

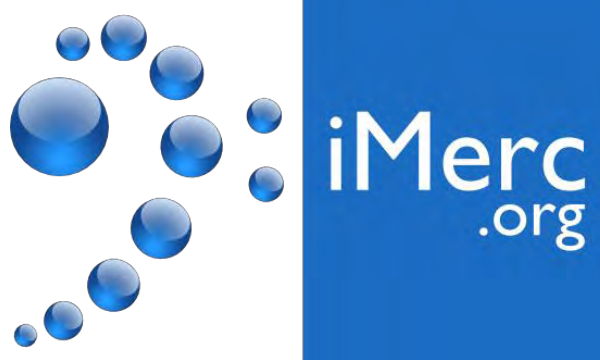
UCL iMerc Newsletter — Vol. 8, May 2024

About us

Since the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, we have been meeting regularly to share new research and insights related to diverse topics in music education, broadly conceived. We are a group of researchers at doctoral and post-doctoral levels, as well as senior researchers, with a shared curiosity and interest in advancing basic and applied research. Our monthly seminars are also designed to foster a sense of community amongst colleagues who are mainly based in the UK, mainland Europe (such as Portugal, Germany, Greece), Asia (China, including Hong Kong), Latin America and Australia. Opportunity is taken each month to update various current research projects and also to listen to the latest research from our invited speakers. If you would like to know more or to join us, please contact us.

Our upcoming research seminar is on Wednesday, 22nd May 2024, at 11 a.m. BST. It will be held hybrid on Zoom and in room 836, 8th floor, B lifts at the IOE. We are very happy to have our guest speakers, Dr Yang Yang and Dr Karen Wise, speak to us. Please join us by clicking the Zoom link [HERE](#). Everyone is welcome!

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Previous iMerc Research Seminar, April 2024



1 - Presentation cover slide presented by Zeinab El-Khateeb

Zeinab El-Khateeb (z.el-khateeb.18@ucl.ac.uk) shared her doctoral study update. The presentation was *The use of a song-based language approach for early language development*. In this presentation, Zeinab started the presentation by sharing her personal and professional experiences, which led to the rationale of the study. The study aims to examine the current claim that songs are useful tools for learning a second language, although preliminary research suggests that teachers often see themselves as very busy and do not understand why a song-based EAL approach might be fruitful nor undertake any follow-up assessment. There is a need for reform within curricula to provide teachers with critical skills, such as incorporating the use of songs within their teaching practice. At present, there is a lack of training and a lack of resources for the use of songs, and there is not any statutory requirement for such singing in the EYFS curriculum.



2 - Presentation cover slide by Kate Laurence

Kate Laurence (k.laurence@ucl.ac.uk) shared her doctoral study presentation titled, *A narrative study of veteran classroom music teachers' professional learning*. The research explores the three veteran music teachers' act of storytelling to communicate and make sense of moments and events in their careers, including the way that literary devices and metaphors potentially amplified, subjugated or obscured meaning in their narratives. The emergent data reveal the serendipitous and unplanned nature of professional learning, specifically how non-formal sites of learning might offer an alternative space for music specialist teachers to stimulate and address areas of their practice.

Music Video: Señorita (Cover) by The Harmony Chorus



3 - *Señorita (Cover)* from *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara* by The Harmony Chorus Music Video. Credits: Harmony International Limited



4 - Señorita (Cover) from Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara by The Harmony Chorus Music Video. Credits: Harmony International Limited



5 - Señorita (Cover) from Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara by The Harmony Chorus Music Video. Credits: Harmony International Limited

Señorita (Cover) from Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara by The Harmony Chorus

Shot in the captivating and picturesque Isle of Man, The Harmony Chorus, directed by our colleague Sandra Oberoi, brings you this Bollywood hit from the 2011 movie, Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara.

Watch the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wg9KB3dVsJM>

Credits:

Produced by Harmony International Limited in association with Harmony-the music school

Arranged and Directed by [@sandraoberoi](#)

Assistant Direction & Cinematography by Tiana Oberoi Soloists: Tiara Michelle Oberoi and Ryan Joseph

Music: Ebenezer Moses John

Mix, Master, CG & Video Edits: Deepak Cherian Original song by [@shankarehsaanloy8000](#)

Voices recorded at Muzico Studio

Special thanks: Visit the Isle of Man

Contact: Sandra Oberoi (sandra@harmonybangalore.com)

Concert: The Amber Trust's Annual Concert with Amber's Patron Derek Paravicini, Sunday 19 May 2024



6 - The Amber Trust's Annual Concert 2024 banner. Credits: The Amber Trust

The Amber Trust is delighted to present another afternoon of music on May 19th 2024, featuring the amazing Derek Paravicini and some of the talented young musicians supported by Amber.

Last year's event was a spectacular success as our musicians showcased music from Bach, Gershwin, Mozart, K.D Lang, and much more. The audience also participated in a lively rendition of *Fly Me to the Moon* alongside the children.

All proceeds from the concert will go to The Amber Trust, supporting blind and partially sighted children in the UK, including those with additional disabilities, to meet their musical aspirations and fulfil their potential.

For details, see <https://ambertrust.org/event/the-amber-trusts-annual-concert-with-ambers-patron-derek-paravicini-2/>

Credits: The Amber Trust

Concert: The Lord of the Strings, English Chamber Orchestra, Sunday 9 June 2024



7 - The Lord of the Strings Poster. Credits: English Chamber Orchestra, Little People Big Noise



8 - Billy's Band. Credits: English Chamber Orchestra, Little People Big Noise

Our colleague Gregory Boardman has been delivering his [Lights Camera Score](#) projects in eight schools in Calderdale, England, since November 2023. As part of the project finale, the English Chamber Orchestra will present a programme of music curated by Gregory.

Conductor Billy and his band have entertained audiences all around the globe and in his search for 'The Lord of the Strings', music-lovers of all ages will enjoy some English classics, hear chart-topping rock hits and some music from your favourite films such as *Mission Impossible*, *Skyfall*, *How to Train Your Dragon* and *Lord of the Rings*.

This unique event will see the incredible string players from the English Chamber Orchestra and conductor Billy search for one string to rule them all!

Book the ticket: <https://www.victoriatheatre.co.uk/whats-on/lord-strings>

Watch the video: <https://youtu.be/bnDU59dZVGg>

We will be able to see the finished student films from Calderdal during mid/late June.

Contact: Dr Gregory Boardman (gregory.boardman.15@ucl.ac.uk)

iMerc Research Seminar, May 2024

Guest Speaker: Dr Yang Yang

Topic: A Corpus-Based Analysis of the Nature and Development of the Discourse on Music Education Philosophy in Mainland China during 1990–2021



9 - Guest Speaker: Dr Yang Yang

Guest Speaker: Dr Yang Yang (yangyang@eduhk.hk)

Dr Yang Yang is an Assistant Professor of the Department of Cultural and Creative Arts. He acquired his bachelor's and master's degrees in music performance in China, having extensive experience in both Western classical and Chinese music as a solo singer. He was awarded a PhD in music education in 2011 by the Institute of Education, University of London. His doctoral research explored pedagogical challenges in the teaching and learning of traditional folk song performance in higher education. He has been an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Queensland. Areas of study include music performance, musicology, singing pedagogy, the psychology of music, psychoacoustic and data science.

Read Dr Yang Yang's EduHK full profile [HERE](#).

Yang's abstract:

This study critically reviews the nature and development of key features of the discourse on music education philosophy in China over the past three decades from the 1990s. The research adopted a text-mining approach to investigate this discourse in 346 Chinese academic articles across this period. Using Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) techniques in KNIME, the corpus-based text analysis yielded 685 keywords that formed six prominent topics: Aesthetics, Praxis, Chinese philosophies, Teaching and Learning, Values (of music education), and Influence factors (in music education). The noun-only co-occurrence-based topic modelling showed that the first three topics were powerful sources in shaping the landscape of MEP studies in recent Chinese literature. In contrast, Teaching and Learning, Values, and Influences provided a “playground” of competing philosophical strands. The keyword network analysis (a) raised critical concerns on translation, logic, and philosophical issues in this

developing Chinese MEP discourse, and (b) revealed that academic discourse substantially impacts national music education policymaking and its implementation. Implications of the current study are discussed in light of the methodological merits of a corpus-based critical review.

Guest Speaker: Dr Karen Wise

Topic: Understanding the journeys of adult non-singers learning to sing: A multi-method approach



10 - Guest Speaker: Dr Karen Wise

Guest Speaker: Dr Karen Wise (karen.wise@gsmd.ac.uk)

Karen Wise is a Research Fellow and Lecturer in Psychology at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, where she teaches on the postgraduate research and Music Therapy programmes. She studied music at the University of York, singing at the Royal Northern College of Music, and psychology at Wolverhampton University before undertaking her PhD in psychology at Keele University. Her research interests include musical performance, singing, and in particular, adult musical development, identity and learning – from novices and the self-proclaimed ‘non-musical’ to professionals. She has published on the psychology of singing and self-defined ‘tone deafness’, teaching adult non-singers, and the teaching and learning of creativity in classical music performance. Current projects include the evaluation of Music Therapy services, the role of auditory imagery in singing pitching, and psychological safety in elite music training. She was a founder member of the Guildhall School’s Institute for Social Impact Research in the Performing Arts. Karen was previously a Research Associate in the Centre for Musical Performance as Creative Practice at the University of Cambridge and has held psychology teaching posts at the Royal Northern College of Music and Keele University. Karen is also a classical mezzo-soprano and singing teacher.

Read Dr Karen Wise's Guildhall PURE profile [HERE](#).

Karen's abstract:

Everyday singing is commonplace, yet subject to wide individual variation in the population, both in terms of participation and skill level. Singing is shown to be beneficial for well-being and is ostensibly accessible to nearly every person; these assumptions underpin the increasing number of singing

opportunities advertised as being ‘for all’. Nevertheless, a substantial proportion of the (Western) adult population consider themselves to be ‘non-singers’ and avoid singing in all but the most private contexts, despite desiring to sing. Many of them believe they ‘can’t’ sing, reflecting the popular belief that singing is an ‘all-or-nothing’ skill dependent on inborn talent. However, singing is a complex sensorimotor skill requiring precise co-ordination of musculature as well as accurate mental representations of auditory material. These multiple challenges – encompassing identity, behaviour, beliefs/attitudes, emotions, self-concepts and skill – make the question of how a non-singer can find their singing voice both fascinating and complex. What does it mean to be a non-singer? What happens when non-singers embark on a process of learning to sing? How might they be enabled to develop as singers, through what kinds of activities or training? What changes take place, both objectively and from the aspiring singer’s perspective? What do their journeys look like, feel like, mean to those involved? In this talk, I give a broad overview of one Strand of our ‘Finding a Voice’ project, which took a multi-method approach to understanding the needs and developmental trajectories of adults taking their first steps in singing since childhood. This naturalistic training study aimed to track, from multiple perspectives, the journeys of non-singers taking their first steps in singing since childhood. As well as outlining some of the key findings, I also aim to reflect on the methodological and ethical complexities and challenges of the work.

In Conversation with Claudia Fernandez de Cañete



11 - Credits: Claudia Fernandez de Cañete



12 - Credits: Claudia Fernandez de Cañete

Claudia Fernandez de Cañete is a visiting scholar at UCL. Her research focuses on the impact of instrumental music learning and second language learning on children's well-being, language and cognitive skills. Here is the conversation with Claudia about her visit to London and beyond.

1. Nice to meet you, Claudia! Can you tell us a bit about yourself?

Sure! I am Claudia Fernandez de Cañete, and I am a third-year PhD student in Health Psychology at the Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia (UNED) in Spain. In 2021, I was awarded with a national funding called FPU ("Formación del Profesor Universitario"), which aims to introduce and lead doctoral students to start their careers at the university. Thus, from 2021 I am also an associate professor at the Developmental & Educational Psychology department of the same university. My interest in research started many years ago, but it wasn't until relatively recently that I realised my professional future could be linked to academia.

Let me share how it all began: Since I started playing the piano, I have always had a passion for music and teaching, and I was concerned that these opportunities could not be universally available within the school context. Since then, I have been working to change this situation, with the eventual aim of providing the Spanish Education Department with information about the benefits of being a musician, benefits widely studied in research and practice in recent decades. I started reading books and articles on various topics related to this, and it was during that time that my interest in this field began.

In December 2017, I attended a conference on *Performance Science*. There, the speech of Professor Williamon enlightened me: there was the field of study I had always sought, and life had shown it to me just when I was about to finish my B-Mus degree. After conversing with him, he explained about the Master's degree in Performance Science at the Royal College of Music (RCM) and since that year my interest has only grown, making my focus exclusively within this field.

Before starting my master's studies at RCM, I had the opportunity to begin my research in this area, designing an intervention for my final dissertation for the English Studies Degree. This intervention with children aimed to explore the impact of the implementation of a musical methodology versus a gamification methodology in the teaching of English as a second language, including both musicians and non-musicians as the sample of a quasi-experimental study.

I got accepted into the master's in performance science, and thanks to receiving a 30,000€ award from the Fundación Musical de Málaga (for having the best academic record in my B-Mus degree), I was able to finance my master's studies and living costs for two years in London.

My experience during my master's kept me up-to-date with the latest research outcomes. We had some of the best researchers in the field as professors who carefully followed and revised our research interests as their peers, with a challenging level of work and refinement.

My master's final dissertation aimed to shed light on the type and nature of the impact that students' engagement with piano learning could have on their psychological well-being. To do so, we designed research with 5 case studies of 8-year-old children who were offered to receive 3 months of free piano lessons. Children and their parents were interviewed before the lessons started and when the lessons concluded with a focus on their children's well-being and engagement with their piano learning. The results were remarkable, as we found common well-being benefits in those children highly engaged with piano lessons compared to those who were not that engaged. Some of these benefits were better managing of their free time, an increased interest in non-musical activities such as reading or sports, and enhanced self-esteem.

"My experience during my master's kept me up-to-date with the latest research outcomes. We had some of the best researchers in the field as professors who carefully followed and revised our research interests as their peers, with a challenging level of work and refinement."

2. What brings you to the IOE?

During my master's readings, and even before that, Professor Graham Welch's work was always around. I really admire his work and research, and since I started my doctoral studies, I've had him in mind for a potential doctoral stay. So, last summer, when I emailed him with this proposal, he was most kind and seemed to be very enthusiastic with my thesis work, accepting my proposal.

3. What is your doctoral thesis about?

My research focuses on the impact of instrumental music learning and second language learning on children's well-being, language and cognitive skills. Something particular in my research is considering children's engagement with the activity (music or English lessons) as a mediating/controlled variable in the analysis. With this purpose, we designed an intervention with 72 eight-year-old participants, who were randomly assigned to one of five groups: individual piano lessons, group music instrumental lessons, individual English lessons, group English lessons and a control group. Students completed a series of standardised tests before and after the lessons, which took place for a whole academic year. I also conducted some interviews regarding the students' well-being before and after the intervention, both with parents and students. I prefer not to share the results until the articles are published, but I dare to say we found very interesting outcomes.

..."I recall myself happily going to give music and English lessons every afternoon with an 8-month pregnant belly."

4. What do you enjoy the most in your doctoral study?

To be honest, the aspect of my work that I enjoyed the most was designing and conducting interventions, commonly known as "fieldwork". I was also pregnant with my second child the year of my thesis intervention, and I recall myself happily going to give music and English lessons every afternoon with an 8-month pregnant belly. Now that I'm more focused on academic pursuits (writing articles), I find myself missing that hands-on experience. My mind is constantly generating new scenarios and research questions for future studies.

5. How do you enjoy London?

A lot! The two years I lived in London during my master's studies were some of the best of my life. I love the city for its beauty, culture, and the academic world in my field, which allows for interest sharing or get-togethers. I'm sure this might have been my dream city if the weather had been better. As this is not the case, I'd rather live in my lovely Malaga and come back from time to time.

6. What are your future aspirations?

I'm still not entirely sure what path to take after completing my PhD. I like academia, but I also have aspirations as an entrepreneur in the music world. What I do know for certain is that I'll pursue what I've always wanted: making music education accessible to students at the school level. For now, I plan to do this within academia by offering authentic insights into the true impact of music and second language learning on children's development and well-being. Perhaps in a few years, I'll establish a small company to provide music training services to schools in Malaga, with the unique feature of incorporating a second language to teach music. This, of course, will depend on the outcomes of my thesis.

Upcoming Research Seminar

Please mark your calendars for our next research seminar, which will be held in room 936 at the IOE and on Zoom on Wednesday, 3rd July 2024, at 11 am BST. More details soon! If you would like to share your work with us, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Contact Us

Visit us on the website at <http://www.imerc.org>

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