



Plain Language Statement

Project Title: Examining Performance in Action

Researcher Details:

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What is this project? The purpose of the research is to investigate contemporary performing arts practices. In particular, we are interested in examining vocalists' individual experiences of participating in an opera production. We want to find out more information about how performers learn and develop throughout a production period (rehearsals through performance).

What does participation involve? The study involves four types of data collection, comprised of observations, interviews, surveys, and a written reflection. Collecting these types of data allows us to examine individual experiences as they develop over the production period. We are asking you to participate in the following ways:

1. Consent to the research team watching the existing production video-recordings (6-8 rehearsals and the final performances). In particular, we would like to transcribe your individual contributions as data for inclusion to this project. The research team will retain only the transcriptions as data.
2. Participate in 5 short, individual interviews – Interviews will take no more than five minutes and will include questions focused on your personal involvement in the production. The short interviews will be audio-recorded so that the data can be transcribed for accuracy. These interviews will take place in a room separate to the rehearsal room with the research team at designated times independent of your rehearsal/ performance schedule to ensure confidentiality.
3. Complete 6 short surveys - You will be asked to complete a short survey approximately once a fortnight throughout the production period, which will take no more than 10 minutes to do. These surveys include questions about yourself and your experience throughout the production. These questionnaires will be handed to you either after your short interview or a separate designated time independent of your rehearsal schedule to ensure confidentiality.
4. Provide a short, written reflection – Following the performances, you will be asked to write a 400-word reflection on your involvement in the production.

Our reason for collecting this data is to gain a more cohesive understanding of your experiences. However, your participation in the project is flexible, such that you have the option to participate in any or all of these tasks, as noted on the consent form.

How long will this take? Interviews will be done within the production schedule (e.g., during rehearsal breaks), such that participation (surveys, written reflection) is anticipated to take no more than 90 minutes outside of rehearsal and performance time.

Is this research project related to my participation in the production as a student?

Your participation in the research is completely separate to your participation in the production as a University of Melbourne student. Your studies and assessments are not related to this research. While the research team is affiliated with The University of Melbourne, this research project is conducted

independently from your interactions with other Melbourne Conservatorium of Music staff. In no way does this research link to, or affect, your assessment for your class/course or your academic standing overall.

What happens if you don't want to be involved? That is perfectly OK. This research is entirely voluntary and separate to your involvement in the production. Even if you do choose to take part in the research, you are free to withdraw your consent and cease participating in the research. You may contact the researchers to withdraw any of your contributions to the project at any time until the data has been collated and it is no longer possible to separate your contribution to the overall data. Your decision not to volunteer will not influence the nature of your relationship with the researchers or The University of Melbourne either now or in the future.

What incentives are there to participate? Your participation in this research is voluntary. The final survey will provide you with individualised feedback, which may assist you in reflecting on your production experience.

Will my information be identifiable? Your contributions will not be personally identifiable. We will not identify you by name in any resulting publications. You will be asked to create a unique participant code, which will be used throughout this project in order to link together your contributions. You will create this code on the consent form, which will be the only place your code is linked to your name. All data will be securely stored on password-protected computers, and will only be accessible by the research team. Note that the information linking your name to your code will be securely stored separate to the research data. When data collection is completed, this information will be securely deleted so that only the anonymous coded data is retained and used for analysis.

You should note, however, because the number of potential participants is small, it still might be possible for someone to identify you. For example, participants could be identified if a publication or media material refers to the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music or production by name, its location, or its demographic makeup.

What will happen to my data? The data will be analysed along with all other responses obtained, and the analyses will form the basis of academic publications. The data will be kept for a minimum period of seven years after the last article has been published. There is a possibility that we may carry out a further study on performer-audience interaction; and, with your permission, your data will be retained and used as a set for comparative study.

If you would like to receive reports on the results, you are welcome to visit the project website: http://bit.ly/EPIA_info or contact the researchers (details at the top of the first page). You can also indicate that you would like the researchers to email you a copy of the report on the consent form.

What are the benefits and risks to participating? While you may not receive any direct benefit from your participation in this research, your participation will contribute to important research concerning live performance and performing arts practices.

We do not foresee any direct risks/ discomfort from your participation in this research apart from your time. However, sometimes talking about aspects of your life (like your performing experiences) can trigger distress, so if you do feel any psychological stress or discomfort during this interview, please let me know and we can stop. And, if you feel any stress or discomfort after participating in this study, please feel free to contact The University of Melbourne Psychology Clinic or Lifeline (for your convenience, this information will be provided at the end of the study also):

University of Melbourne Psychology Clinic: 03 9035 5180; clinic@psych.unimelb.edu.au
Lifeline (24/7): 13 11 14

Additionally, as this research will be published featuring narrative accounts taken from your interviews, there is a possibility that your anonymous contribution may still be identifiable. However, great care will be taken to preserve your anonymity as all identifying information will be removed as far as possible and no individual identities will be used in any reports or publications arising from this research. Should you have any concerns around being identified in the research, you can contact the researchers (details at the top of the page) to discuss any questions you may have.

Where can I get further information? If you have any questions about this information or want to know more, information, please contact the researcher listed above.

This research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of The University of Melbourne. If you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of this research project, which you do not wish to discuss with the research team, you should contact the Manager, Human Research Ethics, Office for Research Ethics and Integrity, The University of Melbourne, VIC 3010. Tel: +61 3 8344 2073 or Fax: +61 03 9347 6739 or Email: HumanEthics-complaints@unimelb.edu.au. All complaints will be treated confidentially. In any correspondence please provide the name of the research team or the name or ethics ID of the research project.

How do I agree to participate?

If you wish to participate, your agreement and consent to participate in the study is indicated when you tick the 'Yes' box at the bottom of the consent form page.

This Plain Language Statement is yours to retain.