

# **Goldsmiths Contemporary Music Research Unit**

**Director Roger Redgate**

## ***Compositional Aesthetics and the Political***

**20<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2015**

**Keynote Speakers:**

**Vladimir Tarnopolsky, Mathias Spahlinger,  
and Bernadette Buckley**

**Convenors:**

**Professor Roger Redgate, Dr Dimitris Exarchos  
and Dr Alistair Zaldua**

**Goldsmiths, University of London  
Lewisham Way  
New Cross  
London  
SE14 6NW**



UNIVERSITY OF LONDON · SCHOOL OF ADVANCED STUDY

Supported by donors to the

**Annual Fund**

**Goldsmiths**  
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

## **Talks**

Contemporary Music Research Unit - Welcome.....	4
Diogo Alvim - Composing spaces of enquiry .....	5
Seth Brodsky -“... there is no repetition ...” The Politics of Repeatedly New Music.....	6
Bernadette Buckley - Autonomy on the Edge: Experiences of Autonomy between Art, Aesthetics and Politics .....	7
Peter Clark - “In Action”: Towards a musical staging of Étienne Balibar's égaliberté.....	8
Franklin Cox - Projective Music.....	9
Agusto Di Scipio - The ideology of the sound object: a cognitive inversion. Notes for the biopolitics of music .....	10
Christine Dysers - Exposing Demagoguery: The use of Mass-Communication as Anti-Totalitarian Protest in Mauricio Kagel's Der Tribun (1979) .....	11
Simon Fell - A more attractive way of getting things done: questions of power and control in British improvised music.....	12
Liam Flenady - Si el clima fuera una composición: Reflections on counterpoint and commitment in my new work for piano and tape.....	13
Panos Ghikas - What music, what politics?: How corporate work and academia made me improvise more. .	14
Chris Halliwell - The Composer as Ideologue.....	15
David Helbich - INTEGRATION IS AN ACT - Artistic strategies for the performativity of the open space. .	16
Alan Hilario - Politics of notation: redefining the relationship between the audience and the performer.....	17
Olaf Hochherz - Using Instruments to do some thinking!.....	18
Juliana Hodkinson - Material and effects in turbulence: natural and synthetic vibrational practices in the composition and performance of contemporary music.....	19
Alexander Hunter - Open Music with Early Instruments in an Electroacoustic Environment: An exploration of innovative anarchic small ensemble performance practice.....	20
Tina Krekels - Staging Improvisation: The loss of desire in improvisation practices.....	21
Trent Leipert - Luigi Nono's Late Period, States in Decay, and Subjects in Decline.....	22
Caroline Lucas - Women (re)producing/(re)producing women.....	23
Neil March - Representing Urban Events And Behaviours In Music Composition.....	24
Marcello Messina - Senza cialoma: official historical narratives and Sicilian subaltern voices.....	25
Jeremy Peyton Jones - Hierarchies of creative interaction – the political aspects of collaboration between composer and improvising musicians in Against Oblivion, Part 3.....	26
Luigi Pizzaleo - Free Improvisation as Figural Representation of Social Relationships .....	27
Lauren Redhead - The Beautiful and the Political as Commitment and Representation.....	28
Federico Reuben - Imaginary Musical Radicalism and the Entanglement of Music and Emancipatory Politics .....	29
Neil Smith - passage/paysage and the 'barbarity of continuity'.....	30
Mathias Spahlinger - Political Implications of the Material of New Music.....	31
Danae Stefanou - From imaginary museum to factory without walls: addressing the spatial politics of	

experimental and improvised music.....32

Vladimir Tarnopolsky - New Music in Contemporary Society: Irony of History.....33

Livine Van Eecke - Towards an exploration of Adornian aesthetics, social engagement, heritage of the past  
and development of the new in the music of Helmut Lachenmann.....34

Stephen Wilkinson - Reworkings and Reconceptualisations: a compositional investigation into the ontology  
and identity of musical works..... 35

Nick Williams - Engaged Composition, Dehierarchisation and the Politics of Practice.....36

Alistair Zaldua - The Politics of Translation..... 37

## *Contemporary Music Research Unit - Welcome*

On behalf of the Goldsmiths Contemporary Music Research Unit I would like to welcome you to the symposium *Compositional Aesthetics and the Political*.

The Contemporary Music Research Unit fosters a wide range of research into composition, performance, aesthetics and theoretical approaches to new music, bringing together composers, performers, theorists and also artists/practitioners from other disciplines. This is the CMRU's fourth symposium; the previous three focused on the music of Brian Ferneyhough (in association with the IMR), a three-day international symposium on Xenakis (in collaboration with the South Bank Centre) and in 2013 *Notation in Contemporary Music: Composition, Performance, Improvisation*.

The increasing growth of the field of music and politics has recently seen quite a few turns in music studies materialised in articles, books, and journals. The natural tendency to themes such as feminism, post-colonialism, the culture industry, war, censorship, resistance, etc., have irreversibly affected thinking about music and music-making of several genres, including that of 'contemporary classical'. However, perhaps as a reaction to traditional musicology (with its insistence on the musical work and on authorship), the study of compositional practices against contemporary political dimensions, has hitherto received less scholarly attention. In the—ostensibly distant—sixties, figures such as Xenakis or Nono represented two typical examples of politicised compositional attitudes: the former's radical abstraction was a coup against the dominance of serialism, the latter's thematization of textuality and location constituted gestures of resistance. Their epigones still produce work that challenges traditional conceptions (including those of their progenitors).

This conference's foremost aim is to advance such contemporary practices. One such example is the impact that (free) improvisation has had on recent composition. To the extent that improvisation is the correlative of composition (as 'material', listening attitude, style, etc.), this conference aims to examine both creative practices in their political dimension. It will focus primarily on practice-based research, its underlying politics, the explicit or implicit theme of the political, and specifically how these are translated via or into compositional praxis.

Special thanks go to our keynote speakers Vladimir Tarnopolsky, Mathias Spahlinger and Bernadette Buckley, and keynote performers Mark Knoop, Aisha Orazbayeva, Peter Sheppard-Skaerved and Tom Mudd for taking time out of their busy schedules.

I would also particularly like to thank my co-conveners Dr Dimitris Exarchos and Dr Alistair Zaldua, without whose time, commitment and total enthusiasm, this event certainly would not have taken place. Thanks also to Dr Paul Archbold from the Institute of Musical Research and the Goldsmiths Annual Fund for their support.

Professor Roger Redgate  
Director, Contemporary Music Research Unit

## *Composing spaces of enquiry*

*Diogo Alvim*

Queens University, Belfast

Modernist music is commonly criticized for claiming autonomy, in the sense that it rejects having any meaning beyond itself, or any direct social function. Much has been discussed about musical meaning, or musical form and its resonance in society. But the level of abstraction of these relations are usually very distant to music as practice, and tends to leave behind its agents and their real social relations. In this paper I discuss the role of the composer as one engaged in a number of social and politically implied activities, beyond the writing of a score. Through an analogy with architecture as methodology, I try to redefine the practice of composition as one that can expand and absorb what was traditionally considered extra-musical. The composer, as the architect, is in fact compromised in the creative process on a number of factors that have no place in the traditional notation of the score. Through a deconstruction of the “work” concept, and an inclusion of different notions of space into the compositional thought, there is room for a wider and more flexible definition of music making. By discussing ideas such as programme, event and planning, I propose a non-binary vision of the practices of composition and improvisation, as well as a topography of music making, one that articulates ideas about formalism and individualism, heteronomy, conceptual art, and socially engaged art. I finish by describing my practice based-research on Music and Architecture and presenting a couple of my recent works that illustrate some of these ideas.

**Diogo Alvim** (Lisbon, 1979), studied architecture and composition in Lisbon. Currently finishing a PhD in Composition/ Sonic Arts at SARC, (Queen’s University Belfast). His research focuses on the crossings between music and architecture. He has presented his work in several events, of which: in 2008, the Festival Música Portuguesa Hoje, at CCB, Lisbon, Festival Synthèse 2009, in Bourges; Festival Musica Viva 2010 (Miso Music); ICMC2012 (Ljubljana), ISMIR2012 (Porto), Notation in Contemporary Music, (Goldsmiths University London, 2013), Ibrasotope 60 and MAC-USP (São Paulo, Brazil, 2014). He often collaborates with other artists/performers and writes music for dance and theatre.

*“... there is no repetition ...” The Politics of Repeatedly New Music*

Seth Brodsky

University of Chicago

The end of Mathias Spahlinger’s *passage/paysage* (1989-90); the rest of the gigantic orchestra is silent. Now only strings, bows on stands: all at once a hard pluck, ricocheting against fingerboard, 58 amplified twigs snapping together on a B-natural below middle C. A long pause, another choric snap. The gesture will repeat for the next 12 minutes, and gradually it will break down, fan out, detune, effloresce. The orchestra, icon of sovereign power and political efficacy, will lose its veil of machinic unity, and emerge as exactly what it already was—a great number of laboring individuals, all trying very hard to listen, obey, coordinate, act; trying too to make audible the stakes of consensus and its failure. Here, in this liminal repetition, might be music as a politics, zero-degree: on the one hand, repetition as failing status quo, an actual 58-member society futilely hiding its antagonisms; on the other hand, repetition as the epiphany that, as Kierkegaard put it, “there is no repetition”—“society” does not exist. The ban on repetition haunts musical modernism (i.e., “the New Music”) from its ever-debated origins: repeat not thy forms, thy means, thy precursors. And this ban is seen as a corollary of modernism’s lifeline to the political, its revolutionary pretenses: to overthrow existing sensible regimes, to defy convention, to be the “locomotive of world history”. And indeed Spahlinger, one of contemporary composition’s most explicitly political and politically faithful living practitioners, toes this line himself when he describes New Music as “the very revolution of revolutions, because she has discarded the conventions, without, however ... having replaced them with new conventions”. My talk takes Spahlinger’s own liminal repetitions as its central example, and attempts to see how far one might connect the modernist ban on repetition to a modernist obsession with repetition on another register: the faith in the new, as the yet-to-come, the never-before, that vector in whose name the practitioner must nevertheless incessantly repeat himself.

**Seth Brodsky’s** scholarly and critical work pursues two related lines of inquiry. The first concerns music of the 20th and 21st centuries, in particular the field of “composely production”, with all the openness this connotes: how is “the composer” constructed, and how does she function culturally, discursively, technologically, mythically? Brodsky’s second line of inquiry involves the role of unconscious processes—particularly as figured in psychoanalytic discourse—in the making and experiencing of music. Here he is especially interested in musical influence and intertextuality—the “locus of the other”—in the work of living, recently deceased, or frequently resurrected composers. How, for instance, do contemporary composers fantasize and shepherd their affiliations with their musical past and precursors, and what role does the psychoanalytic unconsciously play in these fantasies?

## *Autonomy on the Edge: Experiences of Autonomy between Art, Aesthetics and Politics*

Bernadette Buckley

Goldsmiths, University of London

This paper considers the gaps and continuities in theorisations of autonomy as conceived from the various perspectives of Art, Aesthetics and Politics. Despite its being a major area of shared concern for all such fields, the paper argues that normative approaches to autonomy tend to resolve on its intrinsic and internal paradoxes, as theoretically conceived. However, in order to better understand the issues surrounding the question of autonomy and its importance for cross-disciplinary research, this paper argues that closer attention needs to be paid to the performance and experience of autonomy, the latter of which complicates and deepens existing conceptualisations. To this end, the paper draws on a range of thinkers and practitioners in order to consider the role of 'becoming-autonomy' practices, which it is argued, necessarily vacillate, between the political and the aesthetic in order to create contingent, strategic, temporally-based experiences of autonomy.

**Bernadette Buckley.** I joined the department in 2007. Before arriving at Goldsmiths, I was a lecturer in Contemporary Art Theory & Practice at the International Centre for Cultural & Heritage Studies, Newcastle University. There, I established a new MA - 'Gallery and Art Museum Education Studies' - which was the first of its kind in the UK. Prior to this, I was Head of Education & Research at the John Hansard Gallery, University of Southampton. Here I worked with a wide range of artists, academics, curators, writers, city councilors, other gallery sector professional and members of the public, to stimulate public debate and to create new opportunities for research to occur at the interstices between art and politics. I played a key role in the successful application for a £5.2m HLF funded Capital Build Project to relocate the John Hansard Gallery into Southampton city centre. In 2007 I won, in conjunction with Tate Modern, AHRC funding for a research student to undertake a new Collaborative Doctoral Award. The studentship has since been filled by Alex Hodby and it will explore the politics of 'new institutionalism' as exemplified by Tate Modern. I am a Board Member of Tate Papers and the Journal for Museum Education. I am also a member of Polarts, the ECPR Standing Group for Politics and the Arts. I was awarded a bursary from Historical & Cultural Studies, Goldsmiths College, to conduct doctoral research into the ontology of curating and in 2003, I was awarded a PhD without Correction.

## *“In Action” : Towards a musical staging of Étienne Balibar's égaliberté*

Peter Clark

Independent Composer

This paper explores the potential of contemporary composition to stage alternate, hopeful political structures and struggles. In it, I work through how Étienne Balibar's term égaliberté—"equaliberty", or freedom-in-equality—functions at a concrete, musical level in my own work. In doing so I interrogate a counterpoint of contemporary sounds that goes beyond serial, motivic, tonal or simultaneous part-relating procedures. This is a complex parametric counterpoint drawing upon Adorno's *musique informelle*. This contrapuntal method relates parts through tendencies that cut across material and crack open far-reaching interrelations. But is this use of Balibar's égaliberté a mere metaphor, or is there a stronger relationship between égaliberté as music and égaliberté as politics? Following Adorno in *Aesthetic Theory* my assertion is that music is always social, both concretely and abstractly, and that musical relations are also social relations; that is, there is no abstract musical 'thing-in-itself'. While today the social relations in music remain obscured, it follows that musical divisions of labour are also social divisions of labour. Therefore égaliberté staged musically can be seen as a musical, social and political construct; it operates both formalistically and "in action". The task for the composer is then to find music that speaks of collective freedom through collective relation, rather than music that embodies some vague notion of individualistic freedom that advocates the liberal idea of 'total' equality without inextricably interwoven relationships. I will look at how I have brought these ideas into practice in two of my recent compositions. Finally, I note that these considerations are not overtly political: they approach political struggle obliquely. With the rise of social and ecological crises, the limits of the formalist approach to égaliberté reveal themselves (along with Adorno's 'immanent critique'), compelling a more direct approach to political engagement. Against this polar tension I throw the question: are both simultaneously possible?

**Peter Clark** is a young Australian composer and conductor based in Berlin. He studied a Bachelor of Music in Composition at Griffith University (Australia), with Gerardo Dirie and Gerard Brophy. His works have been performed by Australian ensembles Kupka's Piano (of which he was a founding member), the Menard Ensemble, the Southern Cross Soloists and the Australian Youth Orchestra. With Kupka's Piano and the Menard Ensemble he has conducted many late 20th and early 21st century works including Carter's *Triple Duo*, Donatoni's *Arpège* and Hurel's *...à mesure*. In 2012 he was tutored by Pierre Boulez conducting Schoenberg's *Erwartung* with the Lucerne Festival Academy Orchestra. Currently he is writing a solo violin work for Graeme Jennings. [lenoirdeletoile.wordpress.com](http://lenoirdeletoile.wordpress.com)

## *Projective Music*

Franklin Cox

Wright State University

For the Goldsmiths "Compositional Aesthetics and the Political" conference, I would like to present an overview of my efforts to realize my conception of projective music over the last quarter century. I developed this conception from Kandinsky's century-old notion in an attempt to rescue the rescue the visionary component of Modernism from the exhaustion into which the Modernist/Postmodernist discourse had sunk. Projective art, like Kandinsky's projective triangle, stakes claims on the future. Unlike Kandinsky's utopian model for a single, inevitable future for all of society, projective art, from the standpoint of presently-existing conditions, projects a possible future, either hoped for or dreaded. It resembles Critical Composition in requiring ceaseless critique of presuppositions, strategies, and materials, but differs from it in its refusal to reduce the art form to an instrumental level. Projective music speaks of and for its own time, but it also aims to create artworks enduring enough and of sufficient thematic interest to win the interest of future times. Owing to the near-collapse of critical interest in and support for progressive new music, the realization of a small portion this project has required practical actions such as musical performance, written criticism, analysis of projective artworks, and the creation of publication opportunities for younger composers. Of greatest applicability to this conference is the critical/reconstructive program for reconceiving Modernism. On the critical front, I have attempted in a series of articles to answer the Postmodern critique of Modernism, first revealing the faulty reasoning and suppression of evidence characteristic of much of this discourse and second attempting to take its strongest arguments seriously. Crucial to my attempts to reconceive Modernism are the arguments concerning pluralism and musical progress. One example of the reconstructive response is a model for a new music system that fosters a pluralism of strongly-conceived projects, allowing for progressive orientation within each project and mutual criticism among all projects.

Dr. **Franklin Cox**, Associate Professor at Wright State University, has received numerous international awards and commissions as composer and has focused on new music performance for over thirty years. Since 1993 he has presented a solo recital entitled "The New Cello" more than a hundred times throughout Europe and North America. He is founding co-editor of the international book series, *New Music and Aesthetics in the 21st Century*, and is also founding co-editor of *Search*, a peer-reviewed on-line/print journal focused on new music and culture. In 2008 he founded the annual American Innovators series of concerts and symposia.

## *The ideology of the sound object: a cognitive inversion. Notes for the biopolitics of music*

Agusto Di Scipio

University of Paris

The way we understand sound, enacts a certain way to understand music and other creative efforts in the medium of sound. The way sound is born to perception, made present to us and kept in life however temporarily, shapes our living of the music, as well as the life of music. The way we make ourselves present to sound has a substantial impact on what the life of music makes of our life. The innumerable technological mediations today implicated in such cognitive dynamics need probably to be considered in the light of a larger agenda, one possibly envisioned as a *biopolitics* of music: dealing creatively - and thinking critically - in sound, is not only a question of (personal) artistic expression and aesthetic production, it also sets the (public) conditions for the existence of music (or whatever we may want to call *sound art*). The future of music depends on how we understand and experience sound, and is much less independent on aesthetic orientations. A largely predominant ideology of sound and music today reduces the understanding and the experience of sound to the understanding and the experience of the *sound object*. Of course, this follows from very well-known historical reasons (the XXth century electronic media revolution, resulting into multiple branches and instances of *audio culture*). Yet, the cognitive structure of the sound object has ended up reaching far beyond (and probably against) the positive - and positivistic - visions it was born of. Significantly, recent artistic work and scholarly contributions show instead a variety of anti-objectivistic ways to experience sound, closer to the *relational* and *ecological* dimension of the living (embodied) auditory experience. There, an understanding of sound as event seems to emerge, as opposed to *object*. What is deconstructed of the sound object, in these efforts, is a certain cognitive *inversion* (Tim Ingold's term): the sound object turns a transparent medium of shared, situated intersubjective dynamics, into the reified, abstracted and monetized raw material of industrially produced goods for private entertainment and individualistic lifestyles. I'd like to elaborate on this view, and to place it in the context of current critical thinking that seems to point towards an overcoming of benjaminian and McLuhanian paradigms of media and the arts.

**Agostino Di Scipio** is a composer, sound artist and scholar, born in Naples (1962), currently living in L'Aquila. Since the mid 1980s, Di Scipio explores experimental methods in the generation and transmission of sound, often involving phenomena of turbulence and emergence. Internationally renowned are his live-electronics performance pieces and sound installations where networks of "man-machine-environment" interactions are implemented and creatively elaborated - e.g. the Audible Ecosystemics pieces and the Modes of Interference series (a recent special issue of Contemporary Music Review was entirely devoted to such works). Artist-in-residence of the Berlin DAAD program (2004-05), guest artist of several research and music- productions institutions all over the world, former Electroacoustic Music Composition professor at the Conservatory of Naples (2001-2013), former Edgar-Varèse-Professor at Technische Universität (Berlin, 2007- 08), Di Scipio served as lecturer and visiting professor at CCMIX (Paris), Univ. of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, IRCAM (Paris), Simon Fraser Univ. (Burnaby-Vancouver), etc. He is a member of the "Musique et écologies du son" research team at University of Paris 8. Keynote speaker at the International Computer Music Conference 2013 (Edith Cowan Univ., Perth, W.Australia), he has written and published internationally, partly on his own work as a composer and practitioner, partly on broader issues concerning the methods and history of musical technologies, particularly in their socio-cultural, cognitive and political implications. Some of his papers on these matters have been collected in the volume *Pensare le tecnologie del suono e della musica* (Naples, Editoriale Scientifica, 2012). Guest editor of the Journal of New Music Research for a monograph issue on Xenakis. He served as editor of several volumes such as Michael Eldred's *Heidegger, Hölderlin & John Cage* (Semar, Rome, 2000) and Iannis Xenakis' *Universi del suono* (LIM/Ricordi, Milan, 2003).

## *Exposing Demagoguery: The use of Mass-Communication as Anti-Totalitarian Protest in Mauricio Kagel's Der Tribun (1979)*

Christine Dysers

University of Leuven

During the 1960s, a young generation of artists reinvented the German tradition of the radio play. This so-called *Neues Hörspiel* was no longer a mere aural reproduction of existing literature, but an autonomous acoustic art form. It liberated text, music and sound effects from their familiar definitions, transformed them into purely acoustic events and treated them as equally important constructive elements. With his seminar *Musik als Hörspiel* during the Kölner Kurse für Neue Music of 1970, the German-Argentinian composer Mauricio Kagel (1931 – 2008) introduced the genre to the domain of new music. Although many of his radio plays were granted several national and international awards, this segment of his oeuvre remains relatively unknown outside of Germany. In *Der Tribun* (1979), language and radio as means of communication turn against themselves. As an anonymous politician is practicing his speech before an empty square, fragmentary sounds of cheering crowds, applause and a marching band can be heard through the speakers. Although the demagogue's speech often appears to be extremely realistic, it rapidly deviates into absurdist and meaningless nonsense. In view of Germany's national past, this thematic choice can easily be perceived as a critical protest against totalitarianism and radical political ideology, as well as a strong plea for democracy. But how does the artist achieve this? In this paper, I aim to determine the ways in which Kagel uses radio transmission as a means of critique and protest. By analyzing this radio play as an acoustic art form (thereby focusing on structure, sonic events and textual content) and linking it to both Kagel's compositional aesthetics and the tradition of the *Neues Hörspiel*, I will demonstrate the various levels on which the artist destabilizes the media of language and radio, as well as the implications that can be drawn from that.

**Christine Dysers** studied musicology at the University of Leuven and culture management at the University of Antwerp. She is currently affiliated as a doctoral researcher with the University of Leuven. Her current research focusses on the deliberate integration of sounding and/or conceptual features of older musical traditions in 20th- and 21st-century art music. She has published in *Revue Belge de Musicologie*, *Musik & Ästhetik*, *TEMPO*, and is currently preparing a contribution to a collection of essays on protest music (*Ut Orpheus: Protest, Jazz and Politics: The Dissent in Music*, expected in 2015).

## *A more attractive way of getting things done: questions of power and control in British improvised music*

Simon Fell

University of Huddersfield

Questioning power relationships, and the relevance of inherited structures of musical authority and deference, was a prime mover behind the activity of many British experimentalists within 1960s classical music. But such questions – including concerns about the position of a new generation of state-educated creative artists – were also crucial to the radical explorations of the British freely improvising musicians concurrently forging a new musical language. Both groups were seeking to remodel existing performance idioms and the institutionalised composer-interpreter hierarchy. Why did these structures no longer seem valid? What was the effect of the increasingly complex relationship between composition and improvisation in creative contemporary jazz? Why did British free improvisers derive inspiration from modernist classical models, but ultimately feel they had to reject ‘composition’ altogether? Are there paradigms outside the classical tradition which might provide composers with a more viable, communitarian working model? In seeking to answer these questions, my research has involved access to the archives of leading composer/improvisers of this period, along with personal interviews; I have also made extensive study of hundreds of scores in the BMC archive at Huddersfield University. I am myself a composer and improviser with 30+ years experience in the field of writing for musicians from outside the mainstream classical tradition, and I am currently studying the questions of power and authority within British improvised music as part of a PhD course at the University of Huddersfield. Drawing on my researches, I will discuss how composer/musicians from the jazz and improvising tradition have attempted to square the circle of ‘telling others what to do’ while pursuing the ideal of individual freedom. I will discuss the strategies involved in attempts to realise a new type of composer/interpreter relationship, the obligations and compromises these impose on both parties, and the potential social and musical benefits.

**Simon Fell** (b.1959) studied double bass under Peter Leah, received his M.A. from Cambridge University, and is currently researching a PhD at the University of Huddersfield. Simon is a composer and double bassist active in free improvisation and contemporary jazz. He has worked with many leading improvisers, including John Butcher, Peter Brötzmann, Lol Coxhill, Evan Parker, John Zorn, Derek Bailey and Han Bennink. Working groups have included the London Improvisers Orchestra, SFQ, IST, Hession/Wilkinson/Fell and many more. He has presented compositions for improvisers at numerous festivals, including the LMC Festival, the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, and the BBC Electric Proms. [more information at: [www.simonfell.info](http://www.simonfell.info)]

*Si el clima fuera una composición: Reflections on counterpoint and commitment in my new work for piano and tape*

Liam Flenady

Griffith University, Australia

“*Si el clima fuera un banco*” is a 15-minute piano and tape work that I am currently composing as part of my PhD research. This paper explores the various relations between music and politics interrogated in the work. The paper begins by examining the work’s deployment of counterpoint as cipher of dialectical social relations within the piano writing. It points to the limits of this musical mimesis suggests the necessity of external political ideas entering the musical form. In “*Si el clima*” the tape part and its relation to the piano draw upon both ecological and Marxist concepts for their formal processes. Yet these risk functioning as easily subsumable ‘fictions’ with regard to the autonomous musical form, with minimal political impact and bearing no genuine formal heterogeneity. The work attempts to go beyond this limitation by injecting far more explicit political content. The tape part of the work weaves a number of spoken word parts delivering texts from ecological and Marxist authors. It also incorporates a recording of Hugo Chavez’s speech from the 2009 Copenhagen in which he famously made the statement (to which the title of the work refers): “If the climate were a bank, they would have saved it already.” This injection of spoken text, treating environmental, economic and political themes directly, serves as an anti-illusory gesture in two contradictory ways. On the one hand, it goes beyond music as a ‘windowless monad’ to give it the status of a means to a political end. On the other hand, it gives the work a new tension between autonomy and heterogeneity. The paper attempts to show that the essence of the work lies in the interweaving of the three potentially unsynthesisable levels: counterpoint as social mimesis, of political ideas as formal fiction, and political text as an anti-illusory gesture.

**Liam Flenady** is an Australian composer based in Brussels. His works have been performed by a number of chamber ensembles throughout Australia including Kupka’s Piano, of which he is a founding member and co-artistic director. Liam is currently undertaking a PhD in composition through Griffith University where his topic is ‘Counterpoint for the 21st century’. He has attended a number of composition short courses, including Darmstadt Festival and Impuls Academy. He has received a number of composition prizes in Australia including the Silver Harris and Jeff Peck prize and the Alan Lane prize. Liam Flenady is also a committed political activist for social justice and environmental issues.

## *What music, what politics?: How corporate work and academia made me improvise more*

Panos Ghikas

Canterbury Christ Church University

Using a personal account of experiences inside and outside the frame of academic engagement, I will pose a series of questions related to compositional practice and the mutual impact it has with the political. In many respects, political developments (local and global) in the last 10-15 years have combined with the new age of technological utopia (or dystopia) to engender attitudes towards art and particularly music-making that seem to further challenge 'traditional' modes and methods of modernist expression. One of the most surprising aspects of having worked in both corporate and academic ('creative') environments has been to observe how much their language and underlying philosophies are gradually converging, mainly with regards to 'avant' practices, 'cutting edge' concepts, 'innovative' research, customer/audience/student experience. Working with people who labour hard to manipulate public perception using tools of the industry, such as my own musical output's "emotional investment" I have experienced alienation, fascination, bemusement, disappointment and finally a liberating sense of Machiavellian misanthropy. I have also earned a living, which in turn has provided me with essential research time to develop my concepts and practices combining compositional and improvisational approaches. I have been able to curate performances and produce new music releases. In this typical Faustian narrative, advertising agencies unintentionally fund marginal, non-profit compositional research. Beyond the obvious field of discussion regarding public funding versus private sponsorship, a few less obvious questions arise: Can I compose my way out of a language of collective agency? Can I observe the linguistics of politics and use the discourse analysis as material for music-making? Is this political?

**Panos Ghikas** (b. 1972) is a composer, improviser and producer. His output encompasses concert music, live improvisation, interdisciplinary collaborations in digital media, film music and pop production. He is a member of surrealist post-pop band The Chap, runs the Migro Records label, and is a member of new music collective Migrant Sound. Panos performs and releases collaborative multi-channel work with composer/improviser Jennifer Walshe in 'unreal-time' improv duo Ghikas and Walshe and performs violin and viola in free-improvisation groups Friendo, the Bohman Expanded Family and Sudden Rectum. His acoustic compositions have received performances in the UK, Germany, Belgium, Greece and Mexico. Panos Ghikas is a lecturer at Canterbury Christ Church University and has previously taught at Goldsmiths, Kent and Anglia Ruskin.

## *The Composer as Ideologue*

Chris Halliwell

Goldsmiths, University of London

Music is a social practice. The politically committed composer attempts to articulate an aspect of that practice - composition - for a particular idea of the social. Such a composer is thus consciously an ideologue, but every composer, every musician, is ideologically productive. The focus of my research is a relocation of ideological production in music composition to the level of embodiment, which may be taken as synonymous with affectivity. I consider the composer as a producer of (1) changes in the index of the sensible: the potential to articulate distributions of force embodied as affects and percepts; and (2) of the present: the active constitution of time. These analyses form the basis for a continuous asking - as compositional praxis - of the question: what shall these constructions be?

**Chris Halliwell** (London, 1973). Composer, critical theorist, software designer. <http://www.erasurestrategies.com>

## *INTEGRATION IS AN ACT - Artistic strategies for the performativity of the open space*

David Helbich

Independent Composer

I am working since several years within different artistic works on the underlying questions of the performativity of public spaces in relation to the public dimension of performative spaces. In how far does the communicative and social space of a work of art depends on and plays with the conditions and rules of public spaces, and in how far does the incidental togetherness of public space demands performative decisions and behavior? How can we play with and within both? I therefore created works, like my City Tracks, a performative audio guide, with plenty different concepts to send audience members individually to specific places in cities (like Kortrijk, Maastricht, Bergen and Riga until now), where they follow scores and instructions to experience my pieces, the characteristics of the spot and finally themselves in relation to both. A highly scored situation in a chaotic urban field: a situation. As one result of this confrontation the participant becomes the performer and the audience at the same time. The site becomes the instrument and the stage. And the passerby the extra and the spectator. In order to trigger the dialectics between control and freedom – to follow an exact score, but to do with it what you want - I understand an audience as active individuals. The final decision of each member of an audience is one of involvement, one of resistance and trust. It is the political question of collectivity: in how far can an experience of the social 'choreography' of daily life empowers us, urban inhabitants, to live a life we want? Where is the opening within these spaces, how do we move? The presentation of my audio guide concepts will be spiced up with slides, recordings and several participatory exercises.

**David Helbich;** Berlin 1973; artist; studied composition and philosophy in Amsterdam and in Freiburg/D; lives and works since 2002 in Brussels. He created various experimental works on stage, on page, online and in public space. His trajectory moves between representative and interactive works, pieces and interventions, between conceptual work and actions. A recurrent interest is the understanding of an audience as active individuals and the search for an opening up of experiences in an artistically restricted space. [davidhelbich.blogspot.com](http://davidhelbich.blogspot.com)

## *Politics of notation: redefining the relationship between the audience and the performer*

Alan Hilario

Independent Composer

*Wait here for further instructions* (2011) for projected score, silent audience and improvising musicians is a composition which utilizes the ambiguity of words and phrases, giving the musician a vast amount of room for interpretation. The piece has 169 "pages" of instructions or commands, ranging from very simple, basic musical gestures to more specific sound combinations. There are also some references to the special relationship between film and music. At first glance this constellation seems to allow much freedom of interpretation for the performer. However, since the sequence of the instructions are fixed, a distinct sense of musical logic and dramaturgy is already predefined by the composition which then again limits the freedom of speech of the performer: verbal notation being cordoned off by a given musical time. There is a crucial reason why the piece exclusively uses verbal notation as improvisational reference: all of the 169 instructions are to be projected into a screen during the performance (very much similar to a silent film projection being accompanied by live-music). This means that the audience can follow in real time what the improvising musicians are doing. And since the majority of the audience could not read musical notation (be it conventional or experimental-graphic etc.), it is pertinent to the concept of "transparency" to use language as notation. "Transparency", - a term nowadays present in the media as a form of democratic process to help fight corruption - as a performative musical concept thus redefines the relationship between the audience and musician, since usually the audience never has access to the score. The audience actually is able to understand what is supposed to happen and hear and see if the musicians are able to perform the instruction which is currently projected onto a screen. How the instructions are materialized is of course of significant importance in judging the concert experience aesthetically. This makes the performer more "exposed": how a musician interprets "profoundly" is inevitably shown and is more important than instrumental abilities (there is for example an instruction "play pitch F sharp, beautiful, then ugly, then again beautiful"). In effect transparency opens up a new communicative path between the performer and audience and thus transforms the attitude of both towards each other. At the same time, the audience becomes "silent performers" as well, because the simple understandable verbal notation stimulates the imagination when read. Depending on the instruction, some audience would actually perform a command (like "breathe out") or hear sounds innerly (like "as shrill as possible, long"). The piece, which is for any number of instrument - acoustic or electronic - could theoretically be performed as a silent projection, without any live interpretation.

**Alan Hilario** (b. 1967, Manila). Filipino composer, now resident in Germany, of mostly chamber/ multimedia works. Mr. Hilario was a scholar of the Philippine High School for the Arts from 1979-83, majoring in violin. He later had violin lessons with Gilopez Kabayao from 1985-89. He studied composition at the University of the Philippines in Diliman, Quezon City from 1985-88. He later studied composition with Mathias Spahlinger and electronic music with Mesias Manguashca at the Musikhochschule Freiburg from 1992-96, on a scholarship from the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD). He participated in numerous projects with film and theatre directors in the Philippines from 1985-92 and performed as a violinist in the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra from 1988-92. Among his honours is the Kompositionspreis from the city of Stuttgart (1997) and the Kunstpreis Musik 2011 of the Akademie der Künste, Berlin. He has lived in Germany since 1992.

## *Using Instruments to do some thinking!*

Olaf Hochherz

City University of Hong Kong

The question of the political has the two dimensions of praxis (how things are done) and theory (what things mean). To understand the political dimension of compositions to link these two dimensions. I suggest that tracing the emergence of expressions in musical practices, allows us to do so. But musical practices include not only the writing of musical scores and the performance of music (or musical pieces) as has been discussed widely, but also, a blind spot which is remaining in current musicology, the interaction of musician (composer, performer) with instruments. This shift of the focus allows us to put new lights on some topics in musicology and organology. It allows us to express how meanings are emerging, while avoiding idealist conceptions of musical ideas, as it have long been criticized by feminist musicology. It extends the discussion of performance in music, to the material constraints of instruments during the process of composition, so that we are able to trace the emergence of (formal) structures. Drawing on Peircean semiotics (semeiotics) and phenomenology (phaneroscopy) we are able to trace the emergence of expressions through their material-practical conditioning by the use of instruments. On the basis of this ontology we are touching the notions of expression, affordance, and event. Expressions become interobjective. Affordances are considered as emerging through the praxis of creating and interpreting material constrains. The event is the appearance of a true proposition, which is emerging throughout the composition of the work. I will exemplify my approach with an analysis of Rainforest IV in particular the communal aspect of its realizations and realizations of Christopher Wolff's compositions.

**Olaf Hochherz** lives in Hong Kong. He is a sound artist and researcher. He got educated at Folkwang Hochschule Essen in electronic composition, Humboldt University Berlin in philosophy and computer science and at Bauhaus University Weimar in sound-art/media-art. Currently he works on his PhD research about effect of instruments on the meaning of imitation in sound art and music at City University of Hong Kong. He is mostly performing with self-build electronic instruments and computer programs, develops installations and performance-installations. He is interested in the conjunction of instability and associative capacity of sounds. He presented his electronic compositions and installations at different festivals. He toured with his performances throughout Central Europe and East Asia.

## *Material and effects in turbulence: natural and synthetic vibrational practices in the composition and performance of contemporary music*

Juliana Hodkinson

Independent composer

This paper explores vibrato as a metaphor and as musical material that manifests an oscillation between two states (pitches) as a fluctuating glide between them. An unstable element, problematized as expressive excess during the twentieth century's vibrato wars on performance practice, and all but banned in contemporary instrumental and vocal music except when explicitly notated, vibrato has been marginalized in favour of 'pure tone' in considerations of tone production and effect in contemporary music. Erin Manning's politics of touch and Elizabeth Grosz' aesthetics of vibration are invoked to mobilise considerations of vibrato in instrumental music, and to articulate a progressive, fluctuating mode of regarding aesthetic entities and their frameworks and borders, with surfaces – like skin - in constant processes of integration, disintegration, appearance and disappearance. Manning's attention to touch and skin supports an appreciation of the processual fluidity of matter and thus, for my purposes, of musical material; her articulation of engendering turns on the undertaking of a reworking of form, potentialising matter. This is joined with my commentary on Elizabeth Grosz's Darwinist account of the role of vibration in sexual selection, as a description of ambivalent oscillation between any two bodies paralleled in techniques of musical interaction. Vibrato is considered here, then, not only as a sign of fluidity of pitch in performance, but also of the productivity of maintaining spasms between various mutually exclusive states as a possible musical goal. My interest as a composer in the rejuvenation of the expressive concept and material challenge of vibrato is focused specifically on an oscillation between natural (vocal or instrumental) and mechanical or synthetic (electronically-produced) vibrati, in electro-acoustic work contexts. Discussing my chamber opera *Turbulence* (2013), for soprano and actor with mini electronic synthesizer, I present as a productive dilemma a compositional situation that is inherently replete with the task of aligning the work of notating for instruments and voices with composition for electronic and electronically recorded sonic textures. Engaging both singer and non-singer voices and a synthetic oscillator in the exaggeration of a musical archetype that points towards excess and emotionality, the control with which composer and performers seek, in *Turbulence*, to align, with alternating precision and liberty, constantly fluctuating rates and amplitudes of oscillations within a zone that becomes increasingly unpredictable the greater the number of parameters in flux, emphasizes music and song as both natural and intuitive and as highly constructed and stylized, ensuring that the limited signifying economies of notation, machine and vocal style are constantly broadened by one another, and thus forcing processes of individuation and re-individuation of matter through disintegration and loss of control.

**Juliana Hodkinson** is an independent composer and researcher. Her educational background is in musicology, languages and philosophy (MA Cantab Music and Philosophy King's College Cambridge, MA Hons Japanese Studies University of Sheffield, PhD Musicology University of Copenhagen.) She has lectured in composition and music aesthetics at Technische Universität Berlin, the Royal Academy of Music Copenhagen, and the Institute for Art and Culture at the University of Copenhagen. In 2014, she was resident at Bogazici University, Istanbul, participating in the Bogazici Chronicles. She has recently created new works commissioned by Chamber Made Opera (*Turbulence*), MaerzMusik, Spor Festival & Scenatet (*Angel View*), Südwestdeutsche Rundfunk (is there something you can tell us), Klangspuren Schwaz & Esbjerg Ensemble (*The Coastline Piece III: West*) and Jetpack Bellerive (*Previously, on*). She is presently on the board and peer-review panel of the Danish music journal *Seismograf*, and has previously occupied posts as chairman of the Danish National Arts Foundation, and board member of the Danish Composers' Union.

*Open Music with Early Instruments in an Electroacoustic Environment:  
An exploration of innovative anarchic small ensemble performance  
practice*

Alexander Hunter

Australian National University

The work of the newly formed trio, Helyard, Hunter & Martin, consists of three performers utilising early and electronic instruments (harpsichord, regal, viola da gamba, theorbo, malletKAT, etc.) realising ‘open works’ in an electroacoustic and ambisonic environment. Based in the Australian National University’s Experimental Music Studio, this faculty ensemble presents performances of partially improvised open works, utilising an anarchic ensemble performance model stressing the combination of independence and interdependence. The members of this research-led ensemble are interested in the development of performance practice in terms of both early instruments (new extended techniques, including the use of live electronics) and electroacoustic ensemble performance (interactive spatialisation). In addition to his instrument(s), each performer has access to a console from which he can manipulate his signals in terms of both effects and spatialisation. The ensemble performance model is informed by the small-scale anarchic politics of composers and free improvisers like AMM, FIG, Christian Wolff and the Reductionists. The performance environments used in these open works are created (composed) by member Dr Alexander Hunter (viola da gamba, theorbo). These compositions draw on Hunter’s research into mobile forms, informed in part by the writings of Jonathan D. Kramer and the works of the Earle Brown. Utilising non-verbal cues (visual, sonic, or electronic), the three performers navigate and influence the trajectory of each performance, shifting between and altering a mobile series of semi-composed events with varying levels of specificity in terms of performance parameters (rhythm, pitch, density, timbre, spatialisation, etc.). This paper will use both scores and video recordings of recent performances to discuss the ways in which these open works utilise an anarchic combination of independence and interdependence in a small ensemble performance environment combining early and electric instruments and ambisonics.

Dr **Alexander Hunter** studied composition, double bass, viola da gamba and ethnomusicology at Northern Illinois University, and received a PhD in composition from Edinburgh Napier University. Currently lecturing at the Australian National University, Hunter teaches composition and theory and directs the ANU Experimental Music Studio. His work as a composer is based on open works, which encourage a fluid relationship between composer, score and performer. Hunter’s current performance-led research is based on his participation in a trio of improvisers utilising the combination of open works, early instruments, and electroacoustic techniques and spatialisation.

## *Staging Improvisation: The loss of desire in improvisation practices*

Tina Krekels

Edinburgh College of Art

Collectively we improvise, talk, research, we exchange meaning/material on different levels. After an improvisation performance we leave the stage, drink a beer and chat to our friends. This performance is 'lost' and no longer exists, somehow however this 'loss' has become a research interest in the academic community or amongst practitioners themselves. This 'loss' needs to be understood in order to accumulate the already existing knowledge for the Self and the wider community of knowledge. What really is lost is the Batailleian concept of *eroticism*. Erotic is the phenomenological and sensuous improvisation experience, it is the momentary experiences that serves nothing else but the individual's pleasure. From a phenomenological perspective they are without any border and outside the architecture of knowledge. Their purpose is solely in the instantaneous experience, they have no need to be established into a framework of knowledge. Erotic is the noise or resistance of these established architectures and 'accumulation of wealth' (Bataille, 2013). Noise is seen as a disturbance or resistant to the Heideggerian concept of *enframing*; the constraint of experience for the self or the 'self-loss', the non-rational. Erotic is the desire to engage with someone else, it is the desire of exchanging with others and building collectives and collaborative creative processes that are all situational and instantaneous. I am interested in Bataille as the concept of deathly, momentary, situated performances that are anti-architecture, anti-knowledge. They are political in such as they try not to fit into the neo-liberalist structured world of knowledge and representation of multiple truths. Improvisation is more and more manifested within the academic world and has become part of its problematic representation of 'art as scientific knowledge'. The justification of one's creative thinking and work via the representation of some scientific rationalisation (Thatcher's attack on philosophy departments in the mid 1980s).

**Tina Krekels.** I am an improviser. I am interested in noisy and distorted saxophones, the social and experiential aspect of improvisation. I am currently doing a PhD in Creative Practices at the Reid School of Music, Edinburgh College of Art.

## *Luigi Nono's Late Period, States in Decay, and Subjects in Decline*

Trent Leipert

Boston University

This paper considers the still-problematic question of the political in Luigi Nono's so-called late period of the 1980s. I examine one of Luigi Nono's lesser-known works, *Guai ai gelidi mostri* [Beware the cold monsters] (1983), for small ensemble, two altos, and live electronics. This work was part of Nono's long and fruitful collaboration with the philosopher and politician Massimo Cacciari who, in creating the textual basis for the piece, selected and assembled quotations by various writers. In discussing *Guai*, I develop the analytical category of "unsettled unisons" with which I demonstrate a new way of thinking about the pitch material and use of live electronics in Nono's late work. I further employ this concept to consider the ways in which Nono's setting resonates with Cacciari's political philosophy as well as its quotations by Friederich Nietzsche and Franz Rosenzweig on the nature of the state. While discussions of Nono's later works have often struggled to articulate their relationship to political commitment, I argue that a piece such as *Guai* places politics in the foreground but also presses us to think differently about categories such as the state and the subject. To this end, I also consider the importance of inhuman figures that appear in *Guai* and suggest that these be thought of as unique conceptual and aesthetic reflections on the broader "decline of the subject" that was receiving renewed attention by contemporary post-Heideggerian Italian thinkers associated with "weak thought" [*pensiero debole*]. In this way I argue that Nono's works of the 1980s sought to confront the insufficiency of inherited political and philosophical categories that resulted from changes in the nature of late capitalism and its subsequent effects on human life.

**Trent Leipert** is Lecturer in Musicology at Boston University. He recently completed a PhD in Music History and Theory at the University of Chicago. His current book project draws on political theory, philosophy and psychoanalysis to examine the musical composition of the subject in the work of Luigi Nono, Helmut Lachenmann and Salvatore Sciarrino.

## *Women (re)producing/(re)producing women*

Caroline Lucas

Independent Composer

*To be accompanied by an assemblage of female screams: high-pitched shrieks; swelling moans and groans; crying; growling; breathy labouring, pain or pleasure/pleasure or pain?*

This presentation maps the development of my music practice, utilising the methodologies of practice-as-research to enable an exploration of theory and creative practice, presenting a multimodal analysis of the critical implications of artistic invention. Combining theory, reflexive writing, sound and image, this work uses the reciprocity of practice and theory as methods *and* subjects of research. It explores discourse constructed through the disciplinary language of praxis and posits the potentiality of *meaning* democratised through the ambivalent traces of experience.

*Multiple/radical/forms* traces the development of my artistic and scholarly practices which have changed from me ‘thinking myself very [young]’ and exterior to my work, to finding ways of asserting that:

*I am... artist...*

*I am... scholar...*

*I am... feminist...*

*I am... a woman again.*

Furthermore, it charts the relationship between a shift in my theoretical and personal concern for what Diamond (2007) has labelled the ‘imperialistic and narcissistic’ violence of the ‘authoritative “we”’, to the individualised transgressive act of identification.

Reflecting my experimental approach to composition, this presentation combines the multifaceted approaches to practice-as-research: scholarly discourse; traces of subjectivities; sounds and images. Reflexive exploration of my identity as an artist is contextualised within more traditional academic discourse and punctuated by fragments of the sounds and images to be found in my practice. Subjectivity and the privileging of individual meaning-making are positioned throughout my work (and this presentation) as a means of resisting frameworks of power and disrupting dominant discourses. This has enabled me to negotiate the authorised ‘we’ of academia, constructing multiple forms of ‘self’ as artistic production and finally able to confidently assert:

||: *I am... I am...:*||

**Caroline Lucas.** Originally Worcester, then Leeds, now Manchester. Composer, fiddler, flashmob convenor. Interests: Subversive embroidery, morris dancing and composting. WLTM like minded individuals to share in long walks and cartography. Must have own wheelbarrow.

## *Representing Urban Events And Behaviours In Music Composition*

Neil March

Goldsmiths, University of London

The subject of my PhD Thesis, completed in 2014, was *Developing an Urban Art Music* and my primary research aim was to identify an effective means by which events and behaviours in post-globalization urban society could be represented through the composition of [primarily instrumental] music. This process began with the development of various compositional devices rooted in gesture and metaphor and concluded with the use of actual recordings of my immediate day to day environment both for sound effect and, more significantly, as a direct compositional source. My presentation, will explain the socio-political aspects underpinning my compositional aims. I will argue that music, indeed any art form, cannot be divorced from the ideological concerns relevant to the society and environment in which it is conceived. Through a combination of direct integration of physical urban sounds into my music and the development of specific compositional devices, I have sought to reflect the complex, often dysfunctional character of urban society whilst also offering metaphors for [graduated] change that resonate with my Social-Democratic (or Democratic Socialist) perspective. In addition to these compositional principles, my manipulation of recorded urban sounds, often to the extent whereby they become unrecognizable from their sources, and their synthesis into a manufactured soundscape also offers a metaphor for the aggressive alteration and manufacture of natural resources in mass production (whether for food and drink, entertainment, cosmetics etc.), driven by the relentless need for businesses to produce profit in a ruthlessly competitive arena.

**Neil March** is a former Rock musician who, between 2008 and 2014, undertook postgraduate study (mmus. & PhD) at Goldsmiths University with Roger Redgate. Prior to that, he studied at the Blackheath Conservatoire (2005 – 2008) and Birkbeck University (2006 – 2008). He describes his work as Urban Art Music which was also the title of his album, released by Demerara Records in 2014. A key feature of his music is the use of physical recordings of everyday urban sound which are fed into a computer programme and either converted into sources of melody, harmony and colour or used for sound effects, in both cases sitting alongside notated music. In recent months his music has been featured on BBC Radio Three and stations across the world and his work has been reviewed in a variety of media.

## *Senza cialoma: official historical narratives and Sicilian subaltern voices*

Marcello Messina

Universidade Federal do Acre

It has been acknowledged that the recent celebrations for the 150th anniversary of the Italian Unification have triggered a renewed urge for clarification of national history: in this context, a number of revisionist narratives have been identified in Sicily and in the South of mainland Italy, aimed at renegotiating the political position of Southern people within Italian society. This paper presents my work *Senza cialoma* (for soprano and six instruments), which was written for the GNU ensemble and premiered in December 2013 in Rio de Janeiro. Alongside Emanuele Casale's *Composizione per voce*, *Senza cialoma* is among the rare attempts, in the domain of contemporary composition, to set texts in Sicilian. Unlike Casale, who tried to deliberately avoid any reference to the common topoi belonging to Sicily's literary tradition by setting a nonsense poem, I decided to work on existing texts dating back to the 19th century, namely three street poems collected by authors and ethnographers Lionardo Vigo, Antonino Uccello and Salvatore Salomone-Marino. The three poems I selected express negative feelings towards the Italian Unification and the various mainland-directed attempts to suppress Sicilian revolts and obstruct the island's sovereignty. By selecting and setting these texts, I attempted to propose an alternative narration of the events that led to the Unification, remote from the glorious and democratic liberation of Sicily and the South illustrated by the official national history, but also rooted in the conscience of ordinary people, and thus arguably independent from other-directed attempts to instrumentalise dissent. The choice of setting subaltern poetry in Sicilian was tightly intertwined with some important aesthetic and structural choices: in particular, the piece is based on an alternation between instrumental sections and songs, the latter being characterised by a specific intervallic material, and aimed at evoking Sicilian traditional music.

**Marcello Messina** has recently completed his PhD in Composition at the University of Leeds. He has studied with Mic Spencer, Ewan Stefani, Stefano Bonilauri, and Adam Fergler. His music has been performed by the Icarus Ensemble, Trio Atem, GNU, Giacomo Baldelli, Sarah Leonard, Maurizio Barbetti and Lauren Redhead among others. His scores and recordings are published by the University of York Music Press (UYMP), MAP Editions and Huddersfield Contemporary Records (HCR). He is involved in organising concerts and events for the Forum of Composers and Musicians (FOCAM), and is a member of the Ursprung Collective, a spoken poetry and music project based in the US.

*Hierarchies of creative interaction – the political aspects of collaboration  
between composer and improvising musicians in Against Oblivion,  
Part 3*

Jeremy Peyton Jones

Goldsmiths, University of London

This presentation explores the political aspects of the relationship between composer and improvising musicians through an examination of their creative input both during the devising process and the resulting performances of a recent work for voice, narration and improvising musicians, *Against Oblivion Part 3*. The work was devised during a residency in March/April 2014 at the Cantieri Culturali alla Zisa in Palermo, Sicily with the Sicilian Improvisers Orchestra culminating in two public performances in Palermo. This 13-piece orchestra is a group of professional musicians based in Palermo. The particular focus of the project was the collaborative and devising processes involved in working with a group of improvising acoustic/electric musicians: in particular how the interaction works when combining pre-composed fixed material with improvisation outside of a jazz context particularly in relation to my research aim to explore the creative possibilities involved in collaboration, both between composers and between composers and performers. *Against Oblivion Part 3* incorporates more improvisation than any of my work to date, and I was struck by the political aspects of the interaction between myself as composer and ‘director’ and the orchestra members as performers and improvisers. The piece combined improvisation and pre-composed material in several different ways ranging from free to structured with different implications as to the creative roles and hierarchies of the collaborators. It was interesting, and significant, that the orchestra had just finished a project focused on the music and political ideas of jazz saxophonist/composer Albert Ayler. That experience for the players, and the effect on me of seeing their performances had an effect on the way we worked together. This presentation will illustrate, with examples from a recording of the performance of *Against Oblivion*, the various ways in which the improvised elements combined with the pre-composed, and extrapolated from that the various ways in which the collaborators exercised creative influence.

**Jeremy Peyton Jones** is a composer with a particular interest in the intersection between music / theatre / performance / live art and other time based media. He studied at Dartington College of Arts and Goldsmiths and in the 1970’s worked with John Cage and Christian Wolff. His work has been performed across the UK, Europe, Australia and North America and is regularly broadcast in the USA, Australia and the UK. His recent work *Against Oblivion Part 3* was premiered at the Teatro Garibaldi, Palermo in April 2013 by the Sicilian Improvisers Orchestra and he is currently writing the soundtrack for *A Farewell to Arms* by imitating the dog theatre company. He is a lecturer in composition at Goldsmiths, University of London.

## *Free Improvisation as Figural Representation of Social Relationships*

Luigi Pizzaleo

Conservatory of Rome

According to Erich Auerbach's theory, a particular kind of relation called "figural interpretation" binds two facts (or narratives) so that the first one, though real and endowed with full meaning, is at the same time an anticipation and a representation of the second one, which occurs on a different logical or chronological level, and somehow explains, accomplishes and fulfils the first one. Born in the field of biblical exegesis, this concept was extended to literature (specially to Dante's *Commedia*). Here I'll try to underline how a very similar relationship between processes and functions of collective improvisation and social ones seems to emerge from the writings on improvised music by Frederic Rzewski (program notes such as the so-called *Manifesto di Parma* as well as descriptions of works such as *Spacecraft* or *Sound pool*) and from the practice of MEV-Musica Elettronica Viva, the group of American composers who, in the late Sixties, led to the extreme their conception of "collectiveness" by bringing the audience inside the group until they themselves actually dissolved into an innumerable crowd of non-professional players. Free, collective and egalitarian, MEV's improvisation is the "figure" of social processes and struggles on two different levels: as music representing music, it announces a future where oppression and hierarchies implied by the [performer/audience] scheme are overcome by absorbing the audience itself within the group of players, who can thereby share their "meaningful ritual" (Rzewski) with the (virtually) entire social body; as a microcosm representing formally a macrocosm, the quality of the relations between the behaviors of musicians reflects the quality of dealings among individuals in society. This paper also focuses on Rzewski's conception of the "mistake" as a fruitful mutation in the flow of improvisation; finally, I'll try to underline the parallelism occurring between the emancipation of human beings (subjects) and the emancipation of sound sources (objects) in MEV's musical research.

**Luigi Pizzaleo** (Como, Italy, 1971) is a composer and a musicologist. He earned degrees in Piano, Composition and Electronic Music, and a doctorate at the University of Florence with a dissertation on electronic music in Rome. He teaches History of Electronic Music at the Conservatory of Rome. He published MEV-Musica Elettronica Viva (LIM-Libreria Italiana di Musicologia, 2014), *Il liutaio elettronico. Paolo Ketoff e l'invenzione del Synket* (Aracne, 2014), *Musica elettroacustica a Roma* (Edizioni Accademiche Italiane, 2014). He founded the NUME-Nuova Musica per l'Educazione, a research group engaged in the investigation of new didactic patterns for musical composition by means of tools and languages of contemporary electroacoustic music.

## *The Beautiful and the Political as Commitment and Representation*

Lauren Redhead

Canterbury Christ Church University

Competing and polarised positions related to the possible political nature of material in contemporary music are exemplified by the work of postmodern composers and that of post-war modernist composers. Whilst the former argue for the political nature of their composition by, for example, participation in *Protestaktion* and inclusion of contemporary issues and imagery the latter argue for the political nature of their manipulation of otherwise politically neutral musical material. This opposition can be understood as a dialectic between content and form, and is expressed by Adorno as the opposition between ‘committed’ and ‘autonomous’ work. This paper addresses this dialectic of politics in music as one which disregards the idea of beauty. By examining expressions of the political in Luigi Nono’s *Il Canto Sospeso* and Johannes Kreidler’s *Audioguide* it offers a framework through which the musically beautiful can be interrogated in the opposition of committed and autonomous artworks, and understood as an experience of alienation. Eco’s exploration of *Entfremdung* and Kristeva’s concept of abjection can both be employed to argue that the ‘political’ dimension of autonomous works offers the potential for a radical experience of beauty as a transcendence derived from present conditions whilst committed works negate beauty as a condition of re-presenting the present.

**Lauren Redhead** is an internationally performed composer and performer of experimental music for organ and electronics. Her musicological work focuses on the aesthetics and sociosemiotics of contemporary music in the present day. Lauren is Subject Lead for Music at Canterbury Christ Church University.

## *Imaginary Musical Radicalism and the Entanglement of Music and Emancipatory Politics*

Federico Reuben

Falmouth University

The interconnection between music and politics in the discourse of creative practitioners is often reduced to simple assertions of causality between specific musical works or aesthetic traits and particular political actions or ideologies. The simplistic association between the musical avant-garde and Marxist emancipatory politics (and their perceived common failure to fulfill a historical destiny) is evidence that a unidimensional understanding of the relationship of these two practices can negatively influence musical reception and creation. A direct result of this reductive approach is the emergence of an artistic stance that could be labeled *imaginary musical radicalism* - an attitude that replicates musical strategies of the historical avant-garde however detached from its original 'modernist' vision (Rancière). This talk proposes a heuristic and multidimensional approach based on a radical historicist analysis (Rockhill) of musical and political practices as an alternative model for the creative practitioner working at the intersection of music and politics.

**Federico Reuben** is a composer, sound artist, live electronics performer and researcher. His research encompasses a wide variety of disciplines and interests including composition, music technology, live electronic performance, improvisation, sound art, music computing, cross-arts collaboration, contemporary music studies, critical/contextual studies of digital and sound culture. Federico completed his PhD at Brunel University in 2011, supervised by Richard Barrett and Christopher Fox. Previously, he studied composition with Louis Andriessen, Richard Ayres, Martijn Padding and Gilius van Bergeijk at The Royal Conservatoire, The Netherlands. Currently, he is Senior Lecturer and Course Leader for BA Creative Music Technology at Falmouth University.

*passage/paysage and the 'barbarity of continuity'*

Neil Smith

University of Nottingham

This paper will investigate the political and philosophical implications of Mathias Spahlinger's complex exploration of continuity in the orchestral work, *passage/paysage*. The composer's own approach to continuity in this piece will be explored with reference to the themes of transition and what he calls 'all-sided' continuous development: he describes a musical narrative that is in a constant state of flux, without logical succession or over-arching teleology. Spahlinger's exploration of these themes will then be put in the context of musicological discussions focussing on temporality and continuity, with reference to the source-path-goal 'kinesthetic image' outlined by Janna Saslaw, which describes a linear experience of time in relation to a metaphorical journey with a source, end-goal and intermediate points. Using in particular the third of four large-scale sections from the piece, it will be demonstrated that *passage/paysage* subverts the usual order of this schema, thereby illustrating the unusual experience of time this piece offers. The paper will conclude by unpacking the political implications of Spahlinger's manipulation of musical continuity, particularly with reference to Whig theories of history and historical necessity.

**Neil Thomas Smith** is a composer, flautist, blogger and writer. He studied analysis and composition at the University of York with Roger Marsh and Tim Howell before studying composition with Caspar Johannes Walter in Stuttgart, Germany. His pieces have been performed by Schlagquartett Köln, the Hebrides Ensemble and the WDR Symphony Orchestra. He also plays flute with the York-based new music ensemble, Dark Inventions. He is currently working on a PhD on German composer Mathias Spahlinger at the University of Nottingham, supervised by Robert Adlington.

## *Political Implications of the Material of New Music*

Mathias Spahlinger

Berlin

in the new music the relation of the parts to the whole has been fundamentally changed. its characteristics (a-tonality; open form; everything that sounds can be music) negate the context and relationship of the major principles of traditional music — and bring these to consciousness. this is not a feature of style, but a general method that, applied to politics, can allow dilemmas to be understood.

**Mathias Spahlinger** (born 1944 in Frankfurt am Main) is a German composer of contemporary classical music. His work has many different musical influences such as Renaissance music and jazz, musique concrète, minimalism, with elements of noise and improvisation, and has been performed by many artists and groups specialized in contemporary classical music, such as Ensemble Recherche. Since 1990 he is professor of composition and director of the Institute for New Music at the Music Academy of Freiburg. In 2014 Mathias Spahlinger was awarded the “Grand Art Prize” of the Berlin Academy of Arts. The Grand Art Prize is the highest honor of the Academy of Arts for Matthias Spahlinger's artistic lifetime achievement.

## *From imaginary museum to factory without walls: addressing the spatial politics of experimental and improvised music*

Danae Stefanou

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

With an ever increasing number of recent publications, conferences and funded initiatives, an entire territory around improvisatory music-making and experimental, process-based, open-ended compositional practices is rapidly rendered visible and accountable, in both social and aesthetic terms. As Evan Parker deftly summarises, all that is now needed is “a history department that rescues, documents, archives and analyses the work done prior to the recent academic respectability – dusty work but somebody has to do it” (2014, p. 6). Much as the “dusty work” that Parker calls for may seem like the natural conclusion to a lengthy strife for public recognition and acceptance, the path towards “recent academic respectability” is hardly neutral or innocuous, and its purported universality also begs serious questions. How, and to what extent are previously undocumented historic practices becoming instrumentalized, reified and normalized in the interests of present-day, institutionally sanctioned accounts and narratives? What is left out of such “dusty work”, and why? How do current experimental and improvisatory initiatives negotiate their changing social representation, and what is at stake in this negotiation? Drawing on recent participatory fieldwork as well as archival research on lesser known aspects of historic and current experimentalism in Greece, I will focus on a number of examples that suggest space, and the articulation of spatial politics, as crucial metaphors in the way dominant ideologies and pervasive political metaphors are silently embedded, actively contested or aesthetically reformulated in the praxis of musical experimentation. In concluding, I will attempt a broader examination of free improvisation and experimental composition as acts of radical dissent.

References: Parker, Evan. 2014. “Introduction”. In *Soundweaving: Writings on improvisation*, edited by F. Schroeder and M. Ó hAodha, 1-7. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.

**Danae Stefanou.** I am a musicologist and improviser, currently Assistant Professor in Historical Musicology at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, and previously a Research Associate and Visiting Lecturer at Royal Holloway, University of London. I play in the Athens-based electroacoustic duo *acte vide*, and collaborate with composers, improvisers and intermedia artists from several countries. My research engages with experimental music and improvisation from micro-historical, aesthetic and critical perspectives, and has been published in peer-reviewed journals (JRMA, JIMS) and collective publications, including the forthcoming Cambridge Companion to Film Music and Routledge Global Popular Music series. I have also contributed to the Eastern Europe update of Grove Music Online (2015) and translated the first Greek edition of Michael Nyman’s *Experimental Music: Cage and Beyond* (Editions 8, 2012).

*New Music in Contemporary Society: Irony of History*

Vladimir Tarnopolsky

Centre for Contemporary Music, Moscow Conservatory

*Towards an exploration of Adornian aesthetics, social engagement,  
heritage of the past and development of the new in the music of Helmut  
Lachenmann*

Livine Van Eecke

University of Leuven

Contemporary work comments show that many contemporary composers feel a need to legitimize their works, a process of self-reflection in which Adorno's philosophy is both influential and controversial. Studies on the contemporary influence of Adorno's notion of musical material, however, often tend towards unilateral projections of Adorno's ideas on the present or reflections based on typologies. In contrast, a study aiming at a critical reflection on contemporary philosophical assumptions on the basis of the analysis and comparison of specific compositions, appears to be more fruitful. In an attempt to grasp the relation between philosophical constellations and analytical techniques, aesthetic assumptions are necessarily posited, while the actual relation between idea and technique still needs to be discovered by means of the analysis of musical artworks. This methodology will be illustrated by a practical aesthetic and score-based analysis of four notorious compositions of Helmut Lachenmann: *Pression* for cello and *Guero* for grand piano (1969), the piano cycle *Ein Kinderspiel* (1980) and *NUN* (*Musik für Flöte, Posaune, Männerstimmen und Orchester*, 1999). Like many composers after the Second World War, Lachenmann was well aware of the social responsibility of the artist. Yet, unlike the rather palpable social and political commitment of Luigi Nono, who incorporated in *Il canto sospeso* (1955-56) letters of persons sentenced to death, Lachenmann was on his guard for imposing his own ideology on music and obtaining "authority" which does not arise "from the specific law of composition, its own logic and immanent correctness, but from the gesture from which the work turns itself to the listener" (Adorno). "For the composer, there is no way to compromise", Lachenmann explains. Consequently, Lachenmann does not require the authority of his compositions as already acquired, but tries to uncover and follow the inherent tendency of the musical material, a process which will be shown to be necessarily historical and dialectical...

**Livine Van Eecke** (°1988) studied law and musicology at KU Leuven and graduated summa cum laude in musicology in 2013. She is currently working as a lawyer and doing research on the influence of Adorno's notion of the historical dialectic of musical material in the aesthetics of western contemporary art music, under the scientific supervision of prof. Mark Delaere and dr. Jan Christiaens.

## *Reworkings and Reconceptualisations: a compositional investigation into the ontology and identity of musical works*

Stephen Wilkinson

Goldsmiths, University of London

The nature of a musical work and how works retain an identity through diverse instantiations has long been a problem for aestheticians. In his famous essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Benjamin initially defines the 'aura' of an artwork as that which is lost when the work is removed from its original context, and which is essential for its authenticity. In the case of musical works, recordings of pieces created in a tradition centred on live performance have often been regarded as having a problematic relationship to a performed original. Yet much contemporary musical practice uses recordings as the primary method of distribution and aesthetic appreciation. Some theorists have argued for the aesthetic value of recordings as authentic representations of their associated works. However, I feel this fails to solve Benjamin's ontological problem of the essential dependency of the identity of a work on the context of its reception. This paper refers to my recent compositional practice in an attempt to develop a non-essentialist understanding of the musical work which better reflects how works are experienced when translated through different media. Goehr's application of late Wittgensteinian ontology to music offers a means of understanding how social contexts inform the ways in which musical works are conceptualised. Gärdenfors's ideas of conceptual spaces enable the creation of computer models of works as Wittgensteinian cluster concepts. I have used these computer models compositionally to reorganise material from a work in ways which preserve particular aspects and processes significant to the model. The work can thereby be reconstituted using resources idiomatic to a new medium. Insights gained from this practice suggest that essentialist definitions are untenable and a more fruitful approach to musical ontology is to consider musical works as arising from the circumstances of their creation and reception.

**Stephen Wilkinson** studied composition with Robin Hollway at Cambridge before completing a Masters in musicology at Oxford. He is currently finishing a PhD in computer-aided composition at Goldsmiths.

## *Engaged Composition, Dehierarchisation and the Politics of Practice*

Nick Williams

University of Huddersfield

All music, by its nature, is to an extent political, whether explicitly concerned with political subject matter or not. A composer's stylistic decisions, choice and treatment of material, along with who plays the music and who listens to it are all aspects determined to a large degree by political factors. There have been many approaches to political music, including the tonal certainties of Cardew, the high modernism of Nono, the stylistic melting pot of Rzewski, the contingent experimentalism of Wolff and the confrontational complexity of Barrett. The idea of 'political music', however, is famously problematic: for example, can music have political content while avoiding the condition of propaganda? As a composer, my own music is informed and driven by political concerns. Both my compositional practice (choice of style, subject and material) and my choice of musicians to work with (and how we work together) embody particular political perspectives. In this paper I shall explore two distinct modes of compositional practice to illustrate my position. The first mode involves the use of techniques that explore the 'de-hierarchisation' of material (to use Louis Andriessen's phrase), which encompass varieties of unison such as canon, heterophony and hocket. The second mode utilises a notational practice that requires a method of working in which the process of rehearsal acts as a model of political practice. Here I examine the creation of non-hierarchical relationships between composer and players (and amongst the players themselves). I will look at how my choice of subject matter functions as a repository for the history of protest and social struggles, and demonstrate how music can become a site for the practice of new social relations.

**Nick Williams** is a composer. He studied music at York and Huddersfield universities. Since 2005 has been a lecturer in composition, musicology, harmony, counterpoint and analysis. His music has been played throughout Europe, the USA and Canada. Recent works include GOD (farting, belching, coughing), part of a cycle of works dealing with William Blake, and Sabotage Songs, performed at the 2013 Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival. Currently he is writing pieces for the Dutch ensembles Electra and Trio Scordatura.

## *The Politics of Translation*

Alistair Zaldua

Goldsmiths, University of London

This paper, which takes its title from Gayatri Spivak's essay of the same name, applies the politics of contemporary theory in translation to pre-composition. By examining the theories of the post-colonial thinker Homi Bhabha, the activity of hybridisation—where two foreign elements meet and are synthesised—will be presented as both an 'interstitial zone of translation' and 'third space', or space between two cultures or languages. This is where difference takes place. This is, in fact, an application of Giorgio Agamben's idea(s) of potentiality onto the notion of the 'interstitial zone of translation'; it employs a paradigm of translation adopted by Bartoloni and Bhabha, as opposed to the conventional paradigm of translation between original and target languages. In this case the teleology of either language loses its importance and movement between the two is emphasised. The contention of my research is that composition is involved with the hybridisation of languages. In this application of the post-colonial thinking set out by Bhabha, the interstitial zone of translation is where cultures meet. I see this as an enactment of a political position as practiced in my work. 'Creolisation' is the word used by Bhabha as the dynamic process of this cultural meeting place; this causes a distinct, third language to emerge. For composition this dynamic process is also a theme foregrounded in an ongoing process using improvisation and determinate notation. I will discuss how I approach this process in a work for improvisation ensemble with live electronics, with a focus on how the interstitial zone of translation proposes new, third, languages or approaches, and how these approaches pose political questions for the act of composition itself.

**Alistair Zaldua** is a composer of contemporary and experimental music and has written work for: chamber ensemble, solo instrument, live electronics, audio/visual installation, and orchestra. His work has received performances from highly acclaimed ensembles and performers such as: ensemble surplus, Ensemble Aventure, Ensemble Modern, Composers Slide Quartet, and Ian Pace, Mark Knoop, Jonathan Powell, Rei Nakamura, Adam Linson, Lauren Redhead. His work consists of both fixed notated scores, as well as openly notated work and has been performed both internationally at festivals for contemporary music: Borealis (Bergen, Norway, 2014), Leeds New Music Festival (2013), UsineSonore (Malleray-Bevilard, Switzerland, 2012), REM (Bremen, 2011), Delmenhorst (2010), Quantensprünge ZKM (Karlsruhe, 2007 & 2008), Freiburger Frühling (2006), Música Nova (Sao Paolo, 2006), and Núcleo Música Nueva (Montevideo, 2006). Current commissions and projects include work for the Chicago Modern Orchestra, Aleph Guitar Quartet, and Andrew Digby. Since 1998 he has worked as conductor of the new music ensemble and lecturer in contemporary music at the University of Music, Freiburg (Institut für Neue Musik). As a composer and conductor he has worked with different new music ensembles such as: Ensemble Ascolta (Stuttgart), Ensemble Aventure (Freiburg) and Ensemble Modern (Frankfurt), the South-West German Radio Soloist Chamber Ensemble and with the Berner Philharmonic Orchestra. Alistair studied composition with James Dillon. He received a DAAD scholarship to study with Mathias Spahlinger at the Musikhochschule, Freiburg, completing his studies in 1995-1997. Alistair currently teaches conducting at Canterbury Christ Church University, and composition at Goldsmiths, University of London where he organised the International Keyboard Symposium (2012) and more recently an international Symposium on Notation in Contemporary Music (2013).