

<b>Institution: BRUNEL UNIVERSITY (H0113)</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: 35 – Music, Drama, Dance and Performance Arts</b>
<b>Title of case study: Contemporary Middle Eastern Composition: Archives, Advocacy and Performance</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p><a href="#">The Brunel Institute of Contemporary Middle Eastern Composition (BICMEM)</a> was established in response to the significant growth of compositional activity in the Middle East for which there existed no systematic curation, promotion or research.</p> <p>The Institute has established a unique archive of contemporary Middle-Eastern compositions. It works as an advocate, liaising closely with senior diplomats, academics, cultural officers, and business. In a time of great political unrest in the Middle East, BICMEM nurtures new talent, preserves cultural assets and enables international dialogue through the curation and promotion of new music events in Britain and the Middle East.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>BICMEM is led by Professor Peter Wiegold and grows out of his extensive and unique research profile in cross-genre and cross-cultural music-making, both as practitioner and theorist. Three questions underpin this research: the efficaciousness and appropriateness of particular kinds of musical language and method; the maintenance of integrity and distinctiveness when working collaboratively across borders; and the discovery of new forms of creative leadership.</p> <p>In the 1980s Wiegold undertook significant periods of research during which he studied Gamelan in Java, performed with Ravi Shankar's senior pupil Dipak Choudhory and worked with African musicians. Between 1984 and 1993 he also worked in education, especially as Artistic Director of the 'Performance and Communication Skills Department' at the Guildhall School of Music and Dance, enabling the examination and dissemination of new forms of inclusive creative practice. At a time when the predominant focus was on the centrality of the European classical canon, Wiegold argued strongly for an inclusive approach in which cross-cultural and cross-genre collaboration would be increasingly significant. In the 1990s Wiegold went on to pioneer the training of orchestras and ensembles in compositional, improvisational and leadership techniques for cross-genre and cross-ability exchange, including the London Symphony and Royal Philharmonic Orchestras, the City of London Sinfonia, the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group and the Orchestras Canada.</p> <p>Wiegold has given many keynotes and conference presentations on creative leadership in a cross-cultural context, including Cairo (British Council), Dublin, LaSalle College Singapore, Toronto University, UC Santa Barbara, UC San Diego, Wilfrid Laurier University Canada, and Vienna. In 2013 Wiegold led an ensemble in Singapore and Hong Kong combining classical, jazz and traditional Chinese musicians. He has also worked with the Sidney Nolan Trust and the distinguished Chinese pipa player Yang Jing and was a jury member of Classical Next Vienna 2013 where, as part of a meeting of 800 international delegates, he led debate on the re-imagining of cultural change at the heart of traditional classical music.</p> <p>Through this research it became clear that there was an important emerging new music community in the Middle East, strongly grounded both in the cultures of the region and in those cultures' interest in western classical music. It was also apparent that this community was institutionally fragile with little organised national support, few publishers and insufficient opportunities for quality performances. Wiegold invited Oliver Butterworth, an experienced promoter of new Middle Eastern composition with an extensive network of contacts across the region, to work with him on the creation of BICMEM, the first institute in the world to devote itself to Middle Eastern contemporary music. BICMEM is based both on Wiegold's previous research into cross-cultural collaboration and on Butterworth's deep knowledge of the music, the composers and the complex cultural and political structures of the Middle East. Together they work on a range of activities: strategic support, archiving, performance of important new work and acting as 'critical friends' on issues around new music in the region.</p>

## Impact case study (REF3b)

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

Key outputs of this research are:

Wiegold, *The Great Wheel* (2002). This work was commissioned by the London Sinfonietta for performances in Glasgow and London and drew together the musicians of the London Sinfonietta with musicians from Uzbekistan. The project was supported by a commission fee of £5,000 from the London Sinfonietta which also funded Wiegold's fieldwork in Uzbekistan. *The Great Wheel* included in Brunel University's RAE 2008 submission.

Wiegold, *He is armoured without* (2007). This work was commissioned by the BBC for the 2007 Promenade Concerts and performed in the Royal Albert Hall by the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, the Coldstream Guards, musicians from Uzbekistan and 80 other brass players. The work was short-listed for the 2008 Royal Philharmonic Society Large-scale Composition Prize and was included in Brunel University's RAE 2008 submission.

Wiegold, *Earth and Stars* (2010). This CD was the outcome of a research project funded with an AHRC grant of £18,000. The CD consists of four Wiegold works, all informed by the research into cultural exchange that Wiegold undertook over the preceding two decades, and includes *Kalachakra*, a work which is being submitted to REF 2014. The costs of the CD release (£6,000) were funded by NMC Recordings.

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

The impact arises from three types of activity: the establishment of the first ever archive of contemporary Middle Eastern compositions; advocacy and promotion; and the direct curation of events.

**Archive.** BICMEM has established online and physical archives at Brunel University representing the work of over 100 composers from 27 countries. This has become a regularly consulted resource and a core basis for advocacy, promotion, networking and performance, with more than 6,000 on-line users to date.

**Advocacy.** The Institute has built an extensive network of diplomats, politicians, academics, advisors, funders, promoters, composers and supporters to enable a greater understanding, knowledge and performance of contemporary Middle-Eastern music. Sustained advice and help has been given by senior advisors within this network, including The Hon. Dominic Asquith (former British Ambassador, Iraq, Libya, Egypt), Baroness Symons (Chair, Arab British Chamber of Commerce), Noel Rands, (Hon. Sec. British-Egyptian Society), Professor Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Bronco (Professor of Ethnomusicology at the New University, Lisbon, and Fulbright Visiting Professor at Columbia University), Waseem Kotoub (Director Damascus International Piano Competition for Youth), Lena Saleh (Edward Said National Conservatory of Music). This advice has enabled fruitful dialogue; for example, in September 2012 Butterworth addressed all 25 Arab London Ambassadors at the invitation of HE Mr Khaled Al-Duwaisan GCVO. BICMEM is has established relationships with 12 higher education institutions in Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, the Palestinian Authority, Qatar, Syria and Turkey.

Two case studies demonstrate positive outcomes of this advocacy:

(1) *a new opera*. BICMEM was contacted by Professor Rosalind Morris for advice in finding a composer to create an opera about the beginnings of oil discovery and excavation in Saudi Arabia. She was introduced to distinguished Syrian composer Zaid Jabri and a new work is now in production with a creative team drawn from Holland, Germany, Syria and the USA.

(2) *David Staples 'Theatre Projects'*. David Staples has engaged BICMEM to advise on new creative content for concert halls they are developing across the Middle East, including the National Theatre in Bahrain, the Opera House in Oman and a new 'creative laboratory' in Dubai. BICMEM will advise on artistic content and help ensure these new international centres integrate creatively with regional and national artists.

**Curation.** BICMEM has directly raised funds for, promoted and directed many events both in London and in Middle Eastern countries; in London, to date, the music of 41 Middle Eastern composers has been performed. For example, 'Music from Egypt', a Composers Ensemble

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

concert at St John's Smith Square, London in March 2011 led to the British Egyptian University and British Council raising £18,000 to fund BICMEM projects in Cairo, including:

- a concert at the British Embassy of Egyptian music given by Wiegold and the Composers Ensemble,
- a workshop in the Conservatoire, introducing new educational techniques to staff and students,
- a talk at British Council on 'the nature of cross-cultural collaboration', and
- an improvisation in a club with traditional Egyptian musicians.

Extensive networking facilitated by the Chair of the British Council, Sir Vernon Ellis, the American University in Cairo and the Egyptian Centre for Culture and the Arts has enabled further concerts and conferences.

The BICMEM inauguration event at St Luke's, London in July 2011 included a concert with works by Zaid Jabri (Syria) and Amr Okba (Egypt) who also took part in a conference on 'The Integration of Middle-Eastern and Western Music'. An inaugural speech was given by The Rt. Hon Baroness Symons of Vernham Dean.

In January 2012 BICMEM hosted Missak Baghboudarian, conductor of the Syrian National Symphony Orchestra, who visited the LSO and BBC Symphony Orchestra and gave a Foyles interview. His visit was sponsored by an £1,800 British Council grant.

In May 2012 Butterworth was a panel member with Gidon Kremer and Arab composers at the University of Music in Vienna, debating 'Contemporary Music: Between Heritage, Individualism and Dialogue – An Arab Perspective'.

In November 2012 the A M Qattan Foundation hosted a discussion at the Mosaic Rooms, London on 'Arab Spring: Symphony or Requiem? What does the future hold for composers in the Middle East?' including Houtaf Khoury and Abdallah El Masri.

A concert of Lebanese music was given on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2012 in St John's Smith Square, including works by Toufic Succar and Bushra El Turk was supported by £12,000 from the Makhzoumi Foundation.

In December 2012 BICMEM presented the Dante String Quartet with Prof. Özkan Manav speaking on 'Microtonal traditions in Turkish music and its reverberations on new music composition in Turkey' and Prof. Hasan Uçarsu on 'The changing approach to maqam music among the present generation of Turkish composers as a result of social, cultural and economic changes' as part of the University of London's Institute of Musical Research seminar series.

In June 2013 in collaboration with the Egyptian Cultural Centre, Shubbak, BICMEM participated in the London Shubbak Festival presenting composers from Morocco, Egypt, Sudan, Palestine and Jordan.

In October 2013 BICMEM presented a fundraising concert in the Cadogan Hall, London, with Gala El Hedidi (singer), Mohamed Shams (pianist), the Darb El Ahmar School of drummers and acrobats, traditional Musicians from Makan and the Egyptian Contemporary Classical Music Ensemble (works by Bahaa El-Ansary; Mohamed Saad Basha; Ahmed Madkour) Sponsored by Shell International Limited, Tower Hamlets, Vodafone, British Arab Commercial Bank and Alfanar the event raised £23,500.

Projects currently in progress include work with Ardah musicians and dancers from Saudi Arabia (supported by HRH Prince Mohamed bin Nawaf), the Qatar Symphony Orchestra (supported by HE Khaled Mansouri), the Gaza Music School (supported by the Qattan Foundation), and a London concert of Moroccan music.

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

**Brunel Institute for Contemporary Middle Eastern Music** is a resource centre, containing a library of scores, manuscripts and recordings, and a comprehensive and up-to-date database of Middle Eastern composers and musicians. It is also a research centre, organising international

conferences, performances and academic exchanges. <http://www.brunel.ac.uk/bicmem>

*[...] generating the archive [...] is a great gift you have given the world, and I know of nothing else like it. On the other side of the Atlantic, as elsewhere, we are much in your debt.* Professor Rosalind Morris, Department of Anthropology, Columbia University.

*The Engaging with the Islamic World Group in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office fully support the aims of this timely and important project.* HE Mrs. Frances Guy, former Lebanese Ambassador

*I hope that this is the beginning of something that will go on for a long time so that we composers can get to know each other and love and respect each other's work.* Sir Peter Maxwell Davies, Master of the Queen's Music.

*HRH Prince of Wales has long advocated the need to build bridges between faiths and cultures and sends his warmest good wishes for the success of this venture.* HRH The Prince of Wales.

*What you are doing is wonderful and I feel guilty for my "inertia" in the field of classical music from my part of the world.* Myrna Bustani – Founder of the Lebanese Bustan Festival and the first ever woman MP in Lebanon.

*Returning home has given me the chance to think and to returns to all the details related to our project . From my part, I think this was one of the best projects where I involved . This success was only because of all the effort and timing (and money) to make this project. [...]You choose excellent musicians well prepared and open to any musical propositions ..and they were excellent in the rehearsal and the concert.* Houtaf Khoury, Lebanese composer after London concert November 2012

*..but about one melancholy fact, all are agreed: serious contemporary Egyptian composers are now being cruelly marginalised by the media, and starved of the chance to hear their works played by first-class ensembles. Hence the value of this project, and of the parallel projects which Peter Wiegold and Brunel Institute's director Oliver Butterworth are staging with composers from Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, and Syria.*

*'I feel powerful,' says Professor Mahmoud Bayoumi with a smile. Before the revolution, he says, the post of dean would have been filled by a government place-man, but he has been elected to it by his fellow professors. To spread a little musical democracy, he has invited flautist Rowland Sutherland and composer-conductor Peter Wiegold to lead an improvisation class for his students. And what transpires there is astonishing, as Bayoumi's teenage wind and string players take to Wiegold's unfamiliar challenge like ducks to water, improvising as though they'd been doing it all their lives.*

*This is just one facet of why these British musicians, plus four other members of the Composers Ensemble, are in Cairo. Their tour has been organised by the Brunel institute for Contemporary Middle Eastern music, supported by the British Council and the fledgling British University in Egypt.*

*Their primary purpose has been to link up with some young Egyptian composers for a concert in which avant-garde Egyptian works blending oriental and occidental elements are to be given a top-class public airing.*

*All this is happening at a pivotal moment in Egyptian history: there is now a real danger that the army and the Muslim Brotherhood will together take control, leading to new constraints on the country's musicians. The final part in this inspirational jigsaw comes when Wiegold and Sutherland meet up with a bunch of traditional musicians at the Makan arts centre, and jam with them into the small hours.*

*As Wiegold observes, the key is neither to attempt 'fusion', nor for one side to submerge their style in the style of the other, but for both to keep a respectful distance: 'That way the vital spark may jump across the divide.' And here it most certainly did.*

Michael Church, 'Collaborations in Cairo', *Classical Music*, March 2012