

PhD studentship at the University of Glasgow in collaboration with the British Library: The music of Thea Musgrave: an analysis based on the archival sources

Applications are invited for a full PhD studentship in the School of Culture and Creative Arts at the University of Glasgow to work on the music of Thea Musgrave. This studentship will be offered under the AHRC Collaborative Doctoral Partnership scheme in conjunction with the British Library, London. This exciting opportunity will require the researcher to divide his or her time between the University of Glasgow and the British Library, which holds Musgrave's complete archive of music manuscripts and related papers, as well as a substantial collection of recordings of her work. The student will be expected to assist with the cataloguing and interpretation of the archive, and will be invited to participate in other aspects of the British Library's activities. A supervisory team from both institutions will oversee this work and full research training (including archival research skills) will be offered. The team will include Dr Martin Parker Dixon (Music) and Dr Simon Murray (Theatre Studies) from Glasgow University, and Richard Chesser, Head of Music at the British Library.

The studentship is funded for three years to commence in October 2015 and covers tuition fees at the Home/EU rate. Home students and EU students who have lived in the UK for 3 years prior to the award will also receive a maintenance bursary (stipend) of approx. £13,800 (the exact annual rate is to be confirmed). In addition, the student is eligible to receive up to £1,000 a year from the British Library to support travel directly related to the doctoral research, and will be given use of a desk and computer in the Music department of the Library and access to staff catering facilities. All AHRC Collaborative PhD students automatically become part of the UK-wide Collaborative Doctoral Partnership development scheme which will provide training in a range of skills needed for research within museums, archives, galleries and heritage organisations.

Informal enquiries are welcome. Please write to Dr Martin Parker Dixon
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in the first instance.

The Project:

We see four interconnected questions as providing the stimulus for developing and integrating original research into Musgrave's oeuvre:

- 1) Thea Musgrave follows a fairly typical pattern of British composing of the period in that she is concerned to synthesise new continental techniques of serialism and aleatoricism with more traditional academic preoccupations of long-term tonal planning and modal harmony. With this, for example, she follows the same trajectory as the composers of the more heavily researched Manchester School. A comparative analysis of Musgrave's technical *via media* – for which a study of the sketches would be indispensable – would provide an intimate portrait of the cultural and intellectual tolerances and ambitions of post-War Britain.
- 2) Another significant parallel with the Manchester School is Musgrave's impulse towards drama and theatre, both in terms of writing for the stage, but also working with movement and specialisation to affect 'dramatic-abstract' scenarios in her instrumental works. It would be important to contextualise her theatricalisation of musical form, and her concept of the dramatic against theatre practices and theories of the day. Musgrave has been described as essentially an operatic composer and it is important to substantiate this insight by discerning the representational, theatrical or narrative elements of her musical language. We stress that the concept of 'theatre' must not be treated naively or ahistorically, and this is why the

investigation of this key aspect of Musgrave's oeuvre needs to be carried out in collaboration with Theatre Studies.

- 3) A broader approach to her technique would attempt to discover the origins of her notion of compositional professionalism and work ethic, and her tactfulness and practicality towards the technical limitations of musical performers. These are principles that she has generally wanted to impress upon her students. Musgrave has very successfully managed the 'business' of compositional production at a time when commissions for new music were not easy to come by. Because she settled in the USA in the early 1970s, her life affords the opportunity to consider the different working conditions, expectations and cultural positions of the American and the European composer as they attempted to build a career within the economy of new music during the latter half of the 20th Century.
- 4) A further question relates to how her compositional career-building in the post-War context was shaped, hampered, or indeed boosted by gender and national identity. Early in her career, Musgrave seems to have benefitted enormously by being identified as Scottish at a time when Scottish musical institutions needed to champion homegrown talent. This identification does not sit easily with her more modernist and international positioning. And while a good proportion of her music has Scottish themes, there is no overt nationalist sentiment in her work. It is also impossible to ignore the fact that she is very much treated as a woman composer, even though she would rather be considered a 'composer'. Susan McClary notes that Musgrave is one of many successful female musicians who is quick to rebuff any association with feminism. This tension must be explored.

In all of these areas of enquiry we anticipate that close study of the manuscript materials will underpin the research findings. It may then be appropriate for a catalogue description of the archive, taking account of the compositional processes as revealed in the source materials, to form an appendix to the thesis. By this means the student's contribution to the Library's catalogue can form part of the overall evaluation of the PhD.

Candidates ideally should have:

- A First Class Honours degree in Musicology.
- A distinction-level Masters degree in Musicology, Theatre Studies or a related discipline.
- An understanding of modernism and British and American culture.
- An interest in, or first-hand knowledge of, archival work and sketch studies.
- Applicants should be able to demonstrate strong research capabilities and be fluent in spoken and written English.

Applications should include:

- A statement of no more than 1,000 words indicating what skills and experience you have that will be relevant for the project, and how you propose to develop the project theme using the British Library collections
- A current CV
- Degree transcripts (this may be an interim transcript if you are still studying)
- An example of scholarly work up to 3000 words in length (e.g. coursework essay, or a dissertation chapter)
- 2 academic references (these may be sent directly from your referees if they would prefer)

Please send application materials to Research Administrator, Jeanette.Berrie@glasgow.ac.uk with the subject line 'CDP British Library Application' by **Friday 17th July 2015**.

Interviewees will be notified by Friday 24th July 2015 and interviews will take place at the University of Glasgow between 4th and 7th of August 2015.