

Hearing and the noise of performance: Solutions for sound monitoring

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Performing artists must be able to practice, rehearse, and perform safely. With respect to hearing and the “noise” of performance, however, the delicate nature of their work and the dedication of performers themselves may mean that they—as well as their employers, educators, and managers—are placed in a difficult position when complying with new international noise at work regulations. This workshop showcases recent initiatives that have brought together artists and scientists to generate practical solutions and new technology for monitoring noise and protecting hearing, while having little or no impact on the quality of performers’ work. The workshop consists of the following demonstrations: “Improving noise exposure during practice: The sound absorbing mirror” (Dance and Zepidou), “The use of the iPhone as a sound meter: A cheaper noise badge” (Dance and Zepidou), and “The E-meter: A new noise badge designed for the entertainment industry” (Backus and Williamon). In each, new devices and technology are demonstrated alongside in-depth discussion of the research underpinning their development, as well as their cost and application across a wide range of performing arts contexts. The workshop also considers avenues for future research and the artistic, cultural, and scientific requisites that must be met in pursuing them.

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