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 ROYAL MUSICAL ASSOCIATION

## RMA Officers

Mark Everist

*President*

m.everist@soton.ac.uk

Jeffrey Dean

*Executive Officer*

exec@rma.ac.uk

Valerie James

*Hon. Treasurer*

valerie.james@sas.ac.uk

Simon Keefe

*Chair, Publications Committee*

*Editor, RMA Monographs*

s.keefe@sheffield.ac.uk

Thomas Schmidt

*Chair, Proceedings Committee*

thomas.schmidt@manchester.ac.uk

Jan Smaczny

*Chair, Awards Committee*

j.smaczny@qub.ac.uk

Prof. Barbara Kelly

*Chair, Search Committee*

b.l.kelly@keele.ac.uk

Laura Tunbridge

*Editor, JRMA*

laura.tunbridge@manchester.ac.uk

Paul Watt

*Editor, RMA Research Chronicle*

paul.watt@monash.edu

Michael Byde

*Member Communications Officer*

*(Newsletter, Website and Social Media)*

administrator@rma.ac.uk

Katy Hamilton

*Membership Development Officer*

membership@rma.ac.uk

Peter Atkinson

*Student Representative*

pja263@bham.ac.uk

James Taylor

*Student Representative*

james.taylor@bristol.ac.uk

Susan Bagust

*Student Liaison Officer*

sjbagust@onetel.com

Marija Duric Speare

*Copy Editor, RMA Newsletter*

*Proofreader, JRMA*

marijads111@gmail.com

# Newsletter

Volume XIX, Number 2 November 2015

## From the President:

In the April *Newsletter* I promised the results of an analysis of the nationwide assessment of research that was reported in December 2014, which I suggested might be used as a suitable proxy for the anatomy of 'subjects connected with the art and science of music' with which the Royal Musical Association, as the principal learned society in the country, concerns itself. Preliminary results are now in, and I have been talking them through with various constituencies since the early summer. Our plans are to publish a full report with all the data and its analysis by the end of the calendar year. The Association owes a great debt of gratitude to Simon McVeigh (Goldsmiths, University of London), who masterminded the project, funded directly by the RMA Council. This is not the place to outline the results, since they require several tables and a litany of caveats; but the distance between this data and the idea that it may function as a proxy for activity in the United Kingdom can be great. Just to take a single headline: when the data suggests that 40 per cent of all the work produced in the country between 2008 and 2014 was in practice as research, and that most – 32 per cent – was in some form of composition, this excludes what is obviously an enormous tranche of compositional activity outside academia. So while the data will be of value for those who conduct their research within the field of higher education, it is perhaps misleading as we look beyond the academy. On the other hand, looking at the more traditional work in music research, one can trust the data rather more when it says that 43 per cent of text-based work is in some sort of historically based endeavour, whereas 13 per cent falls into what might be called ethnomusicology. One area where we have not quite completed the work is in the various forms of research in music and science, where the final part of the analysis involves going beyond the RAE music sub-panel to look at music-related outputs in all other disciplines across the spectrum (we are grateful to Thomas Schmidt – University of Manchester – for spearheading this final phase).



With observations like the ones I've just given about practice as research and text-based musicology, I was more pleased than ever that the Association is returning to its late nineteenth-century roots as it re-engages with composers and practice-led researchers around the country. The Association conducted some preliminary meetings to try to establish how important a forum for the discussion of ideas around the development of all forms of practice as research in the UK would be; it rapidly became clear that this is a key role that the RMA could and should be undertaking. I spent a stimulating day in Manchester last June getting the measure of some of the concerns that are shared by our research-led performers and composers, and these are discussed by Warwick Edwards elsewhere in this *Newsletter*. It's clear that there is a lot of work to do here, and the Association's Council has already taken some action to move forward. We have appointed Nick Fells (University of Glasgow) to coordinate a national network of colleagues (which already numbers nearly 200) in this field as well as a committee to support him and report to Council. We have also appointed a writing group tasked with reviewing existing documentation on practice-led research in music already in the public domain, and subjecting it to critique and emendation; this will then serve as the basis of representations to various bodies – from individuals to government – in seeking

to discipline the acts of composition and performance.

The RMA Annual Conference 2015 took place at the University of Birmingham, and the Association is grateful to Andrew Kirkman, Ben Earle and their team for supervising an exciting and important programme. The Peter Le Huray lecture was given this year by Georgina Born (University of Oxford), and the Association welcomed 2014 Dent medallist Alexander Rehding (Harvard University) for the presentation of the Dent Medal. Both these impressive plenary events were well received, as were all the other sessions that drove forward scholarship and research in various parts of our discipline with vigour and energy. The invitation to contribute to the next RMA Annual Conference at Guildhall School of Music & Drama in London purposefully includes references to performers and composers in line with the RMA's commitment to practice as research, and we look forward to proposals both for individual papers and for complete sessions for 2016.

The RMA has kept up a breathtaking pace of activity around the country with an event every two weeks during the past six months: Intercultural Transfers in Music (Singapore); Directions in Researching Post-1900 British Music (University of Surrey); Music and Mobilities (Uni-

versity of Oxford); Hearing the Voice, Hearing the Soul (Warwick University); Music and/as Process Study Group (Goldsmiths, University of London); Arrangements, Performance and the Work Concept 1700-1900 (Senate House Library, London); Taking British Music(s) Abroad: Soundscapes of the Imperial Message (King's College London); Practice as Research Symposium (University of Manchester); Music and Sound 1670-1850: Sonorous Sublimsdas Sublimes (CRASSH, Cambridge); Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland); Music and Philosophy Study Group (King's College, London); the 51st Annual Conference (University of Birmingham); (Per)Forming Art: Performance as Research in Contemporary Artworks (University of Leeds); and Musical Instruments in Science and History (University of Cambridge).

## Connect



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## The Dent Medal, 2015

The Dent Medal, struck in memory of the distinguished scholar and musician Edward J. Dent (1876–1957), has been awarded by the Royal Musical Association annually (with the exception of 1976) since 1961 to recipients selected for their outstanding contribution to musicology. Candidates are chosen on the basis of published scholarship, and the outstanding contribution to musicology may consist of either a single large-scale study or a body of work.

For 2015, the Dent Medal is awarded to Professor Marina Frolova-Walker of Clare College, University of Cambridge.

Professor Frolova-Walker was educated at the Moscow Conservatoire from which she graduated with a Ph.D. in 1994. Her first full-time academic appointment was at Goldsmiths, University of London (1997), followed by lectureships at the universities of Southampton (1999) and Cambridge (2000) – where she is now Professor in Music History. She has been the recipient of a number of research grants including a Leverhulme Trust Major Research Fellowship (2010), and in 2014 was elected to a Fellowship of the British Academy.

After early work on the symphonies of Schumann and his influence on Tchaikovsky, her research has been concerned with constructions of Russian nationalism, including a landmark article in *Cambridge Opera Journal* (9/1, 1997, pp. 21–45) entitled 'On *Ruslan* and Russianness'. Later studies on opera in Russia – including 'National in Form, Socialist in Content' (*Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 51/2, 1998, pp. 331–71), 'Grand Opera in Russia: Fragments of an Unwritten History' (*The Cambridge Companion to Grand Opera*, ed. D Charlton, Cambridge, 2003, pp. 344–65), 'Russian Opera: Between Mod-

ernism and Romanticism' (*The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Opera*, ed. M Cooke, Cambridge, 2005, pp. 181–96), 'The Soviet Opera Project: Ivan Dzerzhinsky vs. *Ivan Susanin*' (*Cambridge Opera Journal*, 18/2, 2006, pp. 181–216) and 'Opera and Obsolescence in the Russian Culture Wars' (*The Opera Quarterly*, 25/1–2, 2009, pp. 73–96) – are among an impressive gathering of articles and chapters that have done much to reorientate prevailing views of the subject. Alongside her forensic critique of the nature of Russian musical nationalism, Frolova-Walker has also placed Socialist Realism under the microscope in contributions such as 'The Glib, the Bland, and the Corny: An Aesthetic of Socialist Realism' (in *Music and Dictatorship in Europe and Latin America*, ed. R. Illiano and M. Sala, Turnhout, 2009). A summation of her views is to be found in the magisterial volume *Russian Music and Nationalism: From Glinka to Stalin* (New Haven and London, 2007), succeeded by the trenchant study *Music and Soviet Power, 1917–1932* (with Jonathan Walker; Woodbridge, 2012).

## The Jerome Roche Prize, 2015

The Jerome Roche Prize was inaugurated in 2001 in memory of the British scholar Jerome Roche. The prize is awarded annually by the RMA for a distinguished article by a scholar in the early stages of his or her career.

The Jerome Roche Prize for 2015 has been awarded to Dr Kate Guthrie for her article 'Propaganda Music in Second World War Britain: John Ireland's *Epic March*', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 139/1 (2014), 137–75. In a very strong field, Dr Guthrie's article stood out for its richly textured and lucidly written assessment of how British musical culture negotiated political imperatives before and during the Second World War.

Dr Guthrie holds a British Academy Postdoctoral Fellowship at the University of Southampton. Previously, she studied for her Ph.D. at King's College London and her undergraduate and M.Phil. degrees at the University of Cambridge.

Nominations for the 2016 award can be made by any member and self-nominations are encouraged. Nominations and supporting documents should be received by 1 March 2015. See [www.rma.ac.uk/awards/](http://www.rma.ac.uk/awards/) for the nomination procedure. Articles published in 2015 in English can be considered for the 2016 prize. Articles may be considered from journals, edited volumes, or books of conference proceedings.

## **Small Research Grants**

Research grants of up to £250 each are available annually for student members of the RMA (or members of RMA student groups) and member scholars with no access to institutional support.

Typical expenses might include microfilm and photocopying costs, travel, and accommodation expenses for research away from home or for giving papers at conferences.

For the 2016 competition, applications and supporting letters should be received by 31 January 2016. See <http://www.rma.ac.uk/awards/> for further information.

## **Inauguration of the RMA's South East Asia Chapter**

We are delighted to announce the establishment of the new South East Asia Chapter of the RMA. It was inaugurated with the symposium *West Meets East: Intercultural Transfers in Music* on 4 April 2015 at Raffles Institution in Singapore. The event attracted generous sponsorship from the National Arts Council Singapore and the Tote Board Arts Fund. A detailed report can be found elsewhere in this *Newsletter*.

There has for several years been a need for a forum that would bring together music practitioners in performance, composition and musicology with music educators in South East Asia. As a cultural and geographical nexus, Singapore seemed to be the ideal location for such a venture. There is, moreover, a considerable and active enthusiasm among Singaporean musicians and music teachers for the opportunities that a regional RMA chapter might offer. The symposium subject was designed both to analyse and catalyse connections between the musical worlds of East and West. Singapore, with its unusually rich cultural heritage encompassing both a Western imperial past and a vibrant modern indigenous culture that in many ways combines the best of East and West, was a thought-provoking location for relevant scholarly discussions.

The South East Asia Chapter will in the future continue to enhance and deepen musical scholarship in the region, and widen the reach of the RMA, by hosting similar annual events, whether conferences, study days or other occasions for discussion.

## **Conference Reports**

### **Authorship in Music**

These study days took place at Wadham College, Oxford, on 6 and 7 March. The event (expanded from one day to two on account of the amount of interest generated from the call for papers) sought to address and explore issues surrounding the notion of 'authorship' in relation to different kinds of engagement with music across cultures and genres and from a range of interdisciplinary perspectives.

Speakers presented on topics ranging from historical assertions of intellectual property rights by composers (Guido Viverit, University of Padua; and Ann van Allen-Russell, Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance) to the phenomenology of authorship as experienced in a collaborative recording project involving classical music performance and pop music post-production techniques (Mine Doğan-Dack, University of Oxford).

There were papers that explored legal issues of authorship with regard to performance: the legal ownership of operatic roles through a case study of Lucy Arbell and her right to Massenet's *Cléopâtre* (Emma Higgins, Maynooth University); and legal categories of creativity and labour and the negotiation of authorship by professional musicians (Ananay Aguilar, University of Cambridge). Perspectives on distributed authorship included an auto-ethnographic account of the compositional process of a Carnatic-inspired piece for solo violin (Alice Barron, Oxford); a look at the distributed authorship of orchestral performance (Cayenna Ponchione-Bailey, Oxford); and an exploration of the hidden authorships in classical music videos (Gaia Varon, Catholic University of the Sacred Heart, Milan).

Presentations in popular-music studies included discussions of authorship within the aural aesthetic of hip hop sampling (Niel Scobie, Carleton University, Ottawa) and authorship and the 'cult of personality' in Turkish popular music (Safa Canalp, Istanbul Technical University), while papers that took a historical view explored the performance of nineteenth-century arrangements of Beethoven's works (Claire Holden, University of Oxford), the authorship and authority in early arrangements of Beethoven for wind ensemble (Robert Percival, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London) and the early seventeenth-century keyboard toccata, with a focus on oral narrative and the performer as author (Naomi J Barker, Open University).

From a philosophical perspective, one speaker made an argument for the review of authorship and the work-concept in light of contemporary compositional practices (Adam Stansbie, University of Sheffield), while another explored Derrida's concept of hauntology through Simon Steen-Andersen's *J. S. Bach's Beloved Brother* (David Bainbridge, Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester). A dual presentation discussed two compositions of the speaker-composers which took different approaches to the literal insertion of the composer's 'authorial voice' in performance (Thomas Butler and Simon van der Walt, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Glasgow). And conceiving of authorship in yet a different way, a paper detailed the appropriation of Harris's *Symphony 1933* in mapping an idealized American West (Emily MacGregor, Oxford).

James Saunders (Bath Spa University) gave the keynote on authority, autonomy, control and play in game compositions; and Daniel Leech-Wilkinson (King's College London) joined performers Mine Doğantan-Dack (piano), Carson Becke (piano) and Jake Gill (baritone) to challenge received notions of performance and make a case for the radical interpretation of canonical repertoire.

The discussions over the two days gave rise to a variety of different themes: the multiple layers of authorship, historical and contemporary perspectives on intellectual property, phenomenology of authorship, intellectual property law vs ontological concerns of authorship, distributed authorship, culture specific conceptions of authorship, the privileging of fixed forms, the authorship of ideas vs actions, and the relationship between authorship, responsibility and ownership.

**Cayenna Ponchione-Bailey** is a doctoral student at the University of Oxford where she studies creativity in orchestral performance under the supervision of Eric Clark.

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## Facing the Music of Medieval England

On 21 and 22 March 2015, the University of Huddersfield hosted this conference devoted entirely to the study of music in England before 1500. Sponsors included the RMA, the British Academy series *Early English Church Music*, the Plainsong and Medieval Music Society and the Centre for Music, Gender and Identity (University of Huddersfield).

Papers covered material from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, and the speakers ranged from postgraduate research students to emeritus faculty. Presentations were divided into sessions on specific sources, discussions of genre, palaeographic and codicological examination, and ideas of reconstruction and performance.

Organizers Lisa Colton (University of Huddersfield) and James Cook (universities of Nottingham and Huddersfield) arranged for iPads with 'digital conference packs' to be made available to the delegates throughout the weekend. These conference packs included traditional hand-out content such as charts and tables, but also enabled delegates to interact with high-resolution digital manuscript images provided by the speakers. One of the most effective uses of this technology was in the ability for visual comparison both of manuscript sources and of transcriptions. Helen Deeming (Royal Holloway, University of London) asked delegates to examine images from one manuscript on the iPads while projecting images from another source on the projector, effectively illustrating how such a comparison of digital images can be used when faced with notational ambiguity in medieval sequences.

The influence of technology was very evident in much of the presented research. From the very first session, papers made use of the available conference technology while also presenting work made possible by technological advances in the field. Much of the reconstructive codicological work presented by Elizabeth Nyikos (Uni-

versity of Oxford) on the Worcester Fragments was made possible by the use of ultraviolet photography and digital image manipulation. In his paper on the history and organization of the medieval psalter, John Caldwell (University of Oxford) discussed a proposed online pointed Sarum psalter which would facilitate the editing of an Office by providing relevant psalm-tone endings all in one place. Two papers in the second session were delivered via Google Hangouts with relatively little technological disruption, allowing Monica Roundy (Cornell University) and Elina Hamilton (Boston Conservatory) to present their work (the nature of trilingual song presentation in GB-Lbl Arundel 248; and an exploration of English sources of music theory between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, respectively) from America. Live streams of these sessions were also available to delegates who wished to participate but were unable to be physically present at the conference. Video of much of the conference is available on Lisa Colton's YouTube page: [www.youtube.com/user/lisamariocolton/videos](http://www.youtube.com/user/lisamariocolton/videos).

A keynote by Margaret Bent (All Souls College, Oxford) presented an extensive survey of current scholarship on the music of medieval England, perhaps most importantly indicating topics that have received little attention (including the study of patronage in England; and introducing a proposed prosopography of English musicians before 1600) and outlining ways in which current scholars might reinvigorate not only their own research but also the interest of future scholars via large-scale research projects and collaboration between institutions.

In the final session of the conference, Andrew Kirkman (University of Birmingham) and Philip Weller (University of Nottingham) examined various issues of reconstruction with regard to the music of medieval England. Their engagement with the term 'reconstruction' in its multiple senses allowed for specific focus on the reconstruction of fragmentary source material and the importance of performance in reaching an end result, but also went on to engage with a larger-scale understanding of the term with regard to a theoretical examination of physical sense through the agency of music, poetry, text and visual imagery. This session's approach to research and performance through multiple readings of a single term was not only an apt realization of the conference title, but also a fitting embodiment of the multifaceted and often elusive idea of England within the larger medieval narrative. As pointed out by several delegates in the discussion following the keynote address, the idea of what constitutes 'English' musical material is often difficult to define in the context of its multicultural and multilingual medieval identity.

The two days of lively discussion and thoughtful scholarship are proof that, for a field so often viewed in light of its neglect, there exists a rich and varied community of scholars who are not only devoted to the current study of music in medieval England, but also remain eager to inject the field with new perspectives.

**Samantha Blickhan** is currently completing her Ph.D. at Royal Holloway, University of London, on palaeography and musical notation in insular manuscripts from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

## West Meets East: Intercultural Transfers in Music

### RMA South East Asia Chapter Inaugural Symposium

Following the foundation of the RMA's South East Asia Chapter in January 2015, an inaugural symposium took place at Raffles Institution in Singapore on 4 April 2015 (<http://www.itmmc2015.info>), organized in collaboration with Dr Ruth Rodrigues and Dr Hoh Chung Shih. This generated a large amount of international interest, and was attended by 67 delegates from 13 countries in the region, with participants ranging from secondary school and university students to music professionals, teachers and academics. We were fortunate enough also to obtain sponsorship from the National Arts Council Singapore and the Arts Fund Singapore (Tote Board).

In an attempt to do justice to the wide range of paper submissions, there were two pairs of parallel sessions devoted to current cultural issues, music education, historical musicology and composition. The deliberately provocative question posed the paper 'Can Asians Think about Music?' was clearly answered by the symposium itself. Musicians in the region have developed a fluency in both Eastern and Western traditions – a musical bilingualism – that has generated significant potential for further academic investigation.

The academic papers were enhanced by live performances, which included new arrangements of traditional Taiwanese Aboriginal, Hokkien and Teochew folk songs, and the closing concert of the Asian Contemporary Ensemble's Composition Academy, which took place in parallel to the symposium.

All three keynotes naturally dealt with instances of intercultural confrontation. Professor Mark Everist (RMA President; University of Southampton) evaluated and interrogated concepts of East and West in an intriguing presentation entitled 'Whose West? Whose East?: Twenty-First-Century Global Musicology and the Historiography of Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Music'. His closing analysis of the (from some perspectives) increasingly 'exotic' distribution of nineteenth-century performances of Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots* uncovered previously overlooked information and provided much new food for thought.

Similarly, composer Dieter Mack's (Lübeck Academy of Music) wide-ranging investigation (entitled 'Intercultural Issues in Music and Music Education: Thoughts, Examples, Suggestions and Misunderstandings') of encounters between Indonesian music, its performers and Western audiences and critics proved to be both trenchant and intellectually stimulating, based as it was on long-standing experience of composition and performance in both Europe and South East Asia.

Finally, under the heading 'Conver(g)(s)ing Cultures', composer Anothai Nitibhon (Princess Galyani Vadhana Institute of Music, Bangkok) offered a perceptive, thought-

provoking and highly entertaining multimedia presentation on the fertile intercultural encounters between Western and Eastern musics in Thailand and elsewhere in South East Asia. In so doing, she convincingly demonstrated that such intermingling can create genuinely new elements of cultural fusion and aesthetic understanding.

During a think-tank session, and further informed by post-symposium survey sheets, future plans for the South East Asia Chapter were discussed. A need for an online resource, providing information about current music, musicians and scholars active in the region, was identified. There was also a strong desire to have annual regional symposia and conferences, in addition to local study days. The way forward for the chapter will now include the nomination of country coordinators from South East Asia and associate representatives from interested neighbouring countries (including India, Taiwan, Australia and Hong Kong). A follow-on symposium for March 2016 is being planned. Owing to availability of funding, this is likely to be again held in Singapore, but future meetings will range much further afield, with meetings envisaged for Tokyo (March 2017 - in conjunction with the conference of the IMS) and Bangkok.

*As a member of the RMA Council, **Monika Hennemann** (Cardiff University) currently functions as the South East Asia Chapter liaison.*

### Do you have an idea for a study day?

The RMA's regular study days are normally (though not exclusively) convened by postgraduate students, with the RMA providing advice and assistance, and financial support. We welcome proposals for study days from all members of the Association. If you have an idea for a study day, get in touch with the Student Liaison Officer:

- Susan Bagust ([sjbagust@onetel.com](mailto:sjbagust@onetel.com))

### Affiliation of Conferences

The RMA welcomes proposals from conference organizers for the affiliation of their events to the Association.

Benefits of affiliation include free advertising of the event through the RMA website, *Newsletter*, and social media; free, or reduced cost circulation of information through RMA mailings to members; and access to advice and support from RMA Officers and members of the Proceedings Committee. For more information, visit <http://www.rma.ac.uk/conferences/affiliation.htm>.

# RMA ANNUAL CONFERENCE, GUILDHALL SCHOOL OF MUSIC & DRAMA, LONDON, SEPTEMBER 2016

## CALL FOR PROPOSALS

**Deadline: 5:00pm (GMT), Friday 27 November 2015**

The Royal Musical Association's 52nd Annual Conference will be hosted by Guildhall School of Music & Drama at Milton Court, just across the road from the Barbican Centre, from Saturday 3 to Monday 5 September 2016. The Edward Dent Lecture will be given by **Marina Frolova-Walker** (University of Cambridge) and the Peter Le Huray Lecture by internationally renowned opera director **Graham Vick**.

### Call for Proposals for RMA 2016 now open!

The programme committee invites proposals for themed sessions (90 minutes), individual papers (20 minutes), lecture-recitals (30 minutes) and posters (A1 display sheet). For themed sessions, any format – including sound installations, performance-based presentations, composition workshops and so on – may be proposed, as long as it fits into a 90-minute slot. The committee welcomes proposals from leading scholars and practitioners as well as early-career researchers. It also encourages poster displays, with or without scheduled question and answer sessions, on current projects of all kinds. The aim is to represent the entire scope of current musical scholarship.

**Themed-session proposals** will be selected on the basis of the quality of the proposal, with sessions especially welcome that:

- present practice-led research;
- involve the participation of leading practitioners and performers;
- explore the interface between research and professional practice;
- address issues of current political and strategic interest to the sector;
- are linked thematically to keynote speakers' areas of expertise;
- disseminate kinds of research hitherto under-represented at the RMA Annual Conference;
- are promoted by RMA's study groups and sibling organizations concerned with research in music and cognate areas (e.g. members of the [Music Research Consortium UK](#)).

Note: In order to secure a range of speakers with varying academic and professional experience, and especially to encourage the participation of researchers from the conservatoire sector, the programme committee may actively solicit proposals for themed sessions.

**Proposals for individual presentations** will be selected on the basis of the quality of the proposal (clarity, sense of purpose, methodology, significance of research findings) and its capacity to fit with other selected individual proposals into a thematically coherent conference session. If the number of proposals fulfilling all the above criteria proves to be very high, the programme committee may favour submissions from those who did not present at the last Annual Conference.

**Submission and selection process:** Proposals should be submitted using the Submission Proposal Form, which should also include details of AV requirements. Proposals must be submitted via email to [RMA2016@gsmd.ac.uk](mailto:RMA2016@gsmd.ac.uk) by the deadline for submissions, **Friday 27 November 2015**. The committee aims to notify proposal authors of its decision by early February 2016. Those selected will be asked to confirm their acceptance and may make revisions to their abstract at this stage. The full programme will be announced, and booking will open, in April. Abstracts will be published on the conference website in July.

**The programme committee** comprises Cormac Newark (Guildhall School of Music & Drama, chair); Suzanne Aspden (University of Oxford); Warwick Edwards (University of Glasgow, RMA Conferences Coordinator); Katy Hamilton (representing the RMA); Freya Jarman (University of Liverpool); and Julian Philips, Jacqueline Ross and Evan Rothstein (all Guildhall School of Music & Drama).

**Note regarding conference registration:** All participants (save Dent and Le Huray guests and designated conference organizers) are required to register and pay the applicable fee. Registration fees cannot be guaranteed at this stage, but are expected to be in the region of £65 for RMA members and £80 for non-members, with concessions available and a discount offered to RMA members for early-bird registration.

You do not have to be an RMA member to propose a session or a paper, or to participate. However, you will find it well worth joining at [www.rma.ac.uk](http://www.rma.ac.uk). Membership will entitle you to a discount on the conference registration fee, free hard-copy and online access to the *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* and the *RMA Research Chronicle*, exclusive discounts on a wide range of publishers' books, professional news and views in the monthly e-bulletin and twice-yearly printed newsletter, and much more besides.

**Exhibition space, leafleting, advertising in the conference programme book, closed meeting-room facilities.** Enquiries are welcome at any time.

If you have any queries, please contact the conference organizers at [rma2016@gsm.ac.uk](mailto:rma2016@gsm.ac.uk). Alternatively, if you don't have access to online facilities, please call 020 7638 4141 (ext. 5283).

## Music and/as Process Study Group – Third Annual Conference

Situated at Goldsmith's, University of London, this event on 6 June 2015 carried a particularly interesting mandate. Rather than asking all participants to present papers, conference chair Lauren Redhead (Canterbury Christ Church University) encouraged presenters to tie together musical performances, demonstrations and multimedia to illustrate their viewpoints on musical processes. Redhead began the conference by giving a lecture-performance of her work *ijereja*, for video and live performance. Every time that work is performed, Redhead incorporates facets of past performances, creating a living palimpsest of sonic and linguistic fragments. The work engages with process in an ongoing, performative manner, rather than using it as a pre-compositional device. Redhead's engaging performance and thoughtful discussion set the tone particularly well for the rest of the day.

Pia Palme (University of Huddersfield) also used a filmic element to demonstrate her compositional process. While her video was projected, she played the contrabass recorder and spoke prepared texts. Palme's video highlighted the ways in which she interfaces with physical materials, such as paper and hole punches, to represent and strengthen her compositional and improvisational processes. By presenting these metaphorical actions on video while improvising, Palme enabled them to take on a more active role, directly influencing her live playing.

Scott McLaughlin (University of Leeds) also gave a presentation highlighting the way that physical properties could generate musical processes. First, he played John Lely's *The Harmonics of Real Strings*. In this piece, the performer lightly touches one end of an instrument's string and, while continuously bowing the instrument, over the course of ten or more minutes traverses the length of that string with their finger. This simple, linear action generates a complex sonic result comprised of many individual harmonic and non-harmonic events. In McLaughlin's piece *For John Lely*, this physical process is mirrored. The performer lightly touches one end of a metal spanner and taps it repeatedly. Over the course of minutes they traverse the entire length of the 'instrument', generating a multiplicity of different harmonic and non-harmonic tones. It was fascinating

to observe the way that simple physical processes could produce wildly unstable musical results. This relationship seemed to serve as a metaphor for the way in which many composers at the conference used process: to generate previously inaccessible or unthought-of musical material.

James Saunders (Bath Spa University) prepared a performance of all voices are heard, which demonstrated the ways in which decision-making processes could be demonstrated in musical form in a rather more light-hearted manner. A group of six performers simultaneously read words from a list in arbitrary orders in short sequences with the goal of eventually reading the words simultaneously in the same order. The piece was undoubtedly a highlight of the conference, perhaps becoming one of the first times the word 'doxipoo' has been uttered onstage (one list of words contained many names of dogs). Moreover, the process of the piece was crystal clear during the performance, and was not a pre-compositional process but a live process onstage.

A keynote from Bryn Harrison (University of Huddersfield) brought together many of the previously mentioned strands of musical process, focusing particularly on the way a process could unfold live onstage. Harrison paid particular attention to the idea of 'dwelling' inside a continually evolving musical structure, rather than engaging with the idea of completion (a theory he related to anthropologist Tim Ingold). The pianist Philip Thomas then demonstrated this concept in a dazzling 40-minute performance of Harrison's work for solo piano *Vessels* (which has been performed at a variety of lengths, including up to 75 minutes, and is the result of many simultaneous processes being played live by the pianist).

Perhaps one of the most engaging aspects of the Music and/as Process conference was found in the questions asked by conference participants. Many attempted to dig to the heart of not only what processes composers were using, but also why they employed them, generating rich discussion during the conference and also in the social activities that followed.

**Luke Nickel** is an award-winning Canadian interdisciplinary artist and researcher currently undertaking a Ph.D. at Bath Spa University. His work began in the field of music composition and now investigates notions of notation, reperformance, loss of fidelity and memory.

## The State We're in: Directions in Researching post-1900 British Music

On the 16 and 17 April 2015, around 50 delegates from various parts of Britain, Europe, North America and Australia descended on the beautiful campus of the University of Surrey in Guildford. The Ivy Arts Centre provided the setting for the conference, which was convened by Christopher Mark (University of Surrey) and Joanna Bullivant (University of Nottingham), and supported by the RMA, the Music & Letters Trust and the School of Arts at the University of Surrey. Over the two days, the delegates enjoyed 27 papers, one keynote talk, a vocal recital, plenty of stimulating exchanges during the tea breaks and a discussion of the future of researching post-1900 British music.

While the papers given at the conference displayed a diverse array of subjects and approaches, a number of common themes also emerged. In the midst of its centenary years, it is perhaps not surprising that various papers dealt with the First World War. In one of two parallel sessions that opened the conference, Christopher Scheer (Utah State University) gave a paper on Holst's wartime setting of a Gnostic text, *The Hymn of Jesus*, linking the work to theosophical ideas about the war being a crucible for renewal, a liminal state between the old world and the new. In a later panel on the theme of transnational musical exchanges during the First World War, Jane Angell (Monash University) considered attitudes in Britain towards the music of foreign composers and towards the influx of Belgian refugee musicians – themes that cropped up again in a different guise in Florian Scheduling's (University of Bristol) paper on the significance of immigrant musicians in Britain in the years before and after the Second World War.

Benjamin Britten was well represented at the conference, with a session on the second day – 'Britten and the Voice' – dedicated to the composer. Justin Vickers (Illinois State University) discussed Britten's *Sechs Hölderlin-Fragmente*, which he sang, accompanied by Lucy Walker, in a concert of English song that had taken place the previous evening. Britten was also the subject of the keynote paper delivered on the first day of the conference by Christopher Chowrimootoo (University of Notre Dame), who highlighted a number of recurring themes in Britten's reception – such as smallness, childishness, humility, servility, belatedness and playfulness – that cast him as a 'minor' composer in the modernist canon. He concluded by arguing for a dialectical understanding of the relationship between 'major' and 'minor' composers, suggesting that Britten – a 'minor' composer – and his music could be seen as having fashioned the very majority (the modernisms of Schoenberg and Stravinsky, for instance) in which he stands in relation.

The issue of modernism was central to a number of other papers given at the conference. Drawing on the work of Alain Badiou, Annika Forkert (Royal Holloway and University of Nottingham) sought a compromise between an Adornian understanding of modernism and more recent expansionist approaches to the concept, illustrating her argument with music by Holst, Vaughan Williams and Lutyens. Kirstie Asmussen (University of Queensland) considered how Hubert Foss, in his role as head of music at Oxford University Press during the interwar

period, advocated a particular combination of Continental modernism and Englishness in national music.

The themes of nationalism and internationalism and of the role of institutions in British music were also apparent in the papers given by Kate Guthrie (University of Southampton) and Emily Worthington (London): the former considered how the repertoire of the Sadler's Wells Ballet company at the 1946 reopening of London's Royal Opera House appropriated internationalist heritage to nationalist ends; the latter examined the BBC Symphony Orchestra's promotion of a national performance aesthetic in the 1930s. Matthew Riley (University of Birmingham), meanwhile, discussed the importance of national commemoration in British music, identifying the combination of commemorative elements and landscape as especially characteristic of works by English composers.

Towards the end of the second day, Christopher Mark chaired a thought-provoking discussion on themes arising from the conference, with a panel including Kate Kennedy (University of Cambridge), Rachel Cowgill (University of Huddersfield) and Ceri Owen (University of Cambridge). A wide range of topics were considered by the panel and the rest of the delegates when the conversation was opened to the floor, including the relationship between music and literature (particularly in relation to the First World War), the tension between modernism and tradition, the fluidity of genre boundaries and the experience of the twentieth century through the notion of re-enchantment.

At the close of the conference was a discussion, chaired by Joanna Bullivant, regarding the formation of a network for researching post-1900 British music. It was suggested that the creation of such a network might ultimately result in the production of a new history of British music, and that a series of themed conferences or study days could lead up to this. The inclusivity and breadth of the network – both geographically and in terms of subject matter – was another issue raised, with the consensus seeming to be that, in both senses, the scope should be broader rather than narrow, encouraging, for example, the participation of scholars working on popular music. The importance to the network of having an online presence was also considered, as was the potential for the network to influence public policy and work with other institutions and practitioners in order to have an 'impact'. It was decided that a working group would be set up to move things forward. The conference ended, therefore, with a real sense that it marked the beginning of an exciting new phase in British music studies.

**Peter Atkinson** is an AHRC-funded Ph.D. student at the University of Birmingham researching British Wagnerism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

## Hearing the Voice, Hearing the Soul

The idea for this symposium – which took place on 5 June at the University of Warwick and brought together delegates from the disciplines of Classics, history of philosophy, literature, medicine and psychology as well as musicians – emerged from my own research project: ‘A Well-Tempered Life: Music, Health and Happiness in Renaissance Learning’. Many Renaissance philosophers, humanists and music theorists, as was explained during the symposium by Giuseppe Gerbino (Columbia University, New York), were experiencing difficulty in writing about the power of music, because they found themselves caught in the Plato–Aristotle controversy. They had to make a choice between two radically different theories of the constitution of the human soul: a Platonic one, originating from Plato’s *Timaeus*, which stated that music has a great influence on the human soul because they are somehow similar, and an Aristotelian one, originating from Aristotle’s *On the Soul*, which did not postulate any special relationship between music and the soul. Privileging one philosophical model over the other brought about entirely different beliefs about the nature of music, what it does, or what it should do.

The body of doctrine around these two sources, combined with Christian medical and philosophical ideas about music and the soul, was pervasive until the beginning of the seventeenth century. It united theories of music, ideas about the music/song of the soul and musical practices. Moreover, it shaped perceptions of music as an embodiment of two worlds: one accessible to the senses; the other – be it inside or outside a human being – not. Yet, by the beginning of the eighteenth century, to learn about music’s power meant turning not to these ancient sources and their reception, but to works on the soul such as Descartes’s *Passions of the Soul* and Hobbes’s *Human Nature*. Although steeped in the culture of humanism, writers on the subject at this time appealed not to the authority of ancient and Christian doctrine as the starting point for their enquiries, but to musical experience and practice as they saw it.

I invited some of the leading experts in the field to this event – those who would be able to put the specific historical and geographical settings of my own project into a wider perspective. They were asked to track and to interrogate the nature, life span and eventual radical transformation and/or demise of ancient, medieval and Renaissance conceptions of the belief in music’s deep connections with human life. In so doing, the symposium functioned as a platform to discuss questions concerning why music has fascinated scholars in the Western world continuously for thousands of years, and to explore the continuities and changes in their explanations of its power.

Three themes emerged as particularly prominent and promising. The first of these was that from antiquity onwards a strong humanistic tradition existed, in which music was conceived of as no mere ordered sound, but as something which has a significant psychic, intellectual, emotional and social dimension. Yet given the non-representational character of music, we share the difficulties of Renaissance and early modern humanistic scholars in establishing how music and the inner world of man are connected. The second was the important role that new and emerging scientific and musical ideas and practices played

in shaping and conditioning conceptions of the much-invoked power of music in different historical and geographical contexts. And the third, the divergence within different historical periods in the use of vocabulary, and within different scholarly disciplines in methodological approaches.

During the first lecture, Anne Sheppard (Royal Holloway, University of London) surveyed the views on music and the soul found in Plato and Aristotle, and argued that it was especially the way in which the Neoplatonists of late antiquity combined Platonic and Aristotelian views of the soul, and of music, that paved the way for developments in the Renaissance and later. The theme of the creative and dynamic reception of the ancient Greek doctrine of musical ethos, which attributed specific powers to specific musical modes, was resumed by Wolfgang Fuhrmann (University of Vienna). He demonstrated in his paper that, against the backdrop of the emergence of polyphonic music, the Phrygian mode, which hitherto was associated with ‘negative’ mood, experienced a re-evaluation as a result of which a tonality with E as final note became also appreciated in the context of sacred music.

Next to the idea of music’s ethical power to affect man’s soul, the other vital musical conception handed down from the ancient world was the presence of harmony in the cosmos. This shaped the way in which music was seen as an embodiment of a world that is inaccessible to the senses. In my paper I demonstrated that entirely different interpretations of this elusive ‘music of the spheres’, from perfect harmony to sheer cacophony, were used to deal with what two important Italian Renaissance scholars in the late fifteenth century and the sixteenth considered to be humanity’s major concerns: physical and mental disease and the fear of death. Peregrine Horden (Royal Holloway) complemented this chapter in the history of the Western reception of ancient ideas about the healing power of music. He argued that the long tradition of theorizing the possibility of music therapy in the Islamic Middle East can, through its dependence on a few key early texts, create an impression of great continuity. That impression conceals a great deal, however: not only the lack of evidence for practical realization of the ideas in question, but also important differences between one context and another within which ideas about music therapy come to the fore. The juxtaposition of Horden and Andrea Korenjak (Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna) in the symposium programme further enabled a comparison between Eastern and Western ideas about music therapy which were inspired by ancient musical doctrine. In her study of a nineteenth-century Viennese asylum which was run by psychiatrists with a humanistic education, she demonstrated how music’s integration into the daily life of its wealthy patients as a means of promoting psychic health was based on treating the so-called *Gemüt* (‘soul’, ‘heart’ and/or ‘mood’), with the goal being to achieve inner peace by tempering the soul with appropriate music.

The second part of the symposium started with a paper by Katherine Butler (University of Oxford) on music, demons and the soul in early modern England. In sixteenth-century England music was apparently regarded as a remedy against evil spirits. The biblical story of David playing the harp to drive away Saul’s evil spirit was most commonly cited as evidence for this, and explanations of music’s anti-

demonic powers traditionally relied on parallels between harmony and the divine order. She argued that already in the sixteenth century, however, there were sceptics who wondered whether it had indeed been David's harp playing that had worked Saul's cure, and that by the seventeenth century the metaphysical powers of harmony were beginning to lose their explanatory force. In his study of George Herbert's conception of the relationship between song and suffering, Simon Jackson (University of Warwick) also reminded us of the intertwinement of classical and Christian conceptions in the history of music's power. In his lecture he demonstrated how Herbert's poetry is conditioned by innovative ideas about music, the body and the self. Following this, in his discussion of musical affects and philosophy in the Enlightenment, Tomas McAuley (Indiana University) argued that one of the two most influential classical musical doctrines continued to be used during the Enlightenment in theories of musical affect, according to which the purpose of music is to move the affects of its listeners for their physical and moral betterment. This continuity is often overlooked in the secondary literature about the Enlightenment, which tends to focus on light rather than sound.

Far echoes of the two classical doctrines were also heard in the modern theories about silence, the unsayable and the speechlessness of music, which were discussed at the end of the symposium by Julian Johnson (Royal Holloway). Yet whether the ancient 'music of the spheres' and the modern 'unsayable' in music have anything to do with each other is again difficult, or perhaps even impossible, to establish, because these very terms thematize the non-representational character of music. Finally, a lecture by Penelope Gouk

(University of Manchester) made us realize that in our investigations of the reception of ancient ideas of music and the soul we are standing on the shoulders of giants such as D. P. Walker, whose pioneering work in the interdisciplinary field of the history of music and philosophy is still relevant. Gouk argued that Walker's portrayal of Renaissance musical culture can provide a starting point for rethinking later engagements with world harmony and musical ethos, even at a time when these musical doctrines were supposed to have declined in influence. Her suggestions, together with all the other ones offered by the approximately 40 participants of the symposium, will be used to formulate a coherent programme for the international conference Music and Humanism, which will take place in the University of Warwick's Palazzo Pesaro-Papafava, Venice, 2–4 June 2016.

This symposium was made possible through the generous support of the Institute of Advanced Study (IAS), the Humanities Research Centre (HRC), and the Centre for the Study of the Renaissance (CSR) of the University of Warwick; the Royal Music Association (RMA) and the Society for Renaissance Studies (SRS). More information about the event, including the programme, abstracts and a video of the lunchtime concert, can be found at: [www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/ren/about\\_us/centrestaff/research-fellows/prins/hearingsymposium](http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/ren/about_us/centrestaff/research-fellows/prins/hearingsymposium)

**Jacomien Prins** is a Global Research Fellow (GRF) at Warwick's Institute of Advanced Study (IAS) and Centre for the Study of the Renaissance (CSR). She is currently writing a book entitled *'A Well-Tempered Life: Music, Health and Happiness in Renaissance Learning*.

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## Arrangements, Performance and the Work Concept 1700–1900

In the inspiring setting of the University of London's spectacular art deco headquarters, Senate House, this RMA study day arranged by Elena Pons (Royal Holloway, University of London) took place on 15 June 2015. It explored the role of arrangements in the musical culture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The papers highlighted the importance of studying arrangements in order to understand the development of a musical canon and the dissemination of musical works, performance practice as well as the aesthetic priorities of certain times and places. The status of arrangements in relation to the musical work concept was of particular interest.

On this topic, a keynote from John Irving (Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, London) addressed the role of arrangements and the work concept in the increasingly complex chamber music repertoire of the early nineteenth century through Irving's own experiences of recording music by Beethoven. John Butt's (University of Glasgow) keynote address juxtaposed the different versions of Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with writings by contemporary German philosopher Leibniz to challenge current notions about the lack of a musical work concept before 1800. Similarly, Elena Pons spoke about arrangements as an independent category in nineteenth-century musical discourse, where they were seen to convey the composer's intentions in an accessible way. Reuben Phillips (Princeton University) thoroughly challenged present notions of piano versions as later reductions of a musical

work by showing that Brahms's serenades opp. 11 and 16 were in fact first composed as four-hand piano duets.

Several papers also addressed the adaptation of pieces to suit new eras and audiences: including a discussion by Simone Laghi (Cardiff University) of the dissemination of 'Shepherds, I have lost my love' in various arrangements across all levels of late eighteenth-century British society; and Leonardo Mucci's (Bern Hochschule der Künste) and Olivia Sham's (Royal Academy of Music, London) respective demonstrations that Hummel and Liszt 'updated' works by Mozart and Schubert to suit new performance practices and instrument technologies. On this note, Robert Percival (Guildhall School of Music and Drama) suggested that Beethoven himself had a hand in arranging his 'Pathétique' piano sonata for wind band (Harmonie), and Sonia Wronkowska discussed the adaptation of German and Italian secular music for use in Polish convents.

The study day offered a number of high-quality presentations, and one was certainly left with the impression that arrangements have been neglected for far too long. The papers showed that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century arrangements hold a wealth of information; rather than being 'untrue to the work', arrangements in many cases reveal the working practices of star composers and performers, as well as ordinary people's engagement with their music. To conclude, this was a well-organized study day giving an encouraging glimpse of the ongoing research on this important topic.

**Ester Lebedinski** is an alumna of Royal Holloway, University of London, and is currently a lecturer in musicology at Uppsala University, Sweden.

## Taking British Music(s) Abroad: Soundscapes of the Imperial Message

This interdisciplinary study day took place on 16 June 2015 and was supported by the RMA and the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, King's College London. The three organizers had met at the January 2015 RMA Research Students' Conference, at which plans were initially mooted for a research event on British music overseas. The aim of the study day was to bring together researchers working on what is a very broad area of research, in order to explore further pertinent themes and issues.

The day was held at the King's College London music department and brought together established academics, early-career scholars, Ph.D. students and interested persons from other disciplines. An international variety of institutions was represented: SOAS, University of London; University of Southampton; Yale-NUS College, Singapore; and McGill University, Montreal, were among those listed by attendees.

The schedule consisted of eight paper presentations across three sessions. The presenters were either current Ph.D. students or early-career scholars in music, history and English. Each panel was chaired by a senior academic, thus emphasizing the important element of mentorship which pervaded the day.

The papers themselves traversed vast geographical territory, including Britain, South Africa, Guyana, Singapore, India and Shanghai. The themes they addressed were just as diverse. Colonialism and empire naturally featured prominently, but so too did identity, migration, gender and space, to name but a few. These themes were explored through a variety of topics, which fell

into three key groups: individual characters; institutions; and compositions or works. There was also a consideration of sounds, and the symbolism with which these were imbued in different historical contexts.

In addition to paper presentations, the day included a keynote address and a round-table presentation. Professor Bennett Zon (Durham University) delivered the keynote address, in which he explored theories of colonial resistance and mimicry through an examination of the writings and theories of the nineteenth-century Anglo-Indian musicologist Sourindro Mohun Tagore.

The round-table topic – 'The Politics of the Archive' – was discussed by seven academics. Each presented a five-minute pitch, followed by a lively discussion between the panel and the floor. These discussions revolved around three dominant themes pertinent to music research: first, the need to consider the ethics of working in archives; secondly, the importance of realizing the many limitations that an archive could present; and thirdly, the nature of the archive and its diversity, especially the additional scope that could be provided by 'non-Western'/'non-European'/'traditional' archives. Music researchers have much more available to them than just written material when we expand our view of the archive to include the human body, sound and oral histories.

While still relatively nascent, the debate around music and imperialism is receiving increased attention from scholars, and it is hoped that this day has highlighted the scope for further exploration.

**Philip Burnett** (*University of Bristol*), **Erin Johnson-Hill** (*Yale University; KCL*) and **Yvonne Liao** (*KCL*).

### MUSICA BRITANNICA

#### LOUISE DYER AWARDS 2016

The trustees of the Musica Britannica Trust invite applications for the Louise Dyer awards, the purpose of which is to assist postgraduate students researching British music. Applicants must be full-time or part-time students of a British university or equivalent institution of higher education, registered for a higher degree by research. Awards may be made for necessary research expenditure for which the applicant has no alternative source of funds, such as the purchase of books, music or microfilms, or essential travel. They are not available for computer equipment, ordinary maintenance or conference expenses. The closing date for applications is Friday 18 December 2015. The application form and full details can be found at:  
[www.musicbritannica.org.uk/LDawards.html](http://www.musicbritannica.org.uk/LDawards.html).

#### Performance Studies Network – Fourth International Conference: 14–17 July 2016, Bath Spa University

Following on from the first three conferences held at the University of Cambridge (in July 2011, April 2013 and July 2014), the fourth will be held at Bath Spa University, Newton Park campus. It will further develop the dialogues and cross-disciplinary engagement generated at previous PSN conferences. The established and growing community of performance studies specialists and other interested parties will promote musical and musicological debate, and enable the development of new and more diverse research activity. Details will be circulated approximately 12 months before the conference.

**Conference reports:** Conference organizers are invited to submit reports for the *Newsletter*. The Association encourages organizers to nominate research students to write reports. Guidelines are available on the website.

See [www.rma.ac.uk/publications/](http://www.rma.ac.uk/publications/) for full details or contact [administrator@rma.ac.uk](mailto:administrator@rma.ac.uk).

## Sonorous Sublimes: Music and Sound 1670–1850

This interdisciplinary conference, held at CRASSH (Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities) in Cambridge, 23–25 June 2015 ([www.crassh.cam.ac.uk/events/25670](http://www.crassh.cam.ac.uk/events/25670)), brought scholars together to discuss the sublime and its relationship with music, from its rise to prominence in the age of Boileau and Lully, to its saturation of European culture in the mid-nineteenth century. The sublime has long been recognized as a crucial cultural category in this period, but until very recently, attention to sonorous sublimes beyond music has circled round a narrow range of terrifying noises – screams, canons, rushing waters – identified by Edmund Burke. Music itself has appeared as a latecomer to the feast of the sublime, feeding off an established discourse concerned with the verbal and visual. Responding to new developments in musicology and sound studies, this conference explored both the rich variety of sounds heard as sublime by past listeners, and the complex roles played by music in forming and transforming the discourse, practice and politics of the sublime.

Seven pairs of papers were each followed by a response, and wide-ranging discussion flowed across the three days. Individual papers addressed the roles of music in constructing civil identities and national histories: Suzanne Aspden (University of Oxford) demonstrated how Handel's sublimity was appropriated by English composers who did not merely imitate him, but quoted his musical structures, textures and gestures in order to elevate themselves and the art of music, and in so doing added a temporal – historical – perspective to their art. Musical tropes and devices were examined by Keith Chapin (Cardiff University), who explored the tension between simplicity and complexity in the neoclassical concept of the sublime through the works of C. P. E. Bach – some of whose music had been heard in a concert organized by Margaret Faultless (University of Cambridge) and Rachel Chaplin on the first evening of the conference. The histories of gender and sexuality were brought into the discussion, notably by Matthew Head (King's College London), who analysed the writings of early eighteenth-century English critic John Dennis, where the discourse of penetration and ravishment around the reception of Longinus's *On the Sublime* mingled with the contemporaneous anxiety about sodomy, and their shared fascination with transgressive rapture. Histories of the senses and knowledge informed the responses offered by Wiebke Thormählen (Royal College of Music, London) and Penelope Gouk (University of Manchester). For some speakers (including co-organizers Sarah Hibberd – University of Nottingham; and Miranda Stanyon – King's College London), the sublime was to be found in the performance of singers during times of war and revolution. Elaine Sisman (Columbia University, New York), in the final paper of the conference, asked 'When Does the Sublime Stop?' What returns us to the 'sensible' realm? Considering visual metaphors and word-setting in Haydn's *The Seasons*, and emphasizing the relation between eye and ear, she demonstrated how for Haydn the sublime was when the breath of life was in doubt, thus highlighting the ambiguity surrounding the end of the sublime.

In the concluding discussion, broader questions were addressed: is a history of the sublime distinctive, or does it always yield to other chronologies and grand narratives? Is the sublime an aesthetic category, or an experience to be

theorized? The chronological approach of the conference programme had encouraged a testing of the history of the sublime against metanarratives in music history (not least the rise of instrumental music and the 'absolute', and the descent of rhetoric and sacred music) and established the importance of historical and geographical specificity. And the papers demonstrated that the sublime could encompass experience, discourse, practice, aesthetic, concept – and the indefinable. More broadly, participants shared a conviction that the musical sublime was a phenomenon that enthralled past listeners, writers and musicians, that continued to provoke debate, and that helped to create the categories of experience, aesthetics and understanding with which we now approach it today. A volume of essays is in preparation.

**Sarah Hibberd** is associate professor of music at the University of Nottingham; her research focuses on opera in early nineteenth-century Paris.

**Miranda Stanyon** is lecturer in comparative literature at King's College London; her research focuses on the relationship between the arts and literary cultures in the long eighteenth century.

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## RMA Practice as Research Symposium

Held at the University of Manchester on 24 June 2015, this event was aimed at all composers and practice-based researchers working in higher education. In the words of the organizers, it was 'designed to create an environment where colleagues may share views and seek consensus upon issues that such researchers face in their work in the modern context of research funding, and various sorts of internal and external assessment'. Some 50 participants attended, contributing a remarkable 38 tweets as discussions progressed and as they basked in the afterglow on the way home. The event grew out of a call earlier in the year from Nick Fells (University of Glasgow) for expressions of interest in forming a network for compositional and creative music research, a parallel move by the RMA to reach out to all involved in musical practice as research, and a happy ensuing dialogue between Fells and the RMA.

Four position papers circulated in advance, along with links to some relevant published articles, served to focus discussion. Seeking to define 'the intrinsic nature of compositional research', Camden Reeves (University of Manchester) had expressed concern over the weight given to the ostensibly voluntary 300-word statements that had been introduced to the higher education Research Assessment Exercise in 2008 and featured in an evolved form in the recent Research Excellence Framework (REF). He had rehearsed a series of case studies in respect of seminal twentieth-century composers to demonstrate how theory invariably follows practice, sometimes by a long margin. With that in view, he had called for any verbal explication by composers in the 2020 REF to be genuinely voluntary and for an agreed model for assessment on intrinsic grounds. Endorsing this, Piers Hellawell (Queen's University Belfast) expressed concerns about the de facto establishment of an 'orthodoxy' of discipline regarding certain kinds of composition, one that was responsible for a degree of perplexity among younger composers especially, and that hence encouraged them to 'play the game' instead of following their creative instincts.

Fells adopted a different perspective. Reminding us of the dependence of all in higher education – especially those in

universities – not just on REF-driven QR (quality-related research) funding but also on research councils, he urged us collectively ‘to define or set limits to’ the kinds of creative work we consider ‘research’, and those we do not; and then to get into constructive dialogue with those who set funding policies – in other words, to ‘play the game, but play it better’. Whether or not you like the funding systems, there is a pressing need for pragmatism in order to stave off a potential doomsday scenario whereby practitioners in research-led universities exclude themselves from the very funds that have kept them in their jobs, relegating creative practice to conservatoires to the detriment of diversity in UK higher education and to the dismay of students (not to say the bewilderment of the general public), for most of whom the study of music is unimaginable in isolation from its practice.

Meanwhile, Martin Parker Dixon (Glasgow) tackled head-on the controversial assumption behind the very expression ‘practice as research’. Commenting on a recent article by John Croft (‘Composition Is Not Research’, *Tempo*, 69 (2015), 6–11), to which delegates had been sent a link, he rejected attempts to ‘dichotomize composition and research’, and proceeded to turn round the author’s representations of their incompatibility to argue for the exact opposite. Disputing Croft’s contention that a musical composition could not have a ‘research question’, he proceeded to itemize some 25 different ways in which such a question could indeed be framed in response to various claims about musical creativity that seemed on the surface to imply otherwise. Composition, then, *can* be research. But it need not necessarily be so: ‘The difference between a research-type and non-research-type composer is simply their preparedness to set out and defend certain claims that pertain to their work for the benefit of a research community as well as actually write the music.’ A composer may legitimately (if inadvisably, in a university context) reject making research-related claims for their work, but it is a fallacy to conclude thereby that such process is ‘anathema to creative working’.

Against the backdrop of these preset positions, a deliberately broad agenda shaped the day itself: an introduction from RMA President Mark Everist, who took the chair; a morning discussion of practice as research in composition and performance; an afternoon more specifically on ‘institutional and national value’, ‘research grants and schemes’ and the various categories of submission required in the recent Research Excellence Framework; and finally a consideration of ‘next steps’.

Of course, given the chair’s introductory exhortation to delegates to express gut feelings, there were beefs throughout the day about the perceived injustices of the REF and in respect of the blunt tools apparently used in some institutions to assess those present who felt their research creativity to be self-evident. Still, following the expected initial burst of steam, some useful points further to those in the position papers began to emerge. On the issue of articulating in words what research may or may not be intrinsic to our compositions and performances, are we not all obliged to do just that as we teach our students these subjects? And in the full knowledge that our current understanding of the processes involved will almost always be subject to transformation with the passing of years? On a completely different tack, one delegate observed that in recent decades ethnomusicology has transformed itself from subject area to a research methodology. Are composers and performers methodologists too? If so, there are implications for how their work is assessed.

With regard to research grants and schemes, another point to emerge related to a recent symposium at Goldsmiths, University of London, on the future of practice research at which it was plain that other disciplines such as theatre and dance had been submitting performances for much longer than music had, and had already monopolized the practice-based space at the REF. Indeed, their representatives had expressed puzzlement at composition’s position. In the circumstances, it was little wonder that the community of performing musicians had as yet little confidence in their status as researchers.

As to the various submission categories in the recent REF, it was disturbing to hear anecdotal reports of significant inconsistencies in the manner in which the system had functioned in practice. That said, there was further cause for concern as it became apparent how many of those involved – both in management and at the coalface – had failed to read and digest the guidelines. In one unforgivable case a composer had been advised by her institutional superior not to submit her compositions but to write and submit a journal article about composition and process instead. Still, it was plain that the guidelines were not always a model of clarity and that they could do with expression in terms with which practitioners could readily identify. And therein lay a challenge: it was now down to all with an interest in practice as research to reach a consensus on what might constitute a ‘more subtle’ procedure on the part of funding bodies in future. To that end it was necessary for the constituency to form a working relationship with such bodies with a view to sending them a unified and realistic message.

Finally, with Fells’s networking idea implicitly endorsed, delegates indicated unanimously their desire for a Practice as Research committee to take forward not just the funding issues on which the symposium had focused, but also the whole panoply of themes that Fells had originally proposed for the network. The RMA would facilitate this, and in all likelihood would be happy to have the network affiliated with it should its participants so wish; this in the expectation that the network would in turn inform the RMA about ways it might develop in future in response to the aspirations of its practitioner members. There was also the need for a separate working party to consult with the relevant bodies to bring about a set of funding criteria and methods of assessment to which all could subscribe.

All in all, this was a stimulating day that produced much positive thinking. Fells and Everist are to be congratulated for making it happen. And many thanks to Reeves for local arrangements and for implanting in the minds of those present the idea that there might actually be such thing as a free lunch.

**Warwick Edwards** is Honorary Senior Research Fellow in Music at the University of Glasgow, with publications in the field of early music that include performances and more besides.

There is now an already 200-strong JISCMail list to which all wishing to continue the debate and to stay up to date are welcome to subscribe. Please send an email to [listserv@jiscmail.ac.uk](mailto:listserv@jiscmail.ac.uk) with a blank subject line and the message contents: SUBSCRIBE RMA-PRAC-RESEARCH Firstname Lastname. Once subscribed, messages to the whole group can then be sent to [RMA-PRAC-RESEARCH@jiscmail.ac.uk](mailto:RMA-PRAC-RESEARCH@jiscmail.ac.uk).

## Fifth Annual Conference of the RMA Music and Philosophy Study Group

On Friday 17 and Saturday 18 July 2015, 167 delegates were welcomed to this conference held at King's College London. The optional theme this year was 'Music and the Senses', which enabled a wide range of debates to take place on both this topic and related areas of study.

After some introductory words from Andrew Huddleston (Birkbeck, University of London) and Jeremy Coleman (King's College London), the conference opened with a plenary discussion panel on 'Absolute Music', with emphasis on the debate between Richard Wagner and Eduard Hanslick. The panel featured three speakers: Mark Evan Bonds (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill), whose recent book *Absolute Music: The History of an Idea* was one of the inspirations behind the panel; Hannah Ginsborg (University of California, Berkeley); and Tamar Levitz (University of California, Los Angeles). Each speaker was given ten minutes to set out their position on the topic and five minutes to respond to each other's statements, followed by a forty-minute question and answer session. This format allowed for a stimulating debate on what absolute music is, how the term has been used historically and what it might mean to us today given the decline of music of this type in popular culture. Many interesting questions were also raised concerning whether or not context and narrative is important to appreciation of a piece of music. It was a very successful beginning to proceedings, which allowed delegates to gain an insight into the speakers' opinions, and voice ideas themselves.

The conference then proceeded with a varied selection of parallel sessions, with the first session of each day being devoted to discussion panels. Friday's panels dealt with the subjects of 'Staging Opera', 'Music and Psychoanalysis' and 'Music and Marxism'; and Saturday's included a discussion of *A Million Years of Music* by Gary Tomlinson, 'Listening/ Sound/Performance/Philosophy' and 'Experiencing Process Composition'. Each panel consisted of three or four panellists, and it was an indication of how truly diverse and interdisciplinary this conference was that philosophers and musicologists were joined by historians, music therapists, archaeologists, opera directors and composers – from institutions in many different countries.

Parallel sessions covered a wide range of topics: The Production of Hearing; Music and Cognition; Sensible Keyboards; Ontologies; Limits of the Senses; Self and Other; Functions of Form; Sound and Subjectivity; Criticism and Judgement; Bodies; Representation on Page and Stage; and Multimodality. The diversity of subjects and speakers demonstrated just how large a subject area the study of music and philosophy has become.

The lecture-recital format was used by speakers to extremely good effect, allowing presenters to demonstrate as well as to explain points, engaging the audience and showing great musical skill. The lecture-recital given by Jason R. Nguyen (Indiana University) as part of the Ontologies session included a skilful demonstration of traditional Vietnamese instrument the *đàn bầu* and his first-hand account of learning how to play it. This allowed

Nguyen to explain clearly his theory surrounding acquisition of musical skills and bi-musicality, providing an insight into the practical process of this which words alone could not fully capture. Another enjoyable lecture-recital was given by Morton Wan (McGill University / Cornell University) on Beethoven's op. 110 during the Bodies session. Through his explanations alongside well-chosen examples, Wan gave the audience a new appreciation of a familiar piece, and included a performance of the final movement which served to tie together what was investigated in the talk, as well as showcasing his musical talent.

Both Friday's and Saturday's proceedings were rounded off by excellent keynote speeches which explored the conference theme of 'Music and the Senses' and raised some interesting debate in other related areas. Friday's keynote was delivered by Christopher Peacocke (Columbia University, New York), who spoke on 'Music: The Perception of Relational Properties and Their Aesthetic Significance'. He focused on several different relational properties of music, and on the interesting phenomenon of the metaphorical hearing of music – hearing musical features 'as something else' – which he argued is itself a form of perception distinct from those we usually consider. This also led to a discussion of how composers might be limited by metaphorical hearing, as only certain music devices will produce the desired understanding; but are also able to convey meaning more freely than, for example, poets, who are restricted by semantics. Another relational property Peacocke suggested, in opposition to views such as those of Roger Scruton, was that of perceiving music as an event involving an action by an agent, a point debated extensively in the question and answer session. The response from Nicholas Cook (University of Cambridge) highlighted another important relational property (which Peacocke's fourth property of live music being publicly available had opened for discussion): the social nature of music and the fact that it is accessible by multiple agents. The talk served to link issues in philosophy of perception with the analysis of music, making it interesting to delegates from both disciplines.

In the second keynote speech, 'Making Sense of It All', Kay Kaufman Shelemay (Harvard University) presented a fascinating case study of the musical liturgy of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and the multisensory nature of the associated rituals. This provided an insight into the fundamental importance of music in this culture, and the relation of music to senses other than hearing as part of worship. Shelemay spoke in great detail about these rituals, using short audio-visual examples to assist delegates in understanding to a greater degree what was being described. This keynote stimulated a particularly interesting discussion on the individuation of the senses, and how this is viewed differently by different cultures – the consensus in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church being that there are seven main senses rather than the traditional five. This discussion was furthered by the response given by Stephen Mumford (University of Nottingham), and continued in the question and answer session, demonstrating the unique platform a conference of this sort can provide for combining the research and opinions of philosophers, musicologists, ethnomusicologists, anthropologists and others in an attempt to answer such fundamental questions.

Overall, the conference was viewed as a success by delegates, many saying that they'd greatly enjoyed it and that was excellently organized – many thanks to the MPSG committee. It was particularly noted that the format of the talks was successful, and the amount of time given for questions – 20 minutes in most cases – gave delegates the opportunity to have a thorough dialogue with the speakers. A suggestion for the future would be to include a plenary session at the end of the proceedings to tie together what had been explored over the two days and provide an opportunity to discuss the study of philosophy and music in general.

During the closing remarks it was announced that the study group will in future be holding biennial conferences rather than annual ones, and delegates were invited to give feedback on this year's conference to aid with organizational changes the committee hope to make for the next event. While I'm sure I speak for many delegates when I say that the conference will be missed next year, I look forward to the opportunity to attend another excellent event in 2017.

**Tamsin Timbrell** recently completed a WRoCAH funded MA in Philosophy at the University of York, where she has now begun a Ph.D. researching the ontology of Music.

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## Digital Musicology Workshop: Digital Humanities at Oxford Summer School

The Digital Musicology Workshop was held at the Oxford e-Research Centre (University of Oxford) from 20 to 24 July 2015, organized by Kevin Page (Oxford e-Research Centre) as part of the Digital Humanities at Oxford Summer School. This five-day workshop consisted of a series of lectures and hands-on sessions to offer an introduction to computational and informatics methods that can be, and have been, successfully applied to musicology. Participants from around the world were mainly Ph.D. students and scholars in musicology, but also in computer science and music librarianship. The workshop was introduced by Tim Crawford (Goldsmiths, University of London) and J. Stephen Downie (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign). Crawford described how he became involved in the field of digital musicology: he described his background as a lutenist and how the principal features of lute repertoire (mostly anonymous and borrowed or quoted from other music) led him to apply computational methods to study this repertoire in order to discover more of the music and establish concordances. Talking about Music Information Retrieval (MIR), Downie presented the work of ISMIR (the International Society for Music Information Retrieval) and how this interdisciplinary research community works to create new algorithms to improve the process of retrieving information from music.

One of the major topics of the workshop, 'big data', was introduced by Stephen Rose (Royal Holloway, University of London). With reference to Franco Moretti's 'distant reading' (2005) for literature studies (understanding literature not by studying particular texts, but by analysing large literary corpora), he reflected on how working with big data can open a new and larger perspective for music history. Rose described the Big Data History of Music pro-

ject carried out at Royal Holloway in collaboration with the British Library. Working with large amounts of data from some of the world's biggest collections of published music, music manuscripts and concert programmes (including RISM and the British Library's catalogues, among others), this project aims to develop new methods for research in music history through statistical analysis and visualization of this data. Rose talked about the importance of preparing and cleaning data in any project that works with large amounts of data, and he showed us some examples and suggestive findings of the project concerning music publishing in the period 1500–1700.

Continuing with big data, Downie, David De Roure (Oxford e-Research Centre) and Ichiro Fujinaga (McGill University, Montreal) presented the ambitious SALAMI (Structural Analysis of Large Amounts of Music Information) project, hosted by IMIRSEL (International Music Information Retrieval Systems Evaluation Laboratory) in collaboration with the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, McGill University, the University of Oxford and Queen Mary University of London. This project analysed the general structure of large sets of music recordings from the Internet Archive using a range of computer algorithms designed to detect musical structures; the accuracy of these algorithms were tested against human annotators (graduate students). The project's aim was to produce a large web-accessible corpus of analyses of several hundred thousand recordings including classical music, jazz, folk and world music. This innovative project has opened up new perspectives on music analysis, a discipline traditionally conducted by individuals on a small scale.

Kevin Page introduced another important topic: the Semantic Web and Linked Data (a new way of using the Web to publish highly interlinked and also machine-readable data). He described the principles of these technologies and commented on the potential of using Linked Data to publish, reference and reuse the output of digital music research. Carolin Rindfleisch (University of Oxford) presented excellent work in progress, related to the Semantic Web, from her Ph.D. dissertation. Her objective is to undertake a systematic analysis of the reception and interpretation of Wagner's leitmotifs in *Der Ring des Nibelungen* at different times and in various cultural contexts. She is developing a Semantic Web 'ontology' (a description of concepts and their relationships expressed using RDF, the Resource Description Framework, which is one of the foundational technologies of the Semantic Web) which allows her to express the complex relationships and influences between different interpretations of the leitmotifs in a structured way.

Richard Lewis, David Lewis (both Goldsmiths) and David M. Weigl (Oxford e-Research Centre) ran two very useful hands-on sessions about digitized notated music formats (MEI and MusicXML) and Music21, a toolkit developed by Michael Scott Cuthbert at MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) which can be used to search for patterns and to prepare reproducible music analytic tools. In order to work with Music21 we also learnt some basic aspects of Python, the programming language used by this tool.

Two more hands-on sessions were about audio analy-

sis and machine learning to search for patterns in large collections of audio. Christophe Rhodes (Goldsmiths), Chris Cannam (Queen Mary) and Weigl showed us some tools for extracting and visualizing audio features (such as amplitude, timbre, tempo, pitch and so on) using Vamp plugins and the software Sonic Visualiser. Ben Fields (Goldsmiths) and Tillman Weyde (City University London) presented the Digital Music Lab project (a collaboration between City University, Queen Mary, University College London and the British Library) and the interface developed by it (Digital Music Lab VIS). Through this tool, we were able to explore, analyse and compare large audio music collections from the British Library, CHARM (Centre for the History and Analysis of Recorded Music) and I Like Music.

Fujinaga gave an overview of the history and state of the art of optical music recognition (OMR). He emphasized the importance of image preprocessing such as staff-line removal to improve optical recognition. He also described various applications in the evolution of this technique, such as GEMM (Gamut for Early Music on Microfilms), which allows OMR of music from microfilms. Joining the principles of Linked Data and the process of OMR, Crawford, Page, Weigl and David Lewis presented a case study in early music. The objective of their Semantic Linking of BBC Radio (SLoBR) project is to create a resource of data in early music which is accessible, searchable, reusable and linked with some other extant early music databases (Early Music Online and Electronic Corpus of Lute Music, both of which have been the subject of OMR research) as well as other external resources and databases including DBpedia, MusicBrainz, and BBC broadcast data.

A lecture by Julia Craig-McFeely (University of Oxford), entitled 'Blind Alleys, Science Fiction, Redundancy and Modernization: How Musicology Is and Isn't Evolving in Response to the Digital World', addressed some important issues about the challenges that the world of digital musicology, continuously growing and developing, raises for musicologists. She presented a cautionary point of view regarding the world of digital musicology. She commented on its possibilities and applications: for instance, the large resources available online (musical sources, archival material and bibliography allowing for interdisciplinary research) or digital restoration techniques applied to early music manuscripts and prints (being carried out by projects such as DIAMM and Tudor Partbooks). But she also pointed out the negative side of the digital world: for example a lifetime's work being made redundant by a digitization project.

Both lectures and hands-on sessions covered a large range of topics in digital musicology. However, I would have liked to have heard some thoughts and been given some practical information about the process of producing critical digital editions of musical works, manuscripts or corpora, since producing critical editions is, traditionally, one of the main activities of musicology, and the digital environment can offer more possibilities than the traditional hard-copy format. I hope something like this may be included in future iterations of the workshop.

Thanks to good organization, practical sessions were easy

to follow: each laptop had the appropriate software installed and preconfigured and we were guided step by step in all tasks. This workshop opened to me a new and wide perspective on the potential of using computational methods for musicological research. But, above all, I have realized that the world of digital humanities is a collaborative one. Humanities research should no longer be a lonely activity; we must find ways of working with people with a technical background, because scholars working alone in the non-digital world cannot, in most cases, achieve as much as those working in the digital sphere.

During the entire week and in the final round table, delegates were encouraged to make comments and ask questions about the projects and technologies being presented and also about their own research. In sum, it was an excellent chance to expand our digital knowledge applied to music research and to stimulate our 'digital imagination'.

**Andrea Puentes-Blanco** is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Barcelona and the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC) working on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century manuscripts of hispanic polyphony and interested in applying digital technologies to her research.

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## The Royal Musical Association's 51st Annual Conference

The 51st annual conference of the RMA was held at the University of Birmingham between 9 and 11 September. More than 100 delegates, including about 80 speakers, from across the UK, Europe, North America, Asia and Australia, travelled to the Bramall Music Building at the heart of the university's campus to present their research, attend conference papers, listen to concerts and lecture-recitals, hear and discuss new compositions and perhaps partake in a soundwalk.

After a short welcome by Andrew Kirkman (Birmingham), the conference opened with a panel on 'The Reception of "Silver Age" Operetta in the UK, Germany, Italy and Poland', chaired by Derek Scott (University of Leeds). In the last paper of the session, Anastasia Belina-Johnson (Royal College of Music, London) explained that although Warsaw does not usually figure in accounts of the reception of operetta in Europe, there were some 64 theatres in Warsaw between 1860 and 1939, all of which included operetta in their repertoire, and some of which produced productions thought to rival those in Vienna and Hamburg. At the same time as the session on operetta, there was a panel on Russian music which included a paper by James Taylor (University of Bristol), who examined how Soviet musicologists wrote 'biopsychological appraisals' to account for the 'healthy' or 'harmful' influences of Western composers' compositions.

Following lunch there was a session on post-war British musical modernism, during which Philip Rupprecht (Duke University, Durham, NC) discussed excerpts from 1960s compositions by Malcolm Arnold, Malcolm

Williamson and Gordon Crosse, each of which cross the high/low boundary fundamental to modernism in striking ways, indicating the stylistic breadth of British composition at this period. Papers and sessions broadly concerned with music in Britain were also heard on the second and third days of the conference, and two themes in particular were prominent among these papers. First, the theme of tensions and intersections between the high-brow, lowbrow and middlebrow cropped up again in Kate Guthrie's (University of Southampton) discussion of Robert Mayer's concert series for children in interwar Britain, and also in Alexandra Wilson's (Oxford Brookes University) paper on 'The "Antipathetic Alien": Opera and Cultural Protectionism in 1920s Britain', in which she discussed highbrow commentators' concerns about the lowbrow Americanization of British operatic culture during that decade. An important issue in Wilson's paper – and in Laura Tunbridge's (University of Oxford) paper in the same session, 'Hearing "Sonic Blackness" in the Voice of Roland Hayes' – was that of foreign influences on and in British musical culture. This theme was picked up again in another session on music in Britain that took place on the second day of the conference, titled 'Continental Music for the British Public: Exchange and Interaction in Early Eighteenth-Century London'.

On the first day of the conference, Georgina Born (University of Oxford) gave the Peter Le Huray lecture, titled 'Music, Sound Art and the Contemporary: From Interdisciplinarity to Ontology'. In this rich and stimulating paper, Born drew on her earlier work with Andrew Barry, identifying three 'logics of interdisciplinarity'. After tracing the evolution of the logic of innovation in academic music from the 1980s to the present day, Born demonstrated how the logic of ontology is played out in digital musics today by way of five ethnographic case studies, which, she argued, participate in transforming what music is, as well as the nature of and the relations between musical subjects and objects.

Following Born's lecture there was a reception sponsored by Taylor & Francis, before some of the delegates attended an evening concert of new solo and duo music for mezzo-soprano and flute, performed by Nina Whiteman and Gavin Osborn (from Trio Atem). In addition to this evening concert, there were three lecture-recitals given at lunchtime on each day of the conference. In the last of these, Rebecca Turner (Goldsmiths, University of London) gave a virtuosic performance of Michael Cryne's *Hearing Voices* for solo cello and electronics. Running parallel to each of these lunchtime recitals was the opportunity to participate in a 45-minute soundwalk, organized by Annie Mahtani (Birmingham) and SOUNDkitchen. The walk began underneath the Joseph Chamberlain clock tower, and delegates were encouraged to listen to the sounds of the environment as they walked over to the beautiful Winterbourne Garden adjacent to the university campus.

In addition to lecture-recitals, practice-led (or practice as) research was well represented at the conference in the form of two sessions dedicated to the RMA-affiliated Music and/as Process study group, chaired by Lauren Redhead (Canterbury Christchurch University). In these sessions, composers introduced works that were based on or included process, and which were accompanied by critical programme notes. 'Things to Do' by James Saunders (Bath Spa University), heard in the first of these sessions, explored group behaviours and decision-making processes, and comprised a series of pieces in which a set of instructions spoken during the performance determine the actions of the players.

Preceding the keynote lecture on day two of the conference was the RMA's AGM. In the president's report, Mark Everist (University of Southampton) announced the election of a new vice president and three new Ordinary Members to the RMA Council, before presenting to delegates the initial findings of an analysis of music outputs entered for the REF 2014 and RAE 2008. Everist



Alfia Nakipbekova's lecture recital 'Xenakis: Nomos Alpha for Solo Cello'

then introduced Alexander Rehding's (Harvard University) Dent Medal lecture: 'Three Music Theory Lessons'. Rehding's masterly presentation considered a number of music-theoretical discourse networks, taking us from the modern-day music theory classroom, to the Pythagorean discourse network of Franchinus Gaffurius's sixteenth-century music theory, and finally to 1834 and a discourse network that did not make it into general musical consciousness, centred on Friedrich Wilhelm Opelt's multiphonic, polyrhythmic siren. Rehding demonstrated convincingly how instruments, as epistemic things, are an integral part of the music-theoretical system, and can unlock new ways of thinking about music and sound.

The final session of the conference was a plenary one dedicated to a thought-provoking discussion, chaired by Simon McVeigh (Goldsmiths), on 'The Public Face of Music Research'. After onstage panel members – Kirkman, Scott, Redhead, Katia Chornik (University of Manchester) and Stephen Newbould (Birmingham

Contemporary Music Group) – had given their own perspectives on public engagement, the conversation was opened to the floor. Issues raised included the role of the BBC and other powerful institutions and media organizations, the distinction between impact and outreach and whether traditional research outputs are best suited to connecting with those outside academia.

The rich variety of research presented at the conference demonstrated that the discipline is in good health and reflected the RMA's ongoing commitment to encouraging and supporting all areas of music research. With next year's conference due to be hosted by a conservatoire – Guildhall School of Music & Drama – it seems that the RMA's annual conference will continue to provide a forum for presenting diverse and innovative forms of research.

**Peter Atkinson** is an AHRC-funded Ph.D. student at the University of Birmingham, researching British Wagnerism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.



Mark Everist presents Alexander Rehding with the Edward J. Dent medal



Delegates raise a glass to thank Derek Scott for his work on Ashgate Publishing's Popular and Folk Music series

## (Per)Forming Art: Performance as Research in Contemporary Artworks

This symposium was held on 20 September 2015 at the University of Leeds and was funded by the RMA. Performers and composers from around the world attended to discuss the relationship between performance and composition and the importance of practice-led research. This international event – comprising a series of lecture-recitals segmented into three sessions, and culminating with a concert of contemporary music performed by the speakers – was an enlightening kaleidoscope of contemporary classical music, spatialized electroacoustic music, live coding, music for lute, music for oud and hand-made psalteries. It welcomed researchers from Belgium, Denmark, England, Italy, the Netherlands, Scotland and Thailand.

The first session commenced with Marina Lontou Mochament's (Leiden University; Orpheus Institute, Ghent) presentation 'Enhancing Inspiration: Metric Modal Improvisation as a Tool for Composition in Contemporary Modal Music', in which she discussed a collapse between improvisation and composition and how this fuels her compositional approach. Mochament performed sections of her music on the oud and provided recordings of her music being played by larger ensembles. This was followed by 'Performing Sound-as-Sound – An Investigation of Complexity', in which James Wyness explored multiple definitions of 'sound' and included a hand-made psaltery. Referencing Iannis Xenakis, he talked about how music is energy. He also questioned whether precompositional 'material' is sometimes more interesting than what is later structured into what is typically considered as a completed composition.

The symposium's second session began with a lecture-recital titled 'Renaissance Redux // Recercare Performing Project' by Jacopo Gianninoto (Assumption University of Thailand). Some of Gianninoto's lute music juxtaposes Renaissance idioms with contemporary classical characteristics. He discussed the importance of continuing to write new music for the lute, challenging an existing notion that modern lute music cannot compete with the traditional music already composed for lute: he explained that if this attitude had existed throughout lute music's history then the traditional lute music treasured today (and fuelling said notion) would not exist. Gianninoto's talk was followed by a lecture-recital from marimba performer Adilia Yip (Royal Conservatoire Antwerp) titled 'Inventing New Compositional Process via Oral Transmission Practice'. Yip demonstrated how she experiments with the senses that are inherently involved in performing music by playing the marimba blindfolded in order to enhance other sensory parameters such as hearing and proprioception. This encouraged an interesting discussion among delegates about the role of 'power' between the composer and performer, in particular how much control the composer has over musical details if the performer is blindfolded.

The symposium's final session comprised a joint lecture-recital by Maria Kallionpää (University of Oxford) and Hans-Peter Gasselseder (Aalborg University), titled 'Beyond the Piano: The Super Instrument. Widening the In-

strumental Capacities in the Context of the Piano Music of the 21st Century'. This talk explored the notion of a 'super instrument' as something that comprises multiple single instruments and electronics. Kallionpää and Gasselseder investigated the role of the piano and the toy piano in such a 'super instrument constellation' and performed music by Karlheinz Essl and Kallionpää herself. This was followed by Paul Wolinski's (University of Huddersfield) lecture-recital 'If in Doubt, Make It Loud: Exploring the Composer/Audience Relationship in Live Computer-Based Music Performance'. Wolinski's presentation featured live coding and visuals and acknowledged the current ongoing debate about whether composition is or can be research. He touched upon spectromorphology, the physicality of performing an instrument, laptop orchestras, deadmau5 and his own band 65daysofstatic, and considered several performative options for a laptop soloist.

There was also a thought-provoking academic poster on display throughout the day: 'Performances and Artworks, Performances as Artworks' by Gabriele Cavallo (Goldsmiths, University of London) considered the ontology of a piece of music and the role of performance in such an ontology. Although not practice-based, Cavallo's displayed research tackled the symposium's main research topic and acted as a unifying nucleus amid the lecture-recitals.

The (Per)Forming Art symposium finished with an evening concert and preconcert talk from Katy Hamilton (Royal Musical Association). In her talk, Hamilton acknowledged the significance of practice-led research and how the RMA is supporting such methodologies. The evening concert began with a loud energetic performance by Wolinski and featured pounding electronics and vibrant visuals in a darkened room. This was complemented by Wyness's spatialized and timbrally detailed electroacoustic music, which followed. Completing the concert's first half, Kallionpää and Gasselseder performed Kallionpää's *Trinity Mania* (2010), which involves electronics, a grand piano, a MIDI keyboard and a toy piano. The concert's acoustic second half offered a contrast to the electronics in the first half. It began with Yip's enchanting performance of *Inner Sight Etudes* (2015) by Cornelia Zambila. The sound of Yip's marimba enveloped the room and everything in it as she performed in total darkness. This was followed by a selection of short lute pieces composed and performed by Gianninoto. The concert finished with an atmospheric performance of oud music composed and performed by Mochament.

This symposium not only demonstrated that music is a multifaceted research area, but also highlighted the benefits of practice-led research. The presence of performers, composers and researchers from across the world enabled delegates to be introduced to a variety of musical styles and to instruments from a variety of cultures and traditions. Overall, the event was enlightening and culturally diverse and expanded musical knowledge and practice.

**Alannah Marie Halay** is reading for a Ph.D. in composition at the University of Leeds.

## Forthcoming RMA Events

### Listening to the Listener

Contemporary Perceptions of Classical Music  
16 Nov 15  
University of Sheffield

### RMA Research Students' Conference 2016

6 Jan 16 - 8 Jan 16  
University of Bangor

### Revealing Medtner

Emerging research and Repertoire  
29 Jan 16  
Royal College of Music

### Pavel Haas Study Day

30 Jan 16  
Cardiff University

### Migration and Mobility

Study Group for Russian and Eastern European Music  
24 Jun 16  
Cardiff University

### RMA 52nd Annual Conference

3 Sep 16 - 5 Sep 16  
Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London

## Scottish Chapter

The RMA Scottish Chapter coordinates and publicizes RMA-affiliated events at the Universities of Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow, and at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. For more information contact Warwick Edwards (Warwick.Edwards@glasgow.ac.uk) or click the 'Scottish Chapter' link on the RMA website.

## Student Blog

### Recent posts include:

- 15 Minutes with ... the Dent Medallist (Interview with Alexander Rehding)
- Perspectives on Teaching, I – John Markey
- The JRF Interview Experience
- 'Are You One of the Parents?': Reflections on being a Mature Student

[www.rma.ac.uk/students](http://www.rma.ac.uk/students)

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