



School: Bath School of Music & Performing Arts

Researcher: Dr Matthew Sergeant

Project Title: The Velvet Rage (2017, for flute, voice, cello, and electronics)

UOA: 33 - Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies

Research Questions

The Velvet Rage (2017) is a musical composition for flute, voice, cello, and electronics. The instrumental line up was given by a commission from ensemble [Trio Atem](#).

The research questions developed for the composition can be summarized as follows:

In her work *Queer Phenomenology*, critical theorist Sara Ahmed offers a queer perspective upon notions of socio-spatiality, dwelling particularly upon notions of orientation within notions of sexual orientation. Ahmed outlines how relationships between humans and material things are orientated within patriarchal-cum-heteronormative social infrastructures (Ahmed 2006: 30-31). Synergies between Ahmed's critical perspective can be closely found within popular psychology, most notably within Alan Downes widely-read *The Velvet Rage: Overcoming the Pain of Growing Up Gay in a Straight Man's World* (2005).

This project asks how Ahmed's queering of socio-material space might be used to problematize and re-imagine such human/nonhuman relationships in music (human-to-instrument, for example) in order to derive a new compositional strategy for exploring queer(ed) relationships in musical space.

Within such a question, the project asks how performative human-to-instrument relationships might be considered through a queer(ing) lens, as well as how new musical tensions might be derived from considering relationships between musical materials in the frictive socio-spatial terms Ahmed describes.

The primary output of this investigation is the composition The Velvet Rage, supported by a conference presentation that details subsidiary results from the investigation that may not be immediately apparent in the artistic work itself.