

**Water and Dreams: Exploring Bachelard's concepts
through new audiovisual works for the oboe**

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Certificate of original authorship

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Linda Walsh

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Abstract

This research explores new approaches to composition and performance with interactive audiovisual systems which draw on the ideas of Gaston Bachelard. The composition *Blue Space* for oboe and interactive audiovisual system is a central component of this thesis. This practice-based research project explores music composition and performance incorporating sound, visuals and gesture. Written from the perspective of a composer-performer, it examines ways in which sound and image can be connected in a musical context. Although this work is highly individual, it is contextualised within the existing knowledge and practices of audiovisual music.

The work builds upon my background as a classical musician, and expands the scope of my artistic practice. It offers practice-based insights into composition and performance with visuals, gestures, and interactive systems. A set of related sub-themes arising from practice over the course of a professional career as an oboist are explored.

In the process of this work, I challenge the notion that the oboe should be limited to standard repertoire and traditional styles of music making. A new approach to performance is developed that blends elements of theatre, dance and improvisation, culminating in new repertoire for the oboe. Performance gestures in which the body functions as a controller of the visuals are a feature of the work. Enacting, painting, mixing, interacting and choreographing are the five categories of gesture identified, illustrating different ways in which themes of the piece can be linked to visual forms.

The new work *Blue Space* demonstrates the important role of analogy in the linking of diverse media. It explores the connections between music and water and questions why water is such a prominent source of inspiration. Gaston Bachelard's philosophical text *Water and Dreams* is a key reference in the investigation of the role of water in artistic practice.

