

## Music as a Device of Political Journalism

– Abstract –

Music has been part of journalism ever since the time when moving images were beginning to be employed for mass communication. This included segments about political news which were accompanied with instrumental music during the silent film and early talkie era until the 1950s. Until then, the background music was wall-to-wall, that means, it accompanied the images and the other layers of the soundtrack (spoken words and original soundtrack) from the beginning to the end of the segment, often without a break. This rather excessive use of music was reduced drastically when TV was established as a new mass medium in the 1950s. The reduction of music was intended in order to present news and other journalist coverage about the latest political events unbiased. Again, in the 1980s another shift of paradigm appeared and music re-entered journalism as a device of communication. Ever since, the percentage of music in, for instance, segments of political magazines on public service TV has increased. In my paper, I would like to examine some recent developments in the journalist use of music. At the same time, the problematic nature of this use will be presented critically. From a media scholar perspective, the question will be in focus whether the theories about and methods established within (fictional) film music research, which is extensive but has neglected journalist contributions, can be employed par for par in investigating news, political documentaries, reports and so on. Given the different aesthetic and genetic circumstances of music in journalist reports vis-à-vis a blockbuster movie or a TV series the answer might be no.

Key words: News music, journalist ethics, film soundtrack, TV and film history, mass media communication

### Short CV

Martin Knust studied musicology, theology and philosophy at the University of Greifswald, the Humboldt University Berlin and the Technical University Dresden. Magister Artium (M.A.) in musicology 2000, grade of a Dr. phil. 2006. Since 2007 appointments and lectureships at the University of Greifswald, the Technical University in Berlin, University of Örebro and the Royal College of Music in Stockholm. 2008–2012 Postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Stockholm. Since 2013 Senior lecturer in musicology at the Department of Music and Art at the Linnæus University in Växjö, Sweden. Since 2015 member of the research center “Intermedial Studies” at Linnæus University. Various printed and broadcasted publications about performance practice and composers of the 19<sup>th</sup> through 21<sup>st</sup> century in Central and Northern Europe.

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