

## Seminar Series

# Topics in the Aesthetics of Music and Sound

**Thursday, April 23, 2015**

**3:15-5 p.m. in Meeting Room Comenius**

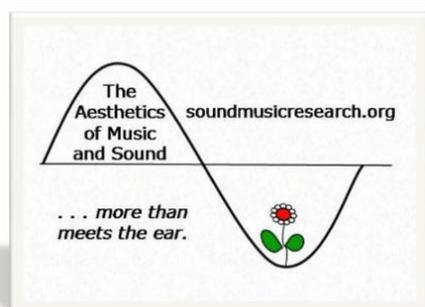


## Mother North: The Construction of Cultural Identity in Norwegian Metal

**Imke von Helden**, M.A Department of Scandinavian Studies at the University of Freiburg, Germany. Research assistant in the research group History in Popular Cultures of Knowledge. PhD student - Mother North: The Construction of Cultural Identity in Norwegian Metal Music. Member of the editorial board of Metal Music Studies. Founding member of the International Society for Metal Music Studies. Past: member of steering group for Music, Metal and Politics. Publications on Norwegian Metal and cultural identity, society and politics; EU politics in Norway. **Via Skype.**

**Abstract:** The metal music scene as a *glocal* cultural phenomenon offers a way of dealing with globalisation and of finding, defining and reassuring oneself of one's own cultural identity within the frame of an imagined global community. This particularly applies to Norse band concepts in Scandinavian countries. However, apart from tourism and children's books, these topics no longer occur to most people in Norwegian society. This, along with the presentation of metal aesthetics might be the cause for scepticism towards Norse-themed metal music not only in Scandinavia: in Germany, these topics are often associated with right-wing extremism and racism due to extensive use of mythology and runes and the ideal of a strong, blonde-haired, blue-eyed warrior in Nazi-Germany. The killings committed by Breivik in 2011 also showed that there is still awareness for this topic in Norwegian society.

It is the aim of this presentation to delve into the Norwegian Viking metal genre and to identify the meaning and various functions attached to these topics in- and outside the scene. I will do so by looking at selected examples of band concepts in terms of the visual, lyrical as well as sonic levels and add information on the artists' motivations that I gathered in interviews with Norwegian musicians and during field research. Additionally, I will provide a survey of the various literary and archaeological sources used in (re-)constructing the Viking Age in metal music.



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



**All are  
welcome  
- also via  
Skype**