Gesellschaft für Popularmusikforschung e.V.
German Society for Popular Music Studies
From “Arbeitskreis Studium Populärer Musik e.V.“ (Working Group for the Study of Popular Music) to “Gesellschaft für Popularmusikforschung / German Society for Popular Music Studies e.V.”

In 2014 thirty years of continuous institutionalised German-speaking Popular Music Studies were celebrated. The scientific research in popular music was implemented in 1984 by a rather informal “Arbeitskreis Studium Populärer Music e.V.” (ASPM) which has developed into the largest German-speaking research society in this field since. In order to acknowledge this development ASPM was renamed into “Gesellschaft für Popularmusikforschung e.V.” (GfPM).

This brochure presents the society’s activities through a twofold portrayal of its achievements: A personal retrospective by Prof. Dr. em. Helmut Rösing – the founding and long-standing chair of the executive committee –, followed by a summary of conferences, publications, workshops etc. organised during the past 30 years.

The renaming of the organisation also gave the opportunity to look forward and emphasise some future perspectives:

• Considering the expertise in the study of popular music and its cultural contexts GfPM acts as the main reference point for students, researchers and the media.

• GfPM’s goal is the stimulation and promotion of research into all genres of popular music through conferences, summer schools, workshops and publications. We issue two book series and an online-journal: The yearbook “Beiträge zur Popularmusikforschung” (Contributions to Popular Music Studies), a series of monographs “texte zur populären musik” (texts on popular music) and the online journal SAMPLES (www.gfpm-samples.de). Our publications retain high quality standards and adhere to the criteria of good academic practice as defined by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG, German Research Community).
• Particular attention is given to the promotion of (PhD) students by organising specialised workshops and an annual award for outstanding essays within the field. They also have the opportunity to present their research at our annual conferences.

• Being a registered non-profit association, the society’s expertise is available to the broad public. Services include among others the finding of consultants, reviewers and experts for interviews, talks, workshops or seminars in all areas of popular music studies.

• On the international level GfPM works together with numerous academic and cultural associations and institutions. Prominent international researchers are regular speakers at our conferences. Especially the summer schools provide an excellent platform for networking and international exchange.

• As a non-profit association the GfPM finances itself exclusively through membership fees and public funds and is hence independent from any commercial interests.

• Being a member of the Deutscher Musikrat (DMR, German Music Council) GfPM is represented in various committees of the DMR and thus actively involved in German music politics.

• GfPM members regularly obtain a newsletter with important information on calls for papers, conferences, events, new publications and job advertisements. Members also receive a free copy of “Beiträge zur Popularmusikforschung” (Contributions to Popular Music Studies) and are entitled to reduced fees for all GfPM-conferences.
Who would have imagined it back then? The 1984 founded and in 1986 officially registered “Arbeitskreis Studium Populärer Musik” (Working Group for the Study of Popular Music) has survived and is now thirty years old. Even more: it flourishes in spite of the one or another crisis that shook it. What started as a small working group has by now developed into an acclaimed society with more than 250 members.

At the beginning of the 1980s there were a number of reasons that contributed to the founding of the association:

(1.) On one hand, the West-German musicology paid no attention to the research of popular music. Popular music – as opposed to the so-called “Ernste Musik” (serious or art music) – was not taken seriously or was contested. The positive aura of music as an art form was considered to be incompatible with the negative image of “Schlager” music.

(2.) Music teachers on the other hand were confronted with a very different reality. They had to deal with children and youngsters who wanted to know more about ‘their’ music: Schlager, Pop, Rock, and Jazz. However, at the beginning of the 1980s there were only few activities in this field, such as the founding of the Institut für Didaktik populärer Musik (Institute for the Didactics of Popular Music) in Lüneburg. Also in 1980 the Hamburg Music Academy started its “Modellversuch Popularmusik” (Pilot Project Popular Music) and the Institute for Popular Culture was established at the Akademie Remscheid (Remscheid Academy) in North Rhine-Westphalia.

(3.) On the international level a number of changes took place at the same time. In 1981 the International Association for the Study of Popular Music (IASPM) was founded, and it did not take long before a German branch was established as well. Yet, from the international point of view this branch was associated rather with the German Democratic Republic than with the Federal Republic of Germany. Unfortunately, our intentions to consolidate this situation were not met with mutual consent.
So, we took the bull by the horns! We – meaning Alenka Barber-Kersovan and I – thought it was about time to establish an association of our own in order to widen, strengthen and sharpen the academic perception of and the scientific research into all areas and manifestations of popular music, to reduce prejudices, eliminate deficits and revise value judgements. In short: to unify the strength and the energy of all those who were willing to tackle the subject and to explore popular music issues in the framework of the academic discourse.

It was a rocky start, as wishes and visions had to be brought in line with reality: continual lack of money, a considerable fluctuation of members, difficult negotiations with the IASPM, misunderstanding on the side of the ‘established’ musicology, disputes with the historically oriented Gesellschaft für Musikwissenschaft (GfM, Society for Music Research), even leading to accusations our association lacked scientific standards and much more. To put it in other words: there were enough reasons to bring the association to fail.

That this did not happen is due to two circumstances: Firstly, the engagement of Alenka Barber-Kersovan, the honorary executive manager from the beginning on. Her foresight and persistence in all kinds of negotiations, her unorthodox collaboration with the executive committee and the advisory board, her continuous presence as a centre and ‘switchboard’ of everyday activities were indispensable for the existence of the association.

Secondly, the concept of the association and the implementation of organisational structures as they were contested for the university level by the 1968 generation: flat hierarchies, equality based cooperation between all members and a lively discourse culture that did not shy away from disputes about concrete problems.

Considering the topic of research, the broadest possible approach was called for, especially with regards to the term ‘music’ itself. Hence the understanding of ‘Popular music’ was not restricted to particular styles or genres: As conference programmes clearly demonstrate, the scope ranged from everyday entertainment and functional music to Rock, Pop, Schlager, and Jazz. Due to the premise that nearly every kind of music can be interpreted as po-
Popular music, as long as perceived and explored in terms of an interactive reference system, even “unpopular” popular music was not excluded.

Since the musical construction of meaning results from a dynamic circulation process (perception, production and distribution), an alternative to the purely historical and analytic approaches of traditional musicology was seen in the trans- or interdisciplinary research. Music analysis was enlarged by music pedagogy, sociology of music, music psychology, as well as aspects of economics, technology and media dissemination. Further, instead of a simple and fast evaluation in terms of good or bad, trivial or sophisticated, etc. empiricism was asked for: the analysis of facts, which are essential for the understanding of music as a communication medium.

In order to increase the public perception of the society “Beiträge zur Popularmusikforschung“ (Contributions to Popular Music Studies) were set up. At the beginning, the edited documents were typed on an old style typewriter, which meant that doing corrections was nearly impossible; also the reproduction and the binding, done by the university printing service, hardly ever ran smoothly. Gradually, due to the collaboration with a publisher and the computer aided production, the editorial work became easier and “Beiträge” had the chance to develop into what they are now: a proper yearbook. Further, since 1988 there were – and still are – other book series that define the subject matter of the society and sharpen its institutional profile.

From the beginning on the society supported and promoted (PhD) students and post-docs. However, since the presentation of student work during ASPM conferences turned out to be rather problematic, exposing especially methodological weaknesses, regular workshops for students have been organised. In addition, since 2002 articles and reviews can be published also in our online journal SAMPLES.

ASPM or rather the GfPM has perceived and perceives itself not as a merely musicological association. It was Hans-Peter Reinecke who – referring to the study of popular music – coined the image of the frightened musicologist, and Alfons M. Dauer spoke in this connection
about music, that is stigmatised by the disregard of musicologists. In terms of reducing these fears and prejudices the society is making very good progress. It helps to integrate all musics that shape the contemporary musical life into the research agendas of musicological institutes providing – as already described by Guido Adler in 1885 – they are willing to embed their expertise into the broader context of cultural sciences.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

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Prof. Dr. Thomas Phleps

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FURTHER INFORMATION
www.popularmusikforschung.de


**CONFERENCES**

Unless stated otherwise selected conference papers were published in “Beiträge zur Popularmusikforschung“ (Contributions to Popular Music Studies).

1984  Hamburg  Popmusik und Lernen | Pop Music and Learning

1985  Göttingen  Musik in den Städten / Musik der Bürger | Music in the Cities / Citizens’ Music

1986  Inzmühlen  Ist Pop die Volksmusik von heute? | Is Pop Today’s Folk Music?

1987  Hamburg  Rock / Pop / Jazz – Vom Amateur zum Profi | Rock / Pop / Jazz – From Amateur to Professional

1987  Inzmühlen  Arbeitstagung (thematisch offen) | Workshop / No Given Topic

1988  Rauischholzhausen  Musikalische Werdegänge | Personal Careers in Music

1989  Heek/Borken  Rock / Pop / Jazz – musikimmanent durchleuchtet | Rock / Pop / Jazz – Musically Illuminated

1990  Hofgeismar  Zwischen “Jesus Christ Superstar“ und “Sympathy for the Devil“. Rock, Pop, Jazz und christliche Religionen im Spannungsfeld von Annäherung, Gleichgültigkeit und Abwehr | Between “Jesus Christ Superstar” and “Sympathy for the Devil”. Rock, Pop, Jazz and Christian Religions in the Tension Field of Reconciliation, Indifference and Repulsion

1991 Rauschholzhausen  Arbeitstagung (thematisch offen) | Workshop / No Given Topic

1992 Leipzig  Aspekte zur Geschichte populärer Musik | Historical Aspects of Popular Music

1993 Rauschholzhausen  Auf der Suche nach kultureller Identität. Populäre Musik und Heimat | In the Search of Cultural Identity. Popular Music and ‘Heimat’

1993 Remscheid  Populäre Musik und Pädagogik | Popular Music and Pedagogy

1994 Remscheid  Aktuelle Stile in Rock, Pop und Jazz | Contemporary Styles in Rock, Pop and Jazz

1995 Rauschholzhausen  Regionale Stile und volksmusikalische Traditionen in populärer Musik | Regional Styles and Folk Music Traditions in Popular Music

1995 Freudenberg  Populäre Musik zur Zeit der Weimarer Republik | Popular Music in the Weimar Republic

1996 Oldenburg  »Step Across the Border«. Neue musikalische Tendenzen, neue massenmediale Kontexte | “Step Across the Border”. New Musical Trends, New Mass Media Contexts

1996 Remscheid  »Dig it«. Neue Medien, neue Technik, neue Musik | “Dig it”. New Media, New Technology, New Music

1996 Halle  Rockmusik und Publikumsverhalten | Rock Music and Audience Behaviour

1997 Freudenberg  Populäre Musik und Politik | Popular Music and Politics

1997 Rauschholzhausen  Arbeitstagung (thematisch offen) | Workshop / No Given Topic
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<td>1998</td>
<td>Hamburg</td>
<td>Erkenntniszuwachs durch Analyse. Populäre Musik auf dem Prüfstand</td>
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<td>Gaining Knowledge through Analysis. Popular Music on Trial</td>
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<td>»Frauentöne«. Ringvorlesung im Rahmen des Frauenfestivals Espressiva</td>
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<td>2004</td>
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<td>Keiner wird gewinnen: Populäre Musik im Wettbewerb</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>Barendorf</td>
<td>Konfektionsgröße 5 – Schnittmuster populärer Musiken</td>
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<td>2006</td>
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<td>Sound and the City. Populäre Musik im urbanen Kontext</td>
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<td>2007</td>
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<td>No Time For Losers. Kanonbildungen in der populären Musik I</td>
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<td>2008</td>
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<td>...alles hat seine Zeit. Alter(n) in der populären Musik I</td>
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<td>...Everything Has its Season. Age(ing) in Popular Music)</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>Mannheim</td>
<td>Black Box Pop. Analysen populärer Musik I Black Box Pop. Popular Music Analyses</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>Paderborn</td>
<td>Populäre Inszenierungen / Inszenierungen des Populären in der Musik I Popular Stagings / Staging the Popular in Music</td>
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<td>2013</td>
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<td>»Changing the Tune« – Popular Music and Politics in the 21st Century from the Fall of Communism to the Arab Spring</td>
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<td>2013</td>
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<td>Typisch Deutsch – (Eigen-)Sichten auf populäre Musik in diesem unserem Land I (Typically German – (Self-)Reflections on Popular Music in this Country of Ours)</td>
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WORKSHOPS

Popular Music Analysis
JLU Gießen, 31.8.-1.9.2009 (Organisation: Ralf von Appen, André Doehring)

1. Nachwuchsworkshop | 1st Workshop for MA and PhD students
Hamburg, 3.7.2010 (Organisation: Alenka Barber-Kersovan, Merle Mulder)

Quantitative empirische Methoden in der Popularmusikforschung | Quantitative Empirical Methods of Popular Music Studies
JLU Gießen, 1.-3.10.2010 (Organisation: Richard von Georgi)

2. Nachwuchsworkshop | 2nd Workshop for MA and PhD students
Leuphana Universität Lüneburg, 9.4.2011
(Organisation: Alenka Barber-Kersovan, Merle Mulder)

3. Nachwuchsworkshop | 3rd Workshop for MA and PhD students
Leuphana Universität Lüneburg, 28.4.2012
(Organisation: Alenka Barber-Kersovan, Merle Mulder)

Workshop zur Hochschullehre | Workshop on Higher Education

4. Nachwuchsworkshop | 4th Workshop for MA and PhD students
HfM Weimar, 5.-6.7.2013 (Organisation: Sarah Chaker)

5. Nachwuchsworkshop | 5th Workshop for MA and PhD students
TU Braunschweig, 18.-19.7.2014
(Organisation: Sarah Chaker, Dietmar Elflein)

6. Nachwuchsworkshop | 6th Workshop for MA and PhD students
Leuphana Universität Lüneburg, 11.-12.7.2015
(Organisation: Sarah Chaker, Michael Ahlers)

PUBLICATIONS

Beiträge zur Popularmusikforschung | Contributions to Popular Music Studies

Beiträge 1 | Ist Pop die Volksmusik von heute? | Is Pop today's Folk Music?


Beiträge 5/6 | Musikalische Werdegänge. | Personal Careers in Music.


Beiträge 9/10 | Zwischen »Jesus Christ Superstar« und »Sympathy for the


Beiträge 15/16 »Es liegt in der Luft was Idiotisches«... Populäre Musik zur Zeit der Weimarer Republik. I “There is Something Idiotic in the Air…”


SAMPLES – Online publication of The Society for Popular Music Studies

Published continually since 2002
www.gfpm-samples.de

Schriften zur Popularmusikforschung | Writings on Popular Music Studies
Editor: Helmut Rösing. Karben: CODA. The remaining stock can be obtained through the GfPM office.
Since 2003 “Schriften zur Popularmusikforschung” (Writings on Popular Music Studies) are published under the name “texte zur populären musik” (texts on popular music). Editors: Winfried Pape and Mechthild von Schönebeck.


  Take Three Chords… Punkrock und die Entwicklung zum American Hardcore I Take Three Chords… Punk Rock and its Development to American Hardcore

Volume 3 Dorothea Kaufmann (1997).
  »...routinierte Trommlerin gesucht«. Musiker in einer Damenkapelle. Zum Bild eines vergessenen Frauenberufes aus der Kaiserzeit I “...Looking for an Experienced Female Drummer”.
  A Female Musician in a Ladies Orchestra. On the Image of a Forgotten Female Profession from the Imperial Era

  On the Reception of Asian and African Music in Jazz of the 1960s and 1970s

Volume 5 Ursula Schlicht (2000).
  »It’s gotta be music first«. Zur Bedeutung, Rezeption und Arbeits situation von Jazzmusikerinnen I “It’s gotta be music first”.
  On the Meaning, Reception and Working Situation of Female Jazz Musicians
Forum Jazz / Rock / Pop
Editor: Helmut Rösing. Karben: CODA.
The remaining stock can be obtained through the GfPM office.

Volume 1 Bernd Hoffmann / Helmut Rösing (Hg.) (1998).
...und der Jazz ist nicht von Dauer. Aspekte afro-amerikanischer Musik I ...and Jazz is not by Dauer. Aspects of Afro-American Music

Deutsche Militärmusik nach 1940. Aufbau und Entwicklung im Kontext der politischen Kultur der DDR und der Bundesrepublik. Fakten – Beobachtungen – Gedanken I
German Military Music after 1940. Foundation and Development in the Context of GDR’s and FRG’s Political Cultures. Facts – Observations – Thoughts

»...But his soul goes marching on«. Musik zur Ästhetisierung und Inszenierung des Krieges I «...But his Soul Goes Marching on». Music as Asthetisation and Staging of War

Volume 4 Alenka Barber-Kersovan / Annette Kreutziger-Herr / Melanie Unseld (Hg.) (2000).
Frauentöne – Beiträge zu einer ungeschriebenen Musikgeschichte I
Women’s Sounds. Contributions to an Unwritten History of Music

Volume 5 Nikola Vatterodt (2000).
Boygroups und ihre Fans.
Annäherung an ein Popphänomen der neunziger Jahre I

Mein bester Freund in der populären Musik. Nachricht von den neuesten Schicksalen des lauten Schalls im deutschsprachigen Raum I
My Best Friend in Popular Music. News on the Most Recent Fates of Noise in German-Speaking Space

Volume 7 Gudrun Amm (2002).
Pfälzische Dialektmusik. Subversion oder Affirmation I
Palatine Dialect Music. Subversion or Affirmation

texte zur populären musik I texts on popular music
The “texte zur populären musik” (texts on popular music) are a continuation of “Schriften zur Popularmusikforschung” (Writings on Popular Music Studies).

Volume 1 Thomas Phleps / Ralf von Appen (Hg.) (2003).
Pop Sounds. Klangtexturen in der populären Musik.

Das klingt so schön hässlich. Gedanken zum Bezugssystem Musik I
It sounds so Beautifully Ugly.
Thoughts on Music as a Reference System
Hg. v. Alenka Barber-Kersovan, Kai Lothwesen and Thomas Phleps
  Populäre Musik und Ästhetik.
  Die historisch-philosophische Rekonstruktion einer
  Geringschätzung | Popular Music and Aesthetics. The Historio-
  Philosophical Reconstruction of a Disregard

  Der Wert der Musik. Zur Ästhetik des Populären I
  The Value of Music. On the Aesthetics of the Popular

Volume 5  Andreas Gebesmair (2008).
  Die Fabrikation globaler Vielfalt. Struktur und Logik der transnatio-
  nalen Popmusikindustrie | The Fabrication of Global Diversity.
  Structure and Logic of the Transnational Pop Music Industry

Volume 6  Dietmar Elflein (2010).
  Schwermetallanalysen. Die musikalische Sprache des Heavy Metal I
  Heavy Metal Analyses. The Musical Language of Heavy Metal

Volume 7  André Doehring (2011).
  Musikkommunikatoren. Berufsrollen, Organisationsstrukturen und
  Handlungsspielräume im Popmusikjournalismus | Music Communicators. Professional Rolls, Organisational
  Structures and Activity Spaces in Pop Music Journalism

Volume 8  Martin Pfleiderer, Tilo Hähnel, Katrin Horn, Christian Bielefeld
  (eds.) (2015).
  Stimme Kultur Identität. Vokaler Ausdruck in der populären Musik
  der USA, 1900-1960 | Voice Culture Identity. Vocal Expression in
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