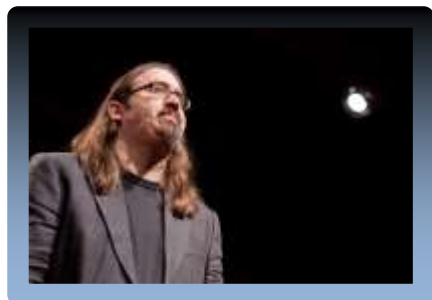


Seminar Series

Topics in the Aesthetics of Music and Sound

Thursday, March 5, 2015

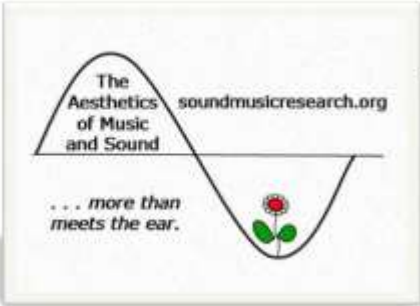
3:15-5 p.m. in Meeting Room Comenius



Exploring New Frontiers in the Aesthetics of Metal: Destabilising Capital through Mediocrity and Incompetence


Keith Kahn-Harris: Dr Keith Kahn-Harris is a lecturer at Birkbeck College and Leo Baeck College. A prolific writer on metal, he is the author of *Extreme Metal: Music and Culture on the Edge* (2007) and the co-editor of *Heavy Metal: Controversies and Countercultures* (2013). His website is www.kahn-harris.org. **Via Skype.**

Abstract: An important theme in metal studies scholarship has been the examination and contestation of 'capital' within metal scenes and the hierarchies that derive from them. Gendered, heteronormative and race-based forms of capital in metal have been deconstructed by scholars rooted in metal scenes, forming part of a wider opening-up of metal to previously marginalised groups. While all this is to be welcomed, other forms of subcultural capital circulating in metal scenes have not been subject to the same degree of challenge. Competence, musical skill, innovation and knowledge - amongst other skills - are valorised in metal scenes in ways that create forms of subcultural capital 'indigenous' to them. As part of a wider project of rethinking metal aesthetics and metal scenes within the context of what I have termed a 'crisis of abundance', I have tried to imagine ways in which metal's reliance on subcultural capital could be destabilised. In this lecture I will examine how a reconsideration of 'incompetence' and 'mediocrity' can open up new forms of metal pleasure as well as raising ironies, paradoxes and questions that help us rethink what metal might become in the future.



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