WORKSHOP

Dynamics of Canon Formation:
Musical Exploration of the Benefits and Limits of Canonisation Theories

Date

Thursday 26 May 2016

Time

14:00 – 18:00

Venue

Heyne Haus, Veranstaltungsraum 2
Papendieck 16
37073 Göttingen

Workshop Description

An LP containing Madonna's 'Like a Virgin', a recording of Ravi Shankar's performance of 'Raga Manj Khamaj' at Woodstock, Psy's Youtube video of 'Gangnam Style' and musical notations of Beethoven's 'Für Elise'. Albeit utterly different in their material form, musical content, and historical and cultural context, all of these examples could be considered as a part of an evolving musical canon.

Within various musicological disciplines and cultural studies, much has been discussed about the intricate dynamics of canon formation. Informed by critical theories that also shaped New Musicology and Critical Musicology, musical canon debates in (Ethno)musicology sought to move away from multifarious modes of 'disciplining' music which were prevalent until the late 1980s (cf. Bergeron and Bohlman 1992). Most of the musicological approaches to musical canon focused on the complexity of sonorous, cultural, material, ideological, historical, normative boundaries. But at the same time, they could fall into the trap of promoting a specific mode of listening that objectified music, be it 'hierarchical' (cf. Bergeron and Bohlman 1992) or 'structural' (cf. Subotnik 1996;

Dell'Antonio 2000), while excluding certain musics from (academic) canons based on very specific, often Euro-centric, notions of musical aesthetics and functions.

In an effort to understand diverse canon formation processes involving a range of musical forms, we propose to examine some of the key theories of musical canons as they relate to folk, popular and classical music as follows. Philip Bohlman (1988) posited three categories of 'small group canon', 'mediated canon' and 'imagined canon' for folk music. Adapting Bohlman's theory, Antti-Ville Kärjä (2006) developed three criteria of 'alternative canon', 'mainstream canon' and 'prescriptive canon' for popular music. As for the European classical music tradition, William Weber (1999) proposed 'scholarly canon', 'pedagogical canon' and 'performing canon'.

The breadth of these theories highlights questions about the nature and form of, and ideologies behind canon formation, and the multifarious dynamics of musical inclusion and exclusion. While such classifications certainly offered us a much welcome alternative to the aforementioned normative and exclusive aesthetic categorizations, the question remains how, or, maybe better, whether we can avoid the inherently disciplining work that *all* typologies do, when we – as an audience, critic, musicologist, ethnomusicologist or anthropologist – seek to understand the musics we love so much.

In this workshop, we will critically engage with this question through an examination of various case studies of musical canon and rigorous theoretical discussions from various perspectives, including cross-genre and cross cultural points of view. The 1st half of the workshop will explore <u>specific case studies presented by the participants</u> (15 minutes presentation plus 5 minutes questions, each) who will address a range of questions and issues including:

(1) How the dynamics of canon formation, in each case study, is shaped by various elements such as musical and performance styles, commercial interests and economic motivations, media representation, technology, industries, mobility, physicality and materiality, ethnicity and race, politics and ideologies, aesthetics, historicity, etc. etc.? And what makes each case study of musical canon unique?

2) How useful, if at all, are the canonization theories and categories, when applied separately or in combination, as analytical tools and how is it theoretically productive to examine the canon formation in terms of a 'typological' concept?

Building upon our exploration of differences and similarities between these musical case studies, the second half of the workshop will take the form of a <u>round table discussion</u> with all participants including the participating audience members. During this open discussion, we alternate between what we learned from the case studies and the macro-theoretical discussions, in order to explore the many tensions and dynamics between knowledge and power present in the academic disciplines as well as practical fields of cultural/creative/music industries.

Workshop Schedule

What?	Who?	When?
Coffee	All	13:45 – 14:00
Welcome	Eva-Maria van Straaten	14:00 – 14:05
Whose Musical Canon Is It?: A Comparative Analysis of Canonization Formation in Two Korean Vocal Genres, *P'ansori* and K-pop	Dr. Haekyung Um	14:05 – 14:25
What Kind of World music?: A Case Study Questioning Viable Canonization	Charissa Granger, M.A.	14:25 – 14:45
Canonization in Public Discourse: Media and Discursive Mechanisms in Response to Musical Virtuosity	Dr. Christine Hoppe & Avischag Müller, M.st.	14:45 – 15:05
German Rap Loops	Julian Warner, M.A.	15:05 – 15:25
The Greatest Surbahar Player You Never Heard: Dynamics of Canonization in Contemporary Hindustani Instrumental Music	Eva-Maria van Straaten, M.A.	15:25 – 15:45
Break – Coffee	All	15:45 – 16:15
Roundtable Discussion	All Moderator: Dr. Haekyung Um	16:15 – 18:00

Abstracts and Workshop Presenters:

Whose Musical Canon Is It?: A Comparative Analysis of Canonization Formation in Two Korean Vocal Genres, *P'ansori* and K-pop

Dr. Haekyung Um (Liverpool)

I will examine various canonization processes associated with two Korean vocal genres, namely the traditional musical drama *p'ansori* and contemporary Korean popular music (K-pop). Each of these two vocal genres will be analysed by applying three canonization theories, including Bohlman's typology of folk music canons (small group, mediated and imagined canons), Kärjä's typology of popular music canon (alternative, mainstream and

prescribed canons) and William Weber's three types of Western classical canon (scholarly, pedagogical and performance canons). In addition to this comparative analysis of canon formation process in *p'ansori* and K-pop, I will also examine if and how postmodern conditions give shape to music canonization, as Gloag (2015) suggested, for these two vocal forms.

What Kind of World Music? A Case Study Questioning Viable Canonization

Charissa Granger, M.A. (Göttingen)

World music, a category that is often conflated with or used interchangeably as a music genre, is shaped by material practices that are informed by culturally and historically distinct moments. It is invoked and clothed by discourses of otherness, representation and power. This presentation concentrates on how canon formation takes place within world music. It will do so by addressing artist and music descriptions that circulate throughout the world music festival space in the form of flyers, program notes and press releases, which often concentrate on the background context, of poverty for instance, rather than music-making. Through an analysis of these descriptions, the case study especially attends to how these texts take part in the formation of a canon around particular artists that are positioned under the pennant of world music. Drawing on research interviews, it questions the ways in which world music remains useful within the festival circuit for participants and how the relationship between festival participants and musical performance is negotiated herein. In this, the presentation critically explores the commonly accepted notion that world music is a category under which different genres are subsumed, and argues that to accept it as a necessity for a lack of better words, is to be disingenuous to the power relations involved in the dynamics of its canonization. The case study argues that the structuring and categorizing is little short of a presentation of fiction, which, were attention be granted to music-making in artist descriptions, would enable a questioning of the viability of the categorization. This case study illustrates how world music categorization and its propensity to canon formation, within itself amongst artists, can impart theoretical acuity to larger overarching concepts of concern to scholarly delineations in studies of the world's music.

Canonization in Public Discourse: Media and Discursive Mechanisms in Response to Musical Virtuosity

Dr. Christine Hoppe & Avischag Müller, M.st. (Göttingen)

The music periodical is the major institutionalised medium for canon formation in the 19th century. It created a public communicative space that enabled a small caste of critics to propagate aesthetic norms for the production of music, steering the understanding of music towards a work-centred practice. They defined both the norms of composition (via work reviews) and of performance (via concert reviews discussing performer behaviour in terms of

an appropriate work interpretation). The discourse is suffused with a dichotomous logic on the levels of production, performance and reception. This basic dichotomy of substance and instance, work and performance, structure and sound etc. reinforced the work paradigm and disciplined the listening practices. Analysing accounts of virtuosity in this discourse uncovers the discursive mechanisms that relegate virtuoso performance and virtuosic compositions (with few exceptions) to the negative side of the binary. However, virtuosity always posited a challenge or even a disruption to the basic dichotomy, forcing writers to fend off its alluring otherness in textual strategies such as alignment, reversal, irony and relativization.

In our talk we will discuss the mediated canonisation mechanisms departing from examples of work and performance criticism in music periodicals such as the *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* and the *Berliner Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* in the first half of the 19th century. We will analyse these writings as a communicative space, pursuing questions like: How did the normative discursive practice work? What sorts of speech (journalistic genres and linguistic registers) were taken up, who established what kind of speaker positions (e.g. authority positions, "impartiality", "advocacy") and who was the recipient of the discourse (the public sphere, a specialised musical public)?

German Rap Loops
*Julian Warner, M.A. (*Göttingen)

During the first half of the twentieth century there was a lengthy debate in the field of German folklore studies about the origins of folklore and folk songs in particular. The discussion revolved around the question whether folk songs actually arose from the very soul of a German Volk or through the institutional work of folklore scholars. I will show how a similar question can be posed to the field of German rap music and propose a view of rap music production and its journalistic and academic discourse as a self-reflexive loop. In this sense the categories posed by the agents of the institutions and the social figures performed by the artists and their respective subcultural scenes cannot be understood as isolated phenomena, but rather as interdependent results of negotiations of power.

"The Greatest Surbahar Player You Never Heard": Dynamics of Canonization in Contemporary Hindustani Instrumental Music

Eva-Maria van Straaten, M.A. (Göttingen)

Referring to *surbahār* player *Smt*. Annapurna Devi (1927), daughter and disciple of founder of the Senia Maihar *gharānā* (musical lineage) Allauddin Khan, the title-quote hints at an apparent paradox regarding musical canonization. Although Annapurna Devi learned from her (retrospectively canonized) father and was musically successful at the beginning of her life, she never performed in public from the mid-1950s onwards. She has since led a reclusive life of vocally teaching music in her apartment in Mumbai, not allowing curious visitors to

meet her nor permitting anybody to hear her play. Only three, relatively short and low quality, recordings of her *surbahar* playing have recently surfaced on Youtube and have been actively circulated by music lovers since. However, despite this absence from the public eye and ear, Annapurna Devi received multiple musical honorary titles and prizes, and music connoisseurs, music critics and musicians actively discuss, disregard, and play "her music". All this indicates that, despite the almost complete absence of recorded evidence of her alleged musical genius, (the music of) Annapurna Devi has certainly become part of a Hindustani classical music canon. In my presentation, I explore this apparent paradox of an unheard music(ian) becoming part of a musical canon, by examining how musical and extra-musical elements are leveraged in contemporary attempts to (de)-legitimize her (music) as part of this canon. While extraordinary in its paradoxical nature, this examination can illuminate some of the multivalent aspects that (can) play a role in dynamics of Hindustani classical music's canonization, which do not fit neatly into the categorization theories explored by Bohlman, Kärjä and Weber.

Preparatory Literature:

Bohlman, Phillip (1988) *The Study of Folk music in the Modern World*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Chapter 7, 'Folk music and Canon Formation: Creative Dialectic between Text and Context', pp. 104-120.

Kärjä, Antti-Ville (2006) 'A Prescribed Alternative Mainstream: Popular Music and Canon Formation', *Popular Music* 25 (1): 3-19.

Weber, William (1999) 'The History of Musical Canon', in Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist eds, *Rethinking Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 336-55.

Additional Literature:

Bergeron, Katherine and Philip V. Bohlman eds (1992*) Disciplining Music: Musicology and Its Canons*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Everist, Mark (1999) 'Reception Theories, Canonic Discourses, and Musical Value', in Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist eds, *Rethinking Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 378-402.

Jones, Carys Wyn (2008) *The Rock Canon: Canonical Values in the Reception of Rock Albums*. Burlington, VT: Ashgate.

Kerman, Joseph (1983) 'A Few Canonic Variations', *Critical Inquiry* 10 (1): 107-125.

Kurkela, Vesa and Markus Matere eds (2015). *Critical Music Historiography: Probing Canons, Ideologies and Institutions*. Abington: Ashgate.

Qureshi, Regula Burckhardt (1999) 'Other Musicologies: Exploring Issues and Confronting Practice in India', in Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist eds, *Rethinking Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 311-35.

Regev, Motti et al. (2006) Special issue on canonisation, *Popular Music* journal, volume 25, issue including: Motti Regev (guest editor, Introduction); Antti-Ville Kärjä (see above); Ral von Appen and Andr Doehring (Nevermind The Beatles, here's Exile 61 and Nico: 'The top 100 records of all time' – a canon of pop and rock albums from a sociological and an aesthetic perspective'); Mary Watson and N. Anand (Award ceremony as an arbiter of commerce and canon in the popular music industry); Katherine Skinner ('Must Be Born Again': resurrecting the *Anthology of American Folk Music*); Matthew Bannister ('Loaded': indie guitar rock, canonism, white masculinities); and Michele Ollivier (Snobs and *quétaines*: prestige and boundaries in popular music in Quebec).

Samson, Jim (2001) 'Canon (iii)', in Stanley Sadie and John Tyrell (eds) *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. 2nd edition. New York: Oxford University Press, pp. 6-7.

Schmutz, Vaughn (2005). 'Retrospective Cultural Consecration in Popular Music: Rolling Stone's Greatest Albums of All Time', *American Behavioral Scientist* 48 (11): 1510–23.