

Reports

Research Projects

RAP, RIGHTS AND RESPECT! – A MUSICAL ANTHROPOLOGY OF HIP HOP, RAP MUSIC, VIOLENCE AND FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION IN PRIMARILY MIDDLE EASTERN MIGRANT COMMUNITIES IN COPENHAGEN

In Denmark generalizing public narratives of people with migrant background have been increasing during the past few years. These predominantly negative stories stigmatize migrants as ‘strangers’ unwilling to let themselves integrate in the Danish society, sometimes even associating especially Middle Eastern migrants with radical terrorism or Islamic extremism. Such discriminating stories of migrants in general can be understood as an outcome of a Danish nationalist discourse, which at the moment has obtained more political influence than ever.

Based on ethnographic field research among primarily Middle Eastern migrant rappers living in socially deprived areas of Copenhagen this Ph.D. project (2010–2013, Section of Musicology, Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen) addresses how young migrants use rap music in striking up against this Danish nationalist discourse, demanding rights, respect, and recognition in the Danish society. Among other things it discusses how some migrant rappers re-appropriate the migrant stigma of being *perker* in mobilizing an identity contrasting the national Danish identity.

On a theoretical level the project wishes to conceptualize the ongoing processes of identity construction involving participation in the local migrant rap communities. For that reason it will also investigate, which role different locally placed community-based rap projects play in these rap communities and for the youths participating. Understanding music as an important means in individual and collective identity processes and as an embodying and semantically structuring tool in communication, the project moreover discusses how we can conceptualize musical agencies of rap expressing alternative cultural and political identities.

In addition, the project wishes to elucidate whether – and if so how – the stigmatizing public narratives of migrants as well as the general association between rap and violence affect the rappers’ opportunities to express themselves freely.

Kristine Ringsager

SILENCE/NOISE OF THE WORK

– DISSONANT PASSAGES IN 20TH-CENTURY ARTS AND AESTHETICS

If one looks back on the history of arts and aesthetics of the 20th century, the phenomena and concepts of silence and noise occur as something which have occupied a number of composers, artists, and writers. For instance, Luigi Russolo’s Futurist Manifesto ‘The Art of Noises’ constituted noise as the music and symbol of a new world order while denouncing silence as belonging to the obsolete past. Correspondingly the idea of silence has been connected to artistic practice since Antiquity, as a way of deliberately not expressing oneself directly but instead negating or suspending any form of actual utterance. Silence – thus signifying the wilful resistance to music, images, speech, and text – became an aesthetic strategy for approaching the ineffable and inexpressible, and has been of pivotal interest to several artists of the 20th century as well.

Concentrating on the key concepts of silence and noise and their emergence in dissimilar forms of art, this Ph.D. project (2008–12, Section for Aesthetics and Culture, Department of Aesthetic Studies, Aarhus University) is concerned with the reciprocal relations and interchanges of sound art, music, visual arts, and literature. An overall objective of the project will be to establish a transmedial and interdisciplinary understanding of how the sonic and auditory traverse and impinge various forms of art. This involves a variety of reflections on the nature of sound and its changing meanings, related to the ways in which silence and noise are transposed from an inherent connection with the musical and the auditory to that of the visual and textual. The analytical effort also comprises an investigation of the alternating cultural perception of those same key concepts. Part of the project thus seeks to trace silence and noise as constitutive concepts which, in themselves, imply a specific historicity.

Following this at a broader discursive level, the project intends to challenge the idea of a current ‘auditory turn’ (compared to similar linguistic and pictorial ‘turns’ of the past decades) and the emergence of a particular ‘auditory culture’. When looking further into such subjects as ‘sonification’ and ‘audification’, prevalent in contemporary sound studies and sound art practice, one finds a striking similarity within the aesthetic strategies of, for instance, the Bauhaus School, the international Futurist and Dadaist movements, the Russian Constructivists, etc. Thus, in order to clarify the actual course of transmedial artistic exchanges taking place continuously throughout the 20th century, the question will therefore be asked whether sound aesthetics and ‘auditory awareness’ is in fact more present and predominant in art and culture today, as it has been claimed, than it was almost a century ago. The project is funded by The Doctoral School in Arts and Aesthetics – Arts, Literature and Cultural Studies, Aarhus University.

Thomas Bjørnsten Kristensen

THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF MUSICAL LISTENING

The Ph.D. project (2009–12, Section of Musicology, Department of Arts and Cultural Studies, University of Copenhagen) focuses on the different ways in which musicologists for the past 150 years have approached and interpreted the subject of the historical listener.

During the past 20 years concerns with the historical listener have resulted in a number of journal issues, individual articles, and books. The historiography of listening is often seen as one of the novel and innovative musicological enterprises of the past decades. Nevertheless, a closer look at the history of musicology will reveal scholarly undercurrents engaged with the subject throughout the history of the discipline. Listening and its history seem to be recurring themes of musicological scholarship.

Systematic engagement with the history of listening can be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century. The German multi-scientist and philosopher Hermann von Helmholtz entered the field when he merged his studies on the physiological basis of the elements of music with the history of music. The listener provided Helmholtz with the link between the physiological facts of nature and the historical evolution of, and aesthetic justifications for, the different styles of composition, the listener being identified with the synthetic powers of logical spirit as opposed to the mechanical principles of nature.

New ways of handling the subject were developed during the first half of the 20th century. In the 1920s the young German musicologist Heinrich Bessler announced a new approach to the problem of listening and its history. Renouncing the split between mechanical nature and logical spirit as a suitable starting point, Bessler’s purely theoretical text

seeks to overthrow the old conceptions of listening in ways parallel to his teacher Martin Heidegger's renouncement of neo-Kantian metaphysics.

The following decades saw a steady, although not extensive, stream of publications on the history of musical listening. In large, this intermediary tradition, spanning from the interwar period to the 1970s, was characterized by attempts at developing typologies of listening to account for the emergence, subsistence and decline of the different period-styles of music. By the mid 1970s, a few secondary sources attest to the fact that an awareness of a German language research tradition spanning back to the 1920s had emerged.

When the new historiography of listening appeared on the musicological scene in the 1990s, the field had laid relatively dormant for a couple of decades. This fact, combined with the English language orientation of the new school, may account for its lack of engagement with the older traditions of research.

I approach the subject from a historiographical perspective. My object of research is thus not the historical listener, but rather the different ways the history of listening has been approached and interpreted by the various research traditions occupied with it. I aim to highlight the heterogeneity of the field, and to show how the fundamental nature of the questions and concerns characterizing the engagement with the history of listening, changes as the subject pass through different research traditions during a span of 150 years.

Jan Andreas Wessel

AUDIOVISUAL CULTURE AND THE GOOD SOUND

This joint research project (2009–12) is financed by the Danish Council for Independent Research | Humanities (FKK) and is based at the Department of Aesthetic Studies, Aarhus University. The research group consists of 11 members, of whom five (one Ph.D. student, four associate professors) are directly financed by the grant.

We, as human beings, experience sound as one of the most overwhelming and overall interfering elements in modern life in addition to being very volatile and transient. Each individual can – with mobile media such as mp3 players and iPods – be accompanied by her own individual soundtrack and use sound as ‘score music’, staging everyday experience. We live in an audio-visual culture, where multi-sensuous reality, which appeals to all the senses, is being reduced to audio-visual culture in an electronic, mediated version. Considering the massive amount of audio-visuality today, research into audiovisual culture and the whole field of sound and sound discourse is still in its infancy when it comes to the qualitative exploration of aesthetics, reception, and theory of knowledge. We are still hesitant and insecure in our knowledge how an audio-visual work of art or phenomenon may influence or do to us, how we experience and act with it, and what kind of knowledge and understanding audio-visual and multi-sensuous culture is staging and what it demands from and gives to the modern human being. Notions about and relations between ‘the good sound’ and ‘the good experience’ remain to be explored.

The research project works historically with the genealogy of sound and listening, theoretically with sound and listening as integrated phenomena, and methodologically with the connection between sound, listening, hearing, and other sensuous and experience modalities. As the intention of the project is to create knowledge and communication about sound and listening, we have established an interactive weblog (www.AVlyt.dk) where we regularly write about current topics and phenomena within the field of audiovisual culture and with a strict focus on listening. We wish to deliver a research-qualified basis for the urgent and

continuous tackling and negotiation of the triad, sound – culture – sound experience, in a general societal perspective. The following sub-projects are part of the collective research project: *Sound in the museum – sound and contemporary art*; *The reality of sound – in film*; *Emergent forms in audiovisual television bank commercials*; *Sound, lust and delicacy in food commercials and television-programmes*; *Mobilizing sound in the urban space*. More sub-projects and a full description of all of them may be found on the website <http://ak.au.dk/en/subprojects/>.

Besides the work on the individual sub-projects the activities has been centered on taking part in the National Research Network on Auditive Culture (<http://auditiveculture.ku.dk/>), e.g. the participation in and contribution to four seminars. In collaboration with this network, the research group *Urban Sound Institute* (Chalmers University of Technology, Gothenburg), and the Réseau International Ambiances (Grenoble), we arranged and hosted the international conference *SoundActs* at Aarhus University, 23–25 September 2010 (www.soundacts.au.dk), with more than 100 participants from around 15 countries, including sound researchers as well as sound artists.

Other activities in 2010 have been two internal group workshops on theoretical methodological matters, and a workshop entitled ‘Empirical approaches to sound and music in audiovisual contexts’ featuring Annabel J. Cohen (University of Prince Edward Island) as supervisor and keynote speaker.

On 26–28 May 2011 we will host the international conference *Audio-visibility* (www.audio-visibility.au.dk) on audio-visual art, artefacts, and media texts. The four strands of the conference will be as follows. 1) Sound Styling in Film and Television Genres; 2) Strategic Communication; 3) The Audiovisual Exhibited – Sound in the (Fine) Arts; 4) Mobile Mediated *Audio*visibility, with an international keynote speaker opening each strand. These four themes we might consider as a kind of summing up or ‘state of the interests’ in the research project as an entity. It seems that we may be able to share, transgress, and develop rather specific and different research questions when combining disciplines like film, media, communication, and information studies; musicology, aesthetics, literature, and culture studies. Only the final publication(s), however, will show how great the outcome of our interdisciplinary but audio-focused research in the compound audio-visual field will turn out to be. The establishment of an international audio-visual research network – also in collaboration with the National Research Network on Auditive Culture – is planned to be another and very central outcome, when the project ends in 2012.

The research project group consists of the following members: Anette Vandsø Aremark, Anders Bonde, Nina Gram, Iben Have, Thomas Bjørnsten Kristensen, Mads Krogh, Birger Langkjær, Charlotte Rordam Larsen, Ansa Lønstrup (head of project), Steen Kaargaard Nielsen, and Birgitte Stougaard Pedersen.

Ansa Lønstrup

Conferences

SOUNDACTS, AARHUS UNIVERSITY, 23–25 SEPTEMBER 2010

After a successful series of national seminars *The National Research Network on Auditive Culture* concluded its two year research activities by organizing an international three-day conference and workshop in collaboration with the Swedish *Urban Sound Institute* (USIT) and the Aarhus based research project group *Audiovisual Culture*, who hosted the event at Aarhus University on 23–25 September 2010. Three years on from the first major Danish conference on sound studies, the 2007 *Sound, Art, Auditory Culture*, this conference only confirmed that what might best be viewed as a still emerging interdisciplinary field of studies has now taken root in Danish soil as part of a growing international network of research dialogues.

In their call for papers, the organizers cast the net as wide as possible by mapping out a very broad and open field with a string of questions instead of focusing on specific themes or debates. As a result *SoundActs* was populated by a ‘multi-cultural’ mix of artists and researchers, some both, offering and participating in a wide range of activities from workshops, sound installations and exhibitions to paper presentations, panel discussions and plenary debates. In short, a myriad of sound acts. Locating all activities and sound worlds at the Institute of Aesthetic Studies, itself housed in renovated 19th century military barracks, made it easy for the more than one hundred delegates to skip between parallel sessions and visit the various sound art projects during breaks.

The three keynote speakers and their topics provide an ample illustration of the polyphonic character of this sound forum and the very diverse subjects aired and discussed: In ‘Urban Musical Creativity, Complexity, and the Affective Function’ Adam Krims (University of Nottingham) addressed and contributed to recent debates about the dynamic interrelationships of specific urban environments and musical creativity and affect. Raised as a question in the keynote title ‘A Sonic Paradigm of Urban Ambiances?’, Jean-Paul Thibaud (Laboratoire Cresson, Ecole d’architecture de Grenoble) argued that sound is a particularly efficient medium for investigating our experiences of urban environments and therefore advocated a sonic paradigm and approach to the study of urban ambiances. And under the heading ‘Music and the Emergence of Experimental Science in Early Modern Europe’ Penelope Gouk (University of Manchester) uncovered the overlooked role of acoustic technologies in early modern natural philosophy, demonstrating the important part played by musical instruments used as scientific instruments to generate new scientific knowledge.

The perhaps most ambitious and prospective item of the conference programme was a panel discussion entitled ‘The Field of Sound Studies: Perspectives and Objectives’ with short presentations by Tellef Kvifte (University of Oslo), Rolf Grossman (Leuphana University of Lüneburg), and Jacob Kreutzfeldt (University of Copenhagen). One key question that generated much discussion drawing many contributions *ex auditorium* was whether the disparate field of often interdisciplinary sound studies should work towards conceptualizing and establishing a new integrated discipline, not least given the restrictive institutional boundaries that some researchers were faced with e.g. within musicology, or whether the way forward is that of dialogues across a network of sound researchers working within established disciplines and sub-disciplines. The last more pragmatic option seemed to win the day, but the challenge of establishing enough common ground or a workable paradigmatic framing for the present wealth of sound-related ontologies, epistemologies, and methodologies to facilitate productive collaborations remains and seems quite daunting. Georgina Born’s stimulating recent discus-

sion of and call for a relational musicology¹ addresses parallel challenges within music studies, where an abundance of various sub- and interdisciplinary research activities in the last 25 years has spiraled into some kind of a musical Tower of Babel with only sporadic mediating dialogue. If sound studies as a much needed field of research is to bloom beyond its initial 'trendy' flourishing, unceasing dialogues within strong international networks have to be maintained to secure a long-term drive towards substantial institutional anchoring and integration.

To that end channels of online publishing is one useful tool, and the launch of no less than three different e-journals dedicated to sound were announced at a special conference reception: *The Journal of Sonic Studies* (www.sonicstudies.org), *Sound Effects* (www.soundeffects.dk) and *Interference: A Journal of Audio Culture* (www.interferencejournal.com).

Proceedings of *SoundActs* are planned for publication in 2011. And the national network is now in the process of regrouping to strengthen international relations and collaborations.

Steen Kaargaard Nielsen

INTERNATIONAL MARCUS MEIBOM SYMPOSIUM, STOCKHOLM, 12–13 JANUARY 2010

The seventeenth-century polyhistor Marcus Meibom was without doubt one of the most important scholars in the early modern reception of the music theory from classical antiquity. His annotated editions of a number of Greek authors (with parallel translation into Latin), published by Elzevir in Amsterdam in 1652, remained the standard text used for these treatises throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries (in fact, some of the texts are in twentieth-century editions still presented according to Meibom's pagination). Yet, the particulars of Meibom's pervasive scholarship on musical, mathematical, historical, and philological topics are surprisingly little known in relation to their impact on later music theory and musicology. The same holds true also for bio-bibliographical information concerning his long life and his less disseminated writings. A symposium hosted by the Swedish National Library in Stockholm in January 2010, with financial support from the Sven and Dagmar Salén foundation, sought ways to rectify this state of affairs. Ten researchers from six different scholarly disciplines scrutinized different aspects of the life and works of the eccentric Schleswigian man of letters.

In an inaugural address, Janis Kreslins (Stockholm) proposed future outlines of Meibom research in relation to modern methodology and theory, placing the task firmly in a number of interconnected topical contexts: the mobility of scholars in the extended Baltic region (including the low countries and the British isles); distinct spheres, circles, and types of scholars within the *respublica literaria*; and the interplay between intellectual and pecuniary patronage. Peter Sjökvist (Uppsala) and Walter Kreyszig (Saskatchewan) then addressed the latter topic from two different perspectives, both taking Meibom's first major patronage, that with Queen Christina, as the prime object of their studies. Two papers on the first day of the symposium focused on historiographical matters: that of the present author (co-organizer of the conference, Uppsala) concerning Meibom's activities in Sweden 1652–53, and that of Peter Hauge (Copenhagen) pertaining to Meibom's ensuing period in Denmark in the 1650s and 1660s.

Meibom's scholarship and confrontational approach typically resulted in a number of polemical disagreements, one of which came to the forefront in Christian Troelsgaard's (Copenhagen) presentation of Meibom's and Athanasius Kircher's differing understanding of Greek music theory. The paper proved a very interesting study in conflicting methodol-

1 Georgina Born, 'For a Relational Musicology: Music and Interdisciplinarity, Beyond the Practice Turn', in *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 135/2 (2010), 205–43.

ogy and philological ideals. Other schisms of learning were addressed in the paper given by Benjamin Wardhaugh (Oxford), concerning Meibom's peculiar *De proportionibus dialogus* (Martzanus: Copenhagen, 1655), a treatise in the form of a dialogue between pseudo-Archimedes, pseudo-Euclides, and other authors, later provoking counter-treatises by John Wallis and other mathematicians. The paper of Louis Theodorus Lehmann (Amsterdam) was read in his absence, since he was unfortunately unable to attend the symposium in person. It is a valuable learned examination of *De fabrica triremium liber* (Amsterdam, 1671), a work very much characteristic of Meibom's optimism in putting the fruits of philological study unswervingly into contemporary practice on one field after another (in this case, Meibom's stubborn claim was that the potentate first to embrace his detailed and learned design for ancient multi-storey rowed battleships would rule the seas, just as described in classical sources).

Eleonora Rocconi (Pavia) dealt with Meibom's interpretation of the *Elementa harmonica* by Aristoxenos, traced from his 1652 commentary and Latin translation, both investigated in the light of previous and later understanding of the same text. In the final session Otfried Czaika (Stockholm) approached the mystery of Meibom's private library, which according to auction catalogues appears to have exceeded 7,000 items, probing how such a collection could possibly have been compiled, and offering informed hypotheses as to its unusual scarcity of prints issued after *c.* 1650.

The conference benefitted from the generous and stimulating milieu at the National Library (with Janis Kreslins and Otfried Czaika as admirable *convivatores*). The attendees had the opportunity to study fine specimens of Meibom prints in the collections, and a specially held evening recital featured a Guédron song mentioned in one of the infamous later anecdotes shrouding Meibom's and Pierre Bourdelot's supposed debacle at the Swedish court. We will certainly be able to hear and read more on Meibom and the seventeenth-century reception of Greek music theory in the near future, both from the network involved here, and from other scholars. Thanks to all participators, this symposium proved a successful starting point for future scholarship and collaboration within a long-neglected topic of study.

Mattias Lundberg

Danish Musicological Society, 2010

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The Society's annual general assembly took place on 17 March 2010 at the Department of Musicology, University of Copenhagen. Elective were Bjarke Moe, Kirsten Flensburg Petersen, and Anne Ørbæk Jensen – all were ready for re-election. At the first board meeting, Ingeborg Okkels announced her resignation, and deputy Peter E. Nissen entered the board in her place.

The annual one-day symposium on 24 April 2010 had the title *Music, Sound, and Digitization* and was held at the Department of Musicology, University of Copenhagen. In 3 x 2 parallel sessions and a final plenum a number of papers were presented, focusing on online presentations, digital music editions, and themes connected to digitization of old music recordings. The symposium gathered around 30 participants and the programme as well as abstracts and some of the papers can be seen at www.musikforskning.dk.

In 2009 the website www.dym.dk was launched featuring *Danish Yearbook of Musicology*. Besides general information about the yearbook the main asset has been an online access to the volumes since 1995, except the last published volume. In 2010 it became possible to make the rest of the volumes (1 (1961) – 22 (1994)) accessible online, and we want to thank The Danish Council for Independent Research for supporting this digitization financially. It is possible to get pdf-files of all the articles, reports, reviews, and bibliographies, and the articles are searchable in full text from Google and other search engines.

The Society has been part of an editorial group launching a new Danish online periodical, *Danish Musicology Online* (www.danishmusicologyonline.dk), with its first volume from December 2010. Finally, discussions about the type of the Society's future activities have been a major topic at the board meeting.

General information on the Society can be found on p. 140 and www.musikforskning.dk.

Anne Ørbæk Jensen