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Music video on the margins: Performing citizenship on YouTube

Following the arrival of YouTube in 2005, there was widespread anticipation that this platform would realize a democratized “participatory culture,” one where music is often at the centre. Scholars and critics alike anticipated the deinstitutionalization of music, in a way that might bring music closer to the lives of more people. Over this past decade, thousands of amateur, user-generated videos featuring an individual or group interpreting Beyoncé songs into recognized sign languages have appeared on YouTube.

My paper considers the ‘visual turn’ in popular music, examining how and why Beyoncé’s musical oeuvre has inspired d/Deaf and hearing individuals to create this extensive catalogue of Beyoncé signed songs. Using select case studies, I explore how YouTube’s platform might provide an ideal conduit for the (re-)mediation of the art of signed songs, while simultaneously problematizing issues faced in attempts to devise inclusive and exhaustive interpretations of Beyoncé’s music through visual signs, touching on themes of accessibility, representation, remediation, and citizenship.

Ultimately, these performances transform and recontextualize music and music video for *deaf* and hearing audiences respectively, and reveal the limitations of an exclusively phonocentric approach to music.

biographical note

Áine Mangaoang is Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Department of Musicology, University of Oslo. Her work on YouTube and music in prison is the subject of her first monograph *Dangerous Mediations: Pop Music in a Philippine Prison Video* (Bloomsbury, 2019), and also in the journals *Postcolonial Text* and *TORTURE*. Other research on popular music, (dis)ability, place, and politics appears in the volumes *Beyoncé: At Work, On Screen and Online* (University of Indiana Press, 2021), *The Routledge Companion to Popular Music Analysis* (2018), and in the *Journal of World Popular Music* (2019). Her latest co-edited book, *Made in Ireland: Studies in Popular Music* (Routledge, 2020), is a comprehensive introduction to the history, sociology and musicology of Irish popular music in both local and global contexts.

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‘Talking’ about music: the emotional content of comments on YouTube videos

In music psychology, research has tackled emotional responses to music from a diversity of perspectives. Some studies use imaging to identify evoked brain responses, or physiological measurements like galvanic skin response to uncover particular specific reactions. Experimental research often provides highly manipulated musical stimuli for either explicit judgement by participants of emotions evoked or implicit judgements of surprise or goodness of fit that can shed light on emotions.

Other work uses people's own words and descriptions of emotional responses to gain insight into their feelings, typically gathered through written accounts or interviews (e.g. Lamont, 2011). While this provides rich data, one challenge of this approach is to gain insights that remain close to the actual experience of listening. This presentation tackles the central question of how people communicate their emotional responses to music through the use of YouTube comments. Listeners' comments are closely connected to the experience of listening, thereby providing rich, realistic, easily accessible and extensive data. We combine manual (content analysis, coding using existing models of music and emotion) and automated (Evaluative Lexicon) methods. These are brought together to explore how people's comments map onto existing models of music and emotion such as Juslin's (2013) BRECVEMA model of emotional mechanisms and the Geneva Music-Induced Affect Checklist (Coutinho & Scherer, 2017), and to shed light on how these models might need to be 'translated' or extended to account for the range of expressed responses. We will present findings from a large selection of YouTube videos across a range of musical styles and genres, providing information on a) the proportion of usable comments, b) the distribution of comments relating to the artist, music, lyrics, emotional response and evaluative judgement from the listener, and c) the distribution of various emotional components in comments across different music genres. This will provide important insights into the discourse around music and emotion and the ways in which YouTube listeners share their responses. The research is currently ongoing and results will be available at the conference.

biographical note

The team brings together a range of disciplines and fields of expertise. Professor Alexandra Lamont is an expert in the field of everyday engagement with music and is a research innovator in technology and everyday experiences. She has worked in the fields of music preference, musical memories, and music and emotion. Scott Bannister has just finished a PhD on chills in music, exploring conscious and less conscious responses to favourite music using a range of physiological and psychological measures, and has explored YouTube comments as a source of information on chills. Dr Eduardo Coutinho is an international expert in the field of music and emotion, has expertise in linguistic coding of emotion terms, and has developed a number of scales to measure different aspects of emotional responses to music. Dr Hauke Egermann is a specialist in music emotion-induction, social influences in listening, and the ability of music to communicate emotion and meaning to listeners.

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«EVERYBODY KNOWS ME NOW». *Digital as Performance: readings on David Bowie, the performative discourse and the digitisation of the artistic conscience from selected music videos (2013-2017).*

As a reflex of the very notion of *transformation* intrinsic to Contemporary Art, David Bowie extended music as a vehicle to a «mercurial odyssey» of artistic proposals: from the intermedial to the digital. The moving image and music videos, in particular, played a key-role in the consolidation, dissemination and understanding of his performative discourse, and YouTube –albeit in a late stage of his career – presented itself as a platform to exert new possibilities towards the representation of the intermedial and the incorporeal. YouTube as an “archive” defined by the reframing of the very medium it entails – from its format, aesthetic, consumption patterns, etc. – problematizes and potentiates music videos as both haptic modulations and reactions to the progressive democratization of production.