HARK –Listening Research.

***Pilot Listening Groups, Transcription Budget, Final Event Planning.***

**A. Objectives of the Pilot:**

1. To establish the validity of our provisional thesis and method – face validity for participants and construct validity in our provisional analysis of content materials/text. Our thesis is that is that groups of listeners can, and do, give rich accounts of their listening repertoire/practices; that they articulate substantive, rich, meaningful responses to hearing musical ‘works’; and that they can share these responses such that convergence and divergence in aesthetic appreciation is apparent.

2. To trial a model of the *Listening Group* as analogous to a Book Reading Group and to gather review feedback from the participants on the experience of membership by a survey at the end of the 5th (Joint) Session in May.

3. To test aspects of our method(ology): to test various text analysis software packages for transcript analysis; to assess the way in which transcribed taped sessions enable analysis of the text content in the three listening domains noted in 1 above; to assess the value of the HARK website. To assess the usefulness of additional one-to one recorded sessions with group members.

3. To develop an ethnographic approach to the group discussion transcripts by adopting an inductive analysis followed by a deductive one. In the later applying some questions, such as: are their patterns in listening styles? Is there an implicit normative regime of listening? Are there dominant metaphors being used in descriptions of what is being heard? Are there patterns of responses positive or negative and do patterns of divergent/convergent aesthetic (dis)agreement emerge? How does the material assist us in theorizing our understanding of how music has ‘significance’ for listeners?

6. To enable a review of the Pilot findings, redesign for the next stage of the research, and refinement of our theoretical approach.

**B. Structure and Process of the Pilot:**

1. We have recruited volunteers for 3 pilot groups of 8 members each. All prospective members have been given the Participation Information Form and will sign the Consent Form. Groups will meet for 4 sessions of 1.5 hours and a Joint Final Session on late May 26th.

2. Recruitment took place through pitches to various St Andrews Choirs. We explained that the groups would be relaxed, informal, social, convivial and fun. We were clear that this is not an exercise in musical theory, analysis, or an‘intellectual’ approach, and that participants are not being pressed by us to appreciate particular kinds of music. Nor is it intended as some developmental process to enable people to listen ‘better’. Our thesis is that listening is ‘play’ and that personal, and collective, significance of music emerges from engagement in many modes. We wish to affirm that all members’ responses to what they hear are valid and important and that our discussions take place under a rubric of ‘appreciative enquiery’. We explained that we seek rich diversity of responses in an atmosphere where articulating and exploring these responses becomes itself enjoyable.

3. The groups are as follow:

A: The St Andrews Chorus Listening Group will meet in the University in Room 30 of United College on:

March 6th 5.50- 7.00

March 22nd 7.00-8.30

April 5th 7.00-8.30

May 3rd 7.00-8.30

My 26th 7.00-8.30 for a Final Joint Session with other groups.

B: The Prior listening Group B will meet at Kirk House Kingsbarns on dates to be agreed with the prospective participants. First Session will be on March 9th.

C: The ‘Quaker’ Listening Group will meet at the Friends Meeting House in St Andrews. First Session on March 14th.

4. Each group will follow the same pattern of activity: The first session will deal with introductions to group members, admin and ethical issues (HR). It will be proposed/confirmed with the groups (and will have been indicated beforehand as the basis of membership) that the first 4 sessions will include two pieces proposed by the researchers and two pieces proposed by the members. One of the latter will be ‘exchanged’ with the other Listening group as preparation of a joint event as the final session in late May. The short piece for listening at the first session will be ***“Prayer “*** by E.Bloch (5 mins.) followed by discussion and re-listening, iteratively. A follow up piece will be available if necessary. The one-to one sessions will be agreed and arranged individually. The second session will be on a members’ choice. A discography will be available on the Website and our expectation is that members will listen to it in advance. It will be introduced by a group member. The third session will entail listening to the piece proposed by the other listening group and this may be unfamiliar to the listeners or not known in advance. By the third session we wish to be able to introduce the theme of ‘*personal listening practices and repertoire of listening styles’*. We hope that the participants will have gained confidence in discussion by the focus on the music in the early sessions and then hopefully be willing to focus on their own practices (in discussion) as they feel better acquainted, by the third session. This ‘listening practice’theme will also be the major focus of the one-to one sessions. The fourth session will be introduced by BW and focus on a piece by George Benjamin, ***At First Light****.* There will be ample prior information and discography on this piece. Each session will include refreshments for members and these will be taken at the outset and again at a break before settling to listen to music. The fifth Joint session will include discussion of the pieces that were exchanged between the groups, and also some live performance. We will also distribute the Survey Questionnaire, which will seek responses on two areas, first the general experience of the groups and how they might be developed, second to provide an opportunity to add material about personal experience of how the groups have enabled reflections on listening practices to be articulated.

**C. Action:**

1. To confirm confirm shared budget to cover transcription costs estimated at £800, based on estimate from Callisto Green.

6. To consider the live music and catering costs for the 5th session.

**Dr.Huw Richards (Principal Investigator), Bede Williams (Music Research) Dr.Michael Downes (Director of Music) 17/2/17.**