



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

**Thursday,
March 22, 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>.

The Polyfunctionality of Music in Some Dramas by Henrik Ibsen

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Abstract: In the literary texts of realism one repeatedly finds scenes of women sitting at the piano and playing. What does the inclusion of musical elements in a literary text tell us? Is music an ephemeral element in them? Does it function as a specific "break in the action" which aims at lulling the reader before a significant moment in the action? In my presentation I will explain the polyfunctionality of musical elements which among other things creates an independent, contextual narrative which functions as a sub-text of the main narrative of the literary work. Music and the main narrative of the text are intrinsically intertwined, communicating with

the reader as a single entity. Primarily focusing on the works of Henrik Ibsen, I will analyze the functions of his "scenes at the piano", that teem with subtle indications about cultural, political and gender issues of the time, but that are also important dramatic devices often stressing important moments in the dramatic action. Whereas the narrative of the piano as an object and its music probably was something intuitively perceived by the nineteenth-century reader, it now presents an exciting field for interdisciplinary research.

ALL ARE WELCOME!