

Title

Multimodality and Medieval Music

Subtitle

Graphic composition

Author

Kate Maxwell, UiT

ORCID: 0000-0002-2306-2912

Kate.Maxwell@uit.no

UiT The Arctic University of Norway

Author bio

Kate Maxwell is professor of music history with a PhD in medieval French song and a Master's with specialization in composition. She researches medieval and popular music, music and gender, literature, and multimodality.

Abstract

Created in 2012, this graphic composition is a visual and audio exploration of the concept of multimodality in relation to sound and music, particularly medieval music. It is hand drawn with felt-tip pens on pre-printed sheet music paper. At that time, multimodality was a new area of study for me. My first forays into the field indicated a paradox: at the same time as multimodality emphasized the importance of various semiotic modes, the dominant mode of presentation was nevertheless that of the written word, just as in most other disciplines.

The composition is made up of various different elements, including citations from medieval music and 1990s popular music, and visual references to medieval manuscripts and to my previous compositions. It is nevertheless a forward-looking piece, a pause on the brink of a possible new project as I nervously awaited the outcome of a postdoc application. I did not know it at the time, but many of the thoughts and sounds from this piece would prove to be foundational both for the postdoc project and still to my work today.

