

What is Musical Knowledge?

BFE Annual Conference, Oxford, 8-11 April 2010

**Conference venue: The Faculty of Music, St. Aldate's, Oxford and St. John's College Oxford.
Conference accommodation will be available in St. John's College, Oxford.**

Confirmed keynote speakers include

Professor Steven Feld, Distinguished Professor of Anthropology and Music, University of New Mexico

www.bfeconference.org.uk

Call for Papers

What is known about music, and what is knowable? As sub-disciplinary boundaries shift, questions are emerging that bring ethnomusicologists, historical musicologists, composers, scholars of popular music, music theorists and music psychologists together, arguably in a less self-conscious way than has been the case over the last twenty or thirty years. At the heart of this call for papers is a questioning of the epistemological pessimism of recent decades – a.k.a. 'postmodernism', one in which ethnomusicology and anthropology, with their insistence on the local (and therefore circumscribed) nature of knowledge about society and culture, have been complicit. Ethnomusicologists, it might be said, bear a certain responsibility to provoke theoretical reflection engaging all music, and not just the particularistic concerns that have often predominated in our field. Questions of 'musical knowledge', in the context of this conference, are intended to stimulate exactly this kind of conversation.

The following categories and questions are suggested as spurs to the imagination, not as a strict agenda. Papers are invited from all involved in music study, not just ethnomusicologists, though presenters are expected to be members of BFE. Papers should be 20 minutes long. Please send proposals for papers, maximum length one page, to Martin Stokes, Faculty of Music, Oxford University, OX1 1DB, UK, or martin.stokes@music.ox.ac.uk by **18 December 2009**. Please include all details of all AV needs.

The social life of musical knowledge

How is musical knowledge stratified in a given musical culture? Who can claim to know what, and about whom, musically speaking? Is musical knowledge power? What is the nature of the specialization, professionalization and institutionalization of musical knowledge? What kinds of musical knowledge are silenced, and why? Is musical knowledge culture-bound? How and when does it cross cultural boundaries? What are the relations between musical knowledge and social action?

Technologies of/as musical knowledge

What do musical technologies tell us? What are the relationships between musical technologies (broadly conceived) and forms of musical knowledge? What theories of mediation might help us make sense of such relationships? What social and cultural processes are at play in the new technologies of musical knowledge storage and transfer? What kinds of commodities are these technologies, and what does their commodity status imply for musical knowledge? What kinds of historical knowledge are enabled by music technologies?

Musical knowledge as cognitive process

How do musical knowledge and musical emotion relate? What kind of knowledge is musical pleasure? In what senses are listening/dancing/performing forms of, or productive of, musical knowledge? How is musical knowledge embodied? Do models from cognitive psychology and other empirically oriented disciplines work cross-culturally? How does musical knowledge inform (or deform) performance?

Musical knowledge and ethnomusicological fieldwork

What kinds of musical knowledge does ethnomusicological fieldwork produce, and what are its limits? What kinds does it obscure or repress? How is this knowledge shared, circulated, animated by dialogue? Do regionally specific traditions of ethnographic writing shape knowledge of others? How is musical knowledge in the field technologically mediated? What are the ethical implications of knowledge (who knows what about whom) in the field?

Musical knowledge, pedagogy, and education

Can musical knowledge be taught? Can it be demonstrated? How might awareness of other musical knowledge systems enhance (or limit) musical pedagogy in the west? What do we come to know through learning to perform? What kinds of musical knowledge might be generated in the multicultural classroom? When is 'knowledge' a problem, from a pedagogical point of view? How has the disciplinary formation of ethnomusicology impinged on what we can know?



www.bfeconference.org.uk