

The Department of Music Theory at the Stanisław Moniuszko Academy of Music in Gdańsk, Poland, is pleased to invite submissions of proposals for the International Conference “Meaning of Music”, which will take place in person and online on October 10-11, 2024 (co-financed by the Ministry of Education and Science in the “Excellent Science” programme – DNK/SP/548966/2022).

One of the most fundamental questions emerging from our relationship with music is: can music mean? Those who try to answer this question represent two radically different schools called formalism and referentialism, but recently a third one has appeared that situates itself between these two. This third school owes its existence to relatively new cognitive linguistic theories such as conceptual metaphor and conceptual blending. The earlier of them (G. Lakoff and M. Johnson 1980) asserts that metaphor is not a literary, stylistic device, but one of the basic forms of thinking, whose characteristic feature is one-way mapping between mental spaces. In turn, the later theory (G. Fauconnier and M. Turner 2002) assumes that mapping between mental spaces is bidirectional, and a blended space emerges from the interaction of concepts of both input spaces. Meanings that are constructed in this way are mostly unconscious, but they are at the heart of both everyday meanings and unique human creativity.

The first musicological works dealing with the issue of meaning of music from a cognitive perspective appeared at the end of the twentieth century, and the twenty first century has shown that interest in this subject is growing. There are already several serious publications devoted to theoretical issues, such as musical concepts, cognitive musical grammar (L. Zbikowski 2002, 2017), musical metaphors (M. Spitzer 2004), as well as the theory called multilevel grounding (M. Antović 2022), not to mention numerous semantic interpretations of individual works from multimedia genres (song, opera, film music, music with video), instrumental programme music and – less often – absolute instrumental music. Despite some advancement in this work, the question of the definition of musical significance is not yet definitively resolved. The prevailing view is that the musical meaning is divided into auto- and hetero-referentiality, but according to M. Antović it includes “any situation in which elements of a cognitive system (for the most part, music) exhibit reference – that is, evoke a psychological reaction that listeners intuit as categorically different from, though likely superimposed on, the pure parsing of structure”.

The aim of the Gdańsk conference is to gather together in one place and time researchers from all over the world who are dealing with this topic, in order to present current theoretical knowledge, to date scattered across various sources, and to make semantic interpretation of individual works from all musical genres. Among the many important problems within the field, the organisers propose to highlight: embodied music cognition; the place of emotions in the construction of musical meaning; image schemas; musical vs. linguistic concepts; the role of percepts and concepts in the process of constructing musical meaning; physical, biological, social and cultural limitations; metaphors and blends concerning music; ambiguity; definition of musical meaning, but the above list may be widely developed. We are convinced that results of our international conference will contribute not only to the popularisation of the cognitive

approach to musical meaning, but also to raise the general level of knowledge about human forms of mental and creative activity.

Keynote Speakers:

1. Lawrence Zbikowski, Professor of Music and the Humanities, Chair of the Department of Music, University of Chicago, USA
2. Mihailo Antović, Professor, Faculty of Philosophy, Head Researcher, Centre for Cognitive Sciences, University of Niš, Serbia
3. Michael Spitzer, Professor of Music, Department of Music, University of Liverpool, United Kingdom
4. Rolf Inge Godøy, Professor of Musicology, Department of Musicology, University of Oslo, Norway
5. Anthony Brandt, Associate Professor, Chair of Composition and Theory at the Shepherd School of Music, Rice University in Houston, USA
6. Danae Stefanou, Associate Professor, School of Music Studies, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece
7. Juan Chattah, Associate Professor of Music Theory, Director of the Experiential Music Curriculum, Frost School of Music, University Miami, USA
8. Violetta Kostka, Associate Professor, Department of Music Theory, Academy of Music in Gdańsk, Poland

The official language of the conference is English. In addition to one-hour lectures by keynote speakers, we plan 20-minute papers. Please submit an abstract of about 500 words and short biographical information including your name, contact details (postal address, e-mail) and affiliation no later than 15<sup>th</sup> December 2023 to [meaningofmusic2024@amuz.gda.pl](mailto:meaningofmusic2024@amuz.gda.pl). The programme committee will make its final decision on the abstracts by the end of January 2024 and contributors will be informed immediately thereafter. Further information about the programme, registration, conference fee, and accommodation will be announced on the conference website [meaningofmusic2024.pl](http://meaningofmusic2024.pl). Conference members are guaranteed the publication of abstracts on the Internet and in the abstracts book, as well as a coffee bar, dinner and supper for each of the two days of the conference.

Programme Committee:

Violetta Kostka, Associate Professor, Academy of Music in Gdańsk, Project Coordinator

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