

## Strategy

### The Research strategy and its operation

The Music Research Group (MRG) focuses on contemporary composition and live performance, and popular music history and analysis. Its members specialise in improvisation and the moving image, style heritages, theatre and film composition and digital interactive music installations, as well as social history, musicology and ethnography.

MRG is part of CREAM, the cross-disciplinary Centre for Research and Education in Arts and Media ([www.wmin.ac.uk/cream](http://www.wmin.ac.uk/cream)), which was formed in 2001 out of earlier research groupings. CREAM's arts research ranges from ceramics to photography, visual arts to new media, fashion and film. The Centre is located in the School of Media, Arts and Design at Harrow.

MRG, with six senior and junior researchers was established in 2005 as part of CREAM's strategy to become a European centre for cross-disciplinary arts. There are currently five doctoral students associated with Kennett (who is not being returned in this submission). MRG grew out of the School's pioneering approach to the academic study of popular music. With two undergraduate and two Masters courses, and a suite of professional-standard studios, Music has this year been allocated its own department, creating an environment which encourages and facilitates scholarship and practice-based research. It has made a number of senior and junior appointments designed to enhance existing strengths in musical practice, while developing new areas in composition and performance, and musicology.

This new research departure reflects Westminster's long-standing reputation for being at the forefront of contemporary developments in media, arts and design. The former Polytechnic hosted the first demonstration of photography in 1839, Britain's first public film screenings in 1896, and the UK's first undergraduate photographic, media studies, and postgraduate film degrees in the 1970s, as well as commercial music in the 1990s. This tradition underpins the long-term sustainability of research in the School; art and design received a 4 rating in RAE 1996, 2001, and media received a 5 rating in 1992, 1996, 2001.

Under the directorship of Kennett, MRG pursues a policy of composition, performance, publishing research monographs and articles, securing commissions and grants from a variety of sources, and supporting an interdisciplinary doctoral programme. For those researchers submitted in this period there were 16 compositions / performances, 15 compositions / recordings, 8 significant commissions, and one single authored book, reflecting the high quality research embedded in practice.

With a substantial record in music improvisation and moving image, Beresford has an international profile in experimental composition and performance. For example, Whistle Concert was an innovative composition inspired by sound-making devices for J Hudson and Co. Beresford also composed the music

soundtrack to *Bollywood Queen* (Jeremy Wooding 2003). He has collaborated with the artist Christian Marclay on many projects, such as Graffiti Composition.

Thompson's highly-acclaimed contemporary music composition reflects the social and cultural diversity of modern Britain. *New Nation Rising* is a symphony about the spirit of London, fusing classical styles with contemporary musical references. She conducted the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra's performance of the work in 2003. Her collaboration with the dance choreographer Maliphant resulted in a composition for the Sadler's Wells; this production has toured internationally, winning four awards. Perchard is an early career researcher who has recently published a monograph on jazz trumpeter Lee Morgan using an ethnographic approach to music history.

Among those not submitted in this period are Eacott, who has been completing his doctoral thesis on generative musical artefacts while working full-time, although he continues to compose and perform for musical theatre and film. Kennett, whose contributions to *Music Analysis* and *Music and Letters* explore the relationship of musicology to cognitive psychology, computers and mathematics, is not included as he recently joined the University and will be developing his research profile post-2008. Riley, who is working on a PhD about the history of black music in Britain, is also the founder and conductor of the Reggae Philharmonic Orchestra, whose active international programme included opening the Mayor of London's Black History Season (2005), and performing at the Royal festival Hall in Black History Month (2007).

MRG's future research strategy is to become a leading international centre for the study of contemporary music, specialising in experimental composition and live performance, music sociology and musical heritages. Working with artists and film-makers in CREAM, in line with its cross-disciplinary focus, MRG will develop multi-layered collaborations designed to take music performance beyond the concert hall, as Beresford did in his collaboration with Marclay at the Barbican.

MRG will continue to draw upon history, music sociology, composition and performance to explore black music and cultural diversity. London will become a significant focus for developing partnerships with cultural organisations such as South Bank. Operating at the interface between academic research and the music industry, the group will continue to work with The Art of Record Publication, influencing debates in popular music, copyright, and the music industry.

### **Sustainability of the research environment**

The Music Department has a well-regarded portfolio of undergraduate and postgraduate courses that link to the research interests of practitioners and writers. MRG's expertise is illustrated by the internal research culture, active dissemination of work through performances, conferences, public lecture series and relationships with various user communities.

CREAM News keeps researchers informed about publications, exhibitions, performances and awards, while MRG's seminar series featuring internal and external speakers promotes dialogue and exchange. Topics range from musician/ animator collaboration strategies to music politics in Zimbabwe. External speakers include Joan Ashworth, Allan Moore, and Keith Negus.

The Art of Record Production conference hosted by Westminster (2005) was an international, refereed event which brought together the music industry and researchers. An online publication includes selected proceedings from the conference. *Art of Record Production* is now an online journal in its third issue ([www.artofrecordproduction.com](http://www.artofrecordproduction.com)). MRG hosted the Interactive Dance Music Summer School, from 2001-04, led by Eacott. He also chaired the digital arts and music conference Cybersonica (2002-05), in association with Institute of Contemporary Arts, and Cybersalon (with the Dana Centre, Science Museum). Eacott edited a special issue of the international peer reviewed journal *Digital Creativity* with selected publications from the conference. MRG is planning a British-Asian music conference, bringing together industry, artists and researchers.

### **Research grant applications and other forms of research income**

There is strong institutional support for making funding applications. A central research and consultancy unit, set up in 2001, advises on funding applications and budgets, with an external consultant for large-scale or non-research council applications. CREAM and MRG offer specialised help, from funding workshops to mentoring first-time applicants. The campus research office provides administrative and financial support. Successful principal applicants are allocated 50 per cent of School overheads for dissemination or preparation for follow-on projects.

MRG has been developing bids for funding from a diverse range of sources (this income relates to private commissions and Arts Council funding and is not reported in RA4). Thompson received a bursary from the Arts Council of England for her work on *New Nation Rising*, commissioned by the London Borough of Newham Council. ACE also funded her work commemorating the bi-centennial anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade. Beresford has received numerous commissions from artists, film directors and the television industry, including Wooding, Marclay, and BBC and Channel 4. Eacott raised industry funding from Vodafone for his experimental music and mobile phones project, *Intelligent Street*.

Early career researchers are mentored by senior colleagues, while other projects are supervised and evaluated by peers. Project leaders are given extra relief from teaching to help with successful completion. The active programme of seminars, conferences, and publications outlined above are part of MRG's strategy for disseminating research.

## **People**

### **Support and training for research staff**

The School of Media, Arts and Design provides structured support for a balance of teaching and research:

1. Relief from teaching and administrative duties on a regular and consistent basis, including 40 per cent remission for senior staff and 20 per cent for junior researchers.
2. A programme of rotating sabbaticals every three years allowing relief from all teaching and administration for six months.
3. Provision for research expenses for conferences, exhibitions and pilot projects.
4. Financial and administrative support for grant applications and knowledge transfer activities.
5. Financial and administrative support for regular away days, workshops, conferences, and other activities that facilitate the research culture.

The Director of Research for the School and CREAM/MRG, in consultation with the School senior management group, are responsible for annual support.

All research fellows and post-doctoral researchers receive relief from teaching to pursue their research and attend training run by the University. Additional University funds are reserved for developing researchers (up to £3000 each) for specific projects. Twenty staff are supported in this scheme, including Perchard and Riley, while a further £30,000 has been secured to showcase the work of these new researchers at multi-site exhibitions.

Senior staff mentor early career researchers, acting as 'buddies' for funding applications, writing articles, book proposals. Group leaders offer specialised help for MRG members, associates and fellows. There have been several new appointments in 2006-07. Since Kennett was appointed as a full-time member of staff he has established a seminar series and increased the number of doctoral applications in music. Perchard contributes to the group's developing profile in music sociology. Thompson's promotion to Reader and Eacott's completion of his doctoral thesis (2007) (on an interdisciplinary project reported in UoA 66) highlight the strategic direction of this group, which aims to become an international research centre in contemporary music.

### **Support and training for research students**

Team supervision for doctoral students is led by a specialist Director of Studies, while there are University-wide arrangements for progression, monitoring and addressing unsatisfactory performance. The School Research Degrees Committee meets once each semester to address enrolment, progression and completion.

MRG has five doctoral students working on film music, reality TV, reggae social history, music copyright, and one composition-based PhD. There was one completion in 2007 by Eacott. CREAM has 25 students and 8 completions since 2001. There was significant growth from 2003-04 as a result of the introduction of a scholarships policy. CREAM provides two internal scholarships per year (three year bursary and fee waiver). All students can apply for up to £1000 for help with practice, fieldwork or dissemination expenses. External funding sources include the AHRC, Overseas Research Student Awards, funding bodies in overseas countries.

Alongside more traditional theory-based work, the doctoral programme is at the cutting edge of practice-based research, supported by the active contribution of the large community of composers, artists and researchers. CREAM has a well-established research training programme, including weekly seminars, lectures and bi-annual symposia. It is at the forefront of debates on moving image practice-based PhDs, organising, with Goldsmiths, a pioneering HEA-funded symposium in 2005. CREAM subsequently became a founder member of AV PhD, the AHRC PhD training network for moving image PhDs, alongside RCA, Birkbeck and Goldsmiths. Doctoral students also share further training and research symposia with RCA. MRG researchers take part in this training programme.

### **Other Research Activities**

Activities not included in RA2 highlight each researcher's record in composition and performance, publications, and collaboration with diverse cultural arenas.

The Shirley Thompson Ensemble is a vehicle for her compositional exploration and development. These public performances combine music with dance and the spoken word. Thompson revised scores for the *Ensemble* for performances at the Peabody Institute in Baltimore, USA (2007). She has been invited to submit a score to be considered for the opening theme for the 2012 Olympics. Other compositions and performances include 'Smiling Warrior' for Male Voice, Violin, Piano, a tribute to cultural and political activist John La Rose (1<sup>st</sup> performance, March 2007, Camden Arts Centre). 'St George's Song' for SATB & Piano was commissioned to commemorate the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of St George's University (2006, Duration: 4' 30"). Between October 2003 and March 2004 Thomson devised, produced and directed the 'Newham Symphony Multi-Media Spectacular', a series of workshops for 450 pupils from schools in London's East End resulting in four staged performances at the Stratford Circus in March (Duration: 1' 20"). Thomson was featured in the BBC2 documentary, *Diverse Orchestras* which showcased four composers working innovatively with the orchestral form (May 2004).

As a leading practitioner in free improvisation, Beresford is involved in a wide variety of musical projects in venues throughout Europe, Japan and North America, playing piano, trumpet, euphonium, bass guitar and low grade electronics as well as producing, composing, and programming. His television

scores include the title sequence and underscores for Channel 4's Derren Brown series (2001 to present) and the titles and underscore for Jeremy Wooding's Channel 4 documentary 'Rappin' at the Royal' (2005). Beresford played on the Ghostigital CD 'In God We Trust' (2006); 'Trap Street' (2002); '3 Pianos' (2001); 'I Shall Become a Bat' including duos with John Butcher and Richard Sanderson (2001); and 'Ointment' with Tania Chen (2003). 'Le Chronatoscaphé', an illustrated book with three CDs, includes music by Beresford. As well as writing sleeve notes, notably for Emanem Records. He contributed the introduction to 'The Sound of Squirrel Meals – the Work of Lol Coxhill' (Blackpress 2006). Beresford's radio work includes a Radio 3 documentary on Han Bennink, as well as 25 video interviews with musicians and critics for BBC online about drummer/composer John Stevens (2001-03). Perchard has had more than 100 reviews and articles on jazz, hip hop, modern composition and other music published in *The Wire* since 2001, as well as articles in *Cadence*, *Coda*, *Contemporary Music News*. Educational work, includes transcriptions, analysis and commentary on various forms of popular music, published in the Edexcel GCSE Anthology of Music (2002) and the Aqa GCSE Anthology (2003).

In addition to his digital artefacts, Eacott has produced several theatre and film compositions, including the score and sound design for a re-working of the show 'Gormenghast' with the David Glass Ensemble (national tours in 2006-07), and musical arrangements for the film *Alfie* (2003). Eacott also played trumpet in Damon Albarn's opera *Monkey: Journey to the West* (2007). He continues to work with the Royal Shakespeare Company as a musical arranger and advisor. Kennett's chapter 'Is Anybody Listening?' in *Analysing Popular Music* (Cambridge University Press 2003) examined a Drum and Bass tune to elucidate the 'cultural-acoustic model'.

After 2008, Thompson will produce a new programme of improvisatory compositions, while Beresford will continue improvisational performances with artists and musicians. Perchard will co-edit the journal *Popular Music History* from 2008. Kennett will publish the monograph *The Harmonic Species of Frank Bridge* which assesses the position of an English composer between the two World Wars.

## **Structure**

### **Intellectual Infrastructure**

Media, Arts and Design provides support for research and knowledge transfer across the five departments in the school. MRG researchers are based in the Department of Music. The School Research Director oversees the strategic and financial aspects of research activities, liaising with University, School and departmental committees, and representing the interests of staff and students at the School senior management group. The leader of MRG is a member of the Director of CREAM's committee of research group leaders. The Director of the CREAM Doctoral Programme (ten Brink) manages all aspects of research student training and supervision. In recognition of the growth of research in the School after RAE 2001, a dedicated campus

research office was established with two full-time administrators who provide support for funded projects, publications, conferences and seminars, and doctoral training and supervision.

The CREAM committee manages day-to-day activities, interim workshops, annual awaydays, to plan the strategic direction of the research culture, and the individual and collaborative work within the research groups. The intellectual infrastructure supports the development of staff expertise. For example, a strategic outcome of an awayday to create a cross-disciplinary culture was the School's appointment of several senior/junior positions in MRG, shaping new intellectual directions in composition and performance and music sociology.

### **Wider context of research infrastructure**

The central themes characterising Westminster's music research are its emphases on contemporary composition and live performance, and music history. These connect with international movements such as Documenta X1, whose focus is cross disciplinary. MRG's collaborations with artists, musicians, choreographers, and with cultural institutions and industry partners include Beresford's long-term collaboration with Christian Marclay, and Thomson's work with the Sadler's Wells which resulted in international tours and awards. As founding members of leading orchestras and ensembles key researchers are active in developing innovative styles, and influencing cultural heritages and shaping debates about classical and modern music.

### **The operational infrastructure**

Quality assurance in MRG is overseen by the School's Research Director. The School's objectives are to support colleagues in developing their research activities and producing high quality research; to maintain links between research and the curriculum; to support and develop knowledge transfer activities; and to maintain high quality research degree supervision and training. To meet these objectives, staff are given relief from teaching; sabbaticals; expenses; support for funding applications; and support and training for supervisors and students.

These aims harmonise with those of the University-wide committees for quality assurance, including the Research Committee, the Research Degrees Committee, Ethics Committee, and Academic Council. There is a University code of practice for researchers and doctoral students, and guidelines and regulations on research, consultancy and knowledge transfer, as well as doctoral research and training provision. The Academic Registrar's office oversees all quality issues for the University. The QAA praised the quality of doctoral students and training provision in the University (2006). The Scholarships Committee was winner of the Times Higher Education Supplement Award 2005 for Outstanding Support for Overseas Students.

Students and staff have 24-hour access to a large library of books, journals, audio materials and music recordings, as well as IT resources and specialist facilities for music, media and the creative arts. A team of technicians and

library and computing staff provide support and training all year round. These resources and support are available to research fellows and visiting scholars. Doctoral students have designated base rooms with computers, networking, equipment and studios.

Faculty Records is a unique teaching and learning resource, offering all music students and staff experience of working with a record label. The project is funded by the University and highlights MRG's close links with industry and commitment to knowledge exchange.

## **Esteem**

### **Recognition**

MRG's research profile derives from the reputation of its members in academic, music and arts arenas, cultural institutions and public venues around the world.

Academic recognition includes Thompson's appointment as Artist in Residence at Lowell, Massachusetts and Virginia in 2006, and her master class at the 'Making Score' conference at ASCAP in New York, involving students from Yale, New York City University and the Peabody Institute. Eacott was Artist in Residence for Atlantic Centre for the Arts, Florida, (2001), and in 2003 was keynote speaker at Cybersonica Symposium 2003.

Thompson achieved public recognition with PUSH which received an Olivier Award, The South Bank Show Dance Award, the Time Out Award and the National Dance Awards. PUSH has toured to the major dance and concert venues across Europe and North America, including the Théâtre Des Champs Elysées in Paris and the City Center on Broadway, New York. Reviews include *The Times*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, *The Observer*, *The New York Times* and *The Village Voice*, among dozens of mainstream European publications.

Beresford conducted the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, and London Symphony Orchestra. Thompson conducted the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and *Sweet Freedom* was performed in the Queen Elizabeth Hall as the opening work at the Freedom and Culture conference. Thompson is a founder member of Women in Music, and advisor to the Association of British Composers and the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

### **Influence**

MRG researchers shape debates on experimental composition and performance, cultural heritage, and music history. Beresford, Thompson and Riley have all been featured in BBC and Channel 4 documentaries. Thompson's symphony *New Nation Rising* was the first to be composed and conducted by a woman in Europe in the last 30 years. The Shirley Thompson Ensemble is at the forefront of music, dance and spoken word artistic practice and performance. Beresford set up the London Improvisers Orchestra which



is at the forefront of experimental improvisation. Perchard established a new data set on jazz history.

MRG's involvement in the cross-institutional journal *The Art of Record Production* highlights its engagement with the music industry. Perchard was an invited speaker at International Leeds Jazz Conference and Guelph Jazz Festival Colloquium (Canada). Kennett is contributing editor for Open Space journal and referee for *Popular Music*, *Music Analysis*, *Septet*. His article 'Is Anybody Listening?' was widely reviewed, including *Music & Letters*, *Notes*, *British Journal of Music Education*, *Popular Music*. He is a forensic musicology expert witness for music copyright trials heard at High Court.

New collaborations with universities have been established through CREAM's founding role in PhD by practice (in association with RCA, Goldsmith's College). Members have refereed projects and programmes for AHRC and Nestor.

### **Benefit**

The context of a music and arts tradition has created a sustainable environment for MRG researchers to compose and perform innovative music, conduct orchestras and ensembles and produce critical writing. Internal and external funding for CREAM enables staff to contribute to its international reputation, while academic and industry collaborations with a variety of user groups creates opportunities for engagement with the wider world, including Britain, Europe, Japan and America. MRG researchers have benefited from collaboration and sponsorship from South Bank, Sadler's Wells, Barbican, LSO, CBSO, RPO, J. Hudson and Co, ACE.

Building on the reputation of commercial music at Westminster, with its combination of research, practice and industry professionals, MRG can achieve its goal of becoming an international centre for contemporary music.