Time to Say Goodbye?

A Study on Music, Ritual and Death in the Netherlands

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Netherlands Studies in Ritual and Liturgy 24

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CONTENTS

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1 INTRODUCTION[1]

Two popular songs during contemporary funeral rituals in the Netherlands are *Time to Say Goodbye* by Andrea Bocelli and *Afscheid nemen bestaat niet* (*Saying Goodbye Does Not Exist*) by Marco Borsato. The title of the first song seems to indicate that people at funerals say goodbye, while the latter asserts that saying goodbye does not exist. The titles of these songs seem to be contradictory. How are these contradictory song titles interpreted by next of kin and what is actually meant by 'saying goodbye' at contemporary funerals?

Another popular song is *Ave Maria*, for example the version composed by Bach/Gounod and performed by Andrea Bocelli, or the *Ave Maria* composed by Schubert and performed by Il Divo. The popularity of *Ave Maria*, a song that originates from a Christian context, is intriguing as funerary culture in the Netherlands is often characterised as secularised (e.g. Venbrux, Peelen, & Altena, 2009). How does the popularity of *Ave Maria* during contemporary funerals fit the changing role of religion in Dutch society?

1.1 Research question and sub-questions

Practices and processes around funeral music are key in this study and will be used as a lens to study how people in the Netherlands deal with death.[2] Inspired by historian Philippe Ariès, who used, among other things, deathbed rituals and representations of death in works of art as a lens to study how people dealt with death in the past (Ariès, 1974), I will use funeral music as a lens to study how people nowadays deal with death. By studying motivations for the selection of funeral music, the meanings attributed to funeral music and the popularity of a specific musical funeral repertoire, I will gain insights into the broader socio-cultural context of death-related practices and ideas, so-called death mentalities.

The choice to use music as a lens to study death mentalities is inspired by several factors. First, from the perspective of next of kin, music is an important element of the funeral. Next of kin (nearest family members) often pay careful attention to the selection of funeral music and make sure that it is the right song, performed by the right artist and probably in a very specific performance. It has to fit their specific, unique situation and is used to 'personalise' the funeral ritual.

Second, from the perspective of funeral professionals, music has become increasingly

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[1]Parts of this chapter have been published in Mollenhorst, Hoondert and Van Zaanen (2016) and Hoondert and Bruin-Mollenhorst (2016).
[2]This means that the focus is not on funeral music as sheet music or on the acoustic qualities of funeral music.

important. Nowadays, music is an important element in personalising a funeral, and thus nothing is allowed to go wrong. Therefore, funeral directors and employees of crematoria and funeral centres spend a lot of time on the careful handling of music. Also, from a technological point of view, the development of highly advanced audio-visual systems designed for the use during funeral rituals indicates the importance of music (see Chapter 3).

In brief, it can be stated that music is an important element of contemporary funeral rituals. The history of funeral music reveals that funeral music is related to the ways people deal with death (see Chapter 3). This raises the following main question:

> Through the lens of music during contemporary funeral rituals,
> how is death dealt with in the Netherlands?

The lens of funeral music will focus on the following three aspects of the music: changes in and the development of funeral music in recent history, the function of music during the actual funeral and the meanings attributed to this music by next of kin. Therefore, the following three sub-questions are formulated and will be answered in three consecutive chapters.

> From a historical perspective, how do changes in music facilities, musical repertoires and funeral rituals relate to each other?
> From a ritual perspective, how does music function in contemporary funeral rituals in the Netherlands?
> From a perspective of religious studies, how do next of kin interpret *Ave Maria* and songs that contain the word 'heaven' or 'angels' when this music is played during contemporary funeral rituals?

To situate this study in the field of death studies and to gain a better understanding of the context of this research, in Chapter 2, I will first describe Dutch funerary culture and personalised funerals in the Netherlands. To understand how contemporary funerals and funeral music have become the way they are right now, a historical perspective is necessary. Therefore, in Chapter 3, the focus is mainly on how, from the first cremation in 1914 up until the beginning of the 21st century, changing music facilities, changing musical repertoires and changes in cremation rituals in the Netherlands relate to each other. In this third chapter, I will introduce the concept of mediatisation to zoom in on the interrelatedness between socio-cultural changes on one hand and changes in media on the other. The results of a survey and interviews that were used in this part of the research raised questions about how processes of

digitalisation have become part of funerary practices in general and funeral music in particular. Therefore, I decided to elaborate on these digitalisation processes. This focus on digitalisation was also influenced by the academic context in which I conducted my research. Within the Department of Culture Studies of the Tilburg School of Humanities and Digital Sciences, "core research includes the impact of digital technologies on contemporary sociocultural life at all levels and in all domains of society".[3] Colleagues who are experts in the field of digitalisation and online culture inspired me to further examine digitalisation processes with regard to funeral music. So, both the data obtained and the specific academic context contributed to the focus on digitalisation processes with regard to funeral music. As I was especially interested in the role of online playlists and rankings of funeral music, I decided to introduce the concept of algorithmic culture. This concept will prove to be useful in understanding how digitalised, automated processes are part of contemporary funeral music.

To gain a deeper understanding of contemporary funeral music, a study on funeral music in its actual context is included in this research. In the fourth chapter, the function of music during funerals will be studied. In this chapter, the focus shifts from a historical perspective on the interrelatedness between socio-cultural changes on one hand and changes in media on the other to a more performance-based approach of music in the actual context of contemporary funerals. Based on the observations of 44 funerals and adding to functions of music that are also found by other scholars, I propose the concept of 'musical eulogy'.

To understand how funeral music is experienced by next of kin, and what meanings they attribute to the music, in the fifth chapter, meaning-making processes are central. Images of 'heaven' and 'angels' in the lyrics of funeral music and *Ave Maria* will be studied. This topic caught my attention during the initial stages of this research. In earlier research, Dutch funerary culture is often characterised as secularised (Venbrux et al., 2009). The concept of secularisation, however, is complex:

> On the one hand, secularization is regarded as something positive in which people take their own responsibility for their faith and which provides a challenge for churches to become more active. On the other hand, it is regarded as a modern inability and a dangerous development in which people start acting like god. (De Hart & Van Houwelingen, 2018, p. 9; translated from Dutch)

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[3] https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/nl/over/schools/tshd/departementen/dcu (accessed 21 Juni 2019).

In the fifth chapter I will explain more in depth the complexity of the concept of secularisation and why I would rather speak of the changing role of religion in Dutch society by using the concept of 'lived religion'. In rankings of popular funeral music, I found many songs that refer to 'heaven' and 'angels'. Moreover, during my observations of funerals, I was intrigued by the popularity of *Ave Maria*, especially during funerals that did not seem to be 'religious' at all. In the fifth chapter, I will describe how these can relate to 'lived religion', which is religion both within and outside institutionalised contexts (in this research, mainly institutionalised Christianity); continuing bonds, in which next of kin do not sever bonds with the deceased but continue these bonds; and processes of the personalisation of funeral rituals. With regard to *Ave Maria,* it is argued that *Ave Maria* can also be regarded as 'ritual repertoire' that is not related to any of the previously mentioned concepts.

In the concluding sixth chapter, the results of previous chapters will be brought together to answer the main question of how, through the lens of music during contemporary funeral rituals, death is dealt with in the Netherlands.

I have presented and discussed the preliminary results of this study at various conferences and seminars. As these conferences and seminars all emerged from their own backgrounds (e.g. death studies, ritual studies, musicology, religious studies), I was able to discuss my research with experts from various disciplines and fields of study. This not only benefited the final results of this study but also showed the benefits of the innovative approach of studying death through the lens of music (see also section 1.3).

Parts of the chapters of this study have been published as articles in international journals (Bruin-Mollenhorst, 2020; Bruin-Mollenhorst & Hoondert, 2018; Hoondert & Bruin-Mollenhorst, 2016; Mollenhorst, Hoondert and Van Zaanen, 2016) or as book chapters (Bruin-Mollenhorst, 2019a, 2019b). In this study, these earlier publications have been thoroughly rewritten, extended and woven in with the other chapters. References to already-published articles and chapters will be added to the chapters concerned.

As parts of this research have been published before, I note that this study is not structured as a classical monograph. This means that conceptual and theoretical matters are not displayed in a theoretical chapter at the beginning of this study, but are introduced and discussed in the chapters concerned. Moreover, in the final chapter I do not only bring together the different strands of my research, but also further reflect on these from the perspective of the main research question.

1.2 Key concepts

In this research, concepts from various fields of study will be used, especially from the fields of death studies and ritual studies but also from the fields of religious studies and media studies. Each field brings its own concepts and theoretical approaches. In this section, I will expand on two concepts derived from the main research question. Other concepts and theoretical approaches will be discussed in the next chapters, where they are related to the respective sub-questions of this research. For a clear understanding of the context of the entire research, I will introduce two key concepts of this research – the funeral and death mentalities. The funeral, the ritual in which next of kin say farewell to their deceased beloved one, is approached from three angles. First, I will reflect on the funeral as ritual. Second, I will elaborate on the very specific kind of funeral my research is about – the cremation ritual, and, linked to that, the crematorium as the place where cremations in general take place. Third, I will reflect on the way I study funerals – through the lens of funeral music. So, the third angle of this approach consists of funeral music.

1.2.1 Funeral as ritual

From a ritual perspective, a funeral is a rite of passage; it is a ritual marking of a life passage. For the deceased, the ritual marks the passage from life to death.[4] For next of kin, it marks the passage from a life *with* their living beloved one to a life *without*; they have to deal with loss.

By calling the funeral a ritual, it is linked to the conceptual framework of ritual. There are many different approaches and dynamics in the study of ritual, and there is no uncontested definition of ritual. To understand the differences, I will briefly describe the history of ritual studies. This description is mainly based on the description of the emergence of the field of ritual studies written by ritual studies scholar Paul Post (Post, 2015; for more about ritual studies, see e.g. Bradshaw & Melloh, 2007; Grimes, 2014; Stewart & Strathern, 2014).

Until the second half of the 20th century, ritual studies did not exist as a separate field of study. Even though rituals were studied in the fields of religious studies and theology (e.g. Otto, 1952) and anthropology (Durkheim, 1947; Van Gennep, 1960), there was neither elaborated ritual theory nor the existence of or the need for a shared field in which the ritual dynamics of very distinctive yet comparable phenomena, such as dancing around a totem or the Christian Holy Supper, could be discussed.

In the second half of the 20th century the study of ritual became more interdisciplinary,

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[4]It is beyond the scope of this study to discuss the reality of notions such as 'afterlife' and on the 'effectiveness' of this passage.

and the field of ritual studies came into being. From various disciplines, studies on ritual came together in the field of ritual studies, and in 1987, the *Journal of Ritual Studies* was published for the first time. It is in the same time period that ritual theory came into being, paying attention to the definitions, qualities, functions and/or dimensions of ritual and classifications and typologies of ritual (e.g. Bell, 1992; Kreinath, Snoek, & Stausberg, 2006, 2007; Smith, 1992). It is important to note that in ritual theory, ritual is no longer mainly confined to a religious context and, therefore, that rituals should not always be considered religious (see e.g. Rappaport, 1971). The emergence of ritual theory does not imply that there was agreement about the definition of ritual. Some scholars gave a definition of ritual (for an overview, see Grimes, 2014a), while others provided characteristics or dimensions of ritual (e.g. Lukken, 1999) or were more concerned with ritual-like activities or ritualisations (e.g. Bell, 1997; Douglas, 1973).[5]

In this study, I follow the approach of Ronald Grimes, one of the founding fathers of ritual studies and author of many influential publications in the field of ritual studies (e.g. Grimes, 2000, 2014). Grimes writes:

> Although I continue to fret about the magic of terse, formal definitions, I recognize their necessity on some occasions. Ceaselessly begged by students, I sometimes offer a formal definition in class, hoping they will memorize, use, and criticize it: Ritual is embodied, condensed, and prescribed enactment. (Grimes, 2014, p. 195)

According to Grimes, ritual is embodied because it is human activity. Ritual is not only an idea or purely imaginative but is performed in overt, bodily ways. "Because it is in and of bodies, ritual is also cultural, since bodies are enculturated" (Grimes, 2014, p. 195). Ritual is not ordinary action but is condensed. Ritual is "more condensed or elevated than quotidian behavior…. To use a metaphor, it is packed tightly, hence, "condensed." Therefore, unpacking is often necessary for outsiders to make sense of it, although ritual may also suffer from such unpacking" (Grimes, 2014, p. 195). According to Grimes, ritual is also prescribed. Grimes acknowledges that all human interaction is shaped by culture and thus prescribed, but he states that rituals are overtly prescribed as there are right and wrong ways to perform a ritual:

> Sometimes it is the "what" that is prescribed: Say this; show that; walk here; go there. But sometimes it is the "how", the stylization that is prescribed: Clean the space

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[5]Often, scholars revised their definitions or gave other descriptions of rituals.

attentively; dance with humility; offer sacrifice with a good intention. (Grimes, 2014, p. 195)

As a final quality of ritual, Grimes states that ritual is enacted – it is special action, such as acting on stage, although it is not regarded by the participants as fiction.

I will use Grimes's definition of ritual as a working definition in this study.[6] However, I would like to add the following revision to the 'prescribed' quality of ritual. Rituals *can* be prescribed in the sense that 'when X happens, ritual Y should be performed in the following manner…'. However, rituals can also be performed without any prescription of either 'what' or 'how'. This is, for example, visible in the rise of spontaneous roadside memorials at places where people lost their lives (Klaassens, Groote, & Vanclay, 2013). It is neither prescribed *that* one should place objects at the specific place of disaster nor *which* objects and *how* these objects should be placed. Throughout time, however, the rising number of these roadside memorials makes them recognisable as such – whenever we see flowers and/or a cross near the roadside, we can recognise these as roadside memorial and know a tragedy has happened there. As such, it can be argued that they are – in a way – culturally prescribed. However, 'prescribed' entails a top-down notion. As rituals can also emerge bottom up, spontaneously, I would argue to understand 'prescribed' as 'embedded'. Rituals are culturally embedded and are recognisable in and because of this context.

Then, how does Grimes's working definition of ritual apply to contemporary funeral rituals? A funeral is embodied because it consists of human behaviour – it is performed by humans. More specific, people light candles, give a eulogy, look at pictures, listen to music and pay their final respects when they pass by the coffin.

A funeral is condensed as the actions performed are not ordinary actions but are elevated actions. The actions do not serve a particular practical goal but are, in a way, packed with other meaning. For example, people do not light candles to lighten up the room but to remember the deceased – "to put him/her in the (spot)lights" as it is often phrased.[7]

A funeral is culturally embedded as funerals are part and parcel of cultural processes. Even though funerals can be considered a universal phenomenon, the specific form in which funerals occur in a particular cultural context is very much dependent on this context and the way people deal with death. This means that changes in funerary culture are part of, and go

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[6]This is not to say that this definition is *the* definition of ritual given by Grimes as he also offers other definitions and characteristics of ritual in other publications, for example: "By ritual I mean sequences of ordinary action rendered special by virtue of their condensation, elevation, or stylization" (Grimes, 2000, pp. 70–71).
[7]Translation of the Dutch: "We zetten hem/haar in het licht".

hand in hand with, cultural changes.

Although my main focus will be on the practice of listening to music during funerals, it might be useful to pay some attention to the categorisation of funerals. As said, a funeral ritual is a specific type of ritual – a rite of passage. One of the founding fathers of rites of passage theory is anthropologist Arnold van Gennep, who published a major study on rites of passage (Van Gennep, 1960). He classified rites of passage as a special category of ritual. These rituals "accompany a passage from one situation to another or from one cosmic or social world to another" (Van Gennep, 1960, p. 10). A funeral ritual accompanies the passage from life to death. Van Gennep further divided these rites of passage into the following three stages: rites of separation (preliminal rite), transition rites (liminal rite) and rites of incorporation (postliminal rite). These phases are not always equally elaborated and held as equally important. In funerals, for example, according to Van Gennep, rites of separation might be more prominent, while in marriages rites of incorporation might be more prominent (Van Gennep, 1960, p. 11).

In the liminal phase, the ritual subject belongs to neither the previous state nor to the next. The subject is on a *limen* (threshold) between these two states. This notion of liminality was further developed by anthropologist Victor Turner: "Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial" (Turner, 2007, pp. 74–75). During the liminal phase, the social structure in which people have different positions and statuses is absent. In this state of anti-structure, the feeling of *communitas* makes all ritual subjects equal as all are submitted to the same rite of passage. In the liminal phase, the subject "is released from structure into communitas only to return to structure revitalized by their experience of communitas" (Turner, 2007, p. 84).

It can be argued that the funeral is situated in this liminal phase. During the funeral, next of kin are in the phase between a life with their beloved one and a life without. During the funeral, the anti-structure of the liminal phase makes all next of kin equal – for the moment it does not matter, for example, what job one has or what music one prefers (see also Chapter 4). Interpersonal differences have become irrelevant. Conventions of everyday life are not applicable to the place and time of the funeral, and all next of kin are part of the same ritual that is performed in the ceremony room.[8]

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[8]Turner himself already indicated that liminality goes "far beyond the realm of the classical rites of passage, and that it is highly individualised, for instance in art" (Turner, as cited in Quartier, 2013, p. 192). However, for the conceptual context of this study, it suffices to regard funerals as rites of passage.

It is often stated that contemporary funerals focus on the living: "Our funeral practices are directed toward helping family and friends confront the reality of the loss of a loved one and begin the movement toward life without his or her presence" (Hogue, 2006, p. 8). Even though it is beyond the scope of this research to discuss this aspect in full detail, I *do* want to mention that the question as to 'for whom the funeral is' frequently pops up in contemporary funerary culture; is the funeral meant for the deceased or next of kin? For example, in funerals where prayers for the soul of the deceased play an important role, religious next of kin might consider the funeral as 'meant for the deceased'. In funerals where next of kin mainly evoke memories to comfort themselves, next of kin might consider the funeral as 'meant for the living'. I do agree with Hogue that contemporary funeral rituals are *mainly* for the living. However, contemporary personalised funerals are centred on the identity of the deceased (see section 2.3.1). Therefore, I would argue that it cannot be stated that contemporary funerals are *only* directed towards next of kin but are *also* directed to honour the deceased.

In this research, I use funeral and funeral ritual as synonyms. In the Netherlands, the funeral precedes the actual disposal of the body, that is, cremation or burial.[9] The actual act of disposing the body, that is to say, the start of cremating or burying, is often witnessed by only a small group of people.[10] In this study, the term 'funeral' is used to point to the ritual that is performed in the ceremony room. The act of burying or cremating, or any activities that surround that specific moment and that are outside the ceremony room, are not taken into account. Of course, these activities are part of the ritual, too, but I confine myself to the ritual that takes place in the ceremony room.

Regarding the use of the Dutch word *uitvaart* (funeral), something remarkable is going on. The term *uitvaart* can be regarded as a general term to refer to either a cremation or a burial. In the Netherlands, the terms *uitvaart* (funeral), *begrafenis* (burial) and *crematie* (cremation) are used. However, as will be discussed later in this chapter, for a long time burial was the only legal and common way of body disposal. Back then, the words funeral and burial could be regarded as synonyms. It is therefore not surprising, though remarkable, that nowadays people sometimes say they go to a burial, while they actually go to a cremation.

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[9]Bodies can also be donated to science. However, cremation and burial are common. In the near future, alkaline hydrolysis will be approved; see https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/actueel/nieuws/2020/11/17/alkalische-hydrolyse-nieuwe-vorm-van-lijkbezorging

[10]In the Netherlands, increasingly often next of kin want to witness the moment the deceased enters the incinerator. Mostly, only a few people (around 5–15) are allowed.

1.2.2 Death mentalities

The main aim of this study is to explore how funeral music relates to how death is dealt with. I approach dealing with death as a socio-cultural construct and do not consider the aspect of death as a biological phenomenon that ends life.

In this study, I use the terms 'death mentalities' and 'attitudes towards death' as synonyms.

Practices and ideas regarding death, so-called death mentalities, are described by various authors. In this section, I will elaborate on the influential historical work of historian Ariès (1974) and sociologists Jacobsen (2016) and Walter (2019), who critically built on Ariès's work and propose a characterisation of contemporary death mentalities.

In 1974, the French historian Philippe Ariès (1914–1984) published '*Essais sur l'histoire de la mort en Occident: du Moyen Âge à nos jours*', his first major publication on death (I will use the English translation of this book, '*Western attitudes toward death: from the Middle Ages to the present'* [Ariès, 1974]).[11] In this influential work, he linked the ways people dealt with death to historical periods from the Middle Ages until the second half of the 20th century. The boundaries between the historical periods determined by Ariès, which will be described below, are not as clear as they may seem as changes in death mentalities occurred gradually (Ariès, 1974, pp. 27, 106). As will become clear later in this chapter, traces of Ariès's historical death mentalities are still visible in the 21st century. To study death mentalities, Ariès used the lens of deathbed rituals, cemeteries and the presence of death and the dying in the arts. This lens at least partly reveals how people dealt with death.

Ariès discerned the following four different 'death mentalities': 'tamed death', 'one's own death', 'thy death' and 'forbidden death'.[12] According to Ariès, in the early Middle Ages, death could be characterised as 'tamed death'.[13] In that period of time, death was an accepted, natural and inevitable end of life; death evoked no great fear or awe. People in that time were "as familiar with the dead as they were familiarized with the idea of their own death" (Ariès, 1974, p. 25). Various rituals surrounded the dying at the deathbed. These rituals, characterised by Ariès as both Christian and customary (Ariès, 1974, p. 12), were performed in a ceremonial manner but with no theatrics or great show of emotion. Ariès described this as

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[11]Other descriptions of the history of history of death can be found in *A Brief History of Death* (Davies, 2005) and *The Revival of Death* (Walter, 1994).
[12]In *The Hour of our Death* (Ariès, 1983)*,* Ariès mentions the 16th century's 'remote and imminent death' as a fifth phase between 'death of the self' and 'death of the other'. In this study, I will follow the four death mentalities as described in his 1974 publication.
[13]The term 'tamed death' does not imply that death had to be 'tamed' as if it had been 'wild' before the Middle Ages. According to Ariès, death had become wild only in the 20th century (Ariès, 1974, pp. 13–14).

"the simplicity with which the rituals of dying were accepted and carried out" (Ariès, 1974, p. 12). Rituals surrounding the deathbed were as accepted and natural as death itself. This first period of the Middle Ages can be summarised as a collective awareness of *Et moriemur*: and we shall all die (Ariès, 1974, p. 55).

During the 11th and 12th centuries, "subtle modifications gradually gave a dramatic and personal meaning to man's traditional familiarity with death" (Ariès, 1974, p. 27). This resulted in the death mentality 'one's own death', in which the focus is not on the act of dying but on the individual who is dying. Since the 14th and 15th centuries, "it was thought that each person's entire life flashed before his eyes at the moment of death. It was also believed that this attitude at that moment would give his biography its final meaning, its conclusion" (Ariès, 1974, p. 38). The Last Judgement was no longer situated at the end of the world but was situated around the deathbed (Ariès, 1974, pp. 28, 33). Within the collective notion of destiny, the individuality of each person became central in the dying process. People had discovered *la mort de soi*, 'one's own death' (Ariès, 1974, p. 52).

The acceptance of death and the focus on one's own death changed from the 18th century onwards. In the 19th century, people were less concerned with their own death than with the death of the other. Ariès characterised this death mentality as 'thy death'. In this period of time, death was exalted and dramatised and was considered disquieting and greedy (Ariès, 1974, p. 55). Survivors had greater difficulty accepting death than in the past – they cried, and emotion shook them (Ariès, 1974, pp. 59, 67–68). "The death which is feared is no longer so much the death of the self as the death of another, *la mort de toi,* thy death" (Ariès, 1974, p. 68).

In the 20th century, according to Ariès, attitudes towards death radically changed. He even speaks of a brutal revolution (Ariès, 1974, p. 86) and characterises the attitude towards death as 'forbidden death'. This 'forbidden death' became, for example, visible in the following phenomena: people no longer died at home, accompanied by relatives, but died in the hospital, alone; survivors were not considered to be emotional except if no one else could see or hear their emotions; rituals were limited to a minimum; and mourning attire disappeared. Ariès describes cremation, which became a popular way of body disposal at that time, as "the most radical means of getting rid of the body and of forgetting it, of nullifying it, of being "too final"" (Ariès, 1974, p. 91). Even though the death of a beloved person is always felt, the public manifestation of grief and mourning is 'forbidden'. According to Ariès, the interdiction laid upon death is caused by

the need for happiness – the moral duty and the social obligation to contribute to the collective happiness by avoiding any cause for sadness or boredom, by appearing to be always happy, even if in the depths of despair. By showing the least sign of sadness, one sins against happiness, threatens it, and society then risks losing its *raison d'être* (Ariès, 1974, pp. 93–94)

Ariès died in 1984, in the period he described as 'forbidden death'. Many other scholars refer to this period as the period of 'hidden death' or 'invisible death'. I will use hidden, forbidden and invisible death as synonyms. However, can the period after Ariès's death still be characterised as 'forbidden death'? Several scholars have suggested a characterisation of contemporary death mentalities. I will describe two of these – the 'spectacular death' by Jacobsen and the 'pervasive dead' by Walter.

According to sociologist Michael Hviid Jacobsen, the 'forbidden death' no longer fits the ways people deal with death. He proposes characterising the current death mentality as 'spectacular death':

"Spectacular death" inaugurates a period in which death is gradually returning from its forced exile during "forbidden death" and is now something discussed and exposed in public through the media, although "spectacular death" simultaneously commodifies death and makes it the bizarre object of shallow consumption and entertainment. Moreover, "spectacular death," as we saw, is also a 'paradoxical death" because it perhaps promises more than it can deliver – an autonomous and authentic death. Thus, whereas "spectacular death" seems to de-taboo death in public, it perhaps reinforces its sting in private life. (Jacobsen, 2016, p. 17)

Jacobsen elaborates on five dimensions of 'spectacular death'. First, he points to the new mediated visibility of death. Death is increasingly visible through media, such as in the broadcasting of the funerals of famous people and in news bulletins. In addition to these actual deaths, fictitious deaths are mediated as entertainment phenomena, such as in television series or movies.

The second dimension of spectacular death is the commercialisation of death. Funeral organisations advertise their services through media, in a way similar to the way many other death-related products and services are advertised. Death is "fuelled by commercialized and consumerized interests" (Jacobsen, 2016, p. 12).

Third, the re-ritualisation of death is part of spectacular death. According to Jacobsen, funeral practices are re-ritualised, such as by the introduction of different music or the

possibility to personalise the decoration of the coffin. Similarly, other rituals surrounding death, such as Halloween or Day of the Dead, are part of what Jacobsen regards as a re-ritualisation of death. Likewise, spontaneous memorials, both online and offline, are considered as re-ritualisations of death. "It thus seems as if we need rituals in death today as much as ever before" (Jacobsen, 2016, p. 13).

The fourth dimension of spectacular death is the palliative care revolution. The hospice movement, the rise of the 'Death awareness movement' and the search for a 'good death' all indicate that the care and dignity of the dying have become part of attitudes towards death.

The fifth and last dimension described by Jacobsen is how death has become a topic of academic attention and specialisation. From the 1990s onwards, death became the topic of many publications, scholarly networks and conferences. The present study is an example of this.

In his proposed 'spectacular death', Jacobsen seems to stress the visibility of death in and through media. He correctly mentions that spectacular death is also a paradoxical death as the mediated, sometimes entertaining death seems so different from the loss of a beloved person: "whereas "spectacular death" seems to de-taboo death in public, it perhaps reinforces its sting in private life" (Jacobsen, 2016, p. 17).

Sociologist Tony Walter suggests a different characterisation of the contemporary death mentality, the 'pervasive dead'. In contemporary society, the dead remain present "because the emphasis – not least in contemporary 'life-centered' funerals – is placed on the dead 'living on' rather than being dead" (Walter, 2019, p. 401). According to Walter, this discourse emerged in the 1990s: "picturing the dead as no longer separate from everyday life but pervading it" (Walter, 2019, p. 394). More concrete, the *idea* of the dead is pervasive – bodies are still disposed, physically removed, but the dead remain 'present' even though they are physically absent. Walter illustrates this, for example, from the perspective of mourners who continue bonds with the deceased online. By communicating with the deceased on, for example, Facebook, the dead still belong to the social network of next of kin. This is one of the ways in which mourners continue bonds with the deceased. Walter's idea of the pervasive dead is based on "discursive practices around the dead known either intimately or through social networks" (Walter, 2019, p. 399). It thereby distinguishes itself from the focus of Jacobsen, who is mainly concerned with the image of the dead in mass media.

Every description of attitudes towards death has its limits. Ariès is, for example, criticised for his Eurocentric approach (Jacobsen, 2016, p. 9) and his romanticisation of how

people in the past dealt with death (Elias, 2001). Sociologist Norbert Elias writes: "Ariès's selection of facts is based on a preconceived opinion. He tries to convey his assumption that in earlier times people died serenely and calmly. It is only in the present, he postulates, that things are different" (Elias, 2001, p. 12). Ariès is also criticised by Walter, who states that Ariès underplayed the importance of the Reformation: "The paid-for prayers of the church were denounced as ineffective: all that mattered now was the faith of the person while alive and the grace of God" (Walter, 1994, p. 14). Priests were no longer needed around the bedside of the dying and at funerals, and prayers at the funeral lost their meaning. According to Walter, "Just as the Reformed deathbed left a space to be filled later by the doctor, so the Reformed funeral left a space to be filled later by the undertaker" (Walter, 1994, p. 14). Ariès was at least partly aware of these limitations. However, he did manage to write an influential, insightful work on the history of attitudes towards death. Jacobsen, admitting the criticisms on the work of Ariès though still praising it in many ways, modestly proposes a fifth phase to continue Ariès's work. However, I strongly subscribe to Walter's criticisms of Jacobsen that Jacobsen bases his 'spectacular death' mainly on "mass mediated death at a distance" (Walter, 2019, p. 399). Then again, Walter's 'pervasive dead' can be criticised for mainly focusing on everyday life in Britain and social media.

Even though each approach to death mentalities has its limits, the studies by Ariès, Jacobsen and Walter do show that death mentalities can be studied through various lenses. Ariès used the lens of rituals surrounding the deathbed, developments at cemeteries and representations of death and dying in artistic expressions; Jacobsen used the lens of (mainly) mass mediated death; and Walter used the lens of everyday life in Britain and social media. As such, they serve as sources of inspiration for the present study. I will use funeral music as a lens to study contemporary death mentalities in the Netherlands.

In my view, death mentalities consist of both ideas and practices that are based on these ideas. I found a similar understanding in the work of Walter:

> The conclusion to this article therefore discusses whether 'the pervasive dead' might comprise a new *mentalité*, a new collective attitude to, and representation of, the place of the dead. As used in this article, discursive formation/system, collective representation and *mentalité* refer both to practices and to how the collectivity imagines those practices. (Walter, 2019, p. 391)

So, I consider practices and ideas around death that can be seen via the lens of funeral music as death mentalities.

An important note on what I understand by 'death mentalities' should be mentioned. What I take from Ariès's work, and also from the studies by Walter and Jakobsen, is the approach: studying practices to find out more about the ways people deal with death. However, there are also differences. This study has a very specific, narrow lens: the lens of funeral music. The empirical data are retrieved within three crematoria, in the Netherlands, and within a certain period of time. This means that my characterization of contemporary death mentalities is based on these data, and is not necessarily generalizable to broader death related practices and ideas. Therefore, I do not claim that my proposed characterization can be applied to 'Western Europe' or to the '21st century'. My characterization of contemporary death mentalities concerns the micro-level of funeral music in the Netherlands and the cultural changes that can be traced via this lens. My conclusions and further perspectives in the last chapter take into account this very focused ethnographic approach.

Every chapter takes a different angle to look through the lens of funeral music, which will lead to, in the sixth chapter, an overall conclusion regarding contemporary death mentalities in the Netherlands.

In this section, I discussed the key concepts of this research. Before elaborating on the methodology of this research, I will first explain how I approach music.

1.3 Music as a lens

As mentioned, I study funeral music to gain insights into contemporary death mentalities. One of the sources of inspiration for this approach is the book *The Study of Culture Through the Lens of Ritual* (Sparks & Post, 2015). In this book, rituals are studied as an access to cultural phenomena. Rituals both express and produce beliefs, values, moral obligations or, more generally, ideas. There is, however, no one-way relation between idea and ritual; they are – at least partly – dependent on each other. This mutual production and expression of both ideas and ritual are part of culture. In the same way, I use funeral music as a lens to study death mentalities.

Then, what do I mean by 'music'? I could describe music in terms of genres and styles. Most of the music that is part of the current research can be described as soft pop music (e.g. *Afscheid nemen bestaat niet*) or easy listening classical music (e.g. *Time to Say Goodbye*). Another way to describe the music is by stating that it most of the time concerns recorded music. From a musicological approach, I also could have made an analysis of how many songs were performed by a singer, in how many pieces of music a piano sounded, which key was the most popular (e.g. C major or a minor), etc. However, I did not. In this

section, I will briefly touch upon approaches to music in previous studies, how I approach music and funeral music in this study and how music serves as a lens to study contemporary death mentalities.

Next to the approaches described before, music can be studied from the perspective of, for example, music therapy, the neuroscience of music, psychophysiology or music education. In *Music, Health, & Wellbeing,* the editors synthesised these perspective to explore the relationship between music, health and wellbeing (MacDonald, Kreutz, & Mitchell, 2012). Another way to study music is to analyse the lyrics. For example, Scanlon, Jonhnston, Vandervalk and Sparling (2012) studied how true the lyrics are of folk songs written in response to mine disasters, and Marx (2012) analysed the lyrics of 20th-century requiems. Marx found that most of these requiems do not focus on the death of an individual "but rather on the death of many, caused by human activities such as war, genocide or terror" and as such are not only meant to comfort and commemorate but also to educate (Marx, 2012, p. 119).

1.3.1 Pilot study

In a pilot study, I analysed, in cooperation with two colleagues, the musical characteristics of funeral music. In this study, conducted in 2014–2015, we experimented with computational techniques to analyse the playlist of the crematorium in Tilburg, a city in the south of the Netherlands (Mollenhorst et al., 2016). The playlist contains 3703 tracks. We analysed the playlist on musical parameters (e.g. tempo, mode) and compared the results of this computational research with the results of a study on which music parameters contribute to perceived emotional expression (Gabrielsson & Lindström, 2010). To gain insight into the musical characteristics of the crematorium playlist, we compared the playlist with two popular Dutch charts, the *Top 40* and the *Top 2000*.[14] The analysis and comparison was made possible by Echo Nest, a company that describes itself as a 'music intelligence company'.[15] Echo Nest provides all kinds of musical information when given the name of the performing artist and the song title, such as mode, tempo, time signature, pitch and loudness. We matched the tracks of the Tilburg Crematorium playlist with the songs known by Echo Nest and compared them with the tracks from the *Top 40* and *Top 2000*; see Table 1 for an overview of the properties of the three playlists.

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[14]See also: www.top40.nl and www.nporadio2.nl/top2000.
[15]By the time of writing the current chapter, Echo Nest had been taken over by Spotify.

Table 1. *OVERVIEW OF THE PROPERTIES OF THE THREE PLAYLISTS.*

	Number of songs	Number of songs known by Echo Nest	Mean tempo and standard deviation (in BPM)	Mode: % major mode	Mean valence and standard deviation (0–100)	Mean energy and standard deviation (0–100)
Tilburg Crematorium	3703	2099 (56.7%)	110.6 (30.7)	79.8	33.8 (23.3)	37.6 (21.0)
Top 40	13,273	9861 (74.3%)	120.0 (25.3)	69.8	61.3 (24.5)	66.2 (20.7)
Top 2000	2583	2583 (100.0%)	117.1 (26.8)	75.8	56.7 (24.9)	57.8 (21.9)

The comparison shows that the crematorium tracks have a *significantly* lower tempo, lower valence and lower energy than those in the *Top 40* and *Top 2000*. Next to that, surprisingly, the crematorium playlist contains a *significantly* higher percentage of songs in a major key (79.8%) than the popular charts (69.8% and 75.8%, respectively). This is surprising because it is often thought that a minor key sounds sad and a major key happy.

In the pilot study, we related these results to previous research in the field of music and emotion asking: What does the relatively low tempo and predominantly major mode found in the Tilburg Crematorium playlist tell us about the emotional impact of the music? According to Gabrielsson and Lindström, a major mode is associated with emotion words, such as happy, joy, graceful, serene, solemn, attraction and tenderness (Gabrielsson & Lindström, 2010, pp. 383–387). A low tempo is associated with serene, tranquil, dreamy, longing, sentimental, dignified, serious, solemn, sad, lamentation, excited, boredom, disgust, tenderness and peace. The emotion words which these musical parameters have in common are serene, solemn and tender.

Although we used only two musical parameters, the low tempo and major mode point to serene, solemn and tender music being played in the Tilburg Crematorium. We deliberately used the verb 'point to' because we know that there are many more musical parameters that influence the emotional impact of the music. In the pilot study, we argued that these emotion

words match the way we generally say farewell in Dutch culture. In Dutch and Western culture, we tend to say farewell to the deceased in a serene, solemn and tender way and not – in contrast to other cultures – with ritual weeping (Huntington & Metcalf, 1991, pp. 43–61).

The computational analysis of musical characteristics has made it possible to analyse the musical parameters of a large amount of music; in total, we were able to analyse 2099 songs that were on the playlist of the crematorium. However, the online database Echo Nest, which provided data about the musical characteristics of the songs, did not provide details about all the 3703 songs that were in the playlists. Moreover, we studied only *one* playlist of one particular crematorium. Furthermore, we were well aware that the emotion words found via the computational analysis did not necessarily correspond to the emotions experienced by funeral participants.

Initially, a computational analysis of all playlists from crematoria in the Netherlands was part of the present study. Together with interviews with next of kin and observations of funerals, the analysis of the musical parameters would give more insights into the complex interplay between music and emotion. I had planned to gather the music that had sounded during funeral rituals in *all* crematoria in the Netherlands during one year. The crematoria's playlists could be provided by companies that design the audio-visual systems used by crematoria. Even though one of these companies did send some data, the metadata were too unclear to serve as a basis for this research. As communication was already slow – understandable, as these companies have their own concerns – I decided to stop my efforts to gain a more complete dataset.[16]

The decision to eliminate the analysis of the musical characteristics of music was also informed by my findings that musical and lyrical content as such were not key in meaning-making processes regarding funeral music and that attributed meanings often lie outside the music itself (I will elaborate on this in Chapters 4 and 5).

1.3.2 Funeral music: A performative approach

In this study, contrary to approaching music as a score, I approach music as a performance, either live or from a recording. In his book *Musicking,* musicologist Christopher Small (1998) defines 'to music' as: "to take part, in any capacity, in musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing" (Small, 1998, p. 9). Whenever someone is taking part in a

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[16]For future studies in/on digitalising societies, collaboration with partners in the field who have access to (digital) data will become increasingly essential.

musical performance, this person is 'musicking'. For most of the people present at funerals, musicking consists of listening. Contrary to 'music' as a noun, the verb 'to music' (musicking) stresses the active, performative aspect of music. According to Small, "in musicking, in engaging in any capacity in a musical performance, we are articulating matters for which words are not only inadequate but are also unnecessary" (Small, 1998, p. 200). In the context of music during funeral rituals, the concept of musicking helps to understand that music as a meaningful practice is not something that *is* but something that *becomes* by the activities of those involved, including, for example, the next of kin who select the music, the employees of the crematorium who prepare the music in a more technical sense and other funeral participants who listen to the music and attribute meaning to it.[17] These various aspects of musicking are covered in the next chapters.

Musicking can be regarded as a spatial practice. Spatial practice "denotes the ways people generate, use, and perceive space" (Lefebvre, as cited in Knott, 2005, p. 39). Putting on the radio to break the silence, dancing on the beat of the music and listening to one's favourite music are examples of how music is part of the ways people generate, use and perceive space. In the current study, music not only creates a musical space but is also part of the production of the ritual space. These spaces are not the same. The ritual space consists of more than music alone. It also entails, for example, words, gestures, lights, objects, silence and other actions. Moreover, it is related to preceding rituals (e.g. at home or in church) and subsequent rituals, such as going to the oven room or the funeral reception where condolences can be offered. The ritual space can transgress the borders of the here and now of the actual ritual through, for example, the use of photo presentations and videos. The music fulfils a ritual function but does not correspond with it; the music not only has meaning within the context of the cremation ritual but also carries a wide variety of meanings. Music can also refer to other contexts in which the music has been heard and represents a specific culture or cultures which may become part of the meaning-making process that takes place during the cremation ritual (see Chapters 4 and 5).

With regard to the meaning-making practices of music, I want to stress that musical meaning comes into being in the performance of music. Here, I follow the works of sociologist Gordon Lynch. In his article *The Role of Popular Music in the Construction of Alternative Spiritual Identities and Ideologies* (Lynch, 2016), Lynch argues that in studying how music shapes identities and ideologies, researchers should not only take into account the ideologies that are encoded in music by the composer or producers but also, and maybe even more so, the contextual

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[17] By funeral participants, I mean the people who attend the funeral (family, friends, neighbours and other people from the networks of the deceased and the nearest of kin).

matters of the act of listening. He suggests using the theories and methods of ethno-musicology and the sociology of music. He states that fieldwork data are needed "to offer concrete explanations of how popular music audiences use musical resources as a means of shaping alternative spiritual identities and belief systems" (Lynch, 2006, p. 485). Lynch further argues, building on the work of music sociologist Tia DeNora, that musical meaning is constructed in a "complex interplay between the musical sound, the quality of the listener's attention, the spatial and relational environment in which it is heard, and particular memories and other associations attached to the music through the individual's specific biography" (Lynch, 2006, p. 486). Similarly, in the present study, I consider 'musical meaning' as meaning attributed by those present during the funeral, constructed out of their own biographies and both the spatial and social context of the funeral. In Chapters 4 and 5, it will become clear which contextual aspects are the most prominent in this process and what role the lyrical content plays in this process.

In this study, I understand funeral music as music that actually sounded during funeral rituals in the ceremony room. This means that any music can become funeral music when it sounds during a funeral. In contemporary Dutch funerals, most of the music is not specifically composed for this context. Numerous online available rankings of funeral music show the popularity of, for example, various versions of *Ave Maria*, *Time to Say Goodbye* by Andrea Bocelli, *Afscheid nemen bestaat niet* (*Saying Goodbye Does Not Exist*) by Marco Borsato and *Tears in Heaven* by Eric Clapton. In observations and interviews, I encountered a broad variety of musical genres, ranging from, for example, the Rolling Stones and Queen on one hand and children's songs on the other.

Funeral music not only plays a role during funeral rituals but also at other moments that surround death. For example, phrases of lyrics can be engraved on tomb stones or are printed on funeral announcement cards. In this research, for example, I interviewed the widow of a Rolling Stones fan. She had put lyrics from a song by the Stones in the funeral announcement: "Faith has been broken, tears must be cried, let's do some living after we die". In this study, however, the main focus is on funeral music in the context of the funeral.

In the literature on funeral rituals, music has received little attention. In the *Encyclopedia of Cremation* (Davies & Mates, 2005), music is not even a separate entry. Also in ritual studies, little attention is paid to music as part of ritual. This is surprising as ritual scholars often conduct observations of rituals during which music sounds. However, the description, analysis and interpretation of music is often lacking. In *The Craft of Ritual Studies* (Grimes, 2014), a book that can be regarded as a guide for studying and theorising

rituals, Grimes describes music by introducing the earlier explained 'to music' by musicologist Christopher Small (Grimes, 2014, pp. 218–223). Still, Grimes's focus on music remains very limited and is mainly situated in a theoretical reflection.

In the current study, I take the performance of music as a starting point, taking into account its spatial and ritual context and the context of dealing with death. In the next section, I will elaborate on what methods I used to conduct my research and how these methods relate to the questions of the research. Ethical issues will also be discussed.

1.4 Methodology

Throughout this research, various methods have been used to collect data, including a survey, newspaper analysis, observations and interviews. The survey and newspaper analysis were mainly used to answer the first sub-question about the relation between changes in music facilities, musical repertoires and funeral rituals from 1914 to present (Chapter 3). In addition to the survey and newspaper analysis, ethnographic research methods of observations and interviews were used. These methods were initially used to collect data to answer the sub-questions about the function of music (Chapter 4) and the meanings attributed to music (Chapter 5). It turned out that these methods provided data that were of use for more than one sub-question. Therefore, the data were also used in other parts of the study where applicable.

1.4.1 Survey

In March 2016, I distributed an online survey among the – back then – 81 crematoria in the Netherlands that were members of the Dutch Association of Crematoria.[18] This survey was distributed to collect data about the audio-visual possibilities in these crematoria , such as the presence of one or more musical instruments, an audio-visual system and the use of online databases of funeral music on their website.[19] In the survey, I also asked crematoria staff when these possibilities became present in the crematorium. The survey provided data about the development of audio-visual possibilities in the past decennia in crematoria.

1.4.2 Newspaper analysis

Missing from the data retrieved by the survey was a clearer perspective on the first period of cremation rituals in the Netherlands. As from 1913 until 1954 the crematorium in Westerveld was the only crematorium in the Netherlands, I decided to explore the possibilities for conducting archive research at this crematorium. Unfortunately, the board of 'De

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[18]According to the website of this organisation: https://www.lvc-online.nl/leden.
[19]See Appendix B.

Facultatieve', the organisation that owns the crematorium, did not allow me to conduct research at their archives. Even though the location manager had warmly welcomed me, and gave me an impressive guided tour through the crematorium and cemetery and also showed me the archive, the board denied my research at the archive.[20] This caused a major problem: How would I find out more details about music during the first decennia of cremation rituals? In the literature on cremation in the Netherlands (Cappers, 1999; Cappers, 2012; Van Erp, Keizer, & de Natris, 2013), some clues were found about the presence of an organ and later of a gramophone. Still, the literature did not usually include any details about the actual use of these. Fortunately, I found that in the first half of the 20th century, reports of cremation rituals were sometimes published in newspapers. Therefore, I decided to study newspapers from the first decennia of cremation rituals. I used the online database Delpher, in which digitalised newspapers (from 1618 to 2005) are stored and can be freely used for research purposes.[21] I searched for keywords such as 'music', 'organ', 'funeral', 'cremation' and 'Westerveld' (the name of the crematorium) and found many reports. This online search provided useful data about music during the first decades of cremation rituals in the Netherlands.

1.4.3 Interviews

During various stages of this research, I conducted interviews. I conducted interview with[22]

- employees of companies (n = 2) that build highly advanced audio-visual systems used in crematoria to find out more about the details of the audio-visual systems. I selected the three companies that, according to the survey, developed the systems that are most used in crematoria. Two of the companies were willing to collaborate in this research;

- employees of crematoria (n = 9) to ask them about actual use of audio-visual possibilities and to find out more about the history of these. I selected both crematoria owned by various funeral organisations and 'privately'-run crematoria;[23]

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[20]Unfortunately, I found that more researchers were denied access to the archive. This is highly unsatisfying as this archive contains important data about the first years of cremation in the Netherlands.

[21]See https://www.delpher.nl/nl/platform/pages/helpitems?title=wat+is+delpher (accessed 24 June 2019). The database also contains books (from the 17th–the 20th century), magazines (from 1800–2000) and radio bulletins (from 1937–1989).

[22]I refer to the number of interviewees. Some interviewees indicated they would prefer to be interviewed together with a colleague/family member. In this overview, the numbers of interviewees are listed, not the numbers of interviews.

[23]Most crematoria in the Netherlands are owned by DELA and Yarden, two of the three biggest funeral organisations in the Netherlands.

- musicians (n = 6) who play (live) music at funerals to find out more about how often, why and how they do this. I selected both professional and non-professional musicians and musicians who specialise in different musical genres;

- funeral directors (n = 6) and celebrants (n = 7) to gain a deeper understanding of how music is part of their work, how it enters the conversations they have with next of kin in preparing a funeral, whether they make use of the lyrics of funeral music at other moments in the funeral, what reasons next of kin have for selecting a specific musical repertoire, etc. The selected funeral directors also often take care of funerals for people with a migrant background.[24] Some, but not all, of the celebrants are affiliated with institutionalised religion;[25]

- next of kin (n = 5) to study the reasons for selecting a specific repertoire, the meanings next of kin attribute to music, etc. I approached next of kin mainly via the celebrant who helped them in preparing the funeral. In this way, the celebrants could make a preselection of people they thought would be able to talk about the funeral.

These semi-structured interviews were centred on one or more specific topics, such as 'meaning' or the metaphors of 'heaven' and 'angels' where it involved interviews with next of kin.

1.4.4 Observations

To gain a deeper understanding of the function of funeral music, I conducted observations of funeral rituals. Even though interviews with funeral professionals and next of kin also provided insightful data on the function of music, I found it necessary to conduct observations. During interviews, we *talk* about music. During funerals, we *experience* music in a very specific context. This might well be accompanied by looking at pictures or other activities. Moreover, an interview about the function of music is always an interview in which we look *back* at a funeral in interviews with next of kin, the time between the funeral and the interview might have influenced the ways next of kin regard the function of funeral music. Because of all these considerations, I decided to conduct observations. Funerals were observed in three crematoria located in the south, east, and southeast of the Netherlands. These crematoria were selected because of pragmatic reasons, for example, because of

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[24]The observations and interviews all concerned white Dutch people. This was not an intentional focus.
[25]Celebrants in the Netherlands call themselves *ritueelbegeleider* (ritual 'coaches', in this study translated as celebrants) or *uitvaartsprekers* (speakers at funerals). For the purpose of this research, it was not necessary to distinguish further between the backgrounds of these celebrants.

already-established contacts with crematoria that welcomed researchers. All observations were made between June 2017 and October 2017. In each crematorium, 14–15 funerals were observed, each within a period of 12–15 days. Funerals were selected for observation based on the time schedules of both the crematorium and myself. At the moment of selection, I was not yet aware of the gender and age of the deceased except for the case of the funeral of a young girl.

For pragmatic reasons, there is no connection between the observed funerals and the interviews; the next of kin I interviewed were not involved in the funerals I observed.

1.4.5 Analysis

Field notes from the observations, an overview of the music that sounded during the funerals and transcripts of the interviews were considered as texts that could be coded. In the analysis, initial and axial codings were used (Saldaña, 2009, pp. 81–85, 159–163). For example, to study the function of funeral music, I extracted parts of the field notes and interviews that, according to my interpretation, pointed in the direction of what might be considered the 'function of funeral music'. These extracts were further compared for similarities and differences. In this way, various categories and subcategories were revealed and grounded within participants' voices and actions. A more detailed example of this will be given in Chapter 4. Ways of data collection and analysis were presented and discussed at national and international conferences, at departmental seminars and at the DONE network.[26]

This research entailed being in contact with people who were faced with the loss of a beloved person. Like much other research in the field of death studies, this brings along many ethical questions. Therefore, I will discuss the ethical aspects in more detail in the next section.

1.5 Ethics

Conducting research in the field of death means conducting research in a sensitive context. How do you approach people who have just lost a beloved family member, and what questions do you ask them? More generally, how can one, in the context of people who are faced with the loss of a beloved one, both conduct proper research *and* respect the privacy of the participants?

At the start of this project (2015), I contacted the ethical committee of Tilburg School

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[26]The DONE network (*Dood Onderzoek Nederland*, Study of Death in the Netherlands) consists of about 40 academics who study (aspects around) death and dying. I initiated and co-established this network in 2018 to promote the dialogue and multidisciplinary collaboration between various researchers studying death.

of Humanities (back then, the suffix 'and Digital Sciences' had not yet been added). I explained to the committee, for example, the content of the e-mails I would send to crematoria for the collection of data via surveys and how I would approach interviewees. I also described how I would act if interviewees would become too emotionally upset. After completing and discussing the form, the ethical committee provided ethical clearance for this research.[27]

1.5.1 Observations

While preparing the observations for this research, the question emerged as to *who* had to give consent for these observations. The initial focus was on the nearest family members of the deceased as they had arranged the funeral. At which moment should the family or a representative of the family be informed about the research? The family had just faced the loss of a beloved family member. When should I, as someone unknown to them, introduce my research and ask them for consent? As I was not involved in the process of preparing the funeral, and I was only present at the crematorium, the most suitable moment would be in the crematorium at the day of the funeral. However, could I just ask them if they would allow my presence for research purposes even when they were in the emotionally challenging situation of saying goodbye to someone they very much loved? And what about the other funeral participants, the funeral leader, celebrant and crematorium staff?

While discussing these questions, I found that the managers/directors of crematoria (in the following: crematorium directors) did not want me to ask the families for permission to observe the funeral for research purposes. They did not want me to intrude upon the emotionally challenging situation these people were in, as this – according to the crematorium directors – might disturb the mourning processes of the bereaved. After having extensively discussed my concerns over and over again and in dialogue with the crematorium directors, I decided to deal with the ethical issues around my observations in three steps, as follows: 1) obtaining written consent from the crematorium director, 2) obtaining oral consent from the funeral director and funeral speakers, who act on behalf of the bereaved family and 3) anonymising the data completely by not mentioning the names of the deceased and their family, the crematorium and the exact date. I will briefly elaborate on these steps.

After being given a description of the research, the crematorium director gave written consent for the observations and use of the data for research purposes. One crematorium announced the presence of a researcher via a newsletter that was sent to funeral directors who frequently worked in that crematorium. On the day of the funeral, I asked for the consent of

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[27]Date of approved form: 16-02-2016.

the funeral director in charge of the funeral on behalf of the family. I asked oral permission of the funeral director who had helped the family in the process of preparing the funeral. The funeral directors estimated whether or not the family would allow my presence. In some of the cases, they asked the family or let me ask the family. None of the funeral leaders and families rejected my presence; they all allowed me to observe how music was embedded in the ritual. During funerals where speakers other than the family and the funeral director were present, such as a celebrant, I also asked their permission. They all allowed my presence.

To further secure the anonymity of the family, I decided not to mention the actual names and ages of the deceased, the family members, the speakers and funeral leader nor the actual locations of the crematoria and specific dates. In this way, I made every effort to be very careful in the ways I conducted my research and processed the data.[28]

1.5.2 Interviews

As explained, during various stages of this research, I also conducted interviews with various funeral professionals and next of kin. After approaching potential interviewees via e-mail, explaining my research and asking if they would like to participate in the research, we agreed on a specific place and time for an interview. Before the interview, I explained my research again, stressed that the data would be anonymised and asked for permission to record the interview. All interviewees allowed me to record the interview. Recordings were made with a voice recorder (not a mobile phone).[29] Except for the personnel of audio-visual companies and the musicians, I asked interviewees for written consent. They all gave consent. Only two interviewees, staff members of a crematorium, hesitated to sign the form. They asked the director of the crematorium where they worked if they could sign the form. He read and approved it, after which both interviewees happily signed the form.

To get in contact with next of kin to interview, I asked celebrants to connect me with next of kin who – in their view – were emotionally able to talk about the funeral and to participate in the research. The celebrants first approached these next of kin to ask if they would allow me to approach them for an interview. This, again, turned out to be a challenging part of the research. Not all celebrants were willingly to contact families they had assisted in preparing the funerals. I can imagine these celebrants might fear for their reputation or be

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[28]However, with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (EU-GDPR) not yet in force when I observed funerals, I would ask consent of the family.

[29]Except during one interview. Even though I always checked the batteries before the interviews, during this interview the batteries went low. I asked permission to record the remainder of the interview on my mobile phone. The interviewee allowed me to do so. After I transferred the recording of the interview to the computer for transcription, I immediately deleted the file from my phone.

afraid to damage the trust they had built with these families. Others did connect me to one or more families. One of the celebrants tried to connect me to the parents of a young boy who had died, but the family rejected the request "just because they find it too loaded. They were asked often by media about the sudden death of their only child. They are having rough times, especially in this time."[30] Contact with one of the next of kin I interviewed was established through a Facebook message about this study.

When I found that potential interviewees were hesitant regarding participation, I chose to protect them against themselves and to cancel the plans for an interview. This was, for example, the case when I approached a certain celebrant. After I had approached her via e-mail, she responded that she had doubts about her participation, because "My mother has died two weeks ago, so my thoughts are still there … at the same time it comes very close to your research. I find that very hard right now".[31] In her e-mail, she made clear that she had doubts but was – if I really wanted to interview her – willing to participate. In this case, I decided to wish her all the best and not to interview her. I did not want to risk asking her questions that would create an even harder time for her. As she had indicated, she found it hard to deal with her own grief. This differs strongly from another interviewee who had recently lost her husband and was approached as a potential interviewee via a celebrant. The potential interviewee replied to the celebrant: "she [the researcher] can talk to me. It doesn't hurt".[32]

Approaching interviewees via funeral experts made me realise that there is a benefit in approaching these 'sensitive interviewees' via e-mail rather than via telephone. Approaching interviewees via e-mail has the benefit for next of kin that they can read and easily re-read the information about my research and how the ethical aspects are dealt with at a time it is convenient for them. In addition, they can think about my question and are still able to ask questions by sending an e-mail or making a phone call. Therefore, I preferred sending e-mails to potential interviewees.

Especially during interviews with funeral professionals who were involved in the process of preparing a funeral, such as celebrants and funeral directors, and during interviews with next of kin, I was very much aware of the fact that they were providing data that were very sensitive. Although I continuously tried to be very careful in handling the data, they sometimes revealed detailed information about the families and funerals. On one occasion, a

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[30]WhatsApp message of a celebrant, received 18 December 2018.
[31]Quote from e-mail, received 13 December 2018.
[32]Original Dutch quote: "Ze kan wel een gesprek met mij hebben. Ik vind het niet vervelend". Forwarded WhatsApp message received 11 December 2018.

celebrant told me about the parents of a young boy who had just died. A day later, she sent me via WhatsApp a picture of the obituary in the newspaper and a voice message about the music the family had selected. Of course, I had assured her that I would anonymise the data and handle them with care. Still, it struck me how easily sensitive data were passed on to me.[33] Alternatively, I always felt warmly welcomed and trusted when next of kin showed me videos and pictures of the funeral or showed me their private memorial in their homes. These activities not only created a feeling of trust but also helped next of kin to think of their beloved ones or the funeral and helped me as a researcher to get to know the deceased a bit more, making it easier to understand the stories told by the interviewees.

1.5.3 Transcription and storage

For careful handling of the gathered data, I anonymised the data. Directly after the observation of a funeral, I wrote down notes. From the beginning, I used a code for the crematorium (A, B, C) and gave the funeral a number (1, 2, 3, etc.). In this way, unique codes were created (e.g. A1, B5, C14). In a separate file, I created a key in which I provided more information about the location of the crematorium, the date and time of the funeral, the sex and age of the deceased, the estimated number of people that had attended the funeral and from whom I had received consent to observe the funeral. This file was saved separately from the field notes.

In the transcripts of the interviews, the real names of the interviewees were changed into pseudonyms. I created a key in which I wrote down the actual names of the interviewees, and, again, I stored the key to these codes separately from the transcripts.

The field notes of the observations and the transcripts of the interviews were securely stored on Surfdrive. Surfdrive is "a personal cloud storage service for the Dutch education and research community, offering staff, researchers and students an easy way to store, synchronize and share files in the secure and reliable SURF community cloud".[34]

After finishing this study, I stored the data in DataverseNL, which is a data repository provided by Data Archiving and Network Services (DANS) and is approved and recommended by Tilburg University.[35]

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[33]The data on WhatsApp were quickly transcribed and deleted from WhatsApp and my mobile phone.
[34]Retrieved 12 December 2018 from https://www.surfdrive.nl/en/about-surfdrive. During a Research Data Management training I attended on 19 September 2017, it was also confirmed that Surfdrive is an allowed and safe cloud storage service for research purposes.
[35]With regards to Dataverse, see also https://dans.knaw.nl/en/about/services/DataverseNL?set_language=en.

1.6 Institutional context and position as researcher

This research is based on mainly ethnographic methods. I retrieved most of the data by observations and interviews, trying to grasp 'what is going on' with regard to funeral music. This means that I cannot separate myself from the data as I am part of the data. How does my embodied presence during funerals and interviews affect the data, and how am I affected by the research? Even though I conducted this research as a PhD student in the Department of Culture Studies, I am also a professional musician, trained in classical music and church music. In addition to my musical background, and more importantly, I am also a human being who gets confronted with the death of beloved people. Both my musical life and private life affect and are affected by the research. Two examples from the research will make clear how this self-awareness has affected my research.

Every time I introduced myself via e-mail to a potential interviewee, I introduced myself as a PhD candidate in culture studies who studies music during funeral rituals in the Netherlands. Although a quick search on the internet for my name would reveal my additional background as a professional musician, at that stage I never introduced myself as such. This was a very conscious choice as I did not want to influence the interviewees. However, during an interview with an organist of one of the crematoria, he asked me whether I knew the composer Boëllman. After my confirmation, he looked surprised and continued talking about a specific piece of music, again asking whether I knew the piece. Again, I confirmed. When he, after that, started to talk about the 'tremulant' on the organ, he again asked if I knew what it was.[36] Again, I confirmed. Very much surprised he replied: "How do you know"? After I had told him about my musical background, he started to talk in more detail about his work as an organist. Here, my musical background was of use in the interview as he did not have to explain everything and probably mentioned details that non-organists would not have understood.

Also during interviews with funerary speakers, especially those with a religious affiliation, my background as a church musician was of use as I knew the traditions and songs they talked about. During other interviews, however, interviewees who were not aware of my musical background talked negatively about the organ. I do not argue here that they would have talked less negatively about the organ if they had known about my musical background. However, my musical background has not influenced their ways of talking about music.

So, during the interviews, I did not mention my identity as a musician when this could

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[36] A tremulant is a device on the organ that creates a vibrating effect.

have influenced the stories interviewees told me and *did* mention it when it would benefit the conversation.

1.7 Outline of this study

The structure of this study mirrors the sub-questions described in section 1.1. Every chapter has its own main concepts and answers one of the sub-questions. After this introduction, in the second chapter, I will describe Dutch funerary culture and personalised funerals in the Netherlands. In the third chapter, I will elaborate on the interplay between music facilities, musical repertoires and funeral rituals from 1914 to present. In the fourth chapter, I will zoom in on the functions of funeral music. This will be followed in Chapter five by an elaboration on the images of 'heaven' and 'angels' in popular funeral music and *Ave Maria*. The results of the various chapters will be brought together in the sixth chapter, which contains both conclusions and a discussion.

2 FUNERARY CULTURE IN THE NETHERLANDS[37]

This study is conducted within Dutch funerary culture. Even though other terms such as funerary landscape, funerary network or funerary infrastructure are related, I chose to speak of funerary *culture* as this allows for the important role meaning-making practices play in this study. Before elaborating on funerary culture in the Netherlands, I will first highlight important journals and (research) centres/networks in the field of death studies which include the study of funerary culture and will consequently zoom in on relevant publications on funerary culture in Europe.

2.1 Studies on funerary culture

Studies on funerary culture are conducted within various disciplines and focus on cultures around the world. They are, for example, published in one of the 'death journals', such as *Death studies* (based in the US, since 1985 as the successor of *Death education* [1977–1984]), *Mortality* (based in the UK, since 1996), *OMEGA* (based in the US, since 1970) and *Thanatos* (based in Finland, since 2012). The scope of these journals is not confined to funerary culture as they also include many other aspects of the broader field of death studies.

In addition to these 'death journals', some important research centres and networks should be mentioned. The Centre for Death & Society (CDAS), located in Bath (UK), was established in 2005. This centre organises several seminars and conferences and hosts the editorial office of the already-mentioned journal *Mortality*.[38] Located in Nijmegen, associated to the Radboud University in the same place, is the Centre for Thanatology. This centre facilitates commissioned research, consultancies, training and education and hosts the editorial office for the book series *Death Studies* (see below).[39]

Besides to these centres, various networks have emerged. One is the Death & Culture Network in York (DaCNet: Interdisciplinary Death & Culture Research), which organises reading groups and the biennial Death & Culture conference and hosts the editorial office of the *Death and Culture* book series (published by Bristol University. The series was previously published by Emerald as *Emerald Studies in Death and Culture*).

So far, the focus has been on journals, centres and networks that are related to studies on funerary culture. To shift the focus to more content-oriented, European studies on funerary

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[37]Parts of this chapter have been published in Hoondert and Bruin-Mollenhorst (2016).
[38]https://www.bath.ac.uk/corporate-information/about-the-centre-for-death-society/(accessed 10 March 2021).
[39]https://www.ru.nl/ct/english/ (accessed 10 March 2021).

culture, I mention the works of two prominent death studies scholars. In 2017, theologian and death studies scholar Douglas Davies published the third edition of his famous book *Death, Ritual and Belief: The Rhetoric of Funerary Rites.* In this book, he sheds lights on various aspects upon which death touches, ranging from coping with corpses, theories of grief, religious encounters with death, pet death and death in media. Throughout this book, his theory of 'words against death' becomes prominent, a theory that will return in the concluding chapter of this research.

From a comparative perspective, sociologist Tony Walter aimed to understand mortuary variation in the modern West (Walter, 2005). He states that there are common trends in funerals: "nineteenth century rationalization and specialization, and twenty-first century individualization. But major variations of both organization and culture persist. Who organizes and enables the personalized twenty-first century funeral will not be the same in Sweden, France, and the USA" (Walter, 2005, p. 187). Differences in funeral organisation (communal, municipal and religious) and cultural differences as well as the interaction between them are at the basis of funerary variations between countries. The same author used a different approach to funerary practices in his book *Death in the Modern World* (Walter, 2020). Unlike many other books on death and dying, this book has no chapters on dying, funerals or grief. Instead, Walter structured his book with chapters on modernity, risk, culture, nation and globalisation. In this way, the book "explores the factors that shape death and dying in different societies around the world" (Walter, 2020, back cover).

With regard to the European context, the first book in the *Death Studies* series was regarded by the editors "as a first step towards a comparative European framework for research into death, dying and disposal" (Venbrux, Quartier, Venhorst & Mathijssen, 2013, p. 8). Other books in this series focus, for example, on Muslim rituals in the Netherlands (Venhorst, 2013) and funerary culture in Denmark (Kjærsgaard, 2017).

An attempt to collect studies on funerary culture is undertaken in the book series *Funerary International.* This series, published by Emerald, started in 2018 and contains country-specific monographs in which, among other things, the legal framework, cremation and burial practices, the funeral industry, religion and funeral costs are described. This series is still growing, with ever more monographs on different countries. In the description of Dutch funerary practices, I will use the already-published monograph on funerary practices in the Netherlands (Mathijssen & Venhorst, 2019).

The present study focuses on music during funerary practices. In previous research, the topic of music and death is touched upon from various perspectives. I will give four

examples of books on 'music and death', each approaching the topic in different ways. Taking music as a site of reflection, in *Mortality and Music,* Christopher Partridge expands on how popular music reflects and evokes our awareness of death (Partridge, 2015). In this book, Partridge seeks "on the one hand, to provide reflection on cultural responses to death and decay and, on the other hand, to contribute to our understanding of the social significance of popular music" (Partridge, 2015, p. 7). Also taking music as point of departure, in *Singing Death,* various authors elaborate on how music expresses and responds to confrontations with death (Dell & Hickey, 2017). From a wide range of disciplines, such as film studies, history and psychoanalysis, authors reflect on the relation between dying and (dealing with) death on one hand, and composed, performed and heard music on the other. Again cutting across various disciplines – such as musicology, celebrity studies and theology – the book *Music and Death: Interdisciplinary Readings and Perspectives* "explores the various ways by which music cultures and practices imagine, express and provide ways of coping with death, grief and remembrance (Bennett & Gracon, 2020, p. 1). Various authors in this book write about, for example, music during mourning rituals, about the theme of death in Punk and Metal music and on how messages about death are part of circus performances or shows by the rock group Queen. Also from an interdisciplinary perspective, though stressing music's profound association with mourning, the book *Music and Mourning* (Davidson & Garrido, 2016) contains studies on music in mourning rituals across time and cultures. Contributions in this book range from bell-ringing in England (c. 1500–1700) to contemporary music therapy in palliative care.

Unfortunately, a clear focus on *funeral music* does not (yet) exist in death studies. As will be described in Chapter 4, there are only a few small-scale studies on this topic. In the next chapters, funeral music will prove to be a refreshing, fruitful lens through which to study death and death rituals.

Now that I have situated the present research within the field of death studies, in the next section, I will zoom in on the Dutch context, starting with a brief elaboration on important changes in funerary culture in the 20th century.

2.2 Cremation and crematoria in the Netherlands

As in many Western countries, one of the biggest changes in funerary culture in the Netherlands in the 20th century is the rising cremation rate. Before describing the history of cremation in the Netherlands, I will briefly explain what I understand by the cremation ritual and why this study focuses on cremation rituals and not on burial rituals.

In this study, the main focus is on cremation rituals. Etymologically, cremation is derived from the Latin *cremare*, which means 'to burn up, cremate'.[40] By the term cremation ritual, I do not refer to the ritual elements of cremating. By cremation rituals, I mean funerals that are performed in crematoria and that on most occasions precede the actual disposal of the body.

The focus on cremation rituals does not imply that the funerals that are taken into account in this research are always followed by the cremation of the deceased body. After the rituals in the ceremony room of the crematorium, it is possible that the deceased is buried at a cemetery or that the body has already been donated to science. So, in the present study, 'cremation ritual' is not necessarily related to the means of body disposal but to the building in which the ritual that precedes the actual body disposal takes place. However, the vast majority of the cremation rituals that take place in a crematorium are followed by the cremation of the body.

For both content-related and pragmatic reasons, in this study I focus mainly on cremation rituals. First, as the cremation rate during the time period of this study (2016–2021) was between 63 and 67%, a focus on cremation rituals covers a major part of the funerals in the Netherlands.[41] Related to this, because of the large number of funerals that are performed in crematoria, the managements of crematoria are always interested in and working on the development of funerals. This is, for example, visible in the amount of time and money they invest in audio-visual systems (see Chapter 3). Third, for pragmatic reasons and mainly related to the observations that are part of this research, the crematorium is a place where multiple funerals per day can be observed. Conducting observations in a crematorium was therefore very time efficient.

Altogether, the focus on cremation rituals is a very suitable focus to study contemporary funerals and funeral music.

2.2.1 History of cremation in the Netherlands

The cremation rate in the Netherlands has not always been as high as it is nowadays. For a proper contextualisation of this research, I will therefore briefly elaborate on the history of cremation in the Netherlands by describing the rising number of crematoria, the increase of the cremation rate and the processes that influenced these rising numbers.

In the Netherlands, the *begrafeniswet* (burial law), from 10 April 1869, defined that

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[40]Derived from https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cremate.
[41]Cremation rate derived from http://www.lvc-online.nl/aantallen (accessed 9 March 2021).

burial was the only officially approved way of body disposal and that cremation was "against the spirit of the nation" (Hoog, 1870, p. 37). Despite this law, a debate about cremation took place in the Netherlands. Arguments pro and contra cremation concerned medical, ethical, emotional, religious, hygienic, environmental, economic and criminal arguments (Cappers, 1999, pp. 15–18).

In 1874, the *Vereeniging tot Invoering der Lijkverbranding* (Association for the Introduction of Body Burning) was founded. A year later, the name was changed into *Vereeniging voor Lijkverbranding* (Association for Body Burning). This association strived for the legalisation of cremation as a way of body disposal (Cappers, 1999). The founders of this association were all literate people with highly regarded functions in society. In the debate concerning cremation, Roman Catholic and Jewish people turned against cremation. Fewer objections came from Protestant people (Van Erp et al., 2013, pp. 26–28).

In Driehuis, a village in the west of the Netherlands, in 1913, the first crematorium in the Netherlands was opened on the initiative of the *Vereeniging voor Lijkverbranding*. In 1914, the first cremation was performed in this crematorium. In addition to the push for the legalisation of cremation, the *Vereeniging voor Lijkverbranding* also strived for new crematoria. New crematoria would both provide the possibility to perform more cremations and shorten the amount of time and money people had to spend to travel to the crematorium. In 1919, the *Arbeiders Vereniging voor Lijkverbranding* (Labour Association for Body Burning) was founded. This association strived for the introduction of *affordable* cremation. In this way, cremation became accessible to a larger part of society. Still, it would last until 1954 before the second crematorium was opened, located in Dieren, a village in the east of the country. A year later, in 1955, when the cremation rate had already risen to 2% of the deceased, cremation became officially legalised by law (Kinschot, 1958, p. 8).[42] In 1962, the third crematorium was opened, in Groningen, a city in the north of the Netherlands. By that time, the cremation rate had risen to 4%.

From the end of the 19th century until halfway into the 20th century, Dutch society was divided into social groups, the so-called 'pillars': "Orthodox Protestants, Catholics and Socialists [had] created their own organizational worlds" (Van Rooden, 2003, p. 117), all containing a minority of Dutch society (see also Mathijssen & Venhorst, 2019, pp. 2, 3). Liberal groups did not want to be part of the process of pillarisation.[43] The pillars "had

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[42]All cremation rates in this article are, unless otherwise stated, derived from http://www.lvc-online.nl/viewer/file.aspx?FileInfoID=172.
[43]Some even claim that because of their resistance to belonging to one of the three pillars, liberal groups created

acquired a dominant position in society by creating a solid masonry of their own media, political parties, schools, sport clubs and indeed funeral societies" (Mathijssen & Venhorst, 2019, p. 40). Initially, the push for the introduction of cremation emerged from liberal, Protestant people (Cappers, 1999, p. 55). However, the *Arbeiders Vereniging voor Lijkverbranding,* which had many members, made cremation accessible to a much larger part of Dutch society. This association clearly belonged to the socialist pillar. This illustrates how the pillars influenced the funerary culture in the Netherlands.

Although religious ceremonies were allowed in the crematorium, these formed only the minority of the rituals in the first decades of cremation in the Netherlands as churches often resisted cremation for body disposal (Cappers, 2012, p. 563). Within the Roman Catholic tradition, a decree from 1886 had even forbidden cremation for Roman Catholics (Cappers, 1999, p. 92). The reformed churches did not have an official document that approved or forbade cremation. In 1961, the Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands clarified the attitude of the church – cremation was approved (Cappers, 1999, p. 265).[44] In the 1963 instruction *Piam et constantem,* issued by the Holy Office of the Roman Catholic Church, it was stated that cremation was not prohibited unless it was chosen by anti-Christian motives.[45] This changing attitude of the Roman Catholic Church regarding cremation at least partly contributed to the increasing number of cremations in the Netherlands, rising to 14% in 1970 and 35% in 1980. Around the same time, the number of crematoria grew to 32 in 1988, covering a cremation percentage of 40%. In 2014, there were 77 crematoria covering a cremation percentage of over 60%.[46] In 2020, the cremation rate was 66%, spread across approximately 100 crematoria.[47]

2.2.2 Crematorium architecture in the Netherlands

Throughout the 20th century, a lot changed in the architecture of crematoria in the Netherlands (see also Hoondert, 2019; Klaassens & Groote, 2012, p. 214; and for a broader European perspective Valentijn & Verhoeven, 2018).[48] Klaassens and Groote distinguished the following four phases of crematorium architecture: pre-modern, shake-hands modernist, sub-modernist and post-modern (Klaassens & Groote, 2012, 2014). In the first, pre-modern or

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their own liberal pillar. For example, see the website of the Dutch parliament: https://www.parlement.com/id/vh8lnhrpfxub/verzuiling.
[44]In Dutch: 'De generale synode van de gereformeerde kerken'.
[45]http://www.vatican.va/archive/aas/documents/AAS-56-1964-ocr.pdf (pp. 822–823; accessed 9 February 2021).
[46]http://www.lvc-online.nl/cremeren-nederland(accessed 5 March 2017).
[47]On 16 October 2019, 98 crematoria were on the list of members of the *National Association for Crematoria.*
[48]See note 10.

'un'-modern phase, from the beginning of the 20th century until 1930, the crematorium building made a monumental, solemn impression. The first crematorium, located in Driehuis-Velsen, is situated on the top of a dune and has a sober interior with pews and an organ. The architecture aimed to avoid any connotation that reminded people of traditional burial practices as this was not in line with the progressive ideology of the cremation movement (Klaassens & Groote, 2012, p. 123). The second phase, from around 1930 to 1970, was described as shake-hands modernism. In this phase, the crematorium building was focused on functionalism with some room for aesthetics. This became, for example, clear in the ways the inside and the outside of the building were linked, such as by open views from the ceremony room onto a garden or lake. The third phase lasted from 1970 until the beginning of the 21st century and is characterised as sub-modernism. With a rapidly rising cremation rate, many smaller crematoria were built, spread across the entire country. "Less attention was paid to architecture, landscape design and location, and the dominant form became a rather dull and weak extract from modernist principles that we labelled 'sub-Modernist'" (Klaassens & Groote, 2014, p. 3). In this phase, the buildings are described as 'non-places', a term coined by the French anthropologist Marc Augé. These non-places are indistinctive and unemotional buildings of low quality. The prominent presence of routing systems in crematoria illustrates the focus on efficiency in this phase. In the fourth, post-modernist, phase, from the beginning of the 21st century onwards, crematorium buildings offer room for emotions and for ritual and symbolic experience. Architects "have adapted to new ideas and the demands of contemporary mourners with regards to funerary practices. However, these are more adaptations than an abrupt break from previous ideas" (Klaassens & Groote, 2014, p. 19). Routing systems and efficiency still play an important role in crematoria but have become less visible to mourners. Instead, mourners encounter a building that, as mentioned, offers room for emotion, ritual and symbolic experience. Yarden, a funeral organisation in the Netherlands, aims to achieve this by means of its 'feeling environment'. In this 'feeling environment', all different rooms in the crematorium (e.g. entrance, ceremony room, coffee/condolence room, committal room, room for handing over the ashes, etc.) have their own 'feeling', which is achieved by colours, materials, scents, views, design and audio-visual equipment.[49]

In addition to changes in the architecture and decoration of crematoria, the function of crematoria also broadened. Since the end of the 20th century, crematoria have offered the

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[49]https://www.yarden.nl/uitvaart-regelen/locatie/feeling-environment.htm

possibility to save some ashes of the deceased placed in an art-object or a piece of jewellery (Heessels, 2012). Moreover, since 1998, the scattering of ashes at a self-chosen location is a legal practice in the Netherlands. Crematoria offer so-called *strooivelden,* specially designed garden-like places near the crematorium, where next of kin can scatter the ashes of the deceased. In this way, crematoria extend their services and try to play an active role in the ways next of kin dispose of the ashes. In her dissertation, Mathijssen shows that the scattering of the ashes is the most popular form of ash disposal, chosen by nearly two-thirds of respondents (Mathijssen, 2017, p. 141). This includes both scattering ashes at *strooivelden* and at other self-chosen locations. By scattering the ashes, meaningful places are created. This is especially the case when the ashes are scattered at places that were meaningful to the deceased during his or her life. By scattering the ashes at these places, next of kin are comforted by the idea that the deceased is at a place (s)he loved. In her dissertation *Bringing Home the Dead*, Meike Heessels argues that the dispersal is an extension of the cremation ritual (Heessels, 2012). Heessels suggests considering this as a fourth phase in Van Gennep's schema of rites of passages. According to Heessels, this fourth phase does not aim at separation, as the cremation ritual itself intends to do, but at incorporation. In the fourth phase, the ashes are dispersed at locations where the deceased is 'at home', or the urn is literally brought home and some ashes are carried in jewellery or used in tattoos.

Nowadays, crematoria have extended their services with possibilities in regard to the disposal of ashes. This includes not only the already mentioned *strooivelden,* but also burial places for the urns in a park-like landscape with trees, ponds and works of art. Moreover, crematoria offer commemoration activities on, for example, All Souls' Day (2 November) and World Wide Candle Lighting (second Sunday of December), and organise lectures and other activities on mourning (see also Hoondert, 2015).

So, throughout the 20th century, in addition to their functional character, crematoria have become places that are, in terms of both architecture and services, increasingly dedicated to the ritual and meaning-making practices that take place in these buildings (see also Davies, 1996). Within Dutch society, they have become important places to say farewell and to commemorate.

2.3 Dutch funerary culture

In this section, I will briefly elaborate on the Dutch funerary industry, the ways death is regulated in the Dutch corpse disposal act (*Wet op de lijkbezorging),* the multicultural population in the Netherlands, the visibility of death in the debates on euthanasia and the

attention given to death in various media. It is not my intention to provide an all-encompassing overview. Instead, based on previous research on 'death in the Netherlands', I provide background information on the broader Dutch context in which this study is situated.[50] But first, I would like to mention that this study came into being before the outbreak of COVID-19, in the Netherlands from February 2020 onwards. The virus spread its global wings while I was writing the concluding chapter of this study and finishing the manuscript. Therefore, I do not elaborate on the effects of the pandemic on funerals.

A typical feature of how the Dutch 'do death' is the high level of keeping funeral insurance. "Over two-thirds of the Dutch are insured for the inevitable: their own funeral. The Netherlands has the highest coverage level of funeral insurance in the world, which accounts for the country's highly professionalized and customer-oriented funeral directing industry" (Mathijssen & Venhorst, 2019, p. 39). The three largest funeral organisations in the Netherlands are DELA, Monuta and Yarden, but nowadays increasingly more small funeral companies are entering funeral directing, leading to a diverse and fragmented industry (Mathijssen & Venhorst, 2019, pp. 39–56). The *Uitvaart-vakbeurs* (funerary trade fair), which takes place every four years, shows the diversity of professionals, services and objects that are offered in the funerary industry, including celebrants, florists, coffins, memory objects, software, clothes, tombstones, pallbearers, hearses, etc.[51]

In the Netherlands, a funeral must be conducted within six working days after death.[52] With regard to the ways of body disposal, burial and cremation are the only legal, common ways of body disposal (see footnote 9). Dutch funerals can be characterised as – to use the term used by funeral organisations – personalised funerals (*persoonlijke uitvaart*) (Venbrux, Heessels, & Bolt, 2008; Venbrux et al., 2009). I will come back to this concept in the next section.

In August 2020, 24.4% of the population in the Netherlands had a migration background, including both first and second generation (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2020). The diverse backgrounds become visible in, for example, the rising number of Islamic burial grounds in cemeteries and rooms in funeral centres designed and equipped for the ritual washing of the deceased in the Muslim tradition (for more on Muslim death rituals, see Venhorst, 2013) as well as the installation of a Hindu monument in Usselo, a village in the east of the country, "for Hindus as well as non-Hindus to scatter the ashes of the deceased

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[50]For further reading, I recommend *Funerary Practices in the Netherlands* by Mathijssen and Venhorst (2019).
[51]https://www.uitvaart-vakbeurs.nl/exhibitor/ (accessed 10 September 2020).
[52]Corpse Disposal Act, article 16. See https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0005009/2018-08-01#HoofdstukII.

according to Hindu rites" (Swhajor, Heessels, van der Velde, & Venbrux, 2010, p. 83). In addition, the birth of a multicultural funeral home in Amsterdam, in the west of the country, shows how the funerary industry is trying to include mourners from various backgrounds (Van der Pijl, 2017).

The Netherlands is one of the few countries in which euthanasia and assisted dying are a legal practice. Even though there are strict statutory rules and procedures, there are heated debates around euthanasia. "While the debates on euthanasia long focused on medical and ethical aspects, questions of a 'good death' and 'good dying process' have now been brought to the table" (Mathijssen & Venhorst, 2019, p. 21). Recently, Van Wijngaarden et al. (2020) conducted a study, requested by the Ministry of Health, Well-being and Sports, on the question of whether elderly people who consider their lives 'completed' (*voltooid leven*) should be assisted in ending their lives. Even though the outcomes of this study have shown that the term 'completed life' (*voltooid leven*) is not a useful term (Van Wijngaarden et al., 2020, p. 164), the study shows how debates on euthanasia and assisted dying focus not only on death but also on life. In other words, current debates show that *Ars moriendi* is closely related to *Ars vivendi*.

In the past two decades, death has become increasingly visible in various media. Funeral insurers and funeral cooperatives campaign on radio and television (Mathijssen & Venhorst, 2019, pp. 54–56), and television series about death, such as *Over mijn lijk* (*Over My Dead Body*) and *De kist* (*The Coffin*), have attracted many viewers. In bookstores, glossies about death can be found under the titles *DOOD: de laatste glossy* (*Death: The Final Glossy*; appearing in 2016 and published by Lentemedia) and *Later* (appearing in 2017/18 and published by LATER MEDIA). In 2017, Venhorst and Mathijssen published a book that provides a broad overview of the various practices around funerary culture in the Netherlands (Venhorst & Mathijssen, 2017).

2.3.1 Personalised funerals in the Netherlands

The diversity of products and services offered in the customer-oriented funeral directing industry is aimed at facilitating so-called personalised funerals. These non-institutionalised, personalised funeral rituals (the part that is performed in the ceremony room) do not follow a strict order or script as, for example, is more or less common within Roman Catholic funerals. However, it is possible to discern the recurring elements and patterns of funerals – speeches, music and pictures are part of almost all funerals, and speeches are often alternated with music. A typical personalised funeral might look like the following:

Entrance

>Funeral participants (family, friends, neighbours and other people from the networks of the deceased and the nearest family members) have already taken their places in the ceremony room. They rise from their seats while the nearest family members enter the ceremony rom and the deceased is brought in. Music sounds.

Welcome

> A word of welcome is given by the celebrant or funeral director. Often, the nearest family members are mentioned by name.

Lighting candles

>Family members (often the grandchildren of the deceased) light candles near the coffin.

Music sounds, possibly while the participants look at pictures.

Speech(es)

>A biography of the deceased is spoken by a relative or the celebrant.
>Memories are offered by a friend/neighbour/colleague/sport mate.

Music sounds, possibly while the participants look at pictures.

Speech(es)

>Memories are offered by a friend/neighbour/colleague/sport mate.
>Memories are offered by a friend/neighbour/colleague/sport mate.

Music

>Words of thanks and farewell, possibly a poem. Often spoken by the celebrant or funeral director.

Leaving

>Participants leave the ceremony room after they have walked passed the coffin. The nearest family members leave the ceremony room after the other participants. Music sounds.

The decisions on *where* the funeral takes place (e.g. in a church, crematorium or favourite place of the deceased) and *who* will lead the ceremony (celebrant, reverend, funeral director, funerary speaker, family member, etc.) are taken by the nearest family members as they pay for the funeral. These decisions are often made in consultation with the funeral director in charge of the funeral, and the specific date and time of the funeral are also dependent on the possibilities of the location. This means that funerals are not constructed by an isolated

bereaved family but that they are constructed out of a negotiation between the bereaved family, the funeral director, the location of the funeral and possibly other funeral professionals, such as a celebrant or a faith community (see also Garces-Foley & Holcomb, 2006).

It is also up to the family which funeral elements and actors become part of the funeral. With regard to the role of the family, Walter writes: "the British funeral lies securely in the hands of 'the family', and this is expected both by the general public and by the funeral industry" (Walter, 2020, p. 146). Walter illustrates this by stating that eulogies are often about family relationships. He therefore argues "though the twenty-first century 'life-centered' funeral in theory reflects the uniqueness of each life and the diversity of contemporary living arrangements, in practice these funerals continue to display family in quite conventional ways" (Walter, 2020, p. 146). Even though I would not state that Dutch funerals in practice *only* display family – often, friends, neighbours, sport mates or colleagues share eulogies, too – the family does have a strong influence on how the funeral looks. The family determines, based on their knowledge of the deceased and the ways they want to remember the deceased, who is invited to the funeral and, for example, who is invited to give a eulogy. This means that a friend or colleague who was important to the deceased but was unknown to the family might not be invited to actively participate during the funeral. Of course, mourners other than the family can ask if they are allowed to give a eulogy, though this is less common than the family inviting the other mourners. The point here is that the family determines the ways the funeral is 'personalised'. This culturally accepted and expected phenomenon also implies that the ways the deceased is portrayed at the funeral might have been different had the personalisation been determined by, for example, friends or colleagues.

Contemporary funeral practices, not in only in the Netherlands but also in other Western countries, are often described as life-centred funerals, or personalised funerals. They are centred on the identity of the deceased, such as what kind of person he was, what his hobbies were and what his favourite destination for holidays was. These kinds of topics are often addressed in the eulogies. The eulogies personalise the funeral, affirm who the deceased was and give the eulogists room to express feelings of loss (Garces-Foley, 2002–2003, p. 300).

In this chapter, it has become clear that even though every funeral is unique (*iedere uitvaart is uniek*, an often-used slogan in the funeral industry), we do see the same elements recurring throughout almost all personalised funerals. The overview of a personalised funeral in this section shows that it is possible to create some kind of template in which such

personalisation takes place: "Personalized funerals have by now existed long enough that they have begun to develop their own "tradition" in the sense of frequently used elements like the celebration of life theme, shared eulogy, and incorporation of pictures of the deceased" (Garces-Foley, 2006, p. 224). In the next chapters, it will become clear that music should definitely be added to this list of frequently used elements.

3 THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN MUSIC FACILITIES, MUSICAL REPERTOIRES AND FUNERAL RITUALS, 1914–PRESENT [53]

In 2017, I visited a crematorium in the south of the Netherlands. In an empty ceremony room, the crematorium director introduced me to the wide range of audio-visual possibilities. At that moment, a recording of the popular funeral song *Breng me naar het water* (*Bring Me to the Water*) by Marco Borsato and Matt Simons started, and the curtains of the ceremony room closed. The crematorium director explained: "We want people to be focused on the song, not on the beautiful view from the ceremony room."[54] When the lyrics *It was in the early morning* sounded, the lights in the ceremony room turned a warm orange colour, evoking the feeling of sunrise. Next to the light show, there was a video clip, created by the employees of the crematorium, visualising the content of the lyrics. For example, during the lyrics *I'm ready to close my eyes,* pencil drawings of closing eyes were shown. Lights and visuals were directed towards the music and, as such, affected the entire ceremony room.

This example shows some of the possibilities of a highly advanced audio-visual system in a crematorium in the Netherlands. Since the first cremation in the Netherlands, in 1914, funeral music has changed considerably. At the beginning of the 20th century, funeral music consisted mainly of classical and religious music, played on an organ or sung by a choir. Moreover, the possibilities with regard to recorded music – if any – were not as advanced as nowadays. Even though visuals such as (digital) pictures and movies are becoming increasingly important in contemporary funerals, also in combination with music, the focus in this chapter remains on funeral music.

This chapter aims to provide an overview of the historical changes and contemporary developments with regard to funeral music. Throughout the 20th century, not only did the music facilities and musical repertoires change but also the funeral ritual itself. In this chapter, I explore how changes in music facilities, musical repertoires and funeral rituals relate to each other. I explore these relationships diachronically from the first cremation in 1914 up to the present. I was inspired to follow this approach by an article by Brian Parsons, who studied, to cite the title of his article, "the progress of cremation and its influence on music at funerals in England, 1874–2010" (Parsons, 2012). In his article, Parsons shows how the progress of

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[53]Results described in this chapter were also published in Bruin-Mollenhorst and Hoondert (2018) and Bruin-Mollenhorst (2019b).
[54]Personal communication with a staff member of a crematorium, 12 May 2017.

cremation in Britain contributed to the fusion of religious and secular funeral music during funerals. According to Parsons, this was caused by

> firstly, the shifting of the service to the semi-secular environment of crematoria; secondly, the increasing opportunity to include music of significance to the family and the deceased; and thirdly, flexibility towards music choices by officiants. (Parsons, 2012, p. 142)

Before I present the methods and data of this chapter, I will introduce the concept of mediatisation, which will be used to describe how music facilities, musical repertoires and changing funeral rituals relate to each other.

3.1 Mediatisation

As the main question of this study indicates, these changes are not studied to simply map them. Instead, the main focus is on the cultural processes that are part of these changes as these processes will tell us more about contemporary death mentalities.

The perspective that provides the basis for this research was found in the concept of mediatisation, which "tries to capture long-term interrelation processes between media change on the one hand and social and cultural change on the other" (Hepp, Hjarvard, & Lundby, 2010, p. 223). These changes are in a complex interplay with each other and cannot be regarded as being part of a one-way causal relationship. Contrary to mediation, which "stands as the more general term, denoting regular communication processes that do not alter the largescale relationship between media, culture and society" (Hepp et al., 2015, p. 318), mediatisation *does* explore the long-term and interrelatedness of changes in the relationships between media, culture and society. Previous research has placed mediatisation in the context of, for example, politics (Strömback & Esser, 2014), secularisation (Lundby, 2016), and emotion and digital affect cultures (Döveling, Harju, & Sommer, 2018).[55] The ways in which the concept of mediatisation examines the complex *interrelationship* between media change and social and cultural change, without searching for one-way causalities, has provided the basis for this research.

Throughout a century of cremation rituals in the Netherlands, music facilities in crematoria have changed. By music facilities I mean both musical instruments and music recording facilities. At the beginning of the 20th century, musicians and musical instruments

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[55] In 2013, a special issue of Thanatos discussed 'Media & Death', though not specifically mediatisation. See Sumiala and Hakola (2013). From a slightly different perspective, the Human Computer Interaction group also studies technology in end of life; see, for example, Moncur, Bikker, Kasket, and Troyer (2012).

were needed to play music; at the beginning of the 21st century, online streaming services and a variety of music facilities with regard to recorded music have made it possible to listen to music at any place and time.[56]

Not only these facilities but also musical repertoires changed during the 20th century. At the beginning of the 20th century, the repertoire consisted mainly of classical music, such as music composed by Bach or Vivaldi, and socialist or Christian songs. Nowadays, we find a lot of pop music in contemporary funeral music.

In addition to changes in funeral music, the funeral ritual as a whole has also changed considerably. At the beginning of the 20th century, the pillars (see Chapter 2) had a strong influence on funeral rituals at that time. At the beginning of the 21st century, the influence of these pillars has decreased, and a person-centred funeral has become the default.

I will describe the interrelationship between changes in music facilities, musical repertoires and funeral rituals in three parts, as follows: the period from 1914 to 1960, the period from 1960 to 1990, and the period from 1990 to present. As in this chapter *long-term* changes are studied, these periods should be regarded as fluid and not strictly confined to the mentioned years.

The first part of this chapter covers the period from the first cremation in 1914 until 1960. In this period of time, funeral music consisted of live music played on an organ or sung by a soloist or choir. The sources from the first period are scarce. From 1914 to 1954, there was only one crematorium in the Netherlands, located in Westerveld. As mentioned in the introduction, the archive of this crematorium is not accessible to researchers. Therefore, the description of the first half of the 20th century is based on a study of the limited amount of available literature on cremation rituals from that time and an analysis of newspaper reports regarding cremation rituals. This also means that I will mainly use musical funeral repertoires to reflect on this period. Newspapers were accessed via the online database Delpher, which is a database that contains, among other things, digitalised newspapers from 1618 until 2005.[57] I accessed the database using keywords such as 'cremation', 'Westerveld', 'organ', 'music', etc. The newspaper reports often concern funerals of public figures, such as directors, chairmen, teachers and politicians. Although the entrance via newspapers is therefore selective and limited, this source at least partly enabled me to examine the funeral music of the first decades of cremation rituals in the Netherlands. After a first look through the

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[56]For an overview of the changes in the general music market, see Tschmuck (2006). For an overview of history of music in the Netherlands, see Grijp (2001).
[57]https://www.delpher.nl/. See also footnote 21.

newspaper reports, I selected 40 newspaper reports in the timespan 1914–1960 for analysis.

In the second part, which covers the period from 1960 until the 1990s, funeral music consists of preselected combinations of three musical pieces derived from reel-to-reel tapes and cassette tapes. In this part, I will mainly use the results from a survey and interviews with staff of crematoria that were conducted in this research.

The third part of this chapter focuses on music during cremation rituals from the late 1990s until present. As the core of this study concerns *contemporary* funeral music and death mentalities, the third part of this chapter will be the main part. In this third part, I will zoom in on more recent changes in highly advanced music facilities, the broadened musical repertoire and contemporary 'personalised' funeral rituals. I will use data gathered via an online survey, interviews and site visits. Special attention will be paid to how the use of online music services relates to changes in contemporary funeral music.

3.2 First period of cremations in the Netherlands: 1914–1960

In 1914, Dr Christiaan Johannes Vaillant was the first person to be cremated in the Westerveld crematorium. During his funeral, music was played on an organ and sung by a choir (see picture 1). Organ and choir music remained the most common type of funeral music until the 1960s.

Newspaper reports about funeral rituals mentioned who had spoken during the funeral, what music had sounded and sometimes even what well-known people had attended the funeral. A general impression of the funeral could also be part of the reports, stating that the funeral made a 'solemn impression' or that 'people were impressed by the funeral'. The analysis of the newspaper reports shows that in addition to a classical and religious repertoire that was common in the mainly Christian society, a socialist repertoire was also played at cremation rituals. In eight of the 40 selected newspaper reports, socialist songs were found. For example, during the cremation of the chairman of the *Arbeidersvereeniging voor Lijkverbranding* (Labour Association for Body Burning) in 1939, the famous socialist song *Aan de strijders* (*To the Combatants*) was played.[58] During the cremation ritual, various speeches were given by representatives of several associations, including a socialist association. With regard to music, the following was written in the newspaper report: "The organist played *Morgenrood* [Red of Dawn]..., *Aan de strijders* [To the combatants] … and when the coffin went down *Ruh'n in Frieden, alle Seelen*, by Schubert" (translated from Dutch; see picture 2).

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[58]Initially, the term 'body burning' was used. Later on, 'body burning' was changed to 'cremation'.

The advent of the socialist funeral repertoire corresponds with the advent in the general musical landscape in the Netherlands of the genre of folk music that has political aims (Grijp, 2001, pp. 538–540). The rise of this kind of musical repertoire should be seen against the background of the pillarised Dutch society (see Chapter 2). The advent of the socialist funeral repertoire in that period of time not only reflects how the Netherlands was divided into social groups (pillars) but also how these pillars influenced cremation rituals. The pillars had a strong influence on speeches and music during funerals (Cappers, 2012, p. 584; Van Erp et al., 2013, pp. 102–103). As described in the introduction, through the efforts of a large socialist association, cremation became accessible to a larger part of Dutch society. The analysis of the newspaper reports revealed and affirmed that this also became visible in the musical repertoire of cremation rituals. In this first period of cremation rituals in the Netherlands, the advent of the socialist repertoire in Dutch cremation rituals show that socialist groups affected the new ritual of cremation and took a position in the Dutch funerary landscape. It also shows that the monopoly of the Christian churches in Dutch society over funeral rituals was slowly disappearing.

3.3 Second period of cremations in the Netherlands: 1960–1990

Although a 1938 brochure from the first crematorium had already indicated the presence of a gramophone (Van Erp et al., 2013, p. 102), it was not until the 1960s that recorded music was really adapted and that it increasingly replaced live organ music (Bot, 1998, p. 247; Cappers, 2012, pp. 612–613). From that time onwards, the organ was almost exclusively used during Christian funerals to accompany hymn singing. During an interview with organist Taco, who often played during cremation rituals in this period, he stated that the organ repertoire in this period was confined to psalms and hymns. He also mentioned the trend of younger people who did not want organ music, or, as he phrased it, "hated organ music".

Live organ music was increasingly replaced by recorded music. The advent of recorded music could easily have broadened the musical repertoire in the crematorium, as in the second half of the 20th century many musical genres entered Dutch music culture. From the 1960s onwards, the 'era of counterculture', with pop music as its backbone, the rising popularity of French *chansons* and rock-'n-roll music and also the Beatles concert in 1964 in the Netherlands all strongly influenced and broadened the musical landscape in the Netherlands (Grijp, 2001, pp. 644–646). However, in the crematorium, the musical repertoire hardly changed. Instead, the musical repertoire became fixed in combinations of three pieces of music, preselected by the crematorium. Each crematorium had a list of these preselected

combinations. The foreword of one such list explains: "To make it easier to choose, a number of music combinations are preselected, consisting of three pieces of music that are in tune with each other."[59] For example, the fifth preselected combination on the list of the crematorium in Rotterdam consisted of three socialist songs, the ninth a combination of two Gregorian chants and the *Ave Maria* by Johann Sebastian Bach/Charles Gounod and the 17th a combination of music composed by Edvard Grieg. Similar preselected combinations can be found on lists of other crematoria, such as the list of the crematorium in Tilburg, on which the third combination consisted of Gregorian chants and the 16th the music of Grieg.[60]

Whenever a funeral director visited the homes of next of kin to arrange a funeral, he brought the list containing the preselected combinations of music of the crematorium where the funeral would take place. These preselected sets were common until well into the 1980s:

> *People didn't need to think about what kind of music they exactly wanted. They wanted socialist songs? Then they got* Morgenrood *[Red of Dawn] and* Aan de strijders *[To the Combatants]. They wanted classical music? Then they got Adagio, Largo, yeah, that's how it went! If they provided the direction, the combination was already determined.* (Crematorium staff, Renate & Hans)

Even though the musical repertoire in crematoria hardly changed, one exception should be mentioned. The song *Waarheen, waarvoor* (*Where To, Where For*) entered the musical funeral repertoire in the 1970s. The melody of the song was taken from the famous *Amazing Grace.* The chorus of the song reads (freely translated from Dutch): "Where does the road lead us? What is our purpose on earth? Who knows what is behind the stars and moon? How much longer will the night last?"[61] The lyrics contain religious imagery without relating it to church doctrines. The song became part of many preselected combinations and was one of the most popular songs in that period of time.

Initially in the crematorium, the individual musical pieces that were part of the preselected combinations had to be derived from several gramophone recordings or reel-to-reel tapes. A crematorium needed various devices for playing gramophone recordings or reel-

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[59]Cited from the list of preselected combinations of crematorium and cemetery Hofwijk, Rotterdam (2000).
[60]Derived from the list of preselected combinations of the crematorium in Tilburg (1986). For a different study on this list, see Van der Smissen, Steenbakker, Hoondert and Van Zaanen (2018).
[61]Translated from "Waarheen leidt de weg die wij moeten gaan? Waarvoor zijn wij op aard? Wie weet wat er is achter ster en maan? Hoe lang duurt nog de nacht?"

to-reel tapes as there was only little time to prepare music in the busy schedule of the crematorium.[62] In an interview, a crematorium employee remarked:

> *[There were] more reel-to-reel devices that could be used. So, you could switch between devices. But you also had to prepare [the music] for the next ceremony…. And searching for the right songs was a hell of a job.* (Crematorium staff, Renate & Hans)

In the 1980s, the large and heavy reel-to-reel tapes were replaced by smaller cassette tapes.[63] The employees of a crematorium would record the preselected combinations on cassette tapes – combination 1 on tape 1, combination 2 on tape 2, etc. The use of the cassette tapes with the preselected sets of music considerably reduced the workload of crematorium staff:

> *There were a lot of cassette tapes, but it was easier to prepare the music. You didn't have to search for the right song somewhere. Yeah, it was quicker. You could work faster… It really made a difference that we took it from the gramophone record or reel-to-reel tape and put it on a cassette tape: those heavy reel-to-reel tapes also took up a lot of space, you see*. (Crematorium staff, Renate & Hans)

The preselected combinations of recorded music were used during funerals from the 1960s until the 1990s. Funerals of that period can be characterised as fixed and sober (Cappers, 2012, p. 612). I will briefly elaborate on the following four factors that have contributed to the sober and fixed format of funerals in that period of time: the process of depillarisation, the process of the professionalisation of the funeral industry, the rising cremation rate and the avoidance of death.[64] As these factors *together* have contributed to the use of preselected combinations of music, I will only briefly describe each single factor, after which I will show how these are related to the use of preselected combinations.

The first factor is the process of depillarisation. As described, at the beginning of the 20th century, the pillars influenced speeches and music during funerals. However, in the second half of the 20th century, a process of depillarisation began. In this process, the traditional 'pillars' (Roman Catholicism, Protestantism and Socialism) lost their influence on

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[62]Unfortunately, exact numbers on the number of cremations in separate crematoria are not available. Still, interviewees mentioned their busy schedule several times.

[63]Philips had already introduced the cassette tape by the early 1960s, but it took two decades before its use was common in crematoria. For the history of the cassette tape, see: http://vintagecassettes.com/philips/philips.htm (accessed 8 February 2018).

[64]It is beyond the scope of this research to describe all the factors that have contributed to the sober and fixed form of funerals. For research on the history of funerary culture in the Netherlands, see Cappers (2012).

their members (Van Rooden, 2003, p. 123). Secularisation, the process in which churches lost their influence, can be seen as part of this depillarisation.[65] As a result of the depillarisation, in the 1960s, the collective funeral rituals of the social groups started to lose their meaning, and people had to search for other ways of designing the funeral. The answers to questions about the meaning of life and death that the pillars provided were no longer meaningful to the many people who were no longer affiliated with the pillars. Instead, these questions became open, unanswered questions. This explains the popularity of the mentioned song *Waarheen, waarvoor,* as it expresses these questions anew, without providing definite answers.

The second factor is the professionalisation of the funeral sector. From the second half of the 20th century, funeral professionals took over the care for the deceased and the arrangement of the funeral from neighbours and family members (Cappers, 2012, p. 474). These professionals increasingly standardised their offer by using services and material objects offered by other professionals. For example, a coffin was no longer made by the local carpenter, but multiple coffins were ordered at then-existing coffin factories (Cappers, 2012, p. 600). This resulted in uniformity, which also became visible in the functional architecture of crematoria (Klaassens & Groote, 2012) and the uniforms of the employees of funeral undertakers: "[This] uniformity of the funeral transformed into soberness" (Cappers, 2012, p. 606).

The third factor that contributed to the sober and fixed character of funerals is the rising cremation rate, rising from 4% in 1960 to 44% in 1990.[66] This rise might be explained by the approval of cremation by both the Dutch Government in 1954, which until then had only tolerated cremation, and the Roman Catholic Church in 1963 (Roman Catholic Church, 2015; see also Chapter 1). Although there was a growing number of crematoria in the Netherlands – in 1988 there were 32 – the rising cremation rate resulted in tight time schedules in the crematoria to cope with the high number of cremations.[67] A rather impersonal and business-like cremation ritual with speeches, if any, a fixed number of three preselected pieces of music and the usual 'coffee and cake' afterwards in the coffee room of the crematorium had to fit within a maximum of 60 minutes (Cappers, 2012, pp. 612–613; De Leeuw, 2009, p. 72).

The fourth factor that contributed to the sober and fixed cremation ritual is the socio-cultural death mentality of the invisible or forbidden death (see Chapter 1). People often no

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[65]Secularisation can be regarded as part of depillarisation but does not equal depillarisation. See also Chapter 4.
[66]http://www.lvc-online.nl/aantallen(accessed 12 February 2018).
[67]http://www.lvc-online.nl/cremeren-nederland(accessed 12 February 2018).

longer died in their homes accompanied by their relatives but in the medicalised context of the hospital, not surrounded by any relatives (Ariès, 1974, pp. 85–88). The custom of wearing mourning attire also disappeared, and other signs and announcements of death and grief were restricted to the minimum. If there was any grief, it was hidden grief, invisible to others (Ariès, 1974, p. 90; Cappers, 2012, pp. 746–747). With regard to the funeral, the aim was "to reduce to a decent minimum the inevitable operations necessary to dispose of the body…. If a few formalities are maintained, and if a ceremony still marks the departure, it must remain discreet and must avoid emotion" (Ariès, 1974, p. 90).

Altogether, the depillarisation, professionalisation, rising cremation rate and death mentality of the forbidden or avoided death in the second half of the 20th century went hand in hand with the sober and fixed funeral rituals that emerged in that time. In other words, in the process of depillarisation, the quest for new death rituals in the context of death avoidance and the professionalisation of the funeral industry was, at least for the time being, answered by fixed and sober funerals that fitted the tight schedule in the crematorium.

Then, how does this relate to the use of preselected combinations of music? Why had the musical funeral repertoire not broadened, just like the general musical landscape in the Netherlands did? The preselected three pieces of music were both part and a result of the standardisation and professionalisation of funerals. Related to that, from the perspective of the employees of crematoria, the preselected combinations recorded on more convenient cassette tapes contributed to the possibility to perform these rituals under time constraints. From the perspective of next of kin, the preselected combinations of music released them from thinking about single pieces of music for the cremation ritual – once one of the sets had been chosen, the music for the entire cremation ritual was determined. In this way, the preselected combinations made it possible to avoid thinking about the musical part of the funeral and as such fit into Ariès's description of the death mentality of 'avoided death'.

3.4 Third period of cremations in the Netherlands: 1990–present

To study recent changes regarding music facilities and musical repertoires in crematoria, a survey and interviews were conducted. In March 2016, an online survey was distributed among all crematoria (n = 81) that were then members of the National Association of Crematoria (*Landelijke Vereniging van Crematoria*).[68] A total of 38 crematoria responded to the survey, which is a response of 47%.[69] Next to background information about the

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[68]According to the website of this organisation, http://www.lvc-online.nl(accessed 17 March 2016).
[69]One respondent did not finish the survey. Still, the information provided in the partial response was considered sufficiently useful to take into account.

crematoria, the main topics concerned the musical instruments and music facilities with regard to recorded music in the crematoria and the availability of musical playlists on the websites of the crematoria.[70] From the respondents, considering geographical and urban/rural differences, the ages of the crematoria, the availability of instruments and other music facilities and the distribution among the various funeral organisations that own crematoria, I selected crematoria for semi-structured interviews with crematorium directors and other staff members of the crematorium (in the following, they are all referred to as 'crematorium staff').[71] The results of the survey informed the interview questions about the use of the musical instruments, audio-visual systems and online playlists. I also asked interviewees about changes in musical repertoire. Besides the interviewees that were connected to crematoria, I also interviewed staff members of two system integrator companies. These companies build contemporary facilities for recorded music, the so-called audio-visual systems, especially for use in crematoria. In total, I interviewed 10 people about contemporary music facilities and musical repertoires in crematoria – eight interviewees were crematorium staff and two interviewees were staff of system integrator companies.[72]

The data of the interviews are analysed using categories related to the concept of mediatisation. Key terms in the analysis are 'musical instruments', 'music devices', 'musical repertoire', 'funeral ritual', 'attitudes towards death' and related terms.

In the following section, the results of the survey and interviews are used to map the contemporary music facilities and musical repertoires in crematoria. I will discuss musical instruments, musical repertoires and audio-visual systems in crematoria and will subsequently relate these to funeral rituals in the 21st century. This will be followed by elaborating on the role of the internet with regard to contemporary funeral music.

3.4.1 Musical instruments in crematoria

In the survey, respondents were asked about the availability of musical instruments. Of the 38 respondents, 22 crematoria have one ceremony room, and 16 have two or more ceremony rooms. As most of the musical instruments are found in the main ceremony room, I will focus on the availability of musical instruments in this room.

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[70]See Appendix B for an abbreviated and translated version of this survey and Appendix C for relevant data extracted from the survey.

[71]In the Netherlands, at the time of the research, there were three large funeral organisations – DELA, Monuta and Yarden. Together they own over 50 crematoria, which is over 50% of all crematoria in the Netherlands. There are also many other, small organisations with one or more crematoria.

[72]All interviews were semi-structured, focusing on the history and developments of music during funeral rituals, and took 50–75 minutes. The interviews were conducted in crematoria (crematorium staff) and at the office of the system integrator companies (staff of these companies).

Across the 38 crematoria that responded to the survey, there are 15 grand pianos, 14 electronic organs, seven pianos and two pipe organs (see also Appendix C). Only three crematoria do not have any musical instruments. The interviews about the use of the musical instruments reveal that the presence of musical instruments in crematoria does not imply a frequent use of the instruments as, by far, most of the funeral music consists of recorded music. Still, in a minority of the cases, there is live music, for example, when (grand)children sing a song or play the piano. According to crematorium staff member Anja, the frequency of live music "varies from two [times] a day, four to six a week, and then nothing for weeks". Furthermore, sometimes a choir sings at the cremation ritual, especially when the deceased or his or her partner used to be a choir member. In an even smaller minority of cases, musicians are hired to perform during cremation rituals.[73]

Then, why do crematoria invest in the availability of musical instruments if the instruments are only used in a minority of cases? A site visit to a crematorium that had indicated having no instruments illustrates why most crematoria possess instruments and have invested a lot of money in buying a musical instrument even though they are not frequently used:

> *From today on, we have a piano! It's still in the hall, but it will be placed in the ceremony room later today. Often, next of kin call and asked whether there is a piano in the ceremony room. So, they had to take care of the instrument. Now, we have taken care of that, so next of kin don't have to worry about that.* (Crematorium staff, Anja)

That crematoria want to facilitate the musical wishes of the deceased is also visible in the number of organs in crematoria. The large number of organs is surprising as they are almost exclusively used for hymn singing during Christian funerals, which are less frequent due to the processes of secularisation already mentioned. Even though these instruments are less frequently used than (grand)pianos, crematoria still invest in these instruments:

> *I think it just belongs there [in the ceremony room]; it's common that you have them. Yeah, if you want to fulfil the wishes of next of kin, you have to go along…. You want to facilitate it, provide the possibility, give them some options.* (Crematorium staff, Birgit & Simone)

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[73]Unfortunately, precise numbers are not available. Employees of crematoria, when asked about this phenomenon, all indicate that it *does* happen but less frequently than live music performed by next of kin (e.g. a grandson). I also conducted interviews with musicians who have an entrance for 'funeral music' on their website. They all confirm that the frequency in which they are hired to play during funerals is low.

So, even though the musical instruments in crematoria are only used in a minority of cases, crematoria still want to provide them to meet the musical wishes of next of kin.

3.4.2 Musical repertoires

At the end of the 20th century, funeral music started to change. People increasingly brought their own music to the crematorium, and it was no longer obvious that funeral music consisted of music that was preselected by the crematorium. Instead, pop music, especially in the Dutch language, became the dominant genre, but also other musical genres entered the crematorium. These changes must be seen against the background of both changes in the general musical landscape in the Netherlands and changes in funeral rituals.

At the end of the 20th century, pop music became a dominant genre in the Dutch musical landscape, including the rising amount of pop music in the Dutch language and music in dialect languages. In addition to pop music, other genres that had emerged throughout the 20th century also remained part of the musical landscape and were given a more prominent place at festivals and specialised theatres/podia, such as at various jazz festivals (Grijp, 2001, pp. 920–922).

In the same period of time, the sober and fixed funeral rituals started to change (Enklaar, 1995; Venbrux et al., 2008). This is often explained by, among other things, the ongoing processes of secularisation and the influx of migrants, which led to more diverse funerary practices. "As Dutch society has become super-diverse, a wide variety of ideas and practices have emerged both in- and outside religious and ideological movements. These include 'new' perspectives on dying, death and grief" (Mathijssen & Venhorst, 2019, p. 6). The changes are also partly attributed to "the gay community, which (confronted with deaths from AIDS/HIV from the 1980s onwards) organized extravagant funerals and memorial services" (Venbrux et al., 2009, p. 97). Moreover, processes of individualisation have influenced contemporary funerals: "the emphasis in late modernity on individualization and self-fulfillment is reflected in today's funerals centering around identity, celebration of the life, and personal choice" (Adamson & Holloway, 2012, p. 34). Contemporary funerals are centred on the identity of the deceased and the identity of the next of kin in relation to the deceased. In Dutch, they are called *persoonlijke uitvaarten* (personalised funerals).

Music is one of the ways to express identity. Although music can also be used to deal with religion, to regulate emotions, to cover time or to follow tradition (Adamson & Holloway, 2012; Caswell, 2011; Garrido & Davidson, 2016), within contemporary 'personalised funerals', music reminiscent of the deceased plays an important role. The music

that sounded at the funeral was often the favourite music of the deceased or had sounded at important moments in the life of the deceased, such as at a wedding (see also Chapter 4). One of the interviewees remarked on the importance of this 'personal music' as follows:

> *Music is an important part of life. Maybe that's the biggest change! Music is a really important part of life. There are funerals where music is just part of the ceremony. But there are also funerals where music is part of life [of the deceased].* (Crematorium staff, Joanne)

Because of the 'personalisation of funeral music', from the end of the 20th century, people increasingly brought their own musical repertoires to the crematorium. In choosing this personal music, the 'right performance' can be an important criterion. This is, for example, the case when the next of kin like a specific performance the most, or because the deceased always listened to a specific performance, maybe even from a specific CD that for the same reason should also be used during the funeral. Crematorium staff member Joanne explained that sometimes people bring their own music to the crematorium because that particular recording has a characteristic scratch, which, for them, belongs to the performance.

As a result of the personalisation of funeral music, the use of preselected combinations disappeared, and the repertoire broadened. Besides classical music, such as the often-heard *Four Seasons* by Antonio Vivaldi, *Air* by Johann Sebastian Bach and *Adagio* by Tomaso Albinoni, nowadays pop songs are frequently heard during cremation rituals. Popular songs are, for example, *Time to Say Goodbye* by Andrea Bocelli and Sarah Brightman, *Mag ik dan bij jou* (*Can I Be with You*) by Claudia de Breij and *Afscheid nemen bestaat niet* (*Saying Goodbye Does Not Exist*) by Marco Borsato. According to Douglas Davies, the use of popular songs "is an appropriate way of recalling the deceased person's life and of bidding farewell" (Davies, 2017, p. 233). In addition, the 'copy-paste' behaviour of next of kin ("We've heard this song at another funeral") and lyrics that refer to bidding farewell also play an important role (see also Chapter 4).

Besides pop music and classical music, other genres are heard, too:

> *We also have hard-core music, live music, house and all kinds of choirs, from gospel to…male choirs…. In the past…sometimes ceremonies all had the same music. That's gone nowadays, fortunately I would say: it's all customised.* (Crematorium staff, Sarah & Charlotte)

In addition to the broadening of the musical repertoire, the amount of music that sounded during funeral rituals also increased. At the end of the 20th century, the demand for more speeches and music contributed to the extension of the available time in the crematorium (Cappers, 2012, pp. 624–625). Nowadays, next of kin have the possibility to hire the ceremony room for at least one hour and even longer, so they can take as much time as they need to say goodbye to their beloved deceased.

As a consequence of the broadened repertoire, the preselected combinations of three pieces of music became replaced by the so-called *muziekboek* (music book). This is a list containing all the pieces of music that are available in a crematorium. This includes songs from the former sets of preselected music. When staff members of a crematorium note that a piece of music that the next of kin have introduced for a specific funeral might also be played at future funerals, they add the piece to the music book of their crematorium. In this way, next of kin are not forced to bring their own music as the music book provides a growing number of musical pieces available in the crematorium.

At the end of the 20th century, recorded music was no longer played from cassette tapes but from compact discs (CDs). For employees of the crematorium, the advent of the CD had not only made it easier to prepare the music for the next funeral but also to play the music that was brought by the next of kin:

> *It all became easier. You could select number 6, and it played number 6. You didn't have to search as before with the cassette tape or those large reel-to-reel tapes. The CDs were also smaller…. People also began to bring their own music to the crematorium. So, if you were a fan of Marco Borsato, you had CDs of that artist at home. Then you brought some of them to the crematorium and said: 'you have to play number X of this CD and number X of that CD'. That was a lot easier.* (Crematorium staff, Renate & Hans)

Nowadays, in addition to CDs, music is also brought on USB sticks. Moreover, the internet is also often used to transfer digital music files, for example, via services such as WeTransfer. The previously mentioned music books are often available as playlists on the websites of the crematoria. The results of the survey show that 28 of the 38 respondents have a playlist on their website. Of these 28 crematoria, 15 introduced the playlist on their website in the period between 2014 and 2016.

Next of kin who do not know what music to choose for a funeral can select music from these online playlists or select music from online 'funeral playlists' on, for example,

YouTube and Spotify. These easily accessible online playlists might have a directing function in the selection of musical repertoire. For example, next of kin might never have thought of the song *Tears in Heaven* by Eric Clapton, but the presence of this song on the online playlists might inspire them to choose this music for use in the cremation ritual.

3.4.3 Audio-visual systems

The survey showed that all crematoria have an audio-visual system for playing recorded music. Most crematoria (32 of the 38) make use of facilities that have many more applications than only 'playing music'. In the 1980s and 1990s, the music facilities were relatively simple. According to Ronald, a staff member of a company that builds audio-visual systems for crematoria, in the 1980s and 1990s, crematorium staff wanted to be able to play music and to have a microphone and had no further wishes. Nowadays, the music facilities have become part of highly advanced audio-visual systems that are able to deal with the many different types of music files (WAF, FLAC, MP3, etc.) that are nowadays brought to the crematorium by next of kin.

These audio-visual systems support a major part of the services of the crematorium. Such a system contains inter alia subsystems for routing at the car park and through the crematorium, for dealing with audio and video files and for recordings and livestreams of the funeral ritual. It is designed in such a way that it is easy to handle for the staff of the crematorium:

> *What's behind it is very complex, but the company has made it easy for us [staff of crematoria] to control it. We have a touchscreen in the ceremony room that has a very simple programme, with an overview, a playlist…. You can also adjust the volume of the microphone with it, control the doors of the ceremony room and tell the kitchen how many people there are.* (Crematorium staff, Joanne)

The integrated music subsystem has a built-in music quality scan and provides the possibility to edit music. In this way, crematoria are still able to control the quality of the recordings that are brought by next of kin:

> *For example, when people bring their own music, it's often live music [a recording of a concert, not recorded in a studio], with applause at the start and end of the song. So, they play the song in the ceremony room and they hear a very loud cheering. Now we can filter it out.* (System integrator, Jan)

The audio-visual system needs to be updated regularly for various reasons. According to system integrator Ronald, "the updates are based on both the consumer [crematoria] and our continuing contact with the crematoria when we say that it's time to improve the system because the system is far behind the newest technological developments".

For crematoria, it is important that the staff can fully rely on this system. According to various staff members of crematoria, this is because of the high pressure during a funeral – everything must go well because you can say farewell only once. This argument was also mentioned by a staff member of one of the system integrator companies:

> *Audio-visual [technology] is secondary but is used in a primary way. If you are at a business meeting where the screen goes black, you get another screen or go to another room. But in a crematorium, it is primary. If the music fails, or the screen goes black, we really have a problem.* (System integrator, Jan)

Therefore, system integrator companies build the entire system redundantly: if a part of the system fails, another part takes over. In this way, system integrator companies want to meet the demands of the crematoria, while crematoria, in turn, want to meet the wishes of the bereaved:

> *We [employees of crematoria] really try to develop the system. But it's actually that people ask for increasingly more. They know what they want. Yeah, you have to go along. So, our system needs to be improved…. Four years ago, it was not possible for the next of kin to upload the music directly into our system. They had to bring CDs or USB sticks. Now the next of kin can also send the music via the internet. So, the technology really changes… At first, you could only send music, but now you can also send pictures. And time will definitely tell that movies can be sent, too*. (Crematorium staff, Birgit & Simone)

So, the wishes and demands of both crematorium staff and next of kin have become intertwined in the development of the audio-visual system.

3.4.4 Music and the funeral ritual in the 21st century

Having described the contemporary music facilities and the broadening of the musical repertoire in crematoria, it becomes clear that both are aimed at facilitating the wishes of next of kin and the personalisation of the funeral ritual.

However, some tension can be found between the developments of music facilities and the personalisation of the funeral ritual. Even though the music facilities are aimed at, among

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other things, the high (acoustic) quality of the music that sounds during funerals, this can be overruled by the personalisation of the funeral ritual. The focus on the identity of the deceased can be considered more important than the criterion of the quality of a recording and might justify scratches as part of a specific performance. So, although the audio-visual system is designed to guarantee quality, for next of kin quality is not always the most important criterion. Especially funeral music that held meaning for the deceased or that reminds the next of kin of the deceased plays a significant role in the personalisation of the funeral. The personal meaning attributed to a specific recording of a piece of music can overrule the aim of funeral professionals to provide high-quality music recordings.

3.5 Algorithmic culture and contemporary funerals

In the previous section, I mentioned that people transfer funeral music via the internet. In the period from 1990 to the present, the role of the internet has increased. This also becomes visible in, for example, how next of kin can arrange parts of the funeral themselves via the internet and, if desired, even livestream the funeral.

Previous research on the online aspects of death focus on 'death online', for example, how the internet has become a place to remember the dead (see e.g. a special issue on 'Death, Memory and the Human in the Internet Era [Árnason & Komaromy, 2015]). However, until recently, "there [was] virtually no academic research into how the internet is affecting the contemporary funeral" (Walter, Hourize, Moncur, & Pitsillides, 2011–2012, p. 281). In this section, I will explore how the internet affects contemporary funerals. I do not consider the internet, the 'online environment', as separate from funerals as the boundaries between both have become blurred, and they are nowadays part of each other.

To gain a deeper understanding of how the internet has become part of contemporary funeral rituals, I will explain how using the internet in selecting funeral music has influenced funeral rituals and vice versa. To do this, I will introduce the concept of 'algorithmic culture' to see how algorithms have become part of cultural processes and vice versa. This means that I narrow my focus to the ways online algorithms, which often remain invisible, are related to contemporary funeral music and, as such, affect contemporary funeral rituals.

3.5.1 Algorithmic culture

In 2006, Alexander Galloway published his book "Gaming: Essays On Algorithmic Culture". In this book, Galloway considers video games as algorithmic cultural objects and analyses the "aesthetic and political impact of video games as a formal medium" (Galloway, 2006, p. xi). Although nowhere in his book does he offer a definition or other description of what he

means by 'algorithmic culture', the term was coined. What is actually meant by algorithmic culture is often discussed. According to Ted Striphas, one of the leading scholars in the field of algorithmic culture, algorithmic culture is "the enfolding of human thought, conduct, organization and expression into the logic of big data and large-scale computation, a move that alters how the category *culture* has long been practiced, experienced and understood" (Striphas, 2015, p. 396, italics in original). He considers algorithms as "socio-technical assemblages joining together the human and the nonhuman, the cultural and the computational" (Striphas, 2015, p. 408, note 1) and points out, referring to Flusser, that "a key stake in algorithmic culture is the *automation* of cultural decision-making processes, taking the latter significantly out of people's hands" (Striphas, 2015, p. 408, note 1, italics in original). In my view, one cannot say that algorithms have taken cultural decision-making processes *fully* out of people's hands. As Striphas stated, algorithms join *together* the cultural and the computational. Algorithms and computational processes become part of cultural processes just like cultural processes become part of algorithms and computational processes.

These nuances in (working) definitions are recurrent aspects in publications on algorithmic culture. This is not surprising as algorithmic culture has emerged fairly recently as a research subject. Studies on algorithmic culture are, for example, published in the field of cultural studies (e.g. Striphas, 2015) but also in journals such as *Big Data & Society* (e.g. Dourisch, 2016) and *Information and Communication Sciences* (e.g. a special issue on the social power of algorithms; see Beer, 2017). Moreover, as algorithms unfold in innumerable ways, and these processes are often partly covered in a 'black box', it is hard to sharpen *the* definition of algorithmic culture. It is therefore not surprising that studies on algorithmic culture often develop and propose concepts such as 'algorithmic turn', 'algorithmic ideology', 'algorithmic identity' and 'algorithmic life' (Seyfert & Roberge, 2016, pp. 3, 4). What all these concepts have in common is that the adjective *algorithmic* is used to

> highlight a social phenomenon that is driven by and committed to algorithmic systems – which include not just algorithms themselves, but also the computational networks in which they function, the people who design and operate them, the data and users on which they act, and the institutions that provide these services… what makes something algorithmic is that it is produced by or related to an information system committed (both functionally and ideologically) to the computational generation of knowledge or decisions. (Gillespie, 2016, pp. 25, 26)

Once again, algorithmic culture is not interested in the algorithm as a formula but in the processes that are informed by algorithms and other computational processes, and vice versa. As algorithmic culture is not exclusively based on algorithms, I will also use the term 'algorithmic dimension' to describe how algorithms are part of cultural processes.

In the next section, I will explore the algorithmic dimension of funeral music in two ways. First, I elaborate on personal funeral music, that is, music that is related to the identity of the deceased. Second, I will zoom in on funeral music that is selected after searching for funeral music on, for example, Spotify. This focus on algorithmic culture does not imply that *all* funeral music has an algorithmic dimension. However, to explore the algorithmic dimension of funeral music, in the following I will focus on music that is – in one way or another – part of algorithmic culture.

3.5.2 Algorithms and personal funeral music

People, both in everyday life and in searching for funeral music, increasingly make use of online rankings of (funeral) music or use music recommendation systems such as YouTube and Spotify. For example, if I open my Spotify account to listen to music, Spotify will recommend music to listen to next. This recommendation is not a random recommendation but is based on my earlier use of Spotify, and the use of many other Spotify users.[74]

In the context of contemporary personalised funerals, the identity of the deceased is at the centre of the funeral. Part of this identity is their musical identity (see also Chapter 4). The musical identity of the deceased during their lifetime might have been constructed and reconstructed by algorithms that were part of music recommendation systems such as Spotify. As such, algorithms – indirectly – entered the funeral ritual.

However, in the personalised funeral, the identity of the deceased is presented by next of kin. Although this is based on their knowledge about the deceased's musical identity as he/she constructed it during their lifetime, the context of the funeral is also at play in the selection of this 'personal funeral music'. Next of kin do not randomly select one of the favourite musical pieces of the deceased. Even though employees of crematoria encourage people to be creative with regard to the selection of funeral music, the interviewees indicate that next of kin still often ask, "what is common?":

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[74]As Spotify is one of the biggest music recommendation systems and is often used in the Netherlands, I will focus on Spotify. In 2017, it had reached almost a quarter of Dutch society. Apple Music had reached a fifth (retrieved 10 September 2018 from https://www.gfk.com/nl/insights/press-release/gfk-dam-januari-2017-bereik-online-muziekdiensten-apple-music-en-spotify/).

There's an idea of 'how it should be'… Sometimes people choose for a very specific genre within the Dutch repertoire. That's what they really want. They are very conscious of their choice. And still, they are uncertain and ask questions like 'Is it allowed? Because I have never heard it during funerals. Is it not too extraordinary, too 'special'? (Celebrant, Govert)

So, the context of the funeral influences the selection of this 'personal music'. This implies that personal music during a specific funeral is not only related to the musical identity of the deceased but also to the music that sounded at other funerals. Of course, the importance of the funeral frame in selecting personal music might vary from person to person.

3.5.3 Search for: 'Funeral music'

For the selection of funeral music, people also make use of online rankings of funeral music. This often happens when the next of kin do not know what music to select for the funeral and therefore search for some inspiration on the internet. However, most of the time people do not select music from the top 10 'because it was in the top 10 of funeral music'. Instead, people relate the music to the funeral or to a characteristic of the deceased (see also Chapter 4). For example, when the children of a deceased father do not know what music to select and search for some inspiration on a top 50 ranking of funeral music, they can find the Dutch song *Papa* (Daddy) by Stef Bos. If they select this song for the funeral, they would probably not say that they selected this specific song 'because it was on the top 10' but 'because he was our dad'. So, the reason for selecting this song is not directly related to the internet or the rankings but to their personal relation with their father. However, without the online source of inspiration, the next of kin would not have chosen the song *Papa* as it is not the music they usually listen to. So, the internet and the rankings function as sources of inspiration but are not the *reason* for selecting funeral music. They are an invisible source of inspiration that most of the time remains hidden to outsiders and researchers.

In addition to these online rankings, funeral playlists on music recommendation services such as Spotify and YouTube are also used. To gain a deeper understanding of how a search for funeral music on Spotify influences contemporary funeral music, I will first elaborate on how Spotify works.

Spotify recommends music based on the musical characteristics of a song and analyses of online conversations about music. It attempts

to turn both conversations about music, and music itself, into quantifiable data….
Once the world of music has been mapped, the task then becomes to figure out where

each individual listener fits on this map, and their individual movements through music space…. For Spotify, the individual is not only understood in relation to the musical objects, but in relation to his or her prior listening behaviours *and* to other individuals deemed most similar. (Prey, 2017, p. 6, italics in original)

So, to recommend music to the individual listener, Spotify not only uses the musical characteristics of a song and analyses of online conversations about music but also uses the listening behaviour of other listeners.

Users of Spotify can not only find but also (co-)create and share playlists, for example, of their own favourite music, music for a wedding, music for a lazy Sunday or – indeed – music for a funeral. Creators of playlists can decide whether the playlists have a private, collaborative or public status and therefore whether their playlists can be used and found by other Spotify users. The created playlists always provide content for Spotify's algorithms that are part of the music recommendation system. Several of Spotify's algorithms use these data to recommend music that sounds like the music an individual listener usually listens to or that fits the search of the listener in other ways.

This means that Spotify does not take the musical identity of a listener as a fixed, stable identity but as many music identities; the identity is not 'decided' based on age, gender or income but on actual listening behaviour. According to Spotify employee Ajay Kalia, "[A] person's preference will vary by the type of music, by their current activity, by the time of day, and so on…. [We] believe that it's important to recognize that a single music listener is usually many listeners" (Kalia, as cited in Prey, 2017, p. 7). By taking into account the context of the individual listener in the so-called 'contextual turn', the individual listener is no longer a fixed, stable individual. From the perspective of recommendation systems, "people have more in common with other people in the same situation, or with the same goals, than they do with past versions of themselves" (Pagano et al., as cited in Prey, 2017, p. 7).

So, whenever next of kin search for funeral music on Spotify, Spotify will recommend 'funeral music' playlists that are created by other users and that probably match the musical preferences of the next of kin. However, Spotify also makes use of the listening behaviour of other users who searched for funeral music. So, even though people are free to select any kind of music they want and feel that 'all music of the universe' is available on Spotify (or, for example, Pandora or YouTube), algorithms decide what music they will and what music they will not find. Especially when music recommendation systems make use of other users' preferences in the same context (e.g. funerals), there might well be a converging effect of

these algorithms when people search with keywords such as 'funeral music'. However, just as described in the previous section on personal funeral music, the algorithms do not decide what music will sound at a funeral. The next of kin still decide what music they select and whether it matches the musical preferences of the deceased or themselves.

What we see in both personal funeral music and in online searches for more general funeral music is that algorithms have become part of the process of selecting funeral music but do not fully take the decision making process out of the hands of the next of kin.

In presenting this work on funeral music and algorithmic culture, people have often suggested that algorithms 'depersonalise' the personalised funeral. I would argue, however, that this is not the case. Instead, algorithms have become an accepted tool for constructing the personalised funeral in a digital society. They do not 'depersonalise' the personalised funeral ritual as the meaning that is attributed to the selected music becomes personalised after having incorporated algorithms into the selection of funeral music. The selection of contemporary funeral music often takes place within an algorithmic culture, whether during life in the construction of one's musical identity or after life in searching, for example, for 'funeral music' on Spotify.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I used the concepts of mediatisation and algorithmic culture to study funeral music. The first proved useful in studying how, over the long term, changes in music facilities, musical repertoires and funeral rituals relate to each other. The latter concept showed that, even though algorithms often remain invisible in the context of funeral music, algorithms have become part of contemporary processes of selecting funeral music. The benefit of introducing the concept of algorithmic culture within mediatisation research is that the explicit focus on algorithms deepens the understanding of how algorithms have become part of mediatisation processes. Even though algorithmic culture is situated in contemporary, digitalised society, it has become part of the mediatisation processes of long-term interrelated changes in musical facilities, musical repertoires and funeral rituals.

In the first period, from 1914 to 1960, the advent of a socialist musical repertoire reflected how socialist groups, one of the pillars in Dutch society, affected the Dutch funerary landscape. From 1960 to 1990, in the period of fixed and sober rituals, the preselected combinations of three pieces of music reflected how death was avoided as much as possible. This went hand in hand with the use of the cassette tape that facilitated the reproduction of preselected combinations of music in the tight time schedule in crematoria. From 1990 to the

present, music is no longer connected to the so-called pillars or derived from preselected combinations but has become one of the constitutive elements of the personalised funeral. This is partly facilitated by highly advanced audio-visual systems. The development of these systems is not only based on technological developments and the demands of crematoria but also on the wishes of next of kin. Moreover, the system functions as an invisible infrastructure in the crematorium in which various media technologies deeply infiltrate funeral practices.

Remarkable changes with regard to both music facilities and musical repertoires were found in the advent and use of online music recommendation systems. Nowadays, next of kin search for 'funeral music' on recommendation systems such as Spotify. Even though many consider Spotify's suggestions for funeral music as 'a source of inspiration', it is intriguing to realise that by searching for funeral music on Spotify, computational, automated algorithms become part of the process of selecting funeral music. In this way, algorithms enter the ritual design of funerals, and, as such, funerals become part of an algorithmic culture. Even though contemporary funeral rituals are centred on the identity of a person, and this (unique) identity is often key during the funeral, computational, automated processes become part of the process in which the funeral for this unique person is constructed. This does not imply that meanings of 'algorithmically selected music' are related to the algorithmic dimension of the music as meanings are attributed *after* the selection of the funeral music. However, it *does* show that algorithms have become an accepted part of the ways people construct the funeral for their beloved deceased – even though many consider these to be contradictory, algorithmic culture and the move towards more personalised funerals are going hand in hand.

Altogether, throughout the 20th century, changes in music facilities, musical repertoires and funeral rituals reinforced the 'avoidance of death', and the other way around, and gradually gave space to the process of personalisation and vice versa.

4 MUSIC ASYLUMS: ABOUT THE FUNCTIONS OF FUNERAL MUSIC[75]

During the observation of the funeral of a 78-year-old man (C8), the almost 100 people who were present at his funeral listened to Händel's *And He Shall Feed His Flock*, Donizetti's *Tornami a dir che m'ami*, Grönemeyer's *Halt mich* and Puccini's *Nessun dorma*. The deceased loved opera and had even sung in an opera choir. Multiple times during the funeral, eulogists referred to the deceased's musical preferences and cited from the libretti of famous operas. Two daughters of the deceased recalled that their father had always sung opera music when he was at work in his store or while he was having lunch.

When I drove back home after the observation, I wondered about what had happened during the funeral. All the funeral participants had listened to opera, yet this genre was probably not the favourite type of music of the people present during the funeral. Many of them might have disliked the musical repertoire. Still, everyone had remained quiet and listened to the music.

This observation raised the question as to why all the people at the funeral listened to opera, a genre they might dislike. Also, why do people actually listen to music during a funeral ritual? In this chapter, I will study, from a ritual perspective, how music functions in contemporary funeral rituals in the Netherlands. Therefore, I conducted observations of 44 funerals. The field notes of these observations served as data for this research. There will be two separate though strongly cohesive analyses of the data in which music is analysed in relation to its specific place in the funeral and in relation to the announcements of and reflections on funeral music. In the reflection after both analyses, I will make use of data from the interviews with funeral professionals (see also Chapter 1). Before further elaborating on the method, data and analysis, I will first describe the previous research on contemporary funeral music.

4.1 Previous research

There are only a few studies on the topic of music during contemporary funeral rituals in Western societies. One of these studies was conducted by Caswell (2011), who examined the ways in which music was used during funerals in Scotland. She selected three sites in Scotland with diverse histories and social configurations to conduct her research – Stornoway, Edinburgh and Inverness. She interviewed 56 funeral professionals and 10 bereaved individuals and found the following five specific ways in which music was used during

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[75]Results described in this chapter were also published in Bruin-Mollenhorst (2020).

Scottish funerals: the use of music as a means of control, the use of music as a means of inclusion and exclusion, music as a source of collective activity, music as a means of creating or shifting emotion and music as a means of evoking memories of the deceased person. The categories of music as a means of control and music as a means of inclusion and exclusion are related to the use of music in the Free Church of Scotland and the Free Presbyterian Churches. In these churches, religious songs included and excluded funeral participants as not all participants were familiar with the religious songs:

> Non-adherents of the free churches may thus be excluded by their lack of awareness about the proceedings, including their lack of understanding of the place of music and their inability to participate in the unaccompanied singing of psalms. (Caswell, 2011, p. 327)

Both churches used music to direct the focus onto God, not wanting the funeral participants to be distracted by music that stirs up or decreases emotions or music that reminded the participants of the individual life of the deceased.

In another study, Adamson and Holloway (2012) examined the role of music in contemporary funerals in the UK. Based on 29 interviews with funeral professionals countrywide and 46 observations in the North of England, they showed that funeral music contributed to both the creation of a ceremonial event and to the process of meaning-making (Adamson & Holloway, 2012, p. 39). On one hand, "the purpose of music was essentially as a filler, to break up the spoken word, and to cover the times when action was taking place such as entry and exit" (Adamson & Holloway, 2012, p. 43). On the other hand, the research revealed how music was the most common vehicle for the expression of personal meaning, which is important for the contemporary funeral. For example, the next of kin had chosen a specific piece of music to express a relationship or because the music held meaning for the deceased. The authors also found "tentative evidence that for many people, the music chosen and used also evokes and conveys their spirituality" (Adamson & Holloway, 2012, p. 52).

In yet another study, Garrido and Davidson investigated "the extent to which tradition is still important to individuals in making choices for funeral music as opposed to music that is personally meaningful in that it relates to personal memories, values or beliefs" (Garrido & Davidson, 2016a, p. 12). To this end, they interviewed five students and academics at the University of Perth (Western Australia) about their funeral music choices. The researchers identified the following three overall motivations: the desire to follow tradition, to create a specific mood or atmosphere and to express something personal. Garrido and Davidson also

found that, for the participants, it was important to minimise the grief of the mourners and to remember the deceased with joy. In addition, they found that the use of personally significant music carried greater weight than following tradition. In two quantitative follow-up studies, they added a fourth motivation for the selection of funeral music, namely an aesthetic one (Garrido & Davidson, 2016b). Together, the studies revealed that coping styles and music choices were related. For example, people with a religious coping style chose traditional music rather than popular music, and people 'coping with humour' chose popular rather than traditional music (Garrido & Davidson, 2016b, p. 25).

In 2020, Viper, Thyrén and Bojner Horwitz published a paper on the importance of music at farewells and mourning in Sweden. Their study "is interested in how music and music choices function in the processing of grief, before, during and after the death of a close relative, in order to cope with the bereavement (Viper, Thyrén, & Bojner Horwitz, 2020, p. 5). The data collection consisted of two questionnaires and interviews with participants in grief groups. Even though the analysis of the data is not always convincing, the results of this study show that funeral music is important because it evokes positive memories of the deceased; because it facilitates active participation in choosing funeral music together; and because it can be experienced as hopeful, comforting and consoling by choosing this music together (Viper et al., 2020).

Recurring themes in the described studies on funeral music are the importance of music for the ceremony at large and for dealing with religion, emotion, memories and personal meaning. However, the questions that informed the studies were diverse. Caswell studied the *ways* in which music can be *used*; Garrido and Davidson studied the *motivations* for choices of funeral music; Adamson and Holloway studied the *role* of music in funerals and the *meaning* of music for the bereaved; and Viper, Thyrén and Bojner Horwitz studied the *importance* of music. All four studies contained interviews with funeral professionals and/or bereaved individuals, so the answers to the various questions are partly informed by bereaved families or funeral professionals who work with bereaved families on a regular basis. Therefore, the answers were at least partly based on the *intention* of the funeral music as phrased by the bereaved.

In this chapter, I use a performance-based approach – the functions discerned in this study are based on *my* analysis of the actual performance of music during contemporary funerals rituals. This means that intentions, which are in this research understood as the reasons and motivations phrased by next of kin for selecting a specific musical repertoire, are only part of the function when these intentions were explicitly shared during the funeral and

as such influenced the actual performance of the music. So, none of the few intentions phrased after the funeral in conversations with me as a researcher are taken into account in this chapter.[76] With regard to the distinction between function and intention, Grimes states:

> Ritual intentions are "in people's heads." Sometimes intentions come out of mouths in words; sometimes scholars infer them from behavior. A mom says her intention in putting on a birthday party for her daughter is "for the kids to have a great time," … The function, however, is indirect, needing to be inferred…. The function is debatable. (Grimes, 2014, p. 301)

The functions are discerned through the lens of the researcher. In other words, the data from the conducted observations were analysed and interpreted by myself. This interpretation of what happened during the funerals has led to the various discerned functions.

As I am an outsider who neither knew the deceased and the bereaved families nor was involved in the process of preparing the funeral, the focus on the performance of the music during the funeral allowed me to examine the music without being influenced by any knowledge about the intentions with which music was selected or any other information about the deceased and the family.

The performance-based approach also entails that I do not analyse the musical or lyrical characteristics of the funeral music in detail. This is because I approach music as inseparable from its funerary context; in a different context, the function of music would have been different.

4.2 Method

In this research, 44 funeral rituals were observed. The questions that informed these observations were as follows: What repertoire was played? At what point in the funeral did the music sound? Were there other activities while the music sounded? How was the music announced and reflected on? How were the lyrics referred to in other parts of the funeral? And how did the music relate to other funeral elements (e.g. spoken words, lighting candles, passing by the coffin)?

4.3 Data and analysis

During the 44 observed funerals, 235 pieces of music were played, each funeral containing three to 17 pieces of music. During most of the funerals, however, four to seven musical

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[76]In the reflection afterwards, I will use data from interviews. These interviews, however, were not connected to the observed funerals.

pieces were played. The variance in the number of musical pieces during funerals is both dependent on and part of the length of the funeral and the number of people attending the funeral. During funerals with a lot of speeches, there were several musical pieces that alternated with the speeches; when there were only one or two speeches, the number of musical pieces was lower. If there were many people attending the funeral, several pieces of music were played while people left the ceremony room as it is not common to leave the ceremony room in silence. The funeral that contained an exceptionally large number of musical pieces was the funeral of a young girl (B15). This funeral, attended by hundreds of people, took over two hours and contained 17 pieces of music – one while the family with the deceased entered the ceremony room, 11 between the points at which people entered and left the ceremony room and five while people left the ceremony room.

There will be two separate analyses of the 235 pieces of funeral music. In the first analysis, the music is analysed in relation to its specific moment in the funeral. In the second analysis, the announcements of and reflections on funeral music will be analysed. In both analyses, an overview of the music that had sounded during the funeral (see Appendix D) in combination with my field notes of the observations will be used as texts that can be coded. As already mentioned in Chapter 1, in the analysis, initial and axial coding was used (Saldaña, 2009, pp. 81–85, 159–163). In this case, this means that parts of the field notes that point in the direction of the function of funeral music will be identified and compared for similarities and differences, resulting in various categories and subcategories of functions of funeral music. For example, the following was extracted from my field notes of funeral B3:

> *After this, on behalf of the partner, someone shared some memories about how they met each other during dancing classes and how it went on. They had danced a lot to* Rot sind die Rosen. *After this, the funeral leader announced we were going to listen to music again,* Rot sind die Rosen *by Semino Rossi. She [funeral leader] walks toward the coffin, takes a red rose from one of the funeral bouquets and gives it to the partner. He moves his arms above his head when* Rot sind die Rosen *starts. After that, he becomes calmer and looks at the pictures while a PowerPoint presentation is shown.* (Translated extract from field notes, funeral B3)

After having compared this extract with many others, I found similarities between this and other quotes. Just like in many other extracts from my field notes, music sounded in the background of the PowerPoint presentation. This turned out to be one of the functions of music – providing background music. In this extract from funeral B3, the music was related to

the role the music had played during the life of the deceased – she had danced a lot to this music. In extracts from other funerals, the music was related to, for example, the wedding or the favourite music of the deceased. These and other extracts were connected in 'relating to the life/identity of the deceased'. In this way, linkages between data were constructed, and various categories and subcategories were found.

4.4 The moment the music sounds

In this first analysis, the music is analysed in relation to the specific moment the music sounded during the funeral (see Appendix E). As there was always music while people entered and left the ceremony room, and the music during these moments clearly marked the start and end of the funeral, I divided the funeral into the following three parts: the moment people entered the ceremony room, the moment people left the ceremony room, and the period between people entering and leaving the ceremony room. During the observations, 46 musical pieces were played while people entered the ceremony room, as follows: three funerals (A9, B10 and B7) had two pieces played at this moment, and only during one funeral (B9) did the people enter the room in silence. A total of 54 musical pieces were played while people left the ceremony room – five funerals (A13, A15, B10, A15 and B15) had two to five pieces played at this moment. In all other cases, one piece of music was played at these moments. During the 44 observed funerals, 135 musical pieces were played in the period between people entering and leaving the ceremony room. As most of the pieces of music were played during this period, the section on music during this period will be the largest part in this first analysis.

4.4.1 Entering the ceremony room

Music that sounds while people enter the ceremony room marks the start of the funeral. During most of the funerals, the next of kin and the other funeral participants enter the ceremony room at different moments; sometimes next of kin enter the room first, and other times the other participants enter the ceremony room first. The group that enters the ceremony first often enters the room in silence. The music only starts the moment the other group enters. When the next of kin enter the room after the other participants, the other participants rise from their seats the moment the music starts, and the next of kin enter the ceremony room. While the music sounds, people are quiet or whisper only briefly and softly. If the music is still playing while everybody has already taken their places, people look around and seem to get used to the environment of the ceremony room, including the view on the coffin, flowers and picture(s) and the often beautiful view of nature outside. Therefore, I consider the

functions of music at the beginning of the funeral, at least partly, as both marking the start of the funeral and as background music during which people acclimatise to the environment of and the situation in the ceremony room.

4.4.2 Leaving the ceremony room

At the end of the funeral, just before people leave the ceremony room, people walk past the coffin and pay their respects. During the observations, this was always accompanied by music. Music at this moment marks the end of the funeral. When the music starts, people rise from their seats and listen to the music for a few moments. Then, after a sign from the funeral director, people leave the ceremony room after they have passed the coffin and paid their respects. When there are a lot of people attending the funeral, several pieces of music are played or one single piece is repeated multiple times, often at lower volume after the first time. So, when people leave the ceremony room, music not only functions as marking the end of the funeral but also functions as background music.

4.4.3 The period between people entering and leaving the ceremony room

During the period between people entering and leaving the ceremony room, music, for example, is played between two speeches or between a poem and a speech. The analysis has pointed out the following five different functions of these 135 pieces of music: providing background music (62), extending spoken words and actions (15), dealing with emotions (5), 'only' alternating with other funeral elements (53) and presenting identities (74).[77]

In the first category, music functions as background music, such as during the lighting of candles or the sharing of prayer cards or memorial cards. There were no funerals where background music was added to spoken words. Interestingly, during 58 of the total number of 135 pieces of music that played between people entering and leaving the ceremony room, people looked at pictures of the deceased. As people reacted to the pictures by nodding and laughing and showed no reaction with regard to the music, looking at (digital) pictures was the main activity, while the music functioned as background music. For example, during one of the funerals (A12), people were looking at pictures while the song *Imagine* by John Lennon was played. During a picture of a butterfly on the motorcycle of the deceased, two people looked at each other, nodded and whispered *'mooi'* (beautiful).

In the second category, music extends other funeral elements, especially speeches delivered just before the music. The extending function of music does not imply that the

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[77]One piece of music can have multiple functions at the same time, such as both presenting identities and extending spoken words and actions.

entire lyrics extend the other funeral elements. This was, for example, the case during a funeral (B5) where the grandchildren of the deceased emotionally spoke about their love for grandma, followed by the song *Ik heb je lief* (*I Love You*) by Paul de Leeuw. Although the song has a chorus in which *I love you* is repeated several times, it also contains the text *your eyes make me melt, heat me like a fire, I only feel it when you're looking at me, and also Rotterdam gives me this feeling*. This part of the lyrics is not necessarily, and in this case probably not, accurate and applicable to the situation as the reasons why the granddaughter loved her grandmother probably differ from the reasons described in the lyrics. Still, the title and the repetitiveness of the title throughout the song were enough to extend the core of the spoken words. *Why* the grandchildren loved their grandmother was already explained in the preceding speech – the song functions as a musical extension of the core message of the speech. Moreover, music not only extends words but also other actions performed just before the music; this was, for example, the case during a song about lights after lighting candles (B5) or the song *Ons lieve Vrouwke* (a dialect utterance of *Onze lieve vrouwe,* 'Our Lady', referring to Mary) by Lya de Haas after praying the *Hail Mary* (B4).

The third category is found on the level of emotions. Especially after emotional speeches, music functions as a way of dealing with emotions. In this chapter, 'dealing with emotions' is used as an umbrella term for creating, shifting, controlling, evoking, expressing, hiding and regulating emotions.[78] In the aforementioned funeral in which the song *Ik heb je lief* (*I Love You*) by Paul de Leeuw extended the words that were spoken before the song (B5), the music also functioned as a tool to deal with emotions. Not only the speaker but also other funeral participants started to cry softly during the grandchildren's speech. The music after the speech provided the participants both the time and atmosphere to deal with their emotions. This was also the case during a funeral where there was only music and no speeches – during *The Rose,* performed by André Rieu, one of the funeral participants started to cry (B4).

In the fourth category, music alternates with other funeral elements. During one of the observed funerals, *The Rose,* performed by André Rieu, was played between two speeches about the life and characteristics of the deceased (A8). The music had none of the functions described before and only seemed to alternate with various speeches. Here, music is 'just' a building block of the funeral, without having another function. Although it might be argued that the music in this category, and partly also in the category of background music, provides a moment of relaxation or is used to cover the sound of people crying, the data do not provide

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[78]Even though it cannot be argued that people, for example, cry *because* of the music, the music at least provides a time and atmosphere in which people can deal with emotions.

this information.

In the fifth and last category, music presents the identity of the deceased. In many cases, funeral music is part of the 'musical identity' of the deceased, such as when the music is the favourite music of the deceased or the music the deceased used to listen to. Music can also be related to other parts of the identity of the deceased, such as when it deals with religion or family ties. I will come back to the religious identity of the deceased in Chapter 5.

4.5 Musical identity

The latter category raises the question of what I actually mean by identity and, more specifically, 'musical identity'. As a first step towards understanding this 'musical identity' of the deceased, a more elaborate understanding of identity is needed. In this study, identity is seen

> as organized as a patchwork of different specific objects and directions of action. The robust hegemonies that appeared to characterize Modernity have been traded for a blending within one individual life project of several *micro-hegemonies* valid in specific segments of life and behavior, and providing the "most logical" solution (or the "truth") within these segments. People can orient towards entirely different logics in different segments of life – one's political views may not entirely correspond to stances taken in domains such as consumption, education or property. (Blommaert & Varis, 2015, p. 154)

Musical identity can be considered one of the many parts of this patchwork of identity. This encompasses, for instance, musical preferences and listening behaviour. For example, I would describe my musical identity as a lover of classical music, mainly from the Baroque period and earlier. I especially love to listen to this music during relaxing Sunday afternoons, being fully concentrated on the music or while reading a book. However, during a workout at the gym, I would rather not listen to classical music. Parallel to the micro-hegemonies of the patchwork of identity, my musical preferences do not correspond to all segments of my behaviour and identity.[79]

Musical identity is not a fixed, static identity but is a process that is in a constant state of flux, an ongoing 'becoming into being'. Sociomusicologist Simon Frith states:

> My argument here, in short, rests on two premises: first, that identity is *mobile,* a process not a thing, a becoming not a being; second, that our experience of music – of

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[79]This resonates with Spotify's view of their users – a single listener is usually many listeners (see Chapter 3).

music making and music listening – is best understood as an experience of this *self-in-process*. (Frith, 1996, p. 109, italics in original)

Musical identity is not only related to the individual self-in-process but also to group identity. Frith argues that it

is not that social groups agree on values which are then expressed in their cultural activities (the assumption of the homology models) but that they only get to know themselves *as groups* (as a particular organization of individual and social interests, of sameness and difference) *through* cultural activity, through aesthetic judgement. Making music isn't a way of expressing ideas; it is a way of living them. (Frith, 1996, p. 111, italics in original)

In other words, music provides a way of being in the world, both as an experience of the *self-in-process* and as a way of living ideas in relation to a broader socio-cultural context. I will get back to the latter after the second round of analysis.

An important note should be made on this *self-in-process.* During their lifetime, the deceased has *constructed* his/her musical identity. As explained, this ongoing construction takes place within specific socio-cultural contexts, in relation to, for example, friends, family, radio stations and/or music recommendation systems (see also Chapter 3). During the funeral however, this musical identity is *presented* by the next of kin, based on their knowledge of the musical identity of the deceased. The musical identity has become a more fixed identity and is no longer actively being constructed by the deceased but is presented by their next of kin. As such, the musical identity of the deceased as presented during a funeral involves identity transformation – it is the musical identity of the deceased as presented by their next of kin. The process of (musical) identity construction by the deceased himself has come to an end and only finds its form in the musical identity as presented by his next of kin. In other words, the musical identity is no longer being constructed by the deceased in his socio-cultural context but is constructed by this socio-cultural context of which the context of the funeral and the loss of the person has become part. During observations and interviews, this is often phrased as "this is who he was" and "this is how we want to remember him": music signals not only who the deceased was but also how the next of kin (want to) remember him.

So far, this first analysis of funeral music, in which music was analysed in relation to the specific moment the music sounds during the funeral, has revealed several functions. Although the functions of marking the start and end of the funeral are fixed by their places in the funeral, other functions are flexible throughout the funeral. For example, functions of

presenting identity and dealing with emotions can also be found while people enter the ceremony room. This functional flexibility should not only be understood from the perspective of the specific moment of the music during the funeral but also from the perspective of the funeral participants because the functions of music might differ from one person to another. For example, for the bereaved family the song might present the musical identity of the deceased, while for people who were not aware of the musical preferences of the deceased, the music might be an alternation between two speeches. So, a single piece of funeral music might have different functions for different people. As shown in the example of *Ik heb je lief* by Paul de Leeuw, multiple functions can occur at the same time.

4.6 Announcements and reflections

In the second analysis of funeral music, the announcements of and reflections on funeral music were analysed. Sixty-eight out of the total number of 235 songs that sounded during the observed funerals were provided with an announcement or reflection that contained more than only the title (and artist) of the song. All these 68 'elaborated' announcements and reflections explained, often only in a few words, why a specific piece of music was chosen, such as "We are going to listen to *Elephant Song* by Kamahl, which was the favourite song of the deceased" (A7).

The analysis of the content of these 68 elaborated announcements and reflections revealed one main category. In this category, music is related to the deceased (59 out of the 68 announcements and reflections). The other nine announcements and reflections showed no shared characteristics and described the music as, for example, 'an open space for commemoration' or related the music to the moment of saying farewell. In the following, I will zoom in on the first and largest category in which music is – one way or another – related to the deceased. This category contains six sometimes closely related subcategories, as follows: music shows the musical preferences of the deceased (33 out of 59), it reminds others of the deceased (7), elements of the musical piece are related to the deceased (7), the music held special meaning for the deceased (5), the deceased had chosen this music and (5) it fits the character of the deceased (3). For example, during one of the funerals, *Elephant Song* by Kamahl had sounded (A7). During this funeral, someone recounted how the children had recently found a gramophone record of this song, which was the deceased's favourite music. So, this piece of funeral music clearly belonged to the category 'musical preferences of the deceased'. Of course, if an announcement stated only that the music 'reminded others of the deceased', the music might also have been the favourite music of the deceased.

4.7 Musical eulogy

In the context of personalised funerals, it seems to be obvious that, as shown in both analyses, part of the music is related to the deceased. In everyday life, however, people do not easily listen to music that is selected by someone else and that does not necessarily meet his/her own musical preferences. During funerals, the opposite might happen. Whether it is a famous part of Verdi's opera *Nabucco* "because the deceased loved this music" (C6) or a song from the Dutch popular singer Grad Damen, "who was the favourite singer of the deceased" (A2), everybody listens to the music, irrespective of their own musical preferences or aversions to the favourite song of the deceased. As such, the music functions as a tribute to the deceased; for a moment, all funeral participants set aside their own musical preferences and listen to the favourite song of the deceased. I propose the concept of the 'musical eulogy' to deal with this phenomenon. In listening to the musical eulogy, people pay their respects and pay tribute to the deceased.

The construction of the concept of the 'musical eulogy' is inspired by the spoken eulogy that is part of almost all funerals in the Netherlands; only two out of the 44 observed funerals did not contain a spoken eulogy. Bailey and Walter (2016) found the following three aspects that mourners considered important for a spoken eulogy to be 'successful': accuracy, authenticity and performance. "While the eulogy's accuracy is important, even more so – at least for some – is its authenticity, namely that the speaker has personal knowledge of the deceased" (Bailey & Walter, 2016, p. 149). With regard to the performance aspect, the self-control of the nonprofessional eulogist can help other mourners gain control of their emotions, and the eulogist's loss of self-control can encourage other mourners to stop hiding their emotions (Bailey & Walter, 2016, p. 161). However, as by far most funeral music consists of music recordings derived from the mainstream music industry, with studio recordings by famous artists, authenticity and performance (in the sense of self-control) as described by Bailey and Walter are not applicable to the musical eulogy.

In the musical eulogy, accuracy is vital. Contrary to the spoken eulogy, this accuracy is not to be found in the lyrical content. Although neither were lyrics extensively analysed, nor were funeral participants asked about their experience of the music, it can be stated that lyrics are not a full and accurate eulogy. The lyrics are not written for the funeral of a specific person – in most cases not even specifically for use during funerals in general – and therefore do not mention the name of the deceased, their date of birth or important moments in their life. Still, funeral participants might still be able to 'recognise' the deceased in the musical eulogy as funeral music often corresponds to the musical preferences of the deceased or is

90

related to the deceased in another way. For example, during the funeral I described at the beginning of this chapter, it was often said that the deceased loved opera and had sung in an opera choir. After a eulogist, a member of the opera choir, ended his spoken eulogy with a phrase from an opera, we listened to *Tornami a dir che m'ami* from the opera *Don Pasquale* by Donizetti (C8). The text of the song was not explained, and I do not assume that the funeral participants knew the translation, as most Dutch people do not understand the Italian language. Here, the lyrics were not the main focus. The song functioned as a musical eulogy; everybody present listened to the favourite music of the deceased, the music he had loved and used to sing himself. So, the accuracy of the musical eulogy is not related to the lyrical content but to the ways the music relates to the deceased. This accuracy might be very detailed. A staff member of a crematorium, Joanne, explained that sometimes a song should not only be the right song, performed by the right artist, but that it also should be a specific recording, with the characteristic scratch in the recording the deceased used to listen to.

Another feature of most of the musical eulogies, corresponding to the previously described observation that pictures can force music to the background, is that there are no other activities during the music. During the observations, I encountered 40 musical eulogies between entering and leaving the ceremony room. Only 4 of these 40 musical eulogies sounded while people looked at pictures.

4.8 Reflection: Music asylum

Both rounds of analysis have shown that funeral music is often related to factors external to the music. By this, I mean that music is not played 'for its own sake', 'to listen to music' but because it, for example, reminds others of the deceased or marks the start or end of the funeral. To deepen the understanding of how music enables these functions, I will use the concept of music asylums, a concept derived from music sociology. Asylums enable people, in the figurative sense of the word, to temporarily escape real life and enter 'another world'. This transportation also takes place during, for example, a play in the theatre – for a while, spectators are transported to a different place and time and witness the story of, for example, Romeo and Juliet. However, this transportation can also be experienced while listening to music: "music, and more broadly organized sound, is a way of framing, furnishing or removal from the sphere of action and thus a way of creating asylum in or away from a social world" (DeNora, 2013, p. 74).

The concept of music asylum is derived from music sociologist Tia DeNora, who defines the notion of asylum "as a space, either physical or conceptual, that either offers

protection from hostility (a refuge) or, more positively, a space within which to play on/with one's environment, whether alone or in concert with others" (DeNora, 2013, p. 47). According to DeNora, whose asylum framework was inspired by Erving Goffman, asylums are not necessarily asylums made of bricks and mortar but can also be an experience of finding asylum. DeNora writes:

> I use the term 'asylum' to denote respite from distress and a place and time in which it is possible to flourish. By 'flourish' I mean the ability to feel as if one is in the flow of things, to be able to feel creative and to engage in creative play, to enjoy a sense of validation or connection to others, to feel pleasure, perhaps to note the absence, or temporary abatement, of pain. (DeNora, 2013, p. 1)

DeNora distinguishes the following two strategies in which these asylums can be created: by removal activities or by refurnishing activities. Asylums that are created by removal activities, the so-called removals, are "forms of asylum-seeking activity that gain distance or offer 'room from' hostile features of the environment…. Removals do this by physically or symbolically relocating actors in places that are more conducive to wellbeing" (DeNora, 2013, p. 49). In a noisy train, one might, for example, create an asylum by putting on earphones and listening to music – the music has symbolically removed the person to a place more conducive to wellbeing.

In addition to asylums created by removal activities, DeNora distinguishes asylums created by refurnishing activities. In the latter, asylums are created by refurnishing activities that take place *within* a less hospitable room. Contrary to removal activities, the activities in the so-called refurnishings "are acting upon and in their environments and in ways that affect those environments, whether materially or symbolically…. Refurnishing is positive: it contributes something to the collective pot of action's conditions" (DeNora, 2013, p. 50). For example, while I was writing this section, I was working from home, accompanied by a colleague who was working on her own research. Being both a bit tired on a late Friday afternoon, we decided to put on some music to energise both the room and ourselves. In this way, we fled away from the silent room, which was exacerbating our tiredness, and turned it into a place more conducive to doing research at that place and time.

DeNora argues that asylums are conducive to wellbeing:

> In both forms of asylum, individuals and groups can establish ontological security, a sense of at least partial control, opportunities for creativity, pleasure, self-validation, a sense of fitting comfortably into some space, scene or milieu, flow and focus. Where

the strategies of removal and refurnishing differ lies in the relationship between actors and their environments. Actors engaged in refurnishing intervene and thus potentially affect environments: they are participatory agents who help to craft the world in which that they and others operate. (DeNora, 2013, p. 55)

Asylums created by funeral music can be considered as refurnishings as the music is noticed by all people present and affects the entire ceremony room.[80] Then, what does the refurnishing quality of music contribute to funerals? According to DeNora, music is not like a medicine that is given to a patient and that has a more or less predictable outcome, such as lower blood pressure. "Music's powers to help become activated only through the ways that we couple music with other things – postures and physical practices, expectations, beliefs and social relations to name but a few" (DeNora, 2013, p. 138). The present research has shown that funeral music is also related to 'other things', to factors external to the music. These were, as described, the beginning and end of the funeral, the emotional context of the funeral, the variation of funeral elements, the extension of what was said/done during the funeral and – most important in quantitative sense – the identity of the deceased. These have turned out to be part and parcel of contemporary funeral rituals, and these functions are facilitated and constructed by the refurnishing quality of music.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter was centred on the question as to how music functions during contemporary funerals in the Netherlands. Oriented from a performance-based approach, several functions of funeral music were discerned, as follows: marking start or end, providing background music, extending spoken words and actions, dealing with emotions, 'only' alternating with other funeral elements and presenting identities. These functions of music during contemporary funerals in the Netherlands are facilitated and constructed by the refurnishing quality of music.

In this chapter, I proposed the concept of the musical eulogy to deal with the phenomenon that the bereaved listen to funeral music irrespective of their own musical preferences as a way of paying their respects and paying tribute to the deceased. Contrary to the spoken eulogy, in the musical eulogy, accuracy is not found in the lyrical content but in the ways the music relates to the deceased.

The importance of funeral music as a way of expressing the identity of the deceased

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[80]This does not imply that funeral participants cannot perform removal activities by withdrawing through, for example, thinking of something else or being distracted by a beautiful view on a lake.

can be regarded as one of the ways in which contemporary funeral rituals are personalised. In Chapters 2 and 3, I described how the personalisation of funeral rituals emerged and flourished from the end of the 20th century onwards. The importance of the identity function of music for contemporary personalised funeral rituals reinforces the conclusions of the previous chapters.

5 FUNERAL MUSIC BETWEEN HEAVEN AND EARTH[81]

> *[*Ave Maria*] fits death. The same as* Time to Say Goodbye, *actually.* (Funeral director, Jason)

In the previous chapters, I described how the broad variety of musical funeral repertoires is, at least partly, both part and a result of the personalisation of funerals – funeral music is often related to the memories or musical preferences of the deceased. This does not mean that there are no tracks that return repeatedly. Rankings of the most popular funeral music, available on the websites of some Dutch funeral organisations, show the popularity of, for example, *Time to Say Goodbye, Ave Maria*, *Afscheid nemen bestaat niet* (*Saying Goodbye Does Not Exist), Trein naar Niemandsland* (*Train to Nowhere*), *Angels, De weg* (*The Road), My Way* and *Tears in Heaven*.[82] A glance through these songs shows that many of the song titles are related to saying farewell. Another feature of popular funeral music is the occurrence of religious terminology in the song titles and lyrics – songs in which the words 'heaven' and 'angel' appear, and various versions of *Ave Maria,* are frequently found in the upper part of rankings of funeral music. In this chapter, I will explore how these images of 'heaven' and 'angels' are interpreted and what meanings next of kin attribute to *Ave Maria.* Using a religious studies approach, I will first briefly describe the role of Christianity in the Dutch religious landscape and elaborate on the concept of lived religion. After that, I will first present the methods used and describe my findings with regard to the images of 'heaven' and 'angels'. I will reflect on this by using two earlier studies on 'heaven' and 'angels' in funerary culture. This will be followed by the findings with regard to *Ave Maria.*

5.1 Lived religion

The popularity of *Ave Maria* and the lyrical presence of 'heaven' and 'angels' in the upper part of the rankings raises the question as to how this relates to the Dutch religious landscape. Dutch funerary culture is often described as one of the most secularised in Europe (e.g. Venbrux et al., 2009). Then, what is actually meant by secularisation? The Netherlands "is one of the few countries in the world where 'no religion' is the dominant philosophy of life

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[81]Results described in this chapter were also published in Bruin-Mollenhorst (2019a).

[82]This is a selection of popular repertoire according to https://www.yarden.nl/uitvaart-regelen/uitvaartmuziek-aanleveren.htm (accessed 3 December 2018) and https://dela.plechtigheidonline.nl/muziekboek/?genre=Top%2050 (accessed 3 December 2018). These websites also show the artists of the songs. Interviews and observations have affirmed the popularity of this repertoire.

[*levensbeschouwelijke stroming*] (De Hart & Van Houwelingen, 2018, p. 17; translated from Dutch). According to a report on Christianity in the Netherlands, at least three processes are part of the secularisation thesis, as follows: a decline in the number of church members and people who believe in God; a decrease in the influence of Christianity on many aspects of society (e.g. education, politics, media), leading to formerly Christian institutions that let go of their Christian identity (the so-called secularisation of social institutions); and religious communities adjusting their doctrine and design of rituals to modern life, which is described as 'internal secularisation'.[83] These processes, however, can also be regarded as updating or modernising (*bij de tijd brengen)* religion, which has happened throughout the past continuously, often resulting in a revitalisation of religion (De Hart & Van Houwelingen, 2018, p. 146).

So, secularisation does not necessarily mean a decline of religion. Those who are not members of a church or other religious groups "do not necessarily reject spirituality, personal religiosity or notions of transcendence" (Wojtkowiak, 2012, p. 13). Specific words such as 'heaven' and 'angels' can be part of Christianity but are also used by people who do not identify with Christianity. These words do not necessarily evoke the same images as different people have "different discourses about what's happening, depending on cultural context and previous knowledge" (Stringer, 2015, p. 51). In this chapter, I study how next of kin interpret the lyrical presence of 'heaven' and 'angels' and the song *Ave Maria* during contemporary funeral rituals.

I will approach this question through the lens of 'lived religion'. This means that religion is understood both in terms of what individuals choose on their own authority and in terms of religion based on the authority of traditions and institutions (Ammerman, 2016). Sociologist Nancy Ammerman, one of the leading scholars in the field of lived religion, shows that even though the concept of lived religion has emerged to prevent researchers from focusing only on institutionalised religion, studies on lived religion often risk excluding institutionalised religions (Ammerman, 2016). Therefore, I focus on religion both within and outside institutionalised settings. Then, what do I actually mean by religion?

Even though it is not possible to define religion in an all-encompassing, final sense (see e.g. Smith, 1998; Stringer, 2005, 2008), it *is* possible to outline the horizon of how I understand religion in the context of this research. I do not consider religion as being confined to "a unitary, organizationally defined, and relatively stable set of collective beliefs and

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[83]See De Hart and Van Houwelingen (2018) for an overview of church membership and Christian faith in the contemporary Netherlands.

practices" (McGuire, 2008, p. 186). Instead, with McGuire, I wonder what happens "if we think of religion, at the individual level, as an ever-changing, multifaceted, often messy – even contradictory – amalgam of beliefs and practices that are not necessarily those religious institutions consider important" (McGuire, 2008, p. 4). The present research studies one of these practices, namely listening to music during funerals and, more specifically, music that contains the words 'heaven' or 'angel' and *Ave Maria*. In the formerly mainly Christian society of the Netherlands, these songs could have easily been related to Christianity; within Roman Catholic tradition, the *Ave Maria* (*Hail Mary*) is a prayer to the Blessed Virgin Mary. However, during the initial phase of this research, it was found that these songs were performed during contemporary funerals both within and outside an institutionalised religious context. This evokes the question of how next of kin interpret *Ave Maria* and the words 'heaven' and 'angel' in contemporary funeral music.

To make the text easier to read, in the following I will refer to the words 'heaven' and 'angel' without quotation marks.

5.2 Methods

This chapter is based on interviews and observations. During the observations and interviews (see Chapter 1), it was found that the words heaven and angels were regularly part of the lyrics of songs played at funerals. The popular songs included, for example, *Tears in Heaven* by Eric Clapton and *Angels* by Robbie Williams. It was also found that various versions of *Ave Maria* were played at different funerals.

To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the popularity of the lyrical presence of heaven and angels and *Ave Maria* in contemporary funeral music, in depth interviews were conducted. The interviewees were with funeral directors (n = 6), celebrants (n = 7; both religiously affiliated and non-affiliated) and next of kin (n = 5).[84] The interviews were held between July 2017 and March 2019. In processing the data, not only the names of the interviewees, but also any names that were mentioned by the interviewees were changed to protect their privacy (see also Chapter 1 and Appendix A).

The popularity of songs that mention heaven and angels in the lyrics in the observed funerals was compared with online rankings of funeral music. These rankings were created by the three largest funeral organisations in the Netherlands, namely Dela, Monuta and Yarden, and are based on the actual use of music during funerals.[85,] Unfortunately, detailed statistics

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[84]During one of the interviews, two people were interviewed.
[85]According to statements on the websites of companies (e.g. https://www.yarden.nl/blog/actualiteiten/64-meestgedraaide-nummers-uitvaartmuziek.htm) and e-mail correspondence (18-06-2018) with one of the funeral

about the use of the songs were not available, so it is not possible to state exactly how many times, for example, *Tears in Heaven* was played during funerals in the Netherlands in a specific year. However, these rankings confirmed the popularity of the abovementioned songs – they were amongst the top 10 most frequently played funeral music.

5.3 Heaven and angels

During the observations, I encountered many songs that contain lyrical references to heaven and angels, including *Panis angelicus* composed by César Franck (translated lyrics contain 'bread of angels' and 'bread of heaven'), the Gregorian chant *In paradisum* (translated lyrics contain 'May the angels lead you into paradise'), *Angels* by Robbie Williams, *Tears in Heaven* by Eric Clapton, *Stairway to Heaven* by Led Zeppelin, *Roundup Time in Heaven* by Eddy Arnold, *Imagine* by John Lennon (lyrics contain 'Imagine there's no heaven'), *Engeltje* (*Little Angel*) by Jebroer and *Trein naar Niemandsland* (*Train to Nowhere*, lyrics contain 'On its way you hear angels singing. It seems like a dream, that heavenly song.… See how the tunnel lightens you, far until heaven's gate') by Frans Bauer.

Panis angelicus* and *In paradisum* were both played twice during my observations (B9, C9, resp. A8, B4). The four funerals that contained these songs were led by representatives of Christian churches in the Netherlands. The songs were clearly part of a Christian liturgy and were accompanied by other Christian rituals, such as praying the Lord's Prayer.

During an interview with Karlijn, a woman who, in a short period of time, had lost both her brother-in-law and her father, she placed the *Panis angelicus* in a Christian context. The funeral of her father was performed in a Roman Catholic church. During the funeral, the next of kin listened to a recording of the *Panis angelicus* sung by the deceased. Karlijn explained:

> *So, it was going to be a church funeral. The Latin language and the* Panis angelicus *just belonged there.* (Next of kin, Karlijn)[86]

Most of the observed funerals, however, did not clearly relate to Christianity; there was neither a Christian liturgy nor the presence of a priest or another representative of a Christian church. Yet, heaven and angels were part of the lyrical content of songs during many of these funerals, especially in pop songs such as *Tears in Heaven* and *Angels*. The interviews

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organisations.
[86]'Church funeral' (*kerkelijke uitvaart*) is often used to indicate that it concerns a Christian funeral, not necessarily taking place in a church building.

revealed that next of kin often relate the words heaven and angels in contemporary funeral rituals to where the deceased now is, without referring to any Christian context. In an interview with Sanne, who had suddenly lost her husband, I asked her what the song *Angels* by Robbie Williams meant to her. She answered:

> *He's somewhere up there. And he's looking down to see what we're all doing. He's with his father and mother. And with my father. I said, "they'll have a nice time up there, won't they?" He's a nice party-animal up there.* (Next of kin, Sanne)

Even though she did not use the word angel, the song triggered Sanne to talk about how and where her husband is after his death.[87] For Sanne, it was a comforting idea that her husband 'still watches her'.

For Sanne, heaven is located 'somewhere up there'. Other interviews similarly show that there is not always a clear image of where heaven is. In an interview with a celebrant, we talked about the interpretations she encountered during her conversations with next of kin about heaven. She explained:

> *it doesn't matter where that heaven is, whether it is at the beach, or 'up there', or 'down there', or wherever, it doesn't matter that much. They are actually all metaphors.* (Celebrant, Gerda)

In an interview with another celebrant, we talked about how next of kin interpret heaven in funeral music. She explained that most people believe that heaven is a place where you go to after death and that some are convinced that they will meet their beloved ones again. She explained:

> *And if people believe that, and call this 'heaven', then I'll also call it heaven. You have to, yeah, you have to put into words something that cannot be put into words, just because we cannot be sure. This is a restaurant, where you can eat and drink, this is concrete and specific. A heaven is not.… Many people have no detailed image of heaven; they don't know exactly. They hope there is something and that they see their beloved ones again. Heaven, yeah, heaven, it's difficult. It's something we use very easily in the way we speak.* (Celebrant, Plien)

One funeral director showed me the script of a funeral.

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[87]Often, not the entire lyrical content is considered relevant. Most of the time, only a title or a short phrase in a song are the reasons for selecting particular funeral music. See also Bruin-Mollenhorst (2020).

[Interviewer reads from funeral script:] 'But when tomorrow starts without me, please try to understand that an angel came and called my name and took me by the hand and said my place was ready in heaven far above and that I'd have to leave behind all those I dearly love….' [88]

[Interviewee answers:] This poem was the reason for me to ask how they [next of kin] interpreted this. They were convinced there is some kind of eternity and that this [life on earth] is only temporal, but also that it overlaps. Something like that. But they did not believe in Christ who created everything in six days. And yeah, heaven… yeah, everyone understands what you mean by heaven. Do you get my point? You shouldn't see it as 'heaven', 'heaven', but as 'the other'. (Funeral director, Ruben)

What the funeral director was trying to say is that the word heaven often does not refer to heaven in a Christian interpretative framework but to a heaven that is generally seen as a place where the deceased are. It is hard to explain in detail where this heaven is or what it looks like, but it turns out to be a helpful, even consoling metaphor.

The previous quote illustrates how people search for the right words to explain how they understand heaven. Even though the interviewees find it hard to explain, they *do* need and use words such as heaven and angels. The need for the metaphors of heaven and angels are often explained by the comfort these metaphors provide to next of kin. In the words of a funeral director:

There is a paradise, there is a heaven. And that has nothing to do with God. That's how it is. Nowadays, we also speak of … 'eternal light', or 'someone has gone to eternity'. When you say this in a good way during the funeral, it sounds better than at this moment…. Well, yeah, people want to be comforted by music…. They find comfort in 'paradise', 'heaven', 'passage'. (Funeral director, Jason)

The interviews show that the words heaven and angel provide a language that allows next of kin and funeral professionals to express where the deceased now are. Angel gives expression to the idea that the deceased *is* somewhere, that there is some kind of afterlife. Heaven gives expression to an idea of *where* the deceased now is.

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[88]In the funeral, this poem was read in Dutch. It is derived from a longer poem that was originally written by David M. Romano in 1993, titled 'If Tomorrow Starts Without Me'.

5.3.1 Heaven, angels and continuing bonds

Similar findings with regard to heaven and angels in contemporary funerals were found in studies by Tony Walter and Thomas Quartier. In 2011, sociologist Tony Walter analysed online tributes to the young British celebrity Jade Goody after her death. Of the 1109 tributes that were posted in the 36 hours after her death, 167 referred to angels. These tributes referred to, for example, the bible or stated that Jade was 'with the angels.' Some also mentioned that Jade was cared for by angels or proposed that Jade had become an angel herself. However, the tributes that mentioned angels did not always make clear what is actually understood by angels. "Whether Jade's writers see angels as real, symbolic or simply a language that reflects and therefore honors Jade is likewise ambiguous, enabling mourners to use this language without worrying about definitions or doctrines" (Walter, 2011, p. 47). According to Walter, "ambiguity and fluidity of meaning are evident in many of the angel tributes" (Walter, 2011, p. 29).

In 2016, Walter studied the popular belief that the dead become angels (Walter, 2016b), making use of mainly online sources such as Facebook, on which once-human angels (the dead who have become angels) are mentioned. In this study, he analyses the *who*, *what*, *where* and *when* of these angels. The once-human angels, according to Walter, give guidance and support to next of kin:

> The once-human angel thus expresses a continuing bond between the living and the dead, particularly important for younger mourners who may live many decades before joining the deceased in heaven. This notion is taught by neither churches nor popular culture; it is not a creedal belief, but an idea, a meme, that some mourners use – and creatively develop – in particular contexts and may be understood as vernacular religion. (Walter, 2016b, p. 3)

Walter concludes his article with: "It is a genuinely bottom-up vernacular belief, articulating, I argue, younger mourners' experiences of continuing bonds. But it is also possible that it is just a fashion, a fad, a flash in the pan, and will disappear just as fast as it appeared" (Walter, 2016b, p. 23).

A similar conclusion can be found in the work of theologian Thomas Quartier (2011). Quartier studied how the notions of heaven and angels in contemporary death rituals are experienced and interpreted by people who cope with death. He described the lyrical content and various interpretations of angels and heaven in the songs *Angels* and *Tears in Heaven.*

According to Quartier, "two major characteristics of eschatology are reflected in these images: *place* and *relation.* Heaven is the place where the deceased are; and they live on after death like or among angels and can be related to and loved" (Quartier, 2011, p. 48, italics in original). Concerning the use of the words angels and heaven in many funeral rituals, Quartier says: "the *experience* of mourners still makes angels and heaven popular and meaningful, also for secularized people: these images permit them to symbolically experience both the loss and an ongoing relation with the deceased" (Quartier, 2011, p. 53, italics in original).

In sum, according to the studies by both Walter and Quartier, the words heaven and angel in the context of death are used by next of kin to express their ongoing bonds with the deceased. In the words of Walter, "[t]he angelic dead thus provide a positive language and image for articulating continuing bonds between the living and the dead in a secular society" (Walter, 2016a, p. NP). The present study, however, has stressed an important nuance already hinted at by Walter in his 2011 article. In that article, Walter writes that the ambiguity of meaning is evident in the angel tributes to Jade Goody. It is precisely because of this ambiguity that it can be questioned whether we should also speak of heaven and angels as an *image* for articulating a continuing bond or whether we should rather speak of a language or discourse. The present study has shown that even though many people use the *words* heaven and angel, these words function as metaphors for images that are not *shared* images. Instead, what the words refer to or which images they evoke varies from one person to the next and often remains unclear.

So far, this research has shown that next of kin relate heaven and angels to Christianity (in the cases of *In paradisum* and *Panis angelicus*) and to how they continue bonds with the deceased (in the case of pop songs such as *Tears in Heaven* and *Angels*). It should be noted that an interpretation of heaven from a Christian perspective might also be part of the ways next of kin continue bonds with the deceased. Unfortunately, the limited amount of data on the meanings people attribute to *In paradisum* and *Panis angelicus* during Christian funerals does not allow for an extensive analysis. Further research is recommended on this topic to see how the meanings attributed to these songs during Christian funerals relate to a Christian view on heaven (and angels) and on continuing bonds.

In addition to the popularity of the terms heaven and angels in contemporary funeral music, the high position of *Ave Maria* in the rankings also raises questions about how this song relates to religion in the Netherlands nowadays. How does listening to *Ave Maria* during contemporary funerals in the Netherlands relate to religion, and what other meanings are attributed to this song?

5.4 *Ave Maria*: Religion, continuing bonds and personalisation

Ave Maria was the most frequently played piece during the observation of 44 funerals (10 out of 235 pieces of music, while most of the musical pieces are only played once or twice; see Appendix D). These were recordings of compositions of Bach/Gounod or Schubert, performed by Andrea Bocelli, Celine Dion, Maria Callas, Il Divo and Andre Rieu as well as one live performance. Also, the *Ave Maria* by the Israeli singer-songwriter Noa was played twice. For one of the *Ave Marias,* no further details about the composer were available.[89]

Similar to the findings with regard to heaven and angels in contemporary funeral music, various interpretations of *Ave Maria* were found in both the observations and interviews. The analysis showed the following four closely related categories: *Ave Maria* in institutionalised religious settings, the religious dimension of *Ave Maria* related to the religious identity of the deceased, *Ave Maria* related to musical preferences or important moments of the life of the deceased and *Ave Maria* as ritual repertoire.

In the first category, *Ave Maria* was part of an institutionalised religious setting. One of the observed funerals (A8) concerned the funeral of an 88-year-old woman. During the ceremony, which was led by a representative of the Roman Catholic Church, candles were lit while next of kin listened to the Gregorian chant *In paradisum* and the *Ave Maria* by Schubert, performed live by a pianist and soprano. Also, the Lord's Prayer was said, and there was a blessing with holy water. In this funeral, *Ave Maria* was clearly incorporated into a Christian ritual context.

In the second category, the religious dimension of *Ave Maria* was related to the religious identity of the deceased. This is, for example, the case when the deceased had considered him/herself a Christian and was a church member, while other family members do not identify themselves as Christian or are not members of a church.[90] During the planning of the funeral, negotiations take place about which Christian rituals will be performed. These might be, for example, a blessing or the Lord's Prayer. According to many interviewees, elements such as a reading from the bible or saying a prayer are – to use words of interviewees – 'too religious' and not meaningful to them.[91] Music, however, is often an acceptable form for religious expression. This is especially the case with *Ave Maria*:

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[89]See also Appendix D.

[90]In 2017, 50.7% of the people indicated being non-affiliated with institutionalised religion (*geen kerkelijke gezindte)*; for people between 15 and 18, this was 56.5%; for people between 55 and 65, this was 47.7%; and for people over 75 years, this was 28.5% (Schmeets, 2018).

[91]'too religious' is used to indicate that it is 'too Christian'.

> *That's the last thing that remains [from Christianity]. Then, you do not have to say something else about it, but it's still there.* (Celebrant, Henk)

This quote shows that even for secularised people who are not affiliated to a church, *Ave Maria* can still be recognised as a reference to Christianity.

During the funeral (B12) of an 88-year-old woman, one of the speakers ended her speech with the announcement that they were going to listen to a prayer the deceased had said regularly but that they were going to listen to it in the Italian language (sic) – the *Ave Maria* by Andrea Bocelli. Here, the *Ave Maria* that had played an important role in the Christian life of the deceased was not only related to religion but also to the identity of the deceased – it was poised between Christianity and personalisation.

In the third category, *Ave Maria* was related to musical preferences or important moments in the life of the deceased. Just like many other songs, described in Chapter 4, *Ave Maria* was played during funerals because it evoked memories of important moments in the life of the deceased, such as the wedding of the deceased. Here, next of kin – especially when the husband/wife of the deceased is still alive – use *Ave Maria* to evoke memories of the wedding and to celebrate the life of the person who had died. Irrespective of the (possibly) religious context of the wedding, during the funeral the song was used to personalise the funeral – it reflects the deceased person's life. The song had become, as it was often claimed by next of kin, 'a song that belongs to (the life of) the deceased'.

In the interviews, funeral professionals indicated that *Ave Maria* was also commonly selected when next of kin neither knew what *Ave Maria* means nor knew about its Christian background. A celebrant explained:

> *If I tell them [next of kin] it [Ave Maria] is Hail Mary sung in Latin, they don't understand'.* (Celebrant, Henk)[92]

When, for example, the children of a deceased mother want *Ave Maria* to be played at the funeral because the song was also played at the wedding of their parents, the Christian background of the song is often not known. Also at the funeral, this background of the song is not shared as the music is presented as a piece of music that corresponds to the music that was played at the wedding of the deceased. The song is used to evoke memories of (the lived life of) the deceased and to personalise the funeral.

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[92]Regional differences appear. In the (previously) Catholic south of the Netherlands, people might have more contextual knowledge about the *Ave Maria* than in the more secularised west of the country.

In the fourth category, *Ave Maria* can be regarded as ritual repertoire. Here, less clearly formulated meanings of *Ave Maria* were found. The previously cited widow Sanne, who had lost her husband in his early 50s, told me that she had listened to *Ave Maria* during his funeral and considered the song to be very precious. The woman and her late husband were both raised Catholic, and the woman was aware of the Christian roots of the song. However, she and her late husband no longer felt connected to Christianity. When I asked her why she had chosen to listen to *Ave Maria* during her husband's funeral, she answered:

> *We also listened to the* Ave Maria *at our wedding. You know, I think that's also why. And [name of husband] also found it a nice song. Precious.… I think, the* Ave Maria *is,… yeah, I don't know. One way or another, it belongs to funerals or weddings. Yeah, you hear it very often.* (Next of kin, Sanne)

Whether or not next of kin relate *Ave Maria* to Christianity or to memories of the deceased, it is striking to find how many interviewees state that *Ave Maria* 'fits' or 'belongs to' the context of a funeral. In an interview with a funeral director, I asked if he could tell me why so many people select *Ave Maria*. He explained:

> *Tradition. Played at the funerals of their parents, the recognisability of the music, the beautiful singing. It's just a nice piece of music, even though, well, yeah, I think many people don't know [the original Christian background]. They just like it…. It fits death. Just like* Time to Say Goodbye, *actually.* (Funeral director, Jason)

Nowadays, *Ave Maria* 'fits death'. It has become a ritual repertoire that is available to next of kin when they are in need of elements for the funeral ritual.

5.4.1 **Ave Maria** *in funerary tradition*

In the first and second categories, the interpretations of *Ave Maria* are related to Christianity, the tradition in which *Ave Maria* originated. In the third and fourth categories, this seems to be unknown or ignored, or at least irrelevant.

Similar findings were found by Martin Hoondert with regard to the appropriation of Gregorian chant (Hoondert, 2006). Hoondert studied the following three contexts in which Gregorian chant was sung: performances in liturgy, performances in concerts and performances in concert-like liturgy (Christian rituals but easily considered as a concert, e.g. vespers). Hoondert states:

In all three contexts the Gregorian chant refers to the past and the tradition. In liturgy many of the churchgoers will acknowledge the Gregorian chant as part of the tradition in which they find themselves; during a concert, this identification is present to a lesser extent. (Hoondert, 2006, p. 199; translated from Dutch)

Hoondert further states that "because of the decreasing identification with the tradition in which the Gregorian chant emerged, the content is no longer exclusive, but inclusive" (Hoondert, 2006, p. 201; translated from Dutch). This means that the interpretation of the chant is no longer exclusively informed by the Christian context in which the Gregorian chant emerged but that the chant has become a "hermeneutic open space that can be filled with meanings in one's own way" (Hoondert, 2006, p. 201; translated from Dutch). Because of this shift, people who do not identify with the Christian ideology of the Gregorian chant can still participate in the music.

The present study has shown similar findings. In the first and second categories, the meanings attributed to *Ave Maria* by next of kin are related to the tradition in which next of kin and/or the deceased belong. In the third and fourth categories, however, *Ave Maria* is an open space that next of kin fill with meaning in their own way. In the third category, these meanings are related to memories of the deceased. In the fourth category, however, the attributed meanings are related to the context of the funeral itself. Interviewees indicated that *Ave Maria* is chosen because they consider it a suitable piece of music for a funeral, often because they have heard it before during other funerals. In other words, the attributed meanings are not related to the Christian context in which *Ave Maria* emerged and with which next of kin identify themselves but are related to the funerary context in which they have heard *Ave Maria* before. That is, the meanings are not only related to the Christian context but also to the funerary context in which people find themselves.

5.5 Conclusion

In an age in which funerals in the Netherlands are characterised as secularised (Venbrux et al., 2009), one might expect a varied musical repertoire that has nothing to do with institutionalised religion. In reality, in rankings of popular funeral music, *Ave Maria* is often ranked in the top three, and the words heaven and angel frequently occur in the titles and lyrics of popular funeral music.

In this chapter, it was discovered that the interpretation of heaven and angels in contemporary funeral music is related to religion both within and outside institutionalised settings and that they are used as metaphors referring to the afterlife of the deceased. This

does not imply, however, that there is a shared convention about what angels are or where heaven is.

With regard to the interpretations of *Ave Maria* in contemporary funeral rituals, it has become clear that these are related to Christianity, to the religious identity of the deceased, to memories of the deceased or to the context of the funeral itself. In the latter category, *Ave Maria* is a building block for a funeral ritual that 'fits' the context of death. Therefore, *Ave Maria* can be considered a piece of music that is both part of and that constructs the funerary context in which people find themselves.

6 CONCLUSION, BALANCE AND PERSPECTIVES

In this research, I studied practices surrounding funeral music. In the previous chapters, among other things, the technical possibilities, the selection processes of funeral music, the function of funeral music and the meanings attributed to the music have been explored. The ideas behind, and coming from, these practices gave insights into the ways death is dealt with in the Netherlands. Together, the results of the previous chapters enable me to answer the main question of this study: Through the lens of music during contemporary funeral rituals, how is death dealt with in the Netherlands?

In this final chapter, I will first present the main findings of the previous chapters, which all dealt with one of the sub-questions formulated in the introduction of this study. The answers on the sub-questions lead me to one firm conclusion: using the lens of music during contemporary funeral rituals in the Netherlands, this study shows that dealing with death in the Netherlands is strongly related to the ways next of kin continue bonds with their deceased. In this final chapter, I will elaborate on theory on continuing bonds, and show how my research adds to this. Subsequently, I will compare the dominant position of the continuing bonds in this research with outcomes of other studies on contemporary death mentalities. To conclude, I will discuss the findings and results of this study and outline some perspectives for future research.

6.1 Summary of the findings with regard to funeral music

After the introduction chapter on this research and a chapter on funerary culture in the Netherlands, in the third chapter I used a historical perspective to better understand the contemporary practices with regard to funeral music. In that chapter, I explored the long-term interrelated changes in music facilities, musical repertoires and cremation rituals. I have found that changes in music facilities, musical repertoires and funeral rituals intertwine and are linked in a complex interplay. With regard to contemporary funerals, the personalisation of funeral music is a good example of this interplay. Thanks to the possibilities of the highly advanced audio-visual systems in crematoria, next of kin have the option to play any kind of musical repertoire (and any type of music file) that makes the funeral more personal to them. At the root of these systems, however, are not only the wishes of next of kin but also technological developments suggested by the developers of the audio-visual systems and the demands of crematoria managers who want to improve their service. In this complex interplay, there is no one-way causal relationship – the changes in music facilities, musical

repertoires and cremation rituals are dependent on each other. In the third chapter, I also described how algorithms have become an accepted tool in the construction of personalised funeral rituals. This was mainly found when next of kin search for 'funeral music' on music recommendation systems, such as Spotify. Based on algorithms that make use of both one's own listening behaviour and that of other people who searched for 'funeral music', the system suggests music. However, when people decide to play this music during the funeral, the meanings attributed to the music are not related to the music recommendation system but to other aspects (e.g. the relation to the deceased when the song *Papa* (*Daddy*) by Stef Bos is played or the afterlife of the deceased when *Angels* by Robby Williams is played). In this way, algorithms have become an accepted tool in the construction of personalised funeral rituals.

In the fourth chapter, from a performance studies and ritual studies perspective, I studied the functions of funeral music. I distinguished the following functions: marking the start or end of the funeral ritual, providing background music, extending spoken words and actions, dealing with emotions, presenting identities and 'just' alternating with other funeral elements without any of the previously mentioned functions. Music is able to function in these ways by means of its refurnishing quality, meaning that music acts upon and in the environment of the funeral ritual and symbolically affects this environment. In this way, music turns the ritual space into a more hospitable space. With regard to the importance of the function of presenting identities, I proposed the concept of the musical eulogy as a way of paying respect to the deceased. The accuracy of the musical eulogy was, contrary to the spoken eulogy, not found in the lyrical content of the song but in the ways the music relates to the deceased.

In the fifth chapter, I used a religious studies approach. I studied how the terms heaven and angels in the lyrics of funeral music and *Ave Maria* in contemporary funerals are interpreted. I found that people interpret heaven and angels as metaphors referring to the afterlife of the deceased. In some cases, the interpretation was informed by institutionalised religion, while in most of the cases it was not. Even though next of kin use the words heaven and angels to express something of the afterlife of the deceased, there is no shared convention about where heaven is or what angels look like. In the funeral rituals that were part of my research, *Ave Maria* was used in the context of a Christian funeral, was linked to the religious identity of the deceased or was used to evoke memories of the lived life of the deceased. In addition, it was often related to the context of the funeral itself as interviewees considered *Ave Maria* a suitable piece of music for the context of a funeral and stated that the song 'belongs' to the context of the funeral. In this way, *Ave Maria* can be considered a piece of music that is

both part of and constructs the funerary context.

As described in the introduction, this study is mainly situated in the fields of ritual studies and death studies. From the perspective of ritual studies, this study has shown the relevance of developments in (digital) technology for the preparation and performance of rituals (Chapter 3); how music functions within a ritual framework (Chapter 4); and how a discourse of continuing bonds, which is often studied in the context of grief and bereavement therapy, is part of the funeral ritual as well (Chapter 5). From the perspective of death studies, this study has introduced music as a lens to study contemporary death practices, in this case funerals, and related death mentalities. In the next sections of this chapter, I will elaborate on the concept of death mentalities and propose a new characterisation of contemporary death mentalities.

6.2 Continuing bonds

This study has shown how changes in funeral music go hand in hand with changes in both ritual and cultural dynamics. Therefore, it invites further reflection on the ways people deal with death. The main findings of this study show how music is constitutive for the personalisation of the funeral; in all chapters, the importance of both the personalisation of the funeral and the role music plays in this personalisation have been revealed. The personalisation of the funeral is not a goal in itself. Instead, the present study has shown that personalisation is part of the ways next of kin continue their bonds with the deceased. For example, the favourite music of the deceased and music that raises memories about the deceased keep alive the memory of the deceased as he or she was *before* death. In addition, music that evokes an image of the deceased *after* death is part of the idea that the deceased is still somewhere/somehow and can be connected to.

6.2.1 The emergence of the continuing bonds model

The continuing bonds model emerged in psychology in the 20th century in response to earlier models of grief that did not sufficiently account for bereaved people's experiences and in which bonds with the deceased had to be severed. In the continuing bonds model, bonds with the deceased are not severed but sustained. Next of kin experience these continuing bonds by, for example, feeling the presence of the deceased person when it is believed that the deceased person still influences thoughts or behaviour, or when next of kin consciously try to incorporate characteristics or virtues of the deceased person into the self (Klass & Steffen, 2018, p. 4).

Continuing bonds are not experienced only as ideas, feelings or mental constructs

between a bereaved individual and the deceased. Living people play active roles in a complex socio-cultural network, and after their death, their roles change, but they can "still be significant members of families and communities" (Klass & Steffen, 2018, p. 5). So, bonds with the dead are also interpersonal: "they are woven into the complex bonds individuals maintain with intimate others within the communities and the overarching narratives that structure the culture in which their lives and bonds are set" (Klass & Steffen, 2018, p. 7). In other words, continuing bonds are strongly embedded in a socio-cultural network. Continuing bonds also play an important role in finding or constructing meaning (Klass & Steffen, 2018, p. 8). The heaven and angels described in the fifth chapter of this study are an example of how "cultural meanings that are invoked in the narratives on which we draw to frame our connections with the deceased"(Klass & Steffen, 2018, p. 8).

The first major work specifically on continuing bonds was published in 1996 (Klass, Silverman, & Nickman, 1996). In their work, the authors argued that the dominant 20th-century model of dealing with grief had to be expanded. Whereas in the 20th century, *cutting* bonds with the deceased was a dominant model in grief and mourning, in the 1996 publication it was argued that *continuing* bonds with the deceased was a healthy resolution of grief. In the decades after the publication of the book, continuing bonds became the dominant model of healthy grief. In 2018, a further work subsequent to the 1996 publication on continuing bonds was published (Klass & Steffen, 2018). In this publication, characterised by Douglas Davies as an "encyclopedia-like volume for continuing bonds" (back cover of the book), it becomes clear how the concept of continuing bonds has found a solid place in therapeutic settings and has spread its academic wings over many disciplines.

Throughout the years, continuing bonds have been studied in the context of, for example, tattoos (Cadell, Davidson, Greco, MacDonald, & Reid Lambert, 2020), online memorials (Bell, Bailey, & Kennedy, 2015; Irwin, 2015; Kasket, 2012), pet death (Packman, Carmack, & Ronen, 2011–2012; Schmidt et al., 2018) and cross-cultural perspectives (Lalande & Bonanno, 2006; Valentine, 2009). The variety of contexts in which continuing bonds are studied illustrates not only how the notion of continuing bonds has become an important model throughout the broad range of contemporary death studies but also the many ways in which continuing bonds are expressed. In the field of bereavement studies, influential works on how continuing bonds help or hinder adaptation to bereavement have been published by, amongst others, Stroebe and Schut (Schut, Stroebe, Boelen, & Zijerveld, 2006; Stroebe, Abakoumkin, Stroebe, & Schut, 2012; Stroebe, Schut, & Boerner, 2010).

In 2018, religious studies scholar Brenda Mathijssen argued for replacing 'continuing

bonds' with 'transforming bonds' as she found, based on her empirical research, that bonds with the deceased are not so much continued as they are transformed (Mathijssen, 2018). She states that ongoing bonds with the deceased not only show continuity but also discontinuity. This is illustrated by, among other things, the ways next of kin relocate memorial objects in their houses from a more prominent place to a less prominent place. Even though I agree with Mathijssen that continuing bonds are not static bonds, I would argue that continuing bonds are by nature transforming bonds since, as Mathijssen showed, the (social) environment also changes throughout place and time. Continuation does not imply that there cannot be any changes or dynamics in the way this continuation takes shape. Therefore, I prefer 'continuing bonds' over 'transforming bonds'.[93]

The present study contributes to studies on continuing bonds in two ways. Most of the publications in the field of continuing bonds focus on experiences of grief and loss in a shorter or longer period after the loss of a beloved person. Little attention is paid to the role of continuing bonds during funerals. In this study, I found that in the ritual setting of a funeral, which in the Netherlands is performed only a few days after death, part of contemporary funeral music can be understood and interpreted from the perspective of continuing bonds. This raises the question of when next of kin start experiencing continuing bonds. Even though most research on continuing bonds takes place in the context of grief and bereavement studies, often in therapeutical settings, the findings of the present research challenge overthinking the study of continuing bonds in shorter periods after death or maybe even before death (e.g. when people are in a coma or suffer from dementia).

With regard to continuing bonds theory, this study also raises the question as to what is meant by 'the dead' in stating that next of kin 'continue bonds with the dead'. In the fourth chapter, I described how funeral music evokes memories of the lived life of the deceased, for example, of holidays or other special moments in the life of the deceased. In the fifth chapter, I found that funeral music expresses ideas about the afterlife of the deceased, especially by referring to heaven. So, the experience of continuing bonds via funeral music concerns both the deceased *before* death and *after* death. This invites further exploration of the concept of 'the dead' in continuing bonds theory.

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[93]I will use 'continuing bonds' to refer both to the experience of these bonds and to the model of continuing bonds.

6.2.2 Continuing bonds against death?

So far, the lens of funeral music has shown that the experience of continuing bonds plays an important role in the ways people nowadays deal with death. To further reflect on this, I will use the work of theologian and anthropologist Douglas Davies, one of the pioneers in the field of death studies, who introduced the – as he calls it – 'theory of words against death' (Davies, 2017). 'Words against death' is "a form of positive rhetoric of death, grounded in theologies and liturgies, through which death, bereavement and afterlife beliefs are formulated and expressed" (Davies, 2017, p. 251). In this theory, Davies argues that in people's responses to death and grief they use words in which they do not "let death have the last word" (Davies, 2005, p. 20). These words might be part of poems that express loss and survival, words that provide a religious meaning of death or words that comfort the bereaved. Even expressions without words, such as music without words, memorials or (other) art works can be considered as being 'against death' when they confront death with hope and comfort (Bailey & Walter, 2016, p. 154). So, in his theory of 'words against death', it is not the *content* of the words but their rhetorical power: "the power of words within the power of ritual broadly conceived" (Davies 2017, p. 267). As already mentioned in the first chapter of this research, Davies states that people often ask for popular songs because they consider them "an appropriate way of recalling the deceased person's life … In these popular items evocative words and music reflect something of life shared together and of the personality of the deceased" (Davies, 2017, p. 233).

In response to Davies's theory on 'words against death', Bailey and Walter argued "that funerals symbolically conquer death not only through *words* delivered by ritual specialists, but also through those who knew the deceased *congregating* and *speaking*" (Bailey & Walter, 2016, p. 149, italics in original). Therefore, they do not speak of 'words against death' but of 'funerals against death' in which "emotional and social are as important as linguistic dimensions in producing funeral ritual" (Bailey & Walter, 2016, p. 162).

The present study partly strengthens the arguments of Bailey and Walter and of Davies with regard to the 'against death' theory but also adds a nuance about 'words', in this case words that are part of the lyrics of funeral music. Davies already argued that in the 'words against death' theory, it is not about the *content* of the words, and Bailey and Walter developed this argument further by stating that emotional and social dimensions are as important as linguistic dimensions. This study confirms that it is not necessarily about the *content* of the lyrics since sometimes only a title, a word or even nothing of the lyrical content

is 'true' or important as the song as a whole represents part of the deceased person's identity. In the third chapter, I showed that the context of the funeral, the emotions that are at play or the (musical representation of the) deceased person's identity often force the lyrics of the song to the background. Therefore, I would argue that the linguistic dimensions are not always *as important* as the emotional and social dimensions; they often turn out be *less* important than the emotional and social dimensions.

In addition, another nuance should be noted. In 2014, a special issue of the *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* (in 2017 this journal was renamed NTT Journal for Theology and the Study of Religion) was centred on the theme of death and consolation. In the foreword, philosopher Christoph Jedan and anthropologist Eric Venbrux wrote:

> From the perspective of consolation, one can question whether this description [of words against death] is adequate: with regard to consolation, death is not an opponent, but a reality that one needs to accept or to integrate in one's own life. (Jedan & Venbrux, 2014, p. 3)

Other authors in this volume also questioned whether practices around death and dying are 'against' death. Indologist and ritual studies scholar Tineke Nugteren questions whether culture-specific processes of consolation are 'against death' or 'go with death' (Nugteren, 2014, p. 86). Nugteren derived the terminology *tegen de dood in* (against death) and *met de dood mee* (with death) from the Sanskrit terminology 'pratiloma' and 'anuloma', meaning brushing in the wrong direction and brushing in the right direction, respectively. Theologian and musicologist Martin Hoondert raises the question of whether 'comfort music' during cremation rituals, which he calls 'sounds against death', should be regarded as a denial of death or an expression of hope (Hoondert, 2014, p. 131).

Indeed, one might question whether 'against' death is adequate. If one says a prayer for the afterlife of the deceased, should this be regarded as 'against' death because there is an afterlife, and death therefore is not a definite ending? Or should it be regarded as 'with' death as it follows the dead in their journey after death? When can we actually speak of 'with death' – when we speak of death as a definite ending?[94] Even though the term 'against death' is problematic, the theory behind it is still useful. If practices against death – as Davies argues – are practices in which next of kin do not let death have the last word, in my view this does not imply that the notion of 'against death' always equals or entails an element of resistance or

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[94] Thanks to the members of the DONE network for this suggestion during a discussion of my work at one of our meetings.

regards death as an opponent. Both the aforementioned questions in the NTT volume and the present study show that the focus is not so much on death and the dead, and how and where the dead now are, but on the living and how the living deal with loss and *their* interpretation of where and how the dead now are. So, 'against death' is not about the dead but is about the living and how they deal with the dead.

6.3 Towards a new characterisation of contemporary death mentalities

In Chapter 1, I explained that death mentalities consist of death-related practices and ideas that inform and come from these practices. So far, the study of the *practice* or *performance* of funeral music in contemporary funerals has shown that most of the ideas connected to these practices can be related to the ways next of kin continue bonds with the deceased. Then, how does this relate to the death mentalities as described by Ariès, Jacobsen and Walter? And, to what extent – if any - are their labels of 'forbidden death', 'spectacular death' and 'pervasive dead' applicable to the findings of the current study?

In the next section, I will first relate the findings of the current study to the death mentalities as described by Ariès, Jacobsen and Walter. This will be followed by a proposal for a new characterisation of contemporary death mentalities. Subsequently, I will give an overview of the limitations of the applicability of characterisations of death mentalities. As Ariès conducted a historical study and died in 1984, I will relate the findings of the present research only to his most recent mentality of 'forbidden death' or, as it is also called, the denial or taboo of death.

6.3.1. Death mentalities: Similarities and differences

How does Ariès's forbidden death, or 'death denial' (see Chapter 1), relate to the focus on continuing bonds in contemporary responses to death? On one hand, as pointed out in this research, dealing with death is neither forbidden nor denied; nowadays, the deceased remains part of the thoughts and behaviour of next of kin and as such remains in his/her social network. On the other hand, however, this attitude can be regarded as a 'denial' of death as death is turned into something more comfortable, namely the experience of a continuing bond with beloved people. Is the discourse around continuing bonds not some kind of word deodorant that hides or blurs an uncomfortableness with death?[95] Are those comforting words and ideas about how the deceased live on in the hearts of next of kin and in their social networks a romanticised, cultural pattern that is easily taken over from one mourner to

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[95]See https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2019/08/06/het-woord-lijk-is-ten-dode-opgeschreven-onterecht-a3969288.

another? Pushing it even further, is this continuing bonds discourse the new standardised response to death? Regarded as such, the continuing bonds discourse contains an element of denial.

The emphasis on continuing bonds that was found in this research was also found in the death mentality of 'pervasive dead' as described by Walter (2019). As I described in the introduction of the current study, Walter argues that, even though the dead (bodies) are physically removed, the *idea* of the dead is pervasive. Similar to my previous description of Ariès's death denial, Walter also argues that his proposed death mentality of the pervasive dead can co-exist with death denial:

> Perhaps the dead can remain present in society because the emphasis – not least in contemporary 'life-centred' funerals – is placed on the dead 'living on' rather than being dead. The pervasive dead can therefore co-exist with death denial. (Walter, 2019, p. 401)

The results of the present study show similarities with both Walter's emphasis on the dead 'living on' rather than being dead and the co-existence of continuing bonds and death denial.

The death mentality of 'spectacular death' by Jacobsen, as described in the introduction of this study, involves, according to Jacobsen, different parts of the domain of death, such as cemeteries, disposal practices, relations between the living and the dead, place and time of dying (Jacobsen, 2016, p. 5). Jacobsen states that something changed in regard to this domain of death, "which therefore not only deserves a new signifying label but perhaps also an entirely new vocabulary to capture these many changes" (Jacobsen, 2016, p. 14). Indeed, these changes – such as an increase in mediated or mediatised death and the so-called palliative care revolution – deserve a new label, or at least reflection on the already-existing labels or characterisations of death mentalities. Jacobsen's suggested label/characterisation of 'spectacular death' is mainly based on death in media, for which the characterisation seems to fit. Yet, he states that his suggestion of spectacular death covers *all* domains of death. The results of the present study on funeral music, however, do not seem to fit the label of 'spectacular death'; there is little or nothing spectacular about the ideas and practices related to funeral music. This raises the question of whether it is possible to merge these various parts of the domain of death. Is it possible to formulate a characterisation of death mentalities that covers both the mediated death in, for example, television programmes such as CSI and Bones and death in real life when a beloved one has died?

Sociologist Ruth Penfold-Mounce studied death in popular culture and distinguished

the following three types of dead: the Undead, the authentic dead and the real dead (Penfold-Mounce, 2018). "As an embodiment of death, the Undead are monstrous animated corpses that have captivated public fascination within popular culture for decades as well as in literature and myth long before that" (Penfold-Mounce, 2018, p. 63). The Undead are, for example, reanimated corpses, vampires and zombies. According to Penfold-Mounce, "The Undead as morbid sensibility and within the confines of morbid space, safe and provocative, inspires and challenges the audience to engage with shared fears relating to the body and selfhood alongside concerns about death" (Penfold-Mounce, 2018, p. 86). The Undead differ from the authentic dead: "The authentic dead, in contrast to the Undead entertaining corpse, mostly appear in crime-focused television shows where they lie inanimate" (Penfold-Mounce, 2018, p. 96). These corpses are often viewed through the lens of experts, such as detectives or professional forensic scientists. In this way, the viewers are offered an "imagined sense of control over not only crime and criminality… but also over death itself" (Penfold-Mounce, 2018, p. 106). The real dead in media are the actual dead, reported, for example, in news items:

> The dead in the media outside of popular culture do not challenge death denial or death taboo in the way that the authentic dead can or how the Undead provide safe and provocative morbid space for morbid sensibilities. Instead, the new mediated dead remain controversial and uncomfortable viewing. (Penfold-Mounce, 2018, p. 107)

According to Penfold-Mounce, the authentic dead in popular culture challenge the debates about death denial or the taboo of death. However, they remain in "the safe confines of popular culture defined morbid space where considering death has no direct consequences" (Penfold-Mounce, 2018, p. 109). Therefore, the ways death is dealt with in popular culture *does* challenge the death taboo thesis, but this does not tell about the ways death is dealt with outside the safe confines of popular culture (see also Penfold-Mounce, 2018, pp. 87–111).

Here we see what is problematic with Jacobsen's characterisation of spectacular death. In his 'spectacular death', he easily merges the mediated death in CSI and Bones and the death of beloved ones in real life. However, the insights of Penfold-Mounce show that it is hard to merge these different types of dead as the death of beloved ones does *not* take place in the 'safe confines' of popular culture or the media. Jacobsen's proposed characterisation of 'spectacular death' might well fit the mediatised death and the deaths that take place in the 'safe confines' at arm's length from real life but does not fit how people deal with death in

real life. The description of 'spectacular death' is not adequate as an overarching description that covers *all* parts of the domain of death.

6.3.2 Continuing bonds mentality

We have seen how Ariès and Jacobsen used a characterisation of death mentalities that involved the word 'death' (taboo of death, spectacular death) and how Walter shifted the focus from 'death' to 'the dead' (pervasive dead). In my research, I found that in contemporary death mentalities the focus is not only on death or the dead but also on the living and how they deal with death and the dead in their lives.[96] Through the lens of funeral music, the continuing bonds discourse has emerged as the most important element of contemporary death mentalities. Therefore, I propose to characterise this mentality as the continuing bonds mentality. Note that I do not equate the theory of continuing bonds with the continuing bonds mentality – the latter is a description, a label to describe the dominant position of the discourse of continuing bonds in death-related practices and ideas. As stated at the end of paragraph 1.2.2, this characterization of contemporary death mentalities concerns death mentality on a micro-level and is therefore not necessarily applicable to 'Western Europe' or the '21st century'.

In this new characterisation, contrary to the earlier mentalities described by Ariès, Walter and Jacobsen, the words 'death' and 'dead' are no longer present. Instead, 'continuing bonds' stresses that this death mentality concerns not only the dead but also – and maybe even more so – the living in that bonds with the dead only continue through the efforts of the living. In this way, the continuing bonds mentality differs from Walter's suggestion of the 'pervasive dead'.

The ways in which bonds are continued are diverse and might, for example, be co-established by digitalised, automated processes (e.g. when Spotify recommends a song that recalls the deceased). In the continuing bonds mentality, 'the dead' concerns both the dead *before* death (memories of the lived lives of the deceased, see Chapter 3) and the dead *after* death (the dead who are thought to be somewhere and somehow, see Chapter 4). This characterisation of the continuing bonds mentality does not imply that continuing bonds are a new phenomenon. In other cultures, practices of continuing bonds can be found in, for example, ancestor veneration.

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[96]I am aware of the fact that developments in palliative care might indicate that there is also more attention on the physical death or the dead body. However, this was not found via the lens of funeral music.

6.3.3 Limitations of the concept of death mentalities

The proposed characterisation of the continuing bonds mentality comes with some important notes on the concept of death mentalities. In the previous sections, I have described how the results of the present research relate to other characterisations of (recent) death mentalities. However, as already indicated, it is important to realise that the described mentalities are not as coherent as they seem to be. Death mentalities are found in a complex socio-cultural network. Each different lens through which death mentalities are studied (e.g. death bed rituals, eulogies, mediated death or music) is part and a result of the socio-cultural network in which these death mentalities have taken shape, and every single lens shows only a part of this death mentality, namely the part that becomes visible through that lens. Ariès, who focused on Western societies, mainly used cemeteries, representations of death in art and rituals surrounding the dying and the deathbed as a lens to study death mentalities from the middle ages to the 1970s. Walter used the lens of the body-mourners-spirit systems in contemporary Britain to find his characterisation of the 'pervasive dead'. Jacobsen, although he also mentions the re-ritualisation of death and the palliative care revolution, seems to base his characterisation of 'spectacular death' mainly on the mediated or mediatised visibility of death. The present study has shed light on contemporary death mentalities in the Netherlands through the lens of funeral music. This is a much smaller focus in terms of both place and time, than, for example, Ariès. Contrary to Ariès, this study does not claim to provide an overarching characterisations of death mentalities 'in Western Europe' or 'in the 21st century. Instead, it has shed light on death mentalities on a micro-level, by using the lens of funeral music during contemporary funeral music in the Netherlands. Different lenses, in the same or different geographical areas, might well lead to different characterisations of death mentalities. This also means that a 'new' characterisation of death mentalities does not necessarily replace existing ones. Rather, it "supplements and/or conflicts with them in death's evolving cultural, technological, institutional and discursive landscape" (Walter, 2019, p. 399). Characterisations found via different lenses might well co-exist.

The limitations of and differences between all studies on death mentalities indicate the complexity of death mentalities on a conceptual level. Characterising death mentalities with one or two words seems to imply that death mentalities *can* be described as a coherent whole. In reality, however, death mentalities are a complex of often paradoxical ideas and practices surrounding death (see also Kellehear, 1984). One might even question how useful it is to speak of death mentalities that overarch all parts of the domain of death, especially in times when death is confronted with ongoing processes of medicalisation, professionalisation and

mediatisation. One has to be aware of the limited range of applicability of a specific characterisation of death mentalities that comes from a specific lens; for example, the proposed characterisation of the continuing bonds mentality does not cover death in horror movies, just like Jacobsen's characterisation of spectacular death does not cover the actual dead. My plea for scholars who propose a characterisation of contemporary death mentalities is to make clear to which part(s) of the domain of death the characterisation is applicable. If one aims to propose an overarching death mentality that covers all domains of death, one has to conduct a multidisciplinary study of all parts of the domain of death in specific times and places. After that, the question remains whether it is possible to capture a characterisation of death mentalities in one or two words – I once again note that death mentalities are a complex whole of paradoxical elements and are less coherent than they might seem.

6.4 Discussion and recommendations for future research

Based on both the findings and the limitations of the current study, in this section I will highlight some directions for future research.

This research has studied funeral music in the Netherlands. Therefore, the research has a very specific focus on funerary practices in the West-European part of the world. This does not imply that the results are representative of other West-European countries. Every country, and even every region or local community, has its own funerary practices (see also Venbrux et al., 2013). The present research did not include an international comparison of funeral music nor explored regional differences. However, as described in the fourth chapter in the example of the *Ons lieve Vrouwke* (a regional hymn devoted to Mary), it was found that regional songs, sometimes even in a dialect language, play an important role during contemporary funerals. Further research on this topic might reveal the role of these and other socio-demographic factors in the variety of funerary practices within the Netherlands.

In this research, the retrieved data all concern the funerals of Dutch people without a migration background. This means that the present research does not include the study of the full range of all funerary practices in the multicultural Dutch society. Therefore, further research on musical practices in the multicultural Netherlands is recommended to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the variety of ways in which death is dealt with in the Netherlands. This might be a study on differences and similarities between musical practices in funerals with different cultural backgrounds but might also be a study on how musical practices from one cultural background affect practices from another cultural background, and maybe even how they become merged.

Moreover, the focus on crematoria limits the applicability of the results. The crematorium is a more or less neutral place; it is not linked to one specific religion, denomination or group. Although the crematorium does not exclude groups, some groups or religions, such as Islam, might avoid or forbid cremation.[97] Different results would have been found had the scope been broadened, for example, if Christian churches had been included. One of the funerary trends in the Netherlands is found in the change of location where the funeral ritual is performed. People are increasingly selecting a favourite pub or restaurant as a location for the funeral. Here, the audio-visual possibilities differ from the possibilities in crematoria. Moreover, the environment might also influence the kind of music that is played. Further research is recommended on this topic.

Initially, this research included a more elaborate study on live music during contemporary funerals. I conducted interviews with various musicians and other people who are involved in live music during funerals. However, during the research, I found that live music does not frequently occur during contemporary funerals. Therefore, I decided to abandon this focus and shift my attention to the more dominant questions that emerged during the research. However, the interviews I conducted show that live music has some benefits over recorded music, such as the possibility to tune in on the emotions that are at play. A study on the advantages and disadvantages of live music during funerals might improve the understanding of the role music plays in dealing with emotions during funerals.

Partly related to this is the aspect of money. Here, many questions can be raised to find out how the expenses of death and the dead relate to cultural values related to death (see also Walter, 2020, pp. 47–52). Why *do* people invest in mourning flowers, which are expensive and will disappear in a few days, and do *not* invest in live music, which can play an important role in dealing with emotions and, to cite a musician I interviewed, 'adds something to the environment'? Would people be willing to pay for music if they benefited from it, emotionally or in other ways? And why do people spend a lot of money on a more beautiful coffin or flowers, while (live) funeral music seems to play a bigger role in the personalisation of contemporary funerals, which is so important to the bereaved?

As described in Chapter 2, funerals are prepared, and funeral music is selected, by the people who are in charge of planning the funeral; usually these are the closest relatives. As argued in this study, music is often selected to personalise the funeral, such as by evoking

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[97]If I had included churches, this might have uncovered different musical developments as audio-visual systems in churches are presumably less used and less advanced than contemporary audio-visual systems in crematoria, and organs are presumably more frequently used in churches than in crematoria.

memories of the deceased. This means that the memories connected to the music are the memories of the family members who are in charge of preparing the funeral. In a way, it might be argued that this excludes other participants from the funeral as they might not share these memories. Even when these memories are explained in an announcement or reflections, the music will not remind the other funeral participants of the deceased. They are excluded from this 'personalisation' of the funeral. So, the ways in which contemporary funerals are personalised raise questions about both the 'power' of the family and the inclusivity of the personalisation. A study on the ways in which different participants at one funeral experience the funeral, and especially the personalised character of it, will lead to more insights into the inclusivity of personalisation.

With regard to the mourning processes of next of kin, it was found that the next of kin listen to the music that was played during the funeral in the weeks or months after the funeral to – as they phrased it – 'see if they could handle the loss already'. Here, we see that funeral music continues to play a role in the lives of next of kin. Further research on the experience of listening to the music that also sounded at the funeral will shed light on the ways funeral music remains connected to the funeral or the deceased in the months or even years after the funeral and how this relates to processes of grief and mourning. This might benefit therapeutic settings such as grief therapy.

In this study, I focused on funeral music. As mentioned in Chapter 3, music often sounds while pictures of the deceased are projected. To gain further insights into how the experience of music is affected by simultaneously looking at pictures (and vice versa!), further research is recommended. This study could even be broadened by expanding the scope to digitalisation processes in general. For example, how do people experience a funeral when they watch the funeral on their laptop or tablet, connected via a livestream connection? I write this conclusion chapter in the middle of the COVID-19 crisis, at a time where restrictions in social life also affect funerals, and many mourners can only digitally attend the funeral. How does their experience differ from the experience of the mourners who are physically present at the funeral? This not only concerns the experience of the funeral as a whole but also the quality and position of camera(s), sound, etc. Not only streaming services but also other digital techniques raise questions about the experience of funeral rituals. What if virtual reality glasses are used during the funeral or holograms enter the ceremony room?[98] Will these techniques be embraced in the funerary industry, and, if so, how does that affect the

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[98]It is already possible to create holograms and let the holograms be part of a funeral; see
https://nos.nl/artikel/2354883-bedrijven-laten-overledene-als-hologram-herleven-op-uitvaart.html.

ways next of kin experience both the loss of a beloved one and the continuing bonds with the deceased?

The present study has shown that funeral music evokes memories of the deceased and, as such, plays a role in the ways next of kin 'celebrate the life of the deceased'. In this way, music plays a role in facilitating that funerals, to cite a bereaved next of kin, "shouldn't be too emotionally loaded, not too sad". Music helps us to not become too sad as the music often brings back memories of happy times. However, at the end of the funeral, the next of kin pass by the coffin and pay their respects, which is often considered as an intensely emotional task that makes people sad. This raises questions about the order of the funeral. Why do we pass by the coffin at the *end* of the funeral? Does the emotionally loaded task of passing by the coffin not erase or at least weaken the celebration of life during the funeral? Moreover, as described in this study, funeral music is often part of the ways next of kin continue bonds with the deceased. Further research is recommended to study whether and how a revised order affects both the ritual and the experience of continuing bonds.[99] Would it not be possible to *first* pass by the coffin, to say goodbye to the physical body, and *after* that perform the funeral ritual with its comforting songs and words with which next of kin express continuing bonds? Phrased in terms of the two song titles from the opening of this study, one could envision starting the funeral with *Time to Say Goodbye,* yet concluding with *Afscheid nemen bestaat niet.*

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[99] I intend to further explore this question in future developments of the experimental research setting of the FUNERALLAB; see https://remembermeproject.wordpress.com/2019/02/23/how-to-make-the-best-funeral/https://totzover.nl/funeraire-academie/uitvaartlab/.

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Appendix A: Overview of observations and interviews

Observations:

As mentioned in chapter 1, to secure the anonymity of the deceased and his/her family, I neither mention the name and age of the deceased, nor the specific location of the crematorium. For reasons of transparency, in this overview I indicate in which region of the Netherlands the crematorium was located, between which date the funeral was observed and the age category of the deceased (younger than 20; 20-40; 40-60; older than 60).

Crematorium A, located in the south of the Netherlands.
Observations conducted between 01-06-2017 and 16-06-2017.

	<20	20-40	40-60	>60
A1				X
A2				X
A3				X
A4				X
A5				X
A6				X
A7				X
A8				X
A9				X
A10				X
A11				X
A12			X	
A13				X
A14			X	
A15				X

Crematorium B, located in the south-east of the Netherlands.
Observations conducted between 10-07-2017 and 24-07-2017.

	<20	20-40	40-60	>60
B1				X
B2				X
B3				X
B4				X
B5				X
B6				X
B7				X
B8				X
B9				X
B10				X
B11				X
B12				X
B13				X
B14				X
B15	X			

Crematorium C, located in the east of the Netherlands.
Observations conducted between 25-09-2017 and 06-10-2017.

	<20	20-40	40-60	>60
C1				X
C2				X
C3				X
C4				X
C5				X
C6				X
C7			X	
C8				X
C9				X
C10				X
C11				X
C12				X
C13				X
C14				X
C15				X

Interviewees and date interview:

System integrators:

- Jan, 26-10-2016
- Ronald, 07-12-2016

Crematorium staff:

- Rens, 21-11-2016
- Renate & Hans, 23-01-2017
- Birgit & Simone, 13-12-2016
- Sarah & Charlotte, 06-01-2017
- Joanne, 12-12-2016
- Anja, 05-01-2017

Musicians:

- Taco, 10-01-2017
- Amanda, 09-11-2016
- Laurens, 23-11-2016
- Suzanne, 16-11-2016
- Maurice, 11-11-2016
- Wessel, 17-11-2016

Celebrants:

- Alina, 05-11-2018
- Plien, 09-01-2019
- Anton, 22-11-2018
- Merel, 29-10-2018
- Gerda, 08-02-2019
- Mannes, 08-01-2019
- Govert, 05-07-2017

Funeral directors:

- Pia, 05-02-2019
- Paulien, 25-01-2019
- Jason, 06-02-2019
- Ruben, 08-02-2019
- Jane, 31-01-2019
- Maaike, 08-06-2017

Next of kin:

- Jan & Zwanie, 01-11-2018
- Karlijn, 17-01-2019
- Annemijn, 14-03-2019
- Marieke, 15-01-2019

Appendix B: Survey (abbreviated and translated)

In 2016, a survey was developed and spread among Dutch crematoria that were then member of the Dutch Association of Crematoria. Together with the survey, respondents received a letter in which I explained my research, the survey and privacy issues. The link to the survey, which was created in Qualtrics, was spread via e-mail. The survey contained many questions that were only displayed when respondents selected a specific answer. Below, an abbreviated translation of the survey is given in which the follow-up questions are indented:

In what town is the crematorium about which you answer this survey?
… [town]

What is the name of the crematorium?
… [name]

In what year was the crematorium opened?
… [year]

How many cremations were performed in this crematorium in 2015?
… [number of cremations]

How many ceremony rooms does the crematorium have? (select applicable)

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4

What is the capacity of ceremony room 1?
… [number of seats]

Which of the following musical instruments can be found in ceremony room 1? (select applicable)

- Pipe organ
  Select the applicable:
  - The pipe organ is still there. It was placed in… [year].
  - The pipe organ has been removed. It was there between … and … [years].

- Electronic organ
  Select the applicable:
  - The electronic organ is still there. It was placed in… [year].
  - The electronic organ has been removed. It was there between … and … [years].

- Piano
  Select the applicable:
  - The piano is still there. It was placed in… [year].
  - The piano has been removed. It was there between … and … [years].

- Grand piano

    Select the applicable:

    - The grand piano is still there. It was placed in… [year].

    - The grand piano has been removed. It was there between … and … [years].

- Other instrument: …

    Select the applicable:

    - The other instrument is still there. It was placed in… [year].

    - The other instrument has been removed. It was there between … and … [years].

- There are no instruments in this ceremony room

Likewise, respondents were asked about available instruments in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th ceremony room, if applicable (including follow-up questions).

Does the crematorium have an online playlist (also called online music book or online library)? (select applicable)

- Yes, people can download it from our website (e.g. PDF or Excel file).

    Is it possible to listen to the music directly from the playlist on the website? (select applicable)

    - Yes, people can listen to entire pieces of music from the playlist directly from our website.

    - Yes, people can listen to fragments of music from the playlist directly from our website.

    - No.

    From what year onwards has the crematorium had an online playlist?
    … [year]

    In addition to this online playlist, does the crematorium also have a music book or list with musical repertoire that is not available on the website? (select applicable)

    - Yes, it is the same as the online playlist.

    - Yes, it differs from the online playlist.

    - No.

- Yes, there is a playlist on our website. You can look through it, but cannot download it.

    Is it possible to listen to the music directly from the playlist on the website? (select applicable)

    - Yes, people can listen to the entire pieces of music from the playlist directly from our website.

    - Yes, people can listen to fragments of music from the playlist directly from our website.

- No.

From what year onwards has the crematorium had an online playlist?
… [year]

In addition to this online playlist, does the crematorium also have a music book or list with musical repertoire that is not available on the website? (select applicable)

- Yes, it is the same as the online playlist.

  - **From what year onwards has the crematorium had this music book/this list with musical repertoire?**
    … [year]

- Yes, it differs from the online playlist.

  - **From what year onwards has the crematorium had this music book/this list with musical repertoire?**
    … [year]

- No.

- No.

Does the crematorium have a music book or list with musical repertoire

that is not available via the website of the crematorium? (select applicable)

- Yes

  - **From what year onwards has the crematorium had a music book/list with musical repertoire?**
    … [year]

  - **How is the music book/ the list with musical repertoire available?**
    …

- No

- Not anymore.

Between what years did the crematorium have an online playlist?
Between … and … [years].

Does the crematorium have a music book or list with musical repertoire that is not available via the website of the crematorium? (select applicable)

- Yes

  - **From what year onwards has the crematorium had a music book/list with musical repertoire?**
    … [year]

  - **How is the music book/the list with musical repertoire available?**
    …

- No

What software does the crematorium use for music in the crematorium and/or on the website? (select applicable)

- Requiem (company: Hecla)

- BIS MDS (Memorial Distribution System. Company: BIS)

- Phase AV-systeem (company: dB audiovisueel)

- AkoestIQ (Company: MK2 Audiovisueel)

- Other: …

Appendix C: Survey results

Number of ceremony rooms in crematoria (n=38)

Number of crematoria with 1 ceremony room	22
Number of crematoria with 2 ceremony rooms	8
Number of crematoria with 3 ceremony rooms	7
Number of crematoria with 4 ceremony rooms	1

Availability of music instruments in ceremony room 1

| Instrument	Number of crematoria with instrument in ceremony room 1	Placed between[100]
Pipe organ	3	1936-1939
Electronic organ	21	1966-2012
Piano (acoustic or electronic)	10	1990-2015
Grand piano	15	1970-2015
Other instrument	0	
No instruments	3	

Out of the 37 respondents, 32 have an online playlist on their website.[101] Figure 1 shows from what year onwards crematoria have an online playlist. Three respondents indicated not to know since when they have an online playlist. One respondent answered 2010/2011. In the table, this was counted as 2010.

Five of the 37 respondents do not have an online playlist. Four of them do have a digital music book (since 2006, 2011, 2013 (2x)) for internal use. They provide next of kin the opportunity to find out whether they have a specific music file in their music book. Next of kin can access this music book by e-mail/telephone, or via a link. Only one crematorium indicates that it has no music book/list available.

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[100]It is possible that musical instruments were placed before the year the crematorium was opened. In these cases, the instruments were placed in a funeral center (building near a cemetery), before a crematorium function was added to this. The answer 'unknown' has been ignored.

[101]In total, 38 people responded to the survey. One respondent did not finish the survey. No information about the online playlist and audio-visual system was provided by this respondent.

Figure 1. *AVAILABILITY OF ONLINE PLAYLISTS*
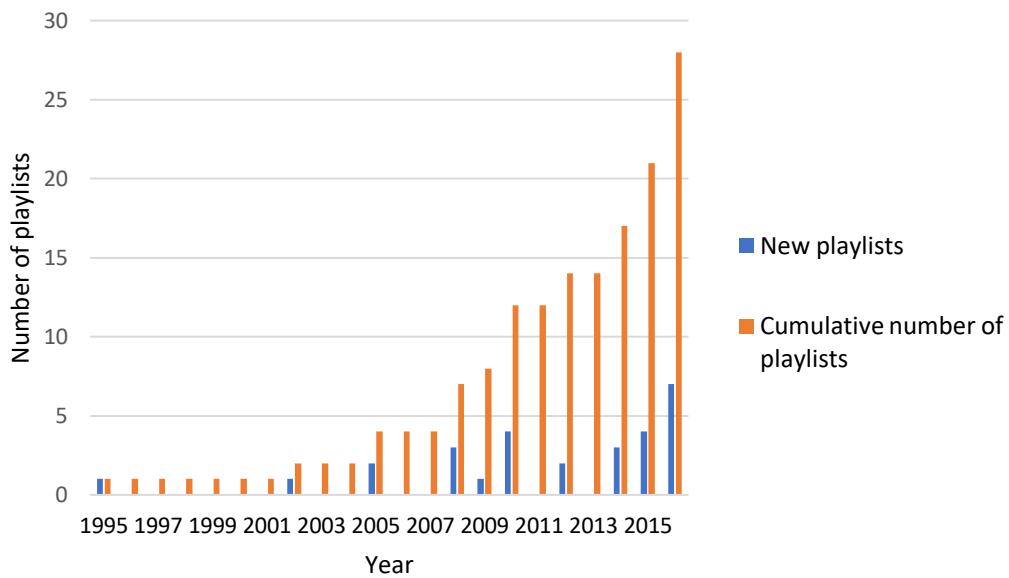
All 37 crematoria use an audio-visual system. Of these, 28 make use of an audio-visual system that is designed especially for the use in funeral centres/crematoria. Others make use of more general audio-visual systems or indicated they don't know which system they use. Figure 2 shows the names of the main companies that develop these systems and their market share among the crematoria in this study.

Figure 2. *AUDIO-VISUAL SYSTEMS*
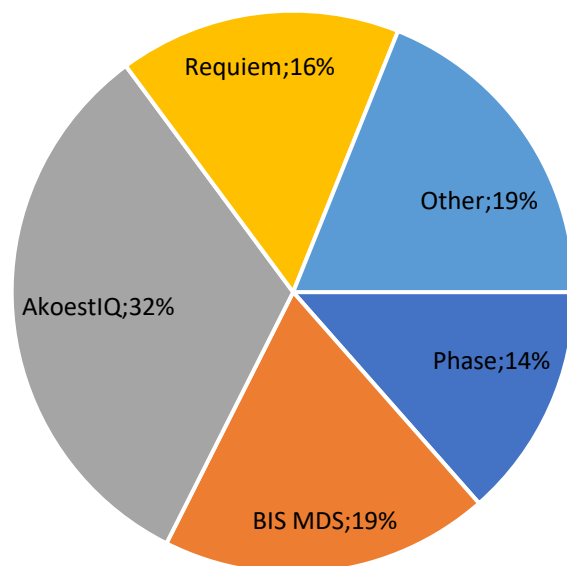
Appendix D: Alphabetical overview of funeral music during observations[102]

Title	Artist/band	Lyricist	Composer	Code of observation
Abide with Me	Celtic expressions			B1
Abschied ist ein scharfes Schwert	Roger Whittaker			C1, C9
Adagio for Strings			Samuel Barber	B9
Adagio	Scottish national orchestra			A10
Adagio From: Clarinet Concerto			Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	B14
Adio, amore adio	Jannes			C6
Adios Nonino	Jim Reeves			C2
Afscheid	Volumia			C7
Afscheid nemen bestaat niet	Marco Borsato			A14, C6 (2x), C13
Afscheid van een vriend	Clouseau			B2, B13
Afscheid van een vriend	Hazes & Hazes			C1
Air on the G String			Johann Sebastian Bach	B9
Alle sterren stralen	Grad Damen			A2
Als alle lichten zijn gedoofd	Marco Borsato			B5
Als de morgen niet meer komt (Dutch version of 'If Tomorrow Never Comes')	Unknown			C10
Als liefde niet bestond	Wende Snijders			B14
Amazing Grace	André Rieu			C5
And He Shall Feed His Flock			Georg Friedrich Händel	C8

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[102]During the observation of 44 funeral rituals, 235 pieces of music were performed. This overview aims to provide readers of this study insights in the songs that sounded during observations. Details about artists, lyricist and/or composer are derived from the audio-visual system in the various crematoria.

Après toi	Mireille Mathieu			B4
Ave Maria	Andrea Bocelli			B12
Ave Maria	Andrea Bocelli		Franz Schubert	A15
Ave Maria	Celine Dion			C13
Ave Maria	Maria Callas			A13
Ave Maria	Noa			A3, B7
Ave Maria (only some sung phrases)	Andre Rieu			B11
Ave Maria				C9
Ave Maria	Il Divo		Franz Schubert	C12
Ave Maria	Performed live (piano)		Franz Schubert	A8
Ave Verum	Andrea Bocelli		Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	B6
Beautiful Life	Mathilda Santinga			A10
Bell ringing	Attached to a video clip			C14
Birds	Anouk			A11
Bolero			Maurice Ravel	A6
Brabant	Guus Meeuwis			B15
Breek	Jeroen Zijlstra			B14
Breng me naar het water	Marco Borsato & Matt Simons			C5
Breng me naar het water	Marco Borsato			A7, A8, A15
Calm After the Storm	Common Linnets			C1
Cantilena			Joseph Rheinberger	B9
Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves from: Nabucco	James Last		Giuseppe Verdi	C12
Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves from: Nabucco	Performed live (orchestra and choir)		Giuseppe Verdi	C6
Concerto de Aranjuez, Adagio			Joaquin Rodrigo	A10
Credo mien bestoan	Ede Staal			C6
Daar bij die molen	Willy Derby			C11

Dan zal ik er zijn	Django Wagner & Ferry de Lits			A15
Dat ik je mis	Maaike Ouboter			B8
De gestorvene	Trijntje Oosterhuis			B13
De Heer is mijn Herder	Cantorij Meppel			B1
De roos	Bonny St Claire			C3
De weg	Guus Meeuwis			B3, B15 (2x)
Dem land Tirol der Treue	Tiroler Alpentrio			B10
Der alte Jager vom Silbertannental	Weisendorfer Sound Express			B10
Distant Drums	Jim Reeves			C11
Double bass (improvisation, live)	Live performance			B14
Eén minuut met jou	Jan Smit			A7, C13
Elephant Song	Kamahl			A7
Engeltje	Jebroer			B15
Entr'acte nr 3 Rosamunde			Franz Schubert	A13
Et les oiseaux chantaient	Sweet people			A10, B2, C12
Etude 6	Live performed (guitar)		Sor	B7
Etude in B-minor	Live performed (guitar)		Sor	B7
Freunde für's Leben	Viller Spatzen			B10
Gabber	Jebroer			B15
Gabriella's Song (from: As It Is in Heaven)				B7
Geef elkaar de hand (from: 'musical groep 8')				B15
Geef mij nu je angst	Guus Meeuwis			A8, A14, B15 (2x)
German schlager				A4
't Glipt me door de vingers	Simone Kleinsma			B8
Green Grass of Home	Tom Jones			C1
Hallelujah	Leonard Cohen			A15

Hallelujah	Susan Bovie			A13
Halt Mich	Herbert Gronemeyer			C8
Het dorp	Wim Sonneveld			B2, B4, B12
Het is goed	Lucas Kramer			C14
Hoor de muzikanten	Jan en Zwaan			B10
I Am sailing	Rod Stewart			C4
I Can't Help Falling in Love With You	Elvis Presley			B15
I Did It My Way				A3
I Still Got The Blues	Gary Moore			C10 (2x)
Ik heb je lief	Paul de Leeuw			B5
Ik moet je laten gaan ma	Martine Slangen			A13
Ik wil nog niet naar huis	Guus Meeuwis			B15
Il silenzio			Nino Rosso	B10
Il silenzio (panflute)			Nino Rosso	A1 (2x)
Im Abendrot			Richard Strauss	B14
Imagine	John Lennon			A12
In Dreams	Roy Orbison			B3
In paradisum			Gregorian	B4
In paradisum	Performed live (piano)			A8
Indonesian music				A11
Je naam in de sterren	Jan Smit			A6, C3
Jesu Joy Of Man's Desiring (organ recording)			Johann Sebastian Bach	B1
Jesu Joy Of Man's Desiring (piano recording)			Johann Sebastian Bach	A10
Jij krijgt die lach niet van mijn gezicht	John de Bever			B15
Kan ik iets voor je doen	De Dijk			B12
Laat me	Performed live (guitar &voice)		Ramses Shaffy	B5
Laat me	Wende Snijders			B7

Largo 9th Symphony			Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	B14
Last Post (instrumental)				A3
Leef	Guus Meeuwis			B15
Let It Be	Beatles			B15
Licht dat ons aanstoot	Performed live (choir)	Huub Oosterhuis	Antoine Oomen	A9
Liefste oma	Maikel Dokter			C3
Maar wie holt van mekaar	Gerard Hoeben			B8
Mag ik dan bij jou	Claudia de Breij			A3, A7, B2, C7
Malguena	Performed live (guitar)			B7
Mam, dank je (Dutch lyrics in videoclip. Song actually sung is Mama by Céline Dion)	Céline Dion			B8
Mama	Aafje Heynis			C3
Mama	Céline Dion			B3
Mama	Il divo			C5
Meditation Thais				A13
Medley of four pieces (o.a. Het Dorp, Tulpen uit Amsterdam)		Various	Various	B13
Medley of various pieces by Meeuwis	Guus Meeuwis			B15
Middernacht	De Klankmakers			B10
Mull Of Kintyre	Paul McCartney			C2
My Way	Frank Sinatra			A7
Nada te turbe	Performed live (piano and choir)			A9
Nearer My God	Andre Rieu			B11
Nessun Dorma (from: Turandot)			Giacomo Puccini	C8
Nuvole Bianche	Ludovico Einaudi		Ludovico Einaudi	B7
Ochtend	Performed live (guitar)		Harry Sacksioni	B7
Of ik je terug zal zien	Benny Neyman			B13

On The Nature Of Daylight	Max Richter		Max Richter	B14
One Day I'll Fly Away	Randy Crawford			A3
One	U2 & Blige			A15
Ons lieve vrouwke	Lya de Haas			B4, B6
Onze vodder	Cor Swanenberg			B10
Opa	Marco Borsato			B10
Panis angelicus			César Franck	B9
Panis angelicus (live)	Performed live (two singers)		César Franck	C9
Papa	Chantal Janzen			B10
Piano Concerto			Frédéric Chopin	B11
Piano Concerto 1 in e-minor, opus 11, Romance			Frédéric Chopin	C14
Pie Jesu	Performed live (piano and soloist)		Gabriel Fauré	A8
Proosten op het leven	Guus Meeuwis			B15
Radar Love	Golden Earring			A12
Romance	Rachmaninov			A13
Rot sind die Rosen	Semino Rossi			B3
Roundup Time in Heaven	Wilf Carter, Eddy Arnold			C2
Samen voor altijd	Marco & Jade Borsato			C7
Schaam je voor tranen niet	Grad Damen			A2
Shaffy cantate	Ramses Shaffy			B12
Sound Of Silence (pan flute)	Unknown			B2
Sound Of Silence	Simon & Garfunkel			C6
Spring (Four Seasons)			Antonio Vivaldi	B11
Stairway To Heaven	Led Zeppelin			A12, C4
Stay With Me Till The Morning	Nicky Brown			A10
Stiekem liedje	Paul de Leeuw			A15
Swan			Camille Saint-Saëns	A13
Tears in Heaven	Eric Clapton			C4, C5

The Rose	Bette Midler			C9
The Rose	André Rieu			A8 (2x)
The Rose (instrumental)	André Rieu			B1, A7
The Winner Takes It All	Abba			B8
Theme from The Last Waltz	The band			C10
These Are The Days Of Our Lives	Queen			A12, A14
Tijd genoeg	Accordeonette			B10
Time to Say Goodbye	Andrea Bocelli			B3, B6 (2x), C7
Time to Say Goodbye	Sarah Brightman			B5
Time to Say Goodbye	Andre Rieu & Marusia			A7
Time to Say Goodbye (Con te Partirò)	Andrea Bocelli & Andre Rieu			A5
Time to Say Goodbye (Con te Partirò, instrumental)	Andre Rieu			B12
Tornami a dir che m'ami			Gaetano Donizetti	C8
Träumerei			Robert Schumann	A13
Trein naar niemandsland	Frans Bauer			A4
Tuintje in mijn hart	Damaru & Jan Smit			B15
Und wenn ich geh	Andrea Berg			B3
Unknown				A5
Unknown	André Rieu			A4
Unknown	Grad Damen			A2
Unknown	Grad Damen			A2
Unknown	Grad Damen			A2
Unknown	Performed live (piano)			A9
Unknown	Performed live (choir)	Huub Oosterhuis		A9
Unknown	Performed live (choir)	Huub Oosterhuis		A9

Unknown				A3
Unknown	Performed live (piano)		Ludovico Einaudi	A9
Unknown	Performed live (piano)			A9
Unknown (in English language)	Unknown			A1
Unknown (in English language)	Unknown			A1
Unknown (in English language)	Unknown			A1
Unknown (in Italian language)	Unknown			A5
Unknown (piano recording)				B4
Vanmorgen vloog ze nog	Robert Long & Simone Kleinsma			B5
Veiled drum (*omfloerste trom*)	Performed live			A9
Voader				B10
Waarheen, waarvoor	Dana Winner			A5, C12
Waarom fluister ik je naam nog	Benny Neyman			A6
Wals nostalgia	Wim Statitius Muller			C14
Wanneer zie ik jou terug?	K3			B3
We Move Lightly	Dustin O Halloran			B14
We'll Meet Again	Vera Lynn			A3, A11, B5, C11
Wish You Were Here	Pink Floyd			C4
Wonderful Tonight	Eric Clapton			C10
Written on The Sky	Max Richter			B14
You Raise Me Up	Celtic Woman			C13
You'll Never Walk Alone	Lee Towers			A11
Zo ver weg	Guus Meeuwis			B15
Zonder vaarwel	Frans Bauer			A6

Appendix E: Analysis of funeral music in relation to its specific place in the funeral

Code	Title	Marking Start	Marking end	Background	Extending	Emotions	Alter-nating	Identity
A1	Il silenzio	x						
A1	Unknown							x
A1	Unknown							x
A1	Unknown							x
A1	Il silenzio		x					
A2	Unknown, by Grad Damen	x						x
A2	Alle sterren stralen					x		x
A2	Schaam je voor je tranen niet							x
A2	Unknown, by Grad Damen							x
A2	Unknown, by Grad Damen		x					x
A3	Unknown	x						
A3	One Day I'll Fly Away				x			
A3	I Did It My Way						x	
A3	Ave Maria						x	
A3	Mag ik dan bij jou				x		x	
A3	We'll Meet Again						x	
A3	Last Post		x					
A4	Unknown, by Andre Rieu	x						
A4	Trein naar niemandsland						x	
A4	German schlager		x					
A5	Unknown, in Italian language	x						x
A5	Unknown							x
A5	Waarheen, waarvoor			x				x
A5	Time to Say Goodbye (Con te Partirò)		x					x
A6	Bolero	x						
A6	Je naam in de sterren			x			x	

151

A6	Waarom fluister ik je naam nog			x		x	
A6	Zonder vaarwel		x				
A7	My Way	x					
A7	The Rose			x			x
A7	Eén minuut met jou					x	
A7	Mag ik dan bij jou					x	
A7	Elephant Song			x			x
A7	Breng me naar het water				x		
A7	Time to Say Goodbye		x				
A8	The Rose	x					
A8	In paradisum			x			
A8	Ave Maria					x	
A8	The Rose					x	
A8	Geef mij je angst						
A8	Pie Jesu					x	
A8	Breng me naar het water		x				
A9	Piano music, performed live	x					
A9	Veiled drum	x					
A9	Licht dat ons aanstoot						x
A9	Unknown, Einaudi					x	
A9	Unknown, performed live by choir						x
A9	Unknown, performed live by choir						x
A9	Unknown, performed live on piano					x	
A9	Nada te turbe		x				
A10	Adagio	x					
A10	Jesu Joy Of Man's Desiring			x		x	
A10	Stay With Me Till The Morning			x		x	
A10	Concerto de Aranjuez			x		x	
A10	Beautiful Life			x		x	

A10	Et les oiseaux chantaient		x					
A11	We'll Meet Again	x						
A11	Birds						x	
A11	Indonesian music							x
A11	You'll Never Walk Alone		x					x
A12	Stairway to Heaven	x						
A12	Radar love			x			x	
A12	Imagine			x			x	
A12	These are the days of our lives		x					
A13	Meditation Thais	x						
A13	Ave Maria						x	
A13	Entr'acte nr 3 Rosamunde			x			x	
A13	Hallelujah						x	
A13	Ik moet je laten gaan ma					x		
A13	Swan		x					
A13	Träumerei		x					
A13	Romance		x					
A14	Geef mij nu je angst	x		x				
A14	These are the days of our lives			x	x		x	
A14	Afscheid nemen bestaat niet		x					
A15	One	x						
A15	Breng me naar het water						x	
A15	Stiekem liedje					x		
A15	Dan zal ik er zijn					x		
A15	Hallelujah		x					
A15	Ave Maria		x					
B1	Jesu joy of man's desiring	x						
B1	The Rose						x	x
B1	De Heer is mijn herder						x	x

B1	Abide with me		x					
B2	Et les oiseaux chantaient	x						
B2	Mag ik dan bij jou			x			x	
B2	Sound of Silence			x			x	
B2	Het dorp			x			x	
B2	Afscheid van een vriend		x					
B3	In dreams	x						
B3	Wanneer zie ik jou terug?			x			x	
B3	Mama			x				x
B3	Rot sind die Rosen			x				x
B3	De weg			x			x	
B3	Und wenn ich geh			x			x	
B3	Time to Say Goodbye		x					
B4	Après toi	x						
B4	Unknown, piano recording			x				x
B4	Het dorp							x
B4	Ons lieve vrouwke							x
B4	In paradisum		x					
B5	Time to Say Goodbye	x						
B5	Laat me							x
B5	Als alle lichten zijn gedoofd					x		x
B5	Ik heb je lief							x
B5	Vanmorgen vloog ze nog							x
B5	We'll meet again		x					
B6	Ons lieve vrouwke	x						
B6	Ave Verum			x				x
B6	Time to Say Goodbye		x					
B7	Etude b-minor	x						
B7	Ochtend	x						

154

B7	Malguena						x	
B7	Gabriella's song			x			x	
B7	Etude 6			x			x	
B7	Ave Maria			x			x	
B7	Laat me						x	
B7	Nuvole Bianche		x					
B8	Dat ik je mis	x						
B8	t Glipt me door de vingers						x	
B8	The winner takes it all						x	
B8	Maar wie holt van mekaar					x		
B8	Mam, dank je		x					
B9	Cantilena	x						x
B9	Air on the G string							x
B9	Panis Angelicus							x
B9	Adagio for strings		x					
B10	Middernacht	x						
B10	Il silenzio	x						
B10	Freunde für's leben			x				x
B10	Papa			x	x			
B10	Onze vodder			x	x			
B10	Voader				x			
B10	Hoor de muzikanten			x				x
B10	Opa			x	x			
B10	Dem land Tirol der Treue		x					
B10	Der alte Jager vom Silbertannental		x					
B10	Tijd genoeg		x					
B11	Piano concerto	x						
B11	Ave Maria			x				
B11	Nearer my God			x				

B11	Spring		x					
B12	Kan ik iets voor je doen	x						
B12	Het dorp						x	
B12	Shaffy cantate						x	
B12	Ave Maria							x
B12	Time to Say Goodbye (Con te partiò)		x					
B13	Of ik je terug zal zien	x						
B13	De gestorvene						x	
B13	Medley of four pieces			x			x	
B13	Afscheid van een vriend		x					
B14	On the nature of daylight	x						
B14	Breek							x
B14	Als liefde niet bestond							x
B14	Double bass (live)							x
B14	Written on the sky							x
B14	Adagio							x
B14	Im Abendrot							x
B14	We move lightly		x					
B14	Largo 9th symphony		x					
B15	Leef	x						
B15	Geef mij nu je angst			x				x
B15	De weg			x				x
B15	Ik wil nog niet naar huis			x				x
B15	Let it be			x				x
B15	Medley of various pieces by Meeuwis			x				x
B15	I can't help falling in love with you			x				x
B15	Tuintje in mijn hart			x				x
B15	Gabber			x				x
B15	Jij krijgt die lach niet van mijn gezicht			x				x

B15	Geef elkaar de hand			x				x
B15	Engeltje			x				x
B15	Zo ver weg		x					
B15	Proosten op het leven		x					
B15	Geef mij nu je angst		x					
B15	De weg		x					
B15	Brabant		x					
C1	Green grass of home	x						
C1	Calm after the storm							x
C1	Afscheid van een vriend							x
C1	Abschied ist eind scharfes Schwert		x					
C2	Mull of Kintyre	x						
C2	Roundup time in heaven							x
C2	Adios Nonino		x					
C3	Je naam in de sterren	x						
C3	De roos							x
C3	Mama				x			
C3	Liefste oma		x					
C4	I am sailing	x						
C4	Wish you were here							x
C4	Tears in Heaven			x			x	
C4	Stairway to Heaven		x					x
C5	Amazing Grace	x						
C5	Tears in Heaven			x			x	
C5	Breng me naar het water			x			x	
C5	Mama		x					
C6	Adio, amore adio	x						
C6	Sound of Silence			x			x	
C6	Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves							x

C6	Credo mien bestoan						x	
C6	Afscheid nemen bestaat niet							x
C6	Afscheid nemen bestaat niet		x					
C7	Time to Say Goodbye	x						
C7	Mag ik dan bij jou				x			
C7	Samen voor altijd			x	x			
C7	Afscheid		x					
C8	And He Shall Feed His Flock	x						
C8	Tornami a dir che m'ami			x				x
C8	Halt mich			x				x
C8	Nessun Dorma		x					x
C9	Panis angelicus						x	
C9	Abschied ist ein scharfes Schwert						x	
C9	Ave Maria						x	
C9	The Rose		x				x	
C10	Theme from The Last Waltz	x						
C10	Wonderful Tonight			x				x
C10	Als de morgen niet meer komt							x
C10	I Still Got The Blues			x				x
C10	I Still Got The Blues		x					
C11	Distant drums	x						
C11	Daar bij die molen							x
C11	We'll Meet Again		x					
C12	Chorus of the Hebrew Slaves	x						
C12	Ave Maria			x		x		x
C12	Et les oiseaux chantaient			x			x	
C12	Waarheen waarvoor		x					
C13	Eén minuut met jou	x						
C13	You Raise Me Up			x				x

		Marking start	Marking end	Background	Extending	Emotions	Alter-nating	Identity
C13	Ave Maria			x				x
C13	Afscheid nemen bestaat niet		x					
C14	Piano concerto 1 in e-minor, opus 11, Romance	x						
C14	Wals nostalgia			x				x
C14	Het is goed			x				x
C14	Bell ringing		X					
Total:	235 pieces of music	46 Marking start	54 Marking end	62 Background	15 Extending	5 Emotions	53 Alter-nating	74 Identity

Time to Say Goodbye?

A Study on Music, Ritual and Death in the Netherlands

Chapter 1: Introduction

In this research, funeral music is used as a lens to study how people in the Netherlands nowadays deal with death. The lens of funeral music will focus on the following three aspects of music: changes in and the development of funeral music in recent history, the function of music during the actual funeral and the meanings attributed to this music by next of kin.

Building on the concept of *musicking* (Small, 1998), I approach music as a performance. *Musicking* takes into account not only the act of playing music but also, amongst other things, listening to music and attributing meaning to it. Funeral music is understood as music, both live and recorded, that is actually played during funerals.

In this study, I use the concept of 'death mentalities'. I understand death mentalities as both death-related practices *and* ideas that inform and come from these practices. From a historical perspective, Ariès has studied death mentalities from the Middle Ages until halfway into the 20th century (Ariès, 1974). Other scholars who have studied death mentalities have proposed characterising contemporary death mentalities as 'spectacular death' (Jacobsen, 2016) and 'pervasive dead' (Walter, 2019). Ariès used the lens of rituals surrounding the deathbed, developments at cemeteries and representations of death and dying in artistic expressions; Jacobsen based his characterisation (mainly) on mass mediated death; and Walter used the lens of everyday life in Britain and social media. In the current study, I will use funeral music as a lens to study contemporary death mentalities in the Netherlands.

In this study, I used a mixed-methods approach. To find out more about the history of cremation rituals in the Netherlands, I analysed newspaper reports from the first half of the 20th century, and for an overview of contemporary audio visual possibilities in Dutch crematoria, I gathered data via a survey amongst Dutch crematoria. Empirical data were retrieved by observations of funerals (n = 44) and interviews with staff of system integrator companies (n = 2), staff of crematoria (n = 9), musicians (n = 6), ritual celebrants and other speakers at funerals (n = 7) and next of kin (n = 5).

Chapter 2: Funerary culture in the Netherlands

To understand contemporary funeral music and, more broadly, contemporary funerary culture in the Netherlands, in the second chapter, I elaborate on the 20th-century history of funerary

culture.

Some of the most important changes in the 20th century were those with regard to cremation in the Netherlands. In 1913, the first crematorium in the Netherlands was opened, and the second crematorium was not opened until 1954. A year later, in 1955, when the cremation rate had already risen to 2% of the deceased, cremation became officially legalised by law.

From the end of the 19th century until halfway into the 20th century, Dutch society was divided into three social groups of Protestants, Roman Catholics and socialists. These so-called 'pillars' held a strong influence on people's lives. Even though initially the push for cremation had emerged mainly in the socialist pillar, and cremation was forbidden in the Roman Catholic pillar, throughout the years the idea of cremation spread across the pillars. Halfway into the 20th century, when the Roman Catholic Church allowed cremation and the pillars started to lose their influence on people's lives, the cremation rate and the number of crematoria in the Netherlands rapidly increased. In 1988, there were 32 crematoria in the Netherlands, covering a cremation percentage of 40%. In 2020, the cremation rate was 66%, spread over approximately 100 crematoria.

Also, with regard to crematorium architecture, remarkable changes occurred in the 20th century. Klaassens and Groote (2012) distinguished four phases. At the beginning of the 20th century, crematoria first made a monumental, solemn impression (until 1930: *pre-modern phase*); then, they were primarily directed towards a functional architecture with room for aesthetics (1930–1970: *shake-hands modernism*); subsequently, they were described as 'non-places', in which the impression the building made did not seem to be important (1970 to the beginning of the 21st century: *post-modern phase*); and finally, they offered room for emotion, ritual and symbolism (beginning of the 21st century–present: *post-modern*). Moreover, at the 21st century, crematoria broadened their services, especially with regard to ash disposal and commemoration activities.

In addition to the high cremation rate, contemporary Dutch funerary culture is characterised by, amongst other things, the following aspects: two-thirds of Dutch society has funeral insurance, euthanasia is a legal practice, and 24.4% of the people in the Netherlands has a migration background, which becomes visible in – among other things – the rising number of Islamic burial grounds.

Contemporary funerals in the Netherlands can be characterised as 'personalised funerals', in which the life and identity of the deceased is key. A funeral consists of eulogies, music, pictures and, often, also a ritual with flowers or candles. The funeral is prepared by the

nearest family members in consultation with the funeral director and possibly a ritual coach, funeral speaker or representative of a church. As the family, who pays the bill, decides which funeral elements will be part of the funeral and who will give the eulogy, the family has a strong influence on how the funeral looks and how (the life of) the deceased is represented.

Even though every funeral is unique, recurring elements in contemporary funeral rituals show that there is a template in which this unique personalisation takes shape. Therefore, it might be argued that contemporary personalised funerals have become a 'new' tradition.

Chapter 3: The interplay between music facilities, musical repertoires and funeral rituals, 1914–present

In Chapter 3, I use the concepts of mediatisation and algorithmic culture to study funeral music. The first proved useful in studying how, over the long term, changes in music facilities, musical repertoires and funeral rituals relate to each other. The latter concept showed that, even though algorithms often remain invisible in the context of funeral music, algorithms have become part of contemporary processes of selecting funeral music. The benefit of introducing the concept of algorithmic culture within mediatisation research is that the explicit focus on algorithms deepens the understanding of how algorithms have become part of mediatisation processes. Even though algorithmic culture is situated in contemporary, digitalised society, it has become part of mediatisation processes, of long-term interrelated changes in musical facilities, musical repertoires and funeral rituals.

In the first period from 1914 to 1960, the advent of a socialist musical repertoire reflected how socialist groups, one of the pillars in Dutch society, affected the Dutch funerary landscape. From 1960 to 1990, in the period of fixed and sober rituals, the preselected combinations of three pieces of music reflected how death was avoided as much as possible. This went hand in hand with the use of the cassette tape, which facilitated the reproduction of preselected combinations of music in the tight time schedule in crematoria. From 1990 to the present, music is no longer connected to the so-called pillars or derived from preselected combinations but has become one of the constitutive elements of the personalised funeral. This is partly facilitated by highly advanced audio-visual systems. The development of these systems is not only based on technological developments and the demands of crematoria but also on the wishes of next of kin. Moreover, the system functions as an invisible infrastructure in the crematorium, in which various media technologies deeply infiltrate funeral practices.

Remarkable changes with regard to both music facilities and musical repertoires were

found in the advent and use of online music recommendation systems. Nowadays, next of kin search for 'funeral music' on recommendation systems such as Spotify. Even though many consider Spotify's suggestions for funeral music as 'a source of inspiration', it is intriguing to realise that by searching for funeral music on Spotify, computational, automated algorithms have become part of the process of selecting funeral music. In this way, algorithms enter the ritual design of funerals, and, as such, funerals become part of an algorithmic culture. Even though contemporary funeral rituals are centred on the identity of a person, and this (unique) identity is often key during the funeral, computational, automated processes become part of the process in which the funeral for this unique person is constructed. This does not imply that meanings of 'algorithmically selected music' are related to the algorithmic dimension of the music as meanings are attributed *after* the selection of the funeral music. However, it *does* show that algorithms have become an accepted part of the ways in which people construct the funeral for their beloved deceased; even though many consider these to be contradictory, algorithmic culture and the move towards more personalised funerals are going hand in hand.

Chapter 4: Music asylums: About functions of funeral music

Chapter 4 is centred on the question of how music functions during contemporary funerals in the Netherlands. Based on a performance-based approach, several functions of funeral music were discerned, as follows: marking the start or end, providing background music, extending spoken words and actions, dealing with emotions, 'merely' alternating with other funeral elements, and presenting identities. These functions of music during contemporary funerals in the Netherlands are facilitated and constructed by the refurnishing quality of music.

In Chapter 4, I propose the concept of the musical eulogy to deal with the phenomenon that the bereaved listen to funeral music irrespective of their own musical preferences as a way of paying their respects and paying tribute to the deceased. Contrary to the spoken eulogy, in the musical eulogy, accuracy is not found in the lyrical content but in the ways the music relates to the deceased.

The importance of funeral music as a way of expressing the identity of the deceased can be regarded as one of the ways in which contemporary funeral rituals are personalised. In Chapters 2 and 3, I describe how the personalisation of funeral rituals emerged and flourished from the end of the 20th century onwards. The importance of the identity function of music for contemporary personalised funeral rituals reinforces the conclusions of the previous chapters.

Chapter 5: Funeral music between heaven and earth

In an age in which funerals in the Netherlands are characterised as secularised (Venbrux et al., 2009), one might expect a varied musical repertoire that has nothing to do with institutionalised religion. In reality, in rankings of popular funeral music, *Ave Maria* is often ranked in the top three, and the words 'heaven' and 'angel' frequently occur in the titles and lyrics of popular funeral music.

In the fifth chapter, it is discovered that the interpretation of heaven and angels in contemporary funeral music is related to religion both within and outside institutionalised settings and that they are used as metaphors referring to the afterlife of the deceased. This does not imply that there is a shared convention as to what angels are or where heaven is.

With regard to the interpretations of *Ave Maria* in contemporary funeral rituals, it has become clear that these are related to Christianity, to the religious identity of the deceased, to memories of the deceased or to the context of the funeral itself. In the latter category, *Ave Maria* is a building block for a funeral ritual that 'fits' the context of death. Therefore, *Ave Maria* can be considered a piece of music that is both part of and that constructs the funerary context in which people find themselves.

Chapter 6: Conclusion, balance and perspectives

In the concluding, sixth chapter, I describe how the personalisation of contemporary funerals and funerary music has turned out to be key in this research. This personalisation, however, is not a goal in itself. Instead, it is part of the ways in which next of kin continue their bonds with the deceased.

The continuing bonds model emerged in psychology in the 20th century in response to earlier models of grief (Klass et al., 1996; Klass & Steffen, 2018). Contrary to these earlier models, in the continuing bonds model, bonds
with the deceased are not severed but sustained. Even though most of the publications in the field of continuing bonds focus on experiences of grief and loss over a shorter or longer period after the loss of a beloved person, the current study shows that in the ritual setting of a funeral, which in the Netherlands is performed only a few days after death, part of contemporary funeral music can be understood and interpreted from the perspective of continuing bonds. Moreover, this study also raises the question of what is meant by 'the dead' in stating that next of kin 'continue bonds with the dead'. In the fourth chapter, I describe how funeral music evokes memories of the lived life of the deceased, such as holidays or other special moments in the life of the deceased. In the fifth chapter, I show that funeral music

expresses ideas about the afterlife of the deceased, especially by referring to heaven. So, the experience of continuing bonds via funeral music concerns both the deceased *before* death and *after* death. This invites further exploration of the concept of 'the dead' in continuing bonds theory.

To further understand the continuing bonds model, I used Davies's theory of 'words against death', which is 'a form of positive rhetoric of death, grounded in theologies and liturgies, through which death, bereavement and afterlife beliefs are formulated and expressed' (Davies, 2017, p. 251). Bailey and Walter (2016) suggest not to speak of 'words against death', but of 'funerals against death' as "emotional and social are as important as linguistic dimensions in producing funeral ritual" (Bailey & Walter, 2016, p. 162). In the current study, especially in the fourth chapter, I show that the context of the funeral, the emotions that are at play or the (musical representation of the) deceased person's identity often force the lyrics of the song to the background. Therefore, I would argue that the linguistic dimensions are not always *as important* as the emotional and social dimensions; they often turn out to be *less* important than the emotional and social dimensions.

With regard to the notion of 'against death', another aspect should be mentioned. The current study shows that dealing with death is not only about the dead, and how and where the dead now are, but also – and maybe even more – about the living and how the living deal with loss and *their* interpretation of where and how the dead now are. So, 'against death' is not about the dead but is about the living and how they deal with the dead.

The strong presence of the continuing bonds model in the current research has brought me to a new characterisation of contemporary death mentalities – the continuing bonds mentality. This characterisation emphasises the important place the continuing bonds model takes in the ways people in the Netherlands nowadays deal with death. I stress that each characterisation of death mentalities is found via different lenses and that one should be careful not to overestimate the applicability of a proposed characterisation to all domains of death. Moreover, characterising death mentalities with one or two words seems to imply that death mentalities *can* be described as a coherent whole. In reality, however, death mentalities are a complex of often paradoxical ideas and practices surrounding death

I conclude this research by providing pathways for future research. In this summary, I mention one of these. During contemporary funerals, the life of the deceased is key, and his or her life is celebrated. As this study has shown, the personalisation of these funerals can be regarded as part of the ways in which next of kin continue bonds with the deceased. At the end of the funeral, however, people pass by the coffin and pay their final respects. Often, this

is an emotional task. This raises questions about the order of the funeral. Why do we pass by the coffin at the *end* of the funeral? Does the emotionally loaded task of passing by the coffin not erase or at least weaken the celebration of life during the funeral? Moreover, as described in this study, funeral music is often part of the ways next of kin continue bonds with the deceased. Further research is recommended to study whether and how a revised order affects both the ritual and the experience of continuing bonds. Would it not be possible to *first* pass by the coffin, to say goodbye to the physical body and *after* that perform the funeral ritual with its comforting songs and words with which next of kin express continuing bonds? Phrased in terms of the two song titles from the opening of this study, one could envision starting the funeral with *Time to Say Goodbye,* yet concluding with *Afscheid nemen bestaat niet.*

NEDERLANDSE SAMENVATTING

Time to Say Goodbye?
Een studie naar muziek, ritueel en dood in Nederland

Time to Say Goodbye en *Afscheid nemen bestaat niet* zijn voorbeelden van muziek die populair is bij uitvaarten. Dat verschilt aanzienlijk met het repertoire dat ruim een eeuw geleden, toen Nederland nog 'verzuild' was, klonk bij de eerste crematies in Nederland: toen ging het voornamelijk om klassieke muziek van bijvoorbeeld Johann Sebastian Bach die werd gespeeld op een orgel. Er is in ruim een eeuw veel veranderd op het gebied van muziek bij uitvaarten, maar ook in de uitvaart zelf en de manier waarop mensen met de dood omgaan. In dit onderzoek ga ik onder andere nader in op die veranderingen. Daarnaast onderzoek ik de functie van muziek bij hedendaagse uitvaarten en kijk ik naar de betekenis die nabestaanden toekennen aan muziek bij uitvaarten.

Centraal in dit onderzoek staat de vraag hoe, door de lens van muziek bij uitvaarten, mensen in Nederland met de dood omgaan. Ten dele leunend op het begrip *musicking* van Small (1998), benader ik muziek niet als een statisch object, zichtbaar als noten op papier of hoorbaar tijdens een uitvoering, maar zie ik muziek als een *performance*. Muziek ontstaat niet uitsluitend door het musiceren van de musici, maar ook door bijvoorbeeld het componeren en luisteren. Muziek heeft ook geen vaste betekenis; deze wordt door de luisteraar aan muziek toegekend, gebaseerd op zowel biografische kenmerken van de luisteraar als andere contextuele aspecten. Daarnaast is het een zogenaamde *spatial practice*, wat betekent dat muziek deel uitmaakt van de manieren waarop mensen een (rituele) ruimte produceren en ervaren.

In dit onderzoek versta ik onder uitvaartmuziek de muziek die daadwerkelijk klinkt bij uitvaarten. Dat betekent dat iedere muziek uitvaartmuziek kan worden en dat uitvaartmuziek niet specifiek voor de context van een uitvaart gecomponeerd hoeft te zijn.

In het beantwoorden van de vraag hoe mensen met de dood omgaan, maak ik gebruik van het concept *death mentalities*. Vertaald naar het huidige onderzoek, waarin ik *death mentalities* bestudeer door de lens van muziek bij uitvaarten, omvat dit concept de verschillende praktijken rondom uitvaartmuziek én ideeën die hieruit voortvloeien en die deze praktijken informeren. Het onderzoek bevat een survey-onderzoek onder crematoria in Nederland en een analyse van krantenberichten over uitvaarten uit het begin van de 20e eeuw. Empirische data zijn verkregen door observaties van 44 uitvaarten, en interviews met medewerkers van audiovisuele bedrijven (n=2), medewerkers van crematoria (n=9), musici

(n=6), uitvaartleiders (n=6), ritueelbegeleiders en andere sprekers bij uitvaarten (n=7) en nabestaanden (n=5).

Hoofdstuk 2: Nederlandse uitvaartcultuur

In hoofdstuk 2 situeer ik dit onderzoek binnen *death studies* en licht ik de Nederlandse uitvaartcultuur nader toe.

Geschiedenis

Om de huidige situatie te begrijpen, is het van belang om kort stil te staan bij de geschiedenis. Eén van de meest in het oog springende ontwikkelingen in de 20ᵉ eeuw is de ontwikkeling op het gebied van crematies. Op initiatief van de Vereeniging voor Lijkverbranding werd de crematiegedachte in Nederland geïntroduceerd en verspreid. In 1914 vond de eerste crematie plaats in het eerste crematorium in Nederland, gesitueerd in Driehuis-Velsen. Tot halverwege de 20ᵉ eeuw was dit het enige crematorium. Ondertussen groeide het aantal mensen die na overlijden gecremeerd wilden worden. In die tijd was Nederland echter verzuild: Nederland was georganiseerd in socialistische, rooms-katholieke en protestant-christelijke 'zuilen'. Deze zuilen hadden een grote invloed op het leven van de leden, en crematie was binnen de rooms-katholieke zuil niet toegestaan. Hoewel de opkomst van crematie gesitueerd moet worden binnen voornamelijk de socialistische zuil, verspreidde de crematiegedachte zich ook over de andere zuilen. Halverwege de twintigste eeuw, toen de verzuiling afbrokkelde en de rooms-katholieke en protestant-christelijke zuilen crematie toestonden, nam niet alleen het aantal crematies, maar ook het aantal crematoria snel toe. In ruim een halve eeuw tijd groeide het crematiepercentage van 4% in 1960 naar 67% in 2019. Ook het aantal crematoria groeide naar ruim 100 aan het begin van de 21ᵉ eeuw.

In de loop van de 20ᵉ eeuw is er veel veranderd in crematoriumarchitectuur. Klaassens & Grootte (2014) beschrijven vier fasen in crematoriumarchitectuur. De fase vanaf het begin van de 20ᵉ eeuw tot 1930 wordt gekarakteriseerd als *pre-modern*, waarin crematoria vooral een monumentale en plechtige indruk maken. Van 1930 tot 1970 wordt de architectuur gekarakteriseerd als *shake-hands modernism*. Hierbij staat vooral de functionaliteit centraal, maar is er ook ruimte voor esthetische aspecten, zoals bijvoorbeeld een mooi uitzicht naar buiten. Van 1970 tot het begin van de 21ᵉ eeuw kan de architectuur worden gezien als *sub-modern*. In deze periode worden veel crematoria gebouwd en lijkt er meer aandacht te zijn voor kwantiteit dan voor de uitstraling van het gebouw: de gebouwen zijn saai en worden ook wel getypeerd als *non-places*. Vanaf het begin van de 21ᵉ eeuw tot aan nu kunnen we de architectuur typeren als *post-modern*. In de architectuur is ruimte voor emotie, voor ritueel en

170

voor symboliek. Hierbij moet worden opgemerkt dat crematoria hun dienstverlening hebben uitgebreid, door ook evenementen te organiseren op bijvoorbeeld Wereldlichtjesdag en Allerzielen, en door lezingen te organiseren. Naast strooivelden hebben crematoria tegenwoordig vaak ook een groot aanbod in urnen en assieraden. Hierdoor spelen ze een grotere rol in de wijze waarop nabestaanden as bewaren of verstrooien.

Karakteristieken van de hedendaagse, Nederlandse uitvaartcultuur

Vanuit internationaal perspectief is een aantal karakteristieken van de Nederlandse uitvaartcultuur te benoemen. Ik beschrijf in het tweede hoofdstuk onder andere dat ruim twee-derde van de Nederlandse bevolking een uitvaartverzekering heeft en dat euthanasie in Nederland – onder strikte voorwaarden – legaal is. Van de Nederlanders heeft 24,4% een migratie-achtergrond. Dit wordt onder andere zichtbaar in de diversiteit aan uitvaartrituelen, en in bijvoorbeeld een toenemende hoeveelheid islamitische grafvakken.

Hedendaagse uitvaarten in Nederland zijn te typeren als 'persoonlijke uitvaarten', waarin het leven van de overledene centraal staat en waarin dit leven gevierd worden. Een uitvaart bestaat vaak uit toespraken, muziek en foto's, maar kan bijvoorbeeld ook een gedicht of een bloemen- of lichtritueel bevatten. De uitvaart wordt voorbereid door de naaste familie, in overleg met een uitvaartverzorger en eventueel een ritueelbegeleider, voorganger van een kerk of andere uitvaartspreker. De familie, die opdracht geeft voor de uitvaart en uiteindelijk de rekening betaalt, bepaalt hoe de uitvaart eruit komt te zien en wie er spreekt tijdens de uitvaart. Daarmee drukt de familie ook een stempel op de wijze waarop de identiteit van de overledene wordt gepresenteerd: wanneer alleen een echtgenote iets vertelt over haar man ontstaat een ander beeld dan wanneer ook collega's of sportmaatjes het woord krijgen.

Naast het delen van herinneringen is er binnen de persoonlijke uitvaart ook ruimte voor andere psycho-emotionele en sociale aspecten. Een persoonlijke uitvaart is dus meer dan alleen maar een viering van het leven van de overledene. En hoewel iedere overledene uniek is, en daarmee ook – om een veelgebruikte slogan uit de uitvaartbranche te hanteren – iedere uitvaart uniek is, is er wel een *template* waarmee de personalisering wordt vormgegeven. Het gaat hierbij om de hiervoor beschreven onderdelen als toespraken, muziek, foto's, etcetera. De persoonlijke uitvaart is als het ware een nieuwe traditie geworden.

Hoofdstuk 3: De samenhang tussen veranderingen in muziekfaciliteiten, muzikaal repertoire en uitvaartrituelen in de 20ᵉ eeuw

In hoofdstuk 3 onderzoek ik, vanuit een historisch perspectief en gebruikmakend van het concept *mediatisation* (Hepp, Hjarvard, & Lundby, 2010), de samenhang tussen wijzigingen

in muziekfaciliteiten (zowel instrumenten als afspeelapparatuur), muzikale repertoires en uitvaartrituelen. Ik concentreer me hierbij op de periode vanaf de eerste crematie in Nederland in 1914 tot heden. Deze periode deel ik op in drie stukken: van 1914 tot 1960; van 1960 tot 1990; en van 1990 tot heden. Hierbij vermeld ik dat deze perioden langzaam in elkaar overlopen en dus niet strikt gelimiteerd zijn tot de genoemde jaartallen.

1914-1960

In de eerste periode, van 1914 tot 1960, werd muziek bij uitvaarten gespeeld op een orgel of gezongen. Het repertoire omvatte vooral klassieke muziek van bijvoorbeeld Johann Sebastian Bach en religieuze muziek. Opvallend in deze periode is de opkomst van socialistische liederen bij crematierituelen, zoals *Morgenrood* en *Aan de strijders*. Dit socialistische repertoire bij uitvaarten laat zien hoe, in het verzuilde Nederland, de socialistische zuil een eigen plek in de Nederlandse uitvaartcultuur kreeg.

1960-1990

In de tweede periode, van 1960 tot 1990, bestond muziek voornamelijk uit opnames, die gedurende korte tijd werden afgespeeld via een grammofoon, later via bandrecorders en nog weer later via cassettebandjes. Hoewel het muzikale repertoire, in een tijd van nieuwe genres zoals rock-'n-roll en jazz, gemakkelijk had kunnen worden uitgebreid, werd het repertoire in crematoria gestandaardiseerd. Crematoria maakten van de muziek die al decennia werd gebruikt setjes van drie stukken muziek. Deze setjes werden weergegeven op een lijst die uitvaartleiders meenamen naar de familie, zodat die gemakkelijk een keuze kon maken. Vaak was een lichte voorkeur of 'richting' al genoeg: hield men van klassieke muziek, dan werd een setje gekozen dat bestond uit klassieke muziek; als er een voorkeur was voor een religieus repertoire, dan werd een setje gekozen dat bestond uit religieus repertoire, etcetera. Hoewel het repertoire dus amper werd uitgebreid, maar wel werd gestandaardiseerd, moet één uitzondering genoemd worden. In de jaren zeventig van de vorige eeuw verscheen het lied *Waarheen, waarvoor,* gezongen door Mieke Telkamp. Dit lied werd zeer populair bij uitvaarten. Vragen als 'Waarheen leidt de weg die wij moeten gaan' en 'Waartoe zijn wij op aard' waren tekenend voor die tijd. De zuilen die jarenlang antwoord gaven op dit soort vragen, verloren namelijk geleidelijk hun invloed op het leven van vele Nederlanders. Dat betekende ook dat mensen op zoek moesten naar een nieuwe invulling voor het uitvaartritueel. Deze werd gevonden in sobere, gestandaardiseerde uitvaarten: een enkele toespraak, drie stukken muziek en de bekende 'koffie en cake' na de uitvaart. Dit alles moest plaats vinden binnen een korte tijd, want de tijdsdruk op crematoria was hoog: hoewel het

aantal crematoria in Nederland toenam, groeide het crematiepercentage ook. Zeker toen de gestandaardiseerde setjes van drie stukken muziek werden opgenomen op cassettebandjes, werd het voor het personeel van crematoria een stuk eenvoudiger om hun werkzaamheden te verrichten binnen deze korte tijdsduur: de cassettebandjes waren eenvoudiger in gebruik en namen minder ruimte in dan de grote bandrecorders. De sobere uitvaarten en gestandaardiseerde muziek vallen samen met de door Ariès beschreven *death mentality* van *forbidden death* (Ariès, 1974): de zichtbaarheid van de dood in de samenleving werd beperkt tot een minimum, en rouwen werd beperkt tot 'achter de voordeur'.

1990-heden

In de derde periode, van 1990 tot heden, werd het muzikale repertoire in crematoria uitgebreid. Nabestaanden namen veelal hun eigen muziek mee naar het crematorium. Vaak ging het hierbij om de lievelingsmuziek van de overledene. De gestandaardiseerde setjes van drie stukken muziek verdwenen naar de achtergrond en sinds het begin van de 20^e eeuw hebben veel crematoria en uitvaartorganisatie lange lijsten met 'uitvaartmuziek' op hun website staan, als bron van inspiratie voor mensen die op zoek zijn naar uitvaartmuziek. Sinds de opkomst van de CD en later digitale muziek via internet, is het voor medewerkers van crematoria makkelijker geworden om de door de nabestaanden gewenste muziek af te spelen. Ze maken hiervoor gebruik van geavanceerde audiovisuele middelen die speciaal voor het gebruik in crematoria zijn ontwikkeld. In deze apparatuur zijn niet alleen de nieuwste technische mogelijkheden verwerkt, maar wordt ook voldaan aan de wens van crematoria: met één systeem wordt niet allen de muziek bediend, maar ook de lichten, de microfoon, etcetera. Op hun beurt willen crematoria weer voldoen aan de wensen van nabestaanden, die niet alleen muziek willen afspelen, maar ook foto's en filmpjes willen laten zien. In de audiovisuele apparatuur zijn dus zowel technische ontwikkelingen alsook wensen van zowel crematoria als nabestaanden opgenomen.

Aan het begin van de 20^e eeuw is ook de rol van internet niet meer weg te denken. Het gaat hierbij niet alleen om het internet als medium om bijvoorbeeld muziek naar het crematorium te sturen, maar ook om het gebruik van online muziekdiensten zoals Spotify. Met behulp van het concept *algorithmic culture* (Striphas, 2015) beschrijf ik in het tweede hoofdstuk een algoritmische dimensie van hedendaagse persoonlijke uitvaarten. Een dienst als Spotify gebruikt algoritmes om muziek aan te bevelen. Deze algoritmes maken gebruik van het luistergedrag van zowel degene die op dat moment iets op Spotify zoekt, als dat van andere mensen die eerder op Spotify naar datzelfde zochten. Wanneer iemand tijdens het

leven vaak Spotify gebruikt en op die manier zijn of haar muzikale voorkeuren 'finetunet', wordt de muzikale voorkeur van deze luisteraar dus mede samengesteld door de algoritmes van Spotify. Wanneer de muziek dan op de uitvaart klinkt, is er dus – zij het indirect – een algoritmische dimensie van de uitvaart. Deze algoritmische dimensie wordt nog duidelijker zichtbaar wanneer nabestaanden op Spotify zoeken naar 'uitvaartmuziek'. Niet alleen het eigen luistergedrag, maar ook tal van lijstjes met 'uitvaartmuziek' die door andere luisteraars zijn samengesteld, worden door algoritmes gebruikt om muziek voor te stellen aan de nabestaanden. Wanneer de nabestaanden muziek uitkiezen die op deze manier door Spotify is aanbevolen, is de betekenis die aan deze muziek wordt toegekend echter niet gekoppeld aan Spotify, maar aan andere factoren. Wanneer Spotify bijvoorbeeld *Papa* van Stef Bos aanbeveelt en mensen selecteren deze muziek, dan is de betekenis niet gekoppeld aan het feit dat Spotify deze muziek voorstelde, maar bijvoorbeeld aan de relatie tot de overledene: het gaat om de uitvaart van papa. Op deze manier zijn algoritmes een geaccepteerd middel om een persoonlijke uitvaart samen te stellen.

Hoofdstuk 4: De functie van muziek bij uitvaarten

In het vierde hoofdstuk behandel ik de vraag wat de functie is van muziek bij hedendaagse uitvaarten. Om deze vraag te beantwoorden, observeerde ik 44 uitvaarten in drie crematoria in Nederland. In de eerste analyse onderzocht ik de 235 muziekstukken die tijdens deze uitvaarten klonken in relatie tot hun specifieke plek in de uitvaart. Ik onderscheidde de volgende functies: het begin van de uitvaart markeren; fungeren als achtergrondmuziek; een verlengstuk zijn van eerdere woorden of handelingen; omgaan met emoties; afwisselen met andere onderdelen van de uitvaart; identiteit presenteren. Een muziekstuk kan op één moment verschillende functies hebben: voor bijvoorbeeld een dochter die weet dat een specifiek muziekstuk de lievelingsmuziek van haar moeder was, kan de muziek de identiteit van haar moeder presenteren, terwijl voor een collega die niet op de hoogte was van de muzikale voorkeuren van de overledene een muziekstuk fungeert ter afwisseling met andere onderdelen van de uitvaart. Wanneer de lievelingsmuziek van een overledene klinkt bij het binnenkomen van de aula, kan deze zowel het begin van de uitvaart markeren als de identiteit van de overledene presenteren.

Met betrekking tot de functie 'identiteit presenteren' ga ik nader in op 'identiteit' en vooral 'muzikale identiteit'. Wanneer ik spreek over 'identiteit presenteren', bedoel ik de muzikale identiteit van de overledene, die onderdeel is van het *patchwork* van identiteit. Identiteit bestaat uit verschillende onderdelen en de muzikale identiteit, vooral vormgegeven

door muzikale voorkeuren, is er daar één van. Ik beschrijf muzikale identiteit niet als een identiteit die voor eens en voor altijd vastligt, maar als een proces, dat constant in beweging is en zich altijd verder ontwikkelt. In de muzikale identiteit die wordt gepresenteerd bij uitvaarten, moet worden vermeld dat het gaat om de identiteit van de overledene zoals de nabestaanden deze identiteit vormgeven. De identiteit is dus minder dynamisch geworden en is mede vormgegeven op basis van hoe nabestaanden hun overleden dierbare willen (blijven) herinneren.

Musical eulogy

In de tweede analyse onderzocht ik 68 wat uitgebreidere aankondigingen van en reflecties op muziekstukken. In 59 hiervan stond de muzikale identiteit van de overledene centraal. Ik introduceer het concept *musical eulogy* voor het fenomeen dat alle aanwezigen bij een uitvaart, ongeacht hun eigen muzikale voorkeur, luisteren naar de uitvaartmuziek: het is een muzikale ode, een muzikaal eerbetoon. In de *musical eulogy* staat meestal niet de tekst van een muziekstuk centraal, maar de manier waarop het muziekstuk zich verhoudt tot de overledene. De nadruk die bij uitvaartmuziek wordt gelegd op de identiteit van de overledene is onderdeel van het personaliseren van hedendaagse uitvaarten.

Muziek is in staat om op verschillende manieren te fungeren door de zogenaamde *refurnishing quality* van de muziek: muziek kan een ruimte als het ware opnieuw inrichten en op die manier bijdragen aan het welbevinden van mensen in die ruimte (DeNora, 2013). Om dat te kunnen doen, wordt muziek gekoppeld aan andere factoren, zoals bijvoorbeeld – en zoals omschreven in dit hoofdstuk – de muzikale voorkeuren van de overledene.

Hoofdstuk 5: *Ave Maria,* hemel en engelen in uitvaartmuziek

In het vijfde hoofdstuk ga ik nader in op de populariteit van *Ave Maria* en muziekstukken waar in de tekst wordt verwezen naar hemel en engelen. Denk hierbij bijvoorbeeld aan het Gregoriaans *In paradisum* en *Panis Angelicus,* aan *Angels* van Robbie Williams, *Tears in Heaven* van Eric Clapton en *Trein naar niemandsland* van Frans Bauer. Dit roept de vraag op hoe de populariteit van deze muziekstukken zich verhoudt tot het Nederlandse funeraire landschap, dat vaak getypeerd wordt als geseculariseerd. Gebruik makend van het concept *lived religion* (Ammerman, 2016), dat religie zowel binnen als buiten een geïnstitutionaliseerde context situeert, onderzoek ik welke rol religie speelt in de populariteit van de genoemde stukken en welke betekenissen er nog meer worden toegekend aan deze muziek. Hierbij baseer ik me voornamelijk op interviews met nabestaanden, uitvaartleiders, ritueelbegeleiders en andere sprekers.

De resultaten laten zien dat de interpretaties van de woorden 'hemel' en 'engel' in uitvaartmuziek zowel aan het christendom worden gerelateerd als aan een niet-christelijk *afterlife* van de overledene. Met betrekking tot het *afterlife* van de overledene moet worden opgemerkt dat er geen consensus is over waar de hemel is, wat engelen zijn en hoe ze eruit zien. De woorden 'hemel' en 'engel' worden vooral gebruikt als een metafoor. Ze bieden een taal, een expressiemogelijkheid, zonder dat ze een concreet beeld oproepen. Op die manier worden hemel en engelen onderdeel van de manier waarop nabestaanden een relatie met de overledene voortzetten: iemand is nog ergens, in een bepaalde hoedanigheid.

Ave Maria

De populariteit van *Ave Maria* (10 van de 235 muziekstukken) omvat vele uitvoeringen van dit stuk. Denk hierbij aan de compositie van Bach/Gounod of Schubert, in uitvoeringen door verschillende artiesten, maar ook aan een live-uitvoering. Ook het *Ave Maria* van de Israëlische singer-songwriter Noa werd twee keer gespeeld. Uit interviews komt naar voren dat de interpretatie van *Ave Maria* wordt gerelateerd aan het christendom; de religieuze identiteit van de overledene; herinneringen aan de overledene; en aan de context van de uitvaart zelf. In veelvoorkomende gevallen waar de overledene christelijk was en de nabestaanden niet, is *Ave Maria* vaak het enige christelijke element in de uitvaart. Nabestaanden die moeite hebben om uitdrukking te geven aan de christelijke identiteit van de overledene, accepteren *Ave Maria* makkelijker dan andere elementen zoals bijvoorbeeld een lezing uit de bijbel. Het stuk is dan niet alleen een expressie van de religieuze identiteit van de overledene, maar roept ook – en misschien zelfs wel meer – herinneringen op aan de overledene, zonder dat, vanuit het perspectief van de nabestaanden, de christelijke identiteit een rol speelt. Ook de christelijke herkomst van het stuk speelt niet altijd een rol. Wanneer *Ave Maria* bijvoorbeeld wordt gerelateerd aan de context van de uitvaart zelf, is de christelijke herkomst niet altijd bekend, of in elk geval niet relevant. *Ave Maria* wordt dan gezien als een stuk dat bij uitvaarten hoort, en dat passend is voor deze context. Op die manier is *Ave Maria* een ritueel repertoire geworden. Mensen identificeren zich dan niet met de christelijke context waarin *Ave Maria* is ontstaan, maar met de funeraire context waarin – in hun optiek – *Ave Maria* thuis hoort.

Hoofdstuk 6: Conclusie, balans en perspectieven

In het zesde hoofdstuk komen de conclusies uit de verschillende hoofdstukken samen. In de voorgaande hoofdstukken vormt de personalisering van uitvaarten en uitvaartmuziek een rode draad: muziek is verbonden met de overledene doordat het mooie herinneringen oproept,

doordat het de lievelingsmuziek van de overledene was, of doordat het uitdrukking geeft aan waar de overledene nu is. Deze personalisering is echter geen doel op zich. De manier waarop muziek verbonden wordt met de overledene maakt deel uit van de manieren waarop nabestaanden een relatie met de overledene voortzetten.

Continuing bonds

In het *continuing bonds*-model staat centraal dat in het rouwproces het *voortzetten* van een relatie met de overledene een betere strategie is dan het *verbreken* van die relatie (Klass & Steffen, 2018). Een overledene kan nog steeds deel uitmaken van het leven van de nabestaanden en hun sociaal-culturele netwerk. Hoewel veel onderzoek op het gebied van *continuing bonds* plaatsvindt binnen therapeutische settings langere tijd na het overlijden van een dierbare, laat mijn onderzoek zien dat het discours rond *continuing bonds* al tijdens een uitvaart aanwezig is. Het laat ook zien dat de voortgezette relatie met de overledene zowel (de herinneringen aan) het geleefde leven van de overledene betreft, als het *afterlife* van de overledene.

In een verdere verdieping van *continuing bonds* binnen uitvaarten breng ik de *continuing bonds*-theorie in dialoog met de zogenoemde *words against death*-theorie (Davies, 2017). In deze theorie laten mensen de dood niet het laatste woord hebben. In plaats daarvan gebruiken ze woorden of andere expressievormen om betekenis te geven aan de dood of om zichzelf te troosten. Het gaat hierbij niet om de inhoud van de woorden, maar om de retorische kracht. In een vervolgonderzoek op deze *words against death*-theorie stellen Bailey en Walter voor om te spreken van *funerals against death* (Bailey & Walter, 2016). Zij concluderen op basis van analyses van gesproken *eulogies* dat emotionele en sociale aspecten van de *eulogy* net zo belangrijk zijn als de talige (linguïstische) aspecten. De bevindingen in mijn onderzoek laten echter zien dat dat talige aspecten veelal minder belangrijk zijn dan emotionele en sociale aspecten: de songtekst is veelal niet (volledig) relevant, terwijl sociale relaties dat des te meer zijn.

Continuing bonds mentality

Wat zowel het *continuing bonds*-model als de *against death*-theorie laten zien, is dat de focus niet (voornamelijk) ligt op de dood en de doden, maar op de omgang met de dood en de doden door de nabestaanden. De sterke aanwezigheid van het *continuing bonds*-model in mijn onderzoek brengt mij tot een nieuwe typering van hedendaagse *death mentalities:* de *continuing bonds mentality.* Hoewel ik hiermee de hedendaagse *death mentality* niet gelijk wil stellen aan het *continuing bonds*-model, wil ik wel benadrukken dat dit model een belangrijke

plaats inneemt. Tevens wil ik benadrukken dat deze karakterisering '*continuing bonds mentality*' naar voren is gekomen via een specifieke lens, namelijk de lens van muziek bij uitvaarten in de hedendaagse uitvaartcultuur in Nederland. Deze lens verschilt op verschillende punten van andere *death mentalities* zoals beschreven door Ariès (1974), Jacobsen (2016) en Walter (2019). Dit laat zien dat, hoewel *death mentalities* in een aantal woorden omschreven kunnen worden, *death mentalities* eigenlijk een complex netwerk van soms paradoxale elementen zijn en daardoor in werkelijkheid minder coherent zijn dan een beschrijving doet vermoeden.

Tot slot beschrijf ik de beperkingen van dit onderzoek en doe ik aanbevelingen voor vervolgonderzoek. In deze samenvatting benoem ik hiervan alleen de laatste aanbeveling voor vervolgonderzoek. Bij hedendaagse uitvaarten staat de uitvaart in het teken van herinneringen ophalen en 'het leven vieren'. Aan het eind van de plechtigheid in de aula lopen de bezoekers langs de kist om – zoals dat heet – een laatste groet te brengen. Dit is vaak een emotioneel moment. Is het niet vreemd dat we éérst proberen om het leven van de overledene te vieren en mooie herinneringen op te halen, en daarna tóch nog weer die emotionele gang langs de kist maken? Zou het voor de effectiviteit van de 'viering van het leven', maar ook – zoals in dit onderzoek naar voren kwam – voor de ervaring van *continuing bonds*, wellicht goed zijn om éérst langs de kist te gaan en daarna het leven te vieren en *continuing bonds* te ervaren? Om het te verwoorden met de songtitels waarmee ik de inleiding begon: een uitvaart zou heel goed kunnen beginnen met *Time to Say Goodbye* en tóch eindigen met *Afscheid nemen bestaat niet*.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Janieke Bruin-Mollenhorst (1988) received her Bachelor of Music from the ArtEZ Conservatory at Enschede (organ and church music). While working as a musician and as a board member of the professional journal *Muziek & Liturgie* (Music & Liturgy), she did a premaster and master on Religion and Ritual at Tilburg University. She obtained her MA degree in Culture Studies at Tilburg University in 2014 (*with distinction*), with a focus on religion and ritual. During and after her studies, she worked as a research assistant on a study about musical parameters in the playlist of a Dutch crematorium and on a study about music as ritual. Between 2016 and 2021 she conducted her doctoral research at the Department of Culture Studies at Tilburg University. She temporarily continued her career at the Department of Theology and Religious Studies of the University of Groningen. After that, she became the academic coordinator of the Institute for Ritual and Liturgical Studies.

She has published several articles and book chapters, which can be found in the bibliography of this book, and is one of the editors of a special issue on Death Mentalities (in progress, expected in 2022). In addition, she co-organised, among other things, a panel for a conference, a symposium and a masterclass. She also initiated both the DONE network and the FUNERALLAB. In the DONE network, scholars from the Netherlands who study (aspects of) death come together to discuss each other's work and to share relevant publications and ideas. In the FUNERALLAB, a (fictitious) funeral is performed and reflected on. The FUNERALLAB encourages the dialogue between various funeral professionals, and at the same time generates data for academic research on contemporary funeral practices.

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In Time to Say Goodbye? A Study on Music, Ritual and Death in the Netherlands, Janieke Bruin- Mollenhorst explores attitudes towards death in the Netherlands through the lens of music during contemporary funeral rituals. Using a multidisciplinary approach, the author stud-ies the interplay between music facilities, musical repertoires and funeral rituals from 1914 to present; the functions of contempo-rary funeral music; and the use of religious ex-pressions in contemporary funeral music. She shows that continuing bonds play an impor-tant role in the ways people in contemporary Dutch society deal with death.
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