‘Music & Democracy’ Study Days II

Music and Political Democratisation in Late Twentieth Century

18-19 June 2020
University of Huddersfield
https://musicdemocracystudydays.wordpress.com

Convened by Igor Contreras Zubillaga (British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Huddersfield) and Robert Adlington (University of Huddersfield)

Keynote speaker: Marina Frolova-Walker (University of Cambridge)

This event aims to innovatively question how musical practices formed ways of imagining democracy in the democratic transitions that took place after Portugal’s ‘Carnation Revolution’ in 1974 – what Huntington (1991) called the ‘third wave’ of democratisation, which involves more than 60 countries throughout Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa. Rather than studying music’s diverse deployments within these political contexts (music ‘in’ transitions to democracy), these study days place the emphasis upon ways in which music embodies democratisation processes and participates in the wider social struggle to define freedom and equality for the post-authoritarian era (hence the ‘and’ in the title of the event).

As political science has shown, democracy is a highly contested category, one that has been imagined in many different ways, and any particular realisation of which carries costs as well as benefits. According to the historian of democracy Pierre Rosanvallon, the rise of democracy has historically represented both a promise and a problem for a society: ‘a promise insofar as democracy reflected the needs of societies founded on the dual imperative of equality and autonomy; and a problem, insofar as these noble ideals were a long way from being realized’ (2008:2). These complex facets of democracy became especially apparent in the political context of transition to democracy after an authoritarian regime, leading to a struggle between different ‘ideas’ of democracy (Albertus and Menaldo, 2018).

Thus, these study days also seek to engage in a comparative discussion of how music framed different ideas of democracy in post-authoritarian transitions during the 1970s, 80s, and 90s. How did musical practices instantiate ideas of democracy in these political contexts? Inversely, how did such democratic values inform musical practice? How did musicians negotiate between creative autonomy and social responsibility? And more broadly, what is the role of musical culture in a transition to democracy?

We invite proposals from scholars working in any discipline for papers exploring these and related questions in relation to any musical practice. Papers will be 30-minutes in length followed by 15 minutes of discussion time, to enable the fullest exchange. Please submit proposals (250-300 words) to I.ContrerasZubillaga@hud.ac.uk by the deadline Friday 31 January 2020. The programme will be announced in early March.