



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

**Thursday,
February 23, 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>

Wagner and Žižek on the Revolutionary Potential of Music

(via Skype)

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Abstract: Slavoj Žižek has persistently traced the revolutionary potential of music by analyzing the music-drama of Richard Wagner. In line with his larger philosophical program, Žižek uses Wagner's works as a testing ground for discussing the symbolic structures that facilitate emancipation. The emphasis on symbolic structures, however, puts Žižek in an uneasy position with regard to the explicit goals stated by Wagner himself, who wanted to undermine the project of the Enlightenment. The decisive question between Žižek and Wagner concerns the role and nature of a collective, and the function of music in building this collective. One way of investigating the question of collectivity is opened once we discard the false dilemma of seeing music either as a symbolic structure to

be analyzed or as a direct expression of pure experience. Music has revolutionary potential when understood as an unbroken natural – or materialistic – continuum with regard to which the extremes (symbolic structures, pure experience) are unhelpful idealizations.

ALL ARE WELCOME!