



Cross-Disciplinary Interplay
between the Humanities,
Technology and Musical Practice

**Thursday,
March 29, 2012,
2:15-4 p.m. in U73.**

Guest lecture in the seminar
series

**Topics in the Aesthetics
of Music and Sound,**

<http://soundmusicresearch.org/seminarsspring2012.html>.

Wittgenstein and the Limits of Musical Grammar

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Abstract: According to the early Wittgenstein, musical tunes are like propositions. They are like tautologies that do not say or represent anything but simply show their own form. Here, the operative notion of form is nothing less than the form of reality, treated by the transcendental logic of Wittgenstein's early work the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Interestingly, the comparison between music and language lies at the heart of Wittgenstein's later philosophy as well. In the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein compares the understanding of a musical theme with the understanding of

a sentence. Moreover, the implications of the comparison are still formalistic: the only way to express the content of the theme is by repeating the theme itself. However, instead of a transcendental logic whose study was supposed to 'lead to knowledge of the nature of music' as well, Wittgenstein's later conception of the grammar of music (and language alike) rests on the practical agreement of the (musical) community. How exactly? That is the topic of this presentation.

ALL ARE WELCOME!