

**Crossfade: Exploring Interstitial Spaces and Public
Collaboration in a New Orchestral Composition
Entitled *Portraits of the Air***

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Abstract

In the global context of declining attendance at orchestral concerts, research indicates the desirability of new strategies to raise public awareness of orchestral music. I posit the research question: How can public collaboration be achieved in the creation of contemporary orchestral music, using the theoretical framework of dynamic interstitiality to help contextualise such an attempt? My research project, a collaboration between 27 volunteer photographers and the composer/researcher towards the creation of a new orchestral work, is my creative response to this question. The research generated 380 photographs (supplied by the volunteer photographers), an orchestral symphony, exploratory modes of orchestration, and a composition log of over 10,000 words. The Literature Review examines interstitiality, relational aesthetics, collaboration and digital ethnography as important tools for investigating the research question and frames an argument for interstitiality as the central conceptual framework of this investigation. The Methodology chapter discusses the research design and methods, describing the call for photographs, participation criteria and the autoethnographic devices of the composition log and the research-practice-research cycle. The Findings chapter gathers together the five resulting qualitative data sets: the photographs, the symphony, the composition log, the music video, and the questionnaires. The Discussion chapter follows, exploring Barthes' theories of the nature of the photograph, the sky photographs of Alfred Steiglitz and algorithmic photography. The crossfade, orchestral sfumato and orchestral chiaroscuro are discussed in relation to my composition and orchestration procedures. The photographs selected for the music video are discussed. Interstitial spaces are described in detail, with particular focus on their importance to the aesthetic program of the creative work. The Conclusions chapter reflects on the successes of the project, its limitations, and suggestions for future directions for projects based on the template established by *Portraits of the Air*.

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