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Word and Music Studies: Types of Word and Music Relations – A Few Case Studies

Since the International Association for Word and Music Studies (WMA) was founded in 1997, the study of the interrelationships between words and music has developed into a multidisciplinary field. This is shown not least through publication series such as *Word and Music Studies* (WMS), and *Studies In Intermediality* (SIM) with contributions by prominent scholars coming from the two disciplines, comparative literature and musicology, dealing with a variety of topics.

To begin with, literary scholar Steven Paul Scher's presentation of the types of relationships between words and music (music in literature; literature in music; literature and music), which he introduced already in 1970, can be regarded as the starting point for different models and discussions on the topic. Scholars such as Werner Wolf, Walter Bernhart, Lawrence Kramer and Eric Prieto have each contributed with theoretical and methodological reflections but also with case studies of various kinds. These have inspired and continue to inspire for further in-depth studies in the field. My presentation is part of this field; however, I make no claims on the theoretical and methodological development. Instead, I intend to present a few case studies that I have been working on dealing with different interrelationships between words into music using established theoretical and methodological models for studies of this kind.

The case studies mainly belong to the narrow definition of intermediality that Wolf terms *intracompositional*, which is characterized by more than one semiotic sign system – namely what one might describe as an variant of *plurimediality* (in Scher's typology, this would perhaps be an example of music *and* literature). However, I am not only interested in how words and music are related, but also in the *performative* aspect of the different cases, how words are *mediated* by way of recorded music, and the relationships between the concepts of *media*, *materiality* and *modality*.

The case studies are examples of what one, at least initially, would describe as types of Spoken Word, namely the music of the electric duo *Mehliana: Taming the Dragon* (2014), with drummer Mark Guiliana and pianist Brad Mehldau. Two songs will be discussed: one within which the words are spoken rather than sung having a narrative character; another within which the words are spoken by way of a recorded radio speech.