

21 Century Performance and Research

**Annual Conference hosted by
the School of Performing Arts (University of Malta)**

9-11 March 2016

Call for Proposals

Keynote Speakers:

Prof. Christopher Balme, Institut für Theaterwissenschaft, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München (Munich)

Prof. Sarah Whatley, Centre for Dance Research, Coventry University

Prof. Jonathan Stock, School of Music and Theatre, University College Cork

The School of Performing Arts at the University of Malta will be holding its third Annual Conference in March 2016, on the theme of **21 Century Performance and Research**. The conference will contribute to the creative imagining of the developing field of 21 Century Studies, by locating performance as a space of investigative research and practice that responds to the challenges marking the twenty-first century.

Already at this early stage, the twenty-first century is exhibiting a series of characteristic pointers on which future scenarios can be envisaged. Digital technology, for long the exclusive domain of specialists, now permeates everyday life where websites, blogs, and social media highlight and theatricalise even the most basic and seemingly inconsequential behavioural acts. Knowledge and its creation, traditionally seen as the very *raison d'être* of universities, is treated less as the imparting of formal and well-defined information and more as a lived experience that mutates into different materialities and their consequent phenomenologies. A difficult economic scenario is still being experienced, while globalisation and the widespread movement of people contrast with conventional conceptions of what constitutes and functions as communities. Such considerations are at the heart of this call and, building on the success of previous years, the conference will locate performance as a point of intersection between disciplines in a way that contributes to current debates on the use of interdisciplinarity as a creative and analytic research strategy for the twenty-first century. Moreover, the conference will not limit its enquiries to the contemporary world, by recognising that current issues and challenges often have roots in the recent and not-so recent past. Knowledge of our political, social, economic, and cultural histories add to the understanding of today's world and those of tomorrow.

Presentations exploring (but not limited to) the following questions and themes are, therefore, being invited:

- How is performance rearticulated in the twenty-first century? Which forces impinge on performance research and practice?
- Which academic fields are involved in defining 21 Century Studies, and how do they relate to performance in general and the performing arts in particular?
- How do the performing arts reflect (or not) twenty-first-century issues pertaining to the environment, migration, health, politics, etc.?
- How do late twentieth-century performance phenomena mutate in the twenty-first?
- Twenty-first-century theoretical applications (e.g. critical posthumanism, postphenomenology, technoscience studies, and cognitive science) to theatre and performance practice and research;
- Addressing historical and historiographical research from twenty-first-century perspectives;
- Future challenges to the fields of performance.

Abstracts of a maximum of 300 words should be submitted by the **15 January 2016** to Dr Stefan Aquilina (stefan.aquilina@um.edu.mt), Director of Research of the School of Performing Arts and conference convener. Acceptance will be confirmed in early February. Kindly include a brief bio note and any technical equipment you might need. Primarily, the conference will take the form of conventional 15-20 minutes presentations, but presenters wishing to suggest practice as research contributions or other forms of practical work are also invited to contact the conference convener.