

Accessing Jazz and Improvised Music Conference of the Australasian Jazz and Improvisation Research Network 2021

**Presented by Sydney Conservatorium of Music, The University of Sydney and the
Australasian Jazz and Improvisation Research Network – Online via Zoom**
Saturday 5 and Sunday 6 June 2021

Program Committee

Associate Professor Robert Burke, Monash University (AJIRN President)

Dr Christopher Coady, The University of Sydney (Conference Convenor and Program Committee Chair)

Professor Roger Dean, Western Sydney University

Dr Louise Denson, Griffith University

Dr Joseph Toltz, The University of Sydney

Dr Aleisha Ward, Independent Researcher

The day's talks and discussions will be recorded (audio only for documentation purposes).

Sydney Conservatorium of Music is located on Gadigal land. This land was never ceded. It has always been and will always be Aboriginal land. The conference program committee recognises and respects the knowledge embedded forever within the Aboriginal Custodianship of Country and pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

Welcome

Welcome to the Australasian Jazz and Improvisation Research Network's 2021 International Conference 'Accessing Jazz and Improvised Music,' hosted by the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, The University of Sydney.

The theme 'Accessing Jazz and Improvised Music' invited participants to consider the networks, infrastructure, physical and ideological barriers, creative problems, privileges, and prejudices musicians and audiences routinely negotiate as they make their way to and through jazz and other improvised music. Prompted in part by the new platforms audiences and musicians have used to connect during the COVID-19 pandemic, this theme was designed to prompt delegates to reflect on the spectrum of physical and metaphorical barriers that have created space between artists, audiences, and researchers, and the bridges that have been built to span these gaps. We are excited to present a program of research papers and lecture recitals that weave together thoughts on 'access' from so many different parts of the globe.

As the online format is a new format for AJIRN conferences, please take note of the following advice for navigating our virtual conference realm:

1. Once you have [registered](#) for the conference, you will be sent a link to the Zoom room that will host all of our streamed video presentations and live question and answer sessions; a link to the virtual conference bar, where we will meet up for informal conversations in between conference sessions; and a link to the Sydney

Conservatorium of Music's private YouTube page, where you can browse the videos of conference delegates that have agreed to have their videos posted in advance.

2. We ask that participants mute themselves and turn off their videos during the streaming of individual papers and lecture recitals. All participants can turn their videos on during the live question and answer sessions that will follow each streamed paper, but we ask that you only unmute when you are asking or responding to a question.
3. We are excited to use SpacialChat software to run our virtual bar experience. Please ensure that you quit the conference Zoom room before joining us at the virtual bar and quit the virtual bar before re-joining the conference Zoom room.

Thank you for contributing your creative energy and intellectual insight to this event. Your contributions are what makes AJIRN such an exciting incubator of ideas. I wish you all the best for an engaging and rewarding conference experience!

Dr Christopher Coady – Conference Convenor
Sydney Conservatorium of Music, The University of Sydney
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Saturday 5 June 2021		
8:00	Acknowledgement of Country and Virtual Welcome Chris Coady	Live
8:10	Keynote Address Making community, living a jazz life – Nichole Rustin-Paschal	Live
9:10	Break	Offline
Session 1: Affordances		
9:30	Sounding together: Composing, improvising, and transporting sonic affordances – Dave Wilson	Pre-recorded / Streamed
9:50	Q&A	Live
10:00	The experimental composition-improvisation continua model: A tool for musical analysis – Alister Spence	Pre-recorded / Streamed
10:20	Q&A	Live
Session 2: (In)Fusions		
10:30	Applying idiomatic Isan Nuea improvisation to jazz: Adapting a <i>Khaen</i> performance of 'Lai Taey Khong' by Sombat Simla for solo double bass – Tanarat Chaichana	Pre-recorded / Streamed
10:50	Q&A	Live
11:00	Exploring experiential elements of mid-1960s Motown – Russell Henderson	Pre-recorded / Streamed
11:20	Q&A	Live
11:30	Break	Offline
15:15	Conference Bar <i>Join the SpacialChat virtual bar for some informal conversation about jazz and improvisation research!</i>	Live
16:00	Roundtable and Book Launch <i>Artistic Research in Jazz: Positions, Theories, Methods</i> (Routledge 2021) – Michael Kahr, Robert Burke, Roger Dean, Marc Duby, Chris Stover	Live

Saturday 5 June 2021 (continued)				
	Session 3a: Improvisation in the Time of COVID	(Breakout Room 1)	Session 3b: Blended Pedagogies	(Breakout Room 2)
17:00	Africa Open improvising: A collective's sonic interactions and installations - Esther Marié Pauw, Cara Stacey, Pierre-Henri Wicomb, Garth Erasmus	Pre-recorded / Streamed	The jazz symbiont: Augmenting popular music tertiary education with jazz pedagogies - Daniel Lee	Pre-recorded / Streamed
17:20	Q&A	Live	Q&A	Live
17:30	Bernard Herrmann's 'Psycho': A metamorphosis through classical, jazz and electronic sample-based invention through remote collaboration - Phillip Johnston	Pre-recorded / Streamed	Contemporary music students' experiences of improvisation in the classroom - Helen Russell	Pre-recorded / Streamed
17:50	Q&A	Live	Q&A	Live
18:00	Some serious play: Collaborative online music making by the Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra - Maria Sappho Donahue (Presenter), Raymond MacDonald, Robert Burke, Tia DeNora, Ross Birrell	Pre-recorded / Streamed	<i>Otogarden</i> : Exploring musical improvisation in digital games - Costantino Oliva	Pre-recorded / Streamed
18:20	Q&A/Round table discussion with Maria Sappho Donahue, Tia DeNora, Robert Burke, Raymond MacDonald	Live	Q&A	Live
18:45	CLOSE		CLOSE	

Sunday 6 June 2021		
Session 4: Jazz Scenes and Experiences		
10:00	Performing jazz in the north: A multi-site qualitative study on Cairns and Mackay, North Queensland - Peter McKenzie	Pre-recorded / Streamed
10:20	Q&A	Live
Session 5: Artistic Research Methodologies		
10:30	Two-line improvisation for bass guitar: Developing an idiomatic approach for two-line improvisation on the bass guitar - Sean Connolly	Pre-recorded / Streamed
10:40	Q&A	Live
10:50	Creativity and methodology – Drawing on jazz improvisational techniques to inform classical musical composition for the violin - Christopher Gleeson	Pre-recorded / Streamed
11:00	Q&A	Live
11:10	From the twentieth-century Western canon (George Enesco) to jazz improvisation (Miles Davis): The [014] pitch class' presence in developing artistry and a viable twenty-first century creative practice-based methodology - Alina Abraham	Pre-recorded / Streamed
11:30	Q&A	Live
11:40	Break	Offline
16:15	Conference Bar <i>Join the SpacialChat virtual bar for some informal conversation about jazz and improvisation research!</i>	Live
Performance		
16:50	<i>This is not improvised but that is: Lockdown 2020</i> Raymond MacDonald, Eva MacDonald, Maria MacDonald	Pre-recorded / Streamed

Sunday 6 June 2021 (continued)				
	Session 6a: Teaching and Technology	(Breakout Room 1)	Session 6b: Jazz and Discourses of Power	(Breakout Room 2)
17:00	Teaching jazz improvisation and the instructional video - Benjamin Phipps	Pre-recorded / Streamed	Minor languages, minor practices - Chris Stover	Pre-recorded / Streamed
17:20	Q&A	Live	Q&A	Live
17:30	'Is it always like this... like weird?': What learning can be accessed through improvisation classes on Zoom? - Una MacGlone	Pre-recorded / Streamed	Play like a girl: How does historical underrepresentation of women in the field of jazz and improvised music impact women musicians in 2021? - Fiona Burnett	Pre-recorded / Streamed
17:50	Q&A	Live	Q&A	Live
18:00	Keynote Address Transcultural musical structures in improvisation and the possible mediation of accessibility: Some observations and speculations Roger Dean	Live		
19:00	CLOSE			

Abstracts (alphabetically by surname of lead presenter or panel chair)

From the twentieth-century Western canon (George Enesco) to jazz improvisation (Miles Davis): The O14 pitch class' presence in developing artistry, and a viable twenty-first century creative practice-based methodology

ALINA ABRAHAM

This study develops a critical investigation of the pitch class O14 (Forte, 1973) – as present in both the twentieth-century Western canon (Niculescu, 1965; 1961) and jazz improvisation (Davis, 1981; Strayhorn, 1960) to examine its potential in establishing a twenty-first century creative practice-based methodology. Drawing on critical autoethnography, I use a creative practice approach – i.e., 'digital' memorabilia and 'e-scrapbook' techniques to present own piano improvisation on the pitch class set O14 contextualised in the augmented scale – as a twenty-first century creative practice-based methodology. I conclude on the mixed improvisation techniques I have used for developing artistry at junction points between classical traditions and jazz improvisation (van der Schiff, 2019; 2015; 2013; Heble & Laver, 2016; Sawyer, 2007).

Play like a girl: How does historical underrepresentation of women in the field of jazz and improvised music impact women musicians in 2021?

FIONA BURNETT

This paper documents the initial stages of an independent research study focused on gender diversity and jazz (Rustin & Tucker, 2008; Pattuelli, Hwang & Miller, 2016), diversity in jazz education (Wehr, 2015; Teichman, 2018), and the experiences of women participating in jazz and improvisation. The impact of gender-based disadvantage on women's experiences and future opportunities are considered as well as the potential for gender-based discrimination to affect the art form. Even with additional support and significant improvements such as events dedicated to women, events by women for women, and events celebrating women, there often remain barriers to equal access of opportunities and representation for women musicians in 2021. This research project is being conducted via interviews and surveys processed through the qualitative research methodology of grounded theory.

Applying idiomatic Isan Nuea improvisation to jazz: Adapting a khaen performance of 'Lai Taey Khong' by Sombat Simla for solo double bass

TANARAT CHAICHANA

Cross-cultural improvisation among jazz performers and researchers is increasingly common. While some traditions of improvisation (e.g., various Indian and Arabic musical traditions) have long been combined with jazz, explorations of how the traditional music of Thailand can be integrated with jazz is still relatively rare in performance and research settings. In this paper, I explore possible cross-cultural improvisation practices between jazz improvisation and the northeast

Thailand traditional music *isan nuea*. When spontaneously performing music, *isan nuea* musicians apply the concept of *lai*, which involves constructing perpetual melodic movements, diverse intervallic patterns, and individual sequence patterns based on a penta-centric pitch concept. Related to the pentatonic scale, this concept significantly associates improvisational methods of *isan nuea* with jazz. By the same token, processes of jazz improvisation can link to concepts important to *isan nuea* musicians such as 'len jak jintanakan' (imagination).

The *khaen* is a bamboo-pipe mouth organ, and a traditional instrument with a long history of practice in the northeast of Thailand and in Laos. To comprehensively adapt traditional *isan nuea* techniques on the *khaen*, and explicitly intermingle them with my performance practice, I transcribe a solo performance by Sombat Simla, one of the prominent *khaen* players from Maha Sarakham Province, of the composition 'Lai Taey Khong.' I transcribe and analyse Sombat's improvisation concepts and apply them to my own bass solo. Through my analysis of the bass solo, I show how this particular cross-cultural improvisation operates, demonstrating just one of many potential avenues for developing new ways of improvising.

Two-line improvisation for bass guitar: Developing an idiomatic approach for two-line improvisation on the bass guitar

SEAN CONNOLLY

Two-line improvisation is a form of contrapuntal or polyphonic playing in which a single performer improvises two melodies simultaneously. Whilst this form of improvising is common practice on some instruments (namely piano and guitar), it has received little attention by bassists. Accordingly, this research has two goals. Firstly, it aims to discover an approach to two-line improvisation through a practice-led, practitioner-observer lens. This is to be achieved by reframing the left-hand technique used on the bass guitar, and adapting Sid Jacob's Counterpoint Concepts as a cross-instrumental framework for practice. Secondly, it aims to use the findings of the first stage in developing the foundations of a pedagogical model for teaching and learning two-line improvisation on the bass guitar. This model will involve didactic etudes that are created through the lense of Andrew Gander's 'transitional synthesis model.'

Creativity and methodology: Drawing on jazz improvisational techniques to inform classical musical composition for the violin

CHRISTOPHER GLEESON

How can jazz material be adapted to extend the technical and stylistic repertory of the classical violin? Jazz violin literature consists largely of transcribed improvisation. It does not represent the same approaches to the study of instrumental technique, or musical stylings that are

traditionally applied. Jazz elements such as ‘patterns’ related to blues scales, bebop scales, passages in quartal harmony, augmented chords, 7th, 9th and 13th chords and altered equivalents are not found in the classical violin technical repertoire.

Creativity is expressed in different ways in classical and jazz fields. Improvisation is characteristic of jazz performance and creativity must be exercised in ‘real-time.’ The classical composer, on the other hand, is at liberty to ponder, revise, correct, develop and reconsider decisions made in the course of producing a score. Two main tools practice-led and research-led methodologies are applicable to the development of compositional ideas. Conceptual research is also important.

When combined, research-led and practice-led research inform compositional decisions. Research-led methodology can include topic history. Improvisational material in print (and aurally retained) can, if practically applied, be extracted and developed to form the basis of new compositions. Creativity will be exercised. Czikkentmihali (1996) defines creativity as ‘any act, or product that changes an existing domain, or transforms an existing domain into a new one.’

Methodology is fundamental to the development of new knowledge through both the application of compositional processes and practical experimentation on violin. The composer might ask: What type of jazz figuration would suit the character of a theme and its development? What patterns are most suitable for any particular section and its role in the overall direction of the work? Can jazz be used as embellishment? Should secondary themes be derived? What will be the harmonic progression of the section and harmonic destination?

In this way composition can effectively draw on research methodology to allow jazz material to be adapted to extend the technical and stylistic repertoire of the classical violin.

Exploring experiential elements of mid-1960s Motown

RUSSELL HENDERSON

Distinctive aspects of groove and timbre were essential components of recordings from the classic period of Motown from the mid-1960s. In music scholarship, however, this area is under-researched, despite mass appeal and the continuing influence of Motown on modern musicians. My practice-based research focuses on groove and timbre in these recordings, presenting them as ‘experiential’ elements. These experiential elements owe a great deal to the Motown house band, the Funk Brothers, who improvised arrangements and accompaniments for Motown hits to a prolific degree during this period. Whilst the Motown sound couldn’t have existed without the input of artists, songwriters, producers and engineers, my research concerns the contributions of these session musicians, who were barely acknowledged at the time, with a particular focus on the basslines of James Jamerson. Jamerson improvised complex basslines which formed a central glue to the groove of Motown records, incorporating great rhythmic variety and bebop-derived

harmonic devices, without compromising the commercial appeal of the music by drawing focus away from the song. I aim to build on the groove-related work of Danielsen (2006) and Zagorski-Thomas (2017), by analysing Motown grooves and timbres, and incorporating them into my own compositional practice. My practice involves using Motown grooves as compositional points of departure, drawing on Motown-inspired polyrhythms to generate ‘synthetic feels’ in string quartets, and exploring Motown grooves and timbres in compositions for solo saxophone and electronics. By composing through groove exploration, timbral manipulation, and improvisation, I aim to gain new ground in contemporary composition which places these experiential elements at its core, and celebrates the continuing influence of Motown.

[See references](#)

Bernard Herrmann’s ‘Psycho’: A metamorphosis through classical, jazz and electronic sample-based invention through remote collaboration

PHILLIP JOHNSTON

This presentation is an audio-visual diary of a composition’s journey as vehicle for both (re-)composition and improvisation through the vehicle of digital audio editing and internet file-sharing.

During the early days of the COVID-19 lockdown I began writing new saxophone quartet music for SNAP (Sandy Evans, Andrew Robson, Paul Cutlan and myself); but only Paul and I had the experience with DAWs to record the parts remotely and share them online. One of those quartets was based on Bernard Herrmann’s ‘Psycho: A Narrative for Strings.’ I adapted this concert piece (based on the Prelude from the Alfred Hitchcock film) into a saxophone quartet, adding improvisation as part of the structure. I created parts in Sibelius, and Paul and I each recorded our parts; Paul sent me the audio stems of his; I mixed these and had a recording of the tune.

However, I didn’t stop there. I also have a trio with two film music composer friends of mine in New York, and I cut the Psycho stems up into small pieces, including the solos, and sent them to each of them. (The Psycho Prelude is extremely modular and lends itself to this treatment.) They took the pieces and re-ordered, re-mixed and added their own variations and improvisations. Together we created a series of variations based on these combined materials: re-mixing as a form of improvisation and re-invention.

This lecture-recital will look under the hood, and show the notation, DAW sessions and various audio stages of this composition’s journey from film score, to concert piece for string orchestra, to saxophone quartet with improvisation, to sample-based digital audio composition, and illustrate the way the last two steps of this process (with many incremental parts) were all accomplished remotely under the limitations of COVID-induced isolation.



ARTISTIC RESEARCH IN JAZZ

POSITIONS, THEORIES, METHODS

Edited by
Michael Kahr



Roundtable discussion and book launch

Artistic Research in Jazz: Positions, theories, methods

MICHAEL KAHR with ROBERT BURKE, ROGER DEAN, MARC DUBY, CHRIS STOVER

This panel discussion aims to shed light on the multiplicity of positions, theories and methods in artistic research based on artistic knowledge and experience in jazz. In consideration of the increasing specialization of academic discourses and the potential alienation between practitioners, theorists and the general public, the discussion stresses the potential to re-merge the often divergent perspectives of practice and theory in music in general and jazz in particular. The panel presents the first multi-authored book on artistic research in jazz as well as the International Network for Artistic Research in Jazz and brings together a diverse group of artist-researchers engaged in these projects.

Artistic Research in Jazz: Positions, Theories, Methods (Routledge 2021) presents the recent positions, theories, and methods of artistic research in jazz, inviting readers to critically engage in and establish a sustained discourse regarding the theoretical, methodological, and analytic perspectives in the field of artistic practice-as-research. This edited collection presents an in-depth discourse on shared and specific approaches to practice-as-research in jazz and popular music. A panel of eleven international contributors provide an understanding of the specificity of current practice in jazz and popular music, both improvisational and composed. The topics addressed throughout consider the cultural, institutional, epistemological, philosophical, ethical, and practical aspects of the discipline, as well as the influence of race, gender and politics. The book is structured in three parts: first, on topics related to improvisation, theory and history; second, on institutional and pedagogical positions; and third, on methodical approaches in four specific research projects conducted by the authors.

The International Network for Artistic Research in Jazz (INARJ) was established in 2019 in reaction to the increasing relevance of artistic perspectives in the academic discourses in jazz research. It aims to establish a formalized network of artistic researchers in jazz, open dialogue on the state of artistic research in jazz internationally and increase visibility of artistic research

in jazz as an independent sub-discipline. The network organized two conferences (2019 and 2021) and its member have delivered individual papers and participated in various panel discussions on topics relevant to artistic research in jazz (e.g. AJIRN Conferences 2017-2019, Weimar Jazz Research Conference 2018, Rhythm Changes Conference Graz 2018, JEN Conference Louisville 2021).

Artistic Research (AR) is situated at the interface between scientific and artistic knowledge. It encompasses various research perspectives such as research on, for and in the arts (Frayling 1993). It is based on a dynamic relationship between scientific and artistic roles and positions; artistic researchers question the separation between research object and subject, embark on questions and problems derived from within the artistic practice and re-integrate research results in new, often experimental forms of practice (Doğantan-Dack 2016). Nevertheless, AR often appears in close interrelation with a range of scientific methods, such as laboratory settings and experiment design, applied phenomenology, music analysis and historical research (Assis 2018). Artistic research has begun to be supported as an academic discipline but is often explicitly and implicitly evident in works of jazz artists as well as researchers across the globe. Concepts related to AR have been adopted, adapted and complemented over the past two decades in Europe, UK, Australia and South Africa, with the aim to highlight the relevance of arts-based knowledge within academic jazz research.

[See references](#)

The jazz symbiont: Augmenting popular music tertiary education with jazz pedagogies

DANIEL LEE

To 'augment' is to make greater (Robinson, 2002). Many popular music courses augment their curricula with jazz content. This paper examines if the inclusion of jazz content in popular music courses has the potential to make courses 'greater' by improving perceived graduate outcomes and/or increasing equity of access to higher music education. A study conducted by researchers at the University of Tasmania examined guitar tuition in Contemporary Popular Music (CPM) courses delivered by Australian tertiary intuitions. It found jazz content existed in the majority of courses. Building on the discussion initiated by Hannan (2000) with his notion of the 'Jazz Virus,' this paper examines the current perception of jazz content in Australian popular music higher education. Nearly two decades later, rather than a virus, this research found current perceptions indicate a positive symbiotic relationship between jazz content and CPM courses. Data was collected from students, alumni and educators of relevant Bachelor degree (Australian Qualifications Framework level 7) courses in the form of surveys (n=84) and interviews (n=32) as well as documentary data in the form of unit descriptors (n=364). Inductive Thematic Analysis of the data corpus revealed the extent of the presence of jazz in the curricula, and the range of participant perceptions regarding the role and consequences of jazz content in CPM courses. The

paper discusses how jazz content in Australian CPM higher education is a result of ambiguous genre boundaries which, in turn offers a greater equity of access to higher music education. It also has the potential to augment the performance practices of Australian guitarists with jazz performance practices and thereby augment the Australian voice in local, glocal and global guitar communities.

'Is it always like this... like weird?': What learning can be accessed through improvisation classes on Zoom?

UNA MACGLONE

During the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, musicians and teachers all over the world had to pivot quickly and move their artistic and educational practices online (MacDonald & Birrell, in press). In March 2020, Free Improvisation was one of the first courses in the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland (and the UK) to be adapted and then delivered online. In 2021, the course will be online again and may continue through this digital mode into the future. This raises questions about what can be learned; new conceptualisations of pedagogy are urgently needed. To address the issue of what learning can take place over Zoom and how this may be different from face-to-face approaches, I use Biesta's (2009) different dimensions of educational purpose as a theoretical framework. Biesta argues that all educational experiences are composites of the three dimensions, but the focus may largely be on one dimension over the others. Dimensions of qualification (e.g., what musical skills develop), socialisation (e.g., collaborative skills and the sense of becoming part of a 'scene') and subjectification (e.g., person-centred qualities such as agency and expressiveness) provide the analytical tool to conceptualise similarities and differences between face-to-face and online modes of delivery. Consideration of adapted teaching materials and new strategies which emerged from the first iteration of online teaching will be contextualised with interviews with students and field notes. I argue that learning improvisation online can be enriching experience rather than a diluted version of face-to-face, but activities and pedagogy need careful adaptation.

[See references](#)

Performing jazz in the north: A multi-site qualitative study on Cairns and Mackay, North Queensland

PETER MCKENZIE

Jazz performances in Australia might be commonly associated with venues in Melbourne or other metropolitan cities, however jazz is performed across Australia in many smaller regional centres. These regions often have skilled musicians who enjoy the support of a small, but passionate, community. This completed PhD study (2020) documented a qualitative exploration of the question: What factors influence the development and sustainability of a jazz community in regional Australia? The study focussed on Cairns and Mackay in North Queensland and applied grounded theory methodology to data from 24 semi-structured interviews with community members in both regions. The data collection also included a survey of audience members associated with

the jazz community in Mackay. The study investigated topics associated with performance, sociological, governmental and educational factors in both communities, and through the grounded theory process it uncovered three major influences: venues, regionality and education. It was discovered that both communities shared similar challenges in relation to jazz musicians performing in venues, working with venue owners, and attracting audiences. Both regions also shared issues relating to geographical isolation, economic impacts, transient populations, and parochialism from the general public.

This presentation will discuss findings relating to venue development and sustainability. It will focus on venue owners and their attitude and expectations towards musicians, marketing, impact on venues from regional economies, venue aesthetics and functionality.

This study provided an opportunity to explore multiple approaches to building and sustaining two North Queensland jazz communities. These approaches might be applicable to other jazz communities in Australia.

Otogarden: Exploring musical improvisation in digital games

COSTANTINO OLIVA

This paper presents the ludomusicological research associated with the development of a digital game: *Otogarden* (Oliva, 2021). If 'making an actual game [...] is useful to materialise the design question [or] aesthetic issues [...] that are being addressed' (Khaled, Lessard & Barr, 2018), *Otogarden* is intended as a playable support to research on musical participation with digital games. Specifically, this paper understands digital games as a contemporary venue for technologically augmented musicking (Borgo, 2007; 2013), potentially allowing access to forms of musical improvisation to a variety of users and players.

While digital games afford a remarkable variety of possible musicking (Oliva, 2017; 2019a; 2019b, 2019c), examples related to musical improvisation remain few and underexplored, with most games favoring score-based interactions, as made popular by titles such *Guitar Hero* (Harmonix, 2005) or *Rock Band* (Harmonix, 2007). In similar examples, music is presented as 'a task to be achieved, a disciplinary activity in which the player should 'play' again and again until the game (and thereby music) is mastered' (Kassabian & Jarman, 2016). Crucially, in these examples 'music' is understood as pre-recorded compositions performed with the aid of simplified notation (Biamonte, 2011). Notable exceptions, such as the experimental music game *Electroplankton* (Nintendo, 2005), have been criticised by reviewers specifically for their lack of composition-oriented functionalities (Pilchmair, 2007), indicating an underlying set of expected qualities which constitute a barrier to the emergence of improvisatory musical practices in digital games.

Otogarden challenges this understanding of 'music game', by focusing on musical improvisation, 'an activity of enormous complexity and sophistication, or the simplest and most direct expression' (Bailey, 1993, p. 83, 84). Players

of *Otogarden* are able to repeat short phrases through the use of a 'loop' mechanic, musicalizing potentially extra-musical (Kahn, 1999, p. 103) acoustic juxtapositions. While retaining the 'intimate and reactive musical bond' (Grimshaw, Tan & Lipscomb, 2013) typical of the music game genre, *Otogarden* does not feature canonic game characteristics, such as a winning condition, compatibly with recent understandings of game definitions (Juil, 2019, p. 224). The conclusions show that it is possible to deliberately stimulate the players' perspective (Aarseth & Calleja, 2015) on the game towards an improvisatory musical direction, rendering manifest the extemporaneous musical possibilities connected with digital game engagement (Oliva, 2019c).

[See references](#)

Africa open improvising: A collective's sonic interactions and installations

ESTHER MARIÉ PAUW, GARTH ERASMUS, CARA STACEY, PIERRE-HENRI WICOMB

Physical and metaphorical barriers in South Africa are woven with colonial cultural hegemonies, selective and unequal educational and material access tied to racial classification and in-land physical distances between domestic spaces and remote urban centres. Add to these barriers a pandemic's lockdown, and a free improvising collective of musicians are faced with potential silence and isolation. The 'Africa Open Improvising' collective of free improvisers play 'Western' music instruments, 'prepared' instruments, 'African' instruments and homemade instruments that carry activist 'Khoi memory.' The collective initiated live sessions at their music institute (www.aoinstitute.ac.za) in March 2020. With a subsequent 'Stage 5' hard lockdown they explored real-time playing as online options that negotiated virtual time delay, intermittent connectivity breaks, poor quality of reception and Zoom-random audio broadcast preference. By recording their individual play, and thereafter collating these tracks with minimal noise reduction editing, they compiled a portfolio of online, live play and hybrid improvisation pieces (www.soundcloud.com/user-610733588). This lecture recital is presented by four of the collective's musicians, each sharing views on online technology mediation towards creating art that happens 'after' the improvisational act. They argue that art-making in this way comes as a surprise, in part due to online strictures for real-time sonic connections. They conclude that free online improvisation invites inclusivity, respect, and possibilities for remote friendship-making amidst divisive barriers to allow for sound activism that nurtures cultures of listening and care. The four presenters each select and comment on one of the improvisation pieces, using material from their Soundcloud and Vimeo sites.

Teaching jazz improvisation and the instructional video

BENJAMIN PHIPPS

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, instructional videos on improvisation already proliferated on sites such as YouTube. Despite being popular, their impact was limited and mediated by the significant emphasis jazz education places on face-to-face teaching and learning; both formally in institutions and informally in venues and at gigs. However, the COVID-19 pandemic brought into focus the pedagogical potential of the presentational style online video lessons on such platforms to connect students and teachers across a range of barriers. The teaching strategies and jazz pedagogical discourse of these resources have not yet been examined, and little is known about the most effective practices to addressing students learning needs in this medium. In this paper, I present preliminary findings from a sample study of jazz improvisation instructional videos hosted publicly on YouTube, focusing on novice improvisers. Through discourse analysis and observation procedures, I explore the improvisational strategies that are taught; the language used to explain these strategies and the concept of improvisation, and the instructors' instructional design strategies. I draw together the relationship of these strategies to existing evidence-based scholarship on instructional videos to suggest a model for jazz improvisation instruction videos that can leverage this technology to give students with limited access to jazz education a high-quality learning experience.

Contemporary music students' experiences of improvisation in the classroom

HELEN RUSSELL and BRUCE WOODWARD

Improvisation is a central part of many contemporary musicians' practices – from developing an accompaniment from chord symbols to 'playing a solo' in an ensemble. Despite the ubiquity of the practice, improvisation – outside of jazz programs – is rarely addressed in contemporary music curricula. This study took place over three years in a small music department in regional Queensland, Australia, where the researchers interviewed student musicians in an undergraduate contemporary music program. The purpose of this study was to collect participants' ideas about how a study of improvisation influenced their ideas about musicianship. Data was collected in semi-structured interviews with participants during a semester's improvisation course, where many were encountering the structured practice of improvisation for the first time. The results capture a wide range of participants' ideas about the impacts of a study of improvisation – their fears and the challenges to their musicianship, describing changes in listening to and hearing music and how the study changed their understanding of 'music theory.' For the purposes of the AJIRN conference, I wish to consider this data in the light of the opportunity that this 'non-jazz' improvisation study presents to jazz educators in the wider education sphere.

Some serious play: Collaborative online music making by the Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra

MARIA SAPHO DONOHUE (PRESENTING), RAYMOND MACDONALD, ROBERT BURKE, TIA DENORA, ROSS BIRRELL

During the COVID-19 pandemic the Glasgow Improvers Orchestra have been meeting weekly for their ongoing project 'Flattening the Curve' – comprised of over 80 international artists who have collaboratively been exploring digital improvisation. This paper will use specific moments from the archive to explore how a large improvising ensemble adapted to online music practices. By covering some of the benefits of working digitally, as well as speculating on the easy transferability of improvised arts to such platforms as Zoom, specific focus will be put on the novel practices being developed by the group. These include extra-musical practices, including video augmentation of bodies and spaces, live chat functions, and movement based performances. Questions are drawn from performer based decisions inside the *Zoomesphere*, the agential presence of the Zoom as a new platform for improvisation, and ensemble organization in co-creating unique possibilities for improvised idea making. In addition to the video archive the practice is supported with verbatim from the players collected in interviews with 29 participating players (MacDonald, Burke, DeNora, Sappho Donohue, Birrell, 2020) and subsequent follow up responses pointing to important remembered moments from the archive. These documents create a unique opportunity to watch artists adapting their practice while improvising in a new space, and explores the development of creative decision making in new forms of group collaborative music making.

The Experimental Composition-Improvisation Model: A Tool for Musical Analysis

ALISTER SPENCE

Among improvisers and composers today there is a resurgence of interest in experimental music practices that welcome contingency: engaging with unforeseen circumstances as an essential component of the music-making process, and a means to sonic discovery. This paper investigates the historical and ongoing relationship between experimental music, composition, and improvisation, and shows that there are both clearly identifiable interpenetrations between the practices, processes, and outcomes expressed in these musical approaches, and yet distinctions that characterize their ideal types. By identifying these distinctions and the continua between them a model for experimental music investigation has been developed. I propose the Experimental Composition Improvisation Continua (ECIC) as a model with which to better understand these experimental musical works. The historical Experimental Music movement of the 1950s and 60s is briefly revisited, and the jazz tradition included as an essential protagonist; both being important historical movements leading to the formulation of ideas around contingent musical practices. The ECIC model is shown to provide a means to observe the interactions and continua between composition and improvisation on the one hand and more or less

experimentally conceived music on the other. This model is the applied as an investigative and comparative tool to a recorded musical example by the Satoko Fujii Quartet and the findings described. The ECIC model can be used to investigate experimentalism in music composition, performance, and perception—across style, and scene, and culture—and the drivers for music, 'the outcome of which is unknown,' can be traced, isolated, and compared.

Minor languages; minor practices

CHRIS STOVER

While jazz pedagogy is frequently codified in terms of relatively prescribed theories, repertoires and performance practices, most jazz musicians know—and a cursory listen through jazz's historical record will verify—that reality is vastly more complicated than that. Still, the codes are imprinted in the minds, fingers and voices of young musicians, repeating the (misguided, I will emphatically argue) adage that 'you have to know the rules before you can break them.'

This presentation draws upon David Ake's (2002) groundbreaking essay on what Ornette Coleman's music and mode of world-making meant in terms of contesting jazz's masculinist practices, as well as my own work on Sun Ra's queering of jazz's syntaxes, histories and discourses. I project both of these ideas into a productively open and manifold teaching-and-learning model that resists the notions that there are right and wrong ways of doing (and teaching) jazz, specific benchmarks to pass, or 'a' language of jazz within which one strives to find their individual voice. As Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1987, 7) insist, 'there is no language in itself, only a throng of dialects, patois, slangs and specialised languages.... There is no mother tongue, only a power takeover by a dominant language within a political multiplicity.' I find in this crucial pair of statements (1) an invaluable pedagogical starting place from which to develop a notion of jazz as a 'minor practice' defined by a series of ever-shifting valences created by refiguring and redeploying existing music-language-frameworks, and (2) a scathing political critique of existing pedagogical frameworks.

Sounding together: Composing, improvising and transporting sonic affordances

DAVE WILSON

Humans have long engaged sonically with their surroundings, from the multifaceted instrumental and vocal practices of Tuvan pastoralists to the sounds of trains, clubs, and churches in James P. Johnson's Harlem Symphony and the birdsong of cuckoos and turtledoves in Antonio Vivaldi's violin concertos. Today, human participation with sonic environments is informed by a warming planet, growing cities that teem with vibrant human life, ocean creatures contending with plastic-filled waters, and governments delivering land to corporations for exploitation. This paper reflects on these issues with regard to my current composition-improvisation project, which explores particular sonic environments

of my experience, transformed and transported to new settings at each performance. I meditate on what it sounds like to compose, improvise, and perform with the sonic affordances of our surroundings, considering two examples: birdsong, and sounds made by humans in urban spaces. I expand on Hollis Taylor's assertion that 'music (including birdsong) augments everything it comes into contact with: it energises spaces and places' (2017: 278), arguing that particular attention must be paid to the ethical implications of how interspecies and interhuman sonic

affordances manifest in composition and improvisation. Refusing to romanticise nature as 'other' and rejecting a posture that 'uses' sounds produced by other beings for personal benefit, I blend ethnography, poetry, and discussion of two pieces for improvising quintet plus string quartet. Alongside dealing with the challenges of an ensemble improvising with multiple musicalities, I address the reality of sharing spaces with other humans and with countless species beyond our own.

Biographies (alphabetically by surname)

Alina Abraham

Alina is an independent researcher, piano teacher and a musician from New Zealand – with an interest in the texture of the pitched sound – aka the harmonic series (HS) (Apel, 1995) and its rich potential in generating scales and modes common to the Western canon, jazz improvisation and beyond. Born and bred in Romania and drawing from Romanian musicology, in this study Alina – that is trained and both the traditions of the classical music and jazz, explores the possible 'bubbling' pedagogies in assembling practice-based methodologies to uphold the value of creative spaces along the augmented scale.

Robert L. Burke

Robert L. Burke (PhD Monash University) is an Associate Professor in Jazz and Improvisation at Monash University and president of the Australasian Jazz and Improvisation Research Network (AJIRN). Robert's practice and research interests include composition, improvisation, artistic research, human-machine relationships and more recently gender studies in music. At the heart of Rob's research lies the question: what happens when we improvise? His publications include *Experimentation in Improvised Jazz: Chasing Ideas* (Routledge, 2019) and the edited books *Perspectives on Artistic Research in Music* (Lexington, 2017) written in collaboration with Andrys Onsman. An improvising musician, Rob's performance and compositions appear on over 300 CDs. He has released 15 CDs under his own name recording with George Lewis, Raymond MacDonald, Dave Douglas, Enrico Rava, Hermeto Pascoal, Kenny Werner, Mark Helias, Ben Monder, Tom Rainey, Nasheet Waites, George Garzone, Paul Grabowsky, Stephen Magnusson, Nick Haywood, Tony Floyd, Tony Gould, Debasis Chackroborty and Paulo Angeli.

Fiona Burnett

Dr Fiona Burnett, PhD (Melb) M.Mus. B.Mus. Dip.Ed is a musician/composer/ensemble leader/educator/ soprano saxophone specialist. Fiona has led ensembles since the early 1990s performing at major arts and music festivals in Australia and Asia, Europe and Canada. She has been an advocate for women in improvised music, founding and co-leading the all-female jazz Quintet Morgana from

1992-1998 and developing workshops for young women for the Melbourne Women's Jazz Festival 2001-2004. She has been a member of the Music Board of the Australian Council 2003-2006 and has released nine CDs as a leader, four on the ABC label. Fiona has received nominations for APRA and Australian Music Awards, was a finalist in the Freedman Fellowship and the recipient of numerous grants from the Australia Council, Arts Victoria and Playing Australia. She was the Program Chair for the 2017 and 2018 AJIRN Conferences at Monash University. Fiona's completed her PhD Thesis, at The University of Melbourne titled 'Identifying and Developing the Personal Voice in Improvised Music.' A practice-based research study on the development of improvisational syntax through the study JS Bach and John Coltrane. Fiona is currently developing a solo performance project based on her research findings and is the VCE Music Coordinator at Melbourne Rudolf Steiner School.

Tanarat Chaichana

Originally born in Thailand, Tanarat Chaichana is a full-time PhD candidate at the New Zealand School of Music and a recipient of the Victoria Doctoral Scholarship (2018-2021). He also earned a master of music degree from the jazz studies program at the University of New Orleans where he worked and performed with various international jazz artists and received the Ellis Marsalis Jr. Jazz Scholarship in 2012-2014. Before moving to New Zealand, Tanarat worked as an adjunct lecturer at Silpakorn University, Bangkok, Thailand, where he taught a jazz bass and jazz arranging and composition from 2015 to 2018. Tanarat's newest artistic research directions are focusing on developing jazz composition methods for writing in a contemporary jazz orchestra and also exploring the musical hybridity of several cross-cultural music compositions demonstrated in jazz aspects.

Sean Connolly

Sean Connolly is a bassist, composer and educator from Melbourne, Australia. He has been described as a serious and innovative exponent of the instrument, challenging both the technique and existing content composed for the instrument. Looking to extend this knowledge, he is currently undertaking a Master of Music degree in Jazz and

Improvisation at the University of Melbourne developing an approach to two-line improvisation for the bass guitar. He can be seen performing around Melbourne with bands such as Hermeto Magnético, the Peeks or in his solo projects.

Roger Dean (Keynote)

Roger Dean is a composer/improviser, and since 2007 a research professor in music cognition and computation at the MARCS Institute, Western Sydney University. His research folds into his creative work, currently particularly by means of deep learning computational models for music generation. He founded and directs the sound and intermedia creative ensemble *austraLYSIS*, which has appeared in 30 countries. He has performed as bassist, pianist, piano accompanist and laptop computer artist in many contexts, from the Academy of Ancient Music and the Australian Chamber Orchestra, to the London Sinfonietta, and from Graham Collier Music to duetting with Derek Bailey and Evan Parker, and performing with leading improvisers particularly from Europe and Australia. About 70 commercial recordings and numerous online digital intermedia pieces represent his creative work, and he has published more than 300 journal articles. Current research concerns improvisation and computational creativity, affect, roles of acoustic intensity and timbre, and rhythm generation and perception. With Hazel Smith and Will Luers, he won the 2018 international Robert Coover prize for a work of electronic literature. Currently *austraLYSIS* is preparing a duo album, of sound and intermedia, featuring diverse pairings: such as human/computer, human/environment, text/improviser, image/improviser. Prior to 2007, he was a full professor of biochemistry in the UK, foundation CEO/Director of the Heart Research Institute, Sydney, researching on atherosclerosis, and then Vice-Chancellor and President of the University of Canberra.

Marc Duby

Marc Duby serves as Research Professor in Musicology at the University of South Africa. Appointed in 2001 as the first director of the Standard Bank National Youth Jazz Band, he completed his doctoral thesis in 2006 on the topic of Soundpainting, the New York composer Walter Thompson's sign language for live composition. Awarded established researcher status in 2010 by the National Research Foundation, Duby has presented academic papers in India, Tenerife, Bologna, New Orleans, Thessaloniki, at Cambridge University and the Universidad de la Rioja (Logroño, Spain), as well as serving as visiting lecturer at the University of Jyväskylä (Finland) and Universidad Veracruzana (México). His research interests are in musical performance from the standpoints of ecological psychology, systems theory, and the dynamics of groups (teams and ensembles); his work on musical interfaces (instruments, audio, and interface technologies in general) is informed by Gibson's theory of affordances. During a performing career of more than four decades, Duby has worked with a host of local and international artists, among whom are Barney Rachabane, John Fourie, Winston 'Mankunku' Ngozi, Nataniël, Syd Kitchen, the Kalahari Surfers, and Pandit Sanjoy

Bandophadyaye (India), Malcolm Braff (Brazil) and François Jeanneau (France).

Garth Erasmus

Garth Erasmus is a visual artist and improvisation musician who plays home-crafted instruments as acts of Khoi memory activism, using the bow as metaphorical and physical reference. He lives in Brackenfell, and has had multiple exhibitions, artist residencies, including a sonic residency at Africa Open Institute, Stellenbosch. He is a founding president of Africa South Art Initiative, <https://asai.co.za/artist/garth-erasmus/>.

Christopher Gleeson

I hold a DSCM (Perf,Vln) from the NSW Conservatorium, Grad Dip (Perf, Vln) from AIM and MTeach from Sydney University. In 2015 I completed BMus Hons at UNE. In 2018 MMus (comp) was completed at ANU. Currently mid-way through a PHD at UNE. I studied Jazz piano and worked as a piano accompanist for Sydney musical productions. I have improvised on the violin - The Goat Band, The Rum Culls, Ethnic Jazz and others. I held a Violin scholarship with the ABC Sinfonia in 1986 and was a long-term member of the Willoughby, Hunter, East West and Wollongong orchestras.

Russell Henderson

Russell Henderson is a Scottish saxophonist and composer based in Aotearoa. He holds a lecturing post at Leeds Conservatoire, and is a current PhD candidate at the NZSM, with mentorship from Dugal McKinnon, Dave Wilson, John Psathas and Mark Donlon. As a session player and soloist, performances have ranged from tiny clubs to the Pyramid Stage at Glastonbury Festival. Recent projects include tours with Motown artists Martha and the Vandellas, and European festivals with Lianne Carroll and London Elektriccity. Russell is a regular guest with the Haggis Horns, and the UK's finest funk export The New Mastersounds. Recently his focus has shifted further towards composition, and his composition-based PhD research investigates experiential elements of 1960s Motown.

Phillip Johnston

Phillip Johnston is a jazz saxophonist/composer (The Microscopic Septet, Fast N Bulbous, The Silent Six) with over 20 CDs as a leader, who has collaborated with Guy Klucsevsek, Gary Lucas, and John Zorn. He holds a PhD in Music Composition from Newcastle Conservatorium and teaches at AIM and Sydney Conservatorium. His book *Silent Films/Loud Music: New Ways of Listening to and Thinking about Silent Film Music* will be published by Bloomsbury Academic in September 2021, and he has a chapter in *Lacy Unfinished*, a book on jazz musician/composer Steve Lacy, to be published by Lenka Lente Press in the spring. phillipjohnston.com

Michael Kahr

Michael Kahr is Senior Lecturer and postdoctoral researcher at the Institute for Jazz and the Institute for Jazz Research University of Music and Performing Arts in Graz, Austria as well as Dean and Head of MA Studies at Jam Music Lab Private University for Jazz and Popular Music in Vienna. He published the award-winning monograph *Jazz & the City: Jazz in Graz von 1965 bis 2015*, various book chapters, articles, CDs and musical scores. He is also the editor for the volume *Artistic Research in Jazz and Popular Music: Positions, Theories, Methods* (Routledge 2021) as well as co-editor of the *Routledge Companion of Jazz and Gender* (Routledge 2022).

Daniel Lee

Daniel Lee graduated from the Elder Conservatorium's Jazz program in the mid 90's and has performed, composed, taught, collected, designed and built all things guitar related ever since. He holds a Masters degree in International Education and has recently completed a PhD in Music Education at the University of Tasmania where he examined popular music courses in Australian higher education. He has performed as a professional Jazz guitarist in almost every setting imaginable from beach weddings to festivals, and in varying formats from solo, duo and trios to large Jazz ensembles and taught in numerous schools, private studios and university.

Una MacGlone

Dr Una MacGlone has research interests in improvisation, pedagogy and social and wellbeing effects of creative music-making. She is co-editor of an anthology: *Expanding the Space for Improvisation Pedagogy* (2019), published by Routledge. Her research uses person-centred and mixed-methods approaches to develop understandings of creativity and interdisciplinary settings. She is an experienced creative educator, particularly with Early Years and individuals with an additional support need. She is bassist in different genres and a founder member of Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra. She has an international profile as an improvisation teacher and has given workshops and lectured across Europe and North America.

Peter McKenzie

Dr Peter McKenzie is Head of Course – Music at CQUniversity. At CQU, Peter has taught saxophone, improvisation, theory and music pedagogy. In 2017, Peter was awarded 'Educator of the Year' for his theory units. He has performed in Australia and the USA with a number of artists including Don Rader, Victor Wooten, David Liebman, Vince Jones, Guy Sebastian, John Riley, James Sherlock and Katie Noonan to name a few. Peter completed his Masters in Learning and Teaching researching approaches to teaching beginner jazz improvisation. In 2020, Peter completed his PhD on the development of regional jazz communities in Northern Australia.

Costantino Oliva

Costantino Oliva is a Lecturer and course coordinator at the Institute of Digital Games. His doctorate focuses on musical participation in digital games. He also holds an M.Sc. in Media Technology and Games awarded by the IT University of Copenhagen and an M.A. in Communication awarded by the Università Suor Orsola Benincasa, Naples. His research focuses on digital games, applying to this topic a diverse range of disciplines including music and sounds studies, soundscape research, and media studies. As a game designer and developer, he also participated in various game development projects funded by international institutions (including the Danske Filmskole, the Malta Arts Fund, and the University of Antwerp).

Esther Marié Pauw

Esther Marié Pauw is a classically-trained flutist whose doctorate in artistic research served to delink her praxis towards interventionist curating and decolonial art practices. She is an affiliated research fellow at Africa Open Institute, Stellenbosch www.aoinstitute.ac.za.

Nichole Rustin-Paschal (Keynote)

Nichole Rustin-Paschal earned her Ph.D. in American Studies from New York University and her J.D. from the University of Virginia. She is an Assistant Professor in Residence of Race and Ethnicity Studies at the Rhode Island School of Design where she teaches classes in African American cultural history, gender studies, and law. Her book, *The Kind of Man I Am: Jazzmasculinity and the World of Charles Mingus Jr* (Wesleyan 2017) is a gendered cultural history of jazz in the postwar period. Rustin-Paschal explores how Mingus' ideas about music, racial identity, and masculinity challenged jazz itself as a model of freedom, inclusion, creativity, and emotional expressivity. She is co-editor with Sherrie Tucker of *Big Ears: Listening for Gender in Jazz Studies* (Duke 2008), the ground-breaking anthology of work in jazz and gender studies. She is also co-editor of *The Routledge Companion to Jazz Studies* (Routledge 2019) with Tony Whyton and Nicholas Gebhardt, an anthology of cross-disciplinary and transnational studies in jazz. Her work has appeared in *Critical Sociology*, *JazzDebates/JazzDebatten*, *Radical History Review*, and the *South Atlantic Quarterly* among other publications. As a member of the Jazz Studies Collective, Nichole coordinates the Works-In-Progress group. She is also a proud board member of The Steel Yard, an industrial arts education and cultural center in Providence, RI.

Cara Stacey

Cara Stacey is a musician, composer and musicologist based in Johannesburg and Mbabane. She is a pianist and plays southern African musical bows (umrhubhe, uhadi, makhweyane). Her doctorate (University of Cape Town/SOAS) focused on innovative music-making with the makhweyane music bow from eSwatini. She is a senior-lecturer in African Music at North-West University, <http://humanities.nwu.ac.za/music/cara-stacey>.

Benjamin Phipps

Dr Benjamin Phipps's research examines how musicians develop their improvisational practices, particularly in jazz and world music. Previous research has examined the development of improvisational practice amongst double bass players using ethnomusicological methods. As a musician and teacher, he is passionate about developing students musical abilities to improvise and is currently working on mixed methods research that explores the relationship between student motivation and the experience of learning improvisation at University. He currently works as a Lecturer and Educational Developer at the University of New South Wales.

Helen Russell

Helen Russell is a bassist, vocalist, arranger, musical director and educator based in Brisbane, Australia. Her career has encompassed many styles of music performance whilst always having jazz at its core. Helen has been a constant on the Brisbane jazz scene since the late 80s, performing with both the old guard and the-up-and-comers. Helen has taught in jazz programs at the Queensland Conservatorium, QCU, JMI, and is currently a full-time lecturer in Contemporary Music at USQ Toowoomba. In 2016 she completed a Master of Music Research at Griffith University, documenting and codifying her method of integrating and internalising music theory in an a cappella setting.

Maria Sappho Donohue

Maria Sappho Donohue is an artist, improviser, and researcher. She has previously worked with the BBC Scottish symphony orchestra, Australian Art Orchestra, Instant Composers Pool (NL) and is a current member of the Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra. She is a winner of the New Piano Stars Competition, Governors Recital Prize, and previously supported by the Dewar Awards. She is a doctoral researcher at Huddersfield University, on the European Research Council project IRiMaS. Maria runs the Feminist Free Improvisation Archive, works for Mopomoso TV (the oldest running UK improvisation concert series) is a member of the international Noisebringers ensemble, and is the co-editor for the discursive political arts magazine the Mass. Her music is released through PanYRosas Discos, and her recent work includes a solo exhibition at DAI hall gallery (UK), Women at MOA – Museum of Operation Avalanche (IT), Sappho's Fairy Tales at NGallery (GR) and she is currently organising an upcoming installation and concert series at Analix Forever Gallery (CZ). Her current commissions include the Orchestre de la Suisse Romande (CZ) the choir midi du Chœur (CZ) and the International Contemporary Ensemble (US).

Alister Spence

Alister Spence is an internationally-recognised pianist, composer, and performer of jazz and improvised music. He holds a PhD in Creative Practice (Music Composition) from the University of New South Wales, and a Diploma

in Teaching from the University of Technology Sydney. Spence's academic research investigates the agency of contingency in music composition and improvisation. This field of research is directly linked to his creative practice. At UNSW Alister Spence teaches in jazz composition and improvisation. His research into the Experimental Composition Improvisation Continua (ECIC) is ongoing.

Chris Stover

Chris Stover is a Senior Lecturer in Music Studies and Research at Queensland Conservatorium, Griffith University. He is co-editor of Rancière and Music (Edinburgh University Press) and the forthcoming volume Making Music Together: Analyzing Musical Interaction, and is currently finishing a monograph on temporal processes in African and Afro-diasporic musics. His research on jazz and improvised music appears in Music Theory Online, Media and Culture, Journal of Jazz Studies, Artistic Research in Jazz, The Open Space Magazine, Improvisation in the Classroom, The Norton Guide to Teaching Music Theory, and elsewhere. He is also a busy trombonist and composer.

Pierre-Henri Wicomb

Pierre-Henri Wicomb is a composer, collaborator and improviser in Cape Town, South Africa. He completed a masters degree in composition at the University of Cape Town, post graduate studies at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague and is currently a PhD fellow in artistic research at the Africa Open Institute for Music, Research and Innovation, Stellenbosch University.

Dave Wilson

Dave Wilson is Senior Lecturer in Music at the New Zealand School of Music–Te Kōkī at Victoria University of Wellington, where he is the Director of the Jazz Performance Programme. His work includes the co-authored textbook Gateways to Understanding Music (Routledge, 2019), as well as articles in Leonardo Music Journal, Yearbook for Traditional Music, Music & Politics, Commoning Ethnography, and Arts. As a saxophonist, clarinetist, and composer, he released the albums On the Face Place (2016) and In Passing (2017) on SkyDeck Music, and his duo improvisation-based album SLANT with pianist Richard Valitutto was released in 2019 on pfMENTUM.