

Oxford Brookes University
Department of Music
Postgraduate Sponsored Symposium

Mastering the Mix
Interdisciplinarity in
Musicology and Compositional Practice



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The Green Room, Headington Hill Hall
Oxford Brookes University
Wednesday, 5 June 2013 at 9.30 am

OXFORD
BROOKES
UNIVERSITY

SYMPORIUM PROGRAMME

9.30 - 9.45 am: **Registration**

9.45 - 10.00 am: **Introduction and welcome (Thomas May)**

10.00 - 11.00 am **Session 1 (Chair: Thomas May)**

Russell Burdekin (Oxford Brookes University): Michael William Balfe, an unwitting cultural bellwether

Christina Michael (City University, London): The compositions of Manos Hadjidakis for ancient Greek drama: issues of authenticity and national identity

11.00 - 11.15 am **Coffee**

11.15 - 12.15 pm **Session 2 (Chair: Russell Burdekin)**

Jun Zubillaga-Pow (King's College, London): Beethoven hysterical

Tom Hewitt (Open University): Blessed are the cheese-makers

12.15 - 1.25 pm **Lunch**

1.25 - 2.25 pm **Session 3 (Chair: Adrian Marchant)**

Martin Ledvinka (Charles University, Prague): *Creatio ex nihilo*: narrativity of imitative soundtrack in television oratorio *Genesis*

Thomas May (Oxford Brookes University): Unveiling *Musique Concrète*: an ecological approach to the audio-visual relationship in Masaki Kobayashi's *Kwaidan*

2.25 – 2.30 pm **Break**

2.30 – 3.30 pm **Session 4 (Chair: Michael Smith)**

Anthony Meynell (London College of Music): Analysis of the composition, recording and collective production of "I Am The Walrus" by The Beatles

Elizabeth Pipe (London College of Music): The use of gesture and character in popular music performance

3.30 – 3.45 pm **Refreshments**

3.45 - 4.30 pm **Roundtable discussion (Chair: Russell Burdekin)**

Including Pete Dale (PMRU); Barbara Eichner (OBERTO); Paul Whitty (SARU)

4.30 pm **Close**

ABSTRACTS

Michael William Balfe, an unwitting cultural bellwether

Russell Burdekin, Oxford Brookes University

Few black characters appear in 19th century opera. However, Balfe included them in three of his English operas: *The Maid of Artois* (1836), *Diadeste* (1838) and *The Bondman* (1846). Although only two years separated the first two, they show markedly different attitudes to blacks. The first can be seen as largely benign, even if patronising, confining and racist in some respects, but the second offered only a portrait of exaggerated ridicule.

The immediate cause for this change was the arrival in England in 1836 of T.D. Rice and his “Jim Crow” blackface minstrelsy routines. His resulting popularity in Britain is not immediately explicable with most people’s knowledge of blacks largely shaped by anti-slavery narratives but partly it must have been the sheer novelty value for a rapidly growing urbanised population who increasingly demanded entertainment. However, this dismissive image of blacks combined with a rising English nationalism led within a few decades to a much harsher imperialistic set of attitudes, although *The Bondman* harked back to earlier attitudes.

Edward Fitzball, *Diadeste*’s librettist, was a popular dramatist who was finely tuned to what would sell and no doubt thought that the addition of a similar routine would help the opera’s chances even though it was superfluous to the plot. In the event, while the opera had moderate success, the inclusion of a “Jim Crow” like role was less well received. Possibly including popular music in this way was becoming less critically acceptable as opera began to move towards a more elitist idea of opera as “art”.

Blessed are the cheese-makers

Tom Hewitt, Open University

My paper develops the Deleuzean concept of the rhizome by proposing the notion of the fungal mycelium as a metaphorical ‘meaning-space’ in which individuals and cultures construct (and de-construct) musical meaning. Does the structure of the fungal mycelium provide a useful metaphor to explain a proposed metaphysical meaning-space for music? Why this metaphor rather than some others? Why describe music in terms of metaphysics rather than a phenomenological or epistemological account?

Babette Babich said at a recent London conference that, ‘It is the role of continental philosophy to make explanations more complex rather than less’. I will assert that explanations of musical meaning in the analytical tradition fail in virtue of the fact that they are not complex enough. I will propose that musical meaning is fundamentally indeterminate when considered diachronically. Finally, I will contend that any real-world phenomenal explanation of how we determine musical meaning must take into account this complex and indeterminate metaphysics.

I will illustrate my points by reference to two musical exemplars; the first movement of *Beethoven's String Quartet in A minor, Op. 132* and a recent ‘piece’ by me, *Network*, put together with the iPad app Garageband. The relevance of the eponymous cheese-makers of the title will become clear in this context.

Creatio ex nihilo: narrativity of imitative soundtrack in television oratorio Genesis

Martin Ledvinka, Charles University, Prague

In this paper I will propose a deconstructive analysis of an audiovisual object created in the context of television opera. I will center my discussion on the television oratorio “Genesis” created by the Polish composer Zbigniew Wisznewski and the Czech director Pavel Hobl. Produced in 1969 by the Czechoslovak Television and the German ZDF, this work is in many ways exceptional within the broader context of the genre of television opera for its use of sound–image relationship. I will concentrate, in particular, on the way in which Wisznewski’s music and Hobl’s visual track use onomatopoetic effects to produce meaning, on the role of the voice within the soundtrack, and on the significance of the soundtrack’s movement between diegetic and extra-diegetic space. I will suggest that through these means, oratorio “Genesis” creates a commentary on the dichotomy of the chaotic Matter and the Creator’s Word bringing the Matter to order as it has been presented by biblical text of Genesis. By depicting the process of signification the oratorio undermines the very same cultural tropes (logocentrism, phallocentrism, superiority of culture over nature, men over women) which it represents in itself. Thus, this analysis in its effect reveals the subversive potential of the oratorio “Genesis” and suggests a way in which deconstructive concepts could be used for an audiovisual analysis.

Unveiling *Musique Concrète*: An ecological approach to the audio-visual relationship in Masaki Kobayashi’s *Kwaidan*

Thomas May, Oxford Brookes University

Ever since its inception in 1948, the compositional practice of *musique concrète* has been intertwined with the two related concepts of acousmatic sound and reduced listening. According to the theory of the music’s founding composer Pierre Schaeffer, *musique concrète* should be heard without any form of visual accompaniment: that is, it should be heard as ‘acousmatic’ sound. In this solely aural environment, the listener can then supposedly enter into a state of ‘reduced’ listening, focusing solely on the immanent features of the sounds themselves whilst ‘bracketing out’ any knowledge of the existence and/or identity of their causal origins.

I will begin this presentation with a brief survey of a number of recent objections to this aspect of Schaefferian theory, all of which explicitly or implicitly align themselves with James Gibson's ecological theory of perception. I will use ecological theory in order to suggest that reduced listening might merely be a convenient fiction and that if, conversely, the state of reduced listening is indeed possible, then the acousmatic situation might in fact hinder its acquisition. I will then proceed to an analysis of Tōru Takemitsu's *musique concrète* score for Masaki Kobayashi's horror film *Kwaidan* (1964). By considering the film's audio-visual relationship from an ecological perspective, I hope to argue that a weak form of reduced listening – what I will call 'immanent listening' – can be promoted in the audio-visual realm.

My analysis will thus suggest that Schaefferian theory is misguided in affording particular significance to the acousmatic setting and will argue for the artistic potential of the pairing of electroacoustic music with the moving image.

Analysis of the composition, recording and collective production of *I Am The Walrus* by The Beatles

Anthony Meynell, London College of Music

"I am he, as you are he, as you are me, and we are all together" – *I Am The Walrus*, 1967

By 1967, recording popular music had evolved from producing an audio facsimile of a live performance that was "as accurate as possible" to using the studio as an instrument. The innovative development of recording techniques during the psychedelic period of 1966 to 1968, led to the creation of sounds employing methods such as backwards tape, tape speed manipulation, phasing, distortion, collage etc., to try and create the soundscapes the musicians were demanding for their new psychedelic records.

Tagg describes the need for a musicological model that tackles popular music content analysis, and contributes towards the understanding of "why and how does who communicate what to whom and with what effect?" This paper considers how an interdisciplinary approach to musical analysis is vital to understand the complex creative transactions inherent in the recording process that become part of the compositional activity.

By examining the recording of The Beatles "I Am The Walrus" and considering not only the traditional musicological interpretation of the music, but the technical, spectrographic, psychoacoustic, ritual, social, cultural, economic, temporal, psychological and even architectural influences, this analysis provides a deeper appreciation of the tapestry of interactions and the creative stimuli of practical constraints. It considers what may be seen as arbitrary in the process, as vital to the outcome. In this way it describes the collective production of the recorded artifact that embodies the composition.

The compositions of Manos Hadjidakis for ancient Greek drama: issues of authenticity and national identity

Christina Michael, City University, London

In this presentation I intent to focus on Manos Hadjidakis' compositions for ancient Greek drama and the ways in which certain elements of authenticity and national identity are constantly raised. There is a discussion over the so-called 'Greekness' of those works as well as a discussion on alleged relations to anterior genres of Greek music that lead to theories of musical continuity. Furthermore, there is a specific focus on the shift of 'art' music to 'popular' on the stage of ancient Greek drama and the bridging of the chasm between the two through the creation of a new hybrid genre of music in Greece during the 1950s, that of the 'art-popular' tradition [entechno laiko]. This PhD thesis, apart from crossing the musicological boundaries, being in the verge of traditional musicology, ethnomusicology and popular music studies it also involves aspects of other disciplines. The aspect of interdisciplinarity is manifested in this presentation through the use of history and criticism, as well as politics especially as far as Greek nationalism and national identity are concerned. Furthermore my work is influenced by classics, specifically the reception of ancient Greek drama in the 20th century.

The use of gesture and character in popular music performance

Elizabeth Pipe, London College of Music

The visual representation of current, live popular music performance can be considered to be more akin to many aspects of (music) theatre than ever before – not least through the physical embodiment of the persona of the performing musician, which has significant implications on the perception of how the music is perceived by the viewing audience. With this in mind, the use of the physical self and body in communication becomes an important focal area – the areas of gesture and movement allow the performer to express the meaning of the music through ways which are nonmusical.

This research is focused on dealing with the psychology of interpretation and communication, and seeks to gain an insight into the inclusion and repercussions of the use of gesture and character, in various different guises, on vocal popular music performance. The areas of music, dance, theatre, language, identity construction, and the use of the physical body in communication are all explored, and by considering music performance via the theoretical constructs of performance studies, the placement of the actual musical content within the performance is completely altered; thus asking 'what the music does or allows people to do' (Madrid, 2009, p.2), rather than what the music is.

This paper presents an analysis of the performance video of 'Picking Up the Pieces' by Paloma Faith, and focuses on the areas of costume, hair and make-up; examining the impact of the inclusion of these visual stimuli on the aural perception of the song.

Beethoven hysteric

Jun Zubillaga-Pow, King's College, London

This paper uses Lacanian psychoanalytic theory as a method of analysing and revealing the psychical processes behind the act of composing music. Framed around the subjective categories of mastery, fantasy and hysteria, I suggest that composers undergo a developmental trajectory of grappling with different sonic objects and their infinite musical meanings. In contrast to psychological reactions during improvisation, the life-long creativity of Beethoven is assessed as a case study where particular draft sketches from his three periods are compared chronologically to understand the musical cognitive perceptions of and by composers themselves.

Since the early twentieth-century, musicologists have dedicated more of their research work to uncovering the creative desires behind Beethoven's compositions through his sketches and autographs. While the fallacious correlation between biography and composition has been amiably settled, the question of genius and heroic qualities in the composer and his music remain contentious among Beethoven scholars like Scott Burnham and Stephen Rumph.

As a part of the larger scholarship in Beethoven studies as well as psychoanalytic research, I argue that the structural method of the latter will assist academics and the greater public to understand how Beethoven and his late style of composition can also be mundanely human and hysterical. Via the rereading of analyses by three musicologists – Barry Cooper, Martha Frohlich and Robert Winter, I will trace Beethoven's artistic development through a psychoanalytic progression from the infantile to the subjective to the hysterical.