

Institution: University of Lincoln

Unit of Assessment: 35, Music, Drama, Dance & Performing Arts

a. Overview

Research in Drama at the University of Lincoln combines a dynamic range of contemporary methodological approaches and critical interests. Since RAE 2008, the UOA has undergone significant expansion, and now stands within a leading performing arts department with a rapidly growing research profile. Expertise is particularly recognised in areas of contemporary theatre, musical theatre, consciousness studies, applied practice as research and Asian performance.

In 2008 we returned 8 individuals to the RAE panel in our first research submission. Since then we have expanded our research base to a submission of 12 colleagues. This expansion should be seen within the context of a growth in research across the University: two staff (Adiseshiah and Marlow) who were returned as part of the Drama submission in 2008 are now included in the University's first submission to the English REF panel.

Our key strategic aims after RAE 2008 were to expand the academic team, to develop the research culture and environment, and to focus on distinctive fields of specialism. Following the appointment of a new Head of School (O'Thomas) in 2010, we have employed several new researchers including a group of early career researchers, recruited a number of PhD students and consolidated existing strengths into five distinctive research groups, reflecting both our focus and our dynamic range of contemporary methodological approaches and critical interests:

- Contemporary Playwriting (**Bolton, Bull**, Dubois, **Hudson**, Jordan, **O'Thomas**, Pulford)
- Theatre, Consciousness & Asian Performance (Madhavan, **Meyer-Dinkgräfe**, Nair)
- The Body in Performance (Bowtell, J. Hunt, Kountouriotis, Sicchio)
- Popular Performances (Gaughan, **Jones, Symonds, Warden**)
- Applied Practice as Research (D. Hunt, **Lawrence, Pinchbeck, Walsh, Westerside**)

The UOA has devised a robust support framework through which we aim to develop these strategic areas within the School of Performing Arts whilst maintaining provision for individual research. As significant other areas gain critical mass—such as Science in Theatre—we will be well placed to develop further formal research clusters.

b. Research strategy

The appointment of **O'Thomas** as Head of School in 2010 prompted a consolidation of existing research and gave structured support to research development, growing the academic team, developing the research culture, and focusing on key areas. Our strategy (2012-2016) aligns with the University's research objectives (2011-2016) and sets out to:

- Support individual and collaborative staff research in both traditional and emerging areas;
- Engage through our practices with the pursuit, critical exploration and national debate around practice as research;
- Increase postgraduate provision in areas of key research expertise.

Through the support of our research office and the leadership of our senior research team (**Bull, Meyer-Dinkgräfe, O'Thomas, Symonds**), initiatives have been implemented to invest in the structure of our research culture, developing staff skills (e.g., bid writing); encouraging enterprise; increasing knowledge of income opportunities; and steering projects to completion. With mentor guidance, colleagues formally plan and track their research; events at School, College and University level offer skill enhancement and training; significant internal research funding (£575,000pa in total) encourages the development of large-scale, collaborative and externally-focussed research; and a generous research leave scheme allows for project completion (including, recently, monographs by Dubois, **Meyer-Dinkgräfe**, and **Warden**).

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In order to share research and develop a vibrant research culture, events programmes have been developed, including the seminar series 'Critical Encounters' and the visiting lecture series 'Theatre, Dance, Music and Consciousness'. Regular conferences/symposia/festivals are also held to position LSPA at the centre of an international research environment.

Our aim over the next five years is to develop our five research areas, each of which will:

- establish an internationally-recognised centre for research;
- participate in School expansion by attracting and recruiting leading international researchers;
- host major international symposia and conferences;
- develop further large-scale RCUK and European funding bids;
- continue to grow PGR numbers, using MAs as seedbeds for this.

We see this initiative as contributing to the infrastructure of long-term research through:

- strengthening key areas of research;
- securing external funding bids;
- reinforcing the School as an internationally respected research department;
- attracting leading international scholars to the school;
- enlarging our postgraduate community;
- providing ECRs the opportunity to supervise at PhD level, increasing the number of research staff who have supervised to completion.

A major goal over the next five years is to increase the quality and quantity of research outputs, raising our number of staff submitted to REF 2020 by at least 25%.

1.) **Contemporary Playwriting.** The school's long-term interest in contemporary playwriting, its context, development and ecology has developed from a focus on Contemporary British and German Drama (in RAE 2008) to become both geographically more diverse and more specifically focussed on the craft, practice and ideologies of playwriting. Existing collaborations with major theatres (Royal Court, RNT) and other universities (Lancaster, Reading), and a key AHRC-funded project forming the backbone of one impact case study indicate the strength of this area. The work of **O'Thomas** with both the Royal Court and the RNT has been fundamental to growth in this area, as has the scholarship of colleagues from English including **Adiseshiah** (returned under UoA 29) (cf. *Churchill's socialism: political resistance in the plays of Caryl Churchill*) and the appointment of several new colleagues including **Bull**; **Bolton** (ECR) and **Hudson** (ECR). Three international symposia, on Caryl Churchill (2011), Sarah Kane (2012) and Mark Ravenhill (2013) have shared knowledge internationally. Critical exploration in this area has benefitted from **O'Thomas's** practical and critical work in translation and adaptation, informing the MA in Playwriting and Script Development which is designed to lead into postgraduate research. Meanwhile, the role of Jordan in directing premiere productions of scientist Carl Djerassi's plays and working with the Old Vic's 'Old Vic, New Voices' project, is building the area of Science and Theatre. A conference on this topic featuring Djerassi as keynote speaker is scheduled for April 2014.

2) **Theatre, Consciousness Asian Performance.** **Meyer-Dinkgräfe's** international reputation for research in Theatre and Consciousness has underpinned our expertise in this area. He is co-convenor of the IFTR's working group in this field and edits the web-journal 'Consciousness, Literature and the Arts', the book series 'Theatre and Consciousness' (Intellect) and 'Consciousness, Literature and the Arts' (Rodopi), and has hosted the biennial 'International Conference on Consciousness, Theatre, Literature and the Arts' since 2005. He is joined by Madhaven and Nair whose work in international performance cultures and consciousness, and whose focus on Asian Performance contributes a global dimension to this area (the conference 'Women in Asian Theatre' was hosted by LSPA in 2013). Internally, the research working group *Theatre, Dance, Music and Consciousness* was founded in autumn 2011. This meets monthly, hosting presentations by core members and guest speakers. Outputs have included conferences ('Consciousness, Theatre, Literature and the Arts', 2009, 2011, 2013), edited collections (**Meyer-**

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Dinkgräfe 2010, 2012), and journal articles.

3) **The Body in Performance.** A significant number of dance scholars and opportunities at Masters level make the study of the body a growing area (though not exclusive to dance colleagues). Colleagues' research, which underpins the programmes, has been boosted by the Gnarl Fest (<http://gnarl.blogs.lincoln.ac.uk/>), which 'celebrates the precarious interrelatedness between Live Art and choreography'. An MFA in Choreographing Live Art and an MA in choreography provide a significant student culture in the area, developed to lead through to Post Graduate Research while staff—although not entered independently in this REF submission—have explored in publication the interface between digital technology and the body (Sicchio), the explicit body (Kountouriotis), the engagement of the elderly with dance (Bowtell), and the expressive body in Asian performance forms (Madhavan, Nair). A recent special issue of *Studies in South Asian Film and Media* (ed. Nair) focused on 'The Body' (<http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals/view-issue,id=2469/>).

4) **Popular Performances.** The study of popular performances is gaining critical mass, with research expanding in various facets of this broad subject, including musical theatre (**Symonds**), Grand Guignol (**Jones**), street art (**Walsh**) and wrestling (**Warden**). In particular, the appointment of **Symonds**, editor of *Studies in Musical Theatre* (<http://www.intellectbooks.co.uk/journals/view-Journal,id=119/>), offers profile in the area. As convenor of the IFTR's music theatre working group he has also published two edited collections in this field, *The Legacy of Opera* (Rodopi) and *Song and Dance* (OUP), as well as a special issue of *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 'The Broadway Musical: New Approaches' (2009). He is co-investigator on a collaborative project with Goldsmiths College exploring the representation of place in music hall and popular theatre forms.

5) **Applied Practice as Research.** The national growth in practice as research in performance—as distinct from professional practice undertaken by various individuals—is reflected within the **Centre for Performance Innovation and Evaluation**, which also manages our outreach activity and whose work forms the basis of Impact Case Study 2. While some of this activity engages in familiar modes of applied theatre practice (award-winning **Walsh's** work in hospitals and prisons, for example), other activity includes site-specific projects archiving memory (**Lawrence**), personal testimony as performance (**Pinchbeck, Westerside**), and interactions between technology and intimacy (**Westerside, Sicchio**). The development of this area has been boosted by the recruitment of practitioner-researchers **Walsh, Pinchbeck** and **Westerside**, and is also aided by the appointment of **Symonds**, who theorises practice as research in publication (Symonds 2013a) and who hosted the symposium 'Articulating Practice' in London (2011) (<http://www.artsadmin.co.uk/events/2914>).

c. People, including:

i. Staffing strategy and staff development

In recruiting new colleagues we aim to attract leading international experts as well as early career researchers with the potential to become research leaders. New appointments of ECRs (**Westerside, Hudson, Walsh, Bolton, Pinchbeck, Hunt**), a Reader (**Symonds**) and a Professor (**Bull**) underscore this intention and evidence our commitment to developing a sustainable research culture for Drama. These appointments emphasise excellence or strong potential in research activity, and have built the profile of newer strategic research areas in Popular Performances (**Symonds**) and Applied Practice as Research (**Pinchbeck, Walsh, Westerside**), whilst consolidating the strength of existing areas in Contemporary Playwriting (**Bolton, Hudson**) and The Body in Performance (**Hunt**).

Practical steps to enhance the support for early career researchers in the School include a guaranteed lower teaching load in their first academic year, and a proactive approach to positioning ECRs appropriately on PhD supervisory teams. At university level, research roadshows, sandpit events, grant-writing workshops and effective research training programmes are available, targetting ECRs. The university's internal Research Investment Funded of £500,000 pa explicitly welcomes bids from ECRs and new researchers and interdisciplinary applications. The UoA secured three grants (totalling £11, 600) from this fund in 2013, including a collaborative

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bid by **Bolton** and **Hudson** for a pilot project on the cultural diplomacy of the British Council in collaboration with colleagues in English. Timetabling guarantees a day free from teaching and administrative duties from all staff. All staff are allocated a research mentor, a senior member of research staff (**O'Thomas**, **Meyer-Dinkgräfe**, **Symonds**) who meets with mentees at least twice a year to discuss and monitor the effectiveness of individual research plans. There is a system of research leave which allows colleagues a longer period of relief from teaching and administrative duties to complete a significant piece of research. Its introduction in 2009 has led to the completion of a number of monographs by researchers including **Meyer-Dinkgräfe** (*Theatre, Opera and Consciousness: History and Current Debates*), **Warden** (*British Avant-Garde Theatre*) and **Dubois** (*Northrop Frye in Context*). Leave is awarded on a competitive basis, with decisions on applications taken by a panel of senior College staff including the Head of School and Director of Research.

The school is further supported by the University's People Strategy, which provides a range of policies around employment, equal opportunities, research management and ethics, and has signed up to the principles of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.

ii. Research students

As a comparatively new School established in 2006 our return in 2008 included no PhD completions. Developing the School's postgraduate culture was one of our major goals and will remain so over the next five years. During the census period we have seen the start of an upward trajectory with one PhD student completing and four student enrolments. The University established a system of bursaries at RCUK level in 2013 and we succeeded in securing one of these, thus recruiting our first PhD student in the Popular Performances area. A further student has been recruited for commencement in January 2014 and a second in 2014-15.

Meanwhile we have developed our portfolio of Masters programmes and anticipate further development in each of the five core research areas that will provide potential PGR students in the next five years. These will also develop large-scale funding bids to the research councils which will include provision for PhD studentships.

Procedures for monitoring student progress have been implemented in the School and rolled out across the College of Arts as good practice. Research student recruitment, ethical approval of projects, and student progress are all monitored through a College research committee. The University's Graduate School provides training courses, support and facilities for all postgraduates. Within the College, postgraduate facilities include dedicated space and IT facilities. Research students are also part of the SCONUL libraries scheme and supported in external conference attendance; £5,000 of the College Research Resources Fund is reserved for this purpose.

d. Income, infrastructure and facilities

Income

Research and external income targets are set annually, and support from the College Director of Research, the Research & Enterprise team and the College's Business Development Manager helps to identify opportunities for funding and collaborative ventures and to develop effectively written funding bids.

Since 2010, the School has received several major awards:

- 'Shakespeare's *Tempest*: Ontology, Reconstruction and Manipulation' (STORM) (**Lawrence** 2011-12) attracted €109,888 from the European Union Culture Fund to translate and produce *The Tempest* in three languages in three different countries (UK, Poland, Portugal);
- 'The Royal Court Theatre's International Work: an Impact Study' (**O'Thomas** 2012-ongoing), a collaborative project with the University of Lancashire, attracted £21,493 from the AHRC's *Translating Cultures* strand to fund research into the Royal Court Theatre's

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international work in the Middle East and South America;

- 'Restoration of breath: a method of wellbeing for actors, dancers and singers' (**Nair** 2011) received a Leverhulme Study Abroad Fellowship (£10,406) to study at the Tisch School, New York.

Colleagues have also received funding from a number of other organisations including:

- ACE - £4030 (Jordan, for Research and Development of new play *Marcela* by Rosanna McGlone, Old Vic, New Voices, 2013)
- Royal Court Theatre - £2,000 (**O'Thomas**, for translation of *Feast*, Young Vic, 2013)
- ACE - £60,000 (**Westerside**, Prototype Theater, for *The Good, The God, and The Guillotine*, 2013)
- RNT - £1000 (**O'Thomas**, for translation of *The Ritual*, Cottesloe Theatre, 2012)
- ACE - £50,000 (**Westerside**, Prototype Theater, for *Third Person* and *Fortnight*, 2011)
- Watershed & PM Studio, Theatre Sandbox Award, £10,000 (**Westerside**, Prototype Theater, for *Fortnight*, 2011);
- BBC Performing Arts Fund award (**Cullen**, £10,000, 2011);
- ACE - £25,000 (**Westerside**, Prototype Theater, for *Fortnight*, 2010);
- ACE - £17,000 (**Westerside**, Prototype Theater, for *Virtuoso*, 2009);
- ACE - £25,000 (**Westerside**, Prototype Theater, for *Whisper*, 2008);
- ACE - £20,000 (**Pinchbeck**, for *The End*);
- British Council - £6000 (**Pinchbeck**, for *The End*).

Productions have received numerous other commissions from venues including Live At LICA (Lancaster), Greenroom (Manchester), hAb (Manchester), Chester Performs, Soho Theatre (London), Warwick Arts Centre, Battersea Arts Centre, CCA (Glasgow), Tramway (Glasgow), Cornerhouse (Manchester), Oxford Playhouse, PS122 (New York City), Axis Arts Centre (Crewe), Fierce! Festival (Birmingham), Contact Theatre (Manchester) and On The Edge (Scarborough).

Infrastructure and facilities

The University of Lincoln has made significant investment during the census period (£140m 2008-2013). The Lincoln Performing Arts Centre, housing an adaptable theatre (446 capacity) and four multipurpose studios, was built in 2007 at a cost of £5.9 million. These cutting-edge practical facilities, linked to the School, have enabled us in particular to build significantly our research base in Practice as Research. The venue has now become home to a number of practitioners and companies including Proto:ype Theater, Red Monk Productions and Keephouse Performance. The Lincoln Performing Arts Centre has assisted their development and the support of Practice as Research through accommodating practice and commissioning projects. The ongoing 'Script This' project also offers research and development opportunities for new playwrights and feeds into the work of the Contemporary Playwriting research group..

The College of Arts funds staff and student research through its Research Resources Allocation Fund. This provides £75,000, distributed among staff through three competitive rounds per year. It supports a variety of research activities (travel and accommodation for conference presentation or archival research; network building aimed at large grant capture; pump-priming projects). A committee of senior College academics makes decisions on bids. Bids are not capped, and colleagues are regularly supported in participating in a number of international conferences annually. From 2013 a central university Research Investment Fund provided a further £500,000 p/a for pump-priming of innovative research on a competitive basis; the UoA had three successful applications in the first round to this fund (described in section c.i above). Conference attendance (where no paper is delivered) may be supported from School Staff Development monies. Support is also provided through the University Research Office which promotes the generation of research income and the delivery of high-quality research through a range of support mechanisms including: advice on external bids; identifying potential partners for collaborative research; managing the cross-University peer review process; maintaining a centralised on-line database of successful and

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unsuccessful bids; and costing research proposals to provide value for money.

Every research student is a member of the University's Graduate School, which offers support, education and career development programmes. Extensive online and physical library and IT facilities support all students, and further support is offered for research students to present work at seminars and at the annual PG Student Conference, to get work published, to identify potential funding resources, and to develop skills transferrable to the workplace

e. Collaboration or contribution to the discipline or research base

We see collaboration and partnership as crucial in developing our research culture over the next five years. Positioning the Lincoln School of Performing Arts within a nationally and internationally discursive framework will enable researchers both to participate in and lead international research. Partnerships have been endemic to our research funding success and will continue to play a major role as we develop research plans within the next REF cycle. Successes have included:

- The Lincolnshire One Venues project (**Morrow**) which is a collaboration between Lincoln Performing Arts Centre and nine other venues in the county;
- The EU Culture project STORM (**Lawrence**) which partnered the university with Polish and Portuguese theatre companies;
- The AHRC Translating Cultures project (**O'Thomas** as Principal Investigator) which was conducted in partnership with Lancaster University;
- Work with Lincoln Hospital (**Walsh**) also involves Lincolnshire Drug and Alcohol Recovery Team, Lincolnshire Addaction and Boston Addaction

School staff are currently involved in a number of major collaborative bids, including an AHRC bid in collaboration with Goldsmiths College (**Symonds** as CI) and a Research Networking Scheme bid in collaboration with Winchester, Leeds, Portsmouth, UEA, Bath Spa, Goldsmiths and Regents Universities.

Internally, staff are encouraged to share ideas and collaborate, and regular meetings of 'Critical Encounters' and the 'Theatre, Dance, Music and Consciousness' working group facilitate this. In addition, colleagues are involved with the University's '21st Century' research centre, which draws together researchers from several other disciplines including English, Architecture and Media and which has organised a number of conferences. Meanwhile, the University's Research Sandpit events encourage cross-discipline collaboration with a ring-fenced fund of £100,000 available competitively for developed proposals.

Contribution to the discipline or research base

Staff from the UoA contribute to the research base of the discipline in a variety of ways. Our researchers are regularly asked to peer review material; examples during the census period include a number of publishers (Oxford University Press, Routledge, Palgrave Macmillan, Manchester University Press) and funding bodies (the British Academy, the Wellcome Trust, the Leverhulme Trust, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada). Journal articles have been peer reviewed for *Contemporary Theatre Review*, *Studies in Musical Theatre*, *Theatre, Dance & Performance Training*, *Adaptation and Translation in Theatre*, *the Journal of Adaptation in Film and Performance* and *Studies in South Asian Film and Media*.

Colleagues with specific editorial roles include **Meyer-Dinkgräfe** (editor, *Consciousness, Literature and the Arts*; series editor, 'Consciousness, Literature and the Arts'; series editor, 'Theatre and Consciousness'), **Symonds** (editor, *Studies in Musical Theatre*, guest editor, *Contemporary Theatre Review* issue 19.1), and **Nair** (guest editor, *Studies in South Asian Film and Media* 4.2). Colleagues also sit on the editorial boards for *Performing Ethos: an International Journal of Ethics in Theatre and Performance* (**Meyer-Dinkgräfe**) and the *International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media* (**Sicchio**).

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Meanwhile, staff expertise has been called on for the examination of doctoral candidates at a number of universities in Britain and abroad including Manchester University, Exeter University, Liverpool John Moores University, Queen Mary, University of London, Utrecht School of Arts, Hilversum, Netherlands and Central European University, Budapest, Hungary.

Several members of our staff team have been invited to give keynotes and visiting lectures internationally at institutions including Harvard University, Princeton University, Columbia University, New York University, City University of New York, University of Ottawa, University of Winnipeg, University of Saskatchewan, and Ryerson University.

A number of colleagues have also been awarded prizes or residencies. **Kountouriotis** was awarded a Sacred Heart Foundation Scholarship from 2009-12 and was Artist in Residence at the Green Room, Manchester in 2010-11; **Nair** conducted a Leverhulme Study Abroad Fellowship at the Tisch School of the Arts, New York in 2011; **Sicchio** was Artist in Residence for Yorkshire Dance in 2008 and at the School of Visual Arts, New York in 2013; she also held a Dance Digital Research Bursary during 2011; **Walsh** was awarded the TaPRA postgraduate essay prize in 2012 and the IFTR/FIRT Helsinki Prize for Outstanding New Scholar in 2013; she has also been nominated for a Nursing Times Award in 2013.

Meanwhile, the Lincoln School of Performing Arts has hosted a series of conferences and symposia during this census period, including 'Consciousness, Theatre, Literature and the Arts 3' (16-18 May 2009), 'Caryl Churchill Now' (2011), 'Consciousness, Theatre, Literature and the Arts 4' (2011), 'Sarah Kane Now' (2012), 'Mark Ravenhill Now' (2013), 'Women in Asian Theatre' (2013), and 'Consciousness, Theatre, Literature and the Arts 5' (2013). Conferences organized by colleagues in other locations have included the 'International Natyasastra Conference' (India, 2011), 'Articulating Practice' (London 2011), and the ongoing series 'Song, Stage and Screen' (various locations, 2006-).