

## Seminar Series

# Topics in the Aesthetics of Music and Sound

**Thursday, February 13, 2014  
3:15-5 p.m. in U73**

## **The Dynamics of Materiality and Digitalization in the Practices of Music Consumption**



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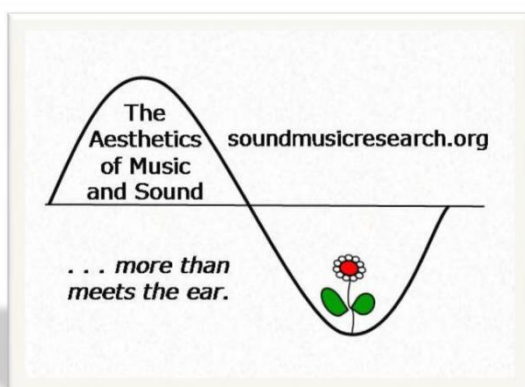
**Abstract:** Consumption of music is currently undergoing a period of rapid reconfiguration resulting from and constituted by a complex interplay between everyday practices and material artifacts. When online streaming services such as Spotify are introduced into the practice of music consumption, what is the effect on older, existing media? An intuitive answer would suggest that existing media such as vinyl records and CDs would diminish in relevance in favor of the newest ones.

Yet, as counterintuitive as it may seem in this age of iPods and digital downloads, vinyl, the favorite physical format of indie music collectors and audiophiles, is re-entering the mainstream. Nowadays, an mp3 download code can be attached to a vinyl record, so that consumers can get the same songs in digital format for free. At the first glance, it appears that a contradiction of sorts is lurking here - different music consumption practices are overlapping. How do consumers handle this combination of different media? On the one hand, vinyl records are cultural artifacts that represent a whole set of listening rituals, sound quality, feeling of nostalgia and the like. In comparison with them, mp3 files are immaterial, listened to on portable playback devices and give rise to a totally different set of practices. Is this phenomenon a successful symbiosis or is one product taking over another in order to survive in the market? Is it just a reversed set of music consumption practices, from analog to digital format and back again, or is there something else going on here?

Additionally, the relationship between materiality and digitalization of music calls into question the whole set of material, cultural and social elements constituting the practice of music consumption. The contribution of practice theories to consumer culture studies can be seen in a way that serves to focus on performative processes of social life -which by necessity involve consumption activities -while not diminishing the importance of either the cultural conditioning of consumption, or of the consumption of practitioners.



**All are welcome - also via Skype**



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

