

Institution: University of Worcester		
Unit of Assessment: 33 Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies		
Title of case study: Shaping Worcestershire Pride through performance research		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2010-2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Daniel Somerville	Senior Lecturer	2010-present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: June 2016 – December 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		
1. Summary of the impact		
<p>Somerville's research has underpinned queer arts events in Worcester and has had a direct impact on the organisational development of Worcestershire Pride; in particular, the embedding of its commitment to queer arts in its Constitution. His work has led to the recognition and support of LGBTQ+ events by Worcester City Council and has increased community awareness and understanding of queer arts and related LGBTQ+ issues in the city. A queer arts festival was initiated by Somerville (the first of its kind in the city), which has had impacts on culture and the community, enriching lives and deepening knowledge.</p>		
2. Underpinning research		
<p>The underpinning research supporting this impact case study includes two performance projects, <i>Admiring La Stupenda</i> (2013-2019) and <i>Pavarotti and Me</i> (2015-2020) (References 1). Both performances offer queer perspectives on opera, and both employ strategies familiar to queer cabaret and contemporary performance/Live Art. Research into the relationship of Live Art to opera (Reference 2) also underpins this case study. Both performances, and other short works (<i>Oh! England</i>, <i>The Mermaid</i>, <i>Trio xxx</i> and <i>Opera Lap Dance</i>) performed in Worcester during this period, employ autobiography as a tool to interrogate a subject (in this case opera) while simultaneously decentring heteronormative claims to authority over this subject. In these performances the identity of the 'opera queen' is presented as that of an outsider, not only from wider heteronormative society, but also outside the queer community where the opera queen is a bygone, forgotten identity. <i>Admiring La Stupenda</i> arises from a body of research into 'the operatic' and positions the opera queen as a conduit to hidden ways of knowing connected to opera and by extension Somerville's lived experience and emotional world. <i>Pavarotti and Me</i> arises from a further exploration of the potential of autobiography to reveal understandings about the subject (opera) and the self in relation to it. The primary insight of the research therefore concerns the power of queer autobiography to participate in knowledge generation and dissemination, while at the same time challenging established ways of knowing.</p> <p>Somerville's performances and publications are part of his wider project to interrogate and facilitate queer identity. This project – deploying and drawing on autobiography - led to and informed his work on queer arts events in Worcester, and his development of impact related to increased awareness of queer arts and related LGBTQ+ issues in the city. Insights gained during the creation and performance of these outputs were a vital resource when mentoring, supporting, and programming other queer artists in the arts events of Worcestershire Pride and in positioning queer arts festival in the cultural landscape of Worcester, a rural city. Findings on rural queer identity led, specifically, to Worcestershire Pride adopting the theme of 'Out in the Country' for its 2018 activities.</p>		

Somerville, senior lecturer at University of Worcester, was the primary and only researcher working on these projects from 2013 to 2020, which build on a body of work in queer performance in the UK since 2009 and on journalism, art direction (Mondi Award winner 1999), performance making, activism and queer festival management (Johannesburg Pride Co-Chair 2001) in South Africa dating back to 1996.

3. References to the research

1. *The Operatic (Double Bill): Admiring La Stupenda and Pavarotti & Me* is returned as a multi-component output (Somerville_05) in the unit's submission.
<https://padlet.com/dsomerville2/82m8ptt0ov9vyb1q>
2. D. Somerville, 'Back to The Artwork of The Future: Transformation, Emotion and Participation in the Opera-Related Works of Joshua Sofaer'. In *Joshua Sofaer: Performance | Objects | Participation* Edited by Roberta Mock & Mary Paterson (The Live Art Development Agency and Intellect Books, 2020), pp. 106-127. This output is also returned in the unit's submission (Somerville_03).

4. Details of the impact

Somerville's research activities have had four distinct but related types of impact.

First, Somerville has had a direct impact on the organisational development of Worcestershire Pride. He was centrally involved in the establishment of a committee and the Constitution for Worcestershire Pride and in the enabling of a productive dialogue between Worcestershire Pride and Worcester City Council. He advised on governance documents, matters of procedure, and fundraising. Through this, Somerville's work has had an impact on the policies and processes of the City Council, specifically leading it to recognise and support LGBTQ+ culture (Source A).

Second, impact has occurred as a result of Somerville's key role in the embedding of arts activities in the work of Worcestershire Pride, ensuring an impact on audiences and the local community in terms of increasing awareness, knowledge and understanding of LGBTQ+ issues. These activities have impacted on culture and the community, enriching lives and deepening knowledge. The queer arts festival initiated by Somerville was the first of its kind in the city (Sources A, C and D). Somerville's work has impacted on the legacy of Pride on queer performance in the city's arts venues.

Third, by encouraging, supporting and mentoring other queer artists to programme and present work in Worcester, Somerville's activities have had an impact on the knowledge and working practices of these artists and performers within the context of rural LGBTQ+ culture (Sources E and G).

Fourth, Somerville's performances of *Admiring La Stupenda* and *Pavarotti and Me* have had an impact on increased awareness of LGBTQ+ issues in Worcester and beyond. Both pieces 'bring to the forefront thought-provoking and intellectually stimulating topics of how opera, at its most fundamental and raw self [is] a clear challenge to our binary society and as such, Queer.' (Source G)

Somerville was recognised by the city of Worcester for his contribution to the LGBTQ+ community when he received the 'Mayor's Best of Worcester Award' 2020 (Source H).

Appropriately, in the case of a project concerning queer performance and art making, the route from research to impact here does not follow a simple, linear or direct path. Activities underpinning research output creation and dissemination facilitated the realisation of impact through a fluid dialogue between practice as research, public engagement and impact activity. This dialogue informed the creative development of performances and enabled a public platform

for research dissemination, while at the same time impacting upon and underpinning the development of Worcestershire Pride, of queer arts events in Worcester, and the work of queer artists. As Nicola Longworth-Cook (Out2gether) puts it (Source F), 'Daniel's research activities created a vibrant and exciting spark in Worcester. They captured the energy and the anticipation of the coming Pride events and brought disparate sections of the local LGBTQ+ community together to share opportunities to experience queer art in a way that had hitherto not existed.'

In June 2016 the committee's first public event was held; a vigil outside the Guildhall following the Pulse nightclub massacre. The Pride flag was flown from the Georgian building for the first time in its history. In May 2017, the first 'Sexuality Showcase' was held at Worcester Arts Workshop. As producer for what was a pilot for a queer arts festival to coincide with the inaugural Pride 2017, Somerville programmed and mentored acts by queer artists in Worcester.

As Director of Arts for Worcestershire Pride, Somerville ran the Worcestershire Pride Festival of Arts and Culture 2017, which involved participation by local arts organisations including Worcester Arts Workshop, Worcester Museum and Art Gallery, and the Hive, where exhibitions of queer art were held for the first time. 39 artists appeared, reaching approx. 300 members of the public, enriching culture and awareness, and impacting artists who were given a platform that was otherwise unavailable and the public that encountered queer art on a scale not seen previously in Worcester. Amanda Hickling (Source B) writes that Somerville's central involvement with Worcestershire Pride saw an 'increase in the LGBTQ+ and queer arts scene in Worcester. It brought members of the community & LGBTQ+ community together with a common interest in the arts and culture.' Other showcase efforts were inspired by this, including a festival organised in August 2017 by the Worcester graduate company Provisional Act Theatre Company that invited Somerville to present *Admiring La Stupenda*. Nicole Roman (Source C) writes 'by being an educator, a performer and a fierce advocate for queer performance', Somerville 'made an impact on the arts scene in Worcester and left an outstanding legacy to the city.'

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- A) Testimonial from André Oldfield, Worcestershire Pride chairperson (2016-2019)
- B) Testimonial from Amanda Hickling, Worcestershire Pride committee member (2016-2019)
- C) Testimonial from Nicole Roman, Secretary of Worcestershire Pride (2016-2018), artist and co-founder of Provisional Act Theatre Company
- D) Testimonial from Helen Mole, Tourism and City Centre Manager, Worcester City Council
- E) Testimonials from performers
- F) Testimonial from Nicola Longworth-Cook, Out2gether, Malvern
- G) Testimonial from Owen Harper, Artistic Director, Ten Minutes Late Theatre
- H) Testimonial from Keith Slater, Organiser of the "Mayor's Best of Worcester Awards"