dispersed, at times foregrounding its corporeal, at others its technological processes of production. All the while, ANOHNI's trembling voice is intensely recognizable and calls into memory performances with her previous artistic project Antony and the Johnsons. The reception history of both artistic projects illustrates both, the urge and difficulty to submit the artist's voice to a binary gender system and normative ideas of corporeality and subjectivity. ANOHNI herself has repeatedly expressed the desire to severe the ostensibly tight bond of voice and body, in fact, to annihilate her body. On "Drone Bomb Me", ANOHNI quite literally utilizes Steven Connor's concept of the "vocalic body" (2000) – the process of imagining a body when hearing an acousmatic voice – as she juxtaposes her voice with other bodies in text and image. Thus, while severing the bond between voice and her own body, the artist's performance foregrounds corporeality in lyrics, videos and live performances. By asking, whose bodies are presented, and in which ways, I aim to begin to analyze the complex intersectional ramifications of ANOHNI's vocal performance across sonic, textual and visual dimensions.

L.J. Müller (Humboldt University of Berlin, Germany): Hearing Whiteness? Thoughts on an Elusive Subject

Whiteness in cultural products is at the same time a place of invisible normativity and of specific white ideals (purity, innocence, civilization, rationality) that might verge into nightmares of white congealment and death (Dyer, Wollrad, Wachendorfer). It only comes into being in relation to excluded and stereotyped others, that are necessary for the production of an homogenic normative and seemingly neutral ideal, which usually stays out of sight, as Whiteness as source of the white gaze (Fanon) usually avoids observing itself. Further racism can be related to fetishistic structures that repress, devalue and idealize differences at the same time and are necessary for the production of privileged "racial" subjectivity (Bhabha). In addition, Whiteness has not to be understood as an essential attribute of any person or group but as a repeated doing, comparable to gender performativity (Butler, Hall). Therefore, whiteness poses special problems as any analysis has to tackle and deal with this very elusive structure itself. In my own work I aim to analyze the reproduction, naturalization and actualization of inequality (up to now: particularly sexism) in sound. Therefore, I developed tools for music analysis based on the idea of a positioned embodiment (sonic body), that is transported in popular music and enables different pleasures in relation to sound. I further relate these to psychoanalytic structures, which are relevant for sexism and racism and place individuals either as normative or as other. In my presentation I will try to make the unseen norm of Whiteness hearable and discuss how sound partakes in the permanent production and legitimation of invisible White privilege. Discussing some examples of current popular music, I want to show how seemingly innocent songs might implicitly teach us a lot about race in the 21st century. Probable examples might be by Rag'n'Bone Man, Taylor Swift, Ed Sheeran or Lady Gaga.

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Abstracts

Per-Henning Olsson (Uppsala University, Sweden): Playing with Expectations. Ambiguous Metre and Rhythmic Play in AC/DC's Music

The music of the Australian hard rock band AC/DC is meant to rock, that is, to make the listener feel the groove in the music, and to move to the music. AC/DC listeners participate in the music bodily (like most rock- and metal listeners), they tap their feet, nod or bang their head, and the live audience pump with their fists in the air or jump to the music. AC/DC's treatment of rhythm, especially the way in which they create their groove, is a characteristic feature in their sound. The backbeat pattern plays a pivotal role in their groove since it is used in almost all songs and since a considerable number of riffs seem to be built up around this pattern. The way listeners groove and move to AC/DC's music emanate from the pattern, both when the drums play it and when they do not – in the latter case the listeners' expectations of the pattern guide how they groove. In this presentation I want to show how AC/DC play with these expectations in the 1985 song "Shake Your Foundations" and a couple of other songs: here we find metrical ambiguity in the beginning, examples of "rhythmic play" (Hesselink 2014). A theoretical starting point is that the analysis of rhythm and metre is meaningful when the listeners' expectations are taken into consideration, that the experience should be seen as part of the rhythm. I argue that the effect of the metrical ambiguity is strong in this context. The bodily experience of the rhythmic play in AC/DC's music is far more powerful than the similar ambiguity in rock music genres characterized by mixed or unusual time signatures and advanced and ambiguous rhythms, like progressive rock or math-metal. An important question is how the rhythmic play in AC/DC's music can be understood: Is it a special kind of communication between artist and listeners, where the listeners are challenged by the artist? Is it something that is meant to divide listeners into "real fans" that understand what happens and "secondary listeners" that get confused?

Rebecca Rinsema (Northern Arizona University, United States): The Politics of Coming of Age: Nostalgia for Innocence in Millennial Popular Music

Music that nostalgically recalls childhood and innocence is trending with young millennials (Zers). In 21 Pilots' video for their chart-topping song 'Stressed Out , ' twenty-somethings ride oversized tricycles, wish for their mothers' lullabies, and long for candles scented with their childhoods. In Major Lazer and DJ Snake's 'Lean On,' Danish singer MØ remembers simpler times: 'when we would walk on the sidewalk; innocent.' The phenomenon traverses popular music genres. Chance the Rapper regrets 'burn holes in his memories' while missing his mother's 'cocoa butter kisses' and recently released the mixtape Coloring Book . At EDM festivals bright colors, kiddie costumes, and candy, alongside other substances, encourage millennials to party like adult children. EDM's repetitious structures and over-obvious tensions and releases (bass drops) recall children's songs, sonically reinforcing the nostalgia. This trend counters themes of rebellion and independence that have shaped youth music since rock's birth, circa 1950. Thus, my aim is to situate this music within its political, social, and technological contexts to understand its emergence. First, I explore constructions of childhood generally. While adults have long constructed childhood and innocence via music and literature, late adolescent constructions of childhood and innocence are under-explored. Next, I relate these constructions to the public discourse on childhood innocence. In retrospect, the '80s discourse concerned loss of innocence from television, music and violence therein, contributing to heightened, 'helicopter parent' surveillance of children during the '90s. Recent discourse, however, reveals an opposing concern: millennials stay children too long and become financially responsible too slowly. The political and technological backdrop is important here. Millennials have come of age in uncertain post-9/11 times, littered with real-time media reports of gun violence, terror attacks, and economic instability that have primed them to seek nostalgia for simpler times (and feel-the-Bern utopia). Mike Brake theorizes that youth culture arises out of societal problems. Following Brake's theory, one could argue that despite helicopter parenting, instability in their formative years has led Zers to believe they lacked innocence even in their childhood. As such, this music allows them to imagine and mourn a childhood innocence they only wish to have experienced, a prime of example of Attali's 'play of mirrors.'

Abstracts

Bernhard Steinbrecher (University of Innsbruck, Austria): Analysing Nuances in Popular Music: Toward a better Understanding of its Aesthetic Experience

Music analytical approaches do not seem very helpful to better understand why only so few pieces of music gain widespread popularity, while most of the others, although obviously similar, do not. Musicologists usually have a rich, well-established vocabulary to describe harmony, tonality, pitch organisation, form and meter. It is those musical aspects which can frequently leave one unsatisfied when analysing contemporary popular songs, where they often seem quickly examinable and make the music appear simple and exchangeable. In this paper, I will look beyond these discrete musical dimensions and discuss, on the basis of approaches from cognitive psychology, processes happening on the very micro level of recordings. The tone-to-tone relations as well as tone-internal variations and gradations, analytically to be addressed by dimensions of microrhythm, microtonality, and articulation, are considered as crucial for identifying, contextualising, and evaluating music. Such nuances can be understood as slight variations within a cognitive category. They are worth an analysis not only for being considered as important factor in musical interpretation and for the characterisation of typical playing styles. It is their role in musical valuation which makes them particularly interesting for scientific examination. They can contribute to the appealing sensation of slight unstableness, inconsistency and unpredictability, not least because they are difficult to memorise and can be rediscovered more than once. Since the aesthetic experience of the exemplarily analysed songs, from David Guetta to D'Angelo, does, of course, not happen in a vacuum, they will be interpreted in connection to their extra-musical contexts.

Monika Voithofer (University of Graz, Austria): "…it takes harmony and the electric guitar for granted…" The New Discipline as a Bridge Between Contemporary and Pop Music

Since the beginning of the 21st century a young generation of composers in the field of contemporary music, such as Alexander Schubert, Johannes Kreidler or Annesley Black, developed multimedia-based compositional strategies which are influenced by pop culture and pop sound in a very ambiguous way. The Irish composer Jennifer Walshe, for example, made a much-acclaimed theoretical contribution to describe her artistic work within the field of the so-called "New Discipline". In the programme of the Norwegian contemporary music festival Borealis she wrote in the year 2016: "The New Discipline is a way of working, both in terms of composing and preparing pieces for performance. […] too much has happened since the 1970s for that term to work here. MTV, the Internet, Beyonce ripping off Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, Stewart Lee, Girls, style blogs and yoga classes at Darmstadt, Mykki Blanco, the availability of cheap cameras and projectors, the supremacy of YouTube documentations over performances. Maybe what is at stake for the New Discipline is the fact that these pieces, these modes of thinking about the world, these compositional techniques – they are not "music theatre", they *are* music." What do all the works within the so-called "New Discipline" have in common, is a specific audiovisual setting, that asks for a multisensory, instead of just an auditory perception. Therefore, in a systematical, highly interdisciplinary approach with regards to the performance studies, I will scrutinize the role of mediality, materiality and performativity. In my presentation, some selected works will be introduced to highlight important aspects of the influence of pop culture and pop music as detected in contemporary music production. In particular, the question of whether a differentiation between pop and contemporary music in such wide-ranging performance practices can ever be drawn, is being subjected through an exhaustive examination.

Abstracts

Victor Szabo (Hampden-Sydney College, United States): A Design-Oriented Approach to Recorded Music Analysis and "Post-Genre Genres"

 In visual culture, the term "design" straddles the worlds of craft and fine art to describe the aesthetic presentation of mass-manufactured commodities. Though the term "design" does not often arise in music scholarship, Adam Krims has suggested that conceiving of recorded music in terms of design may reveal how recordings combine "aesthetic and utilitarian worlds under the rubric of the commercial." (2010:69) This paper forwards two propositions for the analysis of recorded music in a time of scattered attention, an era that Anahid Kassabian calls "ubiquitous listening." First, it proposes a design-oriented approach to recorded music analysis. In an age where music functions flexibly as an object of attention and as an environmental mediation, music's designs work simultaneously across different stages of consumption and attentional modes, remaining open to multiple interpretations and uses as people observe, select, and consume media on the basis of qualitatively different investments, and toward different ends. Conceptualizing recorded music in terms of design can help account for the agency of musical aesthetics and affect alike within this regime. Design-oriented analysis reconciles the scholarly polarization of recorded music as either bounded aesthetic text or everyday mediation, treating recorded music instead as an environmental feature that may function as both aesthetic text and affective mediation, suggesting certain listening strategies and subjective attitudes without demanding them. This framework of understanding finds sympathy with ecological approaches to recorded music consumption undertaken by such scholars as Eric Clarke, Tia DeNora, Simon Zagorski-Thomas, and others. Secondly, this paper argues that, despite claims that we have moved into a post-genre era of inattentive listening and stylistic hybridity, genres still organize practices of recorded music production, programming, and listening. These symbolic interpretive frames, while inherently unstable and internally incoherent, serve as an index of the social values that inform recorded music aesthetics and uses alike. A brief survey of the aesthetic and affective designs central to three purportedly "post-genre genres"—alternative, ambient, and cloud rap—reveals common investments in melancholic asociality and soft masculinity as lifestyle brands.

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