

Abstract

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**From institutionally embedded
'serious' to individualized
'popular': a report on the values
and attitudes in Estonian music
criticism**

This paper identifies the values of Estonian music criticism in print publications, their relation to the institutional framework of Estonian music culture and the principles of Estonian cultural policy.

The findings of a qualitative text analysis suggest that the state-funded publications are characterized by Romantic ideology, professionalism, and tradition, and cover almost exclusively classical music, whereas private publications review mostly popular music and adopt a more individualized, less normative attitude to music. While transnational studies have referred to the growing legitimation of the 'popular' in elite publications, the high–low discrimination evident in Estonian state-funded music journalism upholds the dominant cultural value hierarchy, which is arguably embedded in the institutional framework of Estonian music culture.

Estonian cultural policy has been described as elitist-preservationist with a strong set of existing state-funded classical music institutions dating back to Soviet times. The author suggests that a more inclusive concept of artistic legitimacy in the state-funded publications would contribute to the establishment of creative industries, the recognition of cultural diversity in the music policies of a small eastern European country. This paper is building on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of fields (1993), its

contemporary critique specializing in music and journalism (Susanne Janssen, Vaughn Schmutz, Shyon Baumann, David Hesmondhalgh, Simon Frith etc.) and scholarly work on creative industries.