

Gendering the [piano] performing body

Site- and event-specific works by 20th-century avant-garde composers face us with the problematics of developing a reconstruction departing from scant or unclear notation materials. Our artistic research project, led by an ensemble of performers-researchers (the Xperimus Ensemble), focused on the recreation of three mixed media works by the Portuguese composer Constança Capdeville (1937-1992): *Don't, Juan* (1985) and *Double* (1982) (two experimental musical theatre works), and *Avec Picasso, ce matin...* (1984) (for piano and tape, with staged contents as well). In order to perform these works, we combined an archaeological (Foucault 2002 [1969]) and ethnographic approach (Bayley 2011; Canonne 2018), with experimental methods (Assis 2018).

The piano, both in regards of its staging and musical relevance, emerged as a locus of gendered representations, subtly implicit in the gathered materials, but also connected to the instrumental affordances and techniques suggested in the composer's scores and scripts. Aiming to understand and evidence this outlook, our proposal addresses the procedures and strategies created and employed in order to enhance and unveil the gendered representations conveyed through this instrument. Research questions focused on its specific instrumentality, the relation with historical representations displayed in staple repertoire and discourses about the piano, its reinvention as a staged (male) character in some of Capdeville's works, and the performative implications of the composer's request for a woman pianist in these works.

Procedures involved identifying common themes, musical materials and instrumental techniques, and experimenting performing strategies through collaborative methods, in the context of performance lab work. We chose to infuse the performances with the procedure of 'infection', combining our reading of the original materials with newly-created and adapted materials (a video based on images collected by the composer; new recordings based on the original magnetic tapes and musical materials) that reinforced a gendered reading of the works. This proposal presentation will include a live performance of *Avec Picasso, ce matin...*, which will exemplify some of our strategies, as the basis for a final discussion on the performing protocols that this research has developed and their applicability in similar studies.



Helena Marinho
University of Aveiro, Aveiro, Portugal
helena.marinho@ua.pt

Helena Marinho is Assistant Professor at the University of Aveiro and researcher at the Institute of Ethnomusicology - Centre of Studies in Music and Dance. Her main research interests include performance research, and 20th/21st Portuguese music. As a pianist, Helena Marinho has presented solo and chamber concerts in the main venues and festivals in Portugal, as well as in the U.S.A., Brazil, Ireland, UK, France, Spain, Italy, Greece, Sweden, Norway, Ethiopia, India. She plays the modern piano and the fortepiano, and has recorded 12 CDs.

She combines her performing career with academic and artistic research. Publications include book chapters for Imperial College Press, Brepols, Editions Hispaniques, and articles for *Musica Hodie*, *Psychology of Music*. She has led three multiannual research projects financed by the Portuguese Government Foundation for Science and Technology, and European funds. She was panel member for the evaluation of projects for the European Commission Culture Programme, and for the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology.

Co-authors: Luís Bittencourt, Mónica Chambel, Alfonso Benetti (University of Aveiro, INET-md)