

“Saved by a Song: The Transformative Power of Songwriting”

The Institute of Contemporary Music Performance, 5 June 2024 (hybrid event)

Organisers: Professor Sophie Daniels, Jonathan Whiskered, Shane Beales, Julian Marshall, Lucy James.

Rationale

What do we mean when we speak of the *transformational* Power of Songwriting?

What evidence is there out there that the writing and performance of song may actually make a difference to the way we live our lives?

These are the questions that lie at the very heart of our *Saved by a Song* conference.

While songwriting has long been valued for its expressive power and potential for evoking a world of experience within a highly time-efficient framework (often compared to the writing of poetry), song used more specifically in the service of therapy, is a more contemporary phenomenon. The field of music therapy using song, taking its lead from the pioneering work of Professor Felicity Baker and others, has, however, now become well-established in clinical practice – and, accordingly, is evidently growing as an internationally recognised therapeutic offering.

A related area, less well known and less widely established, lies in the description of the *transformational* role of songwriting.

More and more, it seems that we hear tales of transformational experience being expressed in song - whether via mainstream artists such as Adele, Billie Eilish or Ed Sheeran, the plethora of lesser-known singer-songwriters who reveal, with disarming honesty, aspects of dealing with the day-to-day challenges of uncertain mental health or writer-pioneers such as Mary Gautier who’s remarkable work with veterans and others, clearly produces powerful transformational results in a non-clinical setting.

Our conference is an open invitation to explore the theme of transformational songwriting in its broadest remit. The conference welcomes anyone with an interest in songwriting, including scholars, musical practitioners, industry practitioners, campaigners, etc. We invite proposals for papers, workshops, roundtables, posters, and presentations in any other format. Proposals on any topic related to songwriting practices will be considered.

The organisers are indebted to songwriter and author Mary Gautier for the loan of our conference title from her book of the same name.

The deadline for proposals is **5th January 2024**. Please send the following information to julian.marshall@icmp.ac.uk.

- 150–200 words abstract for paper proposals; max 1 page outlining the aims, methods and duration of the session for workshops or other formats.
- 50–100 words personal biography highlighting relevant activities and experience.
- Please state whether you would prefer to attend in person in London or contribute online.
- If you have any access needs, please let us know and we will do our best to meet them.

Thank you in advance for your proposals, we look forward to reading them! If you have any questions about the conference, please contact: lucy.james@icmp.ac.uk or julian.marshall@icmp.ac.uk.