Paper Proposal – Digital Humanities in the Nordic Countries

**Music Moves: Developing a Massive Open Online Course in Musicology**

Alexander Refsum Jensenius (1), Svein Harald Kleivane (2), Jesper Havrevold (2)

(1) University of Oslo, Department of Musicology

(2) University of Oslo, Learning Technologies Group

The Department of Musicology and the Learning Technologies Group at the University of Oslo (UiO) has developed a Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) called ”Music Moves: Why Does Music Make You Move”. The course is scheduled to start February 1st 2016 and run for six weeks on the MOOC platform FutureLearn.

Music Moves has its roots in the campus course MUS2006 “Music and Movement,” which has been running for several years at UiO. The field of music and movement encompasses all forms of body movements found in musical context - from the movements of professional performers (musicians and dancers), to the more spontaneous movements of people dancing and/or listening to music.

In this paper we will explore how the project came about and share what we learned when making a physical course digital, and again making the digital course stimulate physical movement. Some questions that we will try to answer:

* What possibilities and limitations do MOOCs open for in a research university context?
* In what ways can we facilitate and stimulate research-based and research-near student engagement during the course?
* How can we communicate advanced and technologically based research methods through a global online course?
* What does it take to make a MOOC – both in terms of technical and human resources?
* Why should more disciplines within the Humanities make MOOCs?

One of the main challenges we encountered when constructing and designing Music Moves was how to illustrate, explain and let the students experience movement and music themselves during the course. All of this should be done through the online course portal by students from all over the world in front of their own computer. Fortunately, we have found that the digital tools available actually makes for an enhanced learning experience in a course about music and movement. Video is one of the most powerful digital tools at hand when used properly. We therefore embraced the possibilities of the format, and a large part of the course production has had focus on making illustrative videos.

The videos in Music Moves are a mixture of footage shot on location in various UiO buildings, lectures filmed in a studio using a green screen, and a set of interviews with experts in various fields. In that way we gained more diverse footage at the same time as it helped convey the different aspects of the field. Also positive is that it is a way to make the students “experience” UiO and “meet” the researchers in their offices and labs.

A central premise for the course is that people move differently to different musical genres. This is based on the affordances of the music itself (rhythm, melody, etc.), but also on different “rules” and expectations on how people should move to and with different genres. Within classical music, for instance, it is expected that people should still while listening and only applaud when pieces are finished. Classical performers will typically also sit or stand still during the performance. At a rock concert, however, both the performers and audience members might tend to get more physical. Such examples have been important to convey and illustrate while developing the course material.

In addition to cover relevant theoretical and methodological approaches in the field, it has been an aim to facilitate and stimulate the course participants to move physically themselves. It seemed like the natural way to make the subject’s ends meet when the physical movement was captured in a digital course, to provoke physical engagement by the participants. In a course with thousands of participants this might seem like an optimistic attempt, but we have aimed for giving open tasks in which the students can try out things at home, and present and discuss this to each other in the online course forum.

As a pilot study at UiO, the development of Music Moves has been an exciting yet daunting experience. With literally thousands of participants, this is a new experience for everyone involved. It will be interesting to witness the more long-term effects of the course, both for further web-based teaching and for “flipped-classroom” learning at UiO.