

CV
Bela Emerson
www.belaemerson.com
email: hello@belaemerson.com

Personal Statement

I am a full-time Brighton UK-based professional musician and sonic artist - contemporary cellist, community musician / in healthcare, and composer - working in the field since 2000. Acoustic / electric cellos, loopers, environmental sounds, and voice are my primary sound palettes; my work encapsulates improvisation, movement, embodiment, connection, listening, authenticity, and wellbeing.

In July 2023, after ten years in frontline creative community practice, I was awarded an Arts Council England DYCP grant to explore creative sustainability, the primary focus of which was applying what I had learned in a decade of supporting others' creative wellbeing to developing my own. I did this primarily through structured one-to-one explorations of relational movement and sound.

In 2024/5 I had three solo artist residencies, giving me space to explore and develop new tools, enquiries, and skills to continue practising and sustaining my creative practice through music and relational movement. This solo and collaborative artistic work currently runs alongside and is mutually supportive of my ongoing community- / healthcare-based projects.

Artistic Projects

June 2024-present: Belarina

- Brighton Dome (Anita's Room) residency July 2025
- Positive Ambisonics artist residency, Argyll, April 2025
- facilitating movement workshops for participation
- live performances inc. Spirit of Gravity, Brighton
- recording solo & collaborative pieces/songs for movement and somatic enquiry
- regular self-led embodiment / cello / movement sessions for practice development

July 2023-June 2024: ACE DYCP: *Creative sustainability and development through music, sound, listening, and somatic enquiry* - included:

- 18 collaborative one-to-one and public Contact Improvisation and movement events with live cello - creative collaborations throughout the UK with Asher Levin, Lee Bolton, Julia Samel, Paul Smith, CI jams at Goldsmiths, and with Harriet Roberts at Buddhafield SOMA
- solo reflective / process artist days to support / develop / digest collaborative events
- five-day artist residency *Turning My Cello Around* inc. participatory movement-based public event (Fabrica, Brighton, June '24)

Selected highlights 2000-present:

Solo cello

- BBC Radio 3 *Late Junction* solo commission live from Latitude Festival
- worldwide tours (inc. US / Canada, 14-country EU tours)
- four CD releases: *Hespera*, *Laurasia*, *Kissing Nettles*, *Scythe* (7" vinyl)

Composer

- seven Arts Council England -funded soundtracks / processions for filmmaker Tereza Buskova (2008-present), inc. British Council exhibition at IKON, Birmingham 2025 (Friends in Love and War)
- PRSF-funded commission for outdoor acrobats Mimbre's *Falling Up* (2013-15)

Collaborative cello & session work

- processional cello for Ikon Birmingham's 60th anniversary (February 2025)
- four John Peel BBC Radio 1 sessions (with Lianne Hall)
- live: Liam Gallagher, Birmingham Arena (2017)
- live: Sydney Opera House / Brighton Dome (Brighton Festival commission 2003) / Royal

- Festival Hall - Stomp's Lost & Found Orchestra (2005-2012)
- collaborative audience performance-workshop *Make Piece Together*: Leigh Folk Festival, Fort Process, Green Gathering, Buddhafield (2015-present)
- live music to film with Sarah Angliss: BFI Southbank *Gothic*, and Brighton Rock 70th birthday at Duke of York's (2015-17)
- recording with British Sea Power, The Damned, and Nick Pynn

Community Music / in Healthcare

Brighton & Hove Music for Connection (BHMC), 2013-present - founder, facilitator, programme manager:

- *Interactive Listening Walks* (with Dr Bethan Prosser): creative listening / sound-making for British Library, National Trust/Changing Chalk, BHCC, Universities of Brighton & Sussex (2019-present)
- *Silver Strings*: weekly group of 12-20 later-starter string players (violin, viola, cello): mixed backgrounds & ability (complete beginners to more experienced) (2013-present)
- adult beginners' / mental health / displaced-persons' string improv groups: wellbeing and connection (2014-present)
- NHS-commissioned dementia-friendly music-making sessions (60 per year) (2016-25)
- five-year lead partner in BHCC commission for older people's music (2020-25)
- BHMC founded via 24-month programmes, London School for Social Entrepreneurs
- partnership work with huge range of B&H / Sussex -based community and arts organisations
- BHCC Covid Champions awardee 2020

Wishing Well Music in Health, 2013-present – musician / trainer

- musician: Royal Alexandra Children's Hospital & Trevor Mann Baby Unit, dementia assessment units / acute hospitals, ITUs, mental health units
- trainer: Brighton & Sussex Medical School: eight-week assessed modules with third- & first-year medical students: *Music and the Future Doctor* (2016-present), musician apprenticeship & mentoring scheme (2015-present)

Sound Sense, 2025-present – trustee (voluntary position)

Professional Support / Trainer

- Action Learning Set facilitator with Community Works (2021-present)
- guest lecturer Goldsmiths University of London / Sound Connections (2017-2024)
- mentor: University of Brighton, Community Works (2016-2020)
- singing-based staff wellbeing sessions / conferences / awaydays (2016-present)

CPD

Extensive training including:

- 2025-26: 12-month Mindfulness Teacher Training (Christopher Titmuss/Wise Lotus)
- 2025: six-month certified Cuddle Therapist training (CPI)
- 2024: one-day participatory music and nervous system regulation (Darren Abrahams)
- 2023: six-day MOT for Musicians Working in Challenging Circumstances (Snape Maltings)
- 2023: five-day nervous system regulation, touch-based consent programme (Eshana Spiers)
- 2021: four-session singing training (CYMAZ)
- 2020: four-day Action Learning Set facilitator training (Action Learning Centre)
- 2017-2018: 12-month School for Social Entrepreneurs Trade Up programme, London
- 2017: one-day music and child development / neuroscience (CLADAC)
- 2016: six-day Musicians Without Borders training, Netherlands
- 2014-2021, 2026: Action Learning Sets Brighton / London
- 2014-present: clinical supervision, personal therapy
- 2013-14: 12-month School for Social Entrepreneurs Start Up programme, London
- 2013-14: 12-month Musician in Healthcare Settings training & apprenticeship, Brighton (Rhythmix), plus three-day music & dementia training (Dr Jane Bentley / Wishing Well)
- 2011-2013: 2-year Community Music Skills: Goldsmiths University of London
- lifelong: musicianship skills developed through formal learning (inc. Guildhall jazz programme), six-year improvisation apprenticeship with John Gray, specialist cello tutors, extensive experience in rock / pop / jazz / folk / electronica / no-specific-genre bands