

(REF3b): Impact case studies

Impact case study: 1

UoA 35 – Music, Dance and Performing Arts

Title of case study: Title of case study: Sounding the Sacred: Music, Composition and the Quotidian

1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

The impact described below relates to practice-based research conducted in proximity to and in association with a diverse range of public institutions and communities. The case for impact resides in part on the methodological proximity of the work to key sites of social utility and benefit. The deployment of 'participation' as a research methodology and the benefit accruing thereby to participating individuals and agencies in the scientific, penal, religious, arts, healthcare and educational sectors offers a ready conduit for the dissemination of knowledge and the generation of impact. The claimed impact informs the content and direction of (i) music education practice & curricula (ii) arts organisation policy (iii) discursivity within and between cognate disciplines (iv) musicological exegesis and (v) audience engagement.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)

With a critique of contemporary 'high secularism' at its centre, the research seeks to explore the potential for music to act as a medium through which alternative forms of communality and mutuality might be generated, experienced and understood. It does so by (i) exploring the relationship between music, sound and language, and (ii) problematising the sacred-secular divide in pursuing musical/performative strategies that would re-configure the cultural signature and experiential tenor of everyday 'social' spaces and environments. Out of novel configurations of music, language, narrative, dramaturgy and 'place' (libraries, sports centres, cinemas, bridges, churches, prisons, power stations, museums) come insights that relate to the development of new/alternative approaches to musical interpretation, presentation and reception. These are arrived at by making connections between composed music and everyday places, communities and circumstances. The results of this work have entered the public domain in the form of (a) site-specific operas (b) site-specific music/sound installations (c) composer residencies and (c) associated writings.

The first research trajectory ((i) above) is exemplified in writings that co-opt literary-poetic forms for musicological purposes. The short story "WKD2" (Friction, 2010) and the book length fiction "Thimio's House" (Perfect Edge, 2013), for instance, explore, on the one hand, music's presence and audibility in language, and on the other, language's musicality. The conflation of sacred-versus-secular themes within these stories feeds into the development of outputs that relate to the second research trajectory ((ii) above), which is perhaps best exemplified by "Beyond Belief", a 2001-2003 project commissioned by a consortium of local authority agencies in West Cumbria. This operatic cycle was devised in response to the Cumbrian foot-and-mouth crisis and was conceived for four everyday cultural spaces. The first performance of this four-hour work brought together a large number of beneficiaries (stakeholders, participating individuals/agencies/organisations and audiences) in a novel cohesion that crossed aesthetic boundaries. The individual works themselves (Icon of the Nativity, Passion, Testament and Creation) comprised a mix of live, recorded and digital sound, spoken text, instrumental and vocal music, projected video and live action. These were disseminated to/via local communities in the form of live performances. Beyond Belief also gained regional and national press coverage (Times Educational Supplement, BBC Radio and TV), with impact accruing in terms of public debate (and some controversy) in terms of the way bereavement and death should be represented.

More recent projects along these lines include publicly funded works conducted in association with Durham Cathedral (A Sign in Space, 2012 and Book of Bells, 2013), the Dove Marine Science Laboratory (Eight Bells 2011), HM Prison Frankland (Brass Trax 2012) and the medical charity Diabetes UK (Glucose 2012). The diverse range of agencies (ie. participant-beneficiaries) aligning themselves with the research signals a high degree of veracity, demand and impact accruing over time.

3. References to the research

Title: BEYOND BELIEF

Author: John Kefala-Kerr

Researcher/Position Held: John Kefala-Kerr Senior Lecturer in Music/Music Technology

Dates of Publication: 2001-2003 **Type of Output:** Cycle of four site-specific multimedia operas

Funding: Northern Rock Foundation/Wansbeck County Council/Copeland Borough Council/ Allerdale Borough Council/Carlisle City Council **Grant Title:** Beyond Belief

Awarded to: Cumbria Arts in Education **Value:** £95,000 **Period:** 2001-2003

URL: www.johnkefalakerr.com/passion

Composition and performance of four multimedia operas created in response to the 2001 foot and mouth crisis. Commissioned by Copeland, Allerdale and Wansbeck Borough Councils & Cumbria Arts in Education.

Title: A SIGN IN SPACE/SOUNDING THE SACRED

Author: John Kefala-Kerr

Researcher/Position Held: John Kefala-Kerr Senior Lecturer in Music/Music Technology

Date of Publication: 2012 **Type of Output:** Artist Residency & Composition

Funding: Youth Music/Durham County Council/Durham International Brass Festival/Durham Cathedral

Grant Title: Sounding the Sacred **Awarded to:** The Forge **Value:** £65,000 **Period:** Jan-Jul 2012

URL1: <http://soundingthesacred.wordpress.com/>

URL2: <http://www.intheforge.com/site/?s=a+sign+in+space>

URL3: <http://www.thejournal.co.uk/culture/arts/finalists-chosen-journal-culture-awards-4395875>

URL4: <http://johnkefalakerr.com/a-sign-in-space-4>

Residency, new music commission/score and performance: Jan-July 2012. Performances 20th & 21st July 2012, Durham Cathedral/2012 Durham International Brass Festival.

Title: FISH AND THE YESTERDAY SONG

Authors: John Kefala-Kerr, Tim Bennett & Claire Webster Saraamets

Researcher/Position Held: John Kefala-Kerr Senior Lecturer in Music/Music Technology

Date of Publication: 2011 **Type of Output:** Multimedia Performance for Day Care Centres

Funding: Arts Council England/Helix Arts **Grant Title:** Fish and the Yesterday Song

Awarded to: Skimstone Arts **Value:** £12,000 **Period:** Sept 2010-Mar 2011

URL1: <http://skimstone.org.uk/portfolio-item/fish-the-yesterday-song/>

URL2: <http://www.southtyneside.info/article/10217/fish-and-the-yesterday-song-exhibition>

Tour of multimedia performance based on testimonies of dementia sufferers. Commissioned by Helix Arts.

Performances: 15/10/10 Customs House Theatre, South Shields, 12/10/10 Washington Arts Centre, 09/11/10 Queen's Hall Arts Centre, Hexham, 20/11/10 Newcastle Arts Centre, 23/11/10 Father James Walsh Centre, South Tyneside, 02/12/10 Sunderland Minster, 17/02/11 Culture Lab, Newcastle University

Title: BRASS TRAX

Author: John Kefala-Kerr

Researcher/Position Held: John Kefala-Kerr Senior Lecturer in Music/Music Technology

Date of Publication: 2012 **Type of Output:** Artist Residency & Composition for Brass Instruments

Funding: Durham City Arts **Grant Title:** HMP Frankland Residency **Awarded to:** The Sage Gateshead

Value: £12,000 **Period:** Apr 2011-Jul 2012 **URL:** <http://johnkefalakerr.com/frankland-prison-brass>

HMP Frankland residency and new music composition: June-July 2011. Composition phase Aug 2011-Feb 2012.

Title: EIGHT BELLS

Author: John Kefala-Kerr

Researcher/Position Held: John Kefala-Kerr Senior Lecturer in Music/Music Technology

Date of Publication: 2011 **Type of Output:** Artist residency & site-specific composition for solo violin & soundtrack

Funding: North Tyneside Council **Title:** Eight Bells **Awarded to:** John Kefala-Kerr

Value: £1400 **Period:** Jan-Jun 2011 **URL:** <http://johnkefalakerr.com/8bells>

<http://www.culturescape.co.uk/mobile/mobile%20pages/clients/ntc/arts%20service/shimmer%20pages/8%20bells.html>

Residency, new music composition and performance: Dove Marine laboratory Jan-June 2011. Public performances: St. George's Church Cullercoats, 2nd June 2011 and at Shimmer Festival, North Tyneside, Nov 5th & 6th 2011

TITLE: BOOK OF BELLS

Author: John Kefala-Kerr

Researcher/Position Held: John Kefala-Kerr Senior Lecturer in Music/Music Technology

Date of Publication: 2013 **Type of Output:** Sound Installation **Funding:** Durham International Brass Festival/Durham Cathedral **Grant Title:** Book of Bells **Awarded to:** John Kefala-Kerr

Value: £3500 **Period:** Apr-Jun 2011

URL: <http://www.brassfestival.co.uk/events/book-of-bells-by-john-kefala-kerr/>
Installation 5th-22nd July 2013, Monk's Dormitory Library, Durham Cathedral.

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

The composition "Eight Bells" (2011) was the result of a collaboration with marine scientists based at Newcastle University's Dove Marine Laboratory. Feedback from stakeholders and audiences alike provide a means of evaluating and gauging the impact of this work, which was featured as part of North Tyneside's Shimmer Festival in Nov 2011—a weekend event that attracted over 5,000 visitors.

Evaluative comments from Jane Delaney, Director of the Dove Marine Laboratory (see ref 1. below), offer an indication as to the work's impact in 'helping professionals and organisations respond differently' (to findings of scientific research and their subsequent representation). Delaney's assessment was further validated when Manchester University's Faculty of Life Sciences incorporated Eight Bells into its Life Sciences Podcast series (see ref 2. below). Having been commissioned by North Tyneside Borough Council in association with Rednile Projects and then performed in St. George's Church, Cullercoats, the impact of the work extended simultaneously into several spheres of civic society (scientific, religious, artistic), activating 'sacred' coinages and inflections that provoke interdisciplinary dialogue about contemporary knowledge and epistemology.

Other research activities, such as Brass Trax (2011), highlight the impact the work achieved in its compositional (end point) and residency-based (processual) forms. Commissioned by HM Prison Frankland, The Sage Gateshead and Durham City Arts, this project evolved out of a period of time the researcher spent working as composer-in-residence in Frankland prison. Prisoners serving long custodial sentences in this Category A institution attended brass instrument improvisation and recording workshops in order to compose a new piece of music. The outcome of the process was recognised with a 2012 Koestler Trust Platinum Award for its "contribution to changing offenders' lives" (see ref 3. below)

Sounding the Sacred/A Sign in Space (2012) is the project title of a large-scale residency and opera commission funded with £60,000 from Youth Music, Durham Cathedral and Durham County Council. The project took as its starting point a prima facie engagement with 'sacred space' and followed the researcher's 'public proximity' model of musical creation, bringing together a range of beneficiaries (individuals, institutions and agencies) within the ambit of a musical artifact that took extracts from Isaac Newton's Principia and re-presented them as sacred text. The nature and number of partners and beneficiaries involved in the project (see refs 4-6 below) offers an indication of the project's veracity in generating social and cultural impact. The curatorship of the Durham International Brass Festival, for instance, ensured a high degree of exposure for the work and a high footfall (an audience of 800). A Sign in Space was subsequently shortlisted for the 2012 Arts Council Award and won Best Event in the 2012 Journal Culture Awards. The work also influenced the artistic direction of the arts-in-education agency, The Forge, in suggesting ways of conceiving and delivering contemporary arts projects and performances in and for ecclesiastical contexts (the agency has subsequently continued working with Durham Cathedral). A Sign in Space's impact also prompted the Durham Cathedral authorities to host another of the researcher's works (Book of Bells), and the compositional methodology employed therein was subsequently showcased in the BBC2 TV film "Compose Yourself", a programme directed at primary school teachers in which young people were led by the researcher through a creative process

that involved responding to, and 'reading', the inflections of a geographical location (see ref 7. below).

The installation, *Book of Bells* (2013), also achieved high attendance numbers (4,500) when it was installed in the Monk's Dormitory Library of Durham Cathedral as part of the Lindisfarne Gospels Exhibition in July 2013. With an almost unanimously glowing batch of responses from the general public (see ref 8. below), this sound installation was created with funds from Durham County Council (£4800) and was covered in the national magazine *The Wire*. The work's bell-inspired premise (and the wider inquiry it embodies) formed the basis of a CPD workshop developed for Durham & Darlington Creative Hub (see ref 9. below) and currently underpins not only the direction of that initiative's music-related content, but also its interdisciplinary and speculative emphasis.

The research's discourse about the nature of the sacred-secular divide has also made an impact on musicological debate. "Thimio's House" (*Perfect Edge*, 2013), for instance, is a recently published book whose content forms the subject of a forthcoming paper presentation at the 2014 International Word and Music Conference in Slovenia (see ref 10. below). The text represents a 'hybrid' linguistic approach to musicological exegesis, and this was detailed in a seminar given at the International Centre for Musical Studies at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne in 2011 and a paper presentation given at the International Baltic Musicology Conference in Riga the year before. *Thimio's House* will be the subject of a lecture to be given by the researcher on 2nd April 2014 as part of the B&D Studios public lecture series. At the time of writing the book has achieved advance (pre-publication) sales of 122 copies.

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

1. Dr Jane Delaney, Director, Dove Marine Laboratory, Newcastle University (Project Partner)
2. <http://lifesciencespodcast.com/2012/12/14/episode-5-the-moon-and-the-raqworm/>
3. <http://www.koestlertrust.org.uk/pages/awardsresults.html>
4. Ruth Robson: Head of Marketing & Events, Durham Cathedral (representative of project partners & beneficiaries).
5. <http://www.thejournal.co.uk/news/north-east-news/journal-culture-awards-honours-heroes-4394377>
6. <http://www.intheforge.com/site/2012/06/world-premier-of-a-sign-in-space/>
7. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00ytf1h>
8. Colin Robson: Arts Development Officer (Public Art), Durham County Council (commissioner of *Book of Bells* and holder of audience feedback statements).
9. <http://www.carmelteachingschool.org.uk/media/cpd/TheCreativeHubFlyer.pdf>
10. <http://events.ff.uni-mb.si/wordsandmusic/abstracts.html>