

Institution: University of Sussex

Unit of Assessment: UoA 35 Music

1. OVERVIEW

Research in Music at Sussex is undergoing a period of rapid change which ensures continued focus on our key areas of expertise whilst, at the same time, developing new interdisciplinary research areas. Our work is grouped around three core fields: composition, music theatre (recognising an expanded field of practice under that heading) and critical musicology, with a long-established emphasis on twentieth-century and contemporary music. It is guided in all three areas by a distinctive focus on the relationship between practice and theory. Central to our activity is the Centre for Research in Opera and Music Theatre (CROMT), founded in 2005 to consolidate the Department's research into the history, theory and practice of music theatre. In 2009 Music joined with the Departments of Media and Film to form a new School of Media, Film and Music, which has led to an important re-orientation of Music's research agenda into new disciplinary fields. We are a small Department of 5.8 FTE, but our focused and strategic approach to research management ensures that we continue to maintain a high profile in our respective fields of research.

2. RESEARCH STRATEGY

Our strategy since 2008 has been to consolidate our existing strengths in the relationship between the history, theory and practice of 20th-Century and contemporary music and music theatre whilst developing related disciplinary fields and new cross-disciplinary approaches. CROMT continues to be the strategic hub for our research activities, providing a base for cross-disciplinary research that involves almost all members of the Department in different ways, whether as composers, theatre practitioners or musicologists. We have also sought to maximise the opportunities offered by our position since 2009 within the School of Media, Film and Music to promote new interdisciplinary research fields. We are therefore developing research expertise in the areas of composition for film and visual media, electronic music and music technology, and popular music studies, which have been underpinned by new appointments in the current REF period (see Section below on Staffing). In all of these fields we remain committed to the investigation of the relationship between theory and practice, and to research-led practice. Finally, we aim to ensure the widest reach and impact for our research through the development of national and international partnerships, both academic and non-academic, and through the dissemination of our research outcomes.

We have carried out this strategy of consolidation and development in five interconnected fields:

- **CROMT**

We have consolidated and extended the contribution of CROMT to the field of opera and music-theatre studies through the investment of staff time and financial resources. This is represented in particular by five international conferences organised since 2008:

i) Opera Indigene: Re/presenting First Nations and Indigenous Cultures, 2008 (in partnership with UWE); ii) Beckett and Music, 2009; iii) (Re)-Performing the Posthuman, 2010; iv) Time, Realism and Convention in Recent Opera, 2011; and v) 'Astonished and Somewhat Terrified': Opera and the Transformation of the World by Technology, 2012.

CROMT is also the focus for many of the cross-disciplinary strands of our research, since an expanded category of music theatre invites broader conceptions of multimedia and intermedia in which both composers and musicologists have a stake, such as Hughes' extensive work in opera and other multi-media forms, Ficarra's work in experimental music theatre and composition for dance and object-based performance, McKay's work on Stravinsky's music theatre works, which was in dialogue with Hopkins' Give me Your Blessing project, based on *Les Noces*, one of Stravinsky's most radical cross-genre theatrical experiments, and Elliott's work on music and place, which is in dialogue with site-specific music theatre practices by Till and Hopkins. A marker of CROMT's external reputation is that it attracts a wide range of visiting research fellows, enabling us to enrich our research activities with outside expertise. Katie Tearle, Head of Education at Glyndebourne Opera, worked with us on the history and theory of

opera education in the UK (2011), opera scholar Laurel Zeiss from Baylor University, Texas worked on a book on the dramaturgy of time in contemporary opera for OUP, and co-organised (with Till) the symposium *Time, Realism and Convention in Recent Opera*, and composer Altin Volaj developed work on a new opera exploring voice and electronics as a visiting fellow in 2010–11. As Director of CROMT, Till also mentored the opera conductor Oliver Gooch as a Clore Leadership Research Fellow (2008–10).

- **Theory and practice**

Critical reflection on the relationship between theory and practice is central to our research aims. To consolidate this relationship we have embedded theoretically-led practice research, and critical/theoretical reflection on creative practice, in a variety of ways. Three of the CROMT conferences have combined theoretical with creative contributions. The Beckett and Music symposium (2009) involved the UK première of a Beckett-based music-theatre work, originally commissioned for presentation at the 2008 DMCE symposium in Paris, and the performance of four new Beckett-based compositions by Sussex composers, alongside contributions from scholars. The (Re)Performing the Posthuman (2010) and ‘Astonished and Somewhat Terrified’: Opera and the Transformation of the World by Technology (2012) conferences both included performances conceived in relation to, and alongside critical discussion of, the conference themes. Practical research presentations to external audiences also include an element of critical–theoretical reflection – e.g. the pre-performance discussion, with a panel that included visiting Israeli opera scholar Michal Grover-Friedlander, before a performance of Hughes’ opera *When the Flame Dies* (Canterbury 2012).

- **Dissemination**

Dissemination of our research activities, in particular practice as research, is a crucial component of our strategy. To consolidate and extend this we have ensured that documentation of creative research projects, with critical–theoretical reflection, is published wherever possible. Till has published extended critical accounts of two of his experimental music-theatre projects, both AHRC-funded, in a chapter in a book on *Composed Theatre* (Intellect 2012) and in *Contemporary Theatre Review* (2013). Till’s concept of a ‘post-operatic’ music theatre has also gained wide currency in debates around recent music theatre, as evidenced by the discussion of his work (and complete translation into Italian of his 2004 critical manifesto for a post-operatic music theatre) in the chapter ‘Per un teatro post-operistico: Adorno, Badiou, Till’ in Francesco Ceraolo, *Registi All’Opera* (Bulzoni, Rome 2011). Hughes’ music for the video installation *Auditorium* (2007) is discussed in a critical essay by Till in the publication on the project (Photoworks 2011). As a member of the International Federation of Theatre Research Intermedia Working Group, Hopkins has experimented and innovated with new forms of documentation and presentation for his projects, involving printed and online interfaces, in the Working Group publication *Mapping Intermediality in Performance* (Amsterdam University Press 2010). In addition, the papers given at the CROMT Opera Indigene conference on the representation of native peoples in opera were published in a book with the same title (Ashgate 2010), and a book based on contributions to the Beckett and Music symposium (co-edited by Till) will be published by Ashgate in early 2014, with contributions from both scholars and musicians.

- **Interdisciplinarity**

We have ensured that our research fields continue to be current and responsive to new developments in music, whether artistic or technological, and to new developments in the critical and theoretical understanding of music and related arts. In particular, we recognise that popular music, disseminated by rapidly evolving platforms of distribution and reception, constitutes by far the largest part of peoples’ experience of music today, and that the boundaries between ‘art’ and ‘popular’ music are increasingly porous. Work on popular music and new media and technologies has been strengthened by Music’s union with Media and Film and the opening to related research in these fields – e.g. Hopkins’ work with the BBC and Transport for London on the development of new mobile media platforms for music (Proms Music Walk 2012) in relation to Michael Bull’s influential studies of mobile music technologies, Hopkins’ work being discussed in his contribution to the Bull-organised Bridging Sound

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conference (2012). Equally we have been able to engage with work in cultural studies to study music in relation to issues like class, gender or identity – e.g. the work of Elliott on music, space and place which relates to the work of Sally Munt and Bull in Urban Studies, and was the subject of a cross-disciplinary symposium entitled Singing Places held at Sussex in November 2013. Hughes' compositions for film have connected to work on sound and music in film being undertaken by film scholars, brought together in the Music and the Moving Image symposium in Autumn 2012. The Department has also worked with Media colleagues in the area of jazz studies, following the acquisition by the University of the John Altman archive of jazz videos, which led to an AHRC-funded research fellowship based at Sussex and attached to the AHRC Beyond Text project entitled 'The Use of Audiovisual Resources in Jazz Historiography and Scholarship' (2009–10).

• Partnerships

Partnerships with external players have been key in consolidating existing research specialisms and in developing related disciplinary fields and cross-disciplinary approaches. The Department's long research relationship with Glyndebourne Opera was consolidated with the establishment of a formal partnership between Glyndebourne and the University in 2010. Tearle's visiting fellowship further embedded the relationship between Music at Sussex and Glyndebourne, which has included an AHRC collaborative doctoral award for a composer-in-residence at Glyndebourne (completed 2009) and a project on music therapy for people suffering from dementia. Further opera collaborations have taken place with The Royal Opera, Opera North and Aldeburgh Festival, with whom Hopkins has developed his AHRC Fellowship projects, and cross-disciplinary collaborations with the BBC and Transport for London for Hopkins' Proms Music Walk project (2012). CROMT has also established a partnership with the Puppet Centre involving a series of workshops and performances on object performance and sound. Internationally CROMT has been a partner in the seven-year EU-funded Dramaturgie Musicale Contemporaine en Europe (DMCE) project based at the University of Paris 8, and is the UK member of the Europeana Theatre consortium, with a project to digitise the archives of the Royal Opera in London currently under consideration for funding.

Plans for 2014–19

Our future strategy is to build on our existing research strengths in the theory and practice of opera and music theatre, composition and musicology through extending our disciplinary currency and expanding our interdisciplinary connections. In particular we aim:

- To expand our areas of research expertise in opera and music theatre to create more impact in the socio-economic understanding of these forms, in particular with regard to the impact of new media and technologies. We are currently working with Glyndebourne on a project on the potential of new media for opera performance dissemination and new opera forms (such as live cinema performance, web-based and mobile media platforms, etc.), beginning with an international conference bringing together academic researchers and industry participants in the field in October 2014.
- To extend our engagement with other research being undertaken in the School of Media, Film and Music, in particular in relation to developments around digital-humanities crossings between the Arts and Informatics. Activities already planned in this field include a conference on 'Musical Materialities in the Digital Age' (2014) in association with the Centre for Material Digital Cultures, and the 'Live Coding' project – a 2-year AHRC Network project involving thirty researchers from different disciplines, for which Magnusson is PI (funding confirmed).
- To expand our external partnerships both within the UK and beyond to allow us to engage with both broader and more-current fields of research: e.g. CROMT is currently in discussions for collaboration on an intercultural Chinese/Western Opera research centre with Shanghai Jiaotong University; the Department is currently negotiating a collaboration with the Real-time Musical Interaction Group at IRCAM in Paris.
- Building on Till's recognised leadership in the area of practice as research (e.g. his lead article on the topic, *THE*, 7 March 2013), we will build on our experience in this area by further investigating and formalising methodologies for practice-based research at all levels, with a

particular emphasis upon methodologies for composition and performance as research. We will also investigate more extensively the use of appropriate digital platforms for the dissemination of creative practice research.

3. PEOPLE

Staffing strategy

Appointments since 2008 represent a strategic response to staff movement (in particular the departure of McKay in September 2013, and the decrease of Butler to 0.6 FTE due to ill health), that also marks overall growth in the Department. The employment of composer Ficarra in September 2012 consolidates the strategy of expanding music-theatre research with a dedicated composer in this field, the appointment of Elliott – again in September 2012 – establishes expertise in popular music and cultural studies, whilst innovative research and practice in digital music technology is extended with the appointment of Magnusson in September 2013. In line with our emphasis on theory/practice, all new faculty appointments in practice are required to evidence engagement with critical/theoretical reflection on their practice.

Staff development. Our staff development strategy is to support members of faculty in pursuing their individual research goals through appropriate leave and research funds from the School Research and Staff Development budget, whilst also identifying opportunities for them to engage with collaborative research opportunities. As leader for Research in the Department, Till regularly holds meetings with faculty both individually and as a group to discuss research activities, strategies and opportunities. In addition to the normal good practices associated with staff development (e.g. annual appraisal), specific research and research-supervision training needs are identified for all faculty. A School fund and the University's Research Themes and Seed Corn Funds provide start-up funding for projects. Early-Career Researchers are supported via teaching and administrative remission. Their integration is facilitated into the activities of the Department's and School's research activities (reading groups, symposia, conferences, research-in-progress seminars, research networks, and research 'away-days'), as well as through invitations to joint research activities – e.g. Ficarra has been working with Till on the development of projects for CROMT. ECRs are also, where possible, given the opportunity to co-supervise doctoral projects with experienced supervisors as mentors, something we have been able to facilitate with both Ficarra and Elliott within one term of their arrival. Equal opportunities issues form part of all recruitment interviews and are key in mentoring arrangements.

Research leave is evaluated annually against set criteria: the nature and scale of the planned research project, the projected outcome(s) and the timeliness (against a minimum entitlement of one term in nine). All staff submit individual annual research plans and request leave against these plans. Between 2008 and 2012, all members of the Department were awarded periods of formal leave to complete significant projects. Smaller units of remission may be awarded informally if a member of faculty takes on exceptional research or research-related administrative responsibilities.

Post-doctoral researchers and research fellows. These researchers are either attached to funded projects, or bring their own funding – e.g. AHRC Fellow Hopkins (2007–12), post-doctoral composer Volaj and US opera scholar Laurel Zeiss. To support them they are mentored by an appropriate member of faculty, given suitable work space, and fully integrated into the Department's research culture.

Exchanges between academia and external bodies. Relations with external bodies have been a key part of our research strategy, bringing added benefits to both parties with regard to access to research and development skills and opportunities for the professional partner, and access to professional resources and wider publics for the Music Department. Our relationship with Glyndebourne Opera has taken many forms in addition to the activities mentioned above, ranging from faculty delivering talks, study days, workshops and learning tools related to the repertory, to collaborations on creative and academic research projects, either initiated by Glyndebourne or by the Department. More recently we have developed our relationship with the London Sinfonietta following a jointly organised visit by Steve Reich to Sussex, with performance of his music, and we are planning a follow-up project with Louis Andriessen.

Research students

The Department's strategy with regard to doctoral students is to attract students in the key fields of critical musicology, composition and music theatre (history/theory and theory/practice) that match faculty specialisms. We insist on a robust relationship between practice and theory in doctoral projects and, in line with our commitment to interdisciplinary study, we also encourage the cross-supervision of projects with other departments – e.g. a student researching Korean Pop and Transnational Flows being supervised by Music and by Cultural Studies. Whilst composition has hitherto been defined as conventional score-based composition, in 2011 we extended the permitted formats for submission to include multi-media work, digital sonic arts, and performance, to reflect the changing field of composition today, and have also revised our submission criteria to bring composition in line with other practice-based doctorates in the University, including a more-extensive written component to meet the need for composers working in HE to be able to engage more discursively and reflectively with their own and other work.

Research students are integrated into the research culture of both the Department and the School. Within Music we run graduate research seminar series on themes such as 'Collaboration' and 'Musical Meaning', with specified readings as well as talks or practical workshops. We also organise opportunities for students to present work-in-progress, and students also participate in the School's fortnightly doctoral research seminar series, to which they are required to contribute at least once a year, and through which they are able to interact with students and faculty in other related disciplines. The School runs a highly successful research students mentoring scheme, in which senior students mentor new doctoral students. We support student activities and external conference attendance through earmarked funding. PhD students have full access to all of the Department's and School's comprehensive facilities (see Section 4).

A dual supervision system ensures supervision continuity, pairs new with experienced supervisors, and provides added quality assurance. For practice doctorates, it pairs theory and practice supervisors, ensuring that both aspects of a project are fully developed. There is a robust annual progress review of each student, which includes review of research training requirements.

The University Doctoral School provides a comprehensive generic training programme covering Vitae Researcher Development Framework skills; the three Arts and Humanities Schools jointly provide a more-tailored programme, and the School organises subject-specific training events (e.g. training for students undertaking practice research, and social-sciences methods training). Where specific research-training skills are not available internally, external providers are identified. Teaching training is also provided for doctoral students, leading to teaching accreditation. Doctoral students are also encouraged and supported in organising research events such as conferences and seminar series, and to develop professional skills in the public sphere – e.g. a student who contributed to a Glyndebourne Opera study day. The Department has supported a successful student bid for an AHRC Collaborative Skills Development Grant with Goldsmiths, and practice students have also participated in an AHRC-funded symposium on documentation (May 2013).

4. INCOME, INFRASTRUCTURE AND FACILITIES

Research income. The Department has been successful in securing income from research councils (AHRC: Hopkins, Fellowship in the Creative and Performing Arts, 2007–12; Till, *Pas si*, 2008; Jazz Research Fellowship, 2009–10), charitable bodies (Leverhulme Trust: Till Major Research Fellowship, 2012–15), and the European Union (Till, *Pas si*, 2008). Composers in the Department have secured additional commission income from bodies such as the BBC, Cheltenham Festival, and Poems on the Underground.

The scholarly infrastructure. In addition to the normal university research resources the Department holds an extensive collection of scores and recordings for study purposes, with particular emphasis on acquisition policy in our key research areas such as opera and music theatre, film music, sound art, etc. The John Altman archive of jazz videos is the most extensive collection of visual, as opposed to audio, records of jazz performance in the UK, and offers an invaluable resource for performance analysis. The Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts, which is due for formal opening in 2014, is already operational and brings together researchers from drama, music, creative writing, media, film, cultural studies and art history, to engage in joint

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projects and external collaborations; relevant examples are the Puppet Talk (with drama, creative media and music) and the Motion Capture and Digital Media (with Informatics) projects.

Organisational infrastructure. Overall responsibility for Departmental research is delegated to a member of the Department, who represents the Department on the termly School Research Committee, chaired by the School's Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange, who is a member of the School's Senior Management Team and the University Research Committee. Research is also a standing item on the termly Departmental meeting. Research is supported at School level by a research co-ordinator and assistant, and financially by both the School and the Department through five main streams, from:

- the School to CROMT, awarded in relation to annual reviews and plans;
- the School for music research seminars and other research events;
- the School for individual members of faculty for attendance at conferences, study trips, etc.;
- the School for doctoral students to attend conferences, study trips, etc.; and
- the Department for creative practice, performances, etc. including support for material costs for doctoral students, and the hire of public spaces to show work, etc.

Grant applications are also supported by the University's Research & Enterprise Office, where School-dedicated staff provide pre- and post-grant support.

Operational infrastructure. An annual budget and central support underpin standard and specific IT needs. Practice research is supported by the School's media labs and equipment, all available 24/7, with hardware and software updated annually, supported by specialist technical support staff (3FTE) and production tutors (5FTE). In addition there is a dedicated lab for Music students comprising 10 Mac Pro computers for audio and visual processing, each with MBox mini sound interfaces for use with Pro Tools LE, and controller keyboard, running Logic Pro, Sibelius, Final Cut Studio, Peak Pro and Max/MSP, plus various specialist applications supplied by IRCAM (including AudioSculpt and Open Music). The Jonathan Harvey electronic music studio features a control room with 24-channel Mackie desk connections and two live rooms; Pro Tools recording system with digital control surface, outboard microphone pre-amps and compressors (Focusrite, Drawmer 1960) and effects units (Lexicon, Fireworx etc. Microphones include AKG condensers and Shure dynamic. The University currently has three dedicated spaces for theatre performance, and will regain a 450-seat theatre when the Attenborough Centre reopens in 2014. All doctoral students are provided with office space and the necessary IT resources.

5. COLLABORATION OR CONTRIBUTION TO THE DISCIPLINE OR RESEARCH BASE

Collaboration with external partners forms a key part of our research strategy, both institutionally and individually. In addition to the institutional collaborations already mentioned, individual research collaborations include Hopkins' and Till's memberships of Working Parties of the International Federation of Theatre Research (Intermedia and Music Theatre), both having contributed to Working Party publications; McKay was Sussex leader on the Creative Campus Initiative (2008–09) in a consortium of 13 HEIs in the South-East region, obtaining a £1M HEFCE grant as part of the Cultural Olympiad, and securing around £35,000 for the University of Sussex.

Members of faculty hold editorial positions on journals, e.g.

- Elliott is Associate Editor of *Radical Musicology*, a peer-reviewed online journal; and
- Till is a member of the Editorial Board for *Studies in Musical Theatre* (Intellect) and *Experiments and Intensities* (online peer-reviewed journal of practice as research).

Members of faculty also regularly referee for academic publications and research proposals:

- Elliot for *Volume!: La revue des musiques populaires* (France) and *Journal for Artistic Research* (Netherlands);
- Ficarra for *Organised Sound* (Cambridge);
- Hughes for *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*;
- Till has refereed book proposals for Cambridge University Press (x2), Ashgate (x2), Routledge (x2) and Continuum, and articles for *Contemporary Theatre Review* (x2) and *Studies in Musical Theatre* (x3). In addition to research proposals for UK funding bodies, he has reviewed research

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proposals for the Austrian Research Council, the Swiss National Science Foundation, Hong Kong Institute of Education (x3), and Research Foundation, Flanders.

All senior faculty regularly examine UK doctorates; in addition Hughes has examined a doctorate at the University of Adelaide, Australia, and Till at Aarhus University, Denmark.

In addition to the numerous Departmental conferences and symposia already mentioned, faculty have also been involved in organising national conferences. McKay was a member of the Organising Committee for the RMA Annual Conferences, London 2010 and 2013, and was Lead Conference Organiser for the RMA Annual Conference 'Horizons', University of Sussex 2011, and Till was a member of the Organising Committee and Selection Panel for *The Musical Body: Gesture, Representation and Ergonomics in Musical Performance*, 2009, the Institute of Musical Research, University of London).

HEI consultancies:

- Butler, External Examiner, BA Music Oxford Brookes and BA Music Oxford;
- McKay, External Examiner, BA Music, Hull; and
- Till, External Examiner M. Res. in Theatre and Performance, Plymouth; BA in Theatre and Performance, Winchester; BA in Music and Drama, Anglia Ruskin; BA in Opera Studies, Rose Bruford College. External Reviewer for BA in Music and Theatre, Hull, and External Validator, BA in Music Theatre, Falmouth; external on Professorial interview panel, Department of Music, Kingston; external reviewer, Reader promotion application, Central School of Speech Drama.

Scholarly awards or fellowships:

Ficarra was awarded the 2010/11 George Ladd Prix de Paris for a postgraduate student at the University of California, Berkeley, and Till was awarded a 3-year Leverhulme Major Research Fellowship 2012–15.

Invited keynotes, lectures and/or performances

Members of the Department are invited to speak and present their work in a wide variety of contexts, both academic and professional, national and international, ensuring widespread dissemination of their research. Examples include:

- *Elliott*: pre-film talk, Vamos! Festival, Newcastle upon Tyne, July 2013;
- *Ficarra*: Performances of commissions by Poems on the Underground, British Museum, London (2008) and St Giles Cripplegate, London (2009); international performances at CDMC, Paris (2008), Composer's Union, Moscow (2008), Moving Baltic Festival, St Petersburg (2008); New York City Ballet (2009); Conservatorio Profesional de Salamanca (2011); Keynote+Connect Festival, Malmö (2011).
- *Hopkins*: Presentations on practice, Thursday Club, Goldsmiths (2008); Central School of Speech and Drama and Central St Martins School of Art (2009); Cambridge University and Royal Academy of Music (2010); Brunel (2010) and BEAM Festival, Brunel (2011);
- *Hughes*: Performances of music at Hanns Eisler Conservatory, Berlin (2008); Conservatoire Frédéric Chopin, Paris (2011); Tel Aviv and Jerusalem (2011); Institute for Modern Music, Freiburg, Germany (2012); *Auditorium* installed at Nichido Contemporary Art, Tokyo (2009) and Brancolini-Grimaldi Gallery, London (2012); Broadcasts BBC Radio 3 (2010); Swedish Radio (2010); Voice of Israel Radi (2011).
- *Till*: Invited talks on practice, Sheffield University (2008), RNCM (2009); 'Processes of Devising Theatre' Interdisciplinary Workshop, University of Hildesheim, Germany (2009); invited talks Digital Opera Conference, York (2011), Heiner Goebbels Symposium, Birmingham Conservatoire (2012), Artaud Forum, Brunel (2012), Beckett Symposium, Malta Arts Festival (2012), 'Practice as Research in the UK', 'Komposition und Forschung' Symposium, Hildesheim University (2012), 'Music and Architecture', 'Sound and Space' seminar series, Hanover Hochschule für Musik, Germany (2013), Keynote talk, 'Einstein on the Beach', 'Perceptual Tensions, Sensory Resonances' Conference, University of Toronto (2012). Till also regularly gives talks on opera, and contributes programme articles, for all of the major UK opera companies.