

Combining Artistic Research with Professional Practice

Developing artistic research projects within 2nd Cycle studies in music

The MMus programme at the Royal Academy of Music, London, has included a research project module for over two decades. Followed by around 12% of the total postgraduate cohort (currently 62 of 439 students), the programme contains performers and composers with a range of previous educational experiences from within the UK and abroad. Teaching on the research project module includes classes on performance sources, programming, collaboration, research skills, and project preparation, with regular workshops, tutorials, and individual supervision supporting students in the development of their research. This teaching, delivered by a core group of staff who each have further teaching roles within the wider institution, functions as a micro-climate that enables institutional self-critique and encourages students to take aspects of their research back into their principal-study experiences.

A distinctive characteristic of the MMus research project is that it aims to develop artistic research and professional practice side by side, so that student projects can function both as a gateway to 3rd Cycle studies, and as a steppingstone into the professional world, such as developing materials for a debut recording or a performance at a festival. While every project needs to have a written component, most students choose to present the outcomes of their research as a performance event or recording, or through workshop footage.

This paper will explore the specific pedagogic culture that surrounds the MMus research project with the aim of better understanding the outcomes of 2nd Cycle artistic research training and the relationships with other educational prerogatives and external reference points. This includes the epistemological challenges of creating contexts that are appropriate and relevant to the fast-changing realities of the professional musical sphere. By analysing interviews with teaching staff through a method of open coding, the presentation will discuss how the imperatives of research and professional reality can come together in a creative tension that is beneficial to both contexts. This paper responds to the 'how we can better prepare emerging artists to conduct AR' and 'the place of AR in the curricula of Higher Music Education' conference themes.



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Sarah Callis is Senior Postgraduate Tutor at the Royal Academy of Music in London where she works with doctoral performers and composers on their artistic research, both supervising projects and overseeing seminars. She also co-ordinates research training for masters students and engages with individual projects. Her own research involves working collaboratively with performers on the aesthetic and analytical questions that emerge from rehearsal and performance, on which she has published. She has also recently completed a chapter modelling approaches to artist-led doctoral projects. She is a member of the steering committee for 'Doctors in Performance', an organisation that champions the work of student and newly graduated performer-researchers across Europe through biennial conferences.

Parallel Session



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David Gorton is a composer and artist-researcher. A winner of the Royal Philharmonic Society composition prize, he has worked with ensembles that include the London Sinfonietta, the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and CHROMA. His music is published by Verlag Neue Musik, Berlin, and recorded on the Métier, Toccata Classics, and Neos labels. He has been an Associate Researcher at the Orpheus Institute in Ghent, working with the *Performance, Subjectivity and Experimentation* research cluster, and has published on the areas of composer-performer collaboration, and the analysis of performance and rehearsal. He is the Associate Head of Research at the Royal Academy of Music in London, where he is also a Professor of the University of London.