

# MAiA | Music & Arts in Action

## Editorial

After a brief hiatus, it is our pleasure to welcome you back to *Music and Arts in Action* (MAiA), published by the Sociology of the Arts (SocArts) research group at the University of Exeter, UK. In this general issue, we are pleased to present a suite of articles that examine human-art interactions in communities as diverse as LGBTQ groups, victims of political violence, contemporary art audiences, and rock guitar aficionados. These contributions span four continents and present rich case studies for examining the active role of music and the arts in individual and social life.

First, Mia Nakamura, in *Retelling, Memory-Work, and Metanarrative: Two Musical-Artistic Mediations for Sexual Minorities and Majorities in Tokyo*, discusses music-making as a third space through which people from diverse backgrounds can create and articulate new identities. Here, music plays an integral, though sometimes invisible, role in community rituals such as music festivals and open microphone events that raise awareness of sexual minority groups and HIV. Nakamura demonstrates that these high-quality aesthetic spaces enable individuals to reflect and engage in transformational re-tellings of existing media forms that can be shared with others to build new understandings that bridge majority and minority perspectives.

In *Music and Reconciliation in Colombia: Opportunities and Limitations of Songs Composed by Victims*, Maria Elisa Pinto García similarly examines music as a tool for overcoming conflict. By examining song-writing practices by victims of political violence in Colombia, she explores how the unique storytelling functions of music-making open avenues for mutual memory-work and trust-building between victims and ex-combatants, key ingredients of reconciliation. Importantly, however, she also explores the negative outcomes that can result when songs share anger and stereotypes rather than seek introspection.

This exploration of the relationship between artistic texts and lived experiences is continued by Nail Farkhatdinov in his article *Beyond Decoding: Art Installations and Mediation of Audiences*. Through a video-based exploration of audience interactions with a contemporary art installation, he proposes that audiences for contemporary art are defined by a specific form of communication that involves individual interpretive work combined with the interactional sharing of visitor experiences. This close study demonstrates the significant micro-work of artistic consumers involved in accomplishing the social outcomes described by others in this MAiA issue.

Concluding the issue with *The Making of a Cultural Icon: The Electric Guitar*, William Danaher unpacks the networks of artistic production, mediation, and reception involved in the history of the electric guitar. His work demonstrates that notions of aesthetic quality and value have a variety of sources, including user performance, figures in rock stardom, and media images. In the midst of standardizing pop culture taste practices, the guitar is a unique cultural icon that demonstrates our deep aesthetic attachments to particular artistic forms.

Taken together, these articles explore an important question in the social study of the arts, namely: how can our artistic experiences be foundational life resources? And, these case studies demonstrate that significant outcomes of human-aesthetic interaction emerge from an important interplay of individual art-making and collective sharing in an artistic community. For their valuable insights into this integral component of social life, we thank the authors in this issue for their hard work and creativity in producing exciting articles for us all to share.

### **FUTURE PUBLICATIONS**

MAiA's next issues will feature general, thematic and special article contributions as detailed in our forthcoming articles page. Next to appear is a second special issue refereeing and documenting work presented at an international conference at the University of Exeter examining: "Improvisation in Performance", guest edited by Dr. Jesse Stewart of Carleton University. Although the planned 2013 theme issue on "Musical and Artistic Mediations" has been postponed indefinitely, please keep watch for several new calls for thematic issues in the near future. As always, MAiA maintains an open call for general article submissions and welcomes inquiries for guest-edited special issues. We also welcome interest in translating relevant out-of-copyright work that is under-served in the English-language literature.

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND EDITORIAL TRANSITIONS**

Finally, it is our great pleasure to announce MAiA's first editorial transition. We welcome MAiA's new Editorial Team: Dr. Sigrun Lilja Einarsdottir of Bifrost University (Iceland), Dr. Trevor Hagen of Budapest (Hungary), Dr. Craig Robertson of Leeds (UK), and Mr. Pedro dos Santos Boia a postgraduate researcher at the University of Exeter (UK). As the founding editors of MAiA pass the baton, we look forward to learning from your insights into this important area of study.

Music and Arts in Action would not be possible without the generous help and support of a number of additional individuals. The most invisible, yet most important, of these are the reviewers and copyeditors, to whom we are extremely grateful. The authors, editors and readers of MAiA have all benefited enormously from your ideas, suggestions and thoughtful comments. We would also like to thank the members of the MAiA Advisory and Editorial Boards for their ongoing support and guidance of the journal's work. Last, but certainly not least, we would like to thank the authors in this issue for their hard work and creativity in producing exciting papers for us all to share.

**SOPHIA KRZYS ACORD, ARILD BERGH AND IAN SUTHERLAND**  
**(OUTGOING EDITORS)**

**SIGRUN LILJA EINARSDOTTIR, TREVER HAGEN, CRAIG ROBERTSON**  
**AND PEDRO DOS SANTOS BOIA**  
**(INCOMING EDITORS)**