

THE SOCIOLOGY OF MUSIC LISTENING IN EVERYDAY LIFE

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Music sociologists, ethnomusicologists and social psychologists of music have turned over the past decade to music listening in ordinary life settings. This work has illuminated music's functions across a range of social settings and has helped highlight the importance of music perception as it occurs outside of both the laboratory and the concert hall. This talk will survey recent work on the topic of music listening in daily life and highlight directions and methods for future research. It will focus in particular on sociological methods. While the techniques described are mainly qualitative, they are not presented at the exclusion of experimental or quantitative modes of enquiry which are also of value. In particular the paper will discuss music's role in relation to strategies of social 'control' (i.e., music dissemination practices that are linked to attempts to structure the conduct of others), self-management in daily life and music's role in

helping to define social scenes. It will point to some implications for the study of music's social effects and describe new and on-going work in the area. The study of music listening in everyday life will be described in relation to sociological theories of action and emotion and to the 'cultural repertoires' perspective. The argument will be advanced that too much of sociological theory has ignored the non-cognitive aspects of social action and that empirical research on the topic of music listening in everyday life serves to highlight action's aesthetic dimension. Music, it will be concluded, should not be ignored within social theories of structure and agency and thinking about music as a dynamic medium in social life (via grounded studies of everyday music listening practices) helps to advance a richer conception of the sources and structures of social action.