

Institution: City, University of London (City)		
Unit of Assessment: D33 Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies		
Title of case study: Developing New Techniques and Repertoire, and Enhancing Understanding of Contemporary Piano Music		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: January 2010 - July 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s): Ian Pace	Role: Reader in Music	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: since 1/01/10
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 01/08/2013 – 31/12/2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Dr Ian Pace is a world-leading performer of contemporary piano music. His creative practice research has been fundamental to the generation of new repertoire and has significantly influenced audiences' understanding of contemporary piano music. Through new techniques and interpretive strategies Pace has expanded pianistic practice and supported new forms of artistic expression. Pace's close collaborations with numerous composers, extensive public performances, CD releases, international media and broadcasting work, and textual commentary have been used to (1) expand approaches to pianistic technique and musical notation and thus composers' perceptions of the possibilities for the instrument and performer; (2) extensively shape the form and character of contemporary repertoire through detailed co-creation with composers; and (3) significantly influence listening, understanding and perception of contemporary piano music for audiences around the world.</p>		
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Pace's original research encompasses four major areas: developing pianistic technique; influencing the creative process; devising innovative interpretive strategies; and establishing new repertoire.</p> <p>He has long researched new approaches to piano technique, drawing upon the methods of his own teacher György Sándor but extending and modifying these to encompass the new challenges of a heterogeneous contemporary repertoire, often with transcendental pianistic challenges. For example, he has developed his own approaches to the parameter of 'key noise' (and pedal noise), enabling conscious control of aspects of rhythmic and accentual articulation independently of dynamic variation. This is particularly evident in works such as Wieland Hoban's <i>Whiptail</i> (2017) or Evan Johnson's <i>qu'en yoje on vous demaine</i> (2018), but the outcomes of this research have also been employed in realisations of works by Brian Ferneyhough, György Ligeti, Sadie Harrison, Marc Yeats, Sam Hayden and others.</p> <p>Pace's close involvement in the creative process often directly shapes composers' outputs. For example, his long series of performances and changing interpretations of Michael Finnissy's <i>Gershwin Arrangements</i>, about which he has written and lectured extensively in the context of borrowing and genre [3.2, 3.3], directly informed the composition of Finnissy's <i>Fourth Political Agenda</i> (2019). This new set of Gershwin transcriptions, based upon songs supplied to him by Pace, is also informed by Pace's writings on the music of Horatiu Radulescu. Similarly, with Spencer's extended piano work <i>Per me si va nella città dolente</i> (2019), he collaborated as both performer and 'co-composer', providing sections of musical material which were integrated into the work before giving its premiere. Notable similar collaborations include Wieland Hoban (<i>Whiptail</i>, 2017), Patrícia Sucena de Almeida (<i>Reditus ad vitam</i>, 2012; <i>Vacuum Corporis</i>, 2016; <i>Desperatio</i>, 2017-18), and Sadie Harrison (<i>Return of the Nightingale</i>, 2013; <i>gentle</i>, 2018-19) [3.5]. Such collaborations are characterised by joint</p>		

work on compositional materials and regular exchanges of ideas relating to both musical characteristics and pianistic possibilities.

Pace's research has initiated new approaches to the performance of complex notation, the relationship between notation and interpretation [3.4], and the relationship of contemporary works to pre-existing musical works, styles and genres. Specifically, Pace asks to what extent the performer should situate a given work clearly within a 'tradition', or defamiliarise it by foregrounding aspects which break with traditional practices (for example, in the piano works of György Ligeti) [3.6]. This has been equally fundamental to his approaches to works by Ferneyhough, Finnissy, Hayden, Elliott Carter, and Radulescu. He has employed and developed his own 'anti-positivist' approaches to musical notation as a means for making possible the extremes of notated rhythmic detail in Ferneyhough's music in particular [3.4].

The breadth of output from Pace's research into contemporary piano repertoire is unparalleled. Since 2013, it includes over 80 world premieres given in nine different countries: appearances at major European venues and festivals such as Huddersfield, TRANSIT Festival (Leuven), ISCM World Music Days, Impuls Festival (Graz), Firenze Suona Contemporanea, Contempuls (Prague), Ultima (Oslo) and Borealis Festival (Bergen), as well as appearances in Lisbon, Basel, Kiev, Santiago, Buenos Aires, and São Paulo. Since 2010 he has recorded 16 new CDs, including Michael Finnissy's landmark five-and-a-half-hour piano cycle *The History of Photography in Sound (HoPiS)* [3.1, 3.2], and given radio broadcasts in the UK, Ireland, France, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Italy, Norway, Chile, Argentina, Czechia, and Ukraine. This body of work positions Pace as pivotal to the recent development of contemporary piano repertoire and demonstrates the international reach of the research.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

3.1 Finnissy, M., Pace, I. (2013) *The History of Photography in Sound*. Metier/Divine Art MSV 77501 (5 CDs). Supplemented by Pace's 300-page monograph on the work.

3.2 Pace, I. (2016-17) Michael Finnissy, complete piano works (London and Oxford, 2016-17) [Ian Pace concerts in London, Oxford, Leuven, Prague, Basel, Lisbon, Autumn 2016 – and with City graduate Ben Smith | Music at City](#)

3.3 Pace, I. (2019) 'Negotiating borrowing, genre and mediation in the piano music of Finnissy: strategies and aesthetics'. In Ian Pace and Nigel McBride (Eds.) *Critical Perspectives on Michael Finnissy: Bright Futures, Dark Pasts* (pp. 57-103). London and New York: Routledge.

3.4 Pace, I. (2015) 'Positions, Aesthetics and Methodologies in the Published Discourse about Brian Ferneyhough: A Critical Study'. In *Search: Journal for New Music and Culture*, Issue 11, pp. 1-73. <https://www.searchnewmusic.org/pace.pdf>

3.5 Harrison, S., Pace, I. (2017) *Return of the Nightingale*. Prima Facie PFCD072.

3.6 Pace, I. (2012) 'Maintaining Disorder: Some Technical and Aesthetic Issues Involved in the Performance of Ligeti's Études for piano', *Contemporary Music Review*, vol. 31, nos. 2-3, pp. 177-201. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07494467.2012.717359>

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

4.1 Expanding approaches to musical notation and pianistic technique

Composer Christopher Fox asserts that 'Ian Pace's playing has had a significant influence on the development of contemporary piano music, perhaps especially in Britain but also internationally [...] His ability to convert the most complex notational constructs into sound has enabled composers to explore metric and rhythmic relationships of great subtlety' [5.1]. This influence on the field arises not only from considerations of musical notation, but also aspects of pianistic practice such as key noise, hyper-virtuosity, extremes of stasis and reconfiguration of the physical comportment of the player. Scottish composer Michael Spencer, speaking of

Per me si va nella città dolente (2019) acknowledges that Pace's skills 'allowed me to make specific creative decisions that I might not otherwise have made [...] e.g. the crossing arpeggio figurations and, most notable, the finale of the work' [5.1]. In his piece *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (2020) Marc Yeats wanted to express his compositional ideas in a visually complex way. Specifically, to make the stratification of part writing more complex to support simultaneous polytactic independent lines. Yeats claims that he had '...always wanted to notate piano music in this way' but was 'apprehensive to do so being aware that such visual notational complexity would be off-putting to nearly all pianists and consequently, the work would not be performed'. Working with Pace directly enabled his 'notational aspirations to develop and flourish' [5.1] because he had 'found a pianist who not only enjoys and can meet these musical challenges but is a pianist who actually wants to perform my work because of the very nature of the writing itself' [5.2, p. 4].

Fox has also explained how 'the dynamism of [Pace's] playing and his understanding of how the contact between hand, key, hammer and string can release sonority has led me and many other composers to rethink how the piano can sound', while Portuguese composer Patrícia Sucena de Almeida has written that 'I was thinking about his multifunctional qualities dealing with not only the traditional playing of the instrument but also using other kind of techniques (extended), and demanding other kind of actions, like specific movements of the body.' Composer Sam Hayden speaking of his piece *Becomings I-VII* says 'I would not have undertaken a composition of such notational complexity and monumental formal scale without Ian's unsurpassable reputation and experience in the interpretation of contemporary solo piano repertoire [...] The collaboration with Ian gave me the freedom to push my own limits of the expressive potentials of complex notation and the polyphonic possibilities of the piano in particular' [all 5.1].

4.2 Extensively influencing the form and character of contemporary repertoire through close collaboration with composers.

Having influenced the perception of what might be possible for the piano, Pace's ongoing involvement in the creative process frequently helps shape the final output. Almeida describes the process of working with Pace as 'mutual learning', while German composer Walter Zimmermann thanked Pace for bringing him 'into an area of new music expertise of which I never thought my work would be a part' [5.1]. Hayden, whose cycle for piano *Becomings I-VII* was premiered by Pace in 2019 then recorded for CD, wrote that it was 'undeniable' that Pace had 'informed directly my composition of the work in both general and specific ways' [5.1].

Collaborations with Michael Finnissy particularly demonstrate how Pace's involvement in the creative process shapes the final outcome. In the BBC Radio 3 podcast series *Modern Muses (Ian Pace and Michael Finnissy, 18.04.15)*, which explored some of the key composer-performer partnerships of our times, Finnissy explained the dynamic relationship between composer and performer: 'What I as a composer look for in a performer is somebody who is going to provoke me. Somebody who is going to discuss and wind me up to the point where I want to release energy as music. It's got to be somebody who I can talk to about phrasing and articulation and different kinds of quality of sound and also somebody who has a diversification [...] of knowledge. Somebody who's not basically too kowtowed by traditions and too kowtowed by routines. And Ian ticks all of those boxes absolutely beautifully' [5.3]. Other composers have responded similarly. Lauren Redhead notes that 'my compositional ideas for the piano have been shaped both by collaboration and by Ian's skill and artistry in interpretation that itself provides a constant source of inspiration' [5.1]. In 2018, 23 international composers wrote new music to celebrate Pace's fiftieth birthday and his achievements in this field; this included new works by James Dillon, Finnissy, Fox, Harrison and Zimmermann. American composer Evan Johnson observed that the tribute was 'in recognition of a career built around the persistent championing of young or unduly ignored composers [...] the sort of often thankless effort that can indelibly shape a nascent compositional career, build decades-long collaborations, and begin to change the face of a repertoire' [5.4].

4.3 Influencing audiences' listening, understanding and perception of contemporary piano music

Pace's extensive performances, recordings and media appearances bring contemporary piano music to new audiences and further inform existing ones. The significance of Pace's contribution is underlined by the special issue of BBC Radio 3's flagship new music programme *Hear and Now: Ian Pace, contemporary virtuoso pianist* on 06.10.18, produced to mark his 50th birthday. It was the first time that an entire episode of the programme had been devoted to a single performer. RAJAR (Radio Joint Audience Research) analysis indicates that the average listenership for *Hear And Now* is c.70,000 per broadcast. [5.3].

Pace regularly appears as both pianist and commentator on BBC Radio 3. Broadcaster Robert Worby notes that Pace speaks 'about the pieces from his point of view (i.e. that of a virtuoso pianist) while at the same time giving the listeners some tools for listening, enabling them to engage with the music in creative ways. In my opinion that is everything that the BBC should be doing' [5.1]. Radio 3 producer Philip Tagney hails Pace's 'expertise and virtuosity in specific repertoire of new music for the piano' as 'unique in the UK' and that he is an 'indispensable figure for playing important repertoire that no-one else in this country is playing, and to a superlative standard' [5.1].

The History of Photography in Sound (HoPiS) album [3.1] was the best-selling digital title on the Metier new-music label for five months after its 2013 launch and remains in the top quartile for that label. By the end of September 2019, streaming figures had reached 17,845, a significant figure for modernist piano music [5.5]. HoPiS received overwhelmingly positive reviews. Paul Driver observed in *The Sunday Times* that 'Both composer and executant here are truly prodigious figures. A vast compendium of virtuoso-pianistic and world-historical thought'. Philip Clark (*Gramophone*) wrote of 'each note shaded to perfection, structures translucently and sharply lit, defining sonic images of our time' [5.6]. In *The Spectator* Damian Thompson described Pace's 'supremely virtuosic and delicate performance' of what he called 'the greatest piano work of the 21st century so far' [5.6]. The HoPiS recordings are accompanied by an extensive text, for which there is also an extended monograph, which exhaustively analyses the multi-layered borrowings and their transformations in the work. When HoPiS was featured on *Deutschlandfunk* (German national radio) on 23.03.14, the accompanying webpage observed that Pace 'shares with his audience his precise analyses, dissecting and disentangling the layers of quotations as if he wanted to retrace backwards the compositional process' [5.6]. Other comments illustrate the impact of this text on audience's understanding of the music. One listener noted that 'Pace has also produced a 98-page booklet of notes on the work which is extremely helpful in explaining the origin and influences upon the work,' while another observed that 'I found the massive liner notes [...] easy enough to follow, they make logical sense and explain what they try to explain wonderfully' [5.6].

Reviews of other performances have been similarly laudatory. Pace's recording of Sadie Harrison's *Return of the Nightingales* [3.5], commissioned and premiered by him in 2013, was described as 'stunning' in *International Piano Magazine* (February 2018) and 'atmospherically performed' in *Musical Opinion* (March 2018) [5.7]. On *MusicWeb International* (a classical music review site averaging c.200k unique page views per month) Roy Westbrook, reviewing Yeats' *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, wrote of 'Pace's bravura brilliance [...] Yet he takes care of the sound and never crosses the line to the pugilistic [...] This is playing of high commitment, abundant passion, and no little excitement' [5.7]. Pace's performance at the York Late Music Festival (2018) entailed a full day of concerts that traced 20th-century piano music through the work of more than 25 composers. *Tempo* magazine noted that 'Not many pianists have the stamina or breadth of musical vision to carry off an entire day of concerts covering the best part of a century's music in all its stylistic diversity' and that Pace 'threw a fascinating light on the period and sparked off connections that might not have been obvious' [5.8]. Canadian composer Samuel Andreyev has also noted that such programming is 'vital, as it provides a sense of perspective, altering the way both the older works and the newer ones are heard' [5.1].

Viewing figures for Pace's blog, which often deals with issues of contemporary piano performance, have reached 545,669 in this REF period [5.9]. His performances on YouTube have been widely viewed, such as those of works by Boulez (88,159 views), Dusapin (5,000+),

Finnissy (various clips ranging from 500 to 3,500+ views), Chris Dench (2,300), James Erber (2,080), Andrew Toovey (1,615), or Maxim Kolomiets (1,669). Public comments include 'Très beau et de grande qualité' and 'May I ask how in heck anyone actually plays this piece?' [5.10].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

5.1 Collected testimonials from musicians (Almeida, Andreyev, Antoniadis, Finnissy, Fox, Hayden, Redhead, Smith, Spencer, Yeats, Zimmermann) and industry figures (Tagney, Worby, Sutton).

5.2. Marc Yeats (2020) *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Liner Notes. Prima Facie PFCD123.

5.3 Producer, BBC Radio 3 (2019, 5 November). Email confirming RAJAR listening figures for (a) *Hear and Now: Ian Pace, Contemporary virtuoso pianist* (06.10.18)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0000n7t>; (b) Radio 3 podcast, *Modern Muses: Ian Pace and Michael Finnissy* (18.04.15): <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02r9f8b>

5.4 Evan Johnson (Ed.) (2018) *Ian Pace at Fifty: miniatures for piano by seventeen composers*. Private publication.

5.5 Divine Art Recordings Group (2019, 7 November) Streaming figures for *The History of Photography in Sound* (Metier MSV 77501).

5.6 Collected reviews of Michael Finnissy, *The History of Photography in Sound*, MSV77501.

5.7 Collected reviews for (a) Sadie Harrison (2013) *Return of the Nightingales*, PFCD072, and (b) [Marc Yeats \(2020\) *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, PFCD123.](#)

5.8 Williams, N. (2018) 'Late Music York: Delta Saxophone Quartet, Ian Pace', *Tempo* 72, vol. 286, pp. 78-80.

5.9. Ian Pace. Desiring Progress blog. <https://ianpace.wordpress.com> viewing statistics.

5.10 Collected YouTube videos with viewing figures and comments.