

CV

Tobias Pontara
University of Gothenburg

Education

PhD in Musicology, Stockholm University (2007)

Current employment

Professor in musicology, Department of Cultural Sciences, University of Gothenburg (since 2019)

Previous employments

Associate Professor in musicology, Department of Cultural Sciences, University of Gothenburg (since January 2014)

Research Fellow in musicology, Department of Musicology, Uppsala University (2011-2013)

Guest Lecturer in musicology, Department of Musicology, Uppsala University (2010-2011)

Lecturer in musicology, Åbo Academy, Finland (2008-2010)

Guest Lecturer in musicology, Department of Musicology and Performance Studies, Stockholm University (2007-2008)

Doctoral student in musicology, Department of Musicology and Performance Studies, Stockholm University (2003-2007) (Doctor's degree obtained April 2007)

Visiting scholar

Cleveland State University, USA (2018)

Youngstown State University, USA (2018)

University of Jyväskylä (2015)

Other

As of January 2025, I am a member of Kungliga Vetenskaps- och Vitterhetssamhället i Göteborg (KVVS).

As of January 1, 2024, I am a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music's research committee.

Since March 2023, I have been a member of the Academic Appointments Board (Läraryrådsnämnden) at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Gothenburg.

Between 2018 and 2021, I was the Deputy Head of Research at the Department of Cultural Sciences, University of Gothenburg.

Together with Catharina Thörn (Professor of Cultural Studies at the Department of Cultural Sciences, University of Gothenburg), I ran the podcast "Film Worlds" between 2020 and 2022: <https://play.gu.se/channel/Filmvärldar/365188>

Publication list

Monographs

Pontara, Tobias (2020) *Andrei Tarkovsky's Sounding Cinema: Music and Meaning from Solaris to The Sacrifice*. New York: Routledge. (206 p.)

Pontara, Tobias (2007) *Brev från den autonoma musikens värld. Den diskursiva konstruktionen av musikalisk autonomi i den samtida klassiska CD-skivan*. Diss., Stockholms universitet. (252 p.)

Edited books

Tobias Pontara & Åsa Bergman (eds.) (2024). *Klassisk musik i det moderna mediasamhället: konstruktioner, föreställningar, förhandlingar*. Göteborg och Stockholm: Makadam förlag.

Peer-reviewed original articles in scientific journals

Pontara, Tobias (2025) "Privatized Interiorities and Epiphanic Experiences: Intradiegetic Listening and the Cultural Construction of Classical Music in Contemporary European and American Cinema" *Music and the Moving Image* 18:1.

Volgsten, Ulrik and Tobias Pontara (2023) "Music as Embodied and Emergent: Expanding on a Theme by Joseph Margolis". *International Review for the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 54:1, pp. 27–47.

Pontara, Tobias (2021) "Art Music, Perfection and Power: Critical Encounters with Classical Music Culture in Contemporary Cinema" *Open Library of Humanities Journal* 7(2), pp. 1–25.

Pontara, Tobias (2019) "Människan, musiken och kunskapen: om kunskap som slutgiltighet i Arvo Pärts *Magnificat*" *Finsk tidskrift* No. 5, 27–38.

Pontara, Tobias (2018) "Listening to Technologically Mediated Music in Film: Representations of Social and Solitary Listening in Swedish Cinema 1930–1970" *Swedish Journal of Music Research* Vol. 100, 3–24.

Pontara, Tobias and Ulrik Volgsten (2017) "Domestic Space, Music Technology and the Rise of Solitary Listening: Tracing the Roots of Solipsistic Sound Culture in the Digital Age" *Swedish Journal of Music Research* Vol. 99, 105–123.

Pontara, Tobias (2016) "Interpretation and Underscoring: Modest Constructivism and the Issue of Nondiegetic versus Intra-diegetic Music in Film" *Music and the Moving Image* 9:2, 39–57.

Pontara, Tobias (2015) "Interpretation, Imputation, Plausibility: Towards a Theoretical Model for Musical Hermeneutics" *International Review for the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music* 46:1, 3–41.

Pontara, Tobias (2014) "Bach at the Space Station: Hermeneutic Pliability and Multiplying Gaps in Andrei Tarkovsky's *Solaris*" *Music, Sound, and the Moving Image* 8:1, 1–23.

Pontara, Tobias (2011). "Beethoven Overcome: Romantic and Existentialist Utopia in Andrei Tarkovsky's *Stalker*" *19th-Century Music* 34:3, 302–315.

Erkki Huovinen and Pontara, Tobias (2011). "Methodology in Aesthetics: The Case of Musical Expressivity" *Philosophical Studies* 155: 45–64.

Pontara, Tobias (2008). "Retorik, hegemoni och musikforskning: mot en pragmatisk syn på musikvetenskapen" *Svensk tidskrift för musikforskning-online*, nr. 11/2008.

Pontara, Tobias (2008). "Historiskt informerade framföranden: några kritiska reflektioner kring en övergiven diskussion" *Svensk tidskrift för musikforskning*, s. 57–78.

Book chapters (peer-reviewed)

Pontara, Tobias (2024) "Självcentrerade dirigentgenier och introverta musiklyssnare: klassisk musik i samtida film och TV-serier" in Tobias Pontara & Åsa Bergman (eds.) *Klassisk musik i det moderna mediesamhället: konstruktioner, föreställningar, förhandlingar*. Göteborg och Stockholm: Makadam förlag.

Pontara, Tobias (2024) "Inledning: Klassisk musik, diskurser och medier" in Tobias Pontara & Åsa Bergman (eds.) *Klassisk musik i det moderna mediesamhället: konstruktioner, föreställningar, förhandlingar*. Göteborg och Stockholm: Makadam förlag.

Pontara, Tobias (2019) "Hur lyssnar rollkaraktären? Skildringar av lyssnande till teknologiskt medierad musik i svenska filmer 1930-1970" in U. Volgsten (ed.) *Vardagens apparatur: Musikens medialisering och musikaliserings av medier och vardagsliv i Sverige*. Lund: Mediehistoriskt arkiv.

Pontara, Tobias och Ulrik Volgsten (2019) "Musikalisering och medialisering" in U. Volgsten (red) *Vardagens apparatur: Musikens medialisering och musikaliserings av medier och vardagsliv i Sverige*. Lund: Mediehistoriskt arkiv.

Ulrik Volgsten and Tobias Pontara (2019) "Allmänna teknologier och privata rum: förutsättningar för den digitala tidsålderns solipsistiska ljudkultur" in U. Volgsten (red) *Vardagens apparatur: Musikens medialisering och musikaliserings av medier och vardagsliv i Sverige*. Lund: Mediehistoriskt arkiv.

Pontara, Tobias (2019) "The Music of Sacrificial Acts: Displacement, Redemption; Beethoven and Verdi in Andrei Tarkovsky's *Nostalghia*" in M. Baumgartner & E. Boczkowska (eds.) *Music, Memory, Nostalghia and Trauma in European Cinema*

after the Second World War. New York: Routledge.

Pontara, Tobias and Ulrik Volgsten (2017) "Musicalization and Mediatization" in O. Driessens et al. (eds.) *Dynamics of Mediatization: Institutional Change and Everyday Transformations in the Digital Age*. Palgrave Macmillan, 247–269.

Pontara, Tobias (2008). "Constructing the relevant listener: power, knowledge and the construction of identity in the discourse of musical autonomy", in E. Akrofi, et.al. (eds.) *Music & Identity: Transformation and Negotiation*. Stellenbosch: Stellenbosch University Press, 69-87.

Scientific articles and essays under construction

Pontara, Tobias (in preparation) "Soundtracking Conspiracy Theory: Non-fictional Worldmaking and Audio-Epistemic Strategies in *Loose Change 9/11: An American Coup* (2009/2015)"

Pontara, Tobias (in preparation) "Sounds of Persuasion: 9/11 Conspiracy Theory and Soundtrack Rhetoric in *Zeitgeist: The Movie* (2007)"

Pontara, Tobias (in preparation) "Worldmaking by Droning: The Use of Musical Drones in Conspiracy Theoretical Documentaries"

Pontara, Tobias (in preparation) "The Musicalization of Conspiracy Theory"

Research review articles

Pontara, Tobias (2013). Review of book: Ulrik Volgsten *Från snille till geni: den svenska kompositörsrollens omvandlingar från Kraus till Måndagsgruppen* (Gidlunds: 2013). In *Respons* 6/2013.

Pontara, Tobias (2013). Review of book: James Wierzbicki (ed.), *Music, Sound, and Filmmakers: Sonic Style in Cinema* (London: Routledge 2012). In *Svensk tidskrift för musikforskning* (Swedish Journal of Musicology).

Pontara, Tobias (2010). Review of book: Giles Hooper, *The Discourse of Musicology* (Aldershot: Ashgate 2006). In *Svensk tidskrift för musikforskning* (Swedish Journal of Musicology).

Pontara, Tobias (2009). Review of book: Olle Edström (red.), *Säg det i toner och därtill med ord* (Bo Ejeby förlag 2009). In *Finsk Tidskrift*.

Pontara, Tobias (2009). Review of book: Alf Gabrielsson, *Starka musikupplevelser: Musik är mycket mer än bara musik* (Gidlunds förlag 2008). In *Nutida Musik* 2009/3).

Pontara, Tobias (2008). Review of book: Henrik Marstal, *Arvo Pärt: Længslen efter de hvide tangenter* (Köpenhamn: Gyldendal 2008). In *Nutida Musik* 2008/3.

Pontara, Tobias (2008). Review of book: Mats Arvidson, *Ett tonalt välordnat samhälle eller anarki: estetiska och sociala aspekter på svensk konstmusik 1945-1960* (Diss. Göteborgs universitet 2007). In *Nutida Musik* 2008/1.

Popular scientific articles and miscellaneous

Pontara, Tobias (2023) "Filmmusik och världsskapande". *Ikaros tidskrift* nr. 1, 2023.

Pontara, Tobias (2020) "Vem är egentligen Arthur Fleck?" *Röda Rummet* (2020, #1)

Pontara, Tobias and Catharina Thörn (2020, November) Poscast *Filmvärldar*, episode 1: Todd Phillips: *Joker* (2019).

Pontara, Tobias and Catharina Thörn (2020, December) Poscast *Filmvärldar*, episode 2: Andrei Tarkovsky: *Stalker* (1979).

Pontara, Tobias and Catharina Thörn (2020, December) Podcast *Filmvärldar*, episode 3: Valerie Faris, Jonathan Dayton: *Little Miss Sunshine* (2006).

Pontara, Tobias and Catharina Thörn (2021, January) Podcast *Filmvärldar*, episode 4: Jennifer Kent: *The Babadook* (2014).

Pontara, Tobias and Catharina Thörn (2021, February) Podcast *Filmvärldar*, episode 5: Guillermo del Toro: *El Laberinto del Fauno* (2006).

Pontara, Tobias and Catharina Thörn (2021, March) Podcast *Filmvärldar*, episode 6: Ken Loach: *Sorry We Missed you* (2019).

Pontara, Tobias and Catharina Thörn (2021, March) Podcast *Filmvärldar*, episode 7: Gabriella Pichler: *Amatörer* (2018).

Pontara, Tobias and Catharina Thörn (2021, April) Podcast *Filmvärldar*, episode 8: Alfonso Cuarón: *Children of Men* (2006).

Pontara, Tobias and Catharina Thörn (2021, April) Podcast *Filmvärldar*, episode 9: Jane Campion: *The Piano* (1993).

Pontara, Tobias and Catharina Thörn (2021, May) Podcast *Filmvärldar*, episode 10: Scenes from the history of cinema.

Pontara, Tobias and Catharina Thörn (2021, September) Podcast *Filmvärldar*, episode 11: *Nomadland* (2021)

Pontara, Tobias and Catharina Thörn (2022, January) Podcast *Filmvärldar*, episode 12: *Melancholia* (2011)

Pontara, Tobias and Catharina Thörn (2022, February) Podcast *Filmvärldar*, episode 13: *Shirley* (2020)

Pontara, Tobias and Catharina Thörn (2022, March) Podcast *Filmvärldar*, episode 14: *Una giornata particolare* (1977)

Pontara, Tobias and Catharina Thörn (2022, April) Podcast *Filmvärldar*, episode 15: *First Cow* (2020)

Pontara, Tobias and Catharina Thörn (2022, May) Podcast *Filmvärldar*, episode 16: *Spider-Man: No Way Home* (2021)

Pontara, Tobias and Catharina Thörn (2022, October) Podcast *Filmvärldar*, episode 17: *12 Monkeys* (1995)

Pontara, Tobias and Catharina Thörn (2023, January) Podcast *Filmvärldar*, episode 18: *Äta, Sova, Dö* (2012)

Peer-reviewed conference contributions 2009–2024 (including keynote lectures)

“Soundtracking Conspiracy Theory: Non-Fictional Worldmaking and Audio-Epistemic Strategies in the Conspiracy Documentary Film” *Music and the Moving Image*. New York: 28 May–2 June, 2025.

“The Musicalization of Conspiracy Theory” *Second CONNOR Conference*. Copenhagen: May 22–23.

“Sonic worldmaking: Conspiracy theory and soundtrack rhetoric in *Loose Change: An American Coup* (2009/2015)” *Musikforskning idag*. Stockholm: June 12–14, 2024.

“Conspiracy soundtracks: The role of sound and music in conspiracy theoretical documentaries” *CONNOR Conference*. Lund: May 23–24, 2024.

“Sounds of Persuasion: Creative Sound Design and Music in Conspiracy Documentaries” (together with Holly Rogers) *Conspiracy theories, disinformation and ideological worldmaking in multimodal and audiovisual communication*. Gothenburg: May 16–17, 2024.

“Classical Music Listening and Constructions of the Self in Contemporary Cinema: Listening to Beethoven in *The Soloist* (2009)” *Music and the Moving Image*. New York: May 26–28, 2023.

“Classical Music Listening and Constructions of the Self in Contemporary Cinema: Listening to Beethoven in *The Soloist* (2009)” *Crossroads in Cultural Studies*. Lisbon: November 17–19, 2022.

“Mediated Music and Sound in the Juridical Arena” Introductory talk to the roundtable Mediated Music and Sound in the Juridical Arena. *21st Quinquennial Congress of the International Musicological Society*. Athens: August 22–26, 2022.

“The Mediatization of Classical Music” Introductory talk to the conference *Classical Music in Contemporary Media and Society*. University of Gothenburg: May 13–15, 2022.

“Classical Music in Tarkovsky’s Cinema: *Solaris* (1972), *Mirror* (1975) and *Stalker* (1979)” Keynote lecture, *Tarkovsky Revisited: Dialogue Between The Moving Image and the Other Arts*. University of Porto: December 16, 2021.

“Musicalized ontologies: Exploring the role of music in contemporary cultural and political worldmaking” *Musikforskning idag*. Lund/Malmö: June 10–12, 2020.

“Musicalized ontologies: Exploring the role of music in contemporary cultural and political worldmaking” *24th DiscourseNet Conference. Discourse and Communication as Propaganda*. Brussels: May 18–20, 2020.

“Performance, Perfectionism, Power: Critical dialogues with classical music culture in *Grand Piano* (2013), *The Violin Player* (2018) and *The Perfection* (2019)” *Music and the Moving Image*. New York: May 27-June 1, 2020.

“Classical Music for a Mediatized World: Representing Western Art Music across Contemporary Media” *Musikforskning idag*. Gothenburg: June 12–14, 2019.

“Scoring the Incomprehensible: The Role and Significance of Electronic Music in Andrei Tarkovsky’s *Mirror* (1975)”. *Film-Philosophy Conference*. Gothenburg: July 3-5, 2018.

“Scoring the Incomprehensible: The Role and Significance of Electronic Music in Andrei Tarkovsky’s *Mirror* (1975)”. *Music and the Moving Image*. New York: May 24-27, 2018.

“Reading Andrei Tarkovsky’s *Stalker* (1979) through its Music: Interpretation as Creative Process and Justificatory Procedure” Dana Guest Lecture, Youngstown State University. Youngstown, USA: April 20, 2018.

“The Concept of Musicalization”. *MIRAC-Conference* (Music-focused Interdisciplinary Research Center). Stockholm: November 22-23, 2017.

“Musicalization as spatial conditioner for digital technology” (with Ulrik Volgsten). *Digitaliseringens logik, Kungl. Musikhögskolan*. Stockholm: May 22, 2017.

“Musicalization and Mediatization”. 6th European Communication Conference (ECREA). Prague: November 8-12, 2016.

“Between creativity and justification: Methodological and epistemological perspectives on critical interpretation in musical research”. Keynote lecture at the *2016 Finnish Doctoral Seminar*. Helsinki/Järvenpää: September 26-28, 2016.

“Classical Music in the Films of Andrei Tarkovsky”. *Royal Musical Association Annual Conference 2016*. London: September 3-5, 2016.

“Here, There, and Everywhere. On the Musicalization of Everyday Life”. *Musikforskning idag*. Växjö: June 14-16, 2016.

“A World With and Without Music: Models of Musical Underscoring and the Construction of the Cinematic Diegesis”. *17th Nordic Musicological Congress*. Aalborg: August 11-14, 2015.

“Scoring Sacrificial Acts: Haunting Memories, Impossible Longings and Classical Music in Andrei Tarkovsky’s *Nostalgia*”. *Music and the Moving Image*. New York: May 29-31, 2015.

“Bach, Wagner and Narrative Levels in Film – Classical Music in Ingmar Bergman’s

Through a glass darkly (1961), Andrei Tarkovsky's *Solaris* (1972) and Lars von Trier's *Melancholia* (2011)". *Musikforskning idag*. Växjö: June 11-13, 2014.

"Interpretation and Underscoring: Modest Constructivism and the Issue of Nondiegetic versus Intra-diegetic Music in Film". *Music and the Moving Image*. New York: 28 maj-1 juni 2014.

"Bach at the Space Station: Exploring the Fantastical Gap in Andrei Tarkovsky's *Solaris*". *Sixteenth Nordic Musicological Congress*, Stockholm: August 2012.

"Bach at the Space Station: Exploring the Fantastical Gap in Andrei Tarkovsky's *Solaris*". *Music and Media*, Torino: June 28-29, 2012.

"Tolkning och trovärdighet: en diskussion utgående från två invändningar mot tolkningsstrategier inom den "nya" musikvetenskapen". *Musikforskning idag*. Uppsala: June 14-16, 2011.

"Intuitions and Evidence in Theories of Musical Expressivity". *Music and Philosophy Study Day*. Kings College, London: Februari 20-21, 2010.

"Beethoven, Bach and Tarkovsky: Classical music in Andrej Tarkovsky's films". *Leeds Film Music Conference*. Leeds: November 5-6, 2009.

"Intuitioner, evidens och kunskapsanspråk: En närmare blick på den musikfilosofiska diskussionen om musikens expressivitet". *Musikvetenskap idag*. Lund: June 9-11, 2009.

"Ode to Silence: Beethoven's Ninth and the Fate of Humanity in the Last Scene of Andrei Tarkovsky's *Stalker*". *Music and the Moving Image*. New York: May 29-31, 2009.

External grants (selected 2015-2022)

2023: Travelgrant. University of Gothenburg, 2023: 32 400 SEK

2022 (co-applicant; PI: Olga Sasunkevich) Grant for research school "The Future of Democracy: Cultural Analyses of Illiberal Populism". Vetenskapsrådet: 21 054 000 SEK

2022: Grant for research project "Conspiracy Soundtracks: The Role of Music and Sound in Audiovisually Mediated Conspiracy Theoretical Discourse" (2023-2026). Riksbankens Jubileumsfond: 4 236 000 SEK

2021: Grant for the production of season 2 of the podcast "Filmvärldar". Gustav Adlofs Bratts Minnesfond: 147 140 SEK

2021: Grant for arranging the conference "Classical Music in Contemporary Media and Society" (Gothenburg, October 15-17, 2021). Tobias Nordlind-Stiftelsen: 25000 SEK

2020: Grant for the production of season 1 of the podcast "Filmvärldar". Gustav

Adlofs Bratts Minnesfond: 144 507 SEK

2020: Travelgrant. Kungl. Musikaliska Akademien: 14 000 SEK

2020: Travelgrant. University of Gothenburg: 36 200 SEK

2017: Grant for the research project "Classical Music for a Mediatized World: Visual and Audiovisual Representations in Contemporary Media and Society" (2018-2022). Vetenskapsrådet: 11 040 000 SEK

2017: Grant for the research project "Tarkovsky's Soundtracks: The Significance of Music and Sound in Andrei Tarkovskys Cinema". RJ Sabbatical, 2017: 794 000 SEK

2017: Travelgrant. University of Gothenburg: 29 000 SEK

2015: Grant for the research project "Vardagens apparatur: Musikens medialisering, lokalisering och disciplinering, i Sverige 1900-1970" (together with Ulrik Volgsten, Örebro University). Vetenskapsrådet, 2015: 4 384 853 SEK