

FROM **PRODUCTION FORMAT** TO **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

SPATIAL AUDIO COMPOSITION AS A 'NEW BEGINNING' IN LISTENING, SENSING, AND UNDERSTANDING

INMUSIC 2025 CONFERENCE NEW BEGINNINGS: FROM TABULA RASA TO RIP IT UP AND START AGAIN

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RESEARCH CONTEXT

This research stems from and forms part of my **'Disappearing Voices, Disappearing Spaces: Safeguarding Heritage Through Immersive Technologies and Community Voices'** (2024-2025) research secondment to Falmouth University's Centre for Blended Realities, funded by UKRI's Expanding Excellence in England (E3) scheme

- Associated doctoral brief 'Post-Immersive Experience Design: Affective and Accessible Spatial Audio'

THE RESEARCH INQUIRY

How can spatial audio composition function as a critical and creative methodology for portraying the voices and community resonances of four Cornish men?

> **AIM:** To develop and articulate a post-acousmatic, spatial audio methodology for composing fixed-media sonic portrays that ethically and affectively represent the lives, voices, and community resonances of four Cornish men.

THE OBJECTIVES

1. To compose four fixed-media spatial sonic portrays, each portraying one Cornish man and the community spaces through which their presence, values, and impact are articulated.
2. To investigate spatial audio not as a production format but as a research methodology, through embodied, situational, and affective practices of field recording, listening, and fixed media composition praxis
3. To explore how post-acousmatic listening and spatial audio composition can facilitate a re-engagement with the radiophonic arts, enabling a more relational and situated sonic practice.
4. To interrogate the ethical and representational complexities of portraying white heterosexual men, seeking ways to subvert hegemonic masculine narratives by revealing nuanced, community-rooted, and emotionally resonant masculinities.
5. To reflect critically on the practice of sonic portraying, evaluating its potential for knowledge production, relational ethics, and reimagining voice, space, community, and gender in contemporary sound art.

CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORKS

PORTRAIT

As a “representation of a particular person” and often “more than a record. They have been used to show the power, importance, virtue, wealth, taste, learning or other qualities of the sitter” (Tate)

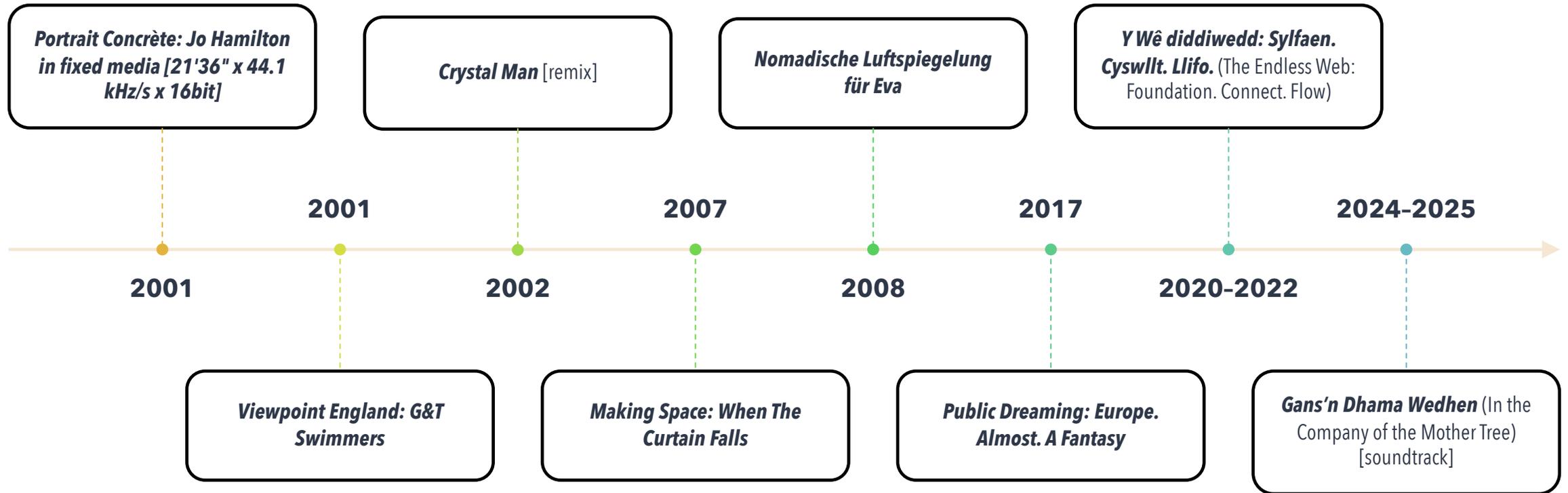
- Portraying the likeness, personality, mood with an explicit focus on the visual, in particular the face, albeit they are intended (‘expected’) to convey something about the subject beyond their physical appearances
- Singular/static perspective [on a ‘fixed’ visual medium]
- Indicator of the relative importance (power) of the given person as the chosen subject and the agency (power) of the portray artist in their depiction of the subject
- The concept and the practice of creating a sonic portray complexifies the idea of what a portray is/can be

SONIC PORTRAIT

- Challenge the normative 'gaze' of portraiture by shifting from ocular-centric modes to embodied, listened presence
- Reposition ('reconfigure') portraiture as auditory ('sonic'), affective, and immersive, allowing for a 'polyphonic' identity construction
- Seek to evoke presence and relational resonance(s)
- Use spatial audio as the medium to bring forth the subject's energy, context, and community
- Sonic portray as haecceity (Deleuze & Guattari)

NOTE: Importantly, not audio/radio documentary/journalism

PREVIOUS FIXED MEDIA SONIC PORTRAITS





Portrait Concrète:

Jo Hamilton in fixed media [21'36" x 44.1 kHz x 16bit] (2001)

OTHER RELEVANT FIXED MEDIA WORKS

Kuollut Radio (1998)

c.4', stereo fixed medium

Produced to form part of LMC commissioned *Ways of Hearing* by David Prior (UK), Dugal McKinnon (NZ), Ian Chuprun (CAN) and Antti Saario (FIN), for John Peel Festival, London, 1998

INK(ED) - Ihoon Kaiverrettua: Thoughts, Deeds, Vibrations (2013)

c.50', stereo fixed medium, multi-lingual experimental radio feature

In collaboration with sound artist and scholar Dr Taina Riikonen (FIN). Commissioned by YLE (Finnish Broadcasting Company)

FOUR CORNISH PORTRAITS

/VOICES/SPACES/RESONANCES/

CHRIS TREVENA SOUNDS LIKE CORNWALL

SOUND ARCHIVIST, KERNEWEK LANGUAGE
REVIVALIST, NATIONAL TRUST HERITAGE GUIDE,
"VOLUNTEER"



IMAGE: Greg Martin / Cornwall Live
<https://www.cornwalllive.com/news/cornwall-news/man-owns-800-records-tapes-8247465>



IMAGE: by Author



IMAGES FROM: <https://domallen.wordpress.com/anthropic-organ/> and Instagram: @dominickallen2

DOM ALLEN

EVERYBODY HERTZ

SOUND ARTIST, SOUND SYSTEMS,
CUSTOM ELECTRONICS AND
INSTRUMENTS

LEE MCINTYRE RUBICUND

CO-FOUNDER, EVENT ORGANISER, ARTIST

A Radical bookshop and Vegan cafe
in Falmouth, Kernow.

Always Antifascist, Always Queer, Always Vegan.

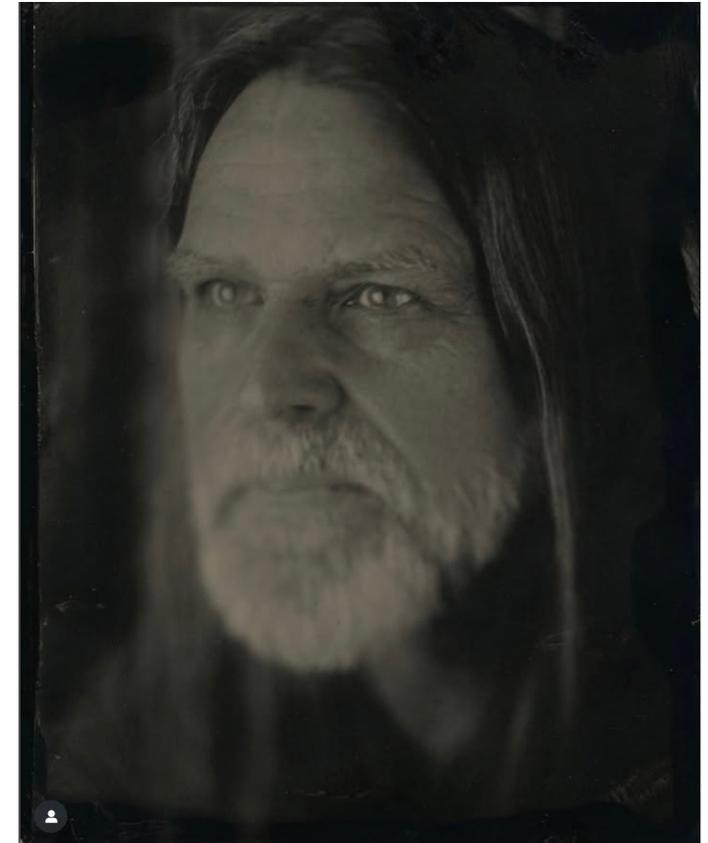


IMAGES FROM: Instagram @rubicundbooks and <https://www.rubicund.co.uk>

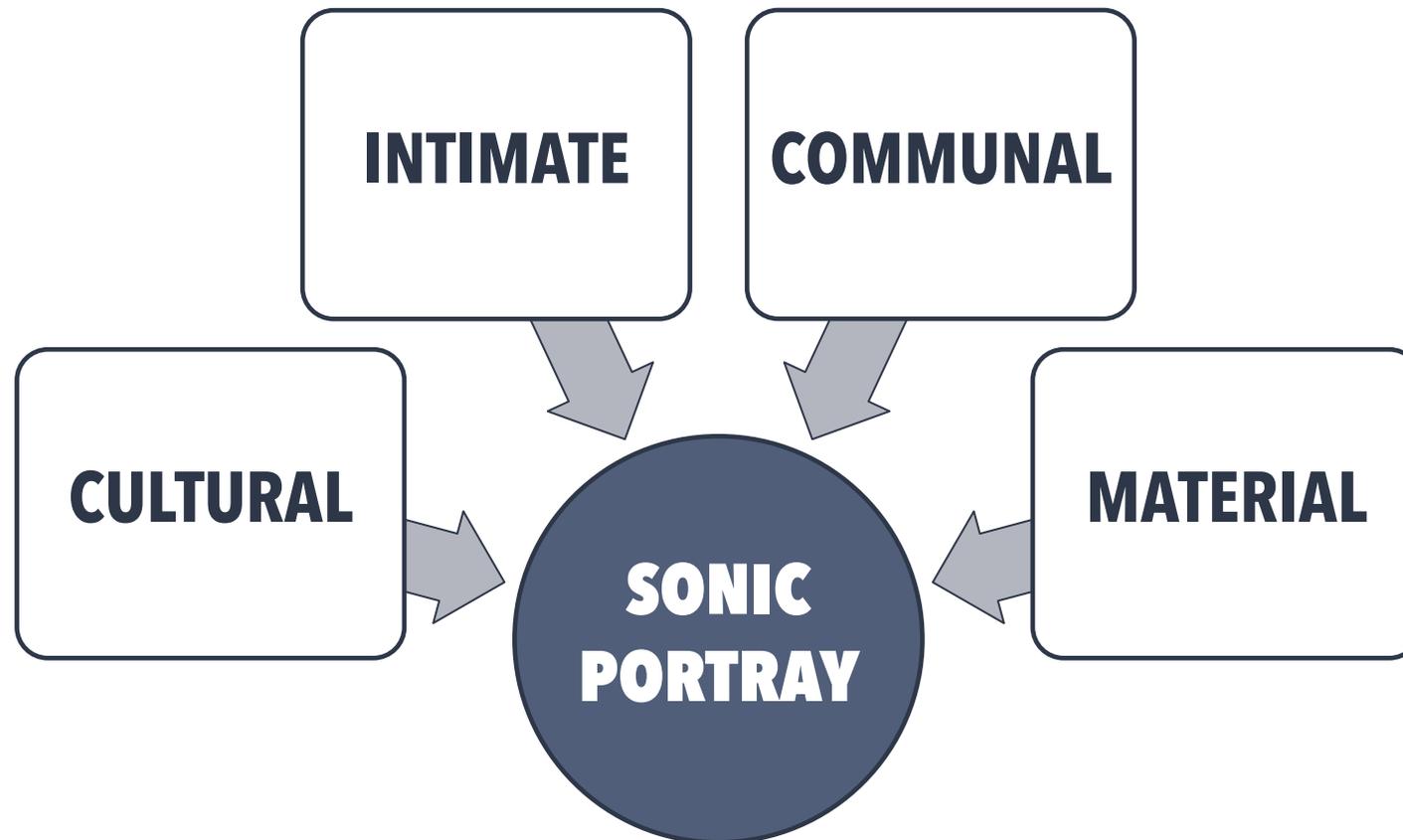


PATRICK ASTON DARK LEAVES

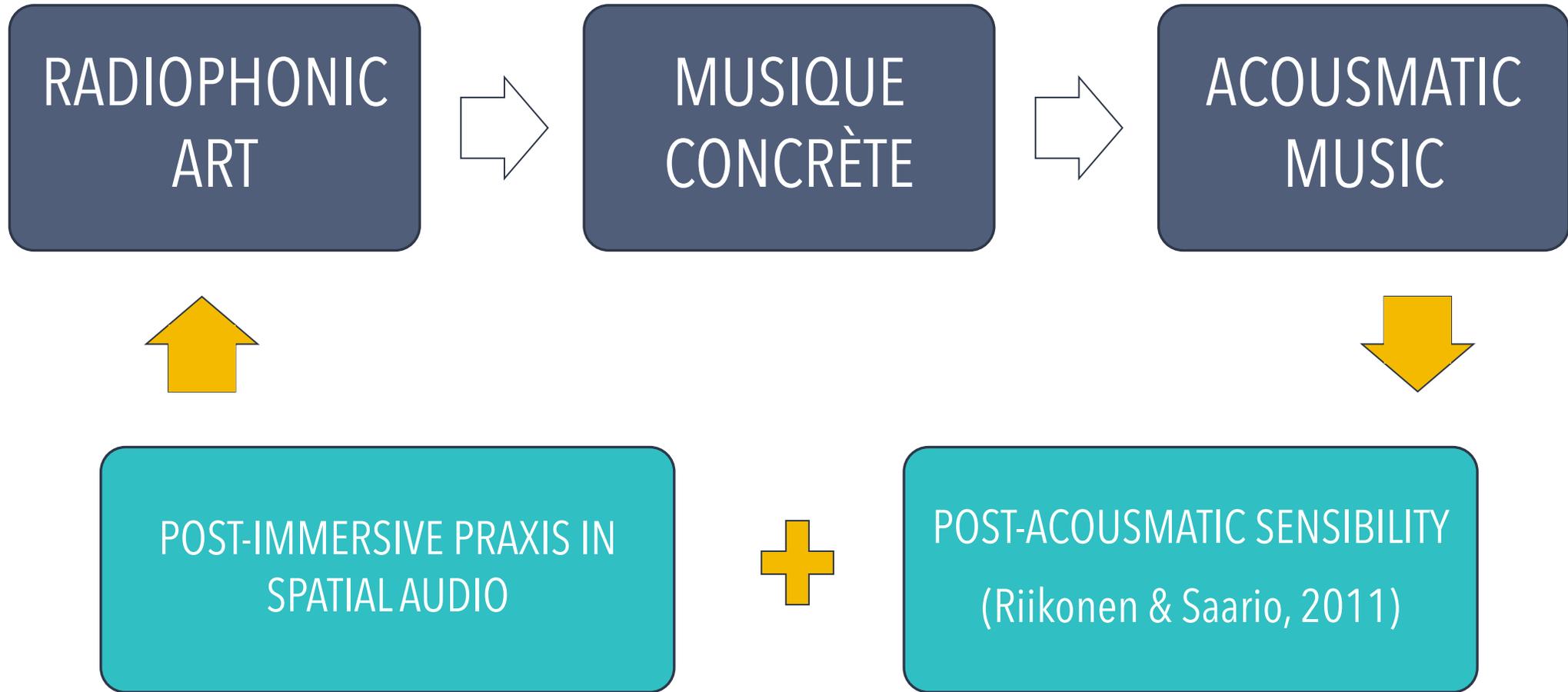
DARK FOLK SINGER-SONGWRITER



MULTIPLE RESONANCES



**METHODOLOGICAL
TURN**



TOWARDS A SONIC METHODOLOGY OF PORTRAYAL

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