

M. J. Grant (Edinburgh)

The Musical Rites of War

In this talk, which I will deliver in English, I will explore how a ritual theory of war, developed through a specifically musicological lens, can help us understand more about the place of warfare in human society, as well as shedding light on the reasons why musical activities and practices have always played such a central role in war. My interest in this topic comes from studying these musical practices of war, and observing the frequency with which they frame and structure the violence of war, and the social organisation of this violence, in ways that are clearly analogous to how anthropologists have understood ritual (and in particular, rites of passage). In this talk, I will explore these issues with examples that link to the main themes of this conference: the role musical practices play in rites associated with becoming a warrior, and in the creation of an *esprit de corps*; how music has been used to mark transitions into and out of combat; and how in the military context, music has also played a significant role in practices of marginalisation and exclusion, not least in the context of military punishment, and torture.

Dr. M. J. Grant (*Morag Josephine Grant*) is Chancellor's Fellow in Music at the University of Edinburgh. She studied in Glasgow, London and in Berlin. Her research currently focuses on the musicology of war and other forms of violence, especially torture. She has also published extensively on serial and experimental music since 1950; song studies, in particular the historical anthropology of group song; music in Scotland; and music and human rights. From 2008 until 2014, she was a junior professor Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, where she founded and led the research group "Music, Conflict and the State". Her work has been funded by numerous fellowships and scholarships, including the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft and the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation.

<https://www.research.ed.ac.uk/en/persons/morag-grant>