Queen's College
The University of Melbourne

The Queen's College and
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Tyrone Bean

Indigenous Student
Support Officer

Creating curious citizens

Legally Blonde The Musical

Developing leaders

photo galleries

Collegians' Dinner, Fellows' Dinner,
Wyvern Ball and alumni events

An expressive body of music

The performance aspects of playing the flute

Simone Maurer is Queen's Director of Music for 2017-18. This year, she has performed in the world premiere of Tim Dargaville's 2014 Albert Maggs Award commission, *Between Breath and Word* at the Melbourne Recital Centre, which was recorded and later broadcast on ABC FM. Simone also competed in national and state classical music competitions. She explains a little about her research.

My doctoral research aims to understand how and why flautists move their body when performing, and which movements are perceived as expressive by audiences. This has a dual aim – not only will this study contribute to the growing field of kinesis research, it will also inform artistic practice. I am, in fact, creating a performance portfolio of solo flute recordings, recording repertoire which incorporates composer-instructed body movements or stage directions, featuring the music of Karlheinz Stockhausen (1928-2007). In the final year of my PhD I envisage collaborating with composers to write new solo flute music with choreographed body movements.

Live musical performances are judged not just by the sounds which are heard, but also by what is seen on stage. Imagine sitting in a pitch-black concert hall listening to a solo piano recital. You would form your judgement of whether you liked the performance based primarily on what you heard. Now imagine the stage lights turn on halfway through the concert and you can see the pianist. Your visual bias would start to influence whether you liked the performance or not. This perceptual bias is also present in other experiences, such as the way taste is affected by presentation of food (a frequently debated topic between low and high table diners in Eakins Hall). Visual bias in musical performance is also embedded into our language. How often does one say, "I'm hearing the orchestra tonight at Hamer Hall"? We are more inclined to say, "I'm seeing" or "I'm watching". These experiences, examined in music psychology research, coupled with my artistic interest in combining movement and music, have formed the inspiration for my doctoral study.

I do not believe all music should be choreographed, particularly music that has already been composed without movement. However, I see an opportunity to explore movement and stillness in contemporary flute playing to enhance storytelling of the music. I anticipate my research outcomes and performances will inspire flautists, other musicians, and composers to develop new ways of communicating and connecting with audiences through movement.

When I perform, I also experience the physical essence of playing music; the tingling sensation of a violin resonating between my chin and shoulder, the power and control of my lungs to turn an inhaled breath into a carefully crafted airstream rushing through my lips into my flute, or the exhilaration of hammering out some Rachmaninov on a concert-sized grand piano. These are feelings I wish everyone could experience – without the necessary years of training. Perhaps someday technology will enable a virtual transfer of these experiences between people. Until then, I will explore whether externally representing these internal sensations through combining music and movement will create a closer shared experience with audiences.

Queen's College
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Phone: +61 (0)3 9349 0500
Email: office@queens.unimelb.edu.au
Web: www.queens.unimelb.edu.au
1–17 College Crescent
Parkville, Victoria 3052 Australia

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