

Research Day | Creative Spaces 16.03.2021

If you think only tonal systems are able to provide harmonic tension, if you are curious to learn about alternative music writing, if you want to know how composing for voice is influenced by the way a libretto is made or if you are intrigued by the idea of genetic algorithms used in composition... tune in for our Creative Spaces Research Day!

10:00 - Simon Kaplan:

How to Create Dramatic Tension within a Xenotonal Environment: A Proposal for a Polar Bohlen-Pierce Harmonic System

Most musicians take for granted that tonality is closely related to the musical scale formed by the equal division of the octave into twelve parts. Moreover, the macrotonal and non-octave-repeating Bohlen-Pierce scale does not seem to share any common points with it. However, both of them are built from the harmonic series. Would applying the basic tonal behaviours to the Bohlen-Pierce scale produce a dramatic tension-release polarity effect similar to the one produced by tonality? Through the present research, it has been demonstrated that a coherent polar harmonic system could be designed for this scale.

10:45 - Maarten Vandenbenden

(Un)able to perform: Music Writing courses in a contemporary curriculum

The KCB can proudly claim to have one of the strongest music writing programs worldwide. Traditionally, these courses were steppingstones in a pyramidal structure, leading into free composition and/or orchestra conducting. In the current structure, Music Writing has become an independent study curriculum, while remaining omnipresent in instrument and composition curricula alike. Potential benefits and aims of this study largely exceed the theoretical understanding of tonal harmony (think of other musical systems, development of the internal ear, forms of improvisation,...) and different views live within the conservatory walls. After an introductory presentation of the main lines of thought behind this research, attendees will be invited to share personal thoughts and experiences on the matter during an open discussion.

-- small break

11:30 - Annelies Van Parys & Gaea Schoeters (RITCS)

The Search for a Maximization of Theatricality in a non-scenic (concert) context of voice and ensemble composition

How close to music theatre can a regular sung concert piece get? What does it take to turn a singer into a character? Which tools does a composer have to maximize theatricality and how important is the textual component? For this lecture we provide an insight into our joint process that questions the interplay between music and libretto and searches for collaborative protocols that are more suitable than the traditional successive (first libretto, then composition) to guarantee a result that is more than the sum of the parts.

12:00 - Peter Swinnen

The Use of Genetic Algorithms in the Composition Process of My Fifth Symphony

In the last decades, new technologies have enabled composers to use material from various sources within their musical language: not only microtonalities, just intonation, and noises, but data from visuals, motion capture, and all kinds of sensors as well. In order to organize musical coherence within such diverse material, new grammatical approaches are needed. In this lecture Swinnen will elaborate on how specific (genetic) algorithms, borrowed from Artificial Intelligence, allow him as a composer to control the degree of coherence between materials from disparate sources.