

DESCRIPTIONS LECTURES FROM 2011 - 2017

Running with the Devil - Current trends in metal music cultures

In the last years, metal music has received much academic attention. After the establishment of the peer-reviewed journal “Metal Music Studies” in 2015, a year later the “International Society for Metal Music Studies” emerged as a network of academics, journalists and musicians. A vast number of conferences in the UK, Scandinavia, Germany and the USA are further proof of this flourishing area of research. This seminar complies with these tendencies and deals with contemporary issues in metal music studies such as

- Genre development
- Trends of music production and of using music technology
- Performance
- Gender
- Authenticity
- Medial presence and reception
- Emergence and development of scenes
- Metal in global perspective
- Journalism
- Metal in the music industry

Producing backing tracks with freeware software

Working with the voice or singing in lessons, be it in Music, English or German education, commonly involves the challenge of providing appropriate musical accompaniment. This practice-oriented workshop for students of all school forms and subjects introduces the freeware *sequencer Presonus Studio One Prime*, using freely available templates in MIDI format for creating convincing playbacks. The producing of own tracks conveys the basic knowhow for creating playbacks in the daily school routine.

Introduction to Art and Music Education

This interdisciplinary seminar introduces the students to the history and current practices of arts and music education by providing an overview on the discourse, contemporary research and challenges. Being interdisciplinary, it confronts students with a culture of an aesthetic education and provides them with background information and arguments for taking a stance on the importance of aesthetic and cultural education at public institutions.

Basics in Musical Performance

This seminar introduces to the issues and methods of working with performance groups in educational contexts. Exemplary situations are arranged for providing the students with options to explore and extend their educational skills.

Film Music

Since the invention of cinema, the moving image and music form a unity. Although film music mostly is perceived subconsciously, it still is highly important for the atmosphere and even transports narrative meanings. This seminar reconstructs the history of film music with its compositional techniques, trends and highlights. Besides analysing exemplary movies, we will compose and record film music on our own, and will combine it with the moving image.

Informal learning in Popular Music

In contemporary political debates, the term “competence” is of primary importance. It is recognisable that educational concepts are now focusing on structuring ways of learning. With such a standardisation of learning, however, the chances of an informal learning (Green 2008) are easily overlooked and hastily dismissed. In popular music, autodidactic and band-oriented approaches of learning and enculturation have a long tradition. Music learning, there, is intrinsically motivated, holistic and based on experimentation and peer-feedback.

In this seminar, we will experience informal learning first-hand by simulating situations studied in popular music education, and by reflecting on the experience.

Research Colloquium for Written Theses

This research colloquium is for all advanced undergraduate and postgraduate students of music and arts. Beyond addressing research standards in the arts, humanities and social sciences, the main intention of the colloquium is to focus on the individual theses to provide the candidates with feedback on their writing, methodology and results. Further issues include typography and the use of research software.

Popular Music and the City

As much as it is a global phenomenon, popular music still is deeply rooted in its national, regional or local contexts. This seminar deals with contemporary European issues by focussing on specific cities and its traces of colonialization, music in urban settings, and the political power of musical sound.

History of Popular Music I

This reading on the history of popular music introduces to the musical culture of Europe and North America between 1750 and the end of the swing era in the 1940s. To capture the various facets of popular music, we will approach the musical culture from a multi-disciplinary perspective: On the one hand, relevant genres (popular song in the 19th century, operetta and musical comedy, blues, spiritual, gospel, jazz etc.) will be analysed with methods of musicology and cultural studies. On the other hand, the musical perspective will be extended by sociocultural, psychological, ethnological, economic and technological issues and contexts for obtaining a holistic understanding.

"Wired for sound." Developments, Analyses and Meanings of the Pop Sound

With the electrification of popular music, sound has become a central aspect of popular music, its medial distribution, and the development of its genres. As debated in many fields of research like the Sound Studies or the Art of Record Production, sound is more than just a necessity of producing popular music with technology. It also is a mediator of music, marker of subcultures and ideologies, communicator, and constitutive element of many genres. This seminar discusses the production and meaning of the pop-sound. Subsequent to an introduction to relevant disciplines, we will get acquainted with contemporary methods of analysing popular music and sound. During the semester, the students will work on research projects of their own, which will be presented and discussed at the end of the semester.

"Bridging the Gap." Webinar by Communicating with Prof. Dr. Philip Tagg (UK)

Professor Philip Tagg has been one of the leading researchers of popular music in the last 40 years. As one of the co-founders of the "International Association for the Study of Popular Music" in 1981, he has taken great influence on the institutionalisation of the popular music studies discipline.

This webinar focuses on the prevalent gap between musicological, cultural studies and social sciences-oriented approaches within popular music studies, and offers ways of bridging the gap.

Basics in Musical Performance

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Folk Music

Folk music and folklore are terms for a wide range of different genres. One mutual characteristic of these forms of music is their use as a means of expression for local and regional groups. This seminar deals with diverse genres of popular music like the traditional folk song, popular tune, operetta, salon piece, blues, folk rock, country, New German Wave and singer-songwriter. We will analyse the historical, sociocultural, performative, medial and aesthetic aspects of the music to determine the interrelation of these aspects. On this basis, we will reflect on the importance of local musical practices with reference to a "glocal" world of music (Robertson 1998).

Improvisation

Improvisation is defined as the spontaneous invention and execution of music. Even though improvisations can be performed without preparation, they often still are based on experience and strategies. In this seminar, we will explore improvisational strategies of different popular music genres ranging from blues and to different kinds of contemporary pop music, but also experimental music.

Music Theory and Analysis 1

In the first year of the module „harmony, analysis and theory“, the students acquire basic and intermediate knowledge of music theory used in the genres blues, jazz, reggae, rock and pop. The seminar introduces to scales, chord theory, voice leading, (re-)harmonisation, substitution and alteration. Analyses, arrangements and compositions provide the students with necessary skills for songwriting and improvising.

Music Theory and Analysis 2

In the second year, the students deepen their knowledge of harmony and theory by stylistic analyses, cover versions, modified arrangements and compositions. Concentrating on many different genres will facilitate advanced strategies for analysing harmony, melody, form and production, ultimately leading to a holistic understanding of the musical product. With a great focus on applying the analysis to a (re-)creation, the seminar aims at a high practical value.

Ear Training and Transcription 3

The module “ear training and transcription” intends to facilitate analytical listening skills combined with music theory. This seminar aims at developing the skills to capture individual musical parameters, to notate music, and to reproduce written melodic and rhythmic notation.

The seminar has two thematic priorities. In ear training, the students deepen their mental representations by productively engaging with their voice (solmisation) and body sounds. They also improve their perceptual skills by aural tasks. In transcription, students learn to transcribe songs and to write sheet music with the help of notation software. This includes aspects like instrument-specific phrasing.

Musical - Advanced Project in Music Education

Since its emergence in the late 19th century, the Western World has been fascinated by the Broadway musical theatre. At first, this seminar provides the students with an overview on genre history by combining information, analysis and practical interpretation of musical songs. In a second step, the students will write a musical show on their own, including the music, lyrics, choreography and storyboard. The result will be performed publicly.

Basics in Musical Performance

This seminar introduces to the issues and methods of working with performance groups in educational contexts. Exemplary situations are arranged for providing the students with options to explore and extend their educational skills.

Basics in Music Performance for Artists

This seminar facilitates basic music skills in performance practice, music theory and technology. It aims at providing the students with rudimentary educational skills to work practically with children and teenagers in diverse musical contexts. Reflections of musical performances and group leading in combination with selected literature provides the students with a broad introduction to a practice-oriented approach in music education.

History of Popular Music II

This reading focuses on six centuries of popular music from the early 1950s rock'n'roll to contemporary music, including soul, reggae, folk, rock, metal and various forms of electronic dance music. Besides a detailed analysis of musical aspects, historical trends and regional phenomena, sociological, economic, cultural, medial and technological issues will be addressed. Another important aspect will be the interrelated development of music and its medial contexts and functionalisation (e.g. sound design, film music, music videos, music TV, and internet).

Sound Innovations – Trends, developments, prognoses

Since the introduction of electrical practices of recording, reproducing and transmitting music in the 1920s, sound has become an important means of expression, determining the aesthetics of popular music styles and genres. Apparently, the history of popular music is marked by innovations in music technology and intended phases of nostalgic retro sounds.

This seminar discusses contemporary tendencies in popular music based on its sound with special regard to music aesthetics, cultural practices and economic strategies. It includes aspects of studio technology, the music industry, the media and music reception. Potential issues are: How can or will popular music develop in the future? Why does a particular sound become a

“hit”? What vocal processing technologies will follow Autotune and Melodyne? What chances does digitalisation offer independent musicians and the industry?

Sound in the above sense will be understood as a promising method for analysing popular music and as an epistemological concept of musical perception and meaning. The seminar aims at exploring contemporary trends in the music industry, and at identifying future trends based on an historical and technological understanding.

Apparative Praxis

This practice-oriented seminar complements the popular music theory seminar. We will create arrangements with the sequencer software Cubase7 and get acquainted with basic and intermediate practices of MIDI and audio technology. In the final task, students are expected to create convincing arrangements and productions of selected popular music styles.

Genres and Styles of Popular Music

In this seminar, various genres of popular music will be analysed regarding structure, arrangement, production, performance and marketing. The participants will be introduced to audio recording, mixing and mastering as well as to strategies and procedures of music productions. In small groups, the students are expected to delve into a style, and to create an authentic song including a music production, a music video and promotional material.