

Dr Henry McPherson

(Dougal Henry James McPherson, he/him)

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PROFILE / STATEMENT

I'm a composer and improviser from Herefordshire (UK). I work across notated composition, open scores, and interdisciplinary practice, often in collaboration with movement and visual media. My work is rooted in exploring how contemporary performance practices can deepen our relationship with the natural and more-than-human world. I'm especially drawn to woodland and coastal ecosystems as sites of listening, collaboration, and reflection. These landscapes – which in the UK are tangibly shaped by extractive and colonial histories – are central to my work, which combines chamber music, installation, sound art, and audiovisual exploration. Many of my composed works are grounded in close attention to place, and seek to cultivate a sense of kinship with nonhuman life. Some works involve direct sonic engagement with plants, animals, and environments through field recordings or performance strategies; others are more conventionally scored, but still composed in dialogue with ecological processes. I'm interested in how music can hold space for slowness, attention, and care, and how performance might become a form of environmental attunement. As a performer, I'm currently exploring deconstructed piano performance in companion with field recordings, as part of a series of 'Ecollages'. My recent work has been premiered by Scottish Opera (Scot., UK), the Eugene Difficult Music Ensemble (OR, USA), broadcast on BBC Radio 3 (Freeness, Late Junction) and on BBC iPlayer (Uhte, opera-film).

EDUCATION

2019 – 2023

University of Huddersfield

Huddersfield

Doctor of Philosophy (Music, Dance), awarded May 2023

Supported by Collaborative Studentship in Music and Dance in association with Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival (3 years)

Supervisors: Dr. Ben Spatz, Dr. Hilary Elliott, Prof. Philip Thomas, Dr. Claudia Molitor

Research area(s): Transdisciplinarity in performing arts, experimental and improvised music, postmodern theatre dance, improvised dance, applied critical race and queer-feminist theory within music and dance studies, qualitative research, practice-as-research.

2017 – 2018

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Glasgow

Master of Arts (Music, Composition). 25 October 2018.

Supported by Institutional Scholarship (Masters, 1 year).

Composition: Dr. Colin Broom.

Research area(s): Graphic and experimental notation, interdisciplinary collaborative and devised performance, queer theory in artistic practice.

2013 – 2017

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Glasgow

Bachelor of Music (Hons, 1st Class). 4 July 2017.

Supported by Institutional Scholarship (Bachelors, 4 years).

Composition: Prof. Rory Boyle (primary tutor), Dr. Oliver Searle, Dr. Stuart Macrae

Piano: Sinae Lee, Silviya Mihaylova, Saša Gerželj-Donaldson.

Specialist Modules: Arts Leadership and Fundraising; Theory of Creativity.

INSTITUTIONAL ENGAGEMENTS

University of Manchester, Research Associate (Creative Manchester), 2023 – present
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Visiting Lecturer (Free Improvisation), 2021 – present
University of Huddersfield, Part-time Lecturer (Music), 2020 – 2023

GRANTS, AWARDS, and HONOURS

Stadt Wien and AustroMechana Creative Funds (with Florijan Lörnitzo, Vienna, AT), 2022 – 2023
Creative Scotland Four National International Fund, IMMERSIONS residency (UK, NL), 2021 – 2022
Goethe Institute Virtual Partner Residency Fund (with The Noisebringers, Geneva, CH), 2020 – 2021
University of Huddersfield Collaborative PhD Studentship in Music and Dance in Association with Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, 2019 – 2023
New Music Scotland Scottish Awards for New Music (Shortlist Nomination, “Collaboration in New Music”), 2019
Help Musicians Transmission Fund, 2018
Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity Creative Gesture Programme Scholarship (Banff, CA), 2018
Psappha Ensemble Composing for Guzheng Bursary, 2018
Harriet Cohen Memorial Music Trust Harriet Cohen Memorial Music Award, 2018
Royal College of Music Patron’s Prize for Composition, 2017
New Music Scotland Scottish Awards for New Music (Shortlist Nomination, “Best Recorded New Work”), 2017
Scottish Opera Opera Sparks Commission Prize, 2017
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Institutional Scholarship (Masters), 2017 – 2018
BBC Scottish Symphony Club Composition Prize, 2016
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Sibelius Essay Prize, 2016
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Agnes Millar Award for Harmony and Counterpoint, 2015
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Dinah Wolfe Memorial Prize for Composition, 2013 – 14
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Institutional Scholarship (Bachelors), 2013 – 2017

SELECTED CONCERT PREMIERES (composed works)

This, Here, Now (2024), Scores from 'This, Here, Now' performed by students on the Contemporary and Experimental Music programme at the University of Manchester. Martin Harris Centre for Music and Drama., January 2025.

How to play Mariana (2022), performed by Eugene Difficult Music Ensemble (EDME) at EDME Festival, Eugene (OR, USA), October 2024 and January 2025.

How to be a forest (2024), premiered at BonjourClaude Scratch Night, Levenshulme Old Library, Manchester, UK, September 2024. Alternate version premiered at New Xpectations Audio Camp, Aberystwyth Bandstand, with Welsh Experimental Music Alliance, November 2024.

Ecollage_01 (2024), performed at the Firs Botanical Research Centre, University of Manchester, UK, July 2024.

This, Here, Now (2024), Text scores, premiered by Edges Ensemble, at Bath House Galleries, Huddersfield, March 2024

Herbarium (2022-23) *co-composition with F. Lörnitzo*, Premiered by Between Feathers at Conservatoire de Musique de Gatineau (CA), January 2024; and in Europe by Florijan Lörnitzo, Anna Maria Niemiec, Flora Geißelbrecht, Vienna, March 2024

Maud (chamber ver. 2023), Premiered by Scottish Opera Young Company/Chris Gray, Scottish Tour (Glasgow, Stirling, Largs), July 2023

Dancing with Colours (2022), Premiered by Henry McPherson and JoAnne Haines, Mind the Gap Studios, Bradford, December 2022. Dir. JoAnne Haines. Choreo. Rachel Dean/Maia Leeke. Music: Henry McPherson.

snow-constellation (ver. 2, 2019) Premiered by Orestis Tsekouras, Haris Kanellidis, at Muncie (USA, IN), March 2022

Sphagnum (2022) Performed by Henry McPherson and Stanford Cheung, at IKLECTIK, London, January 2022

Sigil (2019) Premiered by Yiyang Zhao, [hybrid performance] Berlin (DE), December 2021

Foutraque (2021), co-composition with the Noisebringers Premiered by Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra, at GIOFest, Centre for Contemporary Arts, Glasgow (UK), November 2021

The abusers of power united will never be defeated (2020) Premiered by The Noisebringers, Colin Frank, Weston Olencki, at *Electric Spring Festival*, University of Huddersfield, February 2020

Ecosystem I (2019) Premiered by Ensemble Academy Koninklijk Conservatorium, at *Dag in der Branding Festival*, Zuiderstrandtheater, Den Haag (NL), June 2019

Parchments (2019) Premiered by Ronan Whittern, Nathan Watts, at Bauhaus-Dessau, Dessau-Roßlau (DE), 2020

Sigil (2019) Premiered by Adam Hall, at Town-Hall, Marquette (USA, MI), June 2019

Pathways (2018) Premiered by 1.5 Months, at Old Hairdressers, Glasgow (UK), 2019

Maud (2017) Premiered by Scottish Opera, Connect Chorus + Orchestra, at Galvanizers, SWG3 Glasgow (UK), June 2018

snow-constellation (2017) Maso Giroto, Samrat Majumder, at Ledger Recital Room (RCS) Glasgow (UK), May 2018

Wintersun (2018) Premiered by Henry McPherson, at Kinnear Centre for Creativity and Innovation, Banff (CA), August 2018

Opening Hands (2018) Premiered by DECIBEL, at Ledger Recital Room (RCS), Glasgow (UK), May 2018

Studies in Black and White (2018) Premiered by Maria Sappho, at Stevenson Hall (RCS), Glasgow (UK), May 2018

Book of Trees (2015) Premiered by Gregor Forbes, at Project Café, Glasgow (UK), June 2018

Hellyys (2018) Premiered by Savage Parade at Silk St Concert Hall, Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London. Commissioned by Robert Reid Allen. Premiered in 'Anthems for Queer Youth'. Nominated for New Music Scotland *Scottish Award for New Music* 'Collaboration in New Music' 2019.

Three Dreams at the End (2017/19) Premiered by Peter Norris, Adam Wallace, at Picture Gallery, Royal Holloway (UK), June 2018

Meditations (2016) Premiered by Glasgow New Music Expedition, Alice Allen, Stevenson Hall (RCS), Glasgow (UK), May 2017

Jane the Quene (2016) Premiered by Leslie Schipa, Maciej Granat, Alexander Gibson Opera School, Glasgow (UK), June 2017

For Sylvia (2017) Premiered by Savage Parade, Nicholson School of Dance, Birmingham (UK), September 2017

Ūhte (2015), BBC SSO (w/ Martyn Brabbins) Opera-Film, Recorded by BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra with Martyn Brabbins, BBC Scotland, K. Reid, E. Mockett, D. Horton. Premiere showing at PLUG 2015. BBC iPlayer May 2017

Death the Mother (2016) Premiered by Ensemble Modern, at Stevenson Hall (RCS), Glasgow (UK), 2017

Tides (2015) Premiered by Rednote Ensemble, at Ledger Recital Room (RCS), Glasgow, March 2016

Kindred (2013) Premiered by Garth Knox, Mieko Kanno, Stevenson Hall (RCS), Glasgow (UK), May 2014

SELECTED FESTIVALS and EXHIBITIONS (mixed media works, performance)

How to be a Forest (audiovisual version) exhibited at Fox Yard Studios, Stowmarket, as part of VISIONS exhibition. November 2024.

Bryophyte No.1 and Moss Verses (2024) [graphic score, text score], shown at *It Could be Better* (Cur. Association de Malfaiteurs), Galerie Analix Forever (Geneva, CH), February 2024

121 Seven Second Nocturnes for Beginners (2022) [audio installation], shown at *Seven Seconds* (Cur. Mark Fearbunce), Fringe Arts Bath, June 2022

More Than One Thing (2021) [audiovisual installation], shown at *Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival*, November 2021

What IIIF 10/10 (2021) [audiovisual performance] shown at *Improvisation Festival*, Guelph (CA)

Tente Saga (2021) [audiovisual installation, performance], shown at *AiiA Festival*, Théâtre St. Gervais (Geneva, CH), October 2021

Various works shown at *IS THE NEW PUNK* (Cur. The Noisebringers, Barbara Polla), Galerie Analix Forever (Geneva, CH)

Revolutionary Thoughts (2020) [digital installation] shown in *The September MASS* [publication], September 2020

Parchments (2020) [graphic score] shown in *The Gathering Zine*, London Design Museum, July 2020

Seals (2020) [sculpture score] shown at *Exhibition by Post* (Cur. Lizzie Donegan), June 2020

Cities, Staircases [graphic scores] (2020) shown at *Coantivirus Digital Exhibition*, NY20+ Gallery (Chengdu, CN), March 2020; and at *A Propos of Aesthetics* (Cur. Arron Hansford), May 2020.

The abusers of power united will never be defeated [performance, sculpture] (2020) shown at *Electric Spring*, University of Huddersfield, February 2020

Pathways (2018) shown at *GEMS Festival* (Cur. Gregor Forbes), November 2019

Collagens//Collages (2018) [installation, performance] shown at *Open Out* (Cur. Iain Morrison), Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, February 2019

Collagens//Collages (2018) shown at *Corpos Abertos* (Cur. Consuelo Bassanesi), Despina Gallery, Rio de Janeiro (BR)

Ūhte (2015) shown at *PLUG 10*, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Glasgow, May 2016

For Sylvia (2017) shown at *FLUID Festival* (Cur. Trevor Pitt), Centrala Café + Nicholson School of Dance, Birmingham, September 2017

Various compositions shown at *PLUG Festival (2013 - 2016)* Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Glasgow.

RECORDING and BROADCAST

Free Improvisations (2024), co-creation with Colin Frank (CA), premiere recording February 2024

Interlunar (2022), Brian Bromberg (USA), Premiere Recording (2023)

capella_dream (from INTIMACIES, 2020), The Sampler, Resonance FM (cur. Colin Frank), Broadcast (Radio, 2023)

Noise at the death of one beloved, part IV (2023), Freeness (prod. Phil Smith), BBC R3, Broadcast (Radio, 2023)

INTIMACIES (2020), Radiophrenia, Broadcast (Radio, 2022)

Tous Ensemble (2021, w/ Brice Catherin), Cartopodes (CH), Broadcast (Radio, 2022)

Duo with Brice Catherin (2021), Late Junction (cur. Verity Sharp), BBC R3, Broadcast (Radio, 2022)

Colagens//Collages (2018), Radiophrenia, Broadcast (Radio, 2022)

Noisebringers Olympics (2021), Mopomoso TV, Broadcast, (Livestream, 2021)

un port une femme my head ukwibukusha half cup sugar (2020), The Noisebringers, Radio Dordogne (FR), Broadcast, (Radio, 2021)

Will I Enjoy Covid 19 If I Haven't Watched the First Eighteen? (2020), The Noisebringers, Chez Roger (FR), Broadcast (Livestream, 2020)

Parchments (2019), Ronan Whittern, Nathan Watts, Premiere Recording (2020)

Crocus (2018), Zilan Liao, Psappa Ensemble, Premiere Recording (2018)

Colagens//Collages (2018), Transmission Radio, Broadcast (Radio, 2018)

Oracle (2018), Ronan Whittern (IE/UK), Premiere Recording (2018)

Ūhte (2015), BBC SSO, BBC Scotland, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Broadcast (BBC iPlayer, 2016)

DISCOGRAPHY

Free Improvisations (2024), with Colin frank [Forthcoming Digital Release, EP]

Henria's Lullabies (2024), Digital Release [EP]

Interlunar (2023) on **Gateless Garden** (Brian Patrick Bromberg, 2024), ShanGORIL La Records (HK/USA) [Contribution to album, Digital and Cassette release]

Vignettes (2022), Instrumental, Digital Release [Single]

The Noisebringers and Colin Frank play Chilli and bonbon in Chililabombwe (2022), Instrumental/Electronics, Digital release [Album]

String Quartet (in memoriam Béla Bartók) (2022), Instrumental, Digital Release [EP]

Moss Gardens No.1 (2022), Instrumental, Digital Release [Single]

Moss Gardens No.2 (2022), Instrumental, Digital Release [Single]

Moss Gardens No.3 (2022), Instrumental, Digital Release [EP]

Noise at the death of one beloved (2022), Instrumental, Digital Release [Album]

INTIMACIES (2020), Instrumental/Electroacoustic, Digital Release [Album]

The Colour of Things (2020), Instrumental, Digital Release [Single]

Kerrera, Inner Hebrides, Scotland (2020) on **Rocks I have Taken (Maria Sappho, 2020)**, Electroacoustic, Digital Release [Contribution to Album]

Palindromes (2020) on **Will you marry us?** (2020), the Noisebringers + Collaborators, Digital Release [Contribution to Multimedia Album]

Pavane (2019), Single, Electroacoustic, Digital Release [Single]

Colagens//Collages (2018), Electroacoustic/Field Recording, Digital Release [Album]

Smoke (fire), Voice, Mountain (2018), Instrumental/Field Recording, Digital Release [Album]

RESIDENCIES and SCHEMES

'It could be better' Residency, Association de Malfaiteurs/Galerie Analix Forever, Geneva (CH), Artist-in-residence, 2024

IMMERSIONS Residency (Creative Scotland Four Nations Fund), Norfolk (UK)/Friesland (NL), Artist-in-residence, 2022

'Let's Move' at Chapeltown Community Nursery, Leeds, Improviser-in-residence, 2022

'The New Together' Residency, NGallery, Athens (GR), Artist-in-residence 2022

Manasamitra 'Not the Fringe Festival', Dewsbury, Artist-in-residence 2021

'IS THE NEW PUNK' Residency, Galerie Analix Forever, Geneva (CH), Artist-in-residence, 2021

Goethe Institute Virtual Partner Residency, UK-DE collaboration, Artist-in-residence 2020

'Open Bodies' Residency, Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh; Despina Gallery, Rio de Janeiro (BR), Artist-in-residence 2018-19

The Creative Gesture: Collective Composition Lab, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Banff (CA), Participant 2018

Psappa 'Composing for Guzheng' Scheme, Manchester, Participant 2018

ACADEMIC PUBLICATION

(forthcoming) McPherson, D.H.J., Dowlen, R., Riley, C., Fleetwood-Smith, B. Creating Aesthetic Objects with People Living With Dementia, in *Care Aesthetics and Dementia Studies: New Directions for Person-Centred Practices* (Keady, J., Kindall, J., Thompson, J. Eds.). (2027). Routledge.

(forthcoming) McPherson, D.H.J., MacGlone, U., MacDonald, R., Eds. (2026). Special Journal Issue on Improvisation and Creative Health. *Journal of Applied Arts and Health* (Intellect).

(in press) McPherson, D.H.J., Sappho, M., Catherin, B. (2025). Making mycorrhizal noise: hypermedia, digitality, and interpreting the parafictional universes of the noisebringers. *Liminalities: journal of performance studies* 20(3).

(in press) McPherson, D.H.J., Sappho, M. (2025). "I would be an improviser even if I was born on the moon" (2025). *Journal for Critical Studies in Improvisation*, University of Guelph (CA).

McPherson, D.H.J. et al. (2025) Music in Mind Training: Producing a Theory of Change model to evaluate the implementation of an improvisation-based music-making training programme for care home staff working with people with dementia. *Dementia: International Journal of Social Research and Practice*.

McAuliffe, J., Valiati, L., McPherson, D.H.J., Harris, T. (2025). Exploring arts-based participatory research approaches in cultural partnerships with Creative Manchester: initial findings report (summary version). [report]

Dowlen, R., McPherson, D.H.J., Swarbrick, C, Hoskin, L., Keady, J., Thompson, J. (2024). Creating and Reliving the Moment: Using musical improvisation and care aesthetics as a lens of connection and self-expression for younger people living with dementia. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. 21, 8, 972.

Dowlen, R., McPherson, D. H. J., Bull, H., Hoskin, L., Thomas, M., Hussain, A., & Keady, J. (2024). Music in Mind: Celebrating ten years of growth. *Journal of Dementia Care*, 32(2), 26–30.

McPherson, D. H. J. (2024). Environmental Reciprocity in Improvising Practice. *Cultures of Sound* (Bailey, R., Ed.). Huddersfield University Press.

McPherson, D. H. J. (2023). Listening like an Improviser: Composing in the Studio with Collaged Acoustic Free Improvisations. *CeReNeM Journal*, No.8. University of Huddersfield.

McPherson, D. H. J. (2023). More Than One Thing: A Practice-Led Investigation into Transdisciplinary Free Improvisation in Sound and Movement [PhD thesis]. University of Huddersfield.

McPherson, D. H. J. (2020). Considering the Fixed Naming of Entities: Towards a Transdisciplinary Approach to Free Improvisation. *CeReNeM Journal*, No.7 (Performing Stuff: Human-Entity Interactions in Contemporary Artistic Practice), 16–40. University of Huddersfield.

For additional information, academic or creative references, please contact:

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