

# Inside the Collaborative Process: Realising New Works for Solo Piano

Zubin Rustom Kanga

Royal Academy of Music, London

PhD

2014

I declare that the work submitted is my own, and does not contain any unacknowledged material from other sources.

Zubin Kanga

## Abstract

In the emerging field of research into composer-performer collaboration, the small core of texts forming the basis of the research is supplemented by a deep well of assumptions, tradition and folk knowledge from the long history of practice of collaborations. This received knowledge, a web of 'mythologies', pervades the work of both practitioners and researchers in the field and many of these mythologies favour conventional models and composer-led interactions.

This thesis examines my own creative methods in a diverse range of collaborations. It explores how the field of research studying composer-performer collaborations can be re-examined in terms of catalysts and pressures that shape these dynamic collaborative relationships. There is a particular focus on the performer's role in collaborations, and the re-imagining of concepts from the performer's, rather than the composer's perspective. The case studies feature my collaborations with composers, George Benjamin, Michael Finnissy, Marcus Whale, Philip Jameson, Alex Pozniak, Elliott Gyger, Anthony Moles, David Gorton, Daniel Rojas and David Young. These cases have been chosen to explore unusual or extreme changes to the relationships as a result of these catalysts and pressures – imbalances of authority, an invitation into the composer's creative space, the goal of virtuosity, the effect of long-term relationships and the use of graphic notation. Through these, the mythologies of the field of collaborative composition and performance are explored and tested in ways that would not be possible with more conventional cases. An outcome of the process is the proposal of new strategies for collaborating musicians and researchers. In addition, my own role as collaborator and my own ideology of collaboration is critically examined, thus making this thesis an exegesis of my *modus operandi* as well as a study of the models and mythologies of collaborative creativity in music.

# Table of Contents

Abstract	3
List of Examples	6
Acknowledgements	11
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>12</b>
Performance Activities	19
Awards Recognition	21
Definitions	22
<b>Mythologies:</b>	
Categorisation	24
Authority and Authenticity	30
The Teacher	37
My Musical Identity	41
<b>Chapter 1: Differences in Authority</b>	<b>45</b>
Case Study: <i>Piano Figures</i> by George Benjamin	47
Case Study: <i>Z/K</i> by Michael Finnissy	64
Case Study: <i>Errata</i> by Marcus Whale	97
Case Study: Prelude and Fugue by Philip Jameson	123
<b>Mythologies:</b>	
Performance Practice	141
Music as Sound	151
The Work	155
<b>Chapter 2: An Invitation into the Composer's Workshop</b>	<b>164</b>
Case Study: <i>Interventions</i> by Alex Pozniak	165
<b>Mythologies:</b>	
Efficiency	219
Resistance	223
The Piano	229
Virtuosity	236
<b>Chapter 3: Virtuosity</b>	<b>246</b>
Case Study: <i>...out of obscurity</i> by Elliott Gyger	249
Case Study: <i>Diabolic Machines</i> by Anthony Moles	275
Case Study: <i>Orfordness</i> by David Gorton	292



Mythologies:	
Remembering	320
Forgetting	324
Intimacy	327
Conflict	330
Chapter 4: Long-term Collaboration	334
Early Collaborations	336
Major Case Study: <i>Entre Bajos y Alturas</i> by Daniel Rojas	349
Mythologies:	
Notation	386
Chapter 5: Graphic Notation	392
Case Study: <i>Not Music Yet</i> by David Young	393
Conclusions	463
Bibliography	464
Appendix A: Composer Biographies	482
Appendix B: List of Documented Workshops	485
Portfolio	
Details for Portfolio recordings	496
Portfolio of scores	498
Additional Materials:	
Data DVD of Video and Audio Examples	
Three Portfolio CDs	
One Portfolio DVD	

# List of Examples

## Mythologies

- Example M.1: Excerpt from Sonata by Jean Barraqué (above) and transcription of Woodward's recording of this excerpt by Hopkins (below)
- Example M.2: Graph T, page 12, *Concert for Piano and Orchestra* by John Cage
- Example M.3: Tudor's realization of Graph T, Page 12 of Cage's *Concert for Piano and Orchestra*
- Example M.4: Graphy BT, page 54, *Concert for Piano and Orchestra* by John Cage
- Example M.5: Tudor's realization of Graph BT, Page 54 of Cage's *Concert for Piano and Orchestra*
- Example M.6: *The Crutch of Memory* (2004) by Aaron Cassidy (excerpt)
- Example M.7: *For Bunita Marcus* by Morton Feldman (excerpt)
- Example M.8: *Evryali*, bars 81-82
- Example M.9: Hill's version of *Evryali*, bars 81-82
- Example M.10: *December 1952* by Earle Brown

## Chapter 1

- Example 1.1: *Piano Figures*: Movement II: "Knots", bars 22-27
- Example 1.2: *Piano Figures*, Movement X: "Whirling", bars 1-7
- Example 1.3: Symphony No. 4 by Giovanni Battista Sammartini, bars 1-12
- Example 1.4: Sketches for 'Alla Breve' section of Z/K
- Example 1.5: Z/K by Michael Finnissy, page 10 (excerpt)
- Example 1.6: Sketch for 'Largo' section of Z/K
- Example 1.7: Structural Plan for Z/K by Michael Finnissy
- Example 1.8a: Original opening bar of Z/K (received 24 December 2011)
- Final version 1.8b: Second version of opening bar of Z/K (received 29 December 2011).
- Example 1.9: Z/K by Michael Finnissy, page 1 (excerpt)
- Example 1.10: Z/K by Michael Finnissy, page 4 (excerpt – opening of 'senza misura' section)
- Example 1.11 Z/K by Michael Finnissy, page 9 (excerpt)
- Example 1.12: Z/K by Michael Finnissy, page 23 (excerpt)
- Example 1.13: Z/K by Michael Finnissy, page 17 (excerpt)
- Example 1.14: Photograph of Michael Finnissy and Zubin Kanga, Kings Place, 13 February 2012
- Example 1.15: Screenshot from video of workshop with Michael Finnissy, 19 June 2012
- Example 1.16: Marcus Whale's note from meeting of 2 January 2012
- Example 1.17: *Errata* by Marcus Whale (draft version – 14 April 2012), bars 66-73
- Example 1.18: *Errata* by Marcus Whale, bars 73-84
- Example 1.19: Excerpt from Marcus' notes (as text file) from 14 April 2012
- Example 1.20: *Errata* by Marcus Whale (draft version – 21 April 2012), bar 82
- Example 1.21: *Errata* by Marcus Whale (draft version – 14 April 2012), bars 17-27
- Example 1.22: *Errata* by Marcus Whale, bars 17-34

Example 1.23: Errata by Marcus Whale, bars 85-90

Example 1.24: Prelude and Fugue by Philip Jameson, bars 1-16

Video Example 1.1: Working with George Benjamin on *Piano Figures*, Movement II: "Knots"

Video Example 1.2: Working with George Benjamin on *Piano Figures*, Movement IV: "Interruptions"

Video Example 1.3: Working with George Benjamin on *Piano Figures*, Movement VIII: "Mosaic"

Video Example 1.4: Working with George Benjamin on *Piano Figures*, Movement VIII: "Mosaic"

Video Example 1.5: Discussion of Alla Breve section, workshop on 25 January 2012.

Video Example 1.6: Discussion with Michael Finnissy on colouring and voicing of opening Andante, workshop on 25 January 2012.

Video Example 1.7: Premiere performance of *Z/K* by Michael Finnissy, 13 February 2012.

Video Example 1.8: Workshop with Marcus Whale, 2 January 2012

Video Example 1.9: Workshop with Marcus Whale, 21 August 2012

Video Example 1.10: Workshop with Philip Jameson, 1 September 2011

Video Example 1.11: Workshop with Phil Jameson, 8 November 2011

## Chapter 2

Example 2.1: Sketches from meeting, 20 August 2009

Example 2.2: *Interventions* by Alex Pozniak: bars 163-165

Example 2.3: Sketch from Workshop 1, showing a Lucas series and a list of closely related series (the second term in each series is changed in each of the subsequent series).

Example 2.4: Page of sketches exploring harmonies derived from series in example 2.3, 6 August 2010

Example 2.5: *Interventions* by Alex Pozniak: bars 177-178

Example 2.6: *Interventions*, bars 66-70

Example 2.7: *Interventions*, Annotated score for premiere, page 4 (excerpt)

Example 2.8: *Interventions*, bars 82-93

Example 2.9: Sketches for *Evryali* by Iannis Xenakis

Example 2.10a: Sketches for "Arborescence" section of *Interventions*

Example 2.10b: Sketches for "Arborescence" section of *Interventions*

Example 2.11a: Sketch for 'arborescence' section of *Interventions*

Example 2.11b: Sketch for 'arborescence' section of *Interventions*

Example 2.12: *Interventions*, bars 99-106

Example 2.13: *Interventions* (2011 version), bars 100-111

Example 2.14: *Interventions* (2010 version) bars 113-114

Example 2.15: *Interventions* (2011 version), bars 122-127

Example 2.16: *Interventions* (draft of 2011 version – 12 November 2011), bar 68

Example 2.17: *Interventions* (2011 version), bar 68

Example 2.18: *Interventions* (2010 version), bar 68

Example 2.19: *Interventions* (2011 version), bar 118

Video Example 2.1: Improvising the canon of clusters with Alex Pozniak, 18 June 2010

Video Example 2.2: Workshop with Alex Pozniak, 25 June 2010  
 Video Example 2.3: Workshop with Alex Pozniak, 10 May 2010  
 Video Example 2.4: Workshop with Alex Pozniak, 18 June 2010  
 Video Example 2.5: Workshop with Alex Pozniak, 25 June 2010  
 Video Example 2.6: Workshop with Alex Pozniak, 25 June 2010  
 Video Example 2.7: Workshop with Alex Pozniak, 18 June 2010  
 Video Example 2.8: Workshop on 'arborescence' section of *Interventions*, 18 June 2010  
 Video Example 2.9: Discussing notation for the 'arborescence' section with Alex Pozniak, 18 June 2010  
 Video Example 2.10: Workshop with Alex Pozniak, 18 June 2010  
 Video Example 2.11: Workshop with Alex Pozniak, 25 June 2010  
 Video Example 2.12: Performance of *Interventions*, 2 July 2010  
 Video Example 2.13: Workshopping choreography of *Interventions*, 12 November 2011  
 Video Example 2.14: Rehearsing the final pages of *Interventions* with Antoine Francoise, 26 January 2012  
 Video Example 2.15: Performance of *Interventions*, Kings Place, 13 February 2012

## Chapter 3

Example 3.1: Sample table of Risk as a product of Likelihood and Consequences  
 Example 3.2: Sketch for *...out of obscurity*, 5 March 2011  
 Example 3.3: Sketch for *...out of obscurity*, 5 March 2011  
 Example 3.4: *...out of obscurity* by Elliott Gyger (draft version – 30 April 2013), bars 1-15  
 Example 3.5: *...out of obscurity* by Elliott Gyger, bars 8-10  
 Example 3.6a: *...out of obscurity* by Elliott Gyger, bars 20-24  
 Example 3.6b: *...out of obscurity* by Elliott Gyger, bars 75-83  
 Example 3.6c: *...out of obscurity* by Elliott Gyger, bars 209-216  
 Example 3.7: *...out of obscurity* by Elliott Gyger, bars 44-49 (N.B. The bottom staff is all pizzicato)  
 Example 3.8: *...out of obscurity* by Elliott Gyger, bars 16-18  
 Example 3.9: *...out of obscurity* by Elliott Gyger, bars 258-261  
 Example 3.10: *...out of obscurity* by Elliott Gyger, bars 20-22  
 Example 3.11: Sketch for *Diabolic Machines* by Anthony Moles, 31 July 2010  
 Example 3.12: Sketch for *Diabolic Machines* by Anthony Moles, 7 August 2010  
 Example 3.13: *Diabolic Machines* by Anthony Moles, bars 137-140  
 Example 3.14: Tempo ranges for performances and recordings of *Diabolic Machines*  
 Example 3.15: Sketch for *Orfordness*, 1<sup>st</sup> movement: "Evacuation of the Civil Population from Shingle Street, Suffolk", annotations by Zubin Kanga, 2 March 2011  
 Example 3.16: *Orfordness* by David Gorton, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement: "Cobra Mist", bars 8-12.  
 Example 3.17: *Orfordness* by David Gorton, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement: "You Can't Tell the People", bar 1  
 Example 3.18: Sketch for *Orfordness*, 4<sup>th</sup> movement: "Blue Danube", 25 October 2011  
 Example 3.19: *Orfordness* by David Gorton, 4<sup>th</sup> movement: "Blue Danube", (excerpt – bottom of page 1)

Video Example 3.1: Playing through sketches for *...out of obscurity*, 5 March 2011  
 Video Example 3.2: Exploring new approaches to piano preparation with Elliott Gyger, 5 March 2011  
 Video Example 3.3: Workshop with Elliott Gyger, 6 July 2011  
 Video Example 3.4: Workshop with Elliott Gyger, 6 July 2011  
 Video Example 3.5: Working on 1<sup>st</sup> movement of *Orfordness* with David Gorton, 1 April 2011  
 Video Example 3.6: Working on 1<sup>st</sup> movement of *Orfordness* with David Gorton, 1 April 2011  
 Video Example 3.7: Workshop with David Gorton, 19 January 2012  
 Video Example 3.8: Exploring new techniques with e-bows and dulcimer hammers with David Gorton, 26 May 2012  
 Video Example 3.9: Improvising material for *Orfordness*, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement: “You Can’t Tell the People”, 26 May 2011  
 Video Example 3.10: Workshop with David Gorton, 19 January 2012  
 Video Example 3.11: Workshop with David Gorton, 25 October 2011  
 Video Example 3.12: Workshop with David Gorton, 19 January 2012  
 Video Example 3.13: *Orfordness* by David Gorton, recorded and filmed live at Kings Place, 13 February 2012.

Audio Example 3.1: *Diabolic Machines* by Anthony Moles, recorded live at Café Church, Glebe, 18 March 2011.

Audio Example 3.2: *Diabolic Machines* by Anthony Moles, recorded live at The Independent Theatre, Sydney, 16 August 2012

## Chapter 4

Example 4.1a: Cadenza (by Zubin Kanga) for Piano Concerto No. 1 by Daniel Rojas, excerpt from page 1

Example 4.1b: Cadenza (by Zubin Kanga) for Piano Concerto No. 1 by Daniel Rojas, excerpt from page 8

Example 4.2: *Entre Ritos y Parrandas*, bars 129-130

Example 4.3: Sketches for *Entre Bajos y Alturas*

Example 4.4: *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, final page of first movement (draft – 19 April 2011)

Example 4.5: *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement (draft – 24 June 2011), bars 173-177

Example 4.6: *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, bars 177-183

Example 4.7: *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, bars 89-93 and 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, bars 1-4

Example 4.8: *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, bars 1-8

Example 4.9: *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, bars 80-83

Example 4.10: *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, bars 128-137

Video Example 4.1: Workshop on *Entre Ritos y Parrandas*, 17 December 2009

Video Example 4.2: Workshop on *Entre Ritos y Parrandas*, 10 December 2009

Video Example 4.3: Improvising musical materials for *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, 18 December 2010

Video Example 4.4: Workshop on *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, 6 January 2011

Video Example 4.5: Workshop on *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, 1 July 2011

Audio example 4.1: Cadenza from Piano Concerto No. 1, recorded 25 June 2006 at Verbrugghen Hall, Sydney Conservatorium of Music

Audio Example 4.2: *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, recorded live at Sydney Grammar School, 18 November 2011

## Chapter 5

Example 5.1: *Val Carmonica Pieces: Incisioni Rupestri* (2007) by David Young (excerpt)

Example 5.2: "The Fall of Icarus" from *The Minotaur Trilogy* by David Young and Margaret Cameron

Example 5.3: Not Time to Fly by Deborah Hay, excerpt from pages 10-11.

Example 5.4: Photograph of workshop with David Young, 25 August 2011

Example 5.5: *Not Music Yet* by David Young (scan of watercolour on canvas score)

Example 5.6: *Not Music Yet* by David Young, notes for performance

Example 5.7: Table of measurements for interpretation of *Not Music Yet*

Example 5.8: Excerpt of marked up copy of *Not Music Yet*, used for premiere performance

Example 5.9: Excerpt of marked up copy of *Not Music Yet*, used for recording sessions

Example 5.10: Photograph of scores for *Not Music Yet* (original above and marked-up scan below) positioned in the piano before the Sydney performance, 16 August 2012

Example 5.11: Discussing *Not Music Yet* with pianist, William Chen

Example 5.12: Interpreting *Not Music Yet* alongside students from Sydney Grammar Preparatory School, 13 August 2012

Video Example 5.1: Workshop with David Young, 18 July 2012

Audio Example 5.1: *Not Music Yet* by David Young, recorded live at The Independent Theatre, Sydney, 16 August 2012

# Acknowledgements

First and foremost, thanks to Neil Heyde for his knowledge, guidance, insight, encouragement and patience at every stage of the research and writing process. I could not imagine a better supervisor and he has been an exemplary role model for me and my colleagues as a researcher, performer and educator.

Thanks to David Gorton for his essential insights into this field of research, for his co-authorship of a conference paper and for his advice, guidance and feedback as co-supervisor. Thanks also to Sarah Callis, who provided invaluable support and advice on this research including vital proofing and feedback on the thesis.

Thanks to all the musicians who agreed to be documented as part of this research project, but especially to those composers who were featured in case studies: George Benjamin, Michael Finnissy, Marcus Whale, Philip Jameson, Alex Pozniak, Elliott Gyger, Anthony Moles, David Gorton, Daniel Rojas and David Young. All were generous with their time and with the level of access they granted me.

My studentship would not be possible without the financial support provided by the Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, the Michael Kieran Harvey Scholarship and the Royal Academy of Music.

Finally thanks to my friends and especially to my family for their love and support over the past four years.

# Introduction

As far back as I can remember, I have always loved collaborating with other musicians. Indeed, I began collaboratively creating music long before I decided to pursue a career as a performer. My high school music class was often a site of anarchic creativity and many hours were spent collaborating on new pieces, with all the students acting as composers and performers. These workshop classes would overflow the limitations of the timetable, spilling over into conversations at parties, spending sprees on recordings of contemporary music (funded by surreptitiously appropriated library funding) as well as after-school workshops that would stretch late into the night, supervised by our inspiring but long-suffering teacher, Kim Waldock.<sup>1</sup> This was an environment in which all roles were flexible, all pieces were malleable, work was indistinguishable from play and the 'professional' was inseparable from the 'personal'. As I progressed through my undergraduate years, my compositional output gradually dissipated while my interest and professional career as a performer grew rapidly. But I maintained my love of working collaboratively to create new music – the play of creativity, the discussion of influences, the discovery of new techniques and the pride of making history when one walks onstage.

The history of collaboration in music is as old as music itself. However, the field of research into creativity and collaboration is relatively recent. Central to research on collaborative creativity is the work of Mihalyi Csikszentmihalyi, Keith Sawyer and Vera John-Steiner.<sup>2</sup> All draw on different evidence, and have different goals: Csikszentmihalyi draws on his research into psychological flow, in order to propose his ideal conditions for creativity and happiness; Sawyer draws on the work

---

<sup>1</sup> Kim Waldock was my class teacher at Sydney Grammar School from 1999-2000 and Head of Academic Studies from 2000-2007. She has since left classroom teaching and is currently Head of Education at the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

<sup>2</sup> Csikszentmihalyi, Mihalyi: *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*, (New York: Harper Perennial, 1996).

<sup>2</sup>Sawyer, Keith: *Group Genius: The Creative Power of Collaboration* (New York: Basic Books, 2007).

<sup>2</sup>John-Steiner, Vera: *Creative Collaboration*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).



of improvisers (both in the theatre groups and jazz ensembles) as models for relationships within innovative businesses, while John-Steiner goes further in surveying the range of types and degrees of collaboration.<sup>3</sup>

The field of research into collaboration in music is even more recent, but has grown exponentially in the last few years.<sup>4</sup> From the seminal papers of Hayden and Windsor, Heyde and Fitch and of Clarke, Cook, Harrison and Thomas, the field has grown to include field-specific conferences, a research group at the CMPCP (Centre for Musical Performance as Creative Practice) and several doctoral research studies.<sup>5</sup> From my perspective, the theses of Stefan Östersjö and Heather Roche are the most thorough and significant of the autoethnographic doctoral research projects to date, and this thesis builds on, and responds to, many of the issues raised by these two performer-researchers. Researchers across the field disagree on the definitions of collaboration as well as the advantages of different methods of collaborating, but they

---

<sup>3</sup> These varied types of collaboration are explored further within the Mythologies section, "Categorisation".

<sup>4</sup> It is difficult to pinpoint the precise reasons for the recent growth in the field, but it is one facet of the increase in performer-oriented research in general. I would argue that there has been no paradigmatic shift in attitudes towards collaboration, but that the act of documenting processes that were otherwise left unseen and unexplained is changing the attitudes of both researchers and practitioners towards integratively collaborative work.

<sup>5</sup> Clarke, E., Cook, N., Harrison, B. and Thomas, P. (2005) 'Interpretation and performance in Bryn Harrison's *être-temps*' *Musicae Scientiae: the journal of the European Society for the Cognitive Sciences of Music*, 9 (1), pp. 31-74.

Fitch, Fabrice and Heyde, Neil (2007). 'Ricerca' – The Collaborative Process as Invention. *twentieth-century music*, 4, pp 71-95.

Hayden, Sam & Windsor, Luke (2007). 'Collaboration and the composer: case studies from the turn of the 21st Century'. *Tempo* 61 (240): 28-39

Ostersjö, Stefan: *Shut Up 'n' Play: Negotiating the Musical Work*, originally submitted as a PhD dissertation, (Malmo: Lund University Press, 2008).

Roche Heather: "Dialogue and Collaboration in the Creation of New Works for Clarinet", PhD Dissertation, (Huddersfield: University of Huddersfield, 2011).

Roe, Paul: "A Phenomenology of Collaboration in Contemporary Composition and Practice", PhD dissertation, (York: University of York, 2007).

Another important addition to the field is the recent thesis by Dobson on inter-arts collaboration in an educational context:

Dobson, Elizabeth D.: "An investigation of the processes of interdisciplinary creative collaboration: the case of music technology students working within the performing arts", PhD dissertation, Open University, UK, 2012.

all agree that collaboration is a significant, if not vital, musical process as well as a rich field for research.<sup>6</sup>

This thesis is an autoethnographic study of my collaborative practice over the last four years. Although similar to some recent studies, the focus on specific catalysts, pressures and moderators, from within and without the collaboration, provides fresh perspectives on collaborative practice. In addition, the large number of cases documented in this study allows trends to be spotted and unique differences to be highlighted. The dissertation is also an exegesis of my own practice as a performer and collaborator, and the works that are generated – both scores and recordings – are themselves research outputs as well as artistic outputs. My presence in all the case studies provides a necessary constant amongst the plethora of variables, allowing the differences between composers, their methods and their goals to be illuminated.<sup>7</sup> This autoethnographic method provides essential insights from inside the collaborative process that may have not be obvious to an external observer. The method ties the research process inextricably to the artistic process, allowing the study to capture all details at all stages of the process while allowing the artistic expertise of the researcher to guide the analysis: spotting the crucial significance of seemingly insignificant details and navigating the complex web of professional and personal interactions.

Using these approaches, new insights into the collaborative process are found, both in the demonstration of the effect of the catalysts and pressures across multiple collaborations and in the discovery of collaborative strategies that support and maximise the artistic aims of composers and performers. The works generated within the study are a significant contribution to the piano repertoire exploring and utilising new approaches to the piano, including new techniques and sounds, new types of

---

<sup>6</sup> A more thorough exploration of the research on collaboration in music and the other arts can be found in the Mythologies.

<sup>7</sup> My presence as the performer in all the cases makes it difficult to simply extrapolate the patterns and trends I identify to collaborations with other performers. That is not to say that the results will be different when applied to a larger sample space and a meta-analysis of multiple studies may well find that many of my findings can be applied universally.

virtuosity and new approaches to notation, making the works a significant artistic as well as research output that complement and support the conclusions of the ethnographic studies.

## **Mythologies**

In the emerging field of research into composer-performer collaboration, the small core of texts forming the basis of the research is supplemented by a deep well of assumptions, tradition and folk knowledge from the long history of practice of collaborations. This received knowledge, a web of 'mythologies', pervades the work of both practitioners and researchers in the field. Thus, in place of a conventional literature survey, the mythologies (found before and between the case study chapters) address the practice, and statements about practice, of composers, performers and musicologists as well as addressing the literature relevant to each topic. In many cases, assumptions and prejudices are revealed that will be either confirmed or challenged by the results of the case studies. Conspicuously absent are the mythologies of the 'composer' and 'performer': these roles, and the conventions surrounding their practices are explored throughout all the mythologies and all the case studies and to some extent, this thesis can be read as an exploration of this fundamental musical mythology.

## **Notes on the Presentation of Cases**

The autoethnographic nature of this study has resulted in some idiosyncracies of style that require explanation. Although I refer to composers by their surnames in the Introduction and Conclusion, I refer to them by their first name (or favoured term of address) within the case studies as this is how I knew and communicated with the composers during the collaborations. The sketches, excerpts from correspondence, transcriptions of conversations and videos of workshops are presented with minimal editing, retaining the use of slang, neologisms, malapropisms and profanities. My analysis of these interactions is unavoidably subjective, and my actions as a researcher put me at an advantage over my participants, regardless of the power

dynamic of the collaborative relationship. However, as discussed above, this perspective from ‘inside’ the collaboration allows for special insights that might be invisible to another observer. In order to counter the innate imbalance of power, I gave the case studies to each of my participants to read and comment on, as well as interviewing all of them near the completion of this study. Their interpretation of events, even if they contrast with mine, are included in the presented versions of the cases. With these differing perspectives from inside the process, as well as the documentary materials, the reader is encouraged to form their own interpretation of the events of each case.

## **Methodology**

The following chapters are divided according to various catalysts, pressures, moderators and agents that were observed to affect the collaborative process. Of the 42 collaborations documented, including 30 on new works, ten were selected for detailed case studies. Each chapter contains between one and four cases, although I refer in the conclusion to other cases I observed and documented during the doctoral research in the conclusion. In all cases, the collaborations were entered into with similar artistic aims: the creation and performance preparation of a new work, to be performed in a solo piano recital alongside other contemporary piano works. In all cases, I was the pianist-collaborator, and my priorities and strategies were not intentionally altered between collaborations. The composers were commissioned one to two years before the date of an expected premiere, with the only strict requirement being a limit on the duration of works. All collaborations were documented using similar methods, the most important being the use of a single camera to record what occurred in every workshop.<sup>8</sup> All composers gave their consent to the documentation of the workshops, either in writing or at the start of the

---

<sup>8</sup> The audio component was captured on the camera’s microphone and compressed in-camera. The compression makes the dialogue clear, but it also flattens the dynamic contrast in the musical excerpts. This is a compromise that allows all aspects of the workshop to be captured, and the adverse affect on the quality of the musical components should be kept in mind when viewing the video clips on the accompanying DVD.

first workshop, and I followed their requests to excise information they deemed sensitive from transcripts and video clips.

There were a number of constant features of my collaborations: my constant role as both performer-collaborator and researcher in all the cases, as well as the medium of solo piano, and the relatively stable initial conditions of each commission. The variables between each case were therefore dependent on the choice of composer and their style, working method, cultural/artistic background and relationship to me. This is a complex network of variables, and it would be untenable to claim that the sample space I have studied is sufficient to explore, delineate and analyse the implications of all these variables. Nor can it be claimed that the trends that I identify are indeed caused by the catalysts and pressures to which I link them, rather than being mere correlations. What can be stated with confidence is that this research project examines a much wider sample space and wider cross section of cases than has yet been attempted by researchers in the field, and that the methodology of comparing large numbers of cases to identify salient trends is both unique and crucial to the development of this fledgling field.

The categories that have been used to group case studies together are of many different types, but all these factors transform aspects of the collaborations (in relation to the corresponding traits of cases in other chapters). Chapter 1 explores the possible impact of differences in power and authority. Chapter 2 examines the transformative influence of a composer's invitation to enter their creative space and collaborate integratively within a limited time frame. Chapter 3 presents cases where the creation of a 'virtuosic' work (with many varied interpretations of this goal) affects the working process. Chapter 4 explores the changing dynamics over multiple collaborations with a single composer. Finally, Chapter 5 looks at the effect on the collaboration of a composer's choice to use graphical notation.

The treatment of each of these topics is necessarily inconsistent in detail and in breadth. Chapters 2 and 5 feature detailed examination of a single case, Chapter 3 presents a string of collaborations with a single composer and Chapters 1 and 3

feature multiple cases with a wide variety of composers. In my conclusion I observe patterns and trends across the chapters as well as across the other cases I documented over the course of the study, providing a wider context within which to examine the research project.

# Performance Activities

During the term of my doctoral research, I presented a number of recitals, as well as working as a chamber musician and concerto soloist. These concerts were an important output of the collaborations documented in this study. The following were the most significant concert activities undertaken in 2010-2013 featuring at least one work that was documented as part of this study.

## **Chronology Arts presents Zubin Kanga**

Verbrugghen Hall, Sydney Conservatorium of Music, 2 July 2010

Rolf Hind - *Towers of Silence* for solo piano (Australian Premiere)

Newton Armstrong - *Three Windows* for piano and electronics (Australian Premiere)

Alex Pozniak - *Interventions* for solo piano (World Premiere)

-interval-

Drew Crawford - *The Nun's Picnic (Variations on a Theme by Tammy Wynette)* for solo piano (World Premiere)

Liza Lim - *The Four Seasons (after Cy Twombly)* for solo piano (Australian Premiere)

## **In Portrait: Beat Furrer**

Queen Elizabeth Hall, Southbank Centre, London, 18th January 2011

London Sinfonietta, conducted by Beat Furrer.

Works by Beat Furrer including

*Nuun* for two pianos and orchestra. Zubin Kanga and Rolf Hind, soloists.

## **Bad Blood**

Cafe Church, Glebe, 18 March 2011

Julian Day - *Bad Blood* for solo piano (World Premiere)

Julian Day - *Wire* for cello and electronics (World Premiere)

-interval-

Anthony Moles - *Diabolic Machines* for solo piano (World Premiere)

Anthony Moles - *Turning* for cello and piano (World Premiere)

Anthony Moles - *Trigger* for piano and drum kit (World Premiere)

## **Piano: Inside/Out**

Canberra School of Music, Australian National University, 22 July 2011

Stuart and Sons Piano Showroom, Newcastle, 24 July 2011

Australian National Academy of Music, Melbourne, 29 July 2011

Rolf Hind - *Towers of Silence* for solo piano

Claudia Molitor - *Tango* for solo piano

Daniel Rojas - *Entre Bajos y Alturas* for solo piano

-interval-

Elliott Gyger - *...out of obscurity* for solo piano

Nicholas Vines - *Uncanny Valley* for solo piano

Alex Pozniak - *Crush* for solo piano

### **Generations**

Sydney Grammar School, 18 November 2011

Ross Edwards – *Kumari* for solo piano

Nigel Butterley - *Forest II* for viola and piano (with James Eccles, viola)

Philip Jameson - Prelude and Fugue (World Premiere)

Daniel Rojas - *Entre Bajos y Alturas* for solo piano

-interval-

Elliott Gyger - *...out of obscurity* for solo piano

Nicholas Vines - *Uncanny Valley* for solo piano

Alex Pozniak – *Interventions* for solo piano

### **Piano: Inside/Out (London)**

Hall 2, Kings Place, London, 13 February 2012

Rolf Hind - *Towers of Silence* for solo piano

Claudia Molitor – *Tango* for solo piano

Kate Moore - *Sensitive Spot* for piano and electronics (UK Premiere)

-interval-

David Gorton – *Orfordness* for piano and electronics (World Premiere)

Michael Finnissy - *Z/K* for solo piano (World Premiere)

Alex Pozniak - *Interventions* for solo piano (UK Premiere)

### **Steve Reich - A Celebration**

Sydney Opera House, 30 May 2012

Musicians from Ensemble Offspring, Synergy Percussion, Halcyon and eighth blackbird

Works included:

Steve Reich – *Variations for Vibes, Pianos and Strings*, conducted by Roland Peelman

Steve Reich – *Music for 18 Musicians*

### **George Benjamin: Jubilation**

Purcell Room, Southbank Centre, London, 12 May 2012 (alongside other musicians from the Royal Academy of Music, London).

George Benjamin - *Piano Figures* for solo piano

George Benjamin - *Three Miniatures* for Solo Violin

George Benjamin - *Viola Viola* for two violas

George Benjamin - *Shadowlines* for solo piano

### **Spectrum**

Salon, Melbourne Recital Centre, 11 August 2012

Independent Theatres, Sydney, 16 August 2012

Marcus Whale – *Errata* for solo piano (World Premiere)

Jane Stanley - *Diptych* for solo piano (World Premiere)

Rosalind Page - *Being and Time II: Tabula Rasa* for solo piano (World Premiere)

Andrew Harrison - “...the drumfire was incessant, and continued all night with unabated fury”  
for solo piano

-interval-

David Young - *Not Music Yet* for solo piano (World Premiere)

Michael Finnissy - *Z/K* for solo piano (Australian Premiere)

Anthony Moles - *Diabolic Machines* for solo piano

### **Mapping Music**

St Leonard’s Church, Shoreditch, London, 7 March 2013



Solo and chamber music by London-based and international composers

Works included:

Helmut Lachenmann - Guero for solo piano

Studies in Resonance II - Elo Masing for solo piano (World Premiere)

**Thomas Adès: Life Story**

Elisabeth Murdoch Hall, Melbourne Recital Centre, 11 April 2013

Works included:

Conlon Nancarrow (arr. Adès) – Studies for Player Piano Nos 6 and 7, performed by Thomas Adès and Zubin Kanga, pianos

Thomas Adès – Concerto Conciso, performed by Zubin Kanga (soloist) with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Thomas Adès

**BBC Proms Plus: Param Vir in Portrait**

Royal College of Music, London

Works included:

Param Vir – Intimations of Luminous Clarity for solo piano (World Premiere)

## Awards Recognition

The following prizes were awarded for the concert activities listed above. They demonstrate recognition by the classical music community and the public of the artistic contribution made by these activities.

### 2010

Michael Kieran Harvey Scholarship. Awarded to an Australian pianist proposing an innovative project.

'Best Newcomer' at the ABC Limelight Awards. Voted by the public, hosted by *Limelight Magazine*.

### 2012

NSW Prize for Excellence: Performance of the Year (Uncanny Valley by Nicholas Vines) at the AMC/APRA Art Music Awards.

### 2013

Finalist in the categories of Performance of the Year (The drumfire was incessant, and continued all night with unabated fury by Andrew Harrison) and Excellence by an Individual (for the 2012 Spectrum recitals) at the AMC/APRA Art Music Awards.

# Definitions

In this thesis, I give specific meanings to a number of common terms that relate to my own practice. Several of these are defined elsewhere in this thesis but the most common terms are defined below.

**Collaboration (n.):** Any interaction between artistic practitioners. This includes interactions between performers and composers, between multiple performers, between musicians and artists in other fields and between the living and the dead.<sup>9</sup>

**Workshop (n.):** A meeting, whether in person or online, between artistic participants that includes creative planning, development, composition, performance preparation, rehearsal or other artistic work excluding the performance.<sup>10</sup> Refers to an *environment* for interaction rather than a *specific type* of interaction.

**Workshop (v.):** To participate in a workshop.

**Compose (v.):** To develop an artistic work for future performance. This requires both creative work, and the use of a mechanism for storing this work for future performance, often, but not always, in the form of notation.

**Perform (v.):** To present or enact an artistic work before an audience.

**Phases of Collaboration (n.):** Collaborations on notated music can be roughly divided into two phases.

---

<sup>9</sup> This definition may be playful, but it makes clear that I use ‘collaboration’ literally as well as implicitly. In this usage, all notated music is collaborative and all music making tasks involving multiple musicians are collaborative. For example, a performance of a sonata by Beethoven requires an engagement with the composer even though that engagement is via scores and other source materials rather than a face-to-face conversation.

<sup>10</sup> The ‘Open Workshop’, presented either as a performance or research event, is an obvious counterexample to this definition, although in my experience these events are more performance than workshop.

**Compositional phase:** the phase of the collaboration up to the delivery of a complete draft of the score

**Performance preparation phase:** the phase of the collaboration starting with the delivery of the completed draft of the score and finishing with the performance.

There are many cases where these phases are concurrent or indistinguishable, but the terms are useful for suggesting the priorities of the participants in a particular workshop.

**Site-specific Notation (n.):** Unconventional notation that is specific to the work, a group of works or the output of a particular composer.

**Site-specific Performance Practice (n.):** Performance Practice that is specific to a particular work, a group of works or the output of a particular composer.

# Mythologies

## Categorisation

One of the iconic achievements of the Enlightenment was the publication of the *Encyclopédie*: at the time the most ambitious attempt to collect and organise the world's knowledge.<sup>11</sup> The articles were divided into subject areas and sub-categories, with many great thinkers of the day contributing to their own field of expertise: Voltaire to philosophy, Rousseau to political science, and d'Alembert to mathematics. It was the organisation of knowledge, even more than its collection that made the *Encyclopédie* not just an achievement of importance for the age, but also the expression of the ideology of the time, helping to, "shape the issues that the French Revolution would address . . . serving to recognize and galvanise a new power base, ultimately contributing to the destruction of old values and the creation of new ones."<sup>12</sup> This ideological reorganisation would come to fruition with the storming of the Bastille in 1789.<sup>13</sup>

For researchers in many fields, the definition of categories, classes, types and species is central to the creation of knowledge, and this prioritisation of ordering and labelling can be found in both the natural and social sciences: to categorise is to know. Thus any problems with the categories and how they are defined are problems for the entire body of knowledge. One example is the 'species problem'. When Carol Linnaeus devised his system of categorising and naming all the forms of life, the boundaries between each category seemed fixed and unambiguous. However, Darwin challenged this view of taxonomic stasis with the publication of his *Origin of Species* (1859):

---

<sup>11</sup> *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des metiers*, ed. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert, Published by André le Breton, Michel-Antoine David, Laurent Durand, and Antoine-Claude Briasson, 1751-1772.

<sup>12</sup> Donato, Clorinda: "Eighteenth-century Encyclopedias and National Identity," Proceedings of the Second International Conference of the International Society for the Study of European Ideas, (Pergamon Press, 1992) p 12.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid. p 12.

Most classification schemes necessarily assumed that species were fixed and relatively stable entities. If organisms changed over time, they would have no 'essence' or definition. Charles Darwin . . . regarded the evolution of anatomical relationships as one of the great advantages of accepting his proposals.<sup>14</sup>

After Darwin, species were seen as having ambiguous and dynamic boundaries, and many biologists now agree that there is no definition of a species that can be universally applied. This is an example of a category that is convenient for our understanding but is a very low resolution model of the complexity of the field.<sup>15</sup>

As Darwin's case shows, the categorisation and organisation of knowledge can seem fallaciously like an objective and neutral act, when it is in fact culturally contingent, expressing and promoting one ideological position at the expense of others. In the relatively new field of collaborative creativity in music, the ever-growing number of types of relationships to be surveyed and studied seem ripe for categorization. However, in the rush to stake out territories to be studied, the act of categorization has perhaps been applied without a critical eye on the assumptions and prejudices that may be crystallized in the process.

Vera John-Steiner's *Collaborative Creativity* (2000) has become a reference point for many scholars and the source of many of the definitions of the field's important categories.<sup>16</sup> John-Steiner's intentions are ambitious: to establish a framework for examining all collaborative creativity, across the arts and sciences. The framework is based around four categories of collaboration, divided according to the type of relationship.<sup>17</sup> *Distributed Collaboration* is the name she gives to work with minimal interaction between participants, where the creative work is divided according to the specialties of the participants, although the organization and distribution of this work may be provided by an external agent:

---

<sup>14</sup> Heilbron, J.L. (ed): *The Oxford Companion to the History of Modern Science*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) p 357.

<sup>15</sup> J.B.S Haldane put it succinctly: "The concept of a species is a concession to our linguistic habits and neurological mechanisms".

Haldane, JBS "Can a species concept be justified?" in *The species concept in paleontology* Sylvester-Bradley (ed.), (London: Systematics Association, 1956). pp. 95-96

<sup>16</sup> John-Steiner, Vera (2000): *Creative Collaboration*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. Several other books have been similarly influential on the field, most notably Keith Sawyer's *Group Genius* (2007), and Mihaly Csizsentmihalyi's *Creativity* (1997), but neither proposes formal categories for different types of collaboration as John-Steiner does.

<sup>17</sup> John-Steiner (2000), p 197.

examples include a Hollywood movie production and the writing/editorial teams of a newspaper.<sup>18</sup> *Complementary Collaboration* is characterized by, “a division of labour based on complementary expertise, disciplinary knowledge, roles and temperament”.<sup>19</sup> This is found in numerous relationships in the sciences including those between Alfred Einstein and Niels Bohr and the husband/wife team of Pierre and Marie Curie as well as artistic relationships such as Stravinsky with Diaghilev or Vincent Van Gogh with his brother, Theo.<sup>20</sup> *Family Collaboration* describes the work of larger communities in sharing work, although unlike *Distributed Collaboration*, here the roles and creative authorship is shared between many people.<sup>21</sup> Finally, *Integrative Collaboration* occurs where the participants’ roles merge and authorship is shared, and they “construct a set of common beliefs or ideology. They thrive on dialogue, risk taking, and a shared vision.”<sup>22</sup> Examples include Picasso and Braque’s shared creation of cubist art and the writings of Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir (where each acted as editor, and in some places co-author, of each other’s work).<sup>23</sup> Significantly, this is a type of collaboration, “which transforms both the field and the participants”.<sup>24</sup>

Although these categories only form one of many tools used by John-Steiner for examining creative collaboration, they are the concepts that have been cherry picked and propagated in much of the recent research on collaborative work in music. Paul Roe and Stefan Östersjö both draw upon John-Steiner’s categories, as do Tom Armstrong, Elizabeth Dobson, Richard Harding, Grahame Klippel and Heather Roche.<sup>25</sup> In Sam Hayden and Luke Windsor’s article, “Collaboration and

---

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. p 197.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. p 198.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. p 198.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p 200.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p 203.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid. p 203. De Beauvoir’s language in describing her relationship with Sartre shows thinking patterns found in many Integrative relationships: “finishing each other’s sentences....arriving at the same conclusions....living in the other’s mind” (ibid. p. 15)

<sup>24</sup> Ibid. p 70.

<sup>25</sup> Roe, Paul: “A Phenomenology of Collaboration in Contemporary Composition and Practice”, PhD dissertation, (York: University of York, 2007).

Östersjö, Stefan: *Shut Up ‘n’ Play: Negotiating the Musical Work*, originally submitted as a PhD dissertation, (Malmo: Lund University Press, 2008).

Armstrong, Tom: “Collaboration and Tradition”, presented at Collaborative Processes in Music Making: Pedagogy and Practice, Palatine (University of Surrey), 11 November 2009.

Dobson, Elizabeth: “How is creative work shaped by interaction when undergraduate digital music composers work with each other and other disciplines: a sociocultural

the Composer: case studies from the end of the 20th century”, a direct mapping of categories can be observed onto John-Steiner’s hierarchy of interaction: the terms Directive-Interactive-Collaborative replace John-Steiner’s Distributed-Complementary-Integrative trichotomy (the Family category discarded as irrelevant to musical interaction, and particularly one-on-one interaction in all this research) yet the conditions and proposed borders of the categories remains almost identical.<sup>26</sup> In all of this research, the categories are accepted as axiomatic and only Östersjö has hinted at the possibility that these categories may not fit the cases found in music as neatly as many researchers suggest.<sup>27</sup>

In addition to this already confusing mixture of terms, Georgina Born has outlined a theory of Distributed Creativity, whereby ‘Distributed’ is used to describe the decentralised, networked nature of musical activity rather than any specific collaborative mode. In Born’s model, creativity can be distributed spatially, temporally, socially and culturally.<sup>28</sup> As has already been discussed in the introduction, this model has been fundamental to research in and around CMPCP (Centre for Musical Performance as Creative Practice) by researchers including Eric Clarke, Mark Doffman and John Rink.<sup>29</sup> This widely defined notion of distributed creativity seems to be broadly synonymous with Östersjö’s concept of ‘The Field of the Music Work’ (see *Mythologies: The Work*) but has the potential

---

method for analyzing joint creativity”, presented at the Collaborations in Practice-led Research RMA Study Day, University of Leeds, 23 October 2010.

Harding, Richard: “Notational Indeterminacy and the Performing Musician”, presented at the Collaborations in Practice-led Research RMA Study Day, University of Leeds, 23 October 2010.

Klippel, Graham: “Authority and Integrity” presented at Collaborative Processes in Music Making: Pedagogy and Practice, Palatine (University of Surrey), 11 November 2009.

Roche, Heather: “Intimacy in performer-composer relationships: the dynamics of collaborative space”, presented at the RMA Study Day, Collaborations in Practice-led Research, University of Leeds, 23 October 2010.

<sup>26</sup> Hayden, Sam and Windsor, Luke: “Collaboration and the Composer: case studies from the end of the 20th century”, *Tempo*, 61 (240) 28–39, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p 6.

<sup>27</sup> Östersjö, Stefan: *Shut Up ‘n’ Play: Negotiating the Musical Work*, originally submitted as a PhD dissertation, (Malmö: Lund University Press, 2008) p 378.

<sup>28</sup> Born, Georgina: “Distributed Creativity: What Do We Mean By It?”, *Creative Practice in Contemporary Concert Music Workshop: Distributed Creativity*, University of Oxford, 5 September 2011.

<sup>29</sup> The importance of distributed creativity within CMPCP can be observed in the titles to many of the research outputs: [http://www.cmpcp.ac.uk/cpiccm\\_outputs.html](http://www.cmpcp.ac.uk/cpiccm_outputs.html)

for allowing a more open discussion of musical activities without the need to refer explicitly to the work concept.

In this thesis I will use a hybrid trichotomy of collaborative categories, keeping in mind the highly contingent, ambiguous and inherently flawed activity of such a categorisation.

- **Directive Collaboration** (borrowing Hayden and Windsor's term, synonymous with John-Steiner's Distributed Collaboration) refers to collaborations as they have conventionally existed within the modernist tradition, with a hierarchical power structure, very little if any collaborative activity between composer and performer outside of the score, and a process that is often managed by third parties (such as commissioning bodies, educational institutions and performing arts organisations).
- **Interactive Collaboration** (again borrowing from Hayden and Windsor) refers to collaborations where the participants interact at the compositional and/or the performance-preparation phases while maintaining their distinct roles and areas of expertise.
- **Integrative Collaboration** (this time using John-Steiner's term) refers to collaborations where the conventional roles of composer and performer are temporarily dissolved and there are no limits to which aspects of creativity are shared or the extent to which one party encroaches on the other's creative space.<sup>30</sup>

This Directive-Interactive-Integrative model allows me to use Distributed Creativity in the variously defined form used by Born to refer to other types of distribution outside of the social distribution that is the focus of this thesis. I use

---

<sup>30</sup> Although these categories appear to be relatively neutral in their bias, it is implied that all the categories are defined in terms of the interaction within the composer's creative space – the performer's space considered either irrelevant or at the least subservient to the composer's space and can be invaded to a great extent whether in the Directive or the Integrative mode. This is a bias that I have inherited from the other researchers in the field, and from the conventional hierarchy of composer-performer relationships themselves.



these categories as useful markers for types of interaction, but with the knowledge that such markers come loaded with connotations and prejudices.

# Authority and Authenticity

"You play Bach your way, and I'll play him his way."

Wanda Landowska to Pablo Casals, 1941.<sup>31</sup>

In her oft-quoted statement (simultaneously a putdown and a manifesto), Landowska claims to derive her authority as a performer by following the intentions of the composer, in contrast to others who stray from the composer's vision.<sup>32</sup> This is a claim of authenticity, a claim to ultimate knowledge, appropriating the composer's authority over the way the music should be played by her extraordinary powers to know the mind of Bach. No harpsichordist today would consider Landowska's playing remotely close to what Bach might have envisioned – and it is her anachronistic idiosyncrasies and persuasive artistry that make her recordings so interesting for us to today.<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, her attitude has been inherited by modern performers playing all periods of music – including those working with composers who are alive.

Performers working with living composers have no need for Landowska's apparent ability to converse with the dead: the composers are often there in the room to answer any queries. But the central questions remain: how much authority do composers have over the interpretation of their scores, and under what circumstances would a performer be justified in intentionally ignoring, amending or even contradicting these intentions?

Some examples of the importance of these questions to performers today can be found in the behaviour of Karlheinz Stockhausen towards a number of

---

<sup>31</sup> Landowska in Taruskin, Richard: *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995). p 204. Taruskin notes that the interlocutor is different in other tellings of this apocryphal quote, though Landowska's student Denise Restout, presents a firsthand account of the conversation (and significantly describes the light-hearted nature of the exchange).  
[http://glenn Gould.org/mail/archives/f\\_minor/msg01400.html](http://glenn Gould.org/mail/archives/f_minor/msg01400.html), accessed 6 February 2013.

<sup>32</sup> Taruskin (1995), p 204.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

different performers. In a letter to David Robertson in 1997, he began by strongly suggesting Robertson change his program,

KLAVIERSTÜCK VI will die in your program. I have heard this work recently twice: the first good interpretations (played by Ellen Cover). In your program the only possible order for listening to KLAVIERSTÜCK VI would be  
KLAVIERSTÜCK VI  
REFRAIN  
- intermission -  
ZEITMASZE  
KLAVIERSTÜCK VII  
NOT the other way around!<sup>34</sup>

Stockhausen was even more scathing about Robertson's programming later in the letter,

So, KLAVIERSTÜCK XII does not fit together with KONTAKTE – never. I had dinner together with you in Baden-Baden: you were very careful in composing your meal. Therefore I wonder why you can make such fundamental mistakes in programming.<sup>35</sup>

At other points in the letter, Stockhausen is suspicious of performers he doesn't know, even suggesting that he himself take the place of the proposed sound projectionist for *Kontakte*. Stockhausen here attempts to control aspects of the concerts that might normally be seen as the performer's prerogative – the programming and the choice of performers – emphasising his lack of trust by suggesting he replace one of the performers.

Stockhausen even managed to assert his composerly authority from beyond the grave. In 2009, pianist Kerry Yong began a project performing contemporary works, originally for piano and larger ensemble instrumentations on casio keyboard and electronics using his own arrangements. The works in his program included Stockhausen's *Klavierstück XVI*. Yong took the performance instrumentation of, "string piano, synthesizers, samplers ad lib." as inspiration for creating his interpretation of the piece, reasoning that,

---

<sup>34</sup> Letter: Karlheinz Stockhausen to David Robertson (20 June 1997). Included with online information on the Stockhausen courses, [www.stockhausen.org/](http://www.stockhausen.org/) (accessed 3 February 2013).

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

the 'ad lib' is the interesting point of interpretation - does that mean the string piano is absolutely mandatory? what if it's on stage but only get 'looked at', or just even touched a la Cage 4'33" style?<sup>36</sup>

Soon after he posted his version on youTube, Yong received the following letter from Stockhausen's publisher.

Dear Kerry,

please remove the clip of KLAVIERSTÜCK XVI from Youtube.  
First of all the copyrights of the Electronic Music are with the Stockhausen-Verlag and you are not allowed to make this available on the internet. Secondly the works is for stringed piano (normal piano) plus electronic piano. So your performance is totally wrong and gives a totally wrong impression of the work.

You should work one day with Antonio Perez Abellán at the Stockhausen Courses, Kuerten to make a good version of this work.

Please write that you have received this e-mail, otherwise we will have to take legal steps.<sup>37</sup>

Note the unequivocal disapproval of the interpretation ("the performance is totally wrong"), the advice to study the piece at the Stockhausen summer school, and the final legal threat. Yong removed the video without making further contact.

A position favouring the absolute authority of the composer is expounded most memorably (and colourfully) by Igor Stravinsky in his *Poetics of Music*. Stravinsky defines two types of performer: the executant and the interpreter.<sup>38</sup> The choice between executant and interpreter is not just an aesthetic distinction, according to Stravinsky, but an ethical one, with the worst interpreters committing "sins against the spirit of the work... [by] sinning against its letter".<sup>39</sup> Stravinsky stated emphatically that the only kind of authenticity is authenticity to the score of the composer, a position very similar to Landowska's. Yet in his work as a performer, Stravinsky diverged from scores as much as any other performer, even when the scores are his own. His two recordings, as conductor, of the *Rite of Spring* clearly illustrate this hypocrisy. In the 'Sage' movement, Stravinsky's score

---

<sup>36</sup> Letter: Kerry Yong to the author (25 January 2013).

<sup>37</sup> Letter to Kerry Young, 29 May 2009 (sender details removed for legal purposes).. Provided by Kerry to the author on 25 January 2013.

<sup>38</sup> Stravinsky, Igor: *Poetics of Music*, (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1940), p 163.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. p 165.

states a metronome mark of 42 b.p.m. but in his 1929 recording, he conducted this passage at 88 b.p.m. (more than double the marked speed), and in his 1940 recording, he took the passage at 52 b.p.m. – still markedly faster than his own score dictates. The opening of the ‘Sacrificial Dance’ shows an opposite trend: whereas the score is marked 126 b.p.m., Stravinsky took this passage at 104 b.p.m. in 1929 and 120 b.p.m. in 1940, both slower than the marked tempo.<sup>40</sup> There are other performances (such as those by Pierre Boulez) that adhere more closely to Stravinsky’s tempi than Stravinsky himself: are these performances more ‘authentic’ than Stravinsky’s own?<sup>41</sup> This is far from an exception when it comes to composers performing their own works. Taruskin mentions Debussy and Prokofiev, “whose performances on rolls and records are so at variance with their notation that no one could get away with copying them.”<sup>42</sup> Other composer-performers from Chopin to Ives to Bartok all deviated from their text, not just in tempo but by altering rhythms, adding notes and even improvising radically different versions for each performance.<sup>43</sup> In an era when many live performances are recorded, the number of competing ‘texts’ makes Stravinsky’s commandment problematic to execute and makes the constructed 19th century concept of *werktreue* seem inadequate for the complex task of formulating an interpretation.<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> Hill, Peter: *Stravinsky: The Rite of Spring*, Cambridge Music Handbooks, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p 124.

<sup>41</sup> As Taruskin points out, this is not the only example by Stravinsky of his performances differing wildly from his score. He singles out the cantata *Zvezdoliki* as a work where Stravinsky referred to the recording as a particularly successful documentation, even though the tempi are all much faster than those in the score. (Taruskin 1995: 53).

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> On Ives, Kirkpatrick recalled “Some pieces, like *Concord*, Ives never did twice the same way, and almost always resented the thought or the fancied obligation that he should put it down precisely, because he loved to improvise it.” Kirkpatrick in Perlis, Vivian: *Charles Ives Remembered*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), p 220.

On Chopin, Eigeldinger has collected a number of accounts of Chopin improvising ornamental *fioritura*, not only in his own works (notably in the Mazurkas) but in the works of others such as Field’s *Nocturnes*. There are also accounts of him altering his own scores in lessons to make passages easier or more difficult, depending on the ability of the student.

Eigeldinger, Jean-Jacques: *Chopin: pianist and teacher as seen by his pupils*, trans. Naomi Shohet, ed. Roy Howat, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1988): p 52.

Bartók’s interpretations can be heard on the numerous recordings that survive, in particular, his *Allegro Barbaro* (1911).

Bartók, Béla: *Bartók plays Bartók: Bartók at the piano (1929-1941)*, Pearl CD, 1995.

<sup>44</sup> For more on the historical contingency of the concept of *Werktreue*, and the problems that arise when applying it universally see Goehr, Lydia: *The Imaginary Museum of*

Even a performer determined to be a 'mere executant' would come up not just against the plethora of texts, but also the problem of determining the intentions of the composer. Kivy, following Randall Dipert, proposes a hierarchy of intentions (Dipert dividing these into low, middle and high-level intentions, while Kivy divides composers' intentions into wishes, suggestions and commands).<sup>45</sup> As both John Butt and Stefan Östersjö argue, such distinctions fall apart under scrutiny, given the difficulty in determining where different intentions fit within the hierarchy, as well as the more obvious problem that a suggestion for one composer may be a command for another<sup>46</sup>. One might see a recommended programming order as being merely a suggestion, but as the examples above featuring Stockhausen demonstrate, those aspects that composers choose to control are neither uniform, nor neatly hierarchical. A further problem with equating performative authenticity with the composer's intentions is the 'Intentional Fallacy' (coined by Wimsatt and Beardsley).<sup>47</sup> Taruskin applies the concept to intentions of composers,

We cannot know intentions, for many reasons – or rather, we cannot know we know them. Composers do not always express them. If they do express them, they may do so disingenuously. Or they may be honestly mistaken<sup>48</sup>

The intentional fallacy is not a reason to discount the composer's stated intentions, but it is a warning to treat stated intentions with skepticism, rather than as holy writ (as much as composers like Stockhausen would prefer that they were).

---

*Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).

<sup>45</sup> Dipert, Randall, R: "The Composer's Intentions: An Examination of their Relevance for Performance", *Musical Quarterly*, 66 (1980)

<sup>45</sup> Kivy, Peter: *Authenticities: philosophical reflections on musical performance*, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995). p 12.

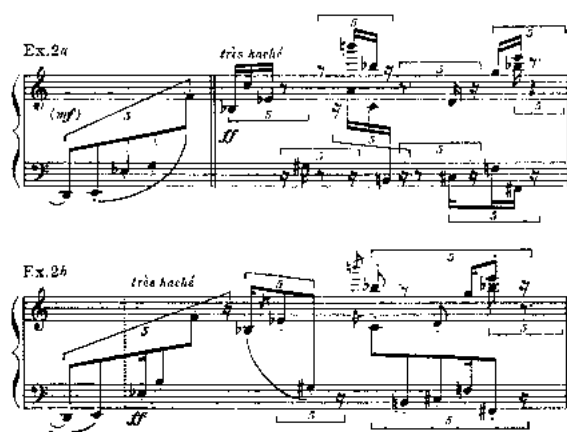
<sup>46</sup> Butt, John: *Playing with History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p 89. and Östersjö (2008), p 91.

<sup>47</sup> Wimsatt, William K. and Monroe C. Beardsley. "The Intentional Fallacy." *Sewanee Review*, vol. 54 (1946): pp 468-488.

<sup>48</sup> Taruskin (1995), p 97.

An extreme case of ‘interpretation’ (in the Stravinskian sense) can be found in Roger Woodward’s performance of Jean Barraqué’s Sonata for piano. Woodward’s performance takes great liberties with the complex score to the point where, in his review of the recording, Barraqué’s student, Bill Hopkins claimed that “the distorted values and bar-line pauses must be regarded as deviant interpretations of the written score”. He includes transcriptions of Woodward’s ‘deviant’ recording alongside the score to show the disparity between the two (with the score above and the transcription of Woodward’s recording below).<sup>49</sup>

**Example M.1: Excerpt from Sonata by Jean Barraqué (above) and transcription of Woodward’s recording of this excerpt by Hopkins (below)**



Yet Jean Barraqué worked closely with Woodward on this recording, calling it the definitive version of the work and calling Woodward a ‘genius’.<sup>50</sup> Here we find the composer endorsing a performer’s own authenticity in a performance that Hopkins finds questionable with regards to its authenticity.

If the composers themselves seem to approve of interpretations that diverge from their scores, then can the composer be vanquished as an authority figure? Kivy falls just short of calling for a Barthesian death of the composer,

<sup>49</sup> Hopkins, Bill: ‘Review’ (includes review of Piano Sonata by Jean Barraque, performed by Roger Woodward), *Tempo*, New Series, No. 110, (September 1974), p 49.

<sup>50</sup> Barraqué goes on to compare Woodward to Liszt and Horowitz and explains that the works he plays “are reinvented by the light he shines on them”. Barraqué, Jean: Letter to Roger Woodward (trans. Martin Coote), 20 March 1973.

We have heard some proclamations in recent years (mostly in French) about the death of the author and of the author's text (in favour of the reader's). Perhaps that might be a good thing if it happened, perhaps not; that is not the point. Rather, this is just another case of exaggerated demise, particularly so in the world of music and musicology, where the cult of author and text is alive, well, and flourishing as never before, thank you very much. It is within this cult or culture that, I believe, the composer's performing intentions gain their prima facie authority. It is an authority, as we have seen, open to empirical defeat, on an individual, case-by-case basis. But its primacy of place, as the starting point for all performance decisions, can be defeated only by an overthrow of the culture of the author itself.<sup>51</sup>

It would certainly seem prudent to treat all possible 'texts' with as much skepticism as respect and to remember, as Taruskin shows, that letting the music speak for itself is not an ethical imperative but simply one interpretative position, both modern and modernist, of many possible choices.<sup>52</sup>

Or we could be imprudent, and follow the approach of pianist, Yuji Takahashi,

A performer is an adventurer who explores sonic nebulae following the star map provided by the composer. A composition is a model which is used again and again to open the door of perception. It will be modified, if necessary, and discarded when it is no longer valid.<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> Kivy (1995): 187.

<sup>52</sup> Taruskin (1995): 60.

<sup>53</sup> Takahashi, Yuji: "Letter to the Editor", *Tempo*, No. 115 (Dec. 1975), p 54.



# The Teacher

“Time is a great teacher, but unfortunately it kills all its pupils.” - Hector Berlioz<sup>54</sup>

The hierarchical tendencies of the modern teacher-student relationship in classical music can be traced back to the origins of musical education. Until music education was institutionalised in the early-Baroque period, it was almost always a process confined to the master-apprentice paradigm common to many trades. This relationship was almost always hierarchical, and sometimes exploitative. Apprentices were a source of unpaid labour, and F.E. Niedt recalls that his 17th century experience of apprenticeship was not just uninformative but abusive:

Once, however [my master] became especially inventive and attempted to kick Art into my body, because any treatment without foundation could not drive the thoroughbass into my head. He pulled me by the hair off the organ bench where I was sitting in front of the keyboard, threw me onto the ground and yanked me up by the hair, to let my head fall back with a crash onto the ground. Then he stepped on my body, stamped around on it for a good while until the Basso Continuo finally so robbed him of his senses, that he dragged me out of the parlour near a staircase leading on to the street and said, ‘this shall be the end of your apprenticeship years and with this you shall receive your certificate, which I shall throw into the bargain’.<sup>55</sup>

More nurturing examples of master-apprentice musical education can be found within musical families, the most obvious being the Mozart and Bach families.<sup>56</sup> Concurrently, the model of the conservatoire was gaining traction, first in Venice and Naples in the 17th century (where they started in orphanages, out of a need to teach the children employable skills) before the modern conservatoires emerged in the late-18th and early-19th centuries, including many still in operation such as the Paris Conservatoire (established 1795) and the Royal Academy of Music, London (established 1822).<sup>57</sup> Many of these institutions implemented much of their

---

<sup>54</sup> Berlioz, Hector: *Memoirs of Hector Berlioz: From 1803 to 1865, Comprising His Travels in Germany, Italy, Russia, and England*, edited by Eleanor Holmes and Ernest Newman, (New York: Dover, 1932).

<sup>55</sup> Niedt, F. E.: *The Music Guide: Parts 1 (1700/10), 2 (1721) and 3 (1717)*, trans P.L. Poulin and I.C. Taylor, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p 15.

<sup>56</sup> Loges, Natasha and Lawson, Colin, “The teaching of performance” in *The Cambridge History of Musical Performance*, edited by Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p 138.

<sup>57</sup> *ibid*, pp 143-144.

curriculum through class teaching, however individual lessons carried on the one-on-one apprenticeship model, with all its benefits and dangers. Although in the majority of cases, the exploitation and abuse of the apprentice system (as described by Niedt) has been supplanted by a more convivial and egalitarian approach to teaching, the numerous recent scandals, featuring the abuse of students by teachers at venerable institutions in the UK, have demonstrated that the risk of exploitation within the master-apprentice model has not been erased by time.<sup>58</sup>

The institutionalisation of music education also had the effect of concretising the trend towards student specialisation of students, and in particular, the increasingly separate training and syllabi afforded to composers and performers. In modern conservatoires, including the Royal Academy of Music, separate training begins at an undergraduate level, with the consequence that many composers have little formal training as performers, and many performers have only rudimentary training in compositional technique. This results in many musicians entering the profession with very specialist areas of expertise and large gaps in their knowledge and expertise.

The role of teacher is related to the role of 'expert'. In communication between an expert and layperson, there is an imbalance of knowledge (and hence a hierarchy of sorts) but there is no conventional imbalance of power enshrined within institutions in the specific teacher-student sense. Defining an 'expert' is a particular concern of legal scholars, and case law provides some useful examples. Judge Tywritt Drake states:

The test of expertness, so far as the law of evidence is concerned, is skill, and skill alone, in the field of which is sought to have the witness's opinion... I adopt, as a working definition of the term 'skilled person', one who has by dint of training and practice, acquired a good knowledge of the science or art concerning which his

---

<sup>58</sup> Linda Merrick, Principal of the Royal Northern College of Music has gone so far as to suggest that the recent scandals could precipitate the end of one-on-one teaching in UK conservatoires, due to the risk to students (of abuse) and to teachers (of false accusations). Such a proposal would likely be vehemently opposed by the other UK conservatoires, where one-on-one teaching is firmly entrenched in the institutional culture. Merrick, Linda in Pidd, Helen: "One-on-one teaching may be abolished", *The Guardian*, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2013/mar/01/one-to-one-music-tuition>, 1 March 2013, accessed 11 March 2013.

opinion is sought... It is not necessary for a person to give opinion evidence of a question of human physiology, that he be a doctor of medicine.<sup>59</sup>

In Drake's definition, the degree of expertise is not necessarily linked to any qualifications or accreditation of the expert.<sup>60</sup> However this is by no means the general consensus within the legal profession, with others, including J. Vaughan-Williams, arguing that:

No one should be allowed to give evidence as an expert unless his profession or course of study gives him more opportunity of judging than other people.<sup>61</sup>

The confusion was demonstrated when I observed rehearsals between Helmut Lachenmann, piano soloist Rolf Hind and the London Sinfonietta for his work *Ausklang* for piano and orchestra (1985) in 2010. Lachenmann, a pianist by training, could demonstrate any passage from the piano solo part with as little effort, and sometimes greater effect than Hind, but he could also demonstrate the unusual extended techniques he asked for on a cello or violin, on any of the percussion instruments, and on the woodwind and brass, all with greater 'expertise' than the professional performers in the orchestra. In this case, although experts, the performers were relative laypeople alongside Lachenmann in the execution of his new and unusual extended techniques.<sup>62</sup> But Lachenmann's expertise was extremely limited: he was only an expert on, for example, the cello techniques he had invented, not on any other aspects of cello technique.

In the expert-layperson relationship, there is a specific hierarchy of knowledge transmission, but no encompassing hierarchical relationship as there is in a teacher-student relationship. Needless to say, the boundaries between these two types of relationship are ambiguous, particularly so in one-on-one interactions in music, where the archetype of the master-apprentice relationship looms over even the most egalitarian exchange.

---

<sup>59</sup> Drake, Tywritt in Hall, Jean Graham: *The Expert Witness*, (Chisester: Barry Rose Law Publishers, 2006), pp 3-4.

<sup>60</sup> However, rather dubiously, the 'expert' in question in this case was a police officer who had made a special study of the physiological effects of alcohol. How the Judge assessed the thoroughness and veracity of the police officer's study is not recounted in Hall's book.

<sup>61</sup> Vaughan-Williams, J. in Hodgkinson, Tristram: *Expert Evidence: Law and Practice*, (London: Sweet & Maxwell, 1990).

<sup>62</sup> These rehearsals were documented on video by the author, with private rehearsals between Hind and Lachenmann documented by Hind and provided to the author.

A third, but intriguing type of educative relationship is that of the ‘Ignorant Schoolmaster’, as set out by Jacques Rancière in his eponymous book.<sup>63</sup> Rancière presents a story about Joseph Jacotot, a lecturer in French literature in 1818 at the University of Louvain. Many of his students spoke Flemish, while he only spoke French. With no common language, he assigned to them a bilingual edition of *Télémaque* as well as a series of exercises: learning to first recite the text, and then answer a series of questions on the text, in French. He found that, without further input, “the students managed... as well as many French could have done! Was wanting all that was necessary for learning?”<sup>64</sup> Rancière thus sees the ‘ignorant schoolmaster’ not as deficient, but an ideal teacher – one who encourages the students’ autonomous learning, while removing the traditional hierarchy of knowledge transmission.<sup>65</sup> When applied to musical collaborations, a version of Rancière’s model could be productive in many situations: a composer pointing out some interpretative choices while encouraging a performer to make their own, or a performer providing materials to a composer to experiment with new techniques but no directions on how to use them. In these cases, the ‘teacher’ is not necessarily ignorant, just assuming a less hierarchically dominant position, and encouraging the other practitioner’s autonomy and creative independence. The question remains as to whether this is really the best approach to collaboration, or whether relationships with different hierarchical gradients function well in different circumstances.

---

<sup>63</sup> Rancière, Jacques: *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, translated by Kristin Ross (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> One might question whether the precise teaching methods outlined by Rancière, such as rote learning, are consistent with his egalitarian ideals.

# My Musical Identity

“Zubin Kanga is a man on a mission. A mission to commission.”

-Radio host, Roger Gonzalez, introducing a concert broadcast on ABC Classic FM<sup>66</sup>

In today’s marketing-driven music industry, all artists present and foster a public persona through published biographies, websites, articles, interviews and social media. I am no different, and over the past decade, I have gradually built a professional identity that is both aided and used by my manager, my peripatetic marketing/PR agent and a circle of journalists interested in contemporary music.

Although it exists in many forms, my biography generally covers the same ground: festivals and venues of recent performances, ensembles I work with, awards I’ve won and composers I’ve worked with. As with most performer biographies, it is a list of achievements and brand-boosting associations.

London-based Australian pianist, Zubin Kanga has recently performed at the Aldeburgh (UK), Borealis (Norway) and London 2012 Festivals as well performing solo recitals at Kings Place, the Purcell Room and the Melbourne Recital Centre and as concerto soloist with the London Sinfonietta. He has commissioned dozens of new solo and chamber works, focusing on the exploration of new sounds and approaches to the piano. He is a member of Ensemble Offspring, Australia’s leading contemporary music ensemble, and also performs with Ensemble Plus-Minus, the Kreutzer Quartet, Halcyon and Synergy Percussion.

In the past three years, Zubin was awarded the Michael Kieran Harvey Scholarship, the ABC Limelight Award for Best Newcomer and the NSW State Award for Performance of the Year at the Australian Art Music Awards. A graduate of the Royal Academy of Music, London, he has collaborated with many of the world’s leading composers including Michael Finnissy, George Benjamin, Steve Reich, Liza Lim and Beat Furrer. He recently made his debut as soloist with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, performing Thomas Adés’ *Concerto Conciso* under the baton of the composer.

Most standard musician biographies cover the same areas, with the exception of the last one, the name-dropping of famous composers-collaborators,

---

<sup>66</sup> Spoken by Roger Gonzalez in introduction to New Music Up Late broadcast, ABC Classic FM, 22 June 2013.

although that too features in a significant proportion of biographies.<sup>67</sup> It is a particularly common marketing strategy among contemporary music ensembles and performers (see *Mythologies: Intimacy*) and the names are often chosen based on the strength of their brand, rather than the quality of their music or the depth or duration of the collaborative relationship. Currently absent are competition wins (the few wins are now so distant and minor as to be counter-productive if included) and education (my varied educational journey through engineering and mathematics before graduating with philosophy and computer science majors having only marginal novelty value). Even more conspicuously absent are the many failures that fill a career: getting knocked out of competitions in the first round, performances marred by nerves and memory lapses, failed collaborations, gaps in training and missed opportunities – such professional failures (with their sometimes acute personal consequences) might make for a rather depressing read, but they are all a part of a musician's story that never gets publicly communicated.<sup>68</sup>

Although I am under no illusions as to gap between the reality of my abilities and achievements and public perceptions, I have taken an active role in the creation and propagation of these myths. The Roger Gonzalez quote above is but one of many cases where I have used my many collaborations as part of a marketing strategy.

It's true that many accomplished composers have well-developed inner ears - imaginations that can fluently translate the sounds they hear into the instruments and techniques that might be able to produce them. But the accomplished musician will always have something to teach the curious composer about their instrument – its possibilities, its quirks and its limitations. One such

---

<sup>67</sup> While working as a Postgraduate Tutor at the Royal Academy of Music in 2012-2014, I edited 80 different professional biographies by students.

<sup>68</sup> A new trend in biographies includes a story of a 'dark past' or some personal crisis that was overcome. James Rhodes' public profile spends considerable time talking about being in psychiatric institutions before rediscovering the piano, and his debut CD was titled "Little pills, Razor Blades and Big Pianos". Some readers may find this frank and honest, while others will find it exploitative and distasteful, as well as being far from unusual given the increased prevalence of mental illness among artists in comparison to the general population. It is certainly effective as a marketing strategy, given Rhodes current following of 20,000 on twitter (as of 1 July 2013, compared to around 1000 for other prominent British pianists). For more on creativity and mental illness see: Roberts, Heather: "Creativity 'closely entwined with mental illness", BBC online, 17 October 2012, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-19959565> (accessed 4 July 2013).

contemporary musician with a passion for composer-collaboration is Zubin Kanga.

-Stephen Adams, ABC producer and Australian music curator<sup>69</sup>

Kanga is an integral part of the creative process, working alongside Page to realise the sounds of her imagination. The work opens with a low, cloudy rumble achieved using soft timpani sticks inside the piano, a texture that Kanga and Page arrived at by trial and error.

-Harriet Cunningham, *The Age/Sydney Morning Herald*<sup>70</sup>

MODERNISM complicated the relationship between composers and performers - nudging composers into a conceptual aesthetic role, while performers increasingly specialised in sophisticated skills of translation, realisation and execution. A post-modern offshoot has been the phenomenon of the creative collaborative project, drawing together these specialisations in the manner of modern project management. Pianist Zubin Kanga's *Spectrum* project involved seven composers ranging from the emerging to the venerable, and the outcomes demonstrated highly varied voices, each with a distinctive artistic trace.

[...]

Kanga's pianism was marked by virtuosic energy and devotion to artistic purpose, his project curatorship showing intelligent discernment.

-Peter McCallum, *Sydney Morning Herald* (review)<sup>71</sup>

Collaborating with composers on new works is the most exciting, challenging and rewarding aspect of my life as a performer. There's nothing quite like creating a piece collaboratively from scratch; discussing ideas and influences; creating new techniques together; testing out the piece as it grows; and then, finally, creating a little bit of history when you perform the world premiere

-Zubin Kanga, *Limelight Magazine*<sup>72</sup>

Given the topic of this thesis, I obviously feel that collaborating closely with composers – not just meeting them before the concert but working with them at

---

<sup>69</sup> Adams, Stephen: "What's the Score?" (blog to accompany podcast recordings), *ABC Classic FM* (website), 7 March 2013, <http://www.abc.net.au/classic/content/2013/03/07/3710138.htm> (accessed 3 July 2013).

<sup>70</sup> Cunningham, Harriet: "Don't try this on the new Steinway kids" (interview/feature article), *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 August 2012, <http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/music/dont-try-this-on-the-new-steinway-kids-20120812-242p3.html> (accessed 3 July 2013).

<sup>71</sup> McCallum, Peter: "Seven composers, from emerging to venerable, each with a distinct voice", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 August 2012, <http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/music/seven-composers-from-emerging-to-venerable-each-with-a-unique-voice-20120819-24ga3.html#ixzz2Xzjf3aJh> (accessed 3 July 2013).

<sup>72</sup> Kanga, Zubin: "One recital - five world premieres", *Limelight Magazine*, 6 August 2012, <http://www.limelightmagazine.com.au/Article/310992,one-piano-recital-8211-five-world-premieres.aspx> (accessed 3 July 2013).

all stages and in many different capacities – is something that I find fulfilling, and that I, the composer and the work we create all benefit from this collaborative process. But despite the wealth of evidence supporting the benefits of collaborative creativity (see Introduction), I began this research without knowing whether my particular approach to collaboration was successful or unproductive and indeed whether or not I am a good collaborator. These questions will be addressed, if not conclusively resolved, in examining the case studies that follow.



# Chapter 1: Differences in Authority

The majority of case studies in this thesis feature composers whom I consider to be peers. They are similar in age, or at similar stages of their careers, and our collaboration may be assumed to benefit us both equally (both in artistic as well as career outcomes).

The cases here, however, present imbalances of authority, resulting from differences in age or career development between the participants. Initially, I explore cases where I have worked with composers who are much older than me, as well as having more established careers. They have all had international recognition and performances by leading solo performers, ensembles and orchestras around the world. In the second half, I look at cases where I am the senior and more established participant, and the composers are still beginning to establish their reputations.

The first presents a single workshop with British composer, George Benjamin on his work *Piano Figures* (2004). This collaboration is an exception in the context of this thesis, but the rule in terms of modern contemporary music practice: a collaboration on a completed work, with a performance history that predates the study. As a young professional pianist, this represents a model of my most common type of interaction with more senior composers. The second collaboration is with another leading British composer, Michael Finnissy, on his work composed for me, *Z/K* (2012). In the second half of the chapter, I examine collaborations with two young Australian composers: Marcus Whale, at the time an undergraduate at the Sydney Conservatorium, who composed *Errata* (2012) and Philip Jameson, at the time a final-year student at Sydney Grammar School, who composed *Prelude and Fugue* (2011). As with the following chapters, these cases will be compared to other similar situations in the conclusion, allowing the research questions and the discoveries that emerge in cases of authoritative imbalance to be explored in greater depth.

A number of research questions arise out of this focus on imbalances in authority. The questions deliberately explore my differing assumptions when beginning these collaborations. For my collaborations with older and more senior composers:

- Are there particular modes of collaboration that these composers tend to favour? In particular, are they accustomed to working in a directive mode and uncomfortable with integrative approaches to collaboration?
- Have these composers developed distinctive methods and language for use in workshops?
- Will the collaborative activity be focussed on a particular phase of the process? In particular, will it be focussed on the performance preparation phase rather than the composition phase?
- Will these composers be resistant to challenges to their authority, and will I, in turn, be less likely to challenge their authority?
- Will the collaborative relationships resemble, or even become teacher-student relationships?

I expect the inverse to be the case in my work with younger composers.

- Will these collaborations tend to be more interactive, or even integrative than those with more senior composers?
- Will these composers still be developing their language and approach to collaboration, allowing me to dominate the process?
- Will collaboration be focussed mainly on the compositional phase, with only minor adjustments made during the performance preparation phase?
- Will the composers be receptive to my challenges to their authority over the works, and will I in turn, be more resistant to their challenges?
- Will the collaborative relationships resemble, or even become teacher-student relationships (with the roles reversed in comparison to the initial cases)?

## *Piano Figures* by George Benjamin

I first worked with George Benjamin in 2008, while preparing his *Shadowlines* (2001) for a performance in the Southbank's Messiaen Centenary Festival.<sup>73</sup> I had worked on the piece with its dedicatee, Pierre-Laurent Aimard, several weeks earlier, and it was interesting to contrast Pierre-Laurent's very specific technical approach at the service of interpretative flexibility with what I perceived to be George's more fixed approach to the interpretation of the work.

I had the opportunity to work with George again while preparing *Shadowlines* as well as his *Piano Figures* (2004) for a performance at the Purcell Room as part of a weekend retrospective entitled, "Jubilation: The Music of George Benjamin" on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> May 2012. The entire engagement, from the initial booking to the final plans for the concert was organised by third parties: the Southbank Centre ran the festival and chose the programme in consultation with George, and the Royal Academy of Music engaged me for this performance, featuring George's *Shadowlines* (2001) and *Piano Figures* alongside chamber works for strings, performed in the Purcell Room. I bought the score for *Piano Figures* from Faber Music and learnt it without having any contact with George. This collaboration, directed from above by institutions (the venue, my educational institution, the publisher) is the standard *modus operandi* of many performers working on music by living composers, and indeed with dead ones too. It was George who finally stepped into this situation to organise a workshop with me, allowing the possibility of a dialogue on the interpretation of the work.

---

<sup>73</sup> I recall that the workshop session was intense, and George was particularly impatient with me, with the state of the Academy's pianos and with the traffic noise of Marylebone Road. I attributed this state to George's exhaustion after rehearsing the Academy's musicians and the London Sinfonietta musicians throughout the day for another of the Festival performances. Although the workshop examined below was different in circumstance and tone, I observed a consistency of method, and in particular, a consistency of workshop language.

George explained the origins of *Piano Figures*, written for Pierre-Laurent Aimard, his friend and frequent collaborator for 35 years,<sup>74</sup>

Like with *Shadowlines*, these pieces started as modest technical exercises. *Shadowlines* started with the first page a new type of canon, a type of prismatic canon... and I tried it out for the first time and I was really excited with what I found so I just wrote it. And then I found myself writing more of them and a whole piece evolved, and the wonderful Betty Freeman commissioned the piece after it was finished. As for *Piano Figures*, that started off as just trying to write a piece for young hands, so no stretches over an octave, very simple rhythms and strong separated characterised movements, each in a world of its own. Again I wrote the piece unexpectedly, in between big pieces. It sort of started one day then three weeks later it was finished, it came out in a great, great rush. And then Pierre-Laurent arranged the commission, which I'd almost forgotten about, for Luxembourg and the young pianists and himself who played the premiere. So in essence both pieces were written uncommissioned, but with great generosity, commissioned afterwards.<sup>75</sup>

As mentioned above, the premiere was presented by young students of Aimard, with one student per movement, followed by a full performance of the work by Aimard at the end of the concert. It is notable that both works were written without a request or commission from a performer, and also notable that there seemed to be little trouble in finding a world-class performer in Aimard, finding major venues to present the performance as well as finding private patrons to fund a post hoc commission. He went on to explain that though these were originally intended as children's pieces, they ended up being more challenging than originally intended,

The problem is, in this piece, and this has happened often when I've tried to write simple pieces, is that you got a bit excited by the material and then you start writing things which are difficult and there are some passages in *Piano Figures* which *are* hard. The sixth movement is hard and the last movement is extremely hard and I've never succeeded in playing that in public up to my standards. The second movement is also hard, but there's ways of getting over that. But if you have a young pianist with a certain technique and is willing to practise, then it's all possible...<sup>76</sup>

---

<sup>74</sup> George described his relationship with Pierre-Laurent Aimard, "I met Pierre-Laurent around Messiaen's class in about 1976. And we've been very close friends since then, so it's been 35 years of friendship. He's a great, loyal and wonderful friend of mine and these two recent piano pieces were written for him, as well as other pieces like my little *Duet* for piano and orchestra. So not only is he a chosen interpreter, and a profoundly good friend, but in a way I don't know if I would have written these pieces without him, so he's been a force of inspiration on me". Interview with George Benjamin (3 June 2013).

<sup>75</sup> Interview with George Benjamin (3 June 2013).

<sup>76</sup> Interview with George Benjamin (3 June 2013).

I met with George at his Maida Vale, London residence on 8<sup>th</sup> May to workshop both works. Having worked with him previously, I knew that he would want all details of the score to be followed as scrupulously as possible. The score itself was full of detail to learn – all ten movements had their own tempo indication and metronome mark. Dynamics and articulation are notated clearly and efficiently. Pedalling is either explicitly left to the performer (with *con pedale*) or notated in full. Some of these notational aspects can be attributed to the fact that this was a score published by a major publishing house (Faber Music), and had been through a thorough editing process, but I felt aware that it was still a very precisely and fastidiously notated score, with what appeared to be a very narrow window of interpretative variation possible.

Most of the time in our meeting was given to working on *Piano Figures* – having worked on *Shadowlines* with George, four years earlier, it only required, to use George’s term, “a tune up”. In this clip, George and I workshop the second movement of *Piano Figures* – after finishing a playthrough, George states repeatedly that he wants the rhythm to be more even, and the 5/16 rhythm made as clear as possible (rather than lapsing into a dotted 3/8 rhythm). However, later in the clip he specifically asks for rubato in bars 25-27 as well as later asking for more rubato on the second page.

**Video Example 1.1: Working with George Benjamin on *Piano Figures*,  
Movement II: “Knots”<sup>77</sup>**



Before the meeting he requested that I study his recording of the works, reinforcing his authority as the composer and interpreter. It is therefore noteworthy, in light of this moment in our session, that his recording of the movement takes the tempo at around 142 to the bar (as opposed to the marked 132 to the bar) and the awkward 5/16 rhythm is so distorted as to sound like even quavers in 3/8. This presents a conundrum to me in evaluating George’s intentions. The conclusion I drew from these exchanges was that interpretative freedoms and rubato are acceptable, but only with his endorsement.<sup>78</sup>

During the session he repeatedly restated his wishes that the marked pedaling should be followed precisely, yet in this clip we observe him adding a pedal change in bar 26 (shown in the score below).

---

<sup>77</sup> All video examples can be viewed on the accompanying CD.

<sup>78</sup> For further discussion of the epistemological difficulties in discovering and following the composers’ intentions see *Mythologies: Performance Practice and Authority and Authenticity*.

**Example 1.1: Piano Figures: Movement II: “Knots”, bars 22-27**

The musical score for Example 1.1, titled "Piano Figures: Movement II: 'Knots', bars 22-27", is presented in two systems. The first system covers bars 22 to 24, and the second system covers bars 25 to 27. The music is written for piano in 18/8 time, with a key signature of one flat. The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and accents, while the left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment. Dynamics include *sf*, *pp*, *espress. mp*, *mf*, and *p*. Pedal markings (Ped.) are present at the beginning and end of the first system and at the beginning of the second system.

This excerpt demonstrates not just the high standards of detailed control and adherence to the score that George requires, but also his desire that I adhere to his diversions from the score. He brought not only his knowledge and authority over the piece as the composer, but also his authority as a performer and interpreter of the score.

Interpretative and pianistic problems also arose in places where I was following his score assiduously yet encountered problems when there was confusion between the possible descriptive and prescriptive interpretations of notation. Example 1.2 shows the first seven bars of the tenth movement.

### Example 1.2: *Piano Figures*, Movement X: “Whirling”, bars 1-7

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "X Whirling". The score is in 12/8 time and is marked "Very fast" with a quarter note equal to 168 beats. The music is written for piano, with a treble and bass clef. The first system (bars 1-4) features a treble staff with a melody of eighth notes and a bass staff with a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The first system is marked "pp leggiero, quasi lontano" and "ff". The second system (bars 5-7) continues the melody and accompaniment. The second system is marked "(pp sempre)" and "ff". The score includes a "Ped." marking and a "Ped." marking with a line underneath. The score ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign.

Observing the pedaling notation assiduously, I had been changing the pedal quickly just before the start of the fortissimo grace notes in the left hand (as shown in bars 5 and 6). I assumed that the constant use of the pedal was a vital element of the movement, and so made my pedal changes as short as possible, while still clearing the previous stream of grace notes from the resonance. However, George complained that the resonance of the low F-sharp in bar 4 was still being held over when I changed the pedal in bar 5. I explained that at the tempo he marked, the pedaling could not be any quicker without losing some of the grace notes that follow in bar 5. George’s solution was to hold the three grace notes and accented F-sharp in bar 5 as a four-note chord, sustaining it for two beats to allow the pedal to come off completely and then come on again for the following dyad. As in other places in the score, the approach makes musical and pianistic sense, but it did run contrary to the notation, assuming, as I was, that the pedaling was prescriptive, rather than descriptive, and intended to be followed precisely.

In some parts of our workshop, George explicitly took on the role of piano teacher. He explained to me a technique to improve my evenness.



It's good, it's good. But it needs to be more even. My piano teacher, Yvonne Loriod, made me practice on the piano lid [demonstrates] where you could really tell if it was even or not. And then when you came back to the piano, it was heaven, because you had some give and some flexibility in what you were playing.<sup>79</sup>

The language, and the technique are very similar to techniques explained to me by several teachers but Benjamin's referencing of Loriod added credence and authority to the suggestion. The comparison to working like a piano teacher is also striking in the following passage, working on the fourth movement, where he utilizes the technique of talking me through his suggestions while playing through the work, another standard (almost clichéd) method employed by piano teachers in masterclasses.<sup>80</sup>

**Video Example 1.2: Working with George Benjamin on *Piano Figures*,  
Movement IV: "Interruptions"**



The density of information in this clip is very high, with a myriad of different types of instructions (using abstract as well as orchestral metaphors, fingering and pedaling details, as well as a conductor's vocabulary of dynamic and tempo directions) all being spoken while a lot of detail is simultaneously communicated

---

<sup>79</sup> Video of workshop with George Benjamin, 8 May 2012

<sup>80</sup> The approach is so commonplace that it was mocked, to great comic effect, by Stephen Fry and Hugh Laurie during a sketch on *Saturday Live* in 1985.

Fry, Stephen, and Hugh Laurie: "Piano Masterclass Sketch" on *Saturday Live*, [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEuVvSKN\\_I](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEuVvSKN_I), 1985 (accessed 15 November 2012).

through his playing (indicating an interpretation that he desires me to mimic). The relationship in these passages takes the form of a hierarchical student-teacher relationship – though I don't disagree with any of his suggestions here, there seems to be no space for my own views or interpretative creativity.

Although the teacher-student mode remained dominant for the majority of time in this workshop, this mode became slightly less hierarchical and more complex in a few passages. While working on the third movement, he quite abruptly moved from pianistic criticism into a discussion of his compositional methods.

George Benjamin: OK, It's good, but it's not the right personality. Let me sit. It's got to be much more... you know it's an inverted mirror canon.

Zubin Kanga: Yes, as in this an inversion of this one [pointing]

GB: This is the right hand backwards and upside down [a retrograde inversion]

ZK: Yeah, from there [pointing]

GB: Yeah from there. And that side too.<sup>81</sup>

And later,

GB: There are two harmonic zones which are also inverted around this central F-sharp so you get that one there [plays] and this one here [plays] and this [plays]. I don't remember the exact details. But there are about three harmonic zones within the melodies, which curiously are the same inverted, and so the same in the second half of the piece. It's because they're inverted in pitch-space so when retrograded and inverted they still sound the same.

ZK: Yeah, symmetrical chords.

GB: Yes, symmetry of chords, symmetry of time. So the listener is completely unaware of what's going on, that's the point. But you've got to make the different zones telling by giving them a different aspect expressively. So I suppose this one here is the tonic, if you like, and then there's the equivalent of a secondary zone and a third zone. Giving them different shades.<sup>82</sup>

While discussing the fourth movement, he describes a harmonic structure that runs in parallel to the more obvious sectional changes.

This movement is made up of three scales. There's only three of them and they're only made up of major and minor triads. And they change every bar and the play

---

<sup>81</sup>Video of workshop with George Benjamin, 8 May 2012

<sup>82</sup> Video of workshop with George Benjamin, 8 May 2012

of the music is to subvert, to relish or subvert, to disguise these regular changes. Literally every eight beats they change.<sup>83</sup>

These sudden digressions into an explanation of his compositional thinking change the tone of the conversation. They demonstrate a certain respect for my ability to understand these compositional techniques, and that an analytic justification is required for some of his instructions. The analysis is didactic but the approach still opens up a far greater variety of interpretative possibilities in comparison to the highly prescriptive ‘piano teacher’ mode. I found the approach to be particularly useful and when I played this movement back to him later, George was also pleased with my response, calling it “really, remarkably much better” than at the beginning of the workshop.

Though there are many differences to my workshops with Michael Finnissy (below), there are some similarities. Like Michael, George enjoys using colourful imagery and metaphors. For example, in examining the repeated gesture in the eighth movement, he first calls it “a series of jewels” but then we discuss other possible images, with him singing the gesture and us both gesturing with our hands, leading to the specific yet ambiguous image of “very fast but slightly coloured ripples”.

---

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. Note that though the harmony follows eight beat cycles, the changes of character and tempo occur at varying time intervals.

**Video Example 1.3: Working with George Benjamin on *Piano Figures*,  
Movement VIII: “Mosaic”**



A more concrete source that Benjamin constantly draws upon to describe his intended sounds is his orchestrated version of the work, *Dance Figures* (2004). He repeatedly asks me to listen to the recording for comparison. In the third movement, the soft canon “is all clarinets and cellos and warm tones, and this is all oboes, bassoons and muted horns”. The loud scherzo passages in the fourth movement are “flutter tongue horns”. I eventually join in the use of orchestral analogies – discussing the left hand at the beginning of the seventh movement,

ZK: To me it sounds like a double bass line.

GB: Yes.

ZK: I mean, I don’t know how you do it [in *Dance Figures*]

GB: Low strings, low strings. Cellos and violas. And the melody’s given to horn and bassoon and it’s more rubato.<sup>84</sup>

At certain moments, Benjamin draws points of reference from the orchestral parts that have been added to fill out the texture of *Dance Figures*. In the sixth movement, he explains the need for rigorous counting by describing the orchestration of this movement in *Dance Figures*, where the rests in *Piano Figures* are filled with semiquavers on temple blocks (creating a kind of orchestrated

---

<sup>84</sup> Video of workshop with George Benjamin, 8 May 2012

metronome). At other points, the analogies diverge from the actual orchestral version – the *ppp* chorales in the third movement are at one point described as an “offstage Russian choir”. He later explained that the use of these metaphors is a fundamental aspect of his writing for piano, “The orchestra is the root of my thinking, even if I’m writing for two violas or for solo piano... I very much think of the piano in orchestral terms.”<sup>85</sup> The orchestral analogies were useful to me, although they served to reinforce George’s specific interpretative vision.

The information overload of this workshop was useful in terms of the wealth of performance practice that George illuminated, but during the session the density of information and his obsession with details began to take its toll. In this passage he coaches me as I play through the eighth movement, adding layer upon layer of things for me to do, listen to and react to, before stating, “This needs you to be a bit more calm”.

**Video Example 1.4: Working with George Benjamin on *Piano Figures*,  
Movement VIII: “Mosaic”**



The stream of information is making me anything but calm, and as a result my playing of this movement deteriorates the more we work on it, becoming more self-conscious and tense when the movement requires space, simplicity and pianistic fluidity.

---

<sup>85</sup> Interview with George Benjamin (3 June 2013).

There are many other examples of this type of intense deluge of information that strained my ability to absorb it, such as this set of instructions for the joins between the pieces, spoken so fast that I had barely enough time to write anything on the score.

So if you look, the pause at the end of number one is quite short, number two ends not too short, but then it goes directly into the same harmony that begins number three. *Attacca* from three to four, almost *subito*. And then *attacca* from four to five, almost *subito*. And then directly from five into six, then after six, a real pause. Then from seven, hold that major third for quite a long time but then go into eight and from eight you really do go in, it should say *attacca*, with a little breath, into nine. And then from nine goes absolutely, almost directly into the finale.<sup>86</sup>

In the days following the workshop, an important part of my practice was to attempt to assimilate all the interpretative details he requested to the point that I didn't have to remember them all while playing – the danger being that, so close to the concert, the self-consciousness and tension introduced into my playing would be carried over to the performance, an obvious negative consequence of such an intensive approach to the workshop.

## Performance

The concert at the Purcell Room was received well, particularly by George who told me that my performance was much better than his own performance in the Queen Elizabeth Hall two years earlier.<sup>87</sup> In this performance, I largely adhered to the interpretative prescriptions that George had given me – the fact that George would be in attendance, and the short amount of time between the workshop and the performance were factors in my choosing to suppress any desires to find a radically different approach to any of these pieces. In terms of technique and execution of the details we had discussed in the workshops, I felt that the performance was very successful, an assessment that George validated when we spoke about the performance the following year,

The performance was extremely good, extremely good. And very sensitive and characterised... I remember the performance of *Piano Figures* being even better

---

<sup>86</sup> Video of workshop with George Benjamin, 8 May 2012

<sup>87</sup> In conversation after the performance on 12 May 2012.

than the one of *Shadowlines*. It was very precise, very articulate, it caught the feeling of each piece, it was very poised. I remember it being outstanding.

He did contrast the performance with performances he'd heard by pianists who "hadn't taken enough time, or weren't given enough time. I have worked with pianists who just couldn't play them, and when that happens it's painful, very painful". But he did say that there had been several good performances by different pianists in recent years.<sup>88</sup> The performance at the Purcell Room was not recorded, so I recorded a studio version of *Piano Figures* in late 2012, which is included in the portfolio.<sup>89</sup>

## Conclusion

In this case, George's power as an authority figure is clear in both his rehearsal technique, and the way that I react to his instructions. He approaches the collaboration as a teacher guiding and educating a student, rather than as an opportunity for creative exchange. His approach yielded a good result, and his interpretative choices were mostly choices I agreed worked well.

- On the question of how he feels he works with younger performers, George was unsure if a pianist's age made a difference, and felt the duration and closeness of his relationship with Pierre-Laurent was more important in making their relationship different to his relationship with me.

There's some difference working with someone who's younger than you compared to working with someone who's been your friend for 35 years. Of course, that's normal. But in the end, I don't think about such things, I like to think I don't like to be crushing with criticism and asking things of people and as long as the people I'm working with are serious and prepared to practice, I tend to be not too unpleasant. Then I'll simply say what I think, I don't think there's any disguise or difference with someone who's younger or older.<sup>90</sup>

---

<sup>88</sup> Young pianists George mentioned, who had given performances of *Piano Figures* he liked were: Ryan McCullough, Alisdair Beatson and Florent Boffard. It's notable that all these pianists are well established performers in their own countries, rather than children or students, the original intended interpreters of the piece.

<sup>89</sup> Although I endeavoured to maintain the same interpretive approach in this recording as I did in the performance, the passage of time and the difference in pianos (using a Stuart and Sons piano for the recording) has resulted in minor differences.

<sup>90</sup> Interview with George Benjamin (3 June 2013).

The observations of the workshop demonstrate an approach that is, for the most part, directive and focused on the performance phase of the collaboration. In addition, I was in no position to suggest alterations to the composition, though George himself made alterations to the score in the workshop. If this holds for all his collaborations with pianists, then they would show that this is George's *modus operandi*, rather than a result of our difference in age. However, this might still suggest that George's stature as a composer allows him to dictate the terms of a collaboration, no matter how established the performer in the collaboration.

- On my original impression that George had a specific interpretation he was teaching me, he agreed that there was a precise interpretation that he had in mind, but that he was still interested in creative input from performers.

ZK: Do you have an ideal interpretation?

GB: Yes, I do.

ZK: That you want people to aim for?

GB: Oh no, because I love the different characters that people will bring to pieces. I do believe in interpretation and there's a degree of liberty which is large that allows people to bring their own personalities, their own techniques, their own colours and it amazes me that it comes over to such a degree in piano playing, because it's not an instrument whose sound you can affect and modify like you can with an oboe or a violin. But there's a border beyond which you're either going to be inaccurate or not making perceptible the things that are important. The stratification of materials and tempi... is essential. And if that's not clear, regardless of the emotions involved, if that's not clear the music is incomprehensible. So you have to get to the point at which the notes, and not just the right notes and order of them, but the structural definition is mastered by the pianist, and then comes the bit where you add personality.

He went on to emphasise that he doesn't like mechanical or computerised sound and likes being surprised in concert, with some caveats,

I like the things that can happen in concerts. When people add something of themselves, when they take a risk, when they go wild occasionally, when they find a corner with a poetry and a way of looking that I hadn't considered. As long as the notes are in the right order, played in the right way, the harmonies are right and the structure is made clear. But making the structure clear does not mean playing mechanically.<sup>91</sup>

---

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.



George seems to be suggesting that although there is freedom for interpretation, this is within very narrow parameters. Given his praise, my performance of *Piano Figures* seemed to walk this tightrope of precision, and it is interesting, in hindsight, to note that I adopted his conditions for success in preparing my final interpretation (and the portfolio recording). The specificity of success criteria may be attributable to the authority imbalance, but I believe it could also be a fundamental aspect of the music – its structural symmetries, exposed pianism and obsession with technical detail are relatively unforgiving to divergent interpretations.<sup>92</sup>

- The workshops demonstrated a very sophisticated language of collaboration, allowing George to work on all aspects of my playing, from the minutest technical details to my conception of the work as a whole. This seems to be the result of significant experience in workshopping pieces at this pre-performance stage, as well as his experience as a conductor.
- An element of *Piano Figures* that affects the ongoing performance history of the work is the presence of George's publisher, Faber Music. Whereas in later case studies, any changes discussed and agreed with the composer can be implemented by the composer into the score with relative ease (and sent on to other performers) the situation is different in this case, as George explains,

I have a wonderful publisher who fortunately prints my pieces. And in fact, all of my works are available in print. And that matters to me very greatly. They're done quite quickly after the piece is released, so normally two to three years after the piece is done, it's in print. And as I hear wonderful, less good, fantastic, terrible performances, and I hear the piece played in several people's different hands there are of course some revisions I'd want to make. I do of course feel that once a piece is printed, it's printed, you can't touch it, but I would like to go back to almost all of my pieces and do a second edition where I could incorporate some of the things I've discovered en route... [however,] they've printed 1500, maybe 2000 copies, and I don't know how many have sold but I'm sure it's not that many, but if there were 700 left, I wouldn't want to ask them to shred those. It's not reasonable.<sup>93</sup>

---

<sup>92</sup> In my opinion, his music shares this trait with Ravel, whose piano works similarly require technical perfection and also do not seem to tolerate wildly divergent interpretations.

<sup>93</sup> Interview with George Benjamin (3 June 2013).

So although it is difficult to say if George would act differently without the presence of a publisher, the fact that he has a publisher at all – who invests a large amount of time and money in the editing and printing of thousands of copies of scores – is a factor that impacts upon collaborations on existing works.

- *Piano Figures* was written by George without any collaboration during the composition process – a conventionally directive approach. Although George does not feel there would be a need for him to work with a pianist on a new work, given his own piano skills, he has gradually opened up to collaborative work with other instrumentalists,

In virtuosic pieces like *Viola Viola* or the three miniatures for solo violin, I didn't work with anyone, but particularly with the viola pieces I know about 15, 16 violists and if I bumped into someone, I'd ask them "is this possible, can you do this". And usually things were possible, if very difficult. Nowadays, now that I've written an opera working very closely with the singers, I probably would actually, as I like the input of someone's individual style.<sup>94</sup>

This suggests that George is gradually moving towards more interactive approaches to composition, though he seems to still retain control of the interactions.

---

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

# Collaboration Profile

**Work:** *Piano Figures* (2004) for solo piano

**Composer:** George Benjamin (b. 1960)

**Performer:** Zubin Kanga (b. 1982)

**Previous collaborations:**

2008: Coaching session on *Shadowlines* (2001) in preparation for a performance in the Southbank's Messiaen Festival.

**Premiere performance (not by the author):**

18 May 2006, Philharmonie, Luxembourg by Pierre-Laurent Aimard

**Performances:**

12 May 2012, Purcell Room, London (in the "Jubiliation: George Benjamin" weekend of concerts at the Southbank Centre).

**Studio Recording:** Hospital Hill Recordings, 4 January 2013

**Documented Workshops:** 8 May 2012 (Benjamin's London residence)

**Interview:** 3 June 2013

## Z/K by Michael Finnissy

My relationship to Finnissy's music began long before I actually met him. I was introduced to his music as an undergraduate at the University of Sydney, and owing to the influence of musicologist, Richard Toop (a Finnissy scholar, and friend of his since their formative years) the university's library contained a substantial collection of Finnissy scores.<sup>95</sup> At the time I was most impressed by the complexity and virtuosity of the scores, which were evident not just on the page but in his own recordings – particularly his 1980 recording of the seminal piano work, *English Country-Tunes* (1977).<sup>96</sup> As a Masters student at the Royal Academy of Music, I performed a lecture-recital featuring excerpts of his *English Country-Tunes*, the *Verdi Transcriptions* (Book 1, 1978) and the *Gershwin Arrangements* (1988), the latter becoming the subject of my Masters thesis the following year.<sup>97</sup>

While conducting my Masters research, I was introduced to Michael, who was generous in granting me an extended interview as well as a coaching session on his works. We would also often meet at concerts and developed a good rapport, though he, at that stage, had not heard me perform his music.

After one such concert in September 2010, I asked Michael to send me some of his latest piano scores (he had given me copies of recently completed scores at several of our meetings). In reply to my follow-up email, in which I apologised for not making it to one of his talks, Michael replied:

Dear Zubin,  
I was sorry you couldn't make it: as I was going to suggest writing you a piece, sometime, if you've got a concert coming up, and you'd like me to.<sup>98</sup>

I replied to him:

---

<sup>95</sup> The size of the collection is particularly notable when compared to the score collections at the Royal Academy of Music and at Senate House Library, which combined contain a fraction of the number of Finnissy scores held by the University of Sydney's libraries.

<sup>96</sup> Finnissy, Michael: *Michael Finnissy: English Country-Tunes, Etcetera*, KTC 1091, 1986.

<sup>97</sup> Kanga, Zubin: "Transcription, Transformation and Transcendence in the Piano Music of Michael Finnissy", MMus Lecture-Recital, Royal Academy of Music, London, 2008.

<sup>98</sup> Email: Michael Finnissy to Zubin Kanga (8<sup>th</sup> November 2010)

Hi Michael,

It would be AWESOME if you wrote me a new piece. I have plenty of concerts coming up where I could play it [...] At the moment I'd be planning to do a London recital (possibly in the Out Hear series in Kings Place) in late 2011/early 2012 and will be doing concerts in various cities in Oz in mid-2011 and mid-2012. What time frame would you be thinking of for writing it? Have you got any ideas/themes?<sup>99</sup>

There are several differences in this commissioning process compared to the other cases. I had assumed before this exchange that Michael, as a composer of international standing, would be unlikely to write me a piece if I had asked. The presumption was based on how busy he is, as well as the large difference in the stages of our careers – I would have far more to gain professionally from a commission than he would. I also assumed that he would require a high commissioning fee, which I would be unable to meet. By offering me the piece, Michael immediately resolved these difficulties, and it is a mark of his generosity that he was willing to spend so much unpaid time on a work for a much more junior musician. Recalling the reasons why he offered to write a piece, Michael said,

Well I always feel that if I like somebody, intuitively, you know you make a connection or not. It's like dog-sniffing in a funny kind of way. Perhaps it's quite a sophisticated process, but it's also very immediate. I thought rather than you do another piece, because I'm always ready to write because I always have ideas going through my head, I thought 'if he'd be interested in something then I'd do it'.<sup>100</sup>

### **Initial Meetings: precompositional collaboration**

Although the original offer for the piece was made in late 2010, it would be some time before Michael would have a chance to begin it. In the meantime we had two meetings, in which we discussed the possible directions the piece might go.

In our first meeting (16 November 2010), we had some very general discussions about the work and Michael's approach to composition in general. He

---

<sup>99</sup> Email: Zubin Kanga to Michael Finnissy (8<sup>th</sup> November 2010).

<sup>100</sup> Interview with Michael Finnissy (16 May 2013).

was interested to hear about my musical as well as non-musical interests, in order that the piece would function like a musical portrait. He later explained this approach:

That's my most common modus operandi because I regard what I do as partly a kind of portraiture, so the pieces become portraits of the people they're written for. And also it's making connections to a world outside which is some kind of bridge to the world inside my head. The world outside my head is much more random in the connections it makes.<sup>101</sup>

The music we discussed included some lesser-played Baroque and Classical composers, late-Beethoven, Chopin, a range of early-twentieth century composers including the Second Viennese School and my interest and training in jazz. Of the extra-musical subjects we discussed, Michael was particularly interested in my views on current British politics, and was at that point quite keen to write a politically oriented work.<sup>102</sup>

At our second meeting on 23 May 2011 at a beachfront café in Brighton, Michael brought several possible ideas for the piece, which at the time seemed only tangentially related to the topics we discussed at our last meeting. Rather than merely stating his concept for the piece, he gave me the choice between two quite different ideas.

Michael Finnissy: I'll tell you what they are. One would be to do something grounded in Schumann's music.

A large-scale symphonic etude – the emphasis, I think, is on symphonic, not etude. I'm not going to write finger...

Zubin Kanga: ...exercises.

MF: That's right. No no no no no! So there was that one and the idea of exploring the nature of symphonic composition for the piano, so in a way, like Schumann, it would be quite colouristic and de-de-de-de – you know.

ZK: Yeah

MF: And the other one, the other possibility would be to make a piece that was two streams of music alternating with each other, maybe just twice. And one of these would be a kind of strand, that examined, I guess the more modernistic strand of contemporary composition, roughly starting from reference points in Debussy and Ravel and going through to, I don't know, Stockhausen or Lachenmann, or whatever. So there's a stream of that that would be, let's generalise and say expressionistic, dissonant, abrasive. And then there would be a second strand, which would be pre-Classical. So actually going a little bit before Mozart, and that these would be simply juxtaposed with each other. These would

---

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Notes from meeting, 16 November 2011

be like a stripe, in which you have a stripe of modernist discourse followed by a stripe of pre-Classical discourse, followed by a stripe of modernist discourse and a stripe of pre-Classical discourse. And the audience's game would be to join these two strands together in whatever way they could.

ZK: Yep

MF: The pre-Classical discourse would not, necessarily, be straightforward transcription, but it would not be hideously distorted. So those are my current thoughts. They are my two options.<sup>103</sup>

In response, I immediately stated my preference for the 'stripes' idea (described by Michael later as "like Pollock alternating with Gainsborough") as opposed to the Schumann proposal. He stated that this was the option he felt was more in tune with his "current preoccupations" but that he would get to the Schumann idea at a later time. He agreed with me that the latter idea would be more programmable as the Schumann concept was for him "more musicological". I also explained that it lined up better with my musical interests. Despite our agreement on this choice, my decision seems hasty in hindsight, considering I provided my choice immediately after he presented the options, even though I could have waited and discussed the ideas further, or even given him a decision at a later date. Looking back at this crucial point in the process, Michael said he was satisfied with the chosen option and that the two options were closely related,

I wouldn't have minded either way, but I was quite glad you chose the Sammartini as it was more of a challenge to me, as I had not worked with the material, and it's not a period of musical history I'm especially fond of so I had to seek out a way of working with the juxtaposition of that material... It's not entirely unrelated to the Schumann as the Schumann pieces I was thinking of developing were the Schumann symphonic studies and so there was the idea of 'symphonism' and what does that mean. It presupposes a kind of scale and a kind of depth or sophistication of engagement with musical material. So I was then led to think about the origins of the symphony and Stamitz and Sammartini are indeed right there at the transformation from symphonia, the opera introduction, to a self-standing, musically abstract entity. The piece has some of that idea, as per Sammartini, using the three movements some of that is ironic, well not so much ironic as critical, because irony sounds like you're making fun of something. Well I'm not, I'm really interested in Sammartini.<sup>104</sup>

The options of using Sammartini or Schumann as the basis for the work seem to be only obliquely linked to the composers and influences I'd discussed

---

<sup>103</sup> Audio recording of meeting between Michael Finnissy and Zubin Kanga (23 May 2011).

<sup>104</sup> Interview with Michael Finnissy (16 May 2013).

with Michael at our last meeting, but as he later told me, there was a connection, even if it was not obvious.

That was my view of the conversations that they were useful, because they were material for me to work with. In the same way that a portrait painter would, of course, be getting the general picture and doing their own thing but they would also be picking up on inflections and small private movements that you may not even be aware of, and which one certainly wouldn't not want to make you aware of, which would be useful in characterising the piece in some way. It also depends on where you want to take somebody: if you'd come to me as a tour guide and said 'take me somewhere interesting in London' then I'd have to find out a bit about what your interests were, and then I'd take you to things that would fulfil that brief.<sup>105</sup>

As the meeting progressed, Michael went into more detail discussing possible pre-Classical source material.

MF: I thought I would look at the pre-Classical symphony, along the lines of those symphonies that provided models for Mozart, so there would be some kind of symphonic discourse, because I'm thinking of an extended piece, that's why really, I'm thinking of musical material which, in a sense, has already been on a journey of development and variation on a wider canvas than simply doing miniatures. Because in the stripe design, as executed musically, one would have a few loose ends at the first set of stripes in order to ensure the whole thing doesn't sound like a series of stops and starts.

ZK: Yeah, or a cycle of small pieces.

MF: Or a cycle of small pieces. Although the four parts would correspond to the four movements of a symphony, but there wouldn't be a stop. So I was thinking Stamitz or Vanhal or Sammartini – I don't know it just depends on what's accessible. But then, making a transcription of what is an orchestral score is more interesting than going to a keyboard work.

ZK: So we're looking at the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century.

MF: Yes that danger area, where there's a transition between concerto grosso and Sturm and Drang. It's expressively unstable. I prefer those periods of history.<sup>106</sup>

From the beginning, Michael's first choice was Sammartini, precisely because he was interested in finding out more about him.

ZK: So the older composers you said, Stamitz and....

MF: My initial feeling is I'd like to go for Sammartini because I don't really know anything about Sammartini.

ZK: Yeah, I don't really know him.

MF: He wrote symphonies which were apparently very influential on J.C. Bach, because J.C. Bach, like a lot of Germans went to work in Italy, I think, before he came to London. And I imagine Sammartini being quite a lot of things that he probably isn't so I'm quite interested to find out what he is, actually. It must be

---

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.



somehow derivative of the Corelli/Vivaldi strand, but going into *what* I wonder. So it gives me an excuse to rootle about in libraries.<sup>107</sup>

By contrast, he was more vague about the source of the ‘modernist’ source materials.

With the modernist strand... I don’t know quite how I’m going to treat that other than that I wanted one part of the piece to sound improvisatory in that way that a lot of contemporary music can sound improvisatory. Very... wild. And then the other half would sound much more prim. That’s quite an interesting thing, the juxtaposition. But we’ll see. I never know how these things are going to turn out, actually, until I start to work on them, with them.<sup>108</sup>

Finally, Michael explained the meaning of his title, *Z/K*.

I’m going to call it *Z/K*, which is also a small joke about Roland Barthes’ *S/Z*, which is his analysis of a novella by Balzac – *Sarrasine*, and the business of how you assemble narratives, though my overall narrative is going to be brutally simple. It might be two or three strands, I don’t know, between four and six sections. I’ll have to think about that one.<sup>109</sup>

Although his explanation of the title, influences and structure of the piece allowed me a view onto his pre-composition process, the extent of my engagement seemed to have finished with my decision over the two starting concepts. However, Michael informed me that my reactions to his explanations were an important tool for him to test which ideas might be worth pursuing in the composition.

MF: I hope it doesn’t feel as if I’m not collaborating. What you’ve just fed me back there has gone and... I’ve been streaming it. What would happen if I put this here or did that there. But for me the exciting thing is actually pondering a structure, which doesn’t really have much to do with collaborative practice. The design of a piece is the design of a piece.

ZK: I mean in a way, I think the collaborative process might actually be after the piece is done and when we start workshopping and discussing it.

MF: Absolutely, because there’s so many ways a piece can be played, an infinite number of ways in which a piece can be played, and what are the margins and does it sound better if you do this or that. I warn you in advance that I’m hopeless with dynamics, I hardly ever put dynamics in, so if you have a feeling about that you can just add them in the score, I’m quite happy for that to happen. Anything to save me the problem of thinking whether I want something loud or soft.<sup>110</sup>

In this session, Michael invited me into his compositional process, allowing me to choose between the two concepts he presented, as well as allowing my reactions and questions on the compositional details to colour his work (though it is very difficult to make any direct correlations). Although the collaborative mode was occasionally integrative, he was continuously in control of the workshop, and in

---

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

the next phase of his composing process, he would remove any avenues for collaborative engagement, before opening these up again after the delivery of the score, through the use of notation. This collaborative approach is one that I've observed Michael apply in his pieces for the Kreutzer Quartet.<sup>111</sup> In comparison to many of the other cases in this project, he seems to favour a more closed compositional process. Yet the parameters that he leaves up to the performers' discretion (including dynamics, as described above) and the scope for interpretative creativity in his works allows for a much more vigorous and detailed collaboration during the performance preparation phase.

### **Composition and Delivery of Z/K**

Michael delivered the piece by email in December 2011. The way this was done gives an insight into Finnissy's compositional process, and a short exchange, in which I attempt to interfere with this process, is also illuminating in demonstrating the limits Finnissy places on collaboration and the limits I place on myself because of his position of authority.

We had originally planned for the piece to be completed in October 2011, and when I checked in with him by email in September, Michael seemed to be on track.

Dear Zubin,  
I have written and assembled ALL the material. I now just need to edit it together. There are two types of musical 'stuff': the first by me, and the second 'reference material' is all by Sammartini.<sup>112</sup>

However, when I checked in October how he was progressing, it seemed he had become much more busy with teaching, performing and composing commitments. We met briefly during his visit to the Academy on 28<sup>th</sup> October, and showed me

---

<sup>111</sup> For more on Finnissy's working methods with the Kreutzer Quartet, see: Bayley, Amanda, and Heyde, Neil, "Communicating through notation: Michael Finnissy's Second String Quartet from composition to performance", in Ronald Woodley (ed.) *Notation and Practice: Essays in Musical Performance and Textuality* (article pending publication, 2014). Bayley observes that the collaborative process, based around the discussion of the ambiguities and missing components of his notation, occur late in the process, after the score has been delivered and after the Kreutzer Quartet have rehearsed and discussed the score themselves.

<sup>112</sup> Email: Michael Finnissy to Zubin Kanga (17<sup>th</sup> September 2011).

some of the materials he had been playing with. He showed me a photocopy of Sammartini's Symphony No. 4, which he had chosen as the source material for the work.

**Example 1.3: Symphony No. 4 by Giovanni Battista Sammartini, bars 1-12.**

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the first movement of Sammartini's Symphony No. 4. The title 'Symphony No. 4 I' is centered at the top, with 'G. B. Sammartini' written in the top left and 'Buxelles Berlin.' in the top right. The tempo is marked 'Alla breve'. The score is written for Violino, Viola, and Basso. The first system (bars 1-6) shows a strong dynamic of [f]. The second system (bars 7-12) shows a change in dynamics, with 'p' (piano) and 'f' (forte) markings. The notation includes various note values and rests, with some notes marked with accents.

The following example is a sketch by Michael, examining ways in which the original can be transformed. The character and the rhythms are preserved but the harmonies are changed radically (as Michael informed me, he had been combining different layers of the counterpoint from different points in the piece).

**Example 1.4: Sketches for 'Alla Breve' section of Z/K**

This version then underwent further processes of transformation to end up with the final version (shown below) which retains the overall shape and feel of the Alla Breve but with the harmonies distorted and the rhythmic flow disrupted by frequent silences.

**Example 1.5: Z/K by Michael Finnissy, page 10 (excerpt)**

The following example is the first of thirteen lines of the 'modernist' material that Michael would contrast with the Sammartini material. Each of these lines was on a

separate strip of paper (to allow him to play with the ordering of them) but the notation and details did not change between this point and the final score.

### Example 1.6: Sketch for 'Largo' section of Z/K



Explaining to me how these were constructed:

I was bringing things together, thinking 'what would the combination be'. I could have chosen neo-classical things with a spikier texture, but that would have been almost too close to Sammartini. So I chose the rather lush, expressionistic, Schoenbergian kind of background wash, well not really wash... it's deliberately under-characterised in order that this Sammartini stands out from it in sharp relief, because I suppose I was playing the game of saying 'if this is 20<sup>th</sup>-century man, what is he doing when he listens to Sammartini'. There is a difference which I wanted to highlight, rather than saying 'this is part of modern man's experience' because it seems to me that in some ways, it's a diversion and distraction from experiencing the modern world and yet it seems to be the more prominent in the economy of music, these days... I wanted to confuse and disturb the audience into asking those sorts of questions about musical style that we should be asking: 'I'm listening to this and it's written in seventeen hundred and something. What the fuck am I doing listening to it? Or am I just diverting myself from more important issues'.<sup>113</sup>

Although I was very appreciative that Michael allowed me to view these sketches and the work-in-progress, it should be noted that his composition process is in practice, directive. The only comments I made were general compliments such as "it looks good" and "I'm interested to see how you'll end up doing that" and there were no criticisms or requests for changes, nor were any sought by Michael. At this meeting, Michael said he would be likely to have the piece completed by mid-December. As I would be in Australia at this time, we decided that he would compose on A4 size paper (unusual for Michael) to facilitate the scanning and email of the score, as we felt posting bits of score as he composed them would

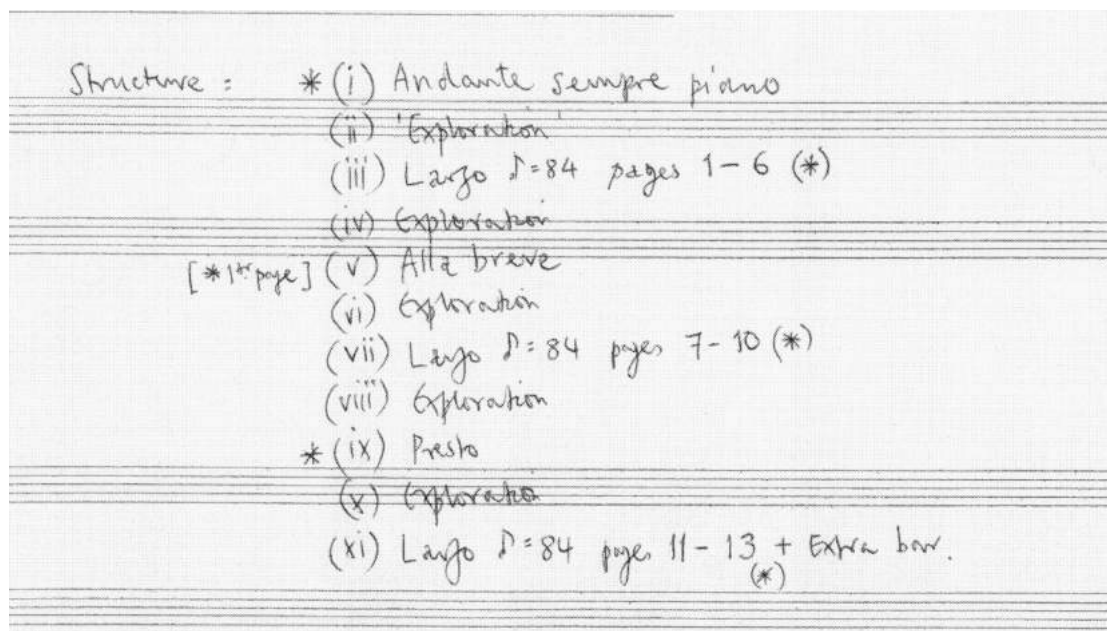
---

<sup>113</sup> Interview with Michael Finnissy (16 May 2013). Michael went on to explain that some of this 'expressionistic' material had been transferred over from baritone and piano work he had been previously working on, where the piano textures had become too dense for the voice.

become expensive and also take valuable time. With the premiere date set as 13<sup>th</sup> February 2012, I was aware that I would need all the available time to learn a piece that would likely be both complex and complicated.

On Christmas Eve, 2011, Michael sent me the majority of the Sammartini sections of the piece. He apologised for the delay and said the rest of the piece would be written in the following week. The Sammartini material was largely complete, and at the end of the third section (itself a transformation of the third movement of Sammartini's 4<sup>th</sup> Symphony) he provided the following structural scheme for the piece.

### Example 1.7: Structural Plan for Z/K by Michael Finnissy



The design was followed exactly: the Sammartini material alternating with the modernist material, with transitioning 'Explorations' in between. Over the following week and a half, several pages arrived in my inbox each day. Michael's method of creating bits of material before constructing the piece from them allowed him to work at an astonishing pace, with several pages arriving each day and by 3<sup>rd</sup> January I had received the entire work.

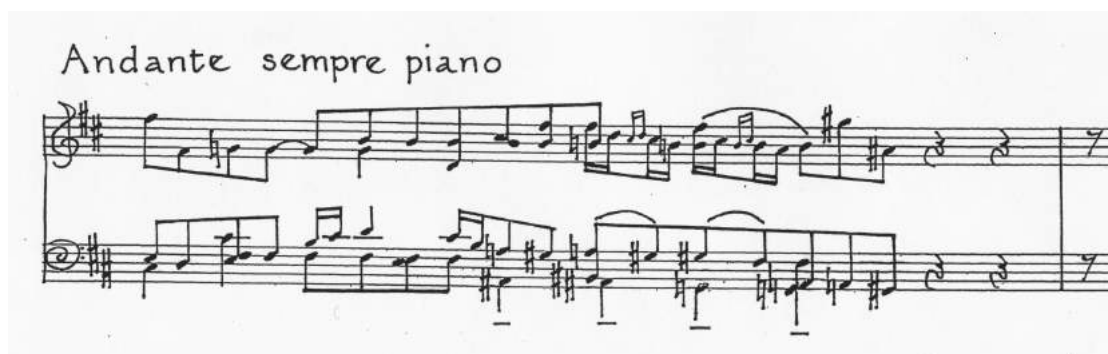
Throughout this period of communication, there were no obvious moments of direct collaboration in the composition process, with one exception. There were

several days where Michael would resend pages where he had made corrections or other edits to pages he had previously sent. One of these was the first page, where he decided to alter the bassline on the first system. The original line and the edited line are shown below.

**Example 1.8a: Original opening bar of Z/K (received 24 December 2011)**



**Final version 1.8b: Second version of opening bar of Z/K (received 29 December 2011).**



Partly out of familiarity with the older version, and partly out of a desire to test his boundaries, I gave my opinion on the change.

On the redone Page 1 of the Andante: I like most of this but (at the risk of sounding foolish) I do prefer the previous bassline you had on the first line - less dissonant which allowed the B minor tonality to be established clearly before it's twisted later in the section. But I'm sure you have a bigger harmonic plan for all the sections/explorations that I haven't totally grasped yet....<sup>114</sup>

Michael was emphatic in his defence of the change.

Dear Zubin,  
Establishing the tonality clearly was precisely what was WRONG with it! Well, to

<sup>114</sup> Email: Zubin Kanga to Michael Finnissy (29<sup>th</sup> December 2011, 4:14 am GMT).

be more precise: establishing it at the wrong speed, too much too soon, and the dissonances have to prefigure the much more dissonant approach of the 'Alla breve'. I knew sending pages of material 'out of sequence' and before the piece was complete was a mistake!!! Please DESTROY first drafts.<sup>115</sup>

I replied by retracting my request.

Thanks for the clarification - please do keep on sending me material out of sequence. Please disregard my stupid comments - it was just a first impression to the changes and your explanation makes sense of it all.<sup>116</sup>

To which Michael replied,

Not stupid at all, you are quite entitled to know what's going on! I think the entire first section is now 'balanced' (if that is the right word: maybe 'meshed together') in an interesting way.<sup>117</sup>

This exchange was my only attempt at an integrative approach to collaboration at the compositional stage. Although at other times, Michael made a conscious effort to de-emphasise his seniority and authority over the work, here he defended his territory and refused to entertain any interference. I, in turn, apologised and retreated in a situation where I might present my case more forcefully with a younger, more inexperienced composer. To some extent, I was reacting to Michael as an 'authority figure', and I trusted his judgement in finding the the right harmonic balance for the section, a trust (for better or worse) that I might not have afforded a much younger composer. Michael later explained his reaction as a product of his approach to all collaborations, and not any special authoritative imbalance in this case.

I'm sorry, but there is a point beyond which I have to do it on my own and where other people's input is simply annoying and it gets in the way. Because I'm sure you don't want to take responsibility for the notes that are on the page and so it might be nice and gratifying to feel that one has a role in the generation of the piece, in fact it's my job to get the notes right, and that's not a committee decision, it's an individual choice.<sup>118</sup>

Although Michael's act of control seems to exclude me from creative input, his choice of notation invites a variety of input from the performer that we would explore further when we met for a workshop.

---

<sup>115</sup> Email: Michael Finnissy to Zubin Kanga (29<sup>th</sup> December 2011, 11:15 am GMT).

<sup>116</sup> Email: Zubin Kanga to Michael Finnissy (29<sup>th</sup> December 2011, 12:31 pm GMT).

<sup>117</sup> Email: Michael Finnissy to Zubin Kanga (29<sup>th</sup> December 2011, 1:52 pm GMT).

<sup>118</sup> Interview with Michael Finnissy (16 May 2013).



## First Workshop: Interpreting Z/K

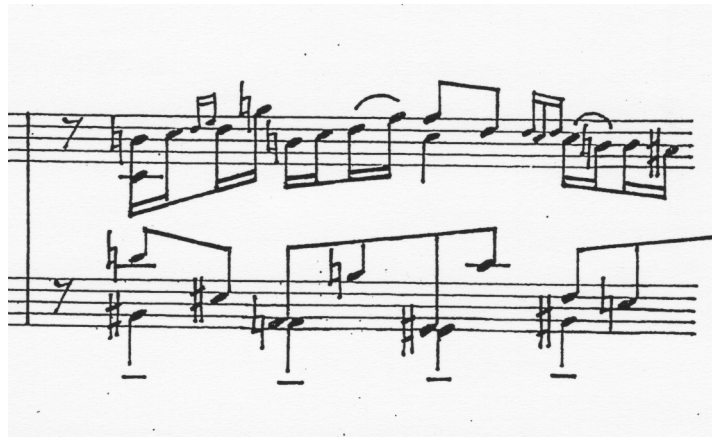
After a brief but intense period of learning the work, I had a workshop session with Michael on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2012. Despite his control of the composition process, it was clear that Michael had left many parameters open for me to explore in my interpretation, as he said he would in our initial meeting.

At first, many of Michael's comments were aimed at coaching me toward his own interpretative intentions. We spoke about tempo – with Michael stating “I wonder if the tempo could just be a notch under that”<sup>119</sup> – and about more subtle pianistic devices, including voicing and ornamentation.

Now, tenuto notes in the bottom of the left hand. I would voice those chords so that they come out as the full length of crotchet so they're really, a bit outside the texture. The other thing is the little grace notes always come before the beat, and you can make space for them so you don't have to keep them very rigid.<sup>120</sup>

He was here referring to the opening Andante – an example showing these tenuto bass notes and grace notes in the right hand is shown below.

### Example 1.9: Z/K by Michael Finnissy, page 1 (excerpt)



These were relatively minor tweaks to my reading, but when it came to the ‘Exploration’ material that acts as transitions between the sections, I found that my own approach to his score was markedly different from what Michael had envisaged. These sections, marked ‘senza misura’ and notated using a quasi-time-

---

<sup>119</sup> Video of workshop with Michael Finnissy (25 January 2012).

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

space notation (shown below), seemed to be quite different from either the expressionistic materials or the Sammartini-sourced materials, and to me the 'senza misura' indicated an explosive, cadenza-like character.

**Example 1.10: Z/K by Michael Finnissy, page 4 (excerpt – opening of 'senza misura' section)**



The image shows a musical score for two systems. The first system consists of a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. Above the treble staff, there is a marking '4:3' with a slur over a group of notes. Above the bass staff, there is another '4:3' marking with a slur. To the right of the first system, the text '(senza misura)' and 'non legato' are written. The second system also consists of a treble and bass staff, continuing the musical notation from the first system.

However, Michael explained that the function of these sections was quite different to my initial interpretation.

MF: I think it's a bit hectic. The idea is, it kind of continues in the same general mood, but has somehow released itself of all the rhythmic accoutrements. So, in a way, this 'senza misura' continues in the same vein as, what is it, Largo?

ZK: Andante

MF: Yes, Andante

ZK: So it should continue to be pedaled.

MF: Yes, and just gently fall apart. .... You shouldn't really be able to tell that something's happened. You should only be aware some moments afterwards.<sup>121</sup>

He also correctly guessed at the reasons I had being taking the approach I had,

The senza misura bits are actually very important. Because, and I slightly agonized over the notation of them, because I wasn't quite sure, but I think I might have suggested that they are faster than they are. They're not fast. The gruppetti are, they kind of move at whatever the quaver tempo is for the previous....

[...]

I think the thing is, you know always, that senza misura, because it's conventionally used for cadenza-like material, always looks like it's an

---

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

opportunity to scamper about, you know, make mayhem. But, in fact, it really means 'don't measure the time', and allow the idea of the pulse to slip.<sup>122</sup>

Though he seems to be at first quite prescriptive, he goes on to explain that, by thinking of them as transitory passages, there are in fact, more interpretative options open to me rather than less.

Yes. They're transformative episodes where the actual transition is entirely up to you, so you can choose how to do it and how to make it, but their aim, really, is to go from one type of mood into another.<sup>123</sup>

He also gives some evocative suggestions about how the different 'Exploration' sections might be differentiated. For the Exploration following the Alla Breve, he explains,

It's still *trying* to continue, because the juxtapositions in this section are more sudden anyway, because in the Alla Breve, there are differences in dynamic whereas in the other bits there aren't. So it's a disjunct dynamic, but as far as everything else goes, it continues the same, at least for the first bit, it continues in the same sort of vein, general way, kind of like a clumsy jig.<sup>124</sup>

This transition is shown in the example below.

---

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

### Example 1.11 Z/K by Michael Finnissy, page 9 (excerpt)

And for the final Exploration (going from the Presto into the final Largo) he explains,

Yes it wants to feel as if all the lights have gone out and you're feeling your way around the walls for directions, that sort of feeling.<sup>125</sup>

The transition into this final 'senza misura' section is shown below.

In this way, his coaching is not merely prescriptive and one-sided, it is dialogic and integrative in that his intention is to open up new interpretative options and

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

give me permission to be very free with certain parameters of the music that are left open by the notation.<sup>126</sup>

The interpretative discussions became gradually more complex and interactive, particularly as we explored all the possible ways of playing the Sammartini material. This clip shows our discussion of the different possible approaches to the Alla Breve section, from considering it as a French Overture, to performing it as a much faster, gigue-like dance, in Video Example 1.5.

**Video Example 1.5: Discussion of Alla Breve section, workshop on 25 January 2012.**



---

<sup>126</sup> In her article on the Second String Quartet, Amanda Bayley explores Finnissy's use of notation as a site for creative collaboration in detail. She explains that in this work, "The notation itself plays games with an enormous variety of conventions that Finnissy knows the players will recognize and encourages them to draw on their accumulated experiences". The notation contains enough ambiguities and competing purposes that a collaborative frame, whether implicit or explicit, is activated. Bayley is particularly struck by the power of omitting details that are conventionally added by the composer (such as dynamics) and states, "the foregoing evidence makes a strong case for composers to give as much, if not greater, consideration to the instructions they leave out of the parts (or score) as to those they include" (Bayley, Heyde: 2013). Such activation through omission is clearly also in play in Z/K, especially in the scarcity of dynamics, articulations and expressive markings.

And here, he at first directs me in the way I shape my phrase, but gradually opens up more options for me, encouraging me to be as colourful in my playing as possible and to experiment with less conventional voicings, in Video 1.6.

**Video Example 1.6: Discussion with Michael Finnissy on colouring and voicing of opening Andante, workshop on 25 January 2012.**



His discussion of the Largo sections similarly utilised a colourful description of the character while also suggesting some possible approaches.

ZK: And the other 'Schoenberg' sections, should they perhaps be more dramatic, in contrast to the Sammartini?

MF: I think the dramatisation of the Sammartini is more 'inside' it. Where, because the Schoenberg is so obviously expressionistic you can, and it's very moody, so you can play that up more, whereas the Sammartini needs to be a little bit cooler in temperature. But it might be fun to try it the other way around.<sup>127</sup>

It is notable how he actively confounds any notion of a fixed and closed interpretation at the end of this passage. He continued to discuss these

---

<sup>127</sup> Video of workshop with Michael Finnissy (25 January 2012).

expressionistic sections, combining a thorough knowledge of the pianistic consequences of his notation as well as providing more evocative suggestions.

ZK: The Largo also, the way you have the hands constantly crossing. I suppose you...

MF: Yeah I don't do that very much either, normally.

ZK: Yeah I suppose you want the lines to be constantly, the focus to be swapping between hands, and between top and bottom and between...

MF: I think you should allow the physical movement of the music to influence the way you colour and articulate it, because it's quite deliberate, the physicality, and the audience can see that of course, so in a way the polyphonic quality and vocal quality of the Sammartini needs to be articulated, slightly above it. As if you're on an air cushion. Whereas the Largo is very dirty and it's all this kind of, alien beasts thing. Even though it's not particularly grotesque but it has a grotesque, awkward physicality about it.<sup>128</sup>

A 'Largo' passage with significant hand crossing is shown below.

### Example 1.13: Z/K by Michael Finnissy, page 17 (excerpt)



Besides interpretative discussions, much of the workshop was spent explaining to me the sources of materials and methods of composition, which would affect my interpretation in less direct ways. For example, he described the 'modernist' material as follows:

ZK: So that material is from various early 20<sup>th</sup> century things?

MF: Yes, sort of. I mean a lot of it is from the Schoenberg *Kammersymphonie*-type era, or parodies of that. It's supposed to be slightly *Weltshmerz* kind of material, representing, in fact, the other end of the history of the symphony. Sort of Mahlerian, going into Bergian symphonic writing.<sup>129</sup>

He also discussed the overall structure, and its uniqueness in his oeuvre:

I think it works OK. I wouldn't do it again, like this. So in some senses it's like the Balzac novella, which he never wrote anything like it again, so it's a sort of one off.<sup>130</sup>

---

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

And also, specifically addressed the structure's relationship to the title:

ZK: I think you originally called it a cut-up Gainsborough, alternating with Pollock.  
MF: Yes, it's always had a kind of oppositional character about it, which of course the oppositional oblique stroke between the two initials is another sign of that, in fact telling you that what that represents – the oblique stroke represents the *senza misura* condition. Whereas the material is either Z material or K material and Z is the *Sammartini* and K is the *Largo* or vice versa, it doesn't really make any difference. But it sweeps across from one to the other.<sup>131</sup>

Towards the end of the workshop session, Michael confirmed that his suggestions are only his opinion, and that he's interested in my choices as a performer, particularly in relation to parameters that are deliberately absent from the score, such as dynamics.

Yes, you can do anything you like! The way I might actually differentiate between the different groups is dynamically, so that I might assign each of the voices, so to speak, a different dynamic shape. I haven't marked it in, but I'm very bad about dynamics, mainly because I prefer to invent them according to where, because you know where you're playing and it makes a lot of difference. As long as the material is articulate in some way or another you can dramatise it fairly freely I think.<sup>132</sup>

This workshop demonstrates how the idiosyncracies of Michael's notation open up the collaborative process in the performance preparation phase. He transfers the conventional composerly control over dynamics, articulation, tempi, and in the '*senza misura*' sections, rhythm, to me, allowing a creative input that was denied during the composition phase. Although he coaches me toward certain interpretive options, these are presented as suggestions and as starting points for my own exploration. As he later elaborated,

I'm quite interested in the possibility that different things can happen and so if it doesn't bother me particularly that something's played either loud or soft or that you make a crescendo or a diminuendo, I won't put it in. Some composers, Alkan, for example, puts in both and says either/or.

Though there are some aspects of site-specific performance practice that he requires to be followed through (in particular, the slower tempo of the *Exploration* sections), to a large extent his approach to performance practice is to create a field of options that act as useful starting points for further interpretative exploration.

---

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.



## Premiere Performance

The premiere performance took place in the recital programme, “Piano: Inside/Out” on 13 February 2012, Kings Place, London as part of their *Out Hear* series of contemporary music. The performance was filmed and can be viewed as Video Example 1.7.

### Video Example 1.7: Premiere performance of *Z/K* by Michael Finnissy, 13 February 2012.



The work and the performance were received well by the audience, and by critic, Steven Berryman, who wrote,

It was Michael Finnissy’s *Z/K* (2012) that provided an effective contrast: another world premiere in the programme, and a piece that showed Finnissy’s compositional technique of appropriating material from the past and progressively unpacking it. This particular work featured regular disruptions to the flow, which Kanga made musical sense of enough to keep the intrigue to its conclusion.<sup>133</sup>

---

<sup>133</sup> Berryman, Steven: “Piano: Inside/Out - Zubin Kanga @ Kings Place, London” (review), *I Care If You Listen, A blog about new classical music, art and technology*, <http://www.icareifyoulisten.com/2012/03/piano-insideout-zubin-kanga-kings-place-london/> 27 March 2012, (accessed 2 February 2013).

Michael was pleased with the performance, but expressed some reservations about the structure, and especially the end of the work. Despite my insistence that there was nothing wrong with the work, and that any weaknesses were down to my performance, Michael told me, "I'll have a fiddle around with it over the weekend and send you something next week".<sup>134</sup> A photograph taken during this exchange is shown below.

**Example 1.14: Photograph of Michael Finnissy and Zubin Kanga, Kings Place, 13 February 2012.**



He later sent this email,

Dear Zubin,  
The performance was wonderful!  
Very clear, very emotionally charged, everything that could be wished for.  
So: A BIG B I G THANK YOU!  
I think I am going to re-edit the last three or four pages, so that the piece ends with Sammartini (the 'Viennese' music will join on to the middle section effortlessly, and the 'senza misura' can also easily be tweaked, I'll look at it over the weekend, and send a revision).<sup>135</sup>

---

<sup>134</sup> Discussion after premiere performance with Michael Finnissy, 13 February 2012.

<sup>135</sup> Email: Michael Finnissy to Zubin Kanga (14 February 2012).

## The Revised Score and Subsequent Performances

The revised score was delivered on 24<sup>th</sup> February (the week after the concert, as promised). There was one new page of 'senza misura' material, but otherwise the same pages had simply been reordered over the last third of the piece – the last two Largo sections were joined together, as well as two 'senza misura' sections, leaving the Presto to finish the work with fewer alternations in between.

When I asked him why he felt he needed to revise the score, Michael said,

The fact that I knew when it was going to end. That's appalling, that's just about the worst thing that can ever happen... sometimes you set up these things [the alternating 'stripes' structure] and they become predictable in the wrong kind of way. I don't mind if things are predictable in the right kind of way but, though they're not narratives, there is a similarity to narratives and keeping somebody's attention and keeping it fresh. It would be like the juggler dropping the ball in a clumsy kind of way that it wouldn't be meaningful, it would just look like a mistake.

We met on 19<sup>th</sup> June to workshop the new version of the piece.

**Example 1.15: Screenshot from video of workshop with Michael Finnissy, 19  
June 2012**



Listening to the new ending, Michael was pleased with the revised version, and despite my expression of equal satisfaction with both versions, Michael asked that the old one be destroyed, “so that musicologists can’t dig it up some time in the future”.<sup>136</sup> We spent most of the workshop discussing the interpretation though in a much more interactive and less didactic manner in comparison to the previous workshop. Whereas in the previous workshop, Michael had encouraged me to find more variety and colour, and explore all the gaps in his notation, here he now asked for a more restrained approach to the Sammartini-derived sections in response to my now overtly expressive playing.

MF: [listening to the opening Andante] Do you think a slightly cooler approach. I mean how do you feel?

ZK: Maybe it's too much?

MF: I think perhaps it is because it doesn't make sense of the cuts then. If it edges too near to “expressive”. It wants to be mysterious, not quite so emotionally giving.<sup>137</sup>

And later,

MF: I know it's difficult not to make it expressive, because it's pretty. It's a deliberate trap.

---

<sup>136</sup> Video of workshop with Michael Finnissy (19 June 2012).

<sup>137</sup> Ibid.

ZK: Yeah but particularly because the other bits are so expressionistic.

MF: Yes there's enough expression in there to last the whole piece so we don't need this to be expressive too. This is just the topping.<sup>138</sup>

After making some adjustments, Michael was pleased with the change, "The approaches to the material are better, because you're not engineering them, they just happen as they should be... it's like they're already there."<sup>139</sup>

He advocated a similar objectivity in approaching the 'senza misura' sections.

ZK: It's actually this quite long transition section that I'm thinking about...

MF: I don't think you need to do anything. They're suspended moments in which there's a sort of review of things going past, things that have happened, things which are about to happen and they don't really want to be moved in any particular direction. They should just seemingly be in suspense. The risk of that sort of notation is one, that it looks fast and two, that it looks directional, and in fact it's designed to not look either, it's designed to just look fragmented and directionless, if that's possible.

ZK: So mine are too directional and didactic sometimes?

MF: Sometimes, not criminally so.

[...]

The performance is a kind of discovery of the shape. It's not a lecture about it. You just take the audience on a journey with you and feel as if you're exploring and then I think it will be interesting enough. It doesn't have any more character than it has, you don't have to fill it out, there's quite enough drama in there already.<sup>140</sup>

In coaching me in the opposite direction to his previous workshop, Michael was showing me that the delicate compositional balance between the different types of material had to be mirrored in a balance in the interpretative approach, which had previously been too 'straight' and directionless, but had now become too teleological and rhythmically driven. Such a balance was particularly hard to find in the 'senza misura' sections, which have to sound like transitions between major sections, without signposting where these sections begin or end. He went on to elaborate,

The whole point of notating it that way was that you get a kind of irregularity, almost as if you were making mistakes, as though you were reading it for the first time, so you need to create that feeling of not really knowing where it's going, and then it settles into something. Because the beginnings of each Sammartini bit are not beginnings either, so the engineering is to mid-phrase rather than the beginning of the movement. So it's been going on for some time already.

---

<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid.

ZK: I suppose that's the danger with the second two, because they both start on the tonic, while the first one does start somewhere else.

MF: That's the problem with bloody Sammartini! You don't get much else except tonic and dominant. They were very rigid in the 18<sup>th</sup> century... this is not about the 18<sup>th</sup>-century, it's just about finding 18<sup>th</sup>-century music so not even the 18<sup>th</sup>-century bits need playing like 18<sup>th</sup>-century music, they should just be there, like old crockery – where ten people turn up and you only have five so you use 18<sup>th</sup> century ones, it's kind of random who has them and who doesn't.<sup>141</sup>

Michael's interactions with me in this workshop continued the pattern of the previous one. He made suggestions for interpretation in reaction to my playing on the day: whereas in the previous workshop he felt my playing needed to be more extrovert, expressive and colourful, he felt that now these aspects needed to be dialled back in the Sammartini-derived sections. As before, these were framed as suggestions rather than directives and there was an emphasis on increasing my understanding of the work in order to encourage an effective approach. He reiterated the freedoms that his choice of notation allows, while going into some detail as to the effect the 'senza misura' passages should have for the listener. Whereas in the previous workshop there was more direction and a slight tendency towards teacher-student roles, there was greater balance in the interaction in this workshop, and my questions to Michael directed the flow and focus in a manner that tended towards interactive rather than directive modes of collaboration.

I performed *Z/K* at the Salon, Melbourne Recital Centre on 11<sup>th</sup> August and in Sydney at the Independent Theatre on 16<sup>th</sup> August in my "Spectrum" recital. In his Sydney Morning Herald review, Peter MacCallum wrote,

*Z/K* by English composer Michael Finnissy was the most substantial and developed work of the program, building on a symphony by Sammartini in cogent bursts of musical thought given reflective distance by interruptions, ending with a stop-start toccata.<sup>142</sup>

My own experience was that the work had settled since the first performance, and that there was more nuance to the playing, better pacing, as well as an obvious

---

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> MacCallum, Peter: "Seven composers, from emerging to venerable, each with a unique voice" (review), *Sydney Morning Herald*, [www.smh.com.au/entertainment/music/seven-composers-from-emerging-to-venerable-each-with-a-unique-voice-20120819-24ga3.html#ixzz2VuXDOFTx](http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/music/seven-composers-from-emerging-to-venerable-each-with-a-unique-voice-20120819-24ga3.html#ixzz2VuXDOFTx), accessed 10 June 2013.

improvement in sound owing to the use of full size grand pianos in contrast to the Steinway Model O baby grand used at Kings Place. The recording of the Melbourne performance can be heard on the portfolio recording.

On hearing recordings of the Australian performances, Michael commented,

There was a great deal more light and shade in the Australian performances. I think you just got a little bit more familiar with what was going on in the piece and you were able to inhabit it, and you'll inhabit it more as you go on and I like that when people take the piece and run with it. There are details in one that I'd prefer in another, but overall there isn't one I like more than the other.<sup>143</sup>

When pushed for negative feedback, Michael focused on the question of timing and rhythm,

I think you tend to tighten up spaces, while I open them out... especially in the more loosely notated sections, you could afford to take more time with them.

I expect these most freely notated sections to continue to evolve with my playing and that subsequent performances will all differ markedly in pacing and characterisation as I continue to explore the interpretative spaces left by Finnissey for me to explore.

## Conclusion

Although the case of *Z/K* confirms some of my assumptions about working with composers who are 'authority figures', the case challenges other assumptions and presents some unforeseen results.

- To a large extent, Michael's composition process remained in the directive mode, with very little input by me into his composition process. He was also defensive of this mode when challenged, particularly when I suggested using a previous version of the opening bassline. However, he did keep me informed of his work and progress throughout the composition phase, he discussed early ideas for the piece with me and granted me a major choice in deciding between

---

<sup>143</sup> Interview with Michael Finnissey (16 May 2013).

the two contrasting conceptions of the piece he proposed. Most importantly, his notation deliberately omitted many details, including dynamics, articulations and expression markings, as well as producing sections of rhythmic ambiguity, that had the effect of transferring responsibilities for these decisions from composer to performer, opening up the performance preparation phase to integrative interactions with the score and with the composer.

- As expected Michael had developed sophisticated and efficient methods and language of workshopping which he brought to bear on this collaboration. The first workshop was well judged and paced by Michael (who remained in control throughout) starting with him clarifying his notation, moving on to coaching of pianistic aspects, then using odd and colourful metaphors to create a complex web of site-specific performance practice and finally encouraging greater independence in further developing my interpretation. Although this sometimes moved into teacher-like language and techniques, Michael attributes this more to the fact that we were working for the first time, and that there would be less need for any workshops after several collaborations:

I said everything I had to say to you and then I quite happily handed it over to you... we discussed fairly fully, more fully than I usually do with performers because I felt I had to as you were someone I didn't know that well prior to us working together, while most people I work with are like a regular football team. I've been working with them for 20 to 30 years and there's nothing really to say because they immediately dive off and do what they have to do, and that's absolutely fine.

There was evidence of a move to this latter style of workshop when we met to work on the revised score. Michael no longer 'taught' the piece, preferring to have more general discussions about the structure and source material, and for the most part, I asked the questions and controlled the flow of the workshop. Although the focus was slightly different, Michael's effective use of analogy and metaphor remained evident.

- As assumed, the early stages of the collaboration were mono-directional, with the focus of the collaboration taking place in the performance-preparation phase. Although the workshop in the leadup to the premiere maintained the focus on my interpretative work, the language became increasingly dialogical



with the notation serving as a focal point for experimentation, negotiation and challenging of interpretative expectations. Michael discussed his desire to ensure there was not a convergence to one interpretation,

I'm not interested in providing musical texts, which only have one potential realisation. Different performers will awaken different things in a piece, and though it very rarely happens, when pieces I have are played by different people, they are very different and equally satisfying.

- The assumption that Michael would be resistant to challenges of authority seemed to be confirmed by his rebuttal of my interference with his composition process, and my subsequent refraining from offering any criticism. However, as already noted above, the collaboration became increasingly interactive during our workshop before the premiere, though there remained a sense that I only challenged or offered an opposing interpretation when invited to do so and only within the windows of autonomy that Michael had opened.

The most unexpected aspect of our collaboration was how Michael's notation activated entirely different ways of working. The notation, using Ferneyhough's theory of notation, "expressed the ideology of its own creation", in that its combination of rigour in some parameters and freedom in others mirrored Michael's own desire for scrupulous adherence from the performer to some aspects while opening up a huge range of interpretative options for others.<sup>144</sup> Indeed Michael discussed just how the notation differs from Ferneyhough's in both the detail and the ideology,

The audience won't care if you're playing this notation or that and I don't think that should matter. The notation is designed for the performer, it's a psychological manipulation of the performer's attention so disruptive notations have an obviously disruptive effect. Whether you choose to keep that fresh or not is a matter for discussion. Brian Ferneyhough feels a little bit differently to this to the way I do. I'm not sure there is a constant in performance that I would want to freeze at a particular moment of familiarity whereas I think Brian likes the performer to feel like it's the first time they opened the page. So where there are conflicting elements in the notation, they have to be frozen at that first moment of surprise. Whereas I'm quite happy that they evolve into something else, and indeed, that they become questions for me and for the performer about the notation itself.<sup>145</sup>

---

<sup>144</sup> Ferneyhough (1995). See (Mythologies: Notation).

<sup>145</sup> Interview with Michael Finnissy (16 May 2013).

Michael went on to explain that although his notation is complex, it is efficient:

I write it this way because I feel it has to be written that way. I wouldn't tie myself in knots with the amount of copying work and everything else if I could make it any simpler, because simplicity is not the issue. There is a lot in notation that is not simply about sound. It might be about sound in a complex way but it's not simply about sound, it's a distillation not a 'taking things away to make life easier'.<sup>146</sup>

The interpretative porosity of the notation allowed the collaboration to continue in my own practice and in my subsequent performances, long after our workshops had finished.

On the question of whether the difference in age and experience affected the collaboration, Finnissy, felt it was largely irrelevant,

When I'm working with a pianist, they become a kind of adjunct to the piano so you stop thinking about them after a while. When we're talking about the piece in the early stages, I'm thinking about you, and I'm interested in you, that's why I write the piece, I'm interested in people. And then at a later stage, you become very much linked to the instrument, because what I've chosen to do is write you a piece, rather than paint your portrait, or give you a box of chocolates or ask you out to dinner, or whatever else it is I might do to make a relationship with someone. So then when you're functioning as a pianist, I'm not thinking about your age. Of course, when I talk to you about how you play, it's in my mind that because you're less familiar with what I might be asking, I would make allowances but nothing more or less than what most people would do through issues of familiarity with them. I don't think "he's a young pianist, he can't do that". Everybody's different, and I've got subtler ways to get what I want out of the music.<sup>147</sup>

As with the case with George Benjamin, many of the aspects that might be attributable to authority imbalance could also be attributable to Michael's standard working methods. His closing off of his composition process and the opening up of the interpretative process to compositional activity is found in his other collaborations (such as with the aforementioned collaborations with the Kreutzer Quartet). However, my relative inexperience in performing Michael's music introduced types of language and interaction into my first workshop that

---

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid. Michael went on to discuss the problems with taking composers' recordings of their works as authoritative texts. He said his recording of his hour-long *English Country-Tunes* was recorded in 3 hours, because that was all the time the BBC would give him in the studio. So there was only time to do a handful of takes per movement, in contrast to more 'mainstream' performers who would record the same amount of music over four to five days.

are not observed in his other collaborations: in particular the more explicit explanation of the structure and the use of ‘teaching’ language. These were present to a much lesser extent in the second workshop.

On the question of how *Z/K* functions as a portrait, Michael was reluctant to go into details, but gave some hints,

When you look at a whole row of van Dyke or Constable portraits of people, of course they all look the same, up to a point. They’re recognisably different people but they’re obviously painted by the same painter... If I’d painted a portrait for you and you hung it on your room, and every now and then you looked at it, you’d recognise you, but you’d begin to see other things. It reminds me of when Picasso painted Gertrude Stein, and she was none too happy with the result. She said to him “but I don’t look like that”, to which Picasso answered, “perhaps not Gertrude, but you will”. And it’s that kind of portrait that a piece of music needs to be, because you’re dealing with the characteristics that people have. If you want me to underline it, you’re a serious person but you have a lighter side that you slightly suppress. And that’s interesting too.<sup>148</sup>

These collaborations with Michael Finnissy and George Benjamin will be compared to other similar cases at the end of this thesis. But now we will examine two cases where I was the senior partner in the collaboration.

---

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

# Collaboration Profile

**Work:** *Z/K* for solo piano

**Composer:** Michael Finnissy (b. 1946)

**Performer:** Zubin Kanga (b. 1982)

**Previous collaborations:**

2008: Workshops/coaching on selections from *Verdi Transcriptions*, *Gershwin Arrangements* and *English Country-Tunes*.

**Other shared background:**

2008-2009: Kanga interviewed Finnissy during research for MMus thesis.

**Commission details:**

Work offered by the composer (via email) on 8 November 2010. No brief was presented. Mutually agreed on a solo work of 10-20 minutes duration.

**Performance score delivered:** 3 January 2012

**Revised score delivered:** 25 February 2012

**Premiere performance:**

13 February 2012, Hall 2, Kings Place, London.

**Further performances:**

11 August 2012, Salon, Melbourne Recital Centre, Melbourne.

16 August 2012, Independent Theatre, Sydney.

**Documented Workshops:**

16 November 2010 (Royal Academy of Music, London)

23 May 2011 (Café in Brighton, UK)

28 October 2011 (Royal Academy of Music, London)

25 January 2012 (Royal Academy of Music, London)

19 June 2012 (Royal Academy of Music, London)

**Interview:** 16 May 2013

In the first two cases of this chapter, I examined authoritative imbalance where I was the junior partner in the relationship working with more senior, established composers. In the next two cases, I examine authoritative imbalance where I am the senior partner, in age as well as in relative career development.

Both the following cases feature solo works, of around five minutes in duration, commissioned for solo and chamber programmes of contemporary music. In both cases, the composer involved was the youngest composer on the programme. There was no conscious effort to work in a student-teacher mode, indeed, I made a concerted effort to avoid doing so (not always successfully, as we shall see). In both cases the relationship prior to the commission began at a stage when the differences in age and career development were more pronounced, and in the case of Phil Jameson, the relationship began in the teacher-student mode. However, the differences in the cases demonstrate the problems raised by generalising the characteristics of these relationships.

## ***Errata by Marcus Whale***<sup>149</sup>

When I commissioned Marcus Whale to write a new work for me, he was a 21-year-old undergraduate with a growing reputation as a composer; our working relationship, however, began much earlier. In 2006, Marcus (then 15 years old) attended a performance I gave with Ensemble Offspring of Gerard Grisey's *Vortex Temporum* for piano and five instruments<sup>150</sup>, although our first meeting was not until 2009, when he was an 18-year-old undergraduate who had volunteered to

---

<sup>149</sup> Marcus explains the title in his program note:

*Errata* explores the delineation of simplistic objects through time in the manner of a controlled, mechanical error. There is a consistency to the continual repetition of pitches drawn out of these chordal sound objects, which is paradoxically brought upon through their unsystematic erraticism. There is perhaps more to be learned from mechanical error in an era of industrial decay in which the dysfunction of physical objects is illuminated by the saturation of the invisible, by data. This is errata as in the elusive entropic slippages in practice, in machinery, that render a splitting out from, a turning, an extraction, a folding.

<sup>150</sup> The concert was a one of several that Marcus considers to be particularly important in his development as a composer (Meeting between Marcus Whale and Zubin Kanga, 4 December 2012).

page-turn for my solo recital of contemporary British and Australian music. Since that meeting, I had followed his development as a composer, performer and concert presenter.

In the year before my commission, I observed his curation of performances of new works by young composers (under the name, Volta Collective), a performance of a graphic score performed by Ensemble Offspring as well as noting his parallel musical life in a number of popular music projects as a singer and DJ/electronics improviser: Scissor Lock, Collarbones, Black Vanilla and Whale and Thorn. As a result of experiencing these projects, I commissioned him in November 2011 to write a work for my August 2012 “Spectrum” programme.

The history of our relationship frames the collaboration as one of authoritative imbalance. However, Marcus holds expert skills and knowledge, particularly in the field of electronic improvisation, which I don’t, and my interest in including these unique musical skills in my recital was the reason for the commission, rather than his youth.<sup>151</sup>

## Early Discussions

I invited Marcus for lunch on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2012 to discuss the details of the commission. Since I was concerned about the length of my total programme (with five premieres planned for the performance) I gave Marcus the brief of writing a five minute prelude. I also explained that I was impressed by his recent piece *Yuri* for clarinet and piano, a post-minimalist work that, I felt, impressively held the listener’s interest, despite there being very little harmonic movement, and that I would be interested in a work with a similar approach. Marcus explained that he had ambitions to write an extended work for piano and electronics but that he would still be happy to write a short work for this project.<sup>152</sup>

---

<sup>151</sup> Marcus’ musical interests and activities attract a significant fanbase, so the decision to include Marcus was also influenced by my desire to expand my own audience base.

<sup>152</sup> Marcus and I are collaborating on a large-scale multi-media theatrical work for piano, electronics, dancers and video for 2014. In contrast to my work with Marcus on *Errata*, he will be the primary artistic director and curator of the event.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2012, we met at my residence to discuss some sketches that he had written in the previous month. Marcus' notes were not scribbled pages of manuscript but instructions and lists of pitches in a text document on his laptop. He explained the structure of the piece, and my questions in response were chosen not just to clarify my understanding of his plans, but also to test the organisational rigour of his methods. My own desire to control the quality of the work, and to assure myself that it would 'stand up' next to works by more established composers was the motivation for this critical assessment. In the following, it's clear that the texture and harmony are strictly planned, but their application is intuitive.

Marcus Whale: And in the first section that will set off, most of the time that will set off a repeated note, one of the four and each note is assigned a sort of value and metre and there's like a uniform tempo for the entire piece. And the length of each bar varies...

ZK: based on?

MW: Based on... nothing [both laugh].<sup>153</sup>

Marcus' plans that we discussed at the meeting are shown below – note the explicit plans for the pitch material and the pitch-specific rhythmic layers and absence of textural details.

**Example 1.16: Marcus Whale's note from meeting of 2 January 2012<sup>154</sup>**

**Chords:**

**D5E4**

**G4Bb3**

**D4F3**

**A4Eb4**

**(combinations)**

**G4E4F3**

**A section**

(Intro) 0'00 - 0'15" - D5 and E4 uneven two hand tremolando (o < mf)

Repeated note extended idea

0'15" - ~1'45" - D5+E4 (acciaccatura), G4Bb3 (acciaccatura)

Interruption E4, A4Eb4

D5 - 7:4 quavers

<sup>153</sup> Video of workshop with Marcus Whale (2 January 2012)

<sup>154</sup> Text file provided by Marcus Whale.

E4 - triplet quavers  
G4 - semiquavers  
Bb3 - quavers  
Eb4 - 5:4 quavers

Wildly varying bar lengths (increasing in variety?) - some without repeated notes

Last repeat - A4 repeated, rit./dim. then accel./cresc.

There were also instances when Marcus asked for my opinion on a possible direction for this section, as in the following exchange.

MW: Maybe there should be a longer length of time between things. Or at least moments of resonance. Because in the B section there's a bit of that, but like bits where things are left to resonate.

ZK: Yeah, maybe. Although I think I like what you've got where it just keeps on that...

MW: Snapshot, snapshot, snapshot.

ZK: Yeah. Maybe at a certain point you can have that but I don't think you need too much because then it will start to lose momentum.

MW: Yeah, that's true, totally. I was feeling that as I was playing it.<sup>155</sup>

Here I gently shut down a possibility for the composition, steering Marcus towards what I perceive to be the most important features of the piece: its rhythmic drive and the sudden changes of metre, an action also influenced by my desire to manage the final duration of the work, keeping it to the planned five minutes. He also asks me specifically about notational issues, resulting in a dialogue that leans towards a teacher-student type of exchange.

MW: How would I notate this beginning? Like normally I would give the notes, and a written instruction, for something this, like, randomized [plays]. You know what I mean, it's like not quite anything. And then gradually becoming one handed tremolo.

ZK: Maybe do it, like Finnissy does, in a kind of time space notation.<sup>156</sup>

In the following video excerpt, we test out the single extended technique in the piece: two e-bows are placed on the strings before the beginning and their sounds

---

<sup>155</sup> Video of workshop with Marcus Whale (2 January 2012). It's perhaps notable that we sit on the floor for the first half of this workshop, lending the meeting a casual or even collegiate atmosphere.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid. I had, earlier that morning, received the final pages of Michael Finnissy's *Z/K*, and had shown these to Marcus at the beginning of our session.



damped with blu-tac, which is removed in the final section to sound the e-bows.<sup>157</sup> Marcus improvises while I provide ‘expert’ advice, placing the e-bows and activating them, advising on where in the piano it will be difficult to position them (because of the placement of the frame) and which notes need to be avoided (as any notes adjacent to a string with an e-bow on it are effectively ‘prepared’ by its wide plastic edge).

### **Video Example 1.8: Workshop with Marcus Whale, 2 January 2012**



Despite the hierarchy of expertise, this process of creating the pitch material of the final gesture is the most egalitarian interaction in this workshop. Although I provide advice and explain why certain notes won't be possible, Marcus makes the final decision on the choice of C and B as the notes played by the e-bows. Although subtle, my technical knowledge does have an influence on certain decisions: for

---

<sup>157</sup> An e-bow is an electronic device, made for and most often used by electric guitarists, that uses a rapidly alternating set of electromagnets to activate a string, producing a constant sound without a definite attack. The strings in the middle range of the piano are steel (and therefore ferromagnetic) as well as having an ideal string tension for the e-bow to activate it. I first encountered the technique in Rolf Hind's *Towers of Silence* (2007).

example, Marcus opts for using just my two e-bows as the result of my demonstration of the e-bows' potential and limitations.<sup>158</sup>

Although the tone of this workshop was collegial, many of the interactions were hierarchical to different degrees: he presented his work to me, I asked questions intended to check how organised his plans were (as I did for his overall plans) and then he asked me for help not just in understanding how the e-bows work on the piano, but in helping him to realise the timing of gestures, the notation to be used, and the best way to apply this technique. Many of these were expert-layperson exchanges, similar to those found in many other cases in this thesis where I tested new techniques workshops (such as with Rojas in Chapter 4 and Gorton in Chapter 3) but some bordered on being teacher-student interactions, particularly when I quizzed him about aspects of his structure. Countering any hierarchical tendencies of these early exchanges, I encouraged him to follow his own judgment, telling him, "Well it's up to you. I think you have a good instinct for how to use this kind of material." By not offering an exact solution to any identified problem, a space for dialogue and more integrative work on an egalitarian footing remained open as the piece progressed from a text document into a score.

### **Early Workshops**

We met again on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2012 after Marcus had sent me the first draft of the piece. Even more so than in the previous workshop, I dictated the agenda. I had two key criticisms of the work. Both were criticisms of musical and structural choices, not just technical ones, and this decision to open up the workshop to integrative work stemmed from my desire to control the quality of the work that would be included in the recital. The first criticism involved the limited tessitura of the bass notes at the climax and was presented alongside a possible solution, both of which were accepted by Marcus.

ZK: One thing I was going to suggest with the climax, is that you keep on going down so that this is right at the bottom of the piano [I play]

---

<sup>158</sup> Michael Hooper has explored oboist, Christopher Redgate's use of improvisation as a way to simultaneously test out musical materials as well as providing new musical content to be used by the composer. See: Hooper, Michael: "Collaboration and Coordination in the Creation of New Music", *Leonardo*, Volume 46, Issue 1, 2012.

MW: Yeah that's good.

ZK: Because then you get a proper, well on a big piano you'll get more [I play bass notes]....and whether it goes directly down or kind of zig-zaggy down is up to you but I think it's kind of cool once you get down to that E- flat.

MW: Yeah I agree.<sup>159</sup>

The 1<sup>st</sup> workshop score of the climax is shown here:

**Example 1.17: *Errata* by Marcus Whale (draft version – 14 April 2012), bars 66-73**

And here is the final version of the climax.

<sup>159</sup> Video of workshop with Marcus Whale (14 April 2012).

Example 1.18: *Errata* by Marcus Whale, bars 73-84

In the final version, the tessitura of the climax was expanded in both directions (with octave transpositions of both hands in opposite directions), and the passage was extended. It is arguable whether this suggestion to expand the tessitura was only interactive, or whether it was integrative: on the surface it was a suggestion relating to register and the resonant properties of the piano, but as a result the character and melodic contours of the climax changed markedly.

The problem, and the possible solutions, were less straightforward in the following point of concern I identified,

ZK: Going into B is where I get less convinced. After this it feels like the two chords you had... they've had their run, and even though you've got a few bars to go, I feel

like maybe something slightly different needs to happen, to have this [pointing to B] as a consequence. To lead to it breaking down.

MW: Yeah, yeah.

ZK: And it might be something very small, just be one strange note being added in or a different rhythmic grouping that you haven't had before. Even though you kind of have that, maybe you need something more extreme, like a really fast one. It's just something that feels necessary in terms of proportions and architecture. I don't know if that's something you...

MW: Yeah, I think that it could do with being more... because I think that my original intention with this section is that we get more erratic, and it doesn't necessarily mean they get that much more erratic towards the end.

ZK: Yeah.

MW: So that could just be more, shorter cells. And more dramatic dynamics as well. What if it was a few bars longer and there was a real sort of sense of it changing?

ZK: Yeah I think that would work. If it became actually erratic and, even if the texture kind of breaks down a bit, you lose the...

MW: Like maybe even a couple of bars, without even the [gestures the gracenote]

ZK: Yeah, I think that could be good. Where you just have the different rhythmic cells.<sup>160</sup>

Here I engaged Marcus in an integrative exchange – we were no longer merely discussing pianistic issues but issues of structure, timing and managing a tricky transition. Unlike the previous example, my suggestions here were much more vague. Indeed my approach was one of criticising and then asking for Marcus to find a response. The approval I gave to the two possible solutions he proffered showed that though we were working integratively, the exchange still retained hierarchical tendencies, that could be interpreted as a teacher-student exchange involving a set task to be completed. This approach was further underlined by Marcus' working notes (see below), which, in their functional brevity, turned our discussions into a series of directions, demonstrating that Marcus was complicit in allowing this encroachment into his creative space.

---

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

**Example 1.19: Excerpt from Marcus' notes (as text file) from 14 April 2012.**

A section - more dramatic dynamics (8,etc)  
- bar 26 re-notate  
- a few more bars, more erratic from bar 21  
- groupings (bar 22)  
frayed edges.<sup>161</sup>

At this stage, Marcus' input into my interpretation focussed on only a few points that he felt were essential. One was to do with pedalling – it's notable that he only offered his opinion after being invited to do so.

ZK: Before I say anything else, do you have anything to say. About what I'm doing or not doing, or things that are surprising.

MW: I suppose little things, tiny things, I don't know how well I've marked the pedalling but I'm usually looking for the pedal to come before the acciaccatura. [I test out this]. Basically so that you get the ping.<sup>162</sup>

This interpretative suggestion is immediately adopted – my use of the pedal after, rather than before the gracenote was more of a 'default setting' rather than an active interpretative choice, and his justification seems reasonable to me. He then goes on to ask for more contrast between the cells, but I manage to I turn his interpretative criticism into my own suggestion for notating his dynamics, reasserting authoritative advantage by turning the attention away from my playing and onto his compositional technique.

ZK: I suppose then I can get more dynamic contrast in those.

MW: Actually yeah, you've already led on to the next thing I was going to talk about. I guess making the cells more dramatically, like each sort of new cell being more dramatically new. Which you were doing just then so...

ZK: I wonder if the dynamics can be...

MW: more extreme?

ZK: Yeah, just because *mp* is a kind of, I mean it's fine to use it sometimes but you use it quite a lot and it's just kind of one of those in between...

MW: Yeah it sort of needs to be quite dramatic. Or at least more dramatic.

ZK: And writing forte on that. There's a limit to how much dynamic contrast you can get on that one note. If that makes sense?

MW: On which one?

ZK: Well on any single note. [plays]. So there's p, mp, forte... I mean there's a difference but there's not the sort of difference you get when you're playing a

---

<sup>161</sup> From a copy of Marcus' notes for meeting on 14 April 2012.

<sup>162</sup> Video of workshop with Marcus Whale (14 April 2012).

whole texture at a different dynamic. So I think it's worth getting a lot more extreme.<sup>163</sup>

It is clear that I attempted to assert authority over the piece in this workshop, both by assuming a position of relative knowledge and experience (and acting from this assumption) as well as by Marcus' accommodation of this arrangement, and it perhaps demonstrates my own lack of trust in Marcus' judgment, and an arrogant confidence in my own. However, the imbalance did not stultify our collaborative creativity as I still invited his criticisms of my playing while making it clear that my own suggestions were not orders to be obeyed literally, but the identification of issues that required addressing.

In our third meeting, on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2012 we went through Marcus' changes to the score from the previous week. I immediately stated my dissatisfaction with his handling of the transition into section B, which I still saw as problematic.

MW: So it's just sort of realised what we talked about last Sunday. Having more erratic bars, like shorter, longer.

ZK: Yeah, I wasn't totally convinced by these new bars... I don't know if it's different enough. Or, you know, if it's erratic enough.<sup>164</sup>

And later,

MW: So do you reckon I should do something different to the previous bars?

ZK: I think you can just have a think about some of them.

MW: Yeah, I'll think about it based on how it goes in context there.

ZK: It's good, but there's a lot of... you're stretching the material for quite a long time, just those two bars.<sup>165</sup>

We went through a number of possible solutions that I proposed and demonstrated to Marcus, from having more bars with just repeated notes (and no initial chord) to simply altering the pedalling but without firmly deciding on any particular option. So on the one hand I was insisting that Marcus hadn't solved the problem from the previous version, but on the other hand I was unwilling to dictate a compositional solution.

Another subtle mix of collaborative modes occurred when I identified that one of the notes he'd written was hitting the note on which an e-bow is sitting

---

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Video of workshop with Marcus Whale (21 April 2012).

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

(creating a thumping sound), and so needed to be changed. We identified the C in the following bar was the problem.

**Example 1.20: Errata by Marcus Whale (draft version – 21 April 2012), bar 82**



We then discussed alternative solutions below.

ZK: You had avoided all that hadn't you? [playing notes adjacent to e-bow]

MW: Yeah. Actually I think I perhaps forgot to write one in. I feel like it was a C somewhere.

ZK: [playing different sections]

MW: Ah, there we go [changes C to B] Which bar's that?

ZK: 82 [plays section]. Hmm. It does change it slightly.

MW: Yeah, it's different but it's...

ZK: ... it's OK. But it's lost something.

MW: OK let's try a G.

ZK: [plays] Yeah, I like that better.

MW: The other one reduced the harmonic tension too much.

ZK: Exactly, you lose something with that minor 9<sup>th</sup>. So now [plays] that works well.

Although Marcus made the compositional decision, I still exercised control over the 'final cut' by identifying features I saw as problematic and then withheld my endorsement of the solution until it satisfied my ear.<sup>166</sup> Though I fear that this act

---

<sup>166</sup>This technique of insisting there is a problem without wanting to dictate the solution is not dissimilar to the accounts of Feldman's workshops with performers in the 1960s when we was composing using graphical notation. In one of these, a violinist began playing and Feldman immediately said 'choose another note'. After several attempts to find a suitable new note, the exasperated violinist told Feldman that he was doing what was written and choosing a starting note based on the notation. Feldman replied, "choose



of controlling the ‘final cut’ without prescribing the solutions was infuriating,

Marcus was not fussed by this approach:

I’ve always been quite malleable in terms of completeness. On the one hand, I’m not much of a perfectionist so I’m happy to leave the piece at one point, but if we have the opportunity to mould it more then I’m also happy with that. I think in the end I always had something like the work we ended up with in mind, and it was just a matter of working out the best way to stitch it all together. Though it’s something I wasn’t completely used to, considering the type of work I’d written in the previous year.<sup>167</sup>

As in the previous workshop, Marcus’ suggestions for interpretation were often redirected toward his choice of notation. Looking at the bass notes at the climax,

ZK: With these, you haven’t slurred them or anything. So are they [plays non-legato] or are they [plays more legato]

MW: Yeah more the second.

ZK: So they’re kind of slurred...And are they loud, are they kind of accented?

MW: Yeah.

ZK: Are they both accented?

MW: Yes they’re both sort of the same. And sort of, pretty sort of springy.

ZK: Springy...[plays]. I’m thinking of what’s the best notation for that. I think accent both and the slur.

MW: Accent and slur [typing into his notes on his Macbook]

Marcus gradually finds a language that allows him to influence my interpretation in more profound ways by drawing parallels with the sounds he uses in improvisation with electronics, especially the similarities with sidechain compression.

---

a note I like”.

Brown, Earle (1995): unpublished conversations, provided to the author David Ryan.

<sup>167</sup> Interview with Marcus Whale (5 January 2013).

### Video Example 1.9: Workshop with Marcus Whale, 21 August 2012



Marcus' analogy to sounds found in electronic music (and his vocal imitation of these sounds) was far more useful to me than the choice of notation, and demonstrated his developing confidence in creating a language of performance practice. Indeed, this was the single most significant piece of site-specific performance practice that he gave me in these workshops, a demonstration of the power of a good analogy, as well as the weakness of a performance direction (and the ease with which it can be forgotten) if not justified or expressed clearly.

### Final workshop

When we met briefly on 4<sup>th</sup> August, a week before the premiere, there were only a few points of discussion, with the focus now on interpretation. Marcus had delivered the score on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2012, with the minor revisions that we had discussed in the second workshop now implemented.<sup>168</sup> The first point of

---

<sup>168</sup> It's notable that the delivery of the score was also initiated by me rather than Marcus. He contacted me on May 29<sup>th</sup> to request that I make a recording of the work, to be included in his undergraduate honours portfolio. I reminded him that there were still changes to be made since our last meeting. By leaving the responsibility for management of the final stages and delivery date of the piece to the performer, Marcus was voluntarily

discussion was the transition from section A to B, which now contained bars of repeated notes, without pedal and without any initial chord. Here is the transition passage as it appeared when we discussed it in our first workshop on 14 April 2012.

**Example 1.21: *Errata* by Marcus Whale (draft version - 14 April 2012), bars 17-27**

The musical score for Example 1.21 (draft version) consists of two systems of piano music. The first system covers bars 17 to 21. Bar 17 starts with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/16 time signature. It includes dynamic markings *p* < *mf* and *pp*. The second system covers bars 22 to 26. Bar 22 has a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 11/16 time signature, with dynamics *f*, *p*, and *f*. Bar 23 has a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 12/16 time signature, with a dynamic of *mf*. Bar 24 has a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 2/4 time signature, with dynamics *f* and *p*. Bar 25 has a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 4/16 time signature, with a dynamic of *mf* > *pp*. Bar 26 has a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 4/4 time signature, with a dynamic of *mf* and a section labeled 'B' with a tempo marking of quarter note = 40. The score includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings throughout.

And here is the transition passage as it finally appeared in the performance score.

---

transferring control and authority over the piece to me; although this is not necessarily a conscious decision, and could easily be explained by a number of other factors (including Marcus' workload, or his forgetting the details of our previous workshop after several months).

Example 1.22: *Errata* by Marcus Whale, bars 17-34

17

Musical notation for bars 17-21. The score is in two staves. Bar 17: Treble clef, 3/16 time, notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Bass clef, 3/16 time, notes G2, A2, B2, C3. Dynamics: p < mf, pp. Bar 18: Treble clef, 13/8 time, notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Bass clef, 13/8 time, notes G2, A2, B2, C3. Dynamics: pp. Bar 19: Treble clef, 9/8 time, notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Bass clef, 9/8 time, notes G2, A2, B2, C3. Dynamics: pp. Bar 20: Treble clef, 2/4 time, notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Bass clef, 2/4 time, notes G2, A2, B2, C3. Dynamics: mp > pp. Bar 21: Treble clef, 11/16 time, notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Bass clef, 11/16 time, notes G2, A2, B2, C3. Dynamics: mp > pp. A bracket under the bass staff from bar 20 to 21 contains a '5'.

22

Musical notation for bars 22-25. The score is in two staves. Bar 22: Treble clef, 11/16 time, rests. Bass clef, 11/16 time, notes G2, A2, B2, C3. Dynamics: f. Bar 23: Treble clef, 10/12 time, notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Bass clef, 10/12 time, notes G2, A2, B2, C3. Dynamics: mf. Bar 24: Treble clef, 2/4 time, notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Bass clef, 2/4 time, notes G2, A2, B2, C3. Dynamics: f, psub. Bar 25: Treble clef, 4/8 time, notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Bass clef, 4/8 time, notes G2, A2, B2, C3. Dynamics: mf > p. A bracket under the bass staff from bar 23 to 25 contains a '7'.

5

26

Musical notation for bars 26-28. The score is in two staves. Bar 26: Treble clef, 5/8 time, notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Bass clef, 5/8 time, notes G2, A2, B2, C3. Dynamics: mp > pp. Bar 27: Treble clef, 3/16 time, notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Bass clef, 3/16 time, notes G2, A2, B2, C3. Dynamics: p < mf. Bar 28: Treble clef, 6/4 time, rests. Bass clef, 6/4 time, notes G2, A2, B2, C3. Dynamics: f.

29

Musical notation for bars 29-32. The score is in two staves. Bar 29: Treble clef, 4/10 time, notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Bass clef, 4/10 time, notes G2, A2, B2, C3. Dynamics: mf > p. Bar 30: Treble clef, 2/4 time, notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Bass clef, 2/4 time, notes G2, A2, B2, C3. Dynamics: mf > p. Bar 31: Treble clef, 2/4 time, notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Bass clef, 2/4 time, notes G2, A2, B2, C3. Dynamics: mf > p. Bar 32: Treble clef, 1/4 time, notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Bass clef, 1/4 time, notes G2, A2, B2, C3. Dynamics: mf. A bracket under the bass staff from bar 29 to 32 contains a '7'.

33

Musical notation for bars 33-34. The score is in two staves. Bar 33: Treble clef, 0 time, notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Bass clef, 0 time, notes G2, A2, B2, C3. Dynamics: mf > p. Bar 34: Treble clef, 4/4 time, notes G4, A4, B4, C5. Bass clef, 4/4 time, notes G2, A2, B2, C3. Dynamics: mp. A bracket above the treble staff from bar 33 to 34 contains '10\"'. A box labeled 'B' contains a quarter note followed by '= 70'. A bracket under the bass staff from bar 33 to 34 contains a '3'.

25

The passage was extended and contains the unpedalled semiquavers I had suggested in the previous workshop, but he had not implemented any of the more demonstrative effects and techniques that I had advocated. In doing so he created a passage with which I was satisfied, while not merely adopting unquestioningly the directions I was dictating.

The meeting itself continued this trend. Much of our workshop focussed on the technical pitfalls of the final e-bow section. I began by explaining that the dyad held by the e-bows would be impossible on the Yamaha C6 that I would be performing on in Melbourne for the premiere, due to the positioning of the frame.

ZK: There's a couple of things on this, for the particular pianos. One is this chord at the end [plays C-B] which I'm hoping is going to be possible, but basically, from what I can tell, I mean I haven't seen the piano, there's going to be a bar just above that B that's going to get in the way.

MW: Ahhhh [laughs]

ZK: So, to do that, I was going to try and go there [playing an octave down for the B] and get the octave higher on the B below, which I've tried on a few pianos so it should be possible. So if you go the other setting,

MW: The harmonic setting....

ZK: Yeah and [places e-bow on string] which is [plays B an octave above]

MW: Oh wow, that's right.

ZK: And then, I mean here there's no space...

MW: Don't they collide anyway? I mean, they won't be able to resonate.

ZK: [placing other e-bow on].

MW: Oh wow – so I suppose you only need one string.

ZK: You only need one string, so if you go on the outer strings.... So that's my solution for down there.<sup>169</sup>

The passage is shown below.

---

<sup>169</sup> Video of workshop with Marcus Whale (4 August 2012).

### Example 1.23: Errata by Marcus Whale, bars 85-90

85 remove blutac on B4

88 remove blutac on C4

ebows continue  
GP 30"

The discussion functioned as an expert-layperson interaction, with my knowledge of the technical capabilities of the e-bows, as well as my knowledge of the different models of pianos and the layout of their frames, giving me an expertise in this field that few composers would share.<sup>170</sup> I identified the problem as well as the solution, while Marcus noted the technique, without changing the score, creating a performer-led site-specific arrangement for the site-specific instrument.

A second, and closely related technical problem, was whether to use the blu-tac to damp the e-bows throughout the piece, or simply to place the e-bows on the strings at the very end of the piece. I explained that for the Melbourne performance, there would be no choice but to use the latter technique.

ZK: yeah, and the other thing is I'm still not sure how well the blu-tac is going to hold this or whether I should just put them on.

MW: Yeah, though that might be difficult if you're trying to do this...

ZK: Actually, the only thing is, if it's like that [pointing to the close arrangement of e-bows] then you have to, because you've already used one of those notes.

MW: Ahhhh! God it's difficult.

<sup>170</sup> For more on expert-layperson interactions, and their difference with teacher-student interactions, see *Mythologies: The Teacher*.

ZK: I have a feeling for the recording I gave you, I had the same issue and that's how I did it.  
MW: Oh really?  
ZK: The recording I did at the Academy.  
MW: So you had the same issue with the...  
ZK: with the bar.  
MW: But you performed it perfectly.  
ZK: All it is it takes slightly more time to get through each of those moments (pointing to the last page).  
MW: Yeah, but that's fine.<sup>171</sup>

Again, there is a pattern of my offering of technical advice and explanation, and Marcus' mix of surprise and acceptance at the solutions I present. As with the placement of the e-bows, the expertise-layperson interaction means that there is no creative space for Marcus to inhabit, and my presentation to him is more about informing him of my plans than asking for feedback. But this is an imbalance of expert knowledge, not of seniority, and though I am teaching him the technique, there is no regression to a teacher-student mode of interaction – in fact the presentation of these solutions demonstrates that I feel it necessary to ask for his approval of my decisions.

As in earlier workshops, Marcus was reticent about offering criticisms until encouraged:

ZK: Anything else?  
MW: Ah no that was spot on.  
ZK: I kind of want to make some of these a bit more....  
MW: A bit more extreme?  
ZK: Well I can make it more extreme, I was going to say more even. I can make it more extreme, certainly [plays]  
MW: Nah, I kind of preferred the way you did it.  
[...]  
ZK: Anything else? The beginning looks good?  
MW: Yeah that was good. I mean, you could have done something different and it would have been...  
ZK: Well I could have a done a very steady tremolo.  
MW: Yeah I think the way you did it before was better, that sense of movement and stasis. More that the rhythm doesn't change necessarily with the crescendo. There's always a sense of instability. Which is what you did.  
ZK: Yeah, rhythm and dynamic not changing together.  
MW: Exactly.<sup>172</sup>

The criticisms were reserved for picking up errors, and articulating the changes in dynamics while the more fundamental criticisms of my interpretation were

---

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

withdrawn soon after being offered. . Here he picked me up on a rhythmic error, which was quickly resolved.

MW: Oh yeah, and just a little thing, at 88 it's [sings rhythm]

ZK: [sings]

MW: Yeah but the left hand comes in after the 3.

ZK: Right, yeah. [plays]

MW: yeah that's it.

ZK: What was I doing? Was I bringing it in early?

MW: You were bringing it in early...<sup>173</sup>

The workshop, like previous ones, was structured around my questions and technical queries, and though Marcus offered criticisms, he did so only after being invited to do so, in contrast to my lack of reservations when encroaching on his creative space. However, my presentation of planned deviations from the score demonstrated that I still felt it necessary to get his approval as the composer for my decisions, and that any previous criticisms I had did not lessen my respect for his work and for his role as the composer.

## Performance

I presented the premiere of *Errata* at the Salon, Melbourne Recital Centre on 11<sup>th</sup> August 2012 and followed that with a performance at The Independent Theatre, North Sydney on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2012. Marcus did not attend the performance on the 11<sup>th</sup> but did attend on the 16<sup>th</sup>, as my page-turner.

In both performances, the crucial e-bow finale required adaptation on the day of the performance. In Melbourne (performing on the Yamaha C6) the frame was positioned as predicted and I therefore placed the e-bows into the piano at the end, using the second e-bow setting on the lower B to produce the required C-B dyad, as discussed with Marcus in our final workshop. In Sydney, performing on a Stuart and Sons 102-key instrument, the placement of the e-bows on the dyad was not a problem, but when we rehearsed it, we noticed a rattling sound, even more pronounced than on the Kawai at my residence. After testing different positions for the e-bows, I proposed to Marcus that I place the e-bows on the

---

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.



piano at the end of the piece, as in Melbourne, rather than leaving them on with blu-tac. Marcus agreed that since the rattle was distracting, it was fine to put the e-bows on at the end. So after many sessions testing out the use of e-bows with blu-tac, I didn't use this technique in either performance.

Marcus recalled, that this change didn't affect the sound of the piece, but affected the visual aspect of the piece:

On the most part it went really well, the only thing is I realised how important that e-bow moment is and how that incredible mystery of being able to use the blu-tac to undo those notes. And the mystery of not knowing what it is. Even though you put them on, some people didn't know what e-bows are and they were amazed by that, but then to have that mystery increased by not even having that gesture of putting them in would be excellent. And the fact that you also couldn't do it in Melbourne, that was something that was disappointing. Because I think it was pretty amazing when we tried it out. As a recording, I really love the Melbourne performance, it was the ideal performance, but the difference that gesture makes in live performance is quite profound. It's about being a sound alchemist at the piano.<sup>174</sup>

In hindsight, I too underestimated the importance of the visual element of this passage, and of the dramatic subtlety that Marcus was striving for in this ending. For future performances, I would look for new methods to damp the strings (or simply using a greater mass of blu-tac) to ensure that this final gesture could be performed as Marcus had intended it. A studio recording was made the week after the performances and it can be heard on the portfolio CD.

## Conclusions

The collaboration on *Errata* addresses many of the opening questions on the effect of the imbalance of authority on collaborative work. The collaboration has much in common with the collaborations in other chapters, containing moments of integrative work, experimentation to innovate new techniques, some contribution by the composer to a site-specific performance practice and a performance alongside other new works.

---

<sup>174</sup> Interview with Marcus Whale (5 January 2013).

Despite these similarities in the major shape of the collaboration, my hypotheses about the possible effects of authoritative imbalance on the process were all confirmed to different extents.

- As predicted, Marcus did allow me to influence the mode of collaboration, with the meetings of 14<sup>th</sup> April and 21<sup>st</sup> April dominated by the integrative work I suggested was necessary. In particular, my insistence on continuing to discuss changes and edits to the transition into section B on 21<sup>st</sup> April (and afterwards by email), despite Marcus feeling his changes were adequate, demonstrated an imbalance of power and control of a type that was not observed at any point in the collaborations from Part 1 of this chapter.

However, Marcus saw the relationship differently, claiming that although he felt that there was a difference in 'status' and power when working with my ensemble, Ensemble Offspring, there was no such imbalance in our work on this solo piece:

I'd never worked with an ensemble that prestigious before, and with performers that were older than me... so I maybe felt a bit daunted by the possibility of telling Claire [Co-artistic Director and percussionist] that she isn't humming right. So I maybe didn't say things that I might have said.  
[...]

[The collaboration with Offspring] was a particularly weird situation because it was pedagogical, coming out of a university class, and working with my lecturer, Damien [Ricketson, Co-artistic Director]. And there was four of them, and one of me. While this was one to one, and with more experience I'm now more comfortable. And then to be in your house on a Saturday afternoon makes the whole experience quite casual, rather than being in the percussion studio at the Conservatorium, and this is more the context that I'm comfortable in.

- Within each workshop, Marcus' language is more reactive than instigative. He rarely offers criticism on my playing until it is invited, and although he argues the merits of particular suggestions, he never places barriers around any aspects of his creative practice. However, my language is not used as a means of dominating the discussions and there is no significant difference in the use of language from that used with peers (as there was in Part 1) though there are differences in the knowledge and experience of particular techniques (particularly the discussion of potential issues with

performing with e-bows at the beginning of the meeting of 4<sup>th</sup> August). However, many of these aspects are attributable to the use of an expert-layperson mode of conversing as well as to personality types.

- As predicted, the majority of the workshops focussed on the compositional aspects of the work. However, the later workshops did contain a greater focus on criticisms and adjustments to my interpretation as well as a handful of useful expressions of site-specific performance practice (most notably the similarities Marcus draws between the techniques in the piece and sounds found in electronic music, both in the contrast between adjacent cells in first half of the work, and the similarities in the crescendos of the climax to sidechain compression). Marcus welcomed this overlap of creative control and responsibilities, even if it involved allowing me to control compositional aspects that he would normally not share:

In the last few years, most of the music I've done has been for me to perform or to play with other people. So I'm used to a dynamic in which the level of instruction by others in what you're making is much smaller than in a composer-performer relationship. So I think it's really essential, in most cases, to have a performer's input, for the performer to be quite intimately involved in what the final product is. I consider interpretation to be a potent form of creation, so there's already a lot of input. But with a new work it's even more important as it's never been heard before, and without a performer it's just code.<sup>175</sup>

- Marcus was highly receptive to my challenges to his practice, and by extension, to his authority over the work. However, while I was sometimes resistant to challenges to my authority (such as in the workshop of 14<sup>th</sup> April, where I turn his interpretative suggestion into a criticism of his notational practice) at other times I invited his input and there was no apparent censorship of criticism or imbalance of creative input by the final workshops.
- Though my insistence on the change to section B seems similar to a teacher-student exchange, my motivation for this and other encroachments into the composition process was quality control. In insisting on having 'final cut' and deciding when the piece was complete, I imposed this control on the work, an imposition that Marcus accepted without argument. This contrasts with the

---

<sup>175</sup> Interview with Marcus Whale (5 January 2013).

similar exchange with Michael Finnissy over a relatively minor compositional question, where my encroachment into the composition process was strongly rebutted. This suggests that the imbalance of authority may have an effect on the reaction to and acceptability of my advances into the composer's creative space.

- It should also be noted that my control of the 'final cut' is only found in two places in this thesis: when I have a position of control afforded by age (in this chapter) or in Chapter 4, where I have a position of trust afforded by a long history of collaboration. It should also be noted that the desire for quality control over the final product on my part belies a lack of trust in the creative process of the collaborator. In this way, my role in this collaboration could be seen as mildly exploitative.
- A significant factor in the level and type of control Marcus allows me is his approach to composition and experience outside of contemporary classical music. Marcus' experience working with non-classical bands and improvisers – environments where the conventional hierarchical role of the composer isn't so ingrained in the culture – have undoubtedly affected his approach. His flexibility with regard to the structure, and his specificity with regard to the theatrical aspects of the performance could be seen as inherent aspects of his working practice rather than aspects that were caused by participation in the collaboration. In addition, our discussions on future projects, in which I am participating in events curated by him, have all focused on the theatrical aspects and the specifics of choreography, costumes and the inclusion of film, while the music was discussed using general concepts with details to be filled in much later in the process, suggesting a consistency of approach even when he is the 'authority figure'. This is not to say that the differences in authority did not affect the collaboration, but that there was a complex interaction between any authoritative imbalance and our contrasting approaches to collaboration that resulted in the observed hierarchical interactions.

This case study demonstrates that though an authority imbalance may have a significant impact (and danger of exploitation) at certain points in the process, the collaboration does not overtly resemble a teacher-student relationship and there is a sharing of creative space at all phases of the process, even if this creative space is not always equally shared.

# Collaboration Profile

**Work:** *Errata* for solo piano

**Composer:** Marcus Whale (b. 1990)

**Performer:** Zubin Kanga (b. 1982)

**Previous collaborations:** None

**Other shared background:** Marcus pageturned for Zubin Kanga for solo recitals, *Crush* (2009) and *Spectrum* (2012)

**Commission Details:** Commissioned discussed in November 2011, formalised on 4 December 2012. Brief was to create prelude for the solo recital, *Spectrum*, of five minutes duration.

**Performance Score Delivered:** 13<sup>th</sup> June 2012 (by email)

**Work Premiere:** 11<sup>th</sup> August 2012, Salon, Melbourne Recital Centre.

**Further Performances:** 16<sup>th</sup> August 2012, Independent Theatre, North Sydney.

**Studio Recording:** 23 August 2012, Move Records.

**Documented Workshops:**

4 December 2011 (Café in Glebe, Sydney)

2 January 2012 (Kanga's Sydney residence)

14 April 2012 (Kanga's Sydney residence)

21 April 2012 (Kanga's Sydney residence)

4 August 2012 (Kanga's Sydney residence)

**Interview:** 5 January 2013

## Prelude and Fugue by Philip Jameson

My collaboration with Philip Jameson has more extreme authoritative imbalances than in the previous case study. The collaboration shifts, in focus and in locus of control, so that this imbalance is at some points exploited, and at others completely nullified. Whereas the collaboration on *Errata* confirmed many of the assumptions I had about collaborations between myself and less experienced composers, this case study problematises some of these assumptions and emphatically rejects others.

As with Marcus, my relationship with Phil began several years before the collaboration, when our age differences were accentuated.<sup>176</sup> Phil was introduced to me in 2006 as a 12-year-old First Form student at my alma mater, Sydney Grammar School, by our common teacher, Ransford Elsley.<sup>177</sup> He was already a precocious composer, performer and improviser, and in 2007 I gave him a lesson on Daniel Rojas' *Danza de Montanas* (see Chapter 4) as well as on works by Ginastera and Messiaen. In the following years, I observed his development as a musician, including his rising profile as a composer, under the tutelage of composer/conductor Richard Gill, marked by a number of high profile orchestral and choral performances of his work.<sup>178</sup>

In mid-2010, I proposed a concert to the Sydney Grammar School, entitled "Generations", which would feature works by the many 'Old Sydneians' and staff who had become composers of note, starting with Nigel Butterley (who graduated in 1953).<sup>179</sup> To round out the program, I suggested that I could include a work by a current student, and asked the school whether they could provide a shortlist of their best composers, or even hold a competition to choose the piece. The school

---

<sup>176</sup> I will hereafter refer to him as 'Phil', which was at the time his preferred term of address as well as the form of his name used in his professional work. He now prefers Philip for his professional work, and I use this form in the title, profile and portfolio.

<sup>177</sup> I was 22 at the time, and was in my Honours year of my undergraduate studies while teaching theory/aural classes at the school. It should be noted that all differences in age are relative and dependent on perceptions and societal expectations and that these were undoubtedly affected by our roles as teacher and student within an educational institution.

<sup>178</sup> See Appendix A for more biographical details.

<sup>179</sup> Former students of the school are known in the school community as Old Sydneians.

nominated Phil as the best student for the commission, with the rationale that the staff would not have the time to run a competition, and that Phil (at that time, about to enter his final year of high school) would be the most likely winner anyway.<sup>180</sup> Having known Phil for many years already, I happily offered the commission to him, and he accepted, despite having a hectic composing and examination schedule for the following year.

The circumstances of the commission highlighted the disparity in power in the framing of the collaboration. Phil was 17 at the time of commissioning: he was appointed as the recipient of the commission by his school teachers and his background with me was framed by a teacher-student relationship. However, my intention, at this stage, was to treat this like any other commission and to engage with Phil as I would with a peer; superficially, the details of the commission were no different than those given to composer-peers.

## Early Discussions

Our first discussions on the piece were carried out over email.<sup>181</sup> Keen to manage not just Phil's piece, but the overall shape and character of the "Generations" programme, I asked him to articulate his ideas for the piece soon after offering the commission in late 2010.

Zubin Kanga: Have you thought about the possible piece for me and how it would fit into your year? Let me know when you'd like to meet up to discuss it further/try out ideas.<sup>182</sup>

Phil Jameson: I won't really have a chance to think properly about our piece for a little while - I've got two commissions to knock over this summer first! So until my thinking is clearer, it's probably not worth having any major meetings about it. My initial ideas have been a Prelude/Fugue or a Waltz (but like a really grotesque and funny waltz), but that's as far as I've got right now. In any case though, I'm very keen and excited.<sup>183</sup>

ZK: Both ideas sound good - and there are ample models for you to use (I was just listening to Ravel's La Valse today on the radio - amazing work!) For the Prelude

---

<sup>180</sup> Meeting with Rita Finn (former Head of Music and special assistant to the Headmaster, Sydney Grammar School), 29<sup>th</sup> November 2010.

<sup>181</sup> The first few exchanges were carried out over facebook messaging (which was Phil's preference). Though the platform is slightly different from traditional email hosts, the exchanges can otherwise be considered to be via email, with the messages written in the form of letters sent privately between one another.

<sup>182</sup> Email: Zubin Kanga to Phil Jameson (19<sup>th</sup> December 2010).

<sup>183</sup> Email: Phil Jameson to Zubin Kanga (20<sup>th</sup> December 2010).



and Fugue, I'd only warn against letting it get too big (being in two movements), but again there are plenty of options with a form like this. I was also thinking that the work could maybe draw on your approach to the piano as an improviser, but then I suspect this will occur naturally if you compose the work at the keyboard.<sup>184</sup>

At this stage Phil's input consisted only of informing me of his plans, and my interaction with them is subtle yet significant, generally warning against writing anything too long or unpianistic. This continued in our exchange months later, where I started to push him to send me some sketches. But the discussion was still general, with Phil offering assurances on the technical aspects while I offered general advice on writing a fugue.

PJ: As far as the difficulty goes, you won't have much trouble from what I can imagine - yes it's a fugue, probably four parts, but I'm not planning on writing anything deliberately devilish! After all, I want to be able to play it too...<sup>185</sup>

ZK: While you're on holidays, it might be good to at least sketch out some ideas for the main fugal subject (and any countersubjects) so you can workshop these with Ransford and/or Richard. From my experience with fugues - this takes some time to get right, but then once it's settled, a lot of the rest of the fugue will fall into place.<sup>186</sup>

The collaboration, and any aspects of teaching or mentorship exist only at the most superficial level at this point. But when Phil finally sent me the score of the fugue on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2011, our exchanges, and the collaboration as a whole became much more integrative and the imbalances of authority were put into sharp relief.

### **The collaboration shifts: An extreme exercise of authority over the work.**

As is evident in several of the other case studies, collaboration via email allows for swift delivery of materials but is a poor (and potentially dangerous) medium for the subtle discussions necessary when criticism, editing and fundamental changes of direction enter the collaboration. Having seen the first draft of the fugue, I wrote the following letter to him.

Hi Phil,

I've had a look at your fugue, and I have some comments for you.

[...]

---

<sup>184</sup> Email: Zubin Kanga to Phil Jameson (20<sup>th</sup> December 2010).

<sup>185</sup> Email: Phil Jameson to Zubin Kanga (23<sup>rd</sup> April 2011).

<sup>186</sup> Email: Zubin Kanga to Phil Jameson (23<sup>rd</sup> April 2011).

I think this is a really good fugue, and technically very well constructed. It's also a very serenely beautiful fugue with your long pedal point at the end a particular highlight. So there aren't really any major technical faults to point out, though there are a couple of details that we can look at a bit later.

But first I'd like to ask a big picture question. When you said you were going to write a fugue, I imagined that you might find your own modern take on the fugue, the way that Shostakovich did. But the fugue you've written is very clearly in the style of Bach and adheres to 18th century norms of tonal harmony, rules of counterpoint and fugal structure. So my question is: why have you written this sort of fugue? Do you have an artistic/composerly reason for writing in this style? Unless you have quite an unusual, and well thought, reason for doing so, my opinion is that it will seem quite incongruous in a program of contemporary music. Though it might earn you full marks in HSC composition, it needs much more to be taken seriously beside works by composers like Nigel Butterly, Ross Edwards and Elliott Gyger.

I have a couple of solutions to suggest to you. The first is: go back to the fugue and introduce some more unusual elements - either some more unusual harmonies as Shostakovich might do, or some rhythmic irregularities and structural discontinuities as one might find in Stravinsky's neo-classical music (see his *Dumbarton Oaks* or the *Pulcinella Suite*). My second suggestion (which I suspect you might prefer, if you'd rather not mess too much with the fugue) is to write a highly contrasting prelude - dissonant and/or violent that sets the serenity and diatonicism of the fugue into sharp relief. This prelude needn't be long, but I think it could provide a context for the fugue that would be far more convincing than any aesthetic justification you could write in a program note.

[...]

Let me know what you think. If you think I've misunderstood your intentions with the work, please do let me know. As I said, I really want us to work together to make this a strong piece and one that will make a good impression on the audience.<sup>187</sup>

In this letter, I compliment the technical aspects of the fugue, but proceed to ask fundamental questions about the artistic rationale behind the work. I imply that the work is unoriginal and anachronistic, a work of pastiche that will not stand up to scrutiny next to works by established composers. Though the tone is polite, the fundamental criticisms of the work's premise are aggressive; in attempting to seize control of the artistic rationale of the work, I am exploiting my authority over the project as a whole, and my position of seniority, as well as our relationship as teacher/student, to pressure him into a radical rewrite of the work. Though my intention is to be as critical as I would with a compositional peer, Phil's authoritative disadvantage makes it difficult for him to stand his ground as an older composer might, and so the criticisms are magnified by the

---

<sup>187</sup> Email: Zubin Kanga to Phil Jameson (26<sup>th</sup> July 2011).

power relationship. In reply, Phil displayed an unusual maturity and tact for a teenager.

Zubin,

Many thanks for your honesty mate, very much appreciated!

Well, the answer to your (very fair) question is basically this: I'd be fooling myself if I thought that I was capable, at this stage, of reinventing the fugue. And this work is part of an ongoing attempt to come to grips with the music of the past, so that perhaps I can become good enough one day write something more like what you were expecting!

I realise that this may make the work seem like something of an exercise - and perhaps it is - but in any case it's not a detached or cold exercise, but rather the most lovingly crafted exercise I could possibly muster at this point in time. And while I very much understand your concerns about the impression I'm going to have on the new music community, I'm not convinced that this is the worst side of myself I could present: somebody who is deadly serious about understanding the way sound works, and who is willing to put aside his ego and learn from the masters for the time being.

Having said that, I think your idea about using a more obviously contemporary prelude as a frame for the fugue is a good one! I'm tied up with trials for the next two weeks but we should definitely talk straight after that.

Thanks again for your honesty mate. I'm sure we'll work this out in the best way possible.<sup>188</sup>

Phil's letter is both a defence of his work as it stands and an admission that an additional movement could be beneficial. At this time, I felt it was necessary to restate my position even more strongly, this time focussing more on the aspects of his 'musical personality' that seem to be absent from this work. In doing so, I'm remembering that most of his recent works have had a large element of pastiche and that this approach to composition will not serve him well as an adult composer. This is a teacher's line of argument, but it also allows me to maintain creative control over the whole concept of the piece, to the point where the relationship is not just directive but possibly exploitative.

I should clarify that, even if you leave it as it is, nobody in the audience is going to think badly of you as a composer - indeed they'll be very impressed by your technique and also by your ability and desire to follow the model of Bach. What I think is missing at the moment is your personal and distinct musical identity and also an engagement with the music of the world we live in now. I understand that you've done this type of homage/pastiche deliberately but I think it would be worth considering showing the many different aspects of your compositional abilities, and by doing so, setting yourself apart from other composers of your generation.

[...]

---

<sup>188</sup> Email: Phil Jameson to Zubin Kanga (31<sup>st</sup> July 2011).

What you decide to do with the piece is up to you, but I am available to help in any way I can.<sup>189</sup>

As Phil's reply shows, I've obviously misinterpreted his earlier email, focussing on his defence of his work and not on his agreement to write the prelude I suggested.

PJ: I absolutely understand where you're coming from mate, and actually I'm very keen for the modern prelude! I reckon it could be seriously, seriously interesting, and a real opportunity to say something about the role of Bach (and more specifically counterpoint) in contemporary music.

I'll contact you right after trials. Very keen to make this work!<sup>190</sup>

On the one hand we can observe a teacher/student relationship in play, with my criticisms intended to be constructive and targeted to what I perceive are Phil's abilities. I was also aware, and concerned, that Phil was receiving contrasting advice from his composition teacher, Richard Gill, who was encouraging his wide use of pastiche: a strategy that I felt was no longer in his best interests. The exchange can also be seen as an overt and unsubtle exercise of power by the performer (and curator of the project) over a much younger and more inexperienced composer, with the hierarchical and directive aspects heightened by the fact that the composer is still in high school. The exchange also reveals a tension between different personality types – I am over-controlling in my actions, and insecure enough to overstate my position, while Phil, despite being much younger, displays maturity and tact in receiving my criticisms with diplomacy and agreeing to the solution I suggest. He was equally diplomatic when assessing this moment in the collaboration in hindsight.

It certainly did come across as harsh, which could have been detrimental to our relationship. But let's face it: you had to deliver the bad news somehow. And perhaps this isn't such a bad way to deliver bad news. After all, it got the job done. I was a little stung, but reviewed my work, considered your solution, and accepted. If you had raised your concerns in one of our meetings at the piano, I wouldn't have had this opportunity for slow, internal reflection. In the heat of criticism, my knee-jerk reaction might have been to make excuses, or reject your claims, or blurt that I didn't have time to write a whole new movement. Any of these reactions would have led to a poorer work.  
[...]

---

<sup>189</sup> Email: Zubin Kanga to Phil Jameson (3<sup>rd</sup> August 2011).

<sup>190</sup> Email: Phil Jameson to Zubin Kanga (4<sup>th</sup> August 2011). To non-Australian readers, the use of 'mate' may seem to imply sarcasm or veiled aggression, but here it is understood by both of us as a term of amicable address.

It was actually really handy. It was an opportunity for you to lay out an extended argument as to why this fugue needed a prelude and I don't have a problem with that at all. Looking back, I think the piece would be less than half as good without the prelude. I think the prelude actually reveals things about the fugue and frames it in a much more interesting context.<sup>191</sup>

So although the manner and method of communication may have been blunt, the result was beneficial, to the work and to his musical development. This email exchange was our hierarchical interaction and the relationship became more egalitarian as we began our live workshops.

### **First Workshop: Ambiguities between performer/composer and teacher/student.**

We met for our first workshop on 1<sup>st</sup> September to consider the sketches for the Prelude as well as the completed Fugue. We began by focussing on pianistic practicalities of the Fugue, based on my analytic testing before the workshop:

ZK: So, where are you at?

PJ: I've done a lot of work. There are a couple of bits that just need to be cleaned up. I'll probably do a good run through and, it's just voice-leading stuff really.

ZK: [putting my score on the piano] There's these three notes with the big leaps, or big stretches, which I think are fine like that [plays]

PJ: Yeah I saw that one coming.

ZK: That's alright. This [pointing to another one] that's a weird voice leading thing.

PJ: Yeah that line goes. It doesn't make sense because it goes from here [plays]

ZK: None of them are impossible, it's just that one's a tenth. But these are ninths so they're fine.

Though we begin with these minor questions on the stretches in the fugue, we soon turn to the more pertinent question of what shape the prelude would take. Despite the potential for the conversation to follow the asymmetrically critical mode of our email exchange, the discussion of the Prelude is straightforward, with Phil explaining his plans (much as he did with the Fugue in our earliest exchanges) as though the existence of the Prelude was always part of his vision.

ZK: So how long is this prelude going to be?

PJ: About 90 seconds.

ZK: And so it's going start softly and then be a big crescendo and climax?

PJ: Yep.

---

<sup>191</sup> Interview with Phil Jameson (1<sup>st</sup> January 2013).

ZK: That's interesting, because the fugue could go either way after that.  
PJ: This is just my structuring stuff, because it's basically two bits of material. It's essentially this noodly stuff versus this sort of stuff, like grotesque, right?  
ZK: Yep  
PJ: So it's going to start, basically it's about this noodly soup stuff [plays] which turns into this sort of stuff [plays chordal material] those sort of shapes, a really sort of primitive angular [plays]. That sort of stuff.  
ZK: Yeah good.  
PJ: So it just sort of grows out of the noodle soup.<sup>192</sup>

Already, Phil's colourful use of language to describe what he wants out of the music shows a confidence that is unexpected, given my pointed criticism of his work in our emails. He goes on to demonstrate the various sections of the prelude to me, and we discuss the harmonic content of this material in this video

### **Video Example 1.10: Workshop with Philip Jameson, 1 September 2011**



During this discussion, we both make references to the harmonic language of a range of composers, including Strauss and Poulenc (and later in workshop, Messiaen) and go on to discuss the mosaic-like structure, based on proportions growing and shrinking by Fibonacci proportions. Such a level of engagement using wide references and detailed analysis is found in many of the other chapters, but

---

<sup>192</sup> Video of workshop (1 September 2011).

that fact that Phil can engage with me on this level, at his age, allows him to transcend the student/teacher frame and interact with me as an equal. Unlike in our emails, Phil's assuredness allows him to maintain a level of equality in his authority over the work and control over the process.

When we start discussing the performative possibilities of the fugue, Phil asserts himself further, questioning my desire to play the fugue slowly.

ZK: You could do it a funny way or you could do it in a really serene Bach thing, so [plays]. And it all being really quiet, and being that kind of contrast. So it depends – I think it could go either way. Because this [plays faster version], yeah this will be fine.

PJ: But for it to work, for the up tempo to work it would have to be more than just fast, it would have to be fast and manic.

ZK: It would have to be really manic.

PJ: Like Shostakovich

[...]

ZK: So I think it could go to either extreme in a way. I still think....

PJ: Well can I hear it your way, because I never thought about it like that.

ZK: Yeah it's really going for that style, how do you say it, stile antico, really rarified kind of Bach. If you do it up, and this Glenn Gould thing [plays], it does sound more Shostakovichy but I wonder if having built up this huge thing, if you push it, it will always be an anti-climax. While if you go really soft.

PJ: It could be very spooky.

ZK: Or just beautiful. I mean it's a very beautiful fugue.<sup>193</sup>

Phil is resistant to my idea of a slower tempo, and remains skeptical (and unwilling to concede the point) at the end of this workshop, and I am also stubborn in not altering my conception of the tempo. My own preference for a slower tempo was partially based on my own doubts about being able to perform the fugue at a faster tempo, but I also presented an argument that was based around my conception of the work as a whole that prompts Phil to keep considering a slower tempo as a possibility for the fugue.

ZK: But yeah the other thing about how these two relate, because in a way, the idea of doing the prelude, and making it go nuts is that the fugue is then, it's kind of like an artifact. It's definitely borrowing from Bach but unapologetically in a way, like you've done it deliberately so it has a contrast to that. So I think it's important to bring out it's 'Bachness', if that makes sense?

PJ: Yeah well it's completely unashamed of that fact that it is very much in the past. There are no funky harmonies. In fact, it's probably more diatonic than Bach is.

ZK: Well yeah it's more like one of Bach's more carefree kind of fugues.

---

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

PJ: And it makes it really interesting. Because if we go for the beautiful element, the prelude is like the triteness of that diatonic mode and that super-saturated thing, but then it prefigures, like 'no, that can be beautiful' and we've left that behind or...

ZK: Exactly, and it's almost a commentary on modern musical language, because you've got all this stuff, and how can this material be used. And this is like a controversial answer, in a way. But it's just the stuff that makes up a fugue. And all the stuff you have before is really exciting but it only comes together in this form at the end.<sup>194</sup>

By the end of this workshop, we had agreed on a couple of small edits to the fugue (but only on pianistic grounds, to minimize extreme stretches), discussed and agreed to continue considering a number of different interpretative options for the fugue, and I had given my endorsement to his planned prelude. The diffusion of any latent tension from our email exchange was a mutual effort – I refrained from the confrontational criticisms of my emails and Phil focused his own criticisms on my interpretation of the fugue, rather than arguing over any compositional decisions. The collaboration was by that point proceeding on a more equal footing, and in the following workshop, Phil's confidence increased as he became even more articulate in explaining to me what he wanted from my performance.

## **Second Workshop: A meeting as equals**

Phil delivered the score to me by email on 4<sup>th</sup> October. His enthusiasm for the piece was very apparent:

I haven't marked dynamics or articulations in the fugue, because we're still so unsure about its style. Having said that, I'm fairly certain I want to go with the slow tempo and super-light articulation, as we were leaning towards when we met. I think it makes a lot of sense seeing how this prelude has turned out.

Speaking of - let me know if you think anything's truly impossible, but my feeling is that the prelude will fall under the fingers fairly easily. It's actually turned out sort of like Messiaen on cocaine, so if you can think back to those sort of shapes and figures, I think you'll find it pretty straightforward.

Anyway, very keen to talk about it whenever you like!<sup>195</sup>

Phil's playful but apt "Messiaen on cocaine" line prefigures some of the increasingly colourful descriptive flourishes he would employ in our final

---

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Email: Phil Jameson to Zubin Kanga (4<sup>th</sup> October 2011).



workshop. My reply was also very positive, and a contrast to our earlier email exchanges:

Thanks for sending me this - I had a bash through it this evening. I really love it - it's really inventive with all the bits of material from the fugue, as well as having lots of variety of character and colour. It also does its job of making you hear the fugue very differently. As you predicted, everything fits into the hands, and though the last page is hard, it's hard in a good way! So I really don't have anything to suggest in terms of edits - I might play around with the dynamics and pedalling in a couple of places and I'll let you if there's any alternatives to suggest.

[...]

Thanks again - I realise it must be extremely stressful for you at the moment at the business end of the HSC so I really appreciate the time and thought you've put into this. It's an impressive piece that I hope I can do justice to.<sup>196</sup>

My reply provides Phil with an approval and endorsement of the work, and in declining to criticise the piece before our meeting just before the premiere, I imply that any future suggestions I do bring up then will be minor adjustments. Phil and I met again in Sydney on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2011. After testing the waters and asking my permission, Phil took control of the workshop, discussing the opening pauses in the Prelude:

PJ: So do you want me to jump in and say no, yes or no, just up to you.

ZK: Yeah – jump in.

PJ: Alright. I think those pauses at the start, by the way, are probably on the long side rather than the short side.

ZK: OK

PJ: They should be quite sudden.

ZK: They'll be quite sudden anyway, because they're rhythmic and unpedalled. But it's just whether, well, how long is long?

PJ: About this long [showing a length of about half a metre with his hands – both laugh]

The opening passage is shown below.

---

<sup>196</sup> Email: Zubin Kanga to Phil Jameson (5<sup>th</sup> October 2011).

### Example 1.24: Prelude and Fugue by Philip Jameson, bars 1-16

Effervescent ♩ = 96

*p* *mp*

*mf*

Phil's use of humour here demonstrates his increasing confidence and in the following passage he is even bolder: turning my questioning on his notational choices into a criticism of my interpretative choices, in a situation that inverts a manoeuvre I used when working with Marcus on *Errata*.

ZK: Maybe it's actually less staccato, because you've written super-staccato on it but maybe it's...

PJ: I think this might be an error on my part but those super-staccato things, I more take as a staccato with accent. Am I wrong or....

ZK: No, that's right. All these marks are ambiguous, but yeah let me think [plays]. What if I do it less staccato and more accented. [plays]

PJ: That's closer. That's definitely much closer.<sup>197</sup>

As the workshop progresses, and we move on to my playing and interpretation of the Fugue, Phil begins to mould my performance choices, using a series of eccentric similes and metaphors as guidance, in a similar manner to those used by George Benjamin.

PJ: Yeah those false entries are working well. I guess when the subject comes in, instead of being just the subject, what would be nice is if it was sort of in that sea, not sea, that cookie dough of semiquavers that's sprinkled with these quavers. So in that you have all the cookie dough working. And within that you get these sprinkled Oreos.

ZK: Yeah it's probably a colour distinction, rather than much of a dynamic distinction.

PJ: But that's how I think of the subject, as a sort of sprinkling, rather than as a...

<sup>197</sup> Video of workshop with Phil Jameson (8 November 2012).

ZK: Yeah like the chocolate chips in the cookie dough. But I know what you mean, it needs to be...

PJ: Like they're individual notes, but they're still part of the cookie dough. It's like, I'm going into very heavy simile land here, but it's like a storm, like a sun shower. Every drop of rain is an individual drop of rain but it's obviously part of a bigger thing.

ZK: Yeah, maybe it's an articulation thing [plays]  
[...]

PJ: That sounds much closer now, when I think about it in terms of its older state [meaning the faster tempo], it actually makes more sense, because it's like it's, it's sort of like a ball bouncing in slow motion, that's the best simile. It's slow and it's serene but it's still bouncing.

ZK: I should write down all these similes. So we have the 'slow-bouncing ball, sun-shower, cookie-dough'...

PJ: [laughing] sounds like a good afternoon, that!<sup>198</sup>

My latching on to the bouncing ball simile was significant in that it most clearly expressed Phil's desire for the fugue to retain the rhythmic vivacity he imagined it having at his original faster tempo, even though I was taking it much slower. His intentions were communicated to me with concision and clarity by the use of his similes and metaphors, which became the most memorable morsels of site-specific performance practice from this workshop. In another exchange that resembles those I had with Benjamin, Phil uses orchestral images to explain the articulation he wants from me.

ZK: Yeah, I think it will work now that I'm trying to take out as much pedal as possible because the different articulations will come out more.

PJ: Yeah it's almost like a French Horn maybe? When a brass instrument articulates it has a, it's very hard to describe, it has a real roundness at the start of the note. It's that sort of thing.<sup>199</sup>

And in another Benjamin-esque moment, Phil conducts me as I play.

---

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

### Video Example 1.11: Workshop with Phil Jameson, 8 November 2011



Phil's sophisticated use of language, especially in comparison to my relative difficulties in articulating my views clearly and succinctly, allows him to assume a dominant role in this workshop, transcending, and even inverting, our previous teacher-student mode of interaction. Indeed the almost the majority of the 90 minute workshop is spent on him coaching my playing, with him in control of the prioritising of passages to coach.

In the final stages of the workshop, we assessed the work as a whole, with Phil and I both agreeing that the addition of the Prelude, and the tempo of the Fugue, have both been constructive changes.

PJ: I think it will be really good now.

ZK: So the thing is to have that little lilt to it.

PJ: I think the best thing is the bouncing ball in slow motion. So it's slow but it's still bouncing.

ZK: Yeah it's still lilting. It can't be too austere, because it's not that kind of fugue. Even though that makes sense after having the huge prelude. But it needs to work in the way that it is a fast thing slowed down.

PJ: I'd love it to feel like it could go somewhere, but just doesn't. Like it could turn into what the prelude turns into but it just sort of settles.

ZK: Yeah

PJ: But there needs to be some potential for that to happen.

ZK: Yeah, maybe that's the tension of it. It's interesting, the way they work together.

PJ: I'm really glad I wrote the prelude. It makes everything a lot more interesting.

ZK: It makes it very interesting and it was a good program note as well. And the prelude itself, it shows something. I mean this shows technique [pointing to the fugue] but this shows something else as well. Just greater... flair. And pianistic flair as well.<sup>200</sup>

## Performance

I gave the premiere performance, as planned, on 18<sup>th</sup> November in the 'Generations' recital. Though my performance of the Prelude raced at several points, I was otherwise satisfied with the performance, and felt that the Fugue worked particularly well on the Bosendorfer piano in the resonant concert space. On the performance, Phil recalled,

I was very happy with the performance... Of the things that I wasn't happy with: there was an A-flat on the first page, and the first entry of the triadic material. I intended for it to blossom more into that and it didn't explode in the same way. For some of the joins in the prelude, I think you phrased them too well in that if you did it again I would ask you to be less tactful in how you move from one section to another. The fugue was wonderful, it just seemed to play itself in a beautiful, tranquil and inevitable way.

## Conclusions

Unlike the collaboration on *Errata*, this case study problematises the assumptions I posited about authority-imbalanced collaborations.

- Phil allowed me to influence the mode of collaboration, but only at the point when I suggested he write a contrasting prelude to go with the fugue. The workshops themselves contained very little integrative work on the composition as his technical skills as a composer and pianist left very little for me to pick apart in the detail of the finished drafts. At the same time, there was a lot of integrative work on my performance preparation, with Phil setting the agenda for the final workshop.
- My expectation of the senior partner being able to dominate the workshop through language was emphatically disproven in this case study. Whereas I dominated the discussion early on, and pressured Phil into writing another movement, in the final workshop, Phil used his superior skills of expression to

---

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

dominate the workshop, much as the much more senior composers did earlier in this chapter.

- Although there was one moment of intense focus on the compositional phase by email, the majority of both workshops focussed on the performance preparation, my interpretative choices, and Phil's desire to coach me and provide site-specific performance practice, again contradicting my assumptions.
- Although Phil was receptive to my challenges to his practice, I was also receptive to his, and there was a mutual intrusion into each other's creative space. Indeed, Phil explained that he felt any difference in age had no bearing on the way the collaboration unfolded:

I don't think it would have made a huge difference. When I think about the way I interact with peers now at university, it's sort of the same. I didn't feel pressured – the prelude was a fantastic idea. If it had been a rubbish idea, I think I would have told you that.

The case study also raises a further question about how to assess the success of collaborations between student musicians and professionals. Though Phil composed a brilliant Prelude for the Fugue, I still felt the final product is a slight misfit – with the Fugue needing more austerity, irony or anachronistic interference to function as a more interesting commentary on Bach (much as Finnissy did with Sammartini). Phil agrees to some extent, but clearly doesn't discount the work from his catalogue.

I have a funny relationship with it. I find the prelude much more interesting than the fugue now. And I would never listen to the fugue without the prelude now, it doesn't make any sense to me. It feels like an exercise. But the prelude, I'm quite proud of and that was the basis for works I'm writing now, like my new work for the Sydney Youth Orchestra. But in a different, more indulgent mood I quite like the fugue too. It has lots of E-flats, and everybody likes E-flats! But if I wanted to listen to a Bach fugue, I would have listened to a Bach fugue... sometimes I'm a bit embarrassed about the fugue, that 'real composers don't do this', but other times I think it doesn't matter. For now I still think of it as part of my catalogue, as the prelude makes the fugue work, but I could have done the job better.

Despite any misgivings about the work, the collaboration provided other benefits to both participants. Most significantly, Phil's musical education benefitted from

the collaboration. As he stated in our interview, he has continued to develop the musical language he explored in the Prelude in the succeeding works.<sup>201</sup> He also developed skills of collaboration, further developing his workshop technique in his more recent collaborations and conducting engagements. As a professional opportunity, he has capitalised and has already been offered commissions by a number of prestigious ensembles and institutions.<sup>202</sup>

I also discovered new skills and dangers of collaboration through the relationship. I learnt that email is a poor medium for handling sensitive discussions and that the deficiencies of the medium are even more problematic when an authoritative imbalance is introduced. I also discovered that the imbalances of experience and career development don't translate evenly to different parts of the collaboration. Whereas Phil's compositional experience led him to the safe solution of modelling too closely on an example from the past, his experience of working with performers surpassed my expectations – so whereas an obvious student-teacher relationship is evident in the early stages of the workshop, it is barely noticeable in the final workshop, where Phil's experience allowed him to interact as an equal. The collaboration, like the others in this thesis, also provided me with the benefit of material for research. So although the collaboration could be seen as not entirely successful on some measures, it was very successful on others.

---

<sup>201</sup> The development of this language is clearly apparent in his work, *Collatz Variations* for brass quintet, which won 3<sup>rd</sup> prize in the Franz Schubert composition competition in 2012.

<sup>202</sup> Phil has continued to build on his success, securing commissions with the Sydney Sinfonia, Sydney Youth Orchestra and the Australian String Quartet and working as assistant conductor for performances of Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* by Orchestra Victoria.

# Collaboration Profile

**Composer:** Philip Jameson (b. 1993)

**Performer:** Zubin Kanga (b. 1982)

**Featured Work:** Prelude and Fugue (2011) for solo piano

**Previous collaborations:** None

**Other shared background:**

Both studied piano with Ransford Elsley.

Both attended Sydney Grammar Preparatory School and Sydney Grammar School (not concurrently).

**Commission Details:** Commissioned on 29 November 2010. A five minute to be included in the recital "Generations" in Sydney in late 2011.

**Performance Score Delivered:** 4 October 2011

**Work Premiere:** 18 November 2011

**Further Performances:** None

**Studio Recording:** None

**Documented Workshops:**

1 September 2011 (Sydney Grammar School).

8 November 2011 (Kanga's Sydney residence).

**Interview:** 1 January 2013



# Mythologies

## Performance Practice

In 1988, Eric Eliason from the United States Geological Survey discovered that 3000 images of Mars, taken by NASA's Viking spacecraft in the 1970's, had never been processed from the master tapes. After tracking down the data, Mr Eliason looked up the NASA documents that described how they were encoded. "It was written in technical jargon," he said, "Maybe it was clear to the person who wrote it but it was not clear to me 20 years later."<sup>203</sup> There were copies of some old computer programs used to turn the raw data into pictures, he said, but the source codes the computer needed to run the programs could not be found and the computers themselves no longer existed. After two years of talking to the few NASA technicians and programmers who he could find (and were still alive) and creating new hardware and software for the task, he finally extracted the majority of the images, including the highest resolution image ever taken of Olympus Mons, the largest volcano in the solar system.<sup>204</sup>

Performance Practice: The way in which mus. is perf., especially as it relates to the quest for the 'authentic' style of performing the mus. of previous generations and eras. Its study covers notation, ornamentation, instruments, voice production, tuning and pitch, and the size of ensembles and choruses.<sup>205</sup>

The term, 'performance practice' is conventionally applied to the music of earlier historical periods, and includes "all aspects of the way in which music is and has been performed".<sup>206</sup> The interpretation of notation, the addition of ornaments and other extemporisation, the choice of instruments, the tuning systems used and the interpretative approach and style of original performers of the work are among the numerous dimensions covered under the broad edifice of performance practice. For 'historically informed performers', the sources for reconstructing the performance practice of a past era range from treatises,

---

<sup>203</sup> Eliason, Eric in Blakeslee, Sandra: "Lost on Earth: Wealth of Data Found in Space", *New York Times*, 20 March 1990, <http://www.nytimes.com/1990/03/20/science/lost-on-earth-wealth-of-data-found-in-space.html> (accessed 29 January 2013).

<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Oxford Dictionary of Music (online, accessed 29 January 2013)

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

instruction books, critical writings, instruments, sketches, scores and performers or teachers who are members of lineages of student-teacher relationships stretching back to earlier eras. Formerly, a niche area, historically informed performance has now become mainstream enough that most major music schools (including the Royal Academy of Music) contain a department dedicated to it, largely focusing on music of the 17th and 18th centuries using period instruments.<sup>207</sup>

The notion of a performance practice becomes problematic when examining cases of more recent music. When asked about his role in premiering John Cage's 4'33", pianist David Tudor explained:

David Tudor: That piece arose from the method of composition of *Music of Changes*. When John was doing it he spoke of it to me as something that was inherent in the *I Ching* process...Then another interesting fact – which has completely disappeared because the score has disappeared – is that the original manuscript was notated in the style of *Music of Changes*. Later on I was asked to revive that work – in 1982, I think - as it was originally performed. The published score, without notation, bears no relationship to that... Those things are not known, and I think people don't understand that it was a compositional necessity for John to write that. It wasn't an idea out of the blue but a continuation of the work with the *I Ching*.  
PD: I don't think he's said that.  
DT: Well, he doesn't remember. I recall it [laughs]<sup>208</sup>

---

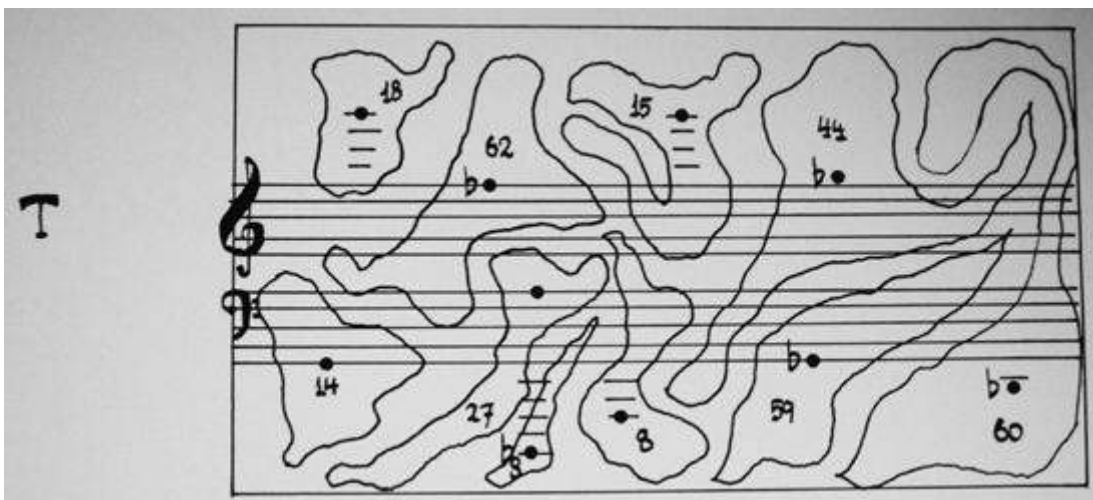
<sup>207</sup> For further discussion of the concept of performative authenticity and its history, see section: Authenticity and Authority. Also see Butt (2002), Kivy (1995) and Taruskin (1995). An important example of the dangers of reconstructing a performance practice can be observed in the case of Gagaku, thought to be a thousand year old Japanese orchestral music, but now revealed to be largely a 19th century construction, with little resemblance to ancient Gagaku (see Marett (2002)). Perhaps an even more perverse case of problems of authenticity can be found in Maori culture, where recent scholarship has found that many of the 'traditional' practices, and even many of the fundamental myths, to have been the product of the misinterpretation and invention of 19th century anthropologists (Taruskin 1995).

<sup>208</sup> Dickinson, Peter: "David Tudor", *Cage Talk: Dialogues with and about John Cage* (Rochester: University of Rochester, 2006). pp 86-87.

<sup>208</sup>Tudor's alternative explanation of the origins of the work, and his recollection of a precisely notated original score (as opposed to the simple 'tacet' score that Cage published) create dilemmas around the performance practice of this iconic work, even though it is a work consisting of silence. There are, in fact, three known versions of the score, the 'Tacet Edition' published by Peters Edition, the 'Kremen Manuscript' which was similar to the original score in proportional notation, though Tudor considered this manuscript to be different from the original (with the lengths of movements changed dramatically). The score that Tudor performed the premiere from, the 'Woodstock manuscript' is considered lost (Dickinson: 2006, p 87).

The problems with the old paradigms of performance practice become apparent as we observe the collaborations of Tudor and Cage. The case above was, of course, not the only example of their collaborative work. In fact, Tudor was Cage's performer of choice during the 1950s and 60s. In the words of Tudor scholar, John Holzaepfel, "Unique among Cage's many collaborators, Tudor was a driving force, in ways both concrete and intangible, in the development of Cage's music during its most revolutionary phase, a phase that began soon after Tudor appeared at a pivotal moment in Cage's career".<sup>209</sup> A complex relationship between score and performance can be observed in their collaboration on the *Concert for Piano and Orchestra* (1958). This work draws upon a range of different notational methods that Cage was using at the time, including a variety of approaches to graphic notation. Tudor's meticulous translations of these into his own performance score reveal the extent of Tudor's creative input, as well as the discipline he brought to creating his interpretations. The example below is Graph T from page 12 of the piano part.

**Example M.2: Graph T, page 12, *Concert for Piano and Orchestra* by John Cage**

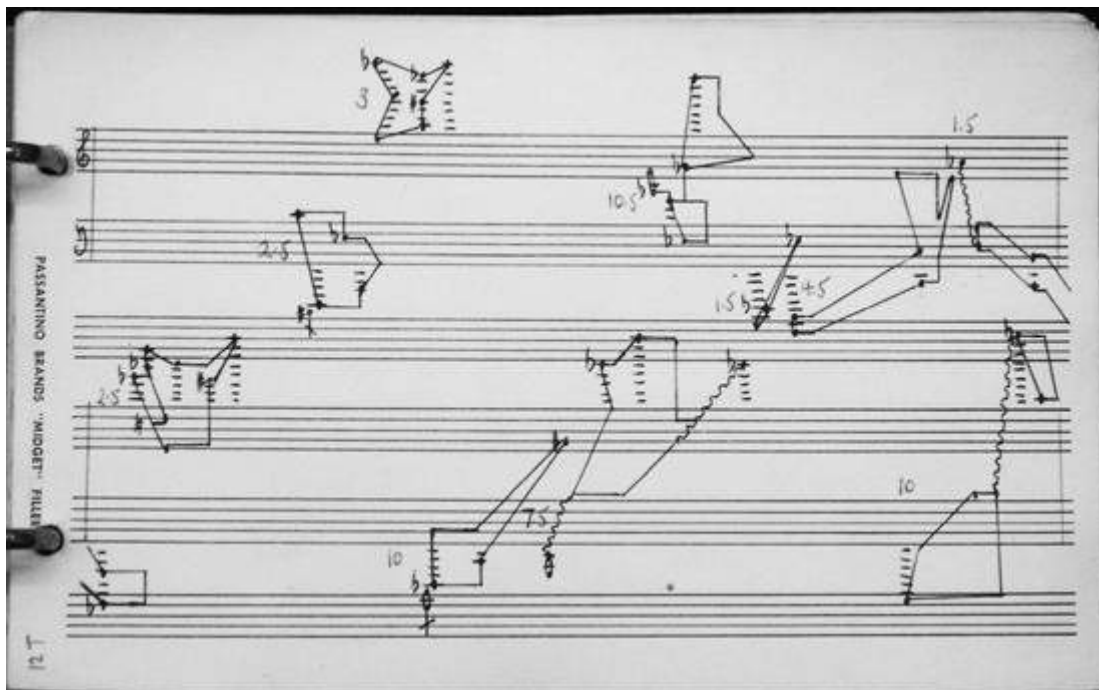


In translating this into a performance score, Tudor translates Cage's numbers into a dynamic scale (ranging from 0 to 10.5), using the central notes within each

<sup>209</sup> Holzaepfel, John: "Cage and Tudor", *The Cambridge Companion to John Cage*, (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 2002), p 169.

shape to determine their order within the passage, and translates the graphical lines into clusters and glissandi.<sup>210</sup>

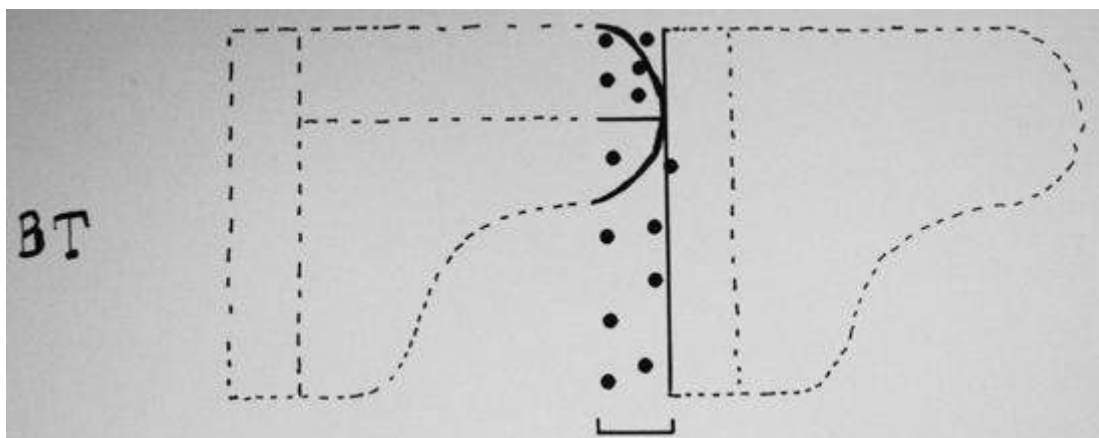
**Example M.3: Tudor's realization of Graph T, Page 12 of Cage's *Concert for Piano and Orchestra***



The above example demonstrates a relatively literal translation of Cage's score into Tudor's performance score. The following example shows a less direct trajectory. The following example is Graph BT from page 54 of the solo piano part.

<sup>210</sup> Schankler, Isaac: "Cage = 100: David Tudor and the Performance Practice of *Concert for Piano and Orchestra*", *New Music Box*, <http://www.newmusicbox.org/articles/cage-tudor-concert-for-piano-and-orchestra>, 2012 (accessed 2 February 2013).

**Example M.4: Graphy BT, page 54, *Concert for Piano and Orchestra* by John Cage**



Tudor chose to interpret those points which intersect the curve of the first piano as effects on the strings or body of the piano, points which come close to the keyboard of the second piano as gestures on the keys, and points away from both as sounds from other, non-pianistic sources (extreme-grade extensions - see *Mythologies: The Piano*), an approach that is logical but far from being the only possible realisation of this oblique notation. The following example shows the interpretation of graph BT 54 as it appears in Tudor's realisation.

**Example M.5: Tudor's realization of Graph BT, Page 54 of Cage's *Concert for Piano and Orchestra*.**

The approach undoubtedly demonstrates what has often been said of Tudor and his approach to interpretation,

They show how Tudor found in indeterminate music a means by which he could expand his own 'sound imagination' by creating an equilibrium between responsibility and freedom, between the exigencies his close readings produced from a composer's text and the possibilities open to a virtuoso performer who could exercise a virtuoso imagination.<sup>211</sup>

One might imagine a myriad of other approaches to interpreting Graph BT, yet Tudor's rigour and imagination create a version that attracts the label of 'definitive'. Although these sketches by Tudor provide insight into his collaboration with Cage, there is no documentation of how closely they worked on these realisations, whether suggestions were proffered, clarifications sought and adjustments made. We know only that Cage approved of Tudor's performances of the work, and that their lifelong collaborative partnership gave Tudor an insight into Cage's process and intentions that would be difficult access for any other performer.

Although Cage's scores may seem to invite a wide variety of interpretations, some far removed from Tudor's approach, Cage was sometimes very specific about the types of interpretations he would tolerate and frequently expressed his disdain for performers who erred from his vision. Some performers, such as some members of the orchestra who played in the premiere of the *Concert*, were simply unprofessional: adding 'exaggerated corny blues riffs' and fragments of orchestral repertoire, including a 'tuba ostinato from Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps*'.<sup>212</sup> However, even when performers interpreted Cage's scores with serious intent, they would sometimes stray from Cage's intentions. During a performance in 1975 by baritone, Julius Eastman, of Cage's *Song Books*, he proceeded to slowly undress his boyfriend onstage, and then began to do the same to his sister, who stopped him protesting "No Julius, no!". The following day, Cage, in a rare rage, exclaimed "I'm tired of people who think that they could do

---

<sup>211</sup> Holzaepfel (2002), p 185.

<sup>212</sup> Holzaepfel, John: "David Tudor and the Performance of American Experimental Music, 1950-1959", Ph.D. dissertation, (New York: City University of New York, 1994), p 208.

whatever they want with my music!"<sup>213</sup> However, Eastman claimed he was sincerely following the score, featuring roadmaps, numerals in different typefaces and other unconventional notational practices and that the assignation of the verb "undress" to one of the numerical symbols was consistent with the instructions.<sup>214</sup> Here, the Practice in question is Cage's 'taste' and his unscored intentions for interpretation, but there would be no way for Eastman to know Cage's interpretative tastes without making contact with him or his inner circle of performers. In addition, one cannot fault Eastman for failing to realise that such a seemingly un-Cagean level of interpretative restriction could exist in the performance practice of a work by Cage.

Here we face the dilemma of performance practice as applied to Cage. Whereas in previous musical periods, the type of notation used, the approach to interpreting that notation and the stylistic norms were largely common among large communities of performers and composers for relatively long periods, in the case of Cage, there is no uniformity of notation, either with other composers, and to some extent, among his own works. There are relatively few performers who worked with Cage on these works, too few to form a community that could be relied upon to pass their knowledge of his performance practice on to the next generation. Most significantly, Tudor's major role in creating the performance practice for these works, sometimes independently of Cage, has been little documented, with the focus of scholars and biographers largely ignoring Tudor's role and focussing on Cage, as the composer of the works. When the notation and methods of performance are specific not just to a composer, but to individual works and collaborations, then the performance practice is no longer shared

---

<sup>213</sup> Panzer, Joe: "Crises of Authenticity", *Stylus Magazine*, [http://www.stylusmagazine.com/articles/weekly\\_article/john-cage-crises-of-authenticity.htm](http://www.stylusmagazine.com/articles/weekly_article/john-cage-crises-of-authenticity.htm), 2003 (accessed 3 March 2013).

<sup>213</sup>Richard Taruskin, in his rather acerbic obituary of Cage, goes a step further and claims that Cage actually behaved more like a traditional composer, with a traditional view of composer/work/performer hierarchies than he would want to admit, and that 4'33" is a prime example of this traditional relationship - the work is presented with all the traditional constraints and rituals of a work by Beethoven: the published, and copyrighted score, the presentation within a concert program, the acknowledgement of Cage as the 'composer' and that this practice is carried out, not with irony but with deep reverence.

<sup>213</sup>Taruskin, Richard: "No ear for music: the scary purity of John Cage", *The New Republic*, 15th March 1993.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

among works and communities: it is site-specific (where the site may be a single work, a group of works, the work of a composer, or the work of a small group of composers). The absence of a notational *lingua franca* necessitates this new paradigm, where a knowledge of the collaboration between composer and performer (either through documentation or direct accounts) is vital to a performance that resembles the original intentions of the creator-collaborators. Whether we should choose to follow these intentions is explored elsewhere (see *Mythologies: Authority and Authenticity*), but with so much vital information missing, there is often no choice for the performer but to fill in the gaps themselves.

The lack of attention to the role of performers further frustrates attempts by contemporary performers to reconstruct site-specific performance practices. Given Tudor's recall of details concerning 4'33" that Cage had forgotten, as well as the detail of his translations of Cage's often messy and notationally ambiguous scores, it is possible that Cage was unaware of all the aspects of Tudor's site-specific performance practice with regards to these works, and that the lack of documentation of Tudor's methods has meant some aspects of his practice can no longer be recovered 15 years after his death. Tudor played a pivotal role not only in Cage's work but also in that of Wolff, Feldman and Earle Brown, among many others, leading Wolff to assert, "in the 1950s, the New York School's piano music had been written more for Tudor himself than it had been for the piano."<sup>215</sup> Given how little we know of Tudor's practice it would seem that a vast body of knowledge of site-specific performance practice of this relatively recent music is fast being lost, to the point where we may feel more confident about knowing the performance practice required to give a period performance of Mozart, than we do about the performance practice of the music of the 1950s. This is despite Tudor being one of the most famous performers of contemporary music of the 20th century. In the case of most contemporary music performers, documentation or scholarly attention to their contribution is non-existent.

My own recent experience of attempting to interpret, and edit the mistakes in, the score of Feldman's *Why Patterns?* demonstrated the ease with which vital

---

<sup>215</sup> Patterson, D: "Celebrating a Life", *Musicworks*, No. 67, 1997, pp 57-58.



site-specific performance practice can be lost within a generation. *Why Patterns?*, like many of Feldman's works, is notated as a complete score, but with no exact vertical alignment between the parts – a notational gambit that introduces an element of chance into the performance and disrupts any traditional notion of ensemble cohesion. I, and the two other performers (Lamorna Nightingale, flute and Claire Edwardes, percussion), found that when we performed the work, Claire would get to the end of the piece around five minutes before the piano, and the flute would get to the end about a minute before the piano. Adding to the puzzle, one of the few existing recordings, by the California Ear Unit, had all the instruments finishing at the same time.<sup>216</sup> Missing time signatures and clef changes in the score added to our doubts – were we missing some critical knowledge of Feldman's practice that others had accessed? Feldman had been dead for more than 20 years, meaning that only an older generation of performers would have had any contact with him, even fewer would have worked with him on this piece, and fewer still could be easily contactable. After several dead ends, we contacted John Snijders, a Dutch pianist who had worked on this piece with Feldman in the early 1980s. Snijders confirmed that several time signatures and clef changes were indeed missing, and also confirmed that our staggered ending was intended by Feldman, in contrast to the recording by the California Ear Unit. Snijders was able to answer many questions and give us a glimpse at Feldman's performance practice, but any notion that this exchange constitutes a 'tradition' seems tenuous when compared to the vibrant culture of research and debate that surrounds traditions of older western music. Indeed, the weakness of this type of 'tradition' is most simply demonstrated by Stockhausen's score for *Mantra* (1970), which in its introduction, explains:

All questions concerning performance practice can be answered by:  
Aloys Kontarsky, (5000) Köln, Löwenburgstraße 27, West Germany  
Bruno Canino, via L. Valtora 1, (20136) Milano, Italy

A convenient solution for Stockhausen, but not for performers who come to *Mantra* in 50 years time.

---

<sup>216</sup> California Ear Unit (Vicki Ray, Arthur Jarvinen and Dorothy Stone): *Morton Feldman: Rothko Chapel/Why Patterns?*, New Albion Records, B000000R2Z, 2009.

David Tudor remains a model and an inspiration and I aspire, in my own collaborations, to emulate his relationship to Cage, a relationship that's acutely observed in the following story by Cage from his work *Indeterminacy* (1959).

Two wooden boxes containing Oriental spices and foodstuffs arrived from India. One was for David Tudor, the other for me. Each of us found, on opening his box, that the contents were all mixed up. The lids of containers of spices had somehow come off. Plastic bags of dried beans and palm sugar had ripped open. The tin lids of cans of chili powder had come off. All of these things were mixed with each other and with the excelsior which had been put in the box to keep the containers in position. I put my box in a corner and simply tried to forget about it. David Tudor, on the other hand, set to work. Assembling bowls of various sizes, sieves of about eleven various-sized screens, a pair of tweezers, and a small knife, he began a process which lasted three days, at the end of which time each spice was separated from each other, each bean from each other, and the palm sugar lumps had been scraped free of spice and excavations in them had removed embedded beans. He then called me up to say, "Whenever you want to get at that box of spices you have, let me know. I'll help you."

## Music as Sound

Music is conventionally considered as a sonic art, and indeed the sales of Classical CDs outstrips the sale of DVDs of classical music performance 100 to 1.<sup>217</sup> A standard musical dictionary such as Grove Music Online finds many widely varying approaches to classifying music but still determines that “there may be disagreement on the need for explicit definition, but all these works maintain that music involves sounds and their combination.”<sup>218</sup>

Of course, music can also activate or even require the other senses, and David Gorton argues that the predominance of audio recordings over video recordings ingrains habits of reception.

Sound isolated from instrumental production is possible through radio, CDs and downloads, for example, and has brought with it a different listening etiquette. Fidelity, in this context, means fidelity to sound alone, isolated sound refracted through recording technologies. But listening to a performance is not just listening to sound, it is experiencing embodied practice.<sup>219</sup>

Simon Shaw-Miller, in his book, *Visible Deeds of Music*, explores the many ways in which music functions as a visual as well as sonic art. Many graphic scores draw on the aesthetics and techniques of the visual arts in communicating to their performers. As an example,

In the work of Sylvano Bussotti, his *Five Pieces for David Tudor* of 1959, for example, the elaborate use of graphic elements, distorting and overwhelming conventional musical symbols, reduces their role as signifiers of specific musical events (in pitch and time) and produces a set of more tenuous connections with improvisation - the score is then unbalanced in the direction of graphics and

---

<sup>217</sup> The proportion changes from year to year. In 2011, total album sales in Britain (both physical and digital) was around £603 million while for DVDs (and online downloads of videos) the total was around £4 million a ratio of 150 to 1. As another measure, classical CDs are certified Gold in the UK after 100,000 copies are sold, while for classical DVDs, the threshold is 1000 copies.

The British Recorded Music Industry (BPI): Fact and Figures, <http://www.bpi.co.uk/facts-figures.aspx>, accessed 13 June 2013.

<sup>218</sup> Nettl, Bruno: “Music”, *Grove Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed June 25, 2013, <http://0->

[www.oxfordmusiconline.com.catalogue.ulrls.lon.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/40476](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.catalogue.ulrls.lon.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/40476).

<sup>219</sup> Gorton, David, Shaw-Miller, Simon and Heyde, Neil: “Instrumental Choreography: Gesture and Performance in Gorton’s *Capriccio for Solo Cello*”, *Music and its Instruments*, proceedings of the 2009 Paris CIM (interdisciplinary Musicology Conference).

visual art. For Bussotti, musical results, whatever they may be, flow directly from the visual. The ear plays no part until the work is performed.<sup>220</sup>

Shaw-Miller categorises graphic scores as ‘transformational hybrids’, but I would argue that graphic scores differ from conventional scores by degree and not by type – all scores are visual objects, and the aesthetics of the layout and style of a conventional score has just as great an impact on a performer as the functional content.<sup>221</sup>

Perhaps most importantly, musical performance can be seen as multimedia art, as Shaw-Miller explains,

Both music and the visual arts consist in the interplay between objects in space and comprehension in time; sound cannot be divorced from the means of its production or its consumption – actual bodies in space and history – any more than visual art can be understood apart from the notion of temporal action and comprehension.<sup>222</sup>

Shaw-Miller cites John Cage’s *4’33”* as an extreme example that emphatically demonstrates the visual dimension of musical performance.

Because the piece gave the audience members nothing to listen to from the performer, they were made even more aware of the spectacle, the “theatre”, the visual nature of musical performance.<sup>223</sup>

When considering the canon of Fluxus works, combining music, theatre and the visual arts, the notion that musical performance is a sonic art seems ludicrous. Nam Jun Paik’s *One for Violin Solo* (1961) is a violent (and in some performances, humorous) commentary on the bourgeois conventions of the classical music performance as well as a tribute to the theatrical, guitar-smashing antics of Jimi Hendrix and Pete Townshend. The theatrical content is fundamental, and considering it in purely sonic terms (such as on a recording) removes the most crucial content.<sup>224</sup>

---

<sup>220</sup> Shaw-Miller, Simon: *Visible Deeds of Music: art and music from Wagner to Cage* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), pp21-22.

<sup>221</sup> This approach to graphic scores is explored in more detail in Chapter 5 and the consideration of style on notation is considered in the case study on Michael Finnissy’s *Z/K* in Chapter 1. Also see *Mythologies: Notation*.

<sup>222</sup> Shaw-Miller (2002), p 34.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.* p 215.

<sup>224</sup> It is of course, debatable whether Fluxus works should be considered music. For a thorough consideration of these questions, see:

One should not assume that the importance of visual elements in music is the sole preserve of contemporary works. As will be discussed later, many virtuoso works exploit the visual spectacle of certain techniques or play with the gap between visual and sonic perception, with 19th century pianist, Sigismond Thalberg gaining an international reputation for his 'three-hand technique' (see *Mythologies: Virtuosity*).<sup>225</sup> As well as being used to impress, the visual dimensions of a piece can be used to humorous effect. In his conversations with Robert Craft, Stravinsky recalled a particular example of the intentionally visual aspect of his music.

R.C. Has music ever been suggested to you by a purely visual experience of movement, line, or pattern?

I.S. Countless times, though I can only cite one instance of it at the moment. During the composition of the second of my Three Pieces for String Quartet, I had been fascinated by the movements of Little Tich, whom I had seen in London in 1914, and the jerky, spastic movements, the ups and downs, the rhythms, even the mood or joke of the music, which I later called *Excentrique*, was suggested by the art of this great clown. And 'suggested' seems to me the right word, for it does not try to 'approfondir' the relationship, whatever it is.<sup>226</sup>

Recent research by Chia-Jung Tsay has further highlighted the importance of the visual dimension of music to audiences. Using videos of piano competitions, Tsay was able to demonstrate that her test subjects could predict the winners at a much higher rate when watching only the visual component when compared to subjects using the audio-only and audio-visual recordings.<sup>227</sup> Tsay's conclusion that the visual dimensions of music may take precedence over sound is limited by the experimental subject of piano competitions, where choices of winners are

---

Gartner, Geoffrey: "Piano Album: Short Piano Pieces, 1962-1984 by Dick Higgins: a D.I.Y. kit for creative people of the non-automaton kind", D.M.A. Dissertation, (San Diego: University of San Diego, 2009).

<sup>225</sup> Though the "three-hand" technique is closely associated with Thalberg, he did not invent it, but made it his own by combining this compositional technique (using the thumbs of each hand to share a melody in the centre of the keyboard, while arpeggios cloud around it from above and below) with his formidable pianistic technique and singing tone, allowing him to, at one point, rival Liszt's standing as a virtuoso: Gooley, Dana: *The Virtuoso Liszt*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p 25.

<sup>226</sup> Stravinsky, Igor and Craft, Robert: *Memories and Commentaries*, (Faber: London, 1960), p 265.

<sup>227</sup> Tsay, Chia-Jung: "Sight over Sound in the Judgement of Music Performance", *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 2013.

often controversial. But it does suggest that the visual dimensions of music are much more important than we might like to think – indeed the ‘expert’ participants in her study were shocked by the results.<sup>228</sup>

The importance of the visual aspects of live performances should not be seen as a problem, but an opportunity for performers and composers to discover new ways of using the visual aspects to support or subvert the sonic.

---

<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

# The Work

Since the first actor took off his mask, the actors who have succeeded him have no longer been considered as mere instruments or puppets, fully entering into the temple of Thalia as creators.

– Javier Bardem, 2011<sup>229</sup>

The concept of the ‘work’ is one of the central myths of music. In conventional and popular usage, the work, created by a sole (genius) author, the composer, endures as a score that is then interpreted by performers. However, this quasi-Platonic conception of the work is highly contentious.

Although debates over ‘work concept’ may seem to be of concern primarily to musicologists, they are, in fact, highly pertinent when considering the legal and remunerative rights of performers. Performers’ rights vary between countries: in the UK, performers have property rights over audio recordings of their work, but not audio-visual recordings. In the USA, performers’ rights are automatically assigned to producers. All performers have moral rights over recordings under the Rome Convention of 1961 but these and other so-called “neighbouring rights” can be easily transferred or waived.<sup>230</sup> Importantly, they do not collect royalties, as ‘authors’ do. As we shall see, the discrete and often binary opposition between ‘authors’ and ‘performers’ in the law masks the complexities of these roles in practice.

It could be argued that the conventional assignment of authorship to a single author is much simpler when considering writers, in contrast to the performing arts. But the notion of sole authorship in the seemingly collaboration-free world of the writer has been increasingly challenged, in particular by Jack Stlinger, who explores a number of examples of multiple authorship in writers and authors in his book, *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius* (1991). Stlinger assembles a large body of evidence suggesting that John Stuart Mill’s wife, Harriet Mill, played a major role in co-authoring and editing his

---

<sup>229</sup> Bardem, Javier speaking at the World International Property Organisation, July 2011, <http://www.wipo.int/pressroom/en/briefs/performers.html> (accessed 4 June 2013).

<sup>230</sup> In my own recordings for the ABC and BBC, I have had to sign contracts where I waive all my property rights, and most of my moral rights, in return for a flat fee.

autobiography as well as several of his major works, including *On Liberty* (1859).<sup>231</sup> He goes on to explore similar case studies where he shows that major works by Coleridge, Wordsworth, T.S. Eliot and F. Scott Fitzgerald were not the sole creation of their attributed authors but the product of collaboration with colleagues (such as Ezra Pound, in the case of T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*) spouses, editors, agents and publishers.

In music, activity is naturally divided between different musicians with defined roles as 'composer' or 'performer', with musical notation forming the basis for communication between these roles. In this sense, it is closer to models in other performing arts rather than writing, including those found on stage and film. Orson Welles once said "Theatre is a collective experience; cinema is the work of one single person."<sup>232</sup> But whereas the 'sole-creator' in music is conventionally considered to be the composer, in film, the 'auteur' is today almost always considered to be the director (the primary interpreter of the screenplay), not the screenwriter (the 'author' of the material that the director interprets). Andrew Sarris sums up the conventional *auteur* theory:

The first premise of the auteur theory is the technical competence of a director as a criterion of value... The second premise of the auteur director is the distinguishable personality of the director as a criterion of value... The third and ultimate premise of the auteur theory is concerned with interior meaning, the ultimate glory of the cinema as an art. Interior meaning is extrapolated from the tension between a director's personality and his material.<sup>233</sup>

Within this theory, the work of directors is seen as the output of a single artist, with their output forming a 'filmography', containing intertextual references and the fingerprints of the director. Alfred Hitchcock is a convenient example as his films use and re-use particular devices and tropes.<sup>234</sup> It is notable how, despite

---

<sup>231</sup> Stillinger, Jack: *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) p 66.

<sup>232</sup> Welles, Orson in Kael, Pauline: "Raising Kane", *The New Yorker*, 20 February 1971.

<sup>233</sup> Sarris, Andrew: "Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962", *Film Culture*, 62/3 (1962). It is notable that the formulation of Auteur Theory coincides with the increasing influence of European filmmakers such as Goddard, Fellini and Truffaut on American directors and with the end of the "Golden Era" of studio-led filmmaking leading to the director-led New Hollywood era.

<sup>234</sup> As Pauline Kael points out, this is a fallacious argument. Hitchcock's distinctiveness is not a mark of quality, only of that fact that he repeats tropes and techniques more than other directors. See:

<sup>234</sup>Kael, Pauline: "Circles and Squares", *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Spring 1963), p 15.



criticisms of auteur theory, it has taken hold in the public consciousness and we think of *E.T. the Extra Terrestrial* (1982) and *Schindler's List* (1993) as films by Steven Spielberg, whereas the screenwriters Melissa Mathison and Steven Zallian are considered important but subsidiary creators.<sup>235</sup> This seems to be the inverse of the conventional composer-performer hierarchy in music.

It might be argued that writer-directors such as Stanley Kubrick, Woody Allen and Quentin Tarantino could be more appropriately considered auteurs, although critic Pauline Kael claims that even this is a simplification of the collaborative nature of film, in which actors, crew, producers and studio executives all have significant creative input.<sup>236</sup> Even *Citizen Kane*, seemingly dominated by writer/director/starring actor, Orson Welles, does not fit the model. In her 1971 paper, "Raising Kane", Pauline Kael calls into question Welles' place as one of the first auteurs, showing that there was enormous creative input from many, including an ensemble of actors he had already collaborated with at the Mercury Theatre, composer Bernard Herrmann and co-writer Herman Mankiewicz. Mankiewicz was, Kael argues, the primary author of the screenplay, and Welles deliberately usurped his title of author as part of a strategy of myth-making which was only thwarted when Mankiewicz complained to the Writers Guild.<sup>237</sup> The arguments surrounding film authorship are relevant to all of the performative arts, which similarly have divided roles between writers and performers. As we will see, the creative splits in musical collaborations are at least as complicated as those mentioned above in film.

As in film, collaboration between the practitioners of different roles has always been central to music. As Heyde and Fitch point out, there are also a number of 19<sup>th</sup>-century manuscripts that seem to almost certainly show the existence of collaborative composition, including the autographs of the Brahms-

---

<sup>235</sup> I use Spielberg here as an example from the modern period of Hollywood filmmaking, demonstrating that the auteur theory has outlasted the director-driven French New Wave and New Hollywood periods of the 1960s and 70s in which the term first gained currency. A rival theory, Schreiber Theory, has been recently coined by David Kipen, claiming screenwriters as the primary authors. See: Kipen, David: *The Schreiber Theory*, (New York: Melville Manifestors, 2006).

<sup>236</sup> Kael (1971).

<sup>237</sup> *ibid.* The use of the same actors he had previously collaborated with in the theatre seems to undermine his previous quote about the differences between theatre and film.

Joachim and Elgar–Kreisler concertos, or the Chopin–Franchomme Grand Duo (with the piano part written in Chopin’s hand and the cello part in Franchomme’s).<sup>238</sup> Brahms’s collaboration with Joachim on his violin concerto is well documented, with letters as well as manuscripts revealing glimpses of a complex collaborative creative process similar to those observed in this thesis.<sup>239</sup> David Oistrakh recorded his telephone conversations with Dmitri Shostakovich, capturing their collaborative refinement of Shostakovich’s Violin Concerto.<sup>240</sup> Even Beethoven, the exemplar of our modern conception of the solitary, genius composer, collaborated with his performers, including changing the time signature of a movement of one of his piano trios in response to criticism by cellist, Nikolaus Kraft.<sup>241</sup>

As abundant as this evidence of collaboration may be, the myth of the composer-as-sole-author-of-a-musical-work has more fundamental flaws. Lydia Goehr in her 1993 book, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, argued that the concept of a musical work is a modern, and modernist construction that began ‘around 1800’. Although the starting date is open to debate, Goehr presents a convincing case that Bach did not think that he created musical ‘works’, in the modern sense of the word, but that Brahms almost certainly did. Goehr’s provides a definition of the work as we use it today:

[We] see works as objectified expressions of composers that prior to compositional activity did not exist. We do not treat works as objects just made or put together, like tables and chairs, but as original, unique products of a special, creative activity. We assume, further, that the tonal, rhythmic and instrumental properties of works are constitutive of structurally integrated wholes that are symbolically represented by composers in scores. Once created, we treat works as

---

<sup>238</sup> Heyde (2007), p 72.

<sup>239</sup> Schwartz suggests a process involving frequent correspondence (including sketches and score materials) several multi-day workshops, and further collaborative revisions after the first two performances. Most of the changes relate to the specific figuration of virtuoso techniques on the violin, such as cycling arpeggios and large leaps.

Schwarz, Boris: “Joachim and the Genesis of Brahms’s Violin Concerto”, *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 69, No. 4 (Autumn, 1983), pp. 503-526.

<sup>240</sup> Jusefovich, Viktor: David Oistrakh: *Conversations with Igor Oistrakh*, trans by Nicholas de Pfeiffer, (London: Cassell, 1977), p 176.

<sup>241</sup> Wegeler in Thayer, Alexander Wheelock: *The Life of Ludwig van Beethoven* (London: Centaur Press, 1960, originally published 1860), p 180.

existing after their creators have died, and whether or not they are performed or listened to at any given time.<sup>242</sup>

Such a conception of the musical work gained particular currency in the 20th century, among early proponents of the Historically Informed Performance movement (see *Mythologies: Authority and Authenticity*), as well as writers on aesthetics, such as Nelson Goodman, who simply divides artworks into the 'allographic' which are reproducible due to the existence of notation, and works which are autographic, where any reproduction is a forgery. Goodman defines the relationship between a notated work and its performance thus:

Complete compliance with the score is the only requirement for a genuine instance of a work [...] Thus while a score may leave unspecified many features of a performance, and allow for considerable variation in others within certain prescribed limits, full compliance with the specifications given is categorically required.<sup>243</sup>

In the light of the complex issues of authority, authenticity and performance practice discussed in this thesis, it is clear that Goodman's conception of music as an allographic type of work, with the authenticity of performances measured simply by their adherence to the score, is an inadequately simplistic model. A much closer description of the relationship of score to performance is provided by Adorno:

The musical score is never identical with the work; devotion to the text means the constant effort to grasp that which it hides... an interpretation which does not bother about the music's meaning on the assumption that it will reveal itself of its own accord will inevitably be false since it fails to see that the meaning is always constituting itself anew.<sup>244</sup>

Goehr also problematises any simple analytic conception of the work, such as Goodman's autographic/allographic dichotomy.

Music works enjoy a very obscure mode of existence; they are 'ontological mutants'. Works cannot, in any straightforward sense be physical, mental or ideal objects... They are not identical, furthermore, to any of their performances. Performances take place in real time; their parts succeed one another. The temporal dimension of works is different; their parts exist simultaneously.

---

<sup>242</sup> Goehr, Lydia: *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p 2.

<sup>243</sup> Goodman, Nelson: *Languages of Art* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1968), pp 186-187

<sup>244</sup> Adorno, T. W.: *Prisms* (S. a. S. Weber, Trans.) in Östersjö (2008), p 60.

Neither are works identical to their scores. There are properties of the former, say, that are not attributable to the latter. And if all the copies of a Beethoven Symphony are destroyed, the symphony itself does not thereby cease to exist.<sup>245</sup>

As an alternative model to the conventional composer → score (work) → performer hierarchy, Östersjö proposes a more fluid model, 'The Field of the Music Work'. He follows Ricoeur in resisting the traditional definition of roles of the composer as 'creator' and the performer as 'interpreter'. Ricoeur argues that the author is disengaged from the work by the act of writing, a theory that is similar (though not as extreme) as the claim of authorial irrelevance made by Barthes.

The text is the very place where the author appears. But does the author appear otherwise than as first reader? The distancing of the text from its author is already a phenomenon of the first reading that, in one move, poses the whole series of problems that we are now going to confront concerning the relations between explanation and interpretation. These relations arise at the time of reading.<sup>246</sup>

Following this Östersjö states:

The construction of a score-based work consists of dialectic interplay between creation and interpretation, in which the composer— even during the act of writing—has to approach the notation by means of interpretation. This is also the reason why we encounter a surplus of meaning in scores. The content of a work is displayed bit-by-bit as it is continually reconsidered in new readings. The traditional view of the composer representing the productive phase and the performer the reproductive is questioned by this analogical reflection on the artistic process, in the light of Ricoeur's philosophy. Hence, we arrive at a modification of the traditional scheme of construction/reproduction, instead including construction but also interpretation in the composer's creative process.<sup>247</sup>

Mirroring this new conception of the composition process, Östersjö draws on the work of Stecker to reconceive the performative process. Stecker defines critical interpretation as:

*Being an interpretation of* is a relation between a thought or an utterance on the one hand and an object of interpretation on the other. In the case of art [...] an utterance about a work is *an interpretation of* the work, only if it says something

---

<sup>245</sup> Goehr (1992), p 3.

<sup>246</sup> Ricoeur, Paul: *From Text to Action*, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991). pp 109-110.

<sup>247</sup> Östersjö (2008), p 58.

about the meaning of a work, about a meaning it could have or was intended to have, or about the work's significance.<sup>248</sup>

There is certainly an element of this type of interpretation in the preparatory work for a performance, what John Rink calls a performer's analysis, "a considered study of the score with particular attention to contextual functions and the means of projecting them".<sup>249</sup> But significantly, Stecker then argues that the performances themselves fail to meet the criteria to be considered interpretations.

If performances and critical interpretations are both representations of works, they are so in quite different senses. If we ignore these differences, we can easily be misled to make invalid inferences. Performances are *necessarily constructive*; that is, they necessarily add features that the work leaves vague or undetermined.<sup>250</sup>

So, according to Östersjö's argument, though the preparation for performances may include interpretative acts, the performances themselves are creative acts. Considering my exploration of the importance to performers and composers of the performance history of works (see *Mythologies: Performance Practice*) and the inevitability of the creative input of performers (see *Mythologies: Authority and Authenticity*), this conclusion is consistent with the conclusions to these parallel discussions. Östersjö, borrowing from Nattiez, goes on to find, in the processes of both composers and performers a "complex interaction between the *esthetic* and *poietic* processes" and an "oscillating interaction between all the different agents that are involved in the process".<sup>251</sup> Here we have a model where composers and performers are both creators and interpreters, with the output of these processes: scores, performances, recordings and even correspondence as traces of these processes.

---

<sup>248</sup> Stecker, R: *Interpretation and Construction: Art, Speech and the Law* (Malden: Blackwell, 2003). p 82.

<sup>249</sup> Rink, John: *Musical Performance: A guide to understanding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p 39.

<sup>250</sup> Stecker (2003), p 83.

<sup>251</sup> Östersjö (2008), p 68. In place of these conventional conceptions of composer and performer, Östersjö draws on Nattiez' tripartite conception of musical processes. Jean-Jacques Nattiez employs a semiotic tripartition of *poietic* (or productive) processes and *esthetic* (or interpretive) processes that take place around the *neutral* physical traces of these processes.

<sup>251</sup>Nattiez, Jean-Jacques: *Music and Discourse: Towards a Semiology of Music*, translated by Carolyn Abbate (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) p 15.

From this theoretical backbone, Östersjö posits his theory of the Field of the Musical Work. In this new model, Östersjö partially salvages the ‘work concept’ by conceiving the work as a network of relationships, between composer and performers, as well as the multiple texts created by them including scores and performances.<sup>252</sup> I would add the audience, musicologists, critics as other agents in the process, and their recollections and writings as other ‘texts’ (and indeed they are considered as such by performers researching historical performance practices). This is a conception similar to that of Georgina Born, who proposes a model of music where creativity is distributed spatially, socially, culturally and temporally (see Introduction), as well as that of Benson who uses a Heideggerian phenomenological conception of the work in stating:

If we say (modifying Heidegger) that a piece of music opens up a world, it should be clear that this “world” of the piece of music is one that is not self-contained. Rather, it is a world within a world, a musical space that is created *within* and *out of* a larger musical practice. Moreover, just as the world of Dasein is not a *physical* world but a world of activity, so the piece of music is likewise a world of activity. It is a “space” that is both created by and allows for musical activity. But what does it mean for a performer to exist within this space? Of course, in one sense, the answer is obvious. If composers improvise their pieces amid the activity of music making, then performers are *already there*.<sup>253</sup>

In this larger view of musical interactions, the Field of the Musical Work is just one network of relationships, within the much larger network of all musical activity. Most importantly, there is no static work concept here, but an ‘identity in the making’ with the Field dynamic and constantly changing.<sup>254</sup> I feel the most subversive extrapolation of Benson’s argument is that the boundaries of the field are illusory, and given how interrelated the many texts of different ‘works’ are, the work-dependent concepts of identity and originality could also be considered to be subjective (and selective) interpretations of this complex network of relationships.

Despite having problematised the conventional conception of the musical work, I will still be referring to ‘works’ throughout this thesis, but I only use the

---

<sup>252</sup> Östersjö (2008), p 109.

<sup>253</sup> Benson, B.E.: *The Improvisation of Musical Dialogue: a phenomenology of music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p 148.

<sup>254</sup> Östersjö (2008), p 111.

term in its weakest possible sense, implying a distributed, delocalised, dynamic and ambiguously definable network of relationships in which the performer's creative contribution is potentially as vital as the composer's.

## Chapter 2: An Invitation into the Composer's Workshop

This case study presents an extreme but by no means uncommon scenario. Although many composers are willing to allow some collaboration while they are in the compositional phase of the project, some go further, and invite the performer to join them to collaboratively compose the score in joint workshops. Such an invitation may be the result of the rapport between composer and performer, the composer's attitude to all their collaborations, the desire to experiment and the pressure of time. All these factors were present in this collaboration, but none of them alone explains the course this case took.

Several questions arise when examining a collaboration where the performer is invited to join the composer to compose the work collaboratively in workshops.

- Do these conditions always favour integrative collaboration or are different modes present at different points in the process?
- Does the type of notation change when the time available for composition is limited but there is available time in workshops?
- Is composing the work in workshops more productive and/or more efficient than working predominantly as individuals?
- Is the language used in workshops developed to aid efficiency, or are non-verbal interactions a more efficient mode of communication?
- Are there still definite phases of composition and performance preparation or do these distinctions dissolve?
- Is there a limit to this type of collaborative work, and what factors bring the collaboration to a close?
- Do any 'short cuts' taken in the creative process before the premiere affect future performances of the work?



## Definitions: Thresholds

Thresholds of different types come into play in many different types of interactions.<sup>255</sup>

-there are technical thresholds, where the physical capacities and technique of the performer are pushed to their limits.

-there are time thresholds, where the amount of time required to learn a piece, or learn a technique is at its limit.

-there is a memory threshold, where the ability to remember large or complex information is at its limit.

-finally, there is a psychological threshold, where tolerances of criticism, aggression, rudeness and breaches of trust are put to the test.

We can define a *tolerance threshold* as the limit an artist is willing to bear on his/her personal resources (of the four types above). Pushing past a tolerance threshold therefore necessitates a radical re-evaluation of an artist's working practice and priorities, or a cessation of artistic work.

This chapter examines a single case study: *Interventions* (2010) by Alex Pozniak. The work was written collaboratively at Alex's invitation, an approach that catalysed a change in both our creative practices that would alter the piece, its score and its performance history.

## *Interventions* by Alex Pozniak

### **Origins of the work, and of our approach to collaboration**

Alex Pozniak and I first discussed collaborating on a new work in August 2009. The previous month, I had premiered his solo piano work, *Crush* (2008) which he wrote with minimal interaction with me, but which seemed to nonetheless suit my technique, temperament and programming needs very well. Alex's ability to tailor the techniques of the piece to my own can largely be attributed to our shared backgrounds: we not only shared musical tastes and

---

<sup>255</sup> For more on thresholds see *Mythologies: Virtuosity*.

interests, but also knowledge of repertoire and, crucially, the same piano teacher and a very similar approach to piano technique which undoubtedly assisted Alex in composing *Crush*. These connections allowed Alex to write passages that I find idiomatic without the necessity for close workshopping (as was the case in *Crush*). In the new work, Alex was keen to try a more integrated approach to collaboration, stating that he was particularly interested after hearing about my research into collaboration.<sup>256</sup> The premise of the work is that it would explore, and subvert, some of the theatrical aspects of piano recitals, and in particular, the role of the pageturner.<sup>257</sup> As the work progresses the page-turner gradually interferes more and more with the pianist until the page-turner becomes an equal performer on the stage.<sup>258</sup> The performative role of the pageturner would not be announced or detailed in the program so that the theatrical role of the pageturner, and theatre of the piece in general, would be as surprising for the audience as possible.<sup>259</sup> A diagram with some early ideas for the piece from December 2009 can be seen in Example 1.

---

<sup>256</sup> Discussed in the meeting of 20 August 2009.

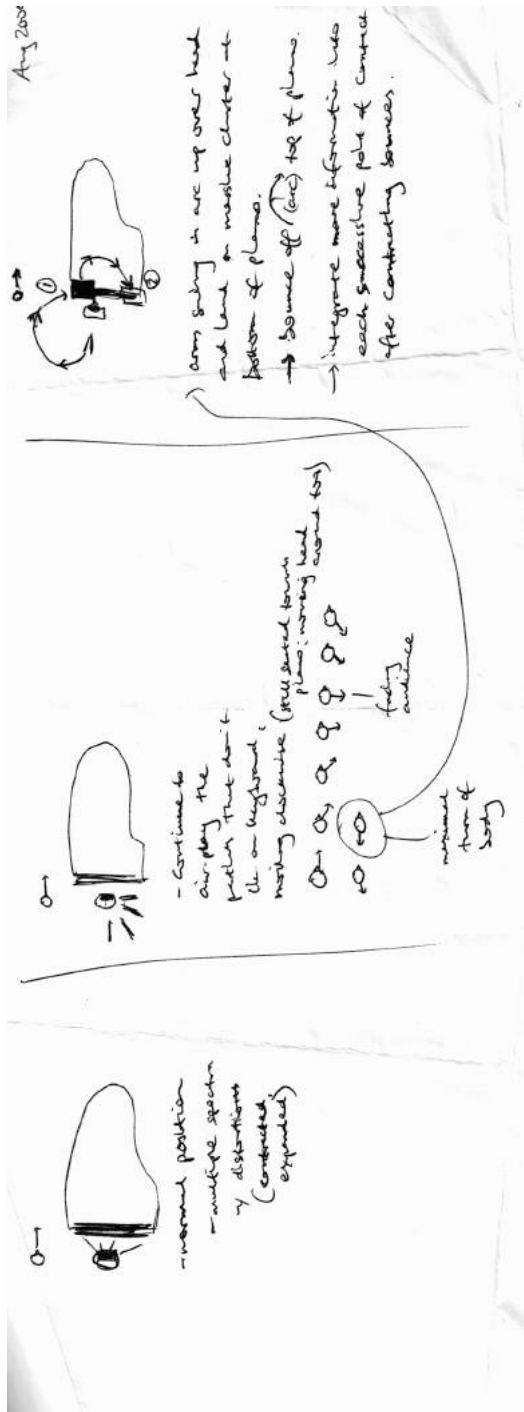
<sup>257</sup> Ibid.

<sup>258</sup> Though we were aware of works with some limited interaction between the pageturner and pianist, such as Marco Stroppa's *Miniature Estrosse* (1991-2002), the main inspiration was the gymnastic theatrics of Claudia Molitor's *Tango* (2007), which I had performed in Sydney in July 2009. There is a close resemblance between the diagrams used by Molitor and those used by Pozniak in the sketch in Example 1.

<sup>259</sup> Pozniak (interview, 19 March 2011). Though it is difficult to judge the success of any intentions to surprise or discomfort the audience, it is important at this stage to note this as one of the primary goals of the work. The surprise of seeing the pageturner take over and eventually play virtuosic cadenza was noted by Steven Berryman in his review of the London 2012 performance.

Berryman, Steven: "Piano: Inside/Out - Zubin Kanga @ Kings Place, London" (review), *I Care If You Listen, A blog about new classical music, art and technology*, [www.icareifyoulisten.com/2012/03/piano-insideout-zubin-kanga-kings-place-london](http://www.icareifyoulisten.com/2012/03/piano-insideout-zubin-kanga-kings-place-london), 27 March 2012, (accessed 2 February 2013).

**Example 2.1: Sketches from meeting, 20 August 2009**



Note that the focus of the sketch was on movement at and around the piano, not on conventional musical materials. The movement described in the diagram, in particular the pianist's hands leaving the piano after reaching the top of the keyboard, would eventually find its way into the final bar of the work.<sup>260</sup> We agreed on a deadline of 6 May 2010. At the time I believed this would give Alex sufficient time to compose the piece, including enough time for intensive workshops, but the commission did not go to plan. At the arrival of the deadline on May 6<sup>th</sup>, the piece was not finished: indeed it had not yet begun.

These circumstances created an environment for the composition of the piece that neither Alex nor I expected, as we were both pushed to the limits of our respective tolerance thresholds. Alex was pushed to the limit of the rate at which he could compose a new work in the time available before the premiere on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, and I was pushed to my limit in terms of how late I was willing to accept the piece and how quickly I would be able to learn it. The theatrical concept of the piece also demanded a more substantial amount of workshop time than with other commissions without this additional component. The pressures of time and complexity of the material created conditions that favoured an intensively integrative approach to collaborative composition. We both acknowledged that the successful completion and performance of the work would only be possible if we were both present at all stages of the composition and performance preparation, and that this would work well with our intended plan to workshop the piece during the composition process.<sup>261</sup> Fortunately, we both had enough time outside our other commitments to accommodate these workshops as well as

---

<sup>260</sup> As Pozniak stated in our 2011 interview, "it started with that idea of the pianist going up the keyboard, and going on and off the keyboard while you turn around to the audience, as a kind of weird thing to do in a performance situation . . . you'd keep on going and the audience would think 'what's happening' or 'when is this going to end'". He had been thinking about a number of works that play with or subvert the performative norms of a classical music performance, including a work for pianist and conductor, but *Interventions* is the first work to attempt to create a whole piece based around a theatrical concept.

Interview with Alex Pozniak (19 March 2011).

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.* Pozniak regards this collaboration as part of an intentional paradigm shift in his working patterns, from working with little or no interaction during the composition process, to intense collaboration while composing. This change in working methods began with his work for solo cello, *Mercurial* (2010), which involved intense workshopping with cellists, John Addison and Geoffrey Gartner.

access to rehearsal spaces at the University of Sydney. We had eight workshops and a dress rehearsal between May 10th and July 2<sup>nd</sup>, with most lasting two to four hours. The direction the composition took, and the final outcomes for both the score and the performance were greatly influenced by the pressures of working at our time-limited tolerance thresholds.

Alex was willing to allow me to dictate the trajectory of the piece from the earliest workshops. Observe the following exchange from our workshop of 11 June,

Zubin Kanga: And then what's next?

Alex Pozniak: I don't know . . . is that enough? Not really. Look the rest . . . this is what I wanted to brainstorm now. I don't think it'll take that long but I wanted to do this with you, rather than...

ZK: Yeah, so let's figure it out.

AP: Because we can do anything now.

This workshop occurred less than one month before the premiere. My question to him was intended to be rhetorical: I merely wanted to make it clear that I was unhappy to have half a piece finished so close to the date of the first performance. However, Alex interprets my question as both a request and an offer – to collaborate actively (or as he says, 'brainstorm') on the more choreographed, dramatic sections of the piece – an offer he was obviously counting on me making. He deliberately invites me into his creative space as a composer, asking (later in the same workshop),

AP: What do you want out of this piece? It's your piece. What do you want to do? It's your concert, you're on stage, this is the one piece where you can do whatever the hell you want. Do you want to go nuts? Do you want some *Herma*-style pointillism?

ZK: Yeah, well this one has to be kind of nuts, because there's nothing else that's really nuts in the first half.

AP: Fine, great, then let's go nuts.<sup>262</sup>

These exchanges frame the excerpts of the workshops that follow, demonstrating the complex interaction between time, creativity and the productive potential to

---

<sup>262</sup> Video of workshop with Alex Pozniak (10 May 2010). The 'going nuts' we refer to hear refers to both the virtuosity of the latter half of the piece as well as the experimentation with extended techniques and theatrical elements (the theme of the recital being about works that challenge the normal expectations of a piano recital). The '*Herma*-style pointillism' that Pozniak suggests here ends up appearing at bars 156-158 of the piece.

be found in breaking down the boundaries between composer and performer. As the workshops were long and each contained many types of work on different sections, I will address specific aspects and foci in turn, presenting the chronology of each focal point, rather than a global chronology of the workshops.

### ***Integrative Collaboration: how the compositional process is shared***

Much of *Interventions* is dependent on not just the notes to be played but also the choreography of how these notes are to be played. As discussed in our 2009 meeting, Alex intended the work to be full of play between the musical and extra-musical elements, so the conception and increasing dominance of the choreographed actions are one of the work's most important aspects. Borrowing terms from Claude Levi-Strauss, the choreography of the final stages is deliberately obvious and primitive: a 'raw' type of musical material as opposed to the more 'cooked', harmonically rich earlier sections: for example, reducing both performers to playing two-hand clusters up and down the keyboard – the kind of gesture that a small child might make on the piano.<sup>263</sup> Yet in this case it functions as the culmination of the takeover of the musical material by the work's theatrical dimension, with the increasing complexity of the choreography of the theatrical elements working in opposition to the decreasing complexity of the musical material.<sup>264</sup> Alex insisted on spending considerable time workshopping both the musical and theatrical material of this crucial passage.

Examining this climactic passage in more detail, here is a section of the original performance score, using quite a crude form of notational shorthand.

#### **Example 2.2: *Interventions* by Alex Pozniak: bars 163-165**

---

<sup>263</sup> Levi-Strauss, Claude: *The Raw and the Cooked*, trans. John and Doreen Weightman, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969).

<sup>264</sup> Interview with Alex Pozniak (19 March 2011).

Handwritten musical score for two pianists, ZK and AP, from measures 163 to 164. The score is heavily annotated with performance directions and diagrams. Measure 163 shows ZK and AP parts with notes, rests, and dynamic markings like "8vb (red) ... \* (secco)". Hand-drawn diagonal arrows connect notes between the two staves, labeled "CONDENSE register" and "walk around AP". Measure 164 begins with "molto rit" and continues with similar annotations, including "ff", "fff 8vb", and "walk around AP". The bottom system shows a "together" marking and a "P" dynamic marking.

Here, the hocketing of clusters between the pianists is roughly suggested by hand-drawn diagonal arrows, and the direction “walk around AP” is both highly contingent (referring to Alex Pozniak, rather than a generic second performer) and also completely inadequate for prescribing the complex choreography of the passage as it finally ended up. The theatrical device of the pianist switching places with the pageturner was mooted in the earliest discussions of the piece. But it is only in the workshops that the musical and theatrical detail of the passage and its placement within the structure of *Interventions* was decided collaboratively.

The video documentation of how this passage was ‘composed’ shows the complexity of our integrative approach. In this video (Video 2.1)<sup>265</sup> we see Alex and me improvising this section – at this moment, I take the lead, first by suggesting that a climax of clusters would be appropriate, then by improvising my movement off the stool and around to Alex’s left, then moving down to the bottom with him and moving around to his right, and so on, continuing this pattern on alternating sides of the piano.

**Video Example 2.1: Improvising the canon of clusters with Alex Pozniak, 18 June 2010**



Using our original 2009 discussion of the main features of the piece as my guide (especially the image he described to me of the two of us moving in synchronous waves across the keyboard) I start by suggesting we both play clusters to follow the previous section because, as I say, “Once you go all out, you’re done”, referring to the fact that anything other than a very loud climax would now seem anti-climactic. We then start improvising ascending and descending clusters, before I suggest that I move around him as a way of making it easier for me to always be the *dux* in the canon. I also justify this with the observation that it will be theatrically striking, in a way that would suit the climax.

---

<sup>265</sup> Video of workshop with Alex Pozniak (18 June 2010).



Although I generated the basic material, Alex fine tuned the details in succeeding workshops. In this video (Video 2.2)<sup>266</sup> we play through this section of clusters in one of the final rehearsals.

### Video Example 2.2: Workshop with Alex Pozniak, 25 June 2010



After our playthrough, Alex demonstrates in more detail what he wants out of this passage: he directs me to organise the distribution of clusters to roughly resemble a harmony based on a type of triangular series, and to also make the rhythms fall roughly into the pattern of this series – meaning the low clusters need to be taken much slower to get the feeling of exponential contraction of the rhythms.<sup>267</sup> This number series was described to me by Alex (in Workshop 1) as being the harmonic basis for the work, an assertion demonstrated by this early sketch (example 3) showing a range of pitch sets derived from the triangular series.

---

<sup>266</sup> Video of workshop with Alex Pozniak (25 June 2010).

<sup>267</sup> A standard triangular series increases by an increasing value with each iteration. That is: 0, 1, 3, 6, 10, 15, 21... with the general formula:  $x_n = n(n+1)/2$ . The series used in Interventions adds one to this series to become 1, 2, 4, 7, 1, 16, 22...

**Example 2.3: Sketch from Workshop 1, showing an altered triangular series and a list of closely related series (the second term in each series is changed in each of the subsequent series).**

Handwritten sketches on lined paper showing various series and a musical staff. The sketches include triangular series with changing second terms, such as 1 3 6 10 15 21, 1 4 8 13 20 28, and 1 5 12 21 33 48. A musical staff at the top shows a sequence of notes with a downward arrow pointing to the first series. At the bottom, there are handwritten notes: "duration sidebands", "Plugs", "05-380-357", "pdt", and "Cateron".

And here is a page that he brought to the fourth workshop showing harmonies derived from this series.

Example 2.4: Page of sketches exploring harmonies derived from series in example 2.3, 6 August 2010

*Page of resonance*

The page contains several staves of handwritten musical notation. The top staff is titled "Page of resonance" and "Starting places". It features a series of notes with annotations like "RH E", "RH C#", "LH F", and "Then". A circled area contains the text "At first" and "Then, even". The second staff has a circled area with "Then" and "down". The third staff has a circled area with "on". The fourth staff has a circled area with "get up". The fifth staff has a circled area with "hold resonance". The sixth staff has a circled area with "return to begin". The seventh staff has a circled area with "for some source". The eighth staff has a circled area with "expand" and "contract". The ninth staff has a circled area with "2".

Our continuing discussion of, and experimentation with, harmonies and rhythms based on these series was retained in our shared memory, so that once he suggested the use of similar harmonies and rhythms in this passage, I responded quickly and with little need for explanation – indeed the film shows the passage emerging quickly with both discussion and improvisation used to create the passage in a few minutes. Unspoken, but communicated to me by his manner of performance when he demonstrated the passage in the workshops, was the way in which this passage should (like several of the earlier passages) resemble an exaggerated version of my way of moving across the keyboard in large, fluid arcs (more on this below). Thus although the initial materials were generated primarily by me, the refinement of these materials is primarily directed by Alex in workshops in which both of us continue to make suggestions and add to the detail of the passage.

In these workshops, all the major features of this collaboration can be observed: our free-flowing discussion and improvisations are informed by memory of previous workshops and experiences, combining to create both the compositional content as well as a substantial amount of site-specific performance practice material. Although the distinction between compositional content (as notated in the score) and performance practice (as stored in our shared memory) can be discerned at the end of the compositional process, the creation of these different sorts of material are inextricably linked and often indistinguishable in the workshops. Indeed, the above example shows how the compositional material of the triangular series discussed in early workshops, becomes part of this passage, without being explicitly notated. Although my role in the compositional process seems particularly significant, Alex exercises his compositional role by adding to the site-specific performance practice at each workshop, refining the harmonic, rhythmic and theatrical material and adding layers of detail that were neither in my initial improvisations, nor in the score.

### **Site-Specific Performance Practice and the Score**

The process of collective composition of this score, and the limits on time, created conditions favouring a significant amount of musical detail being retained

in our memories as site-specific performance practice, rather than in the written details of the score. This distribution of stored musical material is particularly striking in the ending, which features more improvising as well as miming.<sup>268</sup> Here is the ending in an early version, with the two of us improvising the ending in reverse roles: Alex on the keyboard while I play inside the piano (Video 3).<sup>269</sup>

### Video Example 2.3: Workshop with Alex Pozniak, 10 May 2010



As Alex had conceived only the basic gesture of playing from low to high on the keyboard before flying off the end, the role of the second performer during this passage was yet to be worked out. Earlier, Alex had suggested that he would be seated in front of me, in a yoga position (making reference to Molitor's *Tango*), a suggestion that was soon abandoned. In this clip we experiment with possible sounds performed by the second performer to accompany a miming sweep to the top of the keyboard by the pianist, thus confusing the audience about what is played and by whom. The cycling through available materials to play on the low strings may seem to be a cliché of workshops (almost comically so in this film excerpt) but the final sound Alex decides upon is unique, creating an eerie but consistent tremolo that accompanies the mime of complex passagework well.

---

<sup>268</sup> In this case, miming refers to moving the hands and fingers over the piano, imitating the movement of playing the piano, without actually depressing the keys and producing a sound. Therefore miming has a theatrical dimension and although resembling musical movement, produces only silence as a sonic result. It is thus used as a method of transitioning between conventional musical material, and the more extreme theatrical material.

<sup>269</sup> Video of workshop with Alex Ponziak (10 May 2010).



Here we see a sense of play between us in our improvising that allows us to switch roles several times: first Alex trying to play the low strings, experimenting with tools including paper, a water bottle and coins, then my own experiments, and then Alex again after we have discovered this sound. The shared history between us makes this type of playful experimentation possible, though the lack of a substantial collaborative history, in comparison to the later workshops with Daniel Rojas, results in some of the workshops being less disciplined and efficient than those with composers examined in Chapter 4.

In this excerpt, we play with the possibilities of how to mime, and how the final sweep to the final cluster should look (Video 4).<sup>270</sup>

#### **Video Example 2.4: Workshop with Alex Pozniak, 18 June 2010**



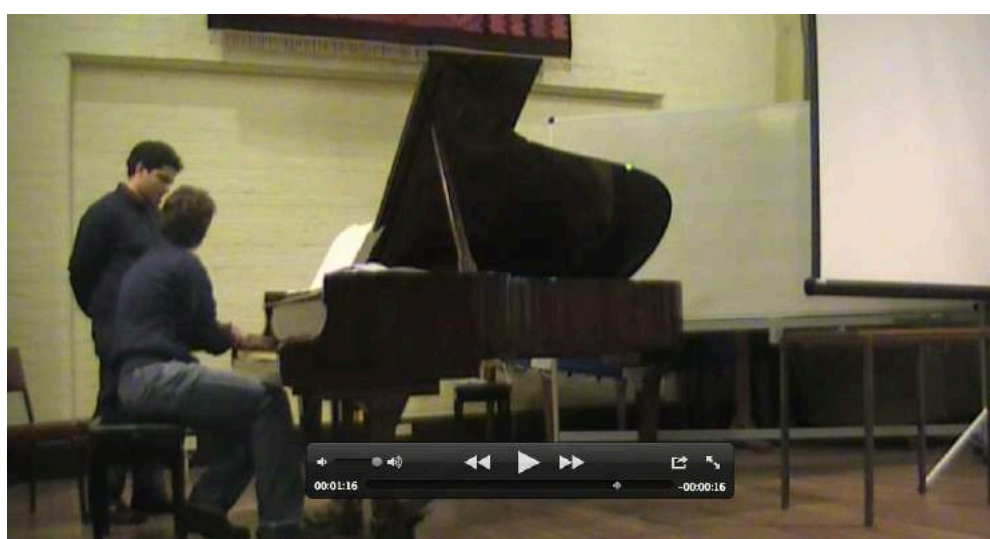
Note the detail of Alex's instructions on my final bodily sweep down to the final cluster: he is particularly insistent on the degree to which I turn my body and the fact that I should then rotate in a backwards sweep (moving my hands over and behind my head rather than over the keyboard) to reach the final cluster. The specific angles of rotation and limits of my movement, as well as the speed and character of movement, are workshopped in detail. Importantly, he wants me to move past my natural way of moving from the top to the bottom of the piano, and towards a relatively 'unnatural' way of moving, including an extreme rotation of my back that I would be unlikely to discover without his instructions. He also

---

<sup>270</sup> Video of workshop with Alex Pozniak (18 June 2010).

gives me a description of the sensation I should get when doing this, “did you get that feeling when you were a kid, and had a fever, and you were delirious that you had the feeling like the world was kind of like spinning backwards”.<sup>271</sup> This sense of vertigo doesn’t just give me an idea of how I should feel, but also how I should try to make the audience feel empathetically – one of the primary goals of the piece being to attempt to take the audience out of its comfort zone by subverting the physical norms of a piano performance. In a later workshop, we fine-tune the important combination of sound and acting (Video 5).<sup>272</sup>

### Video Example 2.5: Workshop with Alex Pozniak, 25 June 2010



Here, Alex gives a more precise choreography for how to enter the final gesture (using what I call in another workshop, the ‘Dudley Moore *Erlkönig* sketch’ approach of playing repeated chords in the air).<sup>273</sup> By this point in our workshops many other details have been refined. Pedalling is now specified: I play without

---

<sup>271</sup> Video of workshop with Alex Pozniak (18 June 2010).

<sup>272</sup> Video of workshop with Alex Pozniak (25 June 2010).

<sup>273</sup> This is a reference to a comic performance by Dudley Moore, entitled, “Die Flabbergast” in which he satirises Schubert’s famous lied, “Der Erlkönig”. The performance was part of the *Beyond the Fringe* reviews featuring Moore with Peter Cook, Allen Bennett and Jonathan Miller. Moore begins by mocking the repeated octaves required by the accompanist: he begins with his right hand appearing to shake uncontrollably, as though operating under its own consciousness (using a kind of ‘alien hand syndrome’ to great comic effect, as was used by Peter Sellers in *Dr Strangelove*). Moore uses his left hand to force the seemingly uncontrollable right hand on to the keyboard where it starts playing octaves.

Moore, D: “Die Flabbergast”, composed 1960, performed and filmed live in 1960 at the West End performances of *Beyond the Fringe*, viewed via YouTube <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=idBZPteNjxs>, (accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2011).

pedal in the previous section, grabbing the final chord in the pedal to form a backing to the mime.

He also specified the requirement that I mime most of the notes in the lowest register, introducing notes gradually as I move up the keyboard, creating an exponentially contracting harmony (again, approximating the triangular series) with the notes that sound on the ascending sweep. The final miming passage was also workshopped in detail so that there is a correspondence between my miming over a non-existent extension to the piano and the sounds Alex is making on the lowest strings, from the other side of the instrument. In creating this effect, Alex was inspired by a scene from the David Lynch film, *Mulholland Drive* (2001) in which a jazz trumpeter emerges on stage at a nightclub only to remove the trumpet from his lips mid-performance as the trumpet sound continues – the play between the illusion of sound production from an instrument and the actual production of the sound being the key to the surreal nature of the scene.<sup>274</sup> Alex's desire to achieve a similarly surreal effect at the end of his piece demanded significant rehearsal time to refine the detail of how my movements would relate to the sounds he would produce. A later workshop where we rehearse this full passage can be seen here (Video 2.6)<sup>275</sup> and the version in the final performance can be seen from 10:10 on the video of the performance (Video 2.12).

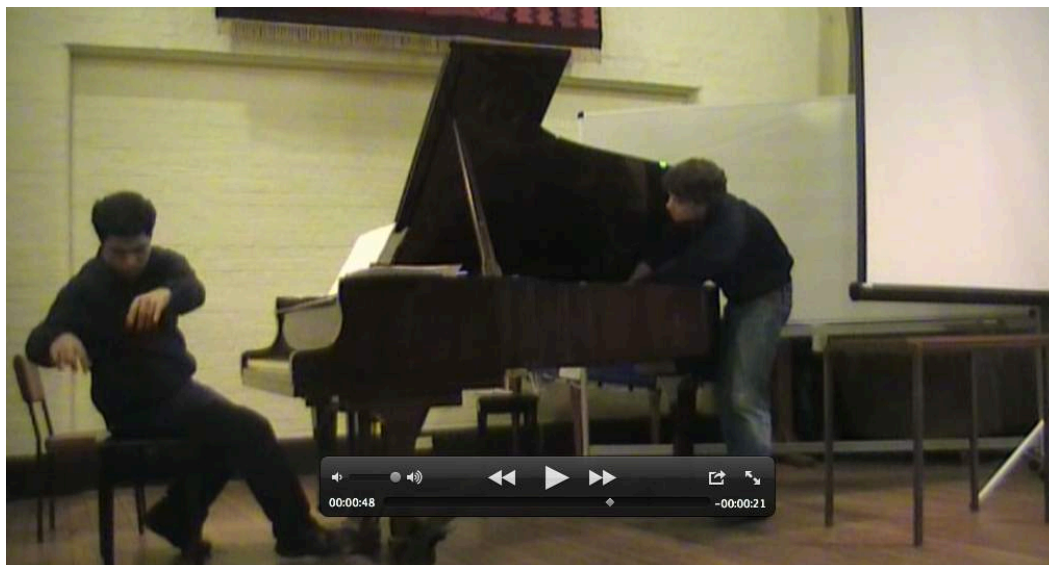
---

<sup>274</sup>Interview with Alex Pozniak (19 March 2011). A similar approach to physical/sonic illusion can be found in bars 41-50, where the pageturner holds notes in an ascending line after they have been released by the pianist. In a live performance, the audience becomes aware that the pageturner is interfering in some way, but the actual effect is subtle and simple enough to be done by the pianist through clever use of the sostenuto pedal. Thus the pageturner's 'action' at that point is ambiguous, coaxing the audience to guess whether he is having any effect on the sounds at all, despite their ability to see a physical action taking place.

<sup>275</sup> Video of workshop with Alex Pozniak (25 June 2010).



## Video Example 2.6: Workshop with Alex Pozniak, 25 June 2010



Considering all the musical and theatrical detail contained in these two bars, it is interesting to see how this final gesture is notated (example 2.5).

### Example 2.5: *Interventions* by Alex Pozniak: bars 177-178

Handwritten musical notation for two staves, labeled 'K' and 'AP'. The notation is highly gestural and descriptive, with a large curved line spanning across both staves. The bottom staff contains wavy lines and arrows indicating movement. The notation is dated '28.06.10' and signed 'Surrey Hills'.

Example 2.5 gives a very rough descriptive outline of the physical aspects of the gesture, without any hint of the progression from mimed playing to real playing, the narrowing of the intervals as I go up the keyboard, or the increase in density relative to position on the keyboard. In addition, the shape of the final curve of the line only vaguely approximates my playing off the end of the keyboard and the twist of my body into the final cluster. From the attention shown to the details of the choreography by Alex in our workshops, it is clear that he does not want this

passage to have an extremely wide compass of possibilities, as suggested by his notation, but in fact wants to control the physical and musical aspects down to quite specific details.

The notation in the original performance score was completely inadequate for either prescribing or describing the musical or theatrical aspects of this ending. Here, the score functions only as an *aide memoire* of our workshops, and it is only in our memory where the detail of the passage is stored. Significantly, we were not aware at the time of the workshops how much of the material would be concretised in the score, and how much would need to be stored as site-specific performance practice. In this case, given that the content of the passage was sufficiently stored in this site-specific performance practice, the inadequately detailed score becomes almost superfluous.

This is by no means the only passage where site-specific performance practice is vital to the comprehension of the score, or where it supersedes the authority of the score entirely. The following example shows a passage from the first half of the piece, seemingly notated in conventional notation.

### Example 2.6: *Interventions*, bars 66-70

The one unconventional aspect of the score is the rising arrows from a series of Gs in the left hand. Each arrow is of a different length, and beneath each G a number is handwritten (11, 7 and 4). Like the final bars, this notation could produce any number of divergent interpretations, and its true function is only known to Alex and me through our collective memory of the workshops that produced the passage. In this case, the upward arrows indicate that I should play an arpeggio, articulating the triangular series harmony of the piece starting on G (in this case: G, A-flat, B-flat, D-flat, F, B-flat, E, etc). The number printed beneath each G indicates the number of notes that should actually be played, with any notes above this in the arpeggio to be mimed. The passage thus introduces subtle elements of theatre and mime that become more dominant as the work progresses. As in other cases, this notational shorthand was considered by Alex to be sufficient (as an *aide memoire*) to trigger our shared memories of the workshops in which this passage was improvised and refined. This example shows that even in the earlier, more conventional passages of the piece, site-specific performance practice is necessary for the understanding of the performance score.<sup>276</sup>

The original score of *Interventions* was full of passages notated in shorthand or graphic symbols that were not intended to be sufficiently prescriptive or descriptive to either store the details of the work, or to allow a performer other than Alex or myself to read it. In these passages, the score's position as the most authoritative site of the work's content is displaced by site-specific performance practice. In this practice, created in workshops and stored in our shared memory, reside the details of the work. Thus, in its original form, the work was only accessible to Alex and myself, who both have a particular authority over the work and a special authenticity with regard to performing it.

---

<sup>276</sup>Later in this chapter, I explore the problems resulting from this practice of relying on a shared memory of workshops when Alex revises the score.

## Common History and Shared Memory as a Source and Stimulant for Collaborative Composition

As mentioned above, Alex's intention is to use the transition from music dominating the movement of the body to theatrical movements of the body dominating the music as a structural scaffold for the work. Having now examined some of the final, and most theatrically complex, passages of this work it is worthwhile exploring some of the earlier sections which required a more subtle collaboration, and a site-specific performance practice that draws on our long working history, and shared memories. One of the earliest passages in *Interventions* to feature any non-conventional movement occurs as bar 42 (see Example 2.7).

**Example 2.7: *Interventions*, Annotated score for premiere, page 4 (excerpt)**

The image shows a musical score excerpt for piano 2, consisting of two systems of music. The first system starts at bar 42 and ends at bar 47. The second system starts at bar 48 and ends at bar 53. The score is annotated with various markings and handwritten notes.

**System 1 (Bars 42-47):**

- Bar 42: Treble clef, *f* dynamic. The melody consists of eighth notes with a dotted line above the notes, indicating increasing arcs. The bass line has a long note with a fermata.
- Bar 43: Treble clef, *f* dynamic. The melody continues with eighth notes and a dotted line above.
- Bar 44: Treble clef, *f* dynamic. The melody continues with eighth notes and a dotted line above.
- Bar 45: Treble clef, *f* dynamic. The melody continues with eighth notes and a dotted line above.
- Bar 46: Treble clef, *f* dynamic. The melody continues with eighth notes and a dotted line above.
- Bar 47: Treble clef, *p* dynamic. The melody continues with eighth notes and a dotted line above.
- Handwritten annotation: "AP: C1" is written below the bass line.

**System 2 (Bars 48-53):**

- Bar 48: Treble clef, *f* dynamic. The melody continues with eighth notes and a dotted line above.
- Bar 49: Treble clef, *f* dynamic. The melody continues with eighth notes and a dotted line above.
- Bar 50: Treble clef, *f* dynamic. The melody continues with eighth notes and a dotted line above.
- Bar 51: Treble clef, *f* dynamic. The melody continues with eighth notes and a dotted line above.
- Bar 52: Treble clef, *p* dynamic. The melody continues with eighth notes and a dotted line above.
- Bar 53: Treble clef, *p* dynamic. The melody continues with eighth notes and a dotted line above.
- Handwritten annotations: "AP: C2" is written below the bass line, "mf D3" is written below the bass line, and "C3 + B3" is written below the bass line.

The passage uses conventional notation, except for the dotted line above the Gs indicating the increasing arcs the pianist's hands are to make with each successive note. The notation seems descriptively broad enough to suggest quite a range of interpretations and bodily gestures, but Alex's intentions are specific.

Coaching me on how to perform this passage, Alex directs me to, "bounce each one higher... imagine Ransford telling you to bounce your wrists". Here he makes reference to our common piano teacher, Ransford Elsley. Alex references

Elsley's technical approach to the piano, particularly his use of large circular movements of the larger joints of the body (torso/arms/wrists) to gain maximum efficiency of movement and power with minimum muscular effort, an approach to, and ideology of, technique I continue to use and explore in almost all my repertoire and an approach that Alex has explored in composing for the piano and other instruments.<sup>277</sup> In this context, the arcs above the keyboard are not just a randomly chosen theatrical tic, but also a commentary on and parody of my own technique and Elsley's teaching method.<sup>278</sup> It is now more clear how the massive arcing clusters at the end of the work serve as the Victor Borge-esque punchline to this ongoing tribute/parody.<sup>279</sup> Similarly, the transition into mime, in passages such as that shown in Example 2.6, draws attention to the idiosyncrasies of the technique and movement across the keyboard, with this technique gradually abstracted from the sounds they produce, making technique a source of musical and theatrical material, rather than a mere means to an end.<sup>280</sup> More than just an in-joke, this site-specific performance practice personalises the gesture, making it, and the piece, closely tailored to my own musical identity and approach to the instrument.

These two choreographic excerpts reveal once again, the influence of site-specific performance practice on the creation and performance of *Interventions*. Tapping into shared memories and experiences, Alex composes my body and performative idiosyncrasies into the work. This makes it potentially difficult for another performer to achieve a similar effect. My body shape, manner of moving, and technique at the piano are all inviolable aspects of my performative identity: these aspects can be mimicked by others but never fully replicated. Thus, the use

---

<sup>277</sup> Pozniak (interview, 19 March 2011). This technical approach is one that favours efficiency of movement, and mirrors the treatises by Sandor and Neuhaus as well as the accounts of Chopin's teaching (see *Mythologies: Efficiency*).

<sup>278</sup> Both of us make numerous references to Elsley throughout the process – indeed the miming section shown in Example 2.6 is first described to me as “floating across the piano, like what I would call, Elsley fluidity” by Pozniak.

<sup>279</sup> Neither Alex nor I were aware of the similarities of this passage to the end of Victor Borge's comic performance of Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody for two pianists, which was pointed out to me by violinist, Peter Sheppard Skaerved. Alex was aware of the comic potential of this material, but thought such an approach wouldn't sustain a work beyond the initial 'gag', and that the types of musical materials he was interested in would work better in a more 'serious' piece. (Pozniak, 19 March 2011).

<sup>280</sup> Pozniak (19 March 2011).

of these aspects gives me a particular (but problematic, as we will see) authenticity when performing the work.

Alex's play on my pianistic movements and mannerisms raises questions about how I should interpret these 'choreographed' passages. If the movements are about my way of moving, then am I really obliged to follow his instructions or should I follow my own instincts and my own body, in finding a way of moving through these passages? Though retreating into the authority of my own body may seem to be, superficially, the more obvious approach, following Alex's' directions yields more interesting results: perhaps imitating or caricaturing oneself is better done through an external agent. Watch in the following video how Alex directs my movements (Video 2.7)<sup>281</sup> for the passage shown in example 2.8.

#### **Video Example 2.7: Workshop with Alex Pozniak, 18 June 2010**



---

<sup>281</sup> Video of workshop with Alex Pozniak (18 June 2010).

### Example 2.8: Interventions, bars 82-93

(8<sup>va</sup>)—  
occasionally fadeout and lift hand  
while continuing fingering pattern

82

tap  
keys

poco a poco accel. (to m.98)

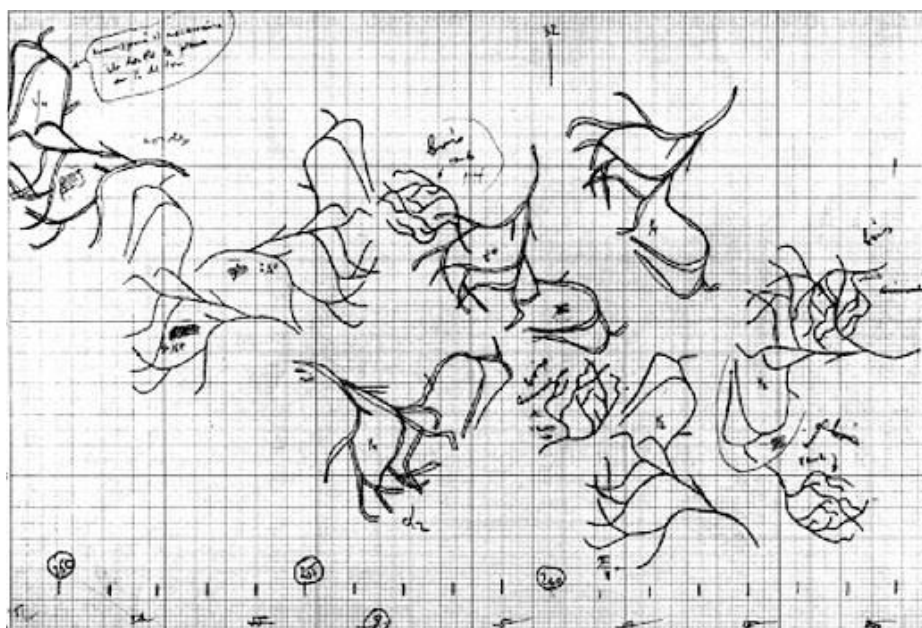
(8<sup>va</sup>)—  
87

As in example 2.7, this passage employs gestures (in this case large arcs of the left arm) to caricature a distinctive characteristic of my technique. In the video, I first sightread the passage and make a small and rather undramatic arc, which Alex then corrects by demonstrating a more extreme version with more detail. He differentiates between the large arc of the hand above the piano, the arc of the hand close to the keys which becomes close to miming, and movement of the hand across the keyboard mixing both miming and playing of notes. He pushes me to produce a movement that seems unnatural and strange to me, but this creates an exaggerated effect that looks more effectively theatrical. Although the movement is based on my own way of playing, the specific motion required for this passage goes beyond what I would naturally find myself, thereby creating a caricature. These workshops show that even in these part-notated passages, employing shared memories as well as aspects of my body and manner of movement, Alex plays a compositional role: creating both the score and coaching me on the passage until it satisfies his artistic goals. Despite the overall integrative nature of the workshops, our roles as composer and performer are re-established at the end of the process.

## Sharing Roles and Responsibilities: The Composer's Role in *Integrative Composition*

There were many moments during our workshop/composition sessions, when our roles as composer and performer dissolved, and were even exchanged. One such moment – the climax of the first section – was referred to by Alex as the ‘arborescences’ section (a reference, like many others in these workshops, to Iannis Xenakis and his approach to composition). Although the product of complex algorithms, Xenakis’ arborescences look like snaking lines, splitting and multiplying at junctions into tree-like structures. An example can be seen here, in sketches for his piano work, *Evryali*:<sup>282</sup> a work that I have known and been working on for many years, and that Alex analysed while an undergraduate.

### Example 2.9: Sketches for *Evryali* by Iannis Xenakis



Alex appropriated the technique of musical arborescences as a way of telescoping the series of arpeggios based on the triangular series that forms the harmonic basis of *Interventions* into a texturally dense climax.

<sup>282</sup> Xenakis, Iannis: *Evryali*, Paris: Editions Salabert, 1973.

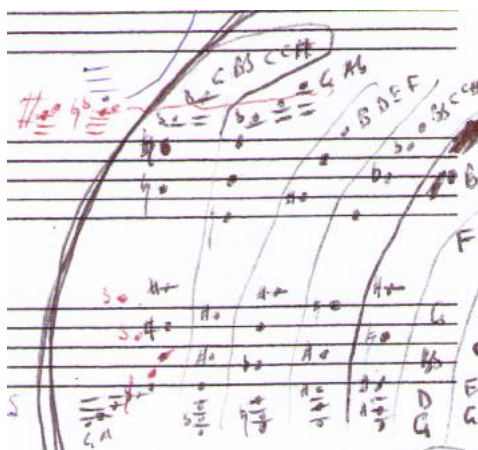


Alex wrote, and subsequently workshopped, a number of passages combining these harmonies with various attempts at arborescences. Sketches from 11<sup>th</sup> June are shown in Example 2.10a and Example 2.10b.

**Example 2.10a: Sketches for “Arborescence” section of *Interventions***



**Example 2.10b: Sketches for “Arborescence” section of *Interventions***



While showing me these sketches, Alex explained that he was having trouble finding the right notation for the climactic section of arborescences, where successive arpeggios would ‘pile up’ on one another, creating an ever more complex polyphony.<sup>283</sup> He also wanted there to be a correspondence between the contracting intervals in the arpeggios and the rhythm of each note of the arpeggio. We attempted to improvise the passage and though making considerable progress

<sup>283</sup> Video of workshop with Alex Pozniak (18 June 2010).

with creating the overall shape and texture (as seen in Video 2.8),<sup>284</sup> we both agreed that a form of notation was required to manage the harmonic detail, pacing and the interaction of both performer's parts within this section.

**Video Example 2.8: Workshop on 'arborescence' section of *Interventions*,  
18 June 2010**



With the pressure of time building, I made two suggestions. One was that Alex could show the rhythm of the passage in a type of time-space notation, with noteheads placed according to their place within second-long 'bars' (a notation, I explained, used by Xenakis in a very different type of passage in his final piano work, *Mists*). Thus a rhythmic arithmetic series, which is very difficult to notate using conventional notation, could be quite simply and clearly communicated. My other suggestion was to show the passages clearly using curves: I would then use this graphic notation to improvise using the harmonies I knew he wanted articulated. Observing the film of the workshop confirms how complex the collaborative notation of this passage is (Video 2.9).<sup>285</sup> Here we see me suggesting what would constitute a sufficient form of notation (for my needs as the performer) for the aforementioned section.

---

<sup>284</sup> Video of workshop with Alex Pozniak (18 June 2010).

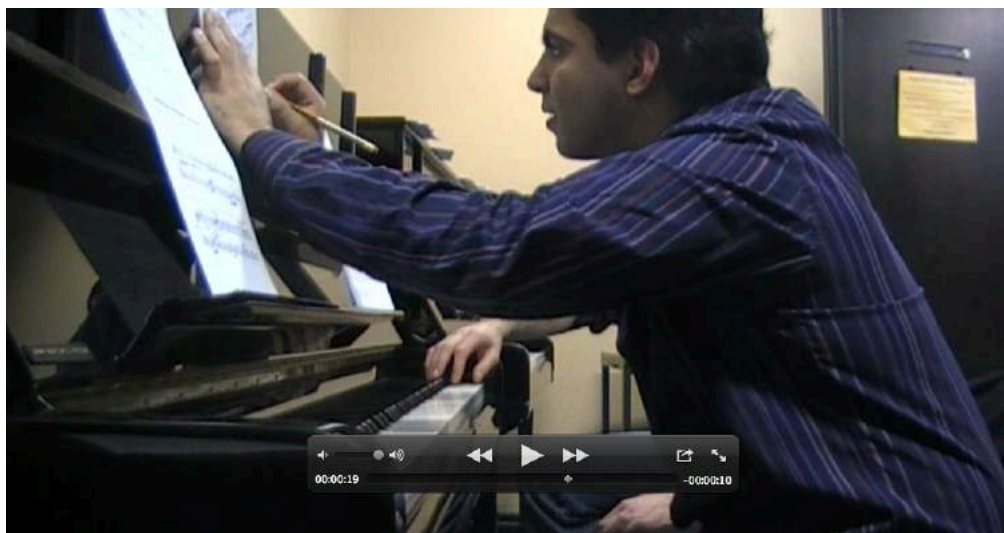
<sup>285</sup> Video of workshop with Alex Pozniak (18 June 2010).

**Video Example 2.9: Discussing notation for the 'aborescence' section with Alex Pozniak, 18 June 2010**



And here (Video 2.10)<sup>286</sup> we see me actually notating some of the section, with Alex describing and demonstrating the gesture while I write it in, using a graphic notation that I feel is well suited to this passage.

**Video Example 2.10: Workshop with Alex Pozniak, 18 June 2010**

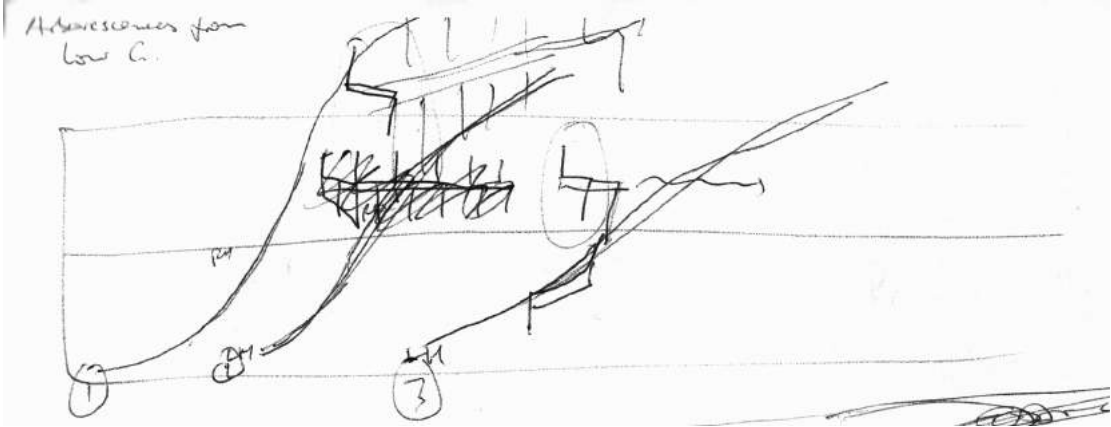


The examples of graphical notation we drew collaboratively are shown in Examples 2.11a (showing a primitive sketch drawn by myself) and 2.11b (in which both of us have notated the passage, using different coloured pens).

---

<sup>286</sup>Ibid.

**Example 2.11a: Sketch for 'arborescence' section of *Interventions***





### Example 2.11b: Sketch for 'arboresece' section of *Interventions*

The image shows a handwritten musical score sketch for the 'arboresece' section of *Interventions*. It consists of five staves. The top two staves are heavily annotated with green and red lines, circles, and notes, indicating complex rhythmic and melodic structures. The middle two staves are mostly empty, with some red annotations and notes. The bottom staff is labeled 'Chords' and contains several blue circles and lines, representing chordal structures. The score is dated '20/06' in the top right corner.

Alex accepted my suggestions on notation because, as he stated in our interview, he knew that, as the performer of the work, my assurances on what would be a sufficient notation to communicate his intentions to me were all the affirmation he needed.<sup>287</sup> As with many other moments in the work, the notation's role was to trigger shared memories (with the help of all the site-specific performance practice gained in our workshops) rather than to communicate the musical detail. As can be seen from the 2010 performance score (example 2.12) Alex used a combination of the two notations we had discussed, but also left out some of the rhythmic detail we had worked out (and partially notated) in workshops.

<sup>287</sup> Interview with Alex Pozniak (18 March 2011).

Example 2.12: *Interventions*, bars 99-106

Handwritten musical score for Example 2.12, bars 99-106. The score is written on five systems of staves. The first system (bars 99-100) shows a piano introduction with a fortissimo (ff) dynamic. The second system (bars 101-102) includes annotations such as '8va' with an arrow, 'contract register', and 'pesante'. The third system (bars 103-104) features '15ma' with an arrow, '(gradually lengthen pause)', '(longer pause)', and '(sum)'. The fourth system (bars 105-106) includes 'AP:', '105', 'suspend LH', and 'hand inside piano to mute strings:'. The score is heavily annotated with question marks, arrows, and other performance instructions.

My own intervention in the question of the notation of this passage problematises its authorship. Conventionally, one of the main functions of the score is that it is the primary medium of communication for the composer to

express his/her intentions to the performer.<sup>288</sup> In this moment, Alex abdicated his responsibility for both the overall type of notation, as well as the detail of the notation: in encouraging me to ‘improvise around the notes’ in order to better blend the conventionally notated sections from the graphically notated sections, Alex passed to me conventionally composerly responsibilities for structural coherence and musical detail.<sup>289</sup> But despite the highly integrative approach to creating this passage, Alex still functioned as the primary author of this passage by controlling several crucial parameters.

Firstly, Alex retained control over the placement of the passage within the work (as the climax of the 1<sup>st</sup> half). This may seem to be a basic consideration, yet the setting up of this passage in relation to many varied types of material, extended techniques and theatrical ‘interventions’ allows it to assume its structural function: the passage provides the culmination of the increasing complexity of the first half, as well as the start of the more musically absurd material that forms much of the second half of the piece.

Secondly, he retained control of the harmonic content: not just through the notation of pitches but through our continuing discussion of the harmonic basis of the work, and our repeated workshopping of my realisation of the passage, both before and after it was notated. Despite allowing me to improvise around the given notes, Alex’s continuing discussion of the harmonic basis of the work ensured that I understood how to improvise, while maintaining the harmonic coherence of the passage.

Thirdly, he retained control over the evolution of the texture of the passage. Even though I suggested, and even drafted, the notation of this passage, Alex refined it to the point where he was satisfied with the timing and progression of the texture, from ascending arpeggios into a high *Herma*-like cloud of notes.<sup>290</sup>

---

<sup>288</sup> Kanno, Mieko: “Prescriptive Notation: Limits and Challenges” in *Contemporary Music Review*, Vol. 26 No. 2, April 2007, 1.

<sup>289</sup> From 5<sup>th</sup> Workshop (18<sup>th</sup> June 2010)

<sup>290</sup> *Herma* (1967) is yet another piano work by Iannis Xenakis that frequently entered our discussions and workshops and influenced this piece (alongside *Evryali* and *Mists*). In *Herma*, Xenakis controls clouds of notes scattered across the length of the keyboard using ‘stochastic’ methods (mathematical sieves which control the probability of particular

As with the harmonic content, we workshopped the increasing density of the texture until he was satisfied that the execution was sufficiently close to his intentions. Alex was particularly pleased with the performative intensity produced by the competing forces on me of resistance (a complex medium-scale harmonic process to be articulated) and freedom (free improvising), explaining that the improvising of free-jazz pianist, Cecil Taylor was an important influence on him and these methods allowed him to get Taylor-like textures from me.<sup>291</sup>

Fourthly, he retained control over the theatre of the passage. The page-turner's role as a performer expands exponentially in pages 8 and 9, and this progression is crucial in the overall structure of the work. The 'interventions' have reached a point of crisis, with the low clusters functioning as both an interruption to the flow of the pianist, as well as a spark to fire off each new, faster ascending arpeggio. By the top of page 9, the pianist and pageturner are equal, duetting partners, and by the bottom of page 9, the pianist has left the piano, and the pageturner has taken over as primary performer for the first time in the work. Alex's control over the progression and timing of this piece of theatre was crucial to this passage.

Although Alex seemed to exert very little control via his score on my performance, the combination of the score, the collaborative composition and the substantial site-specific performance practice material allowed him to exert as much control over the performance of the work as a conventionally notated score might achieve. At the end of the process, Alex reasserted his role as the composer of the work, and although I took on many of the roles of the composer during the process of creation, by the end I deferred to him to coach me on the musical and theatrical detail. However, during the process, the level of integrative collaboration was extreme and our conventional roles as composer and performer temporarily dissolved. In those workshops, there were no limits on the type of input that either of us could make or the degree of encroachment into each other's creative space.

---

notes entering the texture), but in *Interventions*, as in many other cases, Alex attempts to achieve a similar effect through controlled improvisation.

<sup>291</sup> Interview with Alex Pozniak (19 March 2011).



## Conditions for the ending of collaborative composition

Many of the conditions and pressures that forced us into starting an integrative process of collaboration played a role in bringing this process to an end. In the following exchange from our rehearsal a week before the premiere (Video 11),<sup>292</sup> Alex asks me several times to hasten my tempo and assimilate more quickly and accurately the dynamics in the technically complex passage that he has just added to the score (bars 116-153).

### Video Example 2.11: Workshop with Alex Pozniak, 25 June 2010



I begin by complaining that I can't play it any better without time to practice the part, before simply answering 'yes' to his questions without attempting to continue rehearsing or workshopping the material. Finally I stare back at the score without answering, 'stonewalling' him. The communication is now all one way in this workshop, and though I'm continuing to be polite, I have lost patience with him and am now more concerned with simply getting my part into a serviceable state for the imminent performance than with continuing to create and refine new musical material. I do this more and more often in our final rehearsals, reserving opinions where I would previously have given them freely, and selectively ignoring some of the new musical information that Alex is trying to impart. Although we are still continuing to rehearse the new work (with both of us preparing to perform it) our period of integrative collaboration has effectively

---

<sup>292</sup> Video of workshop with Alex Pozniak (25 June 2010).

come to an end. In this case, it seems that the same pressures that combined to create the unusual situation where we were forced to work intensively at all stages of composition also combined to end it. These forces – the pressure of time due to the late start of the composition process, Alex’s intention to write a theatre driven piece and our mutual desire to work integratively – determined the choices we had for the type of relationship, but simultaneously forced us to search out new ways of notating our collaborative composition. However, in the week before the concert, I passed my ‘tolerance threshold’ for the amount of new notes and musical detail I could learn in the time remaining. I could no longer reconcile Alex’s desire to continue to add to and edit the piece, with my own desire to make my final preparations for the concert. In ignoring Alex’s request to observe his dynamics, I was implicitly telling him that I would no longer tolerate any additions to the work. Although he was composing new material, I was actively ignoring it in order to adequately prepare for a professional level of performance. Alex soon latched on to my silence and closed body language and stopped composing, despite his desire to continue to add details to the notation.

Despite the seeming finality of this event, I relented to some extent, learning the new dynamics he was requesting by our final rehearsal of 29<sup>th</sup> June (the day the ‘completed’ performance score was bound and finished) though no further details were added after the workshop of 25<sup>th</sup> June. It was my judgement then (and it remains so, looking over my documentation of our collaboration) that the composition process needed to end on 25<sup>th</sup> June, a week before performance but I am sure many performers would hit their tolerance thresholds at different points to me. In doing this, I took the most crucial decision for the composer out of his hands – the decision about when a work is complete.<sup>293</sup>

---

<sup>293</sup> This is very similar to the concept of ‘final cut’ explored in Chapter 1. However, whereas ‘final cut’ is a decision of creative control, made according to creative judgements, the ending of the work in this case is made without any creative judgement, and is entirely a product of my tolerance threshold being crossed. My later request for Alex to revise the score demonstrates that I too thought there was further creative work that could be done on the work. It is also notable that this tolerance threshold shifts throughout the period of my research – my risk aversion makes me give composers earlier deadlines but my actual tolerance threshold shifts later, so that the performances are much better prepared and controlled.

## Premiere Performance

The premiere of *Interventions* occurred as planned on 2 July 2010 in my solo piano recital “Piano: Inside/Out”, presented by Chronology Arts at the Verbruggen Hall, Sydney Conservatorium of Music. As planned, I performed the solo piano part, and Alex performed the part of the ‘page-turner’ who gradually intervenes in my performance before joining in as a second performer. A video of the performance is included in the portfolio.

### Video Example 2.12: Performance of *Interventions*, 2 July 2010



The performance put into effect the unusual compositional, workshopping and content-storage mechanisms discussed above. Viewing the video it is clear that in some sections (particularly from the opening to 4:30) Alex and I pay close attention to the score, while in the latter minutes, we pay very little attention to it – demonstrating the transition from the score as the primary site of musical content at the opening, to our shared memories as the primary site of musical content at the end. Importantly, it is difficult, if not impossible to discern when this transfer from score-based to memory-based playing occurs, or which sections are completely scored, which are partially scored with some improvised elements, and which sections are completely improvised. Our intensive workshops doubled as rehearsals, allowing these tricky transitions to be largely seamless. The intensive workshopping also means that the unusual physical gestures and

theatrical movements are, in most places, fluent and well integrated with the musical material.

There are also negative consequences of the nature of the collaboration in the performance. Although there is a fluency to the improvised and semi-improvised passages, the early, fully scored sections have a reliance on the score that limits my movements around the piano, and by extension, the range of colours produced (particularly between 1:00 and 2:00 into the video). My need to be fixed to the score reveals the lack of time I had to absorb and at least partially memorise it. Similar moments occur in the other fully notated passage (starting at 6:15) where the short preparation time results in the counterpoint of this passage being very roughly rendered, with some individual lines indistinguishable. Finally, although most of the theatrical effects are successful, some moments could have been more refined, and closer to the ideals we both agreed on in the workshops. For example, in the final miming passage (at 10:40) I slow down my finger movements more rapidly than Alex does his coin-scrape tremolo, meaning that the sense of (illusory) connection between my movements and Alex's sounds is not as strong as it could be.

Like the composition process, the performance displays a fluidity of roles, with both of us performing and improvising. The results of our 'normal' roles can be seen only at the edges of the performance, with Alex's playing slightly less defined and fluent than my own (see excerpts from 6:30).<sup>294</sup> However, the pacing of sections, cueing, management of dynamic levels and other performative responsibilities are shared throughout – as with the composition process, the fluidity of roles is not complete, but it is very close, and the defining features of our roles are peripheral to the experience of the performance. That we have a special authenticity as performers of the piece is unquestionable (as the authors and original performers of the work) but this does not necessarily mean we are the best performers. Our varying roles in the long-term life of the piece, including

---

<sup>294</sup> Though Pozniak was an accomplished pianist when younger he is, by his own admission, not actively practicing or performing any more (Interview 19 March 2011). The perception of a difference between the playing styles between a professional and a non-professional pianist is obviously highly subjective, and another viewer may not perceive any noticeable difference.

subsequent performances would be tested in forthcoming performances of the work with a revised score by Alex, and a new auxiliary performer.

### **Revised Score and Further Performances**

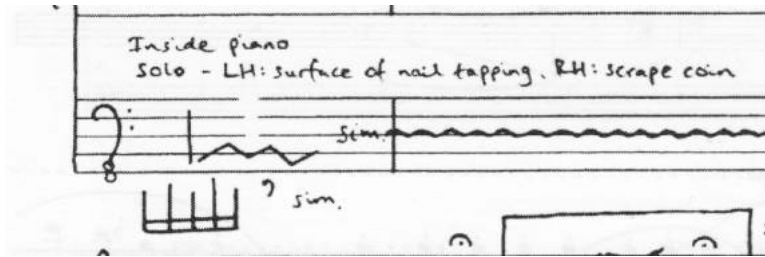
In preparation for a second performance in Sydney on 18 November 2011, Alex returned to our hybrid notated-graphic score and converted it into a more conventionally notated score, which he sent to me on 9 November and which we workshopped on 12 November. A striking change was that the 'arborescence' section was now fully notated at the beginning, before gradually moving into the semi-aleatoric notation used previously.

Example 2.13: *Interventions* (2011 version), bars 100-111

The musical score for Example 2.13, bars 100-111, is presented in four systems. The first system (bars 100-103) is marked *A Tempo* and *ff*. It features a complex rhythmic structure with changing time signatures (3/8, 2/4, 3/4, 7/8) and includes a five-measure rest in the right hand. The second system (bars 104-105) continues the rhythmic complexity with various rests and articulations. The third system (bars 106-108) is marked *ff* and includes performance instructions: "pitches ad lib." and "gradually rise in pitch" in the right hand, and "accel. contract register" in the left hand. The fourth system (bars 109-111) is marked *fff* and includes an *8vb* marking. The score is highly detailed with numerous slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

This fully notated score allowed Alex to control the harmonic content and rhythmic flow more closely than he could when we workshopped it, and it also allowed this passage to be readable (and playable) without the site-specific performance practice that had been previously necessary. Another striking change was that the pageturner's solo, previously completely improvised, was now notated in full. Compare the former,

**Example 2.14: *Interventions* (2010 version) bars 113-114**



And the later version,

**Example 2.15: *Interventions* (2011 version), bars 122-127**

Alex's fixing of these improvised sections into conventional notation removed some elements of the original that were contingent on our shared knowledge of our workshops and allowed us a stable musical base from which to experiment with new approaches to the theatrical components. During the first performance, I had simply stepped to the side of the piano, but in the workshop, I proposed a more demonstrative theatrical gesture.

ZK: When you're doing that [the solo] it's good for me to just walk away. Like as if I'm almost leaving the performance.

AP: How did you do it last time?

ZK: I was like here. About here [standing]. But I reckon I could just walk off into the dark and you could go on for a while.

AP: Well, its longer than it was.

ZK: And then I can come back, I can even come back quite quickly.<sup>295</sup>

Whereas in earlier interactions, I was involved in generating musical materials that Alex shaped, here I was adding and shaping theatrical content to Alex's fixed musical materials. This device was used in the November 2011 Sydney performance (where I walked and sat at the far edge of the front row of the audience) and in my February 2012 London performance (where I walked off stage).

The limitations of relying on site-specific performance practice rather than notation emerged in this workshop, where a relatively simple question of when I lift the pedal and allow him to depress it confounded us – the 17 months since the premiere stretching our memories of the workshops where these questions had been previously addressed.

ZK: What did we do with the pedal here?

AP: That's right – what were we doing last time? [looks for old score]

ZK: How did we do this? Because if I'm going to remain standing....

AP: Is that what I said?

ZK: You've got 'Remain standing' until there [pointing at 2010 score]. Which I think we worked out last time. Maybe there's a certain point where it goes dry. Is this stuff dry? [plays and Alex joins in]

AP: I'm trying to remember – did I do that rhythmically? [both play] I don't know, dry maybe... not.

ZK: Maybe not. OK.<sup>296</sup>

The gaps in our memory forced us to work out the pedalling again, which ended up being largely the same as in our previous performance.<sup>297</sup> In bar 68, I claimed that I used to play fewer of the notes in the descending run, and that some of them should be mimed. Bar 68 (from the version we workshopped) is shown below.

---

<sup>295</sup> Workshop with Alex Pozniak (12 November 2011).

<sup>296</sup> Ibid.

<sup>297</sup> In hindsight, ready access to the video of the premiere and of our previous rehearsals may have resolved this issue more quickly.



**Example 2.16: *Interventions* (draft of 2011 version - 12 November 2011),  
bar 68**

We discussed our differing recollections of performing this section,

AP: [listening to me demonstrate the passage] I guess so. What was it beforehand?

ZK: [plays]

AP: [while ZK plays] So a bit of that F-sharp. For some reason I decided to put it in. That's really annoying, I spent so much time on this bit, I can't believe that wasn't clear. And you're in that moment for so long wondering very specifically... so maybe do it pianissimo on the top note.

ZK: So maybe get rid of that D-flat. And then have a few of these off and come back on again. Or maybe all off.

AP: All off, that makes sense. So that fades in I guess.

ZK: [plays new version] Yeah I think that's it.<sup>298</sup>

Alex would write it as following after this workshop.

**Example 2.17: *Interventions* (2011 version), bar 68**

<sup>298</sup> Workshop with Alex Pozniak (12 November 2011).

In this case, I have retained this bit of site-specific performance practice in my memory slightly better than Alex, and we both agreed that the passage needs to be half-mimed (since the number of notes mimed in the previous bars is gradually increasing). My muscle memory gave me an advantage in recalling the need to mime some notes, but we worked out the new version together, and it was only when we both agreed that Alex notated the new version. Note that Alex has no problem deciphering the rough graphical notation of the original (shown below) to flesh out the left hand: the existence of any *aide-memoire*, no matter how low the resolution is, allowed us a method to access the vital site-specific performance practice of our workshops from 17 months earlier.

### Example 2.18: Interventions (2010 version), bar 68

The image shows a musical score for bar 68 of 'Interventions (2010 version)'. The score is written for piano, with a treble clef on the upper staff and a bass clef on the lower staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The tempo/mood is marked '8<sup>va</sup> (fleeting)'. The score includes several triplets in both hands. Handwritten annotations in red and blue ink are present: a red '25' above the treble staff, a red 'f' circled in the bass staff, and red arrows pointing from the circled 'f' to specific notes in the bass staff. Below the bass staff, there are handwritten numbers in parentheses: '(7)' and '(4)'. The score also features various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Many other aspects of this workshop served to remind us both of interpretative details we had previously discussed. Alex asked me to exaggerate my theatrical movements through the air – an aspect I had remembered generally, but which Alex refined to attain the specific effect of parodying my technique. In the following video we workshop a particular lifting of the hand, and discuss the speed and height and whether it can wave “like a singing teacher” before descending. The use of humour and a sense of play is again evident in this workshop, revealing that even though the upcoming performance is a week away, we are no longer working past our tolerance thresholds as we were a week before the premiere.

**Video Example 2.13: Workshopping choreography of *Interventions*, 12  
November 2011**



Due to having performed the work before, having a more fully notated score and the additional workshop time to refine details, the performance was more theatrically effective than the premiere, and musical moments such as the ‘arborescence’ section, which in the premiere was rushed and lacking in detail, are rendered with more musical detail and performative clarity. Alex agrees with this assessment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> performance and considers it to be the best performance of the work (of the three performances thus far).<sup>299</sup>

### **A New Pageturner – The Revised Score is Tested**

In February 2012, I performed *Interventions* at a recital at Kings Place, London. My pageturner and co-performer for this performance was Antoine François, a pianist with extensive experience in performing contemporary music. When I began rehearsing the work with Antoine, it became apparent that despite

---

<sup>299</sup> Email: Alex Pozniak to Zubin Kanga (1 August 2013).

the use of more conventional notation and explicit explanations in the new score, there were still many ambiguities.

In some cases, they were details that Alex had forgotten to include, such as the direction for the pageturner to mute at different points on the string in the following bar, rather than just holding the one position (as notated).

**Example 2.19: *Interventions* (2011 version), bar 118**

I explained the required technique.

ZK: The third harmonic and sliding George Crumb-style.

AF: I slide, but do I slide that way [gesturing into the piano] or back into the dampers?

ZK: No, sliding in.<sup>300</sup>

Antoine could execute this technique with greater accuracy and fluency than Alex, but without the site-specific performance practice, he had no way of knowing this technique was required.

In other cases, the detail of the score was not sufficient to prescribe some of the extended techniques and theatrical gestures clearly to Antoine. Despite the meticulous notation of the cadenza, Antoine required me to demonstrate the ‘coin tremolo between two strings’ technique as well as the ‘scrape frame with coin’ technique. Antoine demonstrated that many of these techniques have many different possible interpretations – depending on the angle of the coin, the

<sup>300</sup> Video of rehearsal with Antoine Françoise (26 January 2012).

position of the strings and the part of the frame to be scraped – and he was keen to understand the specific technique that Alex had used.

When rehearsing the climactic canon of clusters, Antoine found the graphical notation, combined with dense instructions to be an inadequate (or at least inefficient) method for him to understand Alex's intentions.

AF: And then, I keep going? I take the pedal?

ZK: Yeah, you take the pedal.

AF: But I don't stop I just go like that [plays high clusters]

ZK: Sorry, this is not clear at all. Then I go [plays descending clusters]

AF: OK that one's me? [pointing to the score]<sup>301</sup>

We found it more efficient for me to demonstrate the movements for Antoine to mimic while explaining the detail as I played. In the following video, we rehearse another section of the ending, and I explain the practicalities of performing the passage (such as keeping extra coins at the far end of the piano for easy access) as well as the interpretation of the gesture (with Antoine's glissandi broken to allow him to play around the frame).

---

<sup>301</sup> Ibid.

**Video Example 2.14: Rehearsing the final pages of *Interventions* with  
Antoine Françoise, 26 January 2012**



At points where I don't recall the original interpretation or exact movement of the pageturner, I refer Antoine to the video of the premiere to answer his questions. With Alex absent from the rehearsals, the video of the premiere had become a text, to be analysed and interpreted alongside the score.

For the Kings Place performance, the only major deviation from my previous performance with Alex was in my movements at the beginning of the pageturner's cadenza. In the premiere, I merely moved to the side of the piano, at the second performance I went to sit in the front row of the piano while in this performance I walked into the wings of the stage, remaining hidden until just before my re-entry. In other aspects, the performance seemed more assured and dramatic than those with Alex, a combination of my experience with the piece, having played it twice before, and Antoine's virtuosity and dynamic performance presence. Although certain musical details may not be exactly as Alex had originally played them, the pageturner's cadenza has more dramatic flow, the dynamic and colouristic variety of both performers is wider and my pacing has an

urgency but without rushing. The video of the Kings Place performance can be viewed in Example 2.15.

**Video Example 2.15: Performance of *Interventions*, Kings Place, 13 February 2012**



Viewing the video of the performance, Alex felt it was strong, but preferred his second performance, in part because he felt more of the details of the performance practice were present. He wrote a detailed critical analysis of the video which reveals the detail he had envisaged (and that we did not achieve).

He spotted moments in my performance where the action was not as spontaneous and fluid as he would have liked,

The pianist's hand arc at 2:52 pauses during its journey. Ideally this arc is continuous and smooth in its motion, with evenness in upward and downward motion and approximately even time spent with the hand going up and down. (In this instance the hand falls too quickly in relation to the upward motion and the pause). I know that this is the longest mimed arc in this phrase. A good goal would be to rise until the end of the high Fs and to gradually fall from this point, slowly at first and then with more speed into the next note.<sup>302</sup>

---

<sup>302</sup> Email: Alex Pozniak to Zubin Kanga (1 August 2013).

Antoine was criticised for both the theatrical delivery of a coin scrape, but the manner of picking up the coins themselves,

The pageturner's additional move to pick up the coins from c.6:07 is an unnecessary one if the coins are ready and dissipates some of the focus of the music at this point. The rhythmicised scraping at m.119 should emerge from the previous figure with a degree of suddenness and oddness, rather than theatrically being announced/presented as a separate entity.<sup>303</sup>

The combined movement was also commented on, and again Alex pointed to a high level of detail in both the timing and the fluidity of movements,

The next section with the piano duet is generally executed very satisfactorily by Zubin and Antoine. At 9:38 (m. 150) there is the opportunity for a more choreographed page-turn where the page-turner should observe the 'sit' instruction within that bar. The act of sitting should occur in 150 and the pianist's first note in m.151 can coincide with the moment of contact between the page-turner's rear and their seat. This helps to convey the floating nature of the music with a relaxed sense of weight aided by the smooth motion of both bodies.<sup>304</sup>

On the final gesture, Alex gave a detailed explanation of both the desired technique and the rationale behind the gesture,

Sonically and theatrically this moment mm.188-97 is successful in this performance. As is the remainder of the performance. However, Zubin's body language in his final extended arpeggio up the keyboard is perhaps a little too relaxed, especially in comparison to Antoine's and given both the nature of the music and the surreal theatrical situation. I would recommend a sense of intensification as the pianist rises up the keyboard. This intensification should continue as the hands leave the keyboard and the aim should be for an accordance between the sounds produced by the page-turner and the exact nature of the pianist's mimed playing. As the pianist's body turns to the right, the way this body is held should not feel relaxed, it should feel strained, like being torn away from its rightful position and yet inexorably forced into an awkward position (and somewhat relishing it for the sake of really conveying an unusual mode of pianistic performance). Rather than relaxing as the action slows down, I would suggest a stiffening of the body's mechanical actions, with the fingers outstretched while slowing down, the LH elbow raised at an odd angle, the torso tilted to the right (rather than upright), so that it is a monstrous sort of position. When the body feels it can go no further, then the final twist comes as the body releases itself from this twisted state and finds a state of final peace as it is reunited with the keyboard, albeit hunched over it and seemingly lifeless. By conveying this more monstrous/macabre quality, the ending will feel more surreal and absolutely final and as if every last ounce of energy was spent in the process (both by pianist and page-turner).<sup>305</sup>

---

<sup>303</sup> Ibid.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid.



These criticisms reveal the musical detail of Alex's vision, but also raise an intriguing question. If the required detail is this rich, then the current score is inadequate for communicating all the nuances required. But is there a hypothetical score that could communicate all these details? I would wager that it would not be possible to notate all the theatrical aspects, which means that either Alex needs to be present to workshop all future performances, create detailed films of performances with detailed commentary describing the most important aspects of each action or he must accept that performances will diverge from his ideal vision, but succeed on their own terms, as I believe this performance did.

## Conclusions

The observations of the workshops to create the work, and then realise it again for subsequent performances allows the opening research questions to be addressed.

- From the first meeting when Alex states his desire to work collaboratively to finish the piece in time, our work is thoroughly integrative with a constant swapping of roles within the workshops. Though most of the fully notated sections were generated and completed by Alex and brought to the workshop in a semi-formed state, the more theatrical sections (including the climax) and the sections featuring intricately interwoven improvisation (such as the 'arborescence' section) were generated, partially notated and refined in the workshop.
- The notation of many of the passages generated in the workshop functioned as an *aide memoire*, leaving most of the detail to site-specific performance practice developed and refined in the workshops. In some cases this took the form of graphical elements on top of conventional notation (to show the movements of hands above the keyboard), in others graphical elements showing rhythm but with exact pitch materials (as in the 'arborescence' section to show the pacing of the propagating arpeggios) and in the final pages, completely graphical notation, with only a rough guide to pitch through reference to areas on the keyboard. Other passages, such as the pageturner's 'solo' were originally notated with an instruction to improvise. The majority of

these notational methods were removed or refined in the revised version of the piece, with some passages fully notated (such as the pageturner's solo) and the graphical notation used more sparingly. Despite this attempt at full notation, the later workshops with Alex, as well as my rehearsals with Antoine, demonstrated that it was very difficult to find a sufficiently detailed notation for all the theatrical details and extended techniques, and that in some notated sections (such as the ending) the score remained an *aide memoire* for a more detailed, memorised performance practice.

- The pressures of time on the composition process, when combined with a relative availability of workshop time for collaboration, meant that although the overall compositional process was completed relatively quickly, the individual workshops were inefficient when compared to workshops in other cases in this thesis. A large amount of time was spent generating and refining material that would later be discarded, and the time spent on refining material through site-specific performance practice could have been reduced with the use of more detailed notation. However, this is just a local inefficiency: when examined globally, we can see that the totality of these activities, transferred from the conventionally private compositional space into a collaborative space, were refined and agreed more quickly than if we had worked according to a directive or interactive model.
- The conditions for productivity, besides desire for both participants to collaborate integratively, the pressure of time and the relative availability of time and space for workshops within this limited time frame, were the trust between the participants and their shared history. Although there was only a limited history of collaborative work, our shared pianistic and compositional training allowed shorthands of language and notation to be utilised and a knowledge of each other's improvisational and performative strengths allowed these to be maximised. Trust was essential throughout the process – I had to trust that Alex could deliver the piece in time and that he could handle all the theatrical elements without losing sight of the musical structure. He in turn had to trust that I would be able to learn the notes in time, and that I would be able to perform the theatrical elements convincingly. The productivity

decreased when this trust declined in the final workshops, my wavering trust that Alex would deliver the piece on time leading to an unproductive resistance. This change in mood was a result of me hitting my tolerance threshold, and at this point the pressure of time became destructive to the creative process and to the collaborative relationship rather than a productive pressure.

- As mentioned above, the shared history allowed a shared language to be used in workshops. The mention of ‘arborescences’, ‘Elsley technique’, ‘Herma-like pointillism’, ‘Molitor’s *Tango*’ or ‘Grisey’s *Vortex*’ allowed us to immediately access a type of movement, harmony or texture which would otherwise require a long and complex definition. In many cases, we preferred to communicate by playing, and often to converse through improvisation – the canon in which we constantly switch positions at the climax of the work was generated with very few words, with the majority of the material created through shared improvisation.
- Despite the largely integrative nature of most of the workshops, the later workshops contain less generation of material, and much more refinement of material, with the final workshop effectively functioning as a rehearsal (especially when I resist learning new material). In addition, the composition of all the fully notated sections and the notation of the material generated in workshops was completed by Alex alone, while I still had to undertake private practice away from the workshop. Though these different phases of work (collaborative and non-collaborative) were all present in the process, they largely occurred concurrently rather than sequentially. The latter workshops on the revised score reverted back to a more conventional model of collaboration, where the score was ‘finished’ before being brought to a workshop where minor edits were made and additional details filled in.
- The site-specific notation, relying on site-specific performance practice to decode, functioned well for the premiere, but would have proved problematic for future performance. Even though Alex heavily revised the score, fully notating sections that had been previously notated in shorthand (such as the

'arborescence' section) or not notated at all (such as the pageturner's solo), the London performance with Antoine still required a large body of site-specific performance practice to be imparted during our rehearsals. This may be because both Alex and I underestimated the amount of information stored in our shared memory rather than the score, but it may also be because some aspects of the piece, such as the theatrical components, cannot be adequately notated with conventional musical notation and that works of this type may require new types of scores (possibly using videos or web-based multimedia) to store and transmit their content reliably. In addition, we both used the recording of the premiere as an supplementary text, answering many questions we both had where the notation was ambiguous and my memories were hazy. Such texts, including the video of the Kings Place performance, will undoubtedly be useful for future performances, when my and Alex's memory will be decreasingly reliable. Whether such texts, in combination with the score, would be sufficient for allowing two performers to access all the detail required to perform the work, without any contact with myself or Alex, remains an open and intriguing question.

## Collaboration Profile

**Work:** *Interventions* for solo piano

**Composer:** Alex Pozniak (b. 1982)

**Performers:** Zubin Kanga (b. 1982) with Alex Pozniak and Antoine Françoise (b. 1987).

**Previous collaborations:**

Workshops on numerous chamber works (now considered juvenilia): 1997-1999.

*Poeme Mechanique* (2002) for solo piano (recording)

*Abandoned at Sea* for piano and ensemble (2006) performed at Triptych '06, UNSW

*Crush* for solo piano (2008) performed at "Crush" recital for Chronology Arts, Sydney, 2009.

**Other shared background:**

Both were students at Sydney Grammar School (1997-1999)

Both were students at University of Sydney Music Department (2001-2006)

Both were piano students of Ransford Elsley

**Commission details:** Commissioned August 2009 by Zubin Kanga for performance in a Chronology Arts solo performance in 2010.

**Performance score delivered:** 29 June 2010

**Work Premiere:**

2 July 2010 as part of "Piano: Inside/Out" recital, Sydney Conservatorium of Music

**Further Performances:**

18 November 2011 in solo/chamber recital, "Generations", Sydney Grammar School.

13 February 2012 in solo recital, "Piano: Inside/Out", Out Hear Series, Kings Place (with Antoine Françoise, pageturner).

**Documented Workshops:**

20 August 2009 (Restaurant in Ultimo, Sydney).

29 December 2009 (Café in Narrabeen, Sydney).

15 April 2010 (Chronology Arts offices, Sydney).

10 May 2010 (Sydney Conservatorium of Music).

17 May 2010 (Sydney Conservatorium of Music).

4 June 2010 (Sydney Conservatorium of Music).

11 June 2010 (Music Department, University of Sydney).

18 June 2010 (Music Department, University of Sydney).

22 June 2010 (Music Department, University of Sydney).

25 June 2010 (Music Department, University of Sydney).

29 June 2010 (Sydney Conservatorium of Music)

2 July 2010 (Sydney Conservatorium of Music)

12 November 2011 (Sydney Conservatorium of Music)

(Rehearsals with Antoine François)

26 January 2012 (Royal Academy of Music, London)

30 January 2012 (Royal Academy of Music, London)

**Interview:** 19 March 2011

# Mythologies

## Efficiency

Efficiency (Oxford English Dictionary)

- 1.a. The fact of being an operative agent or efficient cause. Now only in philosophical use (1593)
- b. The action of an operative agent or efficient cause; production, causation, creation (1665)
  
- 2 a. Fitness or power to accomplish, or success in accomplishing, the purpose intended; adequate power, effectiveness, efficacy (1633)
- b. Efficient powers or capacities (1645)
- c. spec. in Economics, as economic efficiency, marginal efficiency, technical efficiency (1906)
  
- 3.a. The work done by a force in operating a machine or engine; the total energy expended by a machine (1827)
- b. The ratio of useful work performed to the total energy expended or heat taken in (1855)<sup>306</sup>

Among the attributes I have observed actively taught in music schools, efficiency is deemed one of the most important. Efficiency takes many forms, and touches many different aspects of music making. In terms of pianistic technique, efficiency of energy usage is an overarching principle in many technical methods and treatises. In her book, *Mastering the Chopin Etudes*, Abbey Whiteside frames her entire method (derived, according to her, from Chopin's own methods) around the goal of efficiency:

For efficiency in the use of power, the large muscles must take the major portion of the action for producing tone... strain and inefficiency always result if the small muscles governing the hand and fingers are overworked<sup>307</sup>

Although Chopin doesn't explicitly mention the word efficiency, the accounts of his teaching methods seem to support Whiteside's interpretation, with an emphasis on relaxation and suppleness, as observed below by Franchomme and Mikuli (and by many others, collated by Eigeldinger).

---

<sup>306</sup> "efficiency, n.". OED Online. March 2013. Oxford University Press. <http://0-www.oed.com.catalogue.ulrls.lon.ac.uk/view/Entry/59741> (accessed May 07, 2013).

<sup>307</sup> Whiteside, Abbey: *Mastering the Chopin Etudes and Other Essays*, Edited by Joseph Prostackoff and Sophia Rosoff, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), p 63.

Have the body supple right to the tips of the toes<sup>308</sup>

On beginning a lesson, Chopin's main concern was to do away with every stiffness and convulsive or cramped movement of the hand, in order to obtain the primary requisite of good playing: suppleness.<sup>309</sup>

Other pianistic traditions converge on similar conclusions. Russian pedagogue, Henrich Neuhaus (teacher of Sviatoslav Richter and Emil Gilels, among many others) recalls formulating his methods while working with younger pianists, "I soon noticed that their main locomotor fault was a terrible stiffness, a complete absence of freedom" and goes on to describe the exercises he formulated to remove any internal bodily resistance to allow the natural weight of the body to produce sound, including dropping the hand "as a dead body falls".<sup>310</sup> Pianist, György Sándor is even more explicit "The force of gravity and our muscles will accomplish anything we require. Most of the time we combine the two, but it is obvious that it is more economical to utilise the force of gravity whenever possible and save our own energy".<sup>311</sup> My own teachers also taught this type of efficiency as a basis for technique.<sup>312</sup>

Efficiency is also emphasised as a measure of 'good' notation in the teaching of composers. There is general agreement in many notational manuals. In the introduction to *Music Notation: A Manual of Modern Practice*, Gardner Read presents a handwritten score and one that is neatly typeset, pointing out his corrections and boldly stating "The performer does not live who would not prefer to read the precisely notated, clear and accurate version".<sup>313</sup> In Paul Zonn's foreword to Risatti's book on contemporary notational methods, he cautiously argues that "If the past can be any indication of the future, then those symbols and devices that most effectively convey their meanings will be retained, while the less

---

<sup>308</sup> Franchomme in Eigeldinger (1986), p 29.

<sup>309</sup> Mukili in Eigeldinger (1986), p 29.

<sup>310</sup> Neuhaus, Heinrich: *The Art of Piano Playing*, trans. K.A. Leibovitch, (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1973) pp 98-100

<sup>311</sup> Sandor, Gyorgy: *On Piano Playing: Motion, Sound and Expression*, (New York: Schirmer Books, 1981).

<sup>312</sup> My most important teacher for technique, Ransford Elsely, taught this technical approach based around efficiency, frequently referring to Eigeldinger's book and using similar descriptive language to Neuhaus and Sandor. My earlier teachers did not stress the importance of inefficiency, and my later teachers, including Kathryn Stott and Rolf Hind, rarely brought up technical questions in lessons in such a detailed way.

<sup>313</sup> Read, Gardner: *Music Notation: A Manual of Modern Practice* (Second Edition), (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1979), p 5.



effective symbols will disappear, as is already being observed”.<sup>314</sup> In these and many others, notation that is clear, conveys its information quickly and with minimal resistance is advocated over notation that resists immediate communication.

As Heyde and Bailey point out, this efficient approach to notation is ingrained within educational institutions particularly in the UK.

A common practice for ‘efficient’ notation is reflected in the technique taught in conservatoires and universities, where young composers are often encouraged to prepare for professional performances in which rehearsal time is limited.<sup>315</sup>

I have experienced this approach, both within the Royal Academy of Music and while performing with UK ensembles.<sup>316</sup> This type of efficiency draws upon the later definitions of the term (shown above), which derive from the industrial revolution. Just as an efficient factory maximises output for the fixed work time of employees, orchestral management require performances to be prepared on the minimum number of rehearsals, and composers are forced to adapt to this approach or be passed over for opportunities. The push towards efficiency also comes from government policy: the recently released Australian Cultural Policy, makes it clear that the efficient delivery of art is not just a practical goal, but an achievement worth bragging about.

Australian creative industries also increasingly work within global markets, creating content, production and post-production services based on Australia’s established reputation for technical and creative skills and efficient delivery.<sup>317</sup>

---

<sup>314</sup> Zonn, Paul in Risatti, Howard: *New Music Vocabulary: A Guide to Notational Signs for Contemporary Music* (Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1975), p 1.

Bayley, Amanda, and Heyde, Neil, “Communicating through notation: Michael Finnissy’s Second String Quartet from composition to performance”, in Ronald Woodley (ed.) *Notation and Practice: Essays in Musical Performance and Textuality* (Cambridge University Press, 2013).

p 2.

<sup>316</sup>For my performance with the London Sinfonietta of music by Beat Furrer (by no means, simple music to rehearse) we had two full days of rehearsal and the general rehearsal on the day. That we had a pre-rehearsal with just the pianos and percussion was considered a luxury, only granted because Furrer himself, as composer and conductor for the performance, requested it. There are a number of more extreme examples I have observed. For example, the BBC Symphony Orchestra sometimes schedules only one full rehearsal to new works (including those by several of my peers).

<sup>317</sup> Crean, Simon (Minister for the Arts): *Creative Australia: National Cultural Policy*, Australian Government, 13 March 2013. It is difficult to tell what kind of efficiency is

This focus on efficiency of action and communication in music reflects a growing emphasis on efficiency in all fields. As an engineering undergraduate student, the importance of energy efficiency when designing a circuit was obvious to me, as was the goal of algorithmic efficiency when designing and coding software (the efficient use of computer resources having the immediately obvious benefit of greater program speed). But while the benefits of efficiency are obvious in these cases, it is not always clear that an efficient method is the most effective, or the most beneficial method, when dealing with the arts, the reason being that the application of the frame of efficiency implies a value judgement, as economist Paul Heyne states,

Terms such as “technical efficiency” or “objective efficiency” are meaningless. From a strictly technical or physical standpoint, every process is perfectly efficient. The ratio of physical output (ends) to physical input (means) necessarily equals one, as the basic law of thermodynamics reminds us. Consider an engineer who judges one machine more efficient than another because one produces more work output per unit of energy input. The engineer is implicitly counting only the useful work done. “Useful,” of course, is an evaluative term.

The inescapably evaluative nature of the concept raises a fundamental question for every attempt to talk about the efficiency of any process or institution: Whose valuations do we use, and how shall they be weighted? <sup>318</sup>

This makes clear that a judgement of efficiency is dependent on the choice of priorities. In the case of orchestral rehearsals, cost is the priority and time is the variable factor that is reduced as much as possible while maintaining a ‘professional standard of performance’. In the case of the pianistic and notational treatises, it is a conservation of energy that is the priority, and the priority is maximising artistic goals. But if the priorities are changed, wasteful practices can be seen as productive and resistance, rather than efficiency, can be seen as a creative force.

---

being referred to here - time efficiency, cost efficiency or more problematically, some kind of aesthetic efficiency.

<sup>318</sup> Heyne, Paul: “Efficiency” in *The Concise Encyclopedia of Economics*, Library of Economics and Liberty, <http://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/Efficiency.html>, accessed 14 March 2013.

# Resistance

When asked about how he works with performers, György Kurtag and his wife, Marta suggest the concept of *resistance* to describe his approach:

Marta Kurtag: One of your principal discoveries was that in instrumental performance, a resistance has to be fitted in. The easy solution is not the right one. György Kurtag: Yes, but I put the resistance into works differently for different performers. My goal is exactly what Marta says, but for each person, the resistance is in a different place.<sup>319</sup>

What is resistance?<sup>320</sup> Kurtag is notorious for his perfectionism when workshopping his works with performers, and for pursuing his vision with an unusual aggression and fervor. Violinist, Graeme Jennings recalls the experience of working with him,

[Kurtag is] able to hyper-focus on very minute musical details for very long stretches of time. He's a fantastic musician of course... obsessed with the interior quality of sound. He can literally rehearse one page of music for hours. It's as if he is composing the piece in the rehearsal, or pulling an engine apart and reassembling it. Unfortunately (or maybe not), he will start from scratch again the very next rehearsal and work the same way, wanting you to do totally different things with the same music (which eventually will drive even the most patient musicians up the wall).... It's very hard to make your own annotations... and then he constantly changes his mind about it anyway.<sup>321</sup>

For Kurtag, resistance is about getting the performer to strive towards the unattainable, and about the 'impossible' virtuosity required to play even a single note of his music perfectly. Yet this very unique approach to the concept of resistance doesn't capture its many possible manifestations.

---

<sup>319</sup> Varga, Balint Andras: György Kurtag: *Three Interviews and Ligeti Homages*, Eastman Studies in Music, v. 67, (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2009), p. 30. It is noteworthy that the interviewer's question is answered by György Kurtag's wife, Marta, before being confirmed by György.

<sup>320</sup> Although this Mythology is seemingly paired with the previous one on efficiency, these two concepts should not be considered to be opposing or mutually exclusive. A successful application of resistance might, paradoxically, also be considered the most efficient solution, remembering Heyne's definition of efficiency as contingent on the choice of values and priorities.

<sup>321</sup> Jennings, Graeme: Correspondence with the author, 30 April 2011. Jennings worked with Kurtag many times during his tenure as 2<sup>nd</sup> violinist of the Arditti Quartet from 1994 to 2005. They worked with him on both his string quartets, the *Officium Breve* in Memoriam Andreae Szervánszky (1989) and the *Twelve Mikroludes* (1979).

Resistance can be found at many different stages of the collaborative process. Kurtag, in the above quote, was discussing working with performers in their rehearsal process. But the resistance can be present, from both performer and composer, from the first meeting. A performer can present an extremely restrictive brief to a composer, resisting their compositional tendencies or conventional patterns. A performer may also resist their own training to choose a technical solution that is less obviously 'efficient' (as demonstrated by Heyde in his examination of Faure's cello writing) or they may even resist the conventions of a performance tradition (as Olivia Sham demonstrates in her research into performing Liszt on historical instruments).<sup>322</sup> Such targeted resistance can also be observed in the performative approaches of Artur Schnabel (observable in the fingerings of his edition of Beethoven's Piano Sonatas), Pablo Casals (observable in a filmed masterclasses on Brahms's E minor Sonata in 1960) and Carlos Kleiber (observable in a filmed rehearsal from 1970) among many other performers of the past.<sup>323</sup> A performer may also resist the intentions of the composer: as Suzanne Cusick observes in a performance of Schumann's song-cycle, *Frauenliebe und -leben*, Jessye Norman resists the submissive gender role presented in the text, performing an alternative narrative that deviates markedly from conventional interpretations – an example of interpretative resistance.<sup>324</sup>

---

<sup>322</sup> Both these examples were examined in detail in the following co-authored paper: Callis, S, Heyde, N, Kanga, Z and Sham, O: "Creative Resistance: towards a performative understanding of 'distributed creativity'", CMPCP Performance Studies Network, Second International Conference, University of Cambridge, 2013.

Targeted resistance can also be observed in the performative approaches of Artur Schnabel (observable in the fingerings of his edition of the Beethoven Piano Sonatas), Pablo Casals (observable in a filmed masterclasses on Brahms's E minor Sonata in 1960) and Carlos Kleiber (observable in a filmed rehearsal from 1970) among many other performers of the past.

<sup>323</sup>Beethoven, Ludwig van: *32 Sonate per Pianoforte*, Schnabel, Artur. (ed.) (Milan: Curci, 1949).

Kleiber, Carlos: *Carlos Kleiber: Rehearsal and Performance*, Südfunk-Sinfonieorchester, dir. Dieter Ertel (SDR Stuttgart, Arthaus Musik GMBH, 1970).

Casals, Pablo. *The Library of Master Performers Masterclass series: Pablo Casals*, filmed at University of California, Berkeley, 1960, edited by Miriam Arhsam, originally released 1961, DVD released by Shar Products Company, 2005.

<sup>324</sup> Cusick, Suzanne: "Gender and the Cultural Work of a Classical Music Performance", *repercussions* 3:1 (1994), 77-110.

A composer can use resistance creatively, to explore the weaknesses rather than the strengths of the performer or to altogether avoid any conventional approach to technique or notation, thus rendering the performer's training irrelevant.<sup>325</sup> A composer may also exploit the low resolution of notation to create resistances in the gap between notation and expression (as explored by Sarah Callis in Brahms's string quartets).<sup>326</sup> People and factors outside of the composer-performer relationship can also create sources of resistance: the limits of an instrument, the acoustic of a performance space, the funding conditions placed by arts councils and the interference of concert promoters can all manifest as resistance. Some composers and performers might find the presence of significant levels of resistance in a collaboration stifling and frustrating. Yet, as we will see in the case studies: resistance, when tailored to the individual (as Kurtag does) can push the composer or performer into new creative approaches and directions.

A number of recent composers have made the exploration of resistance a focus for their music. Brian Ferneyhough's approach to notation (of a rhythmic complexity that resists the simplification or even analysis of its components) and to instrumental technique (of a complexity that resists an efficient approach to performance) were influenced by the playwright, Anton Artaud. Artaud's concept of the "Theatre of Cruelty" particularly fascinated Ferneyhough: "His view of the soul tortured on the rack by the twin force of external reality and internal emotion seems central to any artistic activity at the present time".<sup>327</sup> In a number of his compositions, particularly solo works such as *Time and Motion Study I* (bass clarinet) and *II* (cello), *Lemma-Icon-Epigram* (piano) and *Bone Alphabet* (percussion), these opposing forces: the notation, the instrument, the training of the performer and their physical limitations, are all set to maximum, conjuring explosive creativity out of extreme resistance.<sup>328</sup> As Ferneyhough explains,

---

<sup>325</sup> These types of examples will be explored in more detail in the case studies of Chapters 3 and 4.

<sup>326</sup> Callis, S, Heyde, N, Kanga, Z and Sham, O (2013).

<sup>327</sup> Ferneyhough, Brian: *Brian Ferneyhough: Collected Writings*, edited by James Boros and Richard Toop, Amsterdam: (Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995), p 213.

<sup>328</sup> For a detailed analysis of the difficulties involved in learning Ferneyhough's scores, see:

Schick, Steven: "Developing an Interpretive Context: Learning Brian Ferneyhough's *Bone Alphabet*", *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Winter 1994), p. 137.



of physical movement and theatre in music, the “‘playfulness’ of music performance”: a creative output that is only achieved when the performer is alienated from their ingrained skills, based on efficiency of execution.<sup>332</sup> Though Cassidy’s use of resistance may be extreme, his approach has inspired performers such as Graeme Jennings, who find the extreme demands of *The Crutch of Memory* a stimulating creative challenge.<sup>333</sup>

These composers and performers demonstrate an eclectic variety of approaches to resistance, but there are many more types to be found or created, and the philosopher, Richard Sennett observes the power of resistance in all human activity that requires craft and technique, from carpentry to ballet. He states:

Resistances can be either found or made. Both cases require toleration of frustration, and both require imagination. In found difficulties, to cope we will identify with the obstacle, seeing the problem, as it were, from the problem’s point of view. Made difficulties embody suspicion that matters might be or should be more complex than they seem; to investigate, we can make them even more difficult.<sup>334</sup>

If resistance can be found or made everywhere, it also has the potential to be both creative and destructive. It is a powerful creative strategy, but also a dangerous one.

In this research project, resistance, in its many forms, is a recurring motif. Clearly, it can be used for creative stimulation and even to push performers (or for performers to push themselves) towards a transcendental level of performance, but it can also be abused and mishandled, intentionally or unintentionally, which can lead to frustration and even the ending of artistic work. In extreme cases, unmanaged resistance can stop a project completely, preventing work from being completed or performed. How resistance is managed and deployed is thus a key artistic tool for collaborators, and the case studies explore how the participants

---

<sup>332</sup> Kanno, Mieko: “Prescriptive Notation: Limits and Challenges” in *Contemporary Music Review*, Vol. 26 No. 2, April 2007, p 234.

<sup>333</sup> Graeme has performed *The Crutch of Memory* (2004) on numerous occasions, including in London on 28 April 2009 and Brisbane on 27 July 2008.

<sup>334</sup> Sennett, Richard: *The Craftsman* (Newhaven and London, Yale University Press, 2008), p 226.

produce, communicate and handle each type of resistance as well as exploring the possible pitfalls.



# The Piano

The art of the concert pianist is different from that of other classical soloists. The voice is immediately expressive of the singer's personality; the violin, which fiddlers sometime think of as a "third arm," has ready-made powers of seduction; but pianists contend with an enormous, alien machine. The eminent American pianist Richard Goode, who's currently embarked on a special series of programs at Carnegie Hall, once described the instrument to me as a "world of its own." Alone on the stage with that gleaming black beast, concert pianists are cruelly exposed in all their strengths and weaknesses. As a piano teacher told me in my youth, "You're not just playing Mozart and Chopin, you're showing who you are".

-Charles Michener, *New York Observer*, 2005<sup>335</sup>

A common factor in all the cases that will be studied in this thesis is the piano. Not the 19th century domestic furniture, catering to intimate soirees in homes, but the modern concert grand, a massive (and massively expensive) piece of machinery, capable of competing with the power of an orchestra, and described by Michener as an "enormous, alien machine" and a "gleaming black beast". All the works examined are written for this instrument, performed solo, and the advantages, opportunities and restrictions of the piano as well as the attitudes and prejudices of those who own and service them, affect their composition and performance.

The modern piano's features as a piece of technology define many of its advantages and limitations. The shape and dimensions of the keyboard facilitate an immense number of permutations of chords to be performed, far outnumbering those possible on most other traditional western instruments.<sup>336</sup> The mechanism allows for a note of specific pitch to be played with a simple reliable action (one that a small child can copy instantly) in contrast to the

---

<sup>335</sup> Michener, Charles: "Pianists Alone and Abroad: Alone with the Black Beast", *The New York Observer*, published 11 December 2005, <http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Pianists+Abroad+and+at+Home,+Alone+with+the+Black+Beast-a01611443988> (accessed 24 May 2013).

<sup>336</sup> *The Chord Catalogue* (1985) by Tom Johnson features all 8178 chords possible within a single octave on the piano. When chords spanning a greater distance than an octave are included, this number of combinations increases by an order of magnitude. Given the constant innovation of new playing techniques (including with tools and different parts of the body), it is impossible to provide an exact number of combinations that could be performed, though the total number of possible combinations of notes on the piano is  $2^{88}$  (approximately  $3.0948501 \times 10^{26}$ ). Depending on the variety of stops available, some organs could conceivably have a greater number of chord combinations possible.

comparatively complex playing techniques required to play most string and wind instruments in tune. The mechanism and physical dimensions also allows for very fast playing of passages whether in linear sequences of notes, repeated notes or notes across a very wide range. The range itself is wider than most western instruments, and allows for a (roughly) equal level of control across different registers. This malleability has made the piano a key instrument in the classical canon (as well as the canons of numerous other genres) with few other solo instruments rivaling its popularity among composers.

The mechanical features of the instrument, so advantageous in some dimensions, produces significant disadvantages to the piano in other areas. Japanese pianist, Yuji Takahashi, is extreme in his opinion of the piano as a crude machine:

The piano has eighty-eight keys painted black and white with two or three pedals as the outside operators. Each key has two states: on and off. The pedals work invariably over the whole region. Timbre is neglected. Also, there is no place for local variation of parameters(the fluctuation of a sound after initiation).<sup>337</sup>

The notes produced from the keyboard have a definite pitch, removing the possibility of microtones. Equal-tempered tuning makes most intervals other than an octave only approximate in accuracy. Although a huge number of articulations and timbres are possible on the piano (contrary to what Takahashi suggests) they exist within a much narrower gamut when compared to wind and bowed string instruments. Although a large number of chords are available, they are limited by the dimensions of the performer and especially their hands, with the span of chords limited to a 9th or 10th in each hand.<sup>338</sup> The similarities of the piano to percussion instruments are reflected in its limitations of sound – the sound always decays and can never increase or sustain (although techniques such as a trill or tremolo attempt to create the illusion of doing so).

---

<sup>337</sup> Takahashi, Yuji: The Transformation of the Piano, *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 30, No. 2 (Summer, 1992), pp. 86-89.

<sup>337</sup>

<sup>338</sup> Though larger chords are possible when performing clusters, there are still limits on their size and on their complexity depending on the dimensions and flexibility of the performer's body.

Although there has been little written on modern conceptions of the piano, there is a vast literature exploring its technological evolution,<sup>339</sup> its physical construction,<sup>340</sup> its social positioning,<sup>341</sup> the piano manufacturing industry,<sup>342</sup> the repertory,<sup>343</sup> the playing methods,<sup>344</sup> and the early history of the instrument.<sup>345</sup> One of the few major studies of the piano in contemporary music and the history of extended techniques, is Luk Vaes, in his thesis, “Extended Piano Techniques in Theory, History and Performance Practice” (2009).<sup>346</sup>

The use of extended techniques is one way in which the limits of the piano can be transcended, although they are also dependent on the physical and mechanical peculiarities of the instrument. In his wide ranging thesis, Luk Vaes traces the history of extended techniques on the piano from the early 18th century until 2009. Vaes defines extended techniques as utilising ‘improper’ techniques or interfaces. So the use of clusters and glissandi are low-grade extensions, defined as ‘proper sound but an improper technique on the proper interface’; medium-grade extensions, defined as ‘improper sound but a proper technique on the proper interface’, include preparation of the piano and the manipulation of sound with electronics; while high-grade extensions, defined as ‘an improper sound, produced by an improper technique on an improper interface’ include all the techniques of playing inside the piano with the hands, gliding over the key surfaces, use of tools in and around the piano and combination techniques such as harmonics. He also has a category of extreme-grade extensions which include

---

<sup>339</sup> Good, Edwin M. : *Giraffes, Black Dragons, and other Pianos. A Technological History from Cristofori to the Modern Concert Grand*. (Stanford: California University Press, 1982).

<sup>340</sup> Reblitz, Arthur A.: *Piano Servicing, Tuning and Rebuilding: For the Professional, the Student, and the Hobbyist*. Vestal, NY: Vestal Press (1993).

<sup>341</sup> Loesser, Arthur: *Men, Women and Pianos. A social history*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954).

<sup>342</sup> Ehrlich, Cyril: *The Piano. A History*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).

<sup>343</sup> Rowland, David (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to the Piano*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). The second half of this book is dedicated to articles on the piano repertory in different periods and genres.

<sup>344</sup> Sandor (1981).

<sup>345</sup> Pollens, Stewart: *The Early Pianoforte* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

<sup>345</sup> Lelie, Christo: *Van Piano tot Forte (The History of the Early Piano)* (Kampen: Kok-Lyra, 1995).

<sup>345</sup> Rowland, David: *Early Keyboard Instruments*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)

<sup>346</sup> Vaes, Luk: “Extended Piano Techniques in Theory History and Performance Practice”, Orpheus Institute, Ghent, 2009.

stamping on the ground, speaking, remaining silent, auxiliary percussion, and other sounds and dramatic features that are not related to or created from the piano, but may be included within a piano work.<sup>347</sup>

Examining the history of the use of these techniques, Vaes finds uses of low-grade extensions stretching back to the early-18th century, with early types of clusters observable in Jean-François Dandrieu's *Les Caractères de la Guerre* (1724) and the first glissandi implicit in the notation used by Jean-Philippe Rameau in his *Les Trois Mains* (1728). And although these extensions are explored in some depth during the 19th century, it is only in the early 20<sup>th</sup>-century, with the trailblazing Henry Cowell, that medium and high-grade extensions are thoroughly explored. From the late 1940s, Cage was experimenting with preparation and a wide range of extended techniques, in collaboration with David Tudor, in works such as the *Sonatas and Interludes for Prepared Piano* (1948); whilst across the Atlantic, Stockhausen was augmenting the sounds of the piano with electronics in *Kontakte* (1960) and *Mantra* (1970) and setting new extremes for the use of clusters, performed with the hands, wrist, and whole arm, in his *Klavierstück X* (1961). George Crumb's *Makrokosmos* (1972-1979) and Helmut Lachenmann's *Guero* (1968) considerably expanded the palette of high-grade extended techniques, plucking, strumming and hitting the strings and finding percussive sounds from the frame and casing of the instrument.

Although there was a relative explosion of innovation of extended techniques in the last century, there remain numerous opportunities for further innovation and creative research. The explorations into mid, high and extreme extended techniques have taken place only over the past few decades, with only a small proportion of composers and performers actively adding to the repertoire of techniques. As this period of innovation continues, it demonstrates that the possibilities for new techniques are far from exhausted and there are new techniques and approaches to the piano being created and used in new works every year. New preparations, new tools for playing on the piano, new uses for speech and drama, new selections of auxiliary instruments and new physical approaches to the instrument are among the unexhausted avenues for technical

---

<sup>347</sup> *ibid.* pp 19-21.

discoveries. Although there are countless recent works that innovate new techniques, particularly notable are Rolf Hind's *Towers of Silence* (2007), Moritz Eggert's *Hämmerklavier* (1986-2011), Marco Stroppa's *Miniature Estrosse* (1991-2002) and Claudia Molitor's *Tango* (2007), four works that demonstrated to me the many new areas of piano technique being explored. There are also opportunities for exploring more complex and virtuosic uses and combinations of the current catalogue of extended techniques. This becomes more viable as the works with extended techniques, including those by Cage, Crumb, Stockhausen and Lachenmann, enter the pianistic canon, and their techniques gradually become, if not common practice, then at least better known by the community of pianists particular interested in this repertoire.

Despite the huge canon of extremely difficult repertoire using only the standard techniques of the piano, there remain opportunities for expanding this technique, finding new approaches, sounds and combinations and new ways of reframing old sounds. One way to do this is for new works to comment on older works in the classical canon, or genres outside of the classical world, in which the piano has its own, divergent, performance history.

Despite the centuries of innovation of pianistic technique, and the decades of innovation of 'medium-extreme' extended techniques, there remain significant barriers to pianistic innovation, many of which are explored in the case studies that follow. The piano itself, once a constantly evolving instrument has remained largely unchanged since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century. The trend towards uniformity has also been precipitated by the monopolising of the piano market by Steinway & Sons, who claim that in the 2010-11 season, "97% of concert soloists chose to play on a Steinway piano vs. all other brands combined."<sup>348</sup> This monopoly stifles innovation in piano building by making radical deviations from this norm economically unviable.<sup>349</sup>

---

<sup>348</sup> Gilroy, Anthony and Jim Hoover: "159 Facts about Steinway and the pianos they build", *Steinway Official Website*, <http://www.steinwaypianos.com/159-facts-about-steinway-and-the-pianos-they-build>, accessed 25 November 2012.

<sup>349</sup> Wayne Stuart of Stuart & Sons Pianos has been experimenting with new approaches to piano sound as well as expanding the range of the instrument. However, his business struggles to survive because of Steinway's near monopoly. As Michael Kieran Harvey stated, in the 2012 Peggy Glanville Hicks Address, "Peggy would wonder why there is not

Paradoxically, another major barrier to innovation is the differences between pianos. Pianos by the same maker from different years, as well as different sizes can have widely varying internal frames and pianos by different makers almost always have different systems of frame construction. The variance in positioning of frames means that works that utilise high-grade extensions of the piano may not be transferable between different instruments. A work such as Henry Cowell's *Aeolian Harp* (1923), though a seminal work utilising extended techniques, is impossible on some instruments.<sup>350</sup> These differences may discourage a composer from writing new or complex passages of high-grade extended techniques, or it may result in the requirement of 'arrangements' of works when performed on different pianos, neither of which is ideal for innovation.

Finally, one of the biggest barriers to the use of extended techniques, and the innovation of new techniques, is the attitude of institutions and venues. Taking an overly-cautious approach to piano maintenance and risk, venues either ban all mid-high grade extended techniques or relegate performances using them to their second pianos (often second-rate in model and maintenance). Difficulties caused by these attitudes vary according to the policy of the resident piano technician as well as the attitudes of the current staff in an institution, with changes to the 'rules' dependent on to whom you are speaking.<sup>351</sup>

---

a magnificent Stuart and Sons piano in every concert hall and school in Australia - and bemoan the fact that once again Australian ingenuity and superior design, such as that of these NSW instrument makers are struggling to survive against the cultural cringe, and against monopolistic and reactionary foreign brands."

Harvey, Michael Kieran: "2012 Peggy Glanville Hicks Address", New Music Network website, <http://www.newmusicnetwork.com.au/PGH/MKH12.html>, 2012, accessed 26 November 2012.

<sup>350</sup> Vaes (2009), p 1.

<sup>351</sup> I have had many perplexing discussions with piano technicians over the years as to what is allowable and what is damaging. Before performing at a venue in Sydney, I was told that blu-tac on the strings was allowable but the strings could not be touched by the bare hands. At a concert later in the year at the same venue, no objections were made, even though the program used far more extended techniques (the difference in this case was the piano tuner on duty). At yet another performance, blu-tac was deemed dangerous but touching the strings was allowed. At the Sydney Opera House, preparation of the pianos was not allowed for any of my performances with Ensemble Offspring, but it was allowed when the Bang on a Can All-Stars were invited for a concert in October 2012. The only piano at Kings Place, London that is allowed to be touched is a very old Steinway

In all the chapters, there are cases in which the composer sets out to explore new ground for piano technique and sound, and in all the collaborations, the history of innovation in and around the instrument, the opportunities for new discoveries, and the many pressures that discourage innovation are all in play.

---

Model O (see Chapter 3), yet when I performed with the London Sinfonietta at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, the Steinway technicians allowed myself and Rolf Hind to use all manner of extended techniques and markings in full size Steinway Model D pianos. The most obvious change in attitude has been in the rules surrounding the use of pianos at the Royal Academy of Music – with the appointment of Joanna MacGregor to the head of the piano department, there have been performances involving prepared pianos and extended techniques in all of the Academy’s major venues: practices that were previously forbidden, and only possible through subterfuge.

## Virtuosity

When Bryce Morrison (Gramophone magazine) describes Yevgeny Sudbin's Beethoven, 'virtuosity' is used as a compliment: "his delectably light-fingered brilliance and virtuosity shines a new light on some of the most familiar scores in the repertoire".<sup>352</sup> In another review, Morrison seems to suggest that virtuosity is only welcome when serving a 'virtuous goal', saying of Hamelin's recording of Liszt: "there is never a question of virtuosity for its own sake."<sup>353</sup> Elsewhere among Gramophone's reviews, Harriett Smith places virtuosity in opposition to a 'consummate' approach to performance: "You can keep your Lang Langs, your Yuja Wangs, your Evgeny Kissins... I'd swap their collective virtuosity for one evening of Arcadi Volodos's consummate pianism."<sup>354</sup> Yet she also implies that virtuosity does not have to be showy and brilliant when describing Howard Shelley's playing as "a pianist whose quiet musicality and unobtrusive virtuosity shine through everything he touches."<sup>355</sup>

Is virtuosity a measure of speed and brilliance, or is it some kind of measure of quality? Is it only a feature worth celebrating when used as a means for more worthy ends? What is 'virtuosity for its own sake' and why does Morrison consider it an insult (its denial being used as a strange sort of compliment)?

The polysemous nature of virtuosity reflects the long and mottled history of the word. Although its definition can be found in a number of contexts dating

---

<sup>352</sup> Morrison, Bryce: "Beethoven Concertos No. 4 and 5 Yevgeny Sudbin (pf) Minnesota Orchestra / Osmo Vänskä" (review), *Gramophone* (online), 25/1/11, accessed 20/1/13. <http://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/beethoven-no-4-op-58-no-5-emperor-op-73> (accessed 20 January 2013).

<sup>353</sup> Morrison, Bryce: "Liszt - Piano Sonata etc, Marc-Andre Hamelin" (review), *Gramophone* (online), <http://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/liszt-piano-sonata-etc>, 28/3/11 (accessed 20<sup>th</sup> January 2013).

<sup>354</sup> Smith, Harriet: "Volodos in Vienna" (review), *Gramophone* (online), <http://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/volodos-in-vienna>, 12/7/10, (accessed 20<sup>th</sup> January 2013).

<sup>355</sup> Smith, Harriett: "Beethoven - Complete Works for Piano and Orchestra" (review), *Gramophone* (online), <http://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/beethoven-complete-works-for-piano-and-orchestra>, 11/15/11, (accessed 20<sup>th</sup> January 2013).



back at least to the medieval period, it is first defined as a musical term in Sebastien de Brossard's *Dictionnaire* (1703):

Italians apply this beautiful epithet more customarily and specially to excellent musicians, notably to those among the latter who devote themselves to the theory or to the composition of music rather than to those who excel in the other arts, so that in the Italian language to say simply that a man is a virtuoso is almost always tantamount to saying he is an excellent musician.<sup>356</sup>

This definition, which mentions theory and composition but not performance, has no derogatory connotations, which is hardly surprising given the word's etymology.<sup>357</sup> Even at the end of the century, the violinist Francesco Galeazzi noted on the training of a good violinist in 1791, "Now we have trained a good player, but an unimaginative one, a servile executant, to whom we cannot yet accord the title virtuoso, which belongs by right only to him who possesses the inventive genius, and the style that forms the proper character of the fine arts."<sup>358</sup> These definitions seem to differ markedly from any of those from the reviewers above, in that they consider virtuosity to be synonymous with musical imagination, not just technical prowess. It would appear the modern conception of the term, especially in relation to the piano, was forged during the virtuoso boom of the early 19<sup>th</sup>-century.

Kenneth Hamilton chooses to mark the beginning of the era of the Romantic virtuoso with the piano duel between Liszt and Thalberg in 1837, and the end of it with the death of Paderewski in 1941.<sup>359</sup> Although rather arbitrary as bookends, these dates do encompass an era when virtuoso pianists exerted a significant influence over the entire musical culture. Liszt certainly did more than any other pianist to create and cement the archetypes of the virtuoso pianist, from his invention of the solo recital, his undeniable mastery of the instrument and his

---

<sup>356</sup> de Brossard, Sebastian: *Dictionnaire de la Musique*, Paris: 1703, translated by Albion Gruber, Henryville, PA: Institute of Medieval Studies Music, 1982.

<sup>357</sup> The earliest usage of the word found in the OED is used to signify 'manly qualities' (1470). The usage emphasising virtue in general (and in particular, the virtues expounded by Aristotle) dates from 1673. "virtuosity, n.". OED Online. March 2013. Oxford University Press.

[www.oed.com.catalogue.urls.lon.ac.uk/view/Entry/223847?redirectedFrom=virtuosity](http://www.oed.com.catalogue.urls.lon.ac.uk/view/Entry/223847?redirectedFrom=virtuosity) (accessed May 28, 2013).

<sup>358</sup> Pincherle, Marc: "Virtuosity", *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (April 1949), p 227.

<sup>359</sup> Hamilton, Kenneth: "The Virtuoso Tradition", *The Cambridge Companion to the Piano* edited by David Rowland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p 57.

histrionic stagecraft to his corresponding creation of repertoire, packed with pianistic pyrotechnics, that would popularise the notion of a virtuoso piano work.<sup>360</sup> From Liszt's own teaching studio and from that of Theodore Leschetizsky, a sequence of virtuoso pianists emerged, some reaching superstardom and even, as in the case of Paderweski, being elected to public office.<sup>361</sup> These pianists are now seen as exemplars of the Romantic virtuoso: unpredictable, brilliant, athletic, seductive and dangerous.

Several aspects of the modern terms, virtuoso and virtuosity, were crystallised during this period. Liszt, in particular, has become "the type to which all instrumentalists since aspire".<sup>362</sup> The works composed by the virtuosi of the period, for themselves to perform, were full of techniques that would influence virtuoso music into the twentieth century:

The influence of Liszt's technical virtuosity... is to be seen clearly enough in Ravel's *Jeux d'eau* (1901) which owed much to the water figurations of Liszt's *Les jeux d'eau à la Villa d'Este* (1877). The impressionistic application of virtuoso figurations to create atmospheric effects was adopted by Debussy in his piano music from the *Estampes* (1903) onwards, and Ravel's *Gaspard de la nuit* (1908).<sup>363</sup>

Many of these techniques were innovated, or at least popularised by pianist composers, Liszt and Chopin: fast running passages (such as in Liszt's Mephisto Waltz No. 1 or Chopin's Scherzo No. 1), fast sequences of octaves and double-octaves (as found in Chopin's Etude Op. 25 No. 10), melodies shared between the hands (Thalberg's most famous gimmick, exemplified by his *Mosé* Fantasy but then adopted by Liszt in his Concert Etude No. 3, *Un Sospiro*), sequences of thirds or sixths at even a moderate speed (as found in Chopin's Etudes, Op 10 No. 6 and Op. 25 No. 6), register crossing arpeggios (found in Liszt's *Don Juan* Fantasy and

---

<sup>360</sup> Ibid. p 63.

<sup>361</sup> The context created by the audience for this type of performance and repertoire is also significant. In 1830, Paris had one million inhabitants, with 60,000 pianos and around 100,000 people who could play them. This boom of amateur pianism provided both a sophisticated audience for piano recitals as well as a huge market for published scores.

<sup>362</sup> O'Dea, Jane: *Virtue or Virtuosity?: Explorations in the Ethics of Musical Performance*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000), p 44.

<sup>363</sup> Cooke, Mervyn: "New horizons in the twentieth century" in *The Cambridge Companion to the Piano*, ed. David Rowland, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1998), p 192. Cooke goes on to discuss Liszt's influence on future Hungarian composers including Bartók and Ligeti.

Chopin's Scherzo No. 3), rapid repeated notes (as in Chopin's Etude Op. 10 No. 7) and melodies voiced out from different parts of complex chords (such as in Chopin's Ballade No. 4). All these vary in difficulty with some relatively easy (depending on a pianist's technique and physiology) while creating the impression of difficulty.<sup>364</sup> In Hans von Bülow's case, this attempt to create the right illusion reached farcical heights, when,

To be doubly certain of applause, Bülow also advised that in sections consisting of, for example, daring leaps the pianist should always get one or two wrong deliberately. This would ensure that everyone in the audience knew just how difficult the passage was. After all, what was the point of jumping hurdles that no-one realised were there.<sup>365</sup>

From here, it is not difficult to see why the criticisms of virtuosity (and the negative connotations of the term) also derive from the same period, beginning with a slew of polemics appearing in music journals from the 1830s, with the virtuoso works compared unfavourably to works by Beethoven. Soon the virtuoso himself was under direct attack in articles by Gollmick, Fétis and even Schumann.<sup>366</sup> Such polemics are hardly surprising given the rank awful taste of some touring virtuosos, such as Karl Stamitz, who jumped between instruments, for different variations, and even dedicated a whole section of his recital to a comic pantomime (with costumes and scenery) with Stamitz self-cast as the invincible hero.<sup>367</sup>

From the mid-20th century, the relationship of the virtuoso to contemporary music shifted dramatically. Most famous piano virtuosos maintained (and continue to maintain) a core repertoire from the late 18th to the early 20th centuries, mirroring the increasing museum culture of orchestras and conservatoires. As a result a new type of virtuoso emerged, the 'new music specialist'. A personal list might include David Tudor, Aloys Kontarsky, Yvonne Loriod, Yuji Takahashi, Claude Helffer, Roger Woodward, Herbert Henck, Ursula Oppens, Gilbert Kalish, Stephen Drury, Lisa Moore, Ralph van Raat, John Snijders,

---

<sup>364</sup> In the case of the Chopin, his *Etudes* and other virtuoso pieces were designed around his highly own efficient technique, and the efficient, anti-resistant technique he taught to his students. See *Mythologies: Efficiency*.

<sup>365</sup> Hamilton (1998), p 65.

<sup>366</sup> Gooley (2004), p 13.

<sup>367</sup> Pincherle (1949), p 234.

Marilyn Nonken, Joanna MacGregor, Ian Pace, Pierre-Laurent Aimard, Rolf Hind and Nicholas Hodges. Although a number of non-specialising virtuoso pianists have made major contributions to the creation and performance of contemporary piano music, the specialists predominantly fulfill this role of performing, commissioning, advocating and even popularising contemporary music for the piano.<sup>368</sup> They have also played a significant role in encouraging the rapid expansion not only of traditional pianistic virtuoso techniques but the innovation of new ones, and in the use of extended techniques, a whole new category of playing techniques that most pianists never learn, let alone master.

There is no consensus on the interpretative role of these specialist-virtuosi and their relationship to the 19th century tradition. The details of many contemporary scores, from Boulez to Ferneyhough, seem to leave little room for the creative input of the performer, and some composers actively discourage an interpretative digression from their constrictively prescriptive notation.<sup>369</sup> Other scores, such as the graphical works of Brown or Bussotti leave room for the performer to make major compositional decisions as well as preparing the performance of the work. Some pianists are capable of these extremely varied artistic demands (David Tudor being an archetypal example) but many cannot, and choose not to, specialising in the music of only a few composers (such as John Tilbury).

The expansion of styles and techniques in recent music has also further problematised the already ambiguous characteristics of the 'virtuosic work'. Charles Wuorinen controversially suggested (in 1964) that contemporary music isn't difficult at all, only specialised, and by extension, the virtuosi of contemporary music are unjustifiably praised.

Discussions of contemporary music which reach a sufficiently "practical" point to be concerned with performance usually emphasize the "extreme difficulty" of

---

<sup>368</sup> Although these pianists have played a major role in the performance and advocacy of contemporary music, there have also been a number of composer-pianists (though fewer than in previous periods), such as Richard Meale and Michael Finnissy who have played important roles in performing their own music, and that of others. There have also been a number of 'mainstream' pianists who have played significant roles in contemporary music throughout their careers such as Maurizio Pollini and John Ogdon.

<sup>369</sup> See Chapter 4.

modern music and tend to regard its performers as "virtuosi" of the highest order, in whom an altruistic sense has been, additionally, developed to an abnormal degree. Implicit is the notion that the presumed difficulty is "inevitable," that it cannot be removed because of the directions that composers' concerns have taken over the past half-century, that these directions toward a not far distant point moment of strangulation where the tape recorder will replace the live player, and that meanwhile we had all better be to those grateful players who actually do suffer through the process of learning new music.

All this can be evaporated with the realization that new music is in fact not so difficult to perform as people think, and that the problems experienced by performers in dealing with it are the result of their having been trained in a tradition of no relevance to its performance requirements.<sup>370</sup>

Although I find Wuornin's position extreme, there is certainly a complex relationship between the specialist demands of new music and the specialist virtuosity of its performers. The situation is further complicated by the interpretative demands of works that actively subvert the premises of virtuosity. The two examples I will offer are *For Bunita Marcus* by Morton Feldman and *Evryali* by Iannis Xenakis.

*For Bunita Marcus*, like many of Feldman's late works, is very quiet and very long. Performances last between 70 and 80 minutes and there are no major climaxes, definite structural delineations or dynamic punctuation, with the dynamic level remaining within a palette of pianissimos for its duration. A score excerpt is shown in the following example.

**Example M.7: *For Bunita Marcus* by Morton Feldman (excerpt)**



The sparseness of texture, simplicity of the figuration and lack of notational detail would seem to suggest that the work is not at all virtuosic, or even the antithesis of virtuosity. But John Tilbury dispels this myth:

---

<sup>370</sup> Wuorinen, Charles: "Notes on the Performance of Contemporary Music", *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Autumn - Winter, 1964), p 10.

When David Tudor or Cardew played Feldman what you heard and experienced with great intensity was the limb as it performed, the fingerpad – that most erotic part of a pianist's body – and the resulting sound was raw and thrilling. In too many performances one is all too conscious of a culture intervening between body and instrument.

Tudor and Cardew were virtuosi, which has nothing to do with velocity or *petty digital scramble* (Barthes), by virtue of the extraordinary sounds they drew from the piano. Their performances steered a hazardous course generating risk and excitement: the phrasing and articulation 'situational', determined spontaneously by the idiosyncrasies of individual sounds at particular moments, by ambience and acoustics, by the imperfections in the instrument and the dimensions of the room. And this is Feldman's way.

Such extreme sensitivity of touch is of the essence in a performance of Feldman's music. In the piano pieces the depressed key is gently eased back to position to minimise the obtrusive sound of the key mechanism, time is allowed for the minutest of harmonics to resound, and at the end of the phrases fingers steal away from the keys noiselessly.<sup>371</sup>

Feldman's work, and the performances of it demonstrate that virtuosity doesn't have to be about music that is extremely loud and incredibly complex. But if a work with so few notes can be considered virtuosic, then is all music virtuosic? Perhaps virtuosity lies in the danger inherent in the performance: extreme control is required for extended periods of time, calling for expertise and skills that a non-professional pianist would be unable to sustain. It is arguably in working at the edges of pianism, even the edge of slowness and softness, that virtuosity is found, and where virtuosity of the performer is demanded.

*Evryali* (1975), by Iannis Xenakis is a work that pushes this virtuosity to another extreme. The work contains numerous passages that are, by any literal reading of the score, impossible. The following example shows one such passage, where the contrapuntal lines diverge until they cover the entire expanse of the keyboard.

---

<sup>371</sup> Tilbury, John: "On Playing Feldman", CD program notes for *For Bunita Marcus*, LondonHALL, 1993.

Example M.8: *Evryali*, bars 81-82

A complex musical score for piano, consisting of four staves (two for the right hand and two for the left hand). The music is written in a key with two sharps (D major or F# minor) and a 4/4 time signature. The score is characterized by dense, multi-octave textures. Dynamic markings include *f*, *mp*, *pp*, and *fff*. The piece features intricate counterpoint and rapid passages across a wide range of the piano's register.

To play this passage as it is written, one would need hands that stretched many octaves, or perhaps extra hands. For the average-sized, two-handed pianist, this passage presents a challenge of great technical and physical resistance as well as an ideological dilemma.<sup>372</sup> This dilemma of physical impossibility has elicited two general approaches from performers. Peter Hill advocates the preparation of a new and less resistant score, where the complexities of Xenakis' counterpoint are suggested, thereby creating the illusion of the *resistant* version of the score.<sup>373</sup> An excerpt of this score, showing his 'solution' to the challenges of bars 81-82 is shown below.

Example M.9: Hill's version of *Evryali*, bars 81-82<sup>374</sup>

A musical score for piano, consisting of two staves (treble and bass clef). The tempo is marked as *♩ = 60 approx.*. The score is significantly simplified compared to the original, focusing on the essential rhythmic and harmonic elements. Dynamic markings include *f*, *mp*, *fff*, *p*, and *pp*. A circled *pp* marking is followed by the word *loco*. The score uses various articulation marks and a circled *p* to indicate phrasing and dynamics.

<sup>372</sup> See *Mythologies: Resistance*.

<sup>373</sup> Hill, Peter: "Xenakis and the Performer", *Tempo*, New Series, No. 112 (March 1975), p. 7.

<sup>374</sup> *Ibid.* p 8.

Many pianists agree with Hill's approach to this music including Claude Helffer, Aki Takahashi, Philip Howard and Ian Pace<sup>375</sup>. But this solution to *Evryali*'s performance problems is repudiated by performers such as Roger Woodward, who believed this approach to Xenakis' music to be grossly unethical. He stated "Xenakis never had time for people who messed with his music, leaving things out to make it as easy as they like".<sup>376</sup> Woodward was advocating an approach that maintains the virtuosic ideals of the passage, maintaining the impossible challenge and the high risk of failure. As Philip Howard explains, while advocating a similar approach to interpreting *Evryali*:

*Evryali*'s drive to go beyond existing limits and break through the boundaries of established physical and mental ability is a fundamental component of the discourse, not simply one of its surface characteristics... by introducing the element of impossibility – music literally unrealizable as notated – Xenakis transcends the tradition [of transcendental virtuosity] itself and brings music to a new level.<sup>377</sup>

These rival approaches demonstrate two competing conceptions of virtuosity – virtuosity as the efficient delivery of the music (even if, in Hill's reduction, it requires some smoke and mirrors) is in opposition with the notion of virtuosity as a type of extreme resistance, that Woodward wants to avoid reducing. Despite the different approaches to Xenakis' score, all these performers have been provoked by the physical and technical demands of the work to find new ways of playing and new ways of thinking about the limits of virtuosity. Here, the resistance to traditional (or more specifically, attainable) virtuosic goals sets the virtuosic priorities and attitudes of each of the performers into sharp relief.

In this thesis, virtuosity appears in many guises, from the demonstrative 19<sup>th</sup>-century incarnation, to the Feldman-esque virtuosity of playing a single note,

---

<sup>375</sup> Aki Takahashi's, Philip Howard and Claude Helffer's approaches have been determined by listening to their respective recordings, while Ian Pace's approach was offered in conversation with the author in 2007.

<sup>376</sup> Roger Woodward talked about his own approach to *Evryali* and his experiences of working closely with Xenakis during a private lesson with the author in 2004. Rolf Hind and Mark Knop also advocated this resistance-maintaining approach when asked about their approaches to the work.

<sup>377</sup> Howard, Philip: 'Evryali: Beyond the Surface (What I learnt from Evryali by Performing It)' in *Perspectives of New Music*, Volume 42, No. 2, 2004.



and many others. But in all cases, the virtuosity is about exploring the boundaries of pianistic performance, whether they are the outer boundaries of traditional technique, the new frontiers of extended techniques and for a performer or the interior frontiers of the pianist's strengths, weaknesses, desires and fears.

# Chapter 3: Virtuosity

Virtuosity, as we have seen, is a term assigned to a wide variety of styles of playing, performance techniques, compositions and performances. Setting aside the value judgement that the term might imply, virtuosity is about pushing boundaries, taking risks and demonstrating extraordinary skills. All three case studies in this chapter explore different types of virtuosity as well as different methods of exploring its possibilities.

*...out of obscurity* by Elliott Gyger is a work that never had virtuosity as a goal, but the combination of new and conventional techniques in complex combinations created a work that pushes the boundaries of my abilities. *Diabolic Machines* by Anthony Moles is composed using more traditional pianistic techniques as well as conforming to the traditional genre of the 'virtuoso showpiece'. Finally, *Orfordness* by David Gorton, is a work in five movements, each of which explores different techniques. With the exploration of virtuosity as a specific brief, Gorton finds new ways of interrogating the concept of virtuosity, and the work's extra-musical focus on censorship mirrors David's strategy of censorship, employed in his approach to our collaboration.

Several key questions will be explored across these chapters:

- How does virtuosity affect the balance of authority and distribution of creative input during the collaborative process?
- How are the risks associated with virtuosic techniques managed within the collaboration?
- How is the testing of new techniques managed, and who takes control of this process?
- What role does the open communication or censorship of each artist's own working process play when exploring virtuosity collaboratively?
- Are there differences between how resistant virtuosity and efficient virtuosity are explored and workshopped?

- How does my ‘expertise’ as a virtuoso interact with the composers’ knowledge of the piano (which in all their cases is adequate but not professional).

### Definitions: Risk

In virtuoso repertoire that works close to the limits of the performer’s physical and psychological thresholds, the concept of risk comes into play. Using the definition from the Risk Management International Standards, risk is defined broadly as “the effect of uncertainty on objectives”, though the specific definition relevant for our use is that “Risk is defined in terms of the consequences of an event and the associated likelihood of occurrence”.<sup>378</sup> Thus risk can be calculated as a product of chance and consequence, with low values of both corresponding to low risk and high values of both corresponding to high risk. A sample table might look like the following, with the risk shown on a qualitative scale of, low (L), medium (M), high (H) and extreme (E).

**Example 3.1: Sample table of Risk as a product of Likelihood and Consequences**

		Consequences				
Likelihood		Insignificant 1	Minor 2	Moderate 3	Major 4	Extreme 5
5	Almost Certain	H	H	H	E	E
4	Likely	M	H	H	E	E
3	Possible	M	M	M	H	E
2	Unlikely	L	M	M	M	H
1	Rare	L	L	L	M	M

For solo piano performances, likelihood may range from a one-in-thirty performance event up to a one-per-concert event. The events could range in consequence from an insignificant error that would not be audible to the audience, up to more extreme events where the whole performance may need to stop because the health of the performer would otherwise be compromised.

<sup>378</sup> “Risk Management – Principles and Guidelines”, International Standard, ISO 2009.

The concepts of risk management (putting plans in place to control the amount of risk), risk appetite (the amount of risk a party is willing to take on) and risk owner (the party taking responsibility for the risk) will all be useful in exploring virtuosic risk and its management.

### **Definitions: Testing**

In order to assess risk and to define where thresholds exist, testing is required. In the workshops of this chapter, testing takes two main forms.

- **Threshold Testing:** when testing the performer's limits, the performer is by necessity put at the centre of the collaboration, and defines the results of the testing (though not always deciding on the testing strategy, or the solutions).
- **Aesthetic Testing:** in this form of testing, particular passages, often with new or unfamiliar techniques are tested to decide whether they will be used in the finished piece, or require change or removal. In contrast to threshold testing, the results of aesthetic testing are conventionally defined by the composer, although this is not always the case.

In addition to these two types of testing, we can categorise testing into different phases:

- **Experimental Testing** involves the exploration and invention of new techniques or new combinations of older techniques.
- **Diagnostic Testing** involves the testing of specific musical materials to be used in the piece, with adjustments made as necessary based on the performer's and the instrument's tolerance thresholds.
- **Performative Testing** involves the testing of works nearing a public performance to examine how all the techniques function together within a complete musical framework.

## ***...out of obscurity* by Elliott Gyger<sup>379</sup>**

When Elliott Gyger began composing his solo piano work, *...out of obscurity*, there was no discussion of virtuosity, nor any stated intention that it would be an intended goal for the piece. Yet by the end, Gyger had composed one of the most virtuosic works I have encountered – indeed, of all the works explored in this thesis, his was the most difficult to perform. In this case, I will explore the question of how the aim of innovating new techniques, in combination with traditional techniques, can create an unexpectedly virtuosic piece. The virtuosic use of new techniques in this piece also allows us to explore the concept of the ‘site-specific instrument’.

### **Initial Discussions: the brief of ‘innovation’**

I commissioned Elliott in September 2010 at a meeting in Sydney<sup>380</sup>. I had recently been awarded a grant to allow me to put on a concert tour of new and innovative piano music and I asked Elliott if he wanted to be a part of the project.<sup>381</sup>

Elliott was keen to find out as much as he could about the project, about the other pieces on the program, as he recalled.

I asked you what you wanted or were expecting from the piece, especially relative to the other works – pre-existing or newly commissioned – on the program. I think you found this a surprising question, and perhaps difficult to answer, but it certainly gave me food for thought in starting to shape the piece in my mind.<sup>382</sup>

---

<sup>379</sup> The title plays on the phrase “plucked out of obscurity”, referring to use of plucked notes as a featured technique in the piece.

<sup>380</sup> Notes from meeting, 11 September 2010.

<sup>381</sup> The Michael Kieran Harvey Scholarship, awarded to me in July 2010, supported my research and performances over the next two years. Alongside Elliott, I commissioned Nicholas Vines, Daniel Rojas in 2010 and Marcus Whale, Jane Stanley, Andrew Harrison, Rosalind Page and David Young in 2011.

<sup>382</sup> Interview with Elliott Gyger (28 May 2013).

Elliott's questions surprised me because I had given all the composers a very open brief, requesting only that the works be innovative, and he seemed to want more specific constraints, so that he could find creative ways of addressing them. Elliott's most pressing question was "What do you mean by innovative?".<sup>383</sup> I described some of the other works, including the use of extended techniques, preparations, electronics, theatrical elements as well as experimenting with the piano's resonant capabilities and the use of the various pedals. As he had not written a piece for piano with preparation or extended techniques before, Elliott was initially drawn to the idea of playing with the piano's resonance using post-spectral techniques, similar to those used in Tristan Murail's *Territoires d'Oubli* (1977). When we met again on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2011, Elliott had only made a few sketches, outlining the collection of overlapping symmetrical harmonies that would become the basis for the work. At this point he made his first suggestion to me that he was interested in using plucked notes alongside keyboard notes, and that each would have their own symmetrical harmony underpinning it.

### **First workshop: Defining the limits**

When we met in Melbourne on 5 March 2011 to read through his more developed sketches for the piece, the initial concept had been expanded into a work of extensive and ambitious extended piano writing. Elliott had decided to embrace the brief of innovation around the instrument, and was writing a piece using a number of extended techniques as well as preparations. Making reference to the fact that it would be full of plucked notes, he had chosen the title, *...out of obscurity*.

Elliott brought with him three pages of score, each testing out both musical materials as well as the various techniques he wanted to use. He told me later that he had only come up with these in the preceding days, but that this was perhaps better than coming with more concrete musical materials,

As it happened, I had other deadlines to meet and wasn't able to start working on ideas for the workshop until just a few days before. This was quite interesting

---

<sup>383</sup> Notes from meeting 11 September 2010.

though, in that what I brought in was thoroughly provisional (and indeed virtually none of it ended up in the piece), but I did take the opportunity to try out combinations of different playing techniques, which was extremely useful. I think it's probably true to say that I didn't really know yet what the piece was going to be, and the workshop helped to crystallize some of my ideas.<sup>384</sup>

The first page contained a passage of intricate counterpoint between plucked notes and keyboard passagework, shown in example 3.2.

### Example 3.2: Sketch for *...out of obscurity*, 5 March 2011

The image shows a handwritten musical score on a piece of paper. At the top, there are tempo markings:  $\text{♩} = 108 / \text{♩} = 162$ . The title of the piece is "... out of obscurity" for extended piano. The composer's name, Elliott Gyger, is written in the top right corner, along with the word "(Arranger)". There are also some handwritten notes in the top right: "ANAM Piano (1/3/11) Steining", "Low diode (E)-P (D-B6)", and "High dia (H)-D (C-63)". The score is written on two systems of staves. The first system has a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a bass clef staff with a plucked line. The second system continues the same. There are various musical notations including notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *pp* and *mf*. A handwritten note "(on keyboard)" is written above the first system. The word "Score" is written in the top left corner. There are also some handwritten notes on the left side: "4th", "5th", "6th", "7th", "8th", "9th", "10th", "11th", "12th", "13th", "14th", "15th", "16th", "17th", "18th", "19th", "20th", "21st", "22nd", "23rd", "24th", "25th", "26th", "27th", "28th", "29th", "30th", "31st", "32nd", "33rd", "34th", "35th", "36th", "37th", "38th", "39th", "40th", "41st", "42nd", "43rd", "44th", "45th", "46th", "47th", "48th", "49th", "50th", "51st", "52nd", "53rd", "54th", "55th", "56th", "57th", "58th", "59th", "60th", "61st", "62nd", "63rd", "64th", "65th", "66th", "67th", "68th", "69th", "70th", "71st", "72nd", "73rd", "74th", "75th", "76th", "77th", "78th", "79th", "80th", "81st", "82nd", "83rd", "84th", "85th", "86th", "87th", "88th", "89th", "90th", "91st", "92nd", "93rd", "94th", "95th", "96th", "97th", "98th", "99th", "100th".

The sketch shows a chord held in the middle pedal at the opening, followed by the use of plucking in the left hand and keyboard passagework in the right-hand. Although none of the musical material would make it into the final work, both these techniques would find their way onto the opening page of the premiere performance version. I tested the technique with Elliott, and as is obvious from the video clip, I was only able to sight-read the technically complex passage slowly and awkwardly, providing only a rudimentary test of whether the passage would be playable at tempo. However, it did demonstrate to both of us the virtuosity required to perform such a passage, which was not obvious just by looking at the page – a relatively straightforward passage to play on the keyboard had become extremely difficult just by having the left-hand line performed as plucked notes in the piano.

<sup>384</sup> Interview with Elliott Gyger (28 May 2013).

**Video Example 3.1: Playing through sketches for *...out of obscurity*, 5 March 2011**



There is clearly a physical difficulty involved with reaching deep into the piano with my left hand, while maintaining enough balance and control in my right hand to perform the fast, light passagework. But there is also the difficulty of finding notes within the piano, since the internal geographies of pianos often differ and there are no black and white notes to use as reference points, just a vast uniform landscape of strings. Both these are sources of resistance inherent to the piano that would require testing and risk management as the collaboration progressed, and, indeed, the difficulty of testing all possibilities would prove increasingly problematic.

We discussed at what tempo he would like me to play it, and he sang this section at his ideal tempo, which corresponded to around 152 b.p.m.

Elliott Gyger: The other question is what tempo do you think it's doable at?

Zubin Kanga: So you want it as...

EG: I want it as fast as possible, really. What I've marked is probably off the end of the chart but I'd like this as flickery as possible [sings at quaver = 152 b.p.m.]. That would be my ideal.

ZK: Would it be possible for there to be any rubato?

EG: I think it can be a little flexible, just so long as it doesn't...



ZK: ...stretch too much.  
EG: Yeah. It doesn't have to be metronomic.  
ZK: [plays]. Those quicker pizzicatos will be the...  
EG: ...the limiting factor.  
ZK: ...yes the limiting factor for the speed.<sup>385</sup>

Given the difficulty I had with playing the passage at any tempo, my assessments of 'possible' or 'maximum' speed require a degree of imagination and extrapolation. Given that these techniques were used in combinations and configurations that I had not seen or played before, the amount of extrapolation, and the corresponding margin of error, was significant. But I had at least shown him that the points at which my technical tolerance was pushed to its limits were the points with fast consecutive pizzicatos, and these would remain one of the main 'limiting factors' for this passage.

Example 3.3 shows another sketch we workshopped in this session, again combining plucking with playing on the keys.

### Example 3.3: Sketch for *...out of obscurity*, 5 March 2011



In contrast to the opening section, which showed a slow plucked left-hand melody against rapid right-hand keyboard passagework, this example shows a toccata-like section with alternating plucked and keyboard-played notes. Given the notation in demisemiquavers (as in the beginning), I assumed that Elliott wanted the passage to be played at the same speed. But as I tried it out in the workshop, I made the judgement that this speed would not be reachable, even with considerable practice, and that a tempo of about half this speed would be a more realistic goal.

---

<sup>385</sup> Video of workshop with Elliott Gyger (5 March 2011).

EG: I haven't yet thought about a practical tempo. The idea is that you have a keyboard line and a pizzicato line mirroring each other across. I've written it very fast but I'm not particularly sure about how fast it's actually doable.

ZK: [plays very slowly – on average at semiquaver = 52 b.p.m.]

EG: That's nearly it.

ZK: Got there! That's the speed? [pointing to the score]

EG: It's really what's achievable. The keyboard part's not hard, it's just knowing where the pizz's are going to be and that's the limiting factor, I would think.

ZK: Yeah. Let me try this again [plays fragments at semiquaver = 126 b.p.m.]

EG: That's the kind of effect.

ZK: That speed is definitely doable. Any faster than that will get...

EG: ... too risky

ZK. Yeah.

EG: And this is a place where it'll have to be quite a strict tempo too because of the character of it.<sup>386</sup>

Again, the target I set requires me to imagine how the passage would feel once properly learnt. In discussing the tempi, I'm balancing my own desire to manage the possible risk of Elliott composing a passage that I cannot execute, with the need to allow Elliott a license to push my limits.

The techniques just discussed are not new, but new combinations of established extended techniques. However, one 'new' technique was tested during our March workshop. I had previously experimented with placing blu-tac on the harmonic nodes of strings with Daniel Rojas, producing a dyad between the higher harmonic and the detuned fundamental note (see Chapter 4). Daniel and I had previously used this technique in the central range of the keyboard, but Elliott wanted to test how it would work on the larger copper bass strings. Here you can see us testing out the harmonics and experimenting with different amounts of blu-tac.

---

<sup>386</sup> Ibid.

**Video Example 3.2: Exploring new approaches to piano preparation with Elliott Gyger, 5 March 2011**



Significantly, there was no material written for this technique yet – it was simply an idea that Elliott wanted to try out. So although we found the new technique, we were unable to test it in context, as with the other techniques. Elliott recalls,

The biggest technical issue (which was the subject of a substantial proportion of our subsequent correspondence) was the best method of achieving preparations for harmonics; I suspect that we did try this out in the initial workshop, but were still discussing refinements much later on, so coming up with a definitive solution at that point wouldn't have been realistic.<sup>387</sup>

The first workshop afforded us the opportunity to test several techniques that would become central in the final work. This testing process allowed me to take control of, and manage these musical materials, given that I would have to eventually play them, and Elliott, as a capable but not professional pianist, had to take me at my word when I told him a passage was possible or impossible.

---

<sup>387</sup> Interview with Elliott Gyger (28 May 2013).

## **The composition phase: the limits of testing by correspondence**

Our meeting in March was the last before Elliott would hand in the score, as I would be in London until just before the premiere in July. As a result, we engaged in frequent email correspondence, attempting to continue our workshopping (and in particular, the testing of new techniques) online. As is obvious in the following exchanges, though some testing and discussion of techniques was possible, the complex nature of risks could not be efficiently communicated through written text. In addition, Elliott became ill in late March, meaning that the delivery was delayed until 23<sup>rd</sup> May. In these circumstances, I became less intent on workshopping the work via email, preferring to get a full score as soon as possible. I therefore delayed my questions until we could meet in person, a strategy which would also give me more time to learn the notes and discover where exactly my tolerance thresholds lay.

### **The Site-specific instrument**

We have previously encountered the concepts of a site-specific notation that necessitates the creation of a site-specific performance-practice. In this case, we encounter the site-specific instrument. As the complexities of the extended techniques of the work developed, Elliott and I began identifying techniques that would work on some pianos and not others, due to the many differences in the internal layout of pianos.

During our March workshop, I pointed out that the position of the frame of the piano was slowing down my hand's movement between two plucked notes, and Elliott expressed surprise that the inside layout of the Steinway B was so different to the Yamaha baby grand he had been composing on. As the composition progressed, it became clear that we had both underestimated the number of techniques that would be rendered problematic because of the differences in almost every model of piano from every piano manufacturer.<sup>388</sup>

---

<sup>388</sup> A catalogue of pianos and their internal geography can be found in Luk Vaes thesis, though only a selection of all the pianos found in concert halls is represented. Though

Elliott sent me the first pages of the score via email in April. He wrote alongside the attached draft:

As you'll see, the structure works as a series of enchainned, overlapping short sections; at any given time there are two layers interacting, then one drops out and is replaced by another. So for example the first few sections are

toccata + pizz.  
pizz. + gliss/tremolo on strings  
gliss/tremolo on strings + toccata  
toccata + kbd tremolo

I'm attaching the first chunk of about 2 minutes. ...I have tried it out on a grand piano at work and so far as I can tell I think the ergonomics are possible - but please check and see if you think it is doable at something resembling the marked tempo!<sup>389</sup>

The first page of the draft (of April 30) is shown in example 3.4:

**Example 3.4: ...out of obscurity by Elliott Gyger (draft version – 30 April 2013), bars 1-15**

*... out of obscurity*  
for extended piano

Elliott Gyger (2011)

$\text{♩} = 126$  *sempre*  $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$

on kbd  
depress slowly and hold with sostenuto pedal  
*p*  
*pizz.*  
*mf*

After practicing it I sent back the following assessment on May 4:

---

undoubtedly useful, these diagrams can never completely prepare a performer for the exact spatial differences within each instrument and their interaction with different techniques. Vaes (2009) pp 1031-1048.

<sup>389</sup> Email: Elliott Gyger to Zubin Kanga (30 April 2011).

I had a look at it on an upright yesterday - all the passagework works fine. Indeed, I think you've made it more manageable... There is one moment I've spotted that could be problematic on some instruments: The plucked A-D dyad at bar 10 is quite a stretch and on a Steinway D, this will have a bar of the frame in the middle of it. It would be possible with two hands, but you'll then need to allow some time to get the right hand in and out again, and I suspect you want to maintain the toccata without rests. Anyway it's a moment to investigate further.<sup>390</sup>

This was the first time we faced the problem of requiring a site-specific instrument. The A-D dyad in bar 10 was, according to Elliott, easily reachable on his Yamaha baby-grand but it would be impossible on many other instruments, including the Steinway D (the most common full-size grand encountered in concert halls). In the case of this dyad, he decided to re-order the notes in the bar, making the dyad between the A and B, with the D on the following quaver.

**Example 3.5: ...out of obscurity by Elliott Gyger, bars 8-10**



We soon encountered other passages where the different models of pianos would resist a technique – particularly the strummed glissandi. At first, Elliott thought that the use of ossia bars might be a useful way around this:

Where is the divider exactly on the Steinway? I'd been assuming that there wasn't a divider until above the D (which is where it falls on the Yamaha I've been trialling things on) - so there are probably glissandi and other phrases that also won't work. Maybe rather than devising a version that will work on all pianos (probably impossible!) I should come up with some ossias for problematic corners - what do you think.<sup>391</sup>

I replied, indicating that I also thought that ossia bars might be a good practical solution,

For the Steinway D, the bar is above the C-sharp. You're right that a couple of the glisses will fall a bit short (the ones going up to the D at bar 20 and bar 80) and that C-D tremolo is only possible with two hands (which is actually manageable where it appears at bar 21). I think some ossias would be good (I'm sure the

<sup>390</sup> Email: Zubin Kanga to Elliott Gyger (4 May 2011 – 6:49 p.m., GMT)

<sup>391</sup> Email: Elliott Gyger to Zubin Kanga (4 May 2011 – 10:37 p.m., GMT)

Stuart I'll be playing in Newcastle is completely different again) but as the Melbourne recital will be on the Steinway (as well as the Sydney recital later in the year), I'd suggest you try and make most things doable for that piano, and then suggest alternatives. As far as I can see at this stage, the only place where an ossia is really necessary is the glisses at bar 20 and 80 and the dyad at bar 10, so it's hopefully not a huge hassle.<sup>392</sup>

However, with the deadline already well past, and the premiere date approaching, the ossia bars were discarded as peripheral to the project. However, many of the glissandi remained troublesome and difficult to practice, given that they often ran across areas where the frame crossed several times. Examples of such areas are given in examples 3.6a, 3.6b and 3.6c:

### Example 3.6a: ...out of obscurity by Elliott Gyger, bars 20-24

### Example 3.6b: ...out of obscurity by Elliott Gyger, bars 75-83

<sup>392</sup> Email: Zubin Kanga to Elliott Gyger (4 May 2011 – 11:46 p.m., GMT). Note that the Sydney performance would eventually be performed on a Bosendorfer, not a Steinway as stated in my letter.

### Example 3.6c: ...out of obscurity by Elliott Gyger, bars 209-216

The image shows a musical score for piano, consisting of two systems of staves. The first system is labeled '209 Doleful' and the second system is labeled '215 Swirling on kbd'. The score includes various dynamic markings: *ppp*, *p*, *mp*, and *mf*. There are also performance instructions such as '(sounding pitches)', 'mp prepared harmonics (played on kbd)', and 'Swirling on kbd'. The notation includes glissandi passages and complex rhythmic patterns.

These glissandi passages had to be altered for almost every performance. In the written score they will work fine on a Steinway D, but required changes for my performance on a Stuart and Sons piano in Newcastle, for my performance on a Bösendorfer at Sydney Grammar School and for my recording session on a Yamaha C6 at Move Records, Melbourne.<sup>393</sup> But at this stage in the process, it was proving too cumbersome to describe these problems of physicality and instrumental geography that would have been obvious to demonstrate in a face-to-face workshop and we agreed to return to this problem when we met.

### The limitations of collaboration by correspondence

The limitations of email, especially when attempting to demonstrate possible performative risks became painfully obvious as we turned to the question of speed. Elliott had taken my advice on the toccata passage we had workshoped (example 3.3) and the passage appeared in the piece at half the speed of the opening (that is, in quavers in contrast to the opening semiquavers) as seen in Example 3.7.

---

<sup>393</sup> The adaptations for the Yamaha are particularly significant, given that this commercially released recording will be the “official” recorded document of the work – yet it will differ markedly from the score in these sections.



**Example 3.7: ...out of obscurity by Elliott Gyger, bars 44-49 (N.B. The bottom staff is all pizzicato)**



Despite this concession to my stated limitations, this passage remained, along with the opening page, as the points where I was pushed closest to my tolerance threshold. They therefore became the testing points for any suggested tempo – if I could play these passages at a stated tempo, then I knew that all passages could be played at that tempo.

Due to the time it took me to learn even the opening page and play it at a slow tempo, we did not discuss his marked tempo until after he had sent the finished work on May 31. Asking me how I was going with the piece, I replied: “I’d say the only aspect I’m slightly concerned about is the tempo - I think I’ll get it up to 126 but it might be safer at just under 120”.<sup>394</sup> Although this sounds optimistic, I was in fact very concerned about whether I could meet his marked tempo of crotchet = 126, as I was at that point finding a tempo of 85 barely possible. However, I chose here to censor my own communication – hoping that I would indeed get to the marked tempo rather than forcing further changes on a piece that I had very little time to learn. This censorship was a calculated risk – if I asked for further changes, it might mean I would have insufficient time to learn them before the premiere, so I proceeded on the optimistic assumption that I’d get to 126 b.p.m. in time.

Another aspect of testing that was rendered unworkable was the testing of the new blu-tac preparation explored in the March workshop. As with all the other extended techniques, Elliott used this technique across a whole register of the keyboard, and in complex combinations with other techniques. His email of 22 March 2011 gave the following to me to test:

---

<sup>394</sup> Email: Zubin Kanga to Elliott Gyger (31 May 2011).

I have a concrete proposal for the preparations now - it'd be great if you could try it out. The highest string involved is now D2 - hopefully that will avoid problems. I'm looking at preparing 12 strings, half at the 5th partial and half at the 7th partial:

D2 - 7th (= C5)  
C#2 - 5th (= F4)  
C2 - 7th (= Bb4)  
A#1 - 5th (= D4)  
A1 - 7th (= G4)  
F#1 - 7th (= E4)  
F1 - 5th (= A3)  
D1 - 5th (= F#3)  
C#1 - 7th (= B3)  
B0 - 5th (= D#3)  
A#0 - 7th (= G#3)  
A0 - 5th (= C#3)<sup>395</sup>

I tested these on several pianos at the Royal Academy before emailing him on 11 April 2011:

I checked the preparations you had sent me. They all work (in terms of producing the notes and arranging the blu-tac on the strings). I found it tricky to get the weight distribution right with books on top of the blu-tac, but I might cut out some thick cardboard to put the books on for the concert.

There were only small issues with the sounds - the lowest three notes (A0/A-sharp0/B0) are a bit muddy compared to the others, though this will vary from piano to piano. The pitches can still be made out, but those notes are muddy anyway when unprepared so I guess there are quite a lot of extra harmonics in the note. The 7th harmonics (as expected) are a bit weaker than the 5th harmonics, but this can be compensated for by me in my articulation. The top couple of 7th harmonics on (C2 and D2) have a bit more of the fundamental in the sound (even though the harmonic itself is clearly audible). Again this will probably vary between pianos.<sup>396</sup>

Although I seem to be quite clear in stating the problems with various notes, I don't state an important fact about all the sounds: no matter how carefully I prepared the notes, and how subtly I controlled my playing, they will never sound as cleanly as a fingered harmonic, nor will they sustain as long (since the preparation will also damp the string). I had assumed that Elliott had picked up these issues when we tested it out, but we clearly didn't test out enough of the notes and I didn't communicate these assumptions to him at any time: rather than

---

<sup>395</sup> Email: Elliott Gyger to Zubin Kanga (22 March 2011).

<sup>396</sup> Email: Zubin Kanga to Elliott Gyger (11 April 2011).

a strategy of censorship, this would prove to be an unintentional failure of communication.

### **Final Workshop: Testing the Limits**

When we met again for a workshop on 6<sup>th</sup> July, weeks before the premiere, the inability to test techniques thoroughly over email became obvious and several new negotiations of the virtuosic passages were required to manage the risk of a performance failure.

The first and most obvious aspect to test was the tempo, and the risks involved in pushing the tempo higher. Despite allowing for the difficulties I had in adjusting to the instrument (see section on the site-specific instrument), my tempo was still slower than that which he envisaged, and I was still unable to play more than a couple of pages without stopping or losing my place, as shown in the following clip.

#### **Video Example 3.3: Workshop with Elliott Gyger, 6 July 2011**



Although I was worried about my own preparation for the concert, Elliott appeared unconcerned about my apparent inability to play many sections of the piece, trusting that I would find solution in the following weeks. He did however,

sing several passages (much as he did at the previous meeting) to demonstrate his ideal tempo, and I accepted this as an aspiration, rather than an ultimatum.

Elliott acknowledged the difficulty of the opening page – in particular the time it takes to play consecutive plucked notes – was open to negotiation. Although he felt that some rubato in playing these was allowable, he was bothered by my taking too much time in the climactic bar of the passage (bar 17), which he felt broke the momentum. The leap from F to D (shown in example 3.8) was a particularly resistant obstacle.

**Example 3.8: ...out of obscurity by Elliott Gyger, bars 16-18**

The musical score for Example 3.8 consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef and the bottom staff is in bass clef. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The music begins at bar 16. The treble staff has a melodic line with slurs and dynamic markings: *mf* (bars 16-17), *mp* (bar 17), *p* (bar 18), and *mf* (bar 19). The bass staff has a simpler accompaniment with dynamic markings: *mp* (bar 16), *mf* (bar 17), and *mf* (bar 19). A dashed line under the bass staff is labeled '(u.c.)'. The piece ends with a double bar line and a 'G' time signature.

Elliott experimented with possible alternatives: moving the F up an octave, changing the rhythm, before settling on the best (or perhaps the least-worst) option, the omission of the F altogether. This was a compromise to remove the most resistant point in the passage, allowing a more technically efficient and elegant execution of the passage that would not require extreme rubato and would also greatly reduce the risk of misjudging this interval – relatively wide compared to the other notes plucked in close succession.

Another focus of negotiation was on glissandi, already discussed (though with difficulty) over email. As I played these passages for Elliott, it was clear to both of us that they would only work as written on a site-specific instrument (the one Elliott had composed the piece on) and that there would need to be some kind of adaptation or arrangement of the glissandi for different instruments, depending on the structure and placement of the frame. Elliott gave me some general guidance on how to adapt the glissandi during the workshop: “The ending of each of those glisses is more important than the beginning – if there’s a problem with something getting in the way then just strum from the above and end on the same

note”.<sup>397</sup> In a later email, Elliott gave me more detailed suggestions for how to make these adaptations:

Here are some suggestions for the C6:

10 - plucked dyad (now straddling beam) - play B4 only

20 - gliss up from C#4 to beam (A#4) and pluck C5D5 with RH

20-21 - tremolo A4 only

22 - start downward gliss on A4

25 - replace gliss from A4 with downward gliss from F#5 to C5 (trem)

79-80 - no good solution here! try glisses as follows: G#3-E4, B3-F4-B3-A4

81-86 - I think the only answer is to make the starting points of all

upward glisses B4 (instead of D5), and of all downward glisses A4 (instead of C5). Bar 82 will need to be A4-F4.

213 - end gliss on A4<sup>398</sup>

Despite the detail of these instructions, Elliott left me with the responsibility of adapting, changing and relearning any changes required for the recording, just as he did for all the performances.

Another major issue that was only clear in the workshop was the sound of the prepared harmonics, and how these would meld with the other sounds. Though this was a compositional issue for Elliott, the resulting combination of sounds was a performative issue for me that, like the other new techniques, required considerable virtuosity to address. As soon as I finished my first play through, Elliott stated that he was troubled by the sound of the harmonics: they were neither clear enough, nor did they sustain in the way that he had imagined. Elliott stated some of the required characteristics of these sounds including that, “the thing I wanted to look at is in the second half with the sustained notes and I wanted to hear some microtonal beating between the prepared and unprepared notes”.<sup>399</sup> He was referring to this section (example 3.9) where in theory the prepared bass sounds would ring through for several bars, but in practice they sustained for barely more than two, destroying the intended beating between the two tunings.

---

<sup>397</sup> Video of workshop with Elliott Gyger (6 July 2011).

<sup>398</sup> Email: Elliott Gyger to Zubin Kanga (6 September 2011).

<sup>399</sup> Video of workshop with Elliott Gyger (6 July 2011).

**Example 3.9: ...out of obscurity by Elliott Gyger, bars 258-261**



In this video, we experiment with reducing the weight on the blu-tac, and then with reducing the amount of blu-tac itself, using these bars to test the results of each change, a process of such subtle tactile precision and fine tuning that it could only be achieved in a face-to-face workshop.

**Video Example 3.4: Workshop with Elliott Gyger, 6 July 2011**



Although the harmonics were much clearer and more sustained by the end of this video, they were still not the clear, sustaining harmonics that Elliott had envisaged. As we moved onto other techniques, the problematic passage was left to me to find a practical solution, which would consist of a combination of less *blu-tac*, a more articulate but softer attack on the notes (to maximise the sustain while maintaining clarity of the harmonics) and slightly hurrying the passage to compensate for the lack of sustain. In this case, the site-specific instrument turned out to be an imagined, ideal instrument with ideal preparations that could not be achieved on any of the pianos I performed on. A virtuosic control over preparing the piano, and playing the passage was required to bridge the gap between unrealisable ideal and a repeatably performable result.

A final technique that required radical reworking was the strummed tremolos such as those shown in example 3.10.

**Example 3.10: ...out of obscurity by Elliott Gyger, bars 20-22**

The musical score for Example 3.10 consists of two staves. The right-hand staff (treble clef) contains a melody starting at bar 20 with a quarter rest, followed by quarter notes G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, and G5. The left-hand staff (bass clef) contains a tremolo accompaniment. It begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic, followed by a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. A *pizz.* instruction is placed above the first note. The tremolo is marked *pp* and includes the instruction "tremolo on strings (with fingernail)". The piece concludes with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a *gliss.* instruction.

When I first saw these I had asked him over email how he wanted them performed, and he wrote back:

I found that a sideways scraping movement with the back of the nail worked - it produces quite a delicate, vaguely mandolin-like sound. I've used it mostly (always?) on the undamped pitches so there's a bit of leeway in terms of hitting the surrounding damped strings.<sup>400</sup>

When I played these techniques as Elliott described them in our workshop of 6 July, he was unsatisfied with the result, "The tremolo stuff wasn't carrying at all, I'm not sure if you can do anything about that".<sup>401</sup> We went on to try a few solutions, first by simply playing the tremolos more aggressively, and then by changing to a different technique altogether and using a plucked tremolo (with

<sup>400</sup> Email: Elliott Gyger to Zubin Kanga (4 May 2011).

<sup>401</sup> Video of workshop with Elliott Gyger (6 July 2011).

several fingers, using the fingernails) rather than a sideways, strummed tremolo. Our discovery of the 'right' tremolo was thus a negotiation between the range of techniques that I could practically execute and the ideal sound that Elliott had envisaged. As in the previous examples, the testing process pitted my assessment of risk and repeatability against Elliott's desire to push my limits to achieve a specific sonic result. This is another example where written communication failed to fulfil the needs of our collaboration. The technique could have been developed and honed much earlier in the process in a face-to-face workshop, but instead had to be altered close to the performance, requiring more work for the composer (in changing the score) and for the performer (in having to relearn whole passages of the piece). If we had relied solely on email, the problems with my original tremolo technique would have only been identified after the premiere. The specificity of the technique required virtuosity to execute, but the identification of the specific technique required was only achieved through negotiation.

Despite the productivity of our discussions of interpretation, Elliott felt that this workshop was less useful to him than the earlier one, given the lack of time to make significant changes to the work before the premiere,

My impression is that that was (and perhaps always tends to be) the most awkward point in the collaboration: the composer has – sort of – relinquished control, but the performer hasn't yet fully taken ownership; and neither party yet knows how the piece will come off in performance. It's generally too late to address any outstanding technical issues before the premiere, which may however be re-opened for negotiation at a subsequent stage of revision; and unless there's been a significant misunderstanding of the score (certainly not the case here!), critique of the interpretation can only be tentative and provisional.<sup>402</sup>

Despite this assessment, I felt the workshop was productive for me in terms of testing and refining my performative parameters, and in identifying and managing the risks associated with the virtuosic aspects of the piece.

---

<sup>402</sup> Interview with Elliott Gyger (28 May 2013).



## Performances

In the leadup to the performance, my negotiations with Elliott were internalised, and I continued to test various techniques and tempi, weighing up the risks of each decision. When I gave four performances of *...out of obscurity* in the latter half of 2011, the tempi varied from 112 b.p.m. in the second performance to 124 b.p.m. in the third and fourth performances.<sup>403</sup> Clearly, the marked tempo of 126 b.p.m. would be possible with only a slight increase in tempo, but the slightly slower tempi allowed the performances to be relatively secure, whereas the marked tempo increases the risks of missed pizzicatos and other errors. I decided that accuracy, control of colour and delicacy of phrasing were higher priorities than sheer speed, although the marked tempo remains a goal that may be achieved after numerous further performances. Elliott recalls, hearing the performance in Melbourne (at ANAM) and in Sydney (at S.G.S.) later in the year:

I do remember being surprised at the ANAM performance at how delicate many of the sounds were, probably as I was hearing them for the first time from more than ten feet away! This was less of an issue for the SGS performance – perhaps because I was expecting it, but also because I was sitting closer and the room was smaller. My perception of the quality of your performances is extremely hard to disentangle from my experience of the piece, but I do remember being struck by the intensity, concentration and conviction of your stage persona, both in my work and elsewhere (I'd actually never seen you perform before then).<sup>404</sup>

The site-specific instrument issues were another reason for the changes in tempi between each performance. On each piano, the places where the frame would get in the way of plucking passagework were in different places, changing the resistance points in each, and varying the overall resistance of the piece. In addition, the strummed glissandi needed different amounts of re-arrangement. In general, the Stuart was the least resistant instrument (the main plucked notes falling between the major frames), followed by the Bösendorfer and then the

---

<sup>403</sup> See collaboration profile for details of performances. The premiere performance was not recorded, but I recall the resistance of the Steinway's frame position (compared to the Stuart I played on for the second performance) and the fact that it was the premiere meant the tempo was slower than 112.

<sup>404</sup> Interview with Elliott Gyger (28 May 2013). ANAM is the Australian National Academy of Music in Melbourne and SGS is Sydney Grammar School.

Steinway. I recorded the piece on a Yamaha C6 (yet another instrument) the week after the Sydney performance, under Elliott's supervision, and this recording can be found on the portfolio CD.

In assessing the piece overall, and how the innovative and virtuosic aspects worked in performance, Elliott said to me,

*...out of obscurity* is a good example of a piece in which I really only discovered what I was setting out to do in the process of writing it. My only *a priori* goal was to find a way of integrating extended techniques with the normal sound of the piano, as while I've always loved the sounds I've been frustrated by the way pieces most often come to a halt in order for the player to execute them. This led to the idea of the chocked middle pedal and the prepared harmonics, by which time I'd effectively redesigned the instrument entirely; and the task of composition then became one of discovering what this new instrument wanted to say, not only sonically but expressively. This process is not over – I'm still not entirely sure I have the measure of the harmonics, and of the dynamic balance between the different techniques – but that very uncertainty and tentativeness has now become part of my exegesis of the piece. In that sense I suppose I'd say that I am thoroughly happy with the realization of my initial aim: the whole identity of the piece is bound up with its timbral and technical aspects – they are as far as possible from extraneous special effects.<sup>405</sup>

## Conclusions

Though virtuosity was not a goal of *...out of obscurity*, it gradually became a feature of the piece that defined our collaboration. Describing his approach to virtuosity, Elliott explained,

I see virtuosity as the conscious and overt exploration of the limits (whether staying just within them, or transgressing them) of what is technically possible for performers. Virtuosity does indeed interest me: although sometimes equated with shallowness, in my opinion it's one of the most powerfully expressive tools available to a composer – the impact of virtuoso performance can be amazingly strong. It need not always be equated with extroversion and display, however. My 1997 work for the Australia Ensemble *si doux* explored what I refer to in the program note as a "veiled virtuosity", and I'd see something of the same impulse in *...out of obscurity*. My desire to integrate different techniques necessitated rapid transitions from one mode of playing to another, and execution in quick succession of sounds usually requiring more time to prepare; in this sense I was certainly exploring the limits of what was possible. The resultant expressive intensity became and remains an important part of the music, although operating in very different ways in the two halves of the piece.<sup>406</sup>

---

<sup>405</sup> Ibid.

<sup>406</sup> Interview with Elliott Gyger (28 May 2013).

The work's virtuosic aspects allow us to address the research questions raised at the beginning of the chapter:

- The innovation of the new prepared technique and the extreme complexity of the plucking/strumming counterpoint required extensive technical testing. This was instigated and controlled by me during the early discussions and the email exchanges, while Elliott took control in the last workshop, pushing me to discover my technical thresholds, especially with regard to tempo. There was also extensive aesthetic testing in the early workshop (in order to discover the desired technique) and the last workshop (particularly in our focus on how well the prepared notes could resonate as well as finding the most clearly audible fingernail tremolo). Although the aesthetic judgements were made by Elliott, the strategy of testing and the definition of thresholds was my responsibility, creating a complex interaction that was clearly impossible over email.
- Risk management became an increasingly important aspect of the collaboration, particularly during the final workshop. The testing of different tempi was always based upon my own risk assessment of the main resistant points in the piece (the opening page and the played/plucked hocket on page 3). The technical failures during the early performances can be seen as a failure of risk management, given that the chance of failure at particular tempi had been underestimated. This was ultimately my responsibility as a performer, although the tempi were constantly discussed and negotiated and the composer must take some responsibility for this misjudgement. However, the risk posed by the performance tempo decreased as the piece became more familiar, so that by the fourth performance, there were very few technical aberrations.
- The complexity of the textures mixing conventional and non-conventional techniques created a highly resistant virtuosic work, with the main resistances found around the use of plucked notes. Learning these passages well enough that I could locate the notes in the piano, play them with the precision of attack required and then reposition myself for the following note while also playing a

contrapuntal line on the keyboard in the other hand (such as on page 3) required the mastery of skills I had never tested to this degree before. The early technical failures were partially due to this lack of established thresholds: it was only when the work was performed that the location of technical thresholds was made clear to me. In collaborating with Elliott, most of my technical solutions were aimed at finding the most efficient possible solution to highly resistant technical problems. Though Elliott increased some resistances in our final workshop, these were only minor adjustments, necessitated by aesthetic concerns (such as the audibility of the tremolo effect).

- Although I had previously played works with complex passages using extended techniques, Elliott raised the bar in this piece, to the point that my 'expertise' in technical matters remained only a few steps ahead of him.
- The timings of our workshops resulted in a greater distribution of creative input to me in the early and late stages of the collaboration, but only minimal input in the final stages of the composition process. Early on, my creative input facilitated the formulation of the new preparation techniques and the crucial technical testing of the plucking/playing counterpoint. While I gave some feedback on tempo and the effectiveness of the preparations during our email exchanges, my main creative input from this point on was in turning the highly resistant, and near unplayable passages into a coherent performance where the resistances were, to as great an extent as possible, hidden from the audience.
- Although written correspondence can play an important, useful and sometimes vital role in continuing a collaboration process during periods when face-to-face workshops are not possible, this case shows that when creating and honing unusual, new and virtuosic techniques, the medium of email doesn't allow the demonstration, experimentation and testing of techniques, the live negotiation, the thinking-through-playing and the mutual listening that are all vital to this type of collaboration. The collaborative exploration of a site-specific instrument is only possible when both

practitioners have access to the same instrument, and can hear the same sounds produced by the new techniques. Indeed, much of the late workshop was spent addressing these issues of diagnostic and performative testing that had been lost in translation when written down.

- By passing responsibility to the performer for adapting the work to different pianos, Elliott acknowledges that it is not possible to design his work to be able to fit all possible pianos, nor is it possible to provide ossia for all possible models. He's also acknowledging that as much as he might attempt to familiarise himself via photographs and diagrams with different models of pianos, the performer has a tactile relationship with the different layouts and can discover techniques that don't seem possible when examining a diagram, as well as find other techniques that look theoretically possible, but are very difficult to execute. Thus, the virtuosity of the extended techniques, combined with the difficulties of adapting these techniques to many models of pianos, forces the performer to take on the conventional responsibilities of the composer of adapting and arranging the composition for specific performances. The practicalities of performance override the desire for an ideal, site-specific instrument, placing the performer into the role of arranger of the work, recomposing problematic sections for every performance.

# Collaboration Profile

**Work:** *...out of obscurity* for solo piano (2011)

**Composer:** Elliott Gyger (b. 1968)

**Performer:** Zubin Kanga (b. 1982)

**Previous collaborations:** None

**Other shared background:** Both attended Sydney Grammar School and the University of Sydney (non-concurrently).

**Commission Details:** Commissioned on 11 September 2010 to write an innovative work for piano of 8-12 minutes for “Piano: Inside/Out” tour in 2011.

**Performance Score Delivered:** 23 May 2011

**Work Premiere:** 22 July 2011, Australian National University, Canberra.

**Further Performances:**

24 July 2011, Stuart and Sons Showroom, Newcastle

29 July 2011, Australian National Academy of Music, Melbourne

18 November 2011, Big School Room, Sydney Grammar School.

**Studio Recording:** 24 November 2011, Move Records studios, Melbourne.

**Documented Workshops:**

5 March 2011 (Australian National Academy of Music, Melbourne).

6 July 2011 (Australian National Academy of Music, Melbourne).

**Interview:** 28 May 2013

# *Diabolic Machines* by Anthony Moles

My collaboration with Anthony Moles on his work, *Diabolic Machines* (2011) is another case where the exploration of virtuosic piano writing affects the collaborations process. Unlike in the above case, Anthony's work was always intended as a virtuoso showpiece. Also unlike the above case, there were no extended techniques – in fact, most of the pianistic techniques are relatively standard and could be found in works by Bartók, Stravinsky, Messiaen and Ligeti. So the critical question in this case is: in the absence of new techniques, are there still risks that require testing and management?

## **Background**

Anthony Moles approached me with the intention to collaborate after seeing me play in July 2009. A PhD candidate at the Sydney Conservatorium, Anthony was at first keen for me to have a look at some of his previous piano works, but after meeting in 2009, and discussing ideas for a new work as part of a concert featuring his music alongside the music of Julian Day, we agreed to proceed with the commission. I insisted, as I have in almost all commissions examined in this thesis, that we work collaboratively from the early stages of the process.<sup>407</sup> Anthony was particularly helpful and thorough in this regard, and sent me regular updates on the score every couple of weeks to receive my feedback.<sup>408</sup>

## **Negotiating by correspondence: a productive case**

Unlike the previous case study, email proved to be a very efficient and useful way of working on early sketches for the piece together. Anthony sent me the first bits of sketch material on 31 July 2010. This contained an opening section involving percussive extended techniques and a second section with running

---

<sup>407</sup> "Please send me bits and pieces as you write them so that we can workshop the piece as it goes. There's no hurry - I would prefer that we get some time together on the piece as it takes shape." Email: Zubin Kanga to Anthony Moles (17 May 2010).

<sup>408</sup> As a fellow PhD student, Anthony appreciated the value of the collaboration to our respective research outputs, as well as the perceived value to our artistic outputs.

semiquavers. The former section would eventually be discarded by Moles but the second (shown in example 3.11) became the opening of *Diabolic Machines*.

**Example 3.11: Sketch for *Diabolic Machines* by Anthony Moles, 31 July 2010**

♩ = 98

*ff steely, metallic*

*pp* *ff*

*Red.* →

♩ = 80

*accel. molto*

*ppp*

7

*prestissimo (at least ♩ = 120)*

*fff non legato*

\*

He accompanied this section with a question, “with the 12-tone-row ostinatos in the second chunk at bar 15 forwards, is it okay to put big jumps in the pattern at this tempo?”.<sup>409</sup> In reply I wrote,

In general, when the hands are separated to the edge of the keyboard, you have to be careful about where the leaps happen and how the hands work together... in bar 8 you have an ascending bit in the middle which is particularly tricky in the LH - to finger this requires me to bounce my thumb which is best avoided if you want the speed and articulation. Like the previous passage, it's all possible if you want to keep it, but I'd prefer you to find a more elegant solution. The rest of the page works well.<sup>410</sup>

<sup>409</sup> Email: Anthony Moles to Zubin Kanga (31 July 2010).

<sup>410</sup> Email: Zubin Kanga to Anthony Moles (4 August 2010).



My request for Anthony to find 'a more elegant solution' reflects my usual bias towards efficient technical solutions, but in the case of this piece with constant rapid semiquavers, an efficient solution becomes even more desirable to maximise the speed and evenness of my playing. Although I pinpoint a number of places that I think will be overly resistant, I don't prescribe any solutions except for bringing the hands closer together. Moles does precisely this in his next email.

So with the new opening (previously the later chunk) all the motoric 12 tone stuff is right at the bottom of the piano and have shifted some octaves so it should be less awkward... At bar 10 I've given you two options - is the ossia less awkward? May seem like a small detail but will affect later patterns. There is still the 'thumb bounce' in the L.H., but I'm hoping that's OK now.<sup>411</sup>

The relevant section (with ossia) is shown in example 3.12.

**Example 3.12: Sketch for *Diabolic Machines* by Anthony Moles, 7 August 2010**

----- prestissimo (at least ♩ = 120)

7

ff non legato

\*

ossia:

9

X4

X5

Besides the change in register of the right hand, the passage is unchanged, but the addition of the ossia shows that Anthony was now considering some of the

<sup>411</sup> Email: Anthony Moles to Zubin Kanga (7 August 2010).

technical issues I'd pointed out, and had internalised my focus on the fingerings required to play different combinations of the same notes. My reply was simply, "I think this all works better. It's still tricky but I think it's all doable. In bar 10 the ossia is easier."<sup>412</sup> There is a tension here as to whether I will attempt to explain all the details of my technique to Anthony, or whether to employ a strategy of censorship. As Anthony recalled, the fact that we were working by email meant that there was a certain inefficiency of communication, which might have been beneficial – a sort of inadvertent censorship that gave him the opportunity to push the boundaries of my technical thresholds:

I did send you the key piano figurations/motives/counterpoints for the work and you were able to tell me which were relatively easy and which were awkward. I did keep one slightly awkward figuration which ended up being a central motive in the work. I knew it would be slightly awkward but achievable because of your experience as a pianist. However, it could have been good to hear how it sounded when played by you specifically. Then again, perhaps this could have made me change my mind about this figuration and not have used it. Sometimes it is good to push, just a little.<sup>413</sup>

### **Explaining/Censoring Technique**

Our meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2010 allowed us to test and reaffirm some of our changes made by email, and the opportunity for further identification of possible risky corners. The meeting maintained a tension in my own communication between explanation and censorship. Moles was very open in explaining his technique, bringing his tables of 12-tone rows to the workshop and also explaining their structure (all of them are constructed out of consecutive pairs of tritones). I welcomed the chance to see these, and discussed some general suggestions about structure, in particular the way that differences of register could be used to define the structure, given that each cell is limited by Anthony's serial technique and by what I can reach with one hand.<sup>414</sup> I was, in turn, open about what I felt were my technical thresholds, and Anthony was open about where he felt these could be pushed, as can be seen in the following exchange,

---

<sup>412</sup> Email: Anthony Moles to Zubin Kanga (10 August 2010).

<sup>413</sup> Interview with Anthony Moles (20 May 2013).

<sup>414</sup> Towards the end of this workshop, we listened to a new CD of Michael Kieran Harvey performing his piano work *48 Fugues for Frank*, a work which Anthony says he used as a model for his virtuoso pianism.

where I explain how different articulations for the opening passage require quite different techniques that have different maximum speeds.

Zubin Kanga: So you want these things down the bottom to be legato?

Anthony Moles: Yep.

ZK: So like [plays legato]. It depends, there's all sorts of articulations you could use. You can have a heavy 'tenutoed' thing [plays]. Or more detached [plays]. Or even more staccato [plays]

AM: Yeah, I was thinking legato for speed.

ZK: So how fast do you want it? 98... no it's 120 now.

AM: Basically as fast as possible.

ZK: [playing] Yeah but fast as possible can mean different things. Because fast as possible could mean that it loses the rhythmic tension.

AM: Yeah, OK. No, I don't want that.

ZK: It becomes a bit of a blur.

ZK: "You know *Stroke* [by Michael Smetanin], or even Alex's *Crush* [referring to Alex Pozniak]. They both have 'as fast as possible' but they just become [makes noise - 'shhh'] streams of notes".

AM: No I don't want it that fast.

ZK: I think you want it fast but groovy.

AM: Yeah, that's right. <sup>415</sup>

In this exchange, I demonstrate my technical thresholds for particular articulations, each having its own maximum speed. But our discussion of what 'as fast as possible' means in the context of the work, further complicates the decision. The articulation I choose needs to balance these priorities of speed and rhythmic vitality, as well as finding a technique that allows me to get around the notes – the aforementioned thumb bouncing technique used as a fingering solution cannot be deployed when playing the passage legato. The references to other works are also important – Anthony's knowledge of these past performances of mine of music by Pozniak and Smetanin allows us to gauge the type of virtuosity that he was looking for. Despite my explanations and discussion of other works, I still conceded to keep his marked tempo, stating "120, that's probably the right speed".<sup>416</sup> Here I was censoring my own doubts of reaching the required tempo with Anthony's preferred articulation, as well as censoring any further changes to the passage I might suggest to make it easier. This strategy of conceding to Anthony's control over the tempo would prove beneficial as a motivator for my own practice, but damaging when it came to performing the piece.

---

<sup>415</sup> Video of workshop with Anthony Moles (28<sup>th</sup> February 2011).

<sup>416</sup> Ibid.

Moles delivered the piece, on time, at the beginning of December.<sup>417</sup> However, due to my own schedule, I was only in a position to workshop the piece a few weeks from the premiere. Our workshop of 28th February 2011 focussed mainly on dynamic contrasts and the characterisation and pacing of the slow section, but we did discuss the issue of tempi. In the emails for planning the meeting, I flagged that this would be an issue to look at when we met, “DM [*Diabolic Machines*] will need to be taken slower - we'll need to talk about what the ideal tempo is as I think your marked tempo is a bit too quick.”<sup>418</sup> This was, consequently, the first order of business when we met.

AM: So you said you might have to do it slower. Is that any particular part or the whole thing?

ZK: Depends...it will be slow today...

AM:That's fine...

ZK: ...I think 120 should be almost doable. It's like most bits are fine, and then there's one pattern which is totally [screws up body and face]

AM: Yeah, I thought that could happen<sup>419</sup>

This seems to make my pessimism with reaching the marked tempo clear, but as the conversation goes on I gradually return to appeasing Anthony, assuring him first that only a few sections are really problematic:

ZK: It might get to 120 on the day with adrenalin... but it's that 132 at the end... most of it will be fine and but then that bit where the bass has to go [plays].

AM: Yeah, I thought it would be that one.<sup>420</sup>

And then assuring him that no change is needed:

It's getting faster everyday I do it, and on the day... well I just tend to play things fast so it'll be OK.<sup>421</sup>

This strategy leaves the composer feeling assured about his piece, but it means I have again ceded control over the decision of tempo, despite the workshop performance tests revealing that the written tempi could be problematic.

---

<sup>417</sup> It's notable that Moles is one of only two composers in these case studies to meet his deadline.

<sup>418</sup> Email: Zubin Kanga to Anthony Moles (25 February 2011).

<sup>419</sup> Video of workshop with Anthony Moles (28 February 2011).

<sup>420</sup> Ibid.

<sup>421</sup> Ibid.

In our final workshop before the premiere it is finally Anthony, not I, who points out that the piece will work better, in my hands, when played a bit slower, allowing me to use a heavier, wrist-powered staccato rather than a lighter finger-powered staccato.

AM: I thought that this part here, when it comes back, could be a little more... solid? Like a little bit more secure.

ZK: Yeah OK. It's the left hand bounce.

AM: It's the bounce, isn't it?

ZK: It's more secure when it's slower. When it gets faster, those things will [plays at 102].

AM: And so that's slower now?

ZK: Yeah, before it was [plays at 114]. It'll automatically get faster on that piano. Because this is a heavy piano.

AM: Yeah but it sounded better that time, even when you were playing it faster.

ZK: Maybe I just need to get my weight down there... kind of balanced. I think I have to take it at the tempo that it sits.

AM: Yeah do that, do that.

ZK: Whatever that is on the day, which will probably be different each day. [plays at 102]

AM: Yeah that sounds much better, so if you need to go a bit slower, that's perfectly fine. I reckon it's only a little bit slower.

ZK: It's not just the speed, it's the feel. You know... not rushing, which is what makes it feel unsteady. It's about sitting back on the beat.<sup>422</sup>

So although Anthony here concedes to a tempo that is 'a bit slower', he is reluctant to allow a much slower tempo, and I am reluctant to admit that the reduction in speed I have negotiated with him may not be enough (a product of a need to respect the authority of the composer and my own pride and reluctance to admit my technique isn't up to the challenge).

Anthony also takes the opportunity to push the limits of my technique in other ways, asking for greater contrast in dynamics, greater colour differentiation between the layers at different speeds, specific articulations for different sections (such as at the beginning of the recapitulation, saying "Can it be any lighter at the beginning? I think it makes it more ominous.") and asking for accents to be exaggerated.<sup>423</sup> All of these are taken by me as reasonable requests that are aimed at simply articulating the features of the score more clearly, but each of them is an additional burden on my already stretched technique.

---

<sup>422</sup> Video of workshop with Anthony Moles (11 March 2011).

<sup>423</sup> Ibid.

A new, and contrasting limit that is tested in this workshop is my ability to play very slowly. Examining the end of the slow section, Anthony begins,

AM: I thought this bit could be a bit slower, but maybe you don't want to do it slower?

ZK: [demonstrating a slightly faster speed than is comfortable.]

AM: I'd say if you can just do it fractionally slower. Just slightly then, for a compromise... I do understand if you go too slow, it drags.

ZK: It drags and in that the notes, because it's soft as well, the notes don't sustain so the sounds don't link together. So it sounds very disjointed, rather than line.

AM: I think I do want it a bit disjointed. I think it's my twisted diabolic music box which winds down to nothing, but I think we can compromise. If you don't want to, you don't have to go that slow.

ZK: I can go that slow, if you think it works at that speed.

AM: I think it does.<sup>424</sup>

My difficulty with playing as slowly as he requests (going down to 20 b.p.m.) is that at this speed, this passage of quavers is extremely exposed and any unevenness seems exaggerated, requiring a virtuosic level of control. He similarly requests that the ending, featuring a canon at two different tempi, should be much slower, which is even more difficult since the rhythmic relationships are also exposed at the slower tempo. In this ending, a slow tempo is more resistant than a faster one, while the opposite is the case for the rest of the piece. However, reducing this resistance too far nullifies the virtuosic power of the extremes of speed and sound so again, a balance would need to be found between impact and risk management.

As we finish the workshop, it seems as though we have come to a negotiated agreement on the basic tempo for the work,

AM: I think the thing that we fixed up today is that solidness at the beginning. The solidness sounds much better. The first time I was listening and thinking 'there's just something not right about that yet' so it's good.

ZK: I'll make sure I find exactly where that tempo is. It's the tempo at which my wrist bounces. Because if it goes too fast my wrist doesn't bounce and I'm using fingers some of the time and then it gets uneven.<sup>425</sup>

Although we seem to have agreed here, Anthony is actually passing me responsibility to find the right tempo within the acceptable boundaries he had established. In addition my desire to play the marked tempo rather than admit

---

<sup>424</sup> Ibid.

<sup>425</sup> Ibid.

defeat (perhaps, the ‘virtuoso’s vanity’) would also come into play in the final days before the performance.

### **Premiere Performance**

*Diabolic Machines* was recorded in studio by the ABC on 16<sup>th</sup> March and the premiere was given at the Glebe Café Church on 18<sup>th</sup> March, in the concert “Bad Blood”, organised by Anthony and Julian Day to showcase their works. As I had predicted, a kick of adrenaline gave a slight boost in tempo and although the result was exciting, there were clear inadequacies in the performance such as unevenness and rhythmic instability as well as passages full of wrong or missed notes. Two days before the premiere, I recorded the work in studio at the ABC studios Ultimo. The work was recorded ‘as live’ with two full takes and a final version editing between these two.<sup>426</sup> This recording is more accurate than the live version, but it still contains uneven passagework and fluctuations in tempo: the result of a tempo that is slightly too fast for the articulation I use. In both cases, I misjudged my tolerance threshold, and even the slight overestimation of tempo results in an increase in technical errors.

#### **Audio Example 3.1: *Diabolic Machines* by Anthony Moles, recorded live at Café Church, Glebe, Sydney, 18 March 2011**



### **Subsequent Workshops: revisiting the question of tempo**

Needing a virtuoso showpiece to end a recital program in 2012, I decided to return to *Diabolic Machines*. We met on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2012 for a ‘tune up’ workshop. Again, tempo and rhythmic feel dominated our conversation. But this time, I felt confident in explaining my decision to take all the tempi slower, and Moles was

---

<sup>426</sup> Both the premiere and the ABC recordings are included in the portfolio.

even more supportive, making his own suggestions to relax the tempo in some sections, including the climactic recapitulation.

ZK: I'm sure I was rushing through to there.

AM: Yeah, one general suggestion for just those bits was that you can just, if it makes it more comfortable just relax it, even just slightly, then it makes it more muscular too.

ZK: [plays at 104]

AM: Yeah that little change gives it so much more clarity

ZK: Yeah it's just not being at 100% tempo. At 90% I'm so much more on top of it.<sup>427</sup>

It should be noted that the tempo demonstrated here is around the tempo I had tried the previous year. But in returning to the work, my technical approach had settled and I now had even greater control and power at the same speed. I was also confident enough to not feel the need to push myself to get closer to the marked tempo, justifying this slower tempo as a risk management strategy (reducing the chance of uneven passagework and wrong notes – both high consequence errors in the context of the rhythmically exposed textures and repetition of material). Given this new strategy, I decided to test *his* threshold for what an acceptable tempo might be:

ZK: How slow is acceptable?

AM: Why don't you show me one that you would think would be the slowest tempo, to see how I can live with that.

ZK [plays at 92 b.p.m.]

ZK: That wasn't that much slower than before.

AM: the funny thing is it seems so much slower, like even those three, it's interesting how just a little change... I would certainly still be happy with that and I think it works well, and I think for something like this [pointing to bar 16] it works well, but just for this [pointing to bar 25] it's just the tiniest bit too slow.<sup>428</sup>

So as before, I do not have *carte blanche* on the choice of tempo, but the threshold of acceptability to Anthony has now moved considerably. Where before 104 b.p.m. was the slowest acceptable tempo, it is now the average tempo that I am aiming for. Given my increased control, and the corresponding lower risk of failure, Anthony spent the rest of the workshop focussing on adding further details, such as terraced gradations of pedalling between sections.

---

<sup>427</sup> Video of workshop with Anthony Moles (31 July 2012).

<sup>428</sup> *Ibid.*



I had an increased sense of ownership over the piece having performed it already so felt bold enough to request further changes, including a change of note in the climactic passage to facilitate a more efficient (or perhaps just easier) fingering. The variation in the left hand figuration can be seen in example 3.13 (note the difference in the last beats of bar 138 and 140) and I was keen to omit this variation to manage the risk of this passage at high speed.

**Example 3.13: *Diabolic Machines* by Anthony Moles, bars 137-140**

The image shows two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system, labeled '137', features a treble clef with a melody of eighth notes and a bass clef with a similar rhythmic pattern. The instruction 'cresc. poco a poco' is written below the first staff. The second system, labeled '139', continues the piece with similar notation, showing a variation in the left-hand figuration in the final beats of bar 140.

ZK: You switch this around so that you're not doubling your...[left hand in the last beat of bar 140, forming parallel octaves]

AM: Yes

ZK: But I was wondering, kind of because of the way it works pianistically and the way it works in terms of structure, of just keeping that pattern, even if it does double, because you double the left hand later on.

AM: I most probably do and that would have been my thinking but for that, just do whatever you want really.

ZK: At that speed you can't really tell.

AM: Yeah

ZK: If I just try it [plays, using the left figuration of bar 138 in bar 140] at that speed it's hard to tell whether it's this way or that.

AM: Yeah, seriously, do whatever you want.<sup>429</sup>

Although our constant focus on the questions of technique and tempo may seem repetitive, each discussion revealed a different balance of authority between composer and performer and different priorities. By this final workshop, I was confident enough to tell him I'm ignoring the marked tempo (and in the above case, the actual notes) to prioritise accuracy and detail of articulation, and Anthony was now confident enough as a composer, and removed enough from the

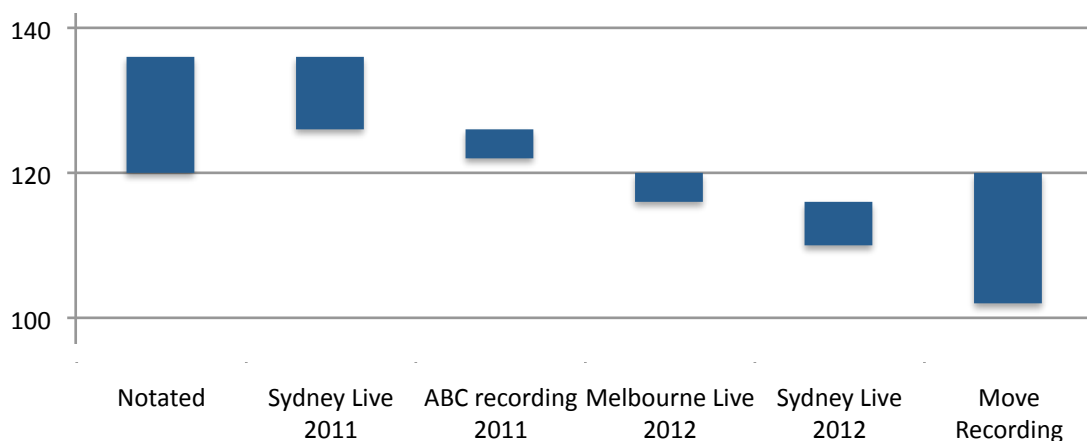
<sup>429</sup> Ibid.

composition process, to ignore the issue of tempo and consider my interpretation on its merits.

### 'Spectrum' Performances and Recording

In the August 2012 'Spectrum' recitals, I felt more in control of the virtuosic challenges of the piece. As discussed, adrenaline naturally pushed all my target tempi higher, but these were still in a lower range to the 2011 performances and recording. The tempo ranges for the fast sections are provided below, bearing in mind that the opening tempo is notated as 120 b.p.m and the tempo of the recapitulation at 136 b.p.m.

**Example 3.14: Tempo ranges for performances and recordings of *Diabolic Machines*<sup>430</sup>**



Anthony recalled his impressions of the 2012 performances,

I do remember discussing with you that straight after a performance is a bad time to evaluate a piece and its performance, and I completely agree. I'm often caught up with my nerves and how the environment has affected my mood. For instance,

<sup>430</sup> The full data set of tempi is as follows:

	Minimum Tempo	Maximum Tempo
Notated	120	136
Sydney Live 2011	126	136
ABC recording 2011	122	126
Melbourne Live 2012	116	120
Sydney Live 2012	110	116
Move Recording	102	120

I was in a really good mood at the Melbourne performance and at the Sydney performance I was quite self-conscious, being on home-turf and seeing Mr McCallum [reviewer for the *Sydney Morning Herald*] and all. I must admit I felt a bit unsure about the piece and sadly to say about the performance after that one. But now with time and distance, I can safely say that the Sydney performance is the best so far.

I did nominate you for Australian Performance of the Year at the Art Music Awards for this performance. One of the points I made about why this performance was so strong was the attention to overall form and dramatic shape on both a micro and macro level. It was really great how you shaped the overall 'narrative' of the piece and made certain bits flow into each other, contrasted some parts, but made it all a cohesive whole. That really delighted me. Also I thought it would have to be a really metronomically rigid piece to work, but you brought a certain slight fluidity to the work which gave it a further depth. This was really nice as the playing was both lithe and muscular. I actually think this made the 'big' moments of the piece even bigger. It really always seemed to pack a punch in performance.<sup>431</sup>

In my experience, the final Sydney performance was the best of all the live performances, though the Melbourne performance was also successful technically and musically. In both cases, the slower tempo allowed for more definition of articulation as well as more variety of colour and dynamics. As can be seen above, I took an even slower tempo for my studio recording with Move Records and would tend towards this tempo range for future performances. The live Sydney performance can be heard at Audio Example 3.2.

**Audio Example 3.2: *Diabolic Machines* by Anthony Moles, recorded live at The Independent theatre, Sydney, 16 August 2012.**



The studio recording can be heard on the portfolio CD.

## **Conclusions**

*Diabolic Machines*, intended as a virtuoso showpiece, allows us to address a number of the chapter's research questions:

---

<sup>431</sup> Interview with Anthony Moles (20 May 2013).

- Despite the use of relatively conventional piano techniques, Anthony Moles allowed my creative input into his compositional process in order to craft the most effective virtuosity possible, maximising efficiency of movement while maintaining his musical priorities of rhythmic drive, textural clarity and dynamic extremes.
- All the major risks in *Diabolic Machines* were related to tempo choices. As in the case of *...out of obscurity*, these were discussed and tested at length, and yet the thresholds were misjudged for the premiere. And as in *...out of obscurity*, the risks were reduced with experience allowing the 2012 performances to be performed with very few technical failings. For Anthony, the risk was central to his conception of virtuosity, and moments of failure, in my performances and those of others, show that the risk is not just apparent but real.

Audiences are always attracted to virtuosity I think – they love the idea of an individual soaring to great heights and they love the daredevil aspect. There has to be an aspect of ‘things could go horribly wrong’; there has to be an element of risk or there is no payoff.

As he explained, the thresholds were in a different place compared to his previous collaborations:

As I knew I was writing for a good performer it was nice to consciously think I can write something pretty tough and get away with it. This contrasts when I was living in Tasmania and writing for community groups mainly and really had to focus on getting the playability (‘difficulty’) level right. I must admit I did want the piece to be a bit of a challenge, I did want to push the performer. I don’t think I set out to write a ‘show-stopper’ but it certainly turned out that way. I will admit I did use difficulty to heighten the excitement.<sup>432</sup>

- The collaborative efforts to find efficient technical solutions paid dividends when *Diabolic Machines* was performed in 2012. Reviewer Peter MacCallum’s observation of the Lisztian references within the work demonstrated the achievement of a work that could be seen as a direct descendant of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century virtuoso tradition.
- My relative ‘expertise’ in the relationship, as well as my slight seniority in experience and career development, allowed me to demand quite burdensome

---

<sup>432</sup> Ibid.

requests for input into the process, resulting in almost weekly updates and questions early in the process. But this position of power was not exploitative or damaging in this case and resulted in a work that balances the resistant nature of the articulation and leaps of the figurations with the efficiency required to reach an 'exciting' speed. Indeed, Anthony recalls that the early email exchanges, resulting in the most substantial changes, were helpful and reassuring, knowing that the level and type of virtuosity was being managed at every step.

The initial emails worked really well, as I did remark above, this exchange led to substantial changes in the piece. Essentially, these interchanges helped shape the piece as it gave me much to think about during the process. Also, it was really great to send you a chunk pretty regularly for feedback – this was very new to me and it helped me not to become complacent (read: lazy) with composing. While we didn't have to make dramatic changes at this stage it was very reassuring as I wasn't going to write something 'important' in the work which would be unplayable.<sup>433</sup>

- Some technical discussions eventually had a bearing on the aesthetic and structural dimensions of the work. In particular, my early emails stressing the difficulty of playing passages in counterpoint at the edges of the keyboard affected his use of register as a structural tool. As he recalled:

You did suggest that counterpoint which moves in different directions within either hand is best employed when the hands are closer together, and that while separation of the hands is certainly possible it is best used sparingly or in 'special moments'. Consequently, I kept the hands an octave apart and at the bottom of the piano. This substantially shaped the form of the work as I could use register as a structural device (something I love to do). Also, it let me save the statement of this key motive with the hands at a great distance for a climactic section. To tell you the truth starting with the hands at such a great distance would have been pretty stupid, I don't know how I could have upped the drama/tension/excitement at a recapitulation of this section. I would have eventually worked this out, but you saved me quite a bit of time and agony.<sup>434</sup>

- The collaboration stayed mostly in an interactive mode, focussed around the testing and risk assessment that the virtuosic techniques required. My input was focussed exclusively on technical concerns and technique was also the focal point of all of Anthony's input into my interpretation. This also answers the larger question of what there was to test given the use of more

---

<sup>433</sup> Ibid.

<sup>434</sup> Ibid.

conventional virtuoso techniques: when the techniques and tempo are near the limits of the performer's tolerance threshold, testing is necessary. The success of the work's virtuosic elements is a result of the detailed diagnostic testing we undertook at the early stages, and the technical failures in the first performance were partially a result of a lack of performative testing, resulting in failures of risk management that were addressed in the leadup to the 2012 performances.

# Collaboration Profile

**Work:** *Diabolic Machines* for solo piano (2011).

**Composer:** Anthony Moles (b. 1983)

**Performer:** Zubin Kanga (b. 1982)

**Previous Collaborations:** None

**Other shared background:**

Both students of the University of Sydney (not concurrently).

**Commission Details:** At meeting on 16 December 2009, Moles offered to write me a new work for solo piano. I agreed, with the condition that Moles would organise a premiere of the work in a concert featuring his music.

**Performance Score Delivered:** 30 November 2010

**Work Premiere:**

18 March 2011, Café Church, Glebe, Sydney

**Further Performances:**

11 August 2012, Salon, Melbourne Recital Centre

16 August 2012, The Independent Theatre, Sydney

**Studio Recordings:**

16 March 2011, ABC Classic FM (recorded for broadcast).

23 August 2012, Move Records

**Documented Workshops:**

28 February 2011 (Kanga's Sydney residence).

11 March 2011 (Kanga's Sydney residence).

31 July 2012 (Kanga's Sydney residence).

**Interview:** 20 May 2013

## *Orfordness* by David Gorton

The final case study in this chapter is David Gorton's solo piano work, *Orfordness*. The piece and the process of creation are distinct from the others here as this is the only work where the creation of a 'virtuoso' piece was specified in the brief. I commissioned the work from David in September 2010 and workshops began in March 2011.

In our early discussions we agreed not to attempt a critical definition of such a complex term as 'virtuosity', but that, for the purposes of the project, our corporate understanding of the term would be defined by the materials of the finished piece. Gorton's 'definition' of virtuosity thus manifested itself in the five distinct approaches to the piano in each of the five movements.

Even more so than the previous two composers, David is explicitly interested in virtuosity, and a large proportion of his works for solo performers explores the virtuosic extension of these players and their instruments. Significantly, David tailors his virtuosity to each performer. For example, his previously composed *Caprices* for solo violin, written for Peter Sheppard Skaerved, exploited particular bowing techniques that Sheppard Skaerved favoured in some movements, while in others deliberately requiring restricted movements, resisting his naturally exuberant playing style. For David, the performer's technique, their character and their repertoire are all significant factors in composing for a soloist.<sup>435</sup>

*Orfordness* is named after the shingle spit on the east coast of Suffolk, which was used for secret military testing from the First World War until 1993, when it was acquired by the National Trust and designated as a National Nature Reserve. A number of myths surround the area pertaining to the development of secret weapons and radar systems, as well as an alleged UFO encounter. Actual facts

---

<sup>435</sup> Interview with David Gorton (17 May 2013).



about the area remain sketchy, with some military documents having been embargoed for far longer than normal practice or even accidentally destroyed.

As each movement explores specific and distinct techniques, I will present the collaboration movement by movement, maintaining a chronological presentation of each ‘mini-case’.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Movement: “Evacuation of the Civil Population from Shingle Street, Suffolk”

The first movement takes its title from a previously embargoed Ministry of Defence file, dating from the Second World War, and rumoured to be related to the testing of a secret weapon that could boil the sea. Gorton used this image of violent boiling as the main inspiration of the piece. A first draft was completed before our first workshop. It is presented below, with fingerings added by me as a way of finding possible technical solutions to the considerable challenges.

### Example 3.15: Sketch for *Orfordness*, 1<sup>st</sup> movement: “Evacuation of the Civil Population from Shingle Street, Suffolk”, annotations by Zubin Kanga, 2 March 2011

**ORFORDNESS**

I. Evacuation of the Civil Population from Shingle Street, Suffolk David Gorton (draft 6/2/11)

\*I also heard tell of a system of pipes extending far out to sea, by means of which a petroleum inferno could be unleashed with such explosive vigour, in the event of an invasion, that the very sea would start to boil. — c.183.7\*

After an hour or so during the start of the piece

\* W. G. Sebald, *The Rings of Saturn*, trans. Michael Hulse (Vintage, London, 2002), p. 331. 183.7 August Cukier in the holding ponds of sea water

As is obvious, this movement explores a similar 19<sup>th</sup>-century conception of pianistic virtuosity to *Diabolic Machines*, with rapid streams of notes in both hands. An added embellishment to this virtuosic passagework (in a similar approach to New Complexist virtuoso works by Ferneyhough and Barrett) is the use of irrational subdivisions in the left hand, creating the effect of the left hand playing at changing tempi relative to the stable right hand.<sup>436</sup> Whenever I encounter a work with fast passagework, my goal is usually to find the most fluent technical solution to allow the passage to be played with the greatest ease, facilitating both speed, and control over colour and articulation. However, in this case, the uneven (even chaotic) distribution of wrist movements required in each hand, and the lack of any synchronization between the parts resisted my attempts at finding an elegant and fluent solution. You can see from the above example, that the opening comprises a fast single line in each hand, made up of individual notes and dyads, with the latter added to increase the density of the overall texture. It soon became clear in the first rehearsal that some of these dyads were making the execution of the passage exceptionally difficult, if not impossible, at an appropriate speed.

A detailed negotiation of the placement of these dyads became the focus of our first workshop. In this video, I identify one of the problematic dyads that David subsequently removes. Here, my priority of fluency combines with David's priority of speed, overriding his other priorities of density and resistance, and one of the notes of the dyad is removed. Initially we remove the F-sharp, but after further testing we realise that the removal of the G instead would fit my hand shape better.

---

<sup>436</sup> For widespread use of this resistant-virtuosic use of irrational rhythms, see (among many others):

Ferneyhough, Brian: *Lemma-Icon-Epigram*, Edition Peters, 1981.

Barrett, Richard: *Tract*, United Music Publishers, 1996.

**Video Example 3.5: Working on 1<sup>st</sup> movement of *Orfordness* with David Gorton, 1 April 2011**



In the next clip I identify another problematic dyad in the left hand. After discovering that the removal of an A-sharp would result in the best pattern to fit my hand, David remarks that there are now two B naturals in close proximity. While David appears quite happy to accept of this, I am a bit more worried about the harmonic implications, and so I decide to keep the original dyad intact.

**Video Example 3.6: Working on 1<sup>st</sup> movement of *Orfordness* with David Gorton, 1 April 2011**



What makes this workshop problematic is that, at this stage, I am only able to play each of the hands separately, at a slow speed. So while we believe that we are finding a practical balance between speed and density, a degree of extrapolation and imagination is required to judge how the piece will work at a faster tempo. These minor changes were notated (thus crystallising my fingering and technical approach to the piece into the score) and no further changes were requested or made. As in the earlier cases in this chapter, I could have insisted on further changes to make the passages much easier to play, but I felt that it was important to maintain the challenge of the work, maintaining the resistant features of the passage that are central to its status as a virtuosic piece. As in the earlier cases, a strategy of censorship is being used by both of us. I am not revealing whether I think I will be able to handle the technical demands of the work, and David is not revealing his compositional priorities at this stage.

Most of the following workshops focussed on the other movements, so we only returned to work on the 1<sup>st</sup> movement on 19 January 2012. By this time, in my own practice, I had concluded that the marked tempo of 103.7 b.p.m. was impractical, if not impossible. In an earlier conversation, David had explained that the tempo, which references the boiling point of sea-water in degrees Celsius, is meant as a guide to the character of the movement, full of extreme aggression and alacrity and a goal to play 'as fast as possible'. But 'as fast as possible' may be considerably slower than the marked tempo given the complexities in the writing.<sup>437</sup> When I began my playthrough for David, I made several false starts, indicating my nerves at playing the work for the composer, my lack of confidence in finding a workable tempo and the risk involved in playing such a technically complex piece.

---

<sup>437</sup> Video of workshop with David Gorton (19 January 2012).

### Video Example 3.7: Workshop with David Gorton, 19 January 2012



I try to explain away the false starts after the play-through, repeating the beginning several times fluently and stating, “It’s the beginning that freaks me out. I think it’ll be fine now, it’s just playing it out and warming up into it.”<sup>438</sup> The repetition and overstatement seem to reveal that I am trying to convince myself as much as David. The workshop exposed the risks involved in playing this movement, with the extreme rapidity of passagework, the irrational ratios between the hands, the lack of any simple rhythmic reference points and the irregularity of the wrist and hand movements required. I was yet to find a strategy to adequately manage this risk, although I censored this self-doubt. David self-censored any doubts he might have about my ability to perform the movement as well as reservations he might have about the rhythmic accuracy of the irrationals (which I am shifting in tempo slightly to reduce their resistance), focussing his attention on the pedalling, and how to use it to emphasise the crescendi. The workshop thus ended with an act of unspoken trust between us – I would attempt to find a way to manage the risks involved in playing the movement, and David would not ask me how or if I could do so.

---

<sup>438</sup> Video of workshop with David Gorton (19 January 2012).

Between this workshop and the performance, I formulated a risk management strategy in which risk was shifted from high to low consequence errors. In the workshops, my stoppages all occurred in the opening line, so I reasoned that if I could reduce the risk in the opening line, the overall risk to the movement would be minimised. I decided to begin the movement slower than my final tempo and gradually accelerate through the first line, using the irrational rhythms to mask the gradual accelerando allowing the left hand to speed up at a slower rate to the right hand. The error produced by this was low consequence (since it would sound like a natural rushing of the rhythm) and by minimising the risk of this opening, I found a strategy to radically reduce the risk of catastrophic failure of the performance.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Movement: “Cobra Mist”**

“Cobra Mist”, is named after an experimental over-the-horizon radar system. The system never worked, and one theory is that a Soviet submarine off the coast was being used to interfere with the radar. The workshop sessions for this movement were used to generate new techniques featuring an e-bow that require extreme levels of control to execute, contrasting with the sheer speed and density of the first movement.

David and I first experimented with the use of an e-bow, and its manipulation using the pedal and fingers, while workshopping his piece, *Fosdyke Wash* for piano quintet, during our residency at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee in February 2010.<sup>439</sup> In our workshops for *Orfordness*, we experimented with other methods and tools for manipulating a note produced by an e-bow. In one of the experiments we used an e-bow to set one of the piano strings vibrating, and then modulated the sound by damping the same string with both the wooden and leather sides of a dulcimer hammer. In the next video clip we can see some of this experimental process. Responding to a series of questions from David, I try a number of different techniques to create a succession of fast modulations of the e-bow note. Some of the techniques are more immediately

---

<sup>439</sup> *Fosdyke Wash* was recorded in 2011 and premiered at the Waterloo festival in 2013 with the Kreutzer Quartet.

successful than others, and while at first glance it might seem that I am directing the workshop and generating lots of different materials, David is carefully selecting which techniques will work well in combination, and which will present a virtuosic challenge.

**Video Example 3.8: Exploring new techniques with e-bows and dulcimer hammers with David Gorton, 26 May 2012**



Following this workshop, David composed the movement, using the materials, techniques, and notations that we had jointly developed. By creating the content of the movement through a kind of joint improvisation, our respective roles of executor and author were made, temporarily at least, ambiguous. David's subsequent ordering and pacing of the materials, and creation of a score, re-established these roles to a certain extent, but also crystallized the process of the workshop. David chose an unmeasured rhythmic notation for the movement – bars are of roughly equal length, but the pacing and rhythmic detail of the events within each bar is left to my discretion. In this way, the notation prioritises efficiency, making the macrostructural rhythm flexible to allow me to concentrate on the details of executing the many precise techniques. Bars 8-12 of the score are shown below, with the techniques of damping, e-bow tremolo and dulcimer hammer *jeté*.



**Example 3.16: *Orfordness* by David Gorton, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement: “Cobra Mist”, bars 8-12**

8

Move e-bow laterally so that it sounds the strings on either side of the central resonating string. Not notated at sounding pitch

jeté (wooden side)

The virtuosity of this movement is partly a result of the need to master new and unusual techniques, but is also the result of the level of extreme control required to execute these techniques effectively. The damping effects will not sound if I press the string too gently, and will damp the note completely if pressed too hard, meaning that a wide variety of colours must be found and cultivated within very narrow parameters. The other techniques in the movement also require extreme control, and extensive pre-planned choreography is needed to execute them fluently in quick succession.

As detailed as David's score may be, I am always relying on a site-specific performance practice to perform these techniques. My memory of our workshops, of our creation and later honing of the techniques, remains more significant and detailed than the information that David provides in the score. This raises once again the question of who is the authority over these new techniques, and over the work as a whole: another performer may be unable to perform it, as David has imagined it, based on the score alone, and may require coaching from one or both of us to understand the execution of the techniques, and the level of control required (see Chapter 2).

When we had another workshop on this movement a few weeks before the premiere, David decided to increase the resistance by insisting on a quicker pace and an articulation of larger phrases.

ZK: I could speed up or slow down certain passages.

DG: Yeah this whole passage [pointing to climax] could be sped up. It's more the gaps between events that could...

ZK: [plays]



DG: Yeah a bar like that for example [top of page 2] That's very much a kind of pause, a pause or rest bar. But the flow of events shouldn't feel like there's any rests. So from there to there [taking in the top line] is a big phrase. If that makes sense.<sup>440</sup>

Having built efficiency into the movement on many levels – using techniques that I innovated, building rhythmic flexibility into the score, having only one buildup of density of events – this final workshop allowed David to inject enough resistance to maintain the virtuosic goals of the movement.

### **3<sup>rd</sup> movement: “You Can’t Tell the People”**

The third movement takes its title from a quote attributed to Margaret Thatcher, who was British Prime Minister at the time of the “Rendalsham Forest Incident”, an alleged UFO encounter in December 1980. The sighting was made by US Air Force personnel stationed at the RAF bases at Woodbridge and Bentwaters, and during the encounter, the Deputy Base Commander, Lt Colonel Halt made a dictaphone recording. An edited version of this recording constitutes the electronics for the movement, with a series of piano ‘interludes’ played in gaps edited into the tape part, between one and five seconds long. A transcription of the tape is included in the score, to allow the tape part to be followed closely and assist in preparing for each of the interludes.

David began by editing the tape, including gaps, and then discussed how these might be filled in our workshop on 26 May 2011. He wanted as many different techniques fitted into the short interludes, so I improvised some passages, experimenting with different combinations.

---

<sup>440</sup> Video of workshop with David Gorton (19 January 2012).

**Video Example 3.9: Improvising material for *Orfordness*, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement: “You Can’t Tell the People”, 26 May 2011**



We eventually settled on using harmonics, a phrase using dulcimer hammers and then a passage on the keyboard. We discuss why this would be the ideal order of events, and then test if I can fit all these into an even shorter time interval.

DG: The thing that takes the longest time to set up is the harmonics, so that has to be first.

ZK: That has to be first, but if you have specific notes there [gesturing with the dulcimer hammers] that could take a bit of time. I'll have it marked, but there'll be a certain limit to how fast it can be, just based on finding, positioning.

DG: I think the last bit is a second and a half. So that would be one [pointing to the harmonics] 'de de' [pointing to the middle of the piano where the dulcimer hammers would play] two notes [pointing to the keyboard]. Can you do that in a second and a half? Shall I time it?

ZK: So let me get it.

DG: Harmonic chord, three notes in there [dulcimer hammers] then three notes dry on the piano notes. Ready, steady, go.

ZK: [plays]

DG: Yeah, second and a half!

ZK: Well, I have to drop this [dulcimer hammers]. 'Virtuosic drop'. And these need to be non-specific or maybe not. Maybe if they're all consecutive notes, it can be done.<sup>441</sup>

These improvisations allow us to test the limits of my technique. Speed mixed with accuracy with very specialised skills at playing extended techniques are all combined and put under the microscope, finding where the possible risks and

---

<sup>441</sup> Video of workshop with David Gorton (26 May 2011).

weaknesses are and what resistances can be reduced (for example, by the ordering of events). After this workshop of thorough testing and material generation, David composed the movement (excerpt shown below).

**Example 3.17: *Orfordness* by David Gorton, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement: “You Can’t Tell the People”, bar 1**

**Lt. Colonel Halt:** 150 feet or more from the initial, I should say, suspected impact point. Having a little difficulty, we can’t get the light-alls to work. There seems to be some kind of mechanical problem. Let’s send back and get another light-all. Meantime, we’re gonna take some readings from the Geiger counter and, err...

**Musical interlude: maximum 4 seconds**

*Strike the strings with the leather side of a dulcimer mallet*

The musical score is written for piano. It features a treble clef staff with a forte (*f*) dynamic marking and a bass clef staff with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score includes a dulcimer mallet technique, with annotations: "Strike the strings with the leather side of a dulcimer mallet" and "Scrape string with the leather side of a dulcimer mallet, moving away from the bridge". There are also markings for "8<sup>th</sup>" and "8<sup>th</sup>" on the bass staff, and a "Ped." marking at the bottom.

Although it contains only about 20 seconds of played material on the piano, this movement explores and demonstrates a number of different types of virtuosity. Like the first movement, it explores a resistant type of virtuosity, requiring me to play a chord of harmonics, perform a flourish using dulcimer hammers and then play a chord on the keyboard. The first two techniques are both very difficult to execute on their own: harmonics on a piano require the ability to find both the string being played and the distance along the string – and both these parameters are different on virtually every different model of piano. Chords using different types of harmonics are particularly difficult to achieve due to the difficulty of stretching to reach multiple harmonic nodes and accurately placing them, and this technique is found only rarely in the repertory.<sup>442</sup> The dulcimer hammer passage is resistant in that the actual technique of tapping the string requires a great deal of control to achieve an even sound, and the need to find the notes inside the piano at high speed is also very demanding.

<sup>442</sup> I have not yet encountered this technique, even in the harmonic-laden works of George Crumb or Rolf Hind, although dyads of the same harmonic are used by Crumb as well as by Alex Hills in his *Resonance Studies* (2012). Although I would like to claim this as a newly innovated technique, it is difficult to say with certainty, given the large number of composers who now use harmonics in their piano music.

The innovative aspects of virtuosity are also present in the individual techniques mentioned above, as well as in their unusual juxtaposition. But the most unusual difficulty is the requirement to fit the musical interludes into the specific duration of each of the gaps in the tape part. It requires me to anticipate the start of each pause in the tape, without the help of a click track, and to fit the musical materials into a very tight temporal window before the tape begins again. If I am too slow, I will overlap with the tape, and if I am too fast, there will be a gap before the start of the tape – neither is desirable, and this small margin of error makes the execution of the movement as a whole, very challenging, despite the fact that I do not play for the majority of its duration.

When we workshopped the movement before the concert, David again increased the resistance of the techniques by asking for several adjustments, particularly to do with the speed, dynamic and legato articulation of the dulcimer hammer phrases.

DG: Can it be any faster, the dulcimer bits. There can be more space around it but...

ZK: I can make it faster but not evenly faster. [plays] Like that. Or [plays]. And if I do it faster there's more risk of it missing.

DG: Missing yeah.<sup>443</sup>

And later.

DG: That's better. It's the legato of these things that's more important than the dynamics. So doing it quiet gives more a feeling of legato.<sup>444</sup>

Whereas the initial improvisation and testing stages were used to create a virtuosity that was tailored to my technique (and therefore as efficient as possible, given the highly resistant material) this last workshop was used to hone and focus the musical details. As before, the aim of David's requested adjustments were not primarily intended to increase resistance, but David's observation of my relative ease in performing most of the techniques demonstrated to him that I had some room to move before hitting my technical threshold.

---

<sup>443</sup> Video of workshop with David Gorton (19 January 2012).

<sup>444</sup> Ibid.

However, at one point, David senses a point of resistance that is hindering my playing.

**Video Example 3.10: Workshop with David Gorton, 19 January 2012**



The dulcimer passage of the first interlude (seen in example 3.17) is uneven, with the gap between the middle pair of notes slower than the outer pairs due to the size of the interval and the time needed to pinpoint notes inside the piano. After trying out some alternative dulcimer beater patterns, he decides to remove the B-flat, making it a three note passage that is still difficult in terms of accuracy, but easier to play as a fast fluent phrase.

**4<sup>th</sup> Movement: “Blue Danube”**

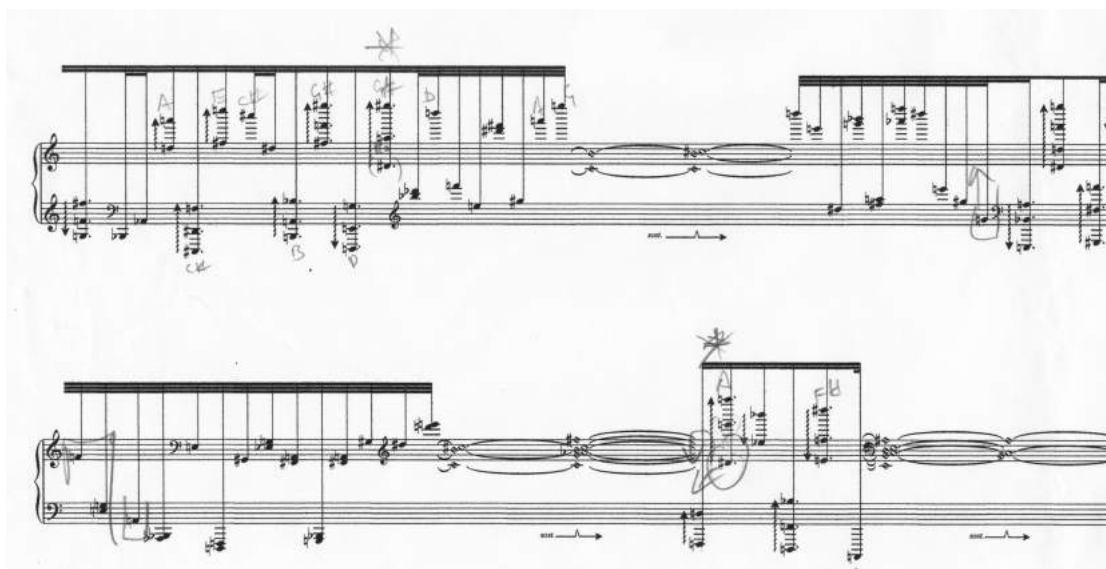
The 4<sup>th</sup> movement, takes its name from the UK’s first atomic weapon. The bomb, minus the core was tested in 1956 at Orfordness. The full test of the fission bomb was conducted in the “Buffalo” program at Maralinga, South Australia.

Rather than depicting the explosion, David uses the various components of the Blue Danube project to determine different musical components of the piece. The tempo is notated as dotted crotchet = 42TJ-50TJ (TJ referring to terajoules, with 42-50TJ indicating the energy output of the bomb). The sinewy single-line figuration is inspired by the unstable radioactive isotopes used in the core, while the held sostenuto resonances indicate the lingering radioactive decay of these isotopes. By establishing sets of notes that will resonate loudly if played

accidentally, David sets ‘traps’, analogous to the dangers of building and testing a nuclear device.

We had one workshop on the first page of the movement on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2011, and then David finished the movement in November-December 2011, meaning we had only one further workshop on the movement, on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2012. At our October 2011 meeting, I read through the single page, discussing and marking any concerns and changes as we went. An excerpt of this marked up sketch is shown below.

**Example 3.18: Sketch for *Orfordness*, 4<sup>th</sup> movement: “Blue Danube”, 25 October 2011**



The workshop proceeded as an intense technical test, where I looked for ways of maximising my speed around the instrument, with David approving changes, vetoing them or suggesting alternatives. I suggested to David that some of his hand distribution was not the most efficient distribution for my hands, and I suggested a solution: notating the single line passages according to location on the keyboard and leaving hand distribution for me to discover. When it came to the broken chords, I demonstrated their relative technical difficulty, and in dialogue with David, we decided on some minimal changes to maximise speed, such as the

octave change of a D-sharp (marked with an asterisk on the second line) as shown in this video clip.

**Video Example 3.11: Workshop with David Gorton, 25 October 2011**



In advocating smaller intervals next to large leaps, I refer to a passage from Finnissy's *English Country-Tunes* that I showed David in an earlier workshop.

ZK: I checked this kind of jump rule in that Finnissy passage [from *English Country-Tunes*], and I found, in all that there was one where he did a big leap which was like that [plays broken chord of two adjacent leaps with one hand] but all the rest were all like [plays chords that are one smaller interval and one big leap]<sup>445</sup>

This 'expertise' in virtuosity was accepted by David, and he made the changes where I felt them absolutely necessary, except for the following example.

For the final, most difficult sequence of broken chords on the page, the discussion of what to do becomes more complex, with speed and ease of movement counterbalanced by David's compositional priorities, and particularly the spacing and voice leading of the chords.

ZK: They're all OK, it's just... [demonstrates difficulty]  
DG: We need some octave changes then. Is the first one OK?  
ZK: The first one is OK. As long as you don't mind it being that slow. [playing]  
That's the fastest I can play it accurately.

---

<sup>445</sup> Video of workshop with David Gorton (25 October 2011).

DG: What if the G-sharp was up an octave.  
 ZK: Up an octave, so it'll be [plays]. Yeah that's good.  
 DG: Good. Oh hang on, I need to check that because there's an issue with...  
 ZK: Voice leading issue is there? Because that D then becomes [plays successive chords].  
 DG: Yeah we can't do that I'm afraid. What if the C is down the octave?  
 ZK: The C?  
 DG: Yeah in the chord  
 ZK: You mean the E there?  
 DG: Oh yeah, the E down an octave.  
 ZK: So the E there, so that would be [plays]. Yeah that's fine.  
 DG: And then the next chord straight after it.  
 ZK: Yeah so it'll be. I think you like the voice leading like that [plays].  
 DG: Yeah, well let's leave it as it is, and think that one's going to be a bit slower.  
 ZK: So leave it as [plays]  
 DG: Yeah<sup>446</sup>

We eventually decide to allow the D-sharp to be played by the left hand, breaking the hand distribution he had originally conceived but maintaining the chord spacing and registration. It should be noted that in these discussions, David never contradicts my arguments in favour of greater efficiency – he shares these priorities, knowing that the piano figuration is extremely resistant as it is. He is also flexible with the tempo, conceding that there needs to be flexibility to facilitate the differing resistances of each arpeggio.

ZK: It would be easier if it was up [an upwards arpeggio]  
 DG: I prefer it down.  
 ZK: [plays] That's possible if it's stretchable.  
 DG: Absolutely, there's a tempo give and take.<sup>447</sup>

As in the first movement, the significant (and sometimes extreme) resistance of the techniques is the source of the virtuosity, and we establish in the workshop that David is happy for alternative technical solutions to be offered that increase technical efficiency and manage risky corners, as long as these don't contradict the compositional structure as he had conceived it. David edited these agreed changes in the finished score – as in the first movement, my technical idiosyncrasies were crystallised in the notation.

When we met again in January, I had learned the piece well enough to play up to the (in my hands) swift tempo. When playing at speed, I had reassessed how I would play the widely spaced arpeggiated chords. These could have been played

---

<sup>446</sup> Ibid.

<sup>447</sup> Ibid.



with one hand per chord (and indeed this was the David's intention, mimicking the technique from *English Country-Tunes*) but my risk assessment of these techniques in David's usage was that there was a high chance of missing notes and a high consequence error in that the chordal passages are very exposed. To minimise this high risk, I decided to play most of these broken chords with two hands, meaning that there was a greater difficulty in getting between each of the chords in different registers, but a low risk of failure within each chord. My distribution of hands in one of these passages is shown below.

**Example 3.19: *Orfordness* by David Gorton, 4<sup>th</sup> movement: "Blue Danube",  
(excerpt – bottom of page 1)**



After playing the movement through to David, I asked him whether he had any problems with this redistribution, or any of the technical aspects. He simply acknowledged my decision and then moved on to other technical details.

ZK: So a lot of the leaps I'm doing with two hands. Which....

DG: moves...

ZK.... transfers the virtuosity from being within one hand to being both hands moving across.

DG: How does this right pedal flutter thing work [note the digression with David applying censorship to my explanation of technique].

ZK: Oh yeah, I'm not really doing right pedal flutter.<sup>448</sup>

David again adopts a strategy of censorship, refraining from dissecting my considered technical decisions, but pointing to technical aspects I hadn't considered fully. The use of flutter pedal adds resistance to the passage, and I negotiate an intermittent flutter with some use of  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{1}{4}$  pedal as a more

---

<sup>448</sup> Video of workshop with David Gorton (19 January 2012).

practical, and effective solution. After discussing the pedalling, David returns to the hand distribution, expressing that he's very pleased with how the visual aspect has turned out, given my chosen solutions.

DG: So less pedal on the chords. More pedal on the split single fast quavers.

ZK: [plays]

DG: That's better. Looks really good as well.

ZK: Yeah all this stuff [plays]. And this at the end crossing over [plays]

DG: Yeah it has quite a sinister air to it.<sup>449</sup>

Although our negotiations were focussed around the practical aspects of simply reaching all the notes, we were both pleased that the finished result retained the visible flair of the original concept. In this case the visible aspects of the virtuosity exaggerated the difficulties, whereas in the other movements the difficulties are largely hidden, or at least not as demonstratively visual.

### **5<sup>th</sup> movement: "The Island"**

The fifth and final movement of *Orfordness* depicts the site as it is now, a ruin, gradually being reclaimed by the natural landscape, protected by the National Trust. It is the slowest, sparsest and longest movement in the cycle, but it is also one of the most demanding movements to perform.

The movement has three interleaved musical elements, a two-part chorale played using two e-bows, melodic fragments played on a succession of 7<sup>th</sup> harmonics, and extremely soft but articulated chords, played by pushing the keys down past the escapement point then striking forcefully. Each technique requires a high degree of skill to execute and there is a high risk of the technique failing, or of unintended noises interrupting the still atmosphere.

In our single workshop on 19 January, we begin with my attempting to find all the 7<sup>th</sup> harmonics required. The following video shows this process and the fragile nature of the harmonics – indeed they are so faint that the camera doesn't pick up the harmonics for the higher notes.

#### **Video Example 3.12: Workshop with David Gorton, 19 January 2012**

---

<sup>449</sup> Ibid.



We then move on to the quiet chords. I'm not aware of the need to play within the escapement to achieve the desired effect, and David demonstrates this to me, establishing a vital site-specific performance practice while also raising the bar for the performative skills required, from merely playing very quietly to manipulating the mechanism of the piano.

DG: So those really quiet chords.

ZK: Yeah they're going to be quieter.

DG: They're like this, you have to put the keys down halfway, and then you go [plays - but comes out loud]. But not like that! Put them down halfway then push them quite hard so you get.

ZK: [plays]. So you want it that loud? Depends what you want - you want it articulated but soft.

DG: [trying it up top]. If you push them down, there's the bottom, see where they go down there?

ZK: Yeah

DG: Get it to that point and then [plays] Like that. So that far then [plays] really push it hard.

ZK: [plays]

DG: Yeah, but really quiet

ZK: [plays]

DG: Yeah, so it's quite a focussed sound, isn't it? I don't know how it'll work on a... it works on Steinways, but not every piano has that mechanism

ZK: [continuing to play it]

DG: Yeah if you get it wrong, it comes out really loud. So it's pretty hard to hear but really focussed.

ZK: [plays]

DG: Yeah, does that make sense?

ZK: And not all the notes will sound, and some will be too loud.<sup>450</sup>

---

<sup>450</sup> Ibid.

In my last line, I acknowledge that there is a high chance of failure, and am almost making excuses in advance. I have no doubt, however, that any permission to fail that David gives is meaningless in front of an audience – it is my responsibility to manage the risk of the technique in time for the performance. The other difficulty with the harmonics is finding the notes when moving across the larger intervals. The unevenness that this point of resistance creates requires negotiation.

ZK: So it's the harmonics. In order to do that, you leave them [the e-bows], you play the harmonics and the harmonics aren't even semiquavers, are they?

DG: Well there's no metronome mark

ZK: But it depends if you actually want them even or if you don't mind going [plays with gap when I have to leap larger intervals]

DG: Yeah that's OK

ZK: Or I could do [plays evenly and slowly]

DG: No that ends up being quite laboured, doesn't it? No, just whatever you want to do.

ZK: Like the rain [referring to the long passage of harmonics in *Fosdyke Wash*]. But then I should make a point of them being uneven.

DG: All uneven.

ZK: No, because otherwise it's weird if they're all even and then suddenly it's uneven because there's a big leap. They should all be more rhetorical while the e-bows are basically straight.<sup>451</sup>

When performing the e-bow chorale, the risk comes from the temperamentality of the e-bows themselves and how they interact with different pianos. E-bows excite different strings at different rates and inadvertent noises caused by moving and pressing the e-bows on the strings are the most prominent dangers. Knowing that I am relatively experienced with e-bows, having used them in *Fosdyke Wash* as well as in Rolf Hind's virtuoso work, *Towers of Silence* (2007), David asks for a more specific and precise approach to pedalling.

DG: And then, I think the other thing is with the pedal [pointing to the score] take the e-bows off and leave the pedal on, so then I guess don't change the pedal until you're just about to start the next note, so that there's no actual...

ZK: ...gap...

DG:...silence.

ZK: Yeah the only thing with pulling them off is that you get a bit of noise.<sup>452</sup>

Dealing with this 'bit of noise' around the use of the e-bows remained a point of resistance up to, and into the performance.

---

<sup>451</sup> Ibid.

<sup>452</sup> Ibid.

## Performance

The premiere performance of *Orfordness* was on 13 February 2012 in the Out Hear series at Kings Place, London (alongside the premiere of Finnissey's *Z/K*). The performance was filmed, and this recording can be viewed [here](#).

**Video Example 3.13: *Orfordness* by David Gorton, recorded and filmed live at Kings Place, 13 February 2012.**



It should be noted that the microphones for the recording were placed directly over the dampers, emphasising extraneous noises around some extended techniques and particularly emphasising every aberration in sound in the final movement, an effect that doesn't represent the experience of the audience in the hall, but does demonstrate the high risk nature of the techniques. By contrast, the faster movements were performed without any significant errors or mishaps.

Despite the care that David took to avoid all possible positions of frames for different makes of pianos (which was so problematic in *...out of obscurity*), there was still a type of site-specific instrument problem for this performance. As with many venues, Kings Place has a policy of not allowing their 'standard' concert pianos to be played using any extended techniques. Thus for my recital, containing

many works with extended techniques, they provided a very old brown Steinway model O, nicknamed the “Newcastle Brown”, which, in my opinion, was not an instrument of the quality and condition that would be acceptable to many concert pianists. An additional downside to using the “Newcastle Brown” was that it had only two pedals. Without the sostenuto pedal, the quiet resonances of the fourth movement (and the risky nature of playing around them) had to be discarded. The small size of the piano also meant that many of the harmonics in the final movement were rendered inaudible, and the very precise ‘escapement accent’ that David had notated could not be executed reliably on the instrument.

When assessing the performance, David was more critical of the piano, than of my playing,

I was pretty pleased with it. The piano wasn't ideal so the level of resonance that's left at the end of the first movement would be more on a bigger piano. There were little things like the e-bow wasn't setup at the beginning although you rescued it pretty well [...]. The first movement was good, could have been boomier but that's the piano. The second movement was really good. There's moments when the e-bow misbehaves, and part of me doesn't like that so much because it's not there in the purity of the concept but another part of me really likes it because it's showing where the edges of this activity is, and because it adds something that you have to work out how to deal with, and that's interesting to me. The third movement was good – some of them could have been a bit tighter going between the things. But if it were slick it might not be so interesting as when you're struggling to fit it in. Fourth movement would have been completely different if it had a tenuto pedal, although it's still pretty cool. The final movement – that had quite a lot of the e-bow misbehaving but again it was quite interesting, it added a sort of grit to it. Perhaps I wouldn't want that on a recording but in a live performance it's actually quite interesting,. So I guess what I'm saying is I don't have an ideal idea of what it should be like, what this piece is about, the struggle and the risk management – those are the interesting things. So if there was no risk management, it wouldn't be so interesting.<sup>453</sup>

The performance was reviewed by Steven Berryman, who wrote on the premiere performance,

The world premiere of *Orfordness* (2012) by David Gorton opened the second half of the concert and involved tapes of speech with live piano. This extended work in five movements demonstrated how well Kanga can perform seemingly complex material in such a way that makes the structure and intent of the work clear to the listener.<sup>454</sup>

---

<sup>453</sup> Interview with David Gorton (17 May 2013).

<sup>454</sup> Berryman, Steven: “Piano: Inside/Out – Zubin Kanga@Kings Place” (review), *I Care If You Listen*, 27 March 2012, <http://www.icareifyoulisten.com/2012/03/piano-insideout-zubin-kanga-kings-place-london/>, accessed 20 June 2013.

Berryman notes the complexity of the material and the skill required to execute it while managing the musical architecture, demonstrating that the virtuoso goals of the work were observed by some in the audience, even if they were not explicitly named as such. A studio recording of *Orfordness* can be heard on the portfolio CD.

## Conclusions

My collaboration with David Gorton, the only one of the three cases in this chapter where the exploration of virtuosity was a specific brief for the commission, exhibits many of the features of both previous cases, as well as having several new features.

- The explicit focus on virtuosity, and our many different views on it, fundamentally shaped the piece, as David explains:

One of the purposes of the piece was to try and find a meeting ground for our combined definitions of virtuosity through the piece. Because it's not just difficult, it's got all sorts of aspects to it. It's partly showiness, partly efficiency, partly coping with extreme levels of technical complexity.<sup>455</sup>

- The collaborations on the different movements were coloured by David's tendencies towards either an efficient or resistant virtuosity.
  - The first movement utilised a highly resistant texture, in some ways an extension of the high speed pyrotechnics of 19<sup>th</sup> century virtuosity, but instead of using efficient figurations that maximise the 'showiness' of the technique for minimal effort, the passagework required an enormous input of energy, pushing me to my technical, time and mental capacity thresholds for an output that, though impressive to an audience, kept the extent of the difficulties hidden. My own performative strategies, though aiming at reducing these resistances, never nullified them.
  - The second movement, by contrast, emphasised efficiency, with the rhythmic freedom of the notation allowing even highly resistant effects with the dulcimer hammers to be controlled and all risks managed, despite David's late efforts to increase the resistance by asking for faster speeds and a better sense of phrasing.

---

<sup>455</sup> Interview with David Gorton (17 May 2013).

- The third movement was highly resistant, with the difficulty of timing each ‘interruption’ providing an unusual and (to me) novel type of resistance. The highly resistant nature of playing the dulcimer passages was slightly eased by David’s removal of a note from the first interruption, but the unusual nature of many techniques (such as the chord of multiple harmonics) and the rapid shifting between techniques inside the piano and on the keyboard maintained the resistant nature in the performance.
- The fourth movement, like the first, extended a 19<sup>th</sup>-century ideal of virtuosity with rapid figurations crossing the length of the keyboard. However, unlike the first movement, the use of a single monodic line allowed me to find highly efficient technical solutions through distribution of the line between the hands. Although the arpeggiated chords were originally intended to be resistant features, my redistribution of the hands in these made them difficult but highly efficient and idiomatic flourishes, resulting in this being the most conventionally virtuosic of all the movements.
- The fifth movement, although slow and seemingly easy was highly resistant due to the unpredictability of all the techniques involved – indeed the close microphones used in the Kings Place premiere pick up many inadvertent noises, despite the precision with which I played the techniques. These unintended noises are absent from the recording, a result achieved by recording each bar separately, a highly risk-averse and inefficient solution to the virtuosic challenges of this movement.
- The risks involved in each variation changed with each variation. The first and last movements had the highest risk, as both had a high chance of failure, and high consequences: the first movement’s consequence of falling off the rails and needing to stop (as I did in the final workshop) were tempered somewhat by the low consequence of missing individual notes, given the density of the texture. The inverse was true in the fifth movement: although missing individual notes, or creating extra notes and noises had significant exposure, there was no chance of losing control of the macrostructure or losing my place. The third movement, despite the removal of a note to manage the risk of



missing notes with the dulcimer hammers, remained a moderate risk, given the highly resistant technique involved. The fourth movement, with my efficient re-distribution of hands was a low risk, given my experience with these sorts of pianistic techniques (and the normally risky techniques of leaping across the keyboard are one of my technical strengths). The second movement was the lowest risk, with errors having a relatively low consequence and the chance of mistakes reduced by the use of time-space notation, allowing me to reduce resistance when required.

- As was seen in the workshops, testing played a crucial role at all stages of the composition and performance preparation. Aesthetic testing took a leading role earlier on in formulating the new techniques for the second and third movements while technical testing was used throughout the process, in early stages of composition on the first and fourth movements to find and eradicate severe resistance points, and in the late stages to manage risk and in some cases increase resistances.
- Censorship took a more prominent role in this collaboration, and David even spoke of employing a 'strategy of censorship'. He didn't reveal his compositional methods in the open way that Anthony had, allowing me to assess technical resistances on their merits, without worrying about compositional hierarchies. David did not ask about my strengths and limitations, preferring to compose first and then assess risks after the draft was completed.

As David explained:

I think it was a vital part of the operation that there were some things that we couldn't disclose, so from my perspective, if I'd known exactly what your technical limits were, rather than having a vague notion, if I'd known exactly then I wouldn't have been in a position to push them in quite the same way. Or at least, I could have deliberately written something beyond that, but that's an explicit crossing of that line rather than an implicit 'let's push something quite far and see where it goes'. So I think the censorship there is a creative stimulus and similarly the fact that you didn't know too much about my compositional workings at the fine grain level of how one selects pitch, rhythm and so on meant that you could suggest things. You had a license to suggest things that were outside of that domain but which then I could respond to.<sup>456</sup>

---

<sup>456</sup> Ibid.

- Rather than being exclusively efficient or resistant, each of the movements involved a different balance of efficiency and resistance that were constantly in tension. Thus the workshops for each of the movements displayed similar fundamental principles, testing out thresholds and managing risk. In some cases risk was increased and in others decreased in order to maintain this tension and to activate the 'dangerous' quality of virtuosity with a perceived high risk. It's notable that in early workshops I have a greater 'risk appetite' and am happy for the first movement to be left as a highly resistant and risky movement with only minimal changes suggested. By contrast, as the performance approaches, I become gradually more risk averse, attempting to find increasingly efficient solutions, and it is left to David to find ways of increasing resistance while negotiating with my competing priority.
- Perhaps even more than in the previous two cases, my 'expertise' as a virtuoso was drawn upon in all the workshops of all the movements. My knowledge of extended techniques, particularly techniques using the e-bow, as well as my ability to play irrational rhythms or leap across the expanse of the keyboard are all specialist techniques that many piano virtuosos performing canonical repertoire would not normally need to master. My abilities to explore these techniques and push my technical thresholds further allowed David to push the boundaries of many different types of virtuosity, without requiring a thorough knowledge of the practicalities of performing these techniques.

## Collaboration Profile

**Work:** *Orfordness* for solo piano

**Composer:** David Gorton (b. 1978)

**Performer:** Zubin Kanga (b. 1982)

**Previous collaborations:**

Fosdyke Wash for piano quintet (2010). Recorded 2011, premiered 2013.

**Other shared background:**

Gorton was lecturer when Kanga took the Composer-Performer Workshop at the Royal Academy of Music, London as a Master student, 2007-2008.

Kanga assisted Gorton in teaching the Composer-Performer Workshop, 2009-2012.

Co-presented paper on *Orfordness* at the Studying the Creative Process Conference, Lille, 2011.

**Commission details:** Commissioned by Kanga on 21 September 2010 to write a virtuoso work to be featured in a performance at Kings Place.

**Performance score delivered:** 20 December 2011

**Premiere performance:** 13 February 2012, Hall 2, Kings Place, London.

**Studio Recording:** Private recording, Royal Academy of Music, London, 22 June 2013

**Documented Workshops:**

1 April 2011 (Royal Academy of Music, London).

13 May 2011 (Royal Academy of Music, London).

26 May 2011 (Royal Academy of Music, London).

25 October 2011 (Royal Academy of Music, London).

19 January 2012 (Royal Academy of Music, London).

**Interview:** 13 May 2013

# Mythologies

## Remembering

In Akira Kurosawa's film *Rashomon* (1950),<sup>457</sup> several people involved in a murder in a forest give testimony before a court, with their versions of events enacted in the film: the accused murderer, the dead man's wife and even the dead man himself (via a 'medium'). Finally, a woodcutter who observed the events in the forest gives his testimony, showing that all the previous witnesses (including the murdered man) were twisting the events and details to favour their own reputations, and that all their perspectives were highly prejudiced. By this point, the succession of contradictory perspectives on the single event leads the viewer to be skeptical even of the woodcutter's version of events, and the truth of what happened that day in the forest remains, to some extent, a mystery.

The film, and the phenomenon it explores has inspired the term, the "*Rashomon*-effect" to describe the "effect of the subjectivity of perception on recollection, by which observers of an event are able to produce substantially different but equally plausible accounts of it."<sup>458</sup> The effect has been a useful premise for cop and courtroom dramas, but it poses a serious problem for a researcher engaged in fieldwork, and even more so in music-related fieldwork. If a simple exchange such as a conversation or observed event produces so many varied accounts, then a complex interaction involving collaborative composition, performance, improvisation as well as conversation results in even more varied accounts. Given the density of activity that occurs within a typical composer-performer workshop, it seems obvious that a number of tools are required for documenting the workshops: most importantly the use of audio and/or video recording as well as copying/scanning notation and notes created in the

---

<sup>457</sup> Kurosawa, Akira (writer/director): *Rashomon*, produced by Minoru Jingo, Daiei Studios, 1950.

<sup>458</sup> Heider, Karl G. : "The Rashomon Effect: when Ethnographers Disagree", *American Anthropologist*, 90 (1), March 1988, p 73.

workshops. But does the use of a camera and other tools of documentation solve the problem of the *Rashomon* Effect?

The old adage, “the camera never lies” is what allows the camera to lie so well. The appearance of a mechanistic objectivity is a misguided reaction to the technology. As Susan Sontag writes,

Although there is a sense in which the camera does indeed capture reality, not just interpret it, photographs are as much an interpretation of the world as paintings and drawings. Those occasions when taking of photographs is relatively indiscriminating, promiscuous, or self-effacing do not lessen the didacticism of the whole enterprise.<sup>459</sup>

When documenting with film or video, editing plays an even more active role in asserting an authorial voice over the images. The camera undoubtedly aids in recording the events of workshops for future analysis, but the onus for the ethical use of that footage falls at the feet of the researcher.

Beyond these issues of documentation, a unique set of problems and opportunities present themselves when doing fieldwork in which the researcher is an active participant and creative agent. On the one hand the researcher’s intimate knowledge facilitates a uniquely intimate, though flawed, understanding of the process being examined. However, this intimacy can also lead to a myopic or even hagiographic view of the situation. As Marilyn Strathern states, “the objective observations of the process become merged with the highly subjective and visceral experience of having lived inside the case study.”<sup>460</sup> The camera, in these situations, is simultaneously, according to Kirsten Hastrup, “the eye of a fictitious third person observer to the situation, as well as an inescapable mirror on the researcher’s methods and relationships.”<sup>461</sup> The importance, and even necessity, of incorporating autobiography into fieldwork is argued by Judith Okely, who explores the role of reflexive writing in fieldwork in detail in *Anthropology and Autobiography* (1992). She writes:

---

<sup>459</sup> Sontag, Susan: *On Photography*, (New York: Picador, 1977) p 7.

<sup>460</sup> Strathern, Marilyn: ‘The limits of auto-anthropology’ in *Anthropology at Home*, edited by Anthony Jackson, (London: Tavistock, 1987) p 25.

<sup>461</sup> Hastrup, Kirsten: “Fieldwork among friends: ethnographic exchange within the Northern civilisation” in *Anthropology at Home*, edited by Anthony Jackson, (London: Tavistock Productions, 1987) p 104.

Generally, the notion of autobiography or reflexivity is seen as threatening to the canons of the discipline, not because it has been interpreted as having political consequences, but because of its explicit attack on positivism. The reflexive I of the ethnographer subverts the idea of the observer as an impersonal machine. The autobiographical insertion is different from the stamp of author's *authority*: not simply 'I was there', but the self and category whom the others confronted, received and confided in. The people in the field relate to the ethnographer as both individual and cultural category, whether or not the ethnographer acknowledges this.<sup>462</sup>

Okely is but one of a large field of modern ethnographers who utilize autobiography in their own ethnographic work, including Chou Chiener<sup>463</sup>, Marilyn Strathern<sup>464</sup> and Anthony P. Cohen.<sup>465</sup>

Despite this body of research, the question of how to handle my inevitably subjective perspectives on the case studies remains. Jean-Jacques Nattiez employs a semiotic tripartition of *poietic* (or productive) processes and *esthesis* (or interpretive) musical processes that take place around the *neutral* physical traces of these processes.<sup>466</sup> If the researcher is also a participant in both these processes, then a neutral perspective on them can only be approached via the "traces" that remain of the creative processes. These physical traces – the scores, sketches, audio and video footage – allow a partially neutralised analysis of the creative process of musical collaboration to be approached, even if a completely neutral perspective on these processes is ultimately unattainable. By inviting my collaborators to comment on the cases, their (sometimes differing) perspective is represented, and although I present my own conclusions on the outcome of each

---

<sup>462</sup> Okely, Judith: "Anthropology and Autobiography: participatory experience and embodied knowledge" in *Anthropology and Autobiography*, edited by Judith Okely and Helen Callaway, (London: Routledge, 1992), p 24.

<sup>463</sup> Chou, Chiener. 'Experience and Fieldwork: A Native Researcher's View.' *Ethnomusicology* 46, no. 3 (2002): pp 456-86.

<sup>464</sup> Strathern, Marilyn: 'The limits of auto-anthropology' in *Anthropology at Home*, edited by Anthony Jackson (London: Tavistock, 1987), pp 16-37.

<sup>465</sup> Cohen, Anthony P: "Self-conscious anthropology" in *Anthropology and Autobiography*, edited by Judith Okely and Helen Callaway, (London: Routledge, 1992), pp 221-241.

<sup>466</sup> Nattiez, Jean-Jacques: *Music and Discourse: Towards a Semiology of Music*, translated by Carolyn Abbate (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) p 15.

Although in music, the *poietic* and *esthesis* processes are sometimes conflated with the acts of composition and performance, I agree with Stefan Östersjö who sees, in composer-performer collaborations, a "complex interaction between the *esthesis* and *poietic* processes" and an "oscillating interaction between all the different agents that are involved in the process". Östersjö (2008)

case study, the reader is encouraged to examine the variety of materials presented and come to their own.

## Forgetting

In Jorge Luis Borges' short story, "Funes, the Memorious" the narrator meets a teenager, Iraceo Funes, after he has been crippled in a horse riding accident. The accident curiously bestowed Funes with a flawless memory, allowing him to remember every detail of every moment he lives. For example, "Funes not only remembered every leaf on every tree of every wood, but even every one of the times he had perceived or imagined it."<sup>467</sup> Funes uses his extraordinary abilities for only the most useless tasks: pointlessly giving nonsense names for every number from 1 to 24,000, and then goes further to name and classify every detail of every memory: a name for every memory of every leaf. Funes' gift is a curse, and he lives imprisoned by the unimaginably vast quantity of memories he carries around with him. As he states, "I have more memories in myself alone than all men have had since the world was a world".<sup>468</sup> The narrator recognizes that Funes' inability to forget renders him unable to think:

To think is to forget a difference, to generalize, to abstract. In the overly replete world of Funes there were nothing but details, almost contiguous details.<sup>469</sup>

Borges' story suggests that forgetting is not just desirable in some cases but necessary: ideas themselves cannot exist without the irrelevant minutiae of reality stripped away. Friedrich Nietzsche is even more scathing in his commentary on the misuse of history. He warns against being weighed down by Funesian details:

History is a costly luxury of the understanding. We do need history only so far as it serves life; but to value its study beyond a certain point mutilates and degrades life.<sup>470</sup>

When life serves history, rather than the other way around, a dilution of priorities results, as a result of which "equal importance is given to everything, and

---

<sup>467</sup> Borges, Jorge Luis: "Funes, the Memorious" in *Fictions*, edited by Anthony Kerrigan, translated by Emecé Editores, (London: Coldar & Boyars, 1962) p 103.

<sup>468</sup> Ibid. p 102.

<sup>469</sup> Ibid. p. 104.

<sup>470</sup> Nietzsche, Frederich: *The Use and Abuse of History*, 1876, trans. Adrian Collins, (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1957), p 3.



therefore too much to anything. For the things of the past are never viewed in their true perspective or receive their just value".<sup>471</sup>

Modern technology facilitates the storing of huge amounts of data with relative ease. Alongside this exponential expansion of data storage capacity, a body of literature has grown, criticizing the inability of modern technology to forget. Victor Mayer-Schönberger explains the change in paradigm:

We used to have a system in which we forgot things easily and had to invest energy in remembering. Now we're switching to a system in which we remember everything and have to invest energy in order to forget. That's an enormous transformation.<sup>472</sup>

Ethnographic research methods and storage mechanisms differ markedly from the decentralised, and seemingly uncontrollable growth of data on the internet that Mayer-Schönberger is so concerned about. Yet the growth of the capability to document and store materials has undoubtedly changed the methods of research, and raised the danger of a surfeit of unimportant data drowning the possibility of critical analysis. In a world where technology is growing closer to storing all our movements, words and actions, the lessons of Borges' story are particularly resonant.

---

<sup>471</sup> Ibid. p 19.

<sup>472</sup> Mayer-Schönberger, Viktor quoted in Winter, Jessica: "The Advantages of Amnesia", *Boston Globe* (online), [http://www.boston.com/news/education/higher/articles/2007/09/23/the\\_advantages\\_of\\_amnesia](http://www.boston.com/news/education/higher/articles/2007/09/23/the_advantages_of_amnesia), 23 September 2007.

Mayer-Schönberger has advocated the implementation of data ecology, where sensitive information about internet users, as well as other stored information (images from CCTV cameras or customer information from online stores, for example) are deleted after it is no longer useful for legal purposes, a proposal supported by the EU Justice Commissioner. Such a proposal seems idealistic given the recent revelations of mass collection and storage of metadata on internet users by the USA's NSA and the UK's GCHQ.

Mayer-Schönberger, Viktor: "Useful Void: The Art of Forgetting in the Age of Ubiquitous Computing." KSG Faculty Research Working Paper Series RWP07-022, April 2007.

Butterworth, Siobhain: "Privacy Online – it's complicated", *The Guardian* (online) <http://www.guardian.co.uk/law/butterworth-and-bowcott-on-law/2011/apr/15/privacy-online-its-complicated-law>, 15 April 2011 (accessed 3 May 2012).

Greenwald, Glenn: "On Prism, partisanship and propaganda", *The Guardian* (online), <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jun/14/nsa-partisanship-propaganda-prism>, 15 June 2013 (accessed 2 September 2013).

This research project has produced a substantial body of documentary material: hundreds of pages of sketches, hundreds of emails and other correspondence and hundreds of hours of video and audio footage of workshops. The need to 'forget' many interesting details is thus vital in the analysis of all this data, in order to focus on the central ideas and themes of the project. But the analysis of this material while the process of creation is in progress poses a more complex challenge. Carrying too much detail of past workshops into new ones can stifle the creative process, disrupting the trimming of memory that might naturally occur in an undocumented workshop. Some of the documentation has proved useful for some of the composers, particularly when the workshops have occurred over many months or years, but it cannot be denied that the act of documenting affects the process of creativity in potentially substantial ways. The threat is present that the weight of this technologically-enhanced memory interferes with and deconstructs the myths we apply to the music as it is being created.

# Intimacy

Reviewing the 'mission statements' of various ensembles and performers dedicated to the performance of contemporary music, we can observe a pattern of claims regarding their working relationship with performers.<sup>473</sup>

## Ensemble Modern

"...strives to achieve the highest degree of authenticity by working closely with the composers themselves."<sup>474</sup>

## Elision

"The ensemble has a reputation for delivering authoritative interpretations of complex, unusual and challenging aesthetics often developed in close collaboration with the composer."<sup>475</sup>

## Arditti Quartet

"...believes that close collaboration with composers is vital to the process of interpreting modern music and therefore attempts to work with every composer it plays."<sup>476</sup>

## ensemble intercontemporain

"Under the artistic direction of Susanna Mälkki, the musicians work in close collaboration with composers, exploring instrumental techniques and developing projects that interweave music, dance, theater, film, video and visual arts."<sup>477</sup>

## Synergy Vocals

"The group's long-standing relationship with Steve Reich is well known, and Synergy Vocals is also the favoured vocal ensemble of many other composers including Louis Andriessen, Christian Henson, Steven Mackey and the composers of Bang on a Can."<sup>478</sup>

## Ensemble Offspring

"With commissioning at the heart of the ensemble's activities, it works closely with Australian composers such as Mary Finsterer, Matthew Shlomowitz, Michael Smetanin, Rosalind Page and international composers including Michael Norris, Simon Steen-Andersen, Steve Reich, Tristan Murail, Louis Andriessen and Michael Finnissy."

---

<sup>473</sup> This pattern of artist statements, particularly among European ensembles, was first noted by Roche in Roche, Heather: "Intimacy in Composer-Performer Relationships: The Dynamics of a Collaborative Space", presented at the RMA Study Day, Collaborations in Practice-led Research, University of Leeds, 23 October 2010.

<sup>474</sup> Ensemble Modern website, [www.ensemble-modern.com/en/ensemble\\_modern/history](http://www.ensemble-modern.com/en/ensemble_modern/history) (accessed 5 July 2013)

<sup>475</sup> Elision Ensemble website, [www.elision.org.au/ELISION\\_Ensemble/ELISION\\_Home.html](http://www.elision.org.au/ELISION_Ensemble/ELISION_Home.html) (accessed 22 January 2013).

<sup>476</sup> Arditti Quartet website, <http://www.ownvoice.com/ardittiquartet/biography.htm> (accessed 22 January 2013).

<sup>477</sup> Ensemble Intercontemporain website, [www.ensembleinter.com/](http://www.ensembleinter.com/) (accessed 22 January 2013).

<sup>478</sup> Synergy Vocals website, [www.synergyvocals.com/home/about](http://www.synergyvocals.com/home/about) (accessed 5 July 2013).

musikFabrik

“It is never just a question of interpretation, but of taking new paths of development. The Cologne-based soloist ensemble has built up a close collaboration with prominent conductors and composers.”<sup>479</sup>

These statements form part of a marketing strategy for each of these groups, where their prestige is correlated with how intimate and long-lasting their relationships with famous composers have been.<sup>480</sup> Heather Roche relates that the benefits of long-term, intimate collaborations had been inculcated into her as a young clarinetist:

How many instrumentalists were educated with the history of the well-known collaborations practically told as bedtime stories? Certainly this is true for clarinetists; relating the stories of Brahms and Mühlfeld, Mozart and Stadler, and Spohr and Hermstedt is child’s-play.<sup>481</sup>

Indeed, the collaborations of Britten and Pears, Brahms and Joachim, Poulenc and Bernac, Stravinsky and Craft, Messiaen and Loriod, and Cage and Tudor are not just historical models that merely interest researchers of collaborative practice, but ideal models of musical success to which I, like Roche, have been exposed from early in my musical education.<sup>482</sup> And although these pairings have undoubtedly influenced not only this research project, but my more general musical development, their use as myths simplifies the complexities of these collaborations, and ignores their conflicts and failings.

In a functioning relationship, the mutual benefits are obvious, as Heather Roche explains, “it has been important to my own understanding of the development of contemporary music that the composer and performer should always be stretching their own practice through a climate of mutual support.”<sup>483</sup> In an idealised form, Roche sees this relationship as approaching the intimacy of courtship:

---

<sup>479</sup> Ensemble musikFabrik website, musikfabrik.eu (accessed 22 January 2013).

<sup>480</sup> Many individual new music performers use similar buzzwords for their biographies (myself included).

<sup>481</sup> Roche (2010).

<sup>482</sup> In my experience, these collaborations were discussed in relation to the study of works by the composer in each pairing, but the details of the collaboration, and what real effect it had on the works was left open to speculation, due to the lack of documentation of most of these cases.

<sup>483</sup> Roche (2011), p 131.

Through this 'love affair' between the two collaborators, there is a kind of discovery that takes place. The two collaborators discover each other; in addition, they discover themselves. It is in the exploration of how the other relates to the world and to the work that the co-collaborator discovers the consciousness of the other.<sup>484</sup>

As discussed in the introduction, there is a wealth of research into collaboration in other fields that draws similar parallels between intimate professional and personal relationships.

When artists with different skills and expertise collaborate, a trust in the other's judgement, abilities, motivations and promises is required. And it is around the issue of trust, and its many variants, that questions arise. Roche is uncomfortable about accepting automatic trust from her composers, particularly at the beginning of a relationship when there hasn't been time for trust to be established.<sup>485</sup> This is mirrored in Gritten's view of trust between musicians: "trust has to be developed, rather than implemented, accumulated rather than bought. It is not a plan for actioning, but a practice that emerges under its own head of steam."<sup>486</sup> An overly trustful or superficially amicable relationship can also mask or delay conflicts and their resolution. Yet conflicts themselves can also be destructive to collaborative relationships. If conflict is necessary for the success of a collaboration yet also possibly an agent for destroying the relationship, is there a way of defining and distinguishing between productive and destructive conflict?

---

<sup>484</sup> Ibid. p 94. This recalls the description by Alfred Schutz of interactions within jazz ensembles as a "mutual tuning-in relationship" which is just one of many similar relationships: "marching together, dancing together, making love together, making music together".

Schutz, Alfred (1964) in Cook, Nicholas: "Making music together, or improvisation and its others", *Music, Performance, Meaning: Selected Essays* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2007), p 321.

<sup>485</sup> Roche (2011), p 134.

<sup>486</sup> Gritten, Anthony: "A Labour of Trust: Working (at) Ensemble Interaction", Paper at Second PSN Conference, Cambridge University, 4-7 July 2013.

## Conflict

Niels Bohr met Albert Einstein in 1920, following the close attention each had paid to the other's work. Einstein's work on the photoelectric effect had inspired the quantum revolution, including the work of Bohr. Despite their friendship, they disagreed strongly with each other's theories, and Einstein proposed an experiment that threatened to undermine Bohr and Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle. But instead of discouraging Bohr, this affront to his theories inspired him to propose the theory of complementarity, where particles could behave as waves and vice versa depending on the experimental conditions. When Einstein still rejected this and proposed a counter theory, Bohr welcomed it and was "motivated to formulate his complementarity principle more and more precisely".<sup>487</sup> This relationship, built on conflict, was crucial to the formulation of modern physics.

The relationship between Bohr and Einstein demonstrates that conflict can be not just productive but necessary to innovation. Indeed, the Bohr-Einstein partnership seems to match the model of a Hegelian dialectic. But the conflicts within the collaborations between composers and performers are more complex in that the necessity of creating the work together precludes the possibility of a constant state of conflict. The complexity of collaboration raises several questions: what types of conflict are beneficial and which destructive, and what degrees of conflict, of any type are beneficial or destructive?

The importance of conflict has been highlighted by many of the psychologists studying creative collaboration, including Moran and John-Steiner, who claim that an overemphasis on consensus stifles creativity, and that effective collaborators work "on an effective synthesis of multiple perspectives".<sup>488</sup> They go

---

<sup>487</sup> John-Steiner (2000), p 53.

<sup>488</sup> Moran, S. John-Steiner, V. "Creativity in the Making: Vygotsky's contemporary contribution to the Dialectic of Development and Creativity" In Sawyer, K., John-Steiner, V. Moran, S., etc., eds. (2003) *Creativity and Development*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p 12.

on to identify productive conflict as that which is focussed on the 'integrity of the project itself', as opposed to conflicts over factors outside the creative work (such as money and recognition).<sup>489</sup> To these, Roche adds deadlines as a source of conflict that undermines trust and exacerbates power imbalances in composer/performer relationships.<sup>490</sup>

This distinction between productive and destructive conflict is seen by Sonneburg as simply an opposition between task conflict and relationship conflict. He goes on, citing two famous examples of creative conflict:

After Sgt. Pepper, for example, The Beatles never reached this level of project creativity again. One reason for this was that relationship conflicts increased dramatically. Concerning Braque and Picasso, they had reached their peak of creativity in 1911, but afterwards they often worked on their own because the relationship conflicts increased between 1911 and 1914.<sup>491</sup>

Although there is clearly some truth in these observations, Sonneburg simplifies the above relationships, and particularly the way that task and relationship conflicts are often inextricably linked.

One way of determining how conflict can be creative, is by determining the circumstances where task conflict can be dealt with in a safe and hermetic environment, insulated from the broader relationship. Fernie believes that humour and laughter can be a significant tool in providing this safe environment in which to play out conflict:

...the ability to deal with the ignominy of being proved wrong and the desire to engage in situations where problems are not necessarily there to be solved, but to

---

Also see: Creamer, E. "Collaborators' Attitudes about Differences of Opinion" *The Journal of Higher Education* 75(5), 2004, pp 556-571.

Wheaton, B.: Interpersonal Conflict and Cohesiveness in Dyadic Relationships. *Sociometry*, 37(3), 1974, pp 328-348.

Miell, D., Littleton, K.: *Collaborative Creativity: Contemporary Perspectives*, (London: Free Association Books, 2004).

<sup>489</sup> Moran and John-Steiner (2004), p 18.

<sup>490</sup> Roche (2011), p 139.

<sup>491</sup> Sonneburg, Stefan: "Project Creativity in Organizations: What Can We Learn from The Beatles, Picasso, Braque, and Herzog & de Meuron?", *Creative Economy and Beyond: Conference Proceedings, International Conference on the Creative Economy* (Helsinki, 2009).

be radically interpreted, laughed at or embraced, also seem to be useful skills to possess in collaborative partnerships.<sup>492</sup>

Roche has also identified that play is an important tool for collaboration, creating a safe environment for boundaries to be tested, disagreements to be aired, and risks to be taken.<sup>493</sup> By contrast, a lack of play can mean that disagreements are not resolved in a shared environment, resulting in attempts at unilateral resolutions, which often end badly as Roche points out.

Unfortunately, one kind of conflict many performers encounter does not occur within any kind of collaborative space but is a direct negation of collaboration itself. Just as the performer must understand the difference between “It’s impossible” and “I can’t do it (yet)” the composer must retain some kind flexibility when writing for a specific performer. The no-that’s-what-I-wanted-and-I’m-not-going-to-change-it approach only results in frustration for the performer and in most cases, making changes without the knowledge of the composer.<sup>494</sup>

This avoidance of task-focussed conflicts can be detrimental, but so can the attempt to tackle these conflicts without the environment of play, or the scaffolding of a pre-existing relationship.

Clearly, the strength and intimacy of a collaborative relationship provides the framework for the most creative use of conflict. But sometimes, the lack of a deep relationship and the impossibility of any reconciliation of views is no barrier to creativity, as long as you are as sporting and magnanimous as Leonard Bernstein.

---

<sup>492</sup> Fernie, J.: *Two Minds: Artists and Architects in Collaboration* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2006), p 13.

<sup>493</sup> Roche (2011), p 137.

<sup>494</sup> Roche (2010).



**Leonard Bernstein, speaking before the New York Philharmonic concert of April 6, 1962.<sup>495</sup>**

Don't be frightened. Mr. Gould is here. He will appear in a moment. I'm not, um, as you know, in the habit of speaking on any concert except the Thursday night previews, but a curious situation has arisen, which merits, I think, a word or two.

You are about to hear a rather, shall we say, unorthodox performance of the Brahms D Minor Concerto, a performance distinctly different from any I've ever heard, or even dreamt of for that matter, in its remarkably broad tempi and its frequent departures from Brahms' dynamic indications. I cannot say I am in total agreement with Mr. Gould's conception and this raises the interesting question: "What am I doing conducting it?" I'm conducting it because Mr. Gould is so valid and serious an artist that I must take seriously anything he conceives in good faith and his conception is interesting enough so that I feel you should hear it, too.

But the age old question still remains: "In a concerto, who is the boss; the soloist or the conductor?" The answer is, of course, sometimes one, sometimes the other, depending on the people involved. But almost always, the two manage to get together by persuasion or charm or even threats to achieve a unified performance.

I have only once before in my life had to submit to a soloist's wholly new and incompatible concept and that was the last time I accompanied Mr. Gould. But, but this time the discrepancies between our views are so great that I feel I must make this small disclaimer. Then why, to repeat the question, am I conducting it? Why do I not make a minor scandal — get a substitute soloist, or let an assistant conduct? Because I am fascinated, glad to have the chance for a new look at this much-played work; Because, what's more, there are moments in Mr. Gould's performance that emerge with astonishing freshness and conviction. Thirdly, because we can all learn something from this extraordinary artist, who is a thinking performer, and finally because there is in music what Dimitri Mitropoulos used to call "the sportive element", that factor of curiosity, adventure, experiment, and I can assure you that it has been an adventure this week collaborating with Mr. Gould on this Brahms concerto and it's in this spirit of adventure that we now present it to you.

---

<sup>495</sup> Glenn Gould, piano; Leonard Bernstein, conductor, New York Philharmonic, *Glenn Gould/Leonard Bernstein/Brahms Piano Concerto No. 1*, Sony Classical, B00000C28M, 1998. Norman Lebrecht, in his review of the recording praised the recording, saying that Gould's controversial tempo decisions have largely been vindicated,

When you check timings against other, more orthodox accounts by Artur Schnabel, Emil Gilels or Daniel Barenboim, Gould is never more than a minute outside average movement length. The only variable is inspiration, and that is a factor that Gould and Bernstein were prepared to indulge liberally without regard for personal vanity or critical reaction... The two men parted the best of friends and there was only one winner from their live contest: the listener.

Lebrecht, Norman: "Who Won in Bernstein-Gould Spat over Brahms? (review), *Bloomberg*, 21 July 2006, <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aik5oSzmzFy8E> (accessed 5 July 2013).

# Chapter 4: Long-Term Collaboration

Many of the 'great' historical collaborations between composers and performers were not one-off commissions but long-term relationships, creating many works over years and sometimes decades. Brahms and Joachim, Britten and Pears, Stravinsky and Craft, Poulenc and Bernac are among many examples of long and fruitful professional and personal relationships.

When examining relationships of this type, several questions present themselves:

- Does a shared knowledge of performance practice develop over the course of multiple works? If so, do later works draw upon practices that are specific to the relationship's history?
- Do communicative methods become more efficient over successive collaborations and are conflicts engaged with and resolved more effectively?
- Is there any effect of the ongoing collaboration on both artists' other projects?
- Does the relationship become more egalitarian and more integrative over successive works, or does it maintain the same structure with which it began?
- Are there negative effects of long-term collaboration, and if so, do the benefits outweigh the potential dangers?

This chapter examines my work with Daniel Rojas, who I met and began working with in 2003. Together we have worked together on six pieces: three solo works, one for soprano and piano and two piano concerti. With our diverse musical and cultural backgrounds, our collaborative work began with an emphasis on educating each other about our practices, but soon a shared practice began to develop.

In many of the other case studies, particular modes of collaboration are influenced by factors including the time available, the type of notation used, the desire for innovation as well as the personalities of the participants. In my work with Daniel, these pressures are reduced or absent:

- Pressures of time do exist but they tend to temporarily alter the collaboration, rather than changing the whole dynamic<sup>496</sup>
- Virtuosity is a feature of many of the works we have collaborated on, yet the virtuosity rarely ventures beyond traditional conceptions (both from the 19<sup>th</sup>-century piano tradition and Latin American popular music traditions).
- Though there is an age difference of eight years, Daniel's years spent as an improviser and freelance musician meant we both finished our undergraduate degrees within a year of one another, and our career trajectories have also been parallel, so differences of age are largely irrelevant.
- Daniel generally uses standard forms of notation, and the innovative techniques used (such as preparation) do not require new notational methods.

With these other catalysts and pressures reduced, or less influential, the effects of our cumulative experience of multiple collaborations can be tracked.<sup>497</sup> The following cases are presented chronologically and represent not only a developing relationship but a developing research practice of documenting process. The early case of *Danza de Montañas* contains very little documentation of our process and the case of the Piano Concerto No. 1 has only sketches and recollections of the process. With the Piano Concerto No. 2, I began video documentation of our workshops (though these were only a small part of his entire composition process) and the final case on the solo piano work, *Entre Bajos y Alturas* is the only one to have been fully documented, with all workshops recorded and all sketches

---

<sup>496</sup> As observed in the case of *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, below

<sup>497</sup> It should be noted that although my collaboration with Alex Pozniak also developed over several works, *Interventions* was the first work where the relationship developed beyond the conventionally directive model. The influence of time pressures was also clearly the dominant factor in *Interventions*, and though the developed rapport played a role in facilitating the integrative collaboration, it is the less dominant factor, and less observable.

collected and filed. This final case is the key to observing the development of our collaborative practice: although many of the early cases are conventional, and in some ways unremarkable, this latter case is the site where the effect of long-term collaboration can be explored.

## Early Collaborations

I met Daniel Rojas in 2003 as a fellow undergraduate student at the University of Sydney. Although eight years my senior, Daniel joined the department as an undergraduate after deferring his studies for many years while he pursued a career as an improviser, both in free improvisation ensembles as well as more traditional tango ensembles and Afro-Cuban bands. Early in the academic year he composed the work *Danza de Montañas* for solo piano. He premiered the work at the university, and soon after, asked me to perform it at a competition in Brisbane where there were prizes for best work and best performance on offer. During this period we had multiple workshops on the piece, in which the interaction was hierarchical and entirely focused on performance coaching. Daniel presented the background of the rhythmic counterpoint of the work, with its roots in the Afro-Cuban salsa<sup>498</sup> (*son-montuno*) tradition, a genre I had only superficial prior knowledge of from playing in big bands.<sup>499</sup> As Daniel recalled, there were significant gaps in my knowledge, and unidiomatic features of my playing.

The main thing is that I remember you played it very romantically. Beautiful legato line, perfect for Ravel and Debussy but it needed to be a bit more brittle, a bit more gutsy... I remember we talked about how salsa is danced, how it's on the ground, not up in the air... You were playing very much with the beat, but it wasn't

---

<sup>498</sup> Daniel now dislikes the term salsa, and sees it as a simplistic term that covers a huge range of Afro-Cuban styles that were appropriated by American musicians in the 1970s. However, given this was the term we used when discussing his work at the time, I will use it within this chapter.

<sup>499</sup> I played alto saxophone in the Sydney Grammar School Big Band (1998-2000) and the Sydney University Big Band (2001-2002) and jazz piano in the Sydney Metro Big Band (2003-2004) as well as playing saxophone, piano and auxiliary percussion in the short-lived salsa band, *Los Caballeros* (2002). These ensembles all featured a variety of repertoire, including South American dance styles such as samba, salsa and bossa nova. However, I had only picked up knowledge of the style from recordings, from the notation of parts and from brief discussions with more experienced performers, so my understanding of these styles was patchy.

until you started playing with the *clave* feel that you started to get the actual phrasing, because that piece is, to a great extent, dictated by the movement of the *clave* as related to the *montuno*.<sup>500</sup>

He explained to me how this worked in practice:

I remember in *Danza de Montañas*, there's a staccato that is an upward movement then a downward movement, which is an accent on the second beat, and that's when I realised there was a lot more specificity that I needed to be aware of beyond just writing the rhythms... because you normally don't have a stress on the second beat, you normally have it on the first and the third if it's in 4/4. I had to work on the notation, but we also had to discuss how much of a staccato or how much an accent each beat would need, and if you try to notate all that, you'll end up with ten pages for one bar, and it's just impractical.<sup>501</sup>

This was my first experience with the subtleties of *clave*-based Afro-Cuban music, and also my first experience of working with Daniel on his own extension of *clave*-based rhythmic frameworks in his own music. With an already-completed piece to work on, and a lack of experience in the performance practice required, I was happy to work in this hierarchical, directive mode of collaboration, trusting Daniel's interpretative judgement over my own – a judgement that paid dividends with the success of both the piece and my performance at the competition later that year.<sup>502</sup>

A similar workshopping style was employed during our work on his first piano concerto, premiered in 2006, although even by that stage, the complexity of the site-specific performance practice and the freedoms he allowed me were opening up new avenues for more interactive collaboration.

## Case Study: Piano Concerto No. 1: *Latinoamericanismos*

This case shows the development of our working relationship, and also provides an example of my growing influence on the interpretation of Daniel's

---

<sup>500</sup> Interview with Daniel Rojas: 4 January 2012.

<sup>501</sup> Ibid.

<sup>502</sup> The Keys International Piano Competition featured parallel competitions for composers and performers. Daniel won the prize for Best Work and I won the prize for Best Performance.

music by other performers. In 2006, I gave the premiere of Daniel's first piano concerto. Commissioned by Fr Arthur Bridge for the Sydney Youth Philharmonic, Daniel lobbied both the commissioner and the orchestra to secure me the soloist's role, a decision they considered a professional risk given my lack of experience and profile.<sup>503</sup> Although there was very little interaction with Daniel during the composition of the work our engagement during the rehearsal process became more interactive. Daniel found that despite the knowledge I had gained working on *Danza de Montañas*, the necessary depth and subtlety of knowledge of Latin American dance styles was lacking. In particular, the first movement of the concerto required me to perform several different pianistic roles: a salsa *montuno* pianist (as part of a rhythm section featuring the four percussionists), a soloist within a salsa band, a solo salsa pianist as well as a traditional concerto soloist. Further demands were placed on my knowledge of performance practices by the need for both Daniel and myself to rehearse the work with a youth orchestra of school-aged musicians. The percussion parts were, in particular, very demanding and we held several full-day workshops with the percussion section to prepare the performance.<sup>504</sup> In these situations, I was both a teacher and student, passing on performance practice knowledge that I often had learnt only weeks before.

A feature of the work that opened up our collaboration to a more egalitarian interaction was, surprisingly, one of the concerto's most conventional (and almost anachronistic) features: an improvised cadenza. Although Daniel originally wanted the cadenza improvised, I decided that attempting to improvise a cadenza without more serious training and experience as an improviser would be foolhardy. I therefore composed a cadenza, using the themes from all three movements as well as drawing on the many different Latin American styles referenced in the work. This exercise allowed me to draw on the knowledge I'd gained from Daniel about these different traditions, and express them as an addition to his composition. This is an unusual case of my compositional work making its way into a piece without any direct integrative collaboration. The

---

<sup>503</sup> Fr Arthur Bridge is a well-known Australian arts philanthropist who commissions new works and supports the study of young performers and composers. He tightly controls the circumstances of the commissions including the choice of soloists and even the musical choices of the composers.

<sup>504</sup> The percussionists, though very young, were mature and professional. The principal percussionist was 15 years old, and the other three were 15, 17 and 18.

cadenza can be heard on Audio Example 4.1, and it should be clear that it functions as both a pastiche of and a commentary on the musical language and themes found in the concerto.

**Audio example 4.1: Cadenza from Piano Concerto No. 1, recorded 25 June 2006 at Verbrugghen Hall, Sydney Conservatorium of Music<sup>505</sup>**



The performance was well received by Daniel and by the audience, who gave a standing ovation. The cadenza was particularly well received, with one audience member stating to Daniel (to his annoyance), “I loved the concerto... and I particularly enjoyed the cadenza.”<sup>506</sup> Although I felt the praise for the cadenza tended to the hyperbolic, I was satisfied to have written music that so well complemented Daniel’s style.

Our collaborative interpretation of the work found a new life several years later, in a situation that demonstrates how site-specific performance practice can have a major effect on future performances of the work. In 2008, Daniel informed me that a young Australian pianist, Andrea Lam would be performing the piano concerto with the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. Daniel passed Andrea the recording of the premiere as an aid to her preparations, since he was not able to attend any rehearsals. Andrea then requested the score for my cadenza, feeling that mine worked well for the concerto (and perhaps feeling uncomfortable with composing her own). Unfortunately, most of the cadenza was written in shorthand, and I had neither the time, nor any motive (financial or otherwise) to typeset the score, which I originally intended as a framework from which I could

---

<sup>505</sup> The recording was made by an audience member on their private recording device rather than by professional recording engineers and so the quality of this ‘bootleg’ recording is sub-professional.

<sup>506</sup> Recounted by Daniel Rojas after the premiere on 25 June 2006. Daniel recently performed the concerto himself, improvising a cadenza that I would judge as bolder, more virtuosic and more extreme in its play with Latin American genres compared to my own cadenza, which is certainly no longer the benchmark for the piece it was at the time.

eventually digress and improvise.<sup>507</sup> The following pages of what I could find of my sketches were scanned and sent – shown below in examples 4.1a and 4.1b.

**Example 4.1a: Cadenza (by Zubin Kanga) for Piano Concerto No. 1 by Daniel Rojas, excerpt from page 1**

The image displays three systems of handwritten musical notation for a piano cadenza. The first system features a treble clef staff with the word 'Cadenza' written above it, and a bass clef staff with 'Ped.' written below it. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings. The second system continues the piece with similar notation. The third system shows further development of the musical ideas. The handwriting is fluid and appears to be a working draft.

---

<sup>507</sup> Indeed, in hindsight it seems like a particularly generous gesture to provide this originally composed material to a 'rival' interpreter, who would profit from the performance. Today, I would be more wary of sending unpublished and unedited sketches to a performer without having made any direct contact.



**Example 4.1b: Cadenza (by Zubin Kanga) for Piano Concerto No. 1 by Daniel Rojas, excerpt from page 8**



As is obvious from these scans, some sections are reasonably fully notated (if barely legible) but without any dynamic, phrasing or articulation markings, while other sections, especially page 8, contain bars that are full of complex figurations that are notated in a kind of shorthand that only I could understand. Adding to the confusion are the areas where I have incompletely rubbed out previous sketches. Andrea Lam combined what she could read from this score with a close study of the recording to produce her version of the cadenza.

Daniel recalls that Andrea's cadenza largely resembled mine, but with some sections harmonically and rhythmically simplified while others (particularly those sections difficult to read from the sketches) were omitted. Although her

playing had a finer tone and greater variety of colour than mine, the structure of the original, with its play on each of the themes in turn, was distorted due to these changes and omissions.<sup>508</sup>

The influence on this '2<sup>nd</sup> generation' performance went beyond the cadenza to more subtle aspects of site-specific performance practice. As with me, Daniel recalled that he needed to work closely with Andrea to get the right 'feel' for the salsa-influenced sections, but he felt the recording of the premiere aided them in this process:

Her touch was beautiful, perhaps too beautiful at times for those more crude and primitive bits we used to talk about at length...it needed a lot more guts. The phrasing was very similar to yours – that's because she had the benefit of your recording. She had it easier, because you'd already done the hard work – we'd already done the hard work together. But she's a very flexible and experienced pianist and caught on to the stylistic features very quickly.<sup>509</sup>

In assessing the two performers of his concerto, Daniel favoured her warmth of tone and colour and her interaction with the orchestra as a result of greater experience in concerto performance over my more inexperienced performances. Overall he said both approaches were equally satisfying and engaging but in different ways: "yours had a more gutsy, visceral touch, while hers had a very nurturing touch: hers was like 'I love you' while yours was like 'I want to fuck you'".<sup>510</sup> When asked about the engagement with the traditional dance rhythms, he added, "if you were both asked to play in a salsa band, you'd eat it up, you'd know what to do, she'd be very precise, and have some of the feeling but she wouldn't have the swing in the same amount that you do".<sup>511</sup> The case demonstrates the increasing importance of the site-specific performance practice created between Daniel and myself to the works themselves and to interpretations by other performers.

---

<sup>508</sup> Andrea Lam declined to be interviewed for this research. Rojas provided an archival recording of the performance.

<sup>509</sup> Interview with Daniel Rojas (3 January 2012).

<sup>510</sup> Ibid.

<sup>511</sup> Interview with Daniel Rojas: 4 January 2012.

## Case Study: *Entre Ritos y Parrandas* for Piano and Orchestra<sup>512</sup>

One of the first instances of a deeply integrative collaboration occurred in a piece for which I was neither the commissioner, nor the performer: his Piano Concerto No. 2: *Entre Ritos y Parrandas*. Following the success of his previous concerto, Rojas was commissioned by arts patron, Fr Arthur Bridge to write a concerto for the winner of the 2008 Sydney International Piano Competition, to be performed with the Sydney Youth Orchestra.<sup>513</sup>

Daniel discussed his ideas and work on the concerto earlier in 2009 but it was only when I returned from London to Sydney in December that we began discussing the details of his work. The deadline was weeks away and Daniel was far from completing the work.<sup>514</sup> He requested that I give him some feedback on the piece, as he felt the need for some response in the absence of a teacher or mentor. I obliged, and the original feedback session turned into three long meetings over two weeks in December, the third occurring on the night before the work was completed and delivered.

The workshop situations that will now be examined are markedly different from the others in this thesis: whereas in all the other workshops I eventually performed and/or recorded the work, in this case I was never the intended performer, I never performed the piece, and I have no foreseeable plans to do so. Although in many of the other cases, I donated unpaid time to the workshop process, these were projects in which I was artistically invested. In this case, there was no such teleological self-interest on my part: my involvement was largely altruistic, although the opportunity to document some of our workshops for the

---

<sup>512</sup> The title roughly translates as “From Rituals to Street Parties” and refers to the work’s contrasting movements with traditional Peruvian rituals in the first movement, Christian liturgy in the second and Afro-Cuban dance styles in the third.

<sup>513</sup> This is a high profile commission: the concerto for the 2004 winner was composed by Roger Smalley, one of Australia’s most significant composer-pianists.

<sup>514</sup> This is a similar situation to the time-pressured environment observed in Chapter 2. However, in this case Daniel is the only one under pressure and my freedom from this pressure means there are no conflicting priorities. However, like in Chapter 2, the time-pressured collaborative environment does correlate with highly integrative workshops.

first time was an obvious incentive.<sup>515</sup> However, it is unlikely that I would have given so much time and energy to these workshops had we not had an established professional and personal relationship.<sup>516</sup>

Several features of the workshops demonstrate our established common practice and developing rapport: the efficiency of our communication, the lack of censorship and the ability to collaborate in several parallel modes of interaction.

### **Communicative Efficiency**

The communication in these workshops demonstrates an increasing efficiency, compared to other collaborations in this thesis. Although the discussions were long, they were also intense. The first and shortest meeting was longer than an hour, and the subsequent workshops were several hours long, with all containing near-continuous discussions and workshopping in which major changes to the work were discussed, workshopped, notated and reappraised within a single session (a process that more often occurs over periods of weeks or months). This type of efficiency is demonstrated in this Video Example 4.1.<sup>517</sup>

---

<sup>515</sup> Although I gained no professional or financial benefit from the workshops, my ability to document them and use them in this research was a benefit.

<sup>516</sup> This is one example where 'intimacy' creates conditions favourable to close collaboration. See *Mythologies: Intimacy/Conflict*.

<sup>517</sup> I have edited two excerpts from this longer passage of work to show the type of collaborative process engaged with over the 25 minute session.

**Video Example 4.1: Workshop on *Entre Ritos y Parrandas*, 17 December  
2009**



We discuss whether less extreme dynamics make more sense for these passages, what additional phrasing and articulation is required and whether some rhythms could be notated more simply – each change is identified, addressed and finalized in rapid succession. A lack of communicative resistance, a mutual trust and the convergence of our aesthetic goals facilitate this type of exchange. In another later session, while looking specifically at the piano part, we edited or tested seventeen different points in the piece within a 25 minute workshop (an average of less than one and a half minutes per point). The efficiency and density of this workshop is atypical among the cases I have examined, where there are usually no more than five changes made over a 90 minute period.

### **Communication without Censorship**

Another salient characteristic of our communication was the free criticism, with no apparent attempts at censorship. This contrasts with the many instances of censorship found in Chapter 3. It also contrasts with the free discussion in my workshops with Alex Pozniak in Chapter 2: in those there was an emphasis on generation of ideas rather than criticism, whereas the workshops with Rojas on this work were almost exclusively based around my critical engagement with his work. This can partly be explained by the unusual role I was asked to play by Daniel as a ‘performer-consultant’, compositional coach and one-man peer

review.<sup>518</sup> But such a request is only possible in established relationships after sufficient trust has been established.

The following exchange demonstrates this relationship:

ZK: This I thought....

DR: It's too obvious isn't it?

ZK: It's just that it's a plain diminished chord.

DR: Is it? Shit, you're right.

ZK: Yeah, and it's just a bit too [plays diminished 7th arpeggio]

DR: [laughs then sings] "At first I was afraid, I was petrified".<sup>519</sup>

ZK: Yeah so do something like... use the octatonic scale over the diminished chord [plays]. Because you're doing a sudden change, it doesn't have to be so functional. It doesn't have to be so...

DR: Literal

ZK: Yes, so obviously B7.<sup>520</sup>

Here I criticise the harmony of a crucial moment, ending the exposition, as being too overtly obvious and simplistic. This is a fundamental criticism of his taste, yet it was received in good spirits with my suggested alternatives noted and largely implemented. The final harmony ended up as this.

#### Example 4.2: *Entre Ritos y Parrandas*, bars 129-130

Although still clearly tonal, the final bar contains modal inflections that contrast with the original, bald diminished 7ths. The piano figuration is also more complex, creating a texture of Rachmaninov-style filigree that contrasts with the stark, traditional Andean ritual-influenced passage that follows. So although my specific

<sup>518</sup> This role is unusual to my practice, but there are a number of other performers who act as 'consultants' but not first performers of the works, such as violinist, Peter Sheppard Skaerved, who served this role working with Peter Maxwell Davies on his Violin Concerto No. 2 and Poul Ruders in his *Summers Prelude and Winters Fugue*. These almost always occur in established relationships with multiple previous collaborations.

<sup>519</sup> This is a reference to the Gloria Gaynor song, "I Will Survive", which begins with a long diminished 7<sup>th</sup> arpeggio.

<sup>520</sup> Video of workshop with Daniel Rojas (10 December 2009).

solution was not implemented, the identification of this corner as a problem catalysed a change in harmony and texture.

## **Parallel Modes of Collaboration**

Our work on *Entre Ritos* drew upon aspects of all of my models of collaboration. The commissioning of the work, its delivery and performance adhered to a directive model, with the commissioner, Fr Arthur, exercising ultimate control over the major parameters of the work, the orchestra only interested in the punctual delivery of the score, and a performer who is unknown to the composer and who will not meet the composer until the final rehearsal.

Yet parallel to this directive model was my collaboration with Daniel on the work, with its frequent oscillation between an interactive mode (where I am advising him on pianistic/technical matters) and an integrative mode (where I am acting as a composer-peer). We switch these modes with ease, even when working just before the deadline, a period when even my relationship with Alex Pozniak became more rigid and conventional. In the above video, we moved rapidly between discussing and editing articulation and dynamics to a discussion on the aesthetic merits of his harmonic decisions, with no distinction made between different types of collaborative work.

When dipping into an integrative mode, the discussions ranged far beyond my expertise as a performer, and into discussions of traditional compositional craft including orchestration. The following excerpt shows me identifying a perceived weakness of structure – I feel the opening section (based on an indigenous Peruvian dance) is too repetitive and needs a countermelody on the third repetition of the melody.

ZK: Even though you're repeating yourself there's still enough different each time you're repeating. There's just that bit where you said it might need something else, that's the bit where it needs a little countermelody.

DR: There it is, thank you.

ZK: I don't know if that's a traditional thing you'd have.

DR: It doesn't necessarily have to be traditional.

ZK: It's like, I know it's really different, but taiko drumming. Like when you listen to TaikOz, you get the drums being added in, and then you finally have the little flute over the top. Who's free?<sup>521</sup>

DR: All the brass is free there.

ZK: What about a little solo trumpet, or something?

DR: Yeah true!<sup>522</sup>

We then workshop various options, and although I find one bitonal solution interesting, I suggest that it would make better sense of the structure (with increasingly chromatic harmony towards the end of the movement) to keep the countermelody harmonically simple. Daniel makes all the final decisions, but he consults me at each step.

**Video Example 4.2: Workshop on *Entre Ritos y Parrandas*, 10 December 2009**



Though my intervention into the composition process is hardly unique in this study, the intervention on a point of orchestration (where the piano part is yet to enter) adds a new dimension to our integrative work: an area of composition that is completely outside of my normal experience and expertise becomes the site for integrative work.

The existence of this consultancy collaboration is only possible in a longer-term relationship. The ease of play, the level of trust, the mutual understanding of

---

<sup>521</sup> TaikOz is an Australian taiko drumming ensemble, established in 1997.

<sup>522</sup> Video of workshop with Daniel Rojas (17 December 2009).



performance practice and the common aesthetic goals are all facilitated by our previous working history. Besides the shared authorship, the collaboration also has some bizarre consequences for performative authenticity. My suggestions for what is practical or idiomatic are made with my own performative skills, strengths and hands in mind, even though these will never be put to use. Indeed, Konstantin Shamray has a completely different background, technique and hand size to mine. However, he accepted the work delivered to him as the work of the composer (with no recourse for interactive dialogue or technical changes) despite the fact that the work was the product of multiple authors: an integrative collaboration in the composition became a directive collaboration when handed to the work's performer.<sup>523</sup>

The communication and collaborative features explored in this work will be examined in more detail in the following case study of our collaboration on his most recent solo work, *Entre Bajos y Alturas*.

## Major Case Study: *Entre Bajos y Alturas*<sup>524</sup>

The last case study in this chapter is our most recent collaboration.<sup>525</sup> In August 2010, I asked Daniel to write a new solo work for me, to be included in a recital of music for mid-2011 that experimented with new pianistic sounds and techniques. The process of collaboration on this work was the only one to be documented throughout the process (to the same level of detail as the other case studies in this thesis) and thus it demonstrates the detail of our working relationship. As the most recent of our collaborations, it also demonstrates a collaboration at a developed stage in a long-term relationship.

---

<sup>523</sup> In our interview, Daniel stated that although he enjoyed Konstantin's obvious virtuosity, he felt that there was barely any time to go through the stylistic aspects with him and felt that this aspect of his performance was lacking.

<sup>524</sup> The title translates roughly as "From the depths to the heights". The title refers to the Peruvian Andes, but is also a pun, "Bajos" also referring to bass instruments and the bass register of the piano.

<sup>525</sup> In between *Entre Ritos y Parrandas* and *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, Daniel composed a 12 minute work for soprano and piano, *Sonata* (with text by Pablo Neruda) for Jane Sheldon and me to perform in 2011. The collaboration was only partly documented, and shares many traits with *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, so it is not discussed in the chapter.

## Early Workshops: Fluid roles, Free experimentation

In the early workshops, we discovered the innovation that would become the central focus of the piece – the use of blu-tac on different harmonic nodes to create an unusual thumb-piano effect.<sup>526</sup> But it was how this new technique was developed that demonstrates the salient aspects of our relationship.

The first workshop began with us alternating improvisations, trying out possible types of material that could be used in each of the three proposed movements. One of my suggestions was to use a lot of extended techniques to create the effect of many different percussion instruments (as a model we discussed the *Hammerklavier* works by Moritz Eggert that combine extended techniques with popular and jazz-based idioms). As an experienced improviser (with years of professional experience) Daniel improvised with these techniques and while doing so, began experimenting with damping notes in the middle register with his left hand while playing with his right. We then started experimenting with damping the notes on the harmonic nodes, and I started assisting him by holding down the harmonics while he improvised. Encouraged by his enthusiasm for this effect, I decided to experiment with using blutac on the harmonic nodes – as the video shows, I start improvising, then Daniel takes over and his improvisation flies off (far more fluent than my own amateurish attempts).<sup>527</sup>

---

<sup>526</sup> To my knowledge, this is the first use of this type of preparation. It was later used by Elliott Gyger in his work *...out of obscurity* after I demonstrated it to him (see Chapter 3).

<sup>527</sup> Observing this video, and my comments on his improvisatory skills, Daniel told me, “I think that I felt unable to materialize my improvisations beyond their initial performance into a notated form. This has been a source of frustration for a long time now”.

**Video Example 4.3: Improvising musical materials for *Entre Bajos y Alturas*,  
18 December 2010**



Our fluidity of roles continues as Daniel continues to improvise, while I add further harmonic-preparations in response to his playing. This is a complete role reversal from other cases in this thesis featuring improvisation: whereas in *Interventions* (Chapter 2) and *Not Music Yet* (Chapter 5), I am required to improvise under the constraints imposed by the composer, in this workshop Daniel performs while I provide the constraints. The element of expertise also seems to be reversed at this point in the composition process: Daniel is clearly a more confident improviser, and performer in this style, while I seem to be more proficient with the structuring of the harmony (by placing the preparations) and suggesting material that could be used by Daniel while improvising. The fluid roles, free play and improvisation, and non-teleological experimentation occur with a spontaneity and effectiveness that is not found to the same extent in any of the other cases.<sup>528</sup>

---

<sup>528</sup> Certainly, the complete reversal of roles we observe in this workshop is observed at times in my work with Alex Pozniak on *Interventions* (Chapter 2) but even there, the workshops have a greater sense of teleology and direction from the composer than in this workshop. It should be noted that there it is not necessarily better for a collaboration to be integrative and fluid, but in this case it is a particularly effective means of generating the work's musical materials.

In the second early workshop, our roles were still fluid, but starting to assume more standard forms. Here we take turns improvising and introducing ideas, in particular, the use of the heel of the hand to play white key clusters in rhythmic counterpoint to melodies played with the fingers on the black keys.

**Video Example 4.4: Workshop on *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, 6 January 2011**



Daniel has also solidified many of his thematic and textural ideas, as well as his plans for the duration of each movement, so he now directs me in improvisations. The workshop, though still free, now conforms more clearly to the integrative models we have observed in the other chapters, with a mixture of improvisation, testing of new material and discussions about structure and harmonic language. In his improvisations, I suggest different techniques, which Daniel either accepts or rejects – rejecting the use of wire brushes and e-bow, but, for now, showing an interest in the use of percussive effects inside the piano.

After this thorough exploration, Daniel called a definite close to the exploratory phase of the collaboration, listing the techniques he had chosen to work with.

DR: I think it's already too much.

ZK: Yeah there's probably too much, I think there's plenty. I think there's a lot of extended stuff that can be done, using the preparations, and not getting too

complex with the preparations. It's just having these (pointing to the blu-tac in the middle range of the piano) and two things to roll in, and that's enough.

DR: Yeah it can get too much. I like the stroking of the frame, of the wood, the clusters, all that stuff. That's going to be the wild climax I think. It'll really build to those clusters, go ape-shit, and that will contrast with the gentle sounds of those prepared notes.

When showing some sketches for each of these movements to me (in his office) he sought my approval for the work-in-progress and seemed relieved when my hopes for the piece coincided with his own vision. In all these exchanges, the 'testing' of material is both pianistic as well as aesthetic, and Daniel seemed entirely comfortable in allowing me to 'quality-control' the work in progress at this stage.

During a third workshop in a visit to Sydney in March, we began testing more concrete musical materials that Daniel had written in the interim, though this served mainly for Daniel to play through his sketches and reassure me that he was making progress (despite the original deadline of mid-March having passed).<sup>529</sup> It was particularly notable that he seemed close to finishing the first movement, full of the influence of Peruvian mountain music, which built to a virtuosic climax. When Daniel suggested that he was beginning to become stressed by the project, I commented that he should produce a work from the material he had so fluently improvised:

ZK: When you improvise and rely on your natural instincts, it's already very impressive. It's all there, you just need to let it out. It's not like it's any less serious, in fact it becomes more convincing.

DR: That's interesting. That's true, that's very true.

ZK: And the things that you calculate, you can calculate to the extent that you're comfortable with.

DR: OK, and then go back to intuition.

ZK: Yeah it's up to you about how much, but don't try to make it too technically taut just because it's a piece for me. You always go a bit overboard in getting everything tight.

DR: By doing that, I've become a better composer, a better craftsman. Because I was always using intuition.

ZK: But now you can rely on your craft

---

<sup>529</sup> The first half of the workshop was given over to a coaching session by me on Daniel's performance of Ginastera's Piano Sonata No. 1, a work I had performed in 2001. As in this session, coaching sessions on performances by either of us would often be included in our workshops, and this demonstrates a degree of trust by both of us in each other's musical judgement that is both a contributor to and a result of our long-term collaborative relationship.

DR: Yeah, because now it's beginning to work against me. Blocking creativity.<sup>530</sup>

This exchange would presage the more intense that would occur in the next phase of the relationship.

These early workshops on *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, demonstrate the fluidity of roles, shared improvising and aesthetic discussions that have been a feature of my more recent collaborations with Rojas. Though fluid interplay and collaborative generation of musical materials was observed in the composition of Pozniak's *Interventions*, that collaboration was borne out of extreme pressures of time. In this case, the deadline was some months away, and our work was allowed to progress naturally from free improvising to more deliberate testing of the newly discovered techniques. The use of play as a tool for collaborative creativity, discussed at length as one of the most effective collaborative tools by Sawyer, is exemplified in these early workshops.<sup>531</sup>

### **The dangers of long-term relationships: collaborating by correspondence**

Towards the end of March 2011, Daniel began putting together the many musical materials we had generated and discussed. As with many of the other collaborations, much of this final stage was after the original deadline for the work, so the pressure of time was introduced into the process. With time restraints, a possible option might have been to emulate my collaboration with Pozniak, or with Daniel on his *Entre Ritos y Parrandas*, and enter into an intense period of integrative collaboration in long workshops. However, as I would be in London until just before the premiere, this was not an option. We attempted to emulate this previously successful working method via email, with less successful results.

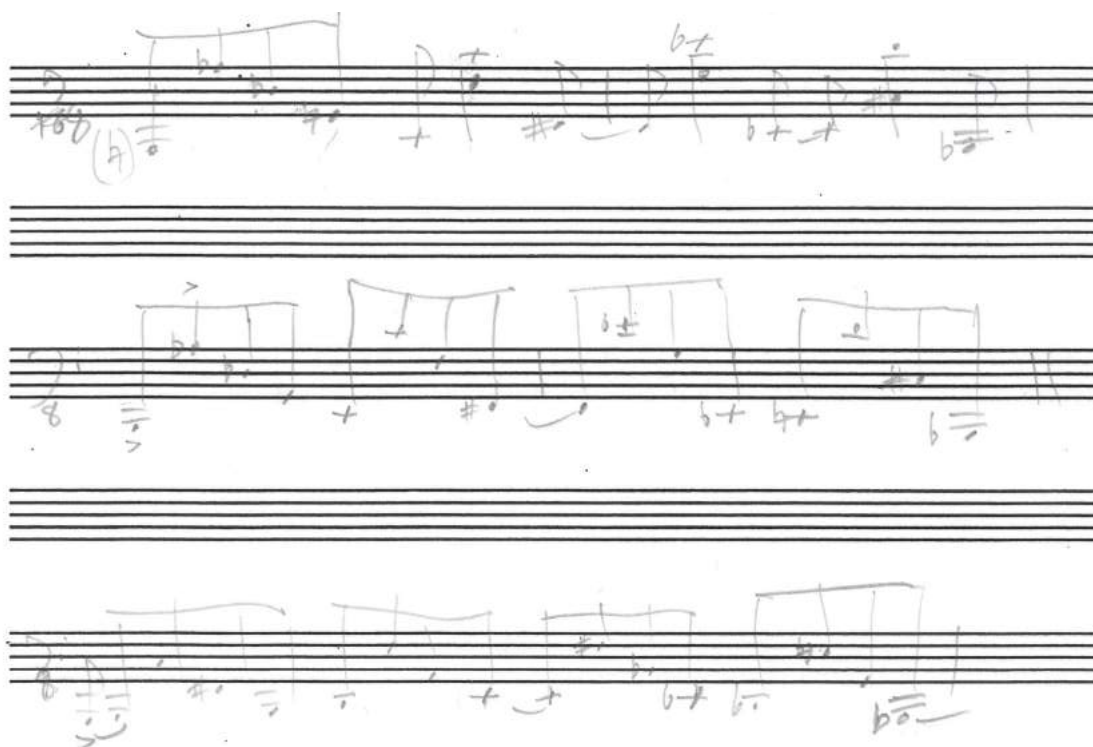
Our first email exchange was relatively straightforward. Daniel sent me a left hand passage (example 4.3) that he wanted me to test.

---

<sup>530</sup>Video of workshop with Daniel Rojas (1 March 2011).

<sup>531</sup> Sawyer (2007): 31.

**Example 4.3: Sketches for *Entre Bajos y Alturas*<sup>532</sup>**



My reply was one of approval and encouragement,

All the LH writing here works fine: though the second line has some tricky moments, they're tricky in the 'right way'. That is - they're virtuosic without being needlessly awkward - indeed the leaps and patterns are quite pianistic in their own unique way. And I totally get the whole bass line + montuno effect that you're going for, which I think is really effective. I'd be interested to see what RH melody or pattern you put over this texture, and how they interrelate and/or diverge, both musically and physically.<sup>533</sup>

Daniel's reply subtly belies the difficulties he was starting to feel while composing the piece and the pressures he was experiencing from his other jobs:

Thanks for the feedback. Yes, I'm into creating "pianistic virtuosity" and on unplayable/awkward showoffosity...learning my lessons I guess :).

I've actually started to enjoy composing again today. It's interesting how when I have so many distractions and can only focus on something with 99% commitment it is very difficult/uphill. But when I commit to it 100% it's easy and enjoyable and I guess this dawned on me again today! [...] I just have to be intelligent and find other ways to make money that I enjoy and not wear me out musically.<sup>534</sup>

---

<sup>532</sup> Email: Daniel Rojas to Zubin Kanga (30th March 2011)

<sup>533</sup> Email: Zubin Kanga to Daniel Rojas (3rd April 2011).

<sup>534</sup> Email: Daniel Rojas to Zubin Kanga (3rd April 2011).

The temporal and financial pressures on Daniel were demonstrated in a later exchange where we discuss the deadlines and fee.

DR: ...does this mean I might have until the end of April to complete this work? Also could I have 50% of the fee we agreed upon soon? It will come in very handy over the holidays given I teach as a casual.<sup>535</sup>

ZK: On the date: I would really like to have the piece to work on during April as I will not get that much time in May and June to do proper practice on it due to my other commitments. I also don't want the due date to keep constantly rolling ahead. Having said that, I don't want you to rush it and make mistakes - how do you feel you are placed in terms of your own compositional trajectory? It would also help if you send me each movement as its finished so I can start work on them even if you're still finishing one of the other movements (see below). On the fee: I really want to treat this commission as I would any other, and keep it professional. So I really can't send half the fee now, without having any of the finished work. As a compromise, I can send you the first half once you've sent two of the completed movements, and the final half on the delivery of the third. I hope that seems fair to you.<sup>536</sup>

DR: Re pay, not pleased but I understand; I always get 50% upon signing contract then 50% on delivery of score/parts; common practice. But if this is the way you commonly work I'll work with this. Re completion date, I'll complete the work by time agreed.<sup>537</sup>

ZK: Given that PhD deadlines and other things have changed for me at the moment, I'm inclined to give you some extra time to finish the piece and make sure it's really good (ie, the end of April, as an absolute final deadline) but let's discuss this on the phone when you're available.<sup>538</sup>

DR: This would be really helpful Zubin because right now I do need a day or two just to clear the shit... breathe and jump wholeheartedly and refreshed into our piano piece. End of April is perfect and I will make it my top priority.

Don't worry about the pay (unless I really get into problems which I think should be ok) until I give you the score. I sense that this might be a little more security for you that I will finish the score on time.<sup>539</sup>

Daniel's final sentence shows that, despite the cordial nature of our exchanges, he can sense that I am getting very worried about whether the piece will actually be completed at all.

---

<sup>535</sup> Ibid.

<sup>536</sup> Email: Zubin Kanga to Daniel Rojas (3<sup>rd</sup> April 2011).

<sup>537</sup> Email: Daniel Rojas to Zubin Kanga (5<sup>th</sup> April 2011).

<sup>538</sup> Email: Zubin Kanga to Daniel Rojas (10<sup>th</sup> April 2011).

<sup>539</sup> Email: Daniel Rojas to Zubin Kanga (11<sup>th</sup> April 2011).



Such haggling over deadlines, and particularly over fee payments is not unique to this relationship, but any threat of consequences, even if there were a written contract, is rendered impotent by the intimacy of the relationship. Contractual obligations cannot be enforced given the risk to the friendship, making the personal relationship a professional liability. Such a situation exacerbates the pressures on the composition of the work and on our collaboration, as is evident in the following exchanges.

On April 19<sup>th</sup>, Daniel sent me the draft of the first movement. Except for the title (given here as “Tierra Antigua”), and the lack of parallel 7ths in bars 41-47, the draft is nearly identical to the final version of the first movement.

**Example 4.4: *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, final page of first movement  
(draft – 19 April 2011)**

48

54

pp

accel.

ff

mp

una corda

f

mp

TO TANGO TRANSITION

Although the changes made over the coming days were minimal, the level of interaction was intense. I wrote back, querying the change of the movement's style and focus from what we had previously discussed, and was previously demonstrated to me in our March workshops: the original virtuosic climax now gone and the texture remaining relatively sparse throughout.

ZK: I have a few global and local comments. First the global: I like having a slow, mysterious opening, but I want to understand how this works with the plan for the three movements. I thought the plan was for the first movement was going to build up to quite a big, savage, virtuosic climax before breaking apart, and leading into the quiet middle movement (as you did in your 2nd piano concerto). Is this still the plan? Will the transition that's missing from the end do this climax or something quite different. If you're keeping this as quite a slow quiet movement, then are you planning on making the tango more extrovert and dramatic and less of a 'slow movement'? I'm sure the overall plan is quite clear in your head so i just want to understand it.<sup>540</sup>

<sup>540</sup> Email: Zubin Kanga to Daniel Rojas (19th April 2011).

Apart from these comments about the general direction of the work, I had a few suggestions for creating textural interest:

On the local level, I think the first half of this works well (I like the descent of the RH line - maybe make more of this as a structural point?), but I think the repeat of the melody needs some kind of variation, or addition of textural interest. In places like bars 37-40 and the recap at the end (and indeed in other places) I think the addition of extra layers of colours could really enrich these passages. I'm thinking of what Debussy does in his 2nd book of Preludes, or even what Anne does very well in Book of the Bells. You already do this a bit at the beginning, with the tenor voice doing the B-flats and D's while the outer voices do their thing, but I think you can do more with this. This kind of movement (and tempo, if it is slow throughout) is a good opportunity for this kind of layering/counterpoint across the piano which isn't really possible or idiomatic in the faster movements. But maybe you're thinking of keeping it all quite contained if something wildly different happens at the end of the movement?<sup>541</sup>

Daniel responded strongly to my comments. To my first paragraph on the overall direction of the work he replied,

I really don't want to think toooo logically about this right now...yes I have a sense where this is going to go and I think now you might too. Let's leave this to "magic" for the time being and reflect retrospectively when the time comes.<sup>542</sup>

And on my second paragraph he commented (colours and highlighting shown from the original email).

On the local level, I think the first half of this works well (I like the descent of the RH line - maybe make more of this as a structural point?), but I think the repeat of the melody needs some kind of variation, or addition of textural interest. **Please remember the recap of the bitonal melody uses the prepared notes of the piano...plenty of difference there...but I have and continue to plan for greater variations upon revisions as I gain increasing confidence in composing again.** In places like bars 37-40 and the recap at the end (and indeed in other places) I think the addition of extra layers of colours could really enrich these passages. I'm thinking of what Debussy does in his 2nd book of Preludes, or even what Anne does very well in Book of the Bells. **What do they do? I really can't remember...** You already do this a bit at the beginning, with the tenor voice doing the B-flats and D's while the outer voices do their thing, but I think you can do more with this. **ah, ok, but can you expand a little more? I'll do my own research.** This kind of movement (and tempo, if it is slow throughout) is a good opportunity for this kind of layering/counterpoint across the piano which isn't really possible or idiomatic in the faster movements. But maybe you're thinking of keeping it all quite contained **CERTAINLY NOT CONTAINED!!!!!!!** if something wildly different happens at the end of the movement? **I will work more on the dynamics...I have possibly mislead you into thinking this is a passive movement. It**

---

<sup>541</sup> Email: Zubin Kanga to Daniel Rojas (19th April 2011).

<sup>542</sup> Email: Daniel Rojas to Zubin Kanga (19th April 2011).

is certainly not, at least not on the whole; while it is slow it is driving, hence the "poco con moto" indication at the beginning.<sup>543</sup>

Daniel finished with following,

Indeed, but perhaps when I allow my creativity to flow more. I can see how these kinds of considerations can hinder this process and momentum...I'm feeling it right now, which is not a good thing considering I have little time to complete it in. It is nonetheless a good exercise to go through, at least in dozes. I can't help considering how different we both are in the way we think. It almost seems to me that your preference is to pre-plan and then stick to this plan as you execute. On the other-hand, I will think a lot/sketch/plan before I actually compose, but these are really more to tickle my creative and logical juices, then I respond to musical ideas as they flow; I might completely throw out ALL or most of my original ideas, but in some way they have helped me to arrive at the ideas I use in the composition.<sup>544</sup>

It was clear that, at this stage, my comments on the work in progress were not welcome, and not considered helpful by Daniel. Despite inviting me to comment, he stridently defends his work, and in his final paragraph, he attempts to end the integrative process (at least in the short term). Despite the failure to engage on an integrative level in this exchange, the frankness of our communication, particularly in openly discussing the differences between each other's working methods and aesthetic approaches is a useful feature of our communication.

My reply to Daniel acknowledged that the high pressure I was placing on him to finish the piece soon was not compatible with highly integrative collaboration.

Thanks for all this - I think my global comments were basically aimed at making sure you don't have two soft/slow movements next to each other. Don't take everything I say as directions - it's just suggestions, and if you're splurging then I hope some of these are useful for your next phase with the material. I don't want to cramp your creative style with over-planning, but I just thought the overall structure had been discussed in a few of our previous meetings, and I wanted to know if anything had dramatically changed.

---

<sup>543</sup> Email: Daniel Rojas to Zubin Kanga (19<sup>th</sup> April 2011). Note that this is the only quote where I have shown Daniel's text in red, but all of his text (in the previous and following quote) was also originally written in red. Though Daniel claims this was simply to show the difference between his text and mine, the impression it gave me was an expression of anger and frustration.

<sup>544</sup> Ibid.

On the Book of the Bells comment - it's just about having these multiple bell like sounds in different registers, all doing their own rhythmic thing. Like a counterpoint of colours - often written on multiple staves (which you are already doing).

So do you feel you're on a roll now? I really want you to feel that you've got enough time to do a good job. If I give you an extra week on one of the movements will that help? I really can't keep on giving continuous extensions as I need to make sure I do a good job on this too, and I have my own pressures to deal with. Remember, you can still make changes to the score after you deliver it - but I just need to start learning the notes, esp for the more virtuosic sections. Can you tell me roughly how you are placed now in terms of how much of the other movements are composed?<sup>545</sup>

At the end of this email, I respond to his stressed emails by offering him extra time to finish. While writing this I had conflicting priorities: to get the piece delivered so I could start learning it, set against my desire to allow Daniel enough space to write a good piece – both time thresholds competing for priority. Even in hindsight, it is difficult to assess whether I was imposing too much pressure on Daniel at this stage, or too little.

Despite this seeming shutdown of our collaboration by email, Daniel responded a week later with another invitation for comments.

Composition is going well. Working on both II & III almost simultaneously, in typical Dan style. I will very probably have these complete by Sunday. But will then need your critical comments. At this stage I will revisit Mov I with your comments. The plan is to have everything complete by end of 1st week of May as you kindly offered. Sound like a plan?<sup>546</sup>

But soon, the atmosphere of pressure and impending crisis returned, when he finally sent me drafts of the second movement and the third movement (still unfinished).

Can I be honest and say, I don't know how much more of this I can handle. I'm going to try type in the final movement today but I have several other things this week, now that the uni and school term has started and I'm struggling to stay above water. I'm going to take a break from so much music for quite some time

---

<sup>545</sup> Email: Zubin Kanga to Daniel Rojas (20<sup>th</sup> April 2011). Daniel recalls that on this final paragraph, and my invitation to keep honing it after he sends me drafts, “reading this was key for me at the time, it somehow allowed me to give myself permission to complete it without continuously tripping.”

<sup>546</sup> Email: Daniel Rojas to Zubin Kanga (27<sup>th</sup> April 2011).

after I complete this work. I'm just exhausted and I don't know quite for what reward.

All the best and hope you are faring better than I.<sup>547</sup>

And later that night:

Here is the 3rd mov work in progress. I'm tired and I want to go to sleep. Here's the best I can do for a day. The ideas are there but there's a fair bit of reshuffling to do. I'll do more work on this tomorrow in my free periods :). Perhaps hang on commenting on this one for a little bit... Nonetheless I think much of what is here will remain, so you can start working on sections to get the feel of it...making no sense...too tired<sup>548</sup>

I replied with an email that was largely supportive, and reserved most of the suggestions for minor adjustments such as dynamic edits in the 'Tango' and my reiteration of the need for some variation or textural interest in the middle section of the first movement – the only major suggestion was the possibility of a moment of less dissonance in the 'Tango'.

Thanks for this - I'll just comment on the first and second movements.

Movement II: Tango. Like I said on the phone, I think this is really strong. The complexity of texture at bar 17 is really interesting, and then it's great when the melody takes of bars 21-24 - maybe this could be even longer before disappearing into the upward octaves? The contrapuntal section from bar 29 reminds me of the Berg sonata - really tortured harmonies! On the ending, those RH passages are definitely playable, and I'll do them lightly, but I think it will still be hard to make this quieter than the previous section due to the thickness of the chords, and the fact that they're fast repeated chords. Could I suggest that you crescendo to bar 65 and then start the decrescendo from bar 66 - if you add a few more bars, you can continue the decrescendo with the chords in both hands contracting towards the centre of the keyboard (you start this process already) and then it can really evaporate into the centre, setting up the 3rd movement. What do you think?

One other thing to maybe think about in the overall plan is whether you give any more moments of 'light' amid the 'darkness'. Some brief moments of consonance may put the dissonance in greater relief, but perhaps you want to save up the 'light' and consonances until the last movement?

Movement I: I'll just recap the main points I made previously. The opening is very strong, and I like the melody section using the prepared notes. The main thing is that I felt there needed to be a bit more textural variety in the 2nd half (bars 37-40, and 55-end, and possibly in between), and particularly the final recap from bar

---

<sup>547</sup> Email: Daniel Rojas to Zubin Kanga (1<sup>st</sup> May 2011). Daniel recalls that by this time, "I had little interest in composing anymore during this period of crisis. I was going to change career and exit music altogether".

<sup>548</sup> Ibid.

55 (which you had not finished in the version you had send me). I had suggested that you use some tolling bell like figures...the idea of bells at different speeds seems to me to foreshadow the percussive effects in rhythmic counterpoint that you use in the third movement. If not this then maybe some other kind of textural interest (using different registers and/or colours of the instrument).

Another thing I mentioned as a possibility is that the descending line at bar 17 might continue down the piano and then pass the line to the left hand which then descends to the bottom. Remember - these are all just suggestions. I am trying to help you here, not make you feel bad - please tell me what kinds of things you want me to look at in more detail or make any suggestions for solutions.

If you really need the first instalment of the fee, then I can organise that, as long as you keep on working at it.

I know you can do it Dan - you're one of the most creative people, and most natural musicians I know. Don't worry about who might be in the audience or what people will say - I'm the only one you need to impress, and you are impressing me so far.

Let me know what you think of these suggestions, and keep me posted on your progress.<sup>549</sup>

Although the tone of this email was generally intended to soothe Daniel's anxieties, my insistence on my being "the only one you need to impress" may have actually exacerbated his anxieties. Certainly, the placement of myself, as commissioner and performer, in such a clear hierarchical position over the composer was unhelpful at this point, particularly in combination with the directness of my comments and Daniel's perception of the suggestions as fundamental criticisms. In any case, none of these suggestions were acted on until after the completion of the third movement, which was still in progress past our multiply renegotiated deadline of 9<sup>th</sup> May. The pressure was clear in his reply to my enquiries about the delivery.

I'm trying my best to get these to you by today. Thanks for your patience. This must be really trying on you; it is for me.<sup>550</sup>

On 13<sup>th</sup> May, Daniel sent edited versions of the first two movements, with some minor textural variety (such as harmonization in parallel 7ths) added in the first movement – his concession to my desire for more variation of the central melody. It also included a tonal interlude in the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement – his response to my request for a more consonant moment. The third movement remained incomplete.

---

<sup>549</sup> Email: Zubin Kanga to Daniel Rojas (1<sup>st</sup> May 2011).

<sup>550</sup> Email: Daniel Rojas to Zubin Kanga (10<sup>th</sup> May 2011).

Very little left in fact. It's a very small climb but the boulder on my back is huge... probably the best way of explaining it. I've found this movement extremely difficult to complete and I think in normal circumstances it would only take half a day to do so! This is what is really worrying me. I'm also trying to finalise results for the Armidale Eisteddfod and I'm in bed sick. Like I've said before, this is all killing me and just between you and I, I'm seriously considering a career change. I will continue to do my best to complete this immediately, but I don't know what this means.

On a more positive note, I'm so relieved you don't have other major comments for the earlier movements at this stage. Thank you.<sup>551</sup>

The third movement was finally delivered on 15<sup>th</sup> May (and payment for the commission immediately arranged). With Daniel clearly exhausted from the effort, and me simply eager to get on with learning the work, I refrained from any further comments on the work. It was clear to me by this point that any attempt at negotiating changes would be unproductive and given my position of authority in the collaboration, I shut the discussion down until we could meet in person.

This period in the collaboration ended with just a few small changes to the work. But the nature of these exchanges was still unusual, with Daniel first inviting then resisting collaboration on the work while I alternated between pushing for changes and deadlines and affording him space and greater time to finish. The exchanges were intense and often personal, both in the criticisms leveled as well as the degree of support provided. Here, our personal and professional relationships were intertwined, turning our collaborative discussions into an unproductive conflict, while also producing the negative results of making deadlines difficult to enforce, encouraging unprofessional behaviour (including attempts at rushed renegotiations of agreed terms), the acceptance of personal excuses as well as (from my end) the use of the relationship of trust and approval as a means to exert greater pressure and control over Daniel's creative process. The medium of email, with its impersonal effect, was a confounding factor, as was the pressure of time, which made attempts at collaboration pressured, frantic, and largely unsuccessful. When I asked him about this period of collaboration in our interview, Daniel recalled,

---

<sup>551</sup> Email: Daniel Rojas to Zubin Kanga (13<sup>th</sup> May 2011).



I remember the exchanges were very tense. I was very angry, at everything. I remember thinking, 'why the fuck am I writing this... why should I bother'. I had so many things going on at the time, and this was just another thing. And I understood, in my mind, that you needed the piece to start practising. But in my gut I was just angry... I remember you were asking for the pieces, and it was well overdue. It's my usual thing of squeezing it into the last, tiniest bit of time possible.<sup>552</sup>

This period of the collaboration was a rare period in this relationship where the collaboration was damaging and unproductive. Our rapport, with its efficiency of communication, openness and established trust all became liabilities when the stresses of time thresholds were combined with the tonal blankness of email. A more mutually satisfactory mode of collaboration was found once the pressures of the deadline were removed and we could work in person.

### **Final Workshops: A return to intimate and integrative collaboration**

Our final workshops in the month leading up to the concert were very different in approach and focus from both the email exchanges and the original experimentally-oriented workshops. In contrast to the destructive and exploitative interaction between our personal and professional relationship during the email exchange, these late-stage workshops demonstrate the benefits of our long history of collaboration allowing many different types of collaborative approach to be entered into and efficiently executed, facilitated by a mutual respect for each other's work and an unforced acceptance of integrative engagement at all stages of the process. To some extent, the work is similar to our collaboration on *Entre Ritos y Parrandas*, but more systematic, organised and efficient. The fact that we could return to this type of work so smoothly after the frustration and anger evident in the previous phase of the collaboration is another mark of the long-term collaboration. Functioning as our own relationship counsellors, we discuss our frustrations openly, so that the work can continue.

---

<sup>552</sup> Interview with Daniel Rojas (4 January 2012).

Our first workshop on the full score (on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2011) featured sections of very efficient re-composition as well as testing of passages and tempi.<sup>553</sup> One major change we made was to the ending of the work.

Below is the ending in its original form.

**Example 4.5: *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement (draft – 24 June 2011), bars 173-177**

The musical score shows two staves. The upper staff is the right hand, and the lower staff is the left hand. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 3/4. The score begins at bar 173. The right hand plays a series of chords, while the left hand plays a melodic line with eighth notes. Dynamics are marked as *ppp* at the start, *fff* in the middle, and *p* and *fff* towards the end. The piece concludes with a fermata over the final chord.

Daniel took my suggestion to alter the ending with good humour, and with none of the resistance that emerged from the less significant changes I suggested to Alex Pozniak (Chapter 2), Michael Finnissy (Chapter 1) and David Gorton (Chapter 3) or indeed to his earlier resistance via email. In the following exchange we discuss and workshop some possibilities for the ending, while also openly discussing, and laughing about, his previous creative block and frustration. Our laughter is not just a sign of enjoyment of the collaboration, but an important tool for facilitating the efficiency of the process of experimentation, and of recalibrating the relationship after the antagonism of the previous few months.

ZK: Let's begin from the end – this is the one thing that's been bugging me [plays]

DR: What's the problem? [both laugh]

ZK: I get what you're going for, and I think it just needs a bit of...

DR: It's not working because there's not enough dynamic range in the muted notes.

ZK: yeah, there's also the proportional thing. You've got this big buildup, and then this ending that's a bit...[gestures]

---

<sup>553</sup> The movement titles are:

1. Vastos Llanos ("Vast Tablelands")
2. Ochos Entre Dos ("Figure Eight Between Pairs")
3. Garras y Abrazos ("Pulling Embraces")

For clarity, I refer to the movements by their number rather than their name as these titles were only decided shortly before the premiere and were not used during our workshop discussions.

DR: An anticlimax  
 ZK: Yeah, and the other thing is it doesn't come from anywhere, it's not material that comes from anywhere.  
 DR: So you get the sense that it's an unrelated coda.  
 ZK: Yeah. It's a non-related coda. When I asked you what this was, you said you were going for the end of the Ginastera.  
 DR: Yeah the second movement [referring to the Piano Sonata No. 1 by Alberto Ginastera].  
 ZK: But for that, he has a whole page where it fades, and he takes out one note from the pattern at a time until you're left with one note at the end.  
 DR: What about just that [cancelling out the coda except for the last, soft dyad]  
 ZK: [plays new version]  
 DR: You don't like that either?  
 ZK: I don't know. This whole passage goes on for pages, fortissimo. If you're going to do it, then keep on doing it and fade out [plays, repeating the final chord]  
 DR: Yeah, that and then 'bang!' Yeah do it again but really soft.  
 ZK: [plays] and then depends on what final chord you want. That [plays clusters] or that [plays open fifths] or down low [plays low cluster].  
 DR: Yeah could be.  
 ZK: If it's going to be a coda, it just needs you to make it a 'thing'  
 DR: Yeah make a point out of it. I thought perhaps going back to one of the opening statements.  
 ZK: Of this movement, like [plays].  
 DR: [sings the rhythm he wants – related to cowbell rhythm]  
 ZK: Something like that  
 DR: Something like that, but on those two notes.  
 ZK: [plays]. Yeah even that, because that's referencing the middle section.  
 DR: Exactly, and it's a little bit cheekier. Because I was trying to be cheeky but it just didn't work, it's a cop out. I was like 'I want to fucking finish this thing and go on to something else – I'm over it!' [both laugh]  
 ZK: I could tell.  
 DR: I'm not over it now. I'm over being over it now.<sup>554</sup>

In this exchange, Daniel allows me to have 'final cut' over the ending, while he asks me to test several options in a series of experiments.<sup>555</sup> Although by the end of the workshop, the details of these final bars had not yet been finalised, the concept of the ostinato (suggested by myself) followed by a loud bang (suggested by Daniel), was implemented by Daniel in the following days, ending up in the form shown below.<sup>556</sup>

---

<sup>554</sup> Video of workshop with Daniel Rojas (24 June 2011).

<sup>555</sup> Note the reference to Ginastera's Piano Sonata No. 1, a piece that I coached Daniel on during our March workshop.

<sup>556</sup> Note that the final bar is a direct reference to the final bar of *Danze de Montañas*.

**Example 4.6: *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, bars 177-183**

177  
*ppp*  
(8)

180  
*fff p subito poco legato*  
*rall. . . . . A tempo*  
*fff subito*

For these few minutes, Daniel affords me an unusual degree of control over a fundamental compositional decision: the pressures of time, instrumental difficulty or professional seniority are largely absent, and the passing of control is voluntary. The final exchange in this conversation reveals why such an exchange is possible: in divulging to me his inner dialogue, Daniel places trust in me, both in my judgements on his piece, and my counsel on his personal life. When working in person, this personal relationship aids our professional work whereas by email, and with the pressure of the deadline, the personal component was a hindrance.

Another moment of efficient collaboration occurred when I identified the transition between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> movements as a weak point.

**Example 4.7: *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, bars 89-93 and 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, bars 1-4**

*Segue Subito*

Daniel spontaneously composes a transition that we proceed to workshop as seen in these videos:

ZK: The other one was end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement into the 3<sup>rd</sup> movement. Again, I wasn't totally convinced by these three bars. It's almost there [plays]. So it doesn't really function as a transition.

DR: Yeah, I got it. It probably will now [writing on my score the dovetailing ostinato between movements]

ZK: Ahh! [plays] So we just have to find the tempo.

DR: The tempo should be the same.

ZK: [plays into 3<sup>rd</sup> movement]

DR: That's too fast. Are you going to keep it up that fast?

ZK: No

DR: That's too fast. I think it's semiquaver equals quaver.

ZK: [plays] Still a bit too fast. Let me try [plays with a rit]

DR: Let's try semiquaver equals crotchet.

ZK: OK let me think [plays]. Yeah that makes more sense, and it's much easier to work out.

DR: Yeah definitely semiquaver equals crotchet. Finding and fixing everything - I wish we'd had this earlier.<sup>557</sup>

<sup>557</sup> Video of workshop with Daniel Rojas (24 June 2011).

The creation of a transition section is straightforward, with Daniel composing it spontaneously after I identify it as a weakness, but finding the right tempo for it requires some experimentation, with both of us suggesting strategies for smoothing the edges of the tempo change. The final solution is shown in example 4.8.

**Example 4.8: *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, bars 1-8**

Son Montuno ♩ = 188

The musical score for Example 4.8 consists of two systems of piano and right-hand parts. The first system covers bars 1-4, and the second system covers bars 5-8. The tempo is marked as Son Montuno with a quarter note equal to 188 (♩ = 188). The piano part in the first system is marked *subito ppp soto voce ad lib.* and *poco Rto.*. The right-hand part in the first system is marked *mp poco legato*. The piano part in the second system is marked *f poco legato*. The right-hand part in the second system is marked *f poco legato*. The score is in 4/4 time and features a mix of eighth and quarter notes with rests.

Again, the speed with which these changes were made is atypical and the highly targeted use of temporary integrative work stands in contrast to the lengthy processes in the other case studies, where similar changes required multiple workshops and additional correspondence before any solution was reached.

The above examples show Daniel allowing me to enter into his creative space, where he accepts my judgements on aesthetic and structural issues. By contrast, when technical issues were the reason for my complaints, a more thorough negotiation took place in which my own creative space was challenged, again demonstrating the fluidity of roles and the low level of resistance. A prime example was our negotiation over the descending right hand patterns at the end of the tango, shown in example 4.9.

**Example 4.9: *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, bars 80-83**

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system, labeled with a circled '80', shows a treble clef with a complex, rapid sequence of chords and a bass clef with a descending line of chords. The second system, labeled with a circled '82', continues the treble clef with similar complexity and the bass clef with a descending line, ending with a 6/8 time signature change.

Feeling that the passage was impractical, I played the descending triads as ninths (omitting the middle note). Although I argued the written form of the passage was pianistically impractical, Daniel resisted, and only partly compromised – allowing me to leave out one note in each chord (as I had requested) but only until I found a solution to playing the passage with the full chords.

DR: So you're not doing the two notes on top?

ZK: Well, if I do them I'm going to be playing them so you don't hear them [plays]

DR: There is a slight difference, I think you can hear that they're these three semitones [the pitch set for each chord]

ZK: OK [plays with full chords]. It depends if you mind if I pull it around.

DR: Why don't you do this. Play it as ninths until you feel comfortable, even if it's for this concert. But if and when you can use the three notes do that, if not, it's cool. Because what I may end up doing there is putting brackets underneath those notes [pointing to lower notes]

ZK: That may not make a difference. The only ones where it's tricky are that one, that one, that one and that one [pointing]. Everything else is fine. If I can drop it down a bit, it should be possible.

DR: OK so you can drop it down there to whatever you feel comfortable with, as long as it's still purposeful.<sup>558</sup>

I did end up performing the passage with the full chords, with a slight holding back of tempo, as Daniel had suggested. In this case, I trusted his judgement as a composer and as a pianist, despite the risks of the passage. Although more negotiation and testing was required, in comparison to the previous examples, the workshopping of this section took less than five minutes.

<sup>558</sup> Ibid.

## Coaching workshops

Our later workshops reveal a very different type of work. Whereas the first meeting on the completed work featured focused periods of integrative composition, the latter workshops involved intensive coaching on the performance practice required for the piece. In the following excerpt, we discuss the character of the 1<sup>st</sup> movement, and whether my interpretation is too 'naïve', lacking the sarcastic tone that he wants.

DR: Something in my writing worries me a little bit in that it becomes a bit naïve

ZK: Well this middle theme is a kind of children's song.

DR: The irony is really something that I'm going for. But I'm just worried is it naïve in a naïve way? [laughs]

ZK: I was trying to actually do it as straight as possible. Because I could make it a bit more... but to get what it is, the whole thing needs to be quite flat, because then the Tango comes out of that.

DR: Exactly, but is there any way of bringing out a kind of sarcastic element in that nursery rhyme. Because I'm going for something that's childish, but almost sinister.<sup>559</sup>

The subtleties of character and groove become the focus of the workshop, and while discussing the 'Tango', I mention Pablo Ziegler (a pianist best known for his work with Astor Piazzolla) as an obvious pianistic influence on the work. Daniel follows this up by demonstrating Ziegler's tango style to me in a typically fluent improvisation (including a comic moment where he forgets there are preparations on some notes).

---

<sup>559</sup> Video of workshop with Daniel Rojas (1 July 2011).



#### Video Example 4.5: Workshop on *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, 1 July 2011



The subtleties of the dance rhythms became even more important as we workshopped the third movement, where he moulded my accents and articulation to his liking. In this video, he gets me to play the opening of the movement more legato, counter-intuitively (to me) creating a more convincing ‘groove’. He also explains the origin and traditional use of each rhythmic pattern. Although we have had many similar workshops before, there are still plenty of new aspects of salsa for me to learn, and he is here adding to a long period of education stretching back ten years to *Danza de Montañas*.

DR: There’s one more thing at the beginning. When you’re doing the cascara and montuno...

ZK: The ‘cascarand’ montuno?

DR: The cascara *and* the montuno. So this is the cascara [miming and singing playing the rhythm]

ZK: And that’s the cowbell right?

DR: No that’s the shell of the timbale.

ZK: So cascara is the name of the shell and the name of the pattern?

DR: That’s right, just like *campana* is the name of the pattern on the bell, and the name of the bell, the cowbell. When you do these try and make them a bit more legato. At the moment it’s sounding a bit too detached.

ZK: [plays]

DR: Just hold the notes a bit longer.

ZK: [plays]

DR: Yeah that’s it. It just sounds a little bit more wholesome that way. Otherwise it’ll sound a bit too literal.<sup>560</sup>

---

<sup>560</sup> Ibid.

The most emphatic demonstration of the need for his coaching on the piece was when he played the *clave* rhythm while I played through movement, allowing me to understand the relationship between the 2-3 *clave* and the rhythmic counterpoint of the other parts. Although we had done this exercise during every previous collaboration, I still found it difficult (as evidenced by my manic head-nodding, a device I'm resorting to because the *clave* is so disorientating) and the exercise was as always, crucial in my preparation of the piece.

Of particular importance to my performance preparation was his explanation of how the *clave* works in the final pages of the piece, where the metre changes every bar.

**Example 4.10: *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, bars 128-137**

The image shows two systems of musical notation for piano. The first system, starting at bar 128, consists of two staves. The right hand has a melody with various rhythmic values and accents, while the left hand plays a more complex, syncopated rhythm. The second system, starting at bar 133, continues this complex rhythmic interplay with further meter changes and intricate patterns in both hands.

DR: [playing *clave* over final section] I've forgotten how I did this here.

ZK: Is it like this [tapping *clave* and playing]?

DR: Yes that's it, with the left hand. So the right hand always resolves in a different place.<sup>561</sup>

Here I analysed (and Daniel confirmed to me) that the final section is written using an isorhythm in the left-hand that continues as if in 4/4 while the right hand changes metre every bar. The *clave* stays with the left-hand, meaning that accents in the right hand occur in different places in every bar, a complex rhythmic relationship that is another example of site-specific performance practice – a rhythmic practice that is site-specific to the multimetric complexities of this piece

<sup>561</sup> Ibid.

(which are rarely found in traditional Afro-Cuban styles), but is built out of a practice that is common to all his works for me, derived originally from salsa.

In a final short workshop, the combination of efficiency of workshopping details, and depth of workshopping bigger performance issues continued. In an intense coaching session lasting only seven minutes, we discussed (in the first movement) the use of *una corda* pedaling, the filtering of the sustain pedal to maintain clarity, the management of the final crescendo and accelerando to the second movement, where we discussed the articulation of the *habanera* rhythm, the voicing of the climactic chords and the use of Piazzolla-style rubato in the lyrical section. The rate of work was fast with one minute per point addressed. Important, wide-ranging performance issues were pursued in depth, as in this discussion of the problems with my 'groove' in the last movement, in particular, my tendency to rush and then recalibrate my tempo.

DR: I think you really need to establish the tempo there [pointing] at the very beginning, because there's a bit of wavering through this movement. For the most part, I think it needs to be quite metronomical, and I can understand some bits are trickier than others.

ZK: Yeah. Is it speeding or is it slowing down?

DR: It's slowing down then speeding up again then slowing down then speeding up again. That's the impression I get, where you start it cool then you go 'oh shit it's going to be too fast' then slow down. That's how I hear it. Then when you realise it's safe again, you bring it back up again. Then it gets difficult and you're slowing down. So it's sounding almost a little bit hesitant. You know it needs to be a thrusting sexual pulsating thing. And it takes about three minutes, which is as long as we want, that's how long the movement is, right? [both laugh].

DR: What I reckon happens with your tempo, and I think this is a blanket statement, is that you begin to rush then you realise you're rushing and you slow down. So what happens in the end is it seems like you're slowing down.

[...]

DR: Does it feel like you're playing at the same tempo.

ZK: The problem is that I'm always on the front of the beat so it's very easy for it to speed up. So I just have to sit on the back of the beat, then...

DR: ...it'll groove more.

ZK: ...it won't speed up. It's just naturally eating up little bits of time at the end of the bars.

DR: Yeah and this is how you know a classical musician from a jazz player when they're playing salsa. A classical musician will rush and eat things, because he's not going to feel the beat... that's what Konstantin Shamray was doing a lot, he eats a semiquaver off the bar<sup>562</sup>

---

<sup>562</sup> Video of workshop with Daniel Rojas (17 July 2011).

Again, humour is used as a way of explaining a criticism while taking the sting out. And again, the coaching is similar to many previous workshops over the years, but going into a more detailed analysis of the problem, with Daniel drawing on his experiences hearing me in many other performances and other repertoire. The problem and its solution are applicable to my playing of other repertoire and in many ways this discussion leaves the specifics of the performance practice of Daniel's music, and becomes a more general discussion of my approach to rhythm. Such a wide ranging discussion and analysis of my technique and its flaws, moving outside the bounds of the work, is perhaps only possible given the established trust between us.

This short and sharp workshop was the last before the three performances in Canberra, Newcastle and Melbourne, and the later concert in Sydney. We both agree that these later sessions on the performance practice aspects of the work were as important, if not more important than any of the earlier workshops. The groove and character is more vital than many details of the score – despite the apparent traditional nature of the score and 'conservative' musical language, site-specific performance practice is still necessary for a performance of this work, just as much as in the earlier, more 'traditional' works.

## Performances

I performed *Entre Bajos y Alturas* four times in 2011, thrice in my "Piano: Inside/Out" tour (22<sup>nd</sup> July in Canberra, 24<sup>th</sup> July in Newcastle and 29<sup>th</sup> July in Melbourne) as well as in November in my Generations recital in Sydney. The Canberra premiere was reviewed in the Canberra Times, with the reviewer colourfully describing the piece with an oblique reference to Harry Potter:

Use of extreme reaches of the piano's register and a configuration of stopped strings created disturbing sound worlds in *Entre Bajos y Alturas* by Daniel Rojas. The tortured tango of *Ochos Entre Dos* sounded like Piazzolla held captive at Azkaban, showcasing Kanga's formidable technique throughout the jousting rhythmic patterns.<sup>563</sup>

---

<sup>563</sup> Gall, Jennifer: "Piano: Inside/Out, Zubin Kanga in concert" (review), 25 July 2011, *Canberra Times*.

The piece resonated with the many varied audiences that heard it, including the pianophile audience in Newcastle, the primarily ‘new music’ audience in Melbourne and the general audience (including many school children) in Sydney. In recalling my performances, Daniel had no issues with their stylistic dimensions, only with the occasional discontinuity of tempo (discussed in the workshops) and with the links between sections, which he felt were more a fault of the composition than the performance.

The only thing in the Grammar performance, that wasn’t in the writing, that I was worried about was in the third movement, when you stopped the continuity and took a slower tempo. That was not good for me because it just needs to keep going as the momentum’s there. And there are already so many stops throughout the work that another one doesn’t help... otherwise, everything else was great and the stylistic stuff was beautiful.<sup>564</sup>

The live performance from Sydney can be heard as Audio Example 4.2.

**Audio Example 4.2: *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, recorded live at Sydney Grammar School, 18 November 2011**



**Recording**

I recorded *Entre Bajos y Alturas* shortly after the Sydney performance in late 2011. Our brief discussion after the performance allowed Daniel to reiterate many of his fundamental points about groove and maintaining tempo. However, while having dinner after the recording, Daniel and I began discussing our perceived structural weaknesses in the work (mentioned above). Although I was happy to leave it as it was (and recorded it as such) Daniel felt that in hindsight the tonal passage in the middle of the second movement (an addition I had suggested) was superfluous and that removing it would tighten the structure.<sup>565</sup> In

---

<sup>564</sup> Interview with Daniel Rojas (4 January 2012).

<sup>565</sup> Unfortunately there is no documentation of this discussion as it occurred in a restaurant (and after the consumption of a considerable volume of wine). The fact that a

our interview, he said this had become clear to him when he had finally heard the piece performed live in Sydney in November 2011 (the fourth performance), “I realised in that tango bit, I wasn’t convinced by the structure, and that’s a writing thing, that’s something I needed to work on”.<sup>566</sup>

This revised structure was enacted in the editing process, and can be heard in the portfolio recording.

### **“From the Depths to the Heights”**

My collaborative work with Daniel Rojas in the composition and performance preparation of *Entre Bajos y Alturas* demonstrates a number of salient features that I attribute to our long and intense history of collaboration. The early workshops reveal an effortless integrative working method, with roles frequently swapped – especially the generation of the blu-tac preparations, with Daniel improvising while I establish the parameters of his improvising by adding the preparations. Our work via email reveals that tensions and resistance were still elements in our collaborative practice, and our sharing of personal difficulties, expressions of sympathy, and directness of communication, though obvious demonstrations of our friendship, were sometimes unhelpful in this situation, clouding both of our professional judgements about how to deal with Daniel’s workload and deadlines. This was one of the main negative results of our long history – similar personal difficulties affecting deadlines were more swiftly and professionally addressed in other cases, such as in my work with Elliott Gyger (Chapter 3). Finally, the late workshops show an efficient and flexible collaborative practice, moving swiftly between highly integrative composition, technical testing and performance coaching, generating site-specific performance practice and also exploring more fundamental aspects of my technique. An extension of Daniel’s unique performance practice (itself an extension of Latin dance traditions) emerges out of these final workshops without any conscious

---

major structural change could be enacted under such informal conditions is another feature not found in any of the other case studies.

<sup>566</sup> Interview with Daniel Rojas (4 January 2012).

effort – it is simply a product of the collaborative work we both felt was required to prepare the work for performance.

## Conclusions

Over the course of our ten-year relationship my collaborations with Daniel transformed: from following a conventional directive model into a highly dynamic mode of interaction where multiple types of collaboration feature in single workshops.

One of the features that I did not expect to be so prominent was the increasing use of play and humour in the interactions. These moments in the workshops may seem like distractions and digressions from the task at hand, yet these lighter moments facilitated the most creative exchanges.<sup>567</sup> The ability to easily enter a mode of play allowed the early improvisations on *Entre Bajos* to be so fruitful, and allowed the later adjustments to be fluent and free from angst. By contrast, the largely humourless exchanges by email in the leadup to the delivery of the piece in April/May 2011 showed that a lack of play can temporarily paralyse a collaborative relationship, building pressure on both participants and entrenching existing positions and mindsets. Whereas play seems to facilitate the democratizing of the relationship and the sharing of authorship, a lack of it apparently precipitates a struggle to maintain authority and ownership over the work. The case also shows that working in person is much more conducive to play

---

<sup>567</sup> Roche has found play useful in many types of collaboration:

Within the collaborative space, there should be a sense of the playful; herein mistakes can be made and laughed at: ‘talking in text’ as ‘laughing together’. Jenkins describes play as ‘the capacity to experiment with one’s surroundings as a form of problem-solving’ and describes it as a key skill in our educational development. Playfulness, in fact, shifts power relationships; it enables experimentation with accepted modes of behaviour.

[...]

In my experience, the playful behaviour that is often a component of my collaborations is just as important as the more ‘disciplined’ aspects: both seem to lead the creation of new ideas; or at the very least, support the relationship that develops them.

Roche (2011) pp 13, 104.

Jenkins, H. “Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture: Media Education for the 21st Century”, MacArthur Foundation, 2006.

than working by email – even in the pressured final workshops on *Entre Ritos y Parrandas*, the ability to interact in the same space allowed a play and subtlety of expression that was easily lost when transcribed into written correspondence.

Addressing the research questions that began this chapter:

- The efficiency and flexibility of the workshops was observed to increase in successive cases, but not so in the case of working over email. Whereas our earlier workshops were effective performance coaching sessions, the working methods from *Entre Ritos y Parrandas* onwards became more complex, as well as more efficient, encompassing many different types of collaborative work while both building and drawing upon our shared knowledge of each other's methods, strengths and weaknesses. This efficiency became even more acute in *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, where it allowed new techniques to be developed in minutes, huge amounts of material to be generated through shared improvisation, late changes to the structure to be executed with little fuss, and multiple, complex performance practice issues to be addressed within a half hour session.
- As well as increasing in efficiency, the trajectory of our relationship showed a transformation from a conservative, directive mode of interaction into a highly dynamic mode in which integrative work is entered into with little resistance. In many of the workshops on *Entre Ritos y Parrandas* and *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, authorship was easily shared because there was no struggle over authority and ownership of the work. Of course, it is possible for such a rapport to be found in new relationships, but in this case the trust required by both of us to work integratively took many collaborations, and many years, to establish.
- Another theme that crosses the various cases is the importance of site-specific performance practice, even in cases where the score follows traditional notational practices and seems to be self-sufficient. In every case, from *Danza de Montañas* in 2003 to *Entre Bajos y Alturas* in 2011, Daniel worked with me on the idiomatic approaches to dance rhythms of various styles (but



particularly those of the tango and Afro-Cuban traditions) and about how they are felt and performed by Latin American musicians. Despite some background performing the music, and an increasing knowledge of the style resulting from these successive workshops, there was still plenty to learn about performing each dance style in the last workshops, and there is still yet more to learn. This is partly due to the fact that every single dance style has a long and complex history, and that many musicians spend their lives dedicated just to mastering the performance practice of a particular dialect of Afro-Cuban music (pianists, Chucho Valdez and Gonzalo Rubalcaba being just two more famous examples). It is also due to Daniel's belief that the nuances of rhythm required for this music can never be fully notated, and that some workshopping is always required.<sup>568</sup> But the other reason for this need for continuous education is that Daniel's extensions and subversions of these dance styles have changed over time. *Danza de Montañas* features a salsa with 2-3 *clave*, but with the added complexity of bars in 7/8 and 9/8 (that is, with an added or subtracted quaver to the bar) creating a variety of rhythmic games between the *clave* and these bars of different length. Such games reach a new point of complexity in the final pages of the third movement of *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, where the right hand plays a melody in *montuno* style with constantly changing metres and bar lengths while the left hand performs an isorhythm in 4/4, creating the near impossible rhythmic puzzle of performing both hands with parallel but nearly unrelatable *clave* cycles. Such rhythmic gambits differentiate this music from much of the music written today influenced by Latin American music – by understanding the complexity of the underlying structure, Daniel is able to extend these structures in new and interesting ways. But this creates the need for us to collectively work to update my performative knowledge, honing my fundamental skills and stylistic knowledge while constantly adding to it. Daniel mused on the complexity of extending the tradition,

You have a good appreciation of the style, but it's not an authentic replica of Latin American music, in terms of the style. But working with you has helped me understand that it doesn't have to be. We're bringing it... I'm bringing it into a different tradition, so it's never going to be 'authentic'. There's also the stamp from Western traditions, which you've been able to read in my music by understanding the influence of Bartók, Stravinsky... so you can bring that to my

---

<sup>568</sup> Interview with Daniel Rojas: 4 January 2012.

music too, which is far removed from the Latin American popular or indigenous tradition. So working with you has helped me to work out where I want that happy medium to be.<sup>569</sup>

The difficulty of disseminating site-specific performance practice has already been mentioned (see *Mythologies: Performance Practice*), yet in many of the pieces mentioned, solutions have been developed over time to allow other performers access to this performative knowledge. In the case of the 1<sup>st</sup> piano concerto, my recording was used as a means of disseminating this knowledge, but Daniel has also acted as a teacher and performance coach for many younger musicians performing his music. I too have given lessons to students, including Philip Jameson, who worked with me on *Danza de Montañas*.<sup>570</sup> Such efforts demonstrate a shared understanding of the need for us to educate other performers who encounter Daniel's music, and the need for us both to be involved in this dissemination process.

- As with many of the collaborations, a degree of cross-fertilisation of compositional influences, transferred by me in workshops, can be observed in the works, particularly *Entre Bajos y Alturas* where use of blu-tac to mute strings was adapted from Rolf Hind's work, *Towers of Silence*, with the use of blu-tac on harmonic nodes itself making its way into Gyger's *...out of obscurity*. In Daniel's own work, the combination of extended techniques with his version of Afro-Cuban music has influenced his more recent works including his *Marimba Concerto* and his planned two piano work, *Le Grande Salsa*. Even more so than in other collaborations, the performative approaches that I honed with Daniel have affected my playing of all repertoire, and our performance coaching sessions have often included coaching on other works in my recitals. In turn, I have coached Daniel on his playing as he has restarted his performing career in recent years. This wide-ranging influence on both our performing and compositional approaches developed as a result of accumulated trust over many years.

---

<sup>569</sup> Interview with Daniel Rojas (4 January 2012).

<sup>570</sup> See Chapter 1. He now teaches a course at the University of Sydney titled "Rhythms and Sounds of Latin America", runs workshops for secondary and students, and also intends to make educational DVDs, all with the aim of developing the knowledge base of Latin American musical traditions among young composers and performers. Interview with Daniel Rojas (4 January 2012).

- The final composition phase of *Entre Bajos y Alturas* demonstrated that there is a danger in long-term collaborations of the relationship being exploited (either to force changes on the work, or by the composer to haggle over fees and deadlines). The free flow of criticism that was given and received with good humour in the workshops came across as crude and invasive over email. In this relationship, this aberration was short lived, and there was an easy reconciliation when we next met to continue work.<sup>571</sup> Although in this case, the perceived benefits of working in a long-term collaboration outweighed the pitfalls, this risk of exploitation should not be overlooked.

---

<sup>571</sup> This contrasts sharply with a number of first time commissions of composers where the relationship never recovered and the piece was abandoned (See Conclusions). While Daniel feels this is a valid argument regarding the effect of written correspondence on the collaboration, and the difference made by working in person, he disagrees as to its significance and provides his own explanation, "These were my 'recovery' months where I had to survive financially at all costs, furthered by the threat of identity theft and personal safety. I remember that composing anything at this time was redundant compared to these more immediate concerns. When you came back, I had largely resolved these issues, largely due to acceptance of the difficulties I had. This also made working together easier."

Email: Daniel Rojas to Zubin Kanga (3 September 2013).

# Collaboration Profile

**Composer:** Daniel Rojas (b. 1974)

**Performer:** Zubin Kanga (b. 1982)

**Featured Work:** *Entre Bajos y Alturas* (2011)

**Previous collaborations:**

*Danza de Montañas* for solo piano (2003 rev 2007)

Performed:

- 6 August 2003, Great Hall, University of Sydney
- 18 October 2003, Brisbane Convention Centre, Keys National Piano Competition.
- 7 September 2004, McLaurin Hall, University of Sydney
- 14 September 2004, Sydney Grammar Preparatory School, St Ives, NSW.
- 24 July 2007, Recital Hall East, Sydney Conservatorium of Music

*Concierto para Piano y Orquesta: Latinoamericanismos* (2006)

Performed:

- 19 June 2006, soloist with Sydney Youth Philharmonic, conducted by David Banney, Verbrugghen Hall, Sydney Conservatorium of Music
- 3 September 2009, soloist with the Kuringai Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Henrik Pisarek, Ravenswood Centenary Auditorium, Sydney.

*Entre Ritos y Parrandas* (Between Rituals and Street Parties) for piano and orchestra (2008) (N.B. Not performed by the author. Premiere performance by Konstantin Shamray)

*Sonata* for soprano and piano (2010)

Performed:

- 30 July 2010 with Jane Sheldon, soprano, Music Workshop, Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

**Other Shared Background:**

Both attended University of Sydney (concurrently in 2003-2007).

Entered Keys National Piano Competition as pianist/composer pair – won first prize in both categories (2003).

Kanga invited to be best man at Rojas's wedding (2007) (wedding was cancelled).

**Commission Details:** Commissioned on 18 August 2010. A solo piano work of around ten minutes duration, to be included in the "Piano: Inside/Out" tour in 2011.

**Performance Score Delivered:** 15 May 2011

**Work Premiere:** 22 July 2011, Australian National University, Canberra

**Further Performances:**

24 July 2011, Stuart and Sons Showroom, Newcastle

29 July 2011, Australian National Academy of Music, Melbourne  
11 November 2011, Sydney Grammar Preparatory School, St Ives, NSW  
18 November 2011, Big School Room, Sydney Grammar School.

**Studio Recording:** *Entre Bajos y Altruas*, recorded for Move Records, 24 November 2011.

**Documented Workshops:**

*Entre Ritos y Parrandas*

10 December 2009 (Music Department, University of Sydney)

17 December 2009 (Music Department, University of Sydney)

*Entre Bajos y Alturas*

18 December 2010 (Music Department, University of Sydney)

6 January 2011 (Music Department, University of Sydney)

1 March 2011 (Music Department, University of Sydney)

24 June 2011 (Music Department, University of Sydney)

1 July 2011 (Music Department, University of Sydney)

17 July 2011 (Kanga's Sydney residence)

22 November 2011 (Kanga's Sydney residence)

**Interview:** 4 January 2012

# Mythologies

## Notation

Richard Rastall provides this attempt at a definition of notation:

The system of written symbols by means of which a composer records the music that exists in his imagination, and which thus acts as a set of instructions to a performer of performers who will create the sound of the music.<sup>572</sup>

This definition may seem to be uncontroversial, but there are many examples of notation that problematise it. What of notation that describes the sounds rather than providing instructions on how to produce them? What of notation that is not intended for use by a performer, but merely as a visual representation of the music (such as is found in many scores that include electronic music)? What of a score that is too dense for any performer to compute (such as Ferneyhough's *Time and Motion Study II* and many other works), or a score that contains only graphics, with no instructions on how to interpret them (such as one finds in the scores of Earle Brown or Cornelius Cardew)? What of a score that is only an incomplete set of instructions, and serves as an *aide-memoire* for music that has already been learnt by other means?

It is obvious that notation has a much wider variety of forms, and variety of functions than Rastall's definition suggests. Mieko Kanno provides a more general definition: that musical notation's function is to "preserve past musical events while enabling and informing future ones".<sup>573</sup> Although this attempt at a general definition seems to cover most of the above scenarios, we will see that it still misses some of the most important functions of notation.

There are many different ways to divide up the different functions of notation, and each is revealing and problematic in its own way. Kanno categorises

---

<sup>572</sup> Rastall, Richard: *The Notation of Western Music: An Introduction*, (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1983), p 1. To Rastall's credit, he too acknowledges the many problems with this definition, particularly in regard to contemporary practices.

<sup>573</sup> Kanno, Mieko: "Prescriptive Notation: Limits and Challenges" in *Contemporary Music Review*, Vol. 26 No. 2, April 2007, p 232.

notational symbols into descriptive and prescriptive types.<sup>574</sup> An extreme type of descriptive notation would be a graphic score that literally attempts to describe the sounds being heard while giving few instructions on how to produce them (an example would be a curving glissando marking, describing the contours of the sound without specifying exact pitches). An extreme type of prescriptive score would be one written entirely in tablature, such as Aaron Cassidy's *The Crutch of Memory* (see *Mythologies: Resistance*). Brian Ferneyhough defines a similar division of the functionality of notation into its ability to "offer a sound picture of the events for which it stands" (the descriptive component) and its function as a list of "instructions for a valid reproduction of those sounds/actions defined as constituting the 'text' of the work" (the prescriptive component).<sup>575</sup> Unlike Kanno, Ferneyhough believes these two types are components of all forms of notation, rather than competing types.

To these functions, Ferneyhough adds another important purpose of notation, its ability to express an "ideology of its own process of creation".<sup>576</sup> For example, a comparison of Cage's and Boulez's approach to aleatoric notation, reveals their different compositional priorities. Cage's notation invites participation in a democratising of the compositional process and subversion of compositional *authority*, as he states,

Chance operations are a means of locating a single one among a multiplicity of answers, and, at the same time, of freeing the ego from its taste and memory, its concern for profit and power.<sup>577</sup>

Cage's use of chance thus nullifies some aspects of the composer's and the performer's egos, by using notation that directs the performer to order musical events using chance operations, as he does in movements of his *Music for Piano* works of the 1950s. Despite their initial friendship, Boulez was ideologically opposed to Cage's approach to aleatoric practices and notation, stating:

---

<sup>574</sup> Ibid. p 232.

<sup>575</sup> Ferneyhough, Brian: *Brian Ferneyhough: Collected Writings*, edited by James Boros and Richard Toop, (Amsterdam: Harword Academic Publishers, 1995), p 4.

<sup>576</sup> Ibid. p 4.

<sup>577</sup> Cage, John: "Lecture on the Weather" (1975) in *Empty Words: Writings '73-'79*, (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1980).

At present, contemporary composers seem constantly preoccupied, not to say, obsessed by chance . . . The most elementary form of chance transformation goes along with a philosophy tinged with orientalism, which covers up a basic weakness of compositional technique . . . This experimenting with chance I term carelessness.<sup>578</sup>

In Boulez's approach to open scores such as his Third Piano Sonata (1957), he "leads the performer into a labyrinth", using arrows to direct possible choices between cells, making the structure and compositional intentions of the composer even more opaque than in conventional score and thereby making the transfer of authority to the performer illusory.<sup>579</sup> This notation employs, as Boulez calls it, "directed choice" as opposed to Cage's "accidental choice".<sup>580</sup> Though the notational practices of Cage and Boulez draw on chance operations, their compositional ideologies shape the conception of the notation so that it interacts with a performer in markedly different ways.

One might claim that conventional staff notation does not come laden with the same ideological burden. But the underlying ideological, and even political dimensions are apparent in ostensibly neutral notational manuals such as that of Gardner Read. Here he describes the non-conventional notational practices of some contemporary composers:

Now the average performer joins the average listener in the sensation that the music of the 'far-left' experimenters is as alien as Hindustani. The reason? Too frequently the obscurities of avant-garde musical thinking are surpassed by the obscurities of its notation – a closed book to all but a small inner circle of initiated professional musicians.<sup>581</sup>

Clearly here, the author's condescension towards the music, towards the notation and towards the 'far-left' are inextricably linked. Though extreme, this shows that, in contemporary music, the conventional notation system that might have once been considered (however problematically) a *lingua franca* is now the site of aesthetic, stylistic and ideological battles – indeed, the use of a key signature could

---

<sup>578</sup> Boulez, Pierre: "Alea" (1968) in *Stocktakings from an Apprenticeship*, translated by Stephen Walsh, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991). p 27.

<sup>579</sup> Harbinson, William, G.: "Performer Indeterminacy and Boulez's Third Sonata", *Tempo*, Issue 169, 1989, p 20.

<sup>580</sup> Boulez: 1968, p 26.

<sup>581</sup> Read, Gardner: *Music Notation: A Manual of Western Practice*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Boston: Crescendo Publishers, 1969).



now be seen as a provocative and reactionary gesture, rather than merely an instruction to the performer.

In their article, “Communicating through Notation”, Neil Heyde and Amanda Bayley take a very different angle in slicing the functional components of notation, seeing the aspects that communicate the music’s structure and those that provoke a particular psychological state in the performer as competing demands.<sup>582</sup> The psychological dimension of notation is well-articulated by Michael Finnissy,

Exploring the ‘psychology’ of notation is more revealing – how you precipitate certain kinds of response by either writing half-notes or sixty-fourth notes. How much detail? How clearly can you hear or envisage a sound? Notation is about choice and degrees of exactitude, reality-unreality.<sup>583</sup>

Although graphic scores play more obviously with the relationship between aesthetic presentation and psychological reception, Finnissy’s handwritten scores, using more conventional forms of notation, affect the psychology of performers in just as profound ways. None of these divisions of the function and intent of notation are mutually exclusive, or definitive and most forms of notation play across all these purposes and demands.

So far we have examined the choices that composers make with regard to notation, but the choices, and ideology of performers is just as important. Consider one of Earle Brown’s score, *December 1952* (shown below).

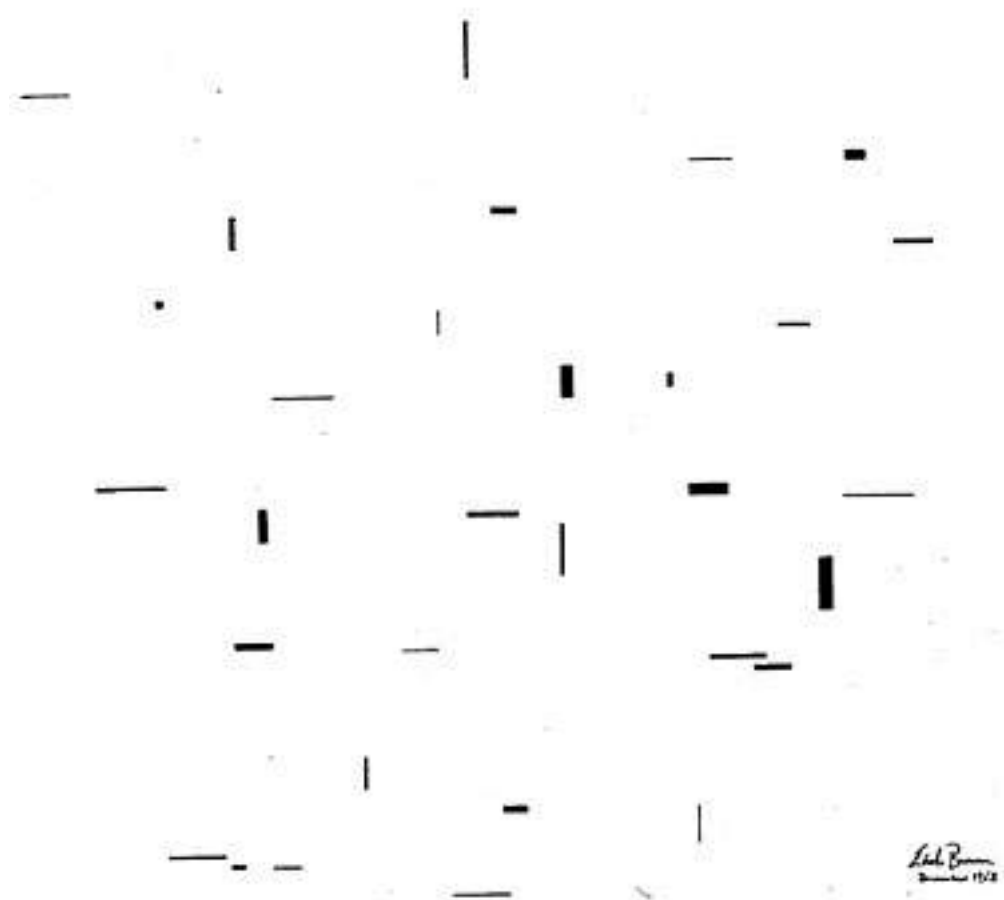
---

<sup>582</sup>Bayley, Amanda, and Heyde, Neil, “Communicating through notation: Michael Finnissy’s Second String Quartet from composition to performance”, in Ronald Woodley (ed.) *Notation and Practice: Essays in Musical Performance and Textuality* (Cambridge University Press, 2013).

p 1.

<sup>583</sup> Finnissy, Michael (2012) in Heyde and Bayley (2013), p 1.

**Example M.10: *December 1952* by Earle Brown**



Pianist, Aloys Kontarsky recalls a student at Darmstadt performing this score to him in a masterclass:

He sat still in front of the score for a while, and then he improvised a rather disorganised muddle of single pitches, clusters and figures. When I asked him how he had arrived at what seemed to me a senseless succession of events, he answered that he let the image of the page inspire him.<sup>584</sup>

---

<sup>584</sup> Kontarsky, Aloys: "Notation for Piano" (1964) in *Perspectives on Notation and Performance*, ed. By Benjamin Boretz and Edward T. Cone, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1976), p 188.

Kontarsky was furious and needless to say, there was a clear difference in performative ideology between himself and the student.<sup>585</sup> In his article, Kontarsky argued in favour of a more pre-planned and well organized approach to the work,

The visual impression is rather ascetic: no curves, no colouring, no diagonals – simply straight lines and rectangular planes. Now, in order to produce an auditorially analogous result, it seems logical that I reduce my musical vocabulary equally drastically, to something like, for example, single pitches, clusters and rests.<sup>586</sup>

Kontarsky's pre-planned approach is obviously very different from the student, who reciprocated Kontarsky's disapproval by calling his approach "sly tricks".<sup>587</sup> In this case, the same score finds two very different interpretations as a result of the differing performance ideologies of Kontarsky and the student. Regardless of the ideological intent of the composer, the performer's interpretative ideology can result in wildly different types of realisations of the notation.

Roberto Gerhard eloquently sums up why notation is useful, despite and because of its complexities and ambiguities. It is valuable because it is mythologisable – its failure to precisely prescribe or describe any musical event and its multiple, sometimes contradictory functions are what make it such a rich resource for composers and performers. As Gerhard states:

Despite its undeniable shortcomings, I am not for scrapping notation in favour of diagrams, doodlings or *musikalische Graphik*: substitutes obviously designed to overcome that remarkable contemporary malaise which we might call 'pitch-fatigue'. Since it never affected me, I naturally give pitch pride of place among *material musica's* prime constituents. Notation's ambiguities are its saving grace. Fundamentally, notation is a serviceable device for coping with imponderables. Precision is never of the essence in creative work.

Subliminal man (the real creative boss) gets along famously with material of such low definition, that any self-respecting computer would have to reject it as unprogrammable.

---

<sup>585</sup> Ibid.

<sup>586</sup> Ibid.

<sup>587</sup> Ibid.

# Chapter 5: Graphic Notation

Although the works examined in the other case studies are written in widely varying styles and approaches, they have in common their use of broadly conventional musical notation. Some create new symbols to communicate new techniques, but all of them have a close relationship to traditional staff notation. This chapter examines collaboration on a work that completely dispenses with the use of traditional notation, instead utilising a graphic score.

Given the importance of notation to the communicative relationship between composer and performer, a radically different approach to notation could be expected to have an impact on the collaborative dynamic. The research questions that I address in this chapter are:

- What mode of collaboration is utilised at the different stages of the process? Is integrative collaboration required when interpreting the score? Do other stages remain largely directive?
- Does the collaboration focus on the performance-preparation phase, or are there be opportunities for collaboration in earlier stages?
- What parameters and musical decisions conventionally controlled by the composer become the performer's responsibility?
- Does site-specific performance practice play a crucial role in the interpretation of the score?
- Is there be a much wider scope of interpretative possibilities than would be expected if conventional notation was used? If this scope is very wide, does the identity of the piece survive multiple interpretations, or even multiple performances?

For this collaboration, I worked with the Australian composer, and Artistic Director of Chamber Made Opera, David Young.<sup>588</sup> Although I had only heard his works and not seen any scores, I knew that David was interested in graphic notation, and that whatever score he did create for me would utilise unconventional approaches to notation and performance, but I had no idea what form this would take.

## *Not Music Yet* by David Young

The offer to commission David was conducted via email. My offer followed a format similar to those I sent to other composers I had not worked with before, such as Elliott Gyger and Andrew Schultz, with a general brief of innovation but no specific requests for the style or approach.<sup>589</sup>

I'm organising recitals of new piano music for next couple of years, in Australia and in several cities in Europe - with a focus on solo piano music that pushes the boundaries of the techniques and sounds available on the instrument, as well as subverting the expectations of a piano recital. I think a piece by you would fit well into this project, especially given that some of your works explore lots of new techniques as well as having a dramatic dimension (your very effective piece for Richard Haynes for his fetish concert comes to mind).<sup>590</sup>

He replied with a basic yes and a link to his most recent piano work,

Dear Zubin,

I would be honoured and delighted.

Have you seen/heard my piano solo, *Incisioni Rupestri*?

[...]

My work has been becoming more graphic and conceptual of late, and sounds like that might fit into your schema.<sup>591</sup>

---

<sup>588</sup> David Young was Artistic Director of Chamber Made Opera, one of Australia's leading contemporary opera companies from 2010-2013 (coinciding with the main period of our collaboration).

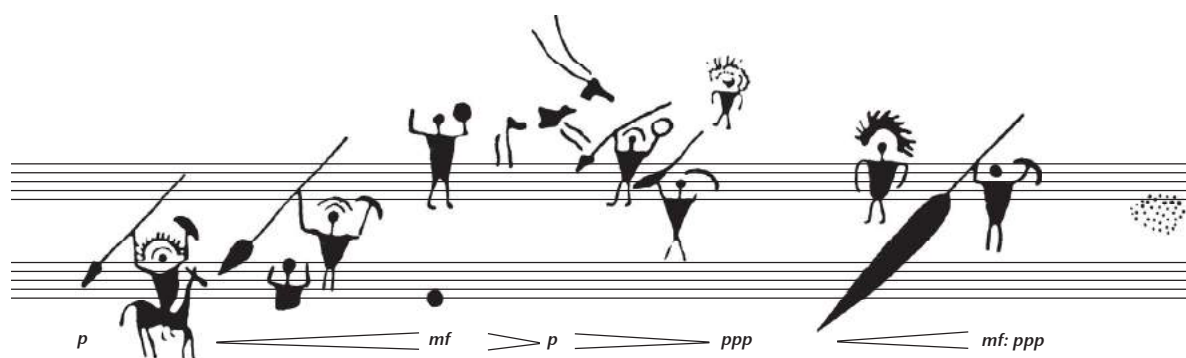
<sup>589</sup> See chapter 3 for case study on Gyger's *...out of obscurity*. Andrew Schultz has agreed to write a work for a future recital.

<sup>590</sup> Email: Zubin Kanga to David Young (2 February 2011). The mentioned work, written for German-based Australian clarinettist Richard Haynes, was *Breath Control* (2007). In this work, David requires the performer to play a single note continuously for six minutes (using circular breathing) with the graphic score dictating the changes to dynamics, timbre and intensity. I saw Richard perform this work in his show, "Listen my Secret Fetish" in London in 2008, where he performed a number of contemporary solo clarinet works in costumes relating to various sexual fetishes.

<sup>591</sup> Email: David Young to Zubin Kanga (5 February 2011).

David's suggestion to write a graphic score was appealing, both for the creative challenges of interpreting such a score, as well as the contrast to the other works that were then being written for me. I replied, "That's excellent! Something graphic and/or conceptual is definitely what I'm looking for."<sup>592</sup> The piano work he mentioned in his email, *Incisioni Rupestri* (2007), was one of the last of a series of works in his *Val Camonica Pieces*, and like the other works in this series, used a hybrid notation combining conventional staff notation with graphic notation.

**Example 5.1: *Val Carmonica Pieces: Incisioni Rupestri* (2007) by David Young  
(excerpt)**



The work had been performed by Australian pianists Michael Kieran Harvey and Mark Knopfler. He later described the differences in their approach to this material to me.

David Young: Yeah, interesting because you saw the piano score I did for Mark Knopfler but then Michael did a performance.

Zubin Kanga: Michael?

DY: Michael Kieran Harvey, also performed it. And....

ZK: Oh yeah you said it was really different.

DY: You could not imagine two more different approaches and of course Michael has his pretty recognisable style and so he brought that to the piece but it's still fascinating for me to hear that whilst in many ways very different, basically it's the same piece, even though Mark had a very obsessively calibrated and notated score to give himself indications and time signatures.

ZK: So he'd almost transcribed it.

DY: Yeah, whereas of course Michael took a much more broad brushstroke approach and yet the result was strangely similar.<sup>593</sup>

<sup>592</sup> Email: Zubin Kanga to David Young (5 February 2011).

<sup>593</sup> Transcribed from video of meeting, 3 March 2011. Michael Kieran Harvey and Mark Knopfler are both Australian pianists, though their backgrounds, choice of repertoire and approach to the instrument are very divergent. He later told me that he felt that Michael's performance, taking the score as a starting point for free improvisation was 'a Michael Kieran Harvey performance, but it didn't really sound like a David Young piece'. Interview with David Young (31 May 2013).

The differences and similarities between the two performances go to one of the core questions around the use of graphic notation. How much liberty can one take? Can radically different interpretations such as these two still be recognisable as the same piece? These are all questions that would occupy me during my collaboration with David and my preparation of his score.<sup>594</sup>

### Initial meetings and early discussions

David and I met twice in 2011, during which we discussed each other's work, the work of our collaborators, as well as possibilities for the piece. While inquiring about each other's work, I brought up my preconceptions of what I expected David to produce.

ZK: As for what you might do, I mean it's really up to you. I thought of you because I thought you'd do something quite a bit different from most of the others.

DY: Why would you think that? [both laughing]

[...]

DY: Of course I can't guarantee that I won't end up writing a very conventional piece. I think it's unlikely. I haven't done that for a very long time.

ZK: Well you could write a conventional piece...

DY: That would be the most radical thing I could do! A tonal neo-classical elegy or something.<sup>595</sup>

---

<sup>594</sup> There is a long and rich tradition of graphic notation that both David and I were aware of. The Oxford Companion to Music makes a distinction between graphic notation that "communicates particular compositional intentions" such as Feldman's *Projection* (1951) and Stockhausen's *Prozession* (1967) and contrasts these with notational methods that "inspire the free play of the performer's imagination in unstipulated ways" including Brown's *December 1952* (1952) and Cardew's *Treatise* (1967). Although I agree with the choice of these works as foundational models for future composers, I think any such binary distinction is fallacious. Feldman abandoned graphic notation specifically because he wanted a greater control over certain musical parameters that were not possible through graphic notation and we have already discussed how Brown's *December 1952* (1952), though abstract, invites very particularly types of musical responses from the performer rather than merely "free play" (see *Mythologies: Notation*). David Young's notation further ambiguates any binary distinction between types of graphic notation, since his notation is intended to be specific and precise yet leaves many fundamental decisions to the imagination of the performer. Young's notation is also different from these earlier models in its medium – the use of watercolour rather than printed ink further obfuscates any clear notion of composer intentionality.

Pryer, Anthony. "graphic notation." *The Oxford Companion to Music*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, <http://0-www.oxfordmusiconline.com.catalogue.ulrls.lon.ac.uk/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e3008> (accessed July 12, 2013).

<sup>595</sup> Transcribed from video of workshop with David Young (3 March 2011).

Although I knew that David was interested in graphic notation, I hadn't realised that this was a later development in his music, and one that had grown out of his previous experience with extremely complex notation as a student of Liza Lim and as a colleague of Chris Dench, Richard Rijnvos and Richard Barrett.<sup>596</sup>

DY: So you, well you may not know, but when my interest in graphic notation started. I've kind of always been interested to a certain extent. Because I work a lot with visual artists, I've always been a bit of a frustrated visual artist. Even my scores, I've always done by hand and it's always been quite obsessively visually constructed and...

ZK: And did you do any training in design?

DY: No no. I just made it all up as I went along. So in a way, there's an aspect of it where the score has to be this beautiful object as much as the music does. I kind of see them as completely connected. Also because I believe that when the performer is looking at something, it has an impact on what they play, whether it's a set of instructions or just the way it's represented will actually inform the performance. But actually more pragmatically than that, I started using graphic notation because I'd written a lot of music that was fiendishly difficult. There's one piece of mine in particular which is for ten string guitar and cello. It was written for Geoff [Morris] and Friedrich Gauwerky who was playing cello with Elision at the time and they could do anything, these guys. And the piece goes for about, I think it's 12 minutes or something but it's so difficult and it ends up on 4 or 5 staves and they're just doing ridiculous things, much of which I appreciate and they could hear, but the detail and nuance of it was incredibly subtle and of course it took them 9 months to practice it and hours and hours and hours and I think they did one performance and a recording. And for me it was just so disproportionate. This amount of time and energy.<sup>597</sup>

The importance of this work, *Scant* for cello and 10-string guitar (1993) as a turning point in David's compositional thinking was highlighted by his returning to it in our next meeting in August (five months later).

Impossible piece, you know multiple staves and bitones and it's all pizzicato on the cello except for one section which is all artificial harmonics which are practically impossible. Very exciting piece, goes for 12 minutes of more black than white on the page and they played it really, really brilliantly but they played it once and probably someday, someone will try and play it. But it was like this crust of notation which at that point broke away and suddenly, I was in this completely other realm, in a way achieving a very similar effect musically but with a very deft notation which was much more precise, more nuanced and actually freer.

ZK: And probably precise in the things that you wanted to control.

DY: Precise in the things I was interested in, exactly. And then of course much more efficient for the performer so that it's more of a conceptual conversation and a rigorous execution as opposed to a very gradual rigorous long technical process before you can then have fun with it. It's interesting and I have to say I'm fascinated by how unconcerned I am about letting go of that complex notation because I adore precision and I find it very exciting when you can, when an

---

<sup>596</sup> Video of workshop with David Young (25 August 2011).

<sup>597</sup> Video of workshop with David Young (3 March 2011).



ensemble is doing something together, I find that totally exhilarating. So it's not that I'm not interested in precision, it's just I'm interested in a different kind of precision.<sup>598</sup>

The move to graphic notation as a means of facilitating a different kind of precision was the key aspect of David's compositional journey.<sup>599</sup> When I asked him about his place in the canon of graphic score composers, David felt that there was some influence but that his approach to graphic scores differed from many other composers.

Obviously I was aware of, and been interested in, lots of graphic scores, but I haven't been interested in them to the point of obsessively studying them, and I don't think of myself as being in some kind of lineage. It's much more for me just finding the solutions to achieve the 'work' that I'm imagining. It's no accident that one of the first contemporary pieces I listened to with the score was Penderecki's *Threnody for the Victims of Hiroshima*. There's this strong simple graphic element to that score and it had a big impact on me. I love looking at certain pieces by Cage, Stockhausen and Schaeffer... but often I've found the actual scores aren't as interesting as pieces. So it's not that often that I've come across a graphic score that I find interesting which is also a composition that I find interesting.<sup>600</sup>

As a way of explaining his current approach to graphic notation, David described to me his most recent and radical work, *The Minotaur Trilogy*, an opera cycle composed entirely using watercolour paintings as the score.<sup>601</sup>

And so while a lot of the music that I've written looks very free, in fact the opera that I've just written, *The Minotaur* opera, all the scores are watercolours but it's a very technical tablature, almost: 'this is the duration, this is the pitch relationships, this is the timbre that's required'. It's infinitely precise, because it's not metered in a conventional sense so you can actually suggest these possibilities that the closer you keep looking the more detail and precision you can find. I have grown to love this paradise which is that, a lot of the performances have a real spontaneity, 'cos it's kind of new every time.

But it's also very precise and I love that. It's also very efficient, in a way it's almost a problem if the musicians rehearse it too much. Because then it sort of becomes rote and codified. It starts losing that freshness. And so in rehearsals, particularly with ensemble work, I've found that we often spend two and a half hours talking about why, how and what's this in music and you know like really big issues as well as some practical issues like 'if this is here then does that mean that I'm blue

---

<sup>598</sup> Video of workshop with David Young (25th August 2011).

<sup>599</sup> This journey seems to be the inverse of Morton Feldman's compositional development, beginning with graphic scores, and then moving to a greater use of conventional notation to facilitate a greater 'precision' (a very different type of precision to that used by David Young).

<sup>600</sup> Interview with David Young (31 May 2013). David also mentioned George Crumb's *Black Angels*, as a work where he enjoys the congruence between the score's notation and it's sound.

<sup>601</sup> *The Minotaur Trilogy*, comprising three one-act operas, composed by David Young and Margaret Cameron, 2010-2012.

there and I'm green'. There's a lot of conversation and then we might play it through a couple of times and say "OK great, got it, that's it" and certainly with the opera we had a week of rehearsal and Margaret, who I've written it with, we'd done a lot of work in terms of preparing and so the actual score is quite rich and dense in some ways but then after a week we basically had an opera. It had a lot to do with the skill of the performers but also there was this kind of efficiency built into the system.<sup>602</sup>

I saw only excerpts of these watercolours scores for *The Minotaur* (which were printed in the programs he had just printed for the upcoming premiere), and although they seemed to be very freely painted, David's description of his process led me to believe that the scores were to be interpreted rigorously, and with an eye for the details that he had included. As I clarified with him:

ZK: Yeah, and I suppose you get to choose which musical parameters to prioritise when you're doing it graphically. While when you use traditional notation there's a [implied] hierarchy of what's important and less important.

DY: Exactly, exactly. That's right.<sup>603</sup>

Below is an excerpt from the opera,

**Example 5.2: "The Fall of Icarus" from *The Minotaur Trilogy* by David Young and Margaret Cameron**



---

<sup>602</sup>Video of workshop with David Young (3 March 2011). In looking at David's approach to precision, it is useful to recall Roberto Gerhard's comments on the topic (see *Mythologies: Notation*).

<sup>603</sup> *Ibid.*

Although we had not yet begun discussing the specifics of the new work that David would write for me, these initial discussions about David's practice and the transformation of his notation would have a strong bearing on the latter stages of our collaboration. His discussion of his process of notational experimentation and gradual evolution, and about its use in his opera highlighted to me the way that David uses graphic scores to achieve what he feels is a greater precision of notation. In this sense, it is a very different application of this type of notation in comparison to the approaches of Earle Brown and Cornelius Cardew, whose scores are deliberately free of instructions and are open to wildly divergent interpretations of different styles and durations. In David's work, as I observed in the two performances of his work, *Incisioni Rupestri*, the details of the interpretations may vary but the overall shape, style and aesthetic of the interpretations differ to a much lesser extent. Our discussions of his practice led David to introduce me to one of his important influences, the work of American choreographer, Deborah Hay.

### **Deborah Hay's collaborative methods**

David had met Deborah two years previously and had collaborated with her on a piece for percussionist, Eugene Ughetti, *Seeing Seeing Seeing* (2009). He had also immersed himself in Hay's work, her methods of creation and her methods of workshopping with her dancers. Although he had not used Hay's specific type of scores (featuring Zen riddles as instructions) David's intense description and discussion of Hay's work highlighted a number of the preoccupations that would become features of our own collaboration. David described the unique aspects of Deborah's work and the relationship of score to performance. Despite my initial scepticism, I began to see the relevance of her approach to musical performance.

DY: And Deborah talks about the perception being the dance.

ZK: Right...[both laugh]

DY: At the beginning she's working with perception, what I mean is that what she does is writes a set of choreographic instructions so it's basically a text. And some of it will be very pragmatic, like 'walk into the centre of a space', or 'define a curve from the front to the back', but a lot of it is also these impossible Zen riddles and so what the performer is doing is executing these instructions and the effect, when you see these performances is that you have no fucking idea what they're doing. But it looks like, because of their attention and the perceptual frame, there's this incredible conviction and this very, very unusual movement which is absolutely in

the present so there's no 'performing' or 'trying to create an emotion' or whatever, it's just this very, very present kind of performance which I love and this extremely unusual movement or kind of manifestation.<sup>604</sup>

The concept of "not performing" would become a recurrent theme in our collaboration. He elaborated on the type of performances that resulted from her methods:

And one of the things she talks about is, and this is what happens, is that the performer is so busy relating to all those things that that's where this immediacy or presence comes from because there's no time to start inventing or interpreting or elaborating or even performing. It's really very interesting. And very strange. And wonderful, in fact.<sup>605</sup>

The following example shows an excerpt from Hay's score for her work *No Time to Fly* (2010). Note the combination of graphical elements, traditional instructions, unusual instructions, and poetic/paradoxical instructions.

**Example 5.3: *No Time to Fly* by Deborah Hay, excerpt from pages 10-11.**



*Note: I do not create OBJECT. I learn its attributes from my body and actually take pleasure in identifying the object for myself in each performance.*

*Note: I remember to notice that my whole body is producing unimaginable instances of specificity.*

I start spinning, not literally but as a part of an onstage counterclockwise spinning vortex that only I perceive. I am a speck, a dot, a flake, endlessly spiraling toward center stage, and absolutely no one can possibly identify me as such.

*Note: The movement may change, but the choreography itself does not change.*

At center stage I reverse direction and turn in place while lifting my arms incrementally, building up my torso, to signify the construction and architecture of A HOLY SITE. At the same time my shoes lightly tap the floor under me as if to imply the sporadic thwacks of a hammer, striking in the distance.

Although our next meeting was many months later, David remained fascinated by the immediacy of Hay's dance works, and described their effect in more detail.

DY: And it's so weird Zubin! Because there's *no performing* really. It's just absolutely there.  
[...]

<sup>604</sup>Video of workshop with David Young (3 March 2011).

<sup>605</sup>Video of workshop with David Young (3 March 2011).

ZK: But interesting that she wasn't performing.

DY: She was just there. It's very hard to explain. I'm sure you've seen it many times where someone will be performing. Particularly acting, you know theatre actors.

ZK: And in dance as well as I suppose.

DY: In dance as well. It's kind of that 'look at me' or 'here I am presenting myself to you and I'm very conscious that you're looking at me'. There's that kind of artifice and people use their technique or their training to hide the fact that they're actually there. And then when you see someone who *is* absolutely there. It's a completely different effect. And that's the kind of performance that I'm interested in, because I find it utterly compelling. It's like children and animals. For example, if you ever put an animal or a child on stage, the audience can't take their eyes off them. For some reason, they're just completely fascinating and perhaps, I think it's because they're completely un-self-conscious

ZK: Yeah, they're not performing.

DY: Somehow. So this was just very very interesting, to see Deborah do it. It was deeply fascinating and somehow slightly embarrassing and disturbing. You almost didn't want to watch. She was making herself so vulnerable, or it was so intimate somehow. Kind of private.<sup>606</sup>

During his European trip, the previous month, David had gone to Porto, Portugal, to watch a series of performances of Hay's work, *Conquest*. Like many of Hay's later works this grew out of intensive courses lasting four months, in which Hay would teach the students her approach to dance, create a new work in collaboration with them and then coach them in their own individual interpretations of the work. Hay described this process in detail in her work, *Lamb at the Altar: Story of a Dance*, in which she recounts in detail one of the first of these courses, in which she first created a dance for all 24 dancers, *Lamb, Lamb, Lamb...* that she then distilled into a solo work, which each dancer interpreted individually.<sup>607</sup> A similar approach was observed by David in *Conquest*.

What she did with the young dancers – there were eight of them, and she wrote a new solo called "Conquest". It's a commissioned solo piece especially for them. And then she spent a week or two with them, teaching them the solo, talking about it, going through it, lots of discussions then getting them to do it. And then they went away and worked on it and when I was there, they were doing their performances. There were eight adaptations of this solo, all following the same score. And there were clearly some structural things where, for example, there was one bit where they went through the audience and then out of the performance space. And then they came back in, doing a sort of rhythm. They all did this but they all did it in slightly different ways, they all had very different costumes, all of them had different props. One had a shovel that she came and stuck in the ground, and it just stayed there, she didn't do anything else with it. And someone else had these hairclips – lots of decorative, bling in her hair, which progressively fell out so eventually the stage was covered in this glistening bits of

---

<sup>606</sup> Video of workshop with David Young (25 August 2011).

<sup>607</sup> Hay, Deborah: *Lamb at the Altar: The Story of a Dance*, (Durham: Duke University, 1994).

jewellery. And then another guy, the last guy, at one point had all of this stuff floating, a tree and a cloud and balloons and a bathing pool.<sup>608</sup>

What interested David when discussing the evening of performances with Deborah was the freedom she allowed her dancers in interpreting the work, including the freedom to make what he perceived as errors of judgement. Such an attitude of passing all authority to the performer, with the opposing desire to retain authority and control, would come into play in David's work with me.<sup>609</sup>

It's her work. But how much is she handing the work over to the dancers? Some of them use music, and I had lots of problems with the music. One was quite good, it was just sort of low pitches which was quite effective. And then there was another one with some bad jazz music and that was just horrible. But Deborah was like 'ah no no no they're allowed to use music if they want, and whatever costume'. You know she's really frustrating. I'm like 'What! You can't just let them do that. What if they don't know what they're doing? What if they've got terrible taste?' So the experience was quite fascinating actually.<sup>610</sup>

Although Hay, her approach to choreography and her approach to notation would not be discussed during the later workshops, it was clear to me that there was a direct influence between her methods and David's, even if this was more to do with concept and approach rather than content.

#### **Example 5.4: Photograph of workshop with David Young, 25 August 2011**



---

<sup>608</sup> Video of workshop with David Young (25 August 2011).

<sup>609</sup> Ibid.

<sup>610</sup> Ibid.

## Further Early Discussions

David's approach to our discussions and workshops shared an important aspect with the experienced composers of Chapter 1, in that he directed the course of the discussions to suit his own working methods and philosophy. He steered these early discussions towards topics that would allow him an insight into how I might approach his music, and also introduced me to concepts and examples that he would want me to refer to when developing my interpretation. In this way, David's discussion was a very active part of the composition process (even though he had not yet begun working on the score), in that he was both judging the type of 'score' to which I might be receptive, while simultaneously inculcating specific approaches to interpreting his work.

David's discussions of Deborah Hay's work thus allowed us to discuss in detail the type of work and the approach to interpretation in which David was interested, without specifically discussing his own work. He did show me scores for *The Minotaur* and fragments of other works, but stressed that they were not examples of the type of work he might write for me, which might diverge in practice from these previous scores. Indeed he stressed that even he didn't know what form the final score might take,

ZK: Yeah, and I still can't quite imagine what it's going to be like.

DY: Neither can I [both laughing]<sup>611</sup>

David's method for getting to know my work was asking me to play excerpts from some of my recently commissioned works, and at our meeting of 25<sup>th</sup> August 2011, I played excerpts from Elliott Gyger's *...out of obscurity* (2011), Nicholas Vines' *Uncanny Valley* (2011), Daniel Rojas *Entre Bajos y Alturas* (2011) and Alex Pozniak's *Crush* (2008), all of which were programmed in my "Piano Inside/Out" tour at the end of July that year. At first David was simply complimentary, saying, after I had played *Uncanny Valley*, "You play with great.... gusto!".<sup>612</sup> He then moved on to enquiring about the difficulties associated with the extended techniques of each piece, discussing the problems of different pianos having a different internal 'geography'.<sup>613</sup> He went on to ask in more detail about my own

---

<sup>611</sup> Ibid.

<sup>612</sup> Ibid.

<sup>613</sup> Ibid.

practice, asking, “What’s your routine? Like when you’re preparing. How many hours are you practising? Do you have a routine or is it just what you can, when you can?”.<sup>614</sup> Such a detailed enquiry into not only my pianistic abilities, but also my practice methods was a fundamental aspect of David’s approach to collaboration. Like Deborah Hay, he was interested in completely understanding the practice of his interpreter, to best be able to tailor a work for my specific abilities.

David summed up his approach to his work in the following way, highlighting that the collaborations and the discussions with performers were of greater importance than any abstract musical ideas that he could bring to the project himself:

I’m not that interested in music. I don’t like music very much. I’m interested in ideas and I’m interested in people. I think everything I’ve done, from the compositions I’ve written to the ultra-complex cross-art-form collaborations – they’re all based very strongly on some kind of concept or conceptual underpinning. But they are very much about the people who are involved. I wrote a lot of guitar music when I was at Uni, just because I found it a very rewarding relationship with Geoffrey Morris. He was interested in what I was doing and I was interested in what he was doing and it wasn’t as if I had to find a guitarist to get all this guitar music out of me. It wasn’t that at all. It was very much a product of the circumstances and I think that’s why a lot of what I do doesn’t fit into those conventional boxes because I’m listening for different things in a way. It’s not really listening for the music. Listening for something else that’s operating on a different level.<sup>615</sup>

Although no musical materials were workshopped in these early sessions, they played an important role in providing ideas and inspiration to David in the kind of work he would create, and in providing me with a series of tools and entry points for what I expected would be a score radically different from any I had previously performed.

### **The Score of *Not Music Yet***

After the second of our preliminary meetings, we communicated only by email for the next eight months. After some delays, David wrote on 4 January 2012,

At this moment, the piece takes the form of a large format watercolour.

---

<sup>614</sup> Ibid.

<sup>615</sup> Video of workshop with David Young (3 March 2011).



I have started talking to Alex Garsden about transcribing the watercolour into conventional (ish) notation on Sibelius.

If the plan works, we will end up with two versions of the work for you to work with – graphic and notated.<sup>616</sup>

Although David raised the possibility of a notated ‘transcription’ of the score, this idea was later abandoned, though other versions of the work would emerge in our discussions. After several failed attempts to synchronise our movements, we organised a meeting in Melbourne at David’s residence on 24 April, fitting in an afternoon flight in and out of Melbourne around my rehearsal commitments. Our brief meeting allowed David to show me the score and provide some useful context for the work, however it is clear from the discussion that the hectic nature of the day and the unusual nature of the score left me slightly dumbstruck. The following example shows a scan of the complete score (with the original canvas measuring 68cm x 102cm). Painted in watercolour, the score differed from the bold geometric shapes and defined lines more commonly found in graphic scores (such as that of Brown and Cardew). The use of colour, and the highlighting of its painted qualities made it seem more akin to an artwork to be hung on a wall, than a musical score. David said that he completed several drafts before completing the score in a single day.

I worked on it, then let it dry then worked on it again. Though it probably only took me two and a half minutes to actually paint. There were many drafts and studies, dozens, maybe hundreds of smaller watercolours and some large ones as well which were all working with a particular technique. It’s a process of refining but a very intuitive exploration. When I arrived at *Not Music Yet*, I had developed techniques for working with the materials and the temperature and how long to let it dry. So I’d developed skills in all of that but I was also at a point where I could trust the materials to create it and I was able to get out of the way and not be trying so hard and just be letting it happen.<sup>617</sup>

---

<sup>616</sup> Email: David Young to Zubin Kanga (4 January 2012).

<sup>617</sup> Interview with David Young (31 May 2013).

**Example 5.5: *Not Music Yet* by David Young (scan of watercolour on canvas score)**



After laying out the painted score, David explained how I was to read it, in order to create either a 14 minute work or a 42 minute work.

DY: Well it's three passes so it's 4 minutes 40 seconds.

ZK: 4 minutes 40 seconds, OK. And each pass has to be exactly that duration?

DY: Yes.

ZK: OK.

DY: Yeah, so stopwatch, if you need it.

ZK: Yeah, and is there a reason for that particular duration for each pass?

DY: I'm 42 years old. It's the meaning of life. And 14 is 42 divided by 3.

ZK: OK...

DY: It's a great duration!<sup>618</sup>

Each 'pass' described above is a reading of the 'score' from left to right, with the vertical axis corresponding to pitch. Despite insisting that apart from these framing details, the score is up to me to interpret, David provided a few clues to the type of musical material he had imagined the painting might provoke.

DY: And then maybe this area here seems to need some more expressive [pointing to bottom right of painting].

---

<sup>618</sup> Video of workshop with David Young (24 April 2012).

ZK: Sorry, that one [pointing to bottom left] and that one [pointing to bottom right]?

DY: Yeah just because of the intensity of colour and the sort of activity that's going on there, it seems to need something to distinguish it. But in the end I decided I don't want to strictly prescribe that.

ZK: OK. But you said specifically that blue section would be...

DY: Well I see, I hear it on this sort of continuum from black through to grey to white to this blue where the white is clearest, purest material, the black is moving towards more percussive material and the blue is moving towards playing actually on the strings, the non-mechanised way of generating sound. And originally I was going to divide the piece up in that way quite strictly so it's percussive, on the keys, inside the piano, but I decided that was boring. So, in a way, it's up to you.<sup>619</sup>

This description of David's initial conception of the three sections would have a significant influence on my realisation of the work, despite him saying, 'it's up to you'. We also discussed the kind of textures and sounds that might correspond to the painting and also how I would need to be selective in what sections of the painting to focus on at any given moment.

DY: So unlike a lot of my music to date, I do imagine this as quite busy. And I think the best word is a bit unrestrained. What I would love you to try and tap into is, the fact that when you're actually working with watercolour, it gets this life of its own. You can see the residue of it, it does this stuff [gesturing] then as it dries, it gradually transforms and twists. So it is that kind of warping of time that I'm interested in, if that makes sense. And maybe the white, there'll be less activity, but I imagine it's going to be fairly constant events, it's not going to be large long silences or...

ZK: OK. So the white, it depends how much white is white. Like in the middle, some of it can be almost part of the white continuum, or is it only the really white bits that are part of the white layer?

DY: I think they're sort of meant to be, they're moving out, they're wanting to move out. But obviously there's a clear kind of clusters there [pointing]

ZK: Say in the blue layer, there's quite a lot happening at once across...

DY: Yeah.

ZK: Yeah, and I suppose it's up to me as to how I make that continuous activity.

DY: That's right, and at some point, you'll have to start making choices about, 'well I just can't play that bit down there because I'm busy up here'.

ZK: yeah.<sup>620</sup>

Alongside the two possible pianistic realisations of the work, David had originally conceived of another two versions of the work, which show the influence of the more unusual performance works of Deborah Hay.

DY: There's another back story as well which may or may not be useful and between now and August, I'm happy to explore this if you want to, but there's another version of the piece which is actually you describing the piece verbally to the audience, so you would sit down at the piano, or sit down at the piano, or be at the piano with score on the piano and say, "And now I'm going to play this piece

---

<sup>619</sup> Ibid.

<sup>620</sup> Ibid.

by David Young which is called *Not Music Yet* for solo piano and it begins with these notes, you can see the black notes” and rather than playing the piece actually describe the whole thing, blow by blow through the whole 42 minutes or 14 minutes, and then play the piece.

ZK: OK, wow.

DY: So I toyed around again with a lot of that and actually wrote this whole text describing the piece in words, like a script that you would read. But I threw that away.<sup>621</sup>

The choice of watercolour marked the score as one that differed greatly in approach to the printed black and white scores of Brown, Cardew or Bussotti.

David later explained to me the appeal of working in watercolours.

I love everything about watercolour because it’s so quick. Using watercolour is quite performative in a way. You only get one chance and I really like that. Very often when I’ll do a watercolour, I’ll think of it as a snapshot of my subconscious, because there’s always something that comes out that reflects my state of mind, almost like some kind of *I Ching* or Tarot card or something. Part of the reason for that is that the way I work with it, it’s very hard to have complete control, because of the water drying and the pigment dissolving, it assumes a life of its own. But what I really love about it is that it’s so far away from the black and white grid graphic notation which I did start working with, it’s so far away from that, there’s so many gradations of tone and contour and texture and abstraction that it forces the musician to render a music that is not quantised. That’s what I find so thrilling about it – even though it’s on paper, it’s about as far away from traditional musical notation as you can get before you start going into three dimensional multimedia work.<sup>622</sup>

The fact that the work was a new direction for David was revealed as we discussed how the score should be presented. Though he had previously composed a score using watercolour paintings, *Breath Control*, the freedoms afforded to the clarinettist performer of that work were very narrow, with the watercolour corresponding only to variations of tone colour. *The Minotaur Trilogy*, though a major work using watercolour scores, combined the music with unusual approaches to libretto, choreography, design and other aspects of operatic direction that made the music just one unusual element among many. *Not Music Yet*’s size, scope and purely musical focus was a new development in David’s work, in which he was moving further away from the traditional paradigms of score production.

ZK: In a way there are instructions, you just haven’t written them on the...

---

<sup>621</sup> Ibid.

<sup>622</sup> Interview with David Young (31 May 2013).

DY: And I will when... I mean what do we do? Do we publish it? I mean I can do an A4 saying 'blah blah blah', I mean we can do that. But I think it's more interesting to let them try and work out, well what is this thing now?

He also highlighted that the relatively simple handover of a painted score, and casual discussion of possible interpretative options was part of an artistic progression for him as a composer stating, "it has been a very interesting progression for me and to get to this point where I can give you this [pointing to the score] and go 'it's not music yet, over to you'. I could not do that unless I'd been gearing myself up to it for the last ten years."<sup>623</sup>

David eventually did produce a page of instructions, which he emailed to me on 16 June. The page is reproduced in full below.

### **Example 5.6: *Not Music Yet* by David Young, notes for performance**

#### NOTES

Duration: there are two possible versions of the work:  
seven minutes or 42 minutes.

The score consists entirely of graphic notation (watercolour) and should ideally be performed from the original.

The watercolour is to be read from left to right in three passes. The first pass should focus on the black and grey material; the second on the white visual events; and the third and final pass should focus on the blue material. Each pass should be of equal duration (therefore 2 mins 20 seconds each in the seven minute version, and 14 minutes each in the 42 minute version).

The notation uses a simple time-space principle: events should be placed in their relative horizontal position for each pass. The vertical plane represents pitch, with the top of the page representing the highest notes on the piano, and the bottom representing the lowest.

The graphics should be played according to their relative and approximate position along the page using a circumscribed range of conventional and unconventional techniques (such as on the keys, inside the piano, subtle preparations and so on). As a general rule, the blacker end of the colour spectrum should be sound more distorted and indistinct compared with the bluer end of the colour spectrum which should sound purer and more resonant.

Dynamics: the more intense the colouring, the louder, ranging from *pppp* to *f*.

**While by its nature this notation has many freedoms, every attempt should be made to realise the graphics' contours and shapes as carefully and precisely as possible.**

---

<sup>623</sup> Video of workshop with David Young (24 April 2012).

Although it follows closely the instructions that David provided verbally during our meeting, one detail was dramatically changed: the ‘short version’ of the piece, which David had described as being 14 minutes long, had been halved to become a 7 minute work. In the emails that followed, I checked that this wasn’t a mistake:

Dear David,  
Instructions look good, although I recall you had the original short version coming in at 14 mins (with 4mins40s per section), but I think 7 mins will work well and encourage me to be more disciplined in my choices.<sup>624</sup>

And his reply:

Dear Zubin,  
Yes I prefer 7 minutes. Discipline is good.<sup>625</sup>

When I asked him about why he changed the duration, he replied,

I originally had this idea of it being a piano piece of about 15 minutes, which is the duration we had discussed when you first approached me. But then when I decided to have two versions, I was like ‘it’s got to be 42 minutes’. And it’s only after stepping away from it that I realised that this 14 minute duration was a hangover from what I’d had in my mind originally. But the 7 minute version is much more right. It’s meant to be 7.<sup>626</sup>

Another notable feature of these instructions is the final request, emphasised in bold and with underlining, that “every attempt should be made to realise the graphics’ contours and shapes as carefully and precisely as possible.” The resistance between his desire for interpretative precision and the ambiguity of the notation would remain a creative focus throughout the process of preparing my realisation.

## **Preparing an Interpretation**

In the months between the handover of the score, and my workshops with David in August, I developed an interpretation of the score. Obviously, working with a score of this kind requires a different sort of preparation compared to my usual practice. Several approaches were trialled. Inspired by the precisely

---

<sup>624</sup> Email: Zubin Kanga to David Young (16 June 2012).

<sup>625</sup> Email: David Young to Zubin Kanga (17 June 2012).

<sup>626</sup> Interview with David Young (31 May 2013).

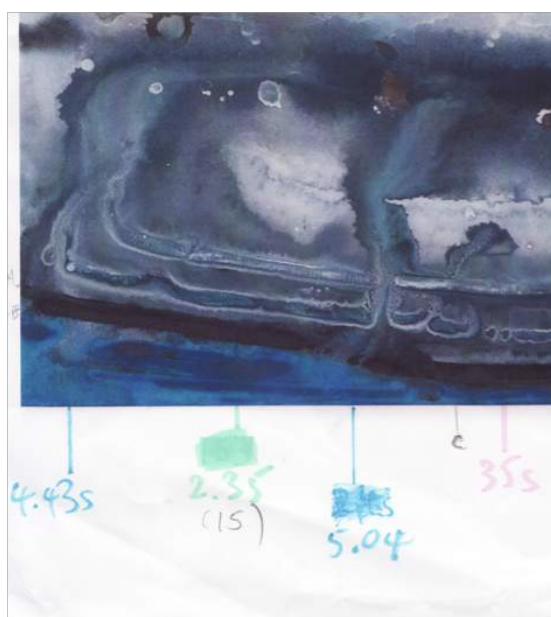
measured, fully scored realisations of David Tudor’s work with graphic scores, I measured all the significant events in the score, converting these to times.

**Example 5.7: Table of measurements for interpretation of *Not Music Yet***

<b>Black</b>	Horizontal Measurements	Timings (mins) (Total 14 Mins)	Minutes	seconds
First high black starts	52	1.76	1	45
First high black ends	101	3.42	3	25
Second high black starts	116	3.92	3	55
Second high black ends	171	5.78	5	46
Thin black arc	235	7.95	7	57
Thin black arc	259	8.76	8	45
Third high black starts	264	8.93	8	55
Third high black ends	287	9.71	9	42
Fourth high black starts	358	12.11	12	6
Fourth High black ends	407	13.76	13	45
		0	0	0

I similarly made vertical measurements, converting these into pitches for an 88 key piano. Although I initially intended to write a fully notated ‘realisation’ using these measurements, I decided that any such realisation would be a reduction (in all senses) and would simplify the work rather than enhancing it, an opinion that David echoed during our workshops. I therefore decided to mark up the score. For the performances of the short version of the work, I wrote absolute time markings (using colours to differentiate between each pass) on to the score as shown here.

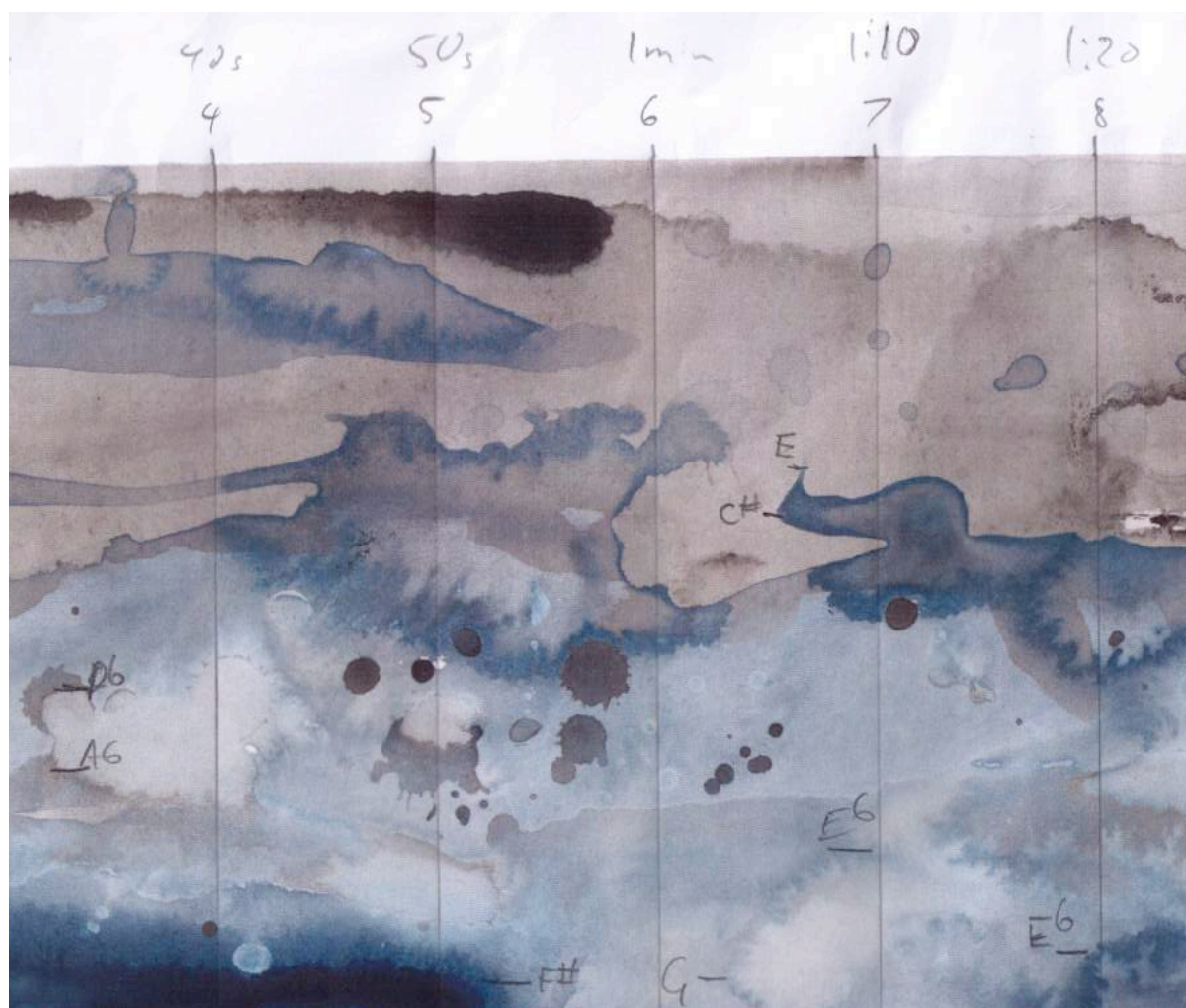
**Example 5.8: Excerpt of marked up copy of *Not Music Yet*, used for premiere performance**



For the later recording (of both the short and long versions), I found it more

precise to mark equal increments of time (ten seconds for the short version, one minute for the long).

**Example 5.9: Excerpt of marked up copy of *Not Music Yet*, used for recordings**



I chose contrasting sound worlds for each of the three sections: for the black section I decided to use all unpitched sounds from the piano, the white section would be on the keyboard and would predominantly use the just the white notes, and the blue section would feature pitched sounds from the strings, playing inside the piano. Thus the three sections would form a progression from the noise of the materials of the piano, to the natural sound of the piano, through to the pure sounds of the strings themselves. Each section would also have its own interior arc: the black would move from unpitched sounds to muted, barely discernible



pitched sounds; the white would move from pure white notes, to a more chromatic sound world; and the blue section would go from large masses of sound from the strings (using percussion mallets) to the more controlled, tactile sounds of fingers directly on the strings. Another general rule I used was that I would try to use extended techniques throughout – obvious in the outer sections but more constrictive in the keyboard section. As a result, I decided that the materials that would be shared between sections would be the three oldest pianistic extended techniques: the cluster, the glissando and the tremolo – all techniques that could be performed in all three sections.

Although many of the parameters of my realisation seem organised and restrictive, there are still many musical parameters which were not fixed, and would be gradually moulded in workshops with David: although David would not greatly alter the structure or choice of musical materials, he chose to focus on moulding the subtler performative aspects.

### **Workshops on the ‘realisation’ of *Not Music Yet***

As the premiere approached, we began communicating frequently by email: these exchanges didn’t touch on my interpretive explorations, and were limited only to the logistics of organising a workshop and deciding upon the best method to transport the score. David managed to have the score transported from Melbourne to Sydney via a friend who drove up with the painting.<sup>627</sup> We decided that a Skype workshop would be sufficiently useful to both of us, and much easier and cheaper than me flying to Melbourne for the day. The first topic of discussion for our Skype workshop on 18 July was the logistics of transporting the painting, watercolour on paper, measuring 68 cm x 102 cm.

ZK: So I picked up the score from him. He said it didn’t fit into the folio you had gotten, so he put it between two thick pieces of cardboard.  
DY: Yeah, do you think that’s going to work on the plane?  
ZK: I’m not sure about the plane, particularly because you were thinking of taking it on as hand luggage, right?  
DY: No you’d have to put it in the hold as oversize.  
ZK: I’d just be worried about how secure it is, how stable it is. I mean I can show you what he’s got. [picking up painting and showing to camera] So as you can see, he’s got...

---

<sup>627</sup> It should be noted that the drive from Melbourne to Sydney takes a minimum of ten hours, so it is very difficult journey for a single driver to do in a single day. The majority of travel between Sydney and Melbourne is by plane, with a 60-90 minute flight.

DY: It's kind of like foam board isn't it?

ZK: Yeah

DY: Well that's going to be handy as a music stand on the piano. But probably not secure enough. I guess the other option is to roll it up.

ZK: It's just a matter of whether it is rollable. As in, whether it will damage the painting. I mean the other option is to play off a copy.

DY: Yeah, of course, but I'm sure you agree, it's not as nice.

ZK: Yeah, it's not as nice. But it depends on how much I'm actually going to be looking at the detail when I'm actually playing

DY: Mmmm

ZK: Like I think it's good to study from, but in a way a marked up copy might be more useful on the music stand.

DY: Yeah for sure. Well Zubin, ultimately of course it's entirely up to you. I mean I guess visually, for the audience there is an effect there as well, that while they're not studying the score in enormous detail, just having it there is kind of nice

ZK: Yeah

DY: But you decide, really.<sup>628</sup>

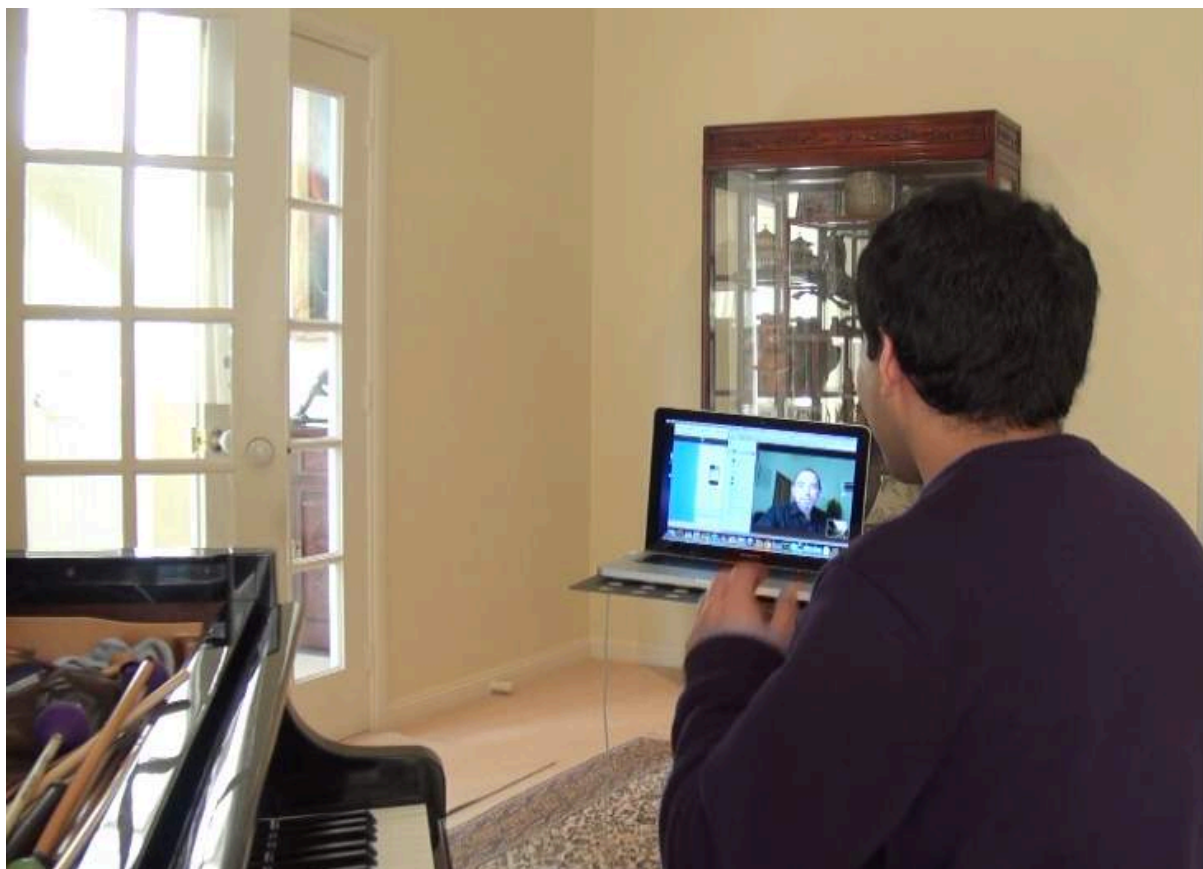
Insisting that the audience sees the 'real' score but requesting that it is not displayed to them directly as an object to contemplate during the performance, reveals David's competing priorities. He wants the audience to be aware of the nature of the score while preventing them from making any direct mapping with my performance. The practicalities of transporting the original score would continue to be a focus of our discussions in the leadup to the performance, but at this stage, I told him I'd explore some more options before settling on a particular solution.

After discussing the logistics of performing *Not Music Yet*, I presented to David each of the three sections of the work, discussing my choices of sound and gesture for each one. In this video, we discuss the sounds, including piano preparation, that I had chosen for the first section.

---

<sup>628</sup> Video of workshop with David Young (18 July 2012).

### Video Example 5.1: Workshop with David Young, 18 July 2012



After playing this section for him. David's comments focussed on the overall approach to performance, rather than on the specific musical materials I had chosen.

DY: Excellent. So, the only thing I'd say now is, I mean I love the sound world and the structure and shape is all there. I think somehow now if you can start looking for something which is still as intense. It still has the same intensity but is not as dramatic

ZK: Right.

DY: So it's almost a little bit like, rather than playing for effect, it's more like *that's* what you're playing. You know what I mean?

ZK: Yeah.

DY: Because for example, some of the gestures that you're doing up the top there. If you can get that not quite mechanical but a bit more matter of fact approach rather than it being kind of dramatic or something. Do you know what I mean?

ZK: Yeah.

DY: It's very hard to explain.

ZK: Yeah I know what you mean

DY: It's all now making it a little bit more technical and also a tiny bit more subdued. So basically, not quite as loud.

ZK: Yeah I think that makes sense because it is quite faint on the painting.

DY: Yeah, it's a watercolour. It's not an acrylic.<sup>629</sup>

The second point could be read quite simply as a suggestion to play more quietly to fit into the *pppp* to *f* dynamic range prescribed in the introductory notes, as well as finding sounds that were a more accurate analogue for the style of graphic score: a watercolour rather than an acrylic. However, this point, as well as the previous one about avoiding dramatic gestures, also reflects David's appropriation of Deborah Hay's ideas about performance. As in the examples he had shown and described to me of her work, David is particularly interested in removing the artifice of performance, and prefers performances that are more spontaneous, natural and unguarded. After playing it through again, he was much more enthusiastic about the performance, and the reduction in my moments of hesitation and over-dramatisation.

DY: Yeah, *that's* a David Young piece.

ZK: OK [laughs]

DY: Do you know what I mean? That is definitely the approach. And what you were doing then is you were hesitating less as well. The first time there was this [sharp intake of breath] and then you'd play something. Whereas there it's just like you're just doing it. Just going about it and it's really good.

ZK: Whichever way I do it, I'll practice it in so that I get more confident doing whatever it is I'm doing.

DY: Of course, of course, because it's that fine line between it feeling as though you're making it up or you're doing exactly what's written. That's the whole point, you are in that blurry space and you want to somehow land exactly in the middle.<sup>630</sup>

David's statement that it now sounded like "a David Young piece" revealed that despite his professed desire for me to interpret his score freely, he did have a clear artistic agenda with specific aesthetic goals. The sonic materials that I used were the ones which – in their complexity, detailed exploration of extended techniques and obfuscation of obvious gestures – superficially resembled his earlier music and the music of his most significant early influences including Liza Lim, Richard Barrett and Chris Dench.

For the second section, I performed on the keyboard, playing on mainly the white notes with glissandi, clusters and the silent depressing of strings to create

---

<sup>629</sup> Video of workshop with David Young (18 July 2012).

<sup>630</sup> *Ibid.*

sympathetic resonances. His responses were similar to those he gave for the first section.

DY: OK, it's a bit hard to tell through this strange underwater audio quality of Skype, but it sounds to me like it needs to be softer. Particularly the glisses. I mean it was really only the first four or five glisses at the start where I felt they were quite jarring, somehow. I don't know whether it was to do with the dynamic or whether some of them needed to just be broken up a little bit more at the beginning. I felt that by the last 40 seconds it had established itself and it was all kind of making sense.

[...]

DY: It's almost like because the glissandi were so stark, it was like you were making some kind of musical point about them, instead of them just being part of this accumulation of movement and sound...

ZK: Yeah, keeping it moving as well. As you said, not hesitating, and not...

DY: ... but I think that working mostly on the white notes is very logical and it does give it a weird tonal, this weird happy sort of quality which I think will contrast quite bizarrely with the first section. I think that's not such a bad thing.<sup>631</sup>

Although David seemed slightly wary of my choice to perform the entire section on the white notes of the keyboard, he still provided a positive appraisal of it and focused his criticism on the dynamics and on the fluency of the gestures. In particular, his desire for the glissandi to be just 'this accumulation of movement and sound' rather than expressing 'some kind of musical point' returned to his recurring preoccupation with immediacy and naturalistic approaches to performance, in contrast to the more didactic approach I sometimes tended toward. He tried to analyse the difficulties I was having in achieving this state.

DY: Yeah it works best when each gesture comes out of the previous one, which is what you're doing most of the time and then sometimes you'll stop. It's that kind of hesitation or something. So it'll just be familiarity and confidence. Yeah but it works best when there's this gesture and then the other one just comes out of it, so it's not even necessarily continuous sound or movement but it's like the conversation is this continuous thing that's evolving rather than it being one gesture, followed by another.<sup>632</sup>

For the third section of the work, I chose to play exclusively inside the piano using my hands as well as a variety of tools. Along with my characterisation of the previous two sections, this follows closely the original ideas for the sections that David had described in our meeting in April. Despite the fact that he had withdrawn these recommended approaches to each section and encouraged me to be completely open in my choices I still ended up sticking with these original

---

<sup>631</sup> Ibid.

<sup>632</sup> Ibid.

characterisations: the first section (black) using mainly percussive sounds, the second one (white) on the keyboard, and the third (blue) inside the keyboard. Although this seemed like the best and most obvious choice at the time his position as an authority figure, in both age and in expertise with graphic scores, no doubt affected my decision to retain his original characterisations.

David was more pleased with my realisation of this section, but we still discussed options for some of the more unusual techniques I had chosen, including the use of a dog chain on the bass strings.

ZK: And this strange chain technique. I only came up with this last night. Because I'm trying to think, because there's that amazing blue colour at the beginning and I'm still not even sure [plays with chain] if that's the right sound I want, or if I want something even more....

DY: ... even brighter.

ZK: yeah

DY: It's a pretty good sound though.

ZK: I want something that sounds really strange, but it's very hard to find, or think of what kind of tool would work.<sup>633</sup>

David then suggested some alternative tools to use in this section, including glass flotation balls (used on fishing nets) and the use of a 'small Chinese gong' as types of preparation that might be worth exploring in the future.

The meeting ended with generous encouragement from David, as well as the reiterating the further work he feels the work requires.

DY: Yeah I'm surprised how well it works. I think it's totally coherent. And again I think it's just that thing of restraint. I think if you can get it into a place where it's quite restrained. With a kind of determination or something? I think that will really bring those, bring it all together. Which I'm sure that you will have by the time the 11<sup>th</sup> comes around.

ZK: Yeah, that's good to know, I think it's good that....

DY: Basically Zubin, I think you're on the right track. I'm totally delighted, and less is always more. So I would be now working with the material that you have and just going for detail and precision and delicacy.

ZK: And even taking out certain things and developing certain single techniques a bit further.

DY: Exactly

ZK: And I suppose getting more and more detail in terms of the correspondence with the painting as well.

DY: Exactly, because it means that you don't have a feeling that you need to make anything up. It's like 'ah there's this bit then this bit then I do this'. You know, that will liberate you as well. It means that you won't feel alone, you'll just be doing it.

ZK: In a way, like playing any other score. In a way.

---

<sup>633</sup> Ibid.

DY: Eventually yes.

ZK: In a strange sort of way. I mean there's some element of improvisation, but it's getting it as close to what's there on the page, and I suppose trying to get all the gestures, as much as possible, to be these painterly type things.

DY: Yeah and that's really coming across.<sup>634</sup>

Again David emphasises his concept of his score as requiring an approach of great precision rather than creative abandon. David's use of 'restrained' to describe the approach he wants is particularly notable, considering he had stated, when handing over the score in April, "I do imagine this as quite busy. And I think the best word is a bit unrestrained."<sup>635</sup> This is another example of Young's use of creative resistance. His instructions pushed against my natural virtuosic flair and my original conception of the piece, guiding me away from stock improvisational gestures and discrete shapes and inducing in me a heightened state of attention and spontaneity analogous to Hay's use of riddles to confuse her dancers' trained responses.

David and I had another Skype session two weeks later. Although the overall approach and parameters of my interpretation did not change during this time, I had worked on the subtleties that David had recommended as well as addressed some of the practical issues raised in our previous discussion. The two big issues remained the positioning of the score on the piano (and its presentation to the audience) and the difficulties of transporting the original painting. On the first issue, David was adamant that the audience should not see the painting as I was performing.

DY: Yeah it just needs to be as simple as possible really. You can't lie it down inside?

ZK: Yeah I could lie it down, that's definitely an option. If I put some cardboard there.

DY: I think that's best. It's simplest. I don't like the idea of putting it on an easel. It's a bit naff somehow. And also it creates this whole other object in the room whereas I think if it's just there then some of the audience can see a bit and maybe you can leave it there after the concert or during the interval and people can look at it. But I'd rather they're not looking at the painting while you're playing. Otherwise it becomes a bit 'Where's Wally?' They try and look at it and... whereas if it's lying there, they can try and see what's going on but they don't have to worry too much about trying to follow it directly.

ZK: Yeah

DY: So I think that's the best solution.

---

<sup>634</sup> Ibid.

<sup>635</sup> Video of workshop with David Young (24 April 2012).

ZK: OK, let's go with that.<sup>636</sup>

I understood David's desire to keep the audience from attempting to map my performance to the painting as I was playing. But this position seemed to be at odds with his desire to have the original painting as the score used for all performances, despite the significant logistical costs and risk of damage to the fragile material.

DY: So logistically, it's so frustrating that you can't move this object around easily.

ZK: Yeah because I've had a look at it and I don't really want to roll it.

DY: No.

ZK: Because I think you got the paint to crack in very particular ways.

DY: Exactly. Let's just go with the copy. I'll try and see if I can get a different printout that might look a bit better, and let's just use that.

ZK: I think that's the easiest option. I mean if we really wanted to do it, it would be using an art courier.

DY: That's expensive as well, I imagine.

ZK: Yeah, but that would be the way to get it down. Because also, I don't want to risk it taking it on, with airlines and the way baggage handlers will just chuck it and put a heavy bag on top of it and...

DY: Yeah exactly.

ZK: Because even though you say it's not a painting, in a way, it's still a precious object.

DY: Well there's only one of them. So you want to take care of it, because otherwise it won't exist anymore.<sup>637</sup>

From a practical perspective, as not just the performer but the project manager of the concert, I found it hard to justify the cost of courier-delivering the score, when I was not going to be performing directly from it (instead using primarily a marked up copy with timings) and David didn't want the audience to see it directly, only to see that it was a painting. A major factor that David had not considered was the considerable size of the painting, larger than any of his previous graphic scores, which could not be easily packed inside a suitcase or taken onto a plane as hand luggage. There were also very few satchels or folios that would fit the painting, and those that I could find were not sturdy enough to protect the painting from the rough handling of airport baggage handlers. I stated my position and my intention to play from the print, and David, though clearly unsatisfied with the result, did not challenge this position.

---

<sup>636</sup> Video of workshop with David Young (1 August 2012).

<sup>637</sup> Ibid.



When the focus shifted to my interpretation, David was overall very positive, and his main criticisms were re-iterations of his previous recommendations for a more spontaneous and natural approach to the piano. He also drew my attention to the transitions between the three major sections.

DY: The only thing I'd say is pretty much what I said last time. In the first section there's a couple of times, it was very very minor, much less, just a couple of times where you were hesitating and then playing. Doing that sort of flourish. And then at the beginning of the second section, again it's very hard to tell through Skype, it seems like it still needs to be a bit softer. But it would be really good to look again at the gaps between part 1 and 2, and 2 and 3. Because at the moment it looks a little bit like you're neither pausing nor attacca, just kind of a little bit in between.

ZK: ... in between.

DY: I think it would be good to decide: is it going to go straight on or are we actually going to just pause, you know have a little breath and then go on to the next section. What do you reckon?

ZK: Well from a practical point of view, it would be probably easier to have a bit of a pause.

DY: So in that case, at the end of part one and two, you should just kind of stop, and freeze, just for a breath, and then...

ZK: ... and then move on.<sup>638</sup>

My confidence with the material and my interpretation of it had increased to the point that I also offered a self-reflective criticism of my approach.

ZK: Yeah I'm getting more and more toward this feeling of... because I was trying to think about what's particularly about this score, and a watercolour graphic score compared to a different kind of graphic score. And it's the fact that everything's quite linear. And only in the black stuff are there really sudden...

DY: ... events.

ZK: Events and attacks. And a lot of this is textures that just grow and might suddenly stop but they don't grow and evolve quite continuously.

DY: Yeah, and I think you're really capturing that.

ZK: And I think that's common to all the sections isn't it, except for the first black events and a few little blue things. But it's just getting the keyboard stuff quieter because the keyboard stuff will naturally be louder than the inside piano.<sup>639</sup>

David noted the increased confidence, and the effect on my performance.

I think the more you are convinced that what you're doing relates to the painting, the better it will work, basically. So it's really primarily about your relationship to what you're reading now. And that's when it works, and that's why at the beginning of the third section, it does work so well, it's because you're very convinced about what you're doing. You're making that image into sound.<sup>640</sup>

---

<sup>638</sup> Ibid.

<sup>639</sup> Ibid.

<sup>640</sup> Ibid.

This tension between reading the score with the precision that I would bring to a conventional score and using it as a frame for improvising became the focus of much of my final practice of the work. Although I strived for increasing accuracy and faithfulness to the score, the practicalities of viewing and interpreting score of infinite detail while performing using a variety of unusual techniques meant that improvisation was always present, even in the most well planned gestures. This tension would continue into the performances.

## **Performances and Reception**

During August 2012, I performed *Not Music Yet* four times, twice in presentations to school students in Sydney and then twice in performances for my Spectrum program in Melbourne and Sydney.

The Spectrum concerts were performed at the Salon, Melbourne Recital Centre on 11<sup>th</sup> August, performed on a Yamaha C7, and at the Independent Theatre, Sydney on 16<sup>th</sup> August, on a 102-key Stuart and Sons piano. For both performances, I placed the main score flat on the unopened music stand, midway inside the piano, with the smaller marked version of the score placed flat across the tuning pegs in front of me and the tools used to perform the work placed along the tuning pegs on either side. This setup is shown below (photo taken before the Sydney performance).

**Example 5.10: Photograph of scores for *Not Music Yet* (original above and marked-up scan below) positioned in the piano before the Sydney performance, 16 August 2012**



As David had desired, this positioning of the score allowed the audience to see that the score was a painting, without being able to make out any details or follow it as I play. An A2 sized print was used as the larger score for the Melbourne performance and the original painted score was used in the Sydney performance. A recording of the Sydney performance can be heard in the following example.

**Audio Example 5.1: *Not Music Yet* by David Young, recorded live at The Independent Theatre, Sydney, 16 August 2012**



Although the work was well received, some members of the audience commented that they would have preferred to see the score more clearly, and that it should even have been projected onto a screen, and those audience members who had seen the score previously, or stayed to examine it afterwards (including Chinese-Australian pianist, William Chen, pictured below) claimed that their enjoyment and understanding of the work was inextricably linked to their ability to see the score.

**Example 5.11: Discussing *Not Music Yet* with pianist, William Chen**



Though I didn't display the score prominently to the audience, in accordance with David's wishes, I would consider doing so for future performances, given the potential for a greater understanding and engagement, as demonstrated in my schools workshop performances of the work.

The schools workshops were conducted on 8 August at Pymble Ladies College (with secondary school girls, aged 13-16) and on 13 August at Sydney Grammar Preparatory School, Edgecliff (with primary school boys, aged 10-12). In both presentations, I discussed the concept of graphic scores, demonstrating simple examples before showing them David's score. Before performing the work, I distributed colour prints of the score to the students, allowing them to 'follow' the score in a way that was not possible for the audiences at the public performances. Both performances were received with a mixture of curiosity and

enthusiasm by the students, with the primary school students particularly keen to try out the extended techniques I'd chosen for the performance.

**Example 5.12: Interpreting *Not Music Yet* alongside students from Sydney Grammar Preparatory School, 13 August 2012**



Apart from serving as useful practice runs of the work before the major public performances, these presentations allowed me to observe how the graphic score allowed a seemingly complex musical world to be made accessible to an audience unfamiliar with contemporary music by providing a beautiful, yet direct visual analogy to music. Thus the choice of notation had a significant impact on the reception of the work, and I would consider, contrary to David's original advice, displaying the score more prominently in future performances.

The 'Spectrum' concerts attracted a substantial amount of media coverage, much of it centred around *Not Music Yet*. Although I had originally thought of the work as being one of the more challenging and uncompromising works on the program, the novelty of the large painted graphic score attracted the attention of the press, including the Fairfax newspapers (*Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*) which published an article by Harriet Cunningham in the leadup to the performances. She wrote,

The composer David Young takes the melding of visual and aural even further. The score for his latest work, *Not Music Yet*, is a large and beautiful abstract watercolour painting. Kanga must read it like a music score, working his way across the painting three times, playing the black, then the white, then the blue<sup>641</sup>

The *Sydney Morning Herald* also published a review of the Sydney performance, in which Peter McCallum described the work as follows.

The score of David Young's *Not Music Yet* was a watercolour painting as impetus for improvisation, which Kanga sustained with gestural inventiveness, riding waves of focused creative energy.<sup>642</sup>

It's notable that here, McCallum summarises my process of interpretation as using the score as a starting point for improvisation, while Cunningham, who had interviewed me before the performances, accepts my explanation that I am reading it precisely like a score. The tension between these different approaches to the score, which had been at the centre of the discussions in our final workshop had here been observed, simplified and broadcast to a general public. Again, the medium of notation transcended the practical issues of composition and performance to become the subject of media interest.<sup>643</sup> David was satisfied with both performances, with a slight preference for the Sydney performance,

I was recently with [double-bass player] Mark Corvin, and he has an amazing sound system, so we listened to both the Sydney and Melbourne recordings back to back. They're such great recordings, the Melbourne recording is slightly higher quality while the Sydney performance is slightly more confident but both are fantastic. I remember being extremely pleased, quite startled actually, at how happy I was. I think it's a really good piece!<sup>644</sup>

---

<sup>641</sup> Cunningham, Harriet: "Don't try this on the new Steinway, kids", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 August 2012.

<sup>642</sup> McCallum, Peter: "Seven Composers, from emerging to venerable, each with a unique voice", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 August 2012.

<sup>643</sup> In my own radio interviews, and in the article I wrote for *Limelight* magazine on the new works to be premiered, I stoked this media interest in the work by highlighting it as a feature of the recital. The exploitation of the score for these purposes was thus mutual – the media outlets used it as an unusual 'angle' with which to engage their audience, and I used the novelty of the score to garner further attention from other media outlets.

<sup>644</sup> Interview with David Young (31 May 2013).

## Workshops and Recording of the Extended Version of *Not Music Yet*

Although I had not found an ideal performance opportunity to premiere the extended version of *Not Music Yet* (at the time of writing), I decided to record it, both to use in the portfolio, but also to create a CD that could be launched at a future premiere. As already mentioned above, the preparation for the larger version of the piece began with more detailed measurements and calculations of the pitch and durational parameters of the score. However, the biggest leap was in conceiving, managing and sustaining such a large structure, which pushed my own approach further from improvisation and closer towards reading the graphic score as I would a conventionally notated score. When we workshopped this larger version via Skype in two sessions in December 2012-January 2013, the psychological difficulties of the work were the first point of discussion.

ZK: There's a bit in the black section where there's three minutes with very little happening. So it has to all be something similar going through that. I can't throw in something completely new so whatever I decide to start with, whatever texture or sound, I need to stick with it and make whatever simple thing that is stretch out. I suppose that's a composer's problem that you always have.

DY: Yeah, exactly. How do you fill in the time. But I guess, from what you're saying, my first question is what happens when you do run out of things, because I think that's where it will start to get the most interesting.

ZK: Yeah, that's the desired state.

DY: And I think if there's sections where there's very little happening, I think that's fine. As soon as you embark on that 42 minute journey, you have to commit to going through boredom and that sparseness, that tension is part of it, there's no way of escaping that, and then counterbalanced with relentless activity.<sup>645</sup>

David's point about the performance becoming interesting when one runs out of ideas is an astute observation of my use of improvisation to supplement interpretation. As my practice continued, I found myself improvising less and relying more on details such as miniscule differences in paint colour, with the length of the work necessitating an increasing accuracy in my interpretation of the score and a decreasing reliance on improvisation.

---

<sup>645</sup> Video of workshop with David Young (30 December 2012)

David agreed that a fully-scored 'realisation' would fundamentally alter the piece, but was intrigued (if not convinced) by my idea of creating a multi-tracked recorded realisation.

ZK: The thing with creating a scored realisation is that you've got to simplify or to choose at that point what you're going to do.

DY: Whereas I think it's better if you're forced to choose...

ZK: ... in the moment.

DY: Even if you have a plan and reminders and indications and whatever.

ZK: I was thinking at one point of using multitracking to get everything on one side of the piano and then the other. But I suppose it's about your physical limitations, to create this thing with two hands.

DY: No otherwise you could keep going for the rest of your life! No I think that is an important limitation, your body. That might be a solution for you too. If you're imagining three or four tracks you could be moving between them at different times, or trying to sustain two different ideas over a period of time.

ZK: I think that's a way to do it, and jump cutting between them.<sup>646</sup>

While performing each section in our workshop, I was aware that I was having trouble sustaining the interest throughout each of the three 'movements'. David provided some suggestions for how to approach rhythm after hearing the first (black) section.

DY: Texturally I think it's spot on. What might help is to think about the rhythm. So at the beginning, when you're brushing the keys. If you think about all the rhythms that you're playing being absolutely regular, so if you're playing a trill, keeping it regular, of course the whole thing is not in the same pulse. But then when you play a different texture or when you have another idea, that is also in a regular rhythm but it can be in a different tempo. So there's these pulses coming into focus and out. It will give what you're doing a bit more intentionality.<sup>647</sup>

Here, David advocates a regular approach to rhythm in direct contrast with his earlier workshops on the short version, where he finds my playing too regular. But whereas a more gestural and chaotic approach to rhythm worked well in the short version, this layering of pulses in different tempi allows rhythmic games to be developed over longer stretches.

As our workshop continued, David made further suggestions for making my interpretation less dense and gestural and more precise and 'cool'. Listening to the second (white) section, he stated,

DY: I feel like there might be too much happening.

ZK: Yeah I thought so. It was quite active.

---

<sup>646</sup> Ibid.

<sup>647</sup> Ibid.



DY: Yeah, so it's almost like, if you took out every third note, and maybe not all the time, but I just feel it needs to be sparser. And also, again, perhaps it's because of Skype, but it sounds very loud.

[...]

DY: I almost wanted a section where it was just a single note and it completely decays. A moment of stasis.<sup>648</sup>

When I played it through again he was pleased with the improvement, and provided further clues to me as to types of musical devices that would sustain interest over the longer timescale.

DY: That's great, what were you just focussing on then?

ZK: I suppose I was just trying to get the contour of the beginning as it goes up and splits, and having that left hand come in as it splits. But just thinking about the different kinds of polyrhythms.

DY: Well that's working perfectly. It's spot on. Because you're really getting the counterpoint, that dialogue happening. And there was something very assured about it, you knew where you were but you were still exploring.<sup>649</sup>

We met again two days later via Skype to work on the third movement. In this short time, I had absorbed many of the suggestions to do with rhythmic and melodic counterpoint, so David focussed on discussing the soundworld. Again, what had worked fine for a little over two minutes did not necessarily sustain 14 minutes. I had made the choice to omit the use of the metal chain, used in the August performances.

DY: I don't miss the chain particularly.

ZK: No I think it starts much more subtly that way, with the superball.<sup>650</sup> On a bigger piano that'll be even better.<sup>651</sup>

David's suggestions for sound were again centred on greater precision, clarity and tonal subtlety. Discussing my use of fingers on the strings as opposed to mallets, he again advocated giving the more strident sounds more space while expressing his preference for the tactile interest of the 'fingered' sounds.

ZK: When I started to use my fingers at the end it seemed to get more clarity and tension.

DY: It's like you have more immediacy. Because with the mallets, there's almost a tendency for you to become disconnected from the instrument. I think again, a bit like the middle movement, I feel like I'm missing a moment or two where it's

---

<sup>648</sup> Ibid.

<sup>649</sup> Ibid.

<sup>650</sup> A superball is a hard ball of synthetic rubber, a common children's toy. A superball mallet is a tool used by percussionists made by attaching a stick handle to the superball – the high friction between the synthetic rubber and the instrument's surface creates the sound, as it does when I rub the superball along the winding of the low piano strings.

<sup>651</sup> Video of workshop with David Young (1 January 2013).

much sparser. It's almost like you're constantly nudging it along, and at a certain point it needs to roll off on its own. Some of the sounds you're getting are so interesting that you want time to let it speak.<sup>652</sup>

In contrast to the previous sections, he asked for changes to some of the sounds to make them less focussed, given that the mallets provided such a definite attack to the sound, which would become tiresome over time.

DY: With the wire brush, what does it sound like if you brush the strings laterally.

ZK: [plays]

DY: I think if you brush them laterally you get more of a textural event rather than an attack.

ZK: Yeah, because everything else is an attack.

DY: I think it needs a few things like that that just blur the edges a bit.<sup>653</sup>

All these suggestions were insights that allowed me to discover more about David's compositional tastes and intuition, and provided me with much needed tools to create a solo piano work on the scale of a large piano sonata (such as Beethoven's *Hammerklavier* Sonata, Ives' *Concord* Sonata and Boulez's *Second Sonata*). That there are so few large-scale piano works demonstrates the difficulty of creating and sustaining such a work, but David's choice of notation allowed these larger time-scales and structures to be accessed by sharing the responsibilities for managing the structure with me. His focus on precision, continuity of sounds, use of silence and economy of materials reiterated many of the performative suggestions from earlier in the year, but our previous workshops and observations of my performances allowed him to delve deeper into the details that required honing, from my wirebrush technique, to the different rhythms possible from brushing the keys. As he later recalled:

What I really wanted in the long version is for it to create that weird feeling that time is doing a strange thing. And I think that certainly in the rehearsals we had, it definitely did that. A kind of slight vertigo that you get. And I loved the detail of being able to sit with each of those gestures and textures for a longer period – it was very satisfying.<sup>654</sup>

I recorded the extended version of the piece on 4 January 2013. With time left in the recording session, I also recorded the short version. As predicted by David, the majority of my first takes of each section were the ones we chose for editing. Both

---

<sup>652</sup> Ibid.

<sup>653</sup> Ibid.

<sup>654</sup> Interview with David Young (31 May 2013).

versions are included in the portfolio, and will be released in 2014 by Hospital Hill Recordings.

## Conclusions

Returning to the research questions posed at the beginning of this chapter:

- There was no integrative work during the creation of the score, with all of the collaboration occurring before the creation of the score and after its delivery, all of which was integrative in scope. The importance of the pre-composition workshops was surprising: not merely trivial discussions of logistics, these conversations allowed us both to understand each other's artistic process, which for me was invaluable when it came to interpreting the score.
- Although the score was specific with regard to pitch and the duration of events and contours, the choice of sounds and the specific type of musical materials used was left to the performer's discretion. This transfer of responsibilities is a more extreme type of the method used by Michael Finnissy in his notation in *Z/K*. Rather than entirely new types of notation, I see these as differing perspectives of the same approach to notation: some aspects are prescribed or described specifically, while others are left for the performer to decide.
- Site-specific performance practice was crucial to my interpretation. David focussed on the performative aspects (the need for gestural continuity and fluency, the volume and type of tone used, the density of textures) although there were several small but crucial suggestions that were affected by 'compositional' choices including his suggestions on rhythmic structure, use of silence, dynamic arcs and articulating the counterpoint that although minor, allowed me better to understand David's aesthetic, and which affected all aspects of my interpretation. It was only after I understood this aesthetic that David could declare: "That sounds like a David Young piece". Importantly, his approval and disapproval of different play-throughs allowed me more subtly to evaluate what David was looking for without him needing to explicitly control or manipulate my interpretation.

- Despite the changes, mentioned above, that David made to my realisation of the score, he generally refrained from interfering with my ‘compositional’ decisions. My overall choice of sounds and musical materials, my choice of which moments in the score to highlight or ignore and my level of faithfulness to the score were not challenged, although he did encourage certain preferences (such as a greater faithfulness to the score) and made the above suggestions, which I utilised to different degrees. With so many variables, David’s stoic non-interventionism in my fundamental choices was one of the most obvious features of our later workshops. As he later said, allowing me to find my own approach to the score was an important part of the process.

A lot of it is about trust. And it goes both ways – the performer has to trust that I know what I’m trying to do and then I have to trust what they’re trying to do. And I think that very much happened with our collaboration. There was a certain point at which we both decided that we could trust each other. So then it almost didn’t matter how much we had contact or talked about it. As long as we could establish that trust, everything else flows quickly and easily.

This last point reminds us of Ferneyhough’s theory that notation expresses the “ideology of its own process of creation”.<sup>655</sup> The score was created in a single day of spontaneity, with many of the details left to the chance dripping and staining of the water across the paper. The score embodies a certain attitude of acceptance of unexpected results and a need for control to be tempered by chance, an attitude that was observed throughout our many workshops. The score also functions both prescriptively and descriptively, although both these functions are undercut by this ‘ideology’: the score as a prescriptive document can never be completely realised, and the score as a descriptive document will never accurately map onto any given performance.

There were also results that were unexpected:

- David had developed a sophisticated language and approach to collaboration to complement his choice of notation. Our early discussions, in which he introduced me to other examples of his notational practice and showed me its evolution, asked me about my own practice and approach to scores, as well as introducing me to his extra-musical influences, were all calculated to prepare me to deal with the score when it arrived. The long discussions on Deborah

---

<sup>655</sup> Ferneyhough (1995), p4. See *Mythologies: Notation*.

Hay's work, although seemingly tangential, became increasingly relevant as we went along, and by the end it was clear that Hay's use of riddles as instructions for her dancers, as a way of producing new modes of expression was analogous to David's graphic score, devised both to guide and confound me in order to create the most immediate, spontaneous performance. It should be noted that although I saw a strategy in David's early discussions with me, David felt that there was no conscious "planning or manipulating or engineering things".<sup>656</sup> Even if there was no conscious strategy, David's work with collaborators on his pieces over the years had allowed him to develop techniques and language that might not need conscious planning. As in the collaborations with Michael Finnissy and George Benjamin, David had developed a manner of collaborating that worked consistently for his goals, even if this was enacted in reaction to my own collaborative methods rather than planned in advance. There was certainly a consistency in the language and intentions behind his suggestions from the earliest meetings to our final workshops with a focus on making my performance more confident but also less demonstrative by playing games of efficiency and resistance, pushing me to a point where, like Deborah Hay's dancers, I could perform in a way that I was 'not there'.

- The 'success' of the work and its reception was tied inextricably to the choice of notation. The work, and its graphic score, became the most significant focal point for all the media attention (across a newspaper article, a magazine article, two radio interviews, a blog article, a newspaper review and a blog review). It was also the most enthusiastically received work in the workshops with schools students and the score itself became an object of fervent study by audience members for an hour after the Sydney performance.
- The score was a rewarding experience to interpret. The freedom to choose sounds and gestures allowed me, as a performer, a greater agency in creating the work even when compared to the most integrative collaborations in the rest of this thesis. The score also guided me to create a sound world with relatively little work compared with the same piece had it been conventionally

---

<sup>656</sup> Interview with David Young (31 May 2013).

notated, which would have become extremely complicated on the page, and extremely difficult and time-intensive to learn. Most of all, with the aid of David's advice in the workshops, the notation allowed me to achieve a spontaneity of expression and a richer palette of colours, despite the complexity of the gestures, compared to my playing of complex conventionally notated works.

By selecting an extremely unconventional and resistant mode of notation, David exaggerated the agency of the performer that is required in the creation of all new works, regardless of notation. As he wrote in his program note:

The notation can convey great precision, nuance and complexity whilst remaining immediate, fresh and spontaneous. This paradoxical quality lends the performer some great freedoms all within very strict parameters. And as with all music scores, even when the composer hands it over to the performer, it is still not music yet.<sup>657</sup>

---

<sup>657</sup>Program note for *Not Music Yet*, provided by the composer.

## Collaboration Profile

**Work:** *Not Music Yet* for solo piano

**Composer:** David Young (b. 1970)

**Performer:** Zubin Kanga (b. 1982)

**Previous collaborations:** None

**Commission Details:** Commissioned on 2 February 2011. A work featuring an innovative approach to the piano of 10 to 15 minutes.

**Performance Score Delivered:** 24 April 2012.

**Work Premiere:** 11 August 2012, Salon, Melbourne Recital Centre.

**Further Performances:** 16 August 2012, The Independent Theatre, Sydney.

**Studio Recording:**

23 August 2012, Move Records

4 January 2013, Hospital Hill Records

**Documented Workshops:**

3 March 2011 (Chamber Made Opera offices, Melbourne).

25 August 2011 (Victorian College of the Arts, Melbourne).

24 April 2012 (David Young's residence, Melbourne).

18 July 2012 (Skype workshop - filmed at Kanga's Sydney residence).

1 August 2012 (Skype workshop - filmed at Kanga's Sydney residence).

**Interview:** 31 May 2013.

# Conclusions

Taking a wider view of all the cases I have documented allows for the observation of larger trends within each topic area as well as across the entire research project. This also allows for conclusions about the effects of catalysts, pressures and moderators to be correlated across all the documented cases.

## Chapter 1

The four cases of this chapter provided four different perspectives on how imbalances in authority might affect the collaboration process. All four case studies showed that the differences in age and career establishment had some affect on some of the interactions but in all these cases, there were still many interactions that were egalitarian rather than hierarchical, and collaborations with Finnissy, Whale and Jameson became increasingly egalitarian as they progressed towards the final workshops.

The case where the authoritative difference seemed to have the greatest effect was that with George Benjamin, and there are many similarities with other collaborations I documented (but did not examine in detail in the case studies). One feature that was found in many such collaborations was mono-directional communication, with the composer imposing specific interpretative choices that I felt unable or unwilling to challenge. In January 2011, I performed Beat Furrer's *Nuun* for two pianos and orchestra (1996) with pianist, Rolf Hind and the London Sinfonietta, with Furrer conducting. In our first rehearsal, Furrer requested an unusual setup, with the two pianos placed on the far ends of the ensemble. This seemed illogical to me - the placement made the intricate hocketing rhythms between the pianos very difficult to perform, the pianos less audible to the audience due to their angles and the solo performers less visible. I made my case to Rolf, who counselled that "I think he knows what he's doing".<sup>658</sup> Given that it was Furrer's piece, which he had conducted previously with Klangforum Wien on

---

<sup>658</sup> Video of workshop with Beat Furrer, Rolf Hind and the London Sinfonietta (15 January 2011).



numerous occasions, I felt obligated to agree with Rolf, against my musical instincts. In the performance itself, all the issues I had identified were still present, marring what would otherwise have been a good performance.<sup>659</sup> In this case, my decision not to challenge Furrer's interpretative choice resulted in negative consequences for the performance.

Another similar collaboration was with Steve Reich who attended a three-hour rehearsal of his work, *Music for 18 Musicians* (1996), performed by Synergy Percussion, Ensemble Offspring and Halcyon (I performed the Piano 3 part).<sup>660</sup> Reich was furious when he saw our setup, featuring a narrow centre-stage grouping of instruments in many rows and the pianos in a V-formation. He explained that the crucial sightlines and the clarity of cues within the ensemble would be hindered by this setup in comparison to the setup he advocated, with the instruments spread wide across the stage and the pianos in two parallel pairs, framing the group. As we began rehearsing the work, Reich began attributing missed cues and rhythmic instability to our setup. At one point he made this clear when I had missed an entry cue from the 1<sup>st</sup> xylophone player, who was placed on the far side of the ensemble. Reich exclaimed to the xylophonist "Of course he

---

<sup>659</sup> The reviews of the concert were generally very generous (including a four star review in *The Guardian*), but some alluded to the density of the writing submerging the piano sound, such as Stephen Graham (*MusicCriticism.com*) who wrote,

Anchoring the whole were the two pianos of Rolf Hind and Zubin Kanga, relentless both, who, even when submerged by the teeming overtone grids, could be felt to playfully and authoritatively sound the disorderly pulse that gave the music its heart.

Peter Grahame Woolf of *Music Pointers* was much more bald in his criticisms, stating:

The largest work, for two pianos and large ensemble, had the pianos angled to make Hind & Kanga scarcely visible from our press seats and Kanga's playing often inaudible within the clotted complexities of the orchestral writing which tended to negate intriguing elements within the teeming activity.

Graham, Stephen: "Furrer: Nuun, Presto, Xenos; Pinnock: Words" (review), *MusicalCriticism.com*, 22 January 2011, <http://www.musicalcriticism.com/concerts/qeh-sinfonietta-furrer-0111.shtml> (accessed 15 July 2013).

Woolf, Peter Grahame: "Beat Furrer and Naomi Pinnock", *Musical Pointers*, 20 January 2011, <http://www.musicalpointers.co.uk/reviews/liveevents11/FurrerPinnock.html> (accessed 15 July 2013).

<sup>660</sup> In *Music for 18 Musicians*, Pianos 1 and 2 are the 'pulse' pianos that, alongside Marimbas 1 and 2, play hocketing quavers for large portions of the piece. Pianos 3 and 4 are the 'melodic' pianos, which play more complex patterns, often pairing with the two xylophones and Marimba 3.

couldn't see you, he's over here. And where are you? Over in Siberia!"<sup>661</sup> We switched to the setup that Reich advocated for the performance, and the results were beneficial. In the setup he advocated, the 1<sup>st</sup> xylophone player was playing back to back with me, allowing us to hear each other, even in quiet passages and to visually communicate by simply looking over our shoulders. There were many similar subtle advantages to the setup, allowing the different groupings of instruments to hear and see each other and for the crucial 'pulse' parts to be heard clearly at all times. As in the collaboration with Furrer, the composer's preferred setup took precedence over the performers', but in this case the composer was right, and his chosen setup revealed his accumulated experience of performing the work over many decades.

Contrasting with these situations were many cases where differences in age and authority were self-consciously dissolved. My rehearsals with Thomas Adès on his *Concerto Conciso* (1996) followed this model, where he encouraged me to find my own solutions to the technical demands of a work that was built around his own technique (and his enormous hands) even when this meant leaving out notes and rolling whole passages of chords, altering the texture significantly. One could also include the collaborations with Elliott Gyger (Chapter 3) and David Young (Chapter 5) as relationships where any potential for authoritative difference to have a significant impact was neutralised in early workshops. Perhaps the most utopian attempt to dissolve the boundaries of age and authority was on the Nashville Exchange in 2010 organised by Peter Sheppard Skaerved and Michael Alec Rose, where students and staff from the Royal Academy of Music and Vanderbilt University spent a week each in London and Nashville, collaborating on new works but without the pressure of defined goals and deadlines. Many of the virtuosic techniques explored with David Gorton (Chapter 3) emerged from these workshops.

Given the mixed results of each of the collaborations affected by authoritative difference, it is impossible to make any judgements on the short-term efficacy of either egalitarian or hierarchical relationships – indeed the

---

<sup>661</sup> Video of workshop with Steve Reich, Synergy Percussion, Ensemble Offspring and Halcyon (27 April 2012).

relatively hierarchical collaboration with Benjamin resulted in very positive outcomes for the piece and the performance. However, it can be demonstrated that the relationships where authoritative differences were deliberately minimised resulted in a greater sense of satisfaction and ownership of the process for both participants, better outcomes for the musical development of the junior participant (for me as a performer, after working with Finnissy, and for Whale and Jameson in their compositional development) and a better mechanism for identifying and managing risks in both the compositional and performative phases.

## Chapter 2

The circumstances that facilitated the deep integrative compositional activity on Alex Pozniak's *Interventions* were only temporarily present in other cases, though moments of integrative activity can be observed in Chapter 4 (in the collaborations on Rojas' *Entre Ritos y Parrandas* and *Entre Bajos y Alturas*) as well as moments in Chapter 3 (particularly the use of improvisation to create material for the 2nd and 3rd movements of Gorton's *Orfordness*).

The other most significant integrative exchange where a composer invited me to take on a major role in the composition process occurred in June 2012 in a collaboration with Glasgow-based Australian composer, Jane Stanley. We had been discussing by email the drafts for her solo piano work, *Diptych*, but with results that were unsatisfactory for both of us: my suggestions for minor edits resulted in Jane repeatedly rewriting large sections of the piece, leading to three quite distinct pieces that could be used as the first movement. Jane flew to London for a workshop on 17 June 2012, the only possible workshop until just before the premiere in August. In the first hour of the workshop, I suggested using the best parts of each of the three draft first movements to form a short prelude to the longer second movement. When she invited me to suggest how this might be done, I unilaterally created a kind of 'edit map', using the strongest parts of each draft in a sequence that seemed (to me) structurally sound. Jane accepted my version of the prelude and implemented it as the new movement, with minor alterations to manage the transitions between sections. In this case there was no explicit

authoritative imbalance, indeed Jane could be seen as the senior partner.<sup>662</sup> This case seems to show a similar type of collaboration to Pozniak, affected by time constraints and facilitated by the composer's invitation to collaborate integratively. Although the interaction was briefer and more mono-directional than with Pozniak, my desire for control, combined with Stanley's invitation to enter her creative territory allowed me to take control of the workshop, resulting in a quick resolution in this case without any further conflict.

### Chapter 3

All three case studies in this chapter demonstrate that, with the testing of tolerance thresholds, risks are created or increased and the collaboration focuses on managing these risks. This pattern applied across all the different styles and different approaches to technique, whether employing conventional pianism (as in the collaboration with Moles) or using extended techniques (as in the collaborations with Gyger and Gorton).

The management of risk in virtuosic passages was a feature observed in my collaboration with Pozniak (Chapter 2), particularly when I was required to create a very complex passage – in this case, a semi-improvised approach reduced the technical risks but increased my responsibility for the musical result. It also briefly featured in my collaboration with Rojas (Chapter 4) when I struggled to play the descending chromatic triads in the 2nd movement. In that case, we worked out a multi-stage strategy for learning and performing the passage, allowing me to leave out some notes if required, but to put them back in once I felt comfortable doing so.

Similar risk management strategies can be observed in other collaborations I have undertaken. When practicing Rolf Hind's *Towers of Silence* (2007), I discovered that the complex passages of harmonics could not be played on all pianos, and that an 'arrangement' of the passage, using different harmonics

---

<sup>662</sup> Jane Stanley was a student at the University of Sydney six years before me and was my tutor for a first year undergraduate class. At the time of collaboration, she had completed her PhD and had a full time position as lecturer at the University of Glasgow, while I was still a PhD student.

in a different register of the keyboard would need to be devised (a more extreme version of the problem of the site-specific instrument explored in the Gyger case). When I discussed this with Rolf, he advised me on the risk management techniques required: organising several hours of extra rehearsal time on the piano prior to a performance and writing out an ossia for the sections that most frequently required rearrangement. In this quasi-teacher-student discussion, a management strategy, with applications beyond the piece at hand, was passed to me.

The testing and subsequent management of new techniques was featured in collaborations on Nicholas Vines' *Uncanny Valley* (2011) and on Elo Masing's *Studies in Resonance II* (2013). Vines used fast alternations between extended techniques (mainly tapping, slapping, knocking and plucking the strings) and keyboard playing. The need to switch very quickly between techniques (examined in the Gyger and Gorton cases) necessitated a negotiation of tempo, informed by repeated performative testing. When working with Masing on her piece, the new techniques were created through exploratory testing, which dominated our early workshops. There were then workshops featuring diagnostic testing to see whether Masing's chosen techniques could be performed in fast succession (in a similar fashion to the workshop on the third movement of *Orfordness*). In this case, techniques that were deemed too physically risky (such as very fast downward scrapes along the bass strings which we determined posed the risk of losing a fingernail) and some were deemed to be too impractical (such as the performance of the work while wearing rubber thimbles) were either used more sparingly or removed from the piece. In our final workshops, the fast successions of unconventional keyboard techniques, including playing the keys with the wrist, elbows, fist and arm as well as the inside-piano techniques were subjected to performative testing, and as in all the above cases, the negotiation of tempi was a key risk management strategy.

An important result of these collaborations is the distribution of risk ownership and risk responsibility. The collaborations make it clear that very few risks are solely the responsibility of the composer or the performer, and that the consequences of failures are felt by both. Interestingly, the cases revealed that my

own risk appetite is large early in the collaborations but gradually decreases until I become relatively risk averse before the performance. Though this occasionally results in negative consequences, such as my overestimation of the manageable tempo in the Moles and Gorton cases, it generally results in works that are ambitiously virtuosic but with difficulties that are well tested and managed.

## Chapter 4

My collaboration with Daniel Rojas is unique in my professional experience, with no other collaborative relationship featuring so many pieces. However, my collaborative relationships with Pozniak and Gorton, each with two works written for me in relatively quick succession, are beginning to show features of a developing long-term relationship. In my work with Gorton, the technical innovations explored in *Fosdyke Wash* (2010) featuring e-bows were reused and expanded upon in *Orfordness*. Performance practice developed for the former piece was carried over into the latter and future pieces may well develop the practices further, allowing Gorton to create an approach to the piano that is distinctive yet diverse (as was the case with Rojas). My collaboration with Pozniak features two works completed as mature 'professionals' as well as a number of student works.<sup>663</sup> In this case, our independent development as students meant that the continuity and maturity necessary for the establishment of a performance practice was only present after our work on *Crush* (2008), but it is fast developing into a fruitful relationship.

## Chapter 5

Although there were no other collaborations during the research period that used a completely graphic score, as David Young did, there were a number of collaborations on scores with graphical components. In Pozniak's *Interventions* (Chapter 2) the graphical notation was used for the same reasons as in Young's *Not Music Yet* – it allowed an efficient transmission of information and transferred responsibilities for certain decisions from the composer to the performer. However, whereas Young left the choice of musical materials open to

---

<sup>663</sup> See the collaboration profile in Chapter 2.

interpretation, but still asked for the notation to be interpreted precisely, Pozniak was very specific about the musical materials, while the notation was imprecise, relying on site-specific performance practice to fill the blanks. In *Tango* (2007), Claudia Molitor used stick-figure diagrams to show the pianists movements around, on and under the piano. Although these diagrams were very clear and precise, there were still many aspects of the movements that were open to interpretation and our workshop focused on finding the right character for these movements. In this way, her graphic notation functions in a similar way to conventional musical notation, being both prescriptive and descriptive as well as both precise and imprecise – the difference is the musical parameters to which precision is directed.

## **General Observations**

### **Innovation correlated with Collaboration**

Although I observed no correlation between the types of collaboration and quality of the artistic products, there was a clear correlation across the case studies between the innovation of new extended techniques, or the extension and development of established ones, and the presence of integrative workshops early in the composition process. In the case studies with Whale, Pozniak, Gyger, Gorton and Rojas (in *Entre Bajos y Alturas*), innovative techniques were discovered in early workshops, often through free play and shared improvisation. The case studies with Benjamin, Finnissy, Jameson, Moles and Rojas (in his earlier works) often featured early meetings and significant discussions by correspondence, but there were no workshops on notated material prior to the performance preparation-phase workshops on the completed drafts or finished works, and no extended techniques used in the finished works. This suggests that the composers interested in exploring new extended techniques wanted to engage with sketch materials and germinal ideas early on, so that new techniques could be found through experimental testing and existing techniques could undergo diagnostic testing to explore the limits of virtuosity. The collaboration with Young was an exception, featuring early discussions that turned out to be significant, and then late performance preparation-phase workshops where fundamental

compositional decisions were discussed and often altered. In this case, the complete transfer of responsibility for the choice and execution of any extended techniques resulted in a divergent collaborative narrative where the distinct separation of roles allowed me the opportunity to choose how conventional or innovative the techniques would be.

### **Collaboration by Correspondence**

In almost all of the collaborations, discussions of the work-in-progress were conducted by email. In the collaborations with Finnissy, Jameson, Gyger, Moles and Rojas, these discussions were as significant to the process as the face-to-face workshops but in all these cases the written word was found wanting in comparison.

One significant source of conflict was the difficulty of expressing tone of voice in written communication. When I wrote to Finnissy about a change to the opening harmony of Z/K (Chapter 1), stating that I preferred the previous version, it came across as a fundamental challenge to his compositional autonomy, while the same question in a workshop might have been brushed aside as harmless curiosity. When asking Phil Jameson about his reasons for composing a Bach-pastiche (Chapter 1), my long explanation came across as hectoring and preachy, but might have been handled more sensitively in person. My attempts at collaboration with Daniel Rojas during the final stages of the composition of *Entre Bajos y Alturas* (Chapter 4) were particularly revealing: discussions we had started in person only a few weeks previously descended into unproductive conflicts over the quality of the piece, deadlines and remuneration and my attempts at reassurance came across as threats. In all these cases, it was not the content of the communication that created conflict or resistance but the lack of nuance in tone, lack of immediate feedback and the length of time required to converse, leading to misunderstanding and an exaggeration of any criticisms.

It should also be noted that in all the above examples, I am the one who sends the written communication that causes conflict: this is partly a result of the conventional expectations of collaboration, where the composer is allowed to



work privately, and my communications may seem like a disruptive intrusion into this normally secluded creative space. The work-in-progress of composers (that is, the drafts of their score) is also more easily sent by written correspondence, while a performer's work-in-progress (the partly learnt piece) is challenging to capture in writing. But there is also an aspect of this which may be particular to my practice. When I met with Jane Stanley to work on her work *Diptych*, she said to me "you seem really angry over email".<sup>664</sup> I recall that I did not feel angry when writing to Stanley, but I was very direct and concise. In future collaborations I would be more selective in the types of criticisms I would communicate via email, leaving integrative work for the workshops, where misunderstandings and conflicts can be more efficiently and painlessly resolved.

### **Auto-ethnography and the Observer Effect**

This study is the latest of several that use autoethnographic methods to examine composer-performer relationships (see Introduction). However none of the studies thus far have critically examined the effect of an autoethnographic method on the collaborations.

In physics, the 'observer effect' describes the way a system is changed by its observation. The most well known examples are found in particle physics, where detecting the position of an electron requires a photon to be bounced off it, changing its velocity.<sup>665</sup> This 'observer effect' is analogous to a number of interactions in my cases. During a number of later workshops with me, Rojas would deliberately censor his conversations, cutting off a discussion that might involve gossip or sensitive information about colleagues until after the camera had been turned off. On other occasions, he would preface a statement with "this is just

---

<sup>664</sup> Video of workshop with Jane Stanley (17 June 2012).

<sup>665</sup> The Observer Effect is closely related to, and easily confused with, Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, a confusion originating with Heisenberg himself, who used the above example to illustrate his principle. It has since been shown that the Uncertainty Principle is a fundamental law of quantum physics and not a statement on the observational success of current technologies. A non-quantum example of the Observer Effect would be the use of a thermometer to measure the temperature of a glass of water - the presence of the thermometer will alter the temperature of the water as it is being measured. For an introduction to Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, see: Cox, Brian and Forshaw, Jeff: *The Quantum Universe: Everything That Can Happen Does Happen*, (London: Penguin, 2012).

between you, me and the camera. It can't leave this room".<sup>666</sup> This demonstrates that the camera's presence changed the language and content of the workshop, though how it might have altered the artistic outcomes is more difficult to determine. Other acts of censorship include the management of the London Sinfonietta at first refusing to allow any documentation of workshops, and then allowing it only if the sound was immediately removed from the recordings and George Benjamin allowing me to film our workshop but not to film our interview. It is, of course, my privilege to be filming any of my collaborative partners, but this overt wariness suggests an understanding that allowing someone else to document your work gives them a power over your representation that is out of your control.<sup>667</sup> The imbalance of power that comes with ethnographic documentation is never absent and in these cases it emerges into plain sight.

In some cases the documentation materials were used to assist and inform the collaboration. Both David Gorton and Elo Masing used my films from early workshops to analyse our experimental testing of new techniques. In Gorton's case, we then co-wrote a conference paper, reflecting on our process of collaborating on the piece while the fourth and fifth movements were still unfinished.<sup>668</sup> Our research undoubtedly affected David's subsequent composition and my performance preparation as we were able to articulate with clarity the virtuosic aims of each movement, as well as our individual strategies during workshops, thus better defining the piece and our working process as we continued to collaborate. In these cases, the Observer Effect was productive and I plan to continue to document all my workshops with composers in the future as I judge that the potential creative benefits of documentation outweigh the risks.

### **The Piano as Lingua Franca**

A common knowledge of the piano and its repertoire proved vital in all of the collaborations. All the composers had at least a basic knowledge and

---

<sup>666</sup> Video of Workshop with Daniel Rojas (1 July 2011).

<sup>667</sup> This awareness of the subjectivity and didacticism of documenting with a camera mirrors Sontag's concerns (see *Mythologies: Remembering*).

<sup>668</sup> Gorton, David and Kanga, Zubin: "'Collaborating in Virtuosity: an agent for re-imagining the creative process", *Tracking the Creative Process in Music* (conference), Lille, France, 30 September 2011.

experience of the piano, and half of them had an advanced knowledge as accomplished pianists. Innovations around the piano could be found across a wide variety of collaborations, regardless of the pianistic experience of the composer, suggesting that composers of different experiences used my presence as a resource to supplement their own expertise. However, the greater pianistic experience of some composers brought benefits to the collaboration. The more experienced pianist-composers – Finnissy, Benjamin, Jameson, Pozniak and Rojas – created works that required little or no alterations to work with my own technique. They also possessed a specific language of pianism that allowed for effective communication in the workshops. For example: Benjamin drawing on practice methods taught by Loriod; Finnissy referring to the “Wigmore Hall school of interpretation”; Jameson discussing the differing approaches of Gould and Tureck to performing fugues; Pozniak’s practical knowledge of tools useful for extended techniques and Rojas’ references to the articulation used by Pablo Ziegler and other tango specialists.

However, it should be noted that the three works that pushed the boundaries of virtuosity were all by composers with some training but little professional experience as pianists: Gyger, Moles and Gorton. This suggests that being less aware of the conventional boundaries of virtuosity allows these boundaries to be pushed and transcended.<sup>669</sup> Young’s approach was radically removed from all of the others, producing a work full of extended techniques and virtuosity by transferring all responsibility for these the pianistic aspects of the music to the performer and having no pianistic details in his score or instructions.

### **The Work-in-Progress**

The works created in this study continued to evolve after the premiere and in some cases changed several times with subsequent performances – Pozniak’s *Interventions* had a new score, with entirely new material for the second performance, Finnissy’s score for the second performance of *Z/K* featured major revisions to the final third of the piece and Rojas’ *Entre Bajos y Alturas* received

---

<sup>669</sup> This is counterintuitive, given that the history of pianistic innovation is full of composer-pianists (see *Mythologies: The Piano*).

significant edits after four performances. Even without implementing edits, my approach changed with subsequent performances, which in turn affected the reception of the works. For example, when I premiered Nicholas Vines' *Uncanny Valley*, it was singled out as the one disappointment of the recital, but my fourth performance earned the work (and me) a major prize at the 2012 Australian Art Music Awards.<sup>670</sup> This further clarifies the argument already presented (in *Mythologies: The Work*) that the modernist notion of a stable and consistent 'finished' work is a myth and that works are always works-in-progress: dynamic, evolving and contingent on the cultural, economic and performative circumstances every time it is performed.

### **The Distribution of the Work and its Ownership**

All of the cases involved the active distribution of creative input between participants. Finnissy and Young used notation to transfer compositional responsibilities to me, while in the collaborations with Pozniak and Rojas, performance practice became a site of creativity and negotiation that superseded the score. In the three case studies on virtuosic works, I took on the responsibilities for testing and risk management, allowing my assessments to inform the creation and negotiation of virtuosic techniques. Although conventional responsibilities were passively distributed between the roles (that is, the final notation of the score to the composer and the final performance preparation for myself) the workshops were a site of active distribution. In the collaboration with Young, although the roles were maintained very clearly, the transfer of responsibilities was dramatic with the choice of musical materials, microstructure and pianistic techniques actively transferred to the performer. Paradoxically, this transfer of responsibilities crystallised our respective roles

---

<sup>670</sup> Jennifer Gall, writing for the Canberra Times, wrote, "I wasn't sure about Nicholas Vines' creepy evocation of robotic creatures in *Uncanny Valley*, but I did enjoy the snare drum effect of the pages inserted into the piano string." Gall, Jennifer: "Piano: Inside/Out – Zubin Kanga in Concert", *Canberra Times*, 25 July 2011. The fourth performance of *Uncanny Valley* (from my 'Generations' recital in Sydney) was awarded the NSW State Prize for Excellence: Performance of the Year at the AMC/APRA Art Music Awards, 2012.

rather than dissolving them, but these new roles had to be discovered through the workshops.

The sites of distribution were most often at the points where specific catalysts were active: notation, virtuosity, performance practice and innovation. Although the cases with Pozniak and Rojas required particularly complex and dynamic distribution, the sites remained the same, with the innovative practices of their music (theatrical aspects in Interventions and piano preparation in *Entre Bajos y Alturas*) requiring the greatest redistribution of responsibilities. When other sites of distribution were chosen, the process seemed less organic and often led to conflict: in particular my attempt to instigate a distribution of creativity early in the composition process through integrative collaboration found resistance in the cases with Finnissy and Rojas.

Given the complexity of creative distribution within the works documented, the idea that composers own these works seems problematic. Copyright law, the legal enshrinement of this conventional conception of ownership might be necessary to secure the income streams of composers but this legal truth does not prove an ontological one. An extreme example might be a hypothetical case where another composer (or DJ) sampled a significant portion of my performance of Young's *Not Music Yet*. Whose copyright has been infringed in this case? There are no simple answers, but all musicians will need to reassess the conventional paradigms of musical ownership as the industry struggles to adapt to the Internet age.<sup>671</sup>

### **Failed Collaborations**

Despite the overall artistic success of this creative/research project and the large number of works created, there were several collaborations that failed, resulting in the works never being performed. They provide an insight into the types of conflicts and relationships that cannot be salvaged.

---

<sup>671</sup> There is an ongoing debate about the way that music is sold, consumed and paid for, with streaming websites such as Spotify drawing consumers away from CD sales, as well as piracy, while attracting criticism for its miniscule royalty payments. Ingham, Tim and Lynch, Johnny: "Is Spotify bad for music?", *The Guardian*, 21 July 2013 (accessed 15 August 2013).

- I commissioned a PhD student at a major London music college to compose a work for two pianos for a performance of two-piano music, featuring three pianists (in different combinations) in London. The composer missed the agreed deadline and the score contained many errors and pianistic impracticalities as well as being far longer than originally requested. In consultation with the other pianist for this work, Eliza McCarthy, we decided that the work would require major edits to facilitate a performance in the limited time available. The composer agreed to meet with me, but brought her composition teacher to the meeting. After refusing to admit to any errors in the score (of which some were obvious, such as notes out of the range of the standard keyboard) and refusing to enter into any negotiation or workshop, I discussed the situation with Eliza and we removed the piece from the programme. Although an attempt was made to workshop the piece at a later date, the composer refused to make any changes, ended our working relationship and forbade me from performing any of her music. The work remains unperformed.
- I commissioned a young composer, a recent Masters graduate of a major London music college, to write a work for a recital featuring piano music with extended techniques. We discussed plans for the work in detail, including the use of crotales suspended over the strings and other auxiliary percussion. The composer missed the deadline and then delivered a piece that was very different from what we discussed: a set of etudes using conventional piano techniques. There was by this point, no time for workshops, and my discussions with him suggested that any future workshops would be unproductive, as he had composed a work completely outside the original brief. The work remains unperformed.

These collaborations share several features: the composer missed the deadline, failed to observe the brief, wrote a work that I considered to be substandard and either avoided or refused the opportunity for negotiation in a workshop. Any one of these issues would not have been a problem – indeed some of these features are found in a number of cases in this thesis and I have worked around them many

times – but their combination demonstrates a lack of respect for the performer, their creative practice, their expertise and their time. They also show a disregard for the works of the other composers in the program (and the preparation time required for each of these) as well as the planning, time and financial investment of the curators, presenters and sponsors of the concert event. Although some performers would go ahead with a premiere under these conditions, I choose not to, as I am not obligated to do so (due to the breach of contract due to the missed deadlines).<sup>672</sup> However, as the commissioner of these works, I must also take responsibility, and these failures have provided me with insights into the causes of destructive conflicts as well as showing me the importance of managing risks in relationships.<sup>673</sup>

## Productive Strategies

Although it would be very difficult to demonstrate that any model of collaboration is superior to another, the cases studied suggest a number of strategies that seem to have resulted in positive outcomes for the collaborations.

**Communicating Priorities:** Collaboration through workshops allowed composers to explain their priorities and, in particular, their definitions of precision. David Young's desire for precision was more about an attitude to the interpretation of the score rather than the execution of specifically notated details, as it was the case in Benjamin's *Piano Figures*. Pozniak's notion of precision was unrelated to the score, but still extremely detailed (as demonstrated by his written feedback), while Daniel Rojas' approach to precision required an understanding of South American popular and traditional idioms. Understanding these different priorities allowed me to focus my energies on particular aspects of the music that required the greatest attention and also gave me framework from which I could judge the accuracy of my playing.

---

<sup>672</sup> There are many composers who are difficult, uncooperative or even mean-spirited, who I am still prepared to collaborate with, if their works are so skillfully and convincingly conceived that performance becomes creatively satisfying regardless.

<sup>673</sup> These insights into relationship-centred conflict confirm support the theories of other researchers, including John-Steiner, Moran, Roche and Sonnenburg (see *Mythologies: Conflict*).

**Cross-Pollination of Ideas:** Innovation was fostered through the flow of new ideas, innovations and strategies during workshops. For example, strategies for preparing the piano and playing complex sequences of extended techniques such as harmonics were passed on to me through workshops with Rolf Hind on his *Towers of Silence*. These influenced the new approaches to preparation with blu-tac found in early workshops on Rojas' *Entre Bajos y Alturas* as well as the filtering of resonances from harmonics in Masing's *Studies in Resonance II*. Rojas' use of blu-tac on harmonics passed to Gyger in my workshops, while Hind's use of e-bows (and my need to own two to play his piece) facilitated the innovations of Gorton's *Fosdyke Wash* and *Orfordness*, which were, in turn, picked up by Whale for use in *Errata*. Another example is Molitor's use of movement and surrealist theatre, which influenced Pozniak's theatrical explorations in *Interventions*. The beginnings of a network of innovation and influence can be observed, and it is possible to see how performers working with many composers, such as David Tudor, became hubs for these networks, fostering communication of new ideas as well as adding new innovations to the pool.

**Communication-through-playing:** Workshops allowed the use of an instrument to communicate, a type of communication that was often superior and sometimes necessary for site-specific performance practice to be formulated.<sup>674</sup> For Rojas to show me the correct 'feel' of a salsa or tango, he had to sit down and play it. The generation of new material in my collaboration with Pozniak occurred with both of us at a piano, experimenting, consolidating and then honing the material with verbal description used only to provide context and to jog memory. Benjamin felt he could only communicate the precise colours and articulations he was asking for by playing them himself. In these cases, the composers' advanced pianistic skills facilitated this form of communication that was less easy to utilise by non-pianist composers. In many cases, I could only communicate certain problems through demonstration: the difficulty of balancing the sounds of prepared and unprepared notes in Gyger's *...out of obscurity*, the awkwardness of certain dyads in the first

---

<sup>674</sup> Stefan Östersjö uses a similar term, "thinking-through-practice". But whereas his term is focused on the internal creative process of a performing musician, mine is centered around the type of communication utilised by either participant in a workshop. Both terms are useful for researchers studying collaborative creativity. See Östersjö (2008), p 77.



movement of Gorton's *Orfordness*, the tempo limits of different types of articulation in Moles's *Diabolic Machines* and my confusion over the interpretation of the 'senza misura' sections in Finnis's *Z/K*, could only be resolved by communicating the various options at the instrument.

**Play and Humour:** Confirming observations made previously by Roche and Sawyer, humour and play fostered my collaborative relationships, but also facilitated innovation.<sup>675</sup> In the collaborations with Rojas on *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, humour played a role at all stages of the process: facilitating the fluidity of roles in the early workshops, diffusing conflict in the leadup to the score delivery and allowing criticisms – of his compositional decisions, including the choice of ending, and of my rhythmic feel and tempo choices – to be voiced and addressed without any return to destructive conflict. Humour was also used to moderate conflict in the collaborations with Jameson, Gorton and Young, but to a lesser extent. Free play often gave rise to innovation, allowing a space for early experiments and improvisations that produced new techniques, new uses of old tools (such as the e-bow) and musical materials. This was particularly observed in the cases with Rojas, Pozniak, Gorton and Masing.

There was also a correlation between the use of playful or humorous digressions and the length of the workshops. Long and productive workshops with Rojas and Pozniak featured humour as a mechanism for defusing tension, maintaining motivation and allowing a rest for our concentration, pushing the workshops to longer than the average of 95 minutes.<sup>676</sup> Although there was more work achieved in these workshops, it was not necessarily efficient work and it would require further research to determine at what point free play stops becoming productive and starts becoming wasteful.

**Testing and Risk Management:** An important strategy that emerged repeatedly was the importance of testing within a framework of risk management. All the works, not just those with virtuosic aspirations, engaged with performative risk

---

<sup>675</sup> For more on Roche's and Sawyer's observations on the role of play and humour in collaborative creativity, see *Mythologies: Intimacy*.

<sup>676</sup> This is the median of the workshop lengths for all documented one-on-one workshops. The three-hour workshop with Benjamin is the exception, a result of my limited access to him in the period before the performance.

and in a number of cases the risk responsibility was shared. The collaborations with Gyger, Moles, Gorton, Rojas and Jameson all involved negotiation of tempi to manage risk (some more successfully than others). The collaborations with Gyger and Gorton also involved negotiation of variations in tempo (a kind of strategic rubato) to manage the points of highest resistance without sacrificing the overall tempo. In all these cases, testing frequently and early paid efficiency dividends later in the process. Although performative testing was almost always carried out before the premiere, diagnostic testing was sometimes absent, and in the collaborations with Jameson, Rojas and Gyger, this lack of intermediate-stage testing resulted in more drastic edits and changes of tempo late in the process to alleviate moments of high risk. One technique that can assist in communicating risk is quantifying the probabilities of different events. Christopher Redgate has long employed this method, in which he states to the composer, “this multiphonic will come out 60% of the time, on this reed, while I’ll only get this one 20% of the time”.<sup>677</sup> The use of probabilities allows risk to be discussed with more nuance than merely saying to a composer, “this might be doable” “this is too risky” or “this needs to be changed, as it’s not going to work”.<sup>678</sup>

**Low Resolution Notation:** Just as Roberto Gerhard spoke of notation’s ambiguities as its saving grace, ambiguous or deliberately ‘low-resolution’ notation was a productive feature of many collaborations.<sup>679</sup> Finnissy’s ‘senza misura’ sections were the most sophisticated examples, with most details of rhythm, dynamics, articulation and counterpoint excluded from the notation but subtly suggested through his handwriting. Similarly, free aspects in Gorton’s and Whale’s pieces allowed the responsibility for managing the tricky e-bow-centred passages to be transferred to the performer. David Young’s score was in some ways extremely high-resolution with an incredible amount of precise information on the page (infinitesimally so, given the watercolour medium) but it could also function as extremely low-resolution notation, describing the general shape of the

---

<sup>677</sup> Conversation with Christopher Redgate, 20th September 2009.

<sup>678</sup> Although these specific probabilities are very difficult to calculate, the psychological impact of using a specific percentage should not be overlooked. Nate Silver explores the complex relationship between probabilities and our subjective perception of them in his book, *The Signal and the Noise*.

Silver, Nate: *The Signal and the Noise*, (New York: Penguin 2012), p 61-64.

<sup>679</sup> See *Mythologies: Notation*.

sounds, depending on the performer's choice of focus. This facilitated great freedom and autonomy to choose whether to see the notation as precise or imprecise in different sections of the piece and at different stages of the process.

In some cases I specifically requested a lower-resolution notation, particularly when prescribing aspects of technique that I preferred to configure myself. The distribution of hands in passages spanning wide intervals was a technique that cropped up multiple times (most notably in the 4th movement of *Orfordness*). In all these cases, I asked the composer to notate the passage without any distribution of hands, leaving these details for me to add after testing different technical solutions. As with all choices of notation, these passages needed to be negotiated on a case-by-cases basis, as there were works where the composers dictated a distribution of hands for a specific contrapuntal or theatrical effect, such as in those by Pozniak and Masing. However, in the collaborations with Gorton, Moles and Stanley, the precise notation of my movements resisted the priorities for the passages – efficiency, speed and variety of colour – and the removal of this precision allowed me to find my own technical solutions to these virtuosic demands.

**Language (References):** Although there were weaknesses in my use of language used in workshops (see below) the frequent referencing of works of music (canonical as well as contemporary works I had heard or played) as well as other arts such as films and the sciences proved to be an effective tool for discussing the composition and interpretation of the music under development. The pool of references drawn upon was different for each composer: with Pozniak we frequently discussed the works of Grisey, Xenakis and Molitor, films by David Lynch and natural phenomena (such as the flow of water). With Rojas, I discussed Ginastera and Piazzolla, with Benjamin, Webern and Messiaen were relevant, and with Finnissy, we referred to his other works as well as the works of Berg, Schoenberg, Sammartini, Mozart and Haydn.

**Language (Censorship):** Although I maintained a policy of open communication with the composers, strategic use of censorship was sometimes a useful way of fostering innovation, streamlining workshops and avoiding unhelpful conflicts.

Gorton's use of censorship was the most sophisticated, censoring his own compositional methods from our discussions so that I would, paradoxically, feel more free to ask for any edits without worrying about the structural ramifications. Gorton's control over the technical tools I gave him (in some movements, testing early, and in others, after a draft had been completed) allowed him to feel unconstricted by any limitations I might have communicated and to push at the edges of my tolerance thresholds. In the collaboration with Rojas on *Entre Bajos y Alturas*, censorship took the form of refraining from communicating any criticisms or suggestions for the piece via written correspondence after finding that previous attempts to do so had created destructive conflicts with no productive gains. In this case, communication only temporarily censored from one form of communication until a workshop could be organised.

**Site-Specific Notation and Performance Practice:** The cases show how site-specific performance practice replaces the need for precise, or even consistent, notational practices, especially when extended techniques are used. Although similar extended techniques were explored in different pieces (e-bows in works by Whale, Gorton and Hind; harmonics in works by Gorton, Pozniak, Hind and Masing) each composer used slightly different notational strategies – some (like Whale and Pozniak) using descriptions of techniques in place of conventional notation. Although this inconsistency might seem like an unhelpful resistance, it did not pose a problem as long as there were opportunities for workshops. Site-specific performance practices allowed the intentions behind site-specific notational practices to be understood, such that the notation could be prescriptively or descriptively vague on the basis that any lack of detail could be compensated for in the workshops.<sup>680</sup> It is notable that most of the composers preferred to simply discuss performance practice issues with me, rather than attempting to implement their advice as notation. In some cases, it would have been impractical and inefficient to do so, but in others the performance practice

---

<sup>680</sup> For examples where an absence of (or lack of access to) site-specific performance practice causes problems for the performer, see *Mythologies: Performance Practice*.

was contingent on my presence and another performer might produce a different performance practice.<sup>681</sup>

In many cases, the act of documentation allowed me access to the detail of the discussions on performance practice that had become less clear in my memory. When performing Pozniak's *Interventions* in London, the videos of performances and workshops were essential for communicating to Antoine Françoise many of the details that were not clear from the score. To some extent, this could offer a solution to the lack of performance practice information left by performers such as David Tudor (see *Mythologies: Performance Practice*) but challenges remain in the future use of these materials by other players. Workshop videos could be edited and sent to future performers alongside the score, but the resources and time required to do this for all the works documented in this thesis is currently prohibitive. However, the increasing demand by other performers for these texts might make this process feasible in the future.<sup>682</sup>

**“Not Performing”:** During early discussions on *Not Music Yet*, David Young described his ideal approach to performance as a type of “not performing”. He went on to explain:

There's that kind of artifice and people use their technique or their training to hide the fact that they're actually there. And then when you see someone who is absolutely there. It's a completely different effect. And that's the kind of performance that I'm interested in, because I find it utterly compelling.<sup>683</sup>

In many of the collaborations, the later workshops often featured the composers looking for ways of eliciting this kind of performance from me. Confronted by resistant and dense music, my attention was drawn to the difficulties and complexities, and the composers used a number of strategies to allow me to let go

---

<sup>681</sup> This is similar to Kurtag's approach to tailoring resistances for each performer. See *Mythologies: Resistance*.

<sup>682</sup> This approach is gradually finding traction in Europe where recent multimedia publications by Vaes, and Herman and Walczak have attempted to provide the site-specific performance practice for works by Kagel and Lachenmann.

Vaes, Luk: *To Perform Maricio Kagel's tactil and Unter Strom* (book, DVD video and scores), University Press Leuven, Edition Peters, Mode Records, 2014.

Hermann, Mathias and Walczak, Maceij: *Extended Techniques in the Music of Helmut Lachenmann* (video and scores on CD-ROM and booklet), Breitkopf and Härtel, 2013.

<sup>683</sup> Young (2011). See Chapter 5.

of these details and trust my technique so that other musical priorities could attract my focus. Young's whole process, from the discussions, to the score itself and on to the later workshops were all aimed at producing this result. Rojas steered me towards the details of the South American dance rhythms and away from the notated details (with the appropriate 'groove' superseding the notated articulation). Gyger, Moles and Gorton all reduced resistances in the most difficult passages of their works to ensure the resistances would not devour all my attention. Benjamin, Finnissy, Whale and Jameson all used colourful metaphors to provoke a more imaginative response to the notation. Pozniak demonstrated gestures and movements himself, contrasting them with his observations of my own, thus coaching me to be less self-conscious as a dance instructor might. Although it may not have been apparent early in the workshops, it became very clear to me and to the composers that finding an approach that would allow me to inhabit the music, rather than overtly 'perform' it, was in both our interests.

### **Ongoing Challenges**

A number of challenges emerged out of the collaborations: some were strategies that were poorly conceived or executed, while others were external factors that introduced unnecessary resistances into the project.

**Trust:** Although trust was fundamental to all the collaborations in this study, the breaking, misuse or exploitation of trust was a source of conflict in several cases. The most obvious type of broken trust occurred with missed deadlines, a constant problem throughout this study. Among all the case studies, only Moles and Young delivered their pieces by the originally agreed deadline. Many composers were late for legitimate reasons – Finnissy was encumbered with more work than expected from his university position and Gyger fell ill in the weeks before the deadline – but many others were late due to self-imposed overwork and poor scheduling. In the cases with Rojas and Pozniak, the relationships with the closest personal trust and rapport, deadlines were missed and renegotiated repeatedly, suggesting that a high level of personal trust is in some cases actually detrimental to professional trust. It is clearly difficult to predict how a creative process will unfold, but a delayed piece only encumbers the performer with the increased

pressure to complete their own creative work in the time left before the performance – a much more concrete deadline that is difficult to shift. In many cases, a written contract might have served as a useful strategy for encouraging deadlines to be respected.

**The desire for control:** When sharing a creative space, there will inevitably be negotiations and constant reappraisals of the balance of control and responsibility. However, in some cases, my desire to control the developing piece created unproductive conflicts. The most prominent of these was my attempt to enter into an integrative mode of collaboration by correspondence with Rojas during the composition of *Entre Bajos y Alturas*. The attempts were unproductive and resulted in no changes to the piece, while possibly delaying the score delivery and increasing Rojas' feelings of anxiety and desperation. Edits to the piece were undertaken efficiently and with Rojas' enthusiastic cooperation after the score was delivered, so (as in the case with Finnissy) it was the timing of my attempt to exert control that caused conflict, not the exercise of control itself, which is certainly necessary in the performance preparation phase.

**Language (Precision):** Several of the composers – Benjamin, Finnissy, Jameson and Young in particular – had developed a sophisticated language of collaboration with which to communicate their intentions and desires. The use of orchestral analogies, specific analysis of pianistic technique, and more colourful and abstract metaphors allowed their communication to be clear, efficient and memorable. My own language was precise in identifying resistances and risks and in communicating the results of testing but it was less precise in quantifying risks or describing alternative technical strategies (particularly when a live workshop demonstration was not immediately feasible). In addition the use of non-verbal aids could be better utilised in future collaborations. For example, the use of marked-up scores as a way of showing technique was particularly effective in my work with Gorton, and this is a technique I will use more widely in the future.

**Language (Criticism):** My handling of criticisms of a composer's aesthetic or structural choices was often the source of conflict. The most heated conflicts were with Finnissy and Rojas, where my suggestion for a change was emphatically

rejected. A more subtle approach to criticism might be to ask questions for clarity: “I don’t understand this section. Can you explain what’s happening here?” rather than “This doesn’t work”.<sup>684</sup> The early delivery of the score, and the early delivery of sketches to be workshopped together often avoided any destructive conflicts and allowed criticisms to be managed in an unpressured environment, as occurred in the early workshops with Gorton, Moles and Gyger. The rapport of a long-term relationship was also valuable in resolving or harnessing conflicts (as was the case with Rojas). Perhaps mutual trust, earned over time might be a prerequisite for entering into conflicts on fundamental aesthetic decisions? Or perhaps such caution removes opportunities for innovation through collaboration that can result from successful outcomes of criticism.

**The Well-Tended Piano:** Objections or prohibitions to the use of extended techniques in pianos were widespread during the course of this study. The performances and recordings of the works by Gyger, Pozniak, Gorton and Rojas faced opposition from piano technicians who either wanted alternative instruments used, specific techniques left out or the pieces withdrawn from the programme. Most fascinating was the range of different objections: some objected to blu-tac, some to the use of markings on the strings and dampers and others to the touching of strings, but the prohibitions were inconsistent. Also fascinating was the attitude of the Steinway technicians at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, arguably the most prestigious venue I have performed in, who allowed all techniques and markings I requested (including touching the strings, using a glass tumbler inside the piano and scraping the frame with a ruler).<sup>685</sup> One possible solution may be to work in cooperation with a major piano manufacturer, such as Steinway, to create a list of all techniques that they would find acceptable for use on their instruments, which could then be made publicly available. This could then be used in negotiations with resistant technicians. A consistent and clear set of policies would assist artists and venues alike to facilitate innovation while protecting the instruments.

---

<sup>684</sup> This mirrors the recommendations by Roche on managing task conflicts. See *Mythologies: Intimacy*.

<sup>685</sup> These confirm all the difficulties of innovating new extended techniques outlined in *Mythologies: The Piano*.



## Areas for further investigation

One conspicuous omission from the variety of case studies is collaborations with women. I undertook many collaborations with female composers but they were not included as major cases due to the type of materials documented as well as the timing of work delivery, but I have briefly mentioned the collaborations with Elo Masing, Jane Stanley and Claudia Molitor above. Although a range of races, nationalities and sexualities were represented by my collaborators, these seemed to be largely irrelevant to the collaborations. Although my own experience suggests that these attributes of my collaborators have no observable effect on our working process, a larger field-wide study or meta-study may well find trends, and perhaps even show patterns of discrimination.

One major area for further research is the influence of musical institutions, companies and the structure of the music industry on the collaborative process. All of these affected the collaborations in this study: the limitations for revisions of scores placed on Benjamin by his publisher; the restrictions, freedoms, resources and restrictions for both students and academics in educational institutions; and the opportunities for and interest in new music (or lack thereof) by venues, festivals and record companies. In many cases, institutions have policies that are both supportive and unsupportive of contemporary music: Kings Place's advocacy for contemporary music allowed my recital to be presented in a major venue with excellent technical support and marketing reach, but the policy to only allow extended techniques on a suboptimal piano seemed to be at odds with the venue management's programming ideals. A wider study of the influence of these institutions might provide them with the necessary evidence to amend their policies in order to support rather than frustrate collaboration and its outputs.

Collaborations between composers and ensembles were documented within this study, and several are mentioned above, but a more thorough study could examine how a group deals with conflicts and negotiations with the composer differently from an individual. The effect of electronics, pre-recorded or live, is another field of enquiry that brings new pressures to a collaboration,

depending on whether the composer, the performer or a third party are responsible for the realisation of the electronics part.

Finally, an avenue for my own research would be to study the collaborations of other pianists with composers, providing an 'insiders' perspective on the specifically pianistic aspects of testing, negotiation and innovation. In combination with a meta-study of a large sample of previous cases, this might also allow some of the trends I identified in this thesis to be replicated across an even larger variety of collaborative partnerships.

## **The Artistic Output**

The portfolio contains 17 works, many of which are significant additions to the solo piano repertoire. There are new types of preparations used, new extended techniques, new uses of existing techniques (such as techniques using the e-bow) and new frontiers of virtuosity explored. Some of these works will remain associated with my identity as a performer, but a number of them will hopefully have their own lives with other performers and will outlast my association with them. My authorial input into these works (represented by the recordings as well as the scores) has been demonstrated in the case studies, and I present them as both a creative as well as a research output of the project.

To some extent, the written output of this study is dependent on the success of the artistic output: a number of the case studies are of particular interest individually due to the artistic success of the works. But the case studies as a whole also point to deeper findings concerning the types of catalysts, pressures and other factors that influence collaborative methods, findings that are not dependent on the success of individual works but rather only on the creative calibre of the participants.

## **The Myth of the Ideal Collaborator**

The diversity of relationships explored in this thesis, and the many journeys that each takes seems to refute any notion of an ideal method of

collaboration. Collaborations that were stressful and unenjoyable for both participants sometimes produced excellent results, and at other times ended in failure. Although innovation was correlated with the level of interaction between the participants, the success of the results of the collaboration was not. This thesis also refutes any notion that I am an ideal collaborator. There are many moments where I am over-controlling, untrusting, harassingly intrusive, inarticulate, inconsistent and over-confident in my abilities. But I am also not a bad collaborator, as there are moments where I am generous with my creativity and my time, knowledgeable in repertoire and technique, forgiving of breaches of trust, eclectic in my choices, dedicated to the process and fearless in my virtuosity. My specialised skills as a virtuoso inspired many of the composers to innovate and explore new approaches to the instrument, and many of the works would not have existed without my presence as co-collaborator. Despite the apparent clashes of egos found in the case studies, my own intentions and responsibilities have been directed towards the music itself. I hope I have served the music well.

# Bibliography

## Papers, Articles and Book Chapters

Adams, Stephen: "What's the Score?" (article to accompany podcast recordings), ABC Classic FM (website), 7 March 2013, [www.abc.net.au/classic/content/2013/03/07/3710138.htm](http://www.abc.net.au/classic/content/2013/03/07/3710138.htm) (accessed 3 July 2013).

Bayley, Amanda, and Heyde, Neil, "Communicating through notation: Michael Finnissy's Second String Quartet from composition to performance", in Ronald Woodley (ed.) *Notation and Practice: Essays in Musical Performance and Textuality* (article pending publication, 2014).

Behrman, David: "What Indeterminate Notation Determines" in *Perspectives on Notation and Performance*, ed. By Benjamin Boretz and Edward T. Cone, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1976) pp 74-89.

Berryman, Steven: "Piano: Inside/Out - Zubin Kanga @ Kings Place, London" (review), *I Care If You Listen, A blog about new classical music, art and technology*, [www.icareifyoulisten.com/2012/03/piano-insideout-zubin-kanga-kings-place-london](http://www.icareifyoulisten.com/2012/03/piano-insideout-zubin-kanga-kings-place-london), 27 March 2012, (accessed 2 February 2013).

Butterworth, Siobhain: "Privacy Online – it's complicated", *The Guardian* (online), [www.guardian.co.uk/law/butterworth-and-bowcott-on-law/2011/apr/15/privacy-online-its-complicated-law](http://www.guardian.co.uk/law/butterworth-and-bowcott-on-law/2011/apr/15/privacy-online-its-complicated-law), 15 April 2011 (accessed 15 April 2011).

Booth, Wayne: "Is there an "Implied" author in every film?", *College Literature*, Vol. 29, No. 2, Spring 2002, pp 124-131.

Borges, Jorge Luis: "Funes, the Memorious" in *Fictions*, edited by Anthony Kerrigan, translated by Emecé Editores, (London: Coldar & Boyars, 1962) p 102-107.

Boulez, Pierre: "Alea" (1968) in *Stocktakings from an Apprenticeship*, translated by Stephen Walsh, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991) pp 35-51.

Cage, John: "Preface to *Lecture on the Weather*" (1975) in *Empty Words: Writings '73-'79*, (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1980) pp 3-4.

Chou, Chiener. "Experience and Fieldwork: A Native Researcher's View", *Ethnomusicology* 46, no. 3, 2002, pp 456-86.

Clarke, Eric, Cook, Nicholas, Harrison, Bryn and Thomas, Philip: 'Interpretation and performance in Bryn Harrison's être-temp'. *Musicae Scientiae: the journal of the European Society for the Cognitive Sciences of Music*, 9, 2005, pp 31-74.

- Cohen, Anthony P: "Self-conscious anthropology" in *Anthropology and Autobiography*, edited by Judith Okely and Helen Callaway, (London: Routledge, 1992) pp 221-241.
- Cooke, Mervyn: "New horizons in the twentieth century" in *The Cambridge Companion to the Piano*, ed. David Rowland, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1998) pp 192-208.
- Cook, Nicholas: "Making music together, or improvisation and its others" in *Music, Performance, Meaning: Selected Essays* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2007) pp 321-342.
- Creamer, Elizabeth. "Collaborators' Attitudes about Differences of Opinion" *The Journal of Higher Education* 75(5), 2004, pp 556-571.
- Cunningham, Harriet: "Don't try this on the new Steinway kids" (interview/feature article), *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 August 2012, [www.smh.com.au/entertainment/music/dont-try-this-on-the-new-steinway-kids-20120812-242p3.html](http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/music/dont-try-this-on-the-new-steinway-kids-20120812-242p3.html) (accessed 3 July 2013).
- Cusick, Suzanne: "Gender and the Cultural Work of a Classical Music Performance", *repercussions* 3:1, 1994, pp 77-110.
- Davidson, Jane, W.: "Music as Social Behavior" in *Empirical Musicology*, edited by Eric Clarke and Nicholas Cooke, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) pp 57-76.
- Dipert, Randall, R: "The Composer's Intentions: An Examination of their Relevance for Performance", *Musical Quarterly*, 66, 1980, pp 205-218.
- Eliason, Eric in Blakeslee, Sandra: "Lost on Earth: Wealth of Data Found in Space", *New York Times*, 20 March 1990, [www.nytimes.com/1990/03/20/science/lost-on-earth-wealth-of-data-found-in-space.html](http://www.nytimes.com/1990/03/20/science/lost-on-earth-wealth-of-data-found-in-space.html) (accessed 29 January 2013).
- Fitch, Fabrice and Heyde, Neil: "'Recercar' – The Collaborative Process as Invention", *Twentieth Century Music*, 4/1, Cambridge University Press, 2007, 71–95.
- Gall, Jennifer: "Piano: Inside/Out, Zubin Kanga in concert" (review), *Canberra Times*, 25 July 2011.
- Gilroy, Anthony and Jim Hoover: "159 Facts about Steinway and the pianos they build", *Steinway Official Website*, [www.steinwaypianos.com/159-facts-about-steinway-and-the-pianos-they-build](http://www.steinwaypianos.com/159-facts-about-steinway-and-the-pianos-they-build), accessed 25 November 2012.
- Greenwald, Glenn: "On Prism, partisanship and propaganda", *The Guardian* (online), [www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jun/14/nsa-partisanship-propaganda-prism](http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jun/14/nsa-partisanship-propaganda-prism), 15 June 2013 (accessed 2 September 2013).
- Haldane, JBS "Can a species concept be justified?" in *The species concept in paleontology* Sylvester-Bradley (ed.), (London: Systematics Association, 1956). pp 95–96

- Hamilton, Kenneth: "The Virtuoso Tradition", *The Cambridge Companion to the Piano* edited by David Rowland (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) pp 57-74.
- Hankinson, Ann and O'Grady, Deborah: "In Re: Collaboration", *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 19, No. 1, Summer, 1981, pp 200-211.
- Harbinson, William, G.: "Performer Indeterminacy and Boulez's Third Sonata", *Tempo*, Issue 169, 1989, pp 16-21.
- Hastrup, Kirsten: "Fieldwork among friends: ethnographic exchange within the Northern civilisation" in *Anthropology at Home*, edited by Anthony Jackson, (London: Tavistock Productions, 1987) pp 94-108.
- Hawking, S.W.: "Black Hole Explosions", *Nature*, 248, 1974, pp 30-31.
- Hayden, Sam and Windsor, Luke: "Collaboration and the Composer: case studies from the end of the 20th century", *Tempo*, 61, Cambridge University Press, 2007, pp 28-39.
- Heider, Karl G.: "The Rashomon Effect: when Ethnographers Disagree", *American Anthropologist*, 90, March 1988, pp 73-81.
- Heyne, Paul: "Efficiency" in *The Concise Encyclopedia of Economics*, Library of Economics and Liberty, [www.econlib.org/library/Enc/Efficiency.html](http://www.econlib.org/library/Enc/Efficiency.html) (accessed 14 March 2013).
- Hill, Peter: "Xenakis and the Performer", *Tempo*, New Series, No. 112, March 1975, pp 17-22.
- Hill, Peter: "Authenticity in Contemporary Music", *Tempo*, New Series, No. 159, Dec 1986, pp 2-8.
- Holzaepfel, John: "Cage and Tudor", *The Cambridge Companion to John Cage*, (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 2002) pp 169-185.
- Hooper, Michael: "The Start of Performance, or Does Collaboration Matter", *Tempo*, Volume 66, Issue 261, July 2012, pp 26-36.
- Hooper, Michael: "Collaboration and Coordination in the Creation of New Music", *Leonardo*, Volume 46, Issue 1, 2012, pp 78-79.
- Hopkins, Bill: "Review" (includes review of Piano Sonata by Jean Barraque, performed by Roger Woodward), *Tempo*, New Series, No. 110, (September 1974), pp 48-50.
- Howard, Philip: "Evryali: Beyond the Surface (What I learnt from Evryali by Performing It)" in *Perspectives of New Music*, Volume 42, No. 2, 2004, pp 144-157.
- Jones, Susan: "Knowing the Dancer: Modernism, Choreography and the Question of Authority" in *Authority Matters: Rethinking the Theory and Practice of*

*Authorship*, edited by Stephen Donovan, Danuta Fjellestad and Rolf Lunden, (New York: Rudopi, 2008) pp 193-222.

Kael, Pauline: "Circles and Squares", *Film Quarterly*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Spring 1963), pp 12-26.

Kael, Pauline: "Raising Kane", *The New Yorker*, 20 February 1971, p 43.

Kanga, Zubin: "One recital - five world premieres", *Limelight Magazine*, 6 August 2012, [www.limelightmagazine.com.au/Article/310992,one-piano-recital-8211-five-world-premieres.aspx](http://www.limelightmagazine.com.au/Article/310992,one-piano-recital-8211-five-world-premieres.aspx) (accessed 3 July 2013).

Kanno, Mieko: "Prescriptive Notation: Limits and Challenges" in *Contemporary Music Review*, Vol. 26 No. 2, April 2007, pp 231-254.

Kontarsky, Aloys: "Notation for Piano", *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol 10, No. 2, Summer-Spring 1972, pp 72-91.

Lebrecht, Norman: "Who Won in Bernstein-Gould Spat over Brahms? (review)", *Bloomberg*, 21 July 2006, <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aik5oSmzFy8E> (accessed 3 February 2013).

Loges, Natasha and Lawson, Colin, "The teaching of performance" in *The Cambridge History of Musical Performance*, edited by Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) pp 135-168.

Mayer-Schönberger, Viktor: "Useful Void: The Art of Forgetting in the Age of Ubiquitous Computing." *KSG Faculty Research Working Paper Series*, RWP07-022, April 2007.

McCallum, Peter: "Seven composers, from emerging to venerable, each with a distinct voice", *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 August 2012, [www.smh.com.au/entertainment/music/seven-composers-from-emerging-to-venerable-each-with-a-unique-voice-20120819-24ga3.html#ixzz2Xzjf3aJh](http://www.smh.com.au/entertainment/music/seven-composers-from-emerging-to-venerable-each-with-a-unique-voice-20120819-24ga3.html#ixzz2Xzjf3aJh) (accessed 3 July 2013).

Merrick, Linda in Pidd, Helen: "One-on-one teaching may be abolished", *The Guardian*, [www.guardian.co.uk/education/2013/mar/01/one-to-one-music-tuition](http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2013/mar/01/one-to-one-music-tuition), 1 March 2013 (accessed 11 March 2013).

Michener, Charles: "Pianists Alone and Abroad: Alone with the Black Beast", *The New York Observer*, 11 December 2005.

Moran, S. John-Steiner, V. "Creativity in the Making: Vygotsky's contemporary contribution to the Dialectic of Development and Creativity" in Sawyer, K., John-Steiner, V. Moran, S., etc., eds. *Creativity and Development*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) pp 61-90.

Morrison, Bryce: "Beethoven Concertos No. 4 and 5 Yevgeny Sudbin (pf) Minnesota Orchestra / Osmo Vänskä" (review), *Gramophone* (online), 25/1/11,

[www.gramophone.co.uk/review/beethoven-no-4-op-58-no-5-emperor-op-73](http://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/beethoven-no-4-op-58-no-5-emperor-op-73) (accessed 20 January 2013).

Morrison, Bryce: "Liszt - Piano Sonata etc, Marc-Andre Hamelin" (review), *Gramophone* (online), [www.gramophone.co.uk/review/liszt-piano-sonata-etc](http://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/liszt-piano-sonata-etc), 28/3/11 (accessed 20<sup>th</sup> January 2013).

Nettl, Bruno: "Music", *Grove Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed June 25, 2013, [www.oxfordmusiconline.com.catalogue.ulrls.lon.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/40476](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.catalogue.ulrls.lon.ac.uk/subscriber/article/grove/music/40476) (accessed 3 May 2013).

Okely, Judith: "Fieldwork up the M1: policy and political aspects" in *Anthropology at Home*, edited by Anthony Jackson, (London: Tavistock Productions, 1987) pp 55-73.

Okely, Judith: "Anthropology and Autobiography: participatory experience and embodied knowledge" in *Anthropology and Autobiography*, edited by Judith Okely and Helen Callaway, (London: Routledge, 1992), pp 1-28.

Panzer, Joe: "Crises of Authenticity", *Stylus Magazine*, [www.stylusmagazine.com/articles/weekly\\_article/john-cage-crises-of-authenticity.htm](http://www.stylusmagazine.com/articles/weekly_article/john-cage-crises-of-authenticity.htm), 2003 (accessed 3 March 2013).

Patterson, David: "Celebrating a Life", *Musicworks*, No. 67, 1997, pp 57-58.

Pincherle, Marc: "Virtuosity", *The Musical Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (April 1949) pp 226-243.

Pryer, Anthony. "graphic notation." *The Oxford Companion to Music*. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, [www.oxfordmusiconline.com.catalogue.ulrls.lon.ac.uk/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e3008](http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.catalogue.ulrls.lon.ac.uk/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e3008) (accessed July 12, 2013).

Redgate, Christopher: "A Discussion of Practices Used in Learning Complex Music with Specific Reference to Roger Redgate's Ausgangspunkte", *Contemporary Music Review*, Vol. 26, No. 2, April 2007, pp 141-149.

Rizzardi, Vennerio: "Notation, oral tradition and performance practice in the works with tape and live electronics by Luigi Nono", *Contemporary Music Review*, vol. 18, 1999, pp 47-56.

Roberts, Heather: "Creativity 'closely entwined with mental illness", BBC online, 17 October 2012, [www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-19959565](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-19959565) (accessed 4 July 2013).

Rosenberg, Max: "The 26 Most Impressive Students at Yale Right Now," *Business Insider*, 18 April 2013, [www.businessinsider.com/most-impressive-students-at-yale-2013-4?op=1](http://www.businessinsider.com/most-impressive-students-at-yale-2013-4?op=1) (accessed 15 June 2013).

Rutherford-Johnson, Timothy: "A Journey to Aaron Cassidy's Second String Quartet", *New Music Box*, American Music Centre,



[www.newmusicbox.org/article.nmbx?id=6771](http://www.newmusicbox.org/article.nmbx?id=6771) (accessed 5 April 2011) 9  
February 2011.

Sarris, Andrew: "Notes on the Auteur Theory in 1962", *Film Culture*, 62/3 (1962)  
pp 1-8.

Schankler, Isaac: "Cage = 100: David Tudor and the Performance Practice of  
Concert for Piano and Orchestra", *New Music Box*,  
[www.newmusicbox.org/articles/cage-tudor-concert-for-piano-and-orchestra](http://www.newmusicbox.org/articles/cage-tudor-concert-for-piano-and-orchestra),  
2012 (accessed 2 February 2013).

Schick, Steven: "Developing an Interpretive Context: Learning Brian  
Ferneyhough's *Bone Alphabet*", *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Winter  
1994) pp 132-153.

Schwarz, Boris: "Joseph Joachim and the Genesis of Brahms' Violin Concerto", *The  
Music Quarterly*, Vol. 69 No. 4, 1983, pp 503-526.

Smalley, Roger: "Some Aspects of the Changing Relationship between Composer  
and Performer in Contemporary Music", *Proceedings of the Royal Musical  
Association*, Vol. 96, Oxford University Press, 1969, pp 73-84.

Smith, Harriet: "Volodos in Vienna" (review), *Gramophone* (online),  
[www.gramophone.co.uk/review/volodos-in-vienna](http://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/volodos-in-vienna), 12/7/10, (accessed 20<sup>th</sup>  
January 2013).

Smith, Harriett: "Beethoven – Complete Works for Piano and Orchestra" (review),  
*Gramophone* (online), [www.gramophone.co.uk/review/beethoven-complete-works-for-piano-and-orchestra](http://www.gramophone.co.uk/review/beethoven-complete-works-for-piano-and-orchestra), 11/15/11, (accessed 20<sup>th</sup> January 2013).

Sonnenburg, Stefan: "Project Creativity in Organizations: What Can We Learn from  
The Beatles, Picasso, Braque, and Herzog & de Meuron?", *Creative Economy and  
Beyond: International Conference on the Creative Economy* (Conference  
Proceedings), Helsinki 2009, pp 17-25.

Stock, Jonathan J. P.: "Documenting the Musical Event: Observation, Participation,  
Representation" in *Empirical Musicology*, edited by Eric Clarke and Nicholas  
Cooke, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) pp 15-34.

Strathern, Marilyn: "The limits of auto-anthropology" in *Anthropology at Home*,  
edited by Anthony Jackson, (London: Tavistock, 1987) pp 16-37.

Takahashi, Yuji: "Letter to the Editor", *Tempo*, No. 115 (Dec. 1975) pp 53-54.

Takahashi, Yuji: "The Piano and its Transformation", *Perspectives of New Music*,  
Vol. 30, No. 2 (Summer, 1992) pp 86-89.

Taruskin, Richard: "No ear for music: the scary purity of John Cage", *The New  
Republic*, 15th March 1993, pp 26-34.

Tsay, Chia-Jung: "Sight over Sound in the Judgement of Music Performance", *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, August 2013, [www.pnas.org](http://www.pnas.org) (accessed 12 August 2013).

Webb, Barrie: "Partners in Creation", *Contemporary Music Review* Vol. 26, No. 2, April 2007, pp 255-281.

Webb, Barrie: "Richard Barrett's 'Imaginary Trombone'", *Contemporary Music Review* Vol. 26, No. 2, April 2007, pp 151-177.

Wheaton, Blair: Interpersonal Conflict and Cohesiveness in Dyadic Relationships. *Sociometry*, 37(3), 1974, pp 328-348.

Wimsatt, William K. and Monroe C. Beardsley. "The Intentional Fallacy." *Sewanee Review*, vol. 54 (1946): pp 468-488.

Winter, Jessica: "The Advantages of Amnesia", *Boston Globe* (online), [www.boston.com/news/education/higher/articles/2007/09/23/the\\_advantages\\_of\\_amnesia](http://www.boston.com/news/education/higher/articles/2007/09/23/the_advantages_of_amnesia), 23 September 2007.

Woolf, Peter Graham: "Beat Furrer and Naomi Pinnock", review in *Musical Pointers*, [www.musicalpointers.co.uk/reviews/liveevents11/FurrerPinnock.html](http://www.musicalpointers.co.uk/reviews/liveevents11/FurrerPinnock.html), 21 January 2011 (accessed 27 January 2011).

Wuorinen, Charles: "Notes on the Performance of Contemporary Music", *Perspectives of New Music*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (Autumn - Winter, 1964) pp 10-21.

### **Theses**

Banks, Zane: "The Role of the Electric Guitar in Contemporary Art Music", PhD dissertation, (Sydney: Sydney Conservatorium of Music, 2013).

Dobson, Elizabeth: "An investigation of the process of interdisciplinary creative collaboration: the case of music technology students working with the performing arts", PhD Dissertation, (Milton Keynes: Open University, 2012).

Gartner, Geoffrey: "Piano Album: Short Piano Pieces, 1962-1984 by Dick Higgins: a D.I.Y. kit for creative people of the non-automaton kind", D.M.A. Dissertation, (San Diego: University of San Diego, 2009).

Holzaepfel, John: "David Tudor and the Performance of American Experimental Music, 1950-1959", Ph.D. dissertation, (New York: City University of New York, 1994).

Kanga, Zubin: "Listening to the Landscape: The Influence of Nature in the Music of David Lumsdaine", BA (Hon I) dissertation, (Sydney: University of Sydney, 2006).

Roche, Heather: "Dialogue and Collaboration in the Creation of New Works for Clarinet", PhD dissertation (Huddersfield, University of Huddersfield, 2012).

Roe, Paul: "A Phenomenology of Collaboration in Contemporary Composition and Practice", PhD dissertation, (York: University of York, 2007).

Vaes, Luk: "Extended Piano Techniques in Theory History and Performance Practice", PhD dissertation, (Ghent: Orpheus Institute, 2009).

### **Books**

Albright, Daniel: *Untwisting the Serpent*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

Barthes, Roland: *Mythologies*, Translated by Annette Lavers, (London: Granada Publishing, 1973).

Berlioz, Hector: *Memoirs of Hector Berlioz: From 1803 to 1865, Comprising His Travels in Germany, Italy, Russia, and England*, edited by Eleanor Holmes and Ernest Newman, (New York: Dover, 1932).

Benson, B.E.: *The Improvisation of Musical Dialogue: a phenomenology of music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

Bloom, Harold: *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

Born, Georgina: *Rationalizing Culture: IRCAM, Boulez, and the Institutionalization of the Musical Avant-Garde*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

Butt, John: *Playing with History: The Historical Approach to Musical Performance*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly: *Creativity: Flow and the Psychology of Discovery and Invention*, (New York: Harper Perennial, 1997).

de Brossard, Sebastian: *Dictionnaire de la Musique*, Paris: 1703, translated by Albion Gruber, Henryville, PA: Institute of Medieval Studies Music, 1982.

Dickinson, Peter: *Cage Talk: Dialogues with and about John Cage* (Rochester: University of Rochester, 2006).

Drake, Tywritt in Hall, Jean Graham: *The Expert Witness*, (Chisester: Barry Rose Law Publishers, 2006).

Ehrlich, Cyril: *The Piano. A History*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976).

Eigeldinger, Jean-Jacques: *Chopin: pianist and teacher as seen by his pupils*, trans. Naomi Shohet, ed. Roy Howat, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1988).

Ferneyhough, Brian: *Brian Ferneyhough: Collected Writings*, edited by James Boros and Richard Toop, (Amsterdam: Harword Academic Publishers, 1995).

- Fernie, J.: *Two Minds: Artists and Architects in Collaboration* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2006)
- Goehr, Lydia: *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993).
- Good, Edwin M. :*Giraffes, Black Dragons, and other Pianos. A Technological History from Cristofori to the Modern Concert Grand.* (Stanford: California University Press, 1982).
- Goodman, Nelson: *Languages of Art* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1968).
- Gooley, Dana: *The Virtuoso Liszt*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
- Hay, Deborah: *Lamb at the Altar: The Story of a Dance*, (Durham: Duke University, 1994).
- Heilbron, J.L. (ed): *The Oxford Companion to the History of Modern Science*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
- Hill, Peter: *Stravinsky: The Rite of Spring*, Cambridge Music Handbooks, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
- Homs, Joaquim: *Robert Gerhard and his Music*, (London: Anglo-Catalan Society, 2000)
- John-Steiner, Vera: *Creative Collaboration*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)
- Jusefovich, Viktor: David Oistrakh: *Conversations with Igor Oistrakh*, trans by Nicholas de Pfeiffer, (London: Cassell, 1977).
- Kivy, Peter: *Authenticities: philosophical reflections on musical performance*, (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1995).
- Lelie, Christo: *Van Piano tot Forte (The History of the Early Piano)* (Kampen: Kok-Lyra, 1995).
- Levi-Strauss, Claude: *The Raw and the Cooked*, trans. John and Doreen Weightman, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969).
- Loesser, Arthur: *Men, Women and Pianos. A social history.* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1954).
- Miell, D., Littleton, K.: *Collaborative Creativity: Contemporary Perspectives*, (London: Free Association Books, 2004).
- Nattiez, Jean-Jacques: *Music and Discourse: Towards a Semiology of Music*, translated by Carolyn Abbate (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

Neuhaus, Heinrich: *The Art of Piano Playing*, trans. K.A. Leibovitch, (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1973).

Niedt, F. E.: *The Music Guide: Parts 1 (1700/10), 2 (1721) and 3 (1717)*, trans P.L. Poulin and I.C. Taylor, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989),

Nietzsche, Frederich: *The Use and Abuse of History*, 1876, trans. Adrian Collins, (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1957).

Okely, Judith: *Own or Other Culture*, (London: Routledge, 1996).

O'Dea, Jane: *Virtue or Virtuosity?: Explorations in the Ethics of Musical Performance*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2000),

Östersjö, Stefan: *Shut Up 'n' Play: Negotiating the Musical Work*, originally submitted as a PhD dissertation, (Malmo: Lund University Press, 2008)

Perlis, Vivian: *Charles Ives Remembered*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974)

Pollens, Stewart: *The Early Pianoforte* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

Ranci re, Jacques: *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, translated by Kristin Ross (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

Rastall, Richard: *The Notation of Western Music: An Introduction*, (London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1983), p 1.

Read, Gardner: *Music Notation: A Manual of Western Practice*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., (Boston: Crescendo Publishers, 1969).

Reblitz, Arthur A.: *Piano Servicing, Tuning and Rebuilding: For the Professional, the Student, and the Hobbyist*. Vestal, NY: Vestal Press (1993).

Ricoeur, Paul: *From Text to Action*, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991).

Rink, John: *Musical Performance: A guide to understanding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

Risatti, Howard: *New Music Vocabulary: A Guide to Notational Signs for Contemporary Music* (Chicago, University of Illinois Press, 1975).

Rowland, David (ed.) *The Cambridge Companion to the Piano*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

Rowland, David: *Early Keyboard Instruments*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)

Sandor, Gyorgy: *On Piano Playing: Motion, Sound and Expression*, (New York: Schirmer Books, 1981).

Sawyer, Keith: *Group Genius: The Creative Power of Collaboration*, (New York: Basic Books, 2007).

Sennett, Richard: *The Craftsman* (Newhaven and London, Yale University Press, 2008).

Shaw-Miller, Simon: *Visible Deeds of Music: art and music from Wagner to Cage* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

Sontag, Susan: *On Photography*, (New York: Picador, 1977).

Stecker, R: *Interpretation and Construction: Art, Speech and the Law* (Malden: Blackwell, 2003).

Stillinger, Jack: *Multiple Authorship and the Myth of Solitary Genius*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991).

Stravinsky, Igor: *Poetics of Music*, (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1940).

Stravinsky, Igor and Craft, Robert: *Memories and Commentaries*, (Faber: London, 1960).

Taruskin, Richard: *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995).

Thayer, Alexander Wheelock: *The Life of Ludwig van Beethoven* (London: Centaur Press, 1960, originally published 1860).

Varga, Balint Andras: *György Kurtag: Three Interviews and Ligeti Homages*, Eastman Studies in Music, v. 67, (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2009).

Vaughan-Williams, J. in Hodgkinson, Tristram: *Expert Evidence: Law and Practice*, (London: Sweet & Maxwell, 1990).

Whiteside, Abbey: *Mastering the Chopin Etudes and Other Essays*, Edited by Joseph Prostackoff and Sophia Rosoff, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969) p 63.

### Scores

Barraque, Jean: *Sonata Pour Piano*, Bärenreiter-Verlag, 1952

Barrett, Richard: *Tract*, United Music Publishers, 1996.

Benjamin, George: *Shadowlines*, Faber Music, 2001.

Benjamin, George: *Piano Figures*, Faber Music, 2004.

Beethoven, Ludwig van: *32 Sonate per Pianoforte*, Schnabel, Artur. (ed.) (Milan: Curci, 1949).

Boulez, Pierre: Piano Sonata No. 2, Universal, 1948.

Brown, Earle: *December 1952 in Folio and 4 Systems*, Schirmer, 1954.

Cage, John: *Sonatas and Interludes for Prepared Piano*, Edition Peters, 1948.

Cage, John: *4'33"*, Edition Peters, 1952.

Cage, John: *Concert for Piano and Orchestra*, Boosey and Hawkes, 1958.

Cage, John: *Indeterminacy*, Edition Peters, 1959.

Cardew, Cornelius: *Treatise*, Gallery Upstairs Press, 1967.

Cassidy, A: *The Crutch of Memory* for any string instrument, self-published score, 2004.

Chopin, Frederic: Etudes Op. 10, PWM, 1833.

Chopin, Frederic: Etudes Op. 25, PWM, 1837.

Chopin, Frederic: Scherzos, PWM, 1832-1842

Chopin, Frederic: Ballades, PWM, 1835-1842.

Cowell, Henry: *Aeolian Harp*, Schirmer, 1923.

Crumb, George: *Makrokosmos*, Edition Peters, 1972-1979.

Eggert, Moritz: *Hämmerklavier*, Schott, 1986-2011.

Feldman, Morton: *Projection 1*, Boosey and Hawkes, 1951.

Feldman, Morton: *Why Patterns?*, Universal Edition, 1978.

Feldman, Morton: *For Bunita Marcus*, Universal Edition, 1985.

Ferneyhough, Brian: *Bone Alphabet* for solo percussion, Edition Peters, 1991.

Ferneyhough, Brian: *Time and Motion Study II* for solo cello, Edition Peters, 1977.

Ferneyhough, Brian: *Lemma-Icon-Epigram*, Edition Peters, 1981.

Finnissy, Michael: *English Country-Tunes*, UMP, 1977.

Finnissy, Michael: *Z/K*, unpublished, 2012

Ginastera, Alberto: Sonata No. 1, Op. 22, Boosey and Hawkes, 1952.

Gorton, David: *Caprices* for solo violin, self-published score, 2011.

Gorton, David: *Fosdyke Wash* for piano quintet, self-published score, 2011.

Gorton, David: *Orfordness* for solo piano, self-published score, 2012.

Gyger, Elliott: *...out of obscurity*, Australian Music Centre, 2011.

Harvey, Michael Kieran: *48 Fugues for Frank* for solo piano, self-published score, 2010.

Hay, Alexandra: *Love Song on a Theme by Walt Whitman* (text by Allen Ginsberg) for soprano and piano, self-published score, 2010.

Hills, Alex: *Resonance Studies*, self-published score, 2012.

Hind, Rolf: *Towers of Silence*, Ricordi, 2007.

Ives, Charles: Piano Sonata No. 2: *Concord, Mass. 1840-1860*, Schirmer, 1919.

Jameson, Philip: *Prelude and Fugue*, unpublished, 2011.

Johnson, Tom: *The Chord Catalogue*, Editions 75, 1985.

Lachenmann, Helmut: *Guero* for piano, Wiesbaden: Breitkopf & Hartel, 1969 rev 1988.

Liszt, Franz: *Réminiscences de Don Juan* (S. 418), Peters, 1842.

Liszt, Franz: *Three Concert Études* (S. 144) Peters, 1849.

Liszt, Franz: *Mephisto Waltz No. 1*, Peters, 1962.

Moles, Anthony: *Diabolic Machines*, self-published score, 2011.

Molitor, Claudia: *Tango*, self-published score, 2007.

Oliveiro, Mark: "A House Divided" (text by Michael Ondaatje) from *Il Garrott* for soprano and piano, unpublished score provided by the composer, 2010.

Paik, Nam June: *One for Violin Solo*, facsimile of handwritten score, 1962.

Pozniak, Alex: *Crush* for solo piano, self-published score, 2008

Pozniak, Alex: *Mercurial* for solo cello, self-published score, 2010.

Pozniak, Alex: *Interventions* for solo piano, self-published score, 2010.

Rojas, Daniel: *Danza de Montañas*, Australian Music Centre, 2003.



Rojas, Daniel: Piano Concerto No. 1: *Latinoamericanismos*, Australian Music Centre, 2006.

Rojas, Daniel: Piano Concerto No. 2: *Entre Ritos y Parrandas*, Australian Music Centre, 2010.

Rojas, Daniel: *Sonata* for soprano and piano, self-published score, 2010.

Rojas, Daniel: *Entre Bajos y Alturas* for solo piano, self-published score, 2011.

Smetanin, Michael: *Stroke* for solo piano, Australian Music Centre, 1988.

Stockhausen, Karlheinz: *Klavierstück X*, Universal Edition, 1955.

Stockhausen, Karlheinz: *Kontakte*, Stockhausen-Verlag, 1960.

Stockhausen, Karlheinz: *Prozession*, Universal Edition, 1967.

Stockhausen, Karlheinz: *Mantra*, Stockhausen-Verlag, 1970.

Stroppa, Marco: *Miniature Estrose*, Ricordi, 1991.

Whale, Marcus: *Yuri* for clarinet and piano, self-published, 2011

Whale, Marcus: *Errata* for solo piano, self-published score, 2012.

Xenakis, Iannis, *Herma*, Boosey & Hawkes, 1961.

Xenakis, Iannis: *Evryali*, Editions Salabert, 1973.

Xenakis, Iannis: *Mists*, Editions Salabert, 1980.

Young, David: *Scant* for 10-string guitar and cello, Australian Music Centre, 1993.

Young, David: *Breath Control* for solo clarinet, Australian Music Centre, 2008.

Young, David and Cameron, Margaret: *The Minotaur Trilogy*, self-published score, 2011.

Young, David: *Not Music Yet* for solo piano, unpublished, 2012.

### **Conference Papers and other Research Presentations**

Armstrong, Tom: "Collaboration and Tradition", presented at Collaborative Processes in Music Making: Pedagogy and Practice, Palatine, University of Surrey, 11 November 2009.

Bayley, Amanda: "Evolution and collaboration in string quartet composition, rehearsal and performance", *Tracking the Creative Process in Music International Conference*, University Lille-de-Nord, 2011.

Born, Georgina: "Distributed Creativity: What Do We Mean By It?", Creative Practice in Contemporary Concert Music Workshop: Distributed Creativity, University of Oxford, 5 September 2011.

Callis, S, Heyde, N, Kanga, Z and Sham, O: "Creative Resistance: towards a performative understanding of 'distributed creativity'", CMPCP Performance Studies Network, Second International Conference, University of Cambridge, 2013.

Dobson, Elizabeth: "How is creative work shaped by interaction when undergraduate digital music composers work with each other and other disciplines: a sociocultural method for analyzing joint creativity", presented at the Collaborations in Practice-led Research RMA Study Day, University of Leeds, 23 October 2010.

Doffman, Mark: "'Ouija': Collaboration, Improvisation and History" (analysis of collaboration of composer Jeremy Thurlow and violinist, Peter Sheppard Skaerved), visiting lecture, Centre for Music Studies, City University, London, 2013.

Donato, Clorinda: "Eighteenth-century Encyclopedias and National Identity," Proceedings of the Second International Conference of the International Society for the Study of European Ideas, Pergamon Press, 1992.

Gorton, David, Shaw-Miller, Simon and Heyde, Neil: "Instrumental Choreography: Gesture and Performance in Gorton's Capriccio for Solo Cello", *Music and its Instruments*, proceedings of the 2009 Paris CIM (interdisciplinary Musicology Conference).

Gritten, Anthony: "A Labour of Trust: Working (at) Ensemble Interaction", Paper at Second PSN Conference, Cambridge University, 4-7 July 2013.

Harding, Richard: "Notational Indeterminacy and the Performing Musician", presented at the Collaborations in Practice-led Research RMA Study Day, University of Leeds, 23 October 2010.

Hewitt, Scott and Berweck, Sebastian: "on\_radio\_midi", presented at the Collaborations in Practice-led Research RMA Study Day, University of Leeds, 23 October 2010.

Klippel, Graham: "Authority and Integrity" presented at Collaborative Processes in Music Making: Pedagogy and Practice, Palatine, University of Surrey, 11 November 2009.

Lim, Liza: "A mycelial model for understanding distributed creativity: collaborative partnership in the making of 'Axis Mundi' (2013) for solo bassoon", CMPCP Performance Studies Network, Second International Conference, University of Cambridge, 2013.

Picknett, Michael: "Memory and Interpretation in Collaborative Composition", presented at the RMA Study Day, Collaborations in Practice-led Research, University of Leeds, 23 October 2010.

Redgate, Roger: "Composer-Performer Collaboration", Keynote Address at the Second Athens Composer/Performer Conference, American College of Greece, Athens, Greece, 15 October 2011.

Roche, Heather: "Intimacy in performer-composer relationships: the dynamics of collaborative space", presented at the RMA Study Day, Collaborations in Practiced Research, University of Leeds, 23 October 2010.

Ryan, David: "Music Notation", presentation to PhD students on David Tudor's work with John Cage and Earl Brown, IMR Study Day, Senate House, University of London, 15 February 2010.

### **Recordings, Films and other Multimedia**

Arditti Quartet and Claude Helffer: *Xenakis – Chamber Music*, incl. *Evryali* with Claude Helffer, piano, Montaigne, B00004WKJM, 2000.

Bartók, Béla: *Bartók plays Bartók: Bartók at the piano (1929-1941)*, Pearl CD, 1995.

Bayley, Amanda and Clarke, Michael: *Evolution and collaboration: the composition, rehearsal and performance of Finnissy's Second String Quartet* (Software DVD using Max/MSP), Palatine, 2011.

California Ear Unit (Vicki Ray, Arthur Jarvinen and Dorothy Stone): *Morton Feldman: Rothko Chapel/Why Patterns?*, New Albion Records, B000000R2Z, 2009.

Casals, Pablo. *The Library of Master Performers Masterclass series: Pablo Casals*, filmed at University of California, Berkeley, 1960, edited by Miriam Arhsam, originally released 1961, DVD released by Shar Products Company, 2005.

Finnissy, Michael: *Michael Finnissy: English Country-Tunes, Etcetera*, KTC 1091, 1986.

Fry, Stephen, and Hugh Laurie: "Piano Masterclass Sketch" on *Saturday Live*, [www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEuVvSKN\\_I](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nEuVvSKN_I), 1985 (accessed 15 November 2012).

Gould, Glenn, piano, Leonard Bernstein, conductor, New York Philharmonic, *Glenn Gould/Leonard Bernstein/Brahms Piano Concerto No. 1*, Sony Classical, B00000C28M, 1998.

Hermann, Mathias and Walczak, Maceij: *Extended Techniques in the Music of Helmut Lachenmann* (video and scores on CD-ROM and booklet), Breitkopf and Härtel, 2013.

Howard, Philip: *Decoding Skin*, Move Records, DA9521, 2004.

Kleiber, Carlos: *Carlos Kleiber: Rehearsal and Performance, Südfunk-Sinfonieorchester*, dir. Dieter Ertel, SDR Stuttgart, Arthaus Musik GMBH, 1970.

Kurosawa, Akira (writer/director): *Rashomon*, produced by Minoru Jingo, Daiei Studios, 1950.

Moore, D: "Die Flabbergast", composed 1960, performed and filmed live in 1960 at the West End performances of *Beyond the Fringe*, viewed via YouTube ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=idBZPteNjxs](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=idBZPteNjxs)), accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2011.

Scheffer, Frank (director): *Karlheinz Stockhausen: Helicopter String Quartet* (documentary film), Medici Arts, 1995.

Takahashi, Aki: *Iannis Xenakis: Complete Works for Solo Piano*, Mode Records, B00001W094, 1999.

Vaes, Luk: *To Perform Maricio Kagel's tactil and Unter Strom* (book, DVD video and scores), University Press Leuven, Edition Peters, Mode Records, 2014.

### **Interviews, Letters, Conversations, Websites and other materials**

Aimard, Pierre-Laurent: Lesson/workshop with the author, 7 September 2008.

Arditti Quartet website, [www.ownvoice.com/ardittiquartet/biography.htm](http://www.ownvoice.com/ardittiquartet/biography.htm) (accessed 22 January 2013).

Bardem, Javier speaking at the World International Property Organisation, July 2011, [www.wipo.int/pressroom/en/briefs/performers.html](http://www.wipo.int/pressroom/en/briefs/performers.html) (accessed 4 June 2013).

Barraqué, Jean: Letter to Roger Woodward (trans. Martin Coote), 20 March 1973.

Benjamin, George: Workshop with the author on *Shadowlines* (2001), 7 September 2008.

The British Recorded Music Industry (BPI): Fact and Figures, [www.bpi.co.uk/facts-figures.aspx](http://www.bpi.co.uk/facts-figures.aspx) (accessed 13 June 2013).

Crean, Simon (Minister for the Arts): *Creative Australia: National Cultural Policy*, Australian Government, 13 March 2013.

Elision Ensemble website, [www.elision.org.au/ELISION\\_Ensemble/ELISION\\_Home.html](http://www.elision.org.au/ELISION_Ensemble/ELISION_Home.html) (accessed 22 January 2013).

Ensemble Intercontemporain website, [www.ensembleinter.com/](http://www.ensembleinter.com/) (accessed 22 January 2013).

Ensemble Modern website, [www.ensemble-modern.com/en/ensemble\\_modern/history](http://www.ensemble-modern.com/en/ensemble_modern/history) (accessed 5 July 2013)

Ensemble musikFabrik website, [musikfabrik.eu](http://musikfabrik.eu) (accessed 22 January 2013).

Harvey, Michael Kieran: "2012 Peggy Glanville Hicks Address", New Music Network website, [www.newmusicnetwork.com.au/PGH/MKH12.html](http://www.newmusicnetwork.com.au/PGH/MKH12.html), 2012, accessed 26 November 2012.

Still, Colin (director): *Electric Chair Music* (documentary film), featuring Neil Heyde, Brian Ferneyhough and Paul Archbold, 2008.

Kanga, Zubin: "Transcription, Transformation and Transcendence in the Piano Music of Michael Finnissy", MMus Lecture-Recital, Royal Academy of Music, London, 2008.

Jennings, Graeme: Correspondence with the author, 30 April 2011.

Pace, Ian: Conversation with the author, 10 November 2007.

Redgate, Christopher: Conversation with the author, 18 September 2009

"Risk Management – Principles and Guidelines", International Standard, ISO 2009.

Stockhausen, Karlheinz: Letter and other materials archived at the Stockhausen Summer Courses website, [www.stockhausen.org](http://www.stockhausen.org) (accessed 2 February 2013).

Synergy Vocals website, [www.synergyvocals.com/home/about](http://www.synergyvocals.com/home/about) (accessed 5 July 2013).

Tilbury, John: "On Playing Feldman", CD program notes for *For Bunita Marcus*, LondonHALL, 1993.

Young, Kerry: Letter to the author, 25 January 2013.

# Appendix A

## Composer Biographies

### **George Benjamin**

Born in 1960, George Benjamin started to play the piano at the age of seven, and began composing almost immediately. In 1976 he entered the Paris Conservatoire to work with Olivier Messiaen (composition) and Yvonne Loriod (piano), after which he completed his studies at King's College Cambridge under Alexander Goehr.

Since his first orchestral piece, *Ringed by the Flat Horizon*, was performed at the BBC Proms in 1980 his works have continued to be performed across the world. In recent years there have been retrospectives of his work in Tokyo, Berlin, Madrid, Paris and Lucerne.

### **Michael Finnissy**

Michael Finnissy was born in Tulse Hill, London in 1946 and studied at the Royal College of Music. He later studied in Italy with Roman Vlad. He went on to create the music department of the London School of Contemporary Dance. He has also been musician in residence to the Victorian College of the Arts, the City of Caulfield in Australia, and the East London Late Starters Orchestra. In 1999 he was made Professor of Composition at the University of Southampton. Finnissy has been featured composer at numerous music festivals, and his works are widely performed and broadcast worldwide.

### **Marcus Whale**

Marcus Whale is a Sydney composer and musician. Under the name Scissor Lock, he has produced music using his voice and lo-fi electronics densely reconfigured by laptop processing with releases on New Weird Australia's New Editions label, Hellosquare recordings, Sound&Fury and others. He has performed at events including Sydney Festival (2012), the Now Now Festival (2011), Sound Summit (2010-2011) and Electrofringe (2010) and his compositions have been performed by Synergy Percussion, Ensemble Offspring and Chronology Arts. He is also a member of mashed R&B party duo Collarbones with Adelaide's Travis Cook, releasing a full-length album, "Iconography" which was nominated for AIR and SMAC awards.

### **Philip Jameson**

Philip's work has been commissioned and performed by the Australian Youth Orchestra Brass Quintet, the Sydney Youth Orchestra, pianist Zubin Kanga, American vocal octet *Roomful of Teeth*, the Manhattan-based Dessoff Choirs, and

the Sydney Symphony Sinfonia, among others. His recent brass quintet, *The Collatz Variations*, shared third prize in the Franz Schubert Conservatory's International Composition Competition (Ensemble Section) for 2012. Philip is currently an undergraduate student at Yale University, and is working on a children's opera, a string quartet, and another orchestral work, all of which will receive performances in 2014.

### **Alex Pozniak**

Award winning Australian composer Alex Pozniak completed his Masters in Musical Composition at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, with the assistance of a UPA scholarship and under the guidance of Matthew Hindson. Alex obtained First Class Honours and the University Medal in 2005 for his undergraduate studies. He was the winner of the 2011 APRA Professional Development Award in the Classical category, allowing him to travel to the United States and Europe in 2012 to pursue studies in composition. Alex co-founded Chronology Arts in 2007 and is a passionate educator, teaching at The Sydney Conservatorium of Music and a number of schools in Sydney.

### **Elliott Gyger**

Elliott Gyger was Assistant Professor of Music at Harvard from 2002 to 2007, and has been Lecturer in Composition at the University of Melbourne since 2008. His composition teachers have included Ross Edwards, Peter Sculthorpe, Bernard Rands and Mario Davidovsky.

His music, grounded in the structural rigour of high Modernism, is concerned with the nexus between harmony and instrumental/vocal gesture. Recent premieres have included *From the hungry waiting country* (2006) for Halcyon, highly commended in the 2006 Paul Lowin Song Cycle Award; the celesta concerto *Angels and Insects* (2010); and voice (and nothing more) (2011), for San Francisco-based choir Volti.

### **Anthony Moles**

Anthony Moles studied composition with Gerard Brophy and Stephen Leek at the Queensland Conservatorium where he graduated with First Class Honours.

Anthony's music has been performed by ensembles including the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra, the Sydney Conservatorium Symphony Orchestra, the Queensland Conservatorium Chamber Orchestra, the Ku-Ring-Gai Philharmonic, the Saint Cecilia Chamber Orchestra, the Song Company and the Sydney Symphony Fellows. Soloists to perform Anthony's music include Vanessa Tomlinson (*Clocked Out*), Zubin Kanga (*Ensemble Offspring*), Geoffrey Gartner (*Ensemble Offspring*) and Joshua Hill (*Synergy Percussion*).

Anthony is currently completing his Ph.D. at the Sydney Conservatorium under the supervision of Michael Smetanin. He is the recipient of a University of Sydney

Postgraduate Award and was recently awarded the Dorothy N. Glover Memorial Trust.

### **David Gorton**

The music of David Gorton (recipient of the 2001 Royal Philharmonic Society Composition Prize) is sometimes characterized by a fascination with alternative tuning systems and virtuosic gestures, and at other times revels in simple tranquility. Current projects include a collection of works inspired by East Anglian landscapes, and a series of pieces for the Swedish guitar player Stefan Östersjö. He is the Associate Head of Research at the Royal Academy of Music in London, and in 2012 was a Visiting Researcher at the Orpheus Institute in Ghent.

### **Daniel Rojas**

Daniel Rojas is a Chilean-born Australian concert pianist and highly acclaimed composer specialising in the rich and vibrant Latin American musical aesthetic. Currently Associate Lecturer in Music at Sydney University, Rojas was awarded his PhD in composition from the Sydney Conservatorium of Music in 2012 and has won several prizes including the Fellowship of Australian Composers Award, Frank Albert Prize and the Miriam Hyde Memorial Award. His works have been performed by the Queensland Symphony Orchestra, Sydney University Symphony Orchestra, Sydney Youth Orchestras, Sydney Omega Ensemble, Kammer Ensemble, and Prima La Musica Chamber Orchestra of Ghent (Belgium). 2013 engagements include the world premiere of his concerto for Marimba and Chamber Orchestra, with The Metropolitan Orchestra, and Claire Edwardes as soloist, along with performing his Piano Concerto no.1 as soloist with the Sydney University Symphony Orchestra.

### **David Young**

David Young is a composer, artist and artistic director based in Melbourne, Australia. His primary focus is the development of cross-artform and interdisciplinary projects. Over the last 20 years David's music has been performed in Australia, Europe and Asia. His catalogue of over 100 works spans orchestral, choral and chamber music, chamber opera and music theatre, and is unified in his preoccupation with exploring the relationship between sound and image, employing intricate and often miniature formats in unconventional settings. David is currently the Artistic Director of Chamber Made Opera, and was also founding Artistic Director of Aphids.



## Appendix B: List of Documented Workshops<sup>686</sup>

<b>Date</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Description/Comments</b>
4/11/09	Nimrod Katzir, composer Zubin Kanga, Eliza McCarthy and Antoine Francoise, pianists	Workshop on Katzir's work <i>azza-mai</i> for two pianos, three pianists. RCM.
16/11/09	David Gorton, Roger Redgate and Paul Archbold, composers. Ensemble Expose	Rehearsals of new works for performance at Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, RAM.
17/11/09	David Gorton, Roger Redgate and Paul Archbold, composers. Ensemble Expose	Second Rehearsal. RAM.
19/11/09	David Gorton, Roger Redgate and Paul Archbold, composers. Ensemble Expose	Third rehearsal. RAM.
21/11/09	David Gorton, Roger Redgate and Paul Archbold, composers. Ensemble Expose	Dress rehearsal. RAM.
24/11/09	Mihyun Woo and Nimrod Katzir, composers. Zubin Kanga, Eliza McCarthy and Antoine Francoise, pianists	Workshops for new works at Many Hands Festival, Roundhouse, London.
26/11/09	Elo Masing, composer Zubin Kanga, pianist	Exploratory workshop for <i>studies in resonance II</i> . RAM.
8/12/09	Daniel Rojas, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	First workshop on Piano Concerto No. 2: Entre <i>Ritos y Parrandas</i> , University of Sydney.
15/12/09	Daniel Rojas, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Second workshop on Piano Concerto No. 2: Entre <i>Ritos y Parrandas</i> .

---

<sup>686</sup> This list contains video or audio files of footage either recorded by the author, or provided to the author for research purposes. Publically available films and documentaries are not listed here – details of these can be found in the Bibliography.

17/12/09	Daniel Rojas, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Third workshop on Piano Concerto No. 2: <i>Entre Ritos y Parrandas</i> .
22/12/09	Drew Crawford, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>in that corner, in that very room: a Suite after the Preludes of Frederic Chopin</i> , AIM, Sydney.
5/1/10	Nicholas Vines, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>Uncanny Valley</i> , Kanga's residence, Sydney
19/1/10	Multiple composers and performers	Composer-Performer Workshop class at RAM
20/1/10	Judith Weir, composer Zubin Kanga, piano Nathaniel Anderson- Frank, violin Other RAM students	Workshops for Mainly New concert at RAM, including Weir's Piano Quartet.
22/1/10	Ed Finnis, composer Zubin Kanga, Eliza McCarthy and Antoine Francoise, pianists	Workshop on <i>Three Pieces for Two pianos</i> .
29/1/10	Nimrod Katzir, composer Zubin Kanga, Eliza McCarthy and Antoine Francoise, pianists)	Workshop on Katzir's work <i>azza-mai</i> for two pianos, three pianists.
3/2/10	Mihyun Woo, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>Tesserae</i> for two pianos. Work
10/02/10	Elo Masing, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Exploratory workshop for <i>studies in resonance II</i>
12/02/10	Rolf Hind, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Lesson/workshop on <i>Towers of Silence</i>
16/02/10	Multiple composers and performers	Composer-Performer Workshop class at RAM
18/02/10	Rolf Hind, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Lesson/workshop on <i>Towers of Silence</i>
22/02/10	Elo Masing, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Exploratory workshop for <i>studies in resonance II</i>
22/02/10	Elo Masing, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Exploratory workshop for <i>studies in resonance II</i>

3/03/10	Nashville-London Exchange (London)	Workshop of works by students. Piano Gallery of RAM.
4/03/10	Diana Burrell, composer Christopher Redgate, oboe	Workshop on new piece. Basement practice room of RAM.
8/3/10	Nashville-London Exchange (Nashville)	Workshop of works by students. This and following workshops took place in the Ingram Hall, Blaire School of Music, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN, USA.
10/3/10	Nashville-London Exchange (Nashville)	Workshops continued.
11/3/10	Nashville-London Exchange (Nashville)	Workshops continued.
17/3/10	Dorothy Ker, composer Christopher Redgate, oboe	Workshop on techniques for new work by Dorothy Kerr. RAM.
22/3/10	Rolf Hind, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop/lesson on <i>Towers of Silence</i> .
26/3/10	Liza Lim, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop with Liza Lim on her piano work, <i>Four Seasons</i> (after Cy Twombly). Basement of Forsyths piano store, Manchester, UK.
27/3/10	Newton Armstrong, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop of Newton Armstrong's <i>Three Windows</i> for piano and electronics. Performance Space, City University, London.
15/4/10	Rosalind Page, composer Various performers including Satsuki Odamura (koto) Claire Edwardes (percussion) and singers from The Song Company	Workshop on a new chamber opera by Rosalind Page. Creative Practice Research Unit, UNSW, Australia.
10/5/10	Alex Pozniak, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	First Workshop on <i>Interventions</i> . Sydney Conservatorium of Music.
17/5/10	Alex Pozniak, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Second Workshop on <i>Interventions</i> . Sydney Conservatorium of Music.
4/6/10	Alex Pozniak, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Third Workshop on <i>Interventions</i> . Sydney Conservatorium of Music.

11/6/10	Mark Oliveiro, composer Jane Sheldon, soprano Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>Il Garrot</i> by Mark Oliveiro. Philharmonia Choirs practice room, Sydney.
18/6/10	Alex Pozniak, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Fifth Workshop. Sydney University Music Department.
25/6/10	Alex Pozniak, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Seventh Workshop. Old Darlington School, University of Sydney.
12/8/10	Drew Crawford, composer Alison Morgan, soprano Jenny Duck-Chong, mezzo-soprano Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop of new work by Drew Crawford for Halcyon Ensemble. Residence of Jenny Duck-Chong, Sydney, Australia.
23/8/10	Anthony Moles, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	First workshop on <i>Diabolic Machines</i> . Zubin Kanga's residence, Sydney
17/9/10	David Gorton, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>Fosdyke Wash</i> . Practice room 151, RAM.
21/9/10	Multiple composers and performers	Composer-Performer Workshop class. Piano Gallery, RAM.
6/10/10	David Gorton, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Collaborative exploration of the "Fluid Piano". Warehouse outside Brighton.
12/10/10	Multiple composers and performers	Composer-Performer Workshop class. Piano Gallery, RAM.
9/11/10	Multiple composers and performers	Composer-Performer Workshop class. Piano Gallery, RAM.
26/11/10	Drew Crawford, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>in that corner, in that very room</i> . Australian Institute of Music, Sydney, Australia.
18/12/10	Daniel Rojas, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	First workshop on <i>Entre Bajos y Alturas</i> . Old Darlington School, University of Sydney.
29/12/10	Drew Crawford, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Post-premiere debriefing on <i>in that corner, in that very room</i> .

15/8/10	Helmut Lachenmann, composer Rolf Hind, piano	Workshop on solo part for <i>Ausklang</i> , Lachenmann's residence, Italy.
16/8/10	Helmut Lachenmann, composer Rolf Hind, piano	Second workshop on solo part for <i>Ausklang</i>
29/10/10	Helmut Lachenmann, composer Rolf Hind, piano Brad Lubman, conductor London Sinfonietta	Full rehearsal for <i>Ausklang</i> . London.
6/1/11	Daniel Rojas, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Second workshop on <i>Entre Bajos y Alturas</i> . Old Darlington School, University of Sydney.
15/1/11	Beat Furrer, composer and conductor Rolf Hind and Zubin Kanga, pianos London Sinfonietta	Rehearsal on <i>Nuun</i> for two pianos and orchestra The Warehouse, London.
16/1/11	Beat Furrer, composer and conductor Rolf Hind and Zubin Kanga, pianos London Sinfonietta	Second Rehearsal on <i>Nuun</i> for two pianos and orchestra The Warehouse, London.
17/1/11	Beat Furrer, composer and conductor Rolf Hind and Zubin Kanga, pianos London Sinfonietta	Third Rehearsal on <i>Nuun</i> for two pianos and orchestra The Warehouse, London.
25/1/11	Multiple composers and performers	Composer-Performer Workshop class. Piano Gallery, RAM.
21/2/11	Rosalind Page, composer Zubin Kanga, piano Imants Tillers, painter	Discussion around Rosalind Page's new work Being and Time II: <i>Tabula Rasa</i> and Imants Tillers work in progress, <i>Tabula Rasa</i> .
28/2/11	Anthony Moles, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Second workshop on <i>Diabolic Machines</i> . Zubin Kanga's residence, Sydney
1/3/11	Daniel Rojas, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Third workshop on <i>Entre Bajos y Alturas</i> . Old Darlington School, University of Sydney.

4/3/11	Elliott Gyger, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	First workshop on Elliott Gyger's <i>...out of obscurity</i> . Australian National Academy of Music, Melbourne
8/3/11	Julian Day, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>Bad Blood</i> . Room 212, ABC Studios, Ultimo, Sydney, Australia.
11/3/11	Anthony Moles, composer Zubin Kanga, piano Joshua Hill, percussion	Rehearsal/Workshop on <i>Trigger</i> for piano and drum kit by Anthony Moles. Kanga's residence, Sydney, Australia.
14/3/11	Anthony Moles, composer Zubin Kanga, piano Geoffrey Gartner, cello	Workshop on Anthony Moles' <i>Turning</i> for cello and piano. Sydney Conservatorium of Music.
14/3/11	Julian Day, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>Bad Blood</i> . Room 212, ABC Studios, Ultimo, Sydney, Australia.
19/3/11	Alex Pozniak, composer Zubin Kanga, researcher	Interview with Alex Pozniak. Pozniak's Residence, Sydney, Australia
1/4/11	David Gorton, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	First Workshop on David Gorton's <i>Orfordness</i> , Room 244, RAM.
13/5/11	David Gorton, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Second Workshop on David Gorton's <i>Orfordness</i> , RAM.
23/5/11	Michael Finnissy, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Discussion about <i>Z/K</i> . Beach Café, Brighton (audio only)
26/5/11	David Gorton, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Third Workshop on David Gorton's <i>Orfordness</i> , RAM.
29/5/11	Jane Stanley, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>Diptych</i> . RAM.
31/5/11	Rolf Hind, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop/lesson on <i>Towers of Silence</i> . Hind's residence, London.
3/6/11	David Gorton, composer Zubin Kanga, researcher	Interview with David Gorton. RAM.
24/6/11	Daniel Rojas, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Fourth Workshop on <i>Entre Bajos y Alturas</i>

1/7/11	Daniel Rojas, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Fifth Workshop on <i>Entre Bajos y Alturas</i>
6/7/11	Elliott Gyger, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>...out of obscurity</i> . ANAM, Melbourne.
12/7/11	Nicholas Vines, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>Uncanny Valley</i> , Kanga's residence, Sydney.
17/7/11	Daniel Rojas, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Sixth Workshop on <i>Entre Bajos y Alturas</i>
5/8/11	Daniel Rojas, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>Sonata</i> for soprano and piano.
8/8/11	Daniel Rojas, composer Jane Sheldon, soprano Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>Sonata</i> for soprano and piano.
17/8/11	Cameron Lam, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop/lesson on various works by Lam.
26/8/11	Andrew Harrison, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>the drumfire was incessant and continued all night with unabated fury</i> . Melbourne.
27/8/11	David Young, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop with David Young. VCA, Melbourne
1/9/11	Philip Jameson, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop at on Prelude and Fugue. Sydney Grammar School
4/9/11	Andrew Schultz, composer Halcyon ensemble	First rehearsal on <i>I am writing in this book</i> for soprano, mezzo, cello, double bass, harp, piano and percussion
8/9/11	Nigel Butterley, composer Zubin Kanga, piano James Eccles, viola	Discussion about <i>Forest II</i> for viola and piano
24/9/11	Michael Cryne, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on a suite of new works for piano. RAM.
11/10/11	David Gorton, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>Orfordness</i> . RAM.

17/10/11	Rolf Hind, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop/lesson on <i>Towers of Silence</i> . Hind's residence, London.
8/11/11	Philip Jameson, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop at on Prelude and Fugue. Kanga's residence, Sydney.
11/11/11	Ross Edwards, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>Kumari</i> . Sydney Grammar School.
13/11/11	Alex Pozniak, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop/rehearsal on new score of <i>Interventions</i> .
2/1/12	Marcus Whale, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>Errata</i> . Kanga's residence, Sydney.
4/1/12	Daniel Rojas, composer Zubin Kanga, researcher	Interview with Daniel Rojas. Kanga's residence, Sydney.
5/1/12	Andrew Harrison, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>the drumfire was incessant and continued all night with unabated fury</i> . Kanga's residence, Sydney.
19/1/12	David Gorton, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>Orfordness</i> . RAM.
24/1/12	Multiple composers and performers	Composer-Performer Workshop class. RAM.
25/1/12	Michael Finnissy, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on Z/K. Concert Room, RAM.
26/1/12	Zubin Kanga, piano Antoine Francoise, piano	Rehearsal on <i>Interventions</i> by Alex Pozniak. RAM.
30/1/12	Zubin Kanga, piano Antoine Francoise, piano	Rehearsal on <i>Interventions</i> by Alex Pozniak. RAM.
2/2/12	Claudia Molitor, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>Tango</i> . RAM.
7/2/12	Multiple composers and performers	Composer-Performer Workshop class. RAM.
11/4/12	Andrew Harrison, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>the drumfire was incessant and continued all night with unabated fury</i> . Harrison's residence, Melbourne.



14/4/12	Marcus Whale, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>Errata</i> . Kanga's residence, Sydney.
21/4/12	Marcus Whale, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>Errata</i> . Kanga's residence, Sydney.
23/4/12	David Young, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Delivery of score and discussion of <i>Not Music Yet</i> . Young's residence, Melbourne.
26/4/12	Steve Reich, composer Synergy Percussion, Ensemble Offspring and Halcyon, performers	Rehearsal of <i>Music for 18 Musicians</i> . Utzon Room, Sydney Opera House.
8/5/12	George Benjamin, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>Piano Figures</i> . Benjamin's residence, London.
17/6/12	Jane Stanley, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>Diptych</i> . RAM.
19/6/12	Michael Finnissy, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>Z/K</i> . RAM.
11/7/12	Andrew Harrison, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>the drumfire was incessant and continued all night with unabated fury</i> . Kanga's residence, Sydney.
18/7/12	David Young, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Skype workshop on <i>Not Music Yet</i> . Filmed at Kanga's residence, Sydney.
20/7/12	Rosalind Page, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>Being and Time II: Tabula Rasa</i> . Kanga's residence, Sydney.
25/7/12	Anthony Moles, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>Diabolic Machines</i> . Kanga's residence, Sydney.
1/8/12	David Young, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Skype workshop on <i>Not Music Yet</i> . Filmed at Kanga's residence, Sydney.
3/8/12	Rosalind Page, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>Being and Time II: Tabula Rasa</i> . Kanga's residence, Sydney.
4/8/12	Jane Stanley, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on <i>Diptych</i> . Kanga's residence, Sydney.

20/8/12	Jane Stanley, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on a score for a film. Kanga's residence, Sydney.
8/10/12	Elo Masing, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on sketches for <i>studies in resonance II</i> . RAM.
10/12/12	Jia Jia Lu, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Lesson for composition student at MLC school, Sydney.
30/12/12	David Young, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on extended version of <i>Not Music Yet</i> . Filmed at Kanga's residence, Sydney.
1/12/13	David Young, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on extended version of <i>Not Music Yet</i> . Filmed at Kanga's residence, Sydney.
1/12/13	Philip Jameson, composer Zubin Kanga, researcher	Interview with Philip Jameson. Jameson's residence, Sydney.
7/1/13	Marcus Whale, composer Zubin Kanga, researcher	Interview with Marcus Whale. Kanga's residence, Sydney.
17/1/13	Elo Masing, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	First workshop on completed score of <i>studies in resonance II</i> . RAM.
4/2/13	Elo Masing, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on completed score of <i>studies in resonance II</i> . RAM.
24/4/13	Rosalind Page, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on Being and Time II: Tabula Rasa to create a revised version. Kanga's residence, Sydney.
17/5/13	Michael Finnissy, composer Zubin Kanga, researcher	Interview with Michael Finnissy. RAM.
31/5/13	David Young, composer Zubin Kanga, researcher	Interview with David Young via Skype. Filmed at Kanga's residence, London.
30/7/13	Param Vir, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on sketches for <i>Intimations of Luminous Clarity</i> . RAM.
17/8/13	Param Vir, composer Zubin Kanga, piano	Workshop on completed score for <i>Intimations of Luminous Clarity</i> . RAM.