



Editor's Foreword

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2020: A year that I personally and professionally wish had resigned at least half-way through its tenure...

How would a handover of the reins prematurely to 2021, extending that year to 18 months, say, have helped though?

Well, it would have made a fine symbol of defiance, or resistance maybe, to the onslaught of difficulties and the desire to return to 'normal', or at the very least it might have provided a fresh start of sorts?

Perhaps this is all too facetious.

While 2020 has provided us all with enough challenge, doubt and uncertainty - things Wright (2020) highlights in her final short essay in this inaugural issue of LIRIC—it has also provided much solidarity, optimism and opportunity, alongside tragedy for many, with the persistence of COVID.

I hope I will be forgiven for using this Editor's Foreword not just to introduce the new journal, but to reflect on my time with Lapidus International, and think about the new directions that the organisation is bravely forging.

I wish to do this so that I might say thank you to all the brave pioneers, innovative thinkers, and thoughtful collaborators I have had the fortune to have worked with during my tenure. This includes my time on the Board as Director of Research, which was in itself a burgeoning role; and

then, latterly, for the small part I played in guiding this journal into being, with the incredible support of the Editorial Board—who, quite frankly, it must be said, are the people who have really made this first issue a reality.

Lapidus has been a family of sorts to me. Initial introductions were via Lisa Rossetti, who at the time was a serving Board member. Not long after a windswept meeting atop a hill, I received her kind request to give a keynote at the annual conference. We all sang ‘Sparrows on the Roof’ that day, and I have very fond memories of this. I was invited to write an article reflecting on the activity not long afterwards (Poole, 2016), and now find that my final engagement with the organisation has been to write a chapter with the previous Chair of the Board, Clare Scott (Poole & Scott, 2021, forthcoming). The initial article and the forthcoming chapter seem like neat bookends of my time with Lapidus; and, as reflections, they move from a very personal epiphany, through the creation of space for practice, to a policy review of wellbeing in the arts and cultural sector.

The pieces in Issue 1 of *LIRIC*, to extend a poor metaphor, could be the all-important row of books, each with a slightly different phronetic perspective of praxis, each telling an equally valid story, and each offering a potential way forward, new beginning, or possibility of practice in our field. They all deal with practice, in one way or another, and so offer the reader practical guidance through personally evaluated processes.

Of note are the professional reflections on the use of creative practices in many of the articles: Bloomfield (2020) uses art materials as a therapeutic vehicle in her work; Foster (2020) recognises and analyses the use of oral history archives; and Williamson (2020) offers consideration of using the art postcard/image as a creative writing tool. An interpretivist positionality, therefore, is apparent throughout the articles and, even more specifically, a paradigmatic stance that aligns with arts-based practice as research is deftly handled by the authors.

Simpkins’ (2020) contribution highlights another key aspect of this volume, a particularly strong theme that features in most of the contributions too: that of an autoethnographic leaning. The work of Den Elzen (2020), Bloomfield (2020) and Etherington (2020) share similar methodological characteristics too, and while Bloomfield (2020) confirms from the onset an autoethnographic approach, Den Elzen (2020) prioritizes the practice-led nature of her work and Etherington (2020) the reflexive nature of narrative accounts.

In all, the work draws together numerous practices from disparate disciplines, and it is this that perhaps most wonderfully summarises why this journal and indeed why *Lapidus* is so relevant. While the membership of *Lapidus* is diverse, and our practices wide-ranging, we can nonetheless discern within our work underpinning theories and methodological standpoints that afford a sense of diverging, yet shared understanding. As such, the research here ‘champions versatility, inter-epistemological acceptance, diversity of knowledge types, understandings and thus ways of reinterpreting “impact”’. Our metaphors of understanding are different and in accordance our expectations should also be’ (Poole, 2017, p. 155).

Wall and Sidsaph’s (2020) invited contribution marks a significant milestone for *Lapidus* too, as it supports the development of a structure for a step-change within the field. It was also launched contemporaneously with the new tagline of *Lapidus*, which reasserts the roots of *Lapidus*’ work and focus in ‘Writing for Wellbeing’. While, on the one hand, the new tagline could be perhaps ungenerously seen to narrow the scope of potential submissions to *LIRIC*, the organisation’s repositioning as an inter-epistemologically accepting body, could on the other hand be viewed as a response that broadens the field’s practitioner base by recognising that ‘Writing for Wellbeing’ is more than a reductive understanding of our members’ work.

I wonder whether some of my own work with fellow *Lapidusians* that previously might not have been comfortably encompassed by ‘writing’ might now find a new home in our journal: work that looks at creative practices like Hip-Hop, such as that produced by Editorial Board member Kiz Bangerh for example, or the music-making through lyrics that I’m more concerned with (Poole & Solé, 2019); work regarding psychogeography, like that of Clare Scott’s (Poole, Marichalar-Friexa, & Scott, 2019); or indeed the work co-authored with Prof. Wall and Dr. Mackenzie (2019), that outlines a notion of applied fantasy and wellbeing. These and many more avenues of research could have a home and justifiably sit within *LIRIC*’s remit, contributing to the canon of knowledge that *Lapidus* is forging. Furthermore because of Prof. Wall’s work we have through dialogic approaches a framework that can guide practice as well. It is only fitting that this should feature therefore in this first issue of our publication.

So what follows is a multi-layered milestone. Personally, it marks for me the end of five years of working with *Lapidus International*. But, far more importantly, it is the first time that *Lapidus* has a peer-reviewed forum for its research community. It marks a positive and inclusive

shift in the organisation's grounding paradigm; a shift that invokes wider engagement, openness, progressive thinking, support, and opportunity.

I suppose every end is also a beginning.

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