

# Book of Abstracts

8th International Conference of the Word and Music Association Forum  
"Sacrum et Profanum in Words and Music", May 21 - 23, 2026  
University American College Skopje (North Macedonia)

## Conference Organizers

IVANA TRAJANOSKA & JAN CZARNECKI, PRESIDENTS OF THE WMAF



## Conference Program

### 8th International Conference of the Word and Music Association Forum

#### *“Sacrum et Profanum in Words and Music”*

May 21 - 23, 2026

Venue:

University American College Skopje, Bd. Treta makedonska brigada n'60

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### Day 1: May 21, 2026

Venue: Amphitheater 1 (A1, 4th floor)

09:00 - 09:30 | Registration and Coffee

09:30 – 10:00 | Opening Remarks **Ivana Trajanoska & Jan Czarnecki**

10:00 - 11:30 | Session 1

Chair: **Ruth Alison Clemens**

- **Dániel Nagy:** *Agenbite of Inwit: The leitmotif of remorse in James Joyce's Ulysses - Musicalization of fiction and the entanglement of sacred and profane*
- **Thomas Gurke:** *Words? Music? No: it's what's behind – Secret(ion) and Profanity in James Joyce's Ulysses*
- **Adrian Paterson:** *Sensual music or saintly singing-masters? sacred and profane musical philosophy in WB Yeats's Byzantium poems*

11:30 - 12:45 | Lunch Break



**12:45 - 14:15 | Session 2**

**Chair: Jan Czarnecki**

- **Elia Romera-Figueroa:** *(Un)Sayable Songs: Sacred and Profane Negotiations in Amancio Prada's Musical Poetics*
- **Sanaz Alizadeh Tabrizi:** *Ritual Montage: Sacrum et Profanum in The Godfather*
- **Laura Vattano:** *Tensioned Rituals: Sacred and Profane in Savinio's Chants de la mi-mort (1914)*

**14:15 – 14:45 | Coffee Break & Snacks**

**14:45 – 16:45 | Session 3**

**Chair: Elia Romera-Figueroa**

- **Alejandro Sánchez Cabrera:** *Rituals of Care: Taylor Swift's The Eras Tour and the Politics of Affect*
- **Florian Homann:** *Sacrum et Profanum in Spanish-Language Rap: Metaphors of Liberation and the Subversive Rewriting of Memory Politics*
- **Abdón Torresano Ramón:** *A Rock Star Between Messianism and Blasphemy: Roberto Iniesta's Desacralised Image of Christ*
- **Ivana Trajanoska:** *Zlatko Origjanski: Between the Sacred and the Profane*

**20:30| Conference Dinner**

**Venue: Restaurant Boemska, St. Orce Nikolov, n'110**

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## Day 2: May 22, 2026

Venue: Room 4A (4th floor)

09:00 - 09:30 | Morning Coffee

09:30 – 11:30 | Session 4

Chair: Tamara Jolevska Popov

- **Paweł Siechowicz:** *The Interests of Criticism: What Is the Value of Meaning?*
- **Daný van Dam & Ruth Alison Clemens:** *Sacred Sounds and Profane Players: Musical Possession in Speculative Fiction*
- **Leena Julin:** *Shared Humanity: Artistic Research on Encounters Between Christian Tradition and Secular Individuals*
- **Suzana V. Spasovska & Tamara Jolevska Popov:** *From Hymns to Beat Poetry*

11:30 - 12:30 | Lunch Break

12:30 - 14:00 | Session 5

Chair: Ruth Alison Clemens

- **Iain Andrew Halliday:** *The Sacred in the Profane: Two Contemporary Songs*
- **Adriano Elia:** *Literary Hauntings: The Sacred and the Profane in Post-Punk Poetics*
- **Carlos Martínez Domingo:** *Evoking the Sacred: Paratextuality, Intertextuality and Rhetorical Strategies in Instrumental Works*

14:00 - 14:30 | Coffee Break & Snacks



**14:30 – 16:30 | Session 6**

**Chair: Ivana Trajanoska**

- **Anna Tenczyńska:** *Music in a concentration camp: between the sacred and the profane. Zofia Pomyszc's "Vacations on the Adriatic"*
- **Iuliana Matasova:** *Reparative Intimacies of War: Latexfauna's "Masandra" and "Nich" as Exercises in Care*
- **Michael Beckers:** *Of Carols and Cannons: Christmas Songs in European Political Movements*
- **Jan Czarnecki:** *Un requiem athée. Contemporary Literary Interpretations of the Missa in agenda defunctorum*

**16:30 – 17:00 | Coffee Break & Snacks**

**17:00 - 18:30 | Business Meeting of the Word and Music Association Forum**

**20:30 | Conference Dinner**

**Venue: Restaurant Boemska, St. Orce Nikolov, n'110**

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## **Day 3: May 23, 2026**

**9:00 | Cultural Field Trip to Ohrid**

**Meeting Point: St. Phillip II of Macedon n'5**

## Abstracts <sup>1</sup>

1.



**Sanaz Alizadeh Tabrizi**

Assist. Prof. Dr., Istanbul Aydın University, Türkiye

Email: [sanazalizadehtabrizi@aydin.edu.tr](mailto:sanazalizadehtabrizi@aydin.edu.tr)

### *Ritual Montage: Sacrum et Profanum in The Godfather*

#### Abstract:

In the contemporary secular age, can the binary of sacrum et profanum preserve the metaphysical and ethical coherence, or is it simply a residual trace that structures our cultural concerns? This study argues how Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather* (1972) crafts a "sacralisation and profanation gesture," using cinematic language and music as both an aesthetic and semiotic force to expose the moral and spiritual contradictions situated within overlapping domains of authority, kinship, and institutionalised ritual. The climactic baptism sequence in the movie serves as a rich setting for studying the tension between the sacred and the profane through an interdisciplinary lens. The core aim of the paper is to investigate how a Catholic baptism ritual intersects with the simultaneous execution of several murders ordered by Michael Corleone, leading to the creation of an overwhelming juxtaposition between liturgical purity and brutal violence. Theologically charged dialogue from the baptism scene overlapped with graphic imagery of orchestrated killings, while the organ music amplified in dramatic counterpoint crafts a ritual montage that functions as a form of cultural critique and reveals the ethical tension between spiritual symbolism and worldly authority. Crucially, the film becomes an aesthetic space where the profane is reinterpreted through the sacred, suggesting the commodified rearticulation of spiritual meaning in secular society. The solemnity of Bach's organ music reinforces the sacred rite; however, when coupled with profane images, the very same music arouses conflicting emotional registers that challenge the ritual's sanctity. Here, sound and language converge with the image to compose meaning. Hence, drawing on the ritual technology of cinematic montage (Walter Benjamin) and the sacred's intrinsic link to transgression (Georges Bataille), a close reading of a multimedia text that stages the collision of the sacred ritual and profane violence, this presentation discusses how *The Godfather*, more than a crime saga, is a sophisticated meditation that reframes a traditional religious ceremony as a performance of power and moral duplicity, unpacking ritual, belief, and critique.

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<sup>1</sup> In no particular order



Keywords: Sacrum et Profanum, Cultural and Media Studies, Intermediality, Violence and Power, *The Godfather*

#### Short Bio

Sanaz Tabrizi is an Assistant Professor of English Language and Literature at Istanbul Aydın University. Her research explores the intersections of literature and the fine arts, with a focus on late Romanticism, Victorian, and early twentieth-century fiction. Specialising in genre theory, narratology, and intermediality, she bridges literary studies with performance, music, and visual expression. Since fall 2021, she has convened and taught the MA-level course “Intermediality: Between Literature and Music.” Her forthcoming monograph, *Reading Music in Henry James’ Fiction* (Cambridge Scholars), follows her chapter, “George Eliot and Her Musical Affinity in *The Mill on the Floss*,” in *The Marriage between Literature and Music* (Cambridge Scholars, 2022). She is also interested in collaborating on European projects involving DEIB, interdisciplinary pedagogy, and digital culture. She currently serves as the International Programs Accreditation Process Coordinator, Deputy Director of the Occidental Studies Applied Research Centre, and Erasmus/International Relations Coordination Assistant for the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

2.



**Leena Julin**

MMus, MTheol, University of the Arts, Helsinki, Finland

Email: [leena.julin@uniarts.fi](mailto:leena.julin@uniarts.fi)

*Shared Humanity: Artistic Research on Encounters Between Christian Tradition and Secular Individuals*

Abstract:

My presentation will share insights from my soon to be finished artistic doctoral research Shared humanity. Artistic research on recognizable and non-recognizable elements for present-day people in the Christian tradition (University of the Arts, Helsinki) which focuses on the affordances and barriers Christianity offers in the contemporary society. It aims to find recognizable elements regardless of beliefs, content that distances or even excludes people, and translate them with and through art. These explorations are done three concrete topics: 1) How to be present in this world, at the intersection of transience and eternity; 2) How to live with other people (love thy neighbour); 3) How to live without other people (dealing with death and grieving).

These themes are content-related, but at the same time they also address different structural levels: the general use of religious language, the creation of reality through language (doctrines, treatment of people), and the functioning of systems (what happens in the church). As my research has progressed, the question of the use of religious language has proven to be surprisingly significant—both among those committed to the church/Christianity and within academia and the art field. It is by no means clear who is allowed to use religious language, and how. Who owns it? How is someone using religious language perceived?

Through artistic strategies, I seek to liberate religious language—in this case, Christian language—for broader use without diminishing its sacredness. I do not see sacred and profane as separate things. And I argue that this doesn't make sacred less holy.

Finally, I propose expanding the concept of church music beyond devotional contexts to include works that observe, comment on, or even critique religion. But I also confront the secular contemporary society and the art world's aversion to religion—an aversion that sometimes extends to forbidding any use of religious vocabulary or discussion of spirituality, or to viewing these issues as simplistically as the religious groups they criticize.

Keywords: Artistic research, religious language, liberal theology, activism in art



#### Short Bio

Having a master's degree in both music and theology, Leena Julin is combining her expertise as a composer of investigatory music. Recently, she has expanded her artistic practice to include sound art and conceptual art. Doing her artistic research as a doctoral researcher at the Sibelius Academy in the University of the Arts, Helsinki, Julin is especially interested in using art to explore the human mind and religiousness. Her research focuses on religious language mirroring being human, and the connection between religious habits and lived life. Julin is also a member of the activist music research association Suoni ry.

3.



**Elia Romera-Figueroa**

Dr., Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Spain

Email: [elromera@ucm.es](mailto:elromera@ucm.es)

*(Un)Sayable Songs: Sacred and Profane Negotiations in Amancio Prada's Musical Poetics*

Abstract:

This paper examines the work of Spanish singer-songwriter Amancio Prada as a site where the sacred and the profane intersect in ways that challenge conventional genre boundaries. Focusing on his musical settings of poets Rosalía de Castro (Rosalía de Castro, 1975) and San Juan de la Cruz (Cántico espiritual, 1977), I argue that Prada's practice gives rise to what I call "(un)sayable songs": performances in which written poetry is transformed into oral expression while retaining a tension between what can and cannot be voiced. In the Rosalía album, themes of migration, solitude, and longing are reinterpreted through ritualized pauses, silences, and vocal inflections that invest profane experience with liturgical resonance. In contrast, the Cántico espiritual foregrounds explicitly sacred texts, but Prada's revoicing situates them within the collective listening practices of late-Franco and Spanish transition-era, thus blurring devotional and political registers. Across both projects, Prada's work stages a permeability between oral and written traditions, sacred and secular repertoires, and individual and communal modes of reception.

By attending to Prada's negotiation of silence, absence, and longing, this paper contributes to broader discussions of how music mediates the boundaries of the sacred and the profane, offering a model of song as a liminal practice that both revives and re-signifies poetry.

Short Bio

Elia Romera-Figueroa is an Assistant Professor at the Complutense University of Madrid. She received her PhD in Iberian Cultural Studies from Duke University (2023) and has been awarded several postdoctoral fellowships, both international and national (including USAL4EXCELLENCE, Juan de la Cierva-Formación, and APOSTD). Among these, she completed the CIVIS3i-Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions CoFund fellowship at the Autonomous University of Madrid and the University of Glasgow (2025). She has also taught and collaborates with New York University (NYU) in Madrid. Her research focuses on 20th- and 21st-century cultural, literary, and musical studies, with an emphasis on gender and sexuality studies, transatlantic LatinX studies, and diaspora studies. Her work has been published in journals such as *Bulletin of Spanish Studies*, *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, *Cultural Dynamics*, *Letral*, and *Signa*.

4.



**Dániel Nagy**

Dr., Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Hungary

Email: [nagydaniel.pecs87@gmail.com](mailto:nagydaniel.pecs87@gmail.com)

*Agenbite of Inwit: The leitmotif of remorse in James Joyce's Ulysses - Musicalization of fiction and the entanglement of sacred and profane*

Abstract:

The claim that James Joyce's groundbreaking novel, *Ulysses* features the use of recurring "word-motifs" as musical/Wagnerian quasi-leitmotifs has been part of the novel's reception from the very beginning (Curtius 1929) to recent interpretations (O'Callaghan 2011). At the same time, despite the adaptation of the leitmotif-technique from Richard Wagner's musical-dramatic works to narrative prose by Joyce having become a commonplace, hardly any consensus seems to have emerged in literary criticism about what poetic purpose this "musicalization of fiction" (cf. Wolf 1999) exactly serves in *Ulysses*. One possible explanation is that (Wagnerian) music could be a model for the construction of complex, polyvalent semantic networks in narrative prose – in a somewhat paradoxical way not in spite of, rather thanks to the radically indeterminate nature of the semantic capacity attributed to music in Western modernity. Wagner's idea of *Gesamtkunstwerk* and the role of music within it could therefore pose a challenge to the literary modernism of the early 20th century (cf. Lacoue-Labarthe 1991) serving as a "utopian model" (cf. Nattiez 1984) for the creation of meaning. Literary attempts – such as Joyce's – to overcome the barrier of untranslatability between the autonomous mechanisms of musical motivic development and the traditional structures of the unfolding of narrative in literary prose may thereby facilitate the emergence of new meanings through making it possible to connect previously intransgressible semantic domains such as the sacred and the profane.

One of the most salient "word-motifs" of *Ulysses* is the recurrence of "agenbite of inwit" – a collocation related to Stephen's remorse for refusing his mother's last wish before she had died. Analysing the way it works as a quasi-musical "leitmotif" in the text, with respect to its connections to the semantic cores of "remorse" or "repentance" and to the intertextual references (such as to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*) associated with them, as well as the integration of this semantic micro-universe to the broader semantic network of the main topics of the novel reveals how "musicalization of fiction" may serve as a poetic tool for connecting the sacred and the profane in Joyce's writing.

Keywords: intersemiotic translation, untranslatability, musicalization of fiction, leitmotif



#### Short Bio

Dániel Nagy is a musicologist, semiotician, and literary critic. He holds a PhD in comparative literature with his thesis on the semiotic and narratological foundations of the concept of the “literary leitmotif” in the interpretations of certain “Wagnerian novels” of 20th-century authors. His primary field of research is the intermedial relations between musical and literary expression, particularly focussing on the emergence of meaning from their intersemiotic interactions and on the possibilities of narrative coherence in either medium. He currently teaches general semiotic theory and music semiotics as an assistant professor at the international Semiotics programme of Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest.

5.



**Iain Andrew Halliday**

Assoc. Prof., University of Catania, Italy

Email: [iain.halliday@unict.it](mailto:iain.halliday@unict.it)

*The Sacred in the Profane: Two Contemporary Songs*

Abstract:

There is something in us that finds binary opposites irresistible. The sharp contrasts of the oxymoronic approach add colour to life, but lived experience soon teaches us that these opposites, in the last analysis, are rarely as clear cut as they first seem. And so it is with the sacred and the profane.

Mircea Eliade's "hierophanies" – manifestations of the sacred, a term first used in his seminal *The Sacred and the Profane: the Nature of Religion* (1957) – are all representative of "the same mysterious act—the manifestation of something of a wholly different order, a reality that does not belong to our world, in objects that are an integral part of our natural 'profane' world."

This paper seeks to investigate how in popular music some authors have been able to find the sacred in the profane, how ordinary, everyday experience and sometimes even ordinary, everyday squalor can lead to hierophanies, to a heightened, sacred awareness of the significance of life in all its aspects. Such awareness can sometimes be so acute and compelling as to constitute a religious experience.

I will mention several songs, but will concentrate on two in particular: the English-language "That's Entertainment" (1980) by Paul Weller, recorded by The Jam, and the Italian language "Del mondo" (1994) by Giovanni Lindo Ferretti, Massimo Zamboni, Francesco Magnelli and Gianni Maroccolo, recorded by CSI [Consorzio Suonatori Indipendenti].

Keywords: song; lyrics; hierophany; oxymoron; religion

Short Bio

Iain Halliday is Associate Professor of English Language and Linguistics in the Department of Humanities, University of Catania and he teaches on both under- and postgraduate degree courses. His research over the years has involved work in the field of translation studies, but in more recent times has come to focus on the relationship between words and music.

6.



**Adriano Elia**

Assoc. Prof., University of Rome "Roma Tre", Italy

Email: [adriano.elia@uniroma3.it](mailto:adriano.elia@uniroma3.it)

*Literary Hauntings: The Sacred and the Profane in Post-Punk Poetics*

Abstract:

Post-punk emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s during political and economic upheaval in Britain and beyond. It inherited punk's antagonism but redirected it toward estrangement, forging a poetics of the sacred and the profane, where echoes of ritual and scripture surface within the secular frame of popular culture. Hauntology, first articulated by Jacques Derrida in *Spectres de Marx* (1993) and later elaborated by Mark Fisher in *Ghosts of My Life* (2014), offers a framework for reading post-punk not as a simple negation of the sacred but as a profanation that paradoxically revives ritualistic intensity. Simon Reynolds's concept of *Retromania* (2011) complicates this further. The afterlives of Joy Division, for instance, carry not only their original intensity but also the spectral aura of endless revival, where repetition itself becomes ritual. Ian Curtis's evocations of light and eternity echo biblical cadences yet collapse into despair, staging transcendence as hollow (*Closer*, 1980). In such moments, post-punk lyrics channel sacred intensity through dismantling it: the profane becomes ritual, and the sacred persists as ghost.

Keywords: post-punk, sacred, profane, Hauntology, Retromania

Short Bio

Adriano Elia is an Associate Professor of English in the Department of Political Science at Roma Tre University. His publications include books and essays on W.E.B. Du Bois, Langston Hughes, Hanif Kureishi, Octavia E. Butler, Afrofuturism, Black literature and technology, contemporary British fiction and poetry, and the word-painting technique. He is the Principal Investigator of the EU-funded research project "Between Text and Performance: Race and Gender in Anglophone Literatures and Cultures (1970s-today)."

7. **Michael Beckers**

PhD, University of Cologne, Germany

Email: [michaelbeckers@outlook.de](mailto:michaelbeckers@outlook.de)

*Of Carols and Cannons: Christmas Songs in European Political Movements*

Abstract:

Using the form of a Christmas carol to parody the royal court and/or prominent political and cultural figures had been popular in France since the early 18th century and soon spread across Europe. In Russia, the melody of the French Christmas song *Tous les bourgeois de Châtres*—which in France had gained popularity through satirical lyrics mocking the court of Louis XV and his *maitresse en titre*, Madame de Pompadour—was repurposed in Russian *contrafacta* to depict the opulent and imperious lifestyle of the Czars. In the last decade of the 18th century and throughout the 19th and 20th century Christmas songs and their popular melodies were increasingly used not only to parody the rich and powerful but also for protest and revolutionary purposes. During the French Revolution the centuries old Latin hymnus *O Filii et filiae* was used to convey the new secular gospels of the Enlightenment. In Poland the advent of Jesus Christ was equated with the end of Russian occupation and Polish Christmas carols began to call for military resistance. The beloved German carol *Silent Night* underwent multiple lyrical adaptations throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, each reflecting the political climate of its time. In the 19th century they often called for social justice, while in both World Wars they urged perseverance in fighting. In 1966, Simon & Garfunkel recorded the song using its original lyrics, but layering it with a news anchor's voice reciting current political events—an experiment that sparked numerous imitations.

The paper explores how artists and political activists transformed songs celebrating one of the most sacred days in the Christian calendar into fierce political messages. It also seeks to trace the boundaries between *sacrum* and *profanum*, particularly in light of ideologies such as nationalism and socialism—often the impetus behind these lyrical revisions and themselves treated as *sacrosanct* by their adherents.

Short Bio

Michael Beckers earned his PhD in November 2025 at Cologne University. He holds a master's degree in Cultural and Intellectual History between East and West from Cologne University and the University of Warsaw. As an undergraduate, he studied Musicology and Slavic Studies in Cologne and Moscow. He is an amateur musician and plays piano, accordion, guitar, and violin. His main research interests are the reception of classical works and ideas in nineteenth-century literature and the relation between music and text in European poetry. He attended conferences and delivered lectures on these topics in Oxford, Paris, Cologne, Belgrade, Warsaw, and Moscow.

8.



**Laura Vattano**

Dr., Independent Researcher, Italy

Email: [lauravattano@yahoo.it](mailto:lauravattano@yahoo.it)

*Tensioned Rituals: Sacred and Profane in Savinio's Chants de la mi-mort (1914)*

Abstract:

This paper explores the vibrant and often unsettling dialogue between sacred imagery and profane form in Alberto Savinio's *Chants de la mi-mort* (1914), a work that stages a modernist ritual grounded in contradiction. Savinio intertwines theatre, poetry, and music to create a space where transcendence is continually evoked yet constantly unsettled, generating an atmosphere in which revelation and disruption coexist.

The narrative unfolds through fragmented scenes, featuring the *homme chauve*, the *homme-jaune*, *Daisyssina*, the mother, animated statues, and angelic figures. Everyday actions, domestic rituals, and dreamlike encounters intermingle with visions of death and divine presence. The sacred appears in literary and iconographic references: the maternal song in *Amore e Dolor* ("Tra la la la, Amore e Dolor"), liminal nocturnal scenes in the *Chant de la nuit* ("Gens de la cité, c'est la nuit, les étoiles... Je suis seul... je m'abandonne aux mains terribles et douces"), and angelic apparitions, all of which blur the boundaries between life and death, human and divine. These images gesture toward transcendence, yet never remain stable, emerging in fleeting flashes suspended between solemnity and estrangement.

Against this sacred vocabulary, Savinio sets a profane strategy of fragmentation. His paratactic construction—an assemblage of verbal, musical, and theatrical fragments without hierarchy—dissolves any unified vision. Irony, parody, and abrupt discontinuity erode the coherence of the sacred even as they paradoxically sharpen its intensity. The *homme chauve*, raising a lamp emitting a blinding light ("sa main tient une lampe qui projette une lumière terriblement vive"), condenses this paradox: illumination becomes wound, revelation becomes rupture, and the divine appears only through its own destabilization. The collapsing veil of the temple ("Le voile du temple se tordit et puis tomba en cendres") further underscores the tension between sacred content and profane form.

*Chants de la mi-mort* thus stages a theatre of ambiguity in which the sacred emerges not through elevation, but through its disruption and collision with the profane. Ritual, word, and music intertwine in a modernist vision of spirituality rooted in tension rather than resolution.

Keywords: Savinio; sacred/profane; *Chants de la mi-mort*; ritual; fragmentation.



#### Short Bio

Alongside her university studies, which led to a Master's degree with honours in Contemporary History from the University of Turin, she earned her piano diploma at the "G. Verdi" Conservatory of Turin and further specialised at the International School of Chamber Music of the Trio di Trieste and the Accademia di Musica di Pinerolo.

In 2007, she obtained with honours a Second-Level Academic Diploma in Chamber Music from the "L. Marenzio" Conservatory of Brescia, presenting a thesis on George Antheil's Second Sonata for violin and piano. This research introduced her to Futurist music, which became the focus of her PhD at the University of Edinburgh, devoted to a critical study of Luigi Russolo's *The Art of Noises* (1916).

She is currently preparing the English translation of *The Art of Noises* and Russolo's musical writings for the academic publisher Brill and completing a monograph based on her doctoral research: *Listening as a Creative Musical Practice: Luigi Russolo's Art of Noise*.

9.



**Florian Homann**

Dr., University of Münster, Germany

Email: [fhomann@uni-muenster.de](mailto:fhomann@uni-muenster.de)

*Sacrum et Profanum in Spanish-Language Rap: Metaphors of Liberation and the Subversive Rewriting of Memory Politics*

Abstract:

The interplay of religious and secular motifs frequently shapes rap lyrics, which primarily address profane everyday realities. Emerging from marginalized communities—often Black and Hispanic populations—rap became a voice for the subaltern. Through storytelling, it portrays class struggles, exclusion, poverty, violence, criminal lifestyles, and drug use, creating a subversive form of recognition via musically recited language rich in metaphor. In this context, rap lyrics, performed within specific musical and sociocultural frameworks, reveal how tensions between the sacred, the diabolical, and the profane are deployed and reinterpreted under particular social conditions and moments of crisis. A characteristic strategy is the sacralization of everyday experience: life at society's margins is depicted with maximum street credibility as a marker of authenticity, invoking images of "hell" or "Satan" while simultaneously envisioning redemption or resurrection, metaphorically tracing a path from misery to liberation. Methodologically, this transdisciplinary approach is situated at the intersection of literary, cultural, and media studies. Rap lyrics are analyzed as poems whose significance emerges through interaction with performance, music, and genre-specific social contexts. The analysis focuses on motifs and themes conveyed through intertextuality, metaphor, and symbolic references, linking and renegotiating sacred and profane dimensions. Selected Spanish-language examples illustrate these dynamics. In lyrics addressing drug addiction, Spanish rappers such as Haze in *Diablo* (2016) or Kase.O in *Renacimiento* (2011) draw on biblical imagery of hell, sin, and salvation to dramatize these struggles. In Latin America, rappers such as the Afro-Colombian female collective *Son Prietas* in *MaBinti wa África* employ religious language and spiritual symbolism both as a code of hope in their decolonial and anti-racist fight and as a tool to expose the church's complicity in colonialism. By reinterpreting sacred symbols, they invert traditional associations so that it is not the "others" stigmatized as sinners or heretics, but hegemonic narratives that are cast as evil.

Thus, rap unfolds political-religious dimensions in the service of multiple liberation movements, operating as a sacralized portrayal of everyday life, oscillating between heaven and hell, and renegotiating meanings of sacrum and profanum in contexts where notions of the holy seem absent.

Keywords: Spanish-language rap, Rap aesthetics, Metaphor, Intertextuality



#### Short Bio

Florian Homann was awarded his doctorate in 2019 at the University of Cologne in cotutela with the University of Seville, with a thesis on flamenco poetry. Since 2021, he is a research assistant at the Romance Seminar (Iberian Romance literatures) of the University of Münster. His research focuses on oral tradition, performance theories, collective memory, and intermediality in Spanish and Latin American literature, with a regional focus on Andalusia and Colombia. From September 2024 to February 2026, he is conducting the DAAD-funded project “Voice and Visibility for Marginalized Memories in Colombia: Afro-Communities, Women, and the Potential of Narratives in Literature and Music”, researching at the University of Antioquia in Medellín until August 2025. He is the author of *Cante flamenco y memoria cultural* (2021) and numerous papers. In addition to *Poemas: Poesía para más gente* at UNED Madrid (PID2024-158927NB-I00), he participates in research groups in Medellín (GEL) and Granada.

**10. Carlos Martínez Domingo**

UNED / Conservatorio Profesional de Música de Valencia, Spain

Email: carlosmartinezdomingo@gmail.com

*Evoking the Sacred: Paratextuality, Intertextuality and Rhetorical Strategies in Instrumental Works*

Abstract:

This presentation explores the intersection between the sacred and the profane in instrumental music, arguing that works without lyrics can evoke religious meanings through para- and intertextual relationships and musical rhetoric. Instrumental music is often perceived as a separate realm from religious expression, relegating the sacred to vocal compositions. However, this study posits that instrumental music can serve as a vehicle for spirituality and religious themes, challenging the dichotomy between the sacred and the profane in music.

On one hand, since classical antiquity, rhetoric has been one of the pillars of education and the humanities in Western culture. Thus, its principles underwent a process of adaptation to music from the sixteenth century onward, connecting the musical medium with a linguistic metalanguage and drawing parallels between the two systems. Nevertheless, its relevance in purely instrumental compositions has been controversial.

On the other hand, musical paratextuality and intertextuality are two concepts that, while still open to theoretical elaboration, expand the boundaries of the concept of musical text. They relate a specific work to other texts, thereby providing new meanings and avenues for interpretation and reception.

Therefore, the presentation reflects on the theoretical foundations of these phenomena and their impact on meaning from a general perspective. Additionally, it examines the case of the "Sarabande" from J.S. Bach's Suite BWV 995, as this piece establishes an intertextual relationship with the Mass BWV 232, directly linking it to the dual nature of Christ (expressed in the Nicene Creed and the mystery of the Incarnation). We conclude by analyzing how this religious concept ultimately permeates the organization of the rhetorical-musical figures of the *elocutio*, the phase of rhetoric dedicated to embellishing discourse.

Keywords: rethoric, Incarnation, christology, Bach, intertextuality, paratextuality, figures, musical meaning

Short Bio

Carlos Martínez Domingo holds a bachelor's degree in Spanish Language and Literature, a Master's in Teacher Training from UNED, and a bachelor's degree in Music (specializing in Guitar Performance) with honors from the "Joaquín Rodrigo" Conservatory of Music in Valencia. He has also pursued studies at the Escola Superior de Música de Catalunya with Àlex Garrobé and is currently completing his doctorate at UNED. He has taught at secondary education institutions and is now a conservatory professor through competitive examination. In the field of research, he



is particularly interested in the relationships between music and literature, as well as literary and musical rhetoric, areas on which he has written articles and presented papers at various universities in Europe and Central America. As a performer, he has played in several concert halls across Spain and Europe, including the Palau de la Música in Valencia, the "La Beneficència" Cultural Centre, and the Arvo Pärt Centre (Laulasmaa, Estonia).

**11. Abdón Torresano Ramón**

Predoctoral fellow, Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, Spain

Email: atorresano@flog.uned.es

*A Rock Star Between Messianism and Blasphemy: Roberto Iniesta's Desacralised Image of Christ*  
Abstract:

Singer and songwriter Roberto Iniesta, former leader of the Spanish rock band Extremoduro, has founded his artistic career and authorial image on a principle of radical irreverence towards political, religious and cultural powers. His sacrilegious attitude towards the prevailing Catholicism in post-Franco Spain is combined with his transgressive approach, already evident in the band's first demo, specifically in the song 'Jesucristo García' (Rock transgresivo, 1989). There, Iniesta gives voice to a marginalised character who, nevertheless, draws numerous twisted parallelisms by narrating his life as analogous to that of Christ. A year later, in their performance of the song for TVE Catalonia, he appeared dressed in a costume that both established connections with the image of the Messiah and demystified it, adding symbols that bound him to the Extremaduran localism and the world of marginality that are characteristic of his identity. From that moment on, through the art of his albums and the lyrics of later songs, he continued to construct an authorial image linked to the visual representations and discourses associated with Christ, thus maintaining a unique position between interest in this figure and a desacralising will. This proposal analyses the biblical references in Roberto Iniesta's songs, both in his lyrics and in his stage performances, using Baños Saldaña's (2022) typology of transreferentiality. The analysis aims to reveal a double thesis: firstly, to verify whether, as Gregori i Gomis (2010) asserts, the author overcomes the Satanism associated to the genre by preceding referents through his own referential practice; and, subsequently, to elucidate in which way Iniesta utilizes these desacralized images of Christ, associating them with his own figure, for the construction of his authorial project (Zapata).

Keywords: Roberto Iniesta; Extremoduro; Author Studies; Referentiality (Intertextuality); Desacralization

**Short Bio**

Abdón Torresano Ramón (1999) is a pre-doctoral researcher (PIPF-CAM) at the National Distance Education University (UNED), where he is writing his thesis on referentiality and authorial project in music-literature relations. He holds a degree in Spanish Language and Literature from the University of Murcia (2021), where he also completed a Master's Degree in European Comparative Literature (2023).

His research focuses on the interjection between the semiotic fields of intertextuality and the sociological fields of authorial image, specifically focused on the study of contemporary song. He has participated in numerous national and international conferences, with papers on the referential relationships between music and literature in authors such as Roberto Iniesta and Javier Krahe.

He has been part of the M+PoeMAS project team, 'Poetry for more people and song poetics' since October 2023 and collaborates as editorial secretary for SIGNA. Journal of the Spanish Association of Semiotics.

12. **Daný van Dam**

Assoc. Prof., Leiden University, Netherlands

Email: [h.d.j.van.dam@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:h.d.j.van.dam@hum.leidenuniv.nl)



**Ruth Alison Clemens**

Dr., Leiden University, Netherlands

Email: [r.a.clemens@hum.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:r.a.clemens@hum.leidenuniv.nl)

*Sacred Sounds and Profane Players: Musical Possession in Speculative Fiction*

Abstract:

While there are numerous stories with musician characters, there are fewer examples where music is an integral element of a story's worldbuilding. In this conference paper, we analyse a selection of fantastic and science fiction narratives where music – whether through its players, through instruments or through other means of music production – is an essential and foundational element of the storyworld. The texts we examine are influenced by the real-world emergence of new sound technologies, such as the phonograph in Bernard Capes's short story "The Devils Fantasia" (1902), or the developments in the 1980s around synthesised music as they are reflected in Kim Stanley Robinson's *The Memory of Whiteness* (1985). These texts show how the material mediation of music challenges the boundaries between the sacred and the profane through the return of specific motifs. One of these is the thematic of possession: the (human) body becomes possessed by a piece of music, the spirit of a musician, or by the ghost of the instrument itself. In many of these texts, music serves as a conduit for power beyond the material realm. Nevertheless, while these recurring themes are similar, the manners in which music is integrated into the narrative worldbuilding varies widely. This paper looks at a selection of speculative fiction from the early twentieth century to the present so as to provide insight into the different purposes sacred sounds and profane players can serve to create a coherent storyworld.

Keywords: Speculative fiction; the fantastic; technology; science fiction

Short Bios

Daný van Dam is assistant professor in English literature and cultural studies at Leiden University. She is PI of a government-funded project on late nineteenth-century to present-day music and technology in literature and culture. Her research interests include contemporary postcolonial rewritings of the Victorian era. She also regularly works on speculative narratives and is trying to turn her hobby of sewing clothing into a research project on craft and AI.



Ruth Alison Clemens is a postdoctoral researcher at Leiden University, funded by the Dutch Research Council. Her current research project, which investigates the player-piano as a posthuman media technology, involves a collaboration with the Pianola Museum in Amsterdam and sonologists at the Royal Academy of Art in The Hague. Her work has been published in *Comparative Critical Studies*, *Modernist Cultures*, and *Feminist Modernist Studies*, and she has contributed to the books *Deleuze and Guattari and Fascism*, *More Posthuman Glossary*, and *Flann O'Brien and the Nonhuman*, among others.

13.



**Alejandro Sánchez Cabrera**

University of Salamanca, Spain

Email: [alejandros28@usal.es](mailto:alejandros28@usal.es)

*Rituals of Care: Taylor Swift's The Eras Tour and the Politics of Affect*

Abstract:

Drawing on Judith Butler's ontological claim that the body is never fully autonomous but emerges through its interdependency with other bodies (2020: 135), this paper aims to explore how Taylor Swift's The Eras Tour (2023-2024) enacts a choreography of relationality in which individuality and collectivity co-constitute one another. With more than ten million attendees worldwide, the tour functioned not merely as a commercial spectacle but as a form of affective community, where participants, much like pilgrims attending a sacred ritual, recognized and shared their own vulnerabilities. This affective density recalls Elias Canetti's notion that in a crowd "distinctions are thrown off and all feel equal" (1981: 18), a perspective further elaborated by Gina Arnold, who suggests that it is only in crowds that we "become humanity" (2018: 171). Yet, while Canetti sees this equality as ephemeral, I propose that The Eras Tour extends the affective bonds beyond the stadium space, sustaining horizontal and lasting connections. Such persistence resonates with Helena Pagán's theorization of "epistemic communities," where artistic texts become "ethical weapons" within horizontal discursive spaces (2024: 236). Similarly, Sara Ahmed's framework of affective economies (2004) underscores how emotions align bodies with social spaces, a dynamic vividly performed in Swift's staging of intimacy, ritual, and collective vulnerability.

The tour's participatory practices illustrate this convergence: the viral fan-inspired mashups of "surprise songs" reveal a dialogic exchange between artist and audience that reconfigures meaning-making as collaborative, while the friendship bracelet exchange transforms the stadiums, which are often associated with masculine-coded spectacle, into sites of relational recognition and ethical care. These ritualized gestures sacralize the space of pop concert, imbuing it with spiritual resonance. At the same time, the tour's economic and ecological costs expose the tensions that complicate this ethical promise.

Keywords: Taylor Swift, The Eras Tour, Affect, Community, Ritual, Shared Vulnerability

Short bio

Alejandro Sánchez Cabrera is a PhD researcher (PIF) in the Department of English Philology at the University of Salamanca, in Spain. He is a member of the Recognized Research Group iLAC and collaborates with the Research Group "Narratives of Resilience." He is also part of the research project M+PoeMAS. During his doctoral training, he has undertaken research stays supported by grants at institutions such as the NYU, the University of Reading, and the University of Pavia. He



currently serves as president of INNOVA, the association of young researchers at the University of Salamanca, and coordinates the Teaching Innovation Project “Nineteenth-Century Literature in Pop: Taylor Swift in the Teaching of British Romantic Poetry.” His recent publications include “The Ethics of Neoaustenism: From Jane Austen to Taylor Swift in the Age of Metamodernism.”

14.



**Thomas Gurke**

DAAD Visiting Assoc. Prof., University of Minnesota, USA

Email: [tgurke@umn.edu](mailto:tgurke@umn.edu)

*Words? Music? No: it's what's behind – Secret(ion) and Profanity in James Joyce's Ulysses*

Abstract:

In the “Sirens” chapter of James Joyce’s *Ulysses* (1922), music often veers indeterminately between the sacred and profane, being described as something that is “high in the effulgence symbolic, high, of the etherial bosom” (U 11.749) but at the same time also sexual and profane, namely a “[f]lood of warm jamjam lickitup secretness [that] flowed to flow in music” (U 11.705). Two major aspects are apparent: first, the textual practices that are being used in order to stage music as a ‘flowing’ natural language which my talk will discern by utilizing the typology of intermediality (thematization, evocation and imitation). Then, these strategies will be read anew by utilizing affect-based approaches by Henri Bergson, Gilles Deleuze and Brian Massumi. For it is my contention that what Joyce in effect stages in “Sirens” – this indeterminate veering between the sacred and the profane – is musical affectivity, not music itself.

Both, affect and music rely on forms of “flow”. This can be thought of as a flow of images (as percepts) or the notion of a moving and ‘flowing’ musical form. The text of James Joyce’s “Sirens” chapter in *Ulysses* reflects upon this by mentioning the word “flow” in several contexts. This is particularly evident in passages that emphasize sexual/profane and musical/sacred ‘climaxes’. When the climax of Simon’s song is nearly reached, the sexual climax of Blazes Boylan and Molly Bloom intersperses the narration of “Sirens” and is also constantly identified with notions of “flow”.

Joyce’s text operates with a language that creates a sequence of connected and disconnected semantic relationships, resembling a Bergsonian flow of images, with cuts and eruptions marking the moment of intensity as affect. The “language of flow” is developed throughout “Sirens” by a multitude of stylistic devices: ambivalent semantics, inversions of phrases, repetitions, assonances as well as lexical and non-lexical onomatopoeia weaving a dense web of quasi-relations and thereby creating indeterminacy and suspense – the secret behind words and music. I argue that affect is here used as a ‘mediator’ between sexuality and musicality – between the sacred and the profane – that endows the medium of text with a quality it would otherwise not have access to.

Short bio

Thomas Gurke is DAAD Visiting Associate Professor at the University of Minnesota. He has a degree in English Literature and Musicology. His PhD dissertation focused on the intersemiotic, aesthetic, and affective dynamics of music and literature in the texts of James Joyce. His publications focus on Joyce, contemporary fiction, ecology, the short-story, and popular culture.



He is co-editor of *Words, Music, and the Popular: Global Perspectives on Intermedial Relations* (Palgrave, 2021) and Guest editor of a forthcoming Special Journal Issue on “Emotions and Affect in Words and Music” (Humanities, MDPI, 2026).

15.



**Suzana V. Spasovska**

Asst. Prof., University American College Skopje, North Macedonia

Email: [svspasovska@yahoo.com](mailto:svspasovska@yahoo.com)



**Tamara Jolevska-Popov**

M.Phil., University American College Skopje, North Macedonia

Email: [tamara.j.popov@uacs.edu.mk](mailto:tamara.j.popov@uacs.edu.mk)

*From Hymns to Beat Poetry*

Abstract:

Since the Homeric era, literature has exhibited a permanent dichotomy between divine expression and rebellion against the gods. This tension manifests in two distinct literary forms: the Orphic poetic, characterized by sacral hymns and prayers, and the Promethean poetic, which addresses the ephemeral, non-divine human condition marked by conflict and social discord. This paper investigates the oscillation between these two poles throughout the history of modern literature.

The Orphic tradition, rooted in the ancient mysteries and rituals intended to be sung, represents the sacral dimension of lyric poetry. To explore this, we analyze works that maintain a spiritual or transcendental focus, specifically focusing on the poetry of William Wordsworth in British literature and Mihail Rendzov in Macedonian literature.

Conversely, the Promethean tradition finds its modern zenith in the Beat movement and the countercultural activism of the post-World War II era. Represented by Allen Ginsberg and Macedonian poet Bogomil Gjuzel, this poetic mode expresses personal convictions regarding the injustices and imperfections of the contemporary world. Rather than divinizing existence, these poets employ irony and sarcasm to address global threats and political crises. By rejecting the presentation of an idealistic world, they foster critical thinking essential for the modern reader. Ultimately, this study demonstrates how both traditions continue to shape the spiritual and social landscapes of world and Macedonian literature.

Keywords: hymns, Orphic poetic, Promethean poetic, Beat poetry, divinization, irony



#### Short Bios

Dr. Suzana V. Spasovska (b. 1972, Rotterdam) is Assistant Professor at University American College Skopje, where she teaches Macedonian Language, Creative Writing, and Poetry. She earned her B.A., M.A., and PhD Degrees from the "Blaze Koneski" Faculty of Philology at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje. Her interdisciplinary research explores the intersections of linguistics, mythology, alchemy, Jungian psychology, and Orphism within European and Macedonian poetic traditions. A prolific scholar and poet, Dr. Spasovska has authored several poetry collections and three significant theoretical works: *The Freedom of the Verse* (2019), *On the Top of the Blade* (2024), and *The Return of Orpheus* (2025). She is a certified proofreader and an active member of both the Association of Writers of Macedonia and the Association of Proofreaders of Macedonia. Based in Skopje, her work continues to bridge the gap between oral tradition and contemporary literary theory.

Tamara Jolevska-Popov, M.Phil., is a doctoral candidate in English Literature at Ss. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje and serves as lecturer at University American College Skopje (UACS) within the School of Foreign Languages. She holds an MA in Business Communication from UACS, with a thesis focusing on the comparative use of case studies as a pedagogical tool. Her research interests are interdisciplinary, spanning linguistics, semantics, morphology, and the role of the English language in globalization and business environments. A prolific researcher, her work has been featured in Cambridge Scholars Publishing (CSP), international conference proceedings, and high-impact scientific journals. In addition to her academic contributions, she is a twice-published fiction writer in Macedonian, with her short stories translated into Croatian by the University of Zagreb.

16.



**Paweł Siechowicz**

Dr., University of Warsaw, Poland

Email: [p.siechowicz@uw.edu.pl](mailto:p.siechowicz@uw.edu.pl)

*The Interests of Criticism: What Is the Value of Meaning?*

Abstract:

Creators of music speak not only through sound. Musical utterances are frequently accompanied by words: in titles, authorial commentaries, program notes, press materials, critical commentaries, and reviews—the stream of texts surrounding music flows with considerable force. From the perspective of the economics of art, a question arises: who benefits from the texts that surround music? Or rather, to what extent are the benefits generated by these texts distributed among composers, performers, listeners, critics, publishers, concert institutions, and other actors who meet on the musical marketplace? These benefits are both spiritual and material, both sacred and profane. Yet if something yields profit, it also entails costs. How might one describe the nature of the costs and benefits of music criticism, understood broadly as a practice of seeking musical meanings?

Nicholas Mathew has recently drawn attention to the political dimension of musicology as it emerges in the context of the attention economy (Mathew, N., “Interesting Haydn: On Attention’s Materials,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 2018, vol. 71, no. 3, pp. 655–701). The meanings we seek in music resonate with our interests. It is in our well-understood interest to pursue meanings that harmonize with our worldview. By practicing criticism, we thus align ourselves with a particular vision of the world. We bear witness to it in words, encourage others to adopt our perspective, and—more or less consciously—seek to persuade, and at times even to agitate, in favor of the direction marked out by our interpretations. Do all interpretations arise in good faith? Can calculated or cynical interpretations be found in texts about music? Responsibility for the word, together with concern for music, compels us to pose these questions and not to evade their answers.

Keywords: music criticism, cultural economy, attention economy, valuation practices, political musicology

Short Bio

Paweł Siechowicz, PhD, is an assistant professor at the Institute of Musicology, University of Warsaw, Poland. In his research, he explores the interconnections of music and art in the works of Central European composers (i.a. Čiurlionis, Różycki, Schönberg), as well as the ideas and practices linking music and economy in the 18th and 19th centuries. His scholarly interests span



interdisciplinary areas: music and economy, music and painting, music and literature, and music and nature.

As a translator, music critic, and educator, he focuses on enhancing the listening experience. He is a regular contributor to Ruch Muzyczny magazine, the Chopin Museum in Warsaw, Polish Radio Chopin, and PWM Edition. His scholarly articles and reviews have appeared in leading Polish musicological and art history journals, including Muzyka, Roczniki Humanistyczne, Res Facta Nova, Rocznik Historii Sztuki, Scontri, and Notes Muzyczny.

Webpage: <https://pawelwiktorsiechowicz.academia.edu>

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8159-8336>

**17. Iuliana Matasova**

Dr., Independent Scholar, Research Fellow, New Europe College Bucharest, Romania  
Email: [ju.matasova@gmail.com](mailto:ju.matasova@gmail.com)

*Reparative Intimacies of War: Latexfauna's "Masandra" and "Nich" as Exercises in Care*  
Abstract:

In September 2023, Ukrainian indie pop band Latexfauna released "Masandra"—a track accompanied by a sensual video that gained over 29 million views. The band then uploaded backstage footage of the one-scene / one-shot clip onto their newly opened OnlyFans account, directing all the funds from subscriptions towards the AFU needs. Taken by some as unnecessarily provocative, the video predominantly gathered comments like "God bless your art! The coolest song, the summerlike warm lyrics, you've comforted me! The video is amazing, with no hint of lechery or vulgarity, just the pleasure of watching." Such reception aligned with a manifestation made by Dmytro Zeziulin, Latexfauna's frontman, in November 2023—that their music existed to make people's lives more pleasant. The lyrics to "Masandra"—dreamlike, yet conceptually anchored in everydayness—invite a flashback to the Eden-like experience devoid of the presence of war, the title, however, immediately integrates these experiences into the wartime realities, including the annexation of Crimea. Significantly, the song's chorus is 'muted'—featuring no lyrics, it is 'sacrificed' for the main erotic activity in the video. In May 2025, Latexfauna released "Nich"—a story of coming home (in their own definition). A wartime lullaby that does not mention the war directly, this song of love and anguish invokes the sacred figures of a wife and a mother, the archetypal imagery of the Milky Way, and connectedness to nature. "Nich" is sung in a voice of a present-day Chumak / Cossack / warrior saddling a horse in the '90s inspired tracksuit; the video is shot in bullet time and conveys an idea of a life put on hold and a path through the limbo of war.

Addressing the seemingly different case studies, this paper seeks to analyze the mechanisms of creating and sustaining intimacies in the time of war, through the conceptualities of care. As this analysis of "Masandra" and "Nich" aims to demonstrate, the songs not only oscillate on the axis of the sacred and the profane but reveal that, in its current 'edition,' war bears characteristics of the eternal present, in which (self-)care becomes a heroically mundane activity.

Keywords: Ukrainian pop music, contemporary, (self-)care

**Short Bio**

Dr Iuliana Matasova is a displaced Ukrainian scholar of popular culture and comparative literature whose ongoing research explores the Ukrainian 1990s through women's popular music. Currently Fellow at New Europe College Bucharest and partner of the Oxford Ukraine Hub, she was RHS and BASEES Scholar-at-Risk at the University of Roehampton London, Carnegie Research Fellow at Duke University, Advanced Academia Fellow at the Centre for Advanced Study Sofia, and served as Associate Professor of Literature at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv.

Her interdisciplinary scholarship of Ukrainian and American literatures and popular cultures appeared in Palgrave and Peter Lang collections of essays and in leading Ukrainian academic journals. She has written features for Marie Claire Ukraine, translated at Kyiv Molodist International Film Festival, and discussed her research on Ukrainian national television.

18.



**Anna Tenczyńska**

PhD, University of Warsaw, Poland

Email: [anna.tenczynska@uw.edu.pl](mailto:anna.tenczynska@uw.edu.pl)

*Music in a concentration camp: between the sacred and the profane. Zofia Pomysz's "Vacations on the Adriatic"*

Abstract:

The topic of my presentation is the complex relationship between music and violence in a concentration camp, as portrayed by Zofia Posmysz in her novel "Vacations on the Adriatic". I would like to pose the following question: to what extent does the heroic and tragic refusal of one of the novel's protagonists, Ptaszka, to participate in the camp orchestra—which could have saved her life—preserve music as sacred?

Short Bio

Researcher and lecturer at the Comparative Literature Department at the University of Warsaw. Research interests: interart studies, especially relationships between literature and music, soundscape studies, historical poetics (especially modern poetry), methodology of literary and comparative studies, translation. Founding member of the Polish Comparative Literature Association, the Polish Literary Translators Association and the Intersemiotic and Intermedial Research Group at the University of Warsaw.

Author of several dozen articles about relationships between literature and music, and about soundscape in literary texts; translator of numerous works devoted to art theory, literary theory, comparative literature and musicology (including Karol Berger's *A Theory of Art*, part of his *Bach's Circle*. *Mozart's Arrow*. *An Essay on the Origins of Musical Modernity*, works of David Damrosch, Kevin Moore, Charles Rosen).

19.



**Adrian Paterson**

Dr., University of Galway, Ireland

Email: [adrianpaterson@yahoo.com](mailto:adrianpaterson@yahoo.com)

*Sensual Music or Sainly Singing-Masters? Sacred and Profane Musical Philosophy in WB Yeats's Byzantium Poems*

Abstract:

Yeats's ekphrastic, visually-replete masterpiece 'Sailing to Byzantium' seems at first by contrast to denigrate music as profane. Against the desperate forgetfulness, the fleeting, wordless 'sensual music' of sexual appetites pursued by the teeming creatures of the living world, the poem places 'monuments of unageing intellect', venerating eternal philosophical endeavour represented by the crafts of architecture, and of sacred interiors as the speaker appeals to the saints of Byzantine mosaics to help 'gather [him] into the artifice of eternity'. And yet the poem's signs and sounds propose aesthetic relations more complex than this: as this paper contends, age-old tensions in musical philosophy are at the heart of Yeats's poetry: music can train and expand both body and soul. Raphael's School of Athens sets two philosophers centre-stage in making the Renaissance: Plato, pointing to the heavens, and Aristotle, his hand over the earth, exemplifying their inclinations towards what the (fictional) Hermes Trismegistus called 'soul and corporeal substance'. Drawing on Marsilio Ficino's translations and interpretation of Plato and Aristotle, on Augustine's theorizations and Byzantine practices of music, this paper describes how sacred and profane, mundane and heavenly musics conflict and then, following the intervention of 'singing-master' sages to entune the soul at the moment of death (vitaly insisting on the mediation of words) they intertwine to produce a strangely sexy glimmering posthumous song. Examining the origins and elaboration of Ficino's theories about soul, music, and spirit, his own musical practices, and near-blasphemous magical suggestions (crucial to this art was the conjunction of music and words together in conception and the performance of songs to the star-spirits of the pagan world), this paper discovers why and how song can be used to elevate the soul as it leaves the body, but also is able to animate the whole man, making possible not only the spiritual elevation in Yeats's Byzantium poems, but also their obsession with stuff and sex – explaining why 'Sailing to Byzantium' claims as artistic ideal a strange deflating return to time over eternity, and how much the philosophical tensions of the ancient world and Renaissance can still affect modernist poetry.



#### Short Bio

Dr Adrian Paterson is Lecturer in English at the University of Galway, writing on eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth century literature from birdsong to broadsides, pianos to poems, with a particular interest in the artistic interactions of modernism and Irish literature – with publications thus featuring well-known authors playing with music, like Shaw, Joyce, Eliot, Pound, and Mallarmé, together with lesser-known musicians and writers like Florence Farr, Harry Partch, and Thomas Moore. Curator of the multimedia exhibition *Yeats & the West*, he is President of Modernist Studies Ireland, co-editor of two *E-rea* special issues on modernism (2018, 2020), the recent *The Edinburgh Companion to W.B. Yeats and the Arts* (2024), and the forthcoming WMA Brill volume on 'Frauds and Fakes in Words and Music'.

20.



**Ivana Trajanoska**

Assoc. Prof., University American College Skopje, North Macedonia

Email: [trajanoska@uacs.edu.mk](mailto:trajanoska@uacs.edu.mk)

*Zlatko Origjanski: Between the Sacred and the Profane*

Abstract:

Zlatko Origjanski's work offers a compelling example of how contemporary Macedonian music negotiates the boundaries between the sacred and the profane. As a member of the influential Macedonian group Anastasia, Origjanski (Skopje, 1963) left an indelible mark in the creation of a musical language that fused Byzantine and Orthodox Christian musical traditions with Macedonian folk music, electronic soundscapes, and elements of alternative and world music. The group became internationally recognized through the soundtrack for the movie *Before the Rain* (1994), whose music transformed liturgical motifs and folkloric sonorities into modern, contemporary music.

This paper explores Origjanski's musical poetics as a liminal space situated between spirituality and secularity, ritual and performance, tradition and experimentation. Particular attention will be given to the ways in which Orthodox chants and Macedonian folklore are recontextualized within contemporary musical production. Rather than treating the sacred as a purely religious category, Origjanski's work reveals how sacred aesthetics may function culturally, politically, and emotionally during the socialist/communist and post-socialist/communist Macedonia (today's North Macedonia). His collaborations with traditional musicians/singers, especially in projects involving Macedonian folk heritage, further complicate the distinction between inherited forms and modern artistic reinterpretation.

By analyzing selected compositions, film music, and performances, the paper argues that Origjanski constructs a soundscape in which the sacred and the profane continuously overlap. In this musical universe, folk memory acquires spiritual resonance, while religious motifs become embedded within contemporary cultural and political discourse. The study therefore contributes to broader discussions on music, religion, folklore, and post-Yugoslav cultural identity, positioning Origjanski as a key figure in the transformation of Balkan sacred and folk imaginaries within modern popular and alternative music traditions.

Keywords: Zlatko Origjanski, sacred/profane, Byzantine and Orthodox Christian musical traditions, Macedonian traditional folk music



#### Short Bio

Ivana Trajanoska holds a PhD Degree in Anglophone Studies from University Montpellier 3, France. She is an interdisciplinary researcher, literary translator from English and French into Macedonian and a writer. She is Associate Professor of English Studies at the University American College Skopje (N. Macedonia) and teaches English Literature, Intercultural Communication, Academic and Creative Writing. Her research interests are primarily in early 20<sup>th</sup> century English Literature, word and music studies, and literature and the visual arts. She serves as Dean of the UACS School of Foreign Languages and co-president of the Forum of the International Association of Word and Music Studies.

## 21. Jan Czarnecki

Dr., University of Cologne, Germany

Email: [jan.czarnecki@uni-koeln.de](mailto:jan.czarnecki@uni-koeln.de)

### Abstract

Un requiem athée. Contemporary Literary Interpretations of the Missa in agenda defunctorum  
There is a range of contemporary works of literature (and music) which deploy (by means of reiteration, quotation, allusion, transformation) the Mass cycle in its textual, liturgical and musical shape, as it settled throughout the centuries. I look at those of them which are arguably not intended for liturgical use and perhaps place themselves in significant tension with Christian theology. The more pronounced the atheist, agnostic, secular or post-religious aspects of the works are, the more pressing the need for an interdisciplinary inquiry into their interpretation. In a way, I want to look at the Mass for Deus absconditus or even absens, a Mass sung or whispered in the silent ruins of a sanctuary. An Atheist's Mass might be a secularizing, iconoclastic gesture, but it may invite a broad range of divergent readings. It may instantiate the secular longing for the sacred, nostalgic, polemic, bitter or disillusioned, it might incorporate a paradoxical mixture of hope and despair, it might be the place where the Atheist extends his hand, murmuring pax tecum to the believer, without becoming one. In the present talk I limit myself to a handful of examples, further limited to the literary mass for the dead, missa pro defunctis.

There are manifold reasons which nourish my interest: 1. Why does a secular text seek a sacred, ritual context by genre? 2. How does this genologic choice influence the strategies of its interpretation? 3. Is the rich musical tradition of the genre, itself already exploring the non-liturgical, non-orthodox and non-verbatim approaches to the Mass cycle, informing the solely textual creation? 4. A literary Atheist Requiem, such as Michel Onfray's 2013 work, poses puzzles on the emphatically absent elements of the genre (its liturgical and sacramental action, its musical reverberance). How are these absent elements present and what effects does this absence/presence produce?

### Bio

Dr. Jan Czarnecki teaches Polish Literature and Language, Theory of Literature as well as Word and Music Studies at the University of Cologne (Germany). Born in Warsaw, he graduated summa cum laude in Philosophy (BA, MA) from the College of Inter-Faculty Individual Studies in the Humanities (MISH), University of Warsaw, and obtained a diploma with honors from the F. Chopin State Music School in Warsaw. He received his PhD with honors from the University of Padua (Italy). He has been an associated researcher at the University of Lille-3 (France) and a Visiting Postgraduate Research Student at the University of Edinburgh (Scotland). An active singer: he has performed as a soloist and as a member of chamber and madrigal choirs in Italy and Germany. He conducts the Choir of the Slavic Institute of the University of Cologne. He worked as an editor at *Universa. Recensionen di filosofia*. His research interests range from word and music relations in European literature to the philosophy of music. His recent publications include a co-translation of Peter Kivy's *Sound sentiment* into Polish (2022), a chapter entitled "A Melopoetic Struggle between East and West: Mickiewicz and the Popular Idiom" in *Words, Music, and the Popular* (Palgrave Studies in Music and Literature, 2021), a study on the music implied in the fourth canto



of Adam Mickiewicz's Konrad Wallenrod in *Prace filologiczne* (2020) and an essay on Form vs. Formalism in Music in *Filozofuj!* (2025). Member of the WMA. Co-President of the Word and Music Association Forum.

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