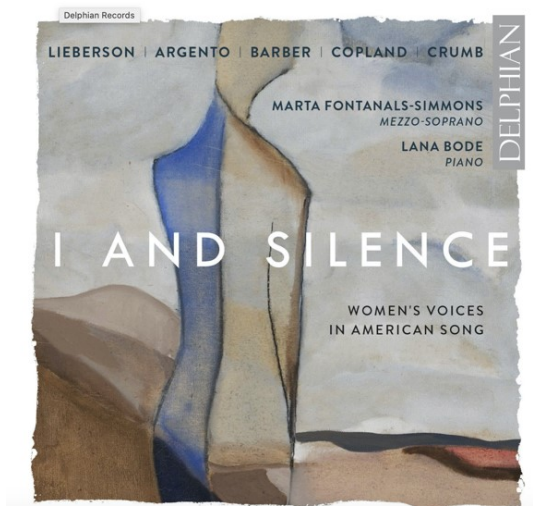


<b>Section A</b>		
<b>Institution:</b> University of St Andrews		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> UoA 27: English Language and Literature		
<b>Title of case study:</b> Hearing the Music of Virginia Woolf's Writing		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2006 – 31 December 2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b> Emma Sutton	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b> Professor	<b>Period(s) employed by HEI:</b> 01 September 2003 to present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> 2014 - 31 December 2020		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014?</b> N		

**Section B**

**1. Summary of the impact**



*I and Silence: Women's Voices in American Song* (2019), CD cover.

For over a decade, St Andrews has been a centre of critical, editorial and creative work on novelist Virginia Woolf. Professor Emma Sutton's research on Woolf and music led to interdisciplinary collaborations that interpret music's importance to Woolf and the Bloomsbury Group for public audiences. Sutton's research also directly catalysed and supported creative work: four new musical compositions inspired by Woolf's writing; a new musical play about Woolf's life; and a new CD on women's voices in song. Sutton's research has: (1) informed a legacy of new musical and dramatic works; (2) inspired interdisciplinary creative practice and enriched cultural life; and (3) interpreted literary heritage for more than 78,000 people (public users) and informed journalism and broadcasts for audiences of over 1,000,000 listeners and readers in the UK, Europe, North America, Australia and Asia.

**2. Underpinning research**

In 1940, Virginia Woolf famously stated, 'I always think of my books as music before I write them.' But, as distinguished Woolf scholar Jane Marcus observed in the 1980s, we have collectively failed to 'hear' music's importance to Woolf's writing. Although many of Woolf's contemporary reviewers had noted music's influence on her prose, research into this subject was hindered by the widespread decline of music education in the later twentieth century and by entrenched perceptions of music as apolitical; the latter obscured recognition of music's vital role in Woolf's feminism, cosmopolitanism and pacifism. Despite extensive critical attention to the role of the other arts, particularly visual art, in the work and lives of Woolf and the Bloomsbury Group, it was generally assumed they had little interest in music.

Sutton's monograph *Virginia Woolf and Classical Music* (2013; pbk 2015) was the first to examine the role of music in Woolf's life and work in detail [R1]. Underpinned by extensive archival research, the monograph revealed the depth and range of Woolf's musical knowledge for the first time. It gathered formerly unknown evidence of her musical life, including her music criticism and binding of sheet music, and (by deciphering the abbreviated entries in Leonard Woolf's financial accounts) established their subscription membership of the National

Gramophonic Society and thus her familiarity with far more twentieth-century and avant-garde repertoire than had been recognised. It provided unprecedented analyses of the allusions to music in Woolf's writing, explored its influence on her politics (feminism, pacifism, philo-Semitism, cosmopolitanism) and proposed music's vital role in her creative practice. The book (researched 2006-2012) extended the discipline of word-music studies to which Sutton has contributed substantially [R2-R6]. Demonstrating the importance of music to Woolf's politics and her formal experimentation, *Virginia Woolf and Classical Music* offered a template for the study of music's dual significance in modernist writing more widely.

Sutton's work was enhanced by St Andrews' community of Woolf scholars, including Professors Susan Sellers and Gill Plain and Dr Christina Alt. Sellers is joint General Editor of the [Cambridge Edition of the Works of Virginia Woolf](#) – the first scholarly edition of Woolf's work – and author of the novel *Vanessa and Virginia* (2008) about Woolf and her sister. [Vanessa and Virginia](#) has been translated into 15 languages, including Japanese and Farsi, and adapted as a stage play. Sutton has been on the editorial team of the *Cambridge Edition* since 2006 and is volume editor of Woolf's first novel, *The Voyage Out*. Sutton's editorial work engendered new readings of *The Voyage Out* [R1, R2], which is about a pianist, prompting critical reevaluation of a novel previously dismissed as juvenile work.

Since 2015, public-facing collaborations with pianist Lana Bode (Guildhall) and art historian Dr. Charlotte de Mille (Courtauld Institute) have catalysed an essay exploring connections between Woolf and the Omega Workshops which produced little-known pacifist concerts and art for children during the First World War [R5]; thus, the research informed the impact which in turn informed further research. This essay also established previously unknown connections among Woolf and French women composers, revealing the influence of one – Germaine Tailleferre – on Woolf's seminal feminist essay *A Room of One's Own*. Sutton's research has, therefore, not only revealed new formal and political aspects of Woolf's work but also enhanced our understanding of music's wider importance to early twentieth-century literary and political history.

### 3. References to the research

All listed outputs were published following anonymous peer-review process by presses. R5 is submitted to REF2021 and R1 and R2 were REF2014 submissions.

R1) Emma Sutton, *Virginia Woolf and Classical Music: Politics, Aesthetics, Form* (Edinburgh University Press, 2013; pbk 2015). Research monograph, 171 pp. ISBN: 9780748637874. Available in Edinburgh Scholarship Online, DOI: [10.3366/edinburgh/9780748637874.001.0001](https://doi.org/10.3366/edinburgh/9780748637874.001.0001).

R2) Emma Sutton, 'Fiction as Musical Critique: Virginia Woolf, *The Voyage Out* and the Case of Wagner', in Phyllis Weliver and Katharine Ellis, eds, *Words and Notes in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), 145-63. Book chapter. ISBN: 9781843838111. Volume shortlisted for The Ruth A. Solie Award, The American Musicological Society, in 2014 for 'a collection of musicological essays of exceptional merit'.

R3) Emma Sutton, 'Flying Dutchmen, Wandering Jews: Romantic Opera, Anti-Semitism, and Jewish Mourning in *Mrs. Dalloway*', in Adriana Varga, ed., *Virginia Woolf & Music* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2014), 160-79. Book chapter. ISBN: 9780253012555.

R4) Emma Sutton, 'Decadence and Music', in Jane Desmarais and David Weir, eds, *Decadence and Literature* (Cambridge UP, 2019), 152-68. Book chapter. Available at Cambridge Core. ISBN: 978110426244, DOI: [10.1017/9781108550826.010](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108550826.010).

R5) Emma Sutton, 'Gender Wars in Music, or Bloomsbury and French Composers: Woolf, Tailleferre, Boulanger', in Ariane Mildenberg and Patricia Novillo-Corvalán, eds, *Virginia Woolf, Europe, and Peace: Transnational Circulations* (Clemson UP, 2020), 33-48. Book chapter. ISBN: 9781949979350. Essay based on plenary lecture at the 28<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference on Virginia Woolf, University of Kent, June 2018.

R6) Emma Sutton, "'Restless Mystical Ardours": Decadence and Music', in Alex Murray, ed., *Decadence: A Literary History* (Cambridge UP, 2020), 218-33. Book chapter. Available at Cambridge Core. ISBN: 9781108426299, DOI: [10.1017/9781108640527.013](https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108640527.013).

#### 4. Details of the impact

Sutton's research has catalysed and supported four new musical works, a new musical play and a CD. These works fostered artists' professional development, leading directly to further performances and commissions for the musicians and composers involved. Through 8 research-led concerts, 11 public talks, an exhibition, and broadcasts for UK, Australian and Russian TV and radio that were presented by Sutton, or in which she was interviewed or her work cited, Sutton's research has enriched cultural life and interpreted literary heritage for users in the UK, Europe, North America, Australia and Asia. These events showcasing music's role in Woolf's life and afterlives were directed by Sutton and pianist [Lana Bode](#) who together established the ongoing [Virginia Woolf & Music](#) project in 2015 after Bode read Sutton's monograph [R1] and proposed a collaboration; AHRC funding enabled the commissions, events and premieres of new music inspired by Woolf. Over 78,000 people have attended the project's events or used its resources; journalism and broadcasts informed by Sutton's research have reached international audiences of at least 1,000,000. Beneficiaries, some of whom were also at times collaborators, include: composers, musicians and dramatists; the reading, listening and exhibition-going public; and school children.

##### 1) Sutton's research informs legacy of new musical and dramatic works

In total, four new compositions inspired by Woolf's writing have been commissioned and/or premiered as a direct result of Sutton's research. These are: a song (*A London Street in Winter*) and a string quartet (*Memory is the Seamstress*) by eminent British composer [Jeremy Thurlow](#); the song cycle [Woolf Letters](#) by British composer [Richard Barnard](#); and a song cycle [The Lonely Mind](#) by Dutch composer [Jan-Willem van Herpen](#) (all premiered 2016). Thurlow's song has been reprised once in the UK (in 2018), his quartet three times in the UK (between 2017 and 2020) and van Herpen's in the Netherlands (in 2018). These works, in turn, catalysed further compositions, including a choral setting by Thurlow of text from Woolf's *The Waves* (premiered in 2018, Tokyo). In 2016, the Alvor Ensemble commissioned Barnard to develop ideas and musical material from his Woolf song cycle for a new instrumental work, [Our Great Grief and Joy](#) (4 UK performances between 2016 and 2020). Then, in 2020, they commissioned another [new instrumental work](#) to "partner" *Our Great Grief and Joy*; Barnard described this as "a really crucial medium-sized commission" in the context of the Covid-19 lockdown [S1, p.8]. AHRC funding also enabled the project to premiere [String Quartet No. 3](#), the last work by distinguished American composer [Elliott Schwartz](#) (d. 2016).

Sutton's research also inspired a new one-woman play about Woolf's life: [Virginia Woolf, Killing the Angel](#) (ongoing UK-wide theatre and festival tour from 2020; 5 performances to date, including at the 2020 Bloomsbury Festival, others postponed due to Covid-19). The play combines Woolf's words with music by contemporary female composers whose work is now rarely performed. The writer/performer Lucy Stevens writes of Sutton's book, "its mere existence persuaded Elizabeth Marcus [the musical director] that Virginia Woolf (not being a singer) was a potential subject that we could portray with words and music" [S2]. Moreover, some of Stevens's decisions about the selection of music and texts for the play were the "direct result" of Sutton's research [R1]. For instance, Sutton's discussion of the historic expectation that men and women should play different repertoire – a bias Woolf had challenged in her first novel through allusions to Beethoven's last piano sonata (Opus 111, in C minor) – led Stevens to include an extract from this sonata early in the play. Similarly, Stevens's interweaving of lines from the concert scene in Woolf's novel *The Waves* with musical phrases from Offenbach's 'Barcarolle' drew directly on Sutton's analysis of the novel [S2]. The convenor of the Opera All Party Parliamentary Group described the play as "[a stunning piece of research \[...\] unearthing some little-known details of VW's life](#)".

##### 2) Sutton's research inspires interdisciplinary creative practice and enriches cultural life

Between 2016 and 2020, Sutton and Bode directed an exhibition, 8 research-led concerts and 11 talks, many live-streamed and available long-term free on the project website. Highlights include: a concert and exhibition for StAnza poetry festival (in St Andrews, 2016) placed by the box office, visible to the approximately 16,500 people (public attendees) who visited the festival

[S3]; performances at some of London's most prestigious concert venues including [St-Martin-in-the-Fields](#) (twice in 2018) and [St James's Piccadilly](#) (in 2018); and a concert and talk at the Paul Mellon Centre (in 2019) for the [Bedford Square Festival](#), the first time a musical performance had been included in the Festival. Sutton's research [R5] also enriched cultural life for children in Scotland. The connections among pacifism, music for children, Woolf and other Bloomsbury members informed a children's concert, marionette workshops and curriculum-based worksheets. These resources, developed and delivered in collaboration with teachers and available free on the project website, were featured as good practice in interdisciplinary teaching at a Highland Teachers' Inset Day (in 2017) and the University of Malta (in 2018). As of 31 December 2020, over 1,600 people (predominantly, Scottish school children; also, Scottish adults) have participated in project workshops on this topic and others based on Sutton's research [S4].

One example illustrates the project's influence on artists' creative and professional development. Bode and mezzo-soprano [Marta Fontanals-Simmons](#) initially collaborated performing Dominick Argento's 1974 song cycle *From the Diary of Virginia Woolf* for the project in 2016; as Fontanals-Simmons attests, this led them to develop a sustained [collaboration](#) focused on women's representation in song. They: reached the semi-final of the 2017 [Wigmore Hall International Song Competition](#); were awarded a year-long performance residency at Snape Maltings, Aldeburgh; followed by another year-long residency at the [Britten-Pears Foundation](#), funded by the British Council. In 2019, they released their debut album, [I and Silence: Women's Voices in American Song](#) (Delphian records, *Gramophone's* 'Label of the Year', 2014). The CD, which includes their performance of Argento's Woolf cycle, has been widely acclaimed: a 'remarkable exploration' (*Sunday Times*) displaying 'searing musical intelligence' (*Classical Source*); a 'hugely ambitious debut solo album' (*Gramophone*); 5 stars *BBC Music*; Presto Editor's Choice (2019). CD sales (retail price: GBP14.99) and streams exceed 10,000 since 30 August 2019 [S5]. At Delphian's invitation, Bode is creating a follow-up CD of newly-commissioned music by women composers, a welcome development given it is estimated [only 13% of new classical music is written by women](#).

### 3) Sutton's work interprets literary heritage in the UK and internationally

Virginia Woolf is often seen as a 'difficult' novelist yet considerable interest has been generated internationally by the sustained engagement of the public with Sutton's work. *Virginia Woolf and Classical Music* [R1] was the subject of a 2014 feature programme '[Woolf and Wagner](#)' for ABC's Radio National (Australia) (weekly audience of more than 631,000 people (listeners)); feature available on demand on ABC's and the [producer's website](#) (additional 3,700 people (listeners) on the latter through 31 December 2020). Sutton was interviewed at length for the hour-long feature, timed to reflect on the first-ever production of [Wagner's Ring cycle by Opera Australia](#) (the principal national opera company) in November and December 2013 on the bicentenary of Wagner's birth and the accompanying Melbourne *Ring Festival* (an accessible "*predominantly free and low-cost*" festival of more than 30 performances, films, events and exhibitions described by Melbourne's Minister for Tourism as "*a major international event for the city [...] expected to generate more than \$12 million [AUD12,000,000] in economic benefits for the state*"). The programme discussed Sutton's research on music's role in Woolf's creative practice, the references to music in her novels, and the Woolfs' responses to British nationalist and Nazi appropriations of music during the First and Second World Wars. Noting the importance of Sutton's archival work on Leonard Woolf's diaries, which had enabled Sutton to reconstruct the "*fascinating list*" of Woolf's attendance at performances of music and her listening to recorded and broadcast music, the producer observed we now have "*the soundtrack to the coming-into-being of some of the twentieth century's great novels*" [S6]. As part of the 2014 year of Anglo-Russian relations, Sutton was invited by the British Council to give public lectures presenting her wider research on word-music studies: the first at the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Art (broadcast on [Moscow 24 TV](#) and [YouTube](#) (additional 3,000 views on the latter to date)) and the second, focusing specifically on Woolf, at the [Moscow Conservatoire](#). Sutton's research has also contributed to journalism and broadcasting by others, demonstrating growing recognition of the importance of music to Woolf's life and work. *Classical-music.com* (website of *BBC Music*, [worldwide the best-selling music magazine](#),

circulation over 37,500) published a feature '[The Musical Life of Virginia Woolf](#)' (in 2019) informed by Sutton's research, and the presenter of the Sony Gold Award-winning BBC Radio 3 music programme *Late Junction* consulted Sutton's monograph for her BBC Radio 4 feature '[Pursuit of Beauty: Virginia Woolf: Impossible Music](#)' with actor Tamsin Greig and new music by composer Nina Perry (broadcast twice in 2018 and available on demand; weekly audience for Radio 4 factual programmes, including 'factual arts', was 8,200,000 people (adults) in 2018-19) [S7].

One subject that has attracted particular interest is Sutton's research on music and mental illness. In her monograph, Sutton had explored connections among music, mental illness and post-war trauma in Woolf's writing, proposing for example that the double narrative structure of *Mrs Dalloway* may be modelled on the double form of musical fugue (fugue was also a contemporary synonym for shell shock) [R1]. This research informed sold-out concerts and talks with Bode and Fontanals-Simmons in 2016 and 2018. Their CD catalysed discussion of music and mental health: a two-page feature in the trade magazine for professional musicians, *Classical Music* (2019), discussed the representations of "grief" and "depression" in the song settings of texts by Woolf, Emily Dickinson and Sara Teasdale, the author commending the "wisdom" of the programming and describing the CD as "a disc [that] stays with you long after the music itself finishes" [S8]. On World Mental Health day (10 October 2019), Fontanals-Simmons was an invited speaker at *Classical Music* magazine's launch of the '[Harmony in Mind](#)' campaign that advocates mental health provision for professional musicians. Bode and Fontanals-Simmons opened the 2020 [Devon Song Festival](#) with this repertoire and reprised it, in conjunction with public lectures on 'mental health, well-being and music', at the 2020 [Oxford Lieder Festival](#).

## 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

S1) Scans of openings of musical scores of three new works (*A London Street in Winter*; *Memory is the Seamstress*; and *I see a Ring*) based on Woolf's work by Jeremy Thurlow; e-mail from Richard Barnard, 16 December 2020.

S2) E-mail from writer/performer of *Virginia Woolf, Killing the Angel*, 21 January 2021.

S3) E-mail from Director, StAnza, Scotland's International Poetry Festival, 27 April 2016.

S4) E-mail from Primary Science Development Officer, Highland Schools, regarding Highland Teachers' Inset Day, 18 September 2017; Conference poster and e-mail from EU Project Officer, University of Malta, 14 May 2018; data on workshop attendance.

S5) Scans and screenshots of reviews of CD *I and Silence* in the *Sunday Times*, *Classical Source*, *Gramophone*, *BBC Music* and *Presto*; e-mail from Label Manager, Delphian Records, 20 January 2021.

S6) Screenshots of 'Woolf and Wagner', ABC website, 22 February 2014. Link: <https://www.abc.net.au/radionational/programs/archived/intothemusic/woolf-and-wagner/5234150>

S7) Screenshot of Ofcom's Annual Report on the BBC, 2018/19. Annex 2: BBC Performance Report, 24 October 2019 (p. 57).

S8) Scan of feature about CD *I and Silence*, *Classical Music*, September 2019 (pp. 78-9).