Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Postgraduate Research Study Day

Thursday 14 December 2017

Morning Session: Workshop 6

Session One: 9.30

Richard Stenton and Niccolò Granieri: *Fostering Microgestures in Piano Playing though the use of Scoring and Text*
Shi Ling Chin: *The Solo Violin Chaconne in the Twentieth Century*
Terezija Stimec: *Constructive or destructive? Assessing the impact of feedback in instrumental piano lessons*

10.40: Break

Session Two: 11.00
Johan Erikson: *Automatonism: Extended Modularity In Synthesis Composition*
Joe Wright: *Investigating Exploratory Sonic Play Through the Design of Digital Instruments With and For Young People on the Autistic Spectrum*

Lunch Break

Afternoon Session: Workshop 3

Session 3: 1.00
Connor Christie: *The Music of Hans Zimmer, US Military Intervention and 'the other' in Film: The Sound of the Ungrievable*
Luca Battioni: *Enforced Sounds: Dubbing in an Italian Fascist Context*
Myles Payne: *Cittern and the Lute in Elizabethan England*
Adrian Horsewood: *"An Island entire of itself – yet a Piece of the Continent": Italian influences on the* cappella di musica *of Mdina Cathedral, Malta*

2.30: Break

Session 4: 3.00
Simon Paton: *Arkestra of Wolves: Observations into the Practicalities of the Self-Organised Large Ensemble*
Conor McElroy: *Irish rebel music 1969 – 1995: Motives and agendas*
Laurie Shore: *The Emergence and Evolution of the Piano Study in the years 1797 to 1837*
Hannah Roberts: *Clara Schumann as Pedagogue*
Bill Hunt: *Performance of the Pre-Restoration Verse Anthem*

Break

Concluding Performance: The LAB
5.15: Susannah Self: *Vivid Stream: Developing 'live' Improvisations in Installation Opera*

<div align="center">**Abstracts**</div>

Session One

Richard Stenton and Niccolò Granieri: *Fostering Microgestures in Piano Playing though the use of Scoring and Text*

When pianists practice their technique for years, they develop a set of microgestures that define their acoustic signature. Niccolò's research aim is to develop a system that takes advantage of these existing expressive gestures and enables pianists to control sound effects, broadening the sound possibilities of the acoustic piano. All of these assumptions have been deducted by studying pianists playing established pieces of repertoire or while improvising in a jazz context. But what would happen if the piece was conceived to foster these kinds of extramusical gestures from the pianists both using standard notation and text? This research aims to uncover the effects on pianistic gestural nuances of compositions aimed to make these gestures emerge and to explore the possibilities of expressive playing and composing.

Shi Ling Chin: *The Solo Violin Chaconne in the Twentieth Century*

The genre of the chaconne has undergone significant evolution since the early Baroque Period, and through what Silbiger observes to be a 'mutation' of form with Bach's D minor Chaconne they have since shifted to chiefly instrumental works. My research takes nine chaconnes written for solo violin after 1900 through a shared medium of movement and sound to restore and recreate the theatrical elements of the modern chaconne. Through a series of collaborations with dancers I will explore the meaning, role and explication of movement and form in the conceptualisation of chaconnes in twentieth-century performative terms. Within this collaborative process that allows for a juxtaposition of realities I will learn about the constitution of the chaconne genre within such a space of reciprocity.

Terezija Stimec: *Constructive or destructive? Assessing the impact of feedback in instrumental piano lessons*

Music education is based on constant critical feedback that can be negative or positive. (Atlas et al, 2004) Musical performance and excellence of students greatly depends on the way that feedback is given or used, therefore it is important to understand how students perceive and react to different types of criticism, and what the most efficient type of feedback is. This research project will focus on understanding the influences and impacts of different feedback methods among advanced piano students at conservatoire. Moreover, it will investigate how criticism affects students' motivation, creativity, and self-confidence as musicians. It will evaluate the understanding and amount of awareness of feedback from the teachers' and students' view.

Session Two

Johan Erikson: *Automatonism: Extended Modularity In Synthesis Composition*

This presentation will explain the musical possibilities of the modular synthesiser software, *Automatonism*, which was created as part of this research. It will present the idea of *extended modularity* and explain how it can be used to make music not

previously possible with modular synthesisers. Three levels of modularity will be identified that demonstrate how more complex structural compositions can be achieved. The research aims to open up a new compositional practice and a novel performance model for modular synths, where the construction of the patch becomes the focal point; thus suggesting that the process of making a piece of software or a patch is art itself.

Joe Wright: *Investigating Exploratory Sonic Play Through the Design of Digital Instruments With and For Young People on the Autistic Spectrum*

A range of musical resources and frameworks exist for work with young people on the autistic spectrum, but there is scope for the development of additional materials in support of experimental or exploratory approaches to music making. The ongoing research outlined in this presentation aims to create new musical instruments with and for young people on the autistic spectrum that encourage exploratory sonic play. Reflective practice-based research in inclusive theatre and experimental music was used to create a conceptual model that encapsulates perceived sound, expectation, curiosity and technique. Simple prototype instruments were designed that are capable of two distinct styles of behaviour: one akin to a traditional instrument, and another based on the conceived model. These two behaviour-styles were tested with a group of seven non-verbal young people on the autistic spectrum. Early responses, interim findings and future developments of the research are discussed.

Session Three

Connor Christie: *The Music of Hans Zimmer, US Military Intervention and 'the other' in Film: The Sound of the Ungrievable*

Using the 2003 war drama *Black Hawk Down* as a case study, the project will be assessing use of cultural and cinematic musical coding in modern war films out of Hollywood. The work will be asking to what extent the European Hans Zimmer adds or subtracts from the Bruckheimer/Pentagon narrative of 'civilised west' and 'savage other' with his use of musical hybridity, and if his representations of ethnic cultures are to be considered as being either inspired by or an appropriation of Somalian music. The case study is used alongside research elements taken from musicology, philosophy, film studies and global political references to attempt to establish an idea of Zimmer's sonic representation of the U.S.A's view of itself, its other, and their discord.

Luca Battioni: *Enforced Sounds: Dubbing in an Italian Fascist Context*

In Italy, after the arrival of sound cinema, dubbing gradually became the only way through which films were screened. Very often in this operation the music was also partly or completely superseded, and sometimes even new music was added. This research intends to look at moments of musical replacement as part of a wider attempt at the appropriation of foreign films that, particularly in the 1930s, represented the vast majority of productions screened in fascist Italy. Using as a framework the work of scholars such as Martine Danan (1991) and a review of original archival materials, alongside technical and economic points of view, the research aims to analyse the dubbing procedures adopted by a range of distribution companies.

Myles Payne: *Cittern and the Lute in Elizabethan England*

A study of the cittern and the lute in Elizabethan England, its use and place in society, using *The Psalmes of David* composed by Richard Allison in 1599 as a focus.

Adrian Horsewood: *"An Island entire of itself – yet a Piece of the Continent": Italian influences on the* cappella di musica *of Mdina Cathedral, Malta*

Malta's geographical location meant that for much of its history the arts flourished in a bubble, the only external influences coming from the Italian peninsula. In particular, the music at Mdina Cathedral – to this day the islands' mother church – was directed by an almost unbroken succession of Italian musicians until 1711, and the cathedral archives contain hundreds of works that were purchased in Italy and brought back to Mdina. In my research I propose to trace the origins of selected works in this archive to determine when, whence, and why they were obtained, thereby to give a more detailed account of musical and liturgical practice at Mdina Cathedral.

Session Four

Simon Paton: *Arkestra of Wolves: Observations into the Practicalities of the Self-Organised Large Ensemble*

Within the communities of do-it-yourself and self-organised art cultures, very rarely do projects exist that utilise a large portion of fellow likeminded performers. This research will be dominated around such a project I commenced in 2016 – Pack of Wolves Arkestra, which was a large ensemble put together to perform a reworking of post-punk group Black Eyes album *Cough* (Dischord Records, 2004) – where I will be assessing how an ensemble such as this could exist in a punk spirited climate as well as looking at how the members of this artificial community would take to the proposal of creating a big band from scratch. Discussions will be made on the effect of the community through the work and channelling that comrade energy on big projects such as the one that has recently been undertaken. With certain challenges and obstacles surrounding the project – such as being under rehearsed, the acceptance of a low level of commitment, something created for short term gain and the lack of opportunities to interact with the rest of the ensemble on a more intimate basis – the question of the worth and value of such project will be addressed. I will be asking if these drawbacks take away from the appeals of creating a cathartic wall of sound that can only be created with an ensemble such as this, chances to play around with instrumental colours and the privilege of performing with certain musicians that are highly regarded in their respected fields all at one time.

Conor McElroy: *Irish rebel music 1969 – 1995: Motives and agendas*

This presentation will discuss my upcoming research into Irish rebel music throughout the troubles in Northern Ireland (1969-1995). I will discuss how Irish rebel music promoted Irish nationalism and the effect that popular rebel music had on the greater political problem. The purpose of my study is to analyse the intentions of Irish rebel music using the Wolfe Tones music as a case study. The troubles were a time of great violence and sectarianism on the Isle of Ireland, especially Northern Ireland. Throughout this time, rebel music served as an outlet for musicians to voice their support for particular factions, express history in a true and emotional way and to provoke, whether that be though thought or violence.

Laurie Shore: *The Emergence and Evolution of the Piano Study in the years 1797 to 1837*

Chopin's second set of etudes (opus 25) were published in 1837. His etudes are still regarded as the pinnacle of the form, yet they arrived only 40 years after the very first simple piano exercises appeared – those by Milchmeyer in 1797. The normally accepted view is that Chopin's etudes were a genius original quantum leap. There were many piano exercises and studies published between 1797 and 1837 and I am going to examine them to see if there is any evidence that Chopin was inspired by composers that are now largely forgotten or neglected.

Hannah Roberts: *Clara Schumann as Pedagogue*

The focus of my MA dissertation is the pedagogy of Clara Schumann, where her teaching is the main stimulus and principle motivation. I will discuss the context in which Clara was teaching, drawing reference to her contemporaries, musical education and the instruments of her time.

Bill Hunt: *Performance of the Pre-Restoration Verse Anthem*

There can be few substantial areas of English musical repertoire that have been so misunderstood as the pre-Restoration verse anthem. A mere handful of pieces from its huge corpus is heard with any regularity today, preserved largely in the glutinous aspic of a 19th-century choral tradition, which betrays little if any of the Reformist fervour that inspired this remarkable and peculiarly English musical form. A fusion of secular and sacred models, born in the last decades of the 16th century, it proved rapidly successful. But was this, as even *Grove Online* seems to suggest, largely because it was easier to rehearse than full anthems in the florid old style? This is wholly to misunderstand the communicative power of the verse anthem, that attracted a host of the greatest composers of the period, from Byrd, through Bull, Weelkes, Gibbons, Tomkins and beyond. To rediscover that power, we need to identify and appreciate a rich expressive language of contemporary rhetoric, poetry and musical thought, and this is a quest that is long overdue.

Concluding Performance: The LAB

Susannah Self: *Vivid Stream: Developing 'live' Improvisations in Installation Opera*

My research focuses on how to engage with audiences in the creation of opera. As I compose my opera *Quilt Song* for The Birmingham Old Rep I have also been devising a series of installations for the opera which consist of composed soundscapes, videos and physical materials. As I developed these installations I decided that they had the potential to also become a separate entity from *Quilt Song*. They are now titled *Vivid Stream: An Installation Opera*. Here I explore new methods of interaction by 'playing' outside a theatrical context but still allow audiences to taste the 'operatic'. Having created some of the Installations, I started improvising this term in The LAB with performance artist Marina Sossi. Whilst *Vivid Stream* is designed as a 'fixed' installation, through the alchemy of our improvised performance exciting unexpected departures occur.