

GASTVORTRAG

im Rahmen der Nachhaltigkeitswoche der Universität Regensburg

Prof. Dr. Kyle Devine
(University of Oslo)

Decomposed: The Political Ecology of Music

am Dienstag, 01.06.2021,
16:15 Uhr per ZOOM-Meeting
Moderation: Johannes Schäbel M. A.

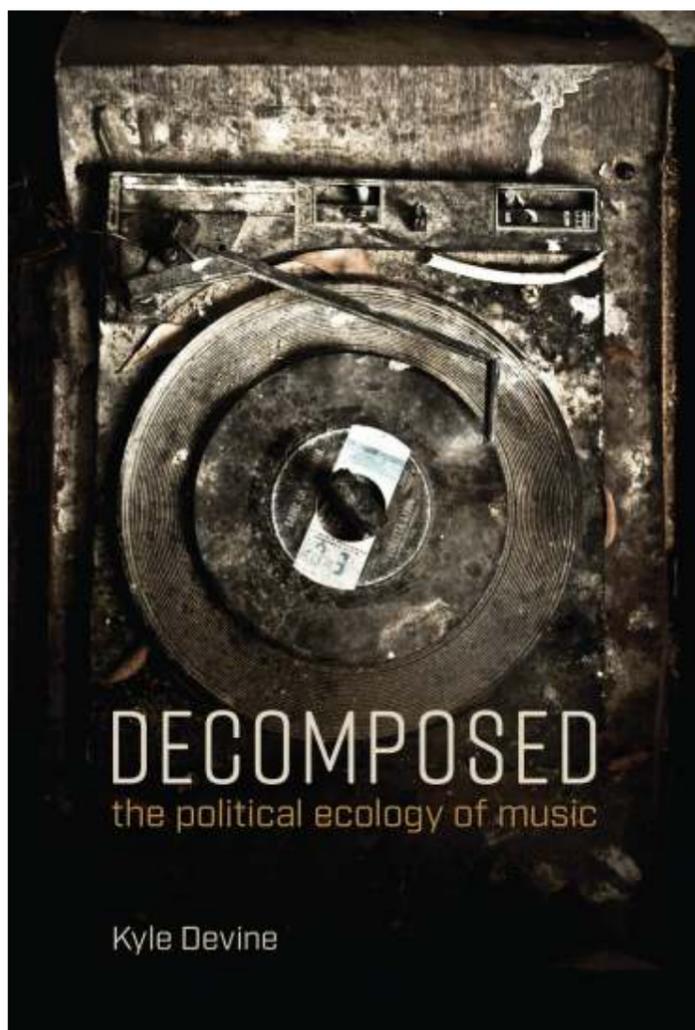
Zoom-Link:

<https://uni-regensburg.zoom.us/j/61380833763?pwd=UFZZZWGlaQVVGMFmBmcURXbWlXc0hjUT09>

Meeting-ID: 613 8083 3763

Kenncode: 849838

Um unverbindliche Anmeldung wird gebeten über eMail: Johannes.Schaebel@psk.uni-regensburg.de



Music is seen as the most immaterial of the arts, and recorded music as a progress of dematerialization—an evolution from physical discs to invisible digits. In this presentation, Kyle Devine offers another perspective. He shows that recorded music has always been a significant exploiter of both natural and human resources, and that its reliance on these resources is more problematic today than ever before. Devine uncovers the hidden history of recorded music—what recordings are made of and what happens to them when they are disposed of.

Devine's story focuses on three forms of materiality. Before 1950, 78 rpm records were made of shellac, a bug-based resin. Between 1950 and 2000, formats such as LPs, cassettes, and CDs were all made of petroleum-based plastic. Today, recordings exist as data-based audio files. Devine describes the people who harvest and process these materials, from women and children in the Global South to scientists and industrialists in the Global North.

He reminds us that vinyl records are oil products, and that the so-called vinyl revival is part of petroculturalism. The supposed immateriality of music as data is belied by the energy required to power the internet and the devices required to access music online. We tend to think of the recordings we buy as finished products. Devine offers an essential backstory. He reveals how a range of apparently peripheral people and processes are actually central to what music is, how it works, and why it matters.