



**School: Music and Performing Arts**

**Researcher: Sita Calvert-Ennals**

**Project Title: Tarrare**

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

## 300-Word Statement

*Tarrare* is a practice-as-research project initiated by Director and Senior Lecturer Sita Calvert-Ennals that investigates adapting Stanislavski's naturalistic approach to acting, as a methodology to develop and sustain multi layered puppet characters for an audience to engage with. In addition, she explores how this adapted method might be used to bring together the ethical/ practical and historical priorities of a piece that was using archive material as the basis of its story. This project drew upon research material developed by Dr. Laura Purcell-Gates, which uses primary medical research and archive material to explore the true story of 18th-century French medical anomaly, *Tarrare*.

*'The Depraved Appetite of Tarrare the Freak'* is the original puppet chamber opera, which became the final output of the research, and toured the UK in 2015, and again in 2017 including a 3 week sell out run at Wiltons music hall and was funded by the Wellcome Trust and Arts Council England.

This practice-based research investigates the role of director in the dramaturgy of puppetry, music, historical archive material and live performance. Through this project Calvert-Ennals developed frameworks for creating a coherent narrative journey with fully embodied characters, in a process which included multiple creative elements (puppetry, live original music, libretto, archive material) with disparate artistic, ethical and intellectual stakes.

Several contemporary scholarly works have been written on puppetry dramaturgy by writers such as Dassia Posner (2016) and Paul Piris (2014); however, they are generally concerned with visual dramaturgy rather than directing. Directors of puppetry are often puppet makers or puppeteers, whose processes look more specifically at the mechanics of the puppet rather than an internal emotional approach. Calvert-Ennals' research is an attempt to bridge 'human' theatre practices with puppetry technique to begin to find a new methodology which could be reused within the puppetry field.