


Culminating Experience for Ms. Abigail Robinson

Presented to Alexandre Perrin, Cherie Hu, & Emilien Moyon
By Abigail Robinson

A decorative horizontal band at the bottom of the slide featuring a light-colored marbled pattern, possibly marble or stone, with subtle grey and white veining.

My Journey

Coming to Berklee and my time with GEMB

Outcome

Interpretations on functional music and its home with smart speakers

Growth and Professional Goals

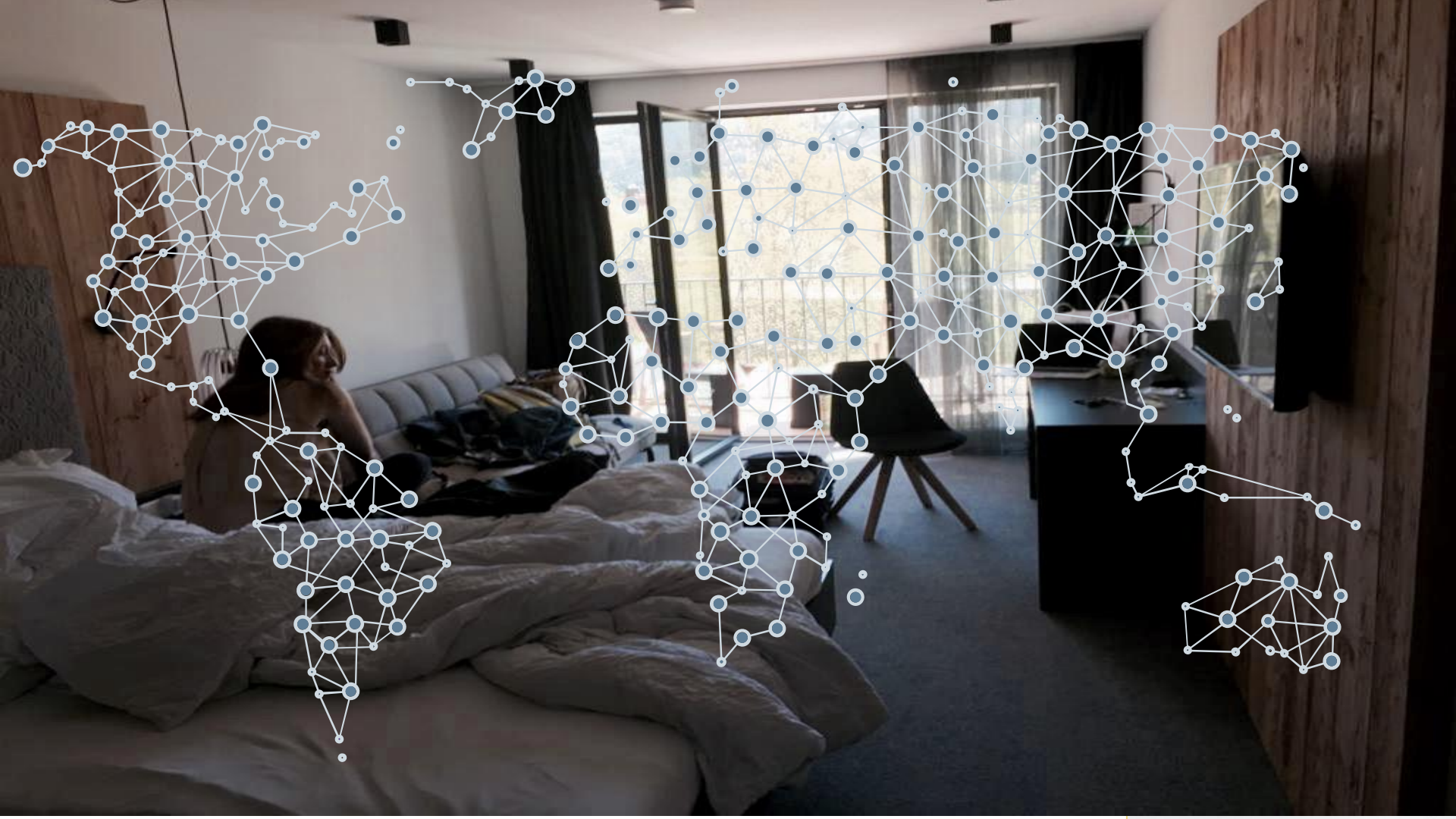
What I have learned and where I will go

My Journey

Detroit



Valencia



Future of Music
Forum

AIM Synch
Conference

MIDEM



Unique Path

Electives informed my year in unexpected ways

- Economics of Creative Industries
- Data Analytics in Music Industry
- Publishing Licensing and Distribution
- Studio Video Music Production

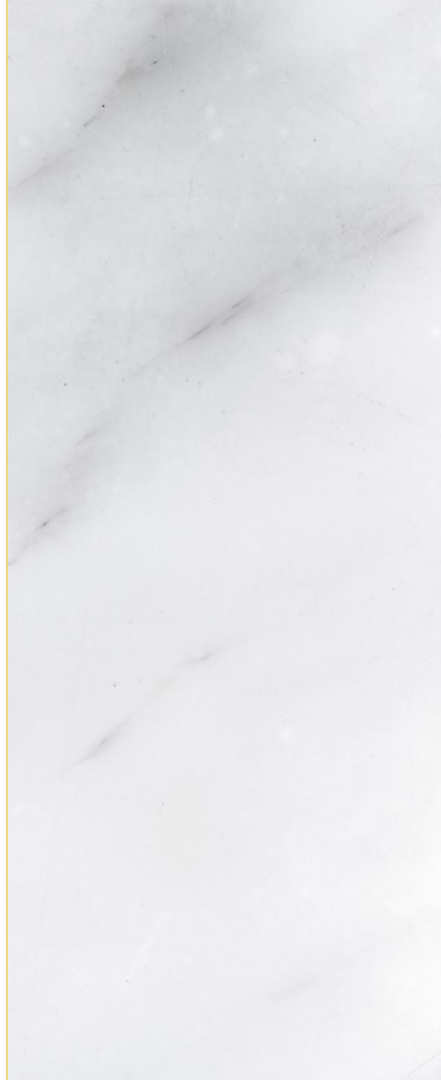


Outcome

Interpretations on

functional music and its

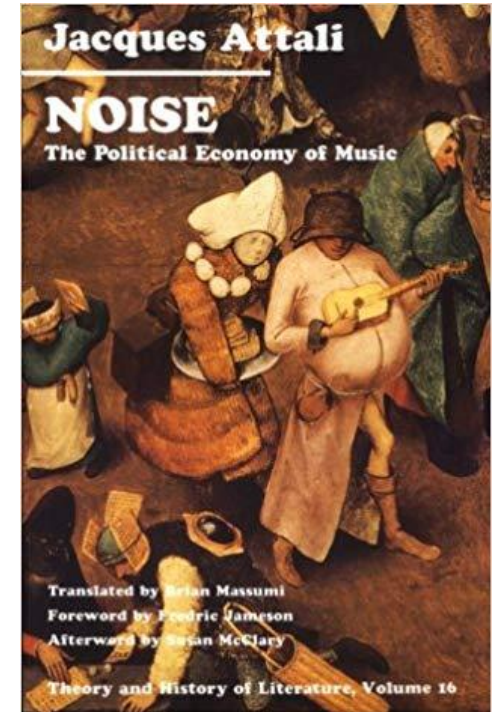
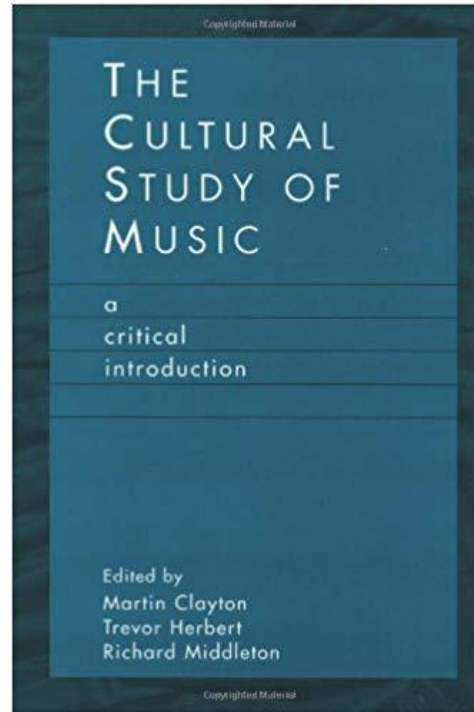
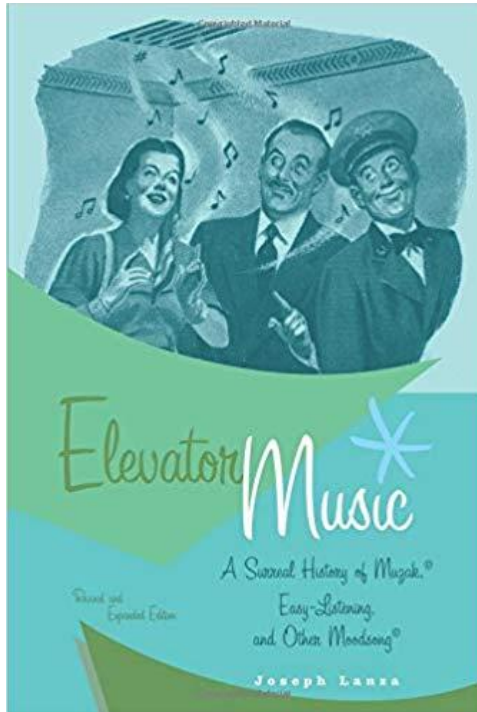
home with smart speakers



“Functional music can be defined as music used principally to support and encourage some other primary activity, whether the production and consumption of goods and services or the reproduction of social and symbolic order in public spaces.”

— Jones and Schumacher 1992

Critical Reading



Neo-Muzak and the Business of Mood

Paul Allen Anderson

Elevator music, canned music, piped music, mood music, background music, programmed music, easy-listening music, wallpaper music, library music, industrial music, functional music, Muzak. The last of these sits alongside Kleenex, Q-Tip, and Prozac as both a protected trademark and an informal name for a whole category of products. In 1987, the FDA approved Eli Lilly's recently patented fluoxetine as an antidepressant and mood elevator. A cheerful best-seller soon predicted that many Americans would be "listening to Prozac."¹ As the brand name implied, the new drug's promise of trouble-free mood elevation would echo Muzak's anodyne branding and half-century of commercial success. While Muzak reigned (and operates still) as a workplace tool rather than a personal care product, neo-Muzak successors like Pandora, Spotify, and other digital streaming services have arrived to close the gap as personal care products for affect management and mood elevation. Welcome to the age of neo-Muzak. Whether at work, home, the mall, the gym, on the bus or in the car, web-connected subjects live and weave among an array of streaming platforms for algorithmic or curated musical moodscapes and affective atmospheres.

Branded in 1934, Muzak later became an all-purpose epithet for generic elevator music. Its critics heard it not as elevating but as irritating—a soft

I am grateful to Sara Konrath, Michaël Szalay, Katie Leonard, Mejdulene Somali, and groups at the University of Michigan and the University of California, Irvine for their comments on early drafts. Special thanks go to Joshua Fellman and Mei-Ning Chang for generously providing me with a writing retreat during which the first draft was completed.

1. See Peter D. Kramer, *Listening to Prozac* (New York, 1993).

Muzak: On Functional Music and Power

SIMON C. JONES AND THOMAS G. SCHUMACHER

□—This paper examines the phenomenon of “functional music” and its evolution as a social technology in the control and regulation of work, consumption, and public space. It argues that the practices of functional music articulate some of the characteristic ways in which power is exercised in capitalist societies and, moreover, that changes in the functional music industry indicate wider structural shifts in capitalism toward “post-Fordist” regimes of production and consumption. Through an analysis of the history, forms, and discourses of functional music, this paper examines the cultural and political significance of these transformations.

THERE now exists an important and growing body of critical research on popular music in communication and cultural studies. However, in the quest to seek out counter-hegemonic styles and subcultural resistances in popular music, much of this research has tended to overlook the diverse contexts in which recorded music is now used in more mundane, utilitarian ways as an agent of cultural reproduction. In particular, it has tended to neglect one of the largest, yet far less visible, fields of musical production and circulation: that of “programmed” or “functional” music.¹

The sheer scope of functional music's dissemination is empirically unquestionable. In the United States alone, it has been estimated that programmed music accounts for the greatest proportion of music heard in hours of exposure per capita (Beauchamp, 1989). The products of the Muzak Corporation, the largest of the programmed music companies, are heard by more than 80 million people daily in approximately 20 countries throughout the world (National Public Radio, 1991). In 1982, it was estimated that within the United States approximately one third of the population heard Muzak at some point in their day (Husch, 1984). Muzak now boasts of having 96 franchises providing programmed music to 135,000 businesses in 16 countries, and in 1990 the corporation grossed over \$50 million (Muzak Corporation, 1991; National Public Radio, 1991).

Background music, or muzak,² as it has come to be known generically in popular discourse, has long been considered the scourge of “good” music, both classical and popular. Muzak has traditionally been critiqued from one of two positions: either on aesthetic and musical grounds, as a form of sonic banality, musical “castration,” or “wallpaper music” (Friedrich, 1984; Hitchcock, 1980; Schaefer, 1977), or as an instance of cultural totalitarianism, reproducing an ideology of bureaucratic rationalism and perpetuating alienation and false consciousness (Hulting, 1988; Husch,

Simon Jones is Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication Studies at Northeastern University. Thomas G. Schumacher is a graduate student in the Department of Communication at Ohio State University.



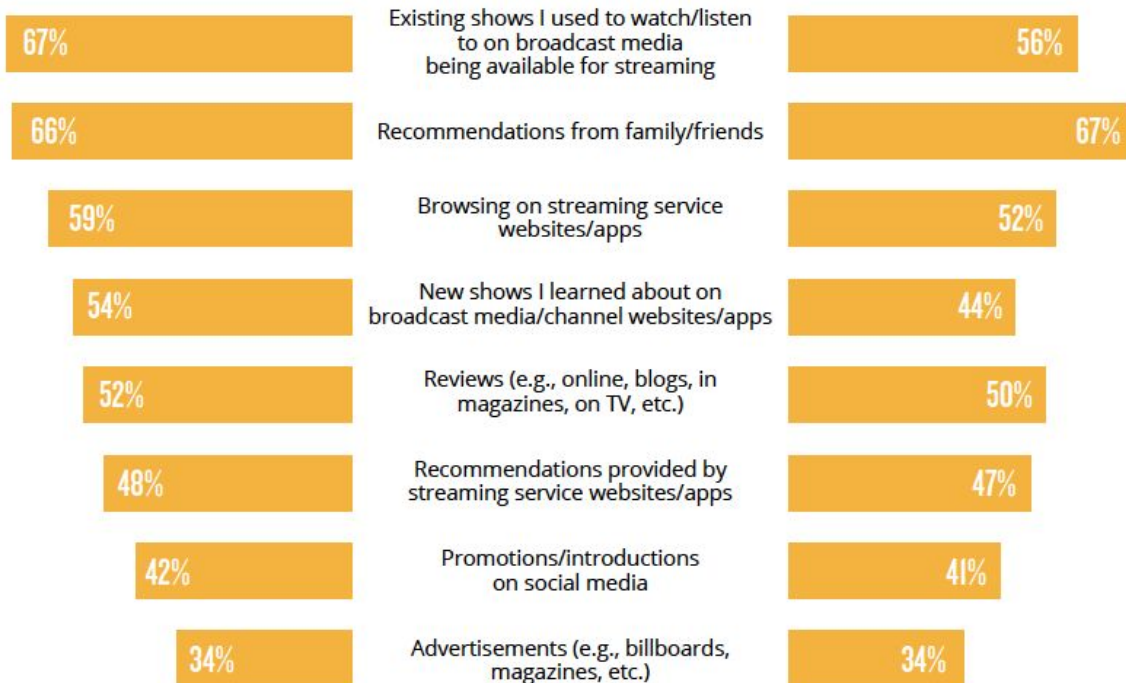
THINGS THAT INFLUENCE WHICH CONTENT TO WATCH/LISTEN TO ON STREAMING SERVICES

How influential are each of the following you might use to explore or decide which content to consume on video / audio streaming services?



VIDEO STREAMING

AUDIO STREAMING



19% OF U.S. ADULTS LISTEN TO PODCASTS EACH WEEK

24% OF HOUSEHOLDS OWN A SMART SPEAKER

SMART SPEAKER AUDIO ACTIVITIES

In what ways do you use your smart speaker each week?



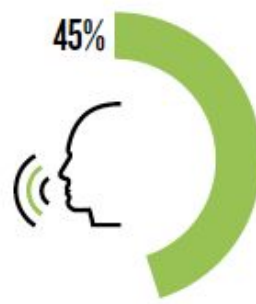
LISTEN TO MUSIC



LISTEN TO NEWS



**LISTEN TO SPORTS
UPDATES**



**LISTEN TO PODCASTS/
AUDIOBOOKS**

Research Questions



What historical context can we apply to functional music and how does this context help define functional music as a mood stabilizer?



What economic strategies in the music industry are in place that capitalize off mood management?



How can smart (voice activated, connected) speakers capitalize off functional music listeners at work and at home?



1

A brief history of functional music...

MERCURY

Mercury is the closest planet to the Sun and the smallest one in the Solar System—it's only a bit larger than our Moon. The planet's name has nothing to do with the liquid metal since it was named after the Roman messenger god, Mercury

VENUS

Venus has a beautiful name and is the second planet from the Sun. It's terribly hot—even hotter than Mercury—and its atmosphere is extremely poisonous. It's the second-brightest natural object in the night sky after the Moon



2

The market of mood...

MERCURY

Mercury is the closest planet to the Sun and the smallest one in the Solar System—it's only a bit larger than our Moon. The planet's name has nothing to do with the liquid metal since it was named after the Roman messenger god, Mercury

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3

Intimate voice and smart speakers...

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Results/Findings etc

Electives informed my year in unexpected ways

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 - Studio Video Music Production
-

Growth and Professional Goals



nielsen
•••••



WARNER MUSIC GROUP

 DEEZER



napster.

Where my research, acquired knowledge, previous experience, and interests meet.



MXX

ADAPTIVE MUSIC ENCODING



PhD?



**“OMG Becky...
look at her CE!”**

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Thank you!

Questions and Feedback
abigail.robinson.ae@gmail.com

... and the same goes for tables

Neo-Muzak and the Business of Mood

Paul Allen Anderson

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1. See Peter D. Kramer, *Listening to Prozac* (New York, 1993).

Desktop Software

You can replace the image on the screen with your own work. Just delete this one, add yours and send it to the back

Sometimes, reviewing concepts is a good idea

MERCURY

Mercury is the closest planet to the Sun and is only a bit larger than our Moon

VENUS

Venus has a beautiful name, but it's terribly hot, even hotter than Mercury

MARS

Despite being red, Mars is a cold place, not hot. The planet is full of iron oxide dust

JUPITER

It's a gas giant and the biggest planet in our Solar System

SATURN

Yes, this is the ringed one. It's a gas giant, composed mostly of hydrogen and helium

NEPTUNE

Neptune is the farthest planet in our Solar System, about 30 times as far from the Sun as the Earth



...and our set of editable icons

You can resize these icons keeping the quality.

You can change the stroke and fill color; just select the icon and click on the paint bucket/pen.



Business Icons



Creative Process Icons



Educational Process Icons



Help & Support Icons



Medical Icons



Nature Icons



Performing Arts Icons



SEO & Marketing Icons



Teamwork Icons



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