

Subject / Object / Practice / Place

Connecting Creatively through the Performing Arts

10th Annual School of Performing Arts Conference, University of Malta

Day 1 Abstracts:

Keynote: Prof Amanda Bayley

Eco-creative approaches to environmental listening and intercultural musicking

By using sound as a way of knowing, Steven Feld's description of 'sounding and listening as knowing-in-action' (2017) can help to teach humans to re-learn how to listen. Dylan Robinson (2020) similarly encourages us to rethink critical listening positionality and relationality, arguing for an empathic listening. Reflections on two interdisciplinary research projects will show how listening to sounds in nature can help to develop music pedagogies, cultural literacy, and ecoliteracy, valuable both for environmentally sustainable growth and ecological urbanism. 'Hear Water: building environmental empathy through deep listening' aims to increase knowledge and understanding of climate change, the value of blue spaces, and actions individuals can take through community-based, public engagement activities. 'Ecotones: Soundscapes of Trees' seeks new ways to communicate an awareness of environmental issues in rural and urban environments, in the UK and in South Korea, through cross-cultural connections and an eco-creative approach to environmental listening. Each project emphasises the significance and diversity of sounds from human and beyond-human worlds, highlighting their mutual impacts. Connecting creatively through intercultural exchange is further illustrated in the project 'Transforming Lives through Ethnomusicological Engagement in Kwando, Namibia', where collaborative methods are employed to contribute to health and wellbeing, and to drive positive social change in the context of music, cultural and ecological sustainability. A range of examples from educational and communitybased activities in each of the three projects will extend boundaries of artistic expression relating to natural and cultural heritage. In these different contexts of listening and musicking, new tools and methodologies are being developed for decentring the West, and encouraging a plurality of voices that challenges current forms of knowledge and knowledge production.

11:00-12:30 Parallel session: Panel 1 - Level 1 - Meeting Room 101*

Historical Rhythms: A Tapestry of Socio-Politics and the Arts

Dr Stacey Prickett, ‘Cold War European arts festivals: Dancing in politicised spaces’

In the height of the Cold War, countries in the western bloc increasingly turned to the soft power of art in their battles for ‘hearts and minds’ against communism. The number of arts festivals in European towns and cities burgeoned in part because of this, as local historical sites became the backdrop for performances usually danced on proscenium stages. Grand buildings, ancient monuments and medieval walls offered new scenery and contexts for state-supported dance. US dance companies were celebrated by the government for how they engaged with local audiences and challenged anti-American feelings in Italy (Spoleto), Yugoslavia (Dubrovnik) and Greece (Athens), among others. Companies such as Jerome Robbins’ Ballets: U.S.A. and American Ballet Theatre were meant to display the benefits of capitalism and democracy. Other national companies revealed the impact of Soviet dance, blended with local traditional forms. This paper moves beyond the simple binary of democratic west and communist east, by examining the political and artistic efficacy of dance in arts festivals during the Cold War of the late 1950s/early 1960s. It delves into the transformation of space, audience responses and how the festivals established models for those we enjoy today.

Dr Max Erwin, ‘Music and Conservative Revolution: Performing German Identity on the Operatic Stage’

Writing in the inaugural issue of *Deutsche Bühnenkorrespondenz*, published in January 1932 by the dramaturgische Büro of the Kampfbund für deutsche Kultur (KfdK), Walter Stang asserted that ‘liberalism and its ideology of the absolute value of the individual [and] the “autonomy of all art” [...] has robbed the theater of every inner Völkisch and cultural relation, every higher meaning, every inner unity, in short, all content.’ Against this backdrop of virulent cultural desolation, then, the role of the Kampfbund was ‘the creation of a German repertoire’. This goal remained consistent as the KfdK transformed from an advocacy group to an organ of centralised political power, reconstituted in June 1934 as the Nationalsozialistische Kulturgemeinde (NSKG). As Stang’s credo suggests, the task was central to the organisation’s radically organicist conception of culture as a racial wellspring, and the creation of a ‘Deutscher Opernspielplan’ – an operatic canon for the Third Reich – was taken on by both cultural functionaries and politically-engaged composers.

This project examines the efforts of the NSKG to delineate and foster a contemporary ‘German’ operatic culture, drawing special attention to works published in-house by the Deutscher Musikverlag in der NSKG. It highlights both the work of these institutions as patron and broker for musicians and the work of composers and cultural administrators in creating a supposedly pure, Germanic, and collectivist aesthetic paradigm for music theatre.

***Dr Kathrina Farrugia-Kriel, ‘As she danced one evening in late spring...Choreography as subject/object/practice/place in *The Longing* (1978)’**

In late spring 1978, a young woman rehearses her solo, *The Longing*. Mimi, dressed in a gold and light green chiffon costume, stands in the rose-pink studio at Otrada on Tigné Terrace in Sliema, Malta. She performs choreography by Princess Nathalie Poutiatine, set to music by Czech composer Zdeněk Fibich. The camera follows Mimi’s movements. Her gaze is directed towards something unattainable, and her performance transcends choreography from a by-gone era. The recording of this rehearsal, now preserved on an 8mm film, is the only recording of Poutiatine’s choreography from the ‘golden era’ of the early 20C in Malta (Farrugia-Kriel, 2020). While Poutiatine’s legacy is captured in photographs, notebooks and a couple of short videos of subjects and objects of the past, what remains of Poutiatine’s ‘art of ballet’ as choreographic practice? In this paper, I offer insight into Poutiatine’s legacy through strands of ballet, performance and culture, intersectionally weaving methodologies as pathways into subject/object/practice/place, and share an exemplar of Poutiatine’s choreography in Malta as captured on film in 1978.

Dr Tyrone Grima, ‘Queer characters on the Maltese stage in the 1970s and 1980s’

Although Malta does not have a tradition of queer performances, over the last decades a number of plays have examined queerness through the depiction of queer characters on stage. This presentation will explore how queer characters were portrayed on the Maltese stage in theatre performances from 1973, the year in which homosexuality was decriminalised till 1989. In this study, a spectrum of performative genres will be referred to, including experimental theatre and pantomime. This analysis will be embedded within queer theory, with specific references to the seminal works of authors such as Foucault, Sedgwick, Butler and Sara Ahmed. The study will also be juxtaposed against the social and political developments that happened in the country, and how this impacted on the awareness of the LGBTI community. The sources that will be used to examine and delve deeper into the study are: newspaper reviews; previews; and interviews conducted with practitioners and performers. The study will be divided in three parts. The first part will focus on the 1970s, discussing whether the decriminalisation led to the featuring of more queer characters and how these were perceived. The second part will focus on the eighties, till the year 1987, a pivotal year in Maltese history, where a fundamental change was made in the Maltese constitution, preceded by various incidents of violence and civil unrest. This element of violence is also evident in the selection of plays with LGBTI characters that were staged in this period. The third part will present the dynamics between 1987-1989, and reflect on how the emergence of queer narratives in Maltese society impacted the depiction of queer characters on stage.

11:00-12:30 Parallel session: Panel 2 - Level 1 - Meeting Room 102*

Articulations of Insight: Navigating the Artistic Process

Dr Francesca Placanica, 'Creative Shared Spaces: Turning the Music Room into a Laboratory'

In classical music performance, the final destination of the musician's journey is the 'result' presented in concert at the presence of an audience. In this context, live performance represents an enriching encounter, yet limited to the senses and bodies of those attending the event. As Profeta states, instead: "experimentality is channelled into rehearsal" (Profeta, 2015), and the processes and practices that feed in the work-in-progress generate a wealth of models and methods that can be consolidated as creative tools for the next practitioner.

My artistic research as a classically trained singer dives in the world of theatre actor and voice training to find common grounds with their experimental premises, which, in Grotowskian terms, conceive the practice studio as a laboratory. This is intended as a shared creative space where the intercorporeal transmission of experiences feeds back and forth horizontally across all participants, determining lines of agency central to their mutual practices, and impacting in creative ways the practitioners's embodied practice. My exploration is carried through the Dynamic Configurations with Transversal Video (DCTV) laboratory (Spatz, 2020), a form of post-Grotowskian audiovisual embodied laboratory, which eschews the teleological premises of performance as the realisation of a work in front of an audience to replace it with outputs and languages closer to filmmaking, focusing on the generative practice process.

Through outputs from the (DCTV) laboratory, this paper documents embodied practice as shared among a number of creative performers (classical singer, actor, theatre director, videographer, et al.) subverting conventional power dynamics, and ultimately questioning traditional performance hierarchies (Director> Actor; Director >Videographer; Pupil<Teacher). Ultimately, this research presents the infinite possibilities that such democratic and creative setting opens up both in practice and in performance in the performing arts as well as in classical music, posing renewed emphasis on the creative potential of the shared practice space.

Prof Haftor Medbøe, 'From a place of silence: articulations of the unspoken'

This paper explores two freely improvised duo recordings made in the year following the relaxing of social distancing measures introduced in response to the 2020/21 COVID-19 pandemic. This period of widely experienced liminality presented opportunities for cultural reawakening and the refocusing of creative identity and purpose through physical reconnection in the creative space. Captured in July and October 2022 respectively, the recordings explore ideas of intersubjective relationships between the participating musicians while focusing on states of negotiated and embodied trust, empathy and love alongside considerations of

individual and collective positionality and their inherent fluidity. Reflections on creative processes and their outcomes are approached through establishing a theoretical framework that draws upon scholarship from fields of philosophy, ethics, psychology and jazz studies in attempting to deepen our understanding of collaborative improvisation in the free setting. In doing so it alludes to the Socratic model of *maieutikos* in presenting participating musicians as midwives in the bringing to life of creative artefact. While this artefact is understood as a temporally framed collective summing of individual experience it is simultaneously acknowledged that the things which our collaborators “bring out in us might not be the things we are capable of bringing out ourselves” (Bagley 2015, p.506).

***Troy Coleman, ‘No-Rolling – Performer Wellness Between Roles’**

Acting is notoriously infrequent work. Being an actor means being unemployed a lot. Despite this reality, actor wellness training for "no-rolling" – the time between roles – remains privileged information. Actors usually must discover for themselves how to prioritize self-care between shows. Mental health and overall self-care are notoriously poor in the performing arts community to the point that suffering artists have become a moniker of pride. Understanding how not to suffer does not need to be learned through years of isolated trial and error while fighting professional existential doubts. With higher-than-average rates of addiction, depression, anxiety, and suicide, it is anachronistic and cruel not to provide actors training for self-care when they are not on a cast list. My paper starts this critical discussion on how to encourage performer wellness from a failed audition to their next casting. I believe prioritizing performer wellness can incorporate elements of intimacy work and de-rolling techniques. Actors without training in professional rejection may become susceptible to their worst fears about themselves. Supporting performers' mental health in no-rolling may help actors combat self-destructive and exclusionary narratives that feed off racism, ageism, sexism, ableism, and other systemic oppressions. I will explore prioritizing actor self-care between roles in order to develop a wellness-based performance pedagogy that will subvert the culture of the struggling artist.

Prof Frank Camilleri, Book Presentation, ‘Performer Training for Actors and Athletes (2023)’

What goes on in the body and mind of an endurance athlete at the limits of performance? How do they relate to the world around and prepare for the task ahead? Offering a fresh perspective on training in the cross-lighting of aesthetic and athletic processes, the book focuses on the learning, mastery, and creative adaptation of technique in performance. From traditional and physical actors to runners, boxers, and other sports practitioners, it is about performers: their bodies, trainings and experiences. It interrogates what it means to prepare and train as a performer in the early twenty-first century. Writing from extensive experience in physical theatre and distance running, the author combines insights from both disciplines along with theatre history, sports science, and perspectives like embodied cognition and affective science.

From the kind of thoughts that go through the mind of an actor or a runner, to the economy and aesthetic of their movement and to how they feel about it, the book sheds light on the performing body and its capacities for action. Topics covered include attentional focus and distraction, affordances and equipment, ‘choking’ and stage fright, physiological regulation and effort perception, pacing and play, optimal flow and creative improvisation, and intentionality and automaticity in expert performance. The volume presents an informative and thought-provoking account accessible to readers interested in theatre, dance, performance, running, athletics, and sport.

11:00-12:30 Parallel session: Panel 3 - Practice-Based Presentations (30 minutes each)
- Level 0 - Theatre

Harmonising History: Unraveling the Diversity of Musical Heritage

Prof Philip Ciantar, ‘*Ja Bahar*’ (‘*O Sea*’): Sea Migration Tragedies, Musical Response, Ethnography, and Advocacy in Musical Composition’

In music studies, ethnography may be employed as a research method but also as a source that inspires and enriches with new insights the creative process, as in musical composition. These dual aspects of ethnography can be melded with the composer’s social consciousness to articulate concerns regarding societal issues, such as migration and the resulting fatalities amidst the vast expanse of sky and water. This research-based presentation brings together this amalgamation with musical knowledge and skills. My composition, ‘*Ja Bahar*’ (‘*O Sea*’), for unaccompanied clarinet, unfurls as a lament dedicated to the countless migrants who fail to reach their intended destination and, instead, are drowned in the Mediterranean Sea. Aided by the live performance of this composition by Hertian Gauci, this presentation will shed light on how the composer's ethnographic experience in Libya coupled with compositional techniques and other musical knowledge have contributed to the musical expression of a social problem. All this forged the composition process of this piece and determined the range of decisions it entailed.

Dr Jun Kai Pow, ‘Photographs and/as Patrimony: A Video History of Indo-Dutch Musical Memory

The provenance of a piece of heritage is often dependent on authorial ownership or sales records. For the case of an intangible cultural heritage, the reliance on a material surrogate is the only means of inheritance. These physical holdings include recordings and other visual media, such as photography and film. It is however the case that as much as the performances have been recorded, the memories of the very same performances are forgotten and sidelined. This has been the situation concerning the important musical heritage of a group of Indonesian migrants to the Netherlands.

While digitalized photographs from the early twenty-first century have served as a material trace of the events and people that populate the diasporic history, no written nor spoken text has been made available. Therefore, grounding this paper on recent debates in new materialism, I query the heritage value of knowing about the performance history of a traditional angklung ensemble and its musicians by examining the curation of selected photo albums uploaded online over a 15-year period. Through the connection of a digital visual narrative, I piece together a linear trajectory of patrimonial continuity by a group of elderly musicians.

Film Synopsis: As part of the decolonial agenda in allowing the voices of the Indo-Dutch musicians to be self-representative, I have commissioned a historical documentary film to be made with them sharing memories of their public musical performances with the academic viewership. Instead of an unmediated photo history, the musicians will themselves relate with global audiences interesting anecdotes of events and music (from 2008-2018) that were etched firmly in their memories. This collaborative method of knowledge production places the agency of content profiling on the interlocutors themselves. By providing an audio-visual stimulus, the video documentary transmits the authenticity and realness of musical and social recollection by the elderly performers themselves.

11:00 – 13:00 Workshop – 1 hour Outdoors and 1 hour in Room 103

Dr Katie Beswick: Poetic Dramaturgies: A city exploration workshop

How can creativity connect us to new places, or help us discover the new in what's familiar? Performance and creative writing techniques have long been used as a means of orienting ourselves in space, connecting with others, and developing what I have elsewhere discussed in terms of 'city dramaturgies' (Beswick and Johnson 2021): the formal and informal ways that cities are narrated and understood by denizens and other users, and through which city identities are formed. In other words, creativity is a tool for organised and quotidian place-making (and unmaking). Artists and collectives such as Mona Hatoum, Janet Cardiff and Wrights and Sights have used creative walking practices as a means of instigating place-exploration, such creativity can help us navigate the emplaced politics of the cities where we dwell as residents and visitors. These practices can be a joyful and stimulating ways to engage practically with notions of space and place developed in theoretical material and through theory/practice such as urban psychogeography.

In this two hour workshop, I encourage participants to engage in a playful dramaturgy of the city. Using a series of walking prompts to orient ourselves in space, the first part of the session will involve an exploration of Valetta. I have developed these prompts from my many visits to the city, where my husband and extended family have lived over five generations. Participants will return to the studio with a range of words and objects retrieved from their walk - on return to the studio we will use the second hour of the workshop to develop performance poems based on their explorations, to be performed in groups in an informal showing to one another. This

workshop draws on and expands creative techniques developed from my research collaborations with performance makers Cecile Sachs Olsen (zURBS) and Conrad Murray (BAC Beatbox Academy), and are designed as a way to encourage conference participants to orient themselves in Valetta through creative improvisation.

13:30 – 14:00 Creative Europe Desk Malta – Level 1 – Meeting Room 101

Creative Europe -The European Commission's programme supporting the Culture and Audiovisual sectors. Students will have the opportunity to meet the Creative Europe Desk and learn more about the various funding opportunities; in particular the Culture Moves Europe Call which offers students the fantastic opportunity to travel in any EU Country.

More information can be obtained through <https://creativeeuropemalta.mt/> or the Desk's Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/creativeeuropemalta>

14:00-15:30 Parallel session: Panel 1 - Level 0 - Meeting Room 6 *

VR and Choreographic Thinking: Roundtable Discussion

This hybrid roundtable discussion brings together leading practitioners in the field of VR and dance-making: choreographer Patricia Okenwa (Germany/Nigeria), founder of the New Movement Collective, and choreographer/videomaker/anthropologist Margherita Landi (Italy). They will engage in a conversation led by Dr. Paula Guzzanti (Arg/Malta) on Virtual Reality and Choreographic Practice.

The conversation will delve into practical and conceptual matters concerning the separation of choreography from the realm of physical bodies. Among other topics, it will explore how VR technologies shape choreography, key insights from the artists's current projects, mediation between the audience and the dance, immersion, and the opportunities for human collaboration and sharing offered by VR technologies.

Through this discussion, we aim to uncover the transformative potential of VR in the realm of dance-making and illuminate the evolving nature of choreographic practice within this medium.

Audience members will have the opportunity to ask the artists questions about their projects and practices.

14:00-15:30 Parallel session: Panel 2 - Level 1 - Meeting Room 102*

Breaking Barriers, Building Bridges: Navigating Leadership and Inclusion in the Arts

Prof Jo Butterworth & Iona Baldacchino: Leadership skills, disability, and the performing arts: the Opening Doors context

This collaboration sets out to investigate means and approaches to leadership skills for artists with disabilities, with a view to opening pathways to progression in leadership roles. We want to give our members the opportunity to be independent, to be challenged creatively, be given responsibility, to motivate the development of their own artistic practice, and to feel respected and confident. These are skills that people with disabilities can develop to hone their leadership qualities.

Opening Doors Association, a Maltese arts organisation set up for adults with intellectual disabilities, offers its members the possibility of accessing training within the performing arts - in dance, theatre, and music. The guidance offered by OD's artistic leaders focuses on enhancing artistic, creative and collaborative skills by actively engaging its members in a participative devising process. Decisions and responsibilities are shared, and space is given for ideas to be expressed through guidance, facilitation and prompting, towards the creation of a new work. Three years of inclusive performances for the ŽiguŽajg festival with selected members has also nourished and nurtured members' creative experiences, both as performers and as future leaders.

We examine the significance and potential of such collaborative practices, as an emerging approach towards further developing the leadership skills of our members. We believe that appropriate leadership styles in this context should balance the dual competencies of artistic and leadership capabilities and to that end, the second part of this presentation will explore some of the existing theories related to performance v leadership styles, skills and qualities that may be pertinent to the future vision of Opening Doors.

Anna Püschel, 'Dancing Hands' (1 hour)

The term neurodiversity, coined in the 1990ies by Judy Singer, aims to express that different brains are by no means working deficiently, but just in another way. It is not a medical term but has been adapted more and more by individuals with autism, ADHD and other neurodevelopmental conditions as an affirmative way to describe themselves. It is only in the last years that research is catching up with the fact that these conditions often present themselves very differently in women and in men, and the fact that the understanding of these conditions as well as possible supporting tools have been developed towards the male population, leaving the majority of neurodivergent women without an accurate diagnosis and thus without any support tools. Most women get diagnosed (if ever) late in life, meaning many years of invisible struggles to navigate a system that was not designed to their needs.

Anna Püschel started *Stimming a Space* because she was curious to explore stimming, soothing auto-regulative behaviour, as a way to understand how spaces can be adjusted to the needs of neurodivergent women. Her multidisciplinary and intersectional approach moves between performance and visual arts, architecture, anthropology and women's and disability rights.

In her presentation (one hour), Anna gives an overview of different types of stimming, why it is so important to stim for a neurodivergent person, what access needs can be met by institutions, and why talking about stimming and healthy bodyminds can help neurodivergent as well as neurotypical students and staff. She will present the outcome of her first year of research and then invite the public to a short and playful (trauma-informed) somatic session to connect body and mind, a gentle impulse to think about what we need today to feel well, and why this question is more important than ever.

14:00 – 15:30 Workshop – Level 1 – Aula Magna

Kerstin Stutterheim: (How) Can Dramaturgy support your Creativity?

Dramaturgy is a practice and a sub-discipline of aesthetics, intertwining knowledge and narrative-performative arts. It is a tradition spanning evolving performative arts for centuries but almost marginalised by neo-liberal tendencies in the Anglo-American World. With my workshop, I would like to introduce basics of dramaturgy and apply it in a few small tasks and experiments, starting from a circa 15 min introduction. We will discuss the challenges one might face in developing and arguing for individual projects, during production and postproduction process as well as summarising it when addressing audiences.

We will discuss the importance and interpretation of core dramaturgical elements to then applying them to the task at hand. Starting from one example, we will apply dramaturgical pattern through arrangement games as well as short performative interactions. I have experience in undertaking such workshops for documentary filmmaker, screenwriter, but also designer and curators, actors, and other creatives.

14:00 – 15:30 Workshop – Level 0 – Theatre

Juliana Ruiz Torres: Contemporary? An Embodied Inquiry (Workshop)

The notion of contemporary dance shifts from practitioner to practitioner ushering a coexistence of multiple movement forms recognized under the same umbrella. The tag of contemporary is a meaning that fights between standardization -the cataloguing of the concept- and freedom -embracing diversity-. This practice-based research enquires about the notion of contemporary and how it is embodied by allowing a group of dance practitioners from Colombia and the United Kingdom to submerge into an exploratory theoretical dancing space.

The way we relate to language and concepts finds an echo in our practices. Asking and answering questions through movement, in a graphic manner and with words, contribute to our

bodily conversation with the surroundings. The four stages of the research -Conceptual framework, workshops with communities, presentation in an installation format, and the archiving as a website- corroborate contemporary as a hybrid language where the particularities of every locality -not only in a territorial way of speaking but also in a corporal manner- push the boundaries of what is possible.

There is not a particular response to the question, instead, this project shows how the individualities net a local common understanding of each contemporary dance field featuring a distinct hierarchy of concepts which echoes in the movement exploration. Promoting creative connections between practices and geographical spaces could be a strategy to welcome diversity, layers, questions, positionalities, corporealities, and malleable embodiments that are still under construction.

16:00 – 18:00 Parallel session: Panel 1 - Level 1 - Meeting Room 102*

From Pain to Purpose: Explorations of Trauma and Wellbeing in the Arts

Dagmara Gizlo, ‘The Plays of Marina Carr and Contemporary Psychology: A Cross-Disciplinary Study’

The Art of Experience is an interdisciplinary work on selected plays from Ireland’s premier female playwright, Marina Carr. The book explores the transformative impact of a theatrical experience and in order to investigate the subject interdisciplinary boundaries must be crossed. The book demonstrates that theatre is therapeutic and therapy is theatrical.

The book represents a step towards integrating research from a variety of fields, including social sciences (psychology, psychotherapy studies), neuroscience, medicine (psychiatry), and the humanities (literary studies, theatre and performance studies), therefore challenging the traditional disciplinary boundaries with a view to shedding new light on potential transformative effects plays may exert upon their audiences.

Psychology and psychotherapy studies may significantly influence the analysis of plays, as well as inspiring further branches within theatre studies. Reading, watching, or analysing a play, in turn, has the potential to illuminate psychology and psychotherapy by providing valuable data that is otherwise inaccessible. Analysing the impact of theatre upon its audiences may reveal parallels between dramaturgical and theatrical strategies and psychotherapeutic techniques. Theatre may also serve as a repository of knowledge insofar as it could demonstrate a multitude of case studies representing particular disorders, a wide range of images of human suffering, and an array of emotions, problems and dilemmas commonly experienced. Psychology, psychiatry, and neurobiology may illumine and enrich theatre studies, and the findings in theatre studies may enhance the array of methods available to psychotherapy and provide cues for further research in disciplines dealing with human emotion and cognition.

Gioia Filocamo & Giovanni Scapecchi, 'UMbRiA, Music & Wellness for a Healthy Society: A Collaborative Project among High Education Artistic Institutes'

UMbRiA [Umbrian Music beyond Resonances in Arts], Music & Wellness for a Healthy Society is a recent project designed to bring together some relevant artistic synergies in the region considered as the Italian “green heart”: Umbria.

Art, in its various forms, is one of the essential engines that animates our lives, and teachers have the responsibility to artistically train students to keep their interest alive, in order to pass it on intact to the next generations. In fact, the three Higher Education Artistic Institutes present in Umbria partake in the *UMbRiA* project: the Conservatoire of Terni (leader), the Conservatoire of Perugia, and the Academy of Fine Arts of Perugia. We also plan to integrate some foreign institutes into our team, and to apply to the 2024 Erasmus+ call. Art always involves the improvement of human awareness and well-being.

In fact, *UMbRiA* project intends to develop the local artistic richness of this region which belonged to the Papal State, partly consisting of impressive pictorial and architectural products. We intend to rethink the Umbrian art, intimately linking it to the music born on site and to the natural features of this world famous land: its extraordinary, intensely green and shady landscape, its wonderful food exported everywhere (starting with olive oil and truffles), its culinary excellence resulting from complex recipes, the silence of its mountains which inspired figures such as St Benedict of Norcia (founder of Western monasticism, patron of Europe) or St Francis of Assisi (founder of Franciscanism, patron of Italy). Consequently, the values we aim to point out and work on can be considered the basis of human well-being: beauty, awareness, sustainability of life rhythms, praise of slowness, silence, and personal meditation.

With our project, we would like to produce some premières of music composed in Umbria or for Umbria, but also to develop an Application for smartphones that will illustrate a “journey in stages” between some significant places in the region. The stops along this path, whether virtual or actually made, would be marked through the App with the indication of specific music, local food, landscapes, and artistic masterpieces.

Kara Flanagan, 'Connecting Creatively with the Craft of Performance: Creating Drama Curriculum to Address Musician Performance Anxiety'

The purpose of this research is to examine students' perceptions of the efficacy of actor education in mitigating music performance anxiety. Music performance anxiety occurs when a performing musician experiences impaired thinking, adverse behavioural effects, and inconvenient physiological reactions (Steptoe, 2001). The literature lacks sufficient evidence on the effectiveness of acting methods. This research is taking place when the need for curriculum on music performance anxiety is critical, as the pandemic created a mental health epidemic (Santomauro et al., 2021). My objective is to transform curriculum derived from actor education into curriculum for instructing musicians to mitigate music performance anxiety. My

research question is: How can customized curriculum derived from actor education be used to educate musicians to manage performance anxiety and enhance performance delivery? I take a qualitative approach to my study, drawing primarily on Johnson and Christensen (2020) for research design and collection of data. I designed a course based on curriculum derived from actor education (e.g., Rea, 2021; Stanislavsky & Hapgood, 2004); my 11 years of work in curriculum, teaching, and acting; curriculum design principles (Meyers & Nulty, 2009); and grounded in curriculum theory (e.g., Dewey, 2004), music performance anxiety theory (LeBlanc, 2010), and self-presentation theory (e.g., Leary, 1983). I taught a pilot course to a group of sixteen musicians in September 2023. The interview results of the course show that the majority of participants found that the acting-based curriculum in this study was effective for them in managing music performance anxiety and enhancing their performance delivery.

Nesrin Alrefaai & Nikki Disney, ‘A Practice-Oriented Framework for Addressing Trauma in Plays: *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*’ (30 minutes)

This paper explores the potential of theatre as a platform for the exploration and illumination of trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) experiences. Within this context, dramatherapists and theatre practitioners assume a vital role in establishing a secure and nurturing environment for individuals who are actively engaging with these sensitive topics. This paper presents a comprehensive framework that delineates essential factors and approaches for dramatherapists and theatre practitioners when involved in the creation of plays addressing trauma and PTSD, using *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* adaptation and stage production as a case study.

The proposed framework enables professionals to adeptly navigate the intricate dynamics of trauma-sensitive work while placing utmost importance on participant well-being and cultivating artistic expression. The rehearsal space functions as a transformative setting wherein actors actively participate in a process of investigation, self-exploration, and character advancement. Within this context, dramatherapy is an important instrument, offering actors a secure and nurturing milieu to navigate their emotions, establish a profound connection with their characters and augment their on-stage performance. It also helps the company develop connection, safety, and the opportunity to connect with the subject matter in a held way. In this paper we delve into the multifaceted role of dramatherapy in safeguarding the actors in the facilitation and development of intricate and compelling characters and in safeguarding the company against secondary trauma through continued performance.

It is important to note that we are not advocating therapeutic interventions within the rehearsal room. Rather, our objective is to establish a framework and provide psychoeducation to facilitate the development of a supportive rehearsal room culture using the framework for *The Beekeeper of Aleppo* as a case study.

16:00 – 18:00 Workshop - Level 1 - Aula Magna

Josephine Calvo, ‘Karate for Actor Training’ (30 minutes)

Karate-dō as an Actors’ Guide to Performance: An Exploration of Karate in Actor Training is the doctoral research behind Karate for Actor Training workshops. This research seeks to answer if incorporating *karate-dō* in an actor training programme improves a practitioner’s relationship with their body, mind, and surrounding world, thus benefitting an actor’s ability to express themselves physically and mentally during a performance. The long-term goal of Karate for Actor Training workshops is to provide a resource and practical guide for performers by devising a tested training programme that outlines the most effective method of application. As a resource, this research has the potential to become a valuable asset to those in the performing arts, especially actors, students of acting, and their teachers. The inspiration behind this thesis stems from the perceived need for systemised research dedicated specifically to how *karate-dō* functions towards Western movement-based theatre. The lack of research on how *karate-dō* functions toward actor training might appear surprising despite how various theatre programmes have chosen to incorporate martial arts in their performing arts courses. Some recent examples of the use of martial arts for actor training include traditional Chinese martial arts by Daniel Mroz at the University of Ottawa in Canada, aikido by Przemysław Błaszczak at the Kokyu Studio in Poland, judo by Ellie Nixon at La Macha Theatre Company in Chile, and Russian martial arts by Slade Billew at Stephen F. Austin State University in the United States.

Esther Venrooij, ‘Thinking Bodies, Radical Scores’ (1 hour)

Contemporary developing art and design practices are performative: as we produce, we engage in permanent exposure. We move through studio visits, act out desk crits, and feed our screens with cultivated online personae. Always on, online, live. Practice is also collective, in conversation, networked, and public. As a sound artist I understand that physical presence is crucial in understanding, becoming, making - in connection with varying users and audiences. In this workshop, we will explore practices of embodiment by developing an embodied practice based on Life/Art process and RSVP cycle coined by landscape architect Lawrence Halprin and choreographer Anna Halprin. In this workshop I will focus on gathering and identifying the various elements and materials that will inform the dance or performance, develop structured guidelines or scores, and present the performance to an audience. It is important note the importance of self-reflection and evaluation within this creative process. We will step outside the studio, and deploy performance as a tool to disrupt real-life situations. THINKING BODIES RADICAL SCORES deepens the understanding of “the self” and guides students towards critical positions, to positively and productively engage with the worlds around them.

16:00 – 18:00 Workshop - Level 0 - Theatre

Ivana Jelača, ‘Stay Tuned: Rethinking Rituals and Performative Concepts of Classical Music’ (2 hours)

What both performers and audiences of Western classical music often take for granted in the present is the ritual of performing which itself creates certain expectations which put the performers, organizers, managers and all the people involved in an expectation-obligation network.

A ritualized event in the concert hall is a strictly choreographed event, a long-lasting ritual and protective of the status quo. It is fixed and work-centred. This is in stark contrast to the performing and listening practices of the earlier epochs, especially in the eighteenth century, when musical events were far more interactive and left room for spontaneous reactions and social contact among all the partakers. This kind of musical sociability was particularly present in the salons in which music tended to be tailored to the performance ritual (Melton 2001; Klorman 2019; Cypess 2022).

By putting Western classical music performance within an experimental framework, using current performative strategies related to experimental theatre and performance art, my intention is to reconsider the possibilities of performance as a complex system of transactions. The 'performative turn,' i.e., the shift from the role of spectator not only to that of participant but also of co-player, is the prerequisite for experiencing community among all the partakers. In this context, there is a solid inclination to blur boundaries between art and non-art, between real life and representation, between the aesthetic and the political etc. (McKenzie 2001; Fischer-Lichte 2009; Dolan 2010; Schechner 2013; Carlson 2018).

Bearing in mind that concepts like this are often applied in contemporary museums and interpretation centers, the potential for interaction among all the partakers can be increased by opening a process of co-creation and the following questions: How can she establish a new dynamism within the performance? Can we transform the reception of music by changing the ritual?

16:00 - 17:00 ONLINE Workshop* - Level 1 - Meeting Room 101

***Eleni Koliopoulou, ‘Rock, Paper, Scissors’ (30 minutes - participants need to have their own headphones)**

A workshop-based presentation which is triggered by the current politics between Armenia and Azerbaijan, Israel and Palestine using Nagorno Karabach and Gaza current situation as a symbol for year-lasting conflicts between states and which unfortunately, are resolved by force and sadly result to big losses of human lives as well as economic disasters. The proposal suggests ethnic cleansing strategies must be added to the list of the Anthropocene and seeks creative solutions making use of performative art as a safe platform to test out and embody new ideas. I am borrowing the aesthetics of Japanese gardens in terms of the participants' perception

of architecture of space and time to explore alternative ways of acting within given time/space in a more constructive and harmonious ways. In Japanese gardens, visitors are encouraged to walk freely in the space and contemplate the garden from different points of view while, at the same time they also shape the garden with their choices of staying still or move. Likewise, participants of 'Rock, Paper, Scissors' will be invited to participate with their presence in a workshop that focuses on the modalities with which we interact with each other within the dynamics of the group. The total duration is estimated at about 30 minutes and will be structured as a guided improvisation with props. This participatory artwork aims at the non-linear experience of time by borrowing elements from the dreamlike, memory and the symbolic. Participants will be invited to create a living system which (as with all living systems) is fragile, subject to change and impossible to fully control. This workshop acts as a social experiment of our ability to listen to each other and to create (or not) harmonious coexistence in space.

Day 2 Abstracts:

Keynote:

Cara Hagan

Where Ritual and Civic Practice Meet

This talk explores civic practice through the lens of artmaking. Learning to live mindfully in community is the first step to having what Hagan calls, a “civic practice,” which is a deep ritual practice unto itself that requires our full attention and a consistent recommitment to its existence and its health. To be clear, a civic practice means playing an active role in one’s community, driven by a concern for that community’s social, cultural, organizational, and infrastructural well-being. It includes the voluntary contribution of one’s time and talent (like any good ritual) to attend to the needs of one’s community. This looks different for everyone, and when people are tending to their communities from a place of agency, rooted in their power, participating in ways that are both manageable and productive given the shape of their lives, a civic practice is potent medicine against the forces of oppression. Hagan will share works of varied genres as a way of stitching together her experience of living in community with a passion for reimagining the world and how we exist in it.

11:00-12:30 Parallel Session: Panel 1 - Level 1 - Meeting Room 101*

Soundscapes of Knowledge: Approaches to Music Pedagogy

Sue Richardson, ‘Musostudy: an innovative, bespoke pedagogy to enhance learning in Higher Popular Music Education’

My research suggests that students in undergraduate creative arts education, such as popular music may struggle to be successful due to a lower academic preparedness which may impede their creative learning due to a lack of the required skills for study. To address this challenge, Musostudy, a bespoke pedagogy, was developed to help transform learning. Through the use of the pedagogy, teachers can embed the skills required for creative and academic success, such as creative thinking, study skills and activities to develop vocational, creative and critical awareness.

This paper introduces Musostudy, describing how, based on my research findings, it can help teachers in vocational, creative arts education to rethink their approach. It provides practical examples of the ways teachers can address students’ learning needs.

Issues in higher popular music education include current disparities towards student success (Weatherton and Schussler, 2021), pressure to address graduate attributes in addition to subject expertise and students who struggle academically due to widening participation. Teachers are predominantly industry experts with limited experience of teaching or working in academia,

and can be overwhelmed having to teach beyond the curriculum, developing attributes and supporting academic study. Innovative teaching methods must be developed to nurture creativity, criticality and employability within this distinctive context.

Musostudy, is a three-part model addressing engagement, module/assessment mastery, and study skills. Developed through my doctoral research and my years of experience teaching in higher popular music education, it caters to students who are naturally more inclined towards practical education that they see as more relevant to their studies and chosen career path. Musostudy aims to improve student success outcomes for students from all backgrounds by promoting active learning for module mastery, engagement and the development of creative, critical and academic skills.

Dovile Kazonaite, 'The Dual Identity of a Singer: Exploring Two Bodies and Their Artistic Expression'

The human voice is a unique instrument that is intimately connected to the body. However, in the teaching and learning of vocal technique, there is often a separation of the vocal apparatus from the body. This means that techniques related to sound, resonance, and articulation are taught in isolation, without taking into consideration the interconnectedness of the voice and the body. In contrast, instrumentalists bring an already made, shaped, and perfected instrument to their craft, whereas a vocalist must develop their voice from scratch. Singers often focus solely on developing their voice box, neglecting the rest of their body. However, based on the holistic system of Eastern philosophy that everything is interconnected, the voice cannot be enclosed in a voice box and separated from the body. The body is a collection of habits and experiences, and small deviations and imbalances can lead to a dysfunctional vocal instrument, akin to a bent flute or broken violin body. A singer must have good body control and be a good actor to embody stage roles successfully. In a lecture/recital, it is essential to address the complexity of the singer's specialty. Specifically, the question arises as to whether a vocalist must manage two bodies, that of an actor and a singer, and whether this requires complex double work. Through theatrical music performance, warm-up exercises, and the interconnectedness of the voice and body will be demonstrated, highlighting the importance of holistic vocal technique. By taking into consideration the entirety of the body and the interconnectedness of its parts, vocalists can achieve a dynamic and flexible vocal instrument that is in harmony with their body.

Francesco Venturi, 'Voice Training between Metaphor and Somatics'

The study of singing abounds with metaphors, powerful tools delving into fundamental aspects of vocal production and perception. This paper examines the impact of metaphors on voice training and vocal performance, exploring their potential to reorganize the singer's lived body, considering issues of performer well-being, and the perpetuation of cultural practices.

Analyzing the main functions of metaphor choice, the paper addresses the paradox inherent in seeking an embodied somatic ground within a disembodied and semantic domain. Drawing on personal experiences as a trainee in distinct vocal traditions—encompassing the Roy Hart Theatre and Italian opera singing—and as a professional trainer and singer, the paper compares metaphors employed by different mentors. The focus is on analyzing how their metaphor choice contributes to or challenges the search for embodiment. What is the situated knowledge behind voice-themed metaphors? How do metaphors influence the integration or deconstruction of vocal habits? Do metaphors facilitate or hinder the body-mind integration of the subject-in-training? The paper then explores how a trainer can shift from a methodology based on the question “what to do?” to learning design that emphasizes the question “what happens?” This research aims to investigate important connections between somatics and voice studies, taking a practice-based interdisciplinary perspective that integrates rarely interacting traditions. It offers insights into the transformative potential of training, emphasizing the impact of the lived experience on the creative aspects of live performance. Furthermore, it delves into the connections between singing practice and movement research—an intersection deserving of further exploration.

Jack Adler-McKean, ‘All the right notes, but not necessarily in the right order: In search of sustainability at the interface of materiality, timbre, and performance practice’

Musicians rarely question what it means to play the right notes, even once they have learned to play them in the right order, as this requires an ontological assessment of the means used to produce such notes, as well as analysis of the resulting sounds. This presentation focuses on two examples from my own practice using instruments of the tuba family, which demonstrate how our relationships with repertoire old and new can be approached through observation of the symbiotic role timbre plays regarding instrumental evolution and contemporaneous performance styles.

Performance-based historical organology will be used to examine how the tuba’s history can inform discussions concerning the timbres available to tubists and composers, both past and present. My own artistic practice is informed by resources I have produced aimed at propagating an understanding of, and develop a means of knowledge transfer between the organological, acoustical, and practical parameters of these instruments. I will then demonstrate how an analytical-experimental approach to acoustic phenomena can lead to a revitalisation of timbral resources. As I collaborate with composers interested in exploring

timbral diversity—a parameter largely overlooked with regard to brass instruments since the invention of the valve—yet are inclined to write for individual performers rather than instruments, they can be encouraged to allow their sonic resources to be defined by acoustic components rather than the abilities of particular musicians.

While the embodied knowledge of artistic practitioners can be used to address questions surrounding authenticity of interpretation, methodological tribalism can lead to outcomes that struggle to demonstrate long-term development, as they are contained by strictly bounded

epistemological limits. By providing insight on living history while also valuing critical experimentation, this presentation will explore what a search for the “right” notes might illuminate for artistic researchers looking to explore the sustainability of their practice.

11:00-12:30 Parallel Session: Panel 2 - Level 1 - Meeting Room 102*

Evoking Emotions, Challenging Norms: Critical Conversations Through Artists' Perspectives

Dr Rowena Gander, 'Objectification: Reperforming the Work of Marina Abramovic'

Drawing from the perspective of a “reperformer” of the work of Marina Abramović, I offer a reflective essay on how feelings of objectification can be negotiated by the performer. These reflections emerged from a rare opportunity to collaborate with Marina Abramović Institute during her first major UK exhibition held at the Royal Academy of Art late 2023. I discourse on my resilience as a performer of three challenging works -- Luminosity (1997), Imponderabilia (1997) and Nude with Skeleton (2005). Each work required extreme levels of focus, endurance, nudity, an ability to withstand the pain of stillness and pressure on the body, as well as close and intimate proximity between performer and spectator. My interest in objectification stems from my own practice, where I have performed with objects that are predominantly exploitative to women – vertical pole and high heels, and how I have found ways of negating detrimental features of objectification, and have instead, experienced increased feelings of power, self-awareness, and subjectivity. This was documented via a five-part model during my doctorate research, which included themes of object manipulation, and reflection of gaze to audience. However, in Abramović’s work, where I was not the creator, nor did not have choice to manipulate objects, I was encouraged to find new ways of negotiating my subjectivity as a person. One example was my attending to the idea that whilst my body was, at times, still, and would be considered an object only to be looked at, the mental processes I was going through as a performer were strengthening to my character as a person. Further, my interaction with thousands of spectators deepened my understanding of audience behaviour and the vulnerabilities and anxieties they bring to their viewing. For instance, when performing Imponderabilia (fig.1), I felt and heard the nervousness of the spectator in their apologetic and gratuitous attempts to squeeze between mine and my partners naked bodies. Monitoring audience evoked a sense of empathy in me that reiterated the power and voice of my body in performance. I thus propose that engagement with durational and painful performance work, that is exposing in many ways, has provided new solutions for the performer to explore agency.

Dorota Sosnowska, 'The reincarnation of *St Orlan*. Carnal creativity in the 1990's'

Orlan is a French artist who since year 1990, in frames of what she calls carnal art, undergoes subsequent plastic surgeries staged as performance art. In that theater of operations, she includes music, movement, visual interventions and even interaction with viewers. Since 1993 her performances have been not only video recorded but also live streamed into art galleries. This, extremely popular in the 1990s artistic practice, from today's point of view triggers interesting questions about embodiment and its image, violence, and gender and finally about creativity in the capitalist realm. What does it mean to be yourself? Monstrous images created by Orlan play with the imageries of ideal, female body and uncover the physical cost of that creation. Orlan claims: "I am a woman-to-woman transsexual act" (Akman 2006) underlining the relationship between medical intervention, body and identity. Through her work it is possible to discover how the process of reconciling the body and the self-image is full of creativity, producing monstrous, in Jack Halberstam's terms, modes of being. In my talk I would like to address those issues in the context of 1990s – not only the epoch of super violence (Appadurai) but also the time of big social and political changes after the end of the cold war and HIV/AIDS crisis changing the understanding off sexuality, embodiment and identity. Against that historical background the reception of Orlan's art as feminist, seducing and at the same time disgusting, producing strong emotional reactions, seems to uncover the power of what I proposed to call carnal creativity.

Nicholas Arnold, 'Not Mike Leigh'

This presentation is in the form of a descriptive narrative, rather than an analytical paper. It describes the creation of a performance piece from an initial purely fortuitous moment, through improvisation guided only by emotional impulse and the increasing imperatives of the world that was being created, to a full-blown performance piece, whose reception opened up fundamental questions about conflicts between fiction and reality in the creation of theatre. The impetus for its inception was two fold. The negative impetus was a TV documentary on the English director Mike Leigh – who is famous for his pieces, which are built up purely through improvisation by the performers. The programme showed, however, that Leigh has already determined the specific environmental and social parameters of the piece, and the characters, their gender, social status, relationship, etc. The subsequent improvisations serve to create the dramatic action and characters – to make the concepts concrete. But this builds walls for actors outside which they cannot venture. The challenge was thus to create a piece, every element of which was the result of improvisation. The positive impetus for this was a consideration of some of the concepts provided by Stanislavski as being fundamental to the preparation and execution of the theatrical act. Two seemed most pertinent – emotional impulse and given circumstances. The resulting work gave creative priority to the performers, to the extent that many improvisations were conducted without the knowledge of the director, guided by the performers creative decisions. The presentation of the finished piece also raised major questions about the status of artifice and reality in theatre.

Ciarán Crilly, ‘Once More Without Feeling: Kurtág, Beckett, and the Search for New Beginnings’

The twentieth century witnessed multiple attempts to translate the technical or stylistic approach of one art form into another, many yielding fresh modes of expression in alternative media as a means of stimulating the ability to begin anew. However, a more radical strategy constituted an erasure of influence that might enable artists to begin again with a completely blank canvas. It involved a determination to be free from lessons of the past, both culturally and historically, and to eradicate the persistent dominion of meaning. This challenge is confronted in Samuel Beckett final work, the poem *What is the Word* (1988), an “ingeniously sustained 53-line stammer” written for a friend and colleague who was suffering from aphasia following a stroke, and thus learning to speak again. The poem was set to music in 1991 by György Kurtág in parallel circumstances, as it was composed for a Hungarian actor who was also undergoing a slow process of speech rehabilitation. Both artists were thus afforded a type of creative surrogacy in which language could be reconstructed without emotional significance. This paper investigates the phenomenon by adapting John Rawls’ concept of the “veil of ignorance”, but in an aesthetic rather than a political context. Rawls believed that more valid truths would be revealed by the “unencumbered self... freed from the dictates of nature and the sanction of social roles”. While Beckett’s poem embodies a rigorous response to such an abstract ideal, Kurtág’s setting ultimately permits residual memory to emerge via a concluding – and unnerving – coup de théâtre.

11:00 – 13:00 Workshop & Practice-Based Presentation - Level 0 - Theatre

Marie Hay, ‘Speakingdance: performing being with speech and dance’ (1 hour)

Speakingdance is a new concept-based approach to dance practice, in which the dancer’s sense of being is performed. The practice provides a meaningful purpose for speech in contemporary dance and challenges objective perceptions of the dancer. Philosophical thinking about speech and being provides a framework with which to reconsider the relationship between speech and contemporary dance to perform the dancer’s being. Speakingdance responds with: a new approach to improvisation, an affective conceptualization of being, dance that ‘speaks’ through a poetic rhythm, and a resonant relationship between the dancer and audience members.

A practice research approach, that values the agency of the practitioner-scholar as part of a phenomenological enquiry, was undertaken to create the practice. Practical experiments with dance and speech were documented through video and written experiential accounts. Three ‘practice sharings’ were created to gauge the resonant impact of the work through audience participation and written ‘resonance narratives’. Resonance indicates a relational engagement with the dancer’s being. NVivo video annotation software was used to triangulate the relationship between speech, dance and audience participation. The ideas of Adrianna Cavarero, Martin Heidegger, Jacques Derrida, and Henri Bergson, provided a philosophical context for experiential knowledge. Writing facilitated reflection in which the concepts of

Speakingdance were formulated. The practice research was structured around three key objectives:

- Developing an understanding of the relationship between speech, dance and being.
- Investigating how dancers can speak in performance without detracting attention away from the dance.
- Exploring how speech can support the performance of the dancer's being.

Speakingdance has relevance for dance practitioners interested in improvisation, speech, and the performance of being. The practice encapsulates research on the topic of dance and speech, which is just emerging in academic fields. Uniquely, Speakingdance also contributes a consideration of the dancer's ontology through a particular conceptualization of being.

Laura Farré Rozada, 'How to Implement Conceptual Simplification on Ofer Ben-Amots' The Butterfly Effect: Reflecting on a New Problem-Solving Method for the Analysis, Learning and Memorisation of a Commissioned Piano Work' (1 hour)

There is a gap in music performance, education and psychology in terms of memorisation training for post-tonal piano music. Despite the repertoire spanning over 100 years, pedagogues and professionals still lack effective tools for developing this skill. Existing research on this domain is mostly focused on observing practitioners' behaviours during practice, to understand how these prepare for a memorised performance of a selected repertoire. However, a systematic method for effective memorisation is not provided. This presentation discusses a new method for analysis, learning and memorisation of post-tonal piano music, named Conceptual Simplification, which was developed, tested and formalised with my PhD thesis (submitted in 2023). This presents a novel implementation to musical memorisation building on certain areas of mathematics and computer science to improve human memory and musical performance. However, Conceptual Simplification does not require any previous scientific training to be successfully implemented and works for different learning styles and types of complexity. This method could also be adapted to other instrumentalists, singers and conductors; and musical genres; and presents enough flexibility for other practitioners to incorporate additional strategies, adapting it to their needs accordingly. Finally, Conceptual Simplification can also assist in preventing performance anxiety through greater confidence and reducing the potential for injuries that usually result from repeated practice. The method's systematic approach toward engaging conceptual memory and reasoning leads to more confident memorised performances while needing less repetition during practice. The proposed practice-based presentation exemplifies the implementation of Conceptual Simplification with the mathematically-based piano work 'The Butterfly Effect' (2021), informed by the Fibonacci sequence, chaos theory and the butterfly effect, which was commissioned during my PhD from composer Ofer Ben-Amots (b.1955), to refine the method further. At the end of the presentation, I shall perform this 10-minute piano piece from memory.

11:00 – 13:00 Workshop - 2 hours Outdoors

Prof Victoria Hunter & Dr Heike Salzer, ‘Moving and Mapping: Exploring body-site relations through counter-cartography’ (Meet in the Valletta Campus Entrance Hallway)

This workshop will take place outdoors and participants are invited to explore exchanges between sensory, material bodies, architectures, atmospheres, and visual responses, to ‘tune in’ to place and space and explore a form of ‘vernacular mapping’ that challenges the ‘representational certitude of cartography’ (Gerlach 2013:1).

Through simple tasks and exercises that incorporate moving, drawing and camera work, we will explore human-nonhuman material entanglements through playful intra-actions grounded in embodied, qualitative enquiry through which body-world relations will be fostered. Through practical enquiry the workshop puts ‘vital materialism’ to work in pragmatic ways and illustrates a form of praxis that works to ‘counter the narcissism of humans in charge of the world’ (Bennet 2009, p.xvi). Through moving and mapping the sites with our bodies ‘flesh and stone’ relations will be invoked (Sennett 1994) as we explore sensory and embodied knowledges of space and place.

This workshop draws on Hunter’s practice-based research into body-site relationships encountered in and through site-based movement practice and Salzer’s *Wanderlust method*, a site-specific holistic approach for the making of somatic landscape screendance (Salzer, 2019). Hunter’s research is informed by theories of New Materialism (Barad 2003, 2007, Bennet 2009, Haraway 2014, 2016) Human Geography (Massey 2005, Longhurst 2000) and non-representational/worlding theory (Stewart 2012) her work explores human-non-human engagements and body-site synergies and their implications for Anthropocene thinking. Salzer’s work is informed by Romantic themes of Heimat (Schüle, 2018), Wanderlust and Embodiment of Place in landscape art in relation to artistic and philosophical aspects of the early German Romantic landscape artists (Koerner, 2014; Rigby, 2004; Verwiebe & Montua, 2018). She collaborates with Ana Baer under the umbrella of WECreat Productions developing films, installations and multi-media performances, reflecting on place and emotional geographies of individuals, communities, and society. (Latent Spaces 2018-23, HinterTerra 2023, WECreat Spaces 2019-2021, Thule 2019, Wild-er-ness 2019).

The session will include:

1. An introductory overview of the facilitators’ praxis in relation to the conference themes.
2. A site-based movement session (for all abilities/levels of experience) in which participants will engage in movement tasks and short exercises. Tasks will practically illustrate philosophical perspectives that explore intrinsic relationships between bodies and environments in which bodies, objects, and place assemble.
3. A post-practice discussion and evaluation of the movement practice as a method of exploring and considering sites and spaces in and through the body.

Incorporating pedestrian, organic and somatically informed modes of moving and responding to tasks, scores and provocations, participants are invited to consider bodily ‘utterances’ (Haraway 1991) and the ‘conversations’ between mobile bodies and moving sites.

Participants should wear loose, comfortable clothing suitable for engaging with the physical site through their body and appropriate footwear for moving (i.e. trainers) – no previous movement/dance experience is required. Please travel light and bring a camera device (such as a mobile phone or camera) and bring water, sunscreen, hat, and sunglasses as required.

14:00-15:30 Parallel session: Panel 1 - Level 1 - Meeting - Room 101*

Dramaturgy Decoded: Crafting Narrative, Shaping Perspective

Sylvia Solakidi, ‘A trans Existence that cancels Cancel Culture – the Dramaturgy of Jan Fabre’s *Peak Mytikas*’

Peak Mytikas (2023) is an 8-hour creation by Belgian artist Jan Fabre, which reworks Theban Cycle into a rave event driven by corporeal smell. It is a queer cabaret where Dionysus, Oedipus and Antigone are both female and male. While 11 performers repeat the cancellation of bodies and of their images in underwear-bandages soaking blood from amputated-cancelled genitals, swords of Damocles hover over their heads.

I explore how existential dimensions of a trans-dramaturgy lead to rebellion against cancel culture through creative reinvention of embodied selves beyond political correctness.

Based on Dutch writer Connie Palmen’s 2022 essay *The Fluid Person* and Foucault’s 1963 *Preface to Bataille’s Transgression*, trans is defined as a movement that connects and separates two opposite experiences and opens up by initiating from gender. According to McKenzie Wark’s *Raving* (2023), trans raves tolerate Merleau-Ponty’s “good ambiguity”, which draws opposites into a whole without dissolving inconvenience. I rework this notion into “creative ambiguity”, which is the way trans opens up to Damoclean experiences of risk and opportunity thanks to the repeated movements of rave that lead to a trance-trans state of being that is not full departure but trans participation in reality and a state beyond. This state leads to a certain knowledge that allows performers, creative team and audience (that creates an atmosphere of dynamic stillness during performances) not to inhabit dramatic structures offered by Fabre, but to exist accordingly and develop them into relationships towards reinvention of their amputated-cancelled bodies as Dionysus’s hermaphrodite, rebel body, and towards transformation of knowledge into new laws. According to Foucault, such a reinvention is possible despite canonization of bodies (from political correctness), if knowledge is truth drawn from pleasure. I conclude that smell, the neglected sense related to bodies of desire, activates pleasure and initiates a switch from canonizing laws to Foucault’s “arts erotica”.

Prof Gill Foster, ‘Arschylus Reborn: how the lost Danaid Tetralogy is being reinvented for contemporary global audiences in an innovative creative partnership between theatre professionals and the academy’

In 2016 *The Suppliant Women* was staged at the Young Vic using a new version of Aeschylus’ text written by playwright, David Greig. The show received 5-star reviews. The creative team then embarked on the ambitious project of resurrecting the next three plays in the full tetralogy in preparation for a global tour in 2024-25. Since only fragments remain of *The Egyptians*, *The Danaids* and the satyr play, *Anyone*, the plays are being reconstructed through a dynamic exploratory creative process supported by some of the world’s leading classical scholars, arts organisations, universities, and practitioners.

“The Danaids myth speaks to the most pressing issues of our time – migration, asylum, democracy, tyranny, female autonomy and male violence. The dramatic form of the plays involves mass community participation, using ancient practice in an urgent new way.”

(Ramin Gray, director)

The reimagining of the tetralogy is both an exercise in theatrical archeological excavation and a creative re-imagining of the way in which ancient practices would have impacted directly on the plays. Assuming the roles of writer, composer, director and choreographer, Aeschylus worked with communities of non-professional citizens drawn from local communities to form a chorus working alongside one or two professional actors. Which is why, in May 2022, the project production company, Wild Yak Productions, approached me at London South Bank University, proposing a research and development partnership between the professional creatives and the Acting department focusing on developing the role of the male chorus in the next play in the tetralogy, *The Egyptians*. Eight months, and multiple workshops later, David Greig’s new version of a play which had not been seen for over 2,500 years opened at the Gulbenkian Centre Canterbury with student actors in their first professional role.

In September this year, the professional creatives, writer David Greig, a new group of female student actors and I travelled to the island of Hydra, 2 hours from the Aeschylus’ birthplace to locate the practical research on the next play, *The Danaids*, in the location the plays were written in, and for. Working in a small, outdoor amphitheatre, next to the sea and amid groves of olive and eucalyptus, we began to understand the way in which the landscape itself directly informed these ancient texts. And David Greig began to write. This paper takes the form of a critical practitioner reflection on how the development of a novel collaborative co-creative process revealed deep insights into ancient texts and practices. Integrating rehearsal and performance film footage, I explore a unique pedagogic-professional partnership which has proved genuinely transformative for everyone engaged in this radical act of theatrical excavation and discovery.

Dr Mario Frendo, ‘Performance Dramaturgies in Opera: Stanislavsky and the Musico-Dramatic Text’

During a workshop session with young opera singers while working on a staging of Eugene *Onegin*, Stanislavsky told the tenor playing the part of Lensky: ‘Why are you making an aria out of that? Why are you trying to show off your voice to us?’. This rather bold reaction was directed towards the tenor’s lack of dramaturgical awareness with regards to his role in the piece. With it Stanislavsky was destabilising and operatic tradition from its very core by telling singers that an opera is not about their voice. The paper investigates the relevance of Konstantin Stanislavsky’s ideas for the opera stage and the way he reconsidered the staging of opera in terms of creative connections between those involved in the performance process. It focuses on Stanislavsky’s first full opera production in 1922 of Tchaikovsky’s *Eugene Onegin*. From this first production it was evident that Stanislavsky’s approach to opera was based on revolutionary and unprecedented ideas that would, in the course of his working life, develop into a concrete vision for opera-making and for the formation of those involved in opera performance, including actor-singers, directors, and musicians. My contribution is an attempt to shed light on this vision by focusing specifically on the concept of the ‘musico-dramatic text’ – a complex textual conception which Stanislavsky considered as foundational to the performance of opera. Central to this concept is the relationship between ‘the musical and the vocal’ within the dramaturgical fabric of an opera – a relationship which, in Stanislavskian terms, feeds on how the voice and the music connect in terms of dramaturgical exigences. This relationality underpins the concept of the musico-dramatic text which in turn informs the emergent performance dramaturgies created through collaborative practices.

Dr Katerina Grohmann, ‘The leading tendencies in the productions of Stockhausen’s LIGHT – operas in recent years’

The present lecture is an attempt at a comparative consideration of the productions of Karlheinz Stockhausen's LIGHT-operas, which took place in the years after his death, THURSDAY from LIGHT, with the last mentioned opera being the focus of current research. The first opera in the cycle saw two successive productions, one of which took place in the Paris Opera Comique in autumn 2018. The penultimate production in Basel 2016 was based on the innovative conception, which partially exchanged the plot determined in detail by the composer for the independent conception of the director. On the other hand, the actually existing autobiographical component was deepened and partially enriched with psychologism, which in principle does not exist in Stockhausen's scenic works to this extent.

Since this production was awarded, among other things, as “the best opera production of the year” by the magazine “Opernwelt”, the question of just how far the conceptual change is justified by the progress, arises. Stockhausen recorded every movement and action in the score and regarded it as “timing” for the subsequent performances, not least because the scenic elements were also a parameter of his serialistic thinking. The premiere of the opera WEDNESDAY in Birmingham in 2012, at which the author was present to carry out the

staging analysis, showed a way to make the visual relatively free without changing the author's fable. It is therefore extremely exciting to follow the trend that has emerged from the Basel staging to the Paris staging. Does the future of Stockhausen's LICHT operas lie with the unavoidable "directing theater" or is a balance favored by the composer himself possible between the composer's specifications and the staging's visions? However, the next production of THURSDAY by the Opera Comique in Paris at Le Balcon aimed in the opposite direction and impressed with scenic minimalism and attention to detail, which did justice to the multi-layered plot concept. After the realisation of SAMSTAG and DIENSTAG in Paris at Le Balcon, FREITAG (2022) and SONNTAG aus LICHT (2023) were staged, both presenting a great challenge in terms of staging due to the aforementioned complexity of events.

14:00-15:30 Parallel session: Panel 2 - Level 1 - Meeting Room 102*

Dancing Borders, Bridging Cultures: Exploring Interculturality

Josephine Doofan Gande, 'Movements Significance of the Tsue Tsue (cat) Dance and the Tiv's philosophy of "Ya Na Agbian".'

Dance is an integral aspect of every African culture and a significant way of life of the people. It serves a complex diversity of social purposes, expressing communal values, social relationships, and religious contexts. Each cultural dance in Africa has a story that reflects certain values or beliefs, embodying cultural values and standards. They convey meaning which grows out of the living experience and they are categorized in their artistic and historic context with well given names that relates them to their functions.

Like most traditional dances in other African societies, Tiv dances are reflect the way of life of the people. Materials that form stories for Tiv dances are drawn of every day experiences of farming, hunting, fishing and so on.

The Tsue tsele dance transformed from a sacred ritual performed only by male initiates during the initiation and induction of new member to become a social dance that is performed by both male and female at all kinds of social gatherings. It is a rich cultural expression of the Tiv people that encompasses various aesthetic elements and symbolism. This traditional dance form utilizes intricate movements of the cat to convey deeper meanings.

Despite its recognized impact on fostering togetherness and mutual cooperation, there remains a need to explore the specific ways in which the dance contributes to these values. This study therefore, aims to explore and examine the aesthetics, significance, and underlying meanings inherent in the Tsue tsele dance movement. Emphasizing its power in embodying the Tiv philosophy of "Yan na Agbian," translating to "share with a kin," the study will also showcase how the Tsue tsele dance serves as a catalyst for influencing diverse facets of Tiv society. Furthermore, the study aims to underscore its role as a tool for cultural preservation, continuously passed down from one generation to the next, thereby safeguarding the intricate tapestry of Tiv traditions and values.

Floyd Favel & Sabina Sweta Sen-Podstawska, ‘Creating with the dramatic text in progress ‘Passage of the sun’: Connecting across cultures, lands, bodies, movements and stories’ (30 minutes)

We intend to share from our ongoing experiment of art, performance, community and ceremony, where stories, prayers, songs, movements and gestures from across cultures and places meet to teach, transform and heal. This is about a place and community-based and cross-cultural collaboration between Cree theatre director, theorist, essayist and cultural leader, Floyd Favel and Bengali-Polish Odissi dancer, performer and scholar Sabina Sweta Sen-Podstawska.

In 2018, our paths crossed as we met on Poundmaker Cree Nation, an Indigenous reserve in Saskatchewan, Canada, to learn and develop a contemporary Indigenous theatre method, defined by Floyd Favel as the Native Performance Culture. Grounded in and guided by reciprocal forces of sharing the teachings, philosophies and movements from our respective performing traditions and cultures, we have adapted and performed stories of colonization, displacement, loss, hope, healing, regrowth and renewal to enable decolonial, inclusive and respective dialogues between lands, cultures and peoples. These performances have been shared with Indigenous and non- Indigenous viewers at the cultural site on Poundmaker reserve and online audiences, as well as discussed in the form of academic articles.

An essay in progress, ‘Passage of the Sun’, based on lived and place-based experiences that intuitively and innately transformed into a drama, has shown us a possible path to a performative way of expressing our method and teaching. In the form of a collaborative presentation accompanied by vocal and movement excerpts from the dramatic text (songs, dance mudras, Plains Indigenous Sign Language), we will share our preliminary thoughts and methods of incorporating the psychophysical, vocal, spiritual, and architectural practices, philosophies, and knowledge present in the rituals and traditional practices and performances from our cultures, that of Odissi dance and Indian performance aesthetics, philosophies and Cree culture and practices and Indigenous philosophies and teachings towards creating new avenues of expression, transmission, transformation and healing.

***Subhashini Goda Venkataramani, ‘What is Indian about Bharatanatyam?’**

In this paper, I propose to consider a new pathway for practising Bharatanatyam in Dublin. Using ethnographic material and embodied research, I primarily focus on the many ways of re-asserting an “ethnicity” or a “nationality” that is often ascribed to the form, both by the audience and the practitioners. Stemming from this, I navigate the paradigm of interculturality that aids the development of a renewed practice and performance of the art form. As a form that originated and was practised in the temples but has since then moved on to the proscenium stage, adapting accordingly, how does embodying ‘alien’ movements continue to be absorbed and, in turn, transform the dance form? Through practice, I seek to understand the many ways of applying attention and wandering with intentionality that is integral to Bharatanatyam

practice, its newness in terms of explorative content, and how these can impact the embodied experience of the dancer. Positioning myself as an “in-between” artist capable of contributing to a growing body of Indo-Irish work, I seek to further develop on how these methods of attention work with larger concerns such as cultural and political beliefs and how these find spaces in the body of the dancer, simultaneously breaking boundaries of all that is considered ethnic around movement, while representing all that has transpired over decades of changing praxis.

14:00-15:30 Parallel session: Panel 3 - Practice Based Presentations - Level 1 - Meeting Room 103*

Agency and Artistry: Navigating Creative Connections

Lisa Kendell & Rachel Rimmer-Piekarczyk, ‘Agency and Awakening: Creative Connections Attributed to Reckless Sleepers’ A String Section’ (30 minutes)

In this performative presentation, Kendall and Rimmer-Piekarczyk will explore, re-encounter and re-articulate collaborative lines of enquiry that have emerged from their practice-research as performers in the Reckless Sleepers’ work A String Section (concept and direction Leen Dewilde): as a tightly scored performative experiment, the original improvised work engages the performers in a playful yet destructive relationship with wooden chairs and handsaws*. Juxtaposing traditional academic presentation and scenic imagery inherent to Dewilde’s work, the presenters will utilise the frame of the performative presentation to disseminate new insights into this practice. Specifically, Kendall will aim to reawaken and reveal knowledge embedded within the improvisatory work and herself, as an act of transmission, whilst Rimmer-Piekarczyk will explore the performer’s sense of agency when improvising within the structural constraints of the score. Since 2012 Kendall and Rimmer-Piekarczyk have gleefully inhabited A String Section, drawing upon their wealth of embodied and performative experience, amassing new knowledge: identifying and meeting these particular strands of enquiry aims to facilitate, an as yet hidden conduit of communication for them.

This presentation addresses concepts as articulated in the conference call out, including, practice as research; performance within/without/across institutions; improvisation; site-specific performance.

Adrienne Ming, ‘I Don’t Dance Now, I Make Money Moves’ (30 minutes)

As part of a larger project that investigates Arts Council policy and its impact on Black British women in the dance sector from 1985 to the present, this presentation will focus specifically on policy. It will look into how Black British artist aesthetics were enculturated through the practice of policy making. It dives into the inner workings of funding institutions and their infrastructure, and how, from the foundation of being established, they’ve neglected Black

artists seeking support. It mentions some of the criticisms and calls for reform of the funding criteria that neglected Black artists, and when addressed further marginalised and othered them. These amendments produced categorical divisions that serve as neo-colonial tools. Because of this tactic, Black artist aesthetics are compromised and transformed to fit the hegemonic agenda. By using creative practice as a methodology, this practice-based presentation will break down the influences of institutional racism, alongside phallogocentric systems, on how society views the Black body. It wants to show how these ideologies inform policies that subsidize dance making, and even more so how these policies impact the outcome of what Black British women in dance create. This presentation will take a creative approach with the hope it will articulate its findings through an embodied method.

14:00 – 15:30 Performance/Workshop - Level 0 - Theatre

Dr Morag Galloway & Nicola Forshaw, ‘Mus(e)Dance Practice Research: Exploring Cross-Disciplinary Collaborations’ (1hour 30 minutes)

Our dance and music practice exists in the mutual ground between disciplines, and our experiences. We bring all our expertise, knowledge, curiosity, vulnerability and trust to a process driven by the relationships found between two practitioners who dance and play string instruments. Our practice is forming a network of embodied knowledge and we actively ‘draw together psychological feeling, bodily experience, dance and musical elements into an all-embracing, free and creative way of life.’ (Katya Rothe, 2014, p.197)

Nicola Forshaw (dancer and cellist) and Morag Galloway (dancer and violist) will demonstrate how moving and musicking quietens the talking mind, allowing it to hear the body think. This explores the mutual ground of narrative and embodied thinking. It is in the entwining of music and dance that we are able to explore our psychology and physiology and show, rather than tell, this to others.

Maxine Sheets-Johnstone (1999, p.260)—in quoting Roger Sperry, that ‘the brain is an organ of and for movement (Sperry, 1952)’—articulates the interwoven relationship we have between our own bodies and minds, and each other’s. Through our collaborative creative practice, we propose a lecture performance where we show bodies and instruments, and their narratives. In doing this we will transcend what language could tell you about us. Furthermore, our practice demonstrates the body’s desire to be in motion alongside music, as temporal phenomena.

Continuing from Dr Galloway’s PhD (The Dynamics of Mutuality in the Composer and Performer Relationship), our braided improvisation-led practice explores Susanne Ravn and Simon Høffding’s assertion ‘that artistic improvisation centres upon a process of oscillating agency’ (2022, p.516) and how each ‘I’—with our separate histories, techniques, knowledges and experiences—becomes an embodied ‘we’ ‘connected to the oscillatory process of assuming and relinquishing agency.’ (2022, p.534) We will discuss our piece-in-progress, perform it, and then take questions. An introductory film showing how our practice began can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmEu1EpXzUc>

16:00 – 17:30 Parallel session: Panel 1 - Level 1 - Meeting Room 103*

Arts-Tech Odyssey: Navigating Multimedia Performance

Angela Woodhouse, ‘Who Cares: A Reflection on Thermal Imaging Video Project’

Who Cares (2023) is a video installation work created by choreographer Angela Woodhouse and visual artist Caroline Broadhead which reflects on the role of touch as a signifier of care, contamination, intimacy and trust.

The research process for *Who Cares* was initiated by interviews with intensive care unit (ICU) nursing staff in which individuals reflected on their experiences during and since the pandemic. It was made apparent the need among front line staff for a moment of pause to capture personal thoughts on the notion of one body in relation to another, of how touch, so critical in the care context, has become so guarded, of exhaustion, and of the weight of traumatising events that are still being carried. These accounts prompted practical explorations in thermal video with dancers. Focus was on the expanded boundary of the self, made visible through thermal representation.

This research, and previous work by Woodhouse and Broadhead, *Thermal Duets* (2019), innovates through the manipulation of thermal imaging combined with movement/dance, registering the consequences of the close contact and merging of bodies as a heat trace, exploring the capture of breath in different ways and the heat transference evident in the exchange of clothes or the thermal residue of touch. It reveals the potential for painterly abstraction through the video capture of heat trace and with it, the opportunity to explore a poetic interpretation of the tactile. *Who Cares* connects the worlds of technology, biology and art to make a work that reflects back and forward on troubled times, prompting questions about the infrastructure of care and the necessary support given to care givers.

***Kurtis Lesick, ‘Performance and the Beginning and End of Subjectivity’**

This paper privileges performance as a form of praxis-based philosophy. Performance, in this sense, holds a mirror to humanity where actions are firstly, self-consciously (re)produced and secondly, consciously examined and theorised by the audience. Significantly, this is precisely Hegel’s characterisation of the emergence of subjectivity: subjective-spirit is consciousness becoming conscious of itself. Not only is performance critical for the maturation of the human subject, but when deployed strategically it may also allow us to think beyond the subject-object dichotomy which has mired human thinking since the Copernican revolution. I will discuss a variety of fundamental philosophical propositions derived in conversation with performance art contexts which will be extended to performance as a whole.

Patrick Gusset, ‘The Future of the Earth: Pre-enacting Climate Scenarios – Pre-enactment as Research’

Scientists and performing artists pre-enact climate scenarios in order to make the consequences of climate change tangible rather than discussing them in diagrams and figures. By sensualising the data in a transdisciplinary setting, it evokes sensual insights that can influence scientific action and beyond.

16:00 – 17:30 Parallel session: Panel 2 - Level 1 - Meeting Room 101*

Location, Location: Exploring Alternate Spaces and Creative Frontiers

Georgia Petroudi, ‘Location and society as a research exploration embedded in artistic creation: some examples of music by Cypriot composers’

Is research in artistic creation a sine qua non? Is it in some way engraved in the process of creation? Taken from the perspective of creators of music works, the continuous need to produce music that is contemporary and distinctive, unavoidably has led to experimentation on different levels, which in turn, is embedded in the final outcome that is presented. What this paper presentation will explore, is another parameter that has become a stimulus for research and creation – a parameter that has been observed in recent years in the creative output of several composers in Cyprus: how the geographical pin of a place of origin has marked the creative process and has influenced, therefore, the artistic creation. This “pin”, as characterised earlier, has become something more than a location, but rather a symbol of inspiration and connection. Society and societal connections with places of descent appear in several examples to have played a catalytic role in the output of composers, since memories and histories of such places, connotations, living habits, interaction with other people, places, monuments, gatherings are etched into their creative identity. This movement of recent years that has seen the connection of ‘living’ places with several expressions of artistic expression has transcended into other strata, and it has become a research tool of finding ways to transfer this living experience and the societal expressions into the work in progress as means of an ongoing active research. Examples of Cypriot composers provide and demonstrate evidence on how a specific location along with any annotated connotations to everyday life and society become part of the creation process, a process which in cases is in progress, as an organic interconnection between the place and the music. We will examine such compositions in which sounds, timbral colours, echolayers, instruments and other compositional means become the vehicles to portray, via the artistic creation, the impression of one’s own society and place in his/her artistic identity. The process that takes place into connecting the place and life in that place to the how to demonstrate it through the music.

***Dr Clare Lesser, ‘Disseminating Connectivity: *Musik für ein Haus* and *Fresco* as Mobile Event’**

‘Dissemination drags it far from any shore [rive], preventing what you call an event from ever arriving [s’arriver].’ (Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, 1987)

Composed by Karlheinz Stockhausen in the late ‘60s and early ‘70s, *Musik für ein Haus* and *Fresco* are part of a wider group of works that explore dissemination and connectivity, challenging the traditional Western classical music concert hall experience—or event—by physically and/or electronically moving sounds through interlinked performance spaces that are freely accessed by a mobile audience in an individual, collective, pluralistic and deconstructed way. Performers, listeners and spaces are connected through sound in ways that unsettle conventional ideas of authorship, creation, performance and reception.

Spreading across five separate rooms with intersecting corridors and stairways, *Musik für ein Haus*, mixes tape, radio and live performance and superimposes multiple compositions, while both its players and audience are mobile. In *Fresco*, four groups of performers play simultaneously, spread across an entire concert hall complex, but here only the audience is mobile, carrying sonic memories from space to space. In both works, sound ‘bleeds’ between rooms and merges at the liminal intersections of their musical materials; points of entry and departure into new sound-worlds are further emphasised by *Fresco*’s static ‘queue’ of musicians, who appear as though passengers about to ‘take flight.’ Thus, the musical experience, the ‘event,’ as Derrida calls it, in both works is fragmented through this process of dissemination, and audience reception is simultaneously collective and individual, as each member follows their own path through the totality. In this paper I shall offer an interwoven reading of Derrida and Stockhausen, considering the nature of the mobile performance event in relation to key tenets from post-structuralist philosophy and the implications for collective creativity in the 21st century performance arena.

James Kenworth, ‘The use of public environment as alternative auditoria and ‘mixed economy’ participation to create new writing which originates from, and is rooted in, a community’s history, culture and people’

This presentation/research contends that a localist and grassroots approach is the most effective way of empowering wider access to the arts. It argues for an increased emphasis on performance in local spaces rather than in mainstream auditoria. The Newham Plays series have marked out a distinct territory by making a virtue of the absence of elements most commonly associated with conventional theatre spaces, e.g., a stage, scenery, lighting, seating.

My research contends that non-institutionalized theatre in community, site specific and localized environments can offer a greater resistance/indifference to commodification or mass reproduction than mainstream or commercial performance. It is precisely the evanescence of this kind of theatre, its ephemerality, that provides or proves its own justification or meaning, without the need to validate itself by entering the ‘economy of reproduction’ (Phelan 1993).

In an increasingly digitally-saturated world, where advances in technology are negating the need for face-to-face human contact, the ‘analogue’ experience of a small group of people in a non-corporate, localized setting, watching a play, on a bare stage, or on a farm or adventure playground, with just a few props, some indicative costumes, becomes almost an act of subversion, and suggests more than a hint of an oppositional stance towards the big-budget, lavish dramas pumped out on an alarmingly regular, if hugely popular, basis by the streaming giants.

***Heather Kelly, ‘Hope Springs Eternal: Performing Grief and Resilience in Boulder’s Columbia Cemetery’**

Columbia Cemetery is the oldest cemetery in Boulder, Colorado, receiving its first interment in 1870, twelve years after white prospectors first invaded Native land in the area, and six years after Colonel John M. Chivington and 675 volunteer soldiers slaughtered approximately 230 Cheyenne and Arapaho people in the Sand Creek Massacre. It has also become an unlikely hub for performance, hosting at least two immersive and provocative promenade productions in the last three years. In this paper, I explore Monica Weller’s 2020 MFA Dance thesis project, *The Liminal Heart*, and Historic Boulder’s 2022 edition of *Meet the Spirits*, both performed on the grounds of the cemetery in the month of October. In *The Liminal Heart*, Weller and her fellow dancers offer a devastatingly personal meditation on grief and loss, inspired by the untimely death of Weller’s husband; the performance featured a collective memorial audience members were invited to contribute to, and—for many—marked the first live performance they’d attended since the appearance of COVID-19. *Meet the Spirits*, by contrast, is a biennial dramatization of some of Columbia Cemetery’s most famous occupants, played by amateur actors, and timed to coincide with Halloween. Equal parts historical interpretation and family-friendly haunted trail, the popular event serves as a fundraiser for a local historic preservation organization, and seeks to draw attention to their ongoing preservation of the cemetery. While very different in tone, *The Liminal Heart* and *Meet the Spirits* share surprisingly similar objectives: to rebrand the cemetery as a vibrant and welcoming communal space for the living, and to nudge the living and the dead into closer contact and more meaningful conversation with each other. I argue that both performances transform an otherwise static, rarely visited cemetery into a dynamic, living memorial and meeting space, posing interesting questions about if and how we may ethically and lovingly (re)animate our dead.

16:00 – 17:00 Workshop - Level 2 - Aula Prima

Sarah Vella & Benjamin Cachia, ‘Moving Beyond’ (1 hour)

This workshop will focus on the power of collaboration when creating and devising. It will be based on improvisation exercises/tasks and the exploration of various improvisation methods using music/sound and movement as tools for research. Moving Beyond aims to break the

comfort zone, move beyond the patterns that we are used to, switch off the mind and follow the body, the sounds, the impulses. We research ways to achieve the feeling of a sense of freedom in the workshop process to be able to access possibilities that are endless and limitless when artists start to create and devise a piece of work. This workshop is inspired by a residency that we were part of under the artist-in-residence programme of ZfinMalta in 2022 (AiR), in which we explored the various relationships between sound and movement and how these connect and inspire the artists involved to find a deeper connection to authenticity in a creative process.

The workshop aims to create a space for listening, awareness, attention and connection. A non-judgemental space. As well as, a space for observation, feedback, dialogue and reflection. It offers a space to explore how our own individual experiences, as well as the shared experiences inform a process.

The opportunity to present the research we did in 2022 throughout this workshop format at the conference, will allow for new creative and performative links to emerge whilst (re)discovering how artists in the performing arts world work, research, devise and create.

16:00 – 18:00 Workshop - Level 0 - Theatre

Thomas Page, ‘Connectivity towards interconnectivity’ (2 hours)

A three-part workshop exploring modes of connection across human, artistic, and societal constructs:

Part One will be centred around a conversational task motivated by Arthur Aron’s experiments on Interpersonal Closeness. Working in pairs, participants will move through a series of questions/prompts designed to create the conditions for connectivity.

Part Two will be a guided playground using improvisation as a method of exploring modes of connection with the potential to move from proprioceptive to contact work temporally locating a complex dynamic network of artists in an animated space. Suitable for movement, visual, photographic, and music-based artists – artists will be required to bring their own materials.

Part Three will be an open collective space for contemplation to map the interconnections of our complex dynamic system(s).

16:00 - 17:00 ONLINE Workshop - Level 1 - Meeting Room 102* (1 hour)

***Caroline Butcher, 'Impossible Tasks as a Means to Possibility'**

It is easy to see that left as is, “our system, by reason of its structure and vocabulary, is ill equipped to redress certain types of wrong” (Delgado and Stefancic 31). Another tenet of Critical Race Theory, Structural Determinism, states how the country’s policies, laws, and systems were created on premises of racist intentions and crafted to maintain hierarchal oppression. Therefore, as long as they are still governing our world they are wildly inadequate to undo racism. So yes, given the above scholarship, it seems that undoing racism is impossible.

And yet, maybe not. The People’s Institute for Survival and Beyond believes that because racism was done, it can be undone (“Undoing Racism □ Community Organizing Workshop”). As impossible as it seems and feels, perhaps it is possible. Perhaps the impossible is only impossible when those in power don’t make change and instead make change impossible. Implied by Structural Determinism is the need for “innovation, not the application of some pre-existing rule or category” (Delgado and Stefancic 32). Because the systems and institutions as they are now are “ill equipped to redress certain types of wrong” (31), the creation of new systems and structures is required. The process of creative innovation often emerges from the pursuit of the seemingly impossible, therefore, by relentlessly committing to the completion of what feels impossible new possibilities reveal themselves. In the repetitive and intentional pursuit of actioning impossible tasks, new strategies emerge and the tasks become possible.

Day 3 Abstracts:

Prof Lee Miller and Dr Joanne “Bob” Whalley

Subject/Object/Practice/Place: Practising Digital Senescence

As two academics with over sixty years of body-based practices between us, the emergence of volumetric capturing technologies (LIDAR, structured light, photogrammetry, 360 video, light fields etc.), and virtual production contexts, affords us a radical intervention into the conjoined territories of Subject/Object/Practice/Place. This keynote seeks to consider the potential impact that these developments might have upon the dramaturgical strategies employed within ephemeral, process-driven performance practice. The potential doubling evoked by the ordinary referent and its digital twin requires that the practitioner-researcher acknowledges the potential cleaving between the source and its document. Inherent therein is the slow degrading of source to output, and the complexity this assumes. Starting from the limits presented by our ageing bodies and their digital doubles, our paper takes an approach from Erin Manning whose work ‘refuses a strict boundary between body and world, individual and other’ (2023: 188) in an attempt to find the benefits of such limits.

11:00-12:30 Parallel Session: Panel 1 - Level 1 - Meeting Room 101*

Empowering Connections: The Impact of Community Engagement in the Arts

Emma Meehan, ‘Sharing Harmony: Practicing Dialogue in Amerta Movement’

Peace studies provides perspectives on different models of intergroup contact for enhancing dialogue between groups in conflict (Moaz et al., 2011). However, Pruitt and Jeffrey (2020, 23) suggest that ‘Dance has received little attention in the broader literature considering the arts and peacebuilding.’ Varynen (2019, 2) also discusses the need to ‘bring living and experiencing, sentient, body to the study of peacebuilding and peace.’ This presentation focuses on Amerta Movement practice, developed by Javanese dance/movement artist Suprpto Suryodarmo (Prapto), which supports dialogue between diverse groups of people. While much has been written about Amerta Movement by authors from the US, UK and Europe, this presentation focuses on new perspectives from interviews with six Amerta Movement practitioners during fieldwork in Indonesia in 2022 undertaken collaboratively with Dr. Samsul Maarif (Centre for Religious and Cross-Cultural Studies, Universitas Gadjah Mada) and with the support of dance artist-researcher Dr. Diane Butler (Dharma Nature Time). The context for this approach is significant given Indonesia’s history of colonial occupation, secessionist conflicts, and localized ideological conflicts (Harrowell 2018); alongside the country’s indigenous local wisdom on pluralism in diversity management (Maarif 2014). This research

investigates how Amerta Movement practice aims to facilitate an exploration of the individual in relationship with community and environment; and non-hierarchical and inclusive approaches to ‘harmony’. It also addresses more broadly how dance and religious studies can work together to understand peaceful dialogue through self-cultivation, interpersonal attunement and connection with nature.

***Maja Milatovic-Ovadia, ‘Possibilities of collaborative theatre and ludic practices in the post-war reconciliation process’**

Bosnia and Herzegovina is not making news today. The war ended twenty-eight years ago. Still, contemporary Bosnian society has yet to come to terms with the past. There is no consensus between opposing sides about the war violence – relativisation of war crimes, misrepresentation of historical facts, and resistance to memorialise the places where atrocities were committed represent the established political attitude. Society is still strongly segregated along ethnic lines, and the peacebuilding process is stagnating.

Young people haven’t experienced the war, but they grow up with its legacy. New generations are born into a divided neighbourhood and growing up considering exclusion as a normality. They live in ethnically homogenous towns and villages and go to ethnically segregated local schools where they are taught different histories of the war. Stereotypes and negative perceptions of the ‘other’ become institutionalised and add to the tension of inter-ethnic relationships.

Using evidence from my four yearlong practice-based research in community theatre projects with young people from segregated communities in Northern Bosnia, this paper will examine the potential of collaborative theatre projects based on comedy and ludic practices in the complex process of post-war reconciliation, in circumstances where war crimes and segregation cannot be addressed directly. While examining the ethical, artistic and social implications of using devised comedy, I will summarise the key principles that guide this work, outline the difficulties this approach poses, consider the function humour plays in the interrogation of social taboos and as a mode of resistance, and argue for a significant reparative value it has to offer to a peacebuilding process. The study takes a cross-disciplinary approach to research, drawing from the theory of reconciliation, theatre practice and comedy studies.

Susie Crow, ‘Drawing Dance: cross art collaboration and dialogue in practice’

In 2008 a group of four Oxford based artists met in the kitchen of one of them to pursue a shared interest, inviting dance artist Susie Crow to dance for them. Out of this grew the project Drawing Dance, endeavouring not simply to draw the body of the dancer but to capture the essence of the dancing itself. The collaboration extended to involve other dancers and musicians of the Oxford Improvisers’ group, responding to each other through extended improvisations. The development of live projection of artists’ drawings as they emerged in response to music and dance enabled dancers and musicians to interact synchronously with the expanded marks and painterly gestures, integrating and enmeshing the art forms in fluid

collaboration, exploring artistic dialogue through improvisation. A core group performed live in Oxford venues such as OVADA gallery, Pegasus Theatre, the Story Museum and The Old Fire Station; regular workshops drew in local artists from Oxfordshire's wider flourishing visual arts scene to explore the expression of dancing and music on paper, feeding into exhibitions of resulting drawings.

Since the pandemic visual artist Antonia Bruce and Susie Crow have resumed and sustained a regular mutual practice of drawing and dancing. Improvising composer Malcolm Atkins has joined them once again for a series of workshops involving professional dancers and local artists, leading to an exhibition of work last year in St Mary and St Nicholas Church in Littlemore. This paper will give an account of this organically developing practice which has given rise to new links between artistic communities and practitioners, and explored different contexts for performance and exchange. It will reflect on the nature of the interaction between art forms operating in different time frames, and the need for listening and giving space. As technology has moved forward, it will consider where this practice might go next.

José Dias, 'Off Screen: Musicking archive film and reinterpreting collective memory in Coventry'

Off Screen is a pilot project of community reinterpretation of collective memory through musicking film archive. Its purpose was to animate and interpret MACE's mute television news collection with collaboration from local artists and community groups through music and spoken word. Using a collection of mute BBC news archive made in and about Coventry, we delivered a series of community-based workshops to stimulate and respond to conversation as it developed in the room in relation to this mute footage. Participants were asked to describe auditory memories that were surfaced by the footage, or to imagine the sound which was absent from these mute bits of film, to describe what they were seeing on screen, but, crucially, to reflect on what they were not seeing, who was absent from the story being told by this footage and what histories lie hidden off screen. Artists used these responses to aid them in the process of improvising music, veejaying and creating spoken word to accompany a rescreening of the footage. Developing such a project helped in bringing parts of the archive to life which are usually inaccessible to the public, enabled the reinterpreting of collective memory, and promoted the archive's engagement with local communities. More importantly the project provided local communities with a platform to reflect upon the ways in which they feel they have been absent, represented and mis-represented in the news and the media that has informed their history via the moving image. Therefore, this project explored innovative models and methodologies for participatory research, developed public engagement activities that are related to participatory and co-produced research, and promoted co-production from different institutions and disciplines.

Symbiotic Dialogues: Navigating Human and Non-Human Agency in the Performing Arts

Mireille E. Camilleri, 'Human & Non-Human Agency in Performance'

Human agency can be described as one's ability 'to do' an action consciously (Nelson 2013). Such awareness is when the human as an 'actor' understands through their embodiment, thus influencing time, space, and other components through their interventions. In performances, a co-authoring experience is encouraged between the performance-makers, where agency is shared by every participant in an 'autopoietic feedback loop' (Erika Fischer-Lichte 2008). Can the same be achieved between human and non-human actors? By opening up the space to human and non-human relationships, this research explores how human perceptive agency affects non-human actors, and whether this can be reciprocated back by the non-human actors. Understanding the level of agency between human and non-human actors is a complex exploration, epitomized by the intricate relationships observed in sports performances, such as in the notably dynamic partnership between horse and rider in equestrian practices. In such processes, the collaboration unfolds as a performative dialogue, where each participant—human and non-human—exerts individual agency. This synergy extends beyond species boundaries, with both entities navigating training scales, exercises, and competitions. Here, one core question emerges: When does the non-human athlete, like the equine partner, operate independently, maintaining an autonomous workflow? Other related questions involve the extent to which the human and non-human agencies harmonize to create a symbiotic exchange. Employing a multidisciplinary approach and weaving together insights from affective science, posthumanism, and performance theories, this research examines nuanced connections between human and non-human entities. A number of case studies (for example human–animal, human–technology) will serve to illuminate our understanding of the complex interplay between human and non-human spaces.

***Inga Romantsova, 'Evreinov and Creativity'**

The paper aims to foster new connections across creative, theatrical, and educational realms within the performing arts, potentially uncovering fresh avenues for exploration and rediscovery. Creativity, as illuminated by Evreinov, transcends mere artistic expression; it serves as a catalyst for innovative thinking, breaking through established thought patterns and fostering empathy. Evreinov's perspective on the theatricality of life goes beyond staging reality—it's a philosophical lens unveiling the intricacies of human nature and its evolutionary significance. This avenue beckons further research, advocating for the internal embrace of our theatrical capabilities across diverse human interactions, from workplaces to intimate settings or even within medical contexts where the embrace of roles may evoke hope and alternative

perspectives. Evreinov's inquiries about creativity echo fundamental inquiries about existence itself, elucidating its broader philosophical implications on human nature, world-building principles, and evolution. As the twenty-first century unfolded, these once-modernist ideas found resonance in everyday life, a sentiment echoed by scholars like Denis Dutton and Ellen Dissanayake. Dissanayake reinforces Evreinov's belief in the innate creative ability of every individual, emphasizing the fundamental need for art in human adaptation and survival—an integral element as crucial as necessities like food, warmth, or shelter for our species. In essence, Evreinov's exploration of creativity mirrors the profound questions about life itself. It expands our understanding of human existence, offering a philosophical framework to comprehend our evolution, societal structures, and the intricate interplay between reality and illusion. His teachings continue to guide us, urging us to embrace the inherent theatricality within us as we navigate the stages of life, fostering a deeper understanding of ourselves and others.

Prof Frank Camilleri, 'Time to Waste: Learning in Performance'

Auto-didacticism marks a crucial aspect in pedagogical processes: irrespective of the teacher, method, set-up, or institution, the final responsibility rests with the learner, with her motivation, application, discipline etc. – all of which are mixed with issues of privilege but which still leave the learner at the centre of the experience, even when marginalized. At the heart of the pedagogical situation, therefore, including in the context of aesthetic performance, is the impulse for self-learning. Consequently, the paper hones in on the bodyworld of the learner, i.e. her body/mind processes within their reciprocally (in)forming material socio-cultural contexts. The conceptualization of the 3As of bodyworld enables auto-didactic practices to be viewed as pedagogical events that creatively bring together a number of elements (as assemblages), whose individual and combined potential (affordances) are actualized (actants) in specific ways, including partially or none-at-all. If 'auto-didacticism' refers to self-learning, 'guided auto-didacticism' highlights the role played by the modelling implements and/or roles (the 'guide') in such processes. As such, by means of the 3As, the paper specifically considers the material qualities and relationalities of the guiding agents in pedagogical events. Accordingly, materiality is understood in terms of subjects and objects that function as tools, instruments, and technology in their broadest sense that also includes discourse, space, and time. Within this framework, auto-didacticism is not simply a 'work upon oneself' (a 'teaching–oneself') but a 'net-working' and a 're-working' that recycles and re-purposes existing materials, including, self, system, and situation. The paper exemplifies the argument by referencing a specific dimension of 'learning time' in practical work as an object that is often camouflaged and hence invisible.

Aliyu Yakubu Abdulkadir & Josephine Doofan Gande, ‘Drama as a Tool for Societal Reflection and Reform: An Appraisal of Bode Ojoniyi’s A Play of the Palliatives’

The role of drama as a transformative tool capable of spurring societal introspection and positive change continues to be enforced by new dramatic interventions focused contemporary realities. Through capacities in representation, characterization, and thematic preoccupation, drama provides a platform for deep reflection on societal issues. This study aims to explore the use of drama as a tool for social commentary in contemporary Nigeria, with a specific focus on Bode Ojoniyi's effervescent play, *A Play of the Palliatives*. Set against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic and government (in)action resulting from it, the play serves as a poignant mirror reflecting the malaise of social injustice and pervasive corruption that characterize the Nigerian socio-political context, as well as the resultant ignominy in the culture and economy. The dramatic plot unfolds with a portrayal of provincial leaders hoarding essential palliatives provided by the federal government and meant for distribution among the struggling masses to ease the harsh effects of the pandemic. Ojoniyi adeptly exposes the moral decay of the establishment, as leaders clandestinely hoard the provisions in warehouses across the nation. The desperate masses, driven by hunger and disillusionment, discover these hidden stores and, in an act of collective defiance, break in to claim their rightful portions. The decaying state of some of the provisions becomes a metaphor for the decay in ethics and governance across the nation.

The play further underscores the complicity of corrupt leaders in empowering hoodlums, euphemistically labelled as "state boys," to shield them from accountability. It also sheds light upon the inherent inadequacies within law enforcement, symbolized by the incompetence of the police to prevent mayhem.

The play culminates in a powerful climax where justice is served through the collective action of the masses. The corrupt leaders and their accomplices are brought before the "court of the people," showcasing the transformative potential of drama to not only spotlight reality but also inspire a call to action and foster accountability. Ojoniyi's play stands as a testament to the enduring impact of the dramatic rendering of reality in instigating positive societal change and fostering a sense of justice and communal responsibility.

11:00 – 13:00 Workshop - Level 0 - Theatre (2 hours)

Lily Kind, ‘Flying Home: A Critical Embrace of Queerness & Africanist Aesthetics in David Zambrano’s Flying Low & Passing Through’

In this Practice-based workshop I share how and why I teach *Flying Low and Passing Through*, the floorwork technique and improvisation methods of David Zambrano. Since the 90s these methods have been expanded upon by a global community of both institutionally embedded professionals as well as Outsider artists. As Zambrano's methods – fast paced, musical, and

requiring no Western/Classical training -- peak in popularity, they remain severely understudied. These methods can – but do not always -- serve as a bridge between canonized contemporary techniques and transgressive/anti-colonial dance pedagogy.

In this workshop, I articulate the Africanist presence in Zambrano's work: couple dancing, the cypher, subversive humor, and jazz musical structures. At the intersection, I consider the queer collectivity and physical risk of these methods, their origin the AIDS epidemic of the 1980s, and what they offer us as teachers and dancers amidst/after the COVID pandemic. I am interested in the open-source ethos and transgressive pedagogy that powers Zambrano's practices – as well as its dissonance with his patriarchal position. My research includes the supplementary material I have developed to support dancers mental and physical health. My interest in Zambrano's methods is interwoven with my love for various Black dance forms as well as the personal pleasure and professional benefits of inhabiting a 'third space' between vernacular forms and institutionalized contemporary dance.

13:30 – 14:00 Student Panel - Level 0 - Meeting Room 6*

Alex Jatosti, 'The Dialectic of Subjectivity in Thomas Mann's Doctor Faustus'

In a review of Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus* (1947), Erich Kahler described the novel as one of the great 'terminal' works of the twentieth century – a definition that captures the essence of Mann's magnum opus (Kahler 1949). The narrative follows the Faustian figure of the composer Adrian Leverkühn, who makes a deal with the devil by deliberately contracting syphilis in exchange for twenty-four years of musical genius. The Dionysian madness of the disease allows him to overcome the crisis of traditional means of musical expression, codifying a new compositional system (controversially inspired by Schoenberg's twelve-tone technique). Drawing on Theodor Adorno's *Philosophy of New Music*, Mann presents the crisis as systemic, rooted in the historical conditions of the musical material itself, and Leverkühn's strict system as a historical necessity at a time when 'imperious subjectivity' has replaced objectivity in the role of musical organisation, and is showing signs of sterility (Mann 1947: 204).

This paper, part of the research for my undergraduate dissertation on Hegelian and historicist legacies in *Doctor Faustus*, will focus on chapter VIII – a series of fictional lectures on Beethoven's late works. Through an analysis of the chapter, I will explore Mann's dialectical understanding of the relationship between objectivity and subjectivity in the creative process from a Hegelian perspective. The post-Beethovenian crisis of subjectivist freedom discussed in chapter VIII will be interpreted as an expression of a broader crisis of nineteenth-century, Enlightenment-inspired, historicist discourse and of Hegel's idea of historical progress as the unfolding of the consciousness of freedom. Ultimately, I am interested in locating *Doctor Faustus* as a 'terminal' work of this Hegelian, historicist tradition – at once its culmination and the terminal stage of its crisis.

Antea Buro, ‘Polùtropos - representation of a “multifaced” word’

The presentation will concern the Dance Film Ancient Values, created in 2022 for the assessment of the study-unit CLA3129 Survey of Classical Epic delivered by Doctor Carmel Serracino, offered by the Department of Classics and Archeology at the University of Malta.

Ancient Values was based on meaningful words which express specific values in the first ten lines of the epic poem *Odyssey* by Homer. In particular regard to the conference’s themes, the presentation will focus on the section dedicated to *πολύτροπος* (*polutropos*) – which is descriptive and distinctive attribute of Odysseus, protagonist of the poem. The complexity and even “ambiguity” of this word, led to a personal reflective writing practice which became the tool and medium to inspire the subject’s interpretation into its being the represented object.

The single part of the body was chosen, not representing entirely myself anymore, but to abstract the meaning. The feet are the human source of support and strength; they are “multifaceted” being in contact with the soil via the plant and with air via the upper surface. They are the parts that mostly carry and hold on the skin the traces and touches of the places where someone has been. The slow motion highlights the skin surface and the minimal traits of “places’ traces”. In addition the decision to focus on the feet has been related to their ancient function. The foot was conceived as a quantitative metre measure in poetry, of which a concrete reminiscence is noticeable in Isadora Duncan’s imagery and revolutionary approach to dance’s essence.

Lilla Kedves, ‘And there is the rhythm of madness’ – The Representation of Mental Disorders on the Contemporary Stage’

Madness, psychosis, schizoid episodes, depression, and suicide have been recurring themes on stage ever since people began to perform. As French philosopher Michel Foucault claims (2004), persons labelled mad cross the boundaries of societal norms, representing the feared connection with a reality beyond our general understanding. In my research, I use *4.48 Psychosis* (2000) by Sarah Kane to explore and compare how contemporary performances of her play depict mental illnesses. Kane’s writing approach itself, interpretable as a subjective confession of a fragile state of mind, defies the conventional rules of dramaturgy. According to the theory of the American historian Sander L. Gilman (1988: 1), what shapes the Western image of mental illness is the fear of collapse and loss of control. What an artist portrays in their art is not themselves but the Other. Therefore, the depicted condition can become nothing else but an anthropomorphised diagnosis.

For centuries, psychological disorders were the subject of fear. Today, there is a growing trend towards a shift in society where mental illnesses are becoming less stigmatized, although the fear, perhaps in a more subtle way, still exists. Moreover, this shift is scarcely reflected in current performative practices which are heavily rooted in the cultural tradition described by Gilman. The goal of my research is to determine if, by employing a different approach,

performing arts, which by depicting an Other, can move in on subjects which reality tends to occult, can be used to destigmatize mental disorders. Through a comparative analysis of existing productions of 4.48 Psychosis (2000) and a general overview of performing madness, I evaluate current representation strategies and develop my theoretical staging plan. Pursuing my hypothesis that mental illnesses are still negatively represented on stage, I seek ways to depart from current traditions and promote a discourse on more inclusive staging strategies for mental disorders.

Sarah Sammut, 'A Case Study on the Minority Group of Maltese Male Dancers'

This case study delves into the experience of Maltese male dancers as a minority group, as an analysis and reflection of the construction and choreography of masculinity within Western theatre dance in the context of the Maltese Islands. A thorough review of statistical research on the percentage of male participation in dance education by the National Statistics Office of Malta contextualises the need for this study. Qualitative research is opted for as the methodology to obtain insight on Maltese male dancers' educational and professional dance experiences. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with four Maltese men who identify themselves as trained, studying or professional dancers. Significant themes within the findings are analysed and discussed alongside academic literature on men in dance. Similarly to findings of international research, Maltese male dancers experience marginalisation and negotiate their masculine identities accordingly, although they are also shown support from various persons and organisations. While the number of Maltese male dancers remains comparatively low to female dancers, it is increasing with time.

14:00-15:30 Parallel session: Panel 1 - Level 1 - Meeting Room 102*

Tech-Tuned: Exploring the Intersection of Technology and the Performing Arts

***Dr Kirsty Russel, '360° Immersive Dance-Making and Performance as an Expanded Screendance Practice'**

The proposed paper explores the artist-researchers PhD practice-based study to explore the Intersection of digital dance studies and Screendance, focusing on the emergent field of 360° immersive dance as a form of internet performance. It delves into pioneering 360° immersive works to showcase the evolving landscape of digital performance and to exemplify immersive experiences, redefining audience engagement with performance through virtual reality and 360° films. Dixon's (2007) expansive definition of digital performance encompasses varied practices including networked performance and telematic dance, all significant as early forms requiring internet connectivity (Popat, 2001). The paper examines historical roots to demonstrate the potential of the Internet for 360° immersive dance-making and performance. The paper focuses on the experiential aspects of incorporating digital environments, ultimately building on foundational practices to propel dance into 360° immersive and VR mediums.

The absence of scholarly literature on these works prompts a critical examination, positioning the study at the crossroads of digital performance, internet art, and Screendance. Tracing the historical evolution of dance film and site-specific dance, the research identifies parallels and merges them in a 360° context, contributing to an expanded Screendance practice. Addressing the current ambiguity in Screendance definitions, the study suggests that 360° immersive dance, underpinned by posthumanism (Braidotti, 2014) and ecological perspectives, challenges conventional notions, potentially aligning with radical Screendance (Heighway, 2014). The artist-researchers practice emphasises both the body and the site equally; the 360° nature of the viewing experience provides choices for the viewer. The viewer can choose to engage with any part of the film, the work could be defined as radical Screendance on the premise that the viewer chooses what they view and depending on their choice, a human body may not be visible at all. This paper explores the significance of the dancing body, raising questions about the relationship between human, nonhuman, and technology within the evolving landscape of immersive 360° Screendance.

Abigail May Parker, ‘Retro-Futuristic ‘ABBA’atars’: The Modernised Role of the Audience’

42-years after their last concert as a band, ABBA Voyage is the closest production to witnessing an ABBA reunion. Combining state-of-the-art technology and an assortment of ABBA’s hits, ABBA Voyage steps back into the musical history of ABBA’s career and revolutionises some of their most iconic performances and tracks. Witnessing an amalgamation of innovative entertainment and pioneering, digital perspectives through cutting-edge motion technology, the show features the four members of ABBA as ‘ABBA’atars’ (an obvious play on ‘ABBA avatars’), specifically three-dimensional avatars on large-scale screens. However, amongst the popularity of this new concept, one must consider the ‘realistic’ nature of this new spectacle and how audiences are perceiving this new, modernised adaptation of ABBA.

This paper examines two areas: the physical creation of the ‘ABBA’atars’ (inclusive to the extent that they resemble an adaption of ‘contemporary’ ABBA), and the reasoning behind audiences paying to visit ABBA Voyage, despite the absence of ABBA themselves – one could even question if it is still classed as an ABBA performance or concert, if the members of ABBA are not physically there. This paper observes the relationship between the virtual performer and the role of the audience, and more importantly, delves into the broader question: how does the audience construct a performer-audience bond with something that is not physically there? Audiences are often enriched by the fabricated identities and performances of personalities that are crucial to popular music culture, hence this paper offers an innovative perception into the audience interpretation of technological performance mediums. Thus, this paper combines the examination of a modernised approach to performance with a traditional analysis on the role of the audience; these two factors combined permit an interesting interpretation on how audiences are perceiving the new ‘version’ of ABBA and predominantly makes the reader question – is this ABBA or not?

***Huiyue Wen, ‘The Evolution of Screen-to-Stage Musical Theatre Adaptations: A Practical Exploration’ (30 minutes)**

Musical theatre adaptations from films occupy a large number of musical theatre productions in past decades, becoming a popular path of creating new stage musicals. In the commercial theatre industry, musical theatre adaptations based on films can be regarded as a “transgenerational phenomenon” (Hutcheon and O’Flynn 2013: 32) This phenomenon entails the revival of a familiar narrative, originally depicted on the silver screen, but reimagined for the stage, thereby breathing new life into classic tales.

Tracing the history of screen-to-stage musical theatre adaptations, I have undertaken a comprehensive categorization of the source fictional films along three dimensions: the script’s origin (original or adapted), the nature of the performers (live-action, cartoon, animation), and the musicality factor (musical or non-musical). This taxonomy provides a foundation for understanding the diversity and evolution of this creative medium. Furthermore, the practice of adapting films into musical theatre is far from novel, with numerous iconic musicals finding their roots in the cinematic world. Therefore, a critical exploration of Broadway and West-End productions of screen-to-stage musical theatre adaptations is paramount. This examination delves into both successful ones and flops throughout the history of this screen-to-stage musical adaptation practice.

As a practitioner, I have adapted the British romantic comedy film “Man Up” (2015) into a musical as my MA dissertation project. In my role as the book writer and lyricist, my focus has been on dramaturgy, examining how the same story is told differently by using music instead of dialogue, in order to ensure the musical adaptation is “special in its own right” while “matching the original in tone” (Gordon, Jubin, and Taylor, 2016: 208). In this conference, I look forward to sharing both my vision for this project and the lyrics I have written, sharing my process of transferring a film into a musical theatre.

14:00-15:30 Parallel session: Panel 2 - Level 1 - Meeting Room 101*

Rhythms of Revolution: Shaping the Conversation in the Performing Arts

Kathryn Stamp, ‘The closeness of us: dance research trajectories and relationality’

This paper presentation will examine the context of dance research with a specific focus on relationality and the social, professional, political and creative implications of a research community where the lines between ‘industry’ and academia are blurred. I will reflect on my own experience as a dance scholar who has been educated through the UK Higher Education system, through my arts-based reflection practices, and the implications of connections, training and experiences that are both in part shared and unique through my own self-perception. This will draw upon the concept of relationality, with relationality emphasising how we do not work in isolation, but rather our self is created through interactional exchange with others. In pondering the current landscape of dance research in the UK and beyond, its

connection to the wider dance sector and significant events from the past five years, I will contemplate the impact on how dance research is perceived, conducted, and valued (or not) for and through the individual and the collective. How do relationships challenge, affirm and grow our practice as dancers and dance scholars? This paper will seek to highlight the distinctiveness of our relationality in the field, considering how multi-layered networks and connections might influence the future of dance research and a growing prioritisation of interdisciplinary engagement. Whilst largely focused on the UK landscape, due to my own experience, this paper will reflect on the UK's relationship to other countries and the interpersonal connections across cultural and geographical borders.

***Karen Wood, 'Freelancing in Dance – What and where are the practices of care?'**

The research questions for this paper follow on from previous extensive research investigating the working conditions of freelance dance artists and their location within the cultural economy.

The questions I address here are:

- What does care look like for a freelance artist?
- Who offers this care and what structures are in place for this to happen?
- What collective action and organising can support care for freelance artists whose employment status is seen as 'precarious'?

Just over 2 million people in the UK work in the creative industries (DCMS, 2021). Around 50% of this workforce is made up of freelance/self-employed workers, compared with 13% of all UK workers. Approximately 300,000 people work in 'music, performing and visual arts' (MPVA, as categorised by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport), of whom 216,000 are self-employed (72%). The only other similar DCMS sub-sector is 'design and designer fashion', where the numbers are around half those in MPVA. The latter sub-sector is broad and does not differentiate between individual art forms; however, it does reveal the amount of freelance work conducted and it highlights the importance of the current piece of research in supporting the sector.

This paper utilises previous research conducted in the Freelance Dance artists and Working Conditions project (www.freelancedance.uk) funded by the British Academy. The transdisciplinary approach brought together freelance dance artists to share knowledges and experiences to highlight gaps in infrastructure and policy making. This paper will explore reflections on this work and in particular point to practices of care that have emerged as missing or sporadically offered in the cultural and creative industries. I will comment on collective purpose and social action as an outcome.

The paper will consider practices of care as a priority moving forward. Facets of care can be seen in Jonathan Gross' work and I will borrow this as the framework. Gross (2020) refers to 'hope' as the 'grounds for agency' (p.213) and essential to individual wellbeing. A

consideration of ethics and its values will foreground this research. Moreover, I will explore the individual and collective desire for hope as a fundamental element for practices of care and use ethics, dance and its workers as a case in point.

Sara Wookey, 'A Shared Aliveness at Louvre Lens Park: Play, Rest and Proximity'

Over the last twenty years, there has been an experiential, performative turn of the museum in which dance has become positioned. As reflected by Dorothea von Hantelmann (2014), these changes focus on the experience that an artwork produces, rather than simply the meaning it depicts. As part of this turn, current museum programming and arts funding agendas often call on the dance artist to offer experiences by 'activating' artworks, spaces and publics within the museum. What this thesis makes evident is that such demands on dance create a situation in which dance is brought into the museum to enhance the institution's participation and engagement needs, and that this instrumentalizing of dance is denying dance of its potential as a way of relating in the museum. The word relating, here, is used to mean our interconnectedness to each other, to the site and, ultimately, a connection back to oneself. This paper opens and challenges current thinking of dance in the museum by challenging that thinking from the perspective of the dance artist working there. This presentation attempts to extend current understanding of dance in the museum beyond a product or 'experience' and towards relation. It argues for the potential of the transferable skills of the dance artist to bring about a shift in the social space and human infrastructure of the museum.

14:00-15:30 Parallel session: Panel 3 – Practice-based presentations - Level 1 - Meeting Room 103*

Falling and Failing: Experiments with Risk and Reward

Josh Slater, 'Catching the fall: Landing between documentation and the experiential'

This practice research presentation investigates and reflects on the body knowledge created through a ritualised solo falling practice. The audience is invited to witness Josh falling in person and via short films capturing his solo falling practice over the last three years. This has been an iterative daily practice that draws on the work of Bas Jan Ader, Emilyn Claid and Steve Paxton.

The practice of falling places notions of authenticity, risk-taking and being in the moment into the experience's foreground. However, much of Josh's falling practice has been captured through video documentation. Recently, he has been exploring and reflecting on the importance of the edit to capture the experience of the fall for the viewer. This draws on the practices and writings of Heathfield, 2004; Reason, 2006; Wilkinson, 2007; Cooper Albright, 2010, 2019; Rounthwaite, 2011; Claid, 2013, 2022; Sharrocks, 2013; and Paxton, 2018.

Dr Joseph Mercier, ‘Desperate Gestures: Queer Presence as a Choreopolitical Practice’

This practice led paper is a queer intervention into the discourse of performance presence, questioning what a queer methodology might offer to how we address questions of presence in choreographic practices., drawing. On Munoz’s (2009), ‘Cruising Utopia’, Love’s (2003) ‘Feeling Backwards’ as well as, Andre Lepecki’s (2013) notion of ‘choreopolitics. In this practice I approach queerness as a discursive process of identifactory assemblages: the queer subject is one, whose sense of self has been assembled in resistance to normative and hegemonic process of identity. This research proceeds from the suspicion that, for the queer subject, any attempt to be present, within this moment of neoliberal, postmodernism, is either impossible or politically compromised. The queer subject often finds themselves over-exposed or invisible. And because we cannot separate any attempt to be present from a culture of the individual, a fetish for the new, and a commodification of the ‘now’ that permeates every cell of contemporary life I hypothesis that any attempt to be ‘present’ in community with other bodies might be something of a desperate gesture. And this desperate gestures might offer a proposition in how queer presence is addressed in time and space: that is to say how queerness might be a ‘choreopolitical’ (Lepecki 2013) practice for queer communities.

***Anna Pillot, ‘It’s Personal: Asking an Audience to Risk Failure’ (30 minutes)**

“It’s Personal” is a dance-based intermedia work consisting of four sections, in which a singular live performer engages with multiple digital versions of herself as she undergoes various physical tasks in which failure is the only outcome. Such tasks are presented as a live-action video game, races against the avatars/duplicates (Anna-Droids) of the performer, one of which always wins, an attempt to teach the audience to dance while simultaneously setting up a pizza party in the lobby, and a return to the video game with shifted rules. The audience is implicated in the event immediately upon arrival to the venue, through the use of live feed surveillance projected in the main performance space and the opportunity to wear a heart rate monitor, allowing them to see their biometric data projected on the screen. The audience is fully implicated in learning a dance mid-performance, shifting them from observer to participant.

Created at a collision point of many themes and disciplines, the research behind “It’s Personal” spans queer theory, feminist theory, stand-up comedy, physiology, psychology, dance, and more. From Jose Muñoz’s queer utopia to Sara Ahmed’s feminist failure, Legacy Russell’s Glitch Feminism, and Hannah Gadsby’s standup expertise, this work asks both the performer and the audience to lean in and risk and be seen trying. This piece is queer around the edges, the effort of those involved is made visible, and the payoff comes from doing the thing in spite of all of the reasons why not to. “It’s Personal” exists as a model to embody aspirational values, where the multiplicity of self is on display, and the viewer is not exempt. More information about this work is available here: <https://www.annapillot.com/recentprojects/it-s-personal>

14:00-15:30 Workshop - Level 1 - Aula Magna

Sara Accettura & Moritz Zavan Stoeckle, 'Composing and creating movement through the auditory and visual stimuli: connecting practices through a sensory approach' (1 hour)

This lecture demonstration presents a variety of explorative choreographic approaches towards a shared language of creating and performing music and movement. The dialogue between contemporary dance, South Indian classical dance Bharatanatyam, and music will be used to show different possible approaches to a collaborative choreographic process. During the lecture demonstration, four different approaches will be shared:

1. How can Bharatanatyam vocalisations become a stimulus to develop a music composition as well as to create different movements, and how giving a rhythmical pattern to such vocalisations can help linking such movements into a phrase.
2. Understanding what happens when the narrative element of Bharatanatyam that uses specific hand gestures and postures is used to create an abstract contemporary dance phrase.
3. Transforming the aesthetics of a contemporary dance phrase, where the dancer's position is mostly upright, the movements have clear directions and projection in space, into the codified language of Bharatanatyam.
4. Adapting contemporary dance qualities of movement, based on the use of the floor and a more somatic approach to create Indian classical dance movement phrases, stimulated by the analysis of the choreographic elements. Although the examples that will be presented may seem very specific, as it presents only some of the possible ways that the dialogue between Indian classical dance, music, and contemporary dance can evolve, the aim of this lecture demonstration is to use such examples as a starting point to open a discussion on the collaborations between different practitioners. This practical research may be of interest to practitioners exploring new collaborative choreographic tools, as well as educators who are interested in cross disciplinary approaches to sound composition and movement creation.

16:00 – 17:30 Parallel session: Panel 1 - Level 1 - Meeting Room 101*

Navigating Narratives: Intertwining Story and Scenarios in the Performing Arts

Cristina de Lucas, ‘Literature as a source of creativity for dance’

Since the birth of the ballet d’action in the 18th century, Western narrative dance has extensively drawn on literature for plots and characters. The variety of sources ranges from myths, Biblical stories and fables, to fairy tales, novels, plays and poetry. As a major storyteller in the history of ballet, the British choreographer Kenneth MacMillan (1929-1992) frequently relied on literary sources to shape the narrative of his ballets. Well known examples are his ballets *Manon* (1974, based on Prevost’s novel), *Las Hermanas* (1963, from Lorca’s play *The House of Bernarda Alba*), *Winter Dreams* (1991, from Chekhov’s *Three Sisters*), and his three incursions in Shakespeare (*Romeo and Juliet* -1965, *Sea of Troubles* -1988, a version of *Hamlet*- and *Images of Love* -1964, inspired by several plays and sonnets).

Lesser known is that MacMillan borrowed the narrative of his one-act ballet *The Invitation* (1960) from two female writers, the Argentinian Beatriz Guido and the French Colette. While I have paid particular attention to the role of Guido’s work in my previous publications on MacMillan, the influence of Colette remains largely unexplored. This presentation focuses on it, and examines its direct effect on one of the two secondary plotlines that MacMillan crafts after Colette, the adolescent relationship between the two young protagonists of the story, the Girl and the Boy. Colette supplies not only episodes, actions and features of these two roles but also, crucially, gestures and body movements that inspire the imagery of the choreography as well as the general tone of camaraderie and sensuality that permeates MacMillan’s recreation of the story in ballet terms.

Dr Andrew Sanger, ‘Storytelling and the Alchemy of Experience: Making meaning in environmental movement practice’

Artist-activists Isabelle Fremeaux and Jay Jordan contend that ‘reality is held together by the most successful stories we tell about it and therefore can be transformed, via different stories and myths, which shift attention’. This paper examines the use of storytelling as a means through which movement practitioners in the UK interpret meaning from lived experience and encourage the development of environmental sensibility. The storytelling utilised by these artists may be abstract or representational, narrative or nonnarrative, as it alchemises private experiences into public expressions. First, I articulate what is meant by environmental sensibility drawing from the work of Jane Bennet and Kay Milton. Ethnography with movement artists Simon Whitehead and Sandra Reeve describe how story emerges, directly and indirectly, through their movement practices in Pembrokeshire and Dorset. Sections of auto-ethnographic prose of these artists practices helps to enliven the claims of this paper. The writings of Michael Jackson, Victor Turner, and Hannah Arendt assist to frame the political

efficacy of storytelling as a transformational tool of communal meaning production. Ultimately this paper provokes us to consider the efficacy of embodied modes of story generation in an era of ecological devastation which demands new narratives for survivance.

Aysegül Begüm Kuntman, ‘The Use of Choreography in Contemporary Choir Performances: movement and musical storytelling across various choral repertoires.’

Contemporary choir performances increasingly incorporate choreography as a means to enhance their artistic expression and audience engagement. This paper serves as an introductory exploration into the integration of choreography within the realm of choir dynamics, focusing on several performances that feature choreographic elements.

This study aims to unravel the underlying principles guiding the integration of movement within musical contexts. A broader perspective is embraced by analyzing a selection of choir performances characterized by the utilization of choreography. These performances are chosen from different cultural backgrounds and musical styles to capture the diverse applications of choreography within the choral context.

A brief introduction to the historic background of the use of choreography in choral performances is provided in order to establish context. The ways in which the choreographic elements are used are exhibited. Then, each selected performance is examined to discern how choreographic elements are synchronized with musical structures. An analysis of the musical material and the corresponding choreographic elements (e.g. movement of the body, alignment on the stage, etc.) is conducted. The quality of both is compared in order to reveal the intricate relation between the two. Furthermore, this exploration aims to shed light on the various storytelling techniques facilitated by choreography in choir performances. It seeks to identify how movement not only embellishes the visual aspect but also contributes significantly to the narrative and emotional depth of the musical presentation. By analyzing multiple instances where choreography is integral to choir performances, this introduction lays the groundwork for a comprehensive understanding of the impact and versatility of incorporating movement within contemporary choral presentations.

Andi Johnson, ‘Crafting Collaborative Narratives on Identity: building archives within, across, and between dance cultures’

In 2022, two UK dance arts organisations in different cities strategically merged to form one new organization that works to serve the broader region of the UK Midlands. Of the previous two organisations, one focused on artist development while the other focused on audience engagement. The newly formed organization is looking to find its identity between these two practices, across two physical locations, and through two different histories. As a PhD student in Dance focusing on archival practices, I have been brought on through a Collaborative Doctoral Award to help create and curate the archive of the new organization using physical and digital ephemera. Through this practice, I will work to situate the identity of the new organization from its past to help guide its future.

This paper will explore the collaborative and practice-based methodologies being used to develop public-facing curations in digital and physical spaces to engage audiences. Working through the methodologies of collaborative autoethnography (Chang, Ngunjiri, and Hernandez, 2012) and collaborative reflection (Candy, 2019) the company becomes a research team alongside myself, interrogating their own practices and experiences to continue to develop the archive. As practice-based arts research, this work also takes an uncommon perspective of audience interpretation within its reflective practices (Holmes, 2022). Through engaging these practices, the research will build a model for developing archives that can be used for other performing arts organisations. The work builds upon research in Dance Studies, Digital Media Studies, and Museum and Archive Studies to look at how the creation of archives today may do more than simply understand the past, but also continue to inform the future.

16:00 – 17:00 Workshop - Level 0 - Theatre

Dance Beyond Borders - Deborah Falzon & Julienne Schembri, 'Transformative Dance for Social Change' (1 hour)

Dance, as a profound embodiment of human expression, serves as a transformative catalyst, sparking a journey of self-discovery that extends beyond personal boundaries to embrace the broader community.

This workshop creates a space for participants to gain practical insight into dance as a transformative tool to deepen understanding of others' lived experiences, fostering a connection with self and community, and combining dance with activism. Beyond transcending linguistic barriers, this workshop positions dance as a universal language conveying emotions and cultural expressions. The inherent physicality of dance serves as a conduit for empathy and shared experiences, fostering connection and unity. This experience aims not merely to educate but to create a space for participants to be empowered and leverage the performative arts, particularly dance and movement, as dynamic and influential catalysts for deeper engagement with challenging subjects and communication. This workshop goes beyond mere exploration of movement; it is an immersive journey crafted to unveil intricate layers of self-awareness, community connectivity, and the profound role of dance in driving meaningful societal transformation.

16:00 - 17:30 ONLINE Workshop & Practice-based presentation* - Level 1 - Meeting Room 102

***Lucie Sykes, 'Game changer: body-mind awareness within movement practices' (1 hour)**

Embodied dance improvisation is a type of dance where the dancer has the freedom and spontaneity to create movement in the moment rather than following pre-planned steps. The

dancer focuses on the lived experience and sensations of the movement in the body. The body knowledge in dance improvisation is often studied in isolation from other disciplines. My practice as research introduces the interdisciplinary approach to embodied dance improvisation within motion capture environments. By wearing a special suit with markers, the dancer's movement is tracked by the array of cameras in real-time. The motion data are mapped onto the three-dimensional digital model presented to the dancer as skeletal dots. Also, the dancer's movement pathways are visualised as a digital trace-form as lines, dots, blobs, and particles.

The dancer sees and responds to these visualisations in real-time and activates sculptural qualities of these experiences. The emergence of sculptural qualities is defined as processes of *shaping* - processual and relational. Through dancers' awareness of the body-mind connection, they shape their physical and virtual bodies and the environment. With that knowledge, they are reshaping the known, which enables new expressions of the sculptural form of shapes and lines with expending-contracting and opening qualities through repetition, accidental micro-choreographies, stillness (as a state), and T-pose with stillness.

This research advances the understanding of creative processes of dance improvisation to encourage innovative approaches to movement and expression in a holistic way and enable our appreciation of dance as an art form that fosters cultural, collaborative and creative exchange.