

Advanced popular music: Defining avant-garde

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Abstract

Beyond the established classical avant-garde as well as beyond advanced Jazz there has been vivid and diverse vanguard activity in popular music since decades. The perception of those musical styles is tricky. On the one hand the music emerges from the impact of Dada, Fluxus, musique concrète or contemporary Jazz more than from the tradition of rock music. Within the pop context it was and still is the reinterpretation and further development of avant-garde trends of the 20th century, and so inscrutable or strange to the average pop consumer. On the other hand it is suited within a sub-cultural context, because the protagonists derive from pop culture more than from institutional contexts. Since centres of avant-garde are built and consolidated by academic and other authorized institutions, "popular" avant-garde takes place beyond those centres.

According to the self-conception of this music's protagonists, the "real" advanced music does not happen within the academic context, but within the experimental independent music scene (cp. Martin Büsser 2001). Using the example of some pieces of advanced popular music and the explanation of their production and perception processes, this lecture wants to demonstrate various notions of avant-garde within this context. The aim is not only to introduce the audience to avant-garde pop music, but also to point out ideas of avant-garde, that on the one hand refer to classical avant-garde's attributes like shock, provocation, deconstruction, rebellion, progress etc., but on the other hand not only differ in their results but also stand outside the classical avant-garde's institutional and ideological sight. In challenging traditional positions and presenting deviant ideas, the lecture contributes to the discussion about avant-garde's definition.

CV

Dahlia Borsche studied musicology, sociology and ethnomusicology at the *Freie Universität Berlin* and *Humboldt Universität Berlin*. She wrote her master thesis about the fine border between artificial and popular music using the example of two contemporary festivals in Berlin (in preparation for publication). Between 2006 and 2009 she worked as production manager at the *club transmediale festival*, Germany's most established international event for advanced popular music. In September 2009 she started her job as university assistant of the new degree program Applied Musicology at the *Alpes-Adria-University* in Klagenfurt/Austria. In November 2009 she was invited to an international media art symposium at *General Public* in Berlin to talk about "New Music and experimental Pop Music".