LEADING IN CREATIVE CONTEXTS
STREAM LEADER: HELEN LANCASTER

TUESDAY 22 JULY
10.00am - 11.00am: Leadership & Gender In The Creative Sector
1. Complementary Leadership in Creative Settings
   Kate McNeill & Anne Tonks
2. Women on the Podium in Italian Major Symphony Orchestras
   Daniela Acquadro Maran

11.30am - 12.30pm: Gender Equity In The Creative Sector
1. Institutional Framework and Cultural Policies: A Rhetorical Tool or real facilitation of gendered leadership in Scotland’s Creative Sectors?
   Kathryn A. Burnett & Katarzyna Kosmala
2. Crisis, Grand Narrative and Small Stories: Telling Tales of Cultural Leadership:
   Sue Kay & Janet Summerton

2.30am - 3.30pm: Creative Leadership Development: Art and Business
1. Outside Plato’s cave
   Louise Mahler
2. What’s mime got to do with it?
   Christiaan Willems

4.00pm – 5.00pm: Creative Leaders
1. Not the bread and butter, but definitely the jams and creams: Leadership in the arts and other creative pursuits in rural Western Australia
   Julia Anwar McHenry
2. Creative Leaders
   Helen Lancaster

EVENING: 5-7pm
DEMONSTRATION (Mahler) followed by PANEL SESSION: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE ARTS

WEDNESDAY 23 JULY
2.00pm – 3.30pm: Gender Amongst Musicians
1. Has Women’s Classical Music Missed the Boat?
   Sally McArthur
2. Ear-leaders: Australian women sound artists as cultural activists
   Jen Brown

4.00pm – 5.00pm: Case Studies and Collaborations
1. Leading Cultural Collaborations: SAMPAD (UK):
   Piali Ray
2. Blind Collaboration:
   Christiaan Willems
Complementary Leadership in Creative Settings  
Kate McNeill & Ann Tonks, University of Melbourne; cmmacn@unimelb.edu.au

This paper presents part of a larger research project which is examining leadership models within the major performing arts companies in Australia. These companies include orchestras, dance companies, ballet and opera companies and circus. While these companies were the subject of a major government inquiry in the late 1990s, including questions of board governance, there was little attention given to the internal management structures and dynamics of leadership (Nugent Report 1999).

The literature on leadership in the arts emphasizes the role of creativity and the demands of leading in a creative environment (eg Bilton 2007, Hartley 2005). In Australia, the necessity for creativity and entrepreneurship on the part of the arts leader has been thoroughly documented (Rentschler 2002). While management literature acknowledges the need for both creative and managerial leadership, the way in which these components are incorporated into leadership models and position descriptions varies considerably across company forms and size. Indeed there has been little attempt to reconcile the literature on creative leadership with actual management structures and, in particular, to examine the effectiveness of complementary leadership.

There is an increasing awareness of complementary leadership models in corporate settings: a common division is along the lines of responsibility for the external and internal environments (Miles and Watkins 2007). Bifurcated leadership is an extremely common practice in arts organizations where separate structures frequently exist to serve the creative aspects of a company’s activities and its administrative responsibilities and external accountabilities (Chong 2002). This division is most commonly evidenced by the dual roles of artistic director and general manager.

Through a series of interviews with general managers and artistic directors we interrogate leadership structures and techniques in a creative context. We make specific reference to the question of whether artistic leadership and managerial leadership require different styles and how these are employed in the day-to-day practice of co-leadership within an arts context. In this particular paper we present that part of the research which examines the dynamics of co-leadership giving particular attention to situations where the leadership positions of artistic director and general manager are held by a male and a female respectively.

Key words: complementary leadership, performing arts organisations, managing creativity

References:
Leadership in Artistic Context: Women on the podium in Italian Major Symphony Orchestra  
Daniela Acquadro Maran, University of the Study of Torino; acquadro@psych.unito.it

**Introduction.** With the project ‘The Image of Excellence’, the goal of the University of Turin (Italy) research team was to describe and analyze how a work group can achieve excellence, the dimensions that can come into play in stimulating a group’s leader and members to produce excellence. The team’s investigation focuses on the interaction between a guest conductor and the hundred or so professional musicians who make up a Major Symphony Orchestra (MSO) (Soro, 2005). The rationale for this focus is to be found in the particular mission surrounding these organizational players: in the world of symphonic music, MSOs represent a pinnacle of excellence that is internationally recognized and enables them to attract audiences, garner coveted recording contracts and receive invitations to tour abroad. In the review of the literature several points attracted our attention, prompting questions as to why the women we met accounted for only 3% of all the guest conductors who mounted the podium in front of the Italian MSOs we investigated.

**Objective.** To understand this phenomenon, we embarked on a project designed to analyze and describe why on the podium of Italian MSOs women are absent, and on the international scene they are present only in rare cases (see Guillemonat, Padovani, 1998). Hypothesis: As the literature indicates, the difficulties that have always surrounded women who choose the conducting professions and can even now be an obstacle to their careers are largely due to the lack of a network of mentors and the violation of gender norms. A number of laboratory studies would appear to show that both women and men have the basic capabilities that promote acceptance and involvement and that women more than men help make individuals feel that they are part of a group. This does not mean that studies show that women have a monopoly on these characteristics, but that thanks to the level of competence acquired through their social role (which tends to center on containment and caring) also on the podium could facilitate the construction of a dynamic context characterized by holding, involvement and groupship which could help in achieving excellent results (Eagly, Wood, Diekman, 2000). When they lay down such competence and knowledge, women attain excellent results in all fields (art, music, management...) (School, 1998).

**Methodology.** We scrutinized the careers of women who have mounted the podium of MSOs on the international scene from the early twentieth century to the present day. To this end, the biographies of 81 women conductors divided according to the period in which they worked were analyzed with Alceste 4.6 to identify the shared elements which characterize their training and careers.

**Results.** The hypothesis was confirmed, and new items emerged from results: the absence of women from the podium seem to be a lost opportunity, the development of those skills that women have acquired culturally and socially could encourage a phenomonic presence that will lay the foundations for a context that is increasing likely to produce excellence, a goal shared by the artistic organization and the men and women who are involved in it.

**Conclusion.** This investigation’s findings will provide a basis for developing more effective behavior on the podium and on leadership role (for men and women) in artistic and creative context whose mission is excellence. Management implications will be also discussed.

**Keywords:** leadership, gender, career, major symphony orchestras

**References:**
Institutional Framework And Cultural Policies: A Rhetorical Tool Or Real Facilitation Of Gendered Leadership In Scotland’s Creative Sectors?
Kathryn A. Burnett & Katarzyna Kosmala, University of the West of Scotland; katarzyna.kosmala@uws.ac.uk

Advancements in cultural policies for the creative industries have been on the global political agenda as a key strategy for growth for sometime. The creative industries sector in Scotland is no exception (Burnett & Danson 2004). In delivering this expansion the sector is required to deliver on gender and diversity agenda, informed as it is by both domestic, European and international policy and debate. Research on a global scale clearly identifies problems within the creative sectors in terms of participation, pay gaps, access to basic employment rights and evidence of cultures of fear, bullying and discrimination and the relationship between the creativity and the economic remains problematic and challenging (Caves 2000). Sectoral conditions such as perceptions of creative freedom, cultures of sporadic success, and blurring of worker/employee and other identities (Burnett 1994; Kosmala 2007), present particular ‘mindset’ challenges as to how new mechanisms for equality in employment, fairness in working practice relations and enhanced leadership might emerge. Creative industries are recognised as gendered biased nonetheless female participation varies across the sectors and across countries/cultural contexts. The functions performed by employees (including the self-employed) in creative sectors and their contribution to competitive advantage and survival in what can be envisaged as potentially gender and diverse biased professions, such as architecture has been subject to exploration (e.g. Caven, 2004, 2006; Mornement, 2003), design and arts (e.g. Kosmala, 2007, 2006; Bain, 2005) and a recent study on women in creative sectors across Scotland specifically, by Marcella et al (2006) indicated the persistence of gender-based barriers to career success, leadership and full participation.

In our research we have been interested in how existing policies and institutional frameworks with regard to diversity and equality schemes support gendered leadership and participation in creative work and creative practice in Scotland. A core question for the research is what the implications for leadership in creative sectors are, where the sector is increasingly required to take account of equality and diversity agenda, with particular reference to female leadership opportunity and experience. Through a critical examination of the existing literature, cultural policies in creative sectors and developments in gender diversity agendas the study will seek to ascertain how the language in these policies and formulations facilitate and/or obstruct increased female participation and leadership, in particular. In this paper, we acknowledge multiple forms of discrimination in relation to gendered-biased practices in creative work and, following Bruni et al. (2002), we recognise the significant role of language/discourse in ‘en-gendering a difference’ effectively creating a significant barrier for leadership and socio-economic success more generally.

This paper will build on such research and present evidence from a discourse analysis of cultural policies and comment in Scotland (and where appropriate the UK more generally). Critical reflections on the transformative potential of language coded other-than-masculine for leadership roles, experiences and policy will be provided. The paper’s contribution is therefore envisaged to be one that delivers further insight into the importance of language to the construction of leadership roles and in the facilitation/obstruction of what is understood as gendered leadership in creative sectors. We will do this with particular reference to the discourse of a ‘New Scotland’, and Scotland’s socio-political aspirations, economic intent, and its highly nuanced relationship with issues of gender and equality’ both historically and today (Breitenbach, 2006; Burnett 1998).

**Keywords:** gender, leadership, creative practice, creative industries, cultural policy
Crisis, Grand Narrative and Small Stories: Telling Tales Of Cultural Leadership
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Around the turn of the century in the UK, a spate of financial, governance and managerial problems in national flagship institutions (the Royal Opera House, the Royal Shakespeare Company, English National Opera and the British Museum) and a number of critical reports (Holland et al., 1997; Boyden Associates, 2000; Metier, 2000; Resource, 2001; Hewison and Holden, 2002) led to the conclusion that there was a 'crisis of cultural leadership' in the UK, that needed to be addressed if the sector was to continue to maintain its position as a driver for growth and prosperity. This resulted in the setting up of the Clore Leadership Programme in 2003, followed by the first postgraduate course in Cultural Leadership at City University in 2006 (which was women-only in its first year). In June 2006, the national Cultural Leadership Programme was launched by the (then) Chancellor of the Exchequer and funded to the tune of £12 million: its purpose, to devise a series of initiatives to

‘hone the leadership skills of talented high flyers in cultural organisations...[and to] promote the emergence of a more diverse group of cultural leaders, drawing on the wealth of talent and potential in the wide range of communities that make up contemporary British cultural life.’ (Arts Council England, 2006: 5)

This paper examines the current 'crisis' through selected theoretical work on gender, work and organisation. While leadership in the UK cultural sector is certainly gendered - for example, while around 80 per cent of the cultural sector workforce is female, it is estimated that only 20 percent assume leadership positions (The Independent, 13 February 2007) - it is not our intention to focus specifically or solely on issues of gender inequity in cultural leadership. Rather we attempt to show how feminist theory - when applied analogously - can open up and illuminate a different way of 'seeing' cultural leadership and the ways in which it is being developed.

Taking as a starting point the four category framework for promoting gender equity in organisations put forward by Kolb et al and Ely in Ely, Folder and Scully (2007), the paper calls into question the prevailing conceptual framework for cultural leadership which shuttles between 'deficit' on the one hand and 'new heroics' on the other. It argues for a radical re-think based on a detailed, in-depth analysis of 'basic work practices and processes and the norms that underlie them' (Kolb et al, 2007: 12) to include an examination of the culture of cultural milieux, leadership beyond and around formal organisational settings and the value of praxis in arriving at a more nuanced and sophisticated understanding of the field (Summerton, Kay and Hutchins, 2006).

Keywords: cultural leadership, arts and cultural management, cultural value, leadership and gender, professional development, learning

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In the history of modern business there has been a cavernous divide between the practice of performance arts and the practice of management, surprisingly so in creative-arts management itself. Facing the task of practising as corporate management teams, creative artists have found themselves leading their organisations through adopted routine hierarchical structures of imposed standard management practices, often ignoring the very essence of their creative source. Resolving this lack of congruence holds the potential to provide more enjoyable solutions for creative-arts organisations, but also for broader management and leadership practice globally.

While Barbara Stevini and John Latham were already attempting collaboration between arts and business through the *Artists’ Placement Group* in 1965, today there are a plethora of groups and individuals attempting to drive trans-disciplinary collaboration. In addition, more than ever, there is a readiness and indeed a thirst for assistance in organisations driven by a need for more meaningful change including developments in ‘empathy’, ‘listening’; bringing who you are to what you do’, ‘rapport’ and ‘inspirational speaking’ at an authentic level.

Most of this activity, however, appears to be pre-fledgling, a failure often attributed to conservative organisational resistance. It is the opinion of the author, that a greater concern is the struggle of artists to understand organisational dynamics and to make sense of their tacit practice, let alone naming and framing their practice for acknowledgement and translation.

Through the diversity of a dual background in opera and Australian organizations, the author was able to stand outside the dual Plato’s caves of arts and business and work practically with her art to unearth cultural discoveries about organizations and research her own field so that she could translate the findings from the performance realm into organisational language.

In this session, the author will presents case studies from a key Australian Leadership forum and private coaching with leaders in Melbourne, Australia and propose methods for translation between arts and business. She suggests ways for creative artists to reframe their thinking for translation within the management sphere so as to provide valuable lessons for other areas of management and indeed, lead the corporate shift.

**Key words:** opera, leadership, management, arts and business
What’s Mime Got To Do With It?
Christiaan Willems, University of Southern Queensland/Queensland University of Technology; willems@usq.edu.au

What has Mime got to do with Corporate Communication?
Well when one considers that Mime, at its most fundamental, consists of the analysis, manipulation and stylisation of body-language, and that body-language is so much a part of human interaction, then applying Mime skills to corporate communication begins to make sense.

As a professional Mime artist on both stage and screen for more than 25 years, the author has been adapting and applying the techniques of Mime to the corporate communication context over a number of years, coaching corporate CEO’s, Executives and Managers, representing both public and private sector corporations and organisations. This unusual inter-contextual skill transfer is the subject of both a book and series of VODCasts by the author (currently in the final stages of completion), which form part of the author’s Doctoral Research and from which this paper is heavily drawn.

The author’s professional background is multi-disciplinary – encompassing theatre, television, media, music, tertiary education and corporate training contexts. It is also inter-disciplinary – concerned with the commonality of different artistic mediums and forms and how, where and why these professional disciplines:

- intersect
- interact
- inform each other

- and therefore how they support each other - rather than losing creative/professional opportunities because of areas where they might conflict.

And although the application of performance skills to other, apparently unrelated, contexts is not new, it does however, bear some re-examination - in particular with a more fine-grained focus on the specialisation of Mime & Movement. This paper examines in particular the physicality of presentation and communication – beyond ‘generic’ body-language analysis – it involves the analysis, manipulation and stylisation of human physicality to support and enhance individual inter-professional communication – and how Mime performance skills specifically, inform that process.

Certainly the author’s own experience as a specialist in mime and movement performance, a musician, a lecturer and business professional, has demonstrated that there is a fundamental theatricality to all manner of human professional communication – whether on a stage or screen, in an auditorium, at a lectern, or in a meeting room – indeed one would argue that there is no professional context which is completely devoid of some measure of ‘performance’.

And if it is going to be a ‘performance’, however minutely, subtly and in whatever context, one should at least make it the best performance possible - by making it clear, concise and confident.

This paper will discuss:-
- to which other contexts Mime skills are applicable
- what changes/adaptations need to be applied in those contexts
- how Mime skills can clarify and enhance inter-professional communication.
- getting a ‘performance’ from ‘non-performers’

Key words: body language, mime, corporate communication, physicality, stylisation, multi-disciplinary, inter-disciplinary

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Not the bread and butter, but definitely the jams and creams: Leadership in the arts and other creative pursuits in rural Western Australia

Julia Anwar McHenry, Institute for Regional Development, University of Western Australia, julia.anwar@gmail.com

The perception of leadership in rural Australia has traditionally been dominated by men. This is reflected through the prominence of male representation on shire councils and other prominent community and business groups such as Rotary, Lions, Agricultural Societies and various sporting groups. However, women have always played an essential yet often unrecognised role within communities through their dominance in administrative roles and as secretaries on various committees and the importance of women’s auxiliary groups and fundraising committees of traditionally male dominated organisations.

The presence of leaders does not necessarily entail that their vision will be realised. It is here that women often have key roles in the ‘behind the scenes’ aspects of leadership and essential, but perhaps poorly named, ‘support roles’ that ensure the success and recognition of their male counterparts. Despite the perception of a male dominated landscape in rural governance and community groups, women have traditionally instigated, managed and run the more creative aspects of rural community life, such as various arts, charity and fundraising organisations.

While sport often dominates the rural social landscape the importance of the arts and other creative pursuits cannot be ignored for its role in developing and strengthening sense of community including community identity, strengthening social bonds and building resilience in rural Australia. Among these social aspects, the arts has aesthetic value, provides entertainment and light relief, it can challenge perceptions, and provide a positive alternative to harmful or anti-social behaviour. Thus the arts have an essential, yet largely unrecognised role in community life.

This paper explores the parallels between leadership in the arts and the creative industries and the changing role of women in rural Australia for the enrichment of community life.

Key Words: rural, arts, creative industries, development, leadership

Relevant Literature


Creative Leaders: How might leadership among performing artists enlighten and enliven leadership development beyond the creative industries?

Helen Lancaster, Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre, Griffith University; helenlancaster@iprimus.com.au

Creative artists respond well to collaborative environments which respect individual talents and expertise, yet they also respond well to visionary direction. Dunham and Freeman refer to this phenomenon as the ‘Principle of Unity and Multiplicity’, of drawing together a cohesive outcome by way of encouraging individual and idiosyncratic activity. The two seemingly contradictory states combine effectively in such examples as the orchestral conductor, the theatre director, and the choreographer. In a comment which extends beyond artistic boundaries, Zander refers to the real power of a conductor deriving from making other people powerful.

These examples present implications for leadership beyond the creative industries. Research in the higher education sector describe similar models of leadership (Lancaster 2006, Middlehurst, Ramsden), where authority needs to be accorded by the community which respects “greater knowledge or competence, reasoned argument and fairness” (Middlehurst, 75). More recently, similar models of leadership extend beyond the creative industries, as the business sector recognises the value of creative practice in developing leadership skills.

Drawing on research in the performing arts, and on case studies which consider these models and the influence of gender, this paper explores leadership in the arts sector, and what the arts might offer leadership development generally.

The paper will feed directly into the Roundtable discussion on the creative arts and leadership development.

**Key words:** leadership, creative leadership, leadership development, cultural leadership, arts leadership, business-arts partnerships

**References:**


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Has Women's Classical Music Missed the Boat?  
*Sally Macarthur, University of Western Sydney, s.macarthur@uws.edu.au*

In the sea of contemporary classical music, the waves that carried women’s music onto the concert platform seem to have abated. Data gathered in the last twenty years demonstrates a decrease in women’s music being performed. A recent survey of six tertiary music institutions in Australia suggests that very little music by women is taught in the theoretical subjects, which leads to their significant under-representation in the concert hall. Nonetheless, the results of a recent pilot study (which included follow-up focus groups), showed that third year tertiary music students in one university were unable to tell the difference between women’s and men’s classical music in a blind listening task and, furthermore, rated the women’s music higher than the men’s for innovation. This would indicate that reasons other than musical might be attributed to their under-representation in curricula and on concert platforms. Yet, as some have also suggested, classical music is an outdated concept in an increasingly dynamic musical world.

Has popular music usurped the place of classical music? Does this mean that women’s classical music has missed the boat? Does this mean that we should no longer actively seek out this music as a topic for discussion in tertiary music institutions? This paper will consider the ramifications for women’s concert hall music if classical music studies disappeared from our institutions. It will propose new strategies aimed at transforming entrenched attitudes and changing the dominance of men’s music in tertiary music curricula.

**Key words:** feminist theory, women composer, innovation and women’s music, popular music/classical music, poststructuralist theory

**References:**

Ear-Leaders: Australian women sound artists as cultural activists

Jen Brown, University of Tasmania, jen.brown@utas.edu.au

Discourse on leadership generally focuses attention on ways in which individuals within organisational cultures can achieve higher levels of authority, power, responsibility and influence. Against a plethora of descriptive, prescriptive and inspirational accounts of strategies that might by employed by aspiring leaders, radical writing on leadership offers a critique of the nature of organisational culture itself. This vein of research seeks to articulate ways in which specific organisations bestow leadership dis/advantage on their participants based on differentiators such as gender, race, class and age. It interrogates existing structures and dynamics by which people become leaders and discusses ways in which organizations might change in order to accommodate and gain from diverse participants and an array of leadership styles. In this paper I am interested in exploring terrain that lies beyond these established frameworks of organizational leadership literature and to consider the notion of ‘ideational leadership’ in relation to creative arts practice. By this term, I mean the capacity to provoke and persuade through the power of ideas. As exemplars, I examine the work of five independent Australian women artists whose primary medium is sound. These artists have positioned themselves as cultural activists by virtue of their innovative practice, command of technology, and acumen in accessing audiences through radio, spatial installations and new media.

Arts practitioners in Australian culture tend to live ‘on the margins’ of the mainstream economy and a great majority sustain themselves by teaching their area of practice rather than by its direct products. Women who choose to work with sound as a creative medium take up a particularly precarious position in the context of a western culture that has historically privileged male access to technological resources and arts funding as well as visual experience over aural. Yet Ros Bandt, Sonia Leber, Amanda Stewart, Norie Neumark and Virginia Madsen have all succeeded in producing powerful sonic works that provoke reflection on history and memory, political controversies, and questions of identity and belonging in contemporary Australia. Exploring the potentials of the voice as an instrument as well as the carrier of language is a common element in their diverse approaches and aesthetics. Interestingly, they are all teachers and researchers as well as artists.

This paper emerges from doctoral research, completed towards the end of 2007, in which I produced a sound installation supported by a cross-disciplinary exegesis.¹

¹ The installation was titled Blitz: Discursive bombardments in ‘the war on terror’ and constructed a space in which to reflect on the masculinist discourse of Australian political leaders in 2004. I could set this work up if a suitable venue were to be available (enclosed space of approx. 10 X 8 metres that can be made dark).
Leading in creative contexts is challenging but fabulous. Being an artist for many years and presently leading an arts organisation provides me the benefit of having a personal insight into both sides of the story. From a dance artist to Director of SAMPAD has been an interesting career transition. The first 8 years after moving to the UK from India in 1982 were really my formative and ‘action research’ years. I realise that now. My experience as an Indian artist trying to find a place and identity in my adopted homeland, significantly informed my understanding of the community, the needs and gaps, the opportunities and the role of arts and artists within that. In 1990 I formed SAMPAD as an organisation that could harness in a cohesive framework the exciting range of ad hoc south Asian arts practice that was taking place in the Midlands region.

Sampad plays a significant role regionally and nationally in the UK, in promoting the appreciation and practice of the arts originating from the Indian sub-continent. In 2007, we find ourselves at a time when it is becoming increasingly complicated to categorize people. The fastest growing ethnic minority in the UK is mixed race, with an infinite variety of heritage permutations. Similarly, South Asian arts’ place in the wider arts landscape has transformed in the last five years. South Asian arts companies and artists are gaining in confidence and maturity, creating a new and distinctly British Asian style that takes its references from an increasingly diverse range of sources, whilst staying true to its cultural roots. South Asian artists are in demand, as there is increasing interest to collaborate with them, whether it is the Birmingham Royal Ballet commissioning Nahid Siddiqui, Joanna McGregor and the Britten Symphonia collaborating with Shrikanth Sriram, Craig David recording Bhangra mixes or Andrew Lloyd Webber working with A R Rahman to write Bombay Dreams.

Leading a progressive organisation like sampad has ideally placed me to be at the forefront of exploring new ways of conceiving arts initiatives that focus on intercultural approach. Our philosophy for many years has been to maintain strong roots in the traditional and classical, to provide the grounding for experimentation and innovation. Through projects and initiatives such as ‘Savitri’, ‘Un-Kahi’, ‘Dounia’ and recently ‘Motherland’, we have created a track record of cross art form and cross cultural work. We also maintain the belief that collaboration is something that happens on a deep level of understanding, and have tried to avoid the trap of quick and easy “fusion” projects that have proliferated in recent years. The creative energy is generated through looking ahead to responding to the challenge of today’s interesting times.

While sampad has achieved a degree of stability in an increasingly uncertain arts funding environment, the issue around future leadership for culturally diverse arts are critical. It is up to present leadership to enable, in pro-active ways, the development of future leaders. The diversity of the creative sector demands a diversity of approach, skills and aptitudes which is taking place through a number of Cultural Leadership modules in the UK. From individual mentoring and through initiatives such as ‘Aarohan – Cultural Leadership course’ I believe this will be the most important investment we can do to ensure a strong cultural prospect for the future.
Blind Collaboration - in the Recording of Contemporary Music
Christiaan Willems, University of Southern Queensland/Queensland University of Technology; willems@usq.edu.au

As the first of three doctoral projects forming Chris Willems’ doctor of creative industries (qut), this practice-led research project/paper examines the creation, development and implementation of an artistic process termed by the author ‘blind collaboration’ - in the context of contemporary music recording.

The process involves musicians collaborating on the recording of an album where they, the musical collaborators, do not meet, see or hear each other, nor record in the same studio at the same time as their fellow musicians. Each musician is therefore completely unaware of any others’ contributions, and is therefore uninfluenced by what the others might play. None of the musicians hears the overall result until the final mix.

There already exist examples of collaboration over geographic distances for particular musical projects. For instance Weinberg (2002) in his paper on interconnected music networks, describes using the internet to facilitate collaboration between musicians through ‘live performance systems that allow players to influence, share, and shape each other’s music in real time...allow(ing) a group of performers to interdependently collaborate in creating dynamic and evolving musical compositions’.

Weinberg’s work is based in the notion of ‘music performance (as) an interdependent artform (emphasis added). Musicians’ real-time gestures are constantly influenced by the music they hear, which is reciprocally influenced by their own actions’, and by utilising the internet it is possible for remote collaboration to take place in real-time. The operative word here is interdependent.

My process in fact takes entirely the opposite approach – it is an independent process rather than an interdependent one.

It is a process where the musicians cannot influence each other because they neither see nor hear the other musicians – their collaborators – so they cannot be influenced by what their collaborators play, therefore, their respective musical contributions, their ‘collaborations’, are indeed ‘blind’ – neither influenced by, nor influencing, their fellow collaborators. Neither were they influenced by myself as producer and/or composer. My instructions to them were simply to choose two of the 14 songs which appealed to them and ‘add whatever you like and send it back to me’.

However, ‘blind’ as the process was and ‘mutually uninfluenced’ as it was, this independent, blind, remote process has produced a remarkably cohesive, musically consistent, yet stylistically varied work. All of which suggests that whilst one would assume that yes, ideally, collaborators would need to be in each other’s presence (even cyber-presence), it is not an essential requirement. In fact I have, through this project, arrived at the view that there may be distinct advantages to actually avoiding physical (and/or cyber) proximity.

The purpose of this paper is not to examine the technical aspects of recording, other than in contextual terms. The principal focus and intention of this study lies in the analysis of specific aspects and outcomes of the creative/artistic process - how it evolved, how it was managed, how it was influenced by the particular artists involved, the role of serendipity - and how the ‘blind collaboration’ process ultimately shaped the final musical work.

Since its completion in April 2007 the album, titled ‘once in a while’, has been a featured album of the week on ABC radio.

Key words: blind collaboration, music collaboration, collaborative creativity, contemporary music recording, interdependent collaboration, independent collaboration

References:
Context is a common object in the Android framework, but are you sure you're using it properly? There are different types of Context for different purposes. Context is probably the most used element in Android applications—it may also be the most misused. Context objects are so common, and get passed around so frequently, it can be easy to create a situation you didn’t intend. Loading resources, launching a new Activity, obtaining a system service, getting internal file paths, and creating views all require a Context (and that’s not even getting started on the full list!) to accomplish the task. What I'd like to do is provide for you some insights on how Context works alongside some tips that will (hopefully) allow you to leverage it more effectively. Instead, creative thinking encompasses special combinations and patterns of the same cognitive processes seen in other noncreative endeavors. A second goal of the creative cognition approach is to learn more and raise new questions about cognition by examining it in creative contexts. For example, research on how creative thinking is inhibited or blocked may stimulate new ideas about how noncreative thinking is inhibited. The creative use of categories may yield insights about the way categories in general are represented. Creativity is usually defined as an innovative idea, leading to a creative product, a piece of art or a scientific discovery. Decision making is strongly connected with action or with preparation for action (Montgomery, 1987).