

Freemasonry
in Popular Music



THE TEMPLE OF HUMANITY

The music of Freemasonry

===== FREESTONE - THE TEMPLE OF HUMANITY =====

The first and only rock album entirely inspired by Freemasonry. A story not heard in Rock 'n Roll before: progressive and symphonic rock music inspired by Freemasonry. Great music, fascinating lyrics and impressive artwork are full of references to the symbolism of this mystical philosophical tradition. Experiencing Freestone's album The Temple of Humanity is like undergoing a musical ritual but clearly in a 21st century performance which justifies comparison to classic and present-day rock bands.

We see it in books, in movies, in documentaries and even on the 1\$-bill. We see references in Classical Music, but now there is popular music inspired by the rich tradition of Freemasonry. With the album The Temple of Humanity by the band Freestone, Freemasonry is entering Popular Music for the first time. The album provides a discovery through symbols and rituals of the tradition of Freemasonry. No conspiracy theories or unnecessary secrecy, but a genuine story based upon personal experience.

The album is composed and produced by someone who is initiated, both in Freemasonry as well as in music. In co-operation with experienced musicians, The Temple of Humanity is a professional produced authentic and unique album. The packaging and booklet contain fascinating art and artists from different countries (of whom a few are masons themselves) have contributed their work.

Freestone makes pop- and rock music based upon a different theme. Music and artwork are contemporary and the album shows that in the pop community and in the changing music industry, there is still place for something different.

Discover the mystery and listen to The Temple of Humanity.

www.freestonemusic.com

Freemasonry in Popular Music

A musical introduction, an artistic contribution

A Study on References to Freemasonry in Pop and Rock
Music compared to Aleister Crowley.

A Practical Application in the Form of a Concept Album with
Music, Lyrics, and Artwork Inspired by Freemasonry.

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First edition © June 2024

Published by Freestone Publishing, Brave New Books

IBSN: 9789464807820

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For Free Men of Good Standing

*Turn the Key
To be what you should be*



Music is the mediator between the spiritual and sensual life.

Music is a higher revelation than all wisdom and philosophy.

~ Ludwig van Beethoven

Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent.

~ Victor Hugo

Abstract

Freemasonry in Popular Music: An Interdisciplinary Exploration of Cultural Resonance and Ideological Dissonance

This study, entitled "Freemasonry in Popular Music," presents an exploration at the intersection of Freemasonry and popular music, contributing to the domains of musicology, cultural studies, and the understanding of esoteric influences in contemporary music. The study is anchored in an interdisciplinary approach, examining the limited instances where Freemasonry's symbolism and philosophy intersect with the realms of popular and rock music.

The core inquiry of this research revolves around the relationship between Freemasonry's philosophical underpinnings and its presence in the popular music landscape. This is juxtaposed against the more pronounced influence of Aleister Crowley, whose ideology presents a stark contrast to Masonic principles. The research provides a comprehensive analysis of this disparity, offering insights into the cultural, symbolic, and philosophical dimensions shaping both lines of thought.

A significant component of this dissertation is the conceptualization and production of the album *The Temple of Humanity* by Freestone. This concept album, inspired by Freemasonry, serves as a practical application of the research findings. It embodies an artistic and lyrical representation of Masonic themes, showcasing the potential for creative engagement with this esoteric tradition in the form of a concept album. The album's reception and critical reviews further illuminate the impact of integrating Freemasonic themes within popular music.

This study addresses why Freemasonry, despite its rich cultural and philosophical heritage, has not found a more prominent place in contemporary pop culture. This exploration sheds light on the broader societal context and possibly resonates particularly, but not

exclusively with younger generations, challenging them to embrace new themes in music, deviating from familiar, all too well known mantras that dominate the pop cultural landscape.

The inclusion of an investigation into the influence of Aleister Crowley in pop music underscores the academic rigor of this study. This analysis elucidates the ideological divergence between Crowley's legacy and Masonic principles, offering a compelling counterpoint and enriching academic discourse.

This study fills a notable gap in the understanding of Freemasonry's presence in popular music and its cultural implications. It holds educational value for academics, music makers, artists, and students, encouraging further exploration and creative endeavours in this intriguing field.

Acknowledgements

I would like to genuinely express my gratitude to my colleagues and the team of individuals involved in my research at Groningen University and Erasmus University. My gratitude to colleagues in the academic community and IASPM (International Association for the Study of Popular Music) for their contributions to my research.

My friends have played a crucial role in my musical, masonic and academic journey. Thank you to Diederik, Dr. Rob, Pier, Marcel, Koen, Vic, Dr. Jeroen, Floris H., Esther, and Dr. Heleen for your presence, conversations, and motivation. Your friendship has always supported and inspired me. Thanks to all members of Freemasons Lodge L'Union Provinciale in Groningen and all Freemasons who have contributed to this project in any way. Here lies the foundation and starting point of this entire life's adventure. *Maior in unione nostra salus.*

My gratitude and love go to my family. My parents for always supporting me and showing interest and curiosity in my research, my professional development, and my journey both within Freemasonry and music. Thank you for your insights and encouragements. Also, thanks to my brother and sister for your presence in my life. To my dear children, Eden and Levin, I want to express my special thanks. You have always been close during my academic, musical and freemasonic journey. Lastly, I want to thank my life partner José. You have been my support and refuge throughout this entire trajectory, and I could not have completed it without you. Thank you for your loyalty, trust and love. As stated in the credits of *The Temple of Humanity*, "you make the meaning of your name come true."

I hope that this study and the process leading up to it may serve as a source of inspiration for others to fulfil their potential and contribute to a better world.

Thank you all.

Preface

Among the various definitions of Freemasonry and descriptions of what a Freemason is and does, a Freemason is first and foremost a seeker. Seeking truth or inner wisdom and inner strength to experience inner beauty, as Freemasons themselves so eloquently express it. Searching for and, after overcoming internal and external obstacles and stumbling blocks, hopefully finding a restored connection with a deeper underlying reality and inner self, which is essential for a meaningful life. It also involves searching for, exploring influences or references to symbolism and the thought or intellectual framework of this Western European cultural, esoteric and wisdom tradition in history and in cultural expressions. These expressions can include paintings, sculptures, literature, and music. The purpose would be to discover and identify plausible and justified relationships and references in which Freemasonry presents itself or a Freemason has made himself known.

“Seek and you shall find”, a saying that is not only familiar to every Freemason but also serves as inspiration to continue the life quest, does not apply when searching for suchlike references to Freemasonry in popular music. It yields, at least, very few songs or lyrics that portray Freemasonry in a positive and, above all, realistic manner. The phenomenon, not least due to its secretive nature, is sometimes surrounded by prejudice, wrongly associated with conspiracy theories, and often referred to as 'the great unknown'. This is in contrast to ideologies and movements with perhaps a more secular character and dominant themes, in which the motto “Do what thou wilt”, a principle that Freemasons distance themselves from, can be recognized either directly or indirectly.

The slogan "Do what thou wilt" is associated with Aleister Crowley, the famous occultist and cult figure in pop culture. While Crowley unjustly claimed to be a Freemason, the slogan does not align with traditional Masonic principles. Freemasonry emphasizes moral values and service to others, whereas Crowley's slogan serves as a summary of his thought and legacy that promotes individual freedom without

moral restrictions. Crowley his thinking has a presence however within the realm of popular music. Crowley's ideology continues to resonate in popular culture, and as such, traces of it can also be recognized in the dominant ideology and Western culture at large. So as a contrast and in order to clarify the distinction between the principles and objectives of Freemasonry and the ideology and perspective of Aleister Crowley, the chapter Aleister Crowley and Popular Music has been included in this dissertation as a concluding remark.

Considering the dominant place that pop music, in all its manifestations, holds in everyday secular life, it is noteworthy that certain themes expressed in song titles and lyrics, as well as in forms of pop culture and artist personas, resurface in different time periods in various ways, sometimes more explicitly than others. Pop and rock as cultural forms and as an ideology foremost need to appeal to a broad public.¹ The 'exploration' of philosophical themes and the addressing, or at least the introduction, of existential questions in a manner that surpasses the adolescent and the obvious or simplified, hardly or only superficially form part of the conventions within the pop community.

Themes from wisdom traditions, of which Freemasonry is merely one possibility, may contrast with the dominant and prevalent themes in pop music. However, it remains an interesting question why Freemasonry has not made a more distinct statement in contemporary popular culture. Considering its potential significance, especially for young individuals, in pursuing an inspiring life path and appealing to a current desire for a quality of life that markedly distinguishes itself from or even opposes the dictates of media and celebrity culture. It is intriguing why Freemasonry has not found a more prominent place in today's pop culture, especially when one

¹ In my research and upcoming publication on rock ideology I argue and demonstrate that rock ideology consists of Romantic and Marxist characteristics, acting as memes and in total as a memplex that resonate in life decisions and in a certain author's posture.

considers the challenges and life issues the representatives of younger generations see themselves confronted with.

Nonetheless, the interest in pop music with such a different sound begins with an inner curiosity of the listener who seeks to understand things rightly and wishes to grasp a greater scheme of things. Assuming that within every individual there is an inner voice, although often drowned out by the noise and clamour of modern life, that calls for this understanding, I express the desire that this publication and the album *The Temple of Humanity* (popular music inspired by Freemasonry) can contribute to portraying Freemasonry and its enriching ideology in a positive, contemporary, and accessible light.

In addition, such a production that sheds light on an previously unknown theme in popular culture and provides its explanation through this publication could serve as an inspiration for music makers to embrace the challenge and invitation to express new themes and deviate from the familiar mantras. What pop music should be about cannot be dictated, and apparently, the recycled themes that have been faithfully served for over fifty years are still digestible. After all, the youngest generation keeps emerging, and the well-known, familiar themes have shaped pop music into what it is today. Its evolution has demonstrated that there are no limitations to what is musically and lyrically possible and permissible within the genre.

However, the search for possibilities to make popular culture accessible for a non-dogmatic exploration of existential questions may hold an answer to the question of what the role of pop music is and could be in a society seemingly in need of answers, as well as the significance of innovation and sustainability in justifying that role. Precisely because media and popular culture have such a strong allure, especially for young people, it means that there are opportunities alongside the pitfalls.

This study consists of five parts. The first part is the chapter titled 'Freemasonry in Popular Music'. It explores the references to Freemasonry that can be found in popular music.

The (limited) presence of Freemasonry in popular music is juxtaposed with the more clearly distinguishable references to that of Aleister Crowley. The second part exploring the presence of this twentieth century, Victorian occultist in pop culture alongside the chapters on references to Freemasonry in popular music and Freestone's album *The Temple of Humanity* can be explained by the stark contrast between Crowley's thoughts and ideas and those of Freemasonry. While artists in pop cultural practices exhibits limited and often elusive indications of masonic influence, Crowley's omnipresence in pop culture is undeniable. This disparity aligns with the notion that hardly any Freemason would associate themselves with or endorse the ideology of this Victorian occultist, given his notorious narrative and practices. The structure and research methodology employed in the chapter on Crowley mirror that of the chapter on Freemasonry. After providing a concise overview of Crowley's biography, the chapter investigates the specific domains within pop culture, particularly the realm of rock, where his influence can be identified and the reasons behind it.

Considering the inherent nature of pop culture and its inherent contrast with the objectives of Freemasonry, it is not surprising that an occultist with beliefs that sharply deviate from those of Freemasonry would serve as a source of influence for numerous pop and rock artists.

Subsequently, the lecture titled 'Does Freemasonry Belong in Popular Music?' provides an explanation of the motivation behind producing the album *The Temple of Humanity*, released under the name Freestone and discusses the underlying developments. In the following fourth part, an interpretation in the form of a semiotic analysis is provided for the twelve compositions of the album, delving into the central theme and the thoughts behind the lyrics of the songs. From the lens of media-analysis, these interpretations demonstrate

semiotic analysis of the music, lyrics and artwork for the twelve compositions. Since its release, the album has received multiple reviews from both domestic and international sources. The final part of this publication is an anthology of these reviews.

Music as a total artform, combining sound, lyrics, artwork, always entails an ideology and fits a particular (sub)culture. All together, reading music as a complex media text from a semiotic perspective (which entails listening, analysing, interpreting as a hermeneutic practice) can help to better understand the sources of inspiration where the music, lyrics and artwork are based upon. Thoughts, ideas and in particular feelings, sensations or suspicions that can not or only with difficulty be expressed in words and language, are translated in this mysterious and therefor powerful artform. Reading music inspired by Freemasonry as such can be of assistance in the endeavour of penetrating its essence. Provided of course if it is combined with an in-depth study of its symbols and allegories.

Qualifier

This publication represents the book adaptation of an academic exploration originally developed as a dissertation, designed to bridge the scholarly analysis of Freemasonry's intersection with popular and rock music to a broader audience. It aims to reach not only academics but also enthusiasts and the general public interested in the rich tapestry of symbolism and cultural influence embedded within Freemasonry and its manifestations in music. This book does not merely reiterate academic discourse but seeks to make it accessible and engaging, inviting readers from all walks of life to discover the intriguing connections between these two fascinating realms.

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Introduction

Amidst the realm of academic, musicological and cultural exploration, this dissertation entails the written, research part of a project that encompasses a duality of scholarly investigation and practical application. This endeavour emerges as a two-fold research undertaking, encompassing an exploration of the realm where Freemasonry intersects with popular music.

The first chapter presents a comprehensive theoretical framework designed to explore the complex interaction between Freemasonry's symbolic tradition and popular music culture. This chapter integrates pivotal theories from diverse disciplines including cultural studies, musicology, and sociology to unpack how esoteric symbols are appropriated, transformed, and consumed within the contemporary musical landscape.

The chapter, entitled “Freemasonry in Popular Music”, stands as the presentation of research endeavour aimed at unravelling the threads that intertwine Freemasonry and its symbolism within pop and rock music. It represents the fruits of a more than a decade long scholarly and musical pursuit, delving into the annals of musical expression to unearth instances where the principles, ideals, and influences of Freemasonry find resonance within the outlets of popular music.

As a contrasting element, an examination of references to Aleister Crowley in pop and rock music has been incorporated into this publication. This investigation serves as a compelling counterpoint to the principles and objectives of Freemasonry, elucidating the stark disparity between Crowley's ideologies and those upheld by the masonic tradition. Through an exploration of Crowley's pervasive influence within popular culture, particularly the realm of rock, the distinct contours of his thought and legacy are revealed, providing a compelling backdrop against which Freemasonry's distinctive essence can be appreciated.

To supplement this academic exploration with a tangible manifestation of the connections and references discovered, a parallel creative interdisciplinary endeavour has been included to the scholarly part. A concept album, titled *The Temple of Humanity*, released in 2008 under the name Freestone, produced with the collaboration of a diverse group of professional and experienced musicians, a producer, graphic designer, choir, et cetera and infused with the essence of Freemasonry, has been conceived as a testament to the profound impact of this ancient and enigmatic tradition on the realm of rock musical creation. This auditory journey, expertly interweaving music, lyrics, and artwork, seeks to evoke the essence of Freemasonry and provide a harmonious embodiment of its principles through a contemporary and accessible medium in the field of popular music or rock music.

Within the pages of this dissertation, the results of research is presented, detailing the intricate web of (limited) references to Freemasonry embedded within the expanse of popular music. The results of this investigation are juxtaposed with an intricate exposition of the production and the creative process behind the album, providing a comprehensive overview of the artistic inspirations and all the activities, time and the labour of love it took to establish the final result. Also, for each of the twelve compositions a concise interpretation or semiotic analysis is presented in order to demonstrate how the underlying thoughts are woven into the musical, lyrical and artistic tapestry.

In addition, a selection of critical reviews has been included to shed light upon the reception and resonance of the album within the realm of contemporary music, starting with a discussion of the album by the late professor Dr. Malcolm Davies who held a special chair in Freemasonry at the Faculty of Religious Studies at University Leiden. These accolades not only testify to the musical and artistic merit of the endeavour but also offer a glimpse into the impact it has had on audiences and critics alike.

It is my sincerest hope that this ambitious work, combining rigorous scholarship and creative expression, will contribute to casting Freemasonry and its enriching ideology in a positive, contemporary, and accessible light. I believe that this interdisciplinary attempt, clarifying the connections between Freemasonry and popular music, may serve as an inspiration for artists and musicians to embrace new themes, deviating from the familiar mantras that are dominant in the pop cultural landscape and in rock ideology.

Within the realm of popular culture, where music reigns supreme as a medium of influence and cultural resonance, there lies an opportunity to bridge the divide between artistic expression and existential contemplation. The allure and omnipresence of media and popular culture, especially among the younger generation, present both challenges and opportunities. It is within this dynamic landscape that the exploration of existential questions and the integration of philosophical themes become essential, potentially offering a compass to navigate the bewildering complexities of contemporary life.

Problem Statement

The intersection of Freemasonry and popular music poses a compelling realm of inquiry, rife with potential for scholarly exploration. Despite Freemasonry's rich symbolism, profound philosophical underpinnings, and historical significance, its explicit presence within popular music remains limited and elusive. The dearth of substantial references to Freemasonry raises questions about the reasons behind its limited representation and the potential for a deeper connection between these two cultural spheres. The central problem addressed in this research is:

How can Freemasonry and Popular Music be meaningfully related, and what insights can this relationship offer into the cultural, symbolic, and philosophical dimensions of both traditions?

Research Questions

To address the overarching problem statement, this research delves into a comprehensive investigation of the relationship between

Freemasonry and popular music. The different research questions guiding this study are treated in the different parts of this dissertation.

1. How do Freemasonry and its symbolism manifest in the realm of popular music, and what are the underlying reasons for the limited presence of explicit references to Freemasonry within this genre?

2. What are the potential cultural, symbolic, and philosophical dimensions that Freemasonry and popular music share, and how can these shared elements be deciphered and analysed within the musical and lyrical compositions?

As formulated in the first chapter: What references to Freemasonry, its meaning, background, and symbolism can be found in popular music, and what is their significance? These two research questions are answered in the first chapter, entailing the research part of this project.

3. In contrast to the limited presence of Freemasonic references, what can be learned from an investigation into the extensive references to Aleister Crowley in pop music, and how does this illuminate the distinction between Crowley's ideology and the principles of Freemasonry? As it is formulated in this chapter: what is the significance of references to Aleister Crowley and his ideology in popular music? This research question is central in the chapter "Aleister Crowley in Popular Music, Presence and significance of the twentieth-century occultist and his ideology on pop music, lyrics and artwork".²

4. What insights can be gleaned from the creative process of developing a concept album inspired by Freemasonry, and how does this artistic endeavour contribute to our understanding of the relationship between Freemasonry and popular music?

In the chapter, "Does Freemasonry Belong in Popular Music?", the process of the creation and production of Freestone's album *The*

² A first version of this chapter was written for the minor The Discourse of Popular Music – Methodology and Analysis at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands.

Temple of Humanity is described. Intentionally, this lecture is written as an essay, trying to grasp the adventure of the production of the album including all its artistic, organisational, financial and other challenges.

5. How does the album *The Temple of Humanity* by Freestone contribute to the exploration and understanding of Freemasonry as a mystical and philosophical tradition in the context of popular music?

This research question encompasses the overarching goal of the chapter “Freestone - The Temple of Humanity, Interpretation of the twelve tracks”, which is to analyse the album's impact on the exploration and understanding of Freemasonry within the realm of popular music. By utilizing a semiotic analysis of each track, the focus is on the album's role in shedding light on the mystical and philosophical aspects of Freemasonry through music, lyrics, and artwork.

6. What are the critical receptions and interpretations of the album inspired by Freemasonry, and how do these evaluations shed light on the impact and significance of integrating Freemasonic themes within popular music? This question that is answered in “Reviews of The Temple of Humanity, A selection of reviews from international magazines and websites”.

By addressing these research questions, this dissertation aims to unravel the intricate connections and potential synergies between Freemasonry and popular music, offering insights into the cultural, symbolic, and philosophical landscapes that shape both traditions. Through a multidisciplinary exploration of the scholarly research and practical application, this study seeks to contribute to the understanding of these intersecting domains and their implications for contemporary cultural discourse.

Academic Context and Justification

The dissertation Freemasonry in Popular Music and the concept album *The Temple of Humanity* have a place within academic

scholarship, since they offer an original contribution by exploring the intersection between Freemasonry and popular music. The research employs an interdisciplinary approach, demonstrating scholarly rigor and cultural significance.

The research on references to Freemasonry in Popular Music is related to several disciplines. Within the field of Musicology and Popular Music Studies, the research explores the intersection between Freemasonry and popular music, delving into the references, influences, and interpretations of Freemasonry in various genres and songs. The focus is on examining the cultural significance, semiotic analysis, and historical context of Freemasonry in popular music. In Cultural studies, the research offers insights into the cultural implications of Freemasonry and its limited presence in contemporary popular culture, specifically within the realm of music. Given the interdisciplinary nature of the research multiple disciplines such as musicology, cultural studies, sociology, and history are integrated in order to analyse the relationships between Freemasonry and popular music.

1. Original Contribution: The research presented in the chapter, "Freemasonry in Popular Music: A Musical Introduction of the Craft", explores a relatively unexplored intersection between Freemasonry and popular music. By investigating the references and influences of Freemasonry in popular music, the publication offers a unique and original contribution to the field of musicology and cultural studies.

2. Interdisciplinary Approach: The research combines multiple disciplines, including musicology, cultural studies, semiotics, and Freemasonry studies. This interdisciplinary approach allows for a comprehensive exploration of the topic, providing a broader and more nuanced understanding of the relationship between Freemasonry and popular music.

3. Cultural Significance: The research addresses the cultural significance of Freemasonry and popular music, exploring their impact on society, particularly among younger generations. By

investigating why Freemasonry has not found a more prominent place in contemporary pop culture, the research sheds light on the broader societal context and offers insights into the challenges and desires of the youth.

4. Practical Application: The accompanying album, Freestone - *The Temple of Humanity*, serves as a unique, practical application of the research findings. The album provides a musical, lyrical and artistic representation of the themes and ideas explored in the research part, showcasing the potential for creative expression and artistic engagement with a particular cultural, esoteric tradition such as Freemasonry in popular music. It involves a highly original and interdisciplinary project and concept.

5. Academic Engagement: The inclusion of a chapter on Aleister Crowley in the publication demonstrates the scholarly engagement with contrasting thoughts, beliefs and perspectives related to or contrasting with Freemasonry. This chapter enriches the academic discourse and provides a comprehensive examination of the subject matter.

6. Contribution to Knowledge: The research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by filling a gap in the understanding of Freemasonry's presence in popular music and its cultural implications.

7. Educational Value: The research has educational value not only for academics but also for music makers, artists, in particular student at pop and rock academies and individuals interested in the intersection of Freemasonry, popular music, and culture. It can serve as a source of inspiration, encouraging further exploration and creative endeavours in this field.

The comprehensive nature of the research, its originality, interdisciplinary approach, and cultural significance give the dissertation and album profound, academic value and quality. They

contribute to the advancement of knowledge, demonstrate scholarly rigor, and have practical applications that extend beyond academia.