

<b>Institution:</b> Royal Academy of Music
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 35
<b>Title of case study:</b> Only Connect: Research and Performance in Museums
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Peter Sheppard Skaerved's research focuses on the ways in which interrelations between composers, performers, instruments and their makers, and music-related artefacts can bring new insights to musical creativity. As a violinist, curator, public speaker and author, Sheppard Skaerved communicates this research to the public through his passionate engagement with performance traditions, new music, and the cultural contexts for music making in the West. His collaborative projects with leading museums in the UK, Europe and the USA have led to enhanced public awareness and understanding of the complexity and diversity of musical creativity.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>As the Museum Fellow at the Royal Academy of Music from the establishment of its York Gate Museum in 1999, and as the Academy's Viotti Lecturer since 2012, Peter Sheppard Skaerved's research has been centred on the ways in which artefacts can give insights into musical creativity, and how these insights can be effectively communicated to the broadest specialist and non-specialist audiences. His prolific research has led to a variety of outputs, including CD recordings, scholarly editions, articles, collaborations leading to the creation of new music, and the curation of exhibitions and museum-based events.</p> <p>In 2008 the National Portrait Gallery invited Sheppard Skaerved to co-curate a music-centred exhibition, working with Paul Moorhouse, the Twentieth-Century Curator at the Gallery. Sheppard Skaerved's research for the project involved the discovery and interpretation of creative, cultural and biographical connections between a wide range of musicians. The resulting Exhibition, <i>Only Connect</i>, ran from 16 April to 27 November 2011, and comprised 45 pictures, subjects ranging from Maria Cosway to Michael Tippett, joined by a network of connections and explained by a large 'viewing table' located in the centre of the room. Performance and the creation of new music – in response to the insights of the exhibition – were integral to the project. Collaborating with Sheppard Skaerved, composers Elliott Schwarz and David Gorton both composed works inspired by the exhibition, which were premiered in the gallery and filmed in situ.</p> <p>From 2009–12 Sheppard Skaerved conducted research on Nicolò Paganini with the instrument and paper holdings of the Music Division of the Library of Congress in Washington DC. Following Sheppard Skaerved's lecture-recital 'The Revolutionary Violin' (based on an earlier research project) at the Library's Coolidge Auditorium in the summer of 2009, the Library's Music Division invited him to bring his previous Paganini research and performances to bear on the resources of the institution. He was given access to a cross-section of holdings relating to Paganini, alongside three violins (the Brooking Amati, the Betts Stradivarius and the Kreisler Del Gesù). In addition to Paganini's 'Red Book', a memorandum book in which he documented his 'Grand Tour' of 1828–31, the paper materials included letters, music manuscripts, playbills and recipes. The research led to new insights into the context of Paganini's work, to the rediscovery of 'lost' works, and to a reappraisal of the significance of his achievements. Sheppard Skaerved also worked with composers in the creation of new works inspired by his research. His research findings informed a lecture-recital Sheppard Skaerved delivered in the Coolidge Auditorium on 15 December 2012,</p>

performing rediscovered and new works alongside a presentation of issues relating to the 'Red Book'. In the summer of 2013, this material was made into an hour-long film for the Music Division, in which the objects, images and instruments are explored in the context of Paganini's life and work. Consequently, the US-based *Strings* magazine invited Sheppard Skaerved to write an article 'My Year with Paganini' which appeared in its May 2013 edition. The entire project was charted through Sheppard Skaerved's online journal.

### 3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Underpinning research outputs include:

1. *Only Connect* (DVD: Optic Nerve, 2013) [REF2: RAM20c]
2. Films of new works inspired by *Only Connect*: <http://youtu.be/Hdd7SgAKX7U> and <http://youtu.be/0um2sfwqlvo>.
3. Film: The Paganini Project at the Library of Congress (<http://youtu.be/lxJZKjxEDCo>) [REF2: RAM20b]
4. Peter Sheppard Skaerved's online journal of the Paganini Project (<http://www.peter-sheppard-skaerved.com/2012/11/the-paganini-project-at-the-library-of-congress/>).

### 4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The dissemination of research findings to a wide public beyond higher education was an integral part of these projects from their initial planning stages through to their delivery.

At the National Portrait Gallery, the primary audience of gallery visitors was able to access the findings of Sheppard Skaerved's research not only through the exhibition itself, but also through a large programme of interactive events co-ordinated by him and delivered by him in collaboration with composers, performers and advanced students from the Royal Academy of Music. These included public lecture-recitals, open workshops, guided tours, and question-and-answer sessions with the visitors. The events enabled audiences to understand the research that informed the curation of the exhibition, as well as the finished product itself, and afforded them insights into the dynamics of creative collaboration that also underpinned the connections between the exhibition's portraits. A wider audience was addressed through the exhibition-related materials that Sheppard Skaerved placed on his website and through the filming and publication of the DVD *Only Connect* (2013).

In the Library of Congress the most immediate beneficiaries of the project's impact were the members of the audience who attended Sheppard Skaerved's lecture-recital in the Coolidge Auditorium. A wider audience has been reached through the project-related materials posted on Sheppard Skaerved's website – including an online journal covering the period of the research and the preparation for the live event – and through the hour-long film made by the Library of Congress, featuring spoken delivery and performances by Sheppard Skaerved, available on YouTube.

For both projects, other beneficiaries of the impact include the museum professionals who collaborated with Sheppard Skaerved in his innovative approach to curation and high-level performance in the exhibition and events. This has led to further invitations to Sheppard Skaerved from other prestigious museums, including the British Museum and the Musical Instrument Museum in Brussels, to develop similar projects with items from their collections.

The reach of the impact of Sheppard Skaerved's research is evidenced by visitor numbers to the *Only Connect* exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery (NPG figures were 1.9 million in 2011); by the audience numbers for the events associated with the exhibition (capacity audiences of over 200 for each of five events); by the audience figures for the lecture-recital given at the Library of Congress as part of the Paganini Project (470 attendees); by the number of hits received by the

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

Library of Congress film on YouTube (over 2000 hits); by the readership of *Strings* magazine (c. 123000; source: <http://www.allthingsstrings.com/Advertising-Information>); and by the number of hits on Sheppard Skaerved's own website containing related materials. The DVD *Only Connect* was published at the very end of the assessment period, and sales figures are not yet available.

The significance of Sheppard Skaerved's impact is witnessed by the public and professional recognition of his work, notably through the invitations from some of the world's most prestigious museums and galleries to collaborate on major projects involving aspects of their collections.

**5. Sources to corroborate the impact** (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[http://www.npg.org.uk/about/press/only-connect.php?searched=Only+Connect&advsearch=allwords&highlight=ajaxSearch\\_highlight+ajaxSearch\\_highlight1+ajaxSearch\\_highlight2](http://www.npg.org.uk/about/press/only-connect.php?searched=Only+Connect&advsearch=allwords&highlight=ajaxSearch_highlight+ajaxSearch_highlight1+ajaxSearch_highlight2)

<http://www.npg.org.uk/about/organisation/visitor-numbers.php>

20th-century Curator at the National Portrait Gallery

<http://blogs.loc.gov/music/2012/11/the-paganini-project-comes-to-the-coolidge-auditorium/>

<http://www.allthingsstrings.com/layout/set/print/News/Interviews-Profiles/My-Year-with-Paganini>

Head of Musical Instrument Collections, Library of Congress