

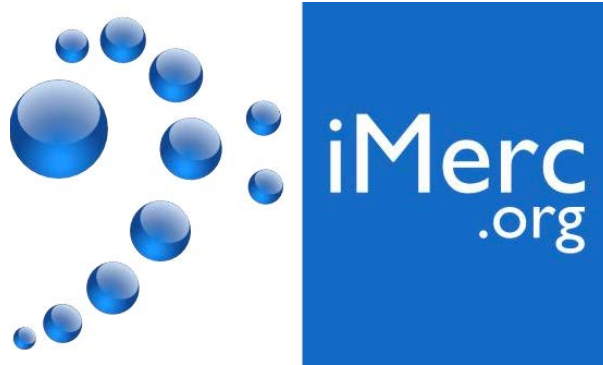
# UCL iMerc Newsletter — Vol. 16, May 2025

## 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 based in the UK, mainland Europe (such as Portugal, Germany, Greece), Asia (China, including Hong Kong), Latin America, USA 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, 21st May 2025, 11am GMT via Zoom and in room 313 at the IOE. We are delighted to have Professor Mine Doğantan Dack (University of Cambridge), Dr Scott Bannister (University of Leeds) and Assistant Prof. Dr. Yusuf Dumlupınar (İnönü University) as our guest speakers. Please join us by clicking the Zoom link [HERE](#). Everyone is welcome!

## In This Issue

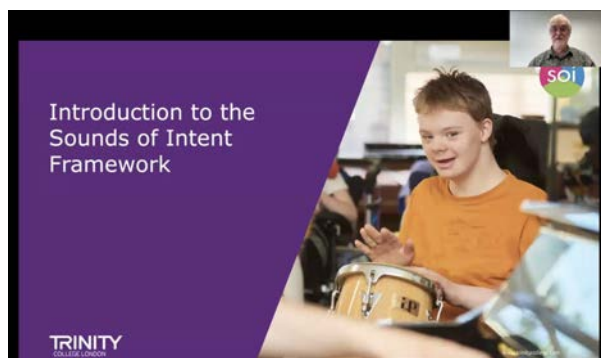


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## Previous UCL iMerc Research Seminar, March 2025



1 - From left to right: Eunice Tang, Shike Guo, Professor Graham Welch, Professor Adam Ockelford, Dr Regina Saltari, Jiayi Wang, Dan Wang



2 - Presentation cover slide credit: Professor Adam Ockelford

### **Professor Adam Ockelford: A new model of inclusive music assessment**

Professor Adam Ockelford ARAM PhD FTCL ([A.Ockelford@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:A.Ockelford@roehampton.ac.uk)) introduced the *Awards and Certificates in Musical Development* (ACMD), a new suite of qualifications from Trinity College London. These qualifications, developed in partnership with the *Sounds of Intent* framework, aim to provide an inclusive pathway for recognising musical achievements across a diverse range of learners .

The ACMD qualifications are designed to be accessible to all, from individuals with profound learning difficulties to those on the autism spectrum exhibiting advanced musical skills. Grounded in the *Sounds of Intent* framework, which maps musical development across reactive, proactive, and interactive domains, these qualifications enable learners to have their musical progress formally acknowledged.

Assessments for the ACMD can be integrated into regular music sessions, with teachers or music leaders continuously evaluating learners' progress. This approach ensures that musical achievements are recognised in a manner that is both meaningful and contextually relevant to each learner's experience. The introduction of the ACMD represents a significant advancement in inclusive music education, offering a structured yet flexible framework that celebrates the musical journeys of all learners, regardless of their starting point.

For more information on the ACMD and the *Sounds of Intent* framework, please visit [Trinity College London](#) and [Sounds of Intent](#).



3 - Presentation cover slide credit: Dr Stephanie MacArthur

### **Dr Stephanie MacArthur: Uncovering children's experiences of emergent learning difficulties in the instrumental music studio**

Dr Stephanie MacArthur ([stephanie.macarthur@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:stephanie.macarthur@unimelb.edu.au)) shared insights from her recent publication focused on the emergence of learning difficulties in young children beginning instrumental music tuition. Drawing from her PhD research, she employed Participatory Action Research and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to follow the lived experiences of fourteen beginner cellists, aged seven, over a period of up to four years. Her findings reveal that, contrary to expectations, half of the children encountered significant challenges that disrupted typical learning processes and affected their musical development. These included difficulties with memory and processing, attention and focus, impulse control, fine motor skills, intrusive synaesthesia, dyslexia, and ongoing anxiety.

Dr Stephanie MacArthur highlighted how these difficulties emerged and evolved in relation to each child's motivation, self-perception, and the pace of skill acquisition. She also explored the role of her reflexive, student-centred pedagogical approach, as well as the valuable insights provided by parents throughout the process. This study contributes important new knowledge to the field of music education by illuminating the complex and often overlooked ways in which learning difficulties can arise and be addressed within the instrumental music studio.



4 - Presentation cover slide credit: Dr Simon Høffding

### Dr Simon Høffding: The intercorporeal, musical self

Dr Simon Høffding ([simon.hoeffding@imv.uio.no](mailto:simon.hoeffding@imv.uio.no)) presented key findings from his decade-long research collaboration with the renowned Danish String Quartet (DSQ), offering unique insights into the phenomenon he terms *shared musical absorption*. With three of the quartet's members having performed together for nearly 30 years and amassing over 10,000 hours of rehearsal and performance, the DSQ provided an ideal case study for exploring deep musical connectedness.

Through detailed phenomenological interviews, Dr Høffding examined the mental and relational structures that underpin the quartet's communication and collective musical experience. His findings revealed a combination of explicit cognitive processes—such as simulation and mind reading— and more embodied, intuitive forms of interaction, described in phenomenology as *intercorporeity*. These deeply felt, bodily, and affective connections appear closely linked to moments of heightened musical absorption.

To further explore this concept, Dr Høffding and a research team at RITMO conducted a comparative study on cardiac synchronisation, measuring physiological alignment in both the DSQ and a novice string quartet as they played the same piece. The results showed significantly greater cardiac synchrony in the DSQ, suggesting a physiological marker of shared musical experience.

Dr Høffding concluded by reflecting on the broader implications of this work for our understanding of musical collaboration and proposed a vision for a more inclusive and embodied approach to concert science and music cognition.

## Invitation: The Amber Trust's 30th Anniversary Concert



5 - Poster credit: The Amber Trust

The Amber Trust is delighted to present an afternoon of music on the 18th of May, featuring the talented musicians supported by Amber, and acclaimed pianist Derek Paravicini.

- Date and time: Sunday 18th May, 15:30 – 17:30
- Venue: The Wathen Hall, Barnes, SW13 9JT
- Tickets: £20, Concessions £10
- Buy Tickets [HERE](#).

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.

## MASE Podcast: Dianna Kenny



*6 - Credit: MASE, Professor Evangelos Himonides*

For this third episode. It is a great pleasure to host Dianna Kenny.

Professor Dianna Kenny, formerly of The University of Sydney, where she held conjoint positions as Professor of Psychology and Professor of Music, is a world leading researcher, writer, clinician, and public intellectual. She is currently working in private practice in Sydney offering individual adult psychotherapy, child, adolescent, couple, and family therapy, mediation and family dispute resolution, and medico-legal consultancy. Dianna is the author of 12 books and over 300 scholarly articles, including book chapters, journal papers, online opinion pieces, and submissions to government. She is frequently an invited speaker at national and international conferences. Dianna's books span her many fields of interest in the psychology, including music performance anxiety, child development, psychotherapy, and gender dysphoria in children and young people. Her latest book titled: *Gender Ideology, Social Contagion, and the Making of a Transgender Generation* (Cambridge Scholars Press, 2025) has just been published.

**Listen to this episode [HERE](#).**



## Online First: Psychology of Music



7 - Photo credit: Psychology of Music

### New Research Articles Now Available in *Psychology of Music*

The latest online-first articles from *Psychology of Music* are now accessible, offering cutting-edge insights into the interplay between music and psychological processes. This collection features diverse studies exploring topics such as music perception, cognition, emotional responses, and the role of music in various social and developmental contexts.

Whether you're a researcher, educator, or practitioner in the field of music psychology, these articles provide valuable perspectives to inform your work.

[View the latest articles online](#)

## Newly articles online: Research Studies in Music Education



8 - Photo credit: Research Studies in Music Education

### New Articles Now Available in *Research Studies in Music Education*

The latest online-first articles from *Research Studies in Music Education* are now accessible. This collection features cutting-edge research exploring various aspects of music education, including pedagogical approaches, curriculum development, and the integration of technology in music learning.

These articles provide valuable insights for educators, researchers, and practitioners aiming to enhance their understanding and practice of music education.

[View the latest articles online](#)



*Guest Speaker: Professor Mine Doğantan Dack*

*Topic: Researching lived experience*

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*9 - Photo credit: Professor Mine Doğantan Dack*

**Mine's Abstract:** In this presentation, I introduce my new books (2 volumes), to be published soon by Routledge as part of the SEMPRE series, on the lived experiences of music performers. While there is a long tradition of investigating “lived experience” in social sciences and humanities, particularly in the context of phenomenological and hermeneutical research, feminist writing, psychoanalysis, and ethnography, music performance studies have not engaged with the subjective, lived experiences of music performers in a systematic and sustained manner to date. In philosophical literature, there are epistemological stances that distinguish lived experience from experience per se, the former placing emphasis on processes of meaning construction rather than on the so-called qualia, or phenomenal, subjective qualities of experience. I consider the spectrum of subjective encounters with the world to encompass both of these phenomena. As I discuss in this presentation, studying lived experience, both as a third-party observer and as an insider, involves various methodological difficulties, but getting closer to our own and others’ experiences as

performers, researchers and performer-researchers and finding ways to articulate and communicate them accurately offer huge potential for dismantling and eradicating unhealthy discourses and practices that shape musical culture as lived in pedagogical and professional settings.

**Professor Mine Doğantan Dack** ([md787@cam.ac.uk](mailto:md787@cam.ac.uk))

A concert pianist and musicologist/music theorist, Mine Doğantan is regarded nationally and internationally as a leading figure in artistic research in music performance. Mine was born in Istanbul, Turkey. After graduating from the Istanbul Municipal Conservatory as a student of Verda Ün, and from Robert College, she received a BA in Philosophy from Boğaziçi University, Istanbul. Mine continued her music studies at the Juilliard School in New York with Oxana Yablonskaya and was awarded the Scholarship of the Turkish Ministry of Education for Young Artists. While at Juilliard she won the prestigious William Petschek award for piano performance. After receiving a BM and MM from the Juilliard School, she studied musicology first at Princeton University (MA), New Jersey and later at Columbia University, New York. She received an MA, MPhil and PhD in music theory from Columbia University, studying with composer and music theorist Fred Lerdahl.

Mine is the founder of the Marmara Piano Trio and the recipient of an award from the Arts and Humanities Research Council of the UK (AHRC) for her 'Alchemy Project', which is the first research project in contemporary performance studies to explore the nature of live performance from the perspective of professional chamber musicians in the Western classical style. Mine was an Associate of the AHRC Research Centre for Music Performance as Creative Practice hosted by the University of Cambridge, and was also awarded a Visiting Professorship by the International Institute for Advanced Studies in Systems Research and Cybernetics, University of Windsor, Canada.

As a soloist and chamber musician, Mine has performed in USA, UK, Germany, France and Turkey, and participated in the Mozart Bicentennial Festival in New York. She recorded the music of JS Bach and Scriabin for WNCN, and also recorded various programs for the Turkish radio and television. Some of her practice-led research outputs have been published in Institute of Musical Research's PRIMO archive.

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***Guest Speaker: Dr Scott Bannister***

***Topic: Connecting with music: Exploring pseudo-social music listening, parasocial interaction, and social surrogacy***

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10 - Photo credit: Dr Scott Bannister

### **Scott's Abstract:**

Contemporary research highlights intimate connections between music and social bonding, such that even modern music listening behaviours, including listening when alone, may be social experiences; in some cases, music may behave as a social “agent” with which interpersonal or social experiences can occur for listeners. However, these types of experiences, labelled here as pseudo-social music listening (P-SML) experiences, have rarely been investigated directly. This talk provides an overview of a recent paper on P-SML experiences published in *Music & Science* (<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/20592043241301997>). Importantly, the talk seeks to situate this work in relation to key concepts such as parasocial interaction and social surrogacy, and consider ways forward for research on these music listening experiences.

**Dr Scott Bannister** ([S.C.Bannister@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:S.C.Bannister@leeds.ac.uk))

Scott Bannister is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the University of Leeds, currently working on the Cadenza Project (<https://cadenzachallenge.org/>), aiming to develop signal processing approaches to improve the experience of music for listeners with a hearing loss. Scott completed his PhD in 2020 at Durham University (fully funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council); this research focussed on musical chills (goosebumps, shivers, tingling sensations), and proposed a theoretical framework suggesting that there are two distinct types of chills responses to music, differentiated at the levels of subjective feeling, psychophysiological response, and underlying psychological mechanisms. Scott’s main

research interests include music and emotion, empathy, social cognition, psychophysiology, wellbeing, and open science.

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*Guest Speaker: Assistant Professor Dr Yusuf Dumlupınar*

*Topic: Applied Music Education Programs in Conservatories: A Critical Examination of Inclusive Learning Experiences from the Perspective of a Blind Musicologist and Educator*

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11 - Photo credit: Asst. Prof. Dr. Yusuf Dumlupınar

**Asst. Prof. Dr. Yusuf Dumlupınar's Abstract:**

This presentation is based on the lived experiences of a blind musicologist, educator, and performer. It aims to examine structural and pedagogical challenges confronting blind students in conservatories. These challenges are deeply embedded in visually constructed systems of applied music education. Conservatory curricula remain predominantly oriented toward visual modes of learning and demonstration. This structure inherently limits blind students' full participation in practice-based music courses. Courses such as instrumental training, composition, theory, and conducting are often inaccessible. Consequently, blind students frequently cannot access required course materials effectively or on time. As a result, they graduate without gaining full benefit from their assigned coursework. They are deprived of the right to receive education under equal learning conditions.

The first section of this presentation identifies barriers related to materials and instructional design. It emphasizes the necessity of preparing accessible environments before student

enrollment begins. Institutions must ensure that accessible tools are not introduced reactively but proactively. Braille notation and audio technologies are essential components in facilitating educational inclusion. These tools promote both pedagogical equity and cognitive efficiency for blind learners. Without such tools, students face significant, persistent, and avoidable educational disadvantages. These disadvantages do not reflect student limitations but rather institutional inadequacies.

The second section addresses the lack of qualified advisors in braille and audio technologies. Such advisors are crucial, fulfilling both technical and pedagogical functions within the institution. They serve as vital communicative bridges between students and instructional faculty. They support adaptation processes and help ensure curriculum adherence for blind students. They also provide emotional and psychological support, preventing distress and academic exclusion. The sustainable employment of these advisors must be prioritized through inclusive policy frameworks. These professionals should possess competencies in music education and special needs pedagogy.

The final section presents recommendations for inclusive policy and institutional transformation. Policies must address not only resource access but also instructional strategy reform. A model grounded in personalized learning can enable blind students' full musical development. Such a model ensures that all students benefit from equal educational opportunities.

Key words: Inclusive Music Education, Braille and Audio Accessibility, Visual Impairment in Conservatories

Asst. Prof. Dr. Yusuf Dumlupınar ([yusuf.dumlupinar@inonu.edu.tr](mailto:yusuf.dumlupinar@inonu.edu.tr)) is a blind musicologist, educator, and performer whose work uniquely blends lived experience with academic inquiry. He serves in the Department of Musicology at İnönü University and has been an academic visitor at the University of Edinburgh. His research and advocacy focus on inclusive music education, with particular emphasis on braille music notation and audio technologies. As the first blind doctorate in musicology from Istanbul Technical University, Dr. Dumlupınar has pioneered accessibility initiatives including the Talking Library Project and continues to advance structural reform through his postdoctoral research on adaptive pedagogies in conservatories. His voice is both scholarly and activist—advocating for equitable design in music education not through exception, but expectation.

## Upcoming UCL iMerc Research Seminar in June

Please note that our next research seminar will be held in 18th June 2025. If you would like to share your work with us, please do not hesitate to contact us. Thank you!

## Contact Us

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

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