

The Return of Music in Political Journalism: Its design and its potentials

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Abstract

Starting in the 1990s, the sonic design of news, reports and other forms of audiovisual political journalism started to change in Western countries. In an ever accelerating process, non-diegetic music – background music – appeared and increased both in quantity and stylistic variety during the 1990s and 2010s. This happened without getting attention or leading to significant reactions among media users or media scholars. Currently, this process is reaching a new level because now music can be heard in some audiovisual segments wall-to-wall, thus covering the entire presentation of certain reports and news videos. Initially, I will present some recent examples for illustrating this increase. After this, the sonic design – i.e. its structure, intertextualities and historical models – will be analyzed in order to make the potential effects of particular features describable. In non-musicological research, music is often perceived as an art form that triggers emotions and feelings more or less directly, a view that oversimplifies its broad range of effects on the listener and treats it as an individual surface effect that can't be generalized or reflected about. Recurring on critical theory and Friedrich Kittler's media theories, the variety of potential effects of a certain combination of words, moving images and sound will be demonstrated in order to show the many ways how music may persuade, guide or even manipulate the user of journalist media. Eventually, the presentation of these effects will conclude with a discussion of the emotional potentials of music on the news consumers on a more profound theoretical level.

Keywords

Music, political journalism, soundtrack, non-diegetic music, manipulation

Bio

Dr. Martin Knust M.A. studied musicology, philosophy and theology in Greifswald, Berlin (HU) and Dresden (TU). Magister Artium 2000, Dr. phil. 2006. Academic employments at universities in Greifswald, Berlin (TU), Stockholm, Örebro and at the Royal College of Music Stockholm from 2007 through 2012. Since 2013 Senior Lecturer and since 2020 Associate

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Recent relevant publications

- “Fictionalizing Populism: a music analysis of recent political journalist soundtracks”, *Mobilis in mobile. La revue de cultures populaires* * 1 “Cultures populaires et politique” 2021, Popular Culture Association of France (PCAoF), 11 pages

<http://pcaof.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/MOBILIS-IN-MOBILE-Revue-1-Fictionalizing-Populism-a-music-analysis-of-recent-political-journalist-soundtracks.pdf>

- Online presentation “Music in journalism and propaganda”, 15 minutes, part of the Media Impact online publications of the Linnæus University Center for Intermedial and multimodal studies (IMS), produced by the Media department of the Linnæus University Kalmar, Sweden, published 18.3.2022

<https://play.lnu.se/channel/channelid/508665>

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCU1Zju_CxcbxP7vLciITt-A

- TV presentation “Musik i nyheterna” (‘Music in News’), [in Swedish] UR Samtiden [Sweden’s Educational Channel], published 5.9.2022, 25 minutes; broadcast on Kunskapskanalen (Swedish public service TV) on 16.9.2022 at 16.15 and 25.9. at 15.20; available online

<https://urplay.se/program/229095-ur-samtiden-forskning-fran-linneuniversitetet-musik-i-nyheterna>

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