9.10am Welcome

9.15 – 10.15am Russian piano music
Chair: David Larkin
Nadia Koudasheva (USyd) – PG
The shadows of Bach: exploring the spectrum of Russian/Soviet Bach piano transcriptions
Anton Bredow (USyd) – PG
Pyotr Ilich Tchaikovsky, Vassily Sapelnikov and the Piano Concerto in B-flat minor

10.15 – 11.15am Women as composers and performers
Chair: Nicky Gluch
Julia Donnelly (USyd) – Hons
A woman’s work is never done: Taking an analytical approach to the music of Alma Mahler-Werfel
Simone Waddell (USyd) – PG
Communicating artistry through gesture by legendary Australian jazz singer Kerrie Biddell

11.15 – 11.30am Break

11.30am-12.30pm In olden days
Chair: Simone Waddell
Serena Lim (USyd) – Hons
The late eighteenth-century North German violone: An account of its evolution in Dresden and Leipzig
Kathryn Parker (USyd) – PG
Communal delight in the Robin Hood balladry of Shakespeare’s As You Like It

12.30-1.30pm Lunch (catered)
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<td>Generative Music with the Living Machine: Using Rule-Based Improvisation to Generate Narrative and Soundtrack</td>
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Anton Bredow

Pyotr Ilich Tchaikovsky, Vassily Sapelnikov and the Piano Concerto in B-flat minor

In recent years there has been a marked increase in literature pertaining to Tchaikovsky’s First Piano Concerto in B-flat minor, primarily focusing on the three separate editions which exist in an attempt to return to Tchaikovsky’s “original intentions”. To date, the literature so far appears to focus solely on written evidence, such as letters and scores. Arguably the most valuable performing practice resources – early sound recordings – have been largely overlooked. In this paper I will analyse the sound recordings (acoustic, electrical and piano rolls) made by pianists who had strong ties with Tchaikovsky, including the 1926 recording of Tchaikovsky’s B-flat minor Concerto by Vassily Sapelnikov (1867-1941), as a means of understanding the types of expressive devices that Tchaikovsky expected, and the extent to which these recordings provide a window into Tchaikovsky’s sound world. Writing in 1888, Tchaikovsky recounts a rehearsal in Hamburg where he conducted this Concerto, during which Sapelnikov “surmounted one after the other all the incredible difficulties…and gradually revealed all the power and all the qualities of his tremendous talent.” An analysis of Salpenikov’s recordings show that he used nineteenth-century performing practices such as arpeggiated style and rhythmic and tempo alteration, which are akin to those used by other major nineteenth-century pianists in major European capital cities.

Julia Donnelly

A Woman’s Work is Never Done: Taking an Analytical Approach to the Music of Alma Mahler-Werfel

The story of Alma Mahler-Werfel falls somewhere between musicological folklore and feminist parable: a beautiful young girl dreams of composing but is forbidden to do so by her eminent husband, resulting in a troubled marriage, an affair, and, after his untimely death, a succession of marriages to other artists. However, this familiar story often sets aside the nature of Alma’s compositions and how they related to the musical currents of her time. These exist in 4 volumes: Fünf Lieder (1910), Vier Lieder (1915), Fünf Gesänge (1924), and Two Lieder (posthumous, 2000). While Alma’s personal history is well documented, investigation of her compositional output has primarily been restricted to sweeping statements about her compositional process and critical/analytical investigations of individual songs. Mahler-Werfel’s style is typically explained biographically and has been critised for a lack of musical interest and structure. Detailed analytical consideration of her songs as a group has been attempted, but a renewed, objective effort is long overdue.

This presentation will explore how Mahler-Werfel’s oeuvre can be interpreted across musical parameters as demonstrating aspects of adherence to Classical and Romantic conventions, as well as freedom from these conventions. These observations are applicable to Mahler-Werfel’s entire output, but two of Mahler-Werfel’s songs (“In meines Vaters Garten” and “Ansturm”) will be used to clearly demonstrate these constrasting aspects of the composer’s style. Finally, it will be considered how these observations could impact both Mahler-Werfel scholarship and feminist musicology in general.

Rachelle Elliott

Performance of Icelandic Mixed Voice Choral Music

This research investigates how to conduct Icelandic mixed voice choral music from any period, to a performance standard. The ethnographic method undertaken involves interviews with key conductors, composers and musicologists, performing selected Icelandic repertoire
with Australian choirs, and attending choir rehearsals and performances in Iceland. The research will provide an overview of the evolution of mixed voice choral music in Iceland and an understanding of how to conduct a selection of Icelandic compositions that pose challenges for conductors. The recommendations will be useful for non-Icelandic and Icelandic conductors alike.

A fieldtrip to Iceland in April 2017 proved invaluable to the research findings which revealed printed literature that is not available electronically, or in English, along with details of some current music research being undertaken. There are few researchers in Icelandic music and none currently outside of Iceland. While rigorous research has been undertaken by a few scholars in a variety of areas of Icelandic music, there is a gap in research about choral music, and more specifically mixed voice choral music. The next phase of this research involves interviews to gain further knowledge and address the discrepancies in existing publications. Most of these interviews will be undertaken as part of a fieldtrip to Iceland in January 2018 along with observation of choir rehearsals and performances.

Nicky Gluch  Reconfiguring the Maestro

In July 2017, 39 conductors participated in the first ‘blind’ conducting competition. Audite was intended to be an experiment in removing bias but it became an exploration of what the field of conducting is ‘about’ in the 21st Century. Within the context of a Masters thesis on conducting, I took the opportunity to interview Audite participants. In my research, I had identified a trend towards the performative conductor (as opposed to musical). The participants, who were suddenly confronted with the aesthetic nature of their conducting, supported this notion. The screen placed between the participants and the jury served to reveal the framing of the conducting profession as it currently stands. This paper assesses the current position and suggests ways to elicit the musical conductor once more. Through utility theory and the perfomativity thesis, this paper steps back from music to provide novel insights for the conductor, specifically, and music-making more generally.

Benjamin Hillier  Musical practices in early Melodic Death Metal

This paper is concerned with the development of what came to be called Melodic Death Metal, a sub-genre of Metal that developed mainly in Gothenburg, Sweden in the early-to-mid 1990s. I examine how songs are constructed in Melodic Death Metal by undertaking a musical analysis of three songs in detail; ‘Blinded by Fear’ by At The Gates (1995), ‘Punish my Heaven’ by Dark Tranquillity (1995) and ‘Moonshield’ by In Flames (1996). These analyses examine how musicians have constructed and arranged the musical material that comprises these songs and the principles of harmony and voice leading that form this music. Significant common practices emerge from the analysis, in particular the construction of chord progressions based on the tonic triad of a piece, the use of modal mixture and common harmonic phrases, and the development of melody through voice leading practices to distinguish this style of Metal from many others. This then enables a discussion of how these choices define Melodic Death Metal during its formative years of development. This paper aims to contribute to both a growing body of work that focuses on musical analysis of Metal music in general, and the refinement of analytical methods that are pertinent to the specific features of Melodic Death Metal. As such, it establishes a new basis for the examination of the developments of Melodic Death Metal.
Nadia Koudasheva  The shadows of Bach: exploring the spectrum of Russian/Soviet Bach piano transcriptions

Ever since his 19th-century revival, there have been a multiplicity of contradictory perceptions of J. S. Bach. These differing attitudes to Bach are reflected not only in the performance style of his works, but also in transcriptions, editions and even impact on new polyphonic compositions. Throughout Russian history, Bach has been variously regarded as a quasi-religious icon, an inspirational figure for the masses, and as an object of contention between opposing ideologies. This study draws on transcriptions as a tool to analyse the various constructed images of Bach. In Russia, the tradition of transcribing Bach’s works for the piano stems from at least 1844 and involves not only well-known composers such as Sergey Rachmaninov, but also lesser-known ones such as Ivan Cherlitsky. The varied treatments of Bach’s scores have been categorised as ‘Romanticised’, ‘Urtext’, and ‘historically-informed’. To demonstrate the wide range of transcriptional responses these varying perceptions prompted, this paper presents two case studies on the transcriptions of Alexander Siloti and Anatoly Vedernikov. These case studies also demonstrate that by viewing the transcribed score outside of the associated musicological ideology of its time, certain musical techniques can be observed in a new light, such as the similarity of Baroque-period elaboration with the ‘Romanticised’ Bach style. It is notable that works from the entire spectrum of transcription approaches, despite their different relationship with the originals, all exemplify the transcriber’s aim of demonstrating reverence for Bach as a master of polyphony.

Serena Lim  The late eighteenth-century North German violone: An account of its evolution in Dresden and Leipzig

The term ‘violone’ was commonly used for a bass string instrument during the early eighteenth century in Western Europe. Usage of this term was often ambiguous in this period, as many instruments called the ‘violone’ varied in shape, size, string number and tuning. There is a consensus in current scholarship that the ‘violone’ varied between geographical locations, and changed over time. However, research to-date on the usage of this term during the mid-eighteenth century is incomplete. The result is that the violone is widely assumed to have been out of use by the latter half of the eighteenth century. This paper examines the social and economic influences on music trends during the late eighteenth century in North Germany. The analysis of selected works, sources, and literature from this time period confirms that the term violone survived considerably longer than current research suggests. My analysis of the term sheds light on the evolution of the definition between 1763 and 1800 in Dresden, Leipzig and surrounding cities. This paper illustrates another part of the violone’s journey towards the establishment of the modern double bass.

Ryan Martin  Generative music with the living machine: Using rule-based improvisation to generate narrative and soundtrack

In this paper, I argue that rule-based improvisation can be used to generate the live performance of an improvised narrative and soundtrack that interact to create meaningful narrative information. I demonstrate this through the application of a form of improvisation I term generative improvisation. This refers to improvisations in which a composer places a set of explicit constraints on the improvisational choices of the performers. Using this concept and a study of the rule-based improvisation Narrative Generator (for Living Machine), I demonstrate how an improvisation which generates coherent narrative and soundtrack can be created by basing the performers’ improvisational constraints on the theories and practices of mediums that already convey coherent narrative and sound: specifically, film and video games. Further,
I propose that generative improvisation, in combination with idiomatic improvisation and free improvisation form a three-part system for categorising the frameworks that performers improvise within. These categories are differentiated by the nature of the constraints placed on the improvisers, and exist to expose the role that constraints play in determining the outcomes of a musical improvisation. Overall, this paper identifies the impact that constraints have in determining the musical outcomes of an improvisation and suggests that these constraints can be designed in a way that ensures the generation of a coherent narrative and soundtrack.

Myles Oakey  
Suspending sobriety in the tavern of drunkards and lovers: Towards a cosmopolitan ethnography of Sufi musical life-worlds

In response to a global moment of hostility to difference, I adopt the philosophy of cosmopolitanism to consider how a return to hospitality, conversation, and shared practical action may shape a musical ethnography in the Twenty First Century. Briefly, I propose a cosmopolitan ethnography to be one characterised by a set of relationships between ethical and political intent; a personal and intellectual attitude or disposition; a carefully selected set of fieldwork methods and ethnographic representation; and ethnographic storytelling of human life-making that carries ethical and political value.

My ethnography of Sufi lifeworlds follows the musical and non-musical activities of the Sufi practitioners connected to the House of Sufism (khānaqāh) located in the Inner-Sydney suburb of Balmain. Through ethnomusicological fieldwork, methods of phenomenology, participation-observation, and dialogical anthropology, I attempt to make sense of the moral and existential significance of public and private music-making within the Sydney Sufi Ensemble, and the Iranian-derived Ni'matullāhī Sufi Order. My methodological and representational approach to Sufi spirituality and musical practice illuminates the complexities and contradictions inherent in human life-making, relationships, and doing ethnography in the 21st century.

Through the storytelling of lived experience, this paper shares ethnographic moments of empathy and mutuality made possible through a cosmopolitan framework. Towards a cosmopolitan ethnography I aim to provide insights that encourage the ethnographer and audiences to understand, learn from, and acknowledge value in contemporary Sufi practice and alternative modalities of living. Further, this paper explores the possibilities and limits for a lived cosmopolitanism in ethnomusicological scholarship that involves peoples with whom we share our city, nation, and world.

Kathryn Parker  
Communal delight in the Robin Hood balladry of Shakespeare’s As You Like It

Shakespeare’s As You Like It has long been associated with the Robin Hood tradition in its contrast between exiled and usurping Dukes in green and urban political spaces. This paper will explore the role of two songs and a ballad within the play which intensify an emotional sense of togetherness for the audience with the exiled Duke and his merry band of lords in the forest. English broadside ballads were one of the most widely sold forms of print in the early modern period. By setting lyric texts to tunes from ballads and other traditional songs, Shakespeare plays with musical performance mediums to generate meaning and emotional response for theatre audiences. As the songs in As You Like It connect with the wider tradition of Robin Hood and the May game entertainments, they bring the past and the present simultaneously into the musical fabric of the comedy. I will demonstrate how Shakespeare uses vocal music to engage with forms of public entertainment that existed
outside of the London playhouses to create a sense of communal delight between his performers and audience.

**Simone Waddell**  Communicating artistry through gesture by legendary Australian jazz singer Kerrie Biddell

Singers communicate with audiences using a sophisticated blend of vocal, musical and physical gestures. While gestures appear naturalistic and spontaneous, they are the culmination of extensive preparation, reflection and rehearsal. The late Kerrie Biddell, (1947-2014) was arguably the most influential jazz singer in Australian Jazz history (Carriage 2000) and an expert in communicating with her audiences. The aim of the study was to explore how Biddell designed and transmitted vocal, musical and physical gestures in performance and how she transmitted these to her colleagues and students.

Five of Biddell’s former singing students and professional musical colleagues were invited to participate in an interview to explore the way in which Biddell utilised gestures and techniques to maximise her performance presentation. Each participant recounted their personal knowledge and history of working with Biddell, and analysed a video of Biddell performing live on Australian television to document how she effortlessly translated gestures into captivating performance. Participants reflected on their experience working with Biddell, and described how she was renowned for her stage presence, physical gestures and facial animation. All described the way in which Biddell would create a scenario to depict the text of the song, and prepare a character to ensure her gestures were authentic and genuine to her audiences. Findings will be considered in the context of recent studies in performance and non-verbal communication. Future work on gesture must consider the work of leading performer/teachers and discover how they conceptualise and communicate gesture to audiences.
Acknowledgements

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MSA Sydney Chapter