

Annette Davison

Abstract and Title: "A Beautiful Mine"?: opening title sequences in contemporary television serials

These intense sequences fulfil a variety of functions, some more tangible than others. As we enter the digital era, however, the key historical function of the television title sequence — i.e. signalling a boundary in the flow of television's continuous programming — may effectively have become obsolete. In addition, certain figures in the television industry suggest that main title sequences with music are in terminal decline in some commercial markets. However, in other markets — notably, the premium cable channels, and those channel that seek to emulate them — the sequences for high production value serials have entered a period of renaissance. In this paper I explore recent trends and topos in sequences for high production value television serials, such as HBO's *The Wire* (2001–5) and *The Sopranos* (1999–2007) and AMC's *Mad Men* (2007–), and introduce the issue of institutional context, particularly as it relates to branding.