



THE ANTHROPOLOGY DEPARTMENTAL SEMINAR

Music, Mediation Theories and Actor-Network Theory: A discussion

September 4th from 10.00-12.00

AT THE MOESGÅRD LECTURE HALL (4206, 139)

With Georgina Born, University of Oxford



In this seminar, I present a recent introductory paper for an issue of the *Contemporary Music Review*. The issue contains papers employing theories of mediation that have emerged in recent years in relation to music – including my own and versions influenced by Latour. The impetus for the issue came from a program of ethnographic studies addressing how music is being transformed around the world by digitisation and digital media. In the first half of the introduction I outline the development of mediation theories for music, their variety and sources – for example, my own approach draws on

Gell's *Art and Agency* (Born 2005). In the second half, I develop a sustained critique of the limits of Latour. I register a series of propitious approaches to mediation signalled by the journal contributors that redress certain limits of Latour, while responding to the demands posed by music's specificity. They are: the need to pursue a subtler form of (ethnographic or historical) empiricism than that advocated by Latour; the need to cross scales in analysis, with reference to music's social, temporal and material mediations, linked to questions of power; the challenge of theorising subjectivities, aesthetic and affective processes; and questions of ontology. In the seminar I will focus on these matters and suggest that music highlights these limits of Latour – which are, however, more general.

Bio:

Georgina Born is Professor of Music and Anthropology, University of Oxford, and Honorary Professor of Anthropology at UCL (where she took her doctorate). Her work crosses four disciplines: anthropology, sociology, music and (new/digital) media studies. Currently she is writing a proposal for a new research program on music and artificial intelligence.

All are welcome



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