

KVNM and Popular Music

Speech held by Ulrike Hascher-Burger at the occasion of awarding the *Popular Music Thesis Prize* on May 30, 2014 in Groningen

A cooperation between the International Association for the Study of Popular Music and the Royal Society of Dutch Music History? A couple of years ago, this would have been a quite strange idea. Popular music didn't have a place in Dutch – and other European – musicological societies and university programmes. Popular music and art music seemed to be totally different worlds. However, popular music has always been a part of music history, although there have always been evident differences between them due to the diverging traditions in which they arose: the mainly oral tradition of the popular music contrasts with the mostly written art music. Popular music from earlier times is therefore almost totally gone: the tunes of the medieval minstrels, the melodies in the taverns of the Dutch Golden Age have almost vanished without a trace. What remained is primarily written music: the music of composers such as Josquin, Bach, Mozart, Wagner – the adored heroes of the 19th and 20th centuries. But I am happy to say that popular music is gradually getting a more prominent place in European academic music research.

How odd it would be to make a sharp distinction between both kinds of music becomes evident from the winning bachelor thesis by Joost Manger Cats, entitled: *Copyright Enforcement in Music: a cross-disciplinary analysis of stakeholder positions in the contemporary music industry*: a hot item not only in the field of popular music, but for all kinds of music productions in the 21st century.

The winning master thesis of Albert Meijer, *Be My Guest: Nation Branding and national representation in the Eurovision Song Contest*, zooms in on a specific event in the context of popular music to discuss the question of national branding of music: an issue that can be traced far back within western music history, an issue that is of great importance in traditional music analysis as well – look for instance at the focus of the Utrecht Early Music Festival this year, which is dedicated to the music of the Habsburg empire.

As chairwoman of the Royal Society of Dutch Music History - the KVNM - I am therefore very happy to cooperate with the IASPM regarding the Popular Music Thesis Prize. Pop music hasn't been a part of the KVNM-programme so far, and I hope that our societies will continue their fruitful cooperation in the future.

Let me finish by wishing both winners the very best for their future studies and research plans.

Thank you.