

innovation
STUDIO

SHARE

The Graduate School for
Interdisciplinary
Studies



University of
St Andrews



Royal Conservatoire
of Scotland



CREATIVE HEALTH SYMPOSIUM

31 May 2023

The Byre Studio, St Andrews

Contact and further information

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<https://shareinterdisciplinary.co.uk>

(Image: Sarah Hopfinger Pain and I)

The Innovation Studio is a 2-year pilot project that aims to facilitate new knowledge exchange opportunities, new modes of working and new collaborations to support creative experimentation and testing, skills development, and co-creation at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland. The Studio is coordinated by the Research & Knowledge Exchange team and assisted by Innovators in residence and a team of industry specialists. The Studio is supported by the Scottish Funding Council. University Innovation Fund (UIF).

PROGRAMME

- 10.00 Welcome
- 10.15 **Presentations** (10 minutes each)
Claire Ruckert, Ines Jentsch and Rachel Drury
Mary Black
Thulani Rachia
Amadu Khan
Emily Davis and Beth Whiteside
Catherine King
Mark Fleming
Kai Durkin
- 11.45 Coffee
- 12.00 Thematic conversations in small groups held by speakers (long table)
- 13:00 Lunch (with optional outdoor activities) and **posters** from
Charlie Guy
Simisola Johnson
Neil Wood
- 14:00 **Creative presentations 1** (15 minutes each)
Sarah Hopfinger
Kathryn Steven
Ellen Thomson and Kally Lloyd-Jones
John de Simone
- 15.00 **Workshops**
Amanda MacLeod
Brianna Robertson Kirkland and Sophie Boyd
- 15.30 Tea break
- 16.00 **Creative presentations 2** (15 minutes each)
Sonia Allori (in collaboration with Laura Gonzalez)
Wan Sheng Kenneth Tay
Lynsey Brown, Kenneth Boyd, Andrew Williams
- 17.00 Close

ABSTRACTS

PRESENTATIONS

Claire Ruckert, Ines Jentzsch and Rachel Drury: *Researching Performance Anxiety in a Music Conservatoire: An Interdisciplinary Approach*

This presentation will explore an interdisciplinary and cross-institutional approach to doctoral study, through Claire's research into the psychophysiological experience of music performance anxiety in conservatoire students. We will discuss how our own experiences as musicians, and social scientists, have led us to this collaboration, and how they have informed our approaches to data collection. We will conclude by reflecting on the implications of work such as ours on the perception of mental health in the creative industries.

Mary Black: *Public Health and narrative*

Mary Ethna Black is an international public health doctor from Lambeg in Northern Ireland. Her fiction and short stories have been published in anthologies, and her biographical essays and blogs feature in the medical press. She won the 2021 Irish Writers Centre Novel fair prize for 'Darkness at the Door,' a reimagination of a forgotten Irish medical scandal. 'Blood and Roses,' a narrative that connects her war experiences in Belfast and Bosnia, won the 2021 Fish Publishing Memoir prize. She is currently a visiting scholar at the Oxford Centre for Life Writing.

Thulani Rachia: *"It is the victors who write history, and who, more often than not, use architecture as their vocabulary."* (P. Kotze, 2)

Siwaguba kanjani amaphupho ethu agqitjwe kulezindonga? ("How do we excavate the dreams laid to rest in these walls?") acts as a focal point in Rachia's work to explore ideas around colonial legacies, reparations and healing within the built environment. Rachia will be sharing the development of his interdisciplinary collaborative work, obuyile, a new composition for four cellists. Obuyile integrates processes of dreaming, composing, resting, communing and building. This development of the work continues a strand of Rachia's artistic research into sonic balms, self-soothing strategies and spatial transformation. Can a music note protect me? Can a brick sooth me? What is the architecture which articulates these ideas? What are its tectonics?

Amadu Khan (PhD): *Creative Interventions & Health Outcomes in an Age of Austerity: Reflections from a 'disadvantaged' community*

The presentation draws from a community digital art-research project to demonstrate the value of creativity for enabling 'disadvantaged' communities' sense of health and wellbeing. It highlights the significance for employing a collaborative practice among communities of interest - academia (interdisciplinarity), creative practice and grass-roots communities - to inform creative health programme development. Sharing the learning generated from this digital artwork is also an attempt to address the paucity of knowledge about the role of interdisciplinarity (social science, "the arts and humanities, and cultural-creative practice") in achieving health outcomes (Dowlen, R. 2023).

Emily Davis and Beth Whiteside: *Dance for Multiple Sclerosis: Methodologies and Methods*

Dance for health research focused on programmes for people living with neurodegenerative conditions (for example, dementia and Parkinson's) has been dominated by quantitative or mixed method approaches equating 'value' to 'impact' (McGill et al, 2014). This presentation responds to a call from some researchers within the field (e.g. Houston, 2019) to explore dance and dancer-centred approaches led by individual and collective experiences and interests. Here, we discuss the potential for undertaking 'movement interviews' (explored with dancers with Parkinson's, see Levin, 2015), designed with dancers with multiple sclerosis (MS) who are long-term attendees of Scottish Ballet's Elevate® programme. Here, the dance is the data and understood through choreographic analysis.

Reference List:

- Levin, N. (2015). *Reflections. about-move-inter-action*. [blog]. Accessed on 20 April 2023 at: <https://hafraah.wordpress.com/2015/04/07/move-inter-action/>
- McGill, A., Houston, A., and Lee, R.Y.W. (2014). 'Dance for Parkinson's: A new framework for research on its physical, mental, emotional, and social benefits'. *Complementary Therapies in Medicine*, 22(3): 426-432.
- Houston, S. (2019). *Dancing with Parkinson's*. Intellect Books.

Catherine King: *Making Finding Peace*

In the middle of my PhD, I became disabled. In the middle of my PhD, I became an artist. I am both these things and neither. Both these things and neither of these things are connected to the other and they now co-exist in my body and my practice. Learning to live with MS means learning to listen to your body in a more urgent way; 'preventing' rather than 'recovering from' and finding the self within this changed life. While working as an interpreter is an embodied practice, working as a performance interpreter demands this is attended to as an arts practice, as a deepening interrogation of the creative self. Both these things demand to be admitted. Both demand to be made explicit. Both are sites of tension in my Self that have exposed fault lines and seek to be resolved, made peace with. So, let's talk about it.

Mark Fleming: *Mood music*

In the late 1980s, despite having relished playing in post-punk bands (receiving airplay on Radio 1), I suffered severe depression. In 1990, my bipolar graph rocketed into binge drinking, and drafting the bestselling novels conjured by my wild imagination.

After ceasing medication (lithium), my wellbeing is maintained with music therapy, volunteering with mental health outreach programmes, and sharing my story in community groups, schools, and prisons. I've also written a memoir, 1976 - Growing Up Bipolar, no longer anticipating bestseller status.

My talk will contrast mental health perceptions over time, and advocate the power of music, sport and creativity to inspire healthy minds.

Kai Durkin: *Co-creating Performance and Play: Supporting community cohesion and well-being through mixed-media co-production*

The talk would be a presentation of my PhD research so far. This research is interdisciplinary, spanning game design, performing arts and mental health, all focusing on the key question: "How can play and games support individuals and communities in improving their wellbeing and social cohesion?" After a brief introduction on the mental health benefits of play, I would first discuss the work of Augusto Boal, who sought with Theatre of the Oppressed to empower communities. I would then share some contemporary examples of play and performance, including digital games, being used to foster a sense of "togetherness" and community expression, such as the work of Douglas

Wilson and Mona Bozdog. Finally, I would briefly discuss my own future plans for a project in which I facilitate a local Scottish community to co-create a mixed media, playful experience such as those designed by Wilson and Bozdog, and qualitatively analyse the impact designing and participating in such an experience has on the community's wellbeing.

POSTERS

Charlie Guy: *The Notes Between the Notes Between the Notes: Music, Lyrics, and Empathetic Connection*

The study of science values objectivity. The ability to examine scientific properties without external influence, personal perspectives, or community bias is a prized professional possession – the value of facts over feeling forming the foundation of reliable scientific practice.

In contrast, the study of the arts and humanities are built on solid foundations of subjective interpretation. As medical professionals, subjective interpretation is vital with regard to communication; being able to understand and appreciate the backgrounds, wants, and needs of multiple individuals in often complex clinical scenarios. The incorporation of the arts into a science-based curriculum is therefore vital, enabling students to form a much wider, well-rounded world view.

This poster will focus primarily on music, and the interpretation of both lyrics and music in relation to formation of empathy. It will also examine the benefits of music-playing in relation to ongoing professional development within medical fields, using the example of Eds Chesters – professional drummer and osteopath.

Information used for this poster will largely be extracted/adapted from a publication pending release in August 2023 – *The Art of Medical Communication: Bringing the Humanities into Clinical Practice* – which, as such, signposts further reading.

Simisola Johnson: *From Narrative Competence to Improved Patient Care: Understanding Illness Narratives*

Narrative-based medicine is increasingly vital in today's healthcare landscape as it provides a framework for understanding patient experiences, recognizing a patient's need for additional support, and improving physician-patient interactions. By adopting narrative techniques, practitioners can foster compassionate inquiry, strengthen relationships, and become a vehicle for trust, ultimately leading to improved patient satisfaction. This 15-minute workshop will briefly introduce learners to narrative-based medicine and its founding principles, emphasizing its significance in enhancing communication between medical practitioners and their patients. The workshop will also explore the top 3 illness narratives and their categories. The final portion of the workshop will involve a game

designed to reinforce the earlier concepts. Attendees will fill in the blanks related to the top three illness narratives, serving as a practical exercise to aid in comprehension. The workshop aims to offer valuable insights into narrative-based medicine, providing practical tools and strategies to help medical practitioners enhance their narrative competence skills and communicate more effectively with their patients.

Neil Wood: *The Folks' Music Project CIC, Cultivating a micro-community of traditional music*

In this short presentation RCS PhD candidate and contemporary Scottish traditional harper Neil Wood will discuss the work of The Folks' Music Project CIC, a Social Enterprise of which he is the founding director. TFMP employs a placed based approach which works alongside local people, organisations and spaces to build programmes of regular, low or no cost community traditional music activities which are intergenerational, have an emphasis on wellbeing and participation and are tailored to suit the needs and wants of the community they take place in. Activities include: regular group music lessons, come and try events, community ceilidhs and community jam sessions. Once underway, each local programme is continually evaluated and developed inline with the community's changing needs. This approach cultivates a micro-community of traditional music which supports the mental health and well-being of individuals, encourages creative sharing at a local level and strengthens the community through encouraging local people to engage with their wider community through shared activities. The programme often provides as a catalyst for other creative and community events led by both local people as well as external arts organisations.

CREATIVE PRESENTATIONS 1

Sarah Hopfinger: *Collaborating with Pain: Pain and I*

What kinds of performance practices, aesthetics and politics emerge when I embrace my chronic pain as a creative collaborator?

Pain and I is a diversely accessible body of work – audio, performance, graphic score – that explores and celebrates the rich complexities of living with chronic pain. Emerging from my research into what it means to collaborate with chronic pain in performance and dance, *Pain and I* is a bold and tender love letter to my pain. Through intimate autobiographical text, original classical music composition by Alicia Jane Turner, playful choreography and experimental dance, *Pain and I* asks: ‘what can pain teach us?’ This presentation shares a 15-minute extract from the 30-minute audio version of *Pain and I*.

Kathryn Steven: *Poetry to understand health and illness*

Kathryn is a GP, clinical lecturer at the School of Medicine, and would-be poet. Over recent years, she has been worked with Steve Smart, Professor Mary Black, and Samuel Tongue from the Scottish Poetry Library to run evening events for medical students who are interested in how poetry helps us understand health and illness. She enjoys writing herself when time allows!

Ellen Thomson and Kally Lloyd-Jones: *Strengthening Connections Through Creativity*

Memory Spinners Fife is centred around the participation of people affected by dementia, and their carers. Receptivity to music and movement is known to be retained even in later stages of dementia when other stimuli are less likely to arouse a response. The difference Memory Spinners makes to unpaid carers is as valuable as for the person with dementia, with carers regularly reporting that taking part provides important coping strategies, networks, respite and skills to replicate our activities at home. This meaningful time participating in a social and cultural activity strengthens their relationship and helps them face their challenges together.

John de Simone: *Obesity Crisis*

The day before starting an extreme calorie restriction diet, John De Simone will discuss his project *Obesity Crisis*. Featuring music from his previous works *Panic Diary* and *Monster* John's presentation will describe the context behind the new work and look towards how this piece can become larger than its instigator and his hopes to provide a pathway to meaningful collaboration between a composer and the medical sciences.

WORKSHOPS

Amanda MacLeod: *Together in Song*

Singing for health and well-being has become increasingly popular in recent years (Fancourt & Finn, 2019), research to date on choral singing indicates many physical, cognitive and social benefits (Clift & Hancox, 2010; Clift et al., 2010; Moss & O'Donoghue, 2018) and studies suggest that singing can positively impact happiness and reduce levels of depression and loneliness in older adults (Bungay et al., 2010; Entezari et al., 2019; Johnson et al., 2020; Mathew et al., 2017).

Director of St Andrews Voices, Scotland's Singing Festival, Amanda MacLeod will lead us in a short practical session to showcase the techniques used in their weekly Singing for Health and Well-being sessions. These practical sessions are adapted to you and your particular health and wellbeing needs. It may involve movement, breathing, vocalising, improvising and singing songs, but it's bound to make you feel more confident, energised, relaxed, and in control, all with a smile.

"Amanda is the most encouraging force of joy you could ever hope to meet"

Dr Brianna E. Robertson-Kirkland and Dr Sophie Boyd: *Singing for Health and Wellbeing: Scotland's Singing for Health Network*

Scotland's Singing for Health Network is designed to provide a space for singing practitioners, medical practitioners, and researchers working on singing and health, to come together to share knowledge, ideas and practice and to open up avenues for communication between individuals and organisations. The network aims to educate and inform those in the community, particularly teachers and health practitioners, about the current Singing for Health practice and how it can support those in the community who many benefit from regular singing, perhaps in the form of attending a Singing for Health group.

In this brief presentation, Dr Brianna Robertson-Kirkland and Dr Sophie Boyd will outline the need for this kind of network and will discuss the project outputs and how these are being used to connect and inform healthcare workers, musicians, teachers, and anyone in the community, to learn more about the how singing can be used to support health and well-being.

<https://portal.rcs.ac.uk/scotland-singing-for-health-network/>

CREATIVE PRESENTATIONS 2

Sonia Allori (in collaboration with Laura Gonzalez): *The well-tempered breath*

A 10-minute recorded breath-exercise by Laura Gonzalez accompanied by Sonia Allori on live improvised bass clarinet. This forms one of the movements of “Room to breathe”, a 5-movement work which explored breath & breathing post-Covid commissioned by Drake Music Scotland and performed at Sound Festival in Aberdeen in October 2022. The audience are invited to join in with the breath exercise guided by Laura as participant or to watch the performance as observer. The breath exercise/performance is followed by 5 minutes of reflection with the audience.

Wan Sheng Kenneth Tay: *Overtone singing for amateurs*

The benefits of singing have been well documented in areas of mental health (e.g. Judd & Pooley, 2014), and simultaneous increase in blood plasma oxytocin and reduced adrenocorticotrophic hormone (Keeler et al., 2015). Amongst musicians, there have been studies investigating group phenomena (e.g. Hart & Di Blasi, 2015), leading to collective flow experiences and enjoyment. In this presentation, we explore overtone singing – a technique where one person is singing two notes simultaneously. Being able to hear overtones hones a singer’s perception of group intonation. Through vowel overtone singing, we explore how amateurs can use their own voice in the creation of unique musical soundscapes and colours with other singers, and be a source of enjoyment, well-being, or spiritual connection.

Reference music compositions:

Sarah Hopkins, Past Life Melodies (1994) Kenneth Tay, Flowers of the Forest (2017)

Lynsey Brown, Kenneth Boyd, Andrew J Williams: *An opportunity to create health: Seeing through the eyes of the community*

The adage is that a picture is worth a thousand words, but each of us has hundreds or thousands of photos on our phones, sharing many of them over social media. What if this creativity could be engaged to help us learn about how our environment impacts on our health? Participatory research methods have helped amplify community member voices in research. Methods like photovoice are particularly powerful as they help us see each other’s perspective and produce stark evidence in the form of photos. The technology in our phones now means that we can take photos and record our experiences anywhere we

go. We are developing methods to crowdsource these kinds of information to help us understand and take action to support the health of the public. In this creative presentation we will use photos from a recent project to illustrate the diverse insights that can be gained from photographs.

