50 Years of Music Sociology in Vienna

Howard S. Becker, Marie Buscatto, Tia DeNora,

with Antoine Hennion, Christian Kaden, Peter J. Martin, Motti Regev, Alfred Smudits

International Conference
24 – 25 September 2015

mdw – University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna
Fanny Hensel-Saal
Anton-von-Webern-Platz 1
1030 Vienna
THURSDAY, 24.09.2015

10.00
Opening Speech
Werner Hasitschka Rector of the mdw
Alfred Smudits Head of the Institute for Music Sociology

Trio Frühstück: Caprice (VI) mosaïque (Thomas Wally)
Maria Sawerthal (violin), Sophie Abraham (cello), Clara Frühstück (piano)

10.30 – 12.00
Alfred Smudits
Music sociology after massmodernism
Discussant: André Doehring

12.00 – 13.30 lunch

13.30 – 15.00
Howard S. Becker
Why sociologists who study music should know the basics of musical expression and language: Lessons from ethnomusicology
Discussant: Martin Niederauer

15.00 – 15.30 break

15.30 – 17.00
Christian Kaden
Music sociology in the GDR: Under political dictatorship, despite of political dictatorship
Discussant: Sarah Chaker

17.00 – 17.30 break

17.30 – 19.00
Marie Buscatto
Exploring gender in music... To better grasp musical work
Discussant: Tasos Zembylas

Chair: Andreas Holzer

LIVE AUDIO STREAM: http://www.mdw.ac.at/mdwMediathek
FRIDAY, 25.09.2015

10.00 – 11.30  Peter J. Martin
Musicology, sociology and digitisation
*Discussant: Andreas Gebesmair*

11.30 – 12.00 break

12.00 – 13.30  Motti Regev
Musical cosmopolitanism, bodies and aesthetic cultures
*Discussant: Rosa Reitsamer*

13.30 – 15.00 lunch

15.00 – 16.30  Antoine Hennion
From mediation to pragmatism: Making sociology sensitive again to the value of things?
*Discussant: Dagmar Danko*

16.30 – 17.00 break

17.00 – 18.30  Tia DeNora
The unsung work of music sociology?
*Discussant: Michael Huber*

18.30 – 19.00 break

Chair: Therese Kaufmann

19.00  Concert & Get together

LIVE AUDIO STREAM: [http://www.mdw.ac.at/mdwMediathek](http://www.mdw.ac.at/mdwMediathek)
Music sociology after massmodernism

I will start with the discussion of the terms 'modernity', 'modernism', and 'modernization'. In this context several dimensions of modernization, such as rationalisation, individualisation, differentiation, domestication as well as several stages of modernity (early modernism, bourgeois modernism, mass modernism) will be identified.

One of the main issues of music sociology was the understanding of the modernization of the musical field. Max Weber argued that rationalisation in the beginning of early modernism was the main characteristic of the specific development of occidental music. The rise of mass media, in particular of electronic media in the beginning of the 20th century (the beginning of mass-modernism) forced sociological theories of music to integrate mass media in their concepts. This means that modernization in society goes along with a modernization in the field of music, and altogether these developments ask for a modernization of music sociology, the development of an adequate sociological concept of music (actors, objects, practices, structures, functions).

With the emergence of digitalisation a new step of modernization takes place. Sociology of music has to face the challenges that arise out of this newest step of modernization, which means above all to keep in touch with culture sociology and general sociological theories.

Discussant: André Doehring
Research Assistant, Justus-Liebig-Universität Gießen (Germany)
Howard S. Becker
Independent Scholar (USA)

Why sociologists who study music should know the basics of musical expression and language:
Lessons from ethnomusicology

Musical activity takes place through sounds that are largely non-verbal. If we want to understand how the collective activity that constitutes music-making takes place we have to understand that language. (This explains why so many sociologists of music have been or still are music-makers.) Ethnomusicology focuses on musics that are unfamiliar to ears trained in Western music based on a twelve tone scale and all the other apparatus of conventional 20th century music. I will explore a classic ethnomusicological work, “La fanfare de Bangui” by Simha Arom, which contains a remarkable analysis of a kind of music that is very different from Western music and which had to be studied by methods Arom had to invent for the occasion.

Discussant: Martin Niederauer
Researcher, Institute for Music Sociology, Vienna
Music sociology in the GDR: Under political dictatorship, despite of political dictatorship

There is no dispute that the state machinery of the former GDR was a political and an ideological dictatorship. Often ignored, however, is the fact that scientific activities in East Germany “produced” remarkable results: not because of the dictatorship described but despite of it. The development of music sociology, as it seems to me, is a paradigm of this process. At least during the 1970s and the 1980s it succeeded in keeping distance to the dogmas of Marxism and Leninism. This liberalization was influenced by paradoxical determinants:

1. Up to the end of the 1960ies the conviction was dominating that a general Marxist sociology could be available in Historical Materialism. Only after 1971 when Erich Honecker had become the leader of the East German ruling party, some rights of sociology as an independent academic discipline were accepted: by establishing special approaches in theory and method, for instance in a sociology of medicine or in a sociology of music. Indeed these so called “special sociologies” profited by the absence of a sociological canon valid for the GDR in its totality. Thus the special sociologies got the chance to define themselves as niches – where, in contrast to ideological indoctrination, explicitly positive theories could be formulated and empiric studies could be realized.

2. Namely the East Berlin musicology developed an advanced model of interdisciplinary research. The central “figure” of the scene was Georg Knepler who had been compelled to retire from his academic position in 1969, because of having supported the Prague spring movement. Being a rather independent scholar he organized an efficient network of private and semi-official contacts to leading scientists of different disciplines. Among them were linguists, representatives of cognitive psychology, ethology, and ethnomusicology. Music sociology was embedded in this network: via discussions on communication theory.

3. The activities of the so-called “K.-group” (“Knepler-Gruppe”) – the name was an invention of the Staatssicherheit, the GDR secret service – were corresponding to a completely new conception of Systematic Musicology at the Berlin Humboldt-University itself. The concept was inaugurated, in 1977 (!), by the mathematician Reiner Kluge. And it was brought to academic reality once again by a team, including specialists for music psychology, music sociology, general system theory, computer assisted musical analysis, and neuroscience. The crucial point of the approach was a revised understanding of the word “systematic”: not in the sense of “logic”, but as “systemic”, concerning material systems. Consequently cybernetics became the methodological fundament of systematic musicology. And respective procedures were successfully executed in many case studies. In this way the dichotomy of historical and systematic research became essentially irrelevant. For evolution, and history are explicit characteristics of dynamic systems.

The concept represented by Knepler, Kluge and, after the publishing of the book “Musiksoziologie” in 1984, by Kaden appeared as an authentic alternative to the highly conservative structure of German musicology. The paper given is therefore an appeal to remind of scientific strategies which might one day be strategies of the future.

Discussant: Sarah Chaker
Senior Scientist, Institute for Music Sociology, Vienna
**Exploring gender in music... To better grasp musical work**

In the last forty years, international scholars have explored ways contemporary female musicians, as compared to their male colleagues, find it more difficult to get access, to remain, and to be recognized as legitimate professionals in various musical worlds – e.g. classical, jazz, rock, pop, techno or rap (Buscatto, 2010). While most musical worlds are quite masculine – rock, jazz, rap or techno – others are mixed – orchestra music, R&B or pop. But in all circumstances, it is always more difficult for women than for men to succeed as a musician in contemporary western societies while all legal barriers have disappeared and formal equality between sexes is considered as a priority in those sectors. Current research in this field has identified several processes which explain such differences – gendered norms, conventions, stereotypes, networks, family roles or socialisations –, and have explored ways women progressively overcome such barriers – schools, producers, practises or family.

My objective would be here to discuss how our knowledge of such processes – which produce and legitimate gendered differences as well as question and sometimes overcome them – can enlighten our knowledge about music as work. Based on our current research on gender in music and arts (Buscatto, 2007, 2010, 2014) and on artistic work (Becker, Buscatto, 2007; Buscatto, 2008, 2012), we intend to show how our knowledge of ways women tend to be excluded from musical worlds (and of ways they more and more overcome such informal barriers) enable us to better grasp ways musical work is socially constructed and transformed over time.

**Discussant:** Tasos Zembylas  
Professor for Cultural Institution Studies, Institute for Music Sociology, Vienna
Musicology, sociology and digitisation

This symposium is timely, since it provides an opportunity to reflect on recent developments in the sociology of music, during the period in which two other relevant specialisms - the 'new' musicology and popular music studies - have emerged. Moreover, it would be impossible to speak of such matters in Vienna without acknowledging the pioneering work of Kurt Blaukopf. Accordingly, I will consider the rise of these specialisms with reference, where appropriate, to Blaukopf's studies.

In respect of the 'new' musicology, I will argue that from a sociological point of view it looks much like the 'old'. As far as popular music studies are concerned, I will suggest that these developed at a time when the record industry was at its peak, dominating the music business. Since then, much has changed: even formerly 'major' record companies are now themselves part of global corporations, and digitisation has produced the most fundamental challenge to the industry since the invention of recording. Some of the implications of these changes will be considered.

Discussant: Andreas Gebesmair
Professor for Sociology of Media, Head of the Austrian Institute of Media Economy, University of Applied Sciences, St. Pölten (Austria)
Musical cosmopolitanism, bodies and aesthetic cultures

Amid the growing sociological interest in cosmopolitanism, the paper seeks to outline major aspects pertaining to the role of music – and pop-rock music in particular – in the consolidation and materialization of cosmopolitanism. The paper will explore several dimensions through which (pop-rock) music has been a key actor in propelling cultural cosmopolitanism, especially at the micro level of bodily practices and everyday life.

I will argue that pop-rock musical styles and genres, as clusters of sonic idioms, and therefore as physical entities, have penetrated urban spaces and individual human bodies in all parts of the world, rendering them constituents of cultural domains best characterized as aesthetic cultures of cosmopolitanism.

The paper will revolve around the idea of the sonic "thingness" of (pop-rock) music, how it turns the cultural body into a cosmopolitan body, and its effect on various dimensions of culture and everyday life, such as urban spaces.

Inspiration and insights are brought in this regard from areas of research and theory such as cultural globalization, sociology and anthropology of the cultural body, and so-called "thing-theory" (material culture studies, ANT, etc.) in order to propose possible foci for investigating how musical cosmopolitanism comes into being and functions as a cultural reality.

Discussant: Rosa Reitsamer
Assistant Professor, Institute for Music Sociology, Vienna
From mediation to pragmatism: making sociology sensitive again to the value of things?

By elaborating on the concept of mediation, I tried to overpass the dualistic opposition between social and musical analyses of music, the former dealing with everything around music but not "music itself", the latter taking music for an object existing by and for itself. Musical works and experiences produce their own worlds, they are not data inside a given space, that musicologists and sociologists could analyse, each in their own way. Music is made of practices, devices, scenes. Considering those mediations does not lead to a bric-a-brac mixing scores, instruments, bodies, performances, institutions, etc.: it means that, while there is no musical event without a minute attention paid to each of them, none of them contains or explains the advent of music. It is impossible, then, to separate music and its value: music can only be valued after its effects, it exists as it is praised, loved, sustained. By no way this implies a psychological reduction of music: subjects are not given any more than works. Both emerge in an open, never-ending process. Documenting empirically this process may provide a non-dualistic account of what makes music count.

Discussant: Dagmar Danko
Researcher, Freiburg Institute for Advanced Studies – FRIAS (Germany)
The unsung work of music sociology?

This paper sings the praises of music sociology. I suggest that the study of music as a part of what sociology does can nourish sociology as a whole. Sociological research on music has enriched understanding of how to think about values, relativism and strong attachments. It has contributed to studies of work and creativity, shedding light on the intermediaries involved in musical production, distribution, and reception. Music sociology has had much to say about social identities and their formation in music and through musical practice. It has developed theories and case studies of how it is that social movements ‘move’ and of the often tacit, emotional and aesthetic bases of action, individual and collective. Music sociology has even had things to say about how our bodily sensations are culturally (musically) mediated and how wellbeing (individual, group, community) can be enhanced through musical engagement. More recently, music sociology has addressed the relational character of personhood, capacity and dis/ability through studies of musical ecologies and it has described how social relations and social settings are sometimes - and more often than we might assume - musicalized. In short, music sociology is a vibrant and potentially powerful area that is too often sidelined as a specialist corner of our field. As such it has been, I believe, a mostly untapped resource for thinking sociologically. Perhaps on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Institut für Musiksoziologie, it is excusable, and timely, for music sociology to ‘blow its own trumpet’.

Discussant: Michael Huber
Associate Professor, Institute for Music Sociology, Vienna
Concert & Get together

**Gina Schwarz** (bass), Andy Middleton (saxophon), Benjamin Schatz (piano)

*Santiago* (Gina Schwarz)
*Venezia* (Gina Schwarz)
*Israel* (Gina Schwarz)

**Trio Immersio**
Vira Zhuk (violin), Anna Maria Niemiec (cello), Mariam Vardzelashvili (piano)

*schlechtecharakterstücke* (Bernhard Gander)

**Libella Swing**
Elisabeth Neunteufl (vocal), Marion Traun (vocal), Elisabeth van Dam (vocal),
Johannes Radl (piano), Willi Platzer (percussion)

*Skyline* (music: Johannes Radl, lyrics: Elisabeth Neunteufl)
*Clap on the sails* (music: Johannes Radl, lyrics: Elisabeth van Dam)
*Keep the business running* (Willi Platzer)
*Movin’* (Cathy & Gus Garcia)

1st floor, Foyer Joseph Haydn–Saal:

**DJ Christina Nemec**

comfortzonemusic.com
The Institute for Music Sociology at the mdw University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna was founded in 1965 on the initiative of Kurt Blaukopf and sees its task as the historically aware, topical and forward-looking scientific development of sociological knowledge on the arts.

In the Austrian tradition of empirical research in arts and culture, the institute is committed to the following principles:

- The close connection between research and teaching
- Maintaining a close relationship with artistic practice
- An interdisciplinary approach to work
- Enhancement of the theoretical and socio-political relevance of its research
- International cooperation.

In the context of research the institute is committed to observing and documenting current developments in musical life and to analysing and assessing them against the background of social developments. In view of the demographic, rapid technological, economic, legal and cultural-policy changes that musical life is currently subject to (digital mediamorphosis), this represents a considerable scientific challenge. The institute’s main tasks include the analysis of the cultural labour market (above all the music labour market), reception research, the investigation of gender-specific aspects of music production and reception and the analysis of media, culture and music policy.

In the context of teaching the focus is on conveying and deepening current scientific knowledge for musical-artistic and music-teaching practice. Students are provided not only with basic knowledge but also with research skills, with the aim of bringing art and science closer together. The supervision of PhD work in the subjects of the sociology of music, cultural sociology and cultural institution studies is part of the programmes provided by the Institute for Music Sociology.
Kurt Blaukopf was one of the pioneers of music sociology in Europe. His passion for music is rooted in his biography. He grew up in Vienna in a middle-class Jewish family, and although he followed his father’s wish and studied jurisprudence his intellectual attention was devoted to music. From the early 1930s he did extended studies in musicology but at the same time he was deeply aware of the social roots of music, and thus he enriched his approach to music with insights from Max Weber’s writings. However, the rise of Nazism in Germany and the Wehrmacht’s invasion of Austria forced the young man to leave Vienna. During the years in exile he continued his informal studies in music sociology, but he also became increasingly interested in the epistemological foundations of his own ideas on the subject.

It is no exaggeration to state that Kurt Blaukopf represents the solid Austrian scientific tradition that began with Bernard Bolzano’s and Ernst Mach’s philosophy of science in the late 19th century. This tradition had been incorporated by some exponents of the Vienna school of art history (Alois Riegl) and musicology (Guido Adler) and developed further by the members of the Vienna Circle and especially in the social sciences by Otto Neurath. Usually described as positivism, the tradition is characterised by a strong reservation towards highly abstract and speculative theories. Furthermore there is a programmatic commitment to fluid boundaries and to linking different specialist disciplines. These three elements – the Vienna school of art history and musicology, Max Weber’s sociology of music and the Austrian philosophy of science - are the epistemological pillars of Blaukopf’s intellectual development.

Kurt Blaukopf aimed at a comprehensive, interdisciplinary approach and analysis of music as sociocultural practice. According to Blaukopf, music sociology should include the “collection of all the social facts relevant to musical practice, the ordering of these facts according to their significance for musical practice and the recording of the changes of facts that decide practice”. The ideal of normative neutrality distinguishes both his writing style as well as his intentions. “The taste judgements and preferences of the sociologist must remain separate... for him, what counts is the proud motto of Spinoza: I do not condemn nor praise; I merely study.” In line with this idea of neutrality, Blaukopf exercised a remarkable openness and an interest in different forms of music from different cultural realms and epochs, which extended to contemporary phenomena such as pop music and experimental music. Furthermore he also addressed fundamental questions on the development of music, highlighted the role of media and technology, mediamorphoses and was interested in the link between music and cultural policy.

His sociological approach to music often indirectly reflects this background. He searches for the innumerable and manifold relations between music and society - and especially the sociography of musical life - constantly aware that music is not determined by societal effects in a narrow sense. It is also noteworthy that Blaukopf’s scientific commitment extended beyond the sphere of academia. He involved himself both as a member of the executive council of UNESCO and as an expert in the Council of Europe as well as in Austrian cultural policy. Hereby he demanded the achievement of two central aims: the democratisation of culture through the enhancement of public access and the participation of the whole population in cultural life, as well as the safeguarding and improvement of the economic and social situation of artists.

Certainly, Kurt Blaukopf as the founder and long-serving head of the Institute for Music Sociology is still present. In his spirit the institute regards its main objectives as connecting teaching and research, theoretical developments and artistic practice, sociological investigation and interdisciplinary work, local rootedness and international cooperation.
VENUE

mdw University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna
Anton-von-Webern Platz 1, 1030 Vienna
Fanny Hensel-Saal

EXHIBITION

KURT BLAUKOPF: Stages of his life
Foyer, main building

BOOK EXHIBITION

Publications of the Institute for Music Sociology

LIVE AUDIO STREAM

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