Call for papers:
Body, concepts, canon, constructions:
Sex and Gender in the New-Music discourse from the Present to the 1950s

Date: 6-8 July, 2018
Place: Hamburg University of Music and Theatre

In 2016[1] a study of the German Cultural Council validated the obvious asymmetry of the sexes in culture and media, particularly with respect to the contemporary music scene. For decades the participation of women had been limited to performing artists, but there was also a remarkable absence of female composers.

Either randomly or induced by the study, contemporaneous initiatives started to discuss sexism in New Music. Examples of this trend include the founding of the group "Gender Relations in Darmstadt (GRID)"[2], initiated by the composer Ashley Fure at the Darmstädter Ferienkurse 2016. That same year this group presented statistics on the constantly low female participation at the Darmstadt Summer Courses since 1946.[3] Another example was the panel discussion held at the Donaueschingen Festival 2017 (transmitted via German Southwest Broadcasting (SWR)).[4] However, a comprehensive and fundamental scientific study that questions unconscious and subliminal criteria, for example the preference of mind over body, within the discourses of new music and performance art is lacking.

Methods of ex- and inclusion that ask for sex (and gender) or that include an interdisciplinary approach with criteria like social class, ethnicity or age, shall be questioned at the conference.

The symposium will take place shortly before the Darmstadt Summer Course 2018 to give impulses for the discussions. Position papers and panel discussions will include the following topics

New music[5], gender and

- Institutions since the 1950s
- Aesthetics
- Cultural politics
- Feminism
- Process of canonisation
- Concepts of avantgarde
- Electronic music
- Experimental music, performance art, neo-conceptual art
- Discourses of body
- Digitisation
- Positions between high and low arts
- Present contemporary artistic positions
- Critic of music
- Musicology
- Audience
- Intersectional perspectives

Further proposals are welcome.

The symposium wants to open new discussions; thus, the presentations should include basic aspects and questions. A publication of a selection of the contributions is planned.

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[1] Gabriele Schulz, Carolin Ries, Olaf Zimmermann: Frauen in Kultur und Medien. Ein Überblick über aktuelle Tendenzen, Entwicklungen und Lösungsvorschläge, Berlin 2016, online: https://www.kulturrat.de/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Frauen-in-Kultur-und-Medien.pdf.

[2] https://griddarmstadt.wordpress.com.

[3] Particularly https://griddarmstadt.files.wordpress.com/2016/08/grid_gender_research_in_darmstadt.pdf. Further statistics http://darmstadt-2016.netlify.com.

[4] https://www.swr.de/swr-classic/donaueschinger-musiktage/programme/do-19-k-eine-maennersache-neue-musik/-/id=2136962/did=19800128/nid=2136962/1wqxvmu/index.html.

[5] The term "New Music" here is used comprehensively, including experimental music as well as performance art etc.

Please submit abstracts (up to 2,000 characters including spaces) for 25-minute presentations, and contact details via the email address below by 11 March, 2018. Junior researchers are especially encouraged to apply. The conference will be held in English and German. Thanks to sponsorship from Mariann-Steegmann-Foundation applicants can receive travel costs (max. € 200) and accommodation (max. 2 nights). Decisions will be made until 31 March, 2018.

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