

<p>Institution: University of Worcester</p>
<p>Unit of Assessment: 35 - Music, Drama, Dance and Performing Arts</p>
<p>a. Context</p> <p>Much of the research generated by the submitting unit in the REF period was applied in nature and designed to be of benefit to non-academic research users. Those benefitting from the research included creative practitioners and organisations, producers and programmers, arts funders and policy makers, theatre audiences, local interest groups, and a wider public interested in the arts.</p> <p>The main types of impact relevant to the unit were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Generating new ways of thinking that influence creative practice.</i> A majority of those contributing to the submitting unit were involved in creating, in collaboration with other practitioners, public performances that were underpinned by their research or represented the fruits of it, and that contributed to ongoing development of the artform (see examples of performances in section b). • <i>Creating, inspiring and supporting new forms of artistic expression.</i> A significant research interest within the unit was the integration of digital media and performance, leading towards new forms of artistic expression, exemplified by Swift's research-based practice in <i>Second Life, Babble</i>, 2012 (see section b). • <i>Providing expert advice to NGOs/charities (thereby influencing policy and/or practice) and helping professionals and organisations adapt to changing cultural values.</i> Several members of the submitting unit sat on the Boards of arts organisations or networks (Cochrane at Birmingham Mac, and as a Trustee of the Sir Barry Jackson Trust; George at Pegasus Theatre, Oxford; Broster as an Executive Board member of Action for Children's Arts) and offered research-informed advice on developing policy and practice in response to the needs and challenges of contemporary society. • <i>Contributing to personal and professional development.</i> Through collaboration in creative projects, members of the unit provided opportunities to emerging and established practitioners to develop their practices (see example, below, of George's <i>Ten Thousand Things</i> and <i>Manet's Mirror</i>). • <i>Preserving, conserving and presenting cultural heritage.</i> Cochrane's Impact Case Study provides a clear example of how her research impacted on the development of, and fundraising for, Birmingham Rep's centenary celebrations, including exhibitions and community engagement events celebrating the theatre's rich history.
<p>b. Approach to impact</p> <p>The University's Strategic Plan for the period 2007-12, under the broad heading <i>Generating Knowledge and Promoting Enterprise</i>, identified a key objective as being "to support the development and expand the reach of our areas of research excellence, in particular interdisciplinary and multi-professional research and consultancy, with social and/or community identified impacts". The unit's approach to impact during the REF period spoke clearly to this objective. Members of the unit developed connections, collaborations and partnerships with a range of local and nationally significant artists and arts organisations by means of which their individual research contributed to the development of practice and/or policy. For example, George's Arts Council-funded Research and Development grant (2007), into working with emerging practitioners to apply site-specific techniques to studio and building-based performance, led to the production <i>The Ten Thousand Things</i> at Pegasus Theatre, Oxford, July 2008⁽¹⁾. The project was specifically aimed at expanding emerging practitioners' approaches to practice.</p> <p>Three of the young practitioners with whom George worked are now creating significant work of their own: Camille Giraudeau is a member of National Dance Company Wales⁽²⁾. Michelle Pogmore is founder member of Red Dress Theatre Company⁽³⁾ and Alex Brockie is writer and performer of the currently touring show, <i>The Inferno Kid</i>⁽⁴⁾. George's collaboration with Reckless Sleepers, <i>Manet's Mirror</i>, (Birmingham Mac, September 2010) similarly drew on her research into</p>

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spatial practice, and similarly offered developmental opportunities for emerging practitioners⁽⁵⁾. This model of working, in turn, influenced the development of Reckless Sleepers' own 2011/12 project and performance *This is Not America 3*, specifically employing emerging practitioners.

Dalmasso's research into the philosophy of Badiou and Derrida influenced development of the collaborative performance (with John Schad), *Last Train to Oxford/Some-one Called Derrida*⁽⁶⁾. This work, which explored the effects of dementia, was funded by the South London & Maudsley NHS Trust, presented in Oxford (2012), Worcester (2013) and the Maudsley Hospital's ORTUS Learning Centre (2013), and provided a focus for dialogue between the company and medical practitioners and researchers. Leighton's research into theatre with people with disabilities (eg *Accountability: the ethics of devising a practice-as-research performance with learning-disabled practitioners*, *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, Vol 4, Issue1, 2009, 'On Disability: Creative Tensions in Applied Theatre' special issue) influenced not only her own practice with her integrated theatre company, Dreamcatcher, but also those of volunteers working with her between 2009 and 2011. Broster's research into theatre with young audiences (eg *Were You There? An exploration of the interaction between theatre and young audiences*, presented at 'Theatre for a Young Audience in the UK', University of Westminster, 2010) informed the style and making of *Granny Twiddle's Emporium of Wonderful Things* with Magic Attic Theatre company⁽⁷⁾. Rippel's research into theories of virtual presence and posthumanism underpinned her performances *Blueprint*, 2011 (subject of an Impact Case Study) and *Under The Covers*⁽⁸⁾, 2009-11. All the above were presented to public audiences and contributed to cultural capital both locally and nationally. These performances also impacted on creative discourse amongst practitioners and audiences concerning what contemporary performance can be, and raised questions for audiences in relation to thematic content. Through presentation in the public arena, work informed the thinking and practices of programmers, funders and policy makers who came into contact with it.

Reeves' current research, into the effectiveness of specific audience intervention processes and technologies, directly fed into the production of three theatre-in-education projects (supported by the University of Worcester), which explored young people's attitudes towards, and choices about, continuing into Higher Education. These touring productions were presented to significant numbers of young people across and beyond the region (*Why Bother?* (2011) in 19 schools; *Is It Worth It?* (2012) in 19 schools; *It's Up To You* (2013) in 17 schools), and reached approximately 5,000 pupils over the three years of production. Swift's expertise informed development of a second theatre-in-education project, *A Life Worth Living*, to involve school-age children in contemporary issues in science. Funded by VETNETLLN (£13,500), the project was presented in 20 schools, reaching 800 pupils during its 2012 and 2013 tours.

Swift's research into performance within virtual environments (eg 2010 'Losing the Plot – An Exploration of Narrative Collaboration and Control in *Second Life*' *International Journal of Performance Arts and Digital Media*, Issue 6 Vol 2) informed her creation of the online digital opera, *Babble*, performed in real time over three days in *Second Life* in December 2012. As a commissioned event contributing to the Upstage 121212 *Festival of Cyberformance*, *Babble* made a significant contribution to international discussion and development of emerging artistic forms of virtual performance. Live screenings of the work were broadcast in 14 countries as well as the work being witnessed by 'in world' audiences in *Second Life*.

Cochrane's work with Birmingham Rep (detailed in her Impact Case Study) demonstrates the impact of an individual researcher's collaboration with a nationally significant theatre and its wider community of artists and audiences. Through membership of the Executive Committee of the national campaigning organisation Action for Children's Arts, Broster's research into theatre and young audiences was directed at influencing governmental policy in the arts. Through her membership of the Artistic Advisory Committee of Pegasus Theatre, and her collaboration with the theatre during her AHRC-funded *Cultural Engagement Fellowship* (with Oxford University), George's research impacted on the policy and practice of this flagship Arts Council organisation. It fed into development and evaluation of two youth theatre projects as well as into the organisation's ongoing thinking about spatial practices on stage, and about the building and organisation as a

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whole.

1. http://www.dailyinfo.co.uk/reviews/feature/3250/The_Ten_Thousand_Things.
2. <http://www.ndcwales.co.uk/en/the-company/the-dancers/>
3. <http://www.reddresstheatre.co.uk/>
4. <http://birminghamfest.co.uk/events/the-inferno-kid-by-alex-brockie-2013-07-12/>
5. <http://manetsmirror.wordpress.com/about/>
6. <http://www.oxfordplayhouse.com/archive/show.aspx?eventid=2560>
7. http://www.worcesternews.co.uk/leisure/music/9497263.Granny_s_show_is_great/
8. <http://www.zooindigo.co.uk/zoo-performance-3/under-the-covers>

c. Strategy and plans

The University's new Strategic Plan (2013-18) identifies as part of its mission statement its continuing commitment to foster research with the potential to achieve major social impact. A key part of the strategy is to develop partnerships and collaborations that will nurture research with impact. The Plan identifies "arts, culture and heritage" as one of four aspired "areas of distinction" within the University's work and reaffirms its commitment to continuous growth in the quality and extent of its research activity. In the next period, within this broad context, the unit will contribute to the Institute of Humanities & Creative Arts' realisation of aims to:

- *Ensure that public dissemination of research and non-academic impact is integral to research development and that participation in such activity is an expectation of staff members in receipt of University research time and funding*
- *Actively encourage, and make visible, national and international networks of associations informing, and being informed by, research and scholarly activity*

In order further to develop and extend the unit's influence, it will ensure that all new appointments can contribute to impactful research. Recent appointments in Drama - Dalmasso, Rippel, Reeves - and in Film/Screenwriting - Stonham, Irving - have brought significant professional experience and this, coupled with growing emphasis on practice-led research, will focus anticipated future impact on practitioners, arts organisations and the development of artform/s. Thereby, the unit's research is also expected to exert impact on the public programming of performance, applied theatre (eg work with young people), and public access to, thinking about, and understanding of, contemporary performance and related new developments. The unit's plans include:

- Extending involvement in professional, national and international networks of practice
- Continuing involvement in the boards and committees of arts organisations
- Furthering of research collaborations with practitioners/organisations internationally, nationally and regionally (eg development of a festival of work for young audiences)
- Developing additional consultancy roles (eg museum interpretation work)
- Initiating a programme of interdisciplinary, accessible public presentations on research through The Hive (Worcester's new £60M joint University/public library opened in 2012 and projected to provide a focus for the University's public engagement activity over the next period)
- Extending research into new art forms and media especially virtual art forms (Second Life, Gaming) and new audiences (children/young people)

d. Relationship to case studies

The case studies illustrate the main ways in which impact was achieved by the unit in the REF period: Cochrane's relationship with a significant regional and national theatre, Birmingham Rep, impacted on and supported the practice and policy of that institution, with attendant benefits for associated communities, practitioners and organisations. Rippel's practice-based research impacted on the development and understanding of contemporary performance practice by practitioners, audiences, programmers and policy makers/funders.