



**New Pathways  
in  
Improvisation@MDX**

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in  
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directed by  
Professor Benjamin Dwyer

live-streamed  
4 & 5 November 2021



Middlesex  
University  
London

register online

with

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### Welcome...

'Life in a complex world...requires the ability to improvise—to deal with, and indeed to create, the unforeseen, the surprise...the Latin root of improvisation is *improvisus*, or 'unforeseen'. (Alfonso Montouri)

You are all very welcome to this two-day event ***New Pathways in Improvisation@MDX***. As Professor of Music at Middlesex University, I am delighted to direct this hybrid conference-performance happening, which features some of the most renowned academics and performing artists currently working in improvisation.

What makes this event more exciting is its cross-disciplinary nature exploring the areas of music, dance, theatre, and visual and sonic arts. Today, improvisation draws in many arts practices but it also reaches out to the social sciences and the politics of real life. It is widely acknowledged that problems, be they cultural, political or social, can no longer be solved by any single approach or method. Creative improvisers are leading the way in finding solutions that are fluid and inter-relational. This event explores ways by which improvisation, as an interdisciplinary happening, can create unique modes of knowledge transfer, contribute to the formation of translative epistemologies (Roth) and thus offer innovative solutions to social, political and even philosophical challenges currently facing us.

Whether you are a student, an academic or just interested in the performing arts, ***New Pathways in Improvisation@MDX*** offers fourteen fascinating lecture-performances combining theory and practice, cross-disciplinarity and intercultural studies that I am sure will be highly stimulating. The event situates **Middlesex University's Faculty of Arts and Creative Industries** at the forefront of research and practice in improvisation in the UK and internationally. I look forward to seeing you on the 4th & 5th of November. Don't forget to register online at: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/new-pathways-in-improvisation-mdx-tickets-180347914467>

# New Pathways in Improvisation @MDX

Day 1 Thursday 4th November

10.00-10.15

Welcome and Introduction  
Professor Benjamin Dwyer

10.15-10.45

Presentation & Performance Viktória Šinkorová:  
The Liminal Spaces of Notated-improvised Music—Barry Guy's  
*The Blue Shroud*, Nick Roth's *Flocking III* and Viktória  
Šinkorová's *After Dowland*

Lucia Švecová (conductor, voice) & Scorched Earth Ensemble:  
Viktória Šinkorová: *After Dowland*

10.45-11.30

Presentation & Performance Jenn Kirby:  
Instrument Design in Improvised Live Electronics

Jenn Kirby:  
Improvisation and The Phonetics Project

11.30-12.15

Presentation/Performance Jane Bacon & Vida Midgelow  
Breath Bone

12.15-13.00

Presentation/Performance Kate Ryder (prepared piano)  
Preparing for the Unprepared

# New Pathways in Improvisation @MDX

Day 1 Thursday 4th November

14.00-14.45

**Presentation & Performance** Benjamin Dwyer:  
**Piercing the Umwelt: Towards a Transcendental  
Philosophy of Improvisation**

Benjamin Dwyer & Olesya Zdorovetska: *Umwelt VI*

**Q&A and Film** Benjamin Dwyer talks to Pete Gomes about his film  
*KnowingUnknowing*

14.45-15.30

*KnowingUnknowing*: an improvised film by Pete Gomes featuring  
improvising dancer Helen Kindred & improvising guitarist-composer  
Benjamin Dwyer

15.30-16.30

**Presentation/Performance** Charlotte Hug (viola, voice)  
**Sonicons—Transdisciplinary Approaches to Improvisation**



# New Pathways in Improvisation @MDX

Day 2 Friday 5th November

## Session Three

10.00-10.45

**Presentation/Performance** Olesya Zdorovetska:  
*Undefined Pleasure*

10.45-11.30

**Presentation & Performance** Robert Vesty  
**Seven Scenes in Tandem—Adventures with Voicing Dancer**

Kate Ryder (prepared piano) & Robert Vesty:  
*Seven Scenes in Tandem—Adventures with Voicing Dancer*

11.30-12.15

**Q&A & Performance** Kate Ryder talks to Tansy Spinks about:  
**Materiality in Sound**

Kate Ryder (prepared piano) & Tansy Spinks (electric violin):  
*SoundMateriality*

12.15-13.00

**Performance** Charlotte Hug, Benjamin Dwyer, Nick Roth  
**Improvised Trio Performance**

# New Pathways in Improvisation @MDX

Day 2 Friday 5th November

14.00-15.00

## Session Four

Presentation & Performance live from the Orpheus Institute (Ghent)

Jonathan Impett & Juan Parra Cancino:

**The Nature of Material in Improvisation with Live Electronics**

Jonathan Impett (trumpet & electronics) & Juan Parra Cancino  
(electric guitar & electronics)

Jonathan Impett: *Three States of Wax*

15.00-15.45

Presentation/Performance Nick Roth:  
Improvisation as Embodied Knowledge

15.45-16.30

Online interactive Q&A

Chaired by Benjamin Dwyer

16.30...

## Session Five

Jam session...

with Huai-Wen Chang, Benjamin Dwyer, Charlotte Hug, Jenn Kirby, Nick Roth, Kate Ryder, Scorched Earth, Viktória Šinkorová, Tansy Spinks, Rob Vesty, Olesya Zdorovetska and Zhibo Zhao



Dance artist/academic, Jungian analyst, focusing trainer and teacher of the discipline of Authentic Movement, **Jane Bacon** is Professor Emerita of Dance and Somatics at the University of Chichester. She has over 30 years of experience facilitating and lecturing in dance and performance, and over 15 years' experience as a psychotherapist and Authentic Movement teacher. Her installation work has been shown internationally and she publishes her research in professional, online and academic performance and psychotherapy journals. Her work in both the arts and psychotherapy focuses on finding ways in which we can 'articulate something' of and from a creative and personal process. Her performance/installation work combines her understanding of, and respect for, conscious-embodied awareness with somatic practices such as Authentic Movement and Focusing. Recent works include: Scratch, A Choreographic Conversation; Skript, a micro-installation; Sitting:Walking:Practice and Myths and Stories by Her. She is committed to challenging contemporary myths of dancing, spirituality, womanhood and feminism in all her endeavours.



**Benjamin Dwyer** is a guitarist, composer, writer and educator. His work as an interpreter of contemporary notated music and as a free improviser is recognized internationally. His music is championed by leading artists, ensembles and orchestras including guitarists Fabio Zanon and Smaro Gregoriadou, the Fidelio Trio, Barry Guy, Maya Homburger, the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, the Irish Chamber Orchestra, the Santos Symphony Orchestra and the Callino Quartet. Major works such as *Umbilical* and *what is the word* are released on Diatribe Records, the latter was launched at the Dublin New Music Festival at the National Concert Hall in 2019. His latest work, *SacrumProfanum*, will be premiered alongside its Farpoint Recordings launch at Chapter Arts, Cardiff, and live-streamed to Dublin, Belfast and Galway in February 2022.

Noted for his cross-disciplinary work, Dwyer is a member of TIN—the Transdisciplinary Improvisation Network; and he is founder of Cotermious—a collective merging dance, music, film and philosophy in its projects.

As a free improviser, Dwyer has performed with renowned musicians including Barry Guy, Garth Knox, Peter Evans, Lucas Niggli, Steve Swell, Augustí Fernández and Savina Yannatou. He is the guitarist with Barry Guy's Blue Shroud Band with which he has performed regularly throughout Europe including at the Frankfurt Opera House, Krakow Autumn Jazz Festivals of 2014, 2016 and 2022, and at the EFG London Jazz Festival 2019.

Dwyer is a member of Aosdána (Ireland's state academy of artists) and an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music, London (ARAM). He earned a PhD from Queen's University and is currently Professor of Music at Middlesex University. Dwyer is Director of New Pathways in Improvisation@MDX.





**Charlotte Hug** is an internationally renowned composer-performer, improviser, visual artist, media artist, and educator. With her unique site-specific, musical-visual performances and her Son-Icons Visual Music, she has created a new genre of transdisciplinary, spatial-scenic music and art. Her intermedial compositions and spatial scores with Son-Icons and Interaction Notation (IAN), which Hug herself developed, offer compositional settings the structure of which are formed by the sensory magnet of the Son-Icons. At the same time, they provide the scope for precise interdisciplinary and intercultural interactions, which are continually developing.

Hug is a musician of the extremes and is constantly expanding the possibilities of her instrument. She has developed the soft bow technique with which she can play up to 8 voices on the instrument, and so reinvents the viola. As a vocalist, she sings over four octaves, from the undertones to the highest falsetto. With vibrating glottal beats, multi-phonics and articulations close to speech, Hug oscillates between the human voice and a hybrid siren song. She also specialises in the sound mixtures of viola and voice; thus, her unmistakably idiosyncratic tonal language.



**Jonathan Impett** is an early-music specialist in trumpet, a composer, and a free improviser on electric trumpet and live electronics. He is also Director of Research at the Orpheus Institute, Ghent, and Associate Professor at Middlesex University. Jonathan's professional and research activities cover many aspects of contemporary musical practice, as a trumpet player, composer and theorist. His research is concerned with the discourses and practices of contemporary musical creativity, particularly the nature of the contemporary technologically-situated musical artefact. His work in the spaces between composition and improvisation has led to continuous research in the areas of interactive systems and interfaces.



**Jenn Kirby** is a composer, performer and music technologist. She is Lecturer in Electronic Music and Technology at Goldsmiths, University of London. Her output includes contemporary instrumental composition, electroacoustic music and experimental-pop. Jenn's work often explores humour and theatre. Her music has been described as having a 'sense of adventure and experimentalism'. Jenn has been commissioned by Kirkos Ensemble, Glasshouse Ensemble, and Ensemble Entropy, among others. She has undertaken residencies with Cove Park, soundSCAPE Festival and National Theatre Wales. Her performance work is centred around hybrid instrument design, building software, re-purposing hardware, and processing improvised vocalisations.



**KnowingUnknowning** is an improvised duet in triptych form created by dancer Helen Kindred and guitarist Benjamin Dwyer. Improvising filmmaker Pete Gomes joined them in a performance in which the director-as-camera operator became an integral element of the improvisation transforming the work from a duet into a trio. The film *KnowingUnknowning* is a demonstration of the combined improvisations of dancer, guitarist and filmmaker.

It was selected to be part of the Lightmoves International Festival of Screendance in Limerick in 2019 and was released on Farpoints Recordings in the same year.

**Helen Kindred** is a dance-artist and scholar, co-Artistic Director of DancingStrong Movement Lab with Adesola Akinleye and a Senior Lecturer in Dance and Professional Practice, teaching across the undergraduate and post-graduate Dance, Arts & Creative Industries programmes at Middlesex University. Kindred has toured internationally as a performer and presented her own choreographic work at venues, festivals and conferences over the past twenty five years alongside published work in text form more recently within the fields of Dance and Somatic scholarship. She believes in dance as a mode of being in the world and fuels this belief through education and performance contexts. Kindred completed her PhD at Middlesex University which developed from her long-standing practice of Bartenieff Fundamentals and examined relationships between somatic practice and improvised performance-making, exploring the between-ness of body-space-environment.

**Pete Gomes** is an award-winning, London-based artist and filmmaker who makes transdisciplinary work with moving image. His recently completed doctoral research at Middlesex University develops a new methodological model for ensemble improvisational filmmaking. His most recent work was an online improvised performance, '99 Revolutions', for flute, camera and turntable performed live from his studio at Studio Voltaire in October 2021. He is currently completing a feature length experimental film drama 'Shalott' filmed on location in Berlin in 2020. He has collaborated extensively with artists and companies such as Shobana Jeyasingh Dance, Michael Nyman, Errollyn Wallen, Jocelyn Pook, Donnacha Dennehy, Scanner, Throbbing Gristle, John Wynne, Funki Porcini, Cornershop and Furtherfield. His films and performance works have been screened internationally in venues such as Tate Modern, Tate Britain, Institute of Contemporary Art, Whitechapel Gallery, Dance Umbrella, Gimpel Fils, Barcelona Centre for Contemporary Culture, Stedelijk Museum, bak.spc, Vienna Museum of Contemporary Art, Leeds International Film Festival, Pixelache, Sonar, Royal Opera House, South Bank Centre, London, ABC Australia and Channel Four.



Dance artist/academic, **Vida L. Midgelow**, joined Middlesex University as Professor in Dance and Choreographic Practices in 2012 where she leads the postgraduate research provision in the Faculty of Arts and Creative Industries. Vida completed her doctoral research at Surrey University, and has over 25 years' experience facilitating and lecturing in performance. Her movement practice and research are grounded in release-based and somatic approaches; she is also a qualified yoga practitioner. Her movement and video works have been shown internationally, and her research is published extensively in professional, online and academic journals. As a movement artist/researcher, her work currently focuses upon artistic research methods, somatic approaches to dance training, improvisation and articulating choreographic processes. Recent performance works include: *BreathBone*, *Skript* and the performative lecture 'Everywhere and Nowhere'.



**Juan Parra Cancino** studied composition at the Catholic University (Chile) and sonology at the Royal Conservatory of The Hague. Part of several ensembles related to Guitar Craft—a school founded by Robert Fripp—he is a regular collaborator with artists such as Brice Soniano, Richard Craig and the ensemble KLANG. Juan is founder-member of the computer and percussion trio Electronic Hammer, and of Wiregriot—a voice and electronics ensemble. Juan is a Fellow in Artistic Research at the Orpheus Institute in Ghent where his research focuses on performance practice in computer music.



**Nick Roth** is a saxophonist, improviser, composer, producer and educator. His work seeks the liberation of improvisation from composition, the poetic syntax of philosophical enquiry, and the function of music as translative epistemology. Roth's curious predisposition and a steadfast refusal to accept the existence of boundaries between the real and the imaginary, has led to engagement with scientists from such diverse fields as mathematical biology, astrophysics, orchidology, and many others. Simultaneously subsumed by an insatiable appetite for literature, many of his compositions explore the symbiotic resonance of language as sound and symbol. His work is an investigation into how we can come to know through the art of music.



**Kate Ryder's** wide-ranging experience as a pianist encompasses solo work, improvisation and collaborations with leading performers and ensembles in dance, electronics and theatre where she has established herself as a versatile and original performer. Ryder has had many works created for her by composers in the UK and abroad. She has co-founded several ensembles combining the prepared piano with other instruments including the harpsichord, Dan Tranh (Vietnamese zither) and sonic art based in Sweden. She has toured worldwide, and has curated events at London's South Bank Centre for their Massed Piano Weekend and for the Cornelius Cardew Festival. Current research interests include working with augmented instruments and developing new techniques, music and memory (with Dr Marilyn Wyers), and researching the music of transatlantic women composers.





**Scorched Earth** is a free-improvisation ensemble that was founded by Middlesex University music students in 2016. Student-led, the ensemble is a fluid group and explores various types of free improvisation, graphic and visual scores. Extending beyond music, it collaborates regularly with dancers and visual artists, and it interfaces with electronics. It is currently directed by MDX graduate Viktória Šinkorová.



A First-class Honours graduate of Middlesex University, **Viktória Šinkorová** is a composer and classical guitarist. She has a particular interest in free improvisation and in the liminal spaces of notated and improvised music, which is the focus of her ongoing research. In developing her research, she has worked on a one-to-one basis with composer-improvisors Nick Roth, Benjamin Dwyer and Barry Guy. She is currently director of the free-improvisation ensemble Scorched Earth.



**Tansy Spinks** is an artist, performer, photographer, and sound and video maker closely affiliated to the Creative Research into Sound Arts Practice collective: CRiSAP. Spinks specializes in solo and collaborative sound performances incorporating electric violin, looping devices and objects related to the given performance space; and she has a particular interest in materiality in sound. She has performed in venues such as the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Camden Arts Centre, Brighton Fringe Festival and Wimbledon Space among others; and her site-specific performance spaces include a sea fort off the north Kent coast, staircases, lifts, a market arcade and on top of a windmill. She has exhibited widely both at home and abroad, and is a Senior Lecturer in Fine Art at Middlesex University.



A First-class Honours graduate of Jesus College Oxford, **Lucia Švecová** currently teaches at the Purcell School for Young Musicians. She continues her studies at the London Conducting Academy. Active as a conductor, organist and arranger, Švecová's most recent projects include a filmed performance of an international production of César Cui's *Feast in Time of Plague* with the Oxford Opera Society, for which she arranged the music for reduced orchestra. She is currently working on an opera-scenes project with the Oxford Opera Society, and on a youth opera production of Hans Krása's *Brundibár* at the Purcell School. This will be her debut conducting the Scorched Earth ensemble.



**Robert Vesty** is Senior Lecturer on the Theatre Arts Performance programme at Middlesex University. He maintains a performance practice that draws on a training in acting, and a background in dance, particularly improvisatory practice. Vesty performs regularly in dance contexts using improvisation as a tool for making, often including voice and poetic text as part of the immediately choreographed material. He is a member of the five-strong performance collective anthologyofamess. Vesty is a certified practitioner of the Feldenkrais Method, which heavily informs a pedagogical practice largely focused on movement/training for performers.



**Olesya Zdorovetska** is a powerful and innovative voice in new music, fluent in a diverse range of disciplines and working internationally across numerous fields of activity. As a solo artist and collaborator, she crosses the fields of improvised, jazz, Afro-Caribbean, contemporary classical and experimental music; and she regularly composes for film and theatre. Zdorovetska is a founder of the Ukrainian-Irish Cultural Platform and co-curator of Phonica—an experimental music and poetry platform in Dublin.



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