

<b>Institution:</b> Keele University		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> UoA30 Philosophy		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Philosophy on the Bandstand: jazz-philosophy fusion as a new approach to creating public engagement with philosophy		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2004-2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b>	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b>
Professor James Tartaglia	Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy	2002 - present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2016-2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> (indicative maximum 100 words)		
<p>Tartaglia's research has introduced an innovative mechanism for engaging diverse audiences with philosophical ideas through his creation of Jazz-Philosophy Fusion and interaction with the Performance Philosophy movement, which explores overlaps between artistic performance and philosophical ideas. Tartaglia's work encompasses a range of creative outputs: albums, concert performances and interactive online content. This has increased public engagement with philosophical concepts by providing a new way of conveying and teaching philosophy to enhance public understanding, while challenging conventional wisdom about philosophy's relevance to personal and social life.</p>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> (indicative maximum 500 words)		
<p>Jazz-Philosophy Fusion has reached beyond the audience for prose and lectures, presenting a generalist conception of philosophy relating its traditional problems to both public concerns and private interests. This conception is defended in a monograph and journal article (3.1, 3.3), and the programme of applying traditional problems to contemporary issues is enacted in two monographs (3.1, 3.2). In the monographs, philosophical discussions of materialism, consciousness, the nature of the self, time, freedom and determinism, and truth, are related to natural personal curiosity about the meaning of life and why there is something rather than nothing, for example. They are also related to public concerns about directions being taken in technological development (e.g. artificial intelligence and genetic engineering), the negative impacts of internet technology and 'post-truth' culture. This research demonstrates the continuing relevance of philosophy, both for satisfying rather than suppressing curiosity, and for helping ensure that our lives are not directed by un-reflected ideas embedded in our history, rather than by collective rationality and consent.</p> <p>The underpinning research defends a conception of philosophy as a historical discourse acquiring new relevance to each new generation which is open to all, rooted in natural curiosity, and able to reflect impartially on religion, science, or any other field of discourse, guided only by rationality and truth. It presents philosophy as concerned with openness to debate and new ideas, rather than the closure of definitively solving problems. It presents philosophy as an empowering form of reflection that benefits public life by promoting open-mindedness, collective rationality, and truth-seeking, while being a source of personal cultural enrichment available to atheists and believers alike. As such, the impact flows directly from the conception of philosophy defended and enacted in the research; given such a conception, the importance of imaginatively seeking new audiences</p>		

**Impact case study (REF3)**

is motivated and the kind of impact (essentially: the music inspiring independent philosophical thought) is justified.

Jazz-Philosophy Fusion conveys ideas in music, whether in the lyrics to songs composed especially for this purpose, through spoken passages with musical accompaniment, or in 'vocalese', an established technique in which lyrics are fitted to notable past improvisations. Tartaglia's research demonstrates the unique appropriateness of jazz as a medium for inspiring philosophical ideas (3.4). Two complete albums of jazz-philosophy fusion have been disseminated, both online (5.1) and through CDs distributed at concerts; other jazz-philosophy recordings are available on the project website (5.1).

Tartaglia composed the monographs (3.1, 3.2) between 2004 (Lecturer in Philosophy, Keele University) and 2020 (Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy). He recruited and rehearsed the musicians and composed and arranged the music.

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

3.1 Tartaglia, James (2016) *Philosophy in a Meaningless Life: A System of Nihilism, Consciousness and Reality* (London: Bloomsbury). Monograph.

ISBN-13: 978-1350017511

ISBN-10: 1350017515

3.2 Tartaglia, James (2020) *Philosophy in a Technological World: Gods and Titans* (London: Bloomsbury). Monograph.

ISBN-10: 1350070106

ISBN-13: 978-1350070103

3.3 Tartaglia, James (2016) 'Is Philosophy All About The Meaning of Life?' *Metaphilosophy*, 47 (2): 283-303. Journal Article.

3.4 Tartaglia, James (2016) 'Jazz-Philosophy Fusion', *Performance Philosophy*, 2:1: 99-114. Journal Article. Published online with audio samples:

<http://www.performancephilosophy.org/journal/article/view/62/111>

**Quality of Research:**

3.1 was endorsed by Tim Crane as 'a superb and original work', went to paperback within months due to high sales, was reviewed in three journals (*Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews*, *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*, *Philosophy in Review*), and was the subject of a journal symposium (*Journal of Philosophy of Life*, 7:1, 2017: 1-315), with 10 commentators (including Philip Goff and Bjørn Ramberg) and replies by Tartaglia. Bloomsbury published 3.2 in October 2020. While 3.1 focused on defending the generalist conception of philosophy and relating traditional philosophical problems to areas of natural individual interest, 3.2 focuses on relating philosophical problems (esp. materialism and idealism, freedom, personal identity and truth) to public concerns about technological development and 'post-truth' culture. 3.3 is a defence of Tartaglia's generalist conception of philosophy, published in the leading academic journal for this topic. 3.4 provides a theoretical and historical justification of the jazz-philosophy fusion approach to generating impact for philosophy and was published in the leading peer-reviewed journal for performance philosophy studies.

This research has been supported by an APRA Foundation Berlin Multi-disciplinary Fellowship (2015-16, €5000). It resulted in new music (see below), which has featured high-profile professional jazz musicians with international reputations, notably pianist Steve Tromans, vocalist Jessica Radcliffe, and one of the most respected bassists on the Los Angeles jazz scene, David Hilton. The high-quality of the jazz has been key to securing impact for the philosophy; the music is the medium for conveying the ideas.

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

### **Influencing Creative Practice and Increasing Public Engagement with Philosophy**

The albums (5.2, 5.3) perform key insights from Tartaglia's research (3.1 and 3.2) relating to the importance of open debate, cultural enrichment and imagination to philosophy (3.1, 3.2, 3.4). The albums, a series of performances and the generation of interactive online content, have increased and diversified public engagement with philosophical research.

Through collaboration with public arts organisations and private music clubs, nine concerts of the two albums have been performed, reaching an estimated 750 people live at a range of diverse venues, including jazz venues, arts centres and a museum (5.4). Jazz audiences, in particular, have been a beneficiary of this research and activity. Tartaglia performed *Jazz-Philosophy Fusion* (2016) at Cambridge International Jazz Festival (November 2017), which attracted around 15,000 visitors across 15 days of live music and workshops. In addition, the two creative outputs have been featured extensively in mainstream jazz platforms and publications, in the UK and internationally. For instance, all tracks from both albums were aired during the weekly jazz show of Radio Devin (Slovakia) as well as some tracks on community radio in the UK. On 20 September 2020, a two-hour dedicated discussion programme was broadcast on Radio Devin, with the presenter and four philosophers (Slovak and Czech) discussing a selection of recordings made between 2002 and 2019 (5.1, 5.5). Midlands jazz blog: *Jazz Breakfast* (over 5,800 followers), featured an interview with Tartaglia (September 2016), and the first album was featured in *London Jazz News*' weekly showcase (average circulation: 14,337), with a full-page feature in *The Birmingham Post* (June 2016) (5.1, 5.5).

Almost 500 CD albums of *Jazz Philosophy Fusion* (2016) have been distributed and the *Gods and Titans* (2020) digital album has received 2081 page visits. The broader project website has been viewed 44,964 times (5.4). Tartaglia has published accessible accounts of jazz-philosophy fusion in the philosophy magazines *Philosophy Now* ('The Sound of Philosophy', 2017) *Filozofuj* (in Polish, 2018) and *The Philosopher's Magazine* ('Jazz, Philosophy, Hate, Love', 2020).

### **Enhanced understandings of philosophical ideas and challenging conventional wisdom about philosophy**

This extensive interaction with Tartaglia's research has challenged audience preconceptions about philosophy, introducing them to new ideas and enhancing understandings of key philosophical concepts and problems. Listeners are taught philosophical ideas and problems in a new and engaging manner. Fifteen songs recorded across the two albums (5.2, 5.3) pose a range of critical philosophical questions interrogated in Tartaglia's research, for instance, about the meaning of life, nature of selfhood, whether experience can be understood physically, whether freedom is possible, the value of honesty (3.1, 3.2). The music often presents opposing views on these issues, and performances encourage audiences to form their own opinions, through vocal prompts at live events and interactive questions in online fora (5.6, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9, 5.10).

The subsequent interactions from listeners and audience members reveal that the music inspired people to think on a wide variety of philosophical matters and often changed people's perceptions about philosophical ideas. For example, over half of survey respondents reported changing their view on the relationship between personal identity and the self after listening to *Jazz-Philosophy Fusion* (2016). One song from this album, 'Teletransportation', asks whether physical replication in another place can constitute travel, and 20 individuals reported changing their minds about this after listening to the song. When asked whether the song 'The Transcendental Ego' helped them understand what philosophers mean when they say that consciousness is private, 23 (over half the total survey respondents) agreed that it did (5.6). Listener responses to *God of Titans* (2020) reveal that over 76% thought that philosophical ideas presented in this way enrich their lives, with 60% indicating that the song in question inspired new ideas in them (5.7).

Comments demonstrate that the music stimulated listener thinking and deep reflection. One listener (2016 concert) commented, "*During the performance of Schopenhauer's Blues, I found that as the piece began descending into the chaotic end section...my thoughts were solely on the concept of right and wrong. I was having a really intense discussion with myself regarding my own*

*morals...*" Another audience member commented: *"it occurred to me that perhaps that I am not a fixed, specific "self" but a series of discrete selves existing only in the moment."* One person reflected, *"I experienced the power of succinctness of music: organised sound can abbreviate and intensify the use of words to express deep ideas by appealing to emotional depth"* (5.6).

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

5.1 Project Website: [www.JazzPhilosophyFusion.com](http://www.JazzPhilosophyFusion.com)

5.2 Tartaglia, James (2016) Jazz-Philosophy Fusion. CD and Digital album. (See 3.1) (*download held within Keele's repository*)

5.3 Tartaglia, James (2019) Gods and Titans. Digital album. (See 3.1) (*download held within Keele's repository*)

5.4 Record of live and online performances (2016-2020) (See also 3.1)

5.5 Press and radio coverage report (2016-2020) (See also 3.1)

5.6 Live audience survey results (2016-2017)

5.7 Compilation of listener feedback (2020)

5.8 Testimonial: Jonathan Webber

5.9 Testimonial: Gabriel Bianchi and Emil Visnovsky

5.10 Testimonial: Daniel O'Brien