

Call for Papers: Narrative and Music

Brussels – 15-17 November 2021

The **cognitivist turn** sparked a renewed interest in narrative analysis that extends beyond the study of literature. It has expanded **across media** such as film, graphic novels, video games, and music. This conference focuses on the study of **narrative and narrativity in music**. While some critics are convinced of music's capacity for story-building, others consider the use of narrative theory derived from literary studies for the analysis of music unsuitable. This conference takes **music's narrative potential** as its point of departure but recognizes that musical narrativity is **scalar**. With 'narrativity of music' as an umbrella term, the conference has three subthemes: (1) the narrative capacity of music, (2) narrativity of minimalist music, and (3) the narrativity of music in intermedial works.

(1) The narrative character of music in general has often been considered by means of (structuralist) models originating from literary studies. For instance, music is often regarded as narrator. Frye's literary archetypes, Propp's fairytale categories, or the Greimasian square have also been used to investigate the narrative character of music. Because this branch of narrative analysis is usually limited to a corpus of Romantic or Classical music, this conference encourages broader and **innovative approaches to the study of narrative and music**.

(2) The narrative capacity of music is especially exemplified by this conference's subtheme 'American minimalist music' and 'Philip Glass'. While **minimalist music** is notoriously repetitive and considerably more abstract than other music styles, it still generates narrative currents. Narrativity in minimalist music might be best compared to the **complexity** of modernist or postmodernist literature. The distortive character of such texts often obscures or even negates the development of the story. Similarly, minimalist music's repetitiveness often **dilutes the narrativity** of the music. In fact, the early goal of minimalists such as Steve Reich and Philip Glass was to foreground music qua music and renounce any extra-musical references. However, a deeper understanding of minimalist music proves otherwise and reveals the **narrative possibilities of minimalist music**.

(3) We also highly value a research focus on **transmedial models** or an **intermedial corpus**. After all, music is often paired with other media to create narrative. Film studies, for example, is one such branch where music is considered as having a significant influence on the narrative

of the film as a whole. Opera as well as radio plays are also part and parcel of research into the narrativity of music.

We welcome all research into **narrativity of music of any period**. Research on **both absolute and texted music** are of interest to us. We **especially welcome discussions of late 20th-century or contemporary music**, given that narrative interpretations of music are often limited to a corpus from the late-18th, 19th century, or early 20th century. A number of performances and/or panels will focus specifically on 20th-century music that is known for its blatant refusal of any referentiality and even narrativity. Minimalism and Philip Glass are the inspiration for the concert that will take place on the final day of the conference. A subject we hope will inspire you to take part in the conference and present your paper focusing on narrative and music in novel ways.

We welcome **papers** including, but not limited to, the following subjects:

1. Narrativity of music
 - Referentiality of music
 - Music's influence on literary narratives
 - 20th-century or contemporary music and narrative
 - Music of all periods and narrative
2. Narrativity of minimalist music
 - Minimalist music and its lack (?) of referentiality
 - Philip Glass
 - Steve Reich
3. Narrativity of music in intermedial works
 - Transmedial models for narrative analysis
 - Narrativity in opera, film, radio plays, etc.

Please send the following information to us **by 14 March 2021**:

- Name of participant & affiliation
- Title of paper
- Abstract (+/- 300-400 words)
- Short bio (+/- 100-200 words)

Other than academic papers, we also welcome **other formats** such as recitals, performances, compositions, etc. These formats can be individual or group submissions and should have a link to the conference theme and subjects. Preferably they have a minimum of research context attached (e.g. in a short introduction or accompanying programme).

Please provide us with the following **by 14 March 2021**:

- Name(s) of participant(s) & affiliation(s)
- Title of performance, recital, composition, etc.
- A description of research context of performance (+/- 250-400 words)
- An audio-excerpt (or video-excerpt) of your work (at least 5 minutes)
- Short bio(s) (+/- 100-200 words per individual)

More information: <https://sites.google.com/view/narrative-and-music>

Any questions about the conference or inquiries about the call for papers can be sent via e-mail to narrativeandmusic@gmail.com.