

Cameron McArthur



Composer | Performer | Educator

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Profile

I make new music. Usually, it's for humans playing instruments; sometimes, it's for computer code. I work with the idea of momentum in music, as well as perception, implication, and interdisciplinarity. I also play music (mostly jazz), and teach music (mostly composition and piano).

Experience

PhD (University of York)

Oct 2020 – Present

Through my practice as a composer, my research explores musical momentum. Momentum (the quality that keeps an event developing or making progress after it has started) is a highly valuable, but relatively under-utilised musical concept, especially from the composer's point of view. Most listeners, regardless of their background, can intuitively identify and describe feelings of 'forward movement' or 'energy', and they can often perceive a destination or point of arrival. However, many of those listeners might struggle to identify the specific relationships within the music that affect the momentum they experience.

Under the guidance of Thomas Simaku and Martin Suckling, I am exploring how momentum can be created in music that is not predominantly organised in terms of pitch; how momentum can be usefully considered as a compositional device, like improvisation, form, or chance; and what happens when approaches to momentum in external idioms (such as jazz, pop, or experimental music) are integrated into the design of new music.

Composer (Self-employed)

Sep 2018 – Present

My work as a composer overlaps heavily with my PhD, but sometimes spills over into independent areas. I continue to enjoy a sustained relationship with The Arc Project, a new music initiative that facilitates collaborative projects between composers and performers. I have been involved with the group since its inception, and many of my most successful works started as Arc Project commissions. The most notable of those is 'Canon X', my work for instrumentalist and live coder, which has since been performed at numerous festivals and events across the UK (and online).

Other recent work includes music for 'Suzy Homemaker', a new work devised by dancer and choreographer Erica Mulkern, and recent performances of my music include Sound Thought Festival, Quatuor Diotima, the University of York Piano Ensemble, and the Chimera Ensemble.

Performer (Self-employed)

Oct 2016 – Present

I am a flexible and adaptive performer, equally comfortable in contemporary concerts, jazz clubs, and theatre orchestras. I'm regularly engaged as a jazz pianist, and I co-run a professional 11-piece Jazz/Soul/Groove Project, Paul McArthur's Kings of Cool, playing public gigs and private functions nationwide.

Music Educator (various)

Sep 2015 – Present

For several years now, I have worked with a growing number of students, both in a private capacity, and as a peripatetic teacher, in schools in North Yorkshire and the North East. I primarily teach piano, as well as trumpet, guitar, composition, and music theory, and do so in both individual and group scenarios.

Director of Music (yorksound)

Jan 2021 – Present

I am responsible for all levels of music-making within yorksound, a people-development business with a music theme. This includes original team-building events, experience days, and bookable ensembles. I am also responsible for all composition services available through the business (e.g., bespoke songwriting).

Jazz Co-ordinator (Vanbrugh College, University of York)

Sep 2017 – Jun 2019

Responsibilities included the organisation, rehearsal, performance, and general overseeing of the weekly jazz session that takes place in Vanbrugh College at the University of York. This role was particularly useful for improving my ability to communicate quickly and effectively with others, as well as my ability to lead an ensemble, and meet regular deadlines.

Education_

PhD Music (Composition) – University of York

Oct 2020 –

MA Music (Composition) – University of York

Oct 2018 – Jan 2020

Graduated with Distinction

BA Music – University of York

Oct 2015 – Jun 2018

Graduated 1st Class with Distinction ('starred 1st)

Awards/Scholarships/Bursaries_

Scholarships and Awards

My doctoral study at the University of York is supported by the Vinson Scholarship.

In recognition of my undergraduate success, I was awarded two scholarships for postgraduate study: The Paynter Scholarship and the Heslington Foundation Composition Scholarship.

I have received several other academic awards: the Wilfrid Mellers Prize, for the highest academic achievement of students in their first year, the Edd Burrell prize, for 2nd year students who show 'enthusiasm, promise and achievement,' and the John Paynter prize for 'the greatest general contribution to the community of the department.'

Additional Information

Fully DBS Checked.

Experienced user of *Sibelius* Music notation software, Logic Pro X, and Sonic Pi.

Good level of written and spoken French - particular interest in current affairs and culture.