Music Genres, Radio Genres and Their Relations: Questions of Categorization

RAMUND, 2-day seminar, 10-11 December 2014

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Notions of genre are key to both media and music studies, just as processes of categorization, labelling, or formatting is central to the practices of (music) culture. Genre connects issues of style, formats, mediation and social regularity in radio programming, performance and listening. Thus, genre may be regarded as a trait of stability within ecologies of music and radio (and its combination: music-radio), just as genre may be regarded as a means of instigating difference and development, projecting into the unruly future an attempted teleology (Born 2011).

In this seminar we investigate practices of categorization and the meaning of genre in music and radio with a focus on music radio. We will discuss typological, formalist, aesthetic and socio-cultural notions of genre and theoretical and/or empirical connections of these. How should practices of music-radio be understood in relation to genre cultures or formations (Toynbee 2000, Holt 2007)? How does music-radio develop generic traits? How does music-radio genres develop in processes of articulation (Hesmondhalgh 2005), assemblage (Born 2011), and mediation (Hennion 2013)?

> Born, Georgina. "Music and the materialization of identities." Journal of Material Culture 16.4 (2011): 376-388.
>
> Toynbee, Jason. *Making popular music.* London: Arnold, 2000.
>
> Holt, Fabian. *Genre in popular music.* University of Chicago Press, 2007.
>
> Hesmondhalgh, David. "Subcultures, scenes or tribes? None of the above."
> *Journal of youth studies* 8.1 (2005): 21-40.
>
> Hennion, Antoine. "Music and mediation: Towards a new sociology of music."
> *The cultural study of music: A critical introduction* 2. ed. (2013).

Location:

Department for Aesthetics and Communication – Musicology, University of Aarhus

Langelandsgade 139, DK-8000 Aarhus C

Programme:

Wednesday, Dec. 10

11-11.15 Welcome (room 118, building 1584)

11.15-12.45 Keynote: Jason Toynbee

Lunch

13.45-15.15 Keynote: Sune Auken (room 114, building 1586)

15.15-16.45 Papers: Nicolai Graakjær & Henrik Smith Sivertsen

Coffee

17-18 Paper: Mads Krogh

19 Dinner (at restaurant Komfur, Guldsmedegade 38-40)

Thursday, Dec. 11:

9.15-10.45 Papers: Patrick Walkient & Iben Have (room 118, building 1584)

Coffee

11-12 Paper and sum-up: Morten Michelsen

12-13 Lunch

13-14.45 Research group meeting (Radio history book) (room 114, building 1586)

Coffee

15-16 Research group meeting (Practical matters)

Abstracts:

Jason Toynbee, Sociology Department, Open University, UK (jason.toynbee@open.ac.uk)

Multiplying yet stuck: genres, music and media in the 90s and after

I used to think (around 2000) that popular music genres were shaped by a complex of factors including audience identification, coding by musicians, and the interests of content owners and media. Certainly there was a centripetal tendency in genres. It arose from the need for shared understanding of musical forms within cultures, and from the demand by music industries and media for stability, an imperative to reduce the chronic uncertainty of music markets. But running against this tendency for coherence were tensions which tended to open up genre - at the bottom level, tensions between how genre was defined culturally and commercially, yet also tensions within each side as it were. For instance record companies often defined genres in different ways to music media like radio. The result was that genres were dynamic, contributing to popular music's demotic, seething creativity. Now I'm much less sure. In this paper I want to explore what I take to be a shift towards generic conservatism in popular music, a shift which been accompanied paradoxically enough by a proliferation in the number of genres. I will argue that complexity in genre formation persists, it is just that there is now much more convergence between the different factors. Changing relations between 'record' companies and music media - including radio - have been key here. My focus will be on the period since the 1990s when genres seem to have multiplied yet also become stuck, anchored in the past.

Sune Auken, Scandinavian Studies and Linguistics, KU (sunauk@hum.ku.dk)

The Challenge of Generic Categorization

The lecture aims to present the state-of-the-art in Genre Studies, and use this as a backdrop for a description of the possibilities and challenges inherent in generic categorization.

In particular the lecture will focus on how we use generic categorization as an inherent part of our understanding of cultural phenomena. The knowledge involved in this interpretation is often tacit, even unrecognized, but it still underpins and directs our

understanding. In fact, what we do in explicit generic interpretation, is often simply to bring these tacit assumptions to light in order to understand the generic foundation on which our interpretation rests.

Moreover, the lecture will describe how we use generic concepts to build implicit and explicit genre hierarchies in our ordering of the cultural landscape surrounding us. These hierarchies are invariably ill-defined, incomplete, and incoherent. But they are also not only useful and enlightening, but crucial and unavoidable in any advanced usage and understanding of genre.

Nicolai Jørgensgaard Graakjær, Communication and Psychology, AAU (nicolaig@hum.aau.dk)

Music and sports radio

Based on an examination of a particular case – i.e., a specific issue of "Sport på 3'eren" on P3 (DNB) – the presentation discusses whether characteristic features of music in sports radio programming can be identified. The following questions will guide the examination: When and how is (what) music deployed, and how does music relate to other sounds and contribute to flow?

Henrik Smith Sivertsen, KB (hess@kb.dk)

"I don't belong on Dansktoppen" – music chart shows and the constitution of musical genres

This paper will focus on how music charts contribute to the constitution of musical genres and audiences. Historically, the music chart show has been one of the most popular radio music formats, and especially chart shows based on votes from audiences have been central to genre formations.

I will concentrate on the case "Dansktoppen" (The Top of Denmark"). It was a radio chart show originally launched by the Danish Broadcasting Company (DR) in 1968, closed down in 1977, and relaunched two times in the 1990's (1991 and 1993). The show still exists in its third incarnation in the reign of DR.

Regarding practices of categorization and the meaning of genre in music and radio "Dansktoppen" is an eminent case. The fact that the show itself has given name to a specific Danish genre term, "dansktop", illustrates the power of such radio shows.

During its different life times negotiations of what "dansktop" is and is not has been central, both to the audience, DR and not least the artists represented, whether willingly or not.

Mads Krogh, Musicology, AU (Musmk@dac.au.dk)

Musico-generic assemblages within (and beyond) the Danish Broadcasting Corporation

If radio, as among others Simon Frith (2002: 41) has claimed, should be considered seminal to the constitution of genres and genre communities in musical life, then surely *format radio* – with its systematic mapping of listener preferences in terms of music content – would have to be of paramount importance.

Focussing in this presentation on the introduction of format radio within the Danish Broadcasting Corporation during the 1990s, I aim to discuss how programming practices connected to format radio involve existing music genre cultures or what I shall call *musico-generic assemblages* and how the translation of these into procedures for programming is marked by reification. That is, a situation where the contingency of genre categories is masked in order to facilitate accountability or a sense of teleology in programming practises and politics. Reification is, however, always partial implying a certain openness and allowing, thus, effacements of generic bounds.

Patrick Valiquet, Musicology, University of Edinburgh (patrick.valiquet@ed.ac.uk)

Genre ideologies: sources and styles of association in electronic art music

The concept of genre holds a problematic position in the theoretical discourse of electronic art music (EAM). To many producers the recognition of generic norms implies either giving up creative agency to industrial forces or adopting an arbitrary analytical perspective with little connection to the creative process. This attitude is rarely contradicted by audiences for EAM, who generally share institutional sphere with producers and thus know implicitly what to expect with regard to the field's aesthetic and social conventions. Nevertheless, a variety of aesthetic hierarchies and regularities have been elaborated by musicians, theorists and institutions. Genre-related performances of belonging permeate EAM's rich repertoire of gestural, genealogical and spatial

conventions as well as its social and political norms. They also mark EAM's organology, shaping systems of technical knowledge, material aesthetics and practices of instrumentation.

In this presentation I survey theories of genre in EAM in light of my ethnographic and archival fieldwork on efforts to reform EAM institutions in response to ubiquitous digitalisation since the late 1990s in the Canadian city of Montreal. I discuss the role that genre associations play both in the inventions of musicians, and in reforms of education, festival programming and cultural funding. Drawing on the work of linguistic anthropologists (Woolard 1994; Kroskrity 2000; Gershon 2010) I describe these transformations as partly determined by beliefs about how genre can and should operate, or 'genre ideologies'. My findings illustrate how prevailing ways of thinking about genre in EAM can reinforce the strong senses of pluralisation and liberalisation often associated with digital technologies, and thus complicate the connection between aesthetic and technological change.

Iben Have, Media Science, AU (ibenhave@dac.au.dk)

Go' Morgen P3: A case study of a music-radio genre

The sound of four morning music-radio programs broadcasted on DBC in 1992, 1998, 2006 and 2011 respectively will constitute a case study of how the popular Danish music-radio format Go' Morgen P3 has developed in the period. The focus will be on the development of the role of the host(s) and the music-host relation, but I will also map the use of not-music-related features like quizzes, interviews, guests, gossip, and news in the programs. By pointing at consistent as well as changing elements of a classic music radio format like Go' Morgen P3, the case study hopefully can be used to discuss the constituents of a music-radio genre.

Morten Michelsen, Musicology, KU (momich@hum.ku.dk)

A typology for radio genres

In order to describe changes in music programming during DBC's first 37 years (until the popular music program began) I have entered all program and music information for the first week of November into a data base. All in all, the base will contain 50-60.000

records, and the records will need tagging if I am to get anything out of the base. I have developed a music and a radio genre taxonomy for that purpose. Here, I would like to introduce the radio genre typology. First I would like to attempt a useable distinction between different terms for program categories (format, genre, etc.). Then I would like to address some of the strengths and weaknesses of typologies from a genre-theoretical perspective. Last I will present the principles of the model and discuss the rationale for choosing the specific categories and point to the most important inconsistencies that such a genre table will inevitably contain.

The typology has been developed inductively, i.e., all programs mentioned in the program sheets have been reduced to a manageable amount of categories. Apart from program sheets for each day the DBC's organisational structure and contemporary views on radio genres have been taken into consideration. The result is a tripartite genre table consisting of a) radio based on music, b) radio based on literature (and drama), and c) radio based on information and education in a broad sense. Each of these are divided into a) in house productions, b) transmissions, and c) productions by others (e.g., records). A third layer of division is related to traditional music and literature genres and to information genres like news, lectures, and children's programmes.