

**Dario Martinelli: zoömusicologist/
zoösemiotician/composer/animal rights activist**



Dario Martinelli.

Major interests: animal studies, including the fields of zoomusicology, animal communication, aesthetics, ethics, and anthrozoology.

Dario Martinelli (1974) Professor of Musicology at Kaunas University of Technology, Visiting Professor of Music History at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre, Adjunct

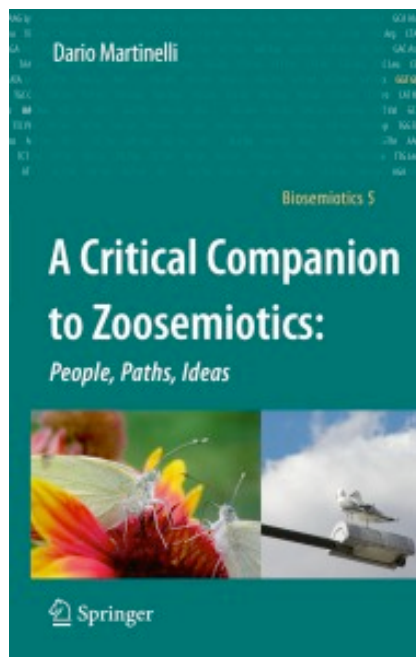
Professor of Musicology and Semiotics at the University of Helsinki, and Adjunct Professor of Semiotics and Communication Studies at the University of Lapland. He is also Scientific Director of Umweb Publications and musical composer. In 2004, he was the youngest winner of the "Oscar Parland award for prominent semioticians" at Helsinki University.

In 2006, he was knighted by the President of Italian Republic, Giorgio Napolitano, for his contributions to culture and research, particularly his pioneering work in zoömusicology and zoösemiotics.

As a zoomusicologist, Martinelli has been in a semi-pioneering position after the crucial work of its founder, François-Bernard Mâche, in helping the process of systematization of the theory, defending the first PhD thesis on the topic, and launching the first academic course. His approach is chiefly theoretical and works in the direction of providing methodological and analytical models that can be eventually employed in empirical research.

Selected Publications

- Martinelli, Dario. 2001. Symptomatology of a semiotic research: methodologies and problems in zoomusicology. *Sign Systems Studies* 29 (1): 1-12.
- Martinelli, Dario. 2002. *How Musical Is a Whale?: Towards a Theory of Zoömusicology*. Edited by E. Tarasti of *Acta Semiotica Fennica: Approaches to Musical Semiotics*. Hakapaino: International Semiotics Institute.
- Martinelli, Dario. 2007. *Zoosemiotics: Proposals for a Handbook*. Imatra: International Semiotics Institute.
- Martinelli, Dario. 2008. Introduction (to the issue and to zoomusicology). *Transcultural Music Review* 12.
- Martinelli, Dario. 2009. *Of Birds, Whales, and Other Musicians: An Introduction to Zoomusicology*. Edited by John Deely of *Approaches to Postmodernity*. Scranton: University of Scranton Press.
- Martinelli, Dario. 2010. *A Critical Companion to Zoosemiotics - People, Paths, Ideas*. New York: Springer.
- Martinelli, Dario. 2011. *Quando la musica è bestiale per davvero - Studiare e capire la zoomusicologia*. Roma: Aracne Editrice.



In his ***Zoosemiotics: Proposals for a Handbook***, Dario writes:

Zoömusicology approaches non-human animals from the direction of human sciences, and music from the direction of biological sciences (2007: 117).

Animals delegate to music functions that are in no way reducible to merely meaningless formal tasks, as has often been claimed, especially in the last century. The fact that the aesthetic dimension is elaborated and emphasised with particular attention does really not deny a more or less consistent “functionality”. Not only is aesthetics *not* in competition with other communicative functions, but it often accompanies and enhances them (ibid: 125).

Zoömusicology has very little to do with admiring birdsong and considering it music simply for that reason. It is rather concerned with thinking that birds possess their own concept of music and that such a mental conception is what they project in their sounds. Methodologically, the main problem is how to approach such peculiar musical cultures. In what sense can we use the word “music”? (ibid: 128).