

# Music and Practice-based Research: Making Research More Creative and Putting More Research into Creativity

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Practice-based research is, according to the United Kingdom Council for Graduate Education, “distinct in that significant aspects of the claim for doctoral characteristics of originality, mastery and contribution to the field are held to be demonstrated through the original creative work”. By including creative works as part of a contribution, practice-based research helps to bridge the gap between otherwise disparate disciplines with differing views on the nature of a contribution. In science, a contribution is generally shorthand for a contribution to knowledge, obtained through careful study of the phenomenon of interest. In creative disciplines like music, a contribution involves the creation of new musical works. While both approaches require considerable background knowledge on the part of the practitioner, the goals are quite different. Practice-based research is an attempt to reconcile these different goals into a coherent approach. This presentation will describe a proposal for how to build a practice-based approach to music creation and research.

In traditional scientific research, the study is the main focus of the researcher's efforts. Some phenomenon is isolated and subjected to testing under controlled conditions. There is no room for the creation of works of any kind, artistic or otherwise. Rather, knowledge about the world is the goal. In order to combine this with a creative discipline like music, the focus needs to change from a goal of obtaining knowledge to one of the creation of musical works or instruments. Some of the same methods may be used in the development of the creative output as in scientific research. For example, the process used during creative development may be described and presented to a research community.

Music composition, as with other creative disciplines, tends to focus on the creation of new musical works. During the course of creating new works, aspects of the work like technology are often taken for granted. One way to inject research practice into creative practice is to develop or create new technologies during the course of developing new musical works. While the goal is still creative, both new technologies and new knowledge about their development are a vitally important part of the process. In this way, the best aspects of creative and scientific research are combined to both develop new approaches to music-making and new musical works.