

Audiovisual Constructions
Material Interrelations in Live Rock Performances

Olga Nikolaeva, MA
Department of Cultural Sciences

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Abstract

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Author: Olga Nikolaeva

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This dissertation examines and analyzes the material interrelations in audiovisual constructions of live rock performances. It explores the interrelations that take place among four key modes of a live rock performance's material modality, namely: the musicians' bodies, screens, screen visuals, and sounds. According to the analysis conducted in this dissertation, an audiovisual construction is understood both as a process that describes the confluence of a performance's modes and as a momentary result of their interrelations that creates the performance as a whole. Rather than exploring the ways audiences perceive performances, the central focus in this dissertation is to investigate the relations and potentialities of the performance's modes by focusing on the assemblage and display of the audiovisuality of three selected case studies.

The three case studies that form the empirical material for this research study each consist of a song performed by a rock music band. The specific performances are: "Angel" by the British band Depeche Mode, "The Handler" by the British band Muse, and "Óveður" by the Icelandic band Sigur Rós.

Relying upon the concepts of performative materiality (Johanna Drucker), the vitality of materials (Jane Bennett), and an understanding of a live rock performance as a scenographic spectacle (Joslin McKinney, Scott Palmer), this study explores the perspective of the materiality's performative potentialities, which emerge and develop in the audiovisual construction. The analysis of each particular case study reveals that processes of audiovisual construction create conditions under which a performance's modes continuously activate and renegotiate each other's individual material potentials, while creating new forms of scenographic assemblages of vital materialities. Furthermore, understanding the material potentials of modes gives rise to new considerations of the roles these modes play in live rock performances.

Keywords: live performance, audiovisual, materiality, rock performance, Depeche Mode, Muse, Sigur Rós, performative materiality, scenography, screen, performance space, sound, screen visuals, body.