

Friday, 05.05.2006

Venue: Clubhouse of the FU Berlin
Goethestr. 49, 14163 Berlin

- 16.00 Opening, address of welcome
Hartmut Zinser, Lidia Guzy
- 16.30-17.15 Annette Wilke
Folk and elite culture expressed in
Indian devotional music
- 17.15.-18.00 Lars-Christian Koch
Raga-Music in North India between
religious meaning and courtly culture
- 18.30 Reception
Sybill De Vito-Egerland

Saturday, 06.05.2006

Venue: Clubhouse of the FU Berlin
Goethestr. 49, 14163 Berlin

- 9.00-9.45 Nicolas Prévot
How musical is God? A pantheon
and its music in Bastar, Central India.
- 9.45-10.30 Chris Gregory
Lakshmi Jagar in Bastar
- 10.30-11.00 coffee break
- 11.00-11.45 Christine Guillebaud
Analysis of an audiovisual activity.
Music and ritual drawing in Kerala/
South India
- 11.45-12.30 Oliver Moebus
Finitude and infinity as musical concepts –
illustrated by the structure of some
Indian string instruments
- 12.30-14.00 lunch
- 14.00-14.45 Gert-Matthias Wegner
Music and death in Newar society/Nepal
- 14.45-15.30 André Itéanu
Music and ritual in the Orokaiva society/
Oceania
- 15.30-16.00 coffee break

- 16.00-16.45 Rainer Hatoum
On the role of different cultures of music
in the sectarian competition in con-
temporary Navajo society/North America
- 16.45-17.30 Volkhard Krech
Music and religion.
Sociological considerations
- 17.30-18.30 open discussion

Sunday, 07.05.2006

Venue: Hörsaal FU
Schwendener Str. 1, 14195 Berlin

- 9:00-9:45 Daniela Weber
Gospel, Sacro-Pop and White Metal –
or the jazz and rock of churchorgans.
On popular music in Christian services
in Berlin.
- 9:45-10:30 Lidia Guzy
Theaphony – on music, religion and the
Goddess in Indian religiosity
- 10:30-10:45 coffee break
- 10:45-11:30 final discussion
- 11:30-12:30 Farewell concert
by the musical ensemble „Tschaika“

organised by

Freie Universität Berlin
Institut für Religionswissenschaft
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Religion and Music Interdisciplinary Workshop



5th to 7th May 2006
Institute for
Religious Studies,
Freie Universität
Berlin

The relationship between religion and music

can be approached in many ways. The proposed transdisciplinary workshop focuses on the role of music as a vehicle for religious ideas.

A basic premise in the anthropology of religion and religious sciences is to view religion in terms of a social fact and category (Durkheim 1898; 1912). Religion thus is to be comprehended as a language of a specific society/culture. Music, in the optic of the workshop, is conceived as "humanly organised sound" (Blacking 1973: 3-31) and body movement. Music thus can be approached as culturally specific acoustic speech, as a "total cultural language" (Fox/Feld 1994: 25-53) which seeks to express/ to speak out something where words end. Music as non-verbal religious communication acts as a social form of cultural consolation, commemoration, recollection and representation of ideas and values (Coppet/Zemp 1979) as well as a marker of cultural and personal identity.

From the comparative perspective on cultures one can observe that music is used not only in religious adoration and worship but also in rituals of personal and collective crisis, as for instance in mourning, death and commemoration rituals. Music is also an expression of different religious identities such as religious chants and the sacred/ritual/liturgical music of diverse societies.

Why is it important to reflect upon the relationship between music, society and religion in order to analyse religion and society?

Music is abstract, intangible. But in its forms music is clearly structured. Its paradoxical character lies precisely in its structural and restructuring elements. Music is on the one hand an epitome of the transcendent (in terms of trans cendere (lat.) = exceeding) and immaterial side of Culture. On the other hand music can be mediated through material objects only: through music instruments and through the human singer and listener.

Music is culturally created and therefore touches the cultural Self. Music is thus a vital medium of personal perception, especially significant for the transmission of religious ideas. Mediated through a person's perception of a supra-personal power music clearly illustrates both the interface between society and the empirical individual as well as the continuity of society in view of the empirical finiteness of death. The social continuity is re-presented through values, ideas and models of behaviour. Not without reason do music instruments and the sounds and voices of humans or birds (Feld 1982) play a crucial role in mourning and funeral rites (Guzy in press). Music outlasts one's empirical death. As a supra-personal category music accompanies the collective response to both individual and collective crisis. An analysis of this supra-individual continuity is the basis of a sociological analysis of religions. Can the paradoxical fact of the intangible sound – which nonetheless moves listeners through the evoked emotions – be considered a cultural predisposition of music to act as a medium for transcendent religious matters?

In its transdisciplinary and culturally comparative perspective the workshop is open to the study of diverse cultural areas. Among the numerous possible issues that could be discussed the conference will focus on the following questions:

- 1) How are religious ideas in diverse religions and societies transmitted through music?
- 2) How can we translate the cultural meaning of music in the rituals of diverse religions into an analysis of religions and rituals in general?

The workshop aims to formulate impulses for the study of religions, rituals and the aesthetics of religions.

Lidia Guzy

Hartmut Zinser

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