

Major Music Project Conference 2024

The Self in Research



MMP Conference 2024

Music, Edinburgh Napier University
Merchiston Campus – Rooms F5, F6, G4, G9
Tuesday 12 March 2024

Book of Abstracts

Edited by Anna Cooper, Ewan McAtier, Sonny Scott and Will Saywell

Introduction

The one-day, student-led MMP conference is part of the learning & teaching activities of the fourth-year [MUS10105 Major Music Project](#) undergraduate module offered at Edinburgh Napier University, School of Arts and Creative Industries. The purpose of this student-led event is to act as an opportunity for our 4th year BA Music students to present their final year dissertations and practice-led research projects work-in-progress, and to share their research processes and findings with their peers and the extended academic community.

The theme of the MMP Conference 2024 is 'The Self in Research', providing a valuable opportunity for presenters to delve into their research so far and to share their research aims, processes, and findings through the lens of *positionality*. This draws inspiration from Holmes (2020), who emphasises the importance of encouraging students to explore and deeply understand the concept of *positionality* and its impact on research.

Positionality encompasses the influence of inherent cultural, social, and political perspectives on a researcher's position, shaped by their lived experiences and understanding of the world. It is key for researchers to comprehend the implications of their *positionality*, and 'that through doing so, they should become a better researcher' (ibid.). This involves moving beyond external factors, delving into the researcher's *self*, *reflexivity*, *subjectivity*, and the *performative* aspects of research. By recognising the researcher as an active participant and examining factors like beliefs and biases, embracing *reflexivity* becomes essential (Walshaw, 2010).

The 2024 MMP one-day conference provides a forum for presenters to further explore their own and others' final-year Major Music Projects by presenting their ongoing work for peer and lecturer feedback.

References

Holmes, A.G.D., 2020. Researcher Positionality – A Consideration of Its Influence and Place in Qualitative Research – A New Researcher Guide. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, 8(4), pp.1-10. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1268044.pdf>

Walshaw, M., 2010. *The Researcher's Self in Research: Confronting Issues about Knowing and Understanding Others*. [Paper presentation]. Annual Meeting of the Mathematics Education Research Group of Australasia, 3–7 Jul, Freemantle, Western Australia. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED520979>

MMP Conference 2024 – Committee & Contact

Sonny Scott (conference chair) – 40532599@live.napier.ac.uk

Ewan McAtier (conference vice-chair) – 40490198@live.napier.ac.uk

Anna Cooper (conference vice-chair) – 40487030@live.napier.ac.uk

Will Saywell (conference vice-chair) – 40493077@live.napier.ac.uk

MMP Conference 2024 – Schedule

SESSION 1	ROOM F5	CHAIR - Ewan McAtier Lecturer present - Dr Paul Harkins
TIMESLOT	PRESENTER	PRESENTATION
10:00 – 10:10	CHAIR	Welcome/Introductions
10:10 – 10:30	Ewan McAtier	<i>And The Beat Goes On... - Stimulaic Practice and Compositional Processes Within Sample-Based Music</i>
10:30 – 10:50	Jan Pukkila	<i>Film/Music Analysis</i>
10:50 – 11:10	Jack Duffield	<i>D.A.W. of the Dead: A Study of Production Techniques as Devices for Musical Storytelling</i>
11:10 – 11:30	Daniel Tracey	<i>Exploring cultural positionality: Musical compositions using Haiku as initial Stimuli</i>
11:30 – 11:40	BREAK	BREAK
11:40 – 12:00	Fraser McLean	<i>An exploration into whether social media is advantageous or disadvantageous to the live music scene.</i>
12:00 – 12:20	James Kennedy	<i>Western Perspectives on Socialist Realism Aesthetics</i>
12:20 – 12:30	BREAK	BREAK
12:30 – 13:30	DISCUSSION	Group discussion Lecturer feedback Chair concluding remarks

SESSION 2	ROOM F6	CHAIR - Sonny Scott Lecturer present - Prof Zack Moir
TIMESLOT	PRESENTER	PRESENTATION
10:00 – 10:10	CHAIR	Welcome/Introductions
10:10 – 10:30	Sonny Scott	<i>Documenting Musical Communities: Exploring the</i>

		<i>Value, Challenges, and Best Practice</i>
10:30 – 10:50	Matthew Blance	<i>Identity and Authenticity in the Nu Metal Era: An Overview</i>
10:50 – 11:10	Darragh Akhtar	<i>Music and autobiographical memories</i>
11:10 – 11:30	Craig McDermott	<i>Positionality and Progress</i>
11:30 – 11:40	BREAK	BREAK
11:40 – 12:00	Erin McKenzie	<i>Music for Skandar and the Unicorn Thief</i>
12:00 – 12:20	Douglas McNeill	<i>The Multivariate Accordion and Me</i>
12:20 – 12:30	BREAK	BREAK
12:30 – 13:30	DISCUSSION	Group discussion Lecturer feedback Chair concluding remarks

SESSION 3	ROOM G4	CHAIR - Anna Cooper Lecturer present - Dr Dimitris Papageorgiou
TIMESLOT	PRESENTER	PRESENTATION
10:00 – 10:10	CHAIR	Welcome/Introductions
10:10 – 10:30	Anna Cooper	<i>Modern Rave and commercialised communitas</i>
10:30 – 10:50	Finlay Bradshaw	<i>When The World Falls Apart, Some Things Stay In Place; A Study into the Evolution of Compositional Techniques and Marketing Strategies of Popular Music under Margaret Thatcher's Premiership</i>
10:50 – 11:10	Manuele Manieri	<i>Melodies of Belonging: Italian Progressive Rock and the Expression of National Identity</i>
11:10 – 11:30	Rachel Nicolson	<i>Imposter Syndrome in Female Instruments</i>
11:30 – 11:40	BREAK	BREAK
11:40 – 12:00	Sam Rae	<i>The Undercurrents of Living Water Artistry - researching Thriving Culture of Christian Creativity</i>

12:00 – 12:20	Cameron Black	<i>Urban and Natural World in Harmony: A Practice-Led Inquiry into Tokyo's Soundscape Experience</i>
12:20 – 12:40	Alex McLean	<i>Untold Tales - LGBTQ+ Stories Through Song</i>
12:40 – 12:45	BREAK	BREAK
12:45 – 13:30	DISCUSSION	Group discussion Lecturer feedback Chair concluding remarks

SESSION 4	ROOM G9	CHAIR - Will Saywell Lecturer present - Bryden Stillie
TIMESLOT	PRESENTER	PRESENTATION
10:00 – 10:10	CHAIR	Welcome/Introductions
10:10 – 10:30	Will Saywell	<i>The Role of a Producer in the Context of Recording Amateur Musicians</i>
10:30 – 10:50	Andrew McInnes	<i>Understanding and Developing Roads In Musical Collaboration</i>
10:50 – 11:10	Seamus Dailly	<i>Remote Collaboration: An experiential study of the compositional process</i>
11:10 – 11:30	Alistair McBride	<i>Bedroom Productions- The Creative Processes of Home Studio Producers</i>
11:30 – 11:40	BREAK	BREAK
11:40 – 12:00	Niamh MacLennan	<i>The Evolution of Scottish Gaelic Singing: Traditional Purism</i>
12:00 – 12:20	Natalia Zoladkiewicz	<i>Authenticity of Vocal Performance</i>
12:20 – 12:30	BREAK	BREAK
12:30 – 13:30	DISCUSSION	Group discussion Lecturer feedback Chair concluding remarks

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Untold Tales - LGBTQ+ Stories Through Song

Alex McLean

My project focuses on the experiences of members of the LGBTQ+ community. Participants are all part of the LGBTQ+ 'family' and have shared a story no matter how big or small with me through a semi-structured interview. Through focusing predominantly on the emotions conveyed in the stories, I am writing a collection of songs that I hope will truly show how different the experience of life is through the LGBTQ+ lens.

As a member of the community I have been careful to create comfortable spaces in which to conduct the interviews, meaning the participants have treated it less formally and more like a conversation. I have found the process extremely interesting and informative as I'm sure you will too. My positionality does play a role in the process as well, being that every interview I have conducted thus far has made me empathise with the participant. When I write the songs, I allow myself to reflect on the process which will inform my songwriting practice in the future.

The project is based on storytelling on behalf of other people taking into account their experience. It aims to be a love letter to the people that didn't feel like they could express who they were and what they truly felt through the world's most "universal language", music. The primary influence for the project is Jazmine Sullivan's 'Heaux Tales' album which won its Grammy for 'Best RnB Album' in 2022.

Bedroom Productions- The Creative Processes of Home Studio Producers

Alistair McBride

This project seeks to investigate the nature of creativity, how we incorporate this creativity into our own workflows, and the realisation of the definitive end point of a creative project. “The process of genesis and growth that give rise to forms in the world we inhabit are more important than the forms themselves”(Ingold, 2010). In the modern world of music production, there are countless resources and creative tools at the fingertips of any creative mind that profess the ‘correct’ approaches of music production and aim to point us in a predetermined route. This project seeks to research the understanding of how creativity influences originality and the relationship between the chaos of individuality and the order of technicality.

Through the lens of the key themes, iterative process, workflow, and organisation/coding, I will demonstrate the links of these practices to my own work as a home music producer. Reflecting on an artefact in the form of a 4 track House music E.P, I will demonstrate an understanding through reflection of and link to the underlying creative processes and how these are incorporated into my own work. The structure of the project will see the research devised around three sections. The nature of creativity, applications and process of successful originality/creativity, and finally reflection on the artefact. Research will be gathered through readings of relevant articles, books, and other resources on the chosen topics. Finally using this foundation of knowledge to critically reflect and analyse on my workflow and creative process.

Understanding and Developing Roads In Musical Collaboration

Andrew McInnes

This practice led research project explores collaborative songwriting in music and ways in which a collaboration can be used to explore conceptual spaces which musicians are already proficient in but also transform conceptual spaces so musicians can explore new ways of songwriting in a collaboration. The two main aims of the project are to: Identify and reflectively analyse effective ways of co creation through showcasing a blending of musician's personal styles through multiple collaborative compositions and to create a portfolio of collaborative compositions, each new composition responding to the previous research explored in the last one.

One of the methods I will employ will be secondary research to study collaborative music making in the world of academia, reading books and journals to create a theoretical framework the rest of my research can respond to. The other method I will employ will be diarizing my collaborations with different musicians through audio recording and note taking to understand what collaborative techniques are effective and which aren't, these reflections will then inform the next collaborations. So far in my exploration in exploring and transforming collaborative spaces I have found a correlation between risking taking leading to volatile but exciting ideas being mainly found in my attempts to transform the conceptual spaces compared to my attempts to explore conceptual spaces.

Modern Rave and Commercialised Communitas

Anna Cooper

Exploring modern rave, this practice based research project combines reflective autoethnographic accounts of rave with an audio/visual accompanying piece. Combining my own musical composition with composite elements of rave visuals, archived and documentary footage, as well as rave in pop culture, merging the reality of modern rave culture with the past that makes up its foundation.

Accompanying writing analyses the rise in popularity of rave culture. Drawing from fields of study such as ethnomusicology, sociology and theology, this thesis and accompanying artefact discuss the role of spirituality in rave culture, and the phenomenology of the communal euphoria experienced. The spiritual framework in which Rave sits is explored in the writing through the lens of *Rave and Religion* (St. John, 2005), a collection of 15 essays covering a range of ontological aspects of rave, from George Bataille's theory of transgression, Durkenheim's collective effervescence, to the role of gospel music in Black Queer House Music. My writing and artefact will explore how these theories sit within modern, highly commercialised, rave. Discussing the role of the modern DJ, dancer, and the ways in which the communitas of rave is maintained on commercialised dance floors.

Urban and Natural World in Harmony: A Practice-Led Inquiry into Tokyo's Soundscape Experience

Cameron Black

The project is investigating the relationship between dense urban environments, the natural world, and the resulting soundscape examined through observation and lived experience. In December 2023 I travelled to Tokyo, Japan, one of the world's largest and most densely populated cities. The purpose was to observe and experience this relationship whilst making field recordings that will feature in the final compositions. The fieldwork was conducted in five specifically chosen locations that can be described as 'greenspace'. This term is multifaceted and largely used in fields related to modern urban design and planning. In this study I will refer to this definition of the term: greenspace requires vegetation, such as trees, grass, and flowers, situated in a densely populated area in a city.

Beyond personal observations, the research adopts qualitative interviewing as a method of diversifying the perspective of Tokyo's soundscape experience. Discussions with those who either currently live or have lived in Tokyo and the surrounding prefectures will bring to surface themes and narratives to be explored in the compositions; a collaboration that begins with some distance to music, resulting in an enriched composition process and musical outcome. At the core, this research aims to contribute to the developing discourse concerning the importance of greenspace by presenting an artistic exploration of the issue, the music composed as a result of an ethnographical and anthropological research process.

Positionality and Progress

Craig McDermott

The inspiration for this research was the closure of the two predominant popular music venues in my hometown of Inverness last year. I am investigating the impact that geographical location and remoteness has on a music venue, the extra difficulties this may lead to and what closures of venues like these means for local communities and music scenes.

I will be focusing on my personal positionality within my research and the consideration that must be given when writing academically about a subject I am passionate about. As a young musician I played both venues multiple times and attended several gigs while living in Inverness. I have countless memories of times spent in these special places, and I was dejected to see both venues close their doors last year. I will be discussing how I intend to mitigate bias and remain objective over the course of the research process.

Following on from research by the likes of Cary Bennet (2020) into the challenges live music faces in rural and regional areas of Australia, I will be conducting ethnographic research into various types and sizes of venues throughout the country. I hope this data provides an insight into the challenges common to all venues and uncover some of the issues that are more specific to different parts of Scotland.

I will begin by discussing my overall research aims for this project, the progress I have made so far, my chosen method of data collection and a description of the next steps I will be taking in order to complete the dissertation.

Exploring cultural positionality: musical compositions using Haiku as initial Stimuli

Daniel Tracey

My presentation will aim to showcase my work so far in my practice based research project, which focuses on taking the Japanese poetic form haiku and using it as stimulus to create musical compositions. Whilst researching this project I have learned more of the philosophy behind haiku, with it taken into influence from zen Buddhist and Taoist religion, how that philosophy has changed since it's inception and how it has been disseminated into other cultures, particularly western ideologies and practices.

I will for this presentation highlight this dissemination and compare it to my own practice of using this art forms practice to inspire my own, as a 23 year old Scottish male musician I have considered my own disconnect from the culture in that I have no history with it other than consumption for my own satisfaction.

As an individual I am imposing myself on this art form as I before was a stranger to it, as someone who is only learning about this art I am a stranger. Yet in theory anyone can write haiku and anyone can understand it, they need only learn from it,

“Go to the Pine to learn from the Pine” – Matsuo Bashó

Thus this presentation will be an acknowledgment of my nature in as a stranger and my growing positionality with this art-form.

Music and autobiographical memories

Darragh Akhtar

My dissertation will focus on music and autobiographical memories, this will include both general memories from one's past and memories in relation to grief and bereavement after the loss of a loved one. The aim of this dissertation is to explore the effect music has on autobiographical memories and the significance of these musical associations in our life; and how it can potentially help us hold onto a memory of someone or something from our past, even if it's painful. This dissertation will include a semi-structured interview with participants being members of my family.

This dissertation will also include findings and case studies from other researchers and books. This dissertation will explore the psychology of music and autobiographical memories, the psychology of grief and different examples. Incorporating evidence from current research I have found that music can induce strong emotions, feelings and memories of places, events and people especially those who are now deceased. Evidence shows that these memories are both positive and negative depending on the person and different situations. Although music and autobiographical memories is a well researched topic it lacks research in grief and bereavement. I want to investigate this further throughout this dissertation.

The Multivariate Accordion and Me

Douglas McNeill

This presentation will give an overview of my research project, which aims to explore the development of the accordion and provide an organological basis to navigate the array of instruments known by that name. I will provide a brief introduction to the different types of accordion commonly found in the British Isles and musical context in which they exist, in order to help the audience understand the research aim.

The theme of the conference will be addressed by considering my positionality as an accordion player but also as an instrument repairer. I will describe how this has sustained my interest in the topic but has also generated unconscious bias towards certain instrument types that became apparent as I reflected upon my research. In particular, I will describe attitudes inherited from authority figures in the formative years of my musical life, which in turn shaped my own outlook without having been subject to sufficient critical appraisal.

Having recognised that this could be an issue, I will conclude the presentation by describing steps I have taken to mitigate the effects of my positionality on the validity of my research. These include borrowing an accordion of a type I was unfamiliar with to undertake some empirical study; reflecting upon the type of language I was using in my analysis, particularly looking for signs of subjectivity; seeking a diverse range of participants for my ethnographic research on the use and relative popularity of different instrument types.

Music for Skandar and the Unicorn Thief

Erin McKenzie

This practice-led research project will explore the experience that I have when writing a fantasy film score for the first time. I will be composing music for the fantasy children's novel by A.F. Steadman called "Skandar and the Unicorn Thief". A film adaptation of the book is currently in the works and is going to begin production in 2024. My aim is to create the music for the films before any visuals have been made.

As film scores are usually composed alongside the films visuals and the composer is usually part of a collaborative project, I will have to embrace the narrative of the story and use my imagination to compose music that creates a bridge between the book and the future film adaptation. I will compose six motifs/themes and will diarise my experience as I do this. I will then use these notes to reflect on and evaluate my experience in the exegesis. As my findings are based on my own experiences and reflecting upon this, the main body of this work will be autoethnographic and will be backed up by academic reading as well as a case study where I will be using the How to Train your Dragon score. I hope that from this I can build a solid score analysis foundation and present interesting findings about my experience.

And The Beat Goes On... - Stimulaic Practice and Compositional Processes Within Sample-Based Music

Ewan McAtier

With the advent of sampling technologies came new forms of art creation within music, from instrumentals for old-school hip-hop to catchy pop songs to entirely sample-based pieces. This practice-based dissertation concerns the latter and the compositional processes regarding the practice of Stimulaic Sampling. This concept is unique to this dissertation and pertains to the idea of the stimulus for a piece of sample-based music both informing further creative decisions and becoming a part of the piece it informs.

Utilising practice-based research, I reflect and analyse my practice through creative artefacts that demonstrate ideas relating to stimulaic sampling and the repetitive cycle of 'digging' and arrangement. Alongside the practice-based research, I include supportive desktop research delving into key topics such as sampling taxonomy and Margaret Boden's conceptual spaces. I also touch on the idea of intertextuality and context within sampling and elaborate on Joseph Schloss' idea of pre-existing structures within sampling. This project aims to shine a light on the intricate processes within the creation of sample-based music and provide a framework in which stimulus within popular music can be further understood.

When The World Falls Apart, Some Things Stay In Place; A Study into the Evolution of Compositional Techniques and Marketing Strategies of Popular Music under Margaret Thatcher's Premiership

Finlay Bradshaw

Through the research and evidence that my studies have accumulated, this dissertation aims to explore in detail whether both music composers and corporations had altered their respective strategies to address and capitalise from the United Kingdom's state of affairs. This will be uncovered with respect to monumental historical events which occurred between 1979-1990 under Margaret Thatcher's conservative government which includes but is not limited to the Miner's Strikes, England Riots (specifically Toxteth in this instance), the Falklands War, Section 28 of the Local Government Act, and the Brighton Bombing. The behaviours of the individual musicians and corporation's reactions to the political climate will be documented, as well as the general public's behaviours and reactions consequently. This will encompass the establishment of social alliances and divisions across the country as a result of the conservative policies implemented during this time. Politically ideologised musical associations such as the Red Wedge will be dissected for further analysis on their motive, activist campaigns, and general influence.

In addition, societal sub-cultures established as a consequence of the tory regime will be analysed in respect to their musical consumption habits. For example, the emergence of 'Yuppie Culture' and the suffering population impacted by the mine closures branded as 'The Enemy Within' by the PM will be cross-examined with the styles of music these groups were most likely to resonate with due to the songs' lyrical content and the origin of its artist's political ideologies. Evidence has been gathered in reference to literature, written lyrics, and musical recordings with the inclusion of recorded lectures also. These historical events will be documented chronologically to show an extensive timeline of when they happened and how they are connected to the events in the music industry which followed, while incorporating the impacts of the aforementioned societal groups' actions within these periods. This dissertation will be worth a minimum of 10,000 words and will conclude with the question on whether Margaret Thatcher's government had a direct impact on compositional techniques and marketing strategies in modern music at the time.

An exploration into whether social media is advantageous or disadvantageous to the live music scene

Fraser McLean

This study aims to thoroughly explore the usage of social media in the music industry, delving into the varied approaches of different individuals. The goal is to gain better understanding of some of the diverse ways that social media is employed, and analyze research findings regarding both positive and negative impacts that social media has on the live music scene.

The literature review in this project has been split into two sections. Firstly, investigating the importance social media has or hasn't had on the live music scene. Secondly, exploring how COVID-19 played a role in both social media and the live industry in the last few years.

Through a mixed-methods approach, I plan to carry out multiple research types to gain a wide understanding of the area. I will carry out Interviews with various professionals in the industry, each with a different role in the industry and demographic. Furthermore, I will send out questionnaires to members of the public, to not only capture what the industry thinks, but complement the research with what the public has to say. In addition, I will also conduct some secondary research with case studies.

D.A.W. of the Dead: A Study of Production Techniques as Devices for Musical Storytelling

Jack Duffield

This project explores how production decisions, techniques, and workflows can act as storytelling devices in popular music. In this project I will be creating 6 songs, each utilising a different production 'gimmick' as a means of telling a story. The source material I will be using for these songs are a selection of classic horror/sci-fi movies from the 1920s-1960s.

Each film will be reimagined as a song written, recorded, and produced by myself and other musicians from the course. 'Gimmicks' are selected in relation to the films story, examples include; a song based on 'Frankenstein' (1931) that consists entirely of audio sampled from other songs, a song based on 'Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde' (1941) that continually switches between two opposing mixes of the same audio, and a song based on 'Night Of The Living Dead' (1968) which is recorded as a live session using reworked versions of olds and outdated recording techniques.

Western Perspectives on Socialist Realism Aesthetics

James Kennedy

The concept and aesthetic of socialist realism within Soviet Russian classical music is a field of study that has been well-researched and documented. However, what is notably absent from this area of study is a 21st century Western perspective about the transparency and the effectiveness of the aesthetic. To determine an understanding of Western perspectives, I employed a focus group of 10 participants, all of whom were Western undergraduate music students from Edinburgh Napier University. This research method has provided significant insights into the personal and cultural thoughts towards Soviet music throughout the 1930s, 40s and 50s.

Participants were questioned about any pre-conceptions that they had towards Russian music, politics and history. The partakers were then engaged in listening sessions which featured music from Soviet composers Dimitri Shostakovich, Sergei Prokofiev and Aram Khachaturian. Participants were questioned on the musical excerpts, challenged on their personal responses, and on their awareness in recognising the audibility of socialist realism aesthetics. This research has provided qualitative findings and results that are indicative of some Western musicians' perspective. The focus group study sessions has led to some very insightful perceptions and observations regarding the aesthetic. However, it could also be argued that the employment of a group study has led to a slightly biased general consensus and does pose some potential implications within this research.

Film/Music Analysis

Jan Pukkila

The objective of this presentation is to explore the methodology for analyzing film music through research, specifically applying this approach to the examination of Kevin Penkin's musical compositions in "Made in Abyss: Dawn of The Deep Soul." The investigation is informed by an extensive review of scholarly literature on the subject, with Emilio Audissino's work on Film/Music Analysis identified as the most pertinent, contemporary, and methodologically sound resource. Audissino adopts a Neoformalist perspective, conceptualizing film as a multi-dimensional construct amenable to analysis at cinematic, narratological, and thematic levels. Notably, Neoformalism, as articulated by Audissino, is an analytical framework designed for film examination. Conceding to the acknowledged limitation, Audissino supplements his analytical framework by incorporating insights derived from Leonard B. Meyer's theories in Music Psychology.

Meyer's postulations delineate the influence of music on mood and emotions within the context of cultural and musical traditions, thereby acknowledging the consequential impact of music on individuals. This acknowledgment is substantiated by contemporary research, which posits that the rewarding nature of music for humans emanates from the intricate communication dynamics between the brain's auditory circuits and reward pathways. Furthermore, he synthesizes these perspectives through the application of Gestalt theory, positing that the entirety of something is greater than its parts.

Following the establishment of the aforementioned analytical framework, it will be employed to scrutinize a specific segment of the film featuring the soundtrack "Fourth Layer." The primary objective of this investigation is to discern Kevin Penkin's approach to film composition, informed by interviews found online with the composer and insights gleaned from the systematic analysis of his soundtracks.

'Melodies of Belonging: Italian Progressive Rock and the Expression of National Identity'

Manuele Manieri

This dissertation explores the intricate relationship between Italian progressive rock (Rock Progressivo Italiano, or R.P.I.) and national identity, employing a blend of practice-led research and academic inquiry to try and identify a model of 'Italianness' and investigate how it can manifest, both within and outside the genre. Central to this study is the composition and production of original music pieces that draw upon and reflect the stylistic and thematic elements characteristic of R.P.I., embodying the theoretical concepts of Italian national identity explored throughout the research. Through a literature review, this work engages with existing scholarship across musicology, cultural studies, and sociology to establish a theoretical framework that addresses the interplay between music, community, and national identity.

The study employs a multi-dimensional analytical approach, incorporating musical analysis to identify key features of R.P.I. and differentiate it from its global counterparts, particularly the British progressive rock scene. Additionally, it examines the socio-political and cultural contexts that have shaped the genre, including the influence of Italy's historical events and movements on the thematic and ideological underpinnings of R.P.I.. Ethnographic methods provide insights into the community's perception of 'Italianness' in R.P.I.: for example, engaging with the opinions of users of for a such as ProgArchive.com.

Furthermore, by adopting an autoethnographic perspective, the dissertation offers a nuanced understanding of how national identity and cultural heritage can influence musical expression, viewed through the lens of my personal experiences as an Italian living in the United Kingdom. The integration of creative practice with scholarly research can enrich the academic exploration of Italian prog rock and offer a contemporary interpretation of the model of 'Italianness' and an examination of the relationship between national identity and musical expression.

Identity and Authenticity in the Nu Metal Era: An Overview

Matthew Blance

Nu metal was a strand of mainstream rock music in the 90s and 00s that combined hip hop and metal to both massive commercial success and a mixed critical reception. The purpose of this presentation is to provide an overview of my ongoing research into concepts of identity formation and authenticity in the nu metal era, with an eye to the theme of the conference, “The Self in Research”. I will provide context for the history of nu metal as a genre, discuss the aims, objectives and questions of my research, and explore my methodology, a mixed method approach comprising musicology, ethnography, cultural studies and poetic analysis.

As part of this, I will trace the theoretical concepts of identity and authenticity underpinning my case studies, pulling from Frith (1998), Auslander (2023), Born (2011) and others. Holmes (2020) will be referenced as I outline my positionality, taking a reflexive approach that should help to contextualise decisions I have made in my research. The insider-outsider model will specifically be explored to discuss my distance from the nu metal subculture of the 90s and 00s and how this has influenced my perspective on the topic. Finally, I will share some early findings based on my musical and lyrical analyses of key bands in the genre’s history.

Authenticity in vocal performance

Natalia Zoladkiewicz

My research project will focus around finding the meanings of authenticity in one's performance from the perspective of vocalists. It will aim to discuss findings for several research questions, e.g.: How much acting can there be present in one's performance in order to preserve authenticity? The main themes of the research project will revolve around authenticity and inauthenticity, theatricality, acting, composition, and performance to name a few. The inspiration for looking into the topic of authenticity in relation to vocal performance stems from my interest into getting to know myself and my instrument better as well as improving my performance skills and understanding correlations between certain ways of performing. I'm also interested to find out if there are any recurring themes between the lived music performance-related experiences from the perspective of different vocal performers.

The methodology for this project will be semi-structured interviews followed by a thorough data analysis. This will be summarised in the "Findings" section and will hopefully help evaluate the research questions put in place at the start of the project. The main dispute presented at the conference will be one about the validity of composition and performance in relation to authenticity. The aim will be to attempt to find middle ground between the two contradictory concepts posed by Gary Tomlinson in his chapter from the book "Authenticity and Early Music: A symposium". There will be a further insight into literature related to themes of theatricality and authenticity followed by a discussion about them.

The Evolution of Scottish Gaelic Singing: Traditional Purism

Niamh MacLennan

Scottish Gaelic singing continues to be a popular aspect of Scottish traditional music, largely through the hybridization with contemporary musical genres – often funk, electronica and jazz. Composition using the Scottish Gaelic language peaked during the 17th century, hence much of the current material incorporates preserved songs from this period.

This dissertation will focus on the evolution of Scottish Gaelic song from the late 20th century up until now, with the development in the pieces showing the contemporary influences. This project will address traditional purism: the individuals within the Gaelic native speaking community who oppose the idea of the hybridization of Scottish Gaelic singing with contemporary genres; believing that Scottish Gaelic song should be arranged and performed in a traditional manner.

Another theme that will be explored is the Pidgeon holing of Scottish Gaelic singing: Scottish Gaelic song is frequently labelled as folk and traditional music even if the lyrics, arrangement, and melodies have been composed in the 21st century. If a song was composed in any universal language such as Spanish or French, it would not be labelled as folk unless it contained folk elements. Is the Pidgeon holing of Scottish Gaelic linked to the decline in language use?

Imposter Syndrome in Female Instrumentalists

Rachel Nicolson

The purpose of this presentation is to present an overview of an idea that I hope to explore and uncover within my dissertation. Imposter syndrome is a fluctuating experience, and experiences of it can be heightened. However, perhaps female instrumentalists are assigned a diagnosis of imposter syndrome when in reality it's not an internal feeling but a result of the musical environments they find themselves being male- dominated, non catering and unwelcoming. My project seeks to explore the prevalence of imposter syndrome among female instrumentalists and implications of the use of the term "imposter syndrome" in relation to female instrumentalists. Through thematic analysis based on information obtained by interviewing a range of female instrumentalists and auto- ethnographic research I aim to investigate the extent of imposter syndrome experienced among the sample group and contributing factors to this experience. Since the the term was established by Clance and Imes in 1978, the Imposter Phenomenon has been researched in regards to experiences of, mostly, women and medical students. Imposter Syndrome, as it now more commonly referred to, is a term assigned to feelings of internal phoniness. Due to feeling like a fraud (hence 'Imposter' syndrome), those who experience it minimise their successes, basing them on outward reasons unrelated to themselves. Imposter syndrome is not a stagnant state and can be influenced by different environments, workplace cultures, interactions, prejudices and systematic biases. As I am a white female instrumentalist, I will be approaching this topic with my own biases based on my experiences, for example feeling out of place in certain musical environments. However, I am also unable to relate to the experiences of women of colour and how systematic biases and racism will impact their relationship with imposter syndrome. Being brought up in a lower- middle class setting means that I will be approaching this topic with differing experiences of those of a higher class, who may have had more opportunities and influence in music and from those of a lower class who may have had less opportunities. So, there are a range of variables that can contribute to someones experience with Imposter Syndrome some of which may impact me and others that I will never be able to experience. I hope to suggest that feelings described by the term 'imposter syndrome' are real and prevalent to some extent in all female instrumentalists but that this term can be used as an excuse, rather than confronting the idea that societal structures have resulted in leaving women on the outside and overlooked in musical settings.

The Undercurrents of Living Water Artistry - researching Thriving Culture of Christian Creativity

Sam Rae

In an art world shaped by scarcity, reductive obsession and anxiousness there glimmers the theological promise of the arts as an expansive space of abundance gifted generously by the God of overflowing Love. Despite this however, the Church at large within Scotland has not walked out it's invitation to be safe havens of creative potential where streams of living water flow. Indeed, there are deeper undercurrents of culture to be reflected on and better channelled. For if the current of culture is flowing towards life, so too shall the art flowing from it.

It is primarily this question I therefore seek to ask, of "What does a healthy undercurrent of culture that encourages young Scottish creatives to embrace their unique voice as they explore the fullness of Christian artistry look like?". Within my research I shall contemplate on resources that speak to, "what is Christian creativity" as well as interview seasoned creatives and retreat leaders, in so doing seeking to distil key values that may begin to facilitate and guide a healthy culture.

I shall then curate a retreat built around these values and invite creatives who follow Jesus to participate within it. Reflecting on the experience of these participants through semi-structured interviews and diarising I then seek to draw out knowledge of what was healthy to carry forward into further practise and research.

Remote Collaboration: An experiential study of the compositional process

Seamus Dailly

This research will investigate the personal experience of musicians involved in remote collaboration.

With home studios now being commonplace, and favoured by musicians for a number of artistic and practical reasons, I aim to explore how this established practise effects the process of collaboration in composition. I believe that asynchronized collaboration will force interesting consequences to the communication modes used, the hierarchy of the composer and performer, and the kinds of collaboration that are possible.

I will work with one other musician, with us both submitting a musical idea to collaborate around. We would initially work completely independently of each other and then come together over a video call to listen and discuss each other's contributions and attempt to synthesis something new from the variants. I would like to work with a member of my band as I am confident in their abilities, and I know we can work well together. I would also like to leave some details open ended. For example, I do not want to impose any specifics relating to hierarchy of decision making or how to run the process. This is to see what is more likely to occur naturally.

Individual semi-structured interviews will be conducted at the end of the process to gauge and analyse the participants views and experience. The questions asked will be of a deliberately open nature as to allow the participants to express themselves unguided

I have chosen this study, I suppose, to try reiterate the value of collaboration. I feel as we retreat more into our studios of solitude, we perhaps more than ever work alone, emboldening the idea of the sole auteur, creating in a vacuum, influenced only by their own thoughts. I will reference this study and the sociocultural theory of creativity, peer collaboration and collaborative creativity to go some way in providing a rebuttal to the romantic notion of lone genius and provide insight to the process of remote collaboration.

Documenting Musical Communities: Exploring the Value, Challenges, and Best Practice

Sonny Scott

This research delves into the intrinsic value of documenting and archiving musical communities, focusing on the contributions of smaller, independent, and community-led archives, such as the Scottish Jazz Archive. It explores fundamental themes like cultural memory, identity, agency, sustainability, and best archival practices, aiming to illuminate the importance of preserving and celebrating musical communities. A central element of this exploration lies in understanding the concepts through the experiences of individuals engaged in documenting musical communities. Through semi-structured interviews, the study will capture their insights, challenges, and perspectives, enriching the understanding and allowing for further exploration of the concepts.

The Scottish Jazz Archive serves as the focus for a case study, providing invaluable insights into archiving practices, challenges, and cultural implications of this work. It aims to contextualise the themes and concepts identified in literature and interviews, to offer a deeper understanding of the archival process. This research is iterative, with the continuous cycle of reconsideration and refinement allowing for the natural evolution of the study, ensuring that emerging themes and perspectives are thoroughly explored and integrated. By synthesising the insights from both interviews and case study in this way, the research aims to contribute to the discourse on best practices for archiving musical communities, providing an exploration of several key concepts, to be utilised by individuals documenting musical communities. This research transcends just documentation, delving into the cultural significances, individual value, and social dynamics inherent in archiving musical communities, offering an in-the-round and holistic understanding of this practice.

The Role of a Producer in the Context of Recording Amateur Musician

Will Saywell

The presentation given will explore my research and practice as a producer, and the dynamic relationships with other artists that are now an established fact. This will provide insight into how the defined role of the producer has not only changed but has been somewhat obscured. The literature review includes studies from Amandine Pras and Catherine Guastavino, in which they explore the expanding and warping role of the producer, alongside sound engineers. This research was conducted by a series of interviews/questionnaires given to producers, sound engineers, and the artists that worked with them. From this research, several themes and concepts emerge, including - Guidance, Criticism and Optimization, Extra Set of Ears, Aesthetic Context, Result, and technical responsibilities.

This will then be contextualised in my own practice, specifically working with an amateur duo "Pocket Gulls". This saw both technical and artistic challenges such as recording space, Artists accustomed to recording with microphones, and trying to translate words into aesthetic and movement in a track. The data will then be collected and attempt to answer narrow-scope questions such as to what degree should a producer make artistic decisions, in which Pras and Guastavino call for further research in the conclusion of their study. It should be stated that positionality will also be taken into account, as working and informal relationships will be present within the study.