

RNCM

ROYAL NORTHERN  
COLLEGE of MUSIC



IN FOCUS: ROBERT SAXTON

# The Sir John Manduell Research Forum series

October – December 2015

Open to all, free admission  
[research@rncm.ac.uk](mailto:research@rncm.ac.uk) | [www.rncm.ac.uk/research](http://www.rncm.ac.uk/research)

Wednesday 7 October

**5.15pm** *Forman Lecture Theatre*

Ann Shoebridge

(La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia)

## **The vexed question of posture: Developing a theory of optimal posture in musicians**

*and*

### **Risk factors associated with playing-related musculoskeletal problems in tertiary music students**

Musicians consider posture to be integral to musical tone. Health professionals and musicians also nominate posture as an important factor contributing to playing-related musculoskeletal problems.

Musicians primarily seek information regarding posture from instrumental teachers, followed by physiotherapists and Alexander Technique teachers.

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Wednesday 14 October

**5.15pm** *Forman Lecture Theatre*

Professor Frank Pollick (University of Glasgow)

## **The brain as it thinks and feels about music**

Brain imaging approaches such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) are reductionist in explaining how the brain processes a musical performance - different brain regions perform different processing roles. Moving towards a more causal understanding of brain activations, I'll discuss our efforts to tip the balance between cognitive and emotional processing of music that use realtime fMRI neurofeedback based on activity of a particular brain region.

Wednesday 21 October

**5.15pm** *Conference Room*

Professor Thomas Schmidt (University of Manchester)

## **'Seven or eight intelligent people in conversation'? On texture and timbre in large-ensemble chamber music of the early nineteenth century.**

When it comes to 19th century chamber music, research and concert practice have traditionally focused on the string quartet, as the epitome of the 'pure' chamber style and 'the abstract representation of structure' (Dahlhaus). This has come at the expense of the repertoire for mixed ensemble of strings and winds, even though some of these works were equally acclaimed in their time, and invite the same sustained enquiry, especially concerning their texture and timbre—two analytical categories whose potential is often overlooked in pre-20th century compositions.

Two of the most important works which fall in this category are Beethoven's Septet Op 20 and Schubert's Octet D 803. Taking these as a point of departure, my paper will explore precisely what defines the texture and timbre of mixed-ensemble chamber music, and it will examine how the specific 'sound' or character of instruments lends compositional interest and structural meaning to non-homogeneous textures, both in purely analytical terms and also in terms of their associated soundscapes, such as the outdoors serenade, the salon or the concert hall.

Wednesday 28 October

**5.15pm** *Forman Lecture Theatre*

Robert Dick

Director, Robert Dick Residential Flute Studio in New York City. Artist Teacher of Flute, Steinhardt School, New York University

### **Continuous transformation of sound: If electrons can do it, why not molecules?**

Composer and flautist Robert Dick will speak about a core motivation of his music, his passion for timbral expansion and transformation. Dick's approach to acoustic instruments is to treat them as 'human-powered synthesizers'. He will demonstrate this approach on flutes and perform a few of his works. Robert Dick is known worldwide for his music, his work in developing new sonorities and techniques for the flute and for his contributions to the evolution of the instrument itself, including his radical invention, the Glissando Headjoint.

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Friday 30 October

**6pm** *Forman Lecture Theatre*

*Forum Plus event*

### **Roundtable on synaesthesia with Dr Michelle Castelletti (RNCM), Dr David Horne (RNCM), Professor Barbara Kelly (RNCM) and Dr Kenneth Smith (University of Liverpool)**

Roundtable panel discussing synaesthesia in relation to Scriabin, Debussy and contemporaries.

Wednesday 11 November

**5.15pm** *Forman Lecture Theatre*

Dr Cheryll Duncan (RNCM)

### **Purcell's Sonnatas of III Parts and the construction of identity**

Although Henry Purcell's various professional appointments are fairly well documented, they tell us little about him as a person. This paper investigates what can be told about Purcell the man from a deconstruction of the engraved frontispiece portrait that precedes his Sonnatas of III Parts (1683), the first works in that genre to be published in England.

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Wednesday 18 November

**5.15pm** *Forman Lecture Theatre*

Dr Emily Howard (Leverhulme Artist in Residence 2015, University of Liverpool and RNCM) and Professor Lasse Rempe-Gillen (University of Liverpool)

### **Points of convergence: Music meets mathematics**

Composer Emily Howard and mathematician Lasse Rempe-Gillen present their Leverhulme Trust-funded collaboration with live demonstrations and performance from Ensemble in Residence scapegoat (saxophonist Joshua Hyde and percussionist Noam Bierstone).

*Followed by*

**7.30pm** *Studio Theatre*

**scapegoat**

**m62**

Research presentation of new works created through the RNCM Research-funded m62 collaboration project with composers Emily Howard, Matthew Sergeant and Mauricio Pauly and premiered in scapegoat's North American tour May 2015. With saxophonist Joshua Hyde and percussionist Noam Bierstone.

Wednesday 25 November  
2 – 6 pm *Forman Lecture Theatre*

*Forum Plus event*

### **Music in the Third Age: Practice and research**

The purpose of this interactive workshop is to raise awareness of existing initiatives, activities, training, projects and research on music-making for, with and by the elderly, including people with dementia; to share best practice; and to inspire students and staff at RNCM not already involved in such initiatives to include 'music in the third age' in their portfolios. Speakers will include Professor Alistair Burns (Vice Dean, Clinical Affairs, Faculty of Medical and Human Sciences, University of Manchester and National Clinical Director for Dementia, NHS England), Gill Drummond (NW Manchester Mental Health Trust; Dementia Friends), Clare Morel (Singing for the Brain; Vibrant Voices), Philip Curtis (Prince Claus Conservatoire, Groningen; Music and Dementia), Professor Jane Ginsborg (RNCM) and Dr Martin Harlow (RNCM). Harpist and music therapist Christina Rhys will work with musicians from Manchester Camerata, improvising with RNCM students to demonstrate Music in Mind (Care UK), and Robyn Dowlen will report on research evaluating this project.

Wednesday 25 November  
6.15pm *Studio Theatre*

*Forum Plus event*

Brian Ferneyhough, Dr Fabrice Fitch (RNCM),  
Dr Lois Fitch (RNCM) Christopher Redgate  
**Ferneyhough and Fitch in conversation**

Brian Ferneyhough speaks with Lois Fitch about his recent piece for oboe and string quartet *Schatten aus Wasser und Stein* in advance of its performance at this evening's concert, with the participation of the oboist Christopher Redgate and composer Fabrice Fitch, whose *agricologies* for string quartet is also on the programme.

*Followed by concert.*

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Thursday 26 November  
5.15pm *Forman Lecture Theatre*

Professor Robert Saxton  
(Worcester College, University of Oxford)  
**Saxton in conversation**

Robert Saxton talks to Clark Rundell about his life and music.

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Friday 4 December  
6.15pm *Forman Lecture Theatre*

*Forum Plus event*

Professor Douglas Jarman (RNCM)  
and Professor Barbara Kelly (RNCM)

### **European composers and the transatlantic exodus around World War II**

Douglas Jarman and Barbara Kelly discuss Kurt Weill's exile from Europe to America, and how Weill takes on an American identity in *Street Scene*. They make comparisons with other exiled composers, such as Arnold Schoenberg and Darius Milhaud, drawing on unpublished letters between Weill and Mme Milhaud.