Music-Word-Image Vol. 2: The Aesthetics of the In-Between

September 23–24, 2027

University of Bergen & Western Norway University of Applied Sciences

Call for Papers

We invite participants from a broad range of disciplines to submit abstracts to the second iteration of the **Music-Word-Word-Music Conference** series, to take place in Bergen, Norway, on September 23-24, 2027. Taking the first symposium as a starting point, we expand the scope to include the visual in this follow-up event, aiming to explore intermedial intersections and aesthetic boundaries.

Some consider words and music as fundamentally different registers of expression. Others see them as complementary, with the lyrics providing a subject and the music giving that subject an emotional figuration. Appraisals of the nature of the relation between words and music are quite diverse. At times, questions of primacy might arise; at a 1965 press conference in San Francisco, Bob Dylan famously stated that "there would be no music without the words." Whether understood as interactive, dialectical, equivalent, transformative, frictional, contradictory, or amplificatory, the affiliation of words and music sustains an aesthetic complexity that seems unresolvable and inexhaustible. Perhaps one of the most discerning formulations regarding this relationship is offered by the American composer Matthew Aucoin: "The words and the music must put pressure on one another – they must be a little wary of one another, and each recognize the other's power, before they embrace."

When words meet music, their interaction thrives in paradoxes and aporias. Such tensions give rise to an in-between, synergetic third space that would not exist without such encounters. This in-between space is at the center of intermedial, intersubjective, and intermaterial resonances, opening onto three possible directions for contributions: We invite papers, presentations, and creative practices that explore the in-between, whether approaching its possibilities through media, the subject, or materiality. While building directly upon the first symposium, our focus this time is not limited to the textual and the audial, but extends to the visual, performative, embodied, and other dimensions of musical encounters. We do not look for definitive answers but encourage probing the complexities of the in-between: its tensions, resonances, and aesthetic possibilities.

Possible areas include but are not limited to:

Music and the visual
Word and music relations
Musical and literary form
Intersemiotic translation
Music and narrative
Rhythm, prosody, and musicality
Voice, listening, and agency
Musical subjectivity
Composer x performer x audience
Collective and individual voice
Memory, affect, and identity
Embodiment
Sound as material
Notation and performance
Recording and mediation
Acoustic space
Technology
Digital/analogue/synthetic
Silence, noise, resonance, vibration

Keynote speakers: Kiene Brillenburg Wurth, Utrecht University

Michael Hinds, Dublin City University

Abstract submission:
Please send your proposal to the conference email musicwordimage@gmail.com by February 1, 2027.

Your submission should be sent as a single PDF or Word document containing:

1. Paper title and Abstract (max. 300 words, excluding references)
2. 3-5 keywords
3. Presenter details: Full name, institutional affiliation, contact email, and a short bio (100-150 words)
4. Preferred format: Paper presentation or Creative/performance presentation (please note any special technical/spatial requirements)

Notification of acceptance: March 1, 2027.

Conference venue: University of Bergen, Norway (in-person event). Registration fee details and travel/accommodation guides will be distributed alongside acceptance notifications.