

THE AUTOETHNOGRAPHY OF COMPOSITION AND THE COMPOSITION OF AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

*University of Glasgow (online conference)
17–18 June 2020*

in association with the University of Surrey

- Zoom link: <https://surrey-ac.zoom.us/my/autoethnography>
- Meeting ID: 280 782 0572

DAY 1: WEDNESDAY 17 JUNE 2020

All times given are UK times (UTC+1)

9am	Registration (delegates log on)
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9:30am	Welcome
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Speakers: Iain Findlay-Walsh (University of Glasgow) and
Christopher Wiley (University of Surrey)

9:40- 11:10am	Reflexive Methodologies Chair: Iain Findlay-Walsh (University of Glasgow)
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Martin Scheuregger (University of Lincoln) and Christopher
Leedham (Independent Scholar), 'Me, myself and I in composition
research: a case for personal writing'

Mike Exarchos (London College of Music, University of West
London), 'Sonic Autoethnography as Reflexive Meta-frame for Arts-
based Research: Reimagining the "Phonographic" in Sample-based
Hip Hop'

Eleanor Ryan (University of Cambridge), '(Un)suturing a White
Aesthetic? Applying critical autoethnography methodology to
experiences of collaborative musical composition in the Caribbean'

11:10-
11:30am

Coffee break

11:30am-
1pm

Composing as Practice-Research

Chair: Louise Harris (University of Glasgow)

Tom Armstrong (University of Surrey), 'Picking Up the Pieces: A Composer's Autoethnographic Journey into Artistic Research'

Corin Anderson (Edinburgh Napier University), 'Autoethnographic Methods in a Compositional Exploration of Auditory-Visual Synaesthesia'

Adam de Paor-Evans (University of Central Lancashire), 'Towards an Autoethnomusicology: Writing practices in regional-rural British hip hop'

1-2pm

Lunch

2-4pm

Sonic Autoethnography

Chair: Lucy Hollingworth (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland)

Iain Findlay-Walsh (University of Glasgow), 'Composing the Field of Dwelling: An Autoethnography of Listening in the Home'

Dan DiPiero (Miami University of Ohio), 'Approaching Improvisation: Autoethnography and Related Methodological Questions'

Samantha L. Talbot (University of Glasgow), 'Uncasing "Sam Lou Uncased": An Autoethnography of a Songwriting Podcast'

Rosie Wilson (University of Glasgow), '*Heresy Put to Good Use: A Study of the Function of Autoethnography in the Composition of the Audiovisual Work Aurora*'

4-4:30pm

Tea break

4:30-
5:30pm

Keynote Address

'Autoethnography: A reflexive research process'

Professor Peter Gouzouasis (University of British Columbia, Canada)
Chair: Iain Findlay-Walsh (University of Glasgow)

Performed by Peter Gouzouasis and Matthew Yanko (University of British Columbia, Canada)

5:30pm

Day ends

DAY 2: THURSDAY 18 JUNE 2020

9am

Registration (delegates log on)

9:30-
11:30am

Music and/as Autoethnography

Chair: Christopher Wiley (University of Surrey)

Lucy Hollingworth (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland), 'Passacaglia: Towards an Autoethnographic Understanding of Musical Form'

Kevin Malone (University of Manchester), "'It's about Sound, not about Me": The Pretence of Compositional Objectivity'

Soosan Lolavar (City University of London), 'An Autoethnographic/Compositional Approach to Questions of Diaspora'

James Williams (University of Derby), 'Composing, Reflecting, Writing, Composing: Exploring music, self, and narrative in the education of Arts & Health Practitioners'

11:30-
11:50am

Coffee break

11:50am-
1pm

Discussion: Music composition and/as autoethnography
Chairs: Iain Findlay-Walsh (University of Glasgow) and Christopher Wiley (University of Surrey)

Key discussion points include:

- How can a musical work be autoethnographic?
- When does it move from the autobiographical into a more critical space in which it interrogates the social?
- What is it in a piece of music that signifies autoethnographic meaning to the listener?
- Must this meaning necessarily be translated into an explanatory text?
- How might autoethnographic compositional methods and outcomes be specifically relevant to and useful in present-day and near-future social contexts?

(with thanks to Lucy Hollingworth)

1pm

Event close

Abstracts

Corin Anderson (Edinburgh Napier University)

‘Autoethnographic Methods in a Compositional Exploration of Auditory-Visual Synaesthesia’

The primary aim of my practice-based PhD is to explore, through a substantial portfolio of original compositions, the impact auditory-visual synaesthesia has on my musical creations. Synaesthesia is a perceptual phenomenon found in less than 5% of the population. As an auditory-visual synaesthete, I automatically and involuntarily visualise music as shape, colour and texture. I am attempting to gain a deeper understanding of synaesthesia and the effect it potentially has on my compositional processes and outputs by producing and critically reflecting on a portfolio of audiovisual compositions inspired by my synaesthetic experiences. The purpose of these compositions is twofold: to utilise synaesthesia to help attune and refine my compositional processes and outputs; and to communicate my synaesthetic experiences with a wider audience. I have adapted an autoethnographic visualisation strategy proposed by Chang (2008) to collect data on my synaesthetic experiences. Contextualised by a broad range of literature, I am utilising a descriptive-realistic writing style to describe my synaesthetic experiences of my music, interspersed with analytical-interpretive writing to make sense of these photisms.

This paper will examine: the autoethnographic methods I have used to research the impact and potential benefits of auditory-visual synaesthesia in the composing of electronic music; and the key findings I have uncovered in my work so far. It will discuss the compositional processes behind some of the works I have composed for my PhD and explain the autoethnographic method I have employed to make sense of my corresponding synaesthetic experiences of the music.

Tom Armstrong (University of Surrey)

‘Picking Up the Pieces: A Composer’s Autoethnographic Journey into Artistic Research’

My aims in this paper are twofold. My central concern is to present an autoethnographic insight into my roughly decade-long transition from practitioner to practitioner-researcher within the context of my employment in a research-intensive UK University. I also intend to provide a glimpse of one way in which composition may be harnessed for autoethnographic study.

My academic training (DPhil in Composition 1990–4) and career (2001–date) span a period in which the status of composition as research (at least in the UK) has changed markedly from a position of equivalence to one in which composers are expected to engage in a more overt research process by establishing lines of inquiry designed to arrive at new insights (Nelson 2013). I will establish a career timeline on which to hinge my account, drawing out epiphanies (Ellis, Adams and Bochner 2011) and other key moments in coming to terms with this research model. These will include some brief examples from my work on revision as a compositional tool, a project that has

unfolded across the period under discussion. I will suggest that revision may function as a musical mode of autoethnography, particularly when it involves the radical re-working of material from much earlier in a composer's career. In the process of presenting this account I will briefly mention methods I have used to track my compositional practice over a lengthy period of time and the changes that have been wrought on it as a result of the documentary imperative.

My main conclusion will be to show how the culture of academic research in the UK can both impede and impel artistic practice. I will also show how my embrace of revision has been part of a move away from a particular compositional production model still noticeable in mainstream classical music.

Dan DiPiero (Miami University of Ohio)

'Approaching Improvisation: Autoethnography and Related Methodological Questions'

This paper is primarily concerned with methods for studying improvisation generally, and improvised music in particular. Studies of improvisation are perhaps particularly open with regard to method, given that improvisation is a multifaceted practice that manifests differently across disciplines. Even within studies of music, or further still, within studies of Western improvised music (e.g. jazz, free improvisation, and so on) studies have proceeded from a variety of often overlapping perspectives, including music-theoretical, musicological (historical), philosophical (e.g. affect theory) and cultural (e.g. feminist analysis).

In my own work, I compare musical improvisation across three Western avant-garde contexts first to each other, and subsequently to instances of improvisation in everyday life. In performing this research, I developed a methodology that is influenced by Michel De Certeau's 'science of singularity', as well as Benjamin Piekut's musicological deployment of Actor Network Theory and Brian Massumi's perspectives on Affect Theory. This method is ultimately centred on the notion of 'contingency', and thus, as a part of its development, I also interrogated my own contingent experiences of listening and improvising. This paper presentation then provides an opportunity to reflect on my own approach to studying improvisation, and to perform a kind of meta-autoethnography: by asking how my own perspective factored into the development of my research, I hope to raise relevant questions specifically for future studies of improvised music.

First, I survey the field of important work in improvisation studies from the past ten years; subsequently, I reflect on challenges and opportunities represented by the dominant approaches I outline; finally, I interrogate my own approaches to such questions. Ultimately, I argue that such methodological questions should be of chief concern in improvisation studies, given political stakes involved in conflating improvisation with practices of freedom, whether musical or social.

Mike Exarchos (London College of Music, University of West London)

‘Sonic Autoethnography as Reflexive Meta-frame for Arts-based Research: Reimagining the “Phonographic” in Sample-based Hip Hop’

As a form of methodological inquiry, autoethnography (AE) presents considerable appeal to researchers in the creative arts investigating wider aesthetic phenomena through the lens of their own practice. As such, references to the autoethnographic method are used somewhat arbitrarily in pedagogy and arts-based research to encompass varying applications (and combinations thereof) of reflective analysis, journaling and practice as *fieldwork*. Borne out of an arts-based research project grounded in the phonomusicology of sample-based hip hop production, the paper takes the opportunity to question the applicability of AE as an interpretive lens for contemporary forms of phonographic practice: it examines specific opportunities for the method’s effective integration into creative practice research and investigates ways in which AE can be used for the comprehensive examination of contemporary phonographic phenomena. Furthermore, it explores the rationale behind the application of AE in sonic arts contexts, as well as the design issues and opportunities arising from imbuing the method into practice-based research. The investigation of aesthetic issues pertaining to sonic poetics problematises the deployment of AE in ways particular not only to the logic of musicological modes of inquiry but also to the *material* causalities that may lie behind aural phenomena. The paper, thus, attempts to extend the notion of music to *sonic* autoethnographies, identifying rich interpretive potential residing in non-textual forms of analysis and highlighting their dynamic interrelationship with developmental modes of narrative reinterpretation. In doing so, it sheds lights upon evolving reflexive paradigms congruent to creative practice research and discusses the implications of incorporating AE into the design methodologies of future practice-based research projects in the sonic arts.

Iain Findlay-Walsh (University of Glasgow)

‘Composing the Field of Dwelling: An Autoethnography of Listening in the Home’

5.55am: quiet, computer fan, swish of my own clothes. something stirs, outside rushes in.

In this paper I present a story of listening in the home during enforced confinement (lockdown). This autoethnography is also an ‘acoustemology’ (Feld) of my flat as a site of privacy, intimacy, care and self-care, learning, parenting, working, playing, nourishing the body. Salomé Voegelin asks what it means to exist together according to listening, and my home, this place, is where my partner, children (5 and 8 yo) and I, exist. Attending to sound I ask what kind of place are we making? Through critical listening I map and trace the flat as a nexus of materialities, entanglements, simultaneities, desires, and agencies. Deep listening and soundwalking in domestic space, I improvise—striving to balance activities of sounding and non-sounding, agreeing and disrupting, teaching and learning, laughing and losing my shit. As the form and function of the home changes, intensifies, during lockdown, this story reflects upon efforts to develop a critical practice of listening and living inside as generative composing, long-form improvising. Connecting Voegelin and Steven Feld’s

relational sound and phenomenological listener, Seth Ayyaz Bhunnoo's music as 'mentalized sound', and bell hooks' spaces of (self-)critical pedagogy, I trace my own developing practice of listening in the home as a means of inhabiting and reshaping domestic space as co-composed music.

Lucy Hollingworth (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland)

'Passacaglia: Towards an Autoethnographic Understanding of Musical Form'

In 'Autoethnography, Autobiography, and Creative Art as Academic Research in Music Studies: A Fugal Ethnodrama', Christopher Wiley investigates the problematics of interpreting a musical composition as autoethnography without recourse to an associated text. After a careful reading of this article, and my own previous attempt to find a way of presenting the *work* as autoethnography, I began to explore the idea that musical form itself might provide some clues. Whilst Wiley uses musical form (fugue) to elucidate meaning in a written 'performance autoethnography', in this paper I attempt to read into what the use of musical form itself might signify as a tool in autoethnographic research.

I wrote my piano piece *What The Living Do* in 2015 in response to an intense personal loss. The work derives from two ideas, a polyrhythmic dance written before this loss, and what I call the 'lonely melody' which came to me in the aftermath. Developing the 'lonely melody' led me to passacaglia form, as the musical idea required many repetitions of the melody to express the feelings I was experiencing. The dance, which interrupts the passacaglia, has the effect of intensifying the mood and generating a need for return, for reconciliation.

This paper describes the process of writing *What The Living Do* and investigates ways in which the form contributes to the telling of the story, and how my previous knowledge of other works in passacaglia form which also tell intense stories, the *Passacaglia on an Old English Tune* by Rebecca Clarke, and the final movement (*La Serenissima*) of Benjamin Britten's String Quartet No. 3, contribute to my understanding of passacaglia form and its uses. It also speculates on how the use of this form might of itself contextualise a personal story within my musical culture.

Soosan Lolavar (City University of London)

'An Autoethnographic/Compositional Approach to Questions of Diaspora'

This paper explores what an integrated methodology of autoethnography and composition can add to our understanding of the term 'diaspora'. A theoretical discussion of this term is incorporated with a detailed exploration of the experiences of the British-Iranian author, and the ways that discourses of diaspora have impacted on her life. This is combined with a discussion of her concerto for cello and string ensemble *Tradition-Hybrid-Survival* in which ideas of diaspora are critically interrogated through sound. Against this backdrop, this paper counters monolithic notions of diaspora and argues for a conceptual 'diaspora space' in which divergent genealogies are complexly co-implicated in relationships set against the backdrop of

power relations. This insight not only has theoretical value, but it also helped the author to understand her positioning as part of Iranian ‘diaspora space’, and positively affected her relationship with her father. As a result, this paper argues for the theoretical value of the intimate details of a lived experience expressed through both music and words, providing the space in which ‘an embodied experience of power provides the basis of knowledge’ (Ahmed, 2015: 10).

Kevin Malone (University of Manchester)

“It’s about Sound, not about Me”: The Pretence of Compositional Objectivity’

‘My Octuor is a musical object. . .not an “emotive” work but a musical composition based on objective elements which are sufficient in themselves. ... To interpret a piece is to realize its portrait, and what I demand is the realization of the piece itself and not of its portrait...’

I suspect that Stravinsky’s oft-quoted statement in 1923 (along with mushrooming 12-tone serialism) sounded the trumpet for composers to claim alliance with New Science: post-WWI technologies which promised human advancement through impersonal efficiencies. No more personal gushing; enter the Sonic Object. Poetry, sculpture, painting, music cannot be proven true or false. Yet they contain truths about human experience, and always about their makers. Therefore, all musical composition (by human beings) must be autoethnographic. Autoethnography is pseudoscientific research: what it yields cannot be objectively proven as true, and therefore cannot be falsifiable, which precludes it being a scientific field. Whew. That takes the burden off our shoulders.

Music analysis about a composition can easily be proven false. It cannot yield comprehensively all the responses to hearing it, nor precise reasons for creating it, nor how it was created (despite unearthing copious manuscripts)—nor the layers of truths it contains: there may be no vocabulary to express those personal and social truths. *The Water Protectors* is a case in point. Premiered in November 2019, this ‘truths-driven’ work is a response to the climate emergency following visits to anti-fracking protest sites, the Lakota protest camps against oil pipelines in North Dakota, USA, Extinction Rebellion activism, and Youth4Climate marches.

This lecture with videos poses these autoethnographic questions:

- What motivations underpin writing this work?
- What subjective processes yielded its form?
- How do its precarious modes of expression compromise the composer?
- Can a privileged white male composer produce objective music about the climate emergency?

Adam de Paor-Evans (University of Central Lancashire)

‘Towards an Autoethnomusicology: Writing practices in regional-rural British hip hop’

The cultural practices and methods of autoethnography have been extensively drawn upon in music practice and research to empower the value of the reflective and reflexive in relation to relevant external contexts (Lee 2010; Bakan 2016; Wiley 2019). Concurrently, practitioners and theorists involved in ethnomusicology continually practice autoethnographic methods which, through practice, become personal (Myers 1992: 21). There is much scholarly literature on the relationship between ethnomusicology and autoethnography, in addition to the intertextual potential for deeper understanding of the practices of ethnomusicology and the rituals of autoethnography, methodological and contextual progress of these fields. Why then, does there not exist a subfield of autoethnomusicology?

This paper explores the above question through the author’s experience, practice and research in hip hop culture, particularly focusing on the regional-rural UK. The cultural practices of hip hop evolved during the mid-1970s in New York City’s dilapidated neighbourhoods and are firmly rooted in the ground of urbanism and the Black and Latinx diasporas which fuelled its creative drive. However, over the past 40 years hip hop has advanced to a point where there exist a multitude of global/glocal attitudes to hip hop’s cultural production. Audibly, these carry their own narratives, reflexive and reflective on the artist’s life experiences. My own regionally-focused work within hip hop explores certain methodologies in ethnomusicology and autoethnography, and my monograph *Provincial Headz: British Hip Hop and Critical Regionalism* (2020) defines a point of arrival where the work informs a prototype methodology and a critically contextual means of production for a subfield of autoethnomusicology. Operating within composition writing and academic writing, an autoethnomusicology is produced by reflexively *writing about hip hop* and *writing hip hop*. Following analysis of these processes, this paper argues for an autoethnomusicological subfield which creates a new narrative-driven space, disputing the parameters of academia and practice, and contests the boundaries of publication and authorship.

Eleanor Ryan (University of Cambridge)

‘(Un)suturing a White Aesthetic? Applying critical autoethnography methodology to experiences of collaborative musical composition in the Caribbean’

Critical autoethnographic methods are effective for exploring self and culture. The joint work of personal narrative and critical theory create ‘a particularly agile approach for understanding and transforming the lived experience of selves and cultures as they are encountered and lived within systems and discourses of power, oppression and privilege’ (Holman Jones & Pruyn, 2017).

This presentation suggests the use of critical autoethnographic methodology to explore associations between classically-trained embodied performance aesthetic in string playing and ‘whiteness’ via intercultural creative discourse. Recent UK-based

ethnographic study has revealed classical music performance training as a site for middle-class cultural capital accumulation and embodied performance of 'white' pedagogic practices and aesthetic values (Bull, 2019). I experienced this as a palpable phenomenon when I began work as a violin teacher and performer at a university in the Southern Caribbean. Situated in a postcolonial, post-slavery society, removed from my normative 'white' environment which Sara Ahmed calls 'the very 'what' that coheres as a world'(Ahmed, 2007), my performing identity, aesthetic values, and pedagogic practices became noticeably entangled with neo-colonial projects, white privilege and white orientations.

Using critical autoethnography to create personal reflections in tandem with critical race and postcolonial theory, I reflect on two collaborative compositional projects I took part in with Trinidadian colleagues as 'critical incidents' which both hailed my embodied 'white' aesthetic and challenged it. My instinct was to explore, destabilise and 'unsuture' (George Yancy, 2015), my embodied white identity via collaborative musical creation. I suggest that actively placing myself in dialogue within an aesthetic language, creative process and social group within which I was unfamiliar, unsettled and in the minority, forced me to examine how familiar performance practice and creative processes I had once imagined as above the social and essential, might in fact be operationalising a racialising aesthetic.

Martin Scheuregger (University of Lincoln) and Christopher Leedham (Independent Scholar)

'Me, myself and I in composition research: a case for personal writing'

Composers working in academia in the UK are often engaged in the creation of verbal documents in addition to their compositions, ranging from descriptive programme notes and journalistic articles, to peer-reviewed specialist publications and REF statements. Composers tend to fall into two categories: those who reluctantly write to fulfil institutional expectations, and those whose writing is an essential part of their scholarly identity. The outputs of the former group often gravitate to description of process, compositional technique, or collaboration; the latter may favour discussion of theoretical frameworks, aesthetic considerations, or even concentrate wholly on the work of others.

This paper argues that, by neglecting personal experience, composer-researchers are often failing to provide genuine insights into the creative process. Instead, academic discourse around composition often favours self-congratulatory teleological narratives in order to demonstrate research 'success'. Drawing on data from a survey of composer-academics, the authors present a taxonomy of composers' writings. Particular attention is given to differentiating between self-analysis which takes finished works as subject matter, and writing that reflects on process and personal experience. Both are highly subjective, yet the former is often accepted as incontrovertible truth, the latter often dismissed as lacking depth and academic rigour.

These opposing methodologies are reconciled as the authors make a case for a self-conscious re-evaluation of composers' approach to their writing. Equipping composers with the tools necessary to situate their personal, lived experience (auto)ethnographically within the experience of a broader community of composers

will generate outputs that provide a more nuanced and honest understanding of the messiness and unpredictability of the creative process. Furthermore, exploration of the overlaps between practice-research and autoethnography help provide a basis for understanding where ‘the self’ should be situated in composition research. In so doing, issues of composition ‘as’ research are addressed.

Samantha L. Talbot (University of Glasgow)

‘Uncasing “Sam Lou Uncased”’: An Autoethnography of a Songwriting Podcast’

Songwriting podcasts tend to be elitist in that they are focussed upon internationally renowned songwriters and Ivor Novello Award winners, notably, *Sodajerker on Songwriting* (Barber & O’Connor, 2012), or almost exclusively on craft and deconstruction (*SongExploder*, Hirway, 2014; *The Working Songwriter*, Pug, 2015). Similarly, music discovery podcasts aim to demystify songwriting processes (*Songwriter Stories*, Caruso, 2018), and *Songs of Loss and Healing* (MacGregor, 2019) and *The Art of Losing* (The anchoress, 2019) are recent concept-driven derivatives. Yet none of these podcasts directly address the emerging, or re-emerging, singer-songwriter without representation, in the struggle to voice the songs, and lives, of ordinary people.

This paper reveals preliminary results from Episodes 1–5 of *Sam Lou Uncased*, my new podcast series featuring semi-structured qualitative interviews with DIY songwriters. A short audio of collated extracts, and a self-conscious reflection (Grierson & Brearley, 2009) illustrate how *Sam Lou Uncased* differs from the conventional aesthetics of the aforementioned podcasts. A non-hierarchical and narrative inquiry (Barrett & Stauffer, 2009; Lego, 2008; McLeod, 1977) bridges the gap between the academic, DIY, and professional ‘communities of practice’ (Wenger, 1991). In turn, the podcast title hints at an ‘uncasing’ of the artist-researcher-host, who, in the course of conversation, ‘is both the researcher and researched’ (Sullivan, 2005: xix). Without a set of core questions to repeat with each participant, as ethnography in the field has traditionally done (Zollo, 2003), autoethnography can instead shed insights upon two voices in conversation, and upon the gaps, silences, and recurring themes, which emerge. Such inclusive, non-traditional modes of doctoral practice research are inherently ‘impactful’, presenting a timely opportunity to challenge academic norms (Candliss, 2000) whilst voicing alternative discourses in the emergent field of songwriting studies (Bartleet & Ellis, 2009).

James Williams (University of Derby)

‘Composing, Reflecting, Writing, Composing: Exploring music, self, and narrative in the education of Arts & Health Practitioners’

Therapeutic Arts (as a discipline) is changing. Having been previously focused primarily on the *arts therapies* (music therapy, art therapy, drama therapy, and dance therapy—all accredited by the HCPC), the wider use of both creative and performing arts as applied practice(s) for health and wellbeing is transforming the discipline into an increasingly respected, studied, and utilized (allied health) field (through both

evidence-based practice and practice-based evidence). The changes, which cater for arts-on-prescription (AOP) and social prescribing (SP) schemes, are supported both politically and financially across the health and social care landscape through a range of public-facing groups and organisations, notably: the RSPH Working Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing (report published 2013); the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing (*Creative Health* report published 2017); and most recently the World Health Organisation (Fancourt and Finn, report published 2019). These reports encourage the development of academic provision in Arts & Health in HEIs, producing graduates to accommodate AOP and SP demands.

This presentation looks at how these educational recommendations are being met as part of an MA Arts and Health Practice degree (University of Derby), by specifically exploring the significance of reflection (through autoethnographic, a/r/tographic, and heuristic studies) for both personal practical development and self-care. Current music pathway students create music portfolios exploring applied composition for wellbeing, where their own personal experiences often sit at the crux of their projects. Students document their compositional processes through autoethnographic methods (including video diaries, written reflections, digital media etc.). They engage in the indefinite oscillation between reflecting on their sense of self, transforming this into music composition, and reflecting on their process. This paper demonstrates how this reflective and creative self-narrative cycle has potential benefits to composers, performers, community musicians, and service users (music) all working in the arts & health sector.

Rosie Wilson (University of Glasgow)

'Heresy Put to Good Use: A Study of the Function of Autoethnography in the Composition of the Audiovisual Work *Aurora*'

Tami Spry, in her article 'Performing Autoethnography: An Embodied Methodological Praxis', asserts that the inclusion of emotion in scholarly writing constitutes 'heresy put to good use' (2001, p.709). This framing of autoethnography poses many questions: for example, what is the use of this heresy? Who should it be useful to? This paper explores this question of the usefulness or validity of revealing the author's own embodied subjectivity through composition, both in relation to works and writings by other authors involved in autoethnographic creation, and in relation to the author's own autoethnographic audiovisual composition, *Aurora*.

In the composition of this work, the author initially struggled with utilising emotional embodied experience as a starting point, due to concerns over whether this constituted a legitimate scholarly approach. However, through interrogation of the compositional process involved in creating this autoethnographic piece of work, and reflection upon the finished composition, this paper expounds the extent to which personal experience can fruitfully shape compositional process, and conversely the extent to which composition can shape personal experience: for example, does using personal, emotional experience as a stimulus for a work change how the author views the initial experience?

Ultimately, this paper suggests that autoethnographic composition can elucidate an author's perspective in a range of ways. Through inserting a personal narrative into an

academic work in this way, there is by extension an academicising of the personal—an externalisation of internal processes. This reframes the author's subjective experience as a creative object separate from the author, to be observed and critiqued by others as well as by themselves. This offers a return to the question of being 'put to good use'—exploring why the simultaneous acknowledgement and othering of personal experience might be useful in artistic creation.

Keynote Biography

Professor Peter Gouzouasis

Keynote Address:

“Autoethnography: A reflexive research process”

Peter Gouzouasis is a Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of British Columbia. His research focuses on lifespan music learning employing both qualitative and quantitative research approaches. Peter has published over 50 books chapters and refereed papers that employ autoethnography and Arts Based Research (ABR) methods. He recently edited the first journal issue dedicated to ABR in a leading music research journal (<http://act.maydaygroup.org/volume-18-issue-2/>) and recently led a research team (Guhn, Emerson, & Gouzouasis, 2020) in publishing one of the most widely downloaded papers in the history of the profession (<https://summon.altmetric.com/details/62627951#score>).



List of Speakers and Organisers

Corin Anderson, Edinburgh Napier University
Tom Armstrong, University of Surrey
Dan DiPiero, Miami University of Ohio
Mike Exarchos, London College of Music, University of West London
Iain Findlay-Walsh, University of Glasgow
Peter Gouzouasis, University of British Columbia
Lucy Hollingworth, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
Christopher Leedham, Independent Scholar
Soosan Lolavar, City University of London
Kevin Malone, University of Manchester
Adam de Paor-Evans, University of Central Lancashire
Eleanor Ryan, University of Cambridge
Martin Scheuregger, University of Lincoln
Jane Stanley, University of Glasgow
Samantha L. Talbot, University of Glasgow
Christopher Wiley, University of Surrey
James Williams, University of Derby
Rosie Wilson, University of Glasgow
Matthew Yanko, University of British Columbia

Delegate List

For the list of delegates, including e-mail addresses and research areas/interests, please see the spreadsheet at the following link:

<https://bit.ly/3bNFo6Y>

Please feel free to add your own details to this spreadsheet if you have not already done so.

THE AUTOETHNOGRAPHY OF COMPOSITION AND THE COMPOSITION OF AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

Organising Committee:

Iain Findlay-Walsh (University of Glasgow)

Christopher Wiley (University of Surrey)

Louise Harris (University of Glasgow)

Tom Armstrong (University of Surrey)

Lucy Hollingworth (Royal Conservatoire of Scotland)

Jane Stanley (University of Glasgow)

Conference Supporters:

School of Culture and Creative Arts, University of Glasgow

Department of Music and Media, University of Surrey

Should you wish to comment on this event via social media,
we invite you to use the hashtag **#CompAutoEthno**
and to tag **@UofGlasgow** and **@SurreyDMM**

<https://goldenpages.jpehs.co.uk/2019/12/09/the-autoethnography-of-composition-and-the-composition-of-autoethnography/>

