

UCL iMerc Newsletter — Vol. 11, October 2024

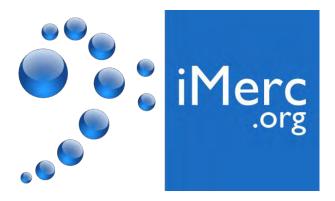
About us

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 will take place on Wednesday, 6th November 2024, 11 am GMT via Zoom only, due to a potential tube strike. We are thrilled to welcome Emeritus Professor Dr Stephen Clift (Canterbury Christ Church University), Mutong Shao (RCM), and Professor Suvi Saarikallio (University of Jyväskylä) as our speakers. Please join us by clicking the Zoom link HERE¹. Everyone is welcome!

¹https://ucl.zoom.us/j/93906876758

In This Issue



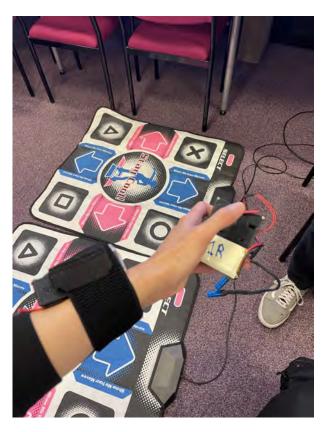
- Previous iMerc Research Seminar, September 2024
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Previous iMerc Research Seminar, September 2024





2 - Harmony Space for Harmony. From Left to Right: Eunice Tang, Jiayi Wang and Dan Wang. Photo Credit: Dr Simon Holland and Eunice Tang



3 - Haptic Bracelets for Rhythm. Photo credit: Dr Simon Holland and Eunice Tang



4 - Harmony Space for Harmony. Dr Simon Holland, Jiayi Wang and Sandra Oberoi. Photo credit: Dr Simon Holland and Eunice Tang



5 - Harmony Space for Harmony. Photo Credit: Dr Simon Holland and Eunice Tang



6 - Haptic Bracelets for Rhythm. Photo credit: Dr Simon Holland and Eunice Tang



7 - Dr Simon Holland (L) and Nicholas Canny (R). Photo Credit: Dr Simon Holland, Nicholas Canny and Eunice Tang

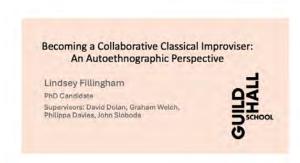


8 - Presentation slide by Dr Melissa C. Brunkan. Credit: Melissa C. Brunkan.

Dr Melissa C Brunkan: Singers' Responses to Congruent and Incongruent Verbal and Nonverbal Instructions

Dr Melissa C Brunkan (mbrunkan@uoregon.edu²) from the University of Oregon presented her study on how singers respond to verbal and nonverbal instructions, focusing on congruent versus incongruent messages. The research involved four choirs singing to a video conductor providing different conducting gestures paired with either matching (congruent) or opposite (incongruent) verbal instructions. The study measured the sound pressure levels (dB SPL) to assess dynamic changes. Results showed that singers generally followed verbal instructions but achieved greater dynamic contrast when verbal and nonverbal cues were congruent. This highlights the importance of aligning verbal and nonverbal communication for clearer musical direction.

²mailto:mbrunkan@uoregon.edu



9 - Presentation slide by Lindsey Fillingham. Credit: Lindsey Fillingham.

Lindsey Fillingham: Becoming a Collaborative Classical Improviser: An autoethnographic perspective

Lindsey Fillingham (lindsey.fillingham@stu.gsmd.ac.uk³) from the Guildhall School of Music & Drama explored the development of collaborative improvisation skills in Western classical music through an autoethnographic lens. Drawing from her experiences as a classically-trained flautist in conservatoire-based improvising ensembles, Fillingham highlighted the importance of informal learning, such as "jam sessions", in fostering a more open and creative approach to music. She emphasised that embracing "wrong notes" often leads to the best performances and moments of group flow. Her presentation detailed various improvisation techniques and styles, advocating for greater autonomy and creativity in classical music education. She provided practical insights and demonstrated her findings with performance extracts, offering valuable perspectives for educators and performers.



10 - Presentation slide by Dr Simon Holland and Nicholas Canny. Credit: Dr Simon Holland and Nicholas Canny

Dr Simon Holland and Nicholas Canny: Technologies for Musical Inclusion

Dr Simon Holland (s.holland@open.ac.uk⁴) and Nicholas Canny (nicholas.canny@open.ac.uk⁵) from the Open University presented their research on enhancing musical inclusion through innovative technologies. They discussed two main projects: The first project is Haptic Bracelets for Rhythm: These motion-sensing vibrotactile bracelets, attachable to wrists and ankles, are designed to aid d/Deaf and deafblind individuals in rhythmically complex music. They provide real-time haptic guidance from a live player or a sequencer, facilitating multi-limb coordination and group synchrony. Dr. Holland highlighted successful implementations with a Samba band and collaboration with profoundly Deaf music educator Sean Chandler. The second project is about Harmony Space for

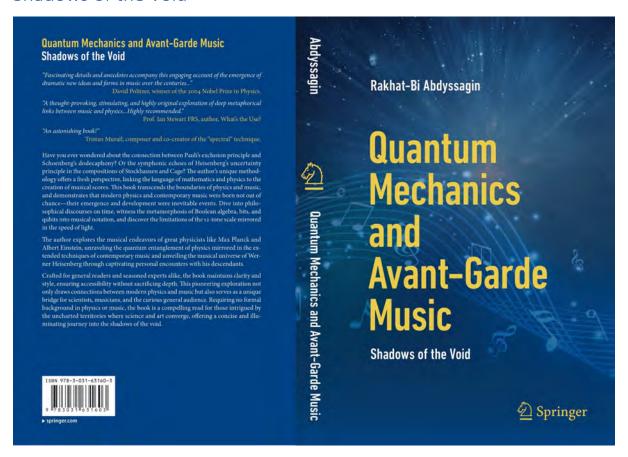
³https://lindsey.fillingham@stu.gsmd.ac.uk/

⁴mailto:s.holland@open.ac.uk

⁵mailto:nicholas.canny@open.ac.uk

Harmony. This tool enables individuals without musical training to compose and perform harmonic sequences. Usable via dance mats, game controllers, laptops, or guitars, Harmony Space proved effective in a study with Italian schoolchildren, who composed and performed after just an hour of instruction. While not specifically designed for physical disabilities, it offers inclusive potential, confirmed through exploration with disabled musicians at Drake Music Scotland and the development of a prototype for one-handed guitarists. Their work showcases the transformative impact of these technologies in promoting musical inclusion across diverse populations.

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



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 Abdyssaign (rahatbiabd@mail.ru⁶) (Springer Nature).

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

Date: Monday, 4th November 2024

Time: 17:00 - 18:00

Venue: Room 642 (Core B), IOE

You may also join us online by clicking the Zoom link here:

⁶mailto:rahatbiabd@mail.ru

https://ucl.zoom.us/j/93508390323

Please register via Eventbrite HERE⁷.

Books will be available for preorder or purchase from:

Blackwells⁸ | Waterstones⁹ | Amazon¹⁰

We look forward to seeing you there!

Contact: eunice.tang@ucl.ac.uk11

Trinity Laban Postgraduate Research in Music Education Symposium Symposium 2024



Trinity Laban's Department of Music Education is pleased to host their fifth annual Postgraduate Research in Music Education Symposium on Friday, 1st November 2024, 10 am - 5 pm GMT. This one-day online event is designed to offer a forum for current or recent Masters or Doctoral Graduates across music education and community music to present their dissertation or personal project studies in a collegiate and supportive environment.

For details, please read https://www.trinitylaban.ac.uk/whats-on/postgraduate-research-in-music-education-symposium/.

⁷https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/book-launch-invitation-quantum-mechanics-and-avant-garde-music-shadows-of-the-void-tickets-1044338142497

⁸https://blackwells.co.uk/bookshop/product/Quantum-Mechanics-and-Avant-Garde-Music-by-Rakhat-Bi-Abdyssagin/9783031631603

 $^{{}^{9}\}underline{https://www.waterstones.com/book/quantum-mechanics-and-avant-garde-music/rakhat-bi-abdyssagin/9783031631603}$

¹⁰https://www.amazon.com/Quantum-Mechanics-Avant-Garde-Music-Shadows/dp/3031631609

¹¹mailto:eunice.tang@ucl.ac.uk

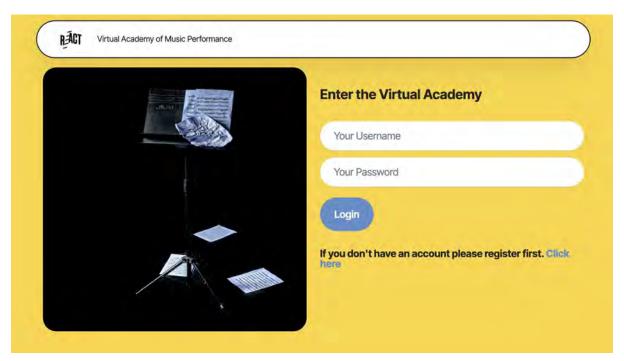
Singing for Health Research Project: 2023-25



A series of webinars studying the effect that singing has on health and wellbeing, informed by the latest research. This collaborative enterprise between the Singing for Health Network¹², the International Centre for Community Music¹³, and the Royal College of Music¹⁴, has sought to bring together musicians, researchers and health professionals from across the globe. The first event is Thursday, 7th November 2024, on singing and mental health.

For details, please read https://www.singingforhealthnetwork.co.uk/sh-research-project

REACT Consortium: Virtual Academy of Music Performance and Toolkit



This is the information about the two new outputs produced by the REACT Consortium: Virtual Academy of Music Performance and Toolkit.

The Virtual Academy of Musical Performance

¹²http://singingforhealthnetwork.co.uk/

¹³https://www.yorksj.ac.uk/research/international-centre-for-community-music/

¹⁴https://www.rcm.ac.uk/

https://react.web.ua.pt/va15

Toolkit for Teachers and Students

http://hdl.handle.net/10773/4215416

These two outputs are of fundamental importance for understanding, in a practical manner, how the consortium proposes the integration of artistic research in the 1st and 2nd cycles of higher education (artistic research-based learning). To access them, users should visit the website and register.

For a clearer understanding of the approach proposed by REACT, we suggest using these two resources together: the Toolkit, which explains each of the topics covered by artistic research-based learning in the arts, and the Virtual Academy, which exemplifies its practical application.

The Virtual Academy of Music Performance is a Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) that integrates various fields related to the teaching of music performance, including artistic research, career and professional development, music education, and curriculum design. This initiative represents a pioneering effort towards the modernisation of music education in European institutions and beyond.

You can watch the promotional teaser below:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2sbFyRmjVcE¹⁷

The Toolkit is a resource that offers practical advice, guidance, and information specifically for music performance teachers and students on how they can engage with an artistic research-based learning approach in their teaching and learning practices. The Toolkit explaining and describing each topic and the practical examples available in the Virtual Academy.

Contact: Dr Gilvano Dalagna (gilvano.d@ua.pt¹⁸)

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Guest Speaker: Emeritus Professor Dr Stephen Clift

Topic: The need for critical appraisal of arts and health research and reviews



11 - Guest Speaker: Emeritus Professor Dr Stephen Clift. Credit: Emeritus Professor Stephen Clift

Emeritus Professor Dr Stephen Clift (s.clift@btinternet.com¹⁹) is Professor Emeritus, Canterbury Christ Church University, and former Director of the Sidney De Haan Research Centre for Arts and Health. He is a Visiting Professor in the International Centre for Community Music, York St John University where he is working on an Arts and Humanities funded project to promote networking in the field of singing for health research. He also contributes as a Visiting Professor to the MA programme on music and wellbeing in the School of Music, University of Leeds. Currently, he is associated with the Salzburg Institute for Arts in Medicine, and is working with colleagues internationally to promote critical appraisal of research and evidence reviews in the field of arts and health. Over an academic career spanning forty years, Stephen has made contributions to research, practice and training on HIV/AIDS prevention and sex education, international travel and health, and the health promoting school in Europe. From 2000-2022 he pursued research in arts and heath and particularly the potential value of group singing for health and wellbeing. Stephen was one of the founding editors of *Arts & Health: An international journal for research, policy and practice*. He is joint editor with Professor Paul Camic of the *Oxford Textbook of Creative Arts, Health and Wellbeing*. https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5442-267X

Stephen's abstract:

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¹⁹mailto:s.clift@btinternet.com

The last twenty-five years has seen a remarkable growth of research on the potential contribution of arts, music and cultural engagement for health and wellbeing. This is reflected in major evidence reviews funded by the World Health Organisation and the European Commission, national government departments, arts councils and arts and health bodies throughout the world. A general consensus has emerged that both receptive and active involvement in arts, music and cultural activities is good for our general wellbeing and our mental and physical health. Some argue that arts, music and cultural engagement can protect and promote health and can contribute to health care and rehabilitation in hospital settings and the community. Particular interest has focused on performing arts, such as singing and dance, in supporting older people with long-term conditions, including lung disease, Parkinson's, dementia, and chronic pain. Nevertheless, there is need for caution, and in this presentation, I will argue that it is essential that we approach such claims with an appropriate degree of scepticism. I will present findings from recent exercises in the critical appraisal of primary studies, cited in recent major evidence reviews. The results show that exaggerated claims have been made for the effectiveness of arts interventions for health and raise the prospect of an impending crisis in the field.

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Guest Speaker: Mutong Shao

Topic: Acousctic Adaptation: an investigation into how solo pianists adapt their playings to room acoustics



12 - Guest Speaker: Mutong Shao. Credit: Mutong Shao

Mutong Shao (mutong.shao@rcm.ac.uk²⁰) is currently a Doctoral Student at the Centre for Performance Science, Royal College of Music. His research explores how musicians adapt to room acoustics during practice and performance, supervised by Dr. George Waddell and Professor Aaron Williamon.

Before joining RCM in 2014, Mutong studied at Lang Lang Music World in Shenzhen, China, under the guidance of Lang Lang and other renowned educators, and has since performed with Lang Lang on several occasions.

Mutong completed a BMus in Piano Performance in 2018 and an MMus in Piano Performance in 2020 with distinction both at RCM, studying with Professor Gordon Fergus-Thompson and Head of

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Keyboard, Professor Vanessa Latarche. He also received multiple scholarships during his studies. He then enrolled into the RCM's doctoral programme in 2020.

Mutong's abstract:

Musicians often perform in diverse acoustic environments, requiring them to perceive and adapt their playing to suit the differences in acoustics among other performance factors. However, conservatoire and university students often have limited access to performance spaces, resulting in practices taking place in environments with drastically contrasting acoustics than the ones of the places they perform in. This gap can potentially limit their acoustical experience and hinder their ability to adapt effectively to performance settings. Despite some technological efforts to enhance practice room acoustics, these systems remain uncommon in conservatoires and universities.

The PhD Research by Mutong Shao aims to investigate how solo pianists adapt to different acoustic environments during practice and performance, as well as how they develop effective adaptation skills. This research employs a primarily qualitative approach, structured in three phases to build a comprehensive understanding of acoustic adaptation among conservatoire and university piano students and assess current training practices.

This presentation will share the progress of Mutong's investigation and aims to spark discussion among fellow researchers on the future direction of music education.

Guest Speaker: Professor Suvi Saarikallio

Topic: Music as a resource for emotionality



13 - Guest Speaker: Professor Suvi Saarikallio. Credit: Professor Suvi Saarikallio

Suvi Saarikallio (suvi.saarikallio@jyu.fi²¹) is a professor of music education at the Centre of Excellence in Music, Mind, Body and Brain, at University of Jyväskylä, Finland. Saarikallio studies music in relation to emotions, identity, youth development, and mental health. She currently leads an ERC-funded project MUSICONNECT, investigating music as a connection to self and others. Saarikallio actively publishes across the fields of music psychology, music education, and music therapy. She is the president for the European Society for the Cognitive Sciences of Music (ESCOM)

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and the European commissioner for the ISME research commission (International Society for Music Education).

Suvi's Abstract

Music can offer wonderful emotional experiences and support emotion regulation. This talk zooms into the characteristics of music as a resource for emotionality. The presentation is conceptually grounded around the Access-Awareness-Agency (AAA) model on how music can support emotional competence. Music engagement is addressed as an affordance for affective capacities — as access and awareness of emotions, as embodied emotional expression and interaction, as a tool for emotional self-regulation, and as affective agency and identity construction. The theoretical propositions are supported by empirical findings from studies that we have conducted in educational and clinical music therapy contexts as well as in my current project MUSICONNECT, which investigates youth ability to connect with self and with others in the context of everyday life. The methods we have used range from digital ethnography to motion capture, psychometric assessment, and clinical trials.

Keywords: music, emotional competence, emotional awareness, emotional self-regulation

Congratulations!



14 - Photo Credit: Jenna Brown



15 - Congratulations to Jenna Brown! Photo Credit: Jenna Brown



16 - Photo Credit: Jenna Brown

Many Congratulations to Jenna Brown, who was awarded the Best Speaker Prize for her workshop and presentation at the 2024 Pan European Vocal Conference in Santander, Spain!

Jenna Brown (jenna.brown.23@ucl.ac.uk²²)'s workshop and presentation entitled: *Exploring 'Clean Language Coaching' as a Somatic Imagination Strategy for Singing Pedagogy*. In this talk, Jenna outlined how contributions from Philosophy of Mind and Psychology can contribute to our understanding of how singers and their teachers use imagination and multi-modal imagery as effective learning strategies. As well as a theoretical presentation, Jenna guided workshop attendees through an application of 'Clean Language Coaching' - an imagery-based strategy, used here for personalising metaphor and gestures used in singing teaching. Participants played with the method and considered how they could apply it ethically to their own studio settings, as well as using it to further understand their own imaginative and perceptual experiences as performers.

Upcoming iMerc Research Seminar

Please note that our next research seminar will be held on Wednesday, 11th December 2024, 11 am GMT 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

Visit us on the website at http://www.imerc.org ²³

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