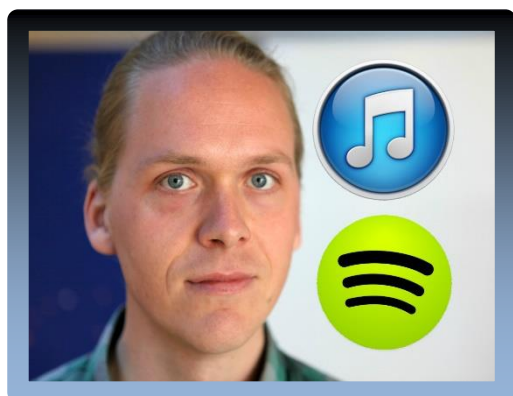


Seminar Series

Topics in the Aesthetics of Music and Sound

**Thursday, March 27, 2014
3:15-5 p.m. in U73**



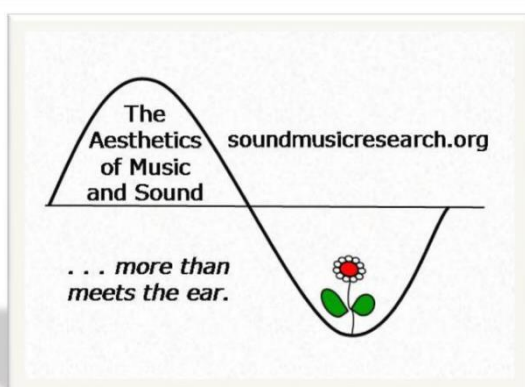
The (Possible) Application of Format Theory in the Study of the Use of Immaterial Music Formats

Andreas Lenander Ægidius, PhD Student (1st year), Institute for the Study of Culture - Media Studies, University of Southern Denmark.

Abstract: I would like to investigate the ways in which format theory might be applicable to the study of how we handle immaterial music formats. Jonathan Sterne tentatively puts the idea of a format theory forward in relation to his historical analysis of the development of the MP3 format: *MP3 – The Meaning of a Format (2013)*. Sterne demonstrates that formats, standards and infrastructures – and the need for content to fit inside them – are every bit as central to communication as the boxes we call “media”. The theory references earlier arguments from the study of technology and science (STS) but distinguishes itself due to its distinct focus on formats: “Format Theory would ask us to modulate the scale of our analysis of media somewhat differently. Mediality happens on multiple scales and time frames. Studying formats highlights smaller registers like software, operating standards, and codes, as well as larger registers like infrastructures, international corporate consortia, and whole technical systems.” (Sterne 2013, p. 11). This approach would have us look at that which functions ‘beneath, beyond and behind’ our reliance on digital infrastructures for media use. Questions as to what format theory is good for and how I propose to use it as part of a sociocultural approach are framed by my overall PhD research question: How do users, creators and distributors of music handle immaterial music formats in the cross field between downloading and streaming? I would like to include a discussion of theoretical merits and possible research questions since I have no empirical data yet here in my first year of a PhD-project, where I am still neck deep in theory.



All are welcome - also via Skype



- Cross-Disciplinary Interplay between the Humanities, Technology and Musical Practice
- Backdrop for the SDU-IKV Research Program

