

# Methods of music research and its role in the contemporary context

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## Oral presentation

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## Abstract

In contrast to research in scientific fields, where results are mostly quantifiable, art - music in particular - brings to the fore a science with a high degree of subjectivism, which makes traditional research methods only partially suitable. Here, rather than measuring the object under study, the aim is to understand it with a view to assimilation, because music is concerned with aspects that are less tangible and more closely related to states. The effects of music on the individual and, by extension, on society are far-reaching. However, only an honest perspective of this reality can be the starting point for recognizing the important role of music and, therefore, of music research.

Since the history of music research is relatively young, its methods and techniques are still undergoing a fervent process of development and refinement within this humanistic science which is called ‘music science’ or ‘musicology’. Throughout the centuries, musicologists have tended to practice musicology largely through historical exposition and syntactical and morphological musical analysis. Later, scholars were no longer satisfied with this way of working and began to relate historical musicological analysis more deeply to different contexts and fields, thus bringing the science closer to the understanding of non-musicologists. Thus, the offer of specialized literature is nowadays really rich and constantly growing and is increasingly taking on a general-comprehensive aspect.

So what are the most appropriate methods for musical research? How far can we go in freedom of choice? To what extent can techniques from other fields be applied here? These are some of the questions that shape the intrigue of the current approach. Music research nowadays is more than ever about linking music analysis itself to various wider contexts, be they social, cultural, political, etc. Contextualization is the optimal way to define and achieve meaning in art and ultimately in life. For neither artistic research nor any other kind of research finds its meaning unless it is mirrored in reality. Consequently, the observation of musical phenomena through methods borrowed from diverse fields has become an indispensable practice, which ensures its increased relevance in the vast field of global research. Musicology is no longer a closed discipline, addressed only to connoisseurs, but it is a science with integrative abilities, it has the means to make itself understood from any point of view, and consequently it is proving to be a science of real utility, both in the academic and in the social context.

## Keywords

Musical research, methods, contextualisation, musicology

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