WRITING ABOUT CONTEMPORARY ARTISTS: CHALLENGES, PRACTICES, AND COMPLEXITIES

UNIVERSITY OF SURREY
20–22 OCTOBER 2017
PROGRAMME
INTRODUCTION

The idea of this conference originated in a series of conversations between Chris Wiley and myself, when working together in the Department of Music at City, University of London. Chris has a wide range of expertise in musical biography and reception; I focus on new music but also research music in Nazi Germany and the post-war era, which highlight issues of the mythologies around many musicians, the extent to which many erased their activities during the Third Reich, and how many of their more hagiographic commentators went along with this. We spoke regularly about the conflicts of interests faced by biographers when writing about living subjects, with whom they might have other professional and personal connections, and how they could maintain sufficient critical distance without alienating those subjects. We agreed that this was a difficult area which many writers on music tended to bypass, and which certainly lacked sustained theoretical engagement.

Another central issue of which some biographers are acutely aware, but can be approached in a hazy manner elsewhere, is the relationship between a subject's biography and their work. This is acute when considering artists working under censorial dictorshipships, but can be equally relevant in less dramatic contexts. Furthermore, we might ask to what extent the reception of various artists' work has been conditioned by constructions of their biography, and how this is affected if new information comes to light which would change such constructions?

From a biographical or sociocultural perspective it is not difficult to agree that the artist's sexuality, gender identification, ethnic group, or other factors, are significant, but is there a necessary relationship between these and the nature of the work they produce? And if so, what might this be? All of these issues become especially pertinent when the artist is living, has a career and a reputation to maintain, may not wish other aspects of their life to be made public, and so on.

Owing to the obvious wider relevance of these questions we chose to organise a multi-disciplinary conference. In the course of planning the specific remit, we also realised that many of the questions arise in the context of practice-as/research and auto-ethnography – there are ethical and scholarly questions involved when writing about oneself as an artist.

So, this conference encompasses the fields of music, theatre, dance, visual art, performance art, literature, film, photography, and some wider issues of pedagogy, rehearsal, performance studies, fandom, (auto-biography, ethnography, sexuality, gender, and much else. Roundtables will consider creative practice as research in this context, the place of the artist's voice and some wider issues of pedagogy, rehearsal, performance studies, fandom, (auto-biography, ethnography, sexuality, gender, and much else. Roundtables will consider creative practice as research in this context, the place of the artist's voice and some wider issues of pedagogy, rehearsal, performance studies, fandom, (auto-biography, ethnography, sexuality, gender, and much else. Roundtables will consider creative practice as research in this context, the place of the artist's voice and some wider issues of pedagogy, rehearsal, performance studies, fandom, (auto-biography, ethnography, sexuality, gender, and much else. 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DAY 1: FRIDAY 20 OCTOBER 2017
All sessions will take place at the University of Surrey
9:30 – 10:30am Registration and Coffee (PATS Lower Foyer)
10:30 – 11am Welcome (PATS Studio 1)
Speakers: Christopher Wiley (University of Surrey), Ian Pace (City, University of London)
11am – 1pm
Parallel paper session 1
Constructing the Artist (TB20A)
Chair: Lucy Ella Rose (University of Surrey)
Robert Dickinson (Manchester Metropolitan University), ‘Entelechy in Writing and Contemporary Art’
Vereen Engelhard (Columbia University), ‘Becoming the Arena: Perspectives on the Artist-Philosopher and the Question of Autonomy’
Hywel Dix (Bournemouth University), ‘Career Construction Theory, Authorship and the Late-Career Stage’
Elisabeth van Treeck (Ruhr University, Germany), ‘Deconstructing self-commentary: Olga Neuwirth’s compositions and writings’

1 – 2pm
Buffet Lunch (PATS Lower Foyer)

2 – 3pm
IAS International Keynote Address (PATS Studio 1)
**The Artist is Present**: Ethical Vitalness and the Academic Study of Contemporary Artists
Professor Lorraine York (McMaster University)
Chair: Christopher Wiley (University of Surrey)

3pm – 3:30pm
Tea break (PATS Lower Foyer)

3:30 – 5pm
Parallel paper session 2
Autobiography and self-narration (TB20A)
Chair: Bjørn Heile (University of Glasgow)
Julia Pesic (University of Toronto), The Aesthetics of Self-Narration in the Biographical Documentary Marina Abramovic on Belgrade Culture and Her Roots (2012)
Andy W. Smith (Independent Scholar), ‘Being-within-itself*: Photography and Autobiography in Howard Barker’s fictional worlds’

Meta-discourses on methodology (TB20B)
Chair: Annika Forkert (University of Bristol)
Karina Zybina (University Mozarteum Salzburg; Ethelbert and Herbert von Karajan Institute), ‘A conductor in focus: A musicalological approach to Nikolaus Harnoncourt’s life and works’
Martin Dixon (University of Glasgow), ‘The Weight of Dead Generations’ presented by Sasha Valeri Millwood

5 – 6:30pm
Dinner (Oak Suites 1 & 2)

6:30 – 10pm
Concert (PATS Studio 1)
Nancy Ruffer, flute
Ian Pace, piano/celeste
Incorporating dance improvisation from student dance company Actual Size (University of Surrey)

DAY 2: SATURDAY 21 OCTOBER 2017
All sessions will take place at the University of Surrey
10 – 11am
Keynote Address (PATS Studio Theatre)
‘From Practice to Publication: Playing in Minefields’
Professor Paul Allain (University of Kent)
Chair: Patrick Duggan (University of Surrey)

11 – 11:30am
Coffee break (PATS Lower Foyer)

11:30am – 1pm
Parallel paper session 3
Biographical methods (TB06)
Chair: Christopher Wiley (University of Surrey)
Esther Cavett (King’s College London), ‘Simply Skempton: The pleasures and perils of co-creating a life in music’
Marc Röntsch (Stellenbosch University, South Africa), ‘Writing the untold: The Christopher James biographical project’
Silvia M. Lazo (University of Texas, Rio Grande Valley), ‘Sounding the Boricuan Jukebox: Pueblerino Sonorities, Agency, and Style in the Works of Roberto Sierra: Reflections on Research and Writing on a Living Composer’

1 – 1:45pm
Buffet Lunch (PATS Lower Foyer)

1:45 – 2:45pm
Roundtable 1 (PATS Studio 1)
‘Creative Practice as Research and Self-Reflective Research around Practice: Equitability and parity’
Speakers: Kirk Woolford (University of Surrey), Shantel Ehrenberg (University of Surrey), Seth Josef (Orpheus Institute, Ghent), Rosalie Wahlfried (University of Surrey), Joanne “Bob” Whalley (Plymouth University).
Chair: Ian Pace (City, University of London)

2:45 – 3:10pm
Tea break (PATS Lower Foyer)

2:45 – 3:10pm
Parallel paper session 4
Self-definition and self-reflexivity (TB06)
Chair: Patrick Duggan (University of Surrey)
Majeed Mohammed Midhin and Maysaa J.A. Al-Abas (University of Essex), ‘The Artist as a Character in Contemporary British Theatre’
Andreï Sora (University of Surrey), ‘Freak Show Excess: Steve Vai and his self-presentation in the media’

4:15 – 5:15pm
Book Launch and Wine Reception (PATS Studio Theatre)
A wine reception and networking opportunity, hosted by the Institute of Performance (University of Surrey) will be followed by the launch of Karen Malpede, Plays in Time: The Beekeeper’s Daughter, Prophecy. Another Life and Extreme Whether (Intellect, 2017)
https://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/books/view-Book,id=5275

Readings from the plays with actress Alia Butt and author Karen Malpede (City University of New York), introduced by Patrick Duggan (University of Surrey), series editor of Intellect’s Playtexts. With Q&A session.

5:30 – 7pm
Keynote Concert and Dialogue (PATS Studio 1)
by MusicArt London
Annie Yim, piano (Founder, MusicArt London)
Christopher Le Brun, painter (President of The Royal Academy of Arts) in conversation with Christopher Wiley (University of Surrey)
Featuring a specially commissioned work by Richard Birchall (2015, performed in the presence of the composer) as well as music by Scriabin, Rachmaninov, Schoenberg, and Debussy.

7:15pm
Conference Dinner (The Weyside, Guildford)
Transport departs from outside PATS building at 7:30pm

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**DAY 3: SUNDAY 22 OCTOBER 2017**
All sessions will take place at the University of Surrey

10 – 11:30am  
**Parallel paper session 5**

- **Bearing witness (TB06)**  
  Chair: Björn Heile (University of Glasgow)  
  Michelle Mitchel (University of Amsterdam), ‘Reflections from a Subjective Interviewer: Writing about the Baroque Violin Pioneers’  
  Kathryn S. Kelley (Texas Tech University), ‘Psycholinguistic computational analysis: Artists’ writing as a regulatory mechanism’  
  Julia M. Ritter (Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University), ‘Writing and Rendering Dance Through Fandom: The Creative Practices of Spectators Impact Analyses and Interpretations of Punchdrunk’s Sleep No More’

11:30am – 12pm  
**Coffee break (PATS Lower Foyer)**

12 – 1pm  
**Roundtable 2 (PATS Studio 1)**

- ‘The composer’s voice in contemporary music scholarship’
  Speakers: Karin de Fleyt (University of York), Christopher Leedham (Leeds College of Music), Martin Scheuregger (University of Lincoln)
  Chair: Martin Scheuregger

1 – 1.45pm  
**Buffet Lunch (PATS Lower Foyer)**

1.45 – 2.45pm  
**Keynote Address (PATS Studio 1)**

- ‘Between “the disease of admiration” and the “hermeneutics of suspicion”: working on living composers and musicians’
  Professor Björn Heile (University of Glasgow)
  Chair: Ian Pace (City, University of London)

2.45 – 3.15pm  
**Tea break (PATS Lower Foyer)**

3.15 – 4.5pm  
**Parallel paper session 6**

- **Modes and idioms of writing (TB06)**
  Chair: tbc
  Attila Antal (University of Theatre and Film, Budapest), ‘The Questions of Interpretation and Context Considering the Work of András Urbán’
  Miriam Cabell (Rode Island School of Design) and Phoebe Stubbs (Journal for Artistic Research, London), ‘Art from Arton’

4.15 – 5.15pm  
**Roundtable 3 (PATS Studio 1)**

- ‘Contemporary artists, contemporary writing: internet and social media’
  Laura-Jane Foley (University of Oxford), Ian Pace (City, University of London), Katie Beswick (University of Exeter), Björn Heile (University of Glasgow), Philip Clark (classical and jazz critic).
  Chair: Christopher Wiley (University of Surrey)

5:15pm  
**Conference Close**

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**ABSTRACTS**

**KEYNOTES AND ROUNDTABLES**

**Professor Lorraine York (McMaster University)**
IAS International Keynote Speaker

‘“The Artist is Present”: Ethical Liveliness and the Academic Study of Contemporary Artists’

In this keynote paper, I will muse on this conference’s capacious subtitle, ‘Challenges, Practices, and Complexities’, from the perspective of a scholar whose career has remained steadfastly devoted to the contemporary, while meandering across genres, disciplines, borders, media. The welcome positivity of those three words reminds me that we have surpassed the conception of contemporary studies as posing difficulties, and the terms ‘challenges, practices and complexities’ invite us to think, rather, about the opportunities that the contemporary offers us: what I am going to call an ethical liveliness fostered by an engagement with the living – culture as it inhales and exhales. In so doing, I don’t mean to suggest for a minute that other historical periods and their cultural products are, by comparison, moribund, or that they somehow ask less of us, for they too call out in us a lively ethical questioning. But as my examples will, I hope, make clear, the timetable for critical response in the contemporary moment is pressing, and our responses bear immediate ramifications for others. In the first part of the paper, I will survey some of the disciplinary histories of suspicion of the contemporary, as well as what I believe are some of the best-practice methodologies a modelled by thinkers whose work with the living artist or the contemporary moment has inspired me. In the second part of my paper, I share three contemporary events – crises, really, in my discipline – that moved me, even if dilatorily, to consider what the present moment in my own fields of celebrity studies and Canadian literature is asking of me. For we also need to acknowledge that this liveliness, this condition of our subjects of study being intimately proximate, can call forth painful ethical work on our part. And in turn, that pain may, if we let it, imbue our work with a visceral, close-to-the-bone political awareness.

**Professor Paul Allain (University of Kent)**

Keynote Speaker

‘From Practice to Publication: Playing in Minefields’

We are now all familiar with practice as research models where the student/practitioner reflects on their own process. This is hard enough: making, reflecting, writing. But what is at stake when the practice observed is initiated and led by others? What role does the academic have then? If some practitioners do actually want academics involved or engaged in their practice, to what end might this be? And who sets the terms of their involvement and subsequent publications?

This talk will reflect on how this relationship could and perhaps should work, drawing on case studies from my experience participating in and writing about Japanese and Polish theatre. As more and more scholars engage in practice in myriad modes, what are the pitfalls and challenges, and how might we avoid them? And in such processes, how far do the scholar’s responsibilities to the practice observed or engaged with extend?

**Professor Björn Heile (University of Glasgow)**

Keynote Speaker

‘Between “the disease of admiration” and the “hermeneutics of suspicion”: working on living composers and musicians and the problem of advocacy’

In his ‘Writing on Music or Axes to Grind: Road Rage and Musical Community’, Nicholas Cook critiques the tendency for musicology to provide advocacy. The worst culprits, according to Cook, are biographies and ‘writers on contemporary “art” music – what they [the writers] often call “new” music’. Having written a monograph on a composer of contemporary art music (with or without inverted commas), a good deal of my work falls into the intersection of all the practices Cook abhors – and I’ve even edited a book with the subtitle Essays on New Music (in which I outline why I prefer that term to seemingly neutral ones such as ‘contemporary classical music’)! What better reason, then, to test some of Cook’s ideas?

There can be little doubt that many scholars writing on living composers have been infected by the ‘lues Boswelliana’ – the disease of admiration, as Thomas Macaulay called it – and have acted as little more than spokespersons ‘explaining’ the master’s work in the latter’s own terms (the gendered language is sadly unavoidable). More recently, notably in the wake of the ‘new musicology’, a contrary tendency towards the ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’ (Ricoeur) has manifested itself, whereby composers are primarily attacked for their supposed failings. In my contribution, I will seek to outline ways in which we can foster an enlightened public discourse about new music and its creators that subjects their work to critical scrutiny while at the same time demonstrating respect for the creative achievements of gifted artists.
Martin Scheueregger (University of Lincoln, chair), Christopher Leedham (Leeds College of Music), Karin de Fleyt (University of York)

Roundtable 'The composer's voice in contemporary music scholarship'

This roundtable discussion brings together three scholar-practitioners engaged in contemporary music research encompassing musicology, analysis, performance and composition. Each panel member outlines a distinct but related position before coming together to discuss the place of the composer's voice in the investigation of this music.

Martin Scheueregger presents a case for analyses that embrace approaches and understanding not apparent from the biographical details of a composer and their work, as well as considering the place of the composer's voice in the study of their music. If a composer identifies their work as belonging to one school, for example, can we usefully apply the context of another?

Christopher Leedham presents a survey of the written elements of composition PhDs – the de facto 'apprenticeship' for many aspiring composers in the UK – and suggests that the 'scholarisation' of composition presents challenges and can create unhelpful aesthetic expectations. Has the requirement for PhD composers to write about their own work fetishised quantifiable compositional procedures in some music?

Karin de Fleyt will discuss issues of collaboration between composer and performer in her current work. Issues of communication between performer and composer will be discussed – through notation, and the written and spoken word – and the manner in which collaborative decision making is enabled between the performer and the composer. Is a composer's voice most honest when addressing the pragmatic realities of performance?

When writing about – as well as composing and performing – contemporary music, the voice of the composer can be seen as unquestionable or negotiable, inconsequential or essential. The different perspectives presented will establish the case for these distinct positions, leading to a discussion that attempts to establish common ground.

Attila Antal (University of Theatre and Film, Budapest)

'The Questions of Interpretation and Context Considering the Work of András Urbán'

In theatre in South-Eastern Europe, where there has not been established a tradition of high-quality video recordings of performances that would allow the interested audience to view certain productions that they could not see live, the best way to preserve and distribute theatre works is still through writing. When not writing about theatre institutions (or authors that are already 'institutions' in their own right), but works of contemporary artists, whose works are alive or could still be in the collective memory of a community, two questions arise: that of the interpretation and of the context. Does it help when one has a certain theoretical discourse in which to analyse an oeuvre, or does it limit the objectivity of the description and ends up in proving one's intellectual point, rather than describing the work of a given artist? On the other hand, how does the specific position of the artist's work in their social context determine the ways of interpretation? Through the analysis of the cycle of performances that address different aspects of an individual's life, devised and directed by one of the former-Yugoslavian region's leading theatre practitioners, András Urbán, we can try to answer both of these questions. Analysing his work in the theoretical discourse of the 'political' in the post-dramatic theatre, we can see the advantages and the pitfalls of a specific theoretical placement. Although, Urbán is a member of the Hungarian national minority living in Serbia, and despite the fact that the majority of his works are produced in Hungarian, he is considered to be one of the leading theatre directors in Serbia. This can be a good starting point for the analysis of the influence of the specific social context in writing about his work, too.

Joel Baldwin (St Hilda's College, University of Oxford)

'How to look good naked: undefining contemporary composers and exposing their true identities'

'I think my music deserves to be considered as a whole' – Igor Stravinsky

Well-known contemporary composers are often viewed in the light of their most popular pieces or, more generally, by their publisher's press releases and concert promoter's efforts to reach a wider audience through various media channels and social networks. By continually presenting a composer's most mainstream aesthetic ideas and works, skewed personality cults are created, which are then perpetuated by evangelical reviewers and academics who present writing that is heavy on admiration and light on musical analysis. So often, the only critical engagement with a subject's works and related works occurs when it supports the deflation, or sensationalisation, of the artist in question. Such hagiographies do not address adequately the wider musical, cultural, political, philosophical and personal circumstances surrounding today's composers. If we fail to explore these aspects of contemporary music in a more critical and nuanced way, we will fail to accurately archive for future generations the uniqueness of individual composers' personal artistic development and the wider influences they have.

This paper considers how, despite some of the missing benefits of more considerable hindsight, we can meaningfully research and write about contemporary composers and their work through writing and other more unconventional forms of discourse. Using Louis Andriessen’s and Elmer Schönberger’s monograph on Stravinsky, The Apollonian Clockwork, as a starting point, I turn the mirror back on Andriessen and explore the various ways in which writers can seriously engage with a popular contemporary composer, how writing critically about this living artist and analysing his music can cut through established networks. By continually presenting a composer's most mainstream aesthetic ideas and works, skewed personality cults are created, which are then perpetuated by evangelical reviewers and academics who present writing that is heavy on admiration and light on musical analysis. So often, the only critical engagement with a subject's works and related works occurs when it supports the deflation, or sensationalisation, of the artist in question. Such hagiographies do not address adequately the wider musical, cultural, political, philosophical and personal circumstances surrounding today's composers. If we fail to explore these aspects of contemporary music in a more critical and nuanced way, we will fail to accurately archive for future generations the uniqueness of individual composers' personal artistic development and the wider influences they have.

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Nevertheless, I argue that, paradoxically, she hides behind the self-promotion. There are no personal revelations beyond the established narrative. I describe my strategies for building a picture of her developing artistry with American Ballet Theatre, an aspect of ‘Misty Copeland’ that the well-crafted branding plays down.

Miriam Cabell (Rhode Island School of Design) and Phoebe Stubbs (Journal for Artistic Research, London) ‘Artfrom/Arton’

Contributors Inc. is a collaborative archive-based artistic research project with a very specific focus: What can working only with the information from the contents pages of magazines of art and culture reveal about art’s critical history and canon? We initially established the project because this information so obviously highlighted the gender imbalance in the contributors of art magazines. After the publication of our recent project in Cabinet however, our remit broadened as we realized the potential of this information to communicate the shifting commercial and political concerns in art over time in relation to its limited constitution and obvious bias. While the text on these pages is freely available, our aim is to move beyond surface exploration and use this information to make visible the hidden structures of the canon. We ask: Whose concerns and editorial decisions are reflected? How often does a single reviewer write? How often does a single art-tot get reviewed? What shape does this give to the magazine’s reference? How does this affect its art-critical critique?

For ‘Writing About Contemporary Artists: Challenges, Practices and Complexities’, we propose to present a paper called Artfrom/Arton that uses the specific case study of Artforum. Using its contents pages we will visualise its critical, their voices’ frequency in the magazine over time, and the breadth of artists they review. We will discuss what this information looks like as patterns, drawing out the voices and themes that have dominated the magazine and constitute its authority in the Western art canon. Together we will then discuss what we can do as writers and researchers to acknowledge these structures as we work. As Andrea Fraser notes in a recent interview, ‘You can only change what is present in the here and now of your work.’

Esther Cavet (King’s College London) ‘Simply Skempton: The pleasures and perils of co-creating a life in music’

The author of this paper is editor of and contributor to a book to be published by Boydell & Brewer about contemporary composer Howard Skempton, consisting of a series of interviews of Skempton on his life, music, and teaching of composition, each followed by reflections on those interviews by different, expert contributors.

There are many examples of ‘composers in conversation’, such as those between Lutoslawski and Nikoloska, Maxwell Davies and Nias and Kostelanetz, or Copland and Dickinson, as well as of composers writing about themselves and their music, including by Stockhausen and Tippett. This book was conceived quite innocently, against the backdrop of such studies, as an example of collaborative, reflective practice. During the course of its creation, however, I was drawn to explore not only its pleasures, but also its perils. I needed to consider, for example, whether Skempton can really give informed consent to the project when he cannot anticipate what the contributors might uncover about his history, and what happens if he inadvertently offends people to whom he refers. Further, is this book a biography, or an autobiography, or fiction of a kind, and, if so, whose biography is it? What if, when the manuscript is complete, the composer were to disown the result overall, and want it vetoed on publication?

I consulted the obvious sources relevant to this project, that is, on autobiography in literary studies, broadly defined, including Eakin (on making stories from our lives) and Griffin (on interviewing and methodology), but my search expanded through sociology (for example, Oakley, pedagogy and education (Goodson, on narrative construction) and psychology (Bamburg, on narratology), to areas in which I have professional expertise, that is in musicology, law, and coaching.

The paper traces that process, as a ‘lived example’ of the challenges faced when co-creating an ethical account of a life in music.

Bill Bowan (Edge Hill University) ‘Dig if U will: Picture: writing about the self or writing about Prince?’

Earlier this year, the University of Salford called for creative writing contributions to a conference on the legacy of the pop icon, Prince. They sought work in any genre that responded to his legacy, impact and meaning through ‘re-writings, writing in response to, reminiscing, reflecting, celebrating, mourning, exploring, provoking, speculating or otherwise engaging with Prince’s influence and lasting appeal’. This paper will consist of a reading of my creative response Dig if U Will the Picture which has been selected for the subsequent anthology, Purple Reign. The piece will be a creative writer approached the challenge; how reflecting upon a contemporary artist like Prince inspired a personal piece of writing that attempts to reveal not only aspects of the artist but aspects of the writer. Inherently, the story also raises questions about the legitimacy, relevance and truth of such writing. In my piece, I actually tell you anything about the subject of this writing or just the story? How do we view such a piece – fiction, non-fiction, journalism, autobiography, and how does this affect its legitimacy or relevance as cultural, historical artefact? Does the story add any knowledge to the artist’s life and work? What is the value and impact of such writing? It is hoped the story will create discussion around some of these questions and maybe inspire someone else to write about a contemporary artist from a personal viewpoint.

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Robert Dickinson (Manchester Metropolitan University) ‘Entelechy, Purple Reign and Contemporary Art’

My PhD research into the relationship between critical writing and contemporary art examines the importance of ‘entelechy’, actualisation or potential, emerging from the complex networks connecting writers and artists. Specific relationships that have evolved between writers and artists can over a period of time continue to be creative as well as mutually beneficial, but they can also become subject to tensions and ambiguities, as my paper illustrates.

I will refer directly to, and reflect on, some of my own writing for the paper, as well as collaborative work done with artists. In particular the paper will concentrate on three contemporary artists who have engaged with the possibilities of what writing can do, and approached me to become involved in collaboration. In the case of the performance artist Agnes Nedregard, my writing about her work as a focus for laughter led to me becoming involved in the politically-oriented collaborative work, The Shield of Achilles, with the collective, Alt Goe Bia, in Bergen. The Taiwanese artist Yu-Chen Wang, by contrast, was interested in a work of fiction that led to a performance piece and a film, A Splash and a Last Drop, and later collaborations. Finally, the Greek performance artist Evangelia Badeles has drawn forth a much looser set of pieces of writing on the artist’s evolving approaches to what she does. Slides will illustrate various verbal and visual aspects of these projects and relationships.

In each case, questions arose as to the relationship between writer and subject, as well as that between artist and writing. These questions may indicate a profound gap in understanding between writer and artist, but may also contain the key to unlock the processes of entelechy.

Hywel Dix (Bournemouth University) ‘Career Construction Theory, Authorship and the Late-Career Stage’

A particular challenge when thinking about contemporary writers is that their later works often suffer through critical comparison to their earlier work. In many cases this has the effect that the writer in question becomes commonly associated with one or two specific works that were produced years – or even decades – earlier, in a way that hinders a positive re-evaluation of the later work. This situation raises an unanswered theoretical question about how we define the contemporary; and another about the mechanics of canonization more generally. Moreover, until recently the concept of a literary career, with certain material properties of its own, had received inadequate critical scholarly attention.

This paper argues that our thinking about these issues has the potential to be enhanced by career construction theory, a body of work jointly rooted in social psychology and fictional practice. Career constructionism employs a dialogic method for re-gridding and reframing authorial trajectories. It animates the career of a given individual through a synthesis of narrative and timesframes. One of these emphasises continuity and commonality across all the phases of a given career; the other identifies discernible stages within it and then considers the distinct properties of each. In other words, by applying career construction theory to a discussion of the late stage of certain contemporary authorial careers, the paper will construct a framework for considering what is specific to such works when compared with works produced during earlier stages, to avoid the negative comparison mentioned above. This means that while attempting to re-evaluate the critically neglected works produced during the latter career stages of certain contemporary authors, the paper simultaneously presents career construction as a new theory of authorship. It also has the potential to be applied to discussion of different career stages of artists in different media and art forms.

Martin Dixon (University of Glasgow) ‘The Weight of Dead Generations’

In this paper I will try to give the practice of ‘writing about’ something a more precise articulation. This is undertaken with a view to discerning and describing the differences between writing about living artists and writing about those who are ‘no longer with us’. The argument is as follows:

(1) The aboutness of writing, the fact that it is occupied with a subject matter and a concern, organises the economy of our attention, or our ‘intersubjectivity’. Those things which are to be placed in view.

(2) Writing about entails elicitation and judgement-making, and thus intuitions are provided with discursive content. I will interpret these practices in line with the terminology of Wilfrid Sellars and say that they are entry points into a ‘language game’. E.g. volunteering the judgements brings artists into a space of critical reasoning and evaluation. If these kinds of claims can be upheld and vindicated, we end up with knowledge.

(3) Every language game implies a ‘meta-game’, a sense of what rules govern the playing of the game, what it is to play a particular game well and successfully. These meta-games Lyotard calls gares.

(4) Technically speaking, the variety and internal abundance of language games is indeterminately vast, constructed as they are from multiple micrological moves. By contrast, the patterns and strategies of the genres themselves are relatively limited. We are familiar, for example, with genres of ‘criticism’ and ‘analysis’.

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Dimitris Exarchos (Goldsmiths, University of London)

Roger Redgate's Compositional Thinking and the Limits of Writing

Since philosophy’s linguistic turn, the concept of writing has met a post-structuralist manifestation and has been associated to absence and death, as opposed to the living presence of logos. Crucially, writing was shown to precede speech/logos, thus undermining the latter’s sovereignty. This generalized sense of writing indexes any kind of inscription and operates on the limits of representation, of language and of thought (Jean-Luc Nancy). Thus, there is no direct correlation between concept and sign, and meaning is in constant flux. Meanwhile, academic practice underwent profound impact from new musicology’s discourse of the ‘writing about dead/widely male composers’ and establishment that devised as a corpus of early acoustics, recent musical composition work has largely developed themes suggested by ethnomusical practices and sound studies; an upshot of this is a certain neglect of music composition and the musical work.

This paper aims at examining a certain kind of composition which implicates writing, in the form of music notation, as integral part of its process and of its work. Such approach is exemplified in the music of currently active composer Roger Redgate, whose work explores such considerations and creatively questions the limits of notation. As a tracing of instrumental technique, notation is relatively removed from the sounding of the work, which raises ontological and performative issues. Writing and such themes puts in question the limits of musico-sculptural writing itself. To the extent that writing is a vehicle of critical understanding, what limits may be imposed by the presence of the composer? Further, how does the deconstructive is animated with regard to practice already assumed to have internalized such function? This paper will attempt to activate the registers of writing with regard to Redgate’s work, with reference to the practices of composition, notation, and improvisation.

Ikuko Inoguchi (City, University of London)

‘Are We Telling the Truth?: John Cage’s Writings, Biographies, and His Created Image’

Contemporary, avant-garde composers often write about their compositional techniques and musical works, or discuss their sources of inspiration at interviews. These provide useful, valuable information for biographers, practitioners, and scholars, clarifying the composer’s creative process, new concepts and approaches to music. However, are artists always telling us the truth? We often quote the composer’s words in an article or a program note to inform the reader or the audience their interpretation of the meaning of their musical work. But by doing so, are we giving ‘correct’ information to them? John Cage (1912–92) is one of the most prominent 20th-century composers. His most famous yet controversial work is 4’33”, widely known as the ‘silent’ piece; he also received for his use of chance operations and association with Zen, both of which are frequently discussed in his books and interviews, e.g., Silence (1961) and For the Birds: in conversation with Daniel Charles (1981). Biographers and scholars refer Cage’s interview and On Zen as one of his key source materials, understanding the composer’s creative process by referring to his words in the ‘interviews’. Cage’s ‘interpenetration’ and ‘unimpededness’ to explain the compositional process of Music of Changes (1951). The composer claims that in this work the chance operations were adopted to eliminate his own taste; my analysis of Seven Haiku (1952) suggests a possibility that he manipulated the results of the chance operations. Similarly, my study of Suzuki’s transcript of his lecture shows that the two keywords derive from Kegon, and Cage’s writings pose a question if he was aware of this but manipulated information for self-promotion. I will discuss how Cage’s image as an advocate of Zen has been created by his writings and interviews as well as by other writers who repeatedly quoted his text.

Seth Josef (Orpheus Institute, Belgium) and Luk Vaes (Orpheus Institute, Belgium)

‘HiPEx and the case of Salut für Caudwell’

Performing contemporary music is logically assumed to entail working with the composers. It is naturally assumed that this relationship is straightforward.

Even though contemporary music is often thought to be of the ‘now’, with the composers still living, the knowledge the performer seeks to find in the interaction with them is not necessarily satisfactory.

HiPEx is a research project at the Orpheus Institute, established to investigate historical performance practices of experimental music. Strands include live electronics from the 1960s, unfinished pieces by Mauricio Kagel, and iconic works for solo instruments. Composers and historical performers are consulted in order to negotiate the issues of a transhistorical performance.

This presentation will focus on Helmut Lachenmann’s Salut für Caudwell (1977). This monumental work for two guitars is not only known for its radical treatment – sonic and physical – of the instrument, but also for its striking setting of a text by the English Marxist, Christopher Caudwell. Lachenmann, who is now 81, is hesitant to revisit the score and sort out the issues which we have meticulously and extensively catalogued.

The guitarist for whom the piece was composed has grown well over 100 performances of the work. They played exclusively from the original manuscript and are unaware of the magnitude of the issues that exist that remain for subsequent performers.

ABSTRACTS (PAPERS)

Vered Engelhard (Columbia University)

‘Becoming the Arena: Perspectives on the Artist-Philosopher and the Question of Autonomy’

In his collection of essays Art After Philosophy, Joseph Kosuth referred to his practice as a ‘total signifying activity’. Referring to one’s own practice as a ‘total signifying activity’ presupposes agency at a very particular place of tension; where the individual is in charge of expression in so far as she/he contains the signified. This tension is fully expressed in a movement towards the isolation of the subject; in the various, all artistic objects are like phantom limbs, body – living labor and dead labor – as a ‘total signifying activity’; essentially, body as constellation.

Autonomy of practice is a well-known ethos in the history of art. It is often characterized as a battle of agencies, where the aim is to own as many rules as possible; the strategy is to anticipate these rules before they happen, to always be at the front of the platonic. The strange tension that this statement brings can also be informed by Kosuth’s own involvement with early Conceptual Art. Their version of autonomy of practice is contingent in a conceptual containment of the rules by which their practice operates. More specifically, autonomy of practice is reached not by a conceptual sheltering of expression (which would be ‘ideological’) but rather an elemental correspondence between expression and the structure of consciousness. Conceived in this way, the business of art starts sounding a lot like metaphysics. And we would, in fact, need a conception of the structure of consciousness in order for our practice to function as a ‘total signifying activity’. I want to look at Adrian Piper’s practice through this relationship between art and philosophy. Understand how, over the years, she has reached a very particular kind of correspondence. Which I believe that, currently, is contingent both on her status as a minoritarian subject and on her relationship to the philosophical work of Immanuel Kant. As a philosopher, she has written extensively on Kant, particularly in the second volume of her two-volume series, Rationality and Constructions of the Self, subtitled A Kantian Conceptual Critique. I issue that her artistic work, when regarding this book, takes her reading of the Kantian self as a matrix, of which functions, operate as her criteria for performance. I want to trace the steps of this specific relationship as something developing over time, and perhaps inquire into the deeper concerns regarding the relation of art to philosophy in the general form. With the increasing prominence of the ‘artist-philosopher’ in contemporary art theoretical discourse, Piper stands as the avant-garde; hence, I believe that a proper understanding of her practice will enable us to look at this contemporary phenomenon in a more systematic light.

Inge Engelbrecht (Stellenbosch University, South Africa)

‘Williams, Apolles, and Ulster: Aspirants or composers in their own right?’

Sacks Williams, Dan Apolles and Dan Ulster have been hailed and celebrated as composers by their respective Cape avant-garde; hence, I believe that a proper understanding of her practice will enable us to look at this contemporary phenomenon in a more systematic light.

1 The term ‘coloured’ may be decontextualized in other contexts, in apartheid South Africa it denoted an ethnic group of mixed race and is still in use in South Africa today.

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The guitarist for whom the piece was composed has grown well over 100 performances of the work. They played exclusively from the original manuscript and are unaware of the magnitude of the issues that exist that remain for subsequent performers.
Both players have a fundamentally different approach towards critical inquiry and towards the relationship to the composer. One player has been available for consultation, the other less so.

Through the use of select examples from the materials available to us, we shall highlight performative and interpersonal challenges.

**Kathryn S. Kelley (Texas Tech University)**

*Psycholinguistic computational analysis: Artists’ writing as a regulatory mechanism*

There is a trend that visual artists—benders of conventions archived into contemporary art historical and critical texts—have robust expressive and critical writing practices. This trend occurs across time, mediums and movements. Why are these makers of things, twisters of conventions, compelled to write? Is the textual practice a latent mechanism involved in creativity? What is the act of writing doing for the artist that so many engage the practice?

In ‘Giving an Account of Oneself’, Judith Butler suggests that ‘for urgent reasons, we must become self-narrating beings’ particularly when there is a perceived breach in conventions of doing or being (2008). Social psychologist, James Pennebaker has found experimental writing manipulations that patterns of expressive narrative construction, meaning making, and perspective-taking that target stressful experiences, or value affirmation predicts reductions in intensity and duration of dysphoric internal experiences. These same text-based narrative processes appear to regulate physiological, psychological and cognitive resources. Further, psychological creativity studies correlate the capacity to regulate internal resources as a possible facilitating mechanism in creative achievement. Following Pennebaker’s methods for analyzing expressive writing texts, I employed Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) computational software to examine relevant psycholinguistic inter-subject cues of narrative construction, meaning making, and perspective-taking in 1,465 texts written by 200 contemporary visual artists. Based on Butler’s ‘urgent reasons’, regulatory mechanisms’ potential roles in creativity, and Pennebaker’s findings, the preliminary results appear to support the possibility that artists’ writing practices may afford them a mechanism for up-and-down-regulating affective, psychological and cognitive resources in ways likely to support their creative practice.

This paper follows my initial foray into the possibilities and pitfalls of using text analysis in examining inter-subject patterns amongst artists and their writings. It investigates artists and their textual practice as an amalgamation of numeric frequencies.

**Silvia M. Lazo (University of Texas, Rio Grande Valley)**

*‘Sounding the Boricuan Jukebox: Puerlerino Sonorities, Agency, and Style in the Works of Roberto Sierra: Reflections on Research and Writing on a Living Composer’*

The writing of biographies of living composers presents particular challenges and benefits to musicologists. In this paper, I summarize insights found in academic literature, as well as reflections from my own experience while researching and writing on Puerto Rican composer Roberto Sierra (b. 1953). Planned as an introduction to a book, I aim to guide readers to ‘engage seriously’. I include, too, some examples of the (potentially institutionally problematic) forms of writing a close collaboration with Thomas Ostermeier, Peter Boenisch suggests he is ‘practice-relevant’.

Here, I suggest we have become a ‘participant-witness’. This position is thus also a transition, a Janus-like stance in order both to be in the room and to bear witness, whilst acknowledging choices and sometimes strategic observational blinkers as a means to ‘engage seriously’. I include, too, some examples of the (potentially institutionally problematic) forms of writing a close encounter with creative processes might encourage.

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**References**


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**Karen Malpede (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, City University of New York)**

*‘Writing about writing and being written about: Negotiating a personal (ecofeminist, pacifist) aesthetic in Plays in Time (2017)’*

I am lead author of Plays in Time: The Beekeeper’s Daughter, Prophecy, Another Life, Extreme Whether (Intellect, October 2017), an anthology that includes essays by three critics, one political writer and two artists, plus an essay I authored about the ecofeminist, pacifist, poetic and ritual strategies I employ. These four plays are differently resistant in form and each. Is about a compelling contemporary social issue: Traumas of sexual abuse and mass rape, set during the Bosnian war, intertwining legacies of the Vietnam, Iraq, Israeli-Lebanon wars; 9/11 and the US torture program; the struggle between American climate scientists and climate change deniers. I have directed the plays as well. Prophecy and Another Life have been seen in London. Prophecy was at the New End Theatre, 2008, Another Life at the RADA New Play Festival, 2013.

I have been written about badly and well. I have been critically lacerated and critically praised. The critical essay in this book are, of course, laudatory. Because I was trained as a literary critic, I have often written about my own work, as well as the work of other living and dead, writers, in two books People’s Theater and Women in Theater: Compassion and Hope, and numerous essays (NY Times, New Theatre Quarterly, Kenyon Review, etc.).

I propose to discuss the strangeness of attempting to articulate and advance a radically personal aesthetic (something artists used to do much more frequently) while negotiating between career halting damnation and well-articulated praise. I will talk about research, collaborations with activists, lawyers, scientists, refugees and trauma specialists and influences from theatre history. I will describe the search for a language and structural difference for every play that might reveal and penetrate violent realities of the Antropocene while dramatizing processes of grieving, healing, forgiveness, biophilia and resistance.

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**Federica Marsico (University of Pavia, Italy)**

*‘Writing about a Homosexual Contemporary Composer: The Challenges of Hans Werner Henze’s Music’*

Hans Werner Henze (1926-2012) was one of the most prolific and successful German composers of the second half of the twentieth century. In the late forties he was among the first participants in the Darmstadt summer courses, which became in the following years the world-leading centre of avant-garde music. Since the sixties, however, he entered upon a personal artistic course that was often in friction with the most experimental and radical choices of contemporary music.

Academic research on Henze’s music started in Germany in the late eighties (Peter Petersen, Hans Werner Henze, ein politischer Musiker: zwolf Vorlesungen, Hamburg 1988). In the following years it overstepped the national boundaries, giving life to numerous musicalological studies that focus on various aspects of Henze’s artistic production.

Although Henze’s works have captured the interest of many researchers, his homosexuality was considered sporadically by scholars as a hermeneutic category to read his music. Henze’s catalogue is full of works that can be interpreted from a queer view of point. Especially in his numerous theatrical works homosexuality never finds expression explicitly on stage, but often is represented through a cryptographic language that needs to be caught and understood by scholars.

This paper shows the challenges for studying the works of a contemporary homosexual composer from a queer perspective, as well as the difficulties for the scholars to implement this approach. It can make an important contribution both to the more general knowledge of the expression of homosexuality in the contemporary music and to the definition of a queer musical aesthetics of our age through a dialogue with other disciplines.

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**Majeed Mohammed Midhin and Mayasa J.A. Al-Abas (University of Essex)**

*‘The Artist as a Character in Contemporary British Theatre’*

The focus of this paper is the representation of the artist as a character in British theatre. Accordingly, I attempt to show that British playwrights, whether male or female, use their main fictional characters as artists either for self-reflexivity or to comment on the situation of being an artist. In accordance with the above premise, the responsibility of the artist and the function of the artist is investigated with due reference to radical thinkers, philosophers and writers such as, among others, Immanuel Kant, Oscar Wilde, Georg Lukacs, Antonio Gramsci, Walter Benjamin, Viktor Shklovsky, Bertolt Brecht and Jean-Paul Sartre.
investigation concentrates on the conceptualization and contribution of those intellectuals to the definition of the role of the artist.

The present paper poses the following questions: as a fictional character, how can the artist function as a member of a certain community while at the same time retain the distinctiveness of his or her role as an outsider? Is he or she committed to the creative work or to the social usefulness of society? If so, can we expect art or the artist to have the answer to society’s problems? Or is that an overly high expectation to place on the artist? How did artists feel living in a society under censorship? How can they avoid being censured? And if they failed, what is the price of free expression?

Springing from the discussion about the dilemmas of the artist in British theatre, it will become apparent how these dilemmas, represented by fictional characters, bring forth the dominant plays about artists. Within the framework of the British playwrights such as Tom Stoppard, Howard Barker and Timberlake Wertenbaker, it is demonstrated that the pressing dilemma which radical artists are faced with nowadays are multiple: social, commercial and political.

Sasha Valeri Millwood (University of Glasgow; British Library, London) ‘Affirming the composer’s prerogative: case studies from Thea Musgrave’s workshops with performers’

Discourses on the role of specified individual performers in the creative process of composers range from those which completely disregarded it to those which treat it as commensurate with co-authorship. Where a composer is working for a particular performer, there may be a process of consultation, termed workshopping, whereby the performer is afforded a means of direct influence. This possibility is not to be characterised as a form of empowerment which yields a substantive collaboration between composer and performer. However, such a characterisation is liable to overlook not only the differences in role, but also disparities in power, which are manifested in constraints to the scope afforded to a performer to propose ideas or amend material at a given juncture in the compositional process.

This paper will examine two case studies from Thea Musgrave’s compositional output in which tensions arising from these constraints are documented in archival sources. These tensions sometimes invite the dialectical question as to whether composing for individuals were inherently antagonistic to aspirations to secure canonic status.

In Postcards from Spain, a set of miniatures for solo guitar, a phrase correspondence between Musgrave and the guitarist, Michael Lorimer, demonstrates a receptiveness on Musgrave’s part to remarks about technique, but only limited flexibility regarding creative input once the score had been drafted. In Lamenting with Ariadne, an instrumental work commissioned by the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group, a public workshop furnishes a semblance of consultation and publicity, yet, when it proves to point stage of editing the score, disparities between Knowles and performers’ preferences for fingering and layout.

In the context of their solicited material, this paper will reflect on the epistemological challenges of reconstituting creative processes, with reference to the relationships between archival sources, official narratives, and the living protagonists, especially Musgrave herself.

Mimi Mitchell (University of Amsterdam) ‘Reflections from a Subjective Interviewee: Writing about the Baroque Violin Pioneers’

Deciding to interview and write about the pioneers of my own field sounded like an exciting and fairly easy task, since I was already very aware of these musicians and their accomplishments. The reality was a double-edged experience, and I will be examining both the positive and negative sides of my ‘insider’ status in this paper.

The Baroque violin pioneers, all born between 1625 and 1947, welcomed me into their homes and their workplaces. They all seemed delighted that lone of their own was interested in hearing their stories and were surprisingly candid in answering the more difficult questions I posed. Able to discuss the musical and technical aspects of the profession as well as being truly interested and impressed by my achievements, I was able to negotiate this side of the interviewing process with ease.

There was also a shadow side. Artists of a pioneering generation are very invested in their artistic legacy and pioneer status, and my interviewees were no exception. Confronted with oft-repeated stories and well-ingrained phrases, I had to work hard to try and discover the reality behind the facade. These musicians also had their preconceived ideas about me, and I occasionally felt like a captured insect pinned onto the examination table squirming to escape.

Writing about one’s own field become, to my surprise, an exercise in self-reflection. It was impossible to divorce my own background from what I was saying to these important and influential figures. I was not an impartial academian, nor could I pretend to be. Was it possible to present this important material in an honest and unbiased way?

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Ian Pace (City, University of London) ‘When Ethnography Becomes Hagiography: Uncritical Musical Perspectives’

Ethnomusicologists have employed ethnographic techniques for much of the history of their discipline, drawing upon experiences and methodological considerations found in the fields of anthropology and sociology. Since the late 1980s there have been a range of studies – from scholars working in a variety of disciplinary fields – applying such techniques to the study of forms of Western music-making, whether folk, popular, art or otherwise. While some of the key early texts of this type involved highly critical perspectives upon their object of study, more recently, another group of scholars have presented a quite different and concomitant new musical value approach. This not only eschews ethnographic methods and, but also pointedly refuses to develop a sceptical or critical perspective towards many statements from artists collected through the ethnographic process. Often the ethnographer sees their role as ‘allowing the artist to speak for themselves’ and offers description and cataloguing to analysis. Furthermore, with types of knowledge or perspectives found in various other musical sub-disciplines. I argue here that this approach entails a type of transposition of attitudes derived from post-colonial guilt into non-colonial fields of study, and as such are very problematic in the latter context. I also argue that such approaches and methods can frustrate attempts to differentiate scholarly writing on one hand and journalism, bureaucratic reports, or even promotional literature on the other, other than in terms of the liberal employment of certain jargon, and that some work identified as the product of ethnographic study essentially reiterate much older types of musical writing. With these considerations in mind, I propose some ways by which there can be a more productive dialogue between musical ethnography and other strategies for writing about living musicians.

Julia Pecis (University of Toronto) ‘The Aesthetics of Self-Narration in the Biographical Documentary Marina Abramovic on Belgrade Culture and Her Roots (2012)’

‘The Aesthetics of Self-Narration in the Biographical Documentary Marina Abramovic on Belgrade Culture and Her Roots (2012)’ is my research project in which I explore how the cinematic techniques construct the personal and artistic identity of Belgrade-born New York-based performance artist Marina Abramovic, known for her record-breaking 2010 MoMA retrospective. Primary research includes the short biographical documentary film Marina Abramovic on Belgrade Culture and Her Roots (2012) in which two filmmakers, Matthew Marks and Jeffrey Dupre, alternate sequences related to Abramovic’s past and present, her Belgrade’s childhood and current artistic career, in order to rethink what characterizes biographical documentary as a film genre; in other words, how subjective and objective points of view in the documentary film as a visual medium create distinction and/or an overlap between Abramovic’s ‘I’ and ‘other(s).’ Since the documentary is structured as a biographical journey in which one of Abramovic’s characters, namely three key points in order to determine her personal life and artistic opus: childhood, her relationship with her mother and her mother’s death. The linearity of life is being realized through a cyclic process of childhood, youth, and death, which corresponds directly to the three main thematic determinants of narration in the structure of the film.’

Performance studies’ theoretical frameworks, cultural anthropology, and cultural theory frameworks, inform my research. Thus, I analyse the interconnectivity of visual aesthetics and the embodied self, including but not limited to the questions of authorship, authenticity, subjectivity, and memory work.

Julia M. Ritter (Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University) ‘Writing and Rendering Dance Through Fandom: The Creative Practices of Spectators Impact Analyses and Interpretations of Punchdrunk’s Sleep No More’

Since its premiere in 2011, an international fan community (fandom) has formed around Sleep No More (SNM), the UK-based Punchdrunk’s long-running immersive production in New York City, and expanded with the opening of SNM in Shanghai in 2016. After encountering the highly sensory, nonverbal, and choreographic performances, fans reflect upon their experiences of participatory engagement and transform them into writings and art that are shared on social media platforms, specifically Tumblr blogs. Investigation of these blogs provides evidence of how fans write about and render dance and the performances of dancers through fan fiction, digital painting, illustration, and collage. As a dance scholar researching choreographer Maxine Doyle and the dancers of SNM, the discovery of the fandom and the breadth of its creative output consequently shifted my strategies of writing about contemporary artists. By approaching the writing and art of fans as primary source materials, my analyses of choreography become more prismatic and my descriptive writing more nuanced. In addition, the work of fans challenges assumptions and shifts perceptions about who is writing about contemporary artists and how this writing is shared. Drawing upon interviews with artists and fans, this paper demonstrates how the fan-driven creativity materializing within the public sphere of the Internet is contributing to analyses and interpretations of performance. Fan-generated works emerge from a particular kind of perceptual framework that immersive choreography evokes in its spectators, one that impels fans to produce creative research in order to satiate their curiosity. Among fans, what is most significant about fans is that the realities of critical and theoretical studies of and writing about performance – traditionally occupied by critics and scholars – are now shared with spectators, whose examinations of performance are reflected in the cultural products posted on their blogs, constituting new forms of writing and discursive practices in and of themselves.
ABSTRACTS (PAPERS)

Marc Röntsch (Stellenbosch University, South Africa)

"Writing the untold: The Christopher James biographical project"

The Christopher James Collection in the Documentation Centre for Music (DOMUS) at Stellenbosch University, South Africa, consists of over 100 boxes containing material ranging from handwritten manuscript scores, personal correspondences and diary entries. James was born in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), and studied composition at the University of Pretoria before doing a Doctorate of Musical Arts (DMA) at the University of Cincinnati on a Fullbright bursary. As a composer, James’s style conflates traditional European musical textures with southern African instrumentation, rhythms and harmonies. His compositions include works such as Four Portraits for Panflute in Four Movements (1982), Songs of Lamentation and Renonstration (1985), Images of Africa (1987) and Paradise Regained (1999).

Because few performers or musicologists have engaged with James’s life or oeuvre, the archive became the main source of information in writing the untold story of James’s life. This paper has been conceptualized and written in the final stages of my doctoral dissertation and focuses on the biography of James, which is focused not only on the creation of a narrative of James’s life, but also on engaging with both his compositional output and the ‘life and works’ paradigm by critically reading James’s works through the lens of his life as read through the archive. The focus of this paper is to reflect critically on this process by referring to the similarities and interactions between archival and biographical theory and speaking to mechanisms for sensitively discussing and engaging with the mythology surrounding composers with mental illness.

ABSTRACTS (PAPERS)

Fernando Machado Silva (Centro de Filosofia das Ciências da Universidade de Lisboa [CFCUL], University of Lisbon)

"For an art of living: On João Fidado and Fernanda Eugénio’s Question Game and AND_Lab artistic research project"

A new book on the Body and Portuguese Artists is soon to be published by a British publishing house. Why is this relevant? Not only does the book address the topic of the present conference, but more importantly it points to the need to frame the change undergone on performative arts since the Portuguese revolution last century. Being one of the participants of this book, our intention is twofold. On one hand, to be an ‘ambassador’ of a long-awaited project on Portuguese performance arts, both nationally and internationally, and, on the other hand, by developing further our chapter analysis, to present one of the most innovative and challenging Portuguese choreographers, João Fidado (1965). Our paper will centre on the project the choreographer created with the anthropologist Fernanda Eugénio, the AND_Lab, as well as one of their research instruments, the ‘Question Game’.

Their practice deals with two problems: how to live together and how not to have an idea. By underlining Deleuze’s silent presence one finds throughout the texts – such as event, in-between, rhythms, starting from the middle, etc. – we will highlight their proposal of aiming at life itself or bringing the impersonality of immanent life to performance. What can be immediate and immediate about their research is that what matters is nothing other than the process, the questioning and questioning of what is being done, what is happening, and that can be summed up by their main concern: how to live together? Hence, this is a project in which the artistic and social aspects are diluted to give life to a meeting between participants, and where what is at stake is the ability to manage to live sustainably. Although not new, this attentional movement from art to everyday life is seen from a different perspective in this text.

ABSTRACTS (PAPERS)

Andy W. Smith (Independent Scholar)

"‘Being-within-itself’: Photography and Autobiography in Howard Barker’s fictional worlds"

I photograph what I do not wish to paint and I paint what I cannot photograph

– Man Ray quoted in Sontag, On Photography, p.186

Howard Barker is well known as a dramatist, poet and artistic director of his theatre company The Wrestling School. Less well known is his work as a visual artist, designer and scenographer; with a life-time of cultural reflections replete with imaginary biographies whose work would become emblematic of the aesthetic style of the company.

The purpose of this paper is to put forward a fourth, vital element of Barker’s art practice to go alongside theatre, poetry and painting: his photographic work for The Wrestling School. The development of Barker’s photographic practice is further complicated by the creation of an alter ego through which the work is constructed: Eduardo Houth, the identity through whom Barker has also written his autobiography in the third person, A Style And Its Origins (2007). Barker addresses the complexities of self-authored narratives through the voice of Eduardo Houth, as Lynda Haverty Rugg writes, ‘Autobiography, like photography, traverses beyond itself, namely the autobiographical or photographed subject. But both autobiography and photography participate in a series of signs that we have learned to read – at one level – as highly interdeterminable and unreliable’.1

Barker’s use of Houth as his authorial voice allows for a certain distancing effect in A Style And Its Origins, and this paper will explore how Barker’s development of Houth as his alter ego and the self-portrait in A Style And Its Origins is another way of capturing the past, using his photographer alter-ego to imprint images of his subjective experiences through language. This paper will also focus on Barker’s creative practice as a photographer through a close reading of his images, from original prints provided by Barker himself.


Andrei Sora (University of Surrey)

"‘Freak Show Excess’: Steve Vai and his self-presentation in the media"

This paper draws on research from sociology, psychology, media studies, and musicology in order to uncover the complex relationship between musical expression, artist discourse, and personae. It focuses on the way Steve Vai, one of the most renowned and influential modern electric guitar players, presents himself and his music to the media. Vai himself admits that his relationship with the press is a calculated one, divulging that he is aware of what journalists write about him as a person, as a guitarist, and as an entertainer. In light of this insight, his demeanour in the press could be understood as an extension of his stage persona, in the sense that even interactions with the press involve a performance.

I analyse dozens of video and print interviews that span the almost three decades of Vai’s career as a solo musician in an attempt to trace patterns, changes, and contradictions in his views on his music and artistic. Musical analyses of key tracks from his debut album will be contrasted with Vai’s statements on the same pieces, as well as with general statements on expressivity, interpretation, and meaning. This is not to assume intentionality, but rather to ask what sort of gap there is between how Vai sees himself and presents himself as a music maker, whether or not he sees music as self-expressive, or as involving a constructed persona.

‘Political’ in the sense of theatre’s ability to produce a simultaneous, active presence of the performers and the audience in the shared moment of the theatrical action (see e.g. Hans-Thies Lehmann’s ‘Post-dramatic Theatre’) gives Vai’s career a performative aspect, as well as an ‘artistic persona’.

Elisabeth van Treeck (Ruhr University, Germany)

"Deconstructing self-commentary: Olga Neuwirth’s compositions and writings"

Although questionable and unmasked as situated in media, discourse, and epistemes at least since Foucault’s famous essay on the ‘author-function’, the ‘authority’ of ‘authorship’ is still apparent when the artist is also the commentator of her/his own works. Especially prevalent with contemporary art in its ever-expanding discursivity, hybridity, and entanglement, the artists themselves see a need to self-comment on their own works in writing, interviews, paratexts. Thus they pre-shape the scholarly discourse through their own ‘authority’ by offering all-too-easy metaphors and explanations. Discarding this commentary however seems almost as problematic as simply succumbing to their doubtful ‘authority’ – the question arising is how to integrate artists’ self-commentary into scholarly writing without tainting one’s own scholarly work with prefigured categories yet still using self-commentary as a viable source of potential insight into the complexities of contemporary art.

My proposed case study will be the 1968-born Austrian composer Olga Neuwirth. Neuwirth not only composes but also serves as a commentator about them. In order to establish working models and metaphors for her own composer’s work, she also as a commentary and instructions for her audiences, for directors, and conductors. My example would be her concept of ‘androgynous sound’ and ‘hyper-sound’ when describing her compositional method of combining sounds of traditional instruments with sounds of newish electronic instruments.

As an approach I would like to propose a wider understanding of the concept musical ‘composition’ – allowing to include Neuwirth’s own commentary not only as poetically important but also as significant in its own artistic, and literary meaning into her overall oeuvre, thus productively flattening the discursive categories of ‘artistic work’ and ‘commentary’ into a textual network, refusing the privileged ‘authority’ of the artist’s commentary while retaining its significance.

Charles Wilson (Cardiff University)

"The autobiography in works: Memorializing and forgetting in Hans Werner Henze’s Ein Verkehrszeichen 1946–1996"

During the 1990s the German composer Hans Werner Henze embarked on a wholesale ‘meta-revision’ of his published output – an undertaking that not only involved the revision of individual compositions but also sought above all to establish the boundaries of his official oeuvre. What marked the project out as unusual, however, was not the act of revising or withdrawing individual works, nor the act of self-cataloguing itself, but the speed and intensity of the process. In just five years a quarter of his output was subjected to changes ranging from the minute (a single-word substitution in a subtitle) to the wholesale (piano reductions to a stringed-big band reconfiguration), the results of this process documented in a handsomely produced catalogue from his publisher Schott.

Henze’s Verkehrszeichen has all the outward trappings of a catalogue rationally, but it departs in key respects from conventional scholarly practice. Rather than moving forward from earlier sources, editions or versions to later ones, Henze’s catalogue is presented in orientation, tracing history backwards from the current state of the work and in notable cases erasing those traces altogether. This paper will discuss the specific implications of some of these erasures in light of Henze’s political activities in the later 1960s. But it will also explore the wider question of the extent to which a creator’s wish to erase, or palimpsestically overwrite, parts of their history and compositional identity – things that have hitherto circulated freely in the public domain – should be respected. To invoke the controversies surrounding the European Court’s ‘Google ruling’, who decides what, in any composer’s output, has the ‘right to be forgotten’?

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The aim of this paper is to present an experimental strategy for writing about contemporary musicians, taking as a case study one of the leading figures in the classical music world, Austrian conductor Nikolaus Harnoncourt (1929-2016). Having established himself initially as a cellist (from 1952 to 1969, he was a part of the Vienna Symphony [Philharmonic?] Orchestra), Harnoncourt later evolved into a pioneer of the so-called Early Music movement, a founder of his own period instrument ensemble, Concentus Musicus Wien, a leading interpreter of numerous baroque and classical musical masterpieces, and a well-known author of several influential books, mostly on such subjects as performance history and musical aesthetics. Nonetheless, his legacy remains largely understudied so far, despite the recent publication of a collective volume Ereignis Klangrede. Nikolaus Harnoncourt als Dirigent und Musikdenker (2009, ed. by Wolfgang Gratzer) that gathers the proceedings of the symposium of the same title. Taking this publication as a starting point, my paper seeks to develop its own approach to writing about a contemporary musician, drawing together a broad spectrum of methods from different disciplines, such as musicology, history, sociology, and journalism. By merging a computer-assisted musicological analysis of Harnoncourt’s musical interpretations of the same title. Taking this publication as a starting point, my paper seeks to develop its own approach to writing about a contemporary musician, drawing together a broad spectrum of methods from different disciplines, such as musicology, history, sociology, and journalism. By merging a computer-assisted musicological analysis of Harnoncourt's musical interpretations, and journalism. By merging a computer-assisted musicological analysis of Harnoncourt's musical interpretations with its historical and social backgrounds informed by Harnoncourt's own interviews and studies, this paper attempts to construe Harnoncourt's 'life' in music through a mirror of his multifaceted creative output.
KEYNOTE BIOGRAPHIES

Professor Björn Heile

Keynote Address:
‘Between the “disease of admiration” and the “hermeneutics of suspicion”: working on living composers and musicians’

Professor Björn Heile is presently the Head of Music at Glasgow University, he is the author of The Music of Mauricio Kagel (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006) and the editor of The Modernist Legacy: Essays on New Music (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009) as well as the co-editor (with Martin Iddon) of Mauricio Kagel bei den Darmstädter Ferienkursen für Neue Musik: Eine Dokumentation (Kölnhlem: Wolke, 2009). Björn spent eight years at the University of Sussex, more than three of which as Head of Department. Prior to this he was at the University of Southampton, where he received his PhD and spent the next year as Leverhulme Special Research Fellow.

Mostly interested in music of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries and he is increasingly drawn to integrative approaches, whereby different forms of music - popular, classical, traditional jazz, western and non-western - are not studied in isolation from one another but comparatively. His expertise lies greatest in avant-garde and experimental music (notably that of Mauricio Kagel) and jazz. Professor Heile currently directs a British Academy-funded project on ‘Mauricio Kagel: Estate and Legacy’ (2013-14), and is currently working on an application for a larger follow-up, entitled ‘Mauricio Kagel’s Experimental Music: Text and Performance, Process and Product’, for submission to the AHRC.

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