

ConservatoiresUK

Shared PGR Training Schedule 25-26

Wed 15 Oct 2025

Sound Heritage/Queer Music Histories

Prof Wiebke Thormahlen, Royal Northern College of Music/ Dr Sarah Whitfield, Royal College of Music

In this session, we will consider two projects, Prof Wiebke Thormählen's work in sound heritage and Dr Sarah K. Whitfield's work exploring queer music histories. We will explore how traditional music histories have worked, looking at common and longstanding methods for conducting research. We will consider how shifts to understanding the performance of music as an ephemeral event has changed music histories, and look at other recent provocations to accepted approaches in music histories. We'll consider the recent examples of methodologies that have sought to uncover and address 'lost histories', and consider the ethical and practical issues facing historians engaging in this work.

- Collectively review common and longstanding methods for conducting research in music history and for writing music histories
- Look at recent provocation to these models
- Review recent examples of methodologies in minoritised histories
- Consider the ethical and practical issues facing historians engaging in this work

Wed 22 Oct 2025

Autoethnography

Prof John Habron-James, Royal Northern College of Music

This session will introduce you to the fundamental principles of autoethnography, an approach to first-person research that connects the personal to the cultural in meaningful, accessible and evocative ways. After a brief historical overview, we will locate autoethnography in relation to research methodology, epistemology and methods. The session will offer examples of autoethnographic topics, writing and presentational styles (including multi-media) and approaches to generating and handling data. The session will conclude with a discussion of some common critiques of autoethnographic practice as well as the interesting and important ethical challenges that the approach brings.

Tue 11 Nov 2025

Critical Editing in Practice

Dr Carrie Churnside and Profs Shirley Thompson, Graham Sadler, Christopher Dingle and Jamie Savan, Royal Birmingham Conservatoire

This session will be led by members of RBC's Forum for Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Music: Carrie Churnside, Shirley Thompson, Graham Sadler, Christopher Dingle and Jamie Savan. It will examine the scholarly practice of preparing critical editions of musical scores, including the challenges of working with manuscript and printed sources, drawing on worked

examples from recent and current projects undertaken by the team of presenters. As well as supporting the work of aspiring editors, the session will also be of particular benefit to those working on related issues of historical performance practice. Further, follow-up sessions can be arranged, tailored to the specific challenges of students' projects.

Wed 12 Nov 2025

Enterprise – Turning your Ideas into New Ventures

Dr Michelle Phillips, Royal Northern College of Music

This session will explore how our ideas, knowledge, and work can have value to different people and groups. We will discuss and try out different tools that are used widely in training researchers to think about how they might make their expertise useful and relevant to people who want and need that new knowledge. I've facilitated on the University of Cambridge's 'Enterprisers' programme for PhD researchers, and taken part in and been an invited speaker at the University of Manchester's 'Researcher to Innovator' course run by their Masood Entrepreneurship Centre, also aimed primarily at PhD researchers. I'll bring the best bits of these along, learning from leading our RNCM StART Entrepreneurship Project, and some other well established sector models and frameworks.

Fri 16 Jan 2026

Collaborative workshop as research method

Profs Neil Heyde/ David Gorton, Royal Academic of Music

'Composer-Performer Collaboration' has in the last 20 years become a shorthand for describing research that encompasses a very wide range of approaches. By identifying some of the challenges that arise when documenting aspects of the musical workshop, and by setting out areas that we see have special potential for elaboration, this session aims to help researchers sift the potentially vast volume of material that an active documentation generates. How can we begin to establish thresholds for significance?

Neil Heyde will explore some of the ways in which workshop data can be seen to help model musical practice of the past where this kind of material is lost, and consider how different kinds of responsibilities are identified and shared/distributed through the workshop process. David Gorton will approach the workshop as a musical laboratory in which ideas embedded in a composition can be tested and explored. Such a perspective provokes a need to go beyond documentation and to apply qualitative research methodologies to the data as a means for finding the unexpected.

Wed 21 Jan 2026

Practice-Based Research in Music Composition

Prof Sam Hayden, Trinity Laban

The purpose of this session is to introduce CUK PGR music students to relevant contemporary critical debates around the idea of composition as 'research' (see for example the John Croft and Camden Reeves interventions in the journal *Tempo*). Other aims include: gaining an understanding of the concept of practice-based research in relation to musical composition; gaining an understanding of how to formulate a composition project as a practice-based research project; gaining an understanding of practice-based research methodologies and iterative research processes in relation to composition, with an introduction to some indicative

examples. Please note that although this session is aimed primarily at composers, it is also relevant to other creative practitioners wishing to gain more understanding of practice-based research methodologies.

Thu 29 Jan 2026

Interdisciplinary research in the arts (music and dance)

Dr Bethany Whiteside and Dr Emily Doolittle, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Bethany Whiteside and Emily Doolittle work in the interdisciplinary fields of Dance Health and Zoomusicology, respectively, and have long standing research collaborations with various scholars, partners, and organisations including current and former PhD students. This session will focus on the benefits, challenges, and practicalities inherent to working in this way and some of the key learning that has informed continued ways of working. Specific projects that will be drawn upon will be informed by Bethany's longstanding partnership with Scottish Ballet, Scotland National Dance Company, and Emily's co-leadership of the SHARE (Science, Humanities and Arts Research Exchange) initiative with the University of St Andrews.

Mon 23 Feb 2026

Qualitative Interviews: Unpacking positionality, ethics, content and environment

Dr James Lea and Professor Helena Gaunt, Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama

This session will open up the art and craft of qualitative interviews, bringing together multiple questions relating to ownership, co-creation and developing content. The session will draw upon Helena Gaunt's extensive work using qualitative interviews as a research method. The session will be of particular benefit to anyone considering using an interview or narrative history approach.

Wed 11 Mar 2026

Writing critical commentaries in artistic research

Dr Adam Swayne, Royal Northern College of Music

This session will identify and explore potential angles for creative practitioners engaged in artistic research. These include compositional background, source materials, musical content and performance considerations. Issues of scholarly presentation will also be addressed, including the identification and adherence to 'house style' (which may vary according to context).

By way of example, I shall present a recent critical commentary for Ferdinand Ries's *Grand concert pour le pianoforte*. Drawing upon my work on this piece as a performer as well as an editor, I aim to uncover the wealth of possibilities that emerge from critical engagement required of artistic research, alongside similarly creative ways of documenting the process.

Mon 16 Mar 2026

Conjunctural Analysis

Dr Tom Six, Central School of Speech and Drama

This session will explore the methodology of conjunctural analysis as developed primarily in the work of Stuart Hall. We will examine Hall's intellectual development as a disloyal disciple of Marx, and his articulation of the analytic concept of the conjuncture through his engagement with the work of Raymond Williams, Althusser and Gramsci and his reflections on his own colonial, Caribbean formation and subsequent experience of life as an immigrant and a Black intellectual. We will then discuss how the concept of the conjuncture can be used in the present, drawing on the example of *Empire's Endgame*, and how you can deploy it in your projects.

Wed 06 May 2026

Phenomenology as a Research Methodology in Practice-Based Research

Prof Jonathan Clark, Trinity Laban

This session has a twofold intention. The first is to give a precise introduction to the disciplinary specialism of phenomenology in its classical exposition (Husserl, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty) and its core concepts. The second is to firmly situate the main methodology of phenomenology as a study of varieties of experience within aesthetics and performing arts research. The aim is to show how phenomenological methods can form fruitful intersections with practice-as-research methodologies, particularly in relation to research questions that centre on the experiences of performing arts practitioners, collaborators and audiences.

Mon 18 May 2026

Ethics of Collaboration

Dr Karen Wise, Dr Biranda Ford and Jo Chard, Guildhall School of Music & Drama

In this session Karen Wise, Biranda Ford and Jo Chard will look at the ethical implications of various collaborative practices. This will take in collaborative research methodologies, collaborative artistic practices and IP policy. Guildhall IP documents will be looked at as an example, but please take a look at the IP policies of your own institution before the session if this is an area of interest.