

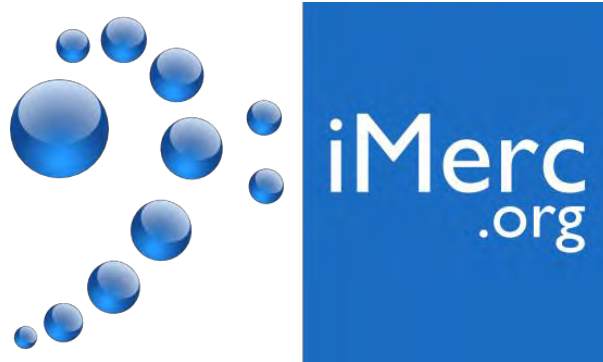
UCL iMerc Newsletter — Vol. 10, September 2024

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, 2nd October 2024, at 11 a.m. BST. It will be held hybrid on Zoom and in room 938 at the UCL Institute of Education (IoE). We are thrilled to welcome Dr Melissa Brunkan (University of Oregon), Lindsey Fillingham (Guildhall School of Music & Drama) and Dr Simon Holland (Open University) as our guest speakers. Please join us by clicking the Zoom link [HERE](#). Everyone is welcome!

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Previous iMerc Research Seminar, July 2024



1 - Presentation cover slides by Dr Monica Esslin-Peard and Samuel D Loveless.

Dr Monica Esslin-Peard (mep1961@liverpool.ac.uk) and Samuel D Loveless (samueldloveless@gmail.com) shared their recent project, presentation titled, "*I want to break free: challenging the hegemony of traditional composition through improvisation, performance, collaboration and sound installation*". This study evaluates the responses of music teachers, musicians, students, and young people to a 90-minute immersive sound installation. It explores how participants step away from traditional composition and performance techniques to engage with sound art. Thematic analysis of video recordings and workshop feedback reveals varying confidence levels among participants, but highlights the accessibility of sound installations, especially for neurodiverse individuals or those with learning challenges in traditional music settings. The study suggests that introducing sound art in schools could inspire musical interest and calls for more training for music educators to adopt these inclusive approaches, benefiting both students and the wider community.



2 - Cover slide by Claudia Fernández de Cañete

Claudia Fernández de Cañete (cfernandezdecanete@psi.uned.es) – a visiting researcher student – shared her doctoral research presentation titled, "*The impact of music instrumental training or second language learning as extracurricular activities on children's cognitive development and academic abilities*", supervised by Dr Pastora Martínez Castilla in Spain. This presentation reported aspects of a randomised controlled study examining the cognitive effects of extracurricular English lessons and musical instrument training on Year 4 children in Spain over seven months. Seventy children were randomly divided into Music, English, and Control groups, with further division into individual or small-group instruction. The study measured intelligence, auditory working memory, short-term memory, and academic abilities before and after the intervention, also controlling for

personality and motivation. Results showed that children in the English group had significantly greater improvements in auditory working memory compared to the Music and Control groups, with a large effect size, while no other notable differences were observed among the groups.



3 - Cover slide by Luna Xinlu Zheng

Luna Xinlu Zheng (luna.xinlu.zheng@ucl.ac.uk) shared her study, "*Conducting digitally-facilitated life history interviews: processes and reflections*". The presentation outlined the processes and reflections from her PhD research project, a life history study exploring the educational and professional experiences of female composers, producers, and conductors across six countries and three generations. Luna focuses on adapting traditional life history methods to a digitally-facilitated research design. She introduced the research context and adjustments made to the methodology. It highlights her experiences conducting remote life history interviews, including learning technical skills, digital sampling techniques, and using digital communication to build collaborative relationships with participants.

Call for Participation: Environmental sustainability practices in music education hubs and services

The national music subject association 'Music Mark' has commissioned UCL to undertake research into environmental sustainability practices in music education hubs and music services across the UK. The project is led by Dr Ross Purves, Associate Professor for Music Education at UCL's Institute of Education, alongside his colleague Emma Arnott.

The research will help to establish sustainability-related activity already happening, and highlight any barriers or limitations to music hubs, services and their partners in developing further their engagement in this area. It will also identify examples of good practice that can be shared with the wider music education community.

[Ross and Emma have launched an online survey to form part of this research.](#) We'd like to invite anyone within the UK who works with, or for, a music service or hub to complete the survey, as well as anyone who works for partner organisations that work with services/hubs to fund or deliver music services. The survey can also be completed by anyone who works for an organisation which makes use of the services of a music hub or service, for instance schools and colleges.

The questionnaire should take around 15 minutes to complete and will remain open until Monday 30th September. The survey can be completed entirely anonymously and has full ethical approval from the Institute of Education Research Ethics Committee. You can get in touch with Ross with any questions at r.purves@ucl.ac.uk. Thank you very much for considering taking part!

[Click here to complete the survey.](#)

Call for Research Summaries: The British Voice Association

[The British Voice Association](#) (BVA) will be creating a space on their new website for 'Research Summaries'. If you would like your research to be posted there, please send a summary of your research (approx 500 words), a photo of yourself and a short biography to Rebecca Moseley-Morgan, Chair of Education, BVA.

Contact: administrator@britishvoiceassociation.org.uk

Concert: The Four Seasons: Piazzolla and Richter



4 - Poster: *The Four Seasons: Piazzolla and Richter*, English Chamber Orchestra. Credit: Dr Gregory Boardman

Join the English Chamber Orchestra on the 30th of September for an unmissable evening of exciting live contemporary music guiding you through Max Richter's reimagining of Vivaldi's dramatic 'Four Seasons' and Astor Piazzolla's vibrant tango-infused 'Four Seasons of Buenos Aires'. Experience the beauty and energy of the seasons like never before. Stir your emotions with their vitality as we move from summer to autumn and join us for this extraordinary musical journey.

[The Four Seasons: Piazzolla and Richter | Cadogan Hall](#)

English Chamber Orchestra

Monday 30 September 2024, 19:30

Our colleague Dr Gregory Boardman (gregory.boardman.15@ucl.ac.uk) is continuing his work with the English Chamber Orchestra. He has secured a special discount code—ECOFIVE—that offers £5 off tickets for those interested in attending. Just click the link above and enter the code at checkout. Don't miss this opportunity!

Music Video: Testify to Love



5 - Testify to Love Music Video. Photo Credit: Sandra Oberoi



6 - Testify to Love Music Video (2). Photo Credit: Sandra Oberoi

Exciting news from The Harmony Chorus! Under the direction of Sandra Oberoi (sandra@harmonybangalore.com), the choir performs a fresh arrangement of "Testify to Love", one of the most beloved and uplifting songs by the award-winning American CCM band, Avalon. Don't miss this inspiring performance!

Watch the video: [Testify to Love, The Harmony Chorus](#)

Conference Highlights: The 36th ISME World Conference and Research Commission



7 - ISME Research Commission Seminar 2024: Local lake in Jyväskylä, Finland in the city where the seminar took place .
Photo credit: Professor Graham Welch



8 - ISME Research Commissioners 2024: Professor Graham Welch, Professor Suvi Saarikallio (host), and Professor Graça Boal Palheiros meeting up before the evening's ISME Research Commission. Photo credit: Professor Graham Welch



9 - ISME Research Commissioners 2024: Dr Regina Saltari presented online. Photo credit: Professor Graham Welch



10 - The Harmony Chorus and Sandra Oberoi performing at the main ISME' 24 conference in Helsinki. Photo credit: Sandra Oberoi



11 - The Harmony Chorus and Sandra Oberoi performing at ISME' 24 (2). Photo credit: Sandra Oberoi



12 - The Harmony Chorus with Jacob performing at ISME' 24 Photo credit: Sandra Oberoi

Sandra Oberoi (sandra@harmonybangalore.com)

Write up on The Harmony Chorus activities:

27 young choristers, between the ages of 9 to 21 years-old, traveled from Bangalore, India as part of The Harmony Chorus, directed by Sandra Oberoi, to sing at [the 36th ISME World Conference](#) at Musiikkitalo in Helsinki, Finland in July 2024. One among nine groups chosen from several entries around the world, their eclectic program included favourites from Mozart to jazz a cappella, Cuban music to Bollywood hits. They received a standing ovation from a packed audience, that included ISME members, the ISME Board and Dean of Sibelius University, Emilie Gardberg. The group also participated in workshops organised by the ISME Advocacy Committee, besides attending a concert by Jacob Collier and enjoying a close interaction with him when he shared about his music and left them with a word of encouragement.

Several UCL colleagues recently presented their research on diverse topics related to music education:

Sandra Oberoi (sandra@harmonybangalore.com) and Stephanie Hoi-Ying Chan (stephanie-chan@ucl.ac.uk) presented their ongoing research with Dr Ross Purves on "*The Influence of the British Empire on Choral Music Education in India and Hong Kong: Then and Now.*" Stephanie also shared her doctoral research, titled "*Fostering a sense of national identity through school music education: A content analysis of Hong Kong music textbooks*", while Sandra delivered a joint talk with keynote speaker André de Quadros on "*Inclusivity, Cultural Tension, and Identity in Indian Music Education and Practice.*" Dr Cindy Yee-Ni Tse (yee.tse.15@alumni.ucl.ac.uk) presented on her recently completed doctoral study of instrumental learning in Hong Kong. Dr Christopher Dalladay (cdalladay@aol.com) presented his research on "*The Personal and Professional Identity of Secondary Classroom Music Teachers in England*". Jiayi Wang (jiayi-wang@ucl.ac.uk) showcased her doctoral poster presentation titled "*The Lived Experience of Performance-Related Health and Wellbeing Among Flautists*", and Luna Xinlu Zheng (luna.xinlu.zheng@ucl.ac.uk) presented her work, "*Surpassing Intersectional Experiences to Sustain Compassion for All: How Eminent Female Musicians Developed Leadership Identities in Music Composition and Conducting*".



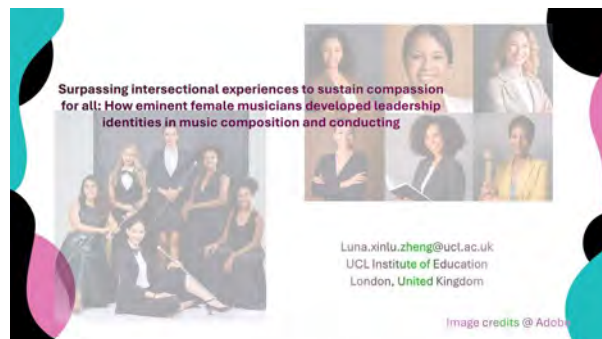
13 - Presentation by Sandra Oberoi and Stephanie Hoi-Ying Chan. Photo credit: Sandra Oberoi



14 - From Left to Right: Stephanie Hoi-Ying Chan, Sandra Oberoi and Jiayi Wang. Photo credit: Sandra Oberoi



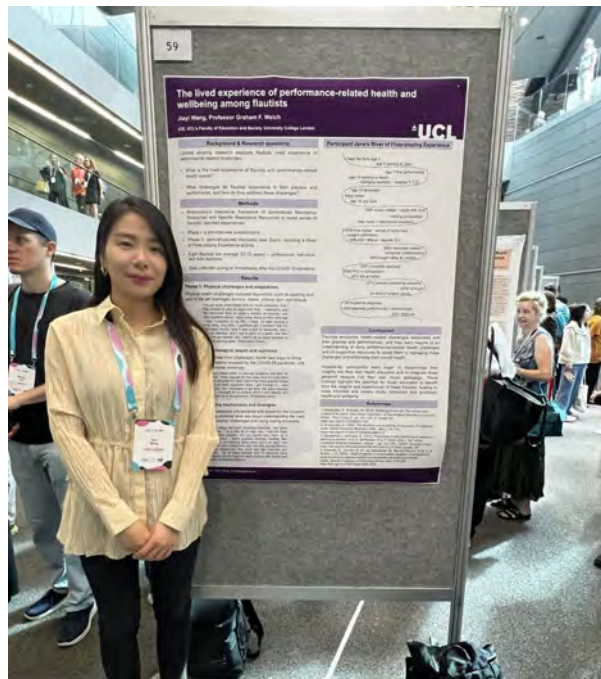
15 - From Left to Right: Dr Cindy Yee-Ni Tse, Stephanie Hoi-Ying Chan, Jiayi Wang and Luna Xinlu Zheng. Photo credit: Stephanie Hoi-Ying Chan



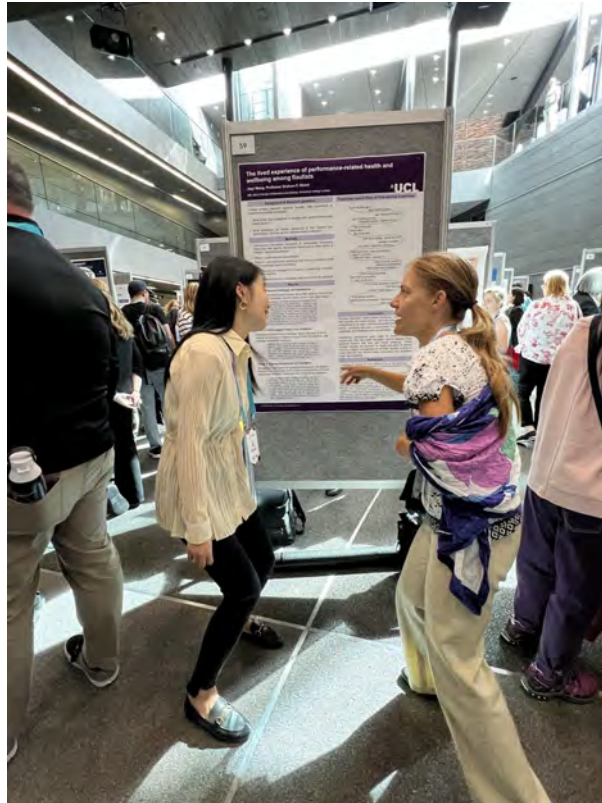
16 - Presentation cover by Luna Xinlu Zheng. Photo credit: Luna Xinlu Zheng



17 - Jiayi Wang (L) and Stephanie Hoi-Ying Chan (R). Photo credit: Stephanie Hoi-Ying Chan



18 - Jiayi Wang and her poster presentation. Photo credit: Jiayi Wang



19 - Jiayi Wang interacting with delegate. Photo credit: Jiayi Wang



20 - Presentation by Stephanie Hoi-Ying Chan. Photo credit: Stephanie Hoi-Ying Chan



21 - From Left to Right: Dr Yang Yang, Stephanie Hoi-Ying Chan and Sandra Oberoi. Photo credit: Stephanie Hoi-Ying Chan



22 - Performance at ISME Conference 2024. Photo credit: Stephanie Hoi-Ying Chan



23 - Dr Christopher Dalladay (L) and Stephanie Hoi-Ying Chan (R). Photo credit: Stephanie Hoi-Ying Chan



24 - Presentation by Dr Christopher Dalladay. Photo credit: Stephanie Hoi-Ying Chan



25 - Presentation by Stephanie Hoi-Ying Chan. Photo credit: Sandra Oberoi

Conference highlights: The 15th Congress of PEVOC



26 - Dr Rebecca Moseley'Morgan presenting findings from her recently submitted thesis. Photo credit: Dr Rebecca Moseley'Morgan



Dr. Rebecca Moseley-Morgan (inspectorvoice@gmail.com)

It is impossible to summarise PanEuropean Voice Conference (PEVoC) 2024 in one article. The [PEVoC Conference](#) was hosted in the beautiful city of Santander, Spain. The co-chairs of PEVoC organizing committee were Alfonso Barragán and Filipa Lă, who led the Spanish team hosting this year's conference. President, Markus Hess and PEVoC founder Johan Sundberg from PEVoC advisory committee were both present and doing sterling work. There were 500 delegates, voice specialists from every conceivable corner of the voice world sharing a treasure-trove of information. The warmth and generosity of spirit from all the delegates sharing their knowledge and passion about voice was awe-inspiring.

This year PEVoC had concerts, workshops, exchange of results from multidisciplinary research, round table, discussions, and expert panels, covering all fields of voice work including singing pedagogy, psychology, physiotherapy, neuroscience, children and voice, transgender voices, age and voice, swallowing, prevention, speech therapy, voice phonosurgery, dentistry, biomechanics, technologies and voice, articulation, acoustics, resonance, linguistics, movement and voice and pharmacology and voice.

I had the immense pleasure of giving five presentations on my work on the functionality of the mature female voice. Other UK delegates included Jenevora Williams and Stephen King who also gave several presentations on their vocal rehabilitation work including an informative workshop entitled 'First do no harm'. David Howard presented the latest developments of his Vocal Tract Organ. Jenna Brown presented her work on the use of imagery in vocal pedagogy and voice science. Philip Salmon presented on the use of singing as a tool for learning English as a second language.

I had the opportunity to meet up with friends I had made whilst studying previously on Johan Sundberg's Summer School. These included Tiago Cruz, Martina Prevejšek and Silvia Capobianco. Tiago had completed his PhD this year and he presented A Systematic Performance Evaluation of AI Powered Voice Separation Technologies. Martina gave a lovely relaxing workshop on body awareness, relaxation and stretching exercises which she uses in a voice lesson. Silvia spoke about dysarthria, dysphagia and patients suffering from neurodegenerative diseases. She also participated in a fascinating workshop with Jacob Lieberman. Silvia scoped a volunteer whilst Jacob was manipulating his larynx.

New to the conference this year was the addition of the Voice Lab where professionals from different voice fields were able to play with voices using different devices and voice analysis software. This was my favourite space and I have a lovely time singing with a bucket on my head whilst Alfonso Barragán attempted to distort my auditory feedback loop.

But to conclude, PEVoC 24 offered the most wonderful opportunity not only to talk about voice science, but to present new ideas without fear of being judged and receive feedback from the world's leading voice experts, encompassed in a circle of friendship, fraternity and affection.

[iMerc Research Seminar, October 2024](#)

Guest Speaker: Dr Melissa C. Brunkan



28 - Guest Speaker: Dr Melissa C. Brunkan. Photo Credit: Dr Melissa C. Brunkan

Dr Melissa C. Brunkan (mbrunkan@uoregon.edu) is an Associate Professor and Head of Music Education at the University of Oregon, and currently teaches music education courses and conducts the University Singers. An active clinician, conductor and vocal pedagogue, she previously taught at Louisiana State University. Prior to her work at the university level, she taught students from pre-K through adulthood in public and private schools. Other experience includes vocal performance, private voice pedagogy consultation, conducting, and workshop facilitation.

Her primary research interests include the impact of singing on health, lifespan voice pedagogy, medical conditions affecting the voice, and conductor gesture and behaviors. She has presented her research at several national and international venues including the International Society for Music Education, National Association for Music Education, Pan American Vocology Association, International Seminar on Research in Music Education, The Clifford K. Madsen International Symposium on Research in Music Behavior, and the Symposium for Research in Choral Singing. Brunkan has published articles in various journals including *Journal of Research in Music Education*, *International Journal of Research in Choral Singing*, *Journal of Music Teacher Education*, *Journal of Voice*, *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, and *The International Journal of Music Education: Research*. She has held leadership roles in professional organizations such as the American Choral Directors' Association and the VoiceCare Network, serves on the editorial board of the *International Journal of Research in Choral Singing*, and has served as an invited reviewer with *Journal of Voice* and the *International Journal of Music Education*.

Melissa's abstract:

Music teachers utilize both verbal and nonverbal communication in the classroom. Nonverbal behaviors include elements such as facial expression, body movements, and use of proximity (Mehrabian, 2017) whereas verbal behaviors have been more extensively studied. The purpose of this study was to examine singers' sung responses to and perceptions of congruent and incongruent verbal and nonverbal instructions. Research questions included: (1) To what extent do singers perform dynamics differently when provided with verbal instructions or conducting gestures?, (2) when presented with incongruent messages, will singers respond better to verbal instructions or conducting gestures?, and (3) what do participant comments indicate about perceptions of the task? Choirs ($N = 4$) sang while watching a stimulus video of a conductor showing two different conducting gestures (crescendo for the first four measures followed by a decrescendo for the last four measures, or the reverse) while singing a familiar tune (Long, Long Ago). In one condition, videos included

written/spoken instructions for singers to crescendo then decrescendo at the same time as the conductor (a congruent message). In the other condition, written/spoken instructions were the opposite (an incongruent message). We subsequently analyzed the sound pressure level (dB SPL) at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of the sung excerpt. Results indicated that the choirs tended to follow the verbal instructions, getting louder when instructed to crescendo and getting quieter when instructed to decrescendo. However, the average dynamic contrast was significantly greater during the congruent conditions than during the incongruent conditions (7.32 dB SPL to 4.71 dB SPL). This finding seemed to indicate that congruent gestures led to a clearer dynamic message to the choir.

Guest speaker: Lindsey Fillingham

Topic: Becoming a collaborative classical improviser: An autoethnographic perspective



29 - Guest speaker: Lindsey Fillingham. Photo Credit: Lindsey Fillingham

Lindsey Fillingham (lindsey.fillingham@stu.gsmd.ac.uk) (flautist) is a completing doctoral student at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, carrying out performance-based research on collaborative classical improvisation. Lindsey co-founded improvising ensemble Ad-Lib, who have performed in several commissions for the Barbican and Guildhall, and was a member of soundSPARK wind quartet and Ashdown Duo, performing for Musicians in Hospitals and Care. She has lead improvisation workshops at the University of Cape Town and City Literary Institute. Conference presentations include the European Platform for Artistic Research in Music (2024; 2021), RNCM's Hub for Artistic Research in Performance and Guildhall's Reflective Conservatoire. Lindsey studied performance in Cape Town (UCT), Stockholm (KMH) and Manchester (RNCM). She has played with the likes of the Hallé, the Cape Philharmonic, and Orchestra of the Swan in venues including the Royal Albert and Bridgewater Halls and St Martin-in-the-Fields. Based in Lancashire (UK), Lindsey particularly enjoys improvising new songs with her two young daughters.

Lindsey's abstract:

Collaborative improvisation in Western classical music is an under-researched but growing practice. Group improvisation is regarded by improvisers in other genres as crucial to the development of improvisational skills. Several research papers have advocated for improvisation training in the conservatoire, citing potential benefits for musicians and audiences. What does it mean to be a collaborative classical improviser?

As a classically-trained flautist and artist-researcher, I have rehearsed and performed in two conservatoire-based improvising ensembles over the course of my doctoral studies. I have utilized an autoethnographic approach, drawing on group video recall discussions and my practice diaries, to reflect on the development of our collaborative improvisation skills. Informal learning experiences, akin to 'jam sessions,' have been crucial in shaping our approach, allowing for the acceptance of "wrong notes" and fostering a more open, less perfectionist attitude. Interestingly, these "wrong notes" have often led to what we regard as our best playing and even moments of group flow.

In this presentation, I will outline the various forms, styles and techniques we have used in our practice. I will also present a framework of actions and decisions that we have made, both planned and spontaneous, and argue for the importance of the autonomy and creativity improvisation can offer to classical music students. I will demonstrate my findings with extracts of our improvisations.

I aim to provide educators and performers with a deeper understanding of the rewards and challenges associated with collaborative improvisation in classical music, as well as practical insight and techniques to apply.

Guest Speaker: Dr Simon Holland

Topic: Technologies for Musical Inclusion



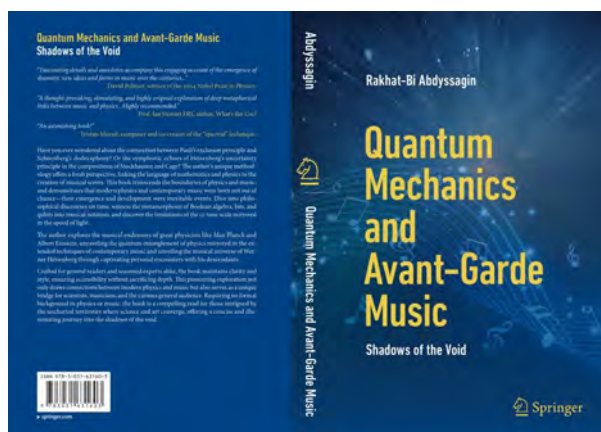
Dr Simon Holland (s.holland@open.ac.uk) is the founder and director of the Music Computing Lab, a research group at the Open University. His research focuses on Music Computing, Human Computer Interaction, and Digital Health. He has served as PI or Co-I on ten external research grants, totalling nearly £4.5 million, including the EPSRC CHIME Network on Music and Human Computer Interaction (HCI), and the EU Polifonia Project. He has co-edited two books on Music and HCI and was co-author of Human Computer Interaction— for many years the worldwide best seller in HCI. He has devised numerous innovative human-centred technologies including Harmony Space, the Haptic Bracelets, the Audio GPS, and Direct Combination.

Simon's Abstract:

We present two strands of research, both aimed to enhance musical inclusion. The first, focused on rhythm, has particular relevance to d/Deaf and deafblind people, but has diverse applications for non-disabled people. This strand uses the Haptic Bracelets — motion-sensing wireless vibrotactile bracelets attachable to each wrist and ankle. Haptic guidance can be transmitted to each limb in real-time, from a live player also wearing bracelets, or from a sequencer, or musical co-ordinator. The bracelets can be used to guide users in playing rhythmic patterns that require multi-limb coordination; or to guide and co-ordinate a group of players each playing their own rhythm in synchrony. Work with a Samba band, and with profoundly Deaf Music educator Sean Chandler is outlined.

The second strand, focused on harmony, enables users who do not read music or play an instrument to compose harmonic sequences and perform live, or to engage in detailed and insightful harmonic analysis. This strand of research uses Harmony Space, versions of which can be controlled using dance mats, games controllers, laptops or guitars. In a recent study, 12-year-old children at an Italian secondary school with essentially no previous musical training used Harmony Space to compose musically meaningful chord sequences and perform them collectively via dance mats and game controllers, after a one-hour lesson. This work was not designed with physical disability in mind. However, children and music teaching staff noted that given the nature of the system, people with physical disabilities would be at no disadvantage in performance and composition activities, with clear potential for inclusion and integration. We are exploring these ideas with disabled musicians at Drake Music Scotland. Separately, in collaboration with a guitarist who lost a hand in a sailing accident, we have developed a prototype pluckable version of Harmony Space, allowing one handed players to perform intricate jazz chord sequences or work on their own compositions.

Book Launch Invitation: Quantum Mechanics and Avant-Garde Music: Shadows of the Void



31 - Book cover by Rakhat-Bi Abdysagyn

Book Launch Invitation: Quantum Mechanics and Avant-Garde Music: Shadows of the Void

We are excited to announce the release of *Mechanics and Avant-Garde Music: Shadows of the Void*, the newly published book by Rakhat-Bi Abdysagyn (rahatbiabd@mail.ru) (Springer Nature).

Join us in celebrating this remarkable work at the **Book Launch Party**:

Date: 4 November 2024

Time: 17:00 - 19:00

Venue: Room 642 (Core B), IOE

Books will be available for preorder or purchase from:

[Blackwells](#) | [Waterstones](#) | [Amazon](#)

We look forward to seeing you there!

Contact: eunice.tang@ucl.ac.uk

Congratulations!



32 - Dr Can Lu's doctorate graduation photo. Photo credit: Can Lu

Join us in congratulating Dr Can Lu (can.lu.16@alumni.ucl.ac.uk), under the supervision of Professor Graham Welch, on reaching this incredible milestone! Her doctoral thesis is titled *Primary School Children's Singing Behaviour in Hunan Province, China*. This special moment was captured at the IOE on 4th September, 2024.

Upcoming iMerc Research Seminar

Please note that our next research seminar will be held on Wednesday, 6th November 2024, 11-1pm UK Time in room 938 at the IOE and on Zoom. If you would like to share your work with us, please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you very much!

Contact Us

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