

Ulrik Volgsten

Abstract

The essay highlights the interrelation of the notions of piracy, musical work and genius composer. It is shown how the metaphor of the pirate requires a treasured object to steal. This object is the immaterial musical work, composed by a musical genius. Although this genius is a myth of romanticism, it is also shown how it is founded on an ancient notion of «monosexuality». This notion, it is argued, has negative consequences for composers, musicians and listeners alike. Together, the metaphors of the pirate, the genius and the work constitute a figure of thought that fulfills a legitimizing function for a malfunctioning present day copyright. It is therefore suggested that the pirate metaphor be jettisoned along with that of the romantic genius and the immaterial musical work. In its stead the *mothership connection* may be a more constructive metaphor.

Ulrik Volgsten is Associate Professor in musicology at Örebro University, Sweden. Volgsten's research focuses on music as medium for human communication and spans over aesthetics, cognitive science and the history of ideas. Volgsten is co-editor (with dr. Steven Brown) for the anthology *Music and Manipulation*, Berghahn Books, New York and London 2006.