

Editors' Introduction

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This issue features seven research articles that explore various aspects of audience studies, sound, music, cinema, and popular culture, spanning topics such as live art song events, cinema in Turkey and China, American pulp magazines, sexual violence in *Game of Thrones*, and male cinema-going experiences in Argentina.

Cripps's article investigates how the deaf community perceives *The Black Drum*, the first signed musical created entirely by a deaf cast and crew. The study explores how signed music, a visual rather than auditory art form, is understood and appreciated within both deaf and mainstream environments, offering insights into the accessibility of the musical and the unique role of signed performances in bridging cultural divides. Gön's study examines cinema puzzles, tests, and crosswords in Turkish film magazines, such as *Haftalık Sinema* and *Beyazperde*, and their role in informal audience education. The article considers how these features engaged readers by mediating cinematic knowledge and promoting cinophilia, effectively functioning as a form of audience training that blended entertainment with cultural distinction. Yu Xiang, Xiaoxing Zhang and Jiarong Zhang's piece focuses on *Wolf Warrior II* and its reception amid China's growing influence in Africa, revealing how the film's portrayal of the continent and Hollywood-style elements have sparked differing reactions. A comparative study of Chinese and African students in China and Canada reveals contrasting perceptions of the 'China in Africa' discourse, highlighting the need for further attention to how cultural products shape international relationships. Korhonen, Koistinen, Korpua and Välisalo analyse audience responses to depictions of sexual violence in *Game of Thrones* (2011–2019), drawing on data from the international *Game of Thrones* Research Project. The article addresses the gap in research on how viewers perceive the show's controversial content, exploring how their personal histories and cultural narratives influence their reception of gendered violence. Moguilansky's and Salas Tonello's article explores the role of cinema in shaping male identities in Argentina between 1940 and 1970. Drawing on twenty-five interviews conducted between 2017 and 2022, the study investigates how young men's experiences with cinema intertwined with taste, emotion, and sociability. It highlights differences in audience behaviours between neighbourhood and downtown cinemas, as well as preferences for action, adventure, and cowboy films, contributing to a deeper

understanding of gendered cinema-going experiences in Latin America. Yan's study on American pulp magazines of the 1930s delves into the reader letter departments, particularly those of *Astounding*. These sections allowed readers to discuss their preferences and debate topics such as the balance between science and imagination in science fiction. The article reviews contemporary perceptions of pulp magazine audiences and analyses the discussions in *Astounding*, revealing early debates over the genre's mythic and scientific elements. Campbell's research addresses the experiences of audiences at live art song events, examining the emotional and interpretative responses that arise during performances. The study introduces the concept of 'complex interpretative song worlds', which describes the interactions between audience members, vocal and non-vocal acts, and the unique environments of live performances. The findings illustrate the deep connections between music, lyrics, and everyday experiences, as well as the challenging but rewarding nature of interpreting art songs.

In addition to the research articles, this issue includes three book reviews and the second publication in the *Conversations* section. This section is designed to embrace the flexibility of online publishing, offering a platform for shorter pieces, podcasts, interviews, and other formats that go beyond the traditional 8,000-word article. The current *Conversation* features O'Hagan and Lyndon's podcast transcript discussing the role of online music fandoms in supporting mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic, which saw a significant rise in global anxiety and depression. The discussion highlights how engaging with music communities online fostered a sense of belonging, community, and identity during uncertain times.

We encourage scholars from various disciplines related to audience research and reception studies, as well as those from diverse countries and backgrounds, including early career researchers, to join our reviewer base. Our review process prioritises openness and transparency through an 'open' system where authors and reviewers are aware of each other's identities. Those interested in contributing as reviewers are invited to contact the editors at editor@participations.org.