Sally Macarthur – Senior Lecturer, Music
The Power of the Virtual in Music Scholarship: Composing a Women’s Musical Future as a ‘Becoming-Other-Than-Itself’

The feminist research endeavour in music, among other political agenda, aimed to improve the visibility of women composers in the concert hall. In the 1990s, a wealth of research became available. In the first decade of the twenty-first century, however, all that had been previously achieved faded away: scholars seemed to lose interest in women’s music destined for the concert hall. Any number of reasons might be given, including the resistance of some researchers to aligning themselves with music that emerges from the elitist concert hall tradition and/or to the threat of extinction facing classical music writ large. Overriding any single factor, however, as I will argue in this paper, is the static way in which the research on women’s ‘new’ music has been conducted. The paradox of this work is its unavoidable replication of the past by envisioning the future from the standpoint of the present. Such work inevitably reinforces the status quo. While acknowledging that it is impossible to generate new ways of thinking that are entirely disconnected from the old, I will draw on Deleuze, and feminist-Deleuzian scholarship, to offer new possibilities for thought and action. In particular, I will explore the power of the ‘virtual’, suggesting that some women’s music might be understood as a ‘becoming-imperceptible’, in Braidotti’s interpretation, as the process of ‘becoming-other-than-itself’, suspended between the no-longer and the not-yet.

Bruce Crossman – Senior Lecturer, Music
Living Colours: The Mind of the Composer and Spirit in Ma, Nature and Asian-Pacific Materiality

As an Australian-based composer I consider complex hybridity as forming a personal compositional voice in my work that is rooted in the culture of place—the Asia-Pacific. In my compositional practice, mind and spirit give birth to living colours of sound influenced by ideas from: the Japanese concept of ma (Shimosako, 2001), the Chinese literati’s close relationship between nature and art (Chou, 1986; Tang, 2003), identifiable trace elements of traditional East and Southeast Asian sonorities (Lau, 2007), and the Chinese musical literati attitude of a multi-art form aesthetic (Ho, 1997; Chou, 1986). In my music living colours move about as a metaphor and embodiment of spirit and specifically engage with: ma’s exploratory space and shifting colour; the sounds and colours of
East coast Australian bush; and traditional Chinese, Korean, Filipino and Japanese instrumental materials (especially gongs) and modes, as well as, free-ringing vibrations, and several Chinese opera traditions within a visual-sonic gesture aesthetic. I examine the music's emergence through a process of friendship and philosophy grounded in 'lateral thinking' (Capon, 2009), focused by the ‘mind of the artist’ (Yang, 1997), and guided by shifting spirit (Barker, 1985; Chou, 2004) towards a culturally resonant flux (Nuss, 2002) anchored in the Asian-Pacific.

Kate Richards – Head of Program, Masters of Convergent Media, PhD Candidate, School of English, Media and Performing Arts, UNSW.

http://katerichards.net

Are you really t/here? Affect, affordance and vitality in heterotopii of flows

Media artists are increasingly creating experiential works that are opportunities for audiences to engage with spaces and embodiment, processes and systems - affective experiences that touch us pre-cognitively or before signification is brought into play. The event-space is often predicated on audience mobility, and aims to allow for the creation of new relations. There is a demonstrable shift away from reliance on content and signification, towards aesthetics of immersion, vitality affects and embodiment.

Simultaneously, media artists generating affective artworks are influenced by new forms of engagement based on participation and interactivity. Agency should now be understood as a process of participation and becoming rather than a simple facility. It is a calling and an inclination to act not simply a human ‘affordance’.

My research asks: “In an immersive porous heterotopia of flows and particles, how do we understand and create for affordance? Can the affective flows and materials themselves have affordance?”