Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
of
ANNETTE BROSIN
Mag. Artium (University of Vienna, 2009)

“Musical Memory, Cultural Memory, and Digital Technologies: Perspectives and Analytical Approaches”

School of Music

Monday, November 23, 2015
12:00pm
David Turpin Building
Room A144

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Christopher Butterfield, School of Music, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Joseph Salem, School of Music, UVic (Member)
Dr. George Tzanetakis, Department of Computer Science, UVic (Outside Member)
Dr. Arthur Kroker, Department of Political Science, UVic (Outside Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Martin Iddon, School of Music, University of Leeds

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Panajotis Agathoklis, Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

A radical transformation is taking place in today's society with the rapid developments in digital technology. The digital dispersion of information occurs globally at an unprecedented speed, altering innumerable aspects of cultural memory to the extent that the experience of cyclical time of ritual culture is gradually replaced by the presence of linear time of computerized, progress-oriented processes. As a result, both formation and experience of meaning are changed.

With that, an important question arises with regards to music: how does musical meaning transpire in contemporary culture?

As a theoretical companion to my compositional work, this doctoral dissertation addresses this question from the perspective of memory. Based on the idea that musical meaning is informed through its contextualization within the manifold intersections of memory, cultural memory, and digital technology, its first three chapters explore the relationships between memory and identity, externalized memory and culture, time and meaning in music, and how these relationships can inform musical analysis. The fourth chapter provides analytical approaches to compositions by Luciano Berio, Helmut Lachenmann, John Cage, and Pierluigi Billone informed by the conclusions gained from the previous chapters.

The last three chapters focus on the added complexity of the relationships between musical memory and cultural memory as impacted by digital technologies. It will be explored how digital processes affect various aspects of musical memory and musical time. Correspondingly, the final chapter offers musical analyses of compositions with live electronics by composers Brian Ferneyhough and Jonathan Harvey, and the dissertation will be concluded by an analysis of my dissertation composition #ffffff which is appended.

Central to the investigation are the post-structuralist ideas of philosophers Bernard Stiegler, Jacques Derrida and Gilles Deleuze, as well as theories regarding cultural memory brought forth by Jan and Aleida Assmann. In order to apply these concepts to an examination of music, they will be reconciled with the musical philosophy of Gunnar Hindrichs, the musical semiotics of Jean-Jacques Nattiez, the cultural semiotics of Roland Posner, and the critical media studies of Wolfgang Ernst.