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| Institution: Edinburgh Napier University | | |
| Unit of Assessment: Unit of Assessment 33 – Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies | | |
| Title of case study: New Church Music for the 21 st Century: Redefining Creative and Liturgical Practice for Musicians and Audiences | | |
| Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2014 - present | | |
| Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit: | | |
| Name(s): Michael Harris Stuart Murray Mitchell | Role(s) (e.g. job title): Lecturer Lecturer | Period(s) employed by submitting HEI: November 1996 - present March 2015 - present |
| Period when the claimed impact occurred: 1 January 2014 - 31 July 2020 | | |
| Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N | | |
| <p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words) Research at Edinburgh Napier University (ENU) has led to new ways of creating contemporary church music. Harris has commissioned composers, created a new record label, and has recorded CDs featuring the Choir of St. Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh. This has led to novel contributions from British composers to the field of church music.</p> <p>The research has had a beneficial reputational and commercial influence on St Giles' Cathedral, receiving acknowledgment of its influence on the atmosphere for the cathedral's 1.4million estimated annual visitors. The choir has also performed the created music on international tours, and the record label has sold almost 1,500 CD copies.</p> <p>The work has also informed the practices of composers and influenced national and international concert audiences via the BBC. Commissioned work was performed on BBC Radio 3, and CD releases, including <i>O Clap Your Hands</i>, have provided an international platform for composers to redefine church music.</p> | | |
| <p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words) With the exception of very few contemporary works, much of the music used in worship by churches in the UK was written between the 16th and 19th centuries. This has often led to a reductive view of church music by both congregations and the wider public. As a result, churches and performers have often struggled for relevance and exposure in the 21st Century. In an attempt to reverse this trend, the underpinning research has focused on improving the breadth and diversity of contemporary church music.</p> <p>Michael Harris is a Lecturer at ENU and Master of the Music at St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh, one of the largest and most renowned churches in Scotland. He has led this research body with contributions from fellow lecturer and composer Stewart Murray Mitchell.</p> <p>Harris has developed a self-termed "Edinburgh model" [O1,O2] for the reinvigoration of church music, based on his work with St Giles Cathedral. He has provided composers with opportunities to work in the domain of church music, requiring compositions to consider worshipping</p> | | |

congregations and their attitudes towards 'new' music. The purpose of sacred music in this context is to enhance the act of worship, effecting a change of emotion in the listener and contributing to their religious or spiritual experience. This 'new' music also engages with a new generation of churchgoers, who may have previously considered church music to be outmoded or prosaic.

In 2014, Harris commissioned two Edinburgh-based composers, Stuart Murray Mitchell, who became a PhD student and lecturer at ENU a year later, and Chris Hutchings, to compose two new works for the Cathedral Choir with funding from The Friends of the Music of St Giles' Cathedral [P1]. The resultant works, *Five Introits* and *O Praise the Lord Ye Angels of His*, fulfilled two purposes; to create a group of introits that could be used throughout the liturgical year, and an anthem to enhance the experience of the worshipping congregation [O2].

Following these successful compositions, Harris programmed a similar series of works by renowned living composers in both a liturgical and in a concert setting. The result has been a series of recordings created by high-profile composers and performed by the Cathedral Choir [O3, O4].

As a result of this initial research, Harris secured subsequent funding from The Friends of the Music of St Giles' Cathedral to commission a number of new works from internationally renowned musicians. Rory Boyle's *O Sacrum Convivium* [P2, O4], Ann Millikan's *Preston Toccata* [P3, O5], and Jonathan Pitkin's *As Kingfishers Catch Fire* [P4, O6] are further new compositions which have been recorded for worship and used for concerts at St Giles', performed by the Cathedral Choir and the organist at that time, Peter Backhouse.

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

O3 was given a 4-star review by Choir and Organ magazine. P1-P4 are projects funded by an external charity connected to St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh, one of the largest and most well-known churches in Scotland. O2 and O5 have influenced the ongoing work of composers.

Conference Papers

- [O1] Harris, M. & Harris, B. (2017). *Planning for the Future: an Edinburgh Model*. Paper presented at York Conference on Church Music. University of York. 15th February. **Can be supplied by HEI on request.**
- [O2] Mitchell, S. M. (2017). *Five Introits: The Composer as Facilitator*. Paper presented at York Conference on Church Music. University of York. 14th February. **Can be supplied by HEI on request.**

Recordings

- [O3] Harris, M., Backhouse, P., & The Choir and Organ of St Giles' Cathedral. (2014). *O Clap Your Hands* [CD]. Edinburgh: Aegidius. **Can be supplied by HEI on request.**
- [O4] Harris, M., English, J., & The Choir and Organ of St Giles' Cathedral. (2018). *Laudate Dominum: Sing Praises to God!* [CD]. Edinburgh: Aegidius. **Can be supplied by HEI on request.**

Scores

- [O5] Millikan, A. (2017). *Preston Toccata*. **Can be supplied by HEI on request.**
- [O6] Pitkin, J. (2018). *As Kingfishers Catch Fire*. **Can be supplied by HEI on request.**

Grants

- [P1] £3800 was provided by The Friends of the Music of St Giles' Cathedral in 2014 to fund the recording of *O Clap Your Hands*.
- [P2] £1500 was provided by The Friends of the Music of St Giles' Cathedral in 2014 to commission the work *O Sacrum Convivium* by Rory Boyle.
- [P3] £1500 was provided by The Friends of the Music of St Giles' Cathedral in 2017 to commission the work *Preston Toccata* by Ann Millikan.

- [P4] £2500 was provided by The Friends of the Music of St Giles' Cathedral in 2018 to commission the work *As Kingfishers Catch Fire* by Jonathan Pitkin.

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

Since 2014 this research has benefitted composers, St Giles' Cathedral, and the St Giles' Cathedral choir, and has reached national and international audiences. It has: (i) developed stimuli to cultural tourism and contributed to the quality of the tourist experience at St Giles, which attracts around 1.4million visitors per year; (ii) enhanced the reputation and commercial income of St Giles; and (iii) enhanced the quality of life for composers, performers, and audiences of church music.

Growing International Audiences and Increasing Tourist Visitors to St. Giles' Cathedral

Harris' programming of new works has led to a number of novel concerts and recitals by the Cathedral Choir and their organist [O1-O6]. This has enhanced the reputation of the Cathedral as a forward-thinking institution that highly values its contribution to both worship and culture. The choir performed the commissioned work in tours in Germany in 2015 and the United States in 2017, thus enhancing their international profile. Information on the tours is provided below:

- *O Sacrum Convivium* – Rory Boyle
 - 19th July 2015, Basilika Waldassen, Bavaria, Germany
 - 21st July 2015, Dompfarrkirche Niedermünster, Regensburg, Germany
 - 22nd July 2015 St Anna, Augsburg, Germany
 - 24th July 2015, St Matthäus, München, Germany
 - 18th June 2017 Fourth Presbyterian Church, Chicago USA
- *Preston Toccata* – Ann Millikan
 - 13th May 2017, St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh
 - 2nd August, 2017, St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh

Furthermore, these new works have been used regularly in services of worship to a congregation comprising a diverse cross-section of the public. These include those who do not regularly attend concerts featuring contemporary music, in addition to the large number of tourists who attend services at St Giles' Cathedral due to its central location in Edinburgh's Old Town. In her letter detailing the number of visitors to the Cathedral, Sarah Phemister, Head of Heritage and Culture at St. Giles', outlines how '*Michael's work on our music programme has a tremendous impact...The popularity of our music programme, and the strong reputation it has developed under Michael's stewardship, ensures that we often attract large crowds to these events*' and that '*no less significant, is the role of the music programme in fostering a welcoming atmosphere in St. Giles*' [C6].

Launch of the Aegidius Record Label and Commercial and Reputational Benefit to St. Giles Cathedral

In 2014, as a result of his research, Harris was responsible for creating the Cathedral's new record label, Aegidius, with the launch of its first two compact discs; *O Clap Your Hands* and *On Christmas Night*. This was featured in the pages of *The Herald* newspaper (estimated weekly readership 91,000, 2014) [C4] and the first CD received a four-star review in *Choir and Organ* magazine. The review by Shirley Ratcliffe stated: '*St. Giles's excellent Cathedral Choir directed by Michael Harris is in fine voice for a programme of sacred music written between 1914 and 2014*' [C3] and makes specific reference to the commissioning of new works by Stuart Murray Mitchell and Chris Hutchings.

The raison d'être of both discs [O3, O4] was to further the reputation of the Cathedral Choir and to solidify its commitment to enhancing the reputation of Scottish church music. As a result of the collaboration, St Giles' Cathedral is one of only four cathedrals in Scotland who have commercially available recordings. As the first of these discs, *O Clap Your Hands* [O3], comprises only works written between 1914-2014, it provides a valuable snapshot of British liturgical choral music over the past century, and celebrates the diversity of church music which is still very much apparent today.

The second disc, *On Christmas Night*, similarly features a number of works from living composers, namely Cecilia McDowall, Gabriel Jackson, and Matthew Owens in addition to early-career composer, Andrew Carvel. Along with a third release, *The Auld Alliance: Organ Music from Scotland and France*, and a fourth release, *Laudate Dominum: Sing Praises to God!* [O4], which features Boyle's *O Sacrum Convivium* [P4], the label has sold nearly 1,500 copies of its releases to date [C2]. In a letter from David W. S. Todd, President of the The Friends of the Music of St. Giles' Cathedral, he outlines how profits from the sales of Aegidius releases have been used to fund new recordings and commission more new works for choir and organ over the next five years. Todd states how *'these commissions will be important and significant additions to the repertoire for Cathedral/Church choirs and, because, the funds from the Friends are self-generating they can also be recorded and these will add greatly to the value of the commissions. The Friends commend this model of funding, commissioning, performing and recording new works.'* [C7].

Influence on Composers and Their Contribution to the Musical Canon

Through the commissioning process Harris has facilitated an expansion of contemporary church music repertoire. This includes three works suitable as anthems (*O Praise the Lord Ye Angels of His*, *O Sacrum Convivium* [P2], *As Kingfishers Catch Fire* [P4, O6]), a collection of introits (*Five Introits* [O2]), and an organ voluntary (*Preston Toccata* [P3, O5]), all of which demonstrate the vibrancy of contemporary church music. Furthermore, a number of works, particularly *Five Introits* [O2] and *O Sacrum Convivium* [P2], were composed with the amateur musician in mind, allowing them to be subsumed into numerous church repertoires from cathedrals to smaller institutions.

As a composer, Mitchell explains how Harris's *'championing of new music has had a profound effect on my own work. The subsequent recording of two of the introits afforded me with evidence of my output, in turn, aiding its dissemination to a wider audience through sales of the CD around the UK and abroad. Furthermore, these recordings have provided me with a vital artefact which attests to my experience in writing for choir, bolstering prospective opportunities for commissioning by other organisations and individuals'* [C8].

Whilst the majority of new commissions utilise choral forces with or without accompaniment and feature a sacred text, *Preston Toccata* [P3, O5] is a solo organ work based on two traditional bagpipe tunes, celebrating the union between Scotland and France. The world premiere was performed by Harris and broadcast on BBC Radio 3 on 16 June 2017 [C5]. While the BBC are unable to share audience figures for individual programmes, its weekly reach for that quarter was 2.046m [C9]. Millikan writes how *'[t]he impact of Preston Toccata on my career has been a great deal of international exposure, particularly in the UK, which is ongoing. The score for Preston Toccata has been purchased by organists in England and in the United States, including a PhD student who plans to record the work as part of a project supported by Theodore Presser. Michael Harris' commitment to new music is making a difference in the lives of musicians, composers, and audiences, internationally. His stunning performance of Preston Toccata is something I will never forget'* [C9].

Due to the favourable reception of his work thus far, Harris has commissioned a further group of composers to write works for the Cathedral Choir, which will subsequently be recorded and performed in various recitals and concerts throughout the world. This five-year project is funded by the Friends of the Music of St Giles' and Creative Scotland and involves the internationally recognised composers James Macmillan, Savourna Stevenson, Ken Dempster, Tom Harrold, and Helen Grime.

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

- [C1] *O Clap Your Hands* CD.
<https://www.acclaimproductions.co.uk/product-page/o-clap-your-hands>
- [C2] Emails from St Giles' Cathedral outlining sales figures of Aegidius releases.
- [C3] Review of CD release in *Choir & Organ Magazine*.

http://agoraclassica.com/reviews/absolute_magazine/-1/1471/o-clap-your-handschoir-of-st-giles%E2%80%99-cathedral-edinburgh-peter-backhouse-org---michael-harris-dir

- **[C4]** Article in *The Herald* detailing the CD launch concert: 'Cathedral Choir launches Record Label', 17 June 2014.

https://www.heraldscotland.com/arts_ents/13165677.arts-news/

[C5] BBC Radio 3 Broadcast of Ann Millikan's work, *Preston Toccata*.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p05642rj>

- **[C6]** Letter from St Giles' Cathedral detailing the impact of the music programme on its atmosphere.

- **[C7]** Letter from The Friends of the Music of St Giles' Cathedral outlining the benefits of the Aegidius label.

- **[C8]** Testimonial from composer, Stuart Murray Mitchell

- **[C9]** Testimonial from composer, Ann Millikan

- **[C10]** Track listing from the cover CD on the Christmas 2020 issue of *BBC Music*, which features the Aegidius recording of Andrew Carvel's 'There is no Rose'.

https://media.immediate.co.uk/volatile/sites/24/2020/11/356_Inlay-b664b47.pdf