Institution: Brunel University

Unit of Assessment: 35 - Music, Drama, Dance and Performing Arts

a. Context

Research in Music and Theatre reflects the wider culture of promoting research and enterprise 'for the benefit of individuals and society at large', stated in the University's Royal Charter of 1966, which has characterised the University from its inception. In Music and Theatre, research strategy has consistently been designed to maximise the number of non-academic users, beneficiaries and audiences for research, to generate different types of impact and to measure both the significance and reach of that impact.

Much of the research undertaken by staff and research students in Music and Theatre at Brunel University is practice-based and specific consideration of a non-academic audience is usually implicit in such work. Researchers whose outputs are in the form of journal articles, book chapters or monographs are also encouraged to maximise the impact of their work. Impact for Richards' 2010 monograph on Abramovic, for example, has grown because of her subject's high profile in the UK in the period since publication; Mitra's chapter on Indian female dancers ('Living a Body Myth, Performing a Body Reality') is featured as a key text in postcolonial studies in *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader* (ed. A. Jones, 2010).

Since the emphasis of practice-based research in Music and Theatre at Brunel is on innovation through creative practice, the main user group is the international community of performers, promoters, institutions and audiences who share an interest in these innovations. Impact is reflected through audience response, both qualitative and quantitative, through the adoption of new approaches by practitioners, through promoters' involvement in projects, and through institutions' willingness to test or compare new design or presentation technologies. In Music the successful impact of research is demonstrated, for example, by the range of major festivals at which their work has been presented, such as Ultraschall (Berlin), Transit (Leuven), Darmstadt, Donaueschingen, Huddersfield, the BBC Proms, etc.

Research in Theatre and Digital Performance has been widely disseminated in museums, galleries and festivals. For example, Stelarc's installations of The Articulated Head was one of the finalists for the 2010 Australian Engineering Excellence Awards and was exhibited at the Powerhouse Science Museum in 2010-2011 with an estimated 1.8 million visitors. His virtual systems performances attracted companies (e.g. Musion Systems Ltd) to work with him for public showcases at Kinetica 2012. Stelarc's work on suspension has generated a growing international following of participants from communities that explore body modification and he recently worked as director of group suspension performances in Finland and the USA. and Birringer's DAP-Lab productions have been presented at numerous venues in Japan, Canada and Europe; his collaborative practice has influenced other media arts organizations and featured in an HEA documentary as an exemplary model of practice-led research. Ploeger's body installations have toured across Europe and were recently featured in a THE article.

b. Approach to impact

Researchers in Music and Theatre at Brunel develop their work through interaction at every level with networks across the music, theatre, and media arts professions. For practice-based researchers these interactions are not only with fellow practitioners and promoters but also with socio-cultural organisations (e.g. social workers, NGOs, urban projects) and with initiatives engaged with the examination of the effects of technology on the body, with issues of equality and human rights (e.g. the Centre for Gender and Sexuality Studies), and ageing.

Researchers are often at the forefront of developing impact through their interaction with professional groups: Muenz is a member of the vocal trio Sprechbohrer, Walshe is a member of the composer-performer ensemble Stock11, Riley collaborates with the ensemble Piano Circus and with the writer Michael Rosen, Templeton is the director of the theatre group The Relationship, and Birringer directs the DAP-Lab ensemble and AlienNation Co (USA). Further impact is generated through collaboration with institutions. For example, Walshe's *Die Taktik* reached an audience beyond those who attended its Stuttgarter Oper performances through an extensive series of school workshops using educational materials developed by the opera company in

collaboration with Walshe; this impact has been tracked and documented by the company.

Walshe's engagement with the project was facilitated by the university's impact culture initiatives. In 2010 the University introduced Knowledge Transfer Leave to allow academic staff to spend dedicated periods of time engaged in knowledge exchange projects outside the institution and Knowledge Transfer Secondments to support industrialists working within the University. The Work Placement scheme also enables staff and students to work beyond the university and for *Die Taktik* student projects in Brunel's Sonic Arts and Computer Gaming undergraduate courses were adapted so that students could produce video and sound material for the work; they were then funded to attend the premiere in Stuttgart.

The Research Centres in Music and Theatre support individual researchers and groups of researchers in their engagement with professional practitioners in their various disciplines through teaching remission and funding from the School of Arts conference budget. Postgraduate students are also supported, particularly where their work has impact beyond academia. For example, in May 2013 five students successfully showed their work during the Month of Performance Art Berlin; this led to further invitations to the Czech Republic and USA.

Impact is incorporated in the academic promotion process, in the application forms for research leave, and for the BRIEF award scheme for early career researchers. Training in communicating the public benefit of research is provided for research staff and postgraduate research students: an 'Impact Toolkit', developed by the Research Support and Development Office (RSDO), supports staff in developing the impact of their research; 'Understanding Impact' forms part of the PDAP training course for all new staff; colleagues on the University Future Research Leaders scheme must demonstrate evidence of impact.

Expertise and advice on liaising with funding bodies, charitable organisations and industry is also provided through the RSDO and the university works with an external PR consultancy to support staff media engagement. The University introduced BURA in 2007 to provide an on-line archive of all research outputs, passed an Open Access Mandate in 2010 and introduced an Open Access Publishing Fund in 2011, giving potential users free access to our research.

c. Strategy and plans

Music and Theatre have clear strategies to develop and monitor the impact of both individual and collaborative research. Fundamental to this is the recruitment and retention of high-profile researchers and artist-practitioners, such as Fox, Betteridge, Stelarc and Walshe, and the development of research in areas with considerable potential impact, such as body-technologies digital performance, gender and sexuality, instrumental theatre, and musical instrument design. Transcultural research is also an area of current and future development, reflected in the foundation of the Brunel Institute of Middle Eastern Music (BICMEM), Birringer's DAP-Lab cooperation with Butoh dancers in Japan, Mitra's research focus on Indian dance-theatre and postcolonial theatre practice, and the 2012 ARTAUD Forum which brought theatre practitioners from Croatia and The Netherlands to London to link up with the SPAZIO network, a European programme for young dance makers.

Plans are also in place to extend the range of impact in Music and Theatre. The creation of the Brunel Institute of Composing and BICMEM not only consolidates existing research undertaken by both Music staff and research students in these areas, but also proposes new agendas which reach beyond academia. The appointment of Betteridge extends the range of the work being undertaken in Theatre with projects such as his acclaimed reconstructions of Tudor masques at Hampton Court and his 2013 'Staging the Scottish Court' venture in the Great Halls of Linlithgow Palace and Stirling Castle.

Senior staff in Music and Theatre are responsible for mentoring researchers and providing organisational support and guidance for the implementation of research plans. In particular, the Deputy Head of School (Research) and the Research Coordinators for Music and Theatre actively support staff in applying for research grants (AHRC, ESRC, Leverhulme, Wellcome Trust, etc.), helping them to shape project proposals whose subject matter and methodologies look beyond academia, such as Broadhurst's project on ageing and her collaboration with the London Knowledge Lab which engage with vital issues in the life sciences and health sector. Early career

researchers received particular encouragement and training in grant application, and the university has a range of initiatives to enable staff to pursue research at different stages in their careers (for example, Nicolls recently received a £14,000 post-maternity grant through the Athena SWAN scheme to undertake research in new instrument design).

Every effort is made to increase the visibility of research in the public domain. As well as Open Access schemes such as BURA, researchers contribute to non-academic magazines, journals and newspapers – Fox, for example, is a regular feature writer for the *Guardian* – have blogs and make other use of the internet. Birringer's DAPLabTV has streamed research lectures and workshops to online audiences and is now engaged in the creation of a 'Meta-Academy' program of online performance research platforms; a pilot project will document art start-ups and demonstrate to policy-makers how government policies contribute to innovation in the arts and how business partnerships can be developed by artists-entrepreneurs.

d. Relationship to case studies

The selected case studies demonstrate three different approaches to impact. The Comprehensibility of Text in New Composition for Vocal Ensemble project developed out of a longstanding interaction between a researcher, Fox, and a professional performing group, The Clerks. As the case study explains, institutional support for the research enabled the potential impact of the project to be developed at an early stage of the research within the university's Researching the Arts conference; later an extended period of study leave enabled Fox to complete the project and the university also supported the impact of the research through an initiative linking the university and the Cheltenham Festivals of Science and Music.

Stelarc's Articulated Head and Ear on Arm/Alternate Anatomical Architectures demonstrate how the university's Research Centres can enhance the impact of projects by coordinating innovative technological research by staff such as Stelarc, Birringer, Ploeger, Faia and Broadhurst and promoting it to an international and interdisciplinary audiences. Stelarc's work offers new socio-cultural applications in artificial intelligence and wearable technologies and is acknowledged widely as being at the forefront of experimentation drawing considerable media attention to the conceptualisation and realisation of biotechnological and engineering-based art.

The Brunel Institute for Contemporary Middle-Eastern Music demonstrates an evolving impact strategy which aims to consolidate potential impact by supporting the research interests of particular staff and research students with a wide range of administrative, archival and executive expertise at institutional level. The development of a unique archive and the marshalling of significant political support for events such as the BICMEM launch at LSO St Luke's draws not only on Wiegold's developing research interest in Middle Eastern music but on the wider networks – cultural, social and political, national and international – within which Brunel University is active.