School: Creative Industries

Researcher: Lee Scott

Project Title: Opera for Web and Mobile Media

UOA: 34 – Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management

300-Word Statement

'Opera for Web and Mobile Media' offers a culturally novel apprehension of opera that extends the art form into web and mobile media. The project's outputs comprise two practice-as-research productions – *The Village* (2015), which explores how an entirely mediated opera may advance a sense of 'now-ness' through several devices – and *Fragments* (2017), which extends this enquiry by treating the city of Bath as operatic mise en scène, facilitating a situation where the opera's music and the activity of the city intermingle to provide new meanings based on environment. Contextual information comprises video walkthroughs, accompanying music and artwork, academic conference contributions and a detailed research timeline.

Methodologically, *The Village* is evaluated using mixed-methods research, with insights into the perceived quality of the opera and the effectiveness of liveness devices collected through an online visitor questionnaire and a custom embedded-data capture system. The work was viewed by over 1900 individuals from around the world, and visitors largely acknowledged the devices, which for some made the opera feel "current and alive". *Fragments*, meanwhile, develops new experimental approaches for how live sound capture, binaural audio and location-based technologies can create mobile storytelling experiences that place the virtual and the physical world in dialogue – a concept that I term 'domain blending'.

Indeed, 'Opera for Web and Mobile Media' contributes new knowledge and creative approaches to the emerging field of 'digital opera' (Sheil and Vear 2012; Hugill et al. 2014). Specifically, Scott's work has defined and characterised a sub-set of entirely mediated operatic works termed 'opera for computing platforms'. The works demonstrate a means of transforming the traditional forces of opera – image (visual production), sound (music) and text (libretto) – through the lens of digital creativity, deploying concepts such as non-linearity, user/audience participation, virtual scenography and headphone-targeted music to reimagine the operatic form in a contemporary context.