



**Thursday,
February 14, 2013
3:15-5 p.m. in U73**

Guest lecture in the seminar series
**Topics in the Aesthetics of
Music and Sound**

- arranged by **The Aesthetics of Music and
Sound** – www.soundmusicresearch.org –
**Cross-Disciplinary Interplay between the
Humanities, Technology and Musical
Practice**; Institute for the Study of Culture,
University of Southern Denmark -

<http://www.soundmusicresearch.org/seminarsspring2013.html>

Oracular Music: Musical Modernism and the Ideology of Progress

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It should not surprise us that so many composers in the twentieth century aligned themselves with the notion of progress. After all, if music – and art in general – is to maintain its cultural importance and significance, then it must keep pace with the rest of the developments that define modern civilization, in particular scientific and technological developments. Additionally, the emergence of specific historical genres, forms, and styles of music was undeniably conditioned by the political and social circumstances of their era. Yet art works also possess a trans-historical value. The technological innovations of today surpassed those of the past, but present-day listeners and musicians are just as capable of enjoying and appreciating music written hundreds years ago.

Indeed, many would agree that new art is not necessarily better than earlier one. Referring to ancient Greek literature, Karl Marx spoke of the "unequal relation of the development of material production". By contrast, some contemporary music theorists and philosophers have argued that only the most recent music can truly fulfil the higher calling of art. What then is the function of music in relation to general progress? When and how did we start thinking of art along these lines, and is it still possible today in the wake of postmodernism? The seminar explores this set of questions, taking as its primary case study Arnold Schoenberg's and Theodor W. Adorno's widespread views of musical progress.

ALL ARE WELCOME! 