



Editorial

Melanie Fritsch¹

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On February 7th 2007, the following *Adium* chat conversation reportedly occurred between two students, one of them working on his summer project dealing with Koji Kondo's music for the "Legend of Zelda":

GL: I kind of like the phrase 'ludological musicology' – I Googled it, and there are no hits. I can be a founding member of its academic study.

NT: I prefer 'Ludomusicology'. You'd be less likely to be targeted by a hit squad of linguists.

GL: Ooh, I like it, too! [A minute's silence] No Google hits! Fabulous!" (Tam 2007).

A few months later, the term appeared publicly for the first time in an article in the University of Alberta Faculty news:

Over the summer, Laroche was conducting research on an area that is both unique and relatively unheard of—ludomusicology, the study of video game music from an academic perspective (Karbani 2007).

Probably neither Guillaume Laroche (GL) nor Nicholas Tam (NT) had assumed that this neologism conceived in a chat about Laroche's project would become the label of an entire subdiscipline. Exactly four years later the term was picked up by a group of PhD students on the other side of the world: in August 2011, the Ludomusicology Research Group UK was launched by Michiel Kamp, Timothy Summers and Mark Sweeney with the goal to become a hub for researchers interested in the topic of game music (GAME 2016). In collaboration with Huw Catchpole-Davies they organized the first RMA Study Day on the 16th April, 2012 at St Catherine's College, Oxford.

Their initiative proved to be successful. The "Ludo" conferences have become the main annual European event for the field, and they attract more and more researchers from all over the world and across several disciplines. Also the scope

✉ Melanie Fritsch
melanie-fritsch@sssmg.org

¹ Independent Researcher, Berlin, Germany

has broadened. Besides the study of music in games investigating its history, design strategies, genres, or technology, additional topics such as the study of music games, fancultural practices, cultural interrelations with other media forms and musical genres, or usage in educational contexts have emerged. Additionally, Ludomusicology deals not only with music in games and music games as its subject matter, but it is also interested in the ways, in which games and their music are a subject of playful engagement themselves. This branch of thinking was prominently introduced by Roger Moseley in a talk he gave at the EthNoise!-Symposium in 2008 at the University of Chicago entitled “Rock Band and the Birth of Ludomusicology”. As he summarizes in 2013:

Whereas Laroche’s deployment of the term has reflected a primary interest in music *within* games, I am more concerned with the extent to which music might be understood as a mode of gameplay. In my view, ludomusicology involves the study of both the musically playful and the playfully musical. Bringing music and play into contact in this way offers access to the undocumented means by which composers, designers, programmers, performers, players, and audiences interact with music, games, and one another. (Moseley 2013, p. 283).

The Ludomusicology conference 2018 and subsequently this special issue of The Computer Games Journal perfectly reflected this entire spectrum of the field. Next to case studies of specific games such as “Beneath a Steel Sky” or “Inside”, talks were also presented on topics such as interfaces and performances, game music and personal experiences, for example in relationship with the shaping of identity through being a fan of chiptunes, soundscapes in VR, or how to archive game sounds. The conference, which was jointly hosted by Prof. Dr. Christoph Hust (Hochschule für Musik und Theater “Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy” Leipzig) in cooperation with Jun.-Prof. Dr. Martin Roth (Japanology, University of Leipzig) and co-organized by the Ludomusicology Research Group (now without the “UK”, and composed of Michiel Kamp, Timothy Summers, Mark Sweeney, and myself) was the first ever European Ludomusicology conference to be held in Germany, and with around 80 participants from academia and industry, the highest attended to date. This demonstrates the growing interest in the field. With this special issue we aim to document the excellent research that is already being conducted, and also wish to bring the discipline to a broader audience to incite even more interdisciplinary exchange.

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