

Seminar Series

Topics in the Aesthetics of Music and Sound

Thursday, October 9, 2014
4:15-6 p.m. in U67

Vox Humana



Theo van Leeuwen is Professor of Multimodal Communication at the University of Southern Denmark and Emeritus Professor at the University of Technology, Sydney. He has published widely in the areas of social semiotics, multimodal communication and critical discourse analysis. His books include *Reading Images – The Grammar of Visual Design* (with Gunther Kress); *Speech, Music, Sound; Multimodal Discourse – the Modes and Media of Contemporary Communication* (with Gunther Kress); *Global Media Discourse* (with David Machin), *Introducing Social Semiotics; Discourse and Practice – New Tools for Critical Discourse Analysis*, and *The Language of Colour*. He is a founding editor of the journal *Visual Communication*.

Abstract: People have long dreamt of making musical instruments sound like the human voice. "If the violin stop is added", wrote Father Mersenne in his *Harmonie Universelle* of 1636, "it seems that there will be nothing more to desire in the organ unless it be that the pipes should sound the vowels and the syllables. . .this it seems must not be hoped for because of the great difficulties encountered."

Today's electronic instruments do 'sound the syllables and the vowels', but human voices now use technologies such as autotune and vocoder to produce sounds which reach beyond the natural human range, sustain beyond the natural duration of the human breath, and produce timbres and effects the human voice cannot naturally produce.

This paper will sketch the history of the interaction between the voice and technology and discuss the values that are at stake in this interaction.



PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE IN TIME TO ONE HOUR LATER. THIS IS DUE TO THE ANNUAL UNIVERSITY-WIDE HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN ACADEMY LECTURE BEING HELD AT 3:00 P.M. IN U45: WIZARDRY WITH LIGHT WITH PROFESSOR LENE VESTERGAARD HAU.

All are welcome - also via Skype

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

