

**Royal Birmingham Conservatoire Doctoral Researchers'**  
**Progression Assessment Panels**

**Wednesday 19 September**  
**Workshop 2**

**10.00:** Shi Ling Chin: *Chaconne: Reimagined*

**10.30:** Daniel Tong: *'On the Road to Heiligenstadt': Kurt Schwertsik and Redemption on the Path to Beethoven's Late Style*

**11.00:** Melinda Maxwell: *Searching Oboe Character: Unlocking Sounds and Harmonic Strategies for Improvisation and Composition*

**11.30:** Bill Hunt: *In Search of the Original Performing Pitch: A Worthwhile Element of Practice-Based Musicological Research or Simply a Matter of Taste?*

**Abstracts**

Shi Ling Chin: *Chaconne: Reimagined*

This is the initial sketch of the chaconne-theatre that will later be the fruition of my project. Quoting Féral, who says that 'theatricality emerges from the fissure between the onlooker's eyes and the objects being watched', the creation and hermeneutic construction of chaconne-theatre is a process of reciprocal and inter-subjective recognition that requires *gestus* as a stimulant and vehicle. Serving as the key element to a theatrical matrix, as well as the *leitmotif* in chaconne-theatre, this presentation offers a look into the definition and development of *gestus* in my research process.

Daniel Tong: *'On the Road to Heiligenstadt': Kurt Schwertsik and Redemption on the Path to Beethoven's Late Style*

According to Julia Kristeva (1967: 36) an artistic work is 'a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another.' This paper, presented as a lecture-recital, examines the relationship between a pair of works written more than two centuries apart. Kurt Schwertsik's *Unterwegs Nach Heiligenstadt* was commissioned in 2014 as part of the 'Beethoven Plus' project, which has paired all ten Beethoven Sonatas for Piano and Violin with a new partner work for the same combination; Schwertsik chose to respond to the A Major Sonata, Op. 30 No. 1 (1802). Questions of intertextuality, both intentional and 'aleatoric... roaming freely across time' (Michael Klein, 1995) inform an understanding of both scores. Schwertsik's 'interpretation' of Op. 30 No. 1 -- a work that, considering its author, has received relatively scant critical attention -- helps us to build a partial picture of the twenty-first century Beethoven who emerges via this coupling process. A latter-day brand of Harold Bloom's (1973) theory of deliberate *misreading* is revealed, as Schwertsik re-tells the story of the work to which he is responding, not in order to escape the 'anxiety of influence' (from which safety has surely been reached at two centuries' distance) but to create a new drama with new meanings. And how is a perception and understanding of the active intertextuality and musical narrative revealed through the act of performance?

Melinda Maxwell: *Searching For Oboe Character: Unlocking Sounds and Harmonic Strategies for Improvisation and Composition*

I will review my research so far showing recent findings and future developments of oboe character. I will also show my interest in re-making material from existing pieces of music in order to generate harmonic thinking through improvisation and ultimately composition.

I have decided that a search into older oboes, the music they played and their harmonic styles, will reveal a freer oboe sound that I believe has become lost over the centuries. This is part of finding an oboe character that has meaning from the past and bringing it into the future within a contemporary setting. The Nadaswaram from southern India is centuries old and still played today. The ancient Greek Aulos is just beginning to be discovered and its sound is the oldest in the world. The Baroque oboe is from the 17<sup>th</sup> century and is the forerunner of its modern cousin. I will show developments with all three, the Aulos and Baroque oboe being in the early stages.

I will also show how reconfiguring existing oboe material can enlighten methods of interpretation and harmonic thinking. I will demonstrate this by improvising over harmonic models and stretching forms into other musical dimensions.

Bill Hunt: *In Search of the Original Performing Pitch: A Worthwhile Element of Practice-Based Musicological Research or Simply a Matter of Taste?*

New research and greater proficiency in execution over the past few decades have greatly increased familiarity with many historical instruments and voice types, and our understanding of how they were probably used. Despite this, old habits are deeply ingrained. Drawing on his experience as a participant in several concert and recording projects, William Hunt argues that the performance of a consort anthem at its 'original pitch' (as opposed to the one at which we have become used to hearing it) can have a significant influence upon our appreciation of the music. With these issues in mind, he also gives a brief survey of the consort anthems of Edmund Hooper, a neglected composer and another focus of his research, discussing how we might reconstruct the original performance of his anthem written to celebrate the accession of James I.