Musicology & Ethnomusicology: Student
Scholarship

Musicology & Ethnomusicology

11-2018

Learning from the Pop World: How Studying Listeners of Pop Music Can Inform the Building of a Classical Music Audience: Annotated Bibliography

University of Denver

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.du.edu/muscilology_student

Part of the Musicology Commons

Recommended Citation

Learning from the Pop World: How Studying Listeners of Pop Music Can Inform the

Building of a Classical Music Audience Annotated Bibliography

Essays and Conference Proceedings

Baur, Dominikus, Jennifer Büttgen, and Andreas Butz. "Listening Factors: A Large-Scale Principal Components Analysis of Long-Term Music Listening Histories." Paper presented at SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, Austin, Texas, May 5-10, 2012. https://doi.org/10.1145/2207676.2208581.

Baur led a study with nuanced results. By looking at last.fm listening histories, his team as able to find trends in listening. While the last.fm interface played a role in his results, he noticed that there was a stark contrast between listeners that experiment and listeners that prefer to listen to familiar music. He also noted a trend for listeners to change their habits based on seasons.

The contrast between experimentation and comfort speaks to the observations made in the number of other articles that pop music has an inextricable attribute of comfort. This research does lay out how strong this correlation between comfort and an affinity for pop music is, but a survey of observations along these lines proves useful in achieving that goal.

Articles

Clarke, Eric F., "The Impact of Recording on Listening." *Twentieth-Century Music;*

Cambridge **4 no. 1 (March 2007): 47-70.** https://doi.org/10.1017/S1478572207000527.

Eric F. Clarke consolidates the vast impact audio recording has had on the average listener. While he does mention the generic impact of recording alone, a good amount of his analysis is based on the resulting wide access of vast amounts of music in the world. He calls this a "democratization" of music and explains how this has led to people enjoying every type of music in any environment, as well a development of the learner of music from less formal structures (being self-taught as opposed to attending a university).

Recording technology is said to have been a major influence on pop music in the past two decades of more. As a result, the average pop listener is guided by these developments, in contrast to the classical listener who might still be used to concert halls as the primary source of experiencing classical music. Clarke's work is well-rounded in that it addresses this hypothesis that pop music is guided by recording technology, but also acknowledges this same technology's impact on classical music. His focus on the universal environment music can be listened to is an interesting lens that bring similarities between these two genres.

Danielsen, A., et al. "Investigating Repetition and Change in Musical Rhythm by

Functional MRI." *Neuroscience* **275 (September 5, 2014): 469-76.**

http://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuroscience.2014.06.029.

Danielsen led an experiment to have quantitative data on the reaction of the brain to repetitive, rhythmic grooves, which are idiomatic to pop music. He observed how the patients responded when repeating patterns were broken up. His conclusion was that the brain had to reengage itself, reevaluating its predictions based on the new developments.

This article doesn't speak to whether this produces pleasure of discomfort in the listener, but does offer a link with studies like Diaz' (below) which looks at how engagement impacts the listener. While no definitive conclusion can be made between the two, this does begin a conversation about the level of engagement needed for certain music and whether that's a factor in the ease of drawing in audiences.

Diaz, Frank M. "Listening and Musical Engagement: An Exploration of the Effects of Different Listening Strategies on Attention, Emotion, and Peak Affective Experiences." *Applications of Research in Music Education* **33, no. 2 (May 2015): 27-33. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F8755123314540665.**

Frank M. Diaz observes that research has been done on the effects different listening strategies have on the listener of music, but it has not taken note of the effects these strategies have across varying genres and how they impact emotional responses. By conducting his experiment, Diaz discovers that different levels of listener engagement do impact emotional responses, equally across every genre.

With so much delineation between genres, it is interesting to note that listening engagement has the same impact across genres. This speaks to the similarities between the classical music and pop listener, a good starting point for learning from pop music audiences.

Dunn, Peter Gregory, Boris de Ruyter, and Don G. Bowhuis. "Toward a Better

Understanding of the Relation between Music Preference, Listening Behavior, and

Personality." *Psychology of Music* 40, no. 4 (July 1, 2012): 411-28.

https://doi.org/10.1177%2F0305735610388897.

Are lovers of different genres of music just incompatible? Dunn explores the correlation

between personality and genre by using the Big Five method and observing the subjects'

listening behaviors over a 3 month period. There was a strong correlation between the

personality and the type of music listened to. However, Dunn acknowledges that his study

was only focused in a workplace environment and that the method of using genres, rather

than musical features, is flawed.

It is important to acknowledge that there is an indescribable reason people tend towards

certain types of music, and observing personality is a quantifiable way to explore this.

Dunn's case that the concept of "genre" is flawed and opens way for further discussions.

Gomes, Ricardo Milani. "Audio Quality X Accessibility How Digital Technology Changed

the Way We Listen and Consume Popular Music 1." *Revista Vórtex* 4, no. 2

(September 2016): 1-14. http://search-proquest-

com.du.idm.oclc.org/docview/1879085596?accountid=14608.

Gomes explores the evolution from CD to MP3, making an astute observation that listeners'

problem in finding music no longer has to do with if there enough available to them, but has

to do with not having time to find the songs that interest them. As a result, internet services are built to help facilitate this.

Jäncke, Lutz, Simon Leipold, and Anja Burkard. "The Neural Underpinnings of Music Listening under Different Attention Conditions." *Neuroreport* 29, no. 7 (2018): 594-604. http://doi.org/10.1097/WNR.0000000000001019.

In this study, a pop song and a classical piece were played as a listener was asked to either pay full attention to the music, or pay attention to a film being played. In general, the pop piece saw responses in the listener's neural activity even when they were asked to passively listen. While the classical piece did not seem to grab the listener's attention in the passive listening. In contrast, the team noted similiarities in active listening, with neural responses that correlated to similar levels of engagement in both pieces.

This speaks to how music can be enjoyed in different levels of listening. Pop music can be enjoyed with low levels of engagement, classical music requires high levels of engagement. This explains the dichotomy between the two genres and the audiences they draw.

Lynar, Emily, et al. "The Joy of Heartfelt Music: An Examination of Emotional and Physiological Responses." *International Journal of Psychophysiology* 120 (October 2017): 118-25. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijpsycho.2017.07.012.

Lynar approaches music from a therapy standpoint, looking at emotional responses to music. Unlike most studies, she allows room for the subject to pick their own piece and add that to her comparisons. She found that the self-selected song had more joyous moods, while classical music tended towards relaxation. However, through the listening of the classical piece, there was wide variation in the listener's reaction. Such varying responses to music by listeners in various genres suggests a deep division in the way listeners respond to genres.

North, Adrian and David J. Hargreaves. "Situations Influences on Reported Musical Preferences." ***Psycholomusicology*** **15, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 30-45.** http://doi.org/10.1037/h0094081.

Environment is generally removed as a variable in listening studies. North and Hargreaves' study look specifically at environment and ask participants to name locations they would want to hear music and what kind. There was a strong trend in deciding where music was necessary, but participants disagreed on what should be playing. Listeners have different associations with music and different desires for when those should be played.

This is mildly discouraging in the pursuit to find a trend in an audience of one genre, but shows a predisposition to genres before the specific music is played, laying the groundwork to explore expectation and its role in listening (and how that trends toward predictable music).

Percino, Gamaliel, Peter Limek, and Stefan Thurner. "Instrumentational Complexity of Music Genres and Why Simplicity Sells." ***PLoS ONE*** **(May 20, 2014).** http://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0115255.

Percino led a study to see what trends exist between the instrumental complexity of a type of music and its success. Part of his conclusion was that, when a genre becomes successful, its complexity drops. However leading up to that success, the complexity rises. In other words, there are more instruments added to a genre as it reaches success.

This correlation implies a strong desire for audiences to want to hear music that is familiar in the pop world. This speaks to a level of comfort in simplicity. This article does not directly say, by itself, how this trait defines pop music's audience, but put in conversation with articles by Diaz and Danielsen, there begins to be a shaping of an audience with a tendency for predictability.

Roose, Henk and Alexander Vander Stichele. "Living Room vs. Concert Hall: Patterns of Music Consumption in Flanders." *Social Forces* **89, no. 1 (September 2010): 185-207.** https://doi.org/10.1353/sof.2010.0077**.**

Roose and Stichele look at very many different factors in the consumption of music. Most notably, they look at how economic class impacts the type of music people listen to and if this is correlated with the ways in which they listen to them. There wasn't a strict correlation between wealth and genre, but a definite trend in wealth and whether the listener went to venues to listen. That is, wealthy listeners attended more concerts.

It is important to realize that music doesn't exist in a vacuum. Its consumption can be impacted by resource availability. Perhaps the situation to attend and enjoy classical music is more prevalent for the wealthy. Or perhaps the personality that makes a wealthy person is, coincidentally, the same as the type that enjoys classical music. These are speculations, but

comparing the findings of this article to Dunn's work, we will achieve a better understanding

of the influences of these factors: wealth and personality.

Senn, Olivier, Toni Bechtold, and Florian Hoesl. "Groove in Drum Patterns as a Function of Both Rhythmic Properties and Listeners' Attitudes." *PLoS One* 13, no. 6 (June 2018): e0199604. http://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0199604.

Drum patterns are defining characteristic of pop music. This study looks at what patterns are successful to listeners. They identified two musical characteristics that created a well-liked pattern: syncopation and event density. Interestingly, they also recorded the listener's familiarity with beats and noticed a positive trend with likability there. This includes a trend with beats that correspond to genres that they like (they like a genre and are, therefore, familiar with it).

This implies an inseparable quality for pop music and familiarity. This correlates strongly with Percino's study in instrumentation.