

Music is Theatre

Devising Musical Performance

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Folio of Compositions

PhD

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Abstract

This portfolio comprises twelve pieces that blend music, theatre and movement, working predominantly with instrumentalists and solely in acoustic performance.

The defining principle of the portfolio is that music is theatre: music is as much a visual as it is an aural art. The theatre of music – musical gestures, the musician's body, and musical performance contexts – is treated as compositional material. The portfolio demonstrates a development from a compositional to a collaborative devising process practice that incorporates techniques from contemporary theatre, dance and performance art. This approach advocates the use of workshop activities focused on enabling musicians to develop movement material.

In collaborations with musicians, dancers and performance artists, the role of the composer was merged with that of a director, dramaturg, performer and choreographer. Several site-specific and participatory works also concern the role of the audience.

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List of Compositions

Remains of Elmet, concerto for solo viola-vocalist, choir and sinfonietta

(October 2012 – April 2013, 30 minutes)

some Surrealist methods, for oboe and voice

(November 2012 – January 2013, 16 minutes)

That's Yer Lot! site-specific interactive theatre for dancers, musicians and rapper

(April – May 2013, 30 minutes)

this piece gets more magical every time someone writes ill of it, lottery for pianist and page-turner

(July 2013, no fixed duration)

shambles, theatre for any solo musician

(November – December 2013, no fixed duration)

assembly line, theatre for any number of performers

(January – February 2014, no fixed duration)

CARNIVORE, promenade performance for two groups of musicians

(February – May 2014, 45 minutes)

a drawing-down of blinds, for solo piano

(May – September 2014, 14 minutes)

touch tales, for two performers and cello

(November 2014 – April 2015, 30 minutes)

my my mime, choreography for a group of musicians plus soloist

(January – May 2015, 15 minutes)

temporary remedies for recurring evils, for talking pianist

(April – August 2015, 9 minutes)

BRETHREN, for choreographed orchestra

(December 2015 – May 2016, 30 minutes)

List of Accompanying Material

In addition to the hard copy submissions, digital copies of this commentary, all scores and all accompanying materials are available online at the following URL.

- Website: <http://www.james-whittle.co.uk/doctorate>
- Password: Wh1tTL3w0rkS

The following media are supplied on data DVDs with the permissions of the performers. All media are films of world premieres in live concerts, unless stated.

DVD 1

some Surrealist methods **15'43"**

Performers: Elspeth Piggott (voice), Giacomo Pozzuto (oboe)

Venue: Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall, University of York

Date: 10th January 2014

Remains of Elmet **27'57"**

Performers: Victoria Bernath (viola-vocalist), Jonathan Brigg (conductor), The 24, University of York Chamber Orchestra

Venue: York Spring Festival 2013, Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall, University of York

Date: 8th May 2013

this piece gets more magical every time someone writes ill of it **8'50"**

Performers: Ian Pace (piano)

Venue: Late Music 'Frederic Rzewski at 75' concert, Unitarian Chapel York

Date: 6th August 2013

a drawing-down of blinds [4th performance] **14'52"**

Performers: Alex Wilson (piano)

Venue: Music in WW1 conference, Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall, University of York

Date: 28th February 2014

temporary remedies for recurring evils [WAV audio file] **8'21"**

Performers: Jin Hyung Lim

Venue: Late Music Lunchtime Concert, Unitarian Chapel York

Date: 5th September 2015

DVD 2

shamble 2

18'51"

Performers: Rowena Jacobs (flute)

Venue: Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall, University of York

Date: 5th December 2013

assembly line

17'02"

Performers: The Assembled

Venue: Rymer Auditorium, University of York

Date: 27 February 2014

CARNIVORE [29 jpeg and png photographs]

Performers: The Carnivore Troupe

Venue: York Spring Festival 2014, York City Centre and Museum Gardens

Date: 11th May 2014

DVD 3

my my mime

8'10"

Performers: The Assembled

Venue: York Spring Festival 2015, Stained Glass Centre, Micklegate, York

Date: 3rd May 2015

DVD 4

BRETHREN

32'36"

Performers: The Brethren ensemble

Venue: York Spring Festival 2016, Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall, University of York

Date: 4th May 2016

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Special thanks to Jan, Suzy, Rachel and my family for their love and support.

Author's declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University.

Regarding collaborative work, the contribution of each author is detailed explicitly, including my own contributions in the form of material and directorship. All sources are acknowledged as references.

Preface

If I can see it, do I have to hear it too?

– John Cage¹

How can music be theatre?

How can a composer make theatre?

How can musicians make and perform theatre?

At the outset of this research, I wanted to compose works involving text and movement – materials that could be classed as theatre in pieces of music-theatre – as well as music. The questions above defined my compositional approach in this portfolio: to cultivate an interdisciplinary methodology that removed this delineation of music and theatre as separate spaces and activities. The following practical questions were asked at the beginning of each project and here introduce my methodology.

(i) What is my practice and what defines my process?

People and collaboration are crucial elements of my compositional practice. Over the course of the portfolio, I came to make work with devising processes (see Table 1). Through devising I aimed to equalise the hierarchy of the creative process and reduce the authority of a notated score to which performers are subjected, contesting ‘the model of the singular creative artist’.²

Devising – ‘to order,’ to ‘arrange the plan or design of,’ to ‘contrive’ or ‘invent’ – has been a common activity in dance, theatre and performance art since the late 1950s.³ In those practices it is understood broadly as ‘a *process* of generating performance’: as gathering, combining, producing, refining, performing, reflecting. “Devised” tends to imply multiple participants.⁴ There is an understanding within the rhetoric surrounding devised work that it is in some way collaborative; however, collaboration can also be between the different media an artist uses.⁵

This portfolio draws on those practices. Its research is indebted partly to insights from colleagues in dance, theatre, and performance art, which I have not trained in.

¹ John Cage, *Silence: lectures and writings*, (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), 41.

² Alex Mermikides and Jackie Smart, ed., *Devising in Process* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 1.

³ “devise, v.,” *OED Online*, 2016, accessed Nov 27, 2016, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/51522>.

⁴ In this commentary single quotation marks denote quoted text. Double marks denote text cited within quotations and are also used separately when referring to the concept behind a word.

⁵ Mermikides and Smart, *Devising in Process*, 4.

Progressively, I incorporated techniques from those practices that could develop a heuristic process enabling musicians to access movement creation autonomously. My approach became concerned with initiating collaborative projects that were egalitarian and group-led, specific to the contexts of group ability, time-scale, and performance situation. This approach also introduced sharing work-in-progress informally and receiving audience feedback, drawing on the “scratch night” culture of performance art, theatre and dance.

Year	Composed	Solo Devised	Group Devised (<4)	Group Devised (4+)
2012	<i>Remains of Elmet</i>	<i>some Surrealist methods</i>		
2013				<i>That's Yer Lot!</i>
		<i>this piece gets more magical...</i>	<i>shambles</i>	
2014				<i>assembly line / CARNIVORE</i> <i>CARNIVORE</i>
		<i>a drawing-down of blinds</i>	<i>touch tales</i>	
2015				<i>my my mime</i>
		<i>temporary remedies for...</i>		
2016				<i>BRETHREN</i>

Table 1. Chronology of compositional processes

A devising process can take multiple forms, since each work will necessitate a unique ‘set of strategies’ of rehearsal techniques.⁶ Therefore, a collaborative devising process can be flexible, fluid, and can feature interchangeable roles. Accordingly, the roles and types of musical composition vary across the portfolio. In order to focus on the social and communicative aspects of my creative processes, I have defined my collaborative devising practice using the collaborative patterns of Vera John-Steiner (see Appendix 1).

I chose to run projects simultaneously as separate lines of creative investigation (see Appendix 2 for a list of performances). Their simultaneity allowed a transferal,

⁶ Deirdre Heddon and Jane Milling, ed., *Devising Performance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 2.

comparison and critique of knowledge and practice between them. Twenty-three projects from the research period do not feature in this portfolio (see Appendix 3). These projects yielded experience of interdisciplinary collaboration, choreography, dramaturgy and devising that contributed towards the present portfolio.

(ii) What materials do I use?

I limited my material to music, movement and text. Movement comprises the musical gestures and bodies of musicians as well as the use of space in choreography and theatre. I developed an approach that aimed to find thematic reasons to work with instruments visually and physically. I worked predominantly with instrumental musicians, in increasingly larger groups, in order to:

- assimilate choreographic and dramaturgical methods into a composer-director role;
- develop a group devising process suitable for small and large ensembles

Following Roger Marsh's motto 'words matter,' the realisation that different bodies with different voices would use different words supported a changing use of text across the portfolio.⁷ Each work is either based on or uses text. My compositional background in music-theatre had relied on poetry and literature for extra-musical inspiration. I aimed to eschew this reliance by instead using texts created by either the performers or me, or collated from non-fiction and public domain sources.

(iii) What should be the form and function of a score?

If devising is a temporal, ephemeral process, arguably it does not require fixing concretely in a score.⁸ I chose to create a score for each work for documentation and dissemination, not of a replicable performance, but of a process.

Notation allows performers to learn a piece for its process: for the particular techniques it requires and challenges the performer to develop. It is only through the critical, active process of devising that text scores by composers such as Pauline Oliveros, James Saunders, and various Fluxus artists can be realised. Rather than

⁷ Roger Marsh, 'Words and Music 1: Words Matter,' *Contemporary Music Research Centre* (blog), 2015, accessed Sept 5, 2015, <https://www.cmreyork.org/blog/2015/09/words-and-music>.

⁸ Composer Michael Picknett reasons that if it is impossible for another performer to have shared the same experiences that fed into the work's conception, dissemination of a work in a score is unnecessary. Michael David Picknett, "Devising Music," Doctoral thesis (Guildhall School of Music and Drama, 2014), 12.

prescribe fixed actions, these works encourage ways of thinking, suggest approaches, and invite personal responses. Such a participatory process can be transformative.

This portfolio contains musical, verbal and pictorial (e.g. stage diagrams) notation. Notation is subject to the requirements of the developing material. When devising, participants may select the most suitable or helpful form notation may take. A score may not be needed until a certain amount of fixed detail needs to be remembered and reiterated. The author of any one part of the notation may be any participant in a group, or all. Performers may also create individual performance scores. Notation is thus an evolving, co-operative activity. I produced the final scores by collating any individual materials with my own notes. Consequently, some scores resemble scripts, while others provide tools and perspectives as prompts to begin a process.

(iv) Why?

Why music and theatre? Motivation for working with theatre grew from the sense that musical performance is fundamentally an absurd, physical and unnatural activity performed by bodies. Musical performance involves placing, stretching and distorting the body in atypical ways, such as when a pianist's hands grapple with wide, complex chords. Moreover, systems of power constrain this activity. We can imagine two systems at work in art: systems of creation and systems of exhibition. In Western classical music-making, each of these systems is a hierarchy governing autonomy that is embodied by composer-performer and performer-audience interactions. Bodies participating in these interactions are constrained by notions of perfected technique, correct performance, and concert etiquette. My work sees music as a theatre of social and political relationships.

The theatre through which my work expresses meaning originates from these integral relationships. I wanted to make work exploring the effort and struggle of working within these systems. By accentuating, exaggerating and abstracting these relationships through theatre, my hope was to present musical performance as a metaphor for external social and political systems functioning as a microcosm of contemporary culture.

Why devise this work? I wanted to make work advocating egalitarian processes as an alternative to inherited hierarchy. It would be possible to compose – not devise – a work about egalitarianism that directed the performers in all aspects of musical and theatrical material. However, for me such an autocratically created work would be hypocritical for employing the very system that it protests. Instead, I sought to make work of protest and empowerment by replacing hierarchy with democratically divided,

devised roles. The questions concerning what defines my practice and process, what materials are used, and what a score contributes, are the necessary, perpetual means by which hierarchy is challenged – hierarchy that may still be employed actively when suitable. I view an activated choice as a path from hierarchy to empowerment. Questioning each aspect of my practice allowed each choice to be made with purpose.

Chapter 1. Music is Theatre

This chapter outlines the ideas and aesthetics that have influenced this portfolio. It aims to clarify what I understand by music and theatre in the context of my practice, to substantiate the claim that music is theatre, and to demonstrate that a devising process can enable composer and musicians to collaborate in the creation of physical performance pieces.

1.1 Bodies are Distractions

Perceiving a musician's movements can affect the experience of musical performance. Movements – such as the entrances and smiles of soloists, the orchestra's striking and swaying, or a singer's outstretched arm on a high note – may seem to convey as much meaning about the music to the spectator as the sound itself, or more so.

Sometimes, these movements can convey the opposite meaning. A cognitive dissonance can occur if a musician's body and sound seem to be 'inconsistent or contradictory' in relation to each other.⁹ It is possible that a charismatic, gesturally exuberant performer can give a less musically convincing performance without the spectator realising. Conversely, one may not hear how highly satisfactory a recital is, if its performer looks nervous and unconvinced themselves. In either scenario, as theatre researcher Colette Conroy remarks, '[b]odies are distractions.'¹⁰

1.2 What am I Reading?

In the example above, the musicians' actions transform an experience of the music. The purpose of physical attendance – to *hear* a piece of music – is compared with what was *seen*, requiring a decision about what meaning to *read* into these conflicting signs. The spectator who aims to focus on sound alone may shut their eyes, but since bodies are 'elements of theatre,' their presence in musical performance cannot be ignored.¹¹ Arguably, live acoustic music requires the visual, as Igor Stravinsky felt:

I have always hated listening to music with my eyes closed, without the eye taking an active part in proceedings. It is essential, in order to understand the music in all its fullness, to see the gesture, the movement

⁹ Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1957), 12-13. Festinger explains: '[t]wo elements are dissonant if, for one reason or another, they do not fit together. They may be inconsistent or contradictory, culture and group standards may dictate that they do not fit, and so on.'

¹⁰ Colette Conroy, *Theatre & the Body* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 37.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

of the different parts of the body which produces it. The fact is that all music which is created or composed requires in addition a means of exteriorisation if it is to be perceived by the listener.¹²

‘Exteriorisation’ could refer to technology in electronic or electroacoustic music. I do not refer to either, since my work is in creating acoustic performances of human-human interaction: performer-performer and performer-spectator.

1.3 Intending to Watch

Negotiating the perceived sights and sounds of performance, and extracting meaning from them, is how a spectator participates in performance. Since any action made by a performer can be considered a material of performance, the question of whether the spectator is aware of perceiving theatre or music is one of context and personal perspective.

Director Peter Brook reflected that: ‘The audience assists the actor, and at the same time for the audience itself assistance comes back from the stage.’ However, Brook contrasts a “‘bad” house’ scenario having an audience’s ‘passive gaze’ with a “‘good night”” of an audience’s ‘active interest’.¹³ But the spectator is not passive by default. Philosopher Jacques Rancière argues against this antagonism of activity/passivity: ‘[b]eing a spectator is not some passive condition that we should transform into activity. It is our normal situation.’¹⁴

Curator and art critic Nicolas Bourriaud developed this idea, saying ‘[a]rt is a state of encounter.’¹⁵ Any ‘arena of exchange’ set up between performer and spectator is in participatory.¹⁶ What we observe is up to us. Theatre researcher Hans-Thies Lehmann agreed that ‘the spectators *themselves* define their situation.’¹⁷ We choose to watch; we choose to listen.

1.4 What Are They Doing?

Wherever spectators witness performance, there is an understanding that the event is, in the words of Marvin Carlson, a ‘consciously produced human action,’ since ‘you are

¹² Igor Stravinsky, *Chronicle of my Life*, Volume I (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1936), 157, quoted in Jack Bornoff, ed., *Music Theatre in a Changing Society* (Paris: UNESCO, 1968), 22-23.

¹³ Peter Brook, *The Empty Space* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1968), 156.

¹⁴ Jacques Rancière, translated by Gregory Elliott, *The Emancipated Spectator* (London: Verso, 2009), 17.

¹⁵ Nicolas Bourriaud, translated by Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods with Mathieu Copeland, *Relational Aesthetics* (Dijon: Les presses du réel, 2002), 18.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹⁷ Hans-Thies Lehmann, translated by Karen Jüers-Munby, *Postdramatic Theatre* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2006), 103.

intending to perform; I am intending to interpret it as a performance.’¹⁸ Surely, then, the concert dress a violinist wears conveys as much information about the performance as where they hold and place the bow.

There is a danger, Conroy continues, that if spectators ‘start to doubt that a specific act is intentional, the coherence of the artistic structure is threatened.’¹⁹ If a musician pulls a strained face, does it mean that they have just made a mistake, or that the next phrase is difficult technically? Are they reacting to something another performer just played? Or was their expression triggered by a completely unrelated thought? That a combination of aural and visual signs can communicate similar, dissimilar and contradictory meanings, raises fundamental compositional questions of how these meanings are created and can coexist coherently.

1.5 Intending to Perform

As a composer, I am concerned with observing and understanding the intention and nonintention behind a performer’s actions – voluntary and involuntary sights and sounds – in order to shape these. This framework provided the compositional basis of this portfolio: to treat all visual aspects of musical performance as compositional material.

By focusing on making ‘consciously produced human action,’ my work engages with the theatre of musical performance. Specifically, with:

- the physical presence and participation of the musician;
- the physical presence and participation of the spectator.

The former concerns:

- the actions that musicians can create;
- how musicians can create these actions intentionally and autonomously;
- how these actions are framed by the theatre of musical performance.

The latter concerns:

- the mode of performance;
- audience participation and interaction.

¹⁸ Lisbon Consortium, “Marvin Carlson – Interview” YouTube video, 6:33, posted by “lisbonconsortium,” Jul 30, 2011, accessed Oct 19, 2012, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zx1hXvphx6U>.

¹⁹ Conroy, *Theatre & the Body*, 38.

1.6 An Art of Bodies

I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged.

– Peter Brook²⁰

In Peter Brook's definition of theatre, the perceived action may not always be intentional. For instance, a musician may not intend any meaning from their act of entering the stage. There are some composed cases where a musician's entrance opens a performance, such as the muttering solo soprano in Luciano Berio's *Sequenza III*, or where a musician enters the stage during the performance, such as the clarinettist in Thomas Adès's *Catch*. But Brook's implication is that any activity can become theatre. If '[t]heatre is an art of bodies witnessed by bodies,' as Simon Shepherd observes, then musical performance can be considered a theatrical situation.²¹

1.7 Theatre of Music

We may expect theatre in a theatre and music in a concert hall. John Paynter observed that 'every musical work is an "event" which we apprehend through participation.'²² The spectator's participation is framed by the context they find themselves in, as Conroy recognises: '[a]udiences make use of a series of unwritten theatrical conventions that are introduced by the context, style and manifest intentions of a performance.'²³ Robert P. Morgan observed how, in the growth of music-theatre in Britain during the 1960s, a number of composers came 'to view much of their work, including purely instrumental work in dramatic terms ... the musical performance itself may be treated as a "staged" event.'²⁴

²⁰ Brook, *The Empty Space*, 11.

²¹ Simon Shepherd, *Body and Pleasure* (London: Routledge, 2006), 73, quoted in Conroy, *Theatre & the Body*, 18. Lehmann's definition of 'situation' develops the exchange between performer and spectator: 'an unstable sphere of simultaneously possible and imposed choice, as well as the virtual transformation of the situation.' Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, 106.

²² John Paynter, "Introduction" in Wilfrid Mellers, edited by John Paynter, *Between Old Worlds and New* (London: Cygnus Arts, 1997), 124.

²³ Conroy, *Theatre & the Body*, 35.

²⁴ Robert P. Morgan, "Music Theatre" in Don Michael Randel, ed., *The New Harvard Dictionary of Music* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1986), 522, quoted in Michael Hall, *Music Theatre in Britain 1960-1975* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2015), 10.

1.7.1 The Concert Event

While music is commonly “staged” through the use of a stage, lighting, proscenium-framed audience seating, and so on, the classical concert is itself a staged act of historical representation involving historicised performance practices. Performers and audience exhibit culturally learned behaviours (sometimes uncertainly, as the enduring concert etiquette debate about when to clap demonstrates), imposed and maintained by learned, gendered social expectations.²⁵

Throughout this portfolio, there is an engagement with this theatre of musical performance in the Western classical concert-going tradition, its rituals, ceremonies and behavioural conventions, which I am a student of. All pieces, save one, engage directly with the idea of tradition and so are in some way *about* music and musical performance, about the physical act of creating and watching music. Several pieces took this idea further by being site-specific for concert halls. This approach was influenced by Sheffield-based company Forced Entertainment:

We knew that one worked in culture and through it, never outside of it. We knew that in addressing a site – library, theatre, gallery or tourist coach – one did so at best with an understanding and reference to the history or expectation of practices or events in such places. We knew that in the dancing with and around the expectations inherent in form and in place lay the possibility of meaning. In this sense everything we did was site-specific – a reaction to the history and properties of a certain arena.²⁶

1.7.2 Liveness

Musical composition and performance may instead be more helpfully framed in the wider context of performance, so as to employ what Peggy Phelan describes as ‘the concept and experience of the live event.’²⁷ In this way, my approach to making performance focuses on its liveness and on the ‘experience of the real,’ which Lehmann notes has blurred the boundary between forms of theatre and performance art.²⁸

However, an awareness of the theatre inherent to any musical performance implies a contradiction in the perception of this dualism of music and theatre. Conversations during my collaborations with dancers used the same terms that I

²⁵ Norman Lebrecht, “A tip from the concertmaster: here’s when you clap,” *Slipped Disc* (blog), 2015, accessed April 14, 2015, <http://slippedisc.com/2015/04/a-tip-from-the-concertmaster-heres-when-you-clap>.

²⁶ Tim Etchells, *Certain Fragments* (London: Routledge, 1999), 21.

²⁷ Peggy Phelan, ‘Foreword’ in *Ibid.*, 10.

²⁸ Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, 134.

consider in musical composition: line, material, form, shape, momentum, energy, density of activity, pacing. Moreover, John Cage's remark, the 'only real difference between theatre and music is that more and more things happen that aren't, superficially, making sounds,' shows that what connects the two is movement.²⁹

1.8 Music is Movement

Movement is a necessary condition of creating music. Recent research by musicologists Rolf Inge Godøy and Marc Leman has demonstrated how musical communication can be defined as a 'chain' of movement:

bodily movements control instruments that generate movements of air particles. These movements are in turn transmitted to the listener, and are taken over by the listener's auditory system, which, through a neuronal coupling with the listener's motor system, sets the listener's body in motion.³⁰

1.8.1 Gesture

If all movements generate sounds, Cage's conclusion that 'everything we do is music' is more than a philosophical statement.³¹ Attaching meaning to these movements is to conceive of them as gestures:

a pattern through which we structure our environment from the viewpoint of actions. Gesture conceived this way is thus a category, or structural feature, of our perception-action system. In this approach, gesture is both a mental and a corporeal phenomenon.³²

I will refer to four types of musical gesture, as defined by Godøy and Leman:

- *sound-producing*: 'those that effectively produce sound' through excitation and modification;
- *communicative*: those that are intended for communication between performer-performer and performer-perceiver;

²⁹ Richard Kostelanetz, *Conversing with Cage* (London: Routledge, 2003), 119.

³⁰ Rolf Inge Godøy and Marc Leman, ed., *Musical Gestures: Sound, Movement, and Meaning* (London: Routledge, 2010), 6.

³¹ Kostelanetz, *Conversing with Cage*, 69.

³² Godøy and Leman, *Musical Gestures: Sound, Movement, and Meaning*, 8.

- *sound-facilitating*: those that ‘are not directly involved in sound production, but play an important part in shaping the resultant sound’ (preparatory or supportive movements, such as raising a finger to press a piano key);
- *sound-accompanying*: those that are ‘intended to follow features in the sound,’ such as dancing, which can be sound-tracing (transposing an aspect of sound, or its contour, directly into movement).³³

In performance, these musical gestures may be variously intentional, unintentional, unnecessary, and necessary (a matrix comparing these criteria may be imagined). Therefore, the body must be the primary focus of devising music.

1.8.2 Body

Musicians perform a complex set of embodied relationships to their instrument and surroundings. Yet, musicians are not trained in movement; we are not dancers or actors. The musicians I collaborated with have a range of experiences of theatre and dance. Our informal discussions corroborated that, in general, musicians are not taught a working understanding of their bodies from an early age; specifically, an awareness of how their body’s motor functions contribute towards creating sound when in contact with a musical instrument. Without such awareness, how may a practising musician realise the sensation of their instrument as an ‘extension of the body’? With or without such awareness, how may a composer create movement for musicians to perform?

Conversely, in music, as Conroy writes of theatre, bodies ‘have to both exist and not exist.’³⁴ The performing musician mirrors the actor who, in order to create the illusion of drama, must deny their real presence while simultaneously drawing attention to their performance.

Musicians are therefore akin to the *not-actors* that Michael Kirby defined as ‘performers who do not do anything to reinforce the information or identification’ of their presence.³⁵ Kirby recognised how ‘[m]usicians rehearse, are concerned with timing, respond to cues. None of these factors defines acting.’

Compared to actors and dancers, musicians use their bodies in a limited number of ways: walk on stage, sit down, hold an instrument, turn pages, stand up, walk off. Simply requesting that musicians perform other kinds of movement can trigger tension.

³³ *Ibid.*, 23–28.

³⁴ Conroy, *Theatre & the Body*, 74. Conroy continues: ‘They [bodies] need to be used and manipulated and foregrounded to make any kind of theatre at all. They must have so many different possibilities to have the semiotic flexibility to enable us to develop an understanding of the different sorts of causal and poetic connections that theatre can possibly pose.’

³⁵ Michael Kirby, *A Formalist Theatre* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 4. See also Michael Kirby, “On Acting and Not-Acting,” *The Drama Review: TDR* 16, no. 1 (1972), 14.

As choreographer and writer Melanie Bales notes: ‘It is one thing to be an untrained dancer performing in a dance piece and quite another to be a former ballet student or a Merce Cunningham dancer performing “pedestrian” movement’ (see Chapter 2.3.1).³⁶ Although the ‘revaluation of the ordinary’ in pedestrian movement signals a theatre of the real, such an approach risks raising performance anxiety as the performer reconciles instructions with new awareness of what their body is doing (all movements becoming inwardly reflexive and outwardly performative).³⁷

Avoiding a ‘technique versus nontechnique’ conflict, to say music *is* theatre is to read meaning into movement: to grant active, embodied and communicative processes as contributing to the creation of musical performance.³⁸

1.8.3 Embodiment

Learning music is a process of embodiment instilling behavioural habits and physical attributes in the student. This is clear if we follow Judith Butler’s claim that understanding the body is ‘an active process of embodying certain cultural and historical possibilities.’³⁹ Butler agrees with the phenomenological argument of Maurice Merleau-Ponty, which, Elizabeth Grosz relates, ‘demonstrates that experience is always necessarily embodied, corporeally constituted, located in and as the subject’s incarnation.’⁴⁰ The performance of music is no different to any other situation where embodied experience is read. The performance situation is then only a heightened version of the everyday, where bodies are encountered not as ‘objects of analysis’ but rather ‘always form a part of politicised discursive structures.’⁴¹

For musicians to perform movement is to engage with their own and each other’s bodies and actions. Reading bodies is a process undertaken by performers and audience alike. Joe Kelleher’s ‘spect-actor’ summarises how audience members are ‘witnesses to the actor’s act of witnessing’.⁴² Tim Etchells of Forced Entertainment agrees: ‘In the complicity of the performers with their task lies our own complicity – we are watching the people before us, not representing something but going through

³⁶ Melanie Bales and Rebecca Nettle-Fiol, ed., *The Body Eclectic: Evolving Practices in Dance Training* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2008) 13-14.

³⁷ Sondra Horton Fraleigh, *Dance and the Lived Body: A Descriptive Aesthetics* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1987), 235.

³⁸ Bales and Nettle-Fiol, *The Body Eclectic: Evolving Practices in Dance Training*, 14.

³⁹ Judith Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution,” in Katie Conboy, Nada Medina and Sarah Stanbury, *Writing on the Body: Female Embodiment and Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 403.

⁴⁰ Elizabeth Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Towards a Corporeal Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 95, quoted in Conroy, *Theatre & the Body*, 53.

⁴¹ Conroy, *Theatre & the Body*, 14 and 61.

⁴² Joe Kelleher, *Theatre & Politics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 70; Conroy, *Theatre & the Body*, 53.

something.’⁴³ Similarly, a reading and understanding of the musician’s body is necessary for a composer wishing to make movement.

Movement cannot be imposed on the body. Since every body is different, the quality of movement will differ between performers performing the same action. As Bales proposes, regarding dance, an understanding of training can lead to identifying movement as ‘a conveyer of meaning ... placed in relationship to other parts of the whole’.⁴⁴ Understanding of the body must be shared: the composer and performer both need to understand what the musician’s body can do in order to work together equally. Consequently, the people I work with influence my works. This collaborative devising process allows the composer to make movement, not for, or on, but *with* musicians.

1.9 Contexts and Precedents

Many composers have explored movement in music, particularly in the music-theatre works developed in the twentieth century. A brief account of this historical context will provide a basis for discussing my integration of theatre and music.

1.9.1 Music-Theatre and Instrumental Theatre

Broadcasters and writers Jack Bornoff and Michael Hall have identified numerous differing definitions for ‘music-theatre’ (variously hyphenated and not), agreeing that the term became popular ‘mainly in German-speaking countries’ during the 1950s and 1960s.⁴⁵ Hall cites an early use by German director Walter Felsenstein:

to designate a theatrical work (or performance) in which dramatic and musical elements are used so as to melt into one another and to create the total impression of “seamless unity”⁴⁶

Excepting Bornoff, composers and critics alike have kept music-theatre distinct from opera, while for Paul Griffiths, Hall notes, it ‘grew out of “the dotage of opera”’.⁴⁷ Hall

⁴³ Etchells, *Certain Fragments*, 49.

⁴⁴ Bales and Nettle-Fiol, ed., *The Body Eclectic*, 10.

⁴⁵ Bornoff, *Music Theatre in a Changing Society*, 17. ‘Music theatre has become current in the past two decades among the more sophisticated public, mainly in German-speaking countries. It can mean a production of a standard opera, which stresses its theatrical or dramatic aspect; as it can mean a work which eschews the classical musical forms of aria, ensemble, chorus, etc., in favour of the dramatic continuity.’

⁴⁶ Peter Paul Fuchs, Foreword to *The Music Theatre of Walter Felsenstein*, Peter Paul Fuchs, ed. (London: Quartet Books, 1991), quoted in Hall, *Music Theatre in Britain*, 3.

⁴⁷ Hall, *Music Theatre in Britain*, 9. Hall also cites Robert P. Morgan, 1986: “the combination of elements from music and drama in new forms distinct from traditional opera, although some actions is usually specified, music theatre is normally non-realistic and often non-representational” (4-5); and the 2009 Concise English Oxford Dictionary: “a combination of music and drama in a modern form distinct from traditional opera, typically for a small number of performers” (3). Hall’s own definition is that:

recounts a defining moment for British music-theatre at the 1964 Summer School at Wardour Castle, when composers including Harrison Birtwistle, Alexander Goehr, Peter Maxwell Davies and Anthony Gilbert:

decided that “Music Theatre”, as all agreed to call it, should be “concise, contain no stage fripperies, no large orchestra, no divas, no gigantic arias. It could include the spoken word, ideally be done in the round, and music and theatre should be integrated for the clear purpose of putting across a socio-political message.”⁴⁸

Hall showcases the array of experimentation and styles of British music-theatre, analysing works by Jeremy Dale Roberts, Nicola LeFanu, Roger Marsh and Erika Fox. Common to these are elements of production (the spatialisation of performers, stage layout, lighting, and costume) and directed theatre (role-playing, non-musical action). Aesthetic connections between twentieth century theatre and music are made plain by importing terms such as Theatre of Situation, Theatre of Character and Theatre of the Absurd for analysing works by European and American contemporaries.⁴⁹

Hall goes on to identify how ‘an instrumental work becomes Instrumental Theatre when it includes a meaningful visual dimension and involves actions that go beyond those normally needed to produce music’ and that ‘Instrumental Theatre demands that at least some of the instrumentalists taking part should behave like actors.’ Griffiths characterises Instrumental Theatre as ‘musicians in movement.’⁵⁰

These definitions of Music Theatre and Instrumental Theatre situate the composer as an authoritative creator of instructions, resulting in composed or choreographed movement. I sought to move beyond composed Music Theatre, although the above production aspects are expanded in the present works through more developed uses of lighting, costume and stage direction.

In seeking to make works articulating combinations of music, movement and text, I aimed to diverge from the representation and subjugation of the performer,

‘Music Theatre allows composers to take control of all aspects of the performance’ (5). Music Theatre ‘never relies exclusively on singing, dancing, or speaking, but combines these elements, or draws on folk or popular types of theatre to create a unique composite of its own. ... works should be short enough to be included as an item in a concert containing other types of music. Sometimes the instrumentalists are asked to take part in the action’ (296).

⁴⁸ Hall, *Music Theatre in Britain*, 17.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 47. For Hall, ‘the Music Theatre of Luigi Nono, John Cage and Pierre Boulez represents the Theatre of Situation; that of Harry Partch, Luciano Berio and Hans Werner Henze, the Theatre of Character; and that of Karlheinz Stockhausen, Mauricio Kagel and György Ligeti, the Theatre of the Absurd.’

⁵⁰ Paul Griffiths, *Modern Music and After* 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 196, quoted in Hall, *Music Theatre in Britain*, 9.

towards a focus on the musicians themselves and their physicality, influenced by what Hans-Thies Lehmann defines as ‘theatre of the real,’ a trait of postdramatic theatre.⁵¹ This developing aesthetic approach employed egalitarian processes to work collaboratively with performers, recognising that the body is a manifestation of experience.

1.9.2 Compositional Influences

The influences of certain artworks are discussed individually in relation to particular works throughout the commentary. The seminal work of devised theatre underpinning these is *Rising* by Roger Marsh, premiered by music-theatre ensemble Black Hair at the 2010 York Spring Festival of New Music.⁵²

Rising interwove a sequence of individual musical and theatrical scenes, each exploring aspects of the eponymous idea. The scenes range from the ritual (a crouched, spotlit violinist spirals slowly upwards) via the comic (a clarinet hurled over the audience, thankfully caught) to the confrontational and political (the words of a catchy song – ‘stand up stand up!’ – transform when the performers advance on the audience with cacophonous shouts).

Marsh and the six Black Hair performers devised the entire half-hour work together, though no full score currently exists. In light of this model, I aimed to make works combining actions in which different bodies, the aural and the physical, verbal and non-verbal vocal sounds, coexist. Where music is theatre.

⁵¹ Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, 103.

⁵² “York Spring Festival of New Music 2010”, York Spring Festival, 2010, accessed Oct 19, 2012, <http://www.yorkspringfestival.co.uk/2010>.

Chapter 2. Constructing Narratives

some Surrealist methods, *Remains of Elmet* and *That's Yer Lot!* are three theatrical pieces that were all created by first constructing a narrative through text. As collaborations in which I took a directorial lead, *some Surrealist methods* and *Remains of Elmet* were concerned with:

- using literary analysis and review to derive all material from a source text
- grounding narrative and structure on the narrative and structure of the text
- exploring dialogue between music and text

Their approaches to material differ, however, since music and text are segregated in *some Surrealist methods*, a piece about Surrealism and composition, while *Remains of Elmet*, a piece about decay and regeneration, integrates them.

2.1 Directed Devising: *some Surrealist methods*

some Surrealist methods was devised with students Elspeth Piggott (voice) and Giacomo Pozzuto (oboe). Giacomo invited me to write a work for a recital; he and I invited Elspeth to collaborate after seeing her give a witty performance of *Stripsody* by Cathy Berberian. We agreed on a familial, collaborative, directed devising process: our aims were clearly focused on making a theatre piece together, while our roles were clearly divided into performers and composer-director (see Appendix 4).⁵³

The structure was derived from two texts from André Breton's *First Manifesto of Surrealism* of 1924: 'POEM,' which I introduced first, and 'SECRETS OF THE MAGICAL SURREALIST ART,' which we placed first to contextualise 'POEM.' Breton's *Manifesto* suggested a premise for a theatrical duo work addressing the issue of how we perceive music and theatre simultaneously: '[t]he forms of Surrealist language adapt themselves best to dialogue. Here, two thoughts confront each other; while one is being delivered, the other is busy with it; but how is it busy with it?'⁵⁴

Dialogue and conflict between confronting thoughts informed preliminary text-based improvisations on 'POEM,' involving Elspeth delivering the text beside musical

⁵³ Michael Picknett distinguishes degrees of authorship and hierarchy helpfully in defining two devising categories of theatre and dance. 'Group devising is where all the performers and collaborators take equal responsibility for directing the rehearsals and creating the project. ... Directed devising is where one person takes on the role of director, with overall responsibility for the process and project. The director takes every decision on the project alone after extensive input from the performers.' Picknett, "Devising Music", 10. See Appendix 4 for further discussion of collaborative patterns.

⁵⁴ André Breton, translated by Helen Lane and Richard Seaver, *Manifestoes of Surrealism* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 1972), 34.

(wordless) responses from Giacomo. Both treated the string of striking fonts as a verbal and graphic score. Their improvisations played with delivery of the text, texture and movement. Besides tasking the performers to respond to the text directly, I tasked myself with responding to their improvisation by adhering to a ‘principle of the association of ideas’ (which Breton claims ‘militates against’ any such juxtaposition).⁵⁵

For me, Breton also expressed a problem in composing music-theatre: seeing music and theatre as ‘two realities in the presence of each other,’ distinct entities seen as juxtaposed images competing for the attention of the eye and ear, rather than integral elements of performance. The idea that all aural and visual images are surreal – not necessarily what they say they are, but vessels for what we think they are – suggested applicable concepts of juxtaposition, simultaneity, absurdity, and automatism.

We reflected on these concepts in relation to the form each improvisation took. I described the effects of the performers’ actions (moments of apparent simultaneity, and characters and moods that came to mind) to open discussion about their approach and intention with the material. Together we identified what we wanted to reiterate, develop and substitute. After each improvisation we annotated ‘POEM’ with our separate responses to each line of text (see Figures 1–3).⁵⁶ I collated our final annotations in the score to capture a sense of playful spontaneity in concrete performance directions.

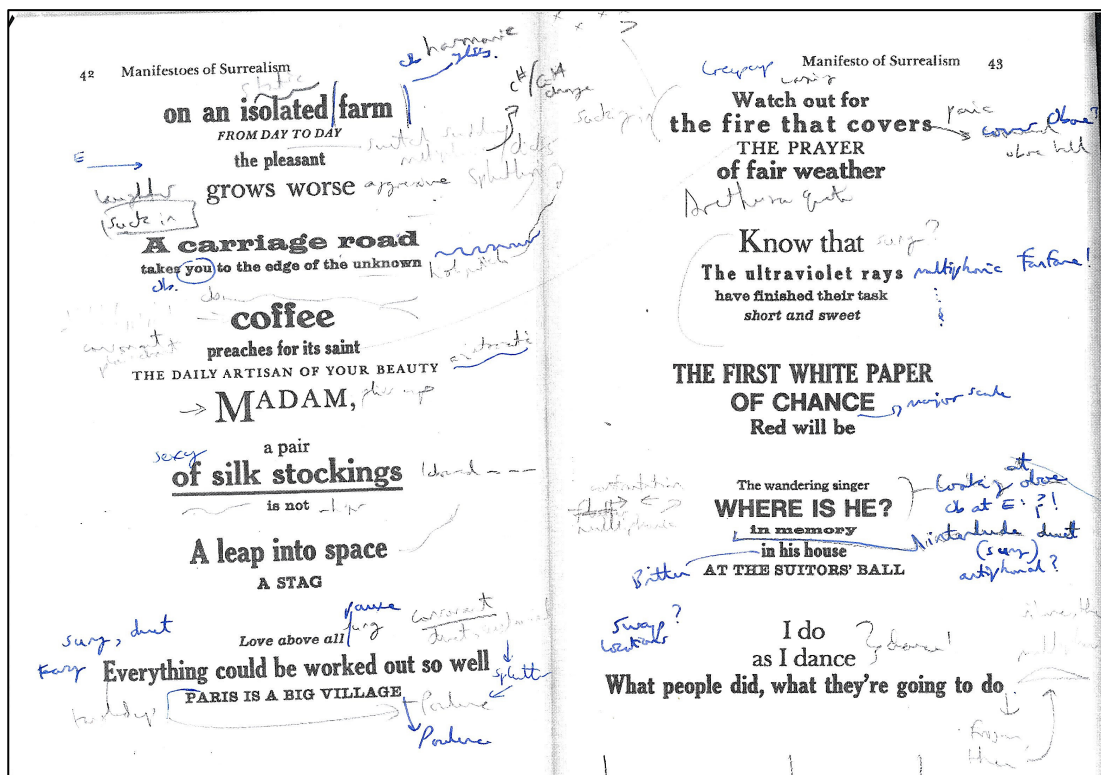


Figure 1. some Surrealist methods, ‘POEM’ annotations by James

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 36-37.

⁵⁶ Throughout this commentary handwritten notes are reproduced for illustrative purposes only.

Stare into audience

(2)

Oboe Voice

II - POEM
Glance at music

Oboe and Voice stand frozen	Voice bursts out laughing	Oboe
-----------------------------	---------------------------	------

A burst of laughter

informative of sapphire in the island of Ceylon

dainty The most beautiful straws

worried **HAVE A FADED COLOR**

UNDER THE LOCKS
comic

Oboe Voice

black on an isolated farm

FROM DAY TO DAY throw away (hand gesture) SL
the pleasant Voice

drop to knees face SIR **grows worse** weight of the world
dramatic

wander away to furthest corner **A carriage road** back to street
takes you to the edge of the unknown

coffee...

choir boy voice **preaches for its saint** hands together

THE DAILY ARTISAN OF YOUR BEAUTY

M^{ADAM,}

Figure 2. some Surrealist methods, 'POEM' annotations by Elspeth (additional annotations by James)

Look forward. (2)

II - POEM

Oboe and Voice stand frozen	Voice bursts out laughing	Oboe
-----------------------------	---------------------------	------

A burst of laughter *luck in*

of sapphire in the island of Ceylon

IMITATE

BE BITTEN HERE

Drop

Click
AGGRESSIVE

HAVE A FADED COLOR *splatters*

UNDER THE LOCKS *Drop*

on an isolated farm *stacc*

FROM DAY TO DAY

the pleasant

grows worse *with phrases + obses.*

A CARRIAGE ROAD → *[SUCKING/LAUGHING]* *clicks*

Takes you to the edge of the interplanar.

coffee *clicks*

preaches for its saint - Plained

THE DAILY ARTISAN OF YOUR BEAUTY

M^AADAM,

Figure 3. some Surrealist methods, 'POEM' annotations by Giacomo

2.1.1 Material Methods

The same process was applied to ‘SECRETS OF THE MAGICAL SURREALIST ART.’ In order to structure this large amount of text, which lacks a straightforward narrative, we sought to develop a ‘through-line’ of action from musical and theatrical relationships.⁵⁷ We defined three methods of creating material in order to create, notate and combine music and text differently and make their relationships discernible.

- **Composed** material: found or new material created by a sole author outside rehearsal.
 - Text by André Breton
 - Quasi-recitatives in ‘To write false novels’ (IV (a) and (b) in Table 2)
 - Oboe in ‘Against death’ (which either follows Voice’s line closely or offers momentary commentaries on the text)
- **Devised** material: created and refined by participants collectively during rehearsals, fixed by transcription either during rehearsals or afterwards from recordings.
 - Oboe fragments in ‘To write false novels’
 - Voice in ‘Against death,’ exaggerating Elspeth’s pitch contour, rhythm and dynamics
 - All musical fragments in ‘POEM’
- **Improvised** material: created during rehearsal, annotated as a performance direction. Improvisation is always directed in some way.⁵⁸ Tasks begin openly before fixing any parameters to retain intention within flexible situations. Degrees of indeterminacy can vary widely depending on which other parameters remain open.
 - Voice and Oboe in ‘Written Surrealist composition’
 - Oboe in ‘How to catch the eye of a woman you pass in the street’

The combination of materials, notations and creative methods is dependent on a project’s stimulus, performers and performance context. Nuances of these three methods are discussed later in relation to other works in this portfolio. Notation was either musical or verbal.

⁵⁷ Konstantin Stanislavski, *An Actor’s Work* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), 288 and 316.

⁵⁸ Heddon and Milling clarify: ‘improvisation is always already conditioned by the mannerisms, physical abilities and training, horizons of expectation and knowledge, patterns of learned behaviour of the performers – their *habitus*, to use Bourdieu’s phrase.’ Heddon and Milling, *Devising Performance*, 10.

Section	Music	Notation	Text	Notation
<i>Written Surrealist composition...</i>	devised	script	devised	script
<i>How not to be bored when...</i>	improvised	script	devised	script
<i>To make speeches</i>	composed	score	devised	score
<i>To write false novels (a)</i>	composed	score	devised	score
<i>To write false novels</i>	devised	score	improvised	script
<i>To write false novels (b)</i>	composed	score	devised	score
<i>How to catch the eye of a...</i>	improvised	script	improvised	script
<i>Against death</i>	composed	score	devised	score
<i>POEM</i>	devised	script/score	devised	script/score

Table 2. Material and notation in some Surrealist methods

This broad scheme ensured different live interactions between the performers, perceivable as spanning the excited, reactive spontaneity of improvised action to the composure of fixed chamber playing. The latter is demonstrated in ‘VI – Against death,’ the only section where music “speaks” separately. The former is clearest in ‘V – How to catch the eye of a woman you pass in the street,’ which I directed, since it is the only section without words save its title, as an improvised comic sketch.

I accentuated the ‘two realities’ of Voice and Oboe further by composing the physical space (see Figure 4). I characterised physical distance as indicating independence and simultaneity (represented by the symmetrically placed music stands), and physical closeness as indicating combined elements. The stage centre became the pivotal point of shared activity. All other movement material was devised. My directorial role became more discrete as movement material became fixed into concrete forms, when I evaluated the clarity and pace of movement alongside the overall pace and continuity of tone.

By prioritising text, our process challenged Giacomo and Elspeth to discover what they were comfortable with performing. The text invited certain demands challenging their theatre and movement skills.

While the final score asks performers to recreate a process and performance, it also includes autobiographical elements. Notated references to Benjamin Britten’s *Six Metamorphoses after Ovid* appear in ‘To write false novels’ and ‘POEM.’ Giacomo had programmed Britten’s work with ours. By including references to Britten, our piece plays on a literal sense of an audience’s reality juxtaposed with the performance virtuality. This approach is adapted in the score to allow performers to incorporate their own musical quotations.

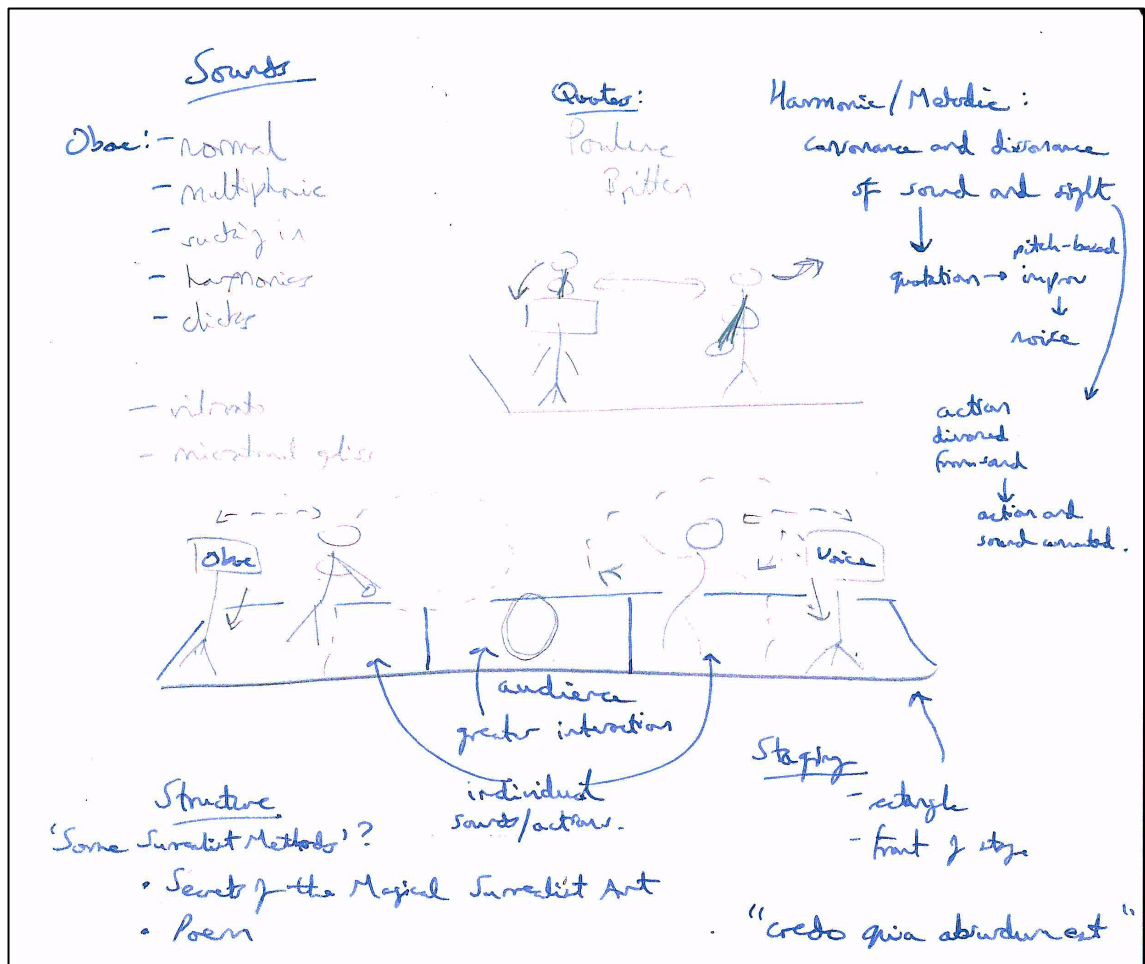


Figure 4. some Surrealist methods staging sketch

2.1.2 Developing a Devising Model

Through the creation of *some Surrealist methods*, I identified a devising rehearsal process comprising four stages with which to frame future work:

- **Discovery**
- **Experimentation**
- **Refining** (Reiteration → Reflection → Revision)
- **Performance** (→ Refining)⁵⁹

Classing this as a rehearsal process acknowledges that devising rehearsals are ‘both workshops and rehearsals.’⁶⁰ **Workshops** involve open creation, exploration and development of material. **Rehearsals** work towards presenting certain materials

⁵⁹ These stages resemble those identified by Mermikides and Smart: ‘generation of initial ideas; exploration and development of ideas; shaping of material into a structured piece; performance and production; reflection.’ Mermikides and Smart, *Devising in Process*, 22.

⁶⁰ Picknett, “Devising Music”, 13.

specifically for performance. A transition from workshop to rehearsal is rarely a precisely fixed moment in a process, since these focuses can interweave in a single session. Because each of my projects worked towards a performance, for simplicity I use rehearsal. The terms of these four stages illustrate compositional and directorial concerns.

Discovery is the initial exploration of a stimulus, starting ‘from anything’: any material, conceptual or real, selected by an individual or group.⁶¹ Discovery also denotes the initial personal development of the group when participants first get to know each other, agree how to collaborate, and learn each other’s strengths and weaknesses.

Experimentation features the bulk of devising work, often integrating multiple workshop activities. This fluid phase generates a bank of material, discussion and ideas, around and beyond the stimulus.

Refining is a cyclical developmental process that filters the bank of material through inclusion and exclusion. Refining involves:

- **Reiteration**: a moment is performed multiple times in its current form
- **Reflection**: observations are made about its effect from its performance
- **Revision**: changes to the product may be made and tried

Peter Brook suggests the formula ‘*Theatre = R r a ...* repetition, representation, assistance’ for making work.⁶² I do not use “repeat” (to go back to), since “reiterate” (to do again) highlights an active, progressive process.

Experimentation often merges with refining, such as when reiterations of a particular material are varied and compared, thus further proliferating material. Refining occurs on a microstructural level (when performers recognise a moment as being sufficiently fixed) and the macrostructural (when the collective coalescence of materials into moments resembles a coherent global form). At this point, workshop becomes rehearsal.

Performance is a public reiteration of a global form, which may be an incomplete work-in-progress or a full work. In either circumstance, performance is a moment documenting the point of cumulative development reached in the devising process thus far, rather than a final, absolute product terminating the process. Performance is always followed by reflection, if not also further refining.

⁶¹ Alison Oddey, *Devising Theatre: A Practical and Theoretical Handbook* (London: Routledge, 1994), 1.

⁶² Brook, *The Empty Space*, 154-156.

2.2 *Remains of Elmet*

Remains of Elmet was a mostly composed work due to the project timescale (four rehearsals and dress run), instrumentation (46 performers) and production (lighting, staging, movement). Two aspects of the project were devised: research and conceptual development in a complementary collaboration with viola-vocalist Victoria Bernath; the development of movement with conductor Jonathan Brigg and members of The 24 choir. The project explored the design and direction of all elements of theatre (staging, movement, lighting) from a defined musical structure.

Remains of Elmet features six poems by Ted Hughes from the eponymous 1979 poetic sequence. Victoria and I developed the concept and themes, selected the poems, and designed the production. We experimented with solo viola and voice technique, and combined viola and voice technique, through a short solo sketch setting Hughes' poem 'Emily Brontë'. Victoria gave further technical advice during the work's composition. As the composition coalesced, I developed a general lighting design (realised in performance by Lorraine Wales). Victoria and I maintained complementary roles in rehearsals, which I directed in collaboration with Jon.

2.2.1 Models and Metaphors

The concerto model was suggested by the sense of internal dialogue and psychological subtext of Hughes's poetry ('Two came down with long shadows').⁶³ The viola-vocalist and ensemble are united in both embodying an internal opposition between instrument and voice that is also reflected in their conflicting relationship.⁶⁴ The ensemble of choir and sinfonietta is divided further into two choirs and four instrumental groups comprising strings and woodwind.

In order to condense the poetic sequence's narrative of 62 poems into a 30-minute work, we decided that the structure would be based on five poems spanning Hughes's sequence. I studied the entire sequence for images that could become musical and theatrical material, drawing on analysis by Ted Hughes scholars Ann Skea and Keith Sagar.⁶⁵

⁶³ Ted Hughes, "Two" in *Remains of Elmet* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1979), 43.

⁶⁴ Michael Hall has noted the dual origins of the word "concerto" as being 'related to *concertare*, the Italian for "join together", "unite"; at other times, however, it can be related to the original Latin meaning of *concertare*, "to fight" or "to contend".' Hall also argued that the concerto is a trope of British music-theatre. Hall, *Music Theatre in Britain*, 199.

⁶⁵ Skea distinguishes 'two major, closely linked themes on which the other poems have been built: the theme of "The Mothers", which has strong regenerative aspects; and the theme of the imprisonment of divine light, or soul, in matter and its eventual, apocalyptic release.' Sagar views *Remains of Elmet* as being 'entirely about the crime against nature' and as seeking 'to renew the fallen light' through enacting a 'magical change from description to metaphor to myth'. Ann Skea, "Regeneration in *Remains of Elmet*," *The Ted Hughes Homepage*, 2015, accessed Oct 13, 2012, <http://www.annskea.com/Elmet.htm>.

The five selected poems trace cycles of decay and regeneration, confinement and release, through the relationships between text and material (these are elaborated in Appendix 3). In Hughes's sequence, the sense of confinement and decay sinks to a nadir. Likewise, in my work sound decays from a cacophonous heterophonic collage in 'Moors' to a stark string scratch leading into the spoken cadenza, 'Light Falls Through Itself.' Only Hughes's final seven poems confirm regeneration, release, and the cyclical nature of the entire sequence:

one or two tossed clear, like soft rockets
And sank back again dimming.
Then soaring harder, brighter, higher.⁶⁶

Accordingly, sound regenerates during the final part, 'The Word that Space Breathes.' Choir 2 introduces it by singing an unmeasured canon on the motto *in limine sapientiae* (on the threshold of wisdom), signalling the emergence of the work's core idea that what decays will regenerate.⁶⁷

This overall form was influenced by the youthful, autobiographical viola melody that Morton Feldman introduces in the final part of *Rothko Chapel*: a diatonic line with a strongly measured rhythm that appears distinct to the rest of the work's modality and slow durational changes.⁶⁸ A similar sense of a new beginning comes in *Remains of Elmet* from a new modality emerging from the viola-vocalist's final line, which is gradually sustained by the whole ensemble to be verticalised in the final chord.

The five poems are in their consecutive order from the poetic sequence. However, an extended interlude was needed between 'A Tree' and 'Light Falls Through Itself,' for action to occur: the viola-vocalist usurps the conductor, despite her viola grinding to a halt. Therefore, I inserted extracts from a sixth poem, 'Telegraph Wires,' to feature unvoiced on surtitles. This poem comments on the unnatural and the technological domination of the decayed landscape. Its inclusion signals how the structure has decayed too, since 'Telegraph Wires' was not published in the 1979 edition; Hughes added it to the 1994 edition, *Elmet*. The extracts recall the collage of

Keith Sagar, "Ted Hughes and the Calder Valley" and "The Mythic Imagination," 2012, accessed Oct 13, 2012, <http://www.keithsagar.co.uk/tedhughes.html>.

⁶⁶ Hughes, "Cock-Crows" in *Remains of Elmet*, 64.

⁶⁷ This motto of The University of York is included as a tribute to Terry Holmes, who commissioned the work, and the Department of Music.

⁶⁸ In 1976, Feldman wrote that this 'quasi-Hebraic melody at the end was written when I was fifteen.' Morton Feldman, *Give My Regards to Eighth Street* (Cambridge, MA: Exact Change, 2000), 126. In a Studio International interview with Fred Orton and Gavin Bryars, on 27th May that same year, Feldman recalled this ending as being 'the memory of a piece that I wrote when I was 14.' Chris Villars, ed., *Morton Feldman Says* (London: Hyphen Press, 2006), 66.

'Moors' and the expulsive shouts of 'moor!' ("more!") that precede 'A Tree' and anticipate the core idea.

Take telegraph wires, a lonely moor,
And fit them together. The thing comes alive in your ear.⁶⁹

The symbol of wires also continues a progressive imagery of diminution associated with each poem, which Choir 1 emphasises in an improvised background texture throughout the work ('moor,' 'glacier,' 'tree,' 'wire,' 'rock'). Their fragmented word-images shift gradually into the foreground, so that in 'The Word that Space Breathes' they come to sing 'rock' on sustained, fixed pitches cued by the viola-vocalist. In February 2013 I workshopped timbres and textures with The 24 choir in order to learn the capabilities of the group and determine appropriate notation for their material. The score contains a verbal direction to explore phonetic content, creating a background texture separate to their musically notated material, which remains a foregrounded combination of free and fixed pitch textures.

2.2.2 Movements

Cyclical progressions are echoed in physical movement. The musical exchanges between viola-vocalist and each string quartet player highlight two clockwise rotations around the stage during the first two parts, though it was only possible to achieve one rotation in the premiere. The movement in 'Remains of Elmet' required more rehearsal time, owing to the more complex viola material written for the viola-vocalist. The rotation becomes anti-clockwise in 'A Tree.'

Rotation also occurred in the amplification of Victoria's voice. Following our decision to amplify her voice, so that the words could remain audible to all the audience no matter where she was on stage, sound technician Ben Eyes suggested a slight panning of her voice to mirror her position on stage.

The conductor's movement in 'A Tree' has a clear formal function in cuing the string quartet, which in turn choose whether to respond by cuing their respective groups. In an initial discussion with Jon, I explained this mobile form and presented images from the sequence that reference religion, spiritual decay, and the physical signs of decaying religion: 'Stripped to its root letter, cruciform/Contorted.'⁷⁰ Jonathan then created the movement by interpreting my directions to use the whole arm and fingers like branches, to create a series of improvised shapes as a living sculpture.

⁶⁹ Ted Hughes, "Telegraph Wires" in *Elmet* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1994), 126.

⁷⁰ Hughes, 'A Tree' in *Remains of Elmet*, 31.

The tree-viola living sculptures of Choir 2 developed similarly. In ‘A Tree,’ Choir 2 moves to the stage edge to place a physical barrier between the audience and the stage, completing the circular border suggested by Choir 1’s position. I led a workshop with the 8 performers to explore miming viola-playing and stretching the arms. The performers chose their placement on the stage edge and developed their own movement phrases within a general structure.

Following this work, I wanted to progress towards creating large-scale works entirely through devising. To do this, I undertook projects investigating choreography and performed in works myself to understand more about a musician’s practical experience of the body and movement creation.

2.3 Group Devising: *That’s Yer Lot!*

That’s Yer Lot! was my first group devised project.⁷¹ Gracefool Collective invited rapper Raphael Attar and me to collaborate through their Collaborative Arts module at the Northern School of Contemporary Dance. Gracefool Collective proposed two ideas for a satirical, absurdist piece incorporating audience participation: an auction or a wedding. I favoured the auction concept for the potential to satirise the commodification of objects, art, and people. The site-specific piece was made for a non-standard performance venue (a warehouse) that an audience would not have expectations about, save any surmised from the advertisement identifying the piece as an auction.

The devising process involved creating an original text and structure from which to develop action and music. Over several workshops, including a visit to the space, Gracefool Collective, Raphael and I worked collectively to develop a structure, characters, the use of space and the role of music. The second workshop included rap improvisations by Raphael and me (playing cello) that developed the feel of the ‘Happiness rap’. The collaboration then became complementary as we worked individually to develop the movement, text and music and recruited performers.

The music aimed to augment the absurdity of the auction through increasingly interrupting the action and increasingly drawing on pop culture found material. The music shifts from diegetic to non-diegetic sound commenting on the lot being bought. The creation of an absurd world required all performers to be characters within that world, or plants in the audience. I recruited an ensemble to double as Barbershop phone-bidders and as a band.

⁷¹ A trailer edited from the third performance is available at: Gracefool Collective, “Gracefool Collective – That’s Yer Lot” Vimeo video, 4:00, posted by “coxcam,” April 14, 2014, <https://vimeo.com/91943072>.

With these simultaneous demands of multi-instrumental playing, singing and non-musical performing, the music needed to be simple, flexible, and devised by the group so that the music could suit their strengths. Each arrangement was made as a mix of open form and fixed elements that were orchestrated by the group in rehearsal. The four-part arrangement of the National Anthem acted as a guideline for choral harmony. The band used my transcription of George Michael's 'Careless Whisper' to devise an improvised accompaniment to the saxophone melody.

In subsequent rehearsals, overall direction was shared between Gracefool Collective, Raphael and me through giving each other feedback on all aspects of the piece. We retained directorial leadership when refining material from our separate disciplines. For instance, when developing the finale rap sequence, I suggested the chant tagline 'Buy now pay later' to Raphael, who incorporated it into his text. Similarly, while Gracefool Collective devised all dancer movement, with their support I directed the movement of the musicians: when, where, and how to move. The collaboration thus introduced choreographic terms that informed my subsequent devised works: movement facility, movement vocabulary and pedestrian movement. Because these terms are used widely and casually in dance, I offer my own definitions.

2.3.1 Movement Facility and Vocabulary

Movement facility can be understood as what a body is capable of: its ability, potential, adaptability and flexibility. Having a certain facility allows a certain **movement vocabulary**: a collection of movements the performer knows how to access. Movement vocabulary can also refer to a collection of defined qualities and attributes of movement, associated with or governed by a particular style or way of working, such as ballet. Thus, Melanie Bales notes that vocabulary is 'not at all central' to the practice of choreographer and postmodern dance pioneer Anna Halprin.⁷²

The term **pedestrian movement** arose alongside the practice of Judson Dance Theater, influenced by Halprin in the early 1960s. It identified the everyday movements (such as walking and sitting) that the group incorporated and that opposed the abstract vocabulary of other modern dance techniques. The principle of allowing all types of movement in a piece, embracing everything the body can be and do, was encapsulated by the 'NO manifesto' of founding member Yvonne Rainer: 'no to style no to camp no to seduction of spectator by the wiles of the performer no to eccentricity no to moving or being moved.'⁷³

⁷² Bales and Nettle-Fiol, ed., *The Body Eclectic*, 30.

⁷³ Yvonne Rainer, "Chapter 12: Implosions" [Excerpt from *Feelings are Facts*] in *BOMB*, no. 96 (2006): 98-103, accessed Nov 6, 2016, <http://bombmagazine.org/article/2833/feelings-are-facts>.

Chapter 3. Developing Devising: Three Solo Piano Pieces

All art is spectacle; all spectacle is material; and all material must come from somewhere.

– Kenneth Goldsmith⁷⁴

That's Yer Lot! demonstrated that theatre and dance group devising techniques resemble the intuitive and improvisational methods of a conventionally solo musical composition practice.⁷⁵ Composing can then be related to a self-directed solo devising process. In order for my process to incorporate these techniques, I aimed to develop my understanding of how musicians may approach movement and develop use of their body in performance. I devised three solo works for the same instrument, piano, as a composer-performer. The integrated collaborations of duo projects *shambles* and *touch tales* also continued this theme (see Chapters 4 and 5).

Each piano work used free play and improvisation to explore the body in relation to the grand piano and heighten particular aspects of pianism. I focused on experimenting with movement that created or implied musical material. Filming movement improvisations allowed the consideration of the musical results and an understanding of what musical material looked and felt like to perform physically.

this piece gets more magical every time someone writes ill of it (hereafter abbreviated to *magical every time*) explored the relationship between pianist and score, through scrunching, chucking, and bouncing paper on the piano strings, and a reversed power play between pianist and page-turner. *a drawing-down of blinds* explored the weight of the pianist's body through lateral and longitudinal movement. *temporary remedies for recurring evils* considered the pianist's agency through the fingers, in fixed and free patterns, and the voice.

In each case, I devised the work for another pianist to perform. *magical every time* was made prior to receiving its premiere date. *a drawing-down of blinds* and *temporary remedies for recurring evils* were conceived with the performers, but due to

⁷⁴ Leslie Katz, "Artist wants to print out entire Internet to honor Aaron Swartz," *CNET Magazine*, July 19, 2013, accessed July 12, 2013, <https://www.cnet.com/uk/news/artist-wants-to-print-out-entire-internet-to-honor-aaron-swartz>.

⁷⁵ Heddon and Milling agree that devising 'does not insist on more than one participant.' Heddon and Milling, *Devising Performance*, 2. Theatre-maker Andy Field has even argued that all types of theatre are devised, appearing to evoke Julia Kristeva's theory of intertextuality that any text may be interpreted as 'a crossing of texts'. Field goes as far as relating playwriting to devising. Andy Field, "All theatre is devised and text-based," *The Guardian*, April 21, 2009, accessed Nov 18, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/theatreblog/2009/apr/21/theatre-devised-text-based>. Andy Field, "The divide in devised theatre," *The Guardian*, Jan 22, 2008, accessed Nov 18, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/theatreblog/2008/jan/22/thedivideindevisedtheatre>.

limited rehearsal time, the collaboration remained complementary and each had only two performer workshops. The purpose of the first workshops was, first, to discuss themes and, second, to experiment with movement and the use of the voice that the performer was comfortable with. The second workshops tested my sketches. Because both works required fixed musical material and notation, the final scores are through-composed music-theatre.

For each piece I also researched an extra-musical theme discovered in found text to develop a form related to the concept. This process of combining literary and physical understanding, evolving research alongside a lived experience of performing the material, could be described as an *embodied compositional practice*. Improvised music and movement material could be related to the themes through the structure and notation. Each project therefore developed different musical, physical and metaphorical relationships between pianist and piano.

3.1 this piece gets more magical every time someone writes ill of it

magical every time responded to crowd-sourced project *Printing out the Internet* by American conceptual poet Kenneth Goldsmith.⁷⁶ The work and its impossible premise – to ‘literally print out the entire Internet’ – invited ethical criticism and debate online, from which I took the title.⁷⁷ The reams of submissions that Goldsmith documented reminded me of piles of selected and rejected scores accumulated through “call for scores” opportunities, common to contemporary classical music culture. I aimed therefore to satirise the accumulation and commodification of material and power structures of the “call for scores” format.

magical every time takes the form of a lottery of crowd-sourced submissions that anyone can submit (see Figures 5–7). This democratisation of material drew on the inclusive ideal of Joseph Beuys that ‘EVERY HUMAN BEING IS AN ARTIST.’⁷⁸ But echoing Goldsmith’s ‘uncreative’ practice, submitted material need not be one’s own.⁷⁹ Likewise, anyone can perform the piece, since the score is freely available online.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Kenneth Goldsmith, “Printing out the Internet”, 2013, accessed July 19, 2013, <http://printingtheinternet-blog.tumblr.com>.

⁷⁷ Kent Sheely (@ksheely), tweet, July 14, 2013, 2:53p.m., accessed July 14, 2013, <http://twitter.com/ksheely>.

⁷⁸ Joseph Beuys, “I Am Searching for Field Character,” in Carin Kuoni, ed., *Energy Plan for the Western Man: Joseph Beuys in America* (New York, NY: Four Walls Eight Windows Press, 1990), 21-3, quoted in Claire Bishop, ed., *PARTICIPATION* (London: Whitechapel Gallery Ventures Limited, 2006), 125.

⁷⁹ Kenneth Goldsmith, “It’s Not Plagiarism. In the Digital Age, It’s ‘Repurposing,’” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Sept 9, 2011, accessed July 21, 2013, <http://www.chronicle.com/article/Uncreative-Writing/128908>; “Uncreativity as a Creative Practice,” Electronic Poetry Center. [n.d.], accessed July 23, 2013, <http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/goldsmith/uncreativity.html>.

⁸⁰ James Whittle, “Open Call for Scores,” 2013, accessed July 27, 2013, <http://www.james-whittle.co.uk/magicaleverytime>.

“Difficulty (homage à Kurt Gödel)”

Do not perform this piece.

Figure 5. Spoken text score submission by Mark Hutchinson

As slow as you can tolerate

The musical score is for piano and consists of two systems. The first system is marked *ff* and the second *ppp*. The tempo instruction is "As slow as you can tolerate". The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The first system has a treble clef and a bass clef. The second system has a treble clef and a bass clef. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The first system has a treble clef and a bass clef. The second system has a treble clef and a bass clef.

* trill until the E and F are of equal volume
** pause until the E and F are no more

Figure 6. Music score submission by Ben Gaunt

‘tim(br)e’

Replace the strings with yarn, or human gut.

Figure 7. Text score submission by Britta Fluevog

However, the project was advertised as being intentionally indeterminate and biased, since no score would be guaranteed performance in any realisation. The egalitarianism of the project is negated by the control exerted by the performers both in selecting what scores feature in performance and through their spontaneous actions, coping with the demands of the performance. The roles of page-turner and pianist, whereby it is the servant page-turner who is really master of ceremonies, embody a satirical point about the power play between a composer and a “call for scores” scheme.

I designed the piece as a two-hander after watching a 24-hour live-streamed performance of *Quizoola!* by Forced Entertainment. In *Quizoola!*, one performer improvises answers to the other’s numerous written, randomly selected questions.⁸¹ The resulting dialogue is tragicomic, with verbal tussles and tangents by turns flippant, compelling, torturous and truthful. In *magical every time*, music and text are just as unpredictable as the page-turner selects scores for the pianist to perform. The piece can become a comedy sketch through the performers’ interactions, but the potential remains for darker connotations.

The crowd-sourcing aspect is ongoing; two other performances have featured newly submitted material. A film of the South Korean premiere demonstrates how differently the piece can be presented.⁸² When compared with the film of the premiere, although both pairs of performers commit to the performance and generate laughter, the stylised aesthetic of my direction of the premiere is more pronounced. I realised that I retained directive preconceptions about how the piece should appear in performance.

The piece does not require direction in order to work. In order to remove confusion between devised and directed material, I revised the text score to return control of the performance aesthetic to the performer. Following this project, I aimed to develop an inclusive practice that would increase the autonomy of the performer (see Chapters 4 and 5).

3.2 a drawing-down of blinds

a drawing-down of blinds was a collaboration with pianist Alex Wilson that developed after seeing Alex give a visceral performance of Charles Ives’ *Piano Sonata No. 2 ‘Concord, Mass., 1840-60.’* Alex approached me about composing a contemporary response to World War 1 for his project, ‘The Banks of Green Willow’. Given that my

⁸¹ Forced Entertainment, “Quizoola!” [n.d.], accessed April 12, 2013, <http://www.forcedentertainment.com/project/quizoola>.

⁸² Hyun-Mook Lim, “James Whittle - this piece gets more magical every time someone writes ill of it” YouTube video, 9:27, posted by “Hyun-Mook Lim,” Mar 30, 2014, accessed Mar 30, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wt6mp9OtK3U>.

prevailing memory of his performance was the sense of weight thrown into the piano, I chose to explore the weight of the body as a metaphor for the weight of the past.⁸³ In relation to the pianist, I treated the grand piano as its own character: as a metaphor for the past itself, playing on its blackness, heaviness, immovability, and sense of history.

My response was to make a piece about remembrance considering my perspective of the war as a memory – a past event from which I am detached. My literary research concentrated on *The Missing of the Somme*, a non-fiction meditation on war memorial art by Geoff Dyer. Rather than depicting a ‘self-contained ideal of remembrance’ (which Dyer claims is a common emotion that such memorials are intended to elicit), I wanted to show the distance between that unfathomable conflict – that black mass of moments – and now; with the sense of knowing you do not, cannot, know its reality, to ask: how to approach this unknown space?⁸⁴

This idea is expressed in the title, which is the final image of Wilfred Owen’s 1917 poem ‘Anthem for Doomed Youth.’⁸⁵ From Dyer’s discussion of sculpture and poetry I inferred four concepts to create a four-part narrative structure: recognition, concealment, confrontation, and reconciliation. These are summarised by four quotations taken from Dyer:

an incomprehensible look ... more terrible than terror, for it was a blindfold look, without expression⁸⁶

Even when the blinds are raised, the sudden rush of light reveals how much is – and will remain – concealed, missing.⁸⁷

“One does not fight with men against *materiel*,” the French commander-in-chief, Pétain, was fond of saying; “it is with *matériel* served by men that one makes war”.⁸⁸

The past is never dead. It’s not even past.⁸⁹

⁸³ ‘This is one of the lessons of history: things get lighter over time ... Hence the burden, the *weight* of the past.’ Geoff Dyer, *The Missing of the Somme* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1994), 60.

⁸⁴ Dyer writes that remembrance is common to war memorial sculptures, the most common form of sculpture being of a soldier with ‘head bowed, leaning on his downward-pointing rifle’. *Ibid.*, 72.

⁸⁵ Dyer interprets the image as referring to ‘the custom of drawing down household blinds as a sign of mourning – of displaying loss – but it is also a disquieting image of concealment, of the larger process whereby the state and the military hid their culpability from scrutiny.’ *Ibid.*, 33-4.

⁸⁶ Wilfred Owen, *Collected Letters*, Harold Owen and John Bell ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 521, quoted in *Ibid.*, 40.

⁸⁷ Dyer, *The Missing of the Somme*, 34.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 47.

These parts are not differentiated explicitly through separate movements, in order to trace the act of remembrance as a psychological process that develops organically.

During our first workshop, Alex and I chose to express the idea of weight through movement to the piano and a “collapsing” movement motif at the piano. We also experimented with reading extracts of war poetry and diaries while playing. This idea was rejected, since words would only double the ideas expressed by integrated music and movement. We discovered certain sounds such as striking the side arms and underneath the keyboard to excite an echo-like resonance. I developed a form from these ideas in my own movement improvisations, intending to embody the four concepts in a movement vocabulary:

- **recognition:** movement towards the piano, developing a physical connection with the piano.
- **concealment:** various movements at the piano, mixing fast and slow finger work, developing touch.
- **confrontation:** movement and weight increasingly into the piano, accelerating as material becomes more demanding, as if the piano draws the pianist in.
- **reconciliation:** minimal movement “held off” the piano, a sense of regained stillness and distance.

The movement at the piano would arise from the nature and demands of musical material. I developed a bank of musical fragments through improvisations focused on the available techniques resulting from movement of the hands, arms and body. I could then structure a composed transformation of sound to integrate movement and music in a fixed score:

- **recognition**
 - Individual fragments are introduced, expressing apprehension, fear, bleakness and blankness.
- **concealment**
 - Fragments conceal one another in a collage conveying non-developmental uncertainty.
 - Through subtle variations, fragments become familiar moments of recall. Some start to lengthen, seeming more prominent. Others do not develop.

⁸⁹ William Faulkner, *Requiem for a Nun* (London: Penguin, 1960), quoted in *Ibid.*, 58.

- **confrontation**

- One fragment dominates the material and builds a sense of boldness and aggression.
- The energy triggers a registral and material break: two low polyphonic lines anchor the pianist to one position.
- Chromatic clusters attempt to break this position.
- The clusters burst into a wild, violent passage where the pianist's arms and torso come fully into contact with the piano. A second break halts the activity abruptly.

- **reconciliation**

- Two pitches, as close together as they can be, repeating in a seemingly timeless, unpredictable chiming pattern.

In this way, the combined musical and physical relationship between pianist and piano communicates an abstract narrative between protagonist and antagonist.

The music at times draws on and depicts images associated with war more literally. The opening collage appears at first to be a collage moving 'towards no identifiable objective'.⁹⁰ The final passage depicts 'long uneven lines,'⁹¹ as Philip Larkin imagined the men marching past the Cenotaph to enlist. Dyer too observed this image in photographs as an 'endless loop: a river of men,'⁹² 'out of sight, out of time.'⁹³

For the fourth performance I added an optional lighting design aiming to highlight the theatricality and finality of performance. The final blackout manifests a palpable realisation that the piece is over: that when the audience 'have been there long enough,' it is time to 'get up and leave, turn the page and move on.'⁹⁴

3.3 temporary remedies for recurring evils

After the previous solo devised piano pieces, I wanted to balance a more open form with fixed material relevant to a concept. The performer would be able to devise their own performance, based on their interpretation of the materials developed by me in connection to the concept.

The initial stimulus for this work was the title of pianist Jin Hyung Lim's

⁹⁰ Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: The First World War and English Culture* (London: Bodley Head, 1990), 125, quoted in *Ibid.*, 56.

⁹¹ Philip Larkin, "MCMXIV" in *Collected Poems*, edited by Anthony Thwaite (London: Faber and Faber, 1988), 127.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 57.

⁹³ Dyer, *The Missing of the Somme*, 24.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 57.

concert programme, 'Politics and Music'. Given this broad theme, on social media I discovered two texts that suggested opposing attitudes and ways of responding to threats of further austerity measures and arts funding cuts in post-general election 2015 Britain.

The first text, 'If your only tool is a hammer, everything looks like a nail,' suggests that there are multiple approaches and solutions to multiple issues and implies that one approach has a singular, and in some cases damaging, effect. The catchphrase is attributed to philosopher Abraham Kaplan, who used it to explain his concept of 'the law of the instrument. Give a small boy a hammer, and he will find everything he encounters needs pounding.'⁹⁵ This law appears to apply to the piano. This section plays on the fact that a piano contains hammers, which are therefore the pianist's only tools.

'EARTH WITHOUT ART IS JUST "EH!"' is a widespread, anonymous Internet meme. The particular occurrence of the image that I discovered is a retweeted photograph of graffiti in a public toilet.⁹⁶ I turned the text into a poem inspired by *Ethics is the Aesthetics of the Few(ture)*, a short tape piece by Laurie Anderson.⁹⁷ The poem uses the repetition and segregation of words to transform their meaning and emphasis from an idealistic, simplistic thought ('EARTH WITHOUT ART IS JUST "EH!"' and 'ART IS JUST') to a cynical tone questioning the value of art ('ART IS JUST EH').

These texts together suggested a work satirising the act of making art. This aim was influenced by three artworks by Martin Creed that I had seen at his 2014 Hayward Gallery exhibition, 'What's the point of it?'⁹⁸

Work No. 569 is for a mechanical grand piano that raises and slams its lids every 15 minutes. In *Work No. 736*, subtitled *Piano Accompaniment*, chromatic scales from the highest to the lowest notes are performed endlessly on an upright piano. Bearing close resemblance to György Ligeti's *Poème symphonique*, *Work No. 112*, subtitled *Thirty-nine metronomes beating time, one at every speed*, creates a cacophony for the audience to filter by moving around the gallery.

Each work derives pathos from a static situation: *Work No. 569* from the endless gratification of an expected, blunt action; *Work No. 736* from the interminable repetition

⁹⁵ Abraham Kaplan, *The Conduct of Inquiry: Methodology for Behavioural Science* (London: Transaction Publishers, 1964), 28. Psychologist Abraham H. Maslow altered the phrase two years later: 'I suppose it is tempting, if the only tool you have is a hammer, to treat everything as if it were a nail.' Abraham H. Maslow, *The Psychology of Science: A Reconnaissance* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1966), 15-16.

⁹⁶ Arts Council England (@ace_national), tweet, July 16, 2015, 12:06p.m., accessed July 16, 2015, http://twitter.com/ace_national.

⁹⁷ Anderson attributes the phrase to Lenin. Laurie Anderson, "Marina Abramović," *BOMB – Artists in Conversation* [n.d.], accessed Jul 21, 2015, <http://bombmagazine.org/article/2561/marina-abramovi>.

⁹⁸ Hayward Gallery. "Martin Creed: What's the point of it?" *Southbank Centre*, 2014, accessed Apr 12, 2014. <https://www.southbankcentre.co.uk/venues/hayward-gallery/past-exhibitions/martin-creed-whats-point-it>.

of an exact process featuring frequent rhythmic irregularities; *Work No. 112* from the dysfunctional density of sound. I wanted to convey a similar sense of cynicism, reductionism and absurdity in my work.

To satirise the act of making art, the piece would explore again an antagonistic relationship between pianist and piano. Having the pianist talk constantly acts as a commentary on the action of playing the piano. The power of a performer's voice to frame action with a self-aware, performative pathos was a device inspired by *A Room for All Our Tomorrows* (2015) by Igor & Moreno.⁹⁹ In this dance-theatre work, nonstop, loud, wordless yells accompany increasingly absurd movement combining complex abstract sequences with speedy espresso making and drinking. I took the title from a sentence by John Gray that seemed as cynical about politics in 2015 as various contemporary editorials: 'Politics is the art of devising temporary remedies for recurring evils – a series of expedients, not a project of salvation.'¹⁰⁰

In an initial workshop, I set Jin various improvisation tasks to experiment with the effect a given texture had on decision-making during improvisation. We also explored various restricted hand and finger shapes.

My devising process then began by continuing improvisational play considering hammers to develop 'recurring evils.' I found the finger shape needed to play dyads of semitone chords to resemble a hammer. I improvised "hammering" repeatedly in combination with speaking over the texture, developing an image of a pianist whose dilemma builds at being unable to escape from a cycle.

The combined effect of these actions also mimicked reading words aloud while typing them. The problem of having constant repetition of only twelve words and a single chord type was how to sustain musical interest. Therefore, I developed the antagonistic relationship between pianist and piano by providing contrasting material that would make the choice of playing the chromatic dyads a noticeable, performative one. This material comprises fragments from three classical works: historical artefacts to relate the dilemma of a hammer-like system to the dilemma of tradition.

The fragments are musical puns on hammers: fragments of the first movement of Beethoven's *Hammerklavier* Piano Sonata No. 29, Op. 106; the first two hammer blows from the fourth movement of Mahler's Symphony No. 6; fragments of Pierre Boulez's *Le marteau sans maître*. I reduced the Mahler and Boulez quotations for piano. These fragments collide with the contemporary as the pianist attempts to recall the past for spontaneous, increasingly longer moments.

⁹⁹ Igor and Moreno, "A Room for All Our Tomorrows," *Igor and Moreno*, 2015, accessed Oct 16, 2015, <http://igorandmoreno.com/works/a-room-for-all-our-tomorrows>.

¹⁰⁰ John Gray, *Gray's Anatomy: Selected Writings* (London: Penguin Books, 2010), 3.

To provide further structural development, the text changes twice:

If your only tool is a hammer, everything looks like a nail.

If your only tool is a hammer, all problems look like nails.

If all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail.

In the second line, 'problems' permits a more personal, psychological interpretation of the problem, emphasised in the third line by 'all.' The predictability of repeated actions contrasts with the unpredictable timing of sound and words. The result can seem unstable in 'recurring evils,' while in 'temporary remedies' the simultaneous strands of words and sound create the impression of a meditation.

The musical material of 'temporary remedies' consists entirely of puns. 'ART' is taken out of 'EARTH' through an additive process. The 'EARTH phrases' (pitches E, A, 'R' – Re – as D, 'H' as B following German nomenclature) are filled with chromatic 'ART clusters,' which are withdrawn to leave the 'EH echoes' sustaining pitches E and B before an 'EH chord' coda. The score is a fixed mobile form, giving the pianist the freedom to repeat this pattern and choose when to speak the words out of time alongside the pitches. Rather than present words and pitches as opposites like in 'recurring evils,' here they appear integrated since in this far calmer alternating pattern, one seems to follow or replace the other. This sense of a shared space is the consoling remedy that I intended the piece to provide and question the stability of.

Jin chose to constrain her performance by fixing the number of repeated lines and the timing of musical quotations in 'recurring evils,' and the timing of the evolving music alongside the poem in 'temporary remedies.' When I performed the work myself, and chose not to preset any order to the former, the lack of constraint in this improvised context led to a tension between needing to incorporate sufficiently diverse interruptions of musical quotations, and maintaining the overall static, unpredictable quality that I had intended. Therefore, I included more text direction in the score regarding possible ideas for preparing a performance with exploratory improvisation.

Chapter 4. Movement as Material, Culture as Concept

shambles, *assembly line* and *CARNIVORE* are theatre works concerned with:

- deriving satirical or parodic content from the theatre of musical performance;
- progressively sharing creative ownership of a work with performers in a directed devising process, through recognising the collective heterogeneity of experiences and expressions;
- developing workshop techniques that increase awareness of individual movement facility and cultivate the vocabulary of the piece.

Regarding the latter concern, my aim was not to teach a group of musicians, who each have varying experiences of theatre, how to act. Increasing the performers' awareness of their movement facilities would enable both the performers and me to understand what possibilities existed for creating a theatrical piece together. In this way, a directed devising process allowed a group 'being together apart' to promote an inclusive heterogeneity of experiences and expressions.¹⁰¹

4.1 Choreographing Musical Gestures: *shambles*

My conclusion was that I was an artist and I was in the studio, then whatever it was I was doing in the studio must be art ... art became more of an activity and less of a product.

– Bruce Nauman¹⁰²

This approach of American artist Bruce Nauman suggested a project whereby solo performers devise their own theatre pieces by deriving all material from their physicality since, likewise, anything a musician does in a practice room must be music. *shambles* is therefore a directed solo devising process. The tongue-in-cheek title indicates the absurd tone of a piece resulting from a performer's process of observing, analysing the orthodoxy of their instrument and exaggerating their musical gestures.

The process encourages the performer to develop awareness of their body, their movement facility and vocabulary. The score is a toolkit for any performer to develop their individual *shamble*. The performer may self-direct or work with a director or

¹⁰¹ Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, 51.

¹⁰² Bruce Nauman, edited by Janet Kraynak, *Please Pay Attention Please: Bruce Nauman's Words, Writings and Interviews* (London: The MIT Press, 2003), 194.

dramaturg. The index of separate *shambles* references Berio's *Sequenza* series. *shambles* may also be combined or made alongside others in a group devising process.

The latter scenario was the case for my realisation of the piece as a cellist, working in an integrated collaboration with flautist Rowena Jacobs. I continued devising *shamble 1*, using filming and self-reflection, until the performance of *shambles 1 and 2* (see Figure 8).



Figure 8. *shambles 1 and 2* premiere © Gracefool Collective, 2013

Because I began developing the project before Rowena approached me about collaborating, I assumed a dramaturgical role regarding her *shamble* and our combined *shambles*. The term dramaturg is more useful here than director. Although I oversaw our joint devising process, my role was not to dictate any of Rowena's material, but to facilitate her creation and structuring of material through activities and discussion.

My task-based approach in the first rehearsal invited Rowena to notice her flute playing movements (see Figure 9). Each movement was explored in a short improvisation followed by discussion. I asked Rowena to reflect on each movement and to make extra-musical associations with it from films of the improvisations. Discussion provided the basis of subsequent improvisations developing a distinct quality of movement for each. Motifs were then arranged into a collage (see Figure 10).

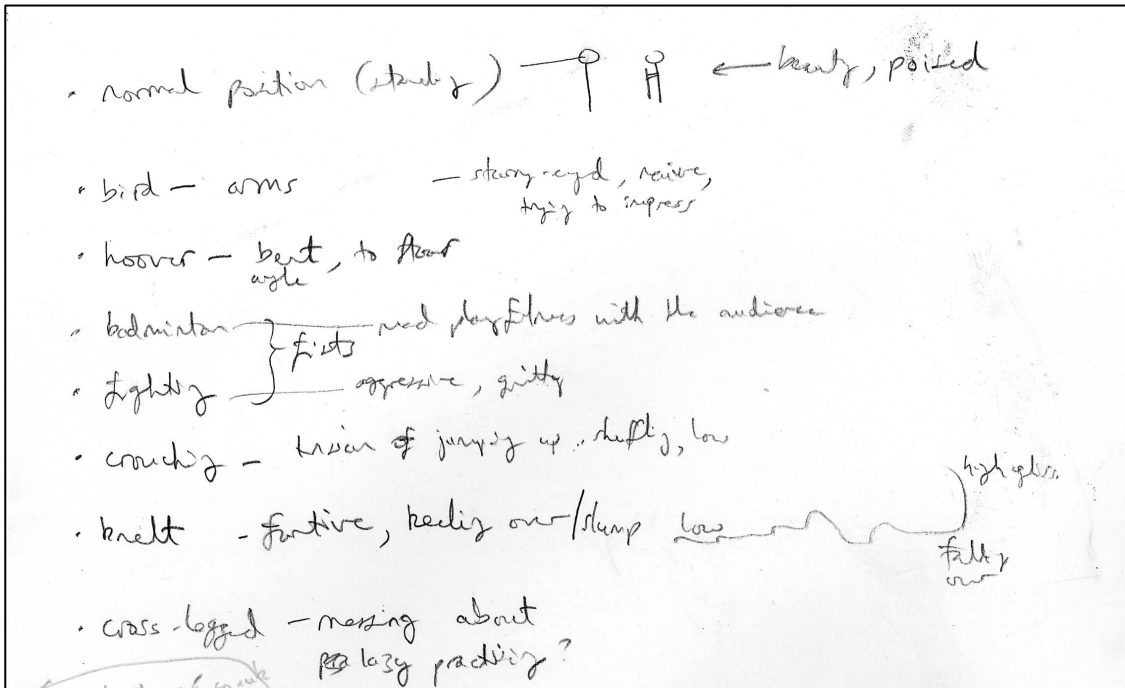


Figure 9. *shamble 2*, movement motifs, transcribed by James

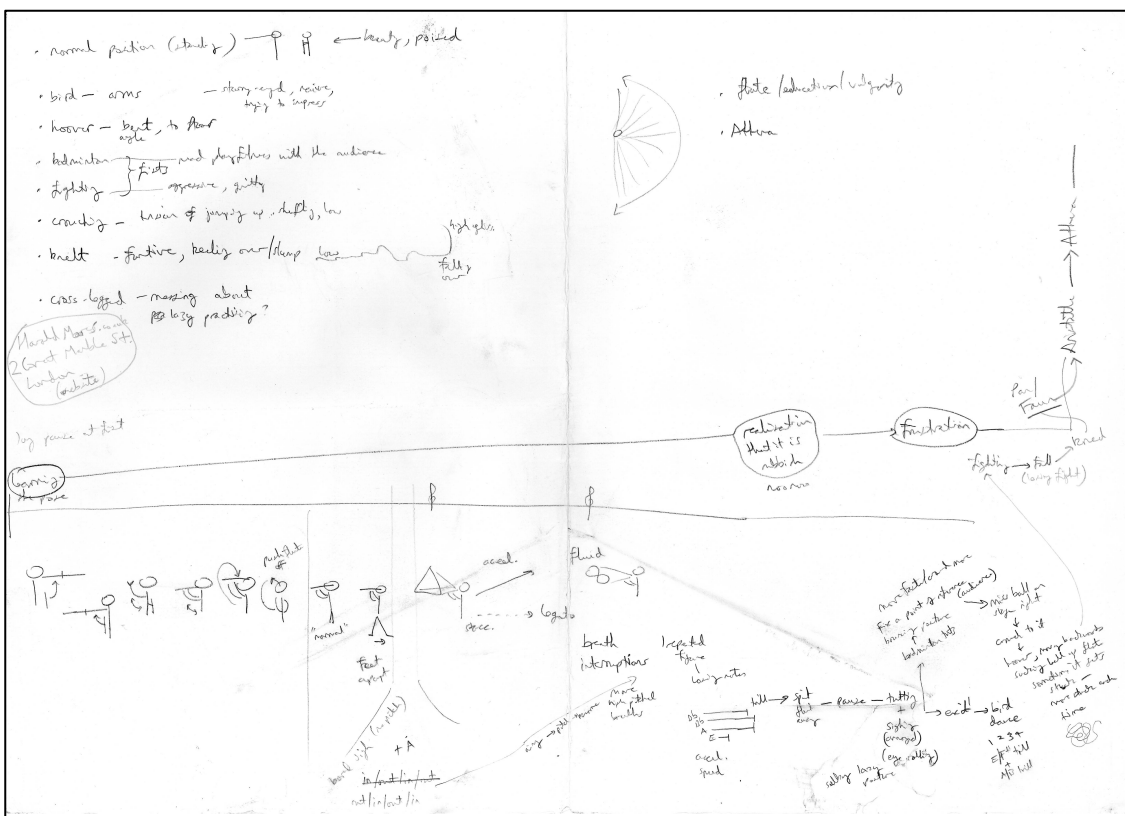


Figure 10. *shamble 2*, sketch score of movement motifs

During the refining stage, my dramaturgy took a more directorial approach to “cleaning” movement.¹⁰³ From observations of Rowena’s use and control of her body and use of the space, I facilitated discussion about the intention of specific actions in order for us to make collective decisions further refining the qualities of movement.

shamble 2 was therefore the first work in which I helped choreograph movement. The *shambles* score details these activities and questions to allow other performers to engage in the process. After the first performance, Rowena and I agreed to refine and extend *shamble 2* by including text extracts from Aristotle’s *Politics*, Book VIII Part VI, which Rowena had introduced previously. It was Rowena’s intention to include a section on flute education. Together we arranged text extracts with more movement motifs and musical quotations (see Figures 11–12). Though I provided composed musical fragments for the final scene, and created a lighting design for the full performance (realised by Sarah Goulding), my dramaturgical role was unchanged.

¹⁰³ “Cleaning” is an informal term in dance for a choreographer’s practice of making small adjustments or fine-tuning the performance of movement. Rather than editing the movement material itself, the choreographer’s focus is on the dancer’s body, their technique, and their communication of the intention behind the movement. The practice is common during the latter stage of choreography prior to performance.

* or any other instr. which requires great skill, eg the harp.

Flute on the floor ^{up} raise/lower (like beginning). More to kneel: Fair scene. (intermediate, extend)

Translation by Benjamin Jowett. Say 1st bubble or cross!

"The flute ought not to be admitted into education" *

↳ grow/build - stand up. Trying to be 'moral' - too about-minded.

"The flute is not an instrument which is expressive of moral character; it is too exciting" → bubbly, vigorous

"The proper time for using it is when the performance aims not at instruction, but at the relief of the passions." → only real interruptions

"And there is a further objection; the impediment which the flute presents to the use of the voice detracts from its educational value." → repeat "educational value", speaking into the flute

↳ keep going, end up of first stage with

"There is a meaning also in the myths of the ancients, which tells how Athens invented the flute and then threw it away. It was not a bad idea of theirs, that the Goddess disliked the instrument because it made the face ugly; but with still more reason may we say that she rejected it because the acquirement of flute-playing contributes nothing to the mind." → spin round, cut off; go to collect stand, drag over on top; center + stand, in pt? center - bird's eye

↳ most stand + more

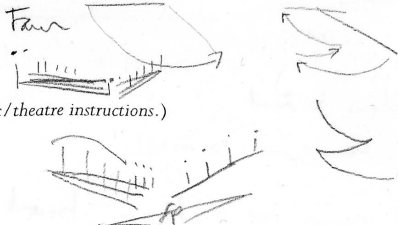
"For in this the performer practises the art, not for the sake of his own improvement, but in order to give pleasure, and that of a vulgar sort, to his hearers. For this reason the execution of such music is not the part of the freeman but of a paid performer, and the result is that the performers are vulgarized, for the end at which they aim is bad. The vulgarity of the spectator tends to lower the character of the music and of the performers; they look at him - he makes them what they are, and fashions even their bodies by the movements which he expects them to exhibit."

Politics, Book 8, Part 6

Figure 11. *shamble 2*, text extracts of *Politics*, first draft, with devising notes

shamble 1 for flautist – Aristotle *Politics* Book VIII

(^v = music/breath! *Italicised texts, sometimes bracketed, are music/theatre instructions.*)



The flute ought not to be admitted into education.

Grow build, stand up – trying to be moral, but too absent-minded.

The flute is not an instrument which is expressive of moral character; it is too exciting. *upbeat* *flute up* *Bubbly, vivacious*

The proper time for using it is when the performance aims not at instruction, but at the relief of the passions. *D!* *twice* *flute, stop. repeat (with voice)*

Rapid runs, fluting in pitch – harmonic rips/jet whistles – into vocal distortions singing down flute

And there is a further objection; the impediment which the flute presents to the use of the voice detracts from its educational value. *(10')* *spoken into flute* *Hy + dar* *up* *flute*

Repeat "educational value" speaking into the flute. Keep moving round erratically, end up at front centre. *ACE BAG / BD* *(my - diction - ACE BAG / BD / BD / BD)*

There is a meaning also in the myths of the ancients, [now like a newsreader] which tells how Athene invented the flute and then threw it away. It was not a bad idea of theirs, that the Goddess disliked the instrument because it made the face ugly; [raise flute to lips: smile to frown] Now spoken with the flute still pressed to the lips] but with still more reason may we say that she rejected it because the acquirement of flute-playing contributes nothing to the mind...

Spin round, cast off, go to collect music stand, drag over, run off stage. Re-enter: birdsong. Eventually give up, go to stand. *well first* *(noise)*

Throughout this next passage: short bursts of music in between speaking each phrase. Overall character: dynamic?

For in this the performer practises the art, not for the sake of his own improvement, or, her own improvement, but in order to give pleasure, and that of a vulgar sort, to his hearers. For this reason the execution of such music is not the part of the freeman but of a paid performer, and the result is that the performers are vulgarised, for the end at which they aim is bad. The vulgarity of the spectator tends to lower the character of the music and therefore of the performers; they look at him – he makes them what they are, and fashions even their bodies by the movements which he expects them to exhibit.

Into lots of frenetic playing.....

Handwritten note: "flute"

Figure 12. shamble 2, text extracts of *Politics*, with cleaning notes

4.2 Interactive Improvisation: *assembly line*

Musical instruments: These will be used as objects, as part of the set.

– Antonin Artaud¹⁰⁴

In a word, the second devised ensemble piece *assembly line* is about behaviour. Following *shambles* and *That's Yer Lot!*, the aim was to lead a group project that engaged musicians' use of the body. My model was *12am: Awake and Looking Down* by Forced Entertainment, which I had again seen a live stream performance of. In that work, all performers are on stage all of the time, watching the performance and choosing when to enter and alter or develop the action.¹⁰⁵ The unpredictable, continually evolving collage form that this scenario creates provided the stimulus to developing an improvised piece exploring musical and physical relationships between individuals. I intended to develop my use of collage form, first explored in *some Surrealist methods*, to avoid the common arc form that can occur in group improvisation, of gradually growing then reducing activity.

assembly line differs from *12am: Awake and Looking Down* in three ways. First, its performers need not be silent. Second, they may perform any action on stage, whereas Forced Entertainment limit action to switching cardboard signs and costume continually to play on identity. Third, while all *assembly line* performers are on stage too, they are either 'in' or 'out' of the action in the sense that when 'out' they remain seated and focused on the stage. This subtle staging difference from Forced Entertainment orients the audience's focus on when each performer chooses to enter the stage action and interact or distract.

This format suggested a title that plays on the name of the ensemble it was devised with, The Assembled. Within a continually morphing collage of pockets of sound and activity – with the potential to lurch unpredictably from silence to cacophony, sincerity to absurdity – the behaviour and interactions of performers provide a through-line and tension through building anticipation and defeating expectation through negating developmental continuity.

As this was my first project leading a group, I ran a directed devising process and chose not to perform at first. For the experimentation stage I led a series of tasks focusing not on building a bank of material but on developing the concept, form and

¹⁰⁴ Antonin Artaud, "The Theatre and Cruelty: First Manifesto" in *The Theatre and Its Double*, translated by Victor Corti (London: Alma Classics Ltd, 2010), 67.

¹⁰⁵ Forced Entertainment, "12am: Awake and Looking Down," [n.d.], accessed Feb 1, 2014, <http://www.forcedentertainment.com/project/12am-awake-looking-down>.

text score as a group. To begin, I gave the ensemble a draft text score detailing a trait taxonomy, from which they chose two to interpret through musical and physical action (see Figure 13). These instructions resulted in too restrictive an activity with too vague an intention. Group feedback informed the development of clearer definitions for supportive, dependent and independent traits (see Figure 14) and a condensed score.

As a result, the group was less preoccupied with instructions and more able to realise the score with more creativity and spontaneity. The refining stage focused on maintaining the overall group performance and developing musical and spatial awareness. My role became more directorial in offering feedback and fostering group discussion about the clarity of the performers' intentions. I drew attention to their use of the body and space, specifically to notice: actions that block or obstruct other actions involuntarily; the strength of an overall image in the even or uneven position of bodies, including whether the whole stage had been or was being used; opportunities for connection or disconnection that maintain or disrupt the evolving form.

During this stage, one performer suggested the addition of a performer outside the stage action. From this idea I developed (and performed) the 'Director' voice role that could interrupt, disrupt or end the performance at any point. I also allocated a props table as a focal point for performers to store miscellaneous items they wanted the potential to use (see Figure 15).

Trait(or)s trait d'union trait(or) d'union

James Whittle

Improvised theatre piece for any number of performers

Each performer chooses a sound to be their identity (*g*). An identity should be motivic: decide on timbre and pitch. It may be one note or a short phrase. It should be possible to vary elements of it without deviating from it or it losing its 'identity' entirely.

In addition, each performer chooses 2 character traits.

Divide the ensemble into groups of pairs and/or trios.

The piece comprises interactions which follow a set of rules about who says what and when.

Upon meeting, the first player to identify themselves is the instigator (I); the second is the reactor (R); any others are commentators (C).

Interactions take the following forms:

SOLO (a monologue): commentator

PAIR (a dialogue): instigator, reactor

TRIO (a dialogue with monologue): instigator, reactor, commentator

4+ (a dialogue with multiple monologues): instigator, reactor, commentators

Instigators: can perform their identity and have free choice to vary it in any way.

Reactors: can perform only their identity, or subtle variations of it, or anything that an instigator says to them.

Commentators: can perform only their identity and subtle variations of it.

In **dialogues**, Instigator and Reactor converse (take it in turns to play). Each dialogue must begin with a separate greeting, where players identify themselves. The Reactor cannot say anything until the Instigator says something. The Instigator can talk over the Reactor, who eventually must stop to let the Instigator finish. (See Mock Performance Score.)

Dialogues can have one of 3 trajectories:

Agreement: the interaction is harmonious. Both parties can leave if enough has been said.

Argument: the interaction descends into discord and identities escalate from one trait to another. One party leaves.

Reversal: I and R swap roles, and begin a new conversation starting with a greeting again.

Being aware of these options, performers respond to each other's sounds to determine the outcome.

trait d'union: 'A connection between or amongst otherwise unattached characteristics or parties.'

Figure 13. *assembly line* first draft, with unconfirmed title

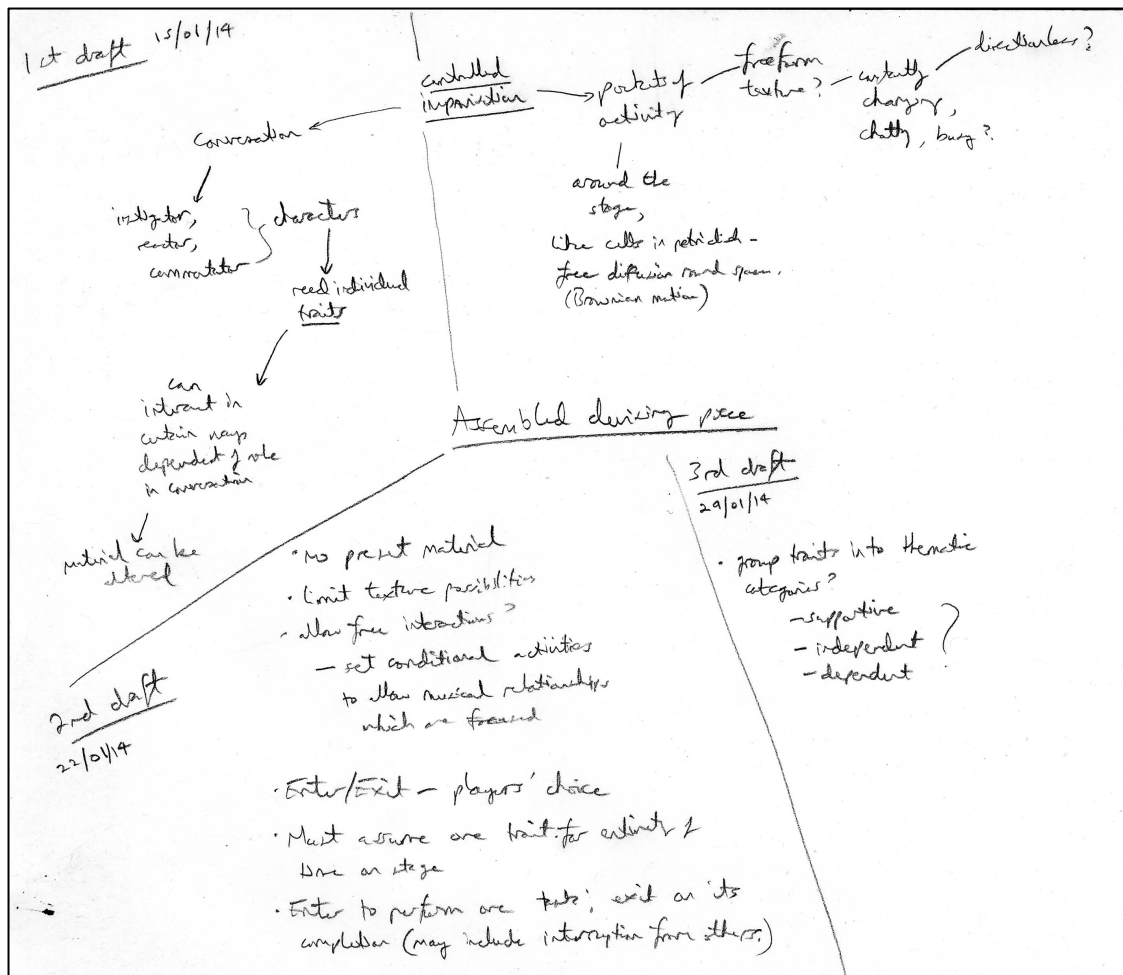


Figure 14. assembly line devising notes



Figure 15. assembly line props table for the premiere © James Whittle, 2014

4.3 Devising and Directing *CARNIVORE*

Creating *assembly line* demonstrated that when making work requiring more from a group of musicians than just music-making, the composer may be required to fulfill a combination of creative and supportive roles: composer, director, facilitator. As the lead artist of a project, the composer assumes the responsibility of ensuring that the devising process accounts for variation of abilities in a group, so as not to reduce or infringe any individual's autonomy, motivation and contribution to the developing work. An open, democratic and inclusive process would allow participants the opportunity and autonomy for their creative potentials to manifest.

In this regard, *CARNIVORE* built on *assembly line* by again providing a composed structure before a directed devising process that allowed performers to develop their own characters with individual text and musical material.

The project collaboration with Victoria Bernath was similar to *Remains of Elmet*: as soloist, Victoria was involved equally in conceiving the piece. We designed the scheme of two opposing ensembles and a scenic structure. I designed the promenade route through York City Centre and Museum Gardens.¹⁰⁶ It was necessary to fix the structure before rehearsals began, because of the combination of musical and theatrical demands the piece would make on performers. These were anticipated as a result of my research into the piece's subject matter and the influence of two key artworks.

Commissioned as a site-specific piece on a theme of carnival, we aimed to make a carnivalesque parody of a notional conflict between 'New Music' and 'Old Music' by caricaturing Western musical styles. The rival ensembles mirror the 'inversion of binary oppositions' of carnival theory, attributed by Vyacheslav Ivanov to Mikhail Bakhtin.¹⁰⁷ The New Musicians (Minstrels) are 'animal-like beings [that] take over the power and become the masters' of the Old Musicians (Troubadours) to create 'an upside-down world.'¹⁰⁸ The Minstrels portray New Music as chaotic and unpredictable with 'vulgar verbal and nonverbal behaviour' (see Figures 16–19).¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ I planned an alternative route to lead the performance to a sheltered area in York Museum Gardens. The premiere followed the alternative route, and was not filmed, due to intermittent rain.

¹⁰⁷ Vyacheslav Ivanov, "The semiotic theory of carnival as the inversion of bipolar opposites," in *Carnival! Approaches to Semiotics 64*, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok assisted by Marcia E. Erickson (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1984), 11.

¹⁰⁸ Umberto Eco, "The frames of comic 'freedom,'" in *Carnival! Approaches to Semiotics 64*, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok assisted by Marcia E. Erickson (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1984), 2-3.

¹⁰⁹ Ivanov, "The semiotic theory of carnival as the inversion of bipolar opposites," 11.



Figure 16. *CARNIVORE*: ‘Minstrels Muster’ © Sarah Goulding, 2014



Figure 17. *CARNIVORE*: The Bard follows The Hunt © Ben Clark, 2014



Figure 18. *CARNIVORE*: Minstrel Clarinet captures Troubadour Romantic Cello
© Sarah Goulding, 2014



Figure 19. *CARNIVORE*: The Bard and the Grand Duel © Sarah Goulding, 2014

The promenade performance format stemmed from experiencing two promenade artworks: *The Drowned Man* (2013) by Punchdrunk and *512 Hours* (2014) by Marina Abramović.¹¹⁰ Both works allow audience to roam freely within a defined space, respectively a four-storey warehouse and the Serpentine Gallery. From *The Drowned Man* I also took the idea of masking, but of the performers rather than the audience.

Both works feature one-on-one interactions between a single audience member and a performer. These are experienced as unforeseen, private moments that may expand uniquely the overall experience and understanding of the work. The role of The Bard was created in this mould. Performer Tom McMahon-Hore developed this character with input from me, regarding the compiling of texts from Troubadour lyric poetry and the direction of audience interactions. Apart from interactions with The Bard, and the audience's free movement around the action, participation was otherwise limited in *CARNIVORE* until the vote that ends the piece.

I led the devising rehearsals, which Victoria joined during the refining stage. While *assembly line* was made with an existing ensemble, I invited student performers to participate in *CARNIVORE* through an open call. The first rehearsals therefore required an extended, introductory focus to allow the group to learn work and perform together.¹¹¹ This was especially necessary since the structure of the piece would isolate Troubadour performers for the first half.

I amalgamated the group discovery stage with the experimentation stage by beginning with playing improvisation games. For instance, a jousting relay game mimicked the eventual encounters of 'The Hunt' scene: pairs of performers approached each other to either copy or outdo the other (as specified by me), before passing for another pair to begin. The games had three functions:

- developing the group's musical improvisation skills;
- developing their movement facility and use of space;
- introducing and developing the qualities of moving that I intended the piece to have.

Regarding the third, rather than fix individual movement vocabularies or musical materials, I specified the qualities of movement and sound that should distinguish

¹¹⁰ Punchdrunk, "The Drowned Man," *Punchdrunk*, 2014, accessed Feb 12, 2014, <https://www.punchdrunk.org.uk/the-drowned-man>.

Marina Abramović, "512 Hours," *Tumblr*, 2014, accessed Jul 12, 2014, <http://512hours.tumblr.com>.

¹¹¹ 'Exercises in communication, concentration, trust, sensitivity, movement, voice and improvisation are all required for group development.' Oddey, *Devising Theatre: A Practical and Theoretical Handbook*, 25.

Minstrels and Troubadours. Both groups worked on caricaturing familiar aspects of musical performance practice: for the Minstrels, their instrument and posture; for the Troubadours, the musical style they chose to work with. Performers continued developing character by writing their own texts, with my assistance as required.

Throughout the process, I attempted to reduce my directorial control and increase performers' self-direction and shared ensemble outlook. During the refining stage, rehearsing in Minstrel-Troubadour pairings, the group was invited to offer feedback on each other's characters and performances. However, arguably directorial control had been exerted beforehand in the thematic and goal-oriented design of the project. *CARNIVORE* led me to want to develop a more integrated collaborative approach when working in large group contexts.

Chapter 5. Devising Theatre

‘theatre is, in and of itself, a community site’

– Jacques Rancière¹¹²

Devising work with larger groups of musicians in *assembly line* and *CARNIVORE* evolved my understanding of collaboration to consider the political implications of a process. To mobilise a group, politically and creatively, is to empower that group by allowing participants the autonomy to create their own movement, their own action. My aim was to provide a rehearsal space that could enable musicians to understand their body and movement facility in order to self-direct their movement. A more integrated collaboration would allow all participants to develop autonomy and control over their material.¹¹³

In order to integrate larger groups, longer rehearsal processes – more typical of other performing arts – were necessary over a period of months rather than weeks.¹¹⁴ Both *touch tales* and *my my mime* were devised over five months. Devising rehearsals for *BRETHREN* were limited to three weeks; therefore, I fixed the structure and thematic material for a directed devising process. However, *touch tales* and *my my mime* had developed workshop activities that I applied to devising *BRETHREN*, and these gave performers more control over their movement material in the shortest group rehearsal process of this doctorate.

My concern with finding meaning in mobility led to two further aims in these works:

- to reach beyond commenting on musical performance to engage an extra-musical, political subject matter;
- to combine music and movement (both abstract and pedestrian) with larger groups of performers.

I approached the former in *touch tales*, which involved the most integrated collaborative devising process of this doctorate, and the latter in *my my mime* and *BRETHREN*.

¹¹² Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, 16.

¹¹³ Oddey implies devising is an integrated process when defining it as ‘a multi-vision made up of each group member’s individual perception of that world as received in a series of images, then interpreted and defined as a product.’ Oddey, *Devising Theatre: A Practical and Theoretical Handbook*, 1.

¹¹⁴ Jennifer Walshe asserted as much in her statement defining The New Discipline as ‘always, always, working against the clock, because the disciplines which are drawn from [dance, theatre, film, video, visual art, installation, literature, stand-up comedy] have the luxury of development and rehearsal periods far longer than those commonly found in new music.’ The New Discipline ‘relishes the absence of that luxury’. Jennifer Walshe, “The New Discipline,” *MILKER CORPORATION*. Jan 2016, accessed Nov 10, 2016, <http://milker.org/the-new-discipline>.

Before being able to combine these aims in *BRETHREN*, I worked with the same performers, The Assembled, to make *my my mime* in an open devising process. These two works are the largest group devised works of this doctorate in terms of duration and number of performers respectively. They are also the most mobile (movement-based) pieces, building on the use of musical gesture as material developed in *shambles*.

5.1 touch tales

touch tales was conceived and devised with performance artist Katharina Arnold as co-creators and performers. The piece developed from two observations that arose during initial discussions. My observation that ‘when I walk with my cello, I lean on it’ commented on my improvised cello playing and questioned treatment of the cello as an inanimate object. Katharina’s observation was of a paradoxical distance between strangers in close proximity in public spaces. Combining these, we took the use and abuse of touch as the concept for a theatre piece blending theatre, dance, music, and audience participation.

Throughout the project, our braided roles involved discussing all creative and logistic aspects, including sharing and interchanging tasks such as background research, script-writing and performance opportunity applications. Movement, text and musical materials were co-created through activities for which we shared responsibility for initiating and structuring. The concept and issues required constant critique of the materials and their implications, supported by constant discussion of what the piece, the process, and what we as performers, needed. The devising process was an evolving workshop format employing activities focused on continual refining (see Table 3).

5.1.1 Workshop Activities

Workshop activities aim to invite responses from and generate dialogue between participants. Using a range of activities can bring ‘creative and empowering insight to workshop members, who form their own audience.’¹¹⁵ Devising *touch tales* involved task-based and reflective activities (see Table 4). Practically, the meanings and functions of materials (such as lines of text or combinations of movement and text) changed constantly in response to an edited element in the same or another scene (such as the tone of voice of a certain line or the pace of a movement sequence). This approach assisted ‘a process in which no single aspect of the theatrical vocabulary is allowed to lead.’¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Heddon and Milling, *Devising Performance*, 4.

¹¹⁶ Etchells, *Certain Fragments*, 17.

Year	Month	Workshop Activities and Performances
2014	November	concept discussions movement improvisations with the cello to develop scenes scene structural blueprints created and tested automatic writing and word associations to develop text
	December	concept discussions material and structure developed from blueprints text developed with transcribed conversations
2015	January	concept discussions, further refinement of all material fixing of structure and lighting, costume and stage designs
	February	rehearsal towards performance <i>first scratch performance plus audience feedback</i>
	March	structure edited and material refined to develop overall through-line <i>second scratch performance plus audience questionnaire</i>
	April	<i>premiere</i> <i>second performance</i> film version completed

Table 3. touch tales project timeline

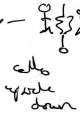

Task-based	Reflective
Improvisation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free play • Structured 	Concept Discussion
Writing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Automatic writing • Word associations • Transcribed conversations • Task-based writing 	Observation (of the group, each other, or external material)
Game-playing	Playback (of workshop audio/video footage)

Table 4. Categories of Workshop Activities

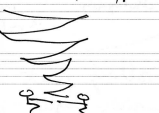
Katharina and I conceived the piece as a trio for us with my cello as a third body in space in order to scrutinise interactions between performers and instruments, people and bodies. Initial improvisations developed a bank of scenes exploring interactions with the cello in space through abstract and associative movements. From these we each made a draft structural blueprint (see Figures 20–22) to test and compare.

Noticing the potential for the cello to sound, we discussed a perception of instrumental music performance as an interaction between active and passive bodies. Comparison of further observations and experiences of musical performance and public interactions elaborated more specific themes for the work: consent, inequality, empowerment and autonomy.

Katharina's Blueprint


- family picture/portrait - looking at audience - smiling - stillness = long poses
- cello to + fto - concentrate more on connection through cello, transfer weight back + forth. (pendulum)
- 2 cello - 1 - 1 - 2 - 1 -  cello goes down
- flg is like pendulum too, between us  leading, weight
- falling leaf to rest on floor
- more harmonics in cello. no pushing of cello
- bow connection more along floor, then up - go behind cello rather than over it. Return to over it.

more tension before cello distended sounds
- start push/pull when up, bring down

 bow to extension of arm (elbow)

- sudden move to cello again

° opposite sides of room: going outwards, not inwards
(turning away from: independent directions)



- biggest pull - 3 - so K stands up: 'empties' enough.

dragging - accelerando! someone get chair - then fermata? (3 had decision) then GO fortissimo!


imitation pup/dance  more chaotic, explosion

Figure 20. touch tales, Katharina's structural blueprint, transcribed by James, with notes







<p>lying down round cello</p>  <p>calm, wisecr,</p>	<p>raising cello up, to flgging trio.</p> <p>stakeholders fight</p> <p>flgging trio</p> <p>building energy: cooperative dependent</p>	<p>cello becomes barrier: K breaks away, cello on 3's back - can't forcing independence</p> 	<p>dragging game: K takes cello to get, leaves, 3 " " " K " " ... etc. then are steps the other conflict:  gets bow let</p> <p>lower to floor slowly</p> <p>3 4 2</p>
<p>3 leaves K with cello sets bow cello cradle</p>  <p>calm, gentle, building anticipation</p>	<p>3 leaves to get bow, returns</p>	<p>bow connection</p> 	<p>bow tension, barrier</p> <p>FOP</p>
<p>3 - cello music role</p> <p>4 - dance solo</p> <p>3 role</p> <p>or exit?</p>	<p>stop remembering</p> <p>stop remembering</p> <p>4 takes cello, cradle?</p> <p>3 role</p> <p>or exit?</p>	<p>pendulum</p> <p>goes to 4 + cello?</p> 	

Figure 21. touch tales, James's structural blueprint

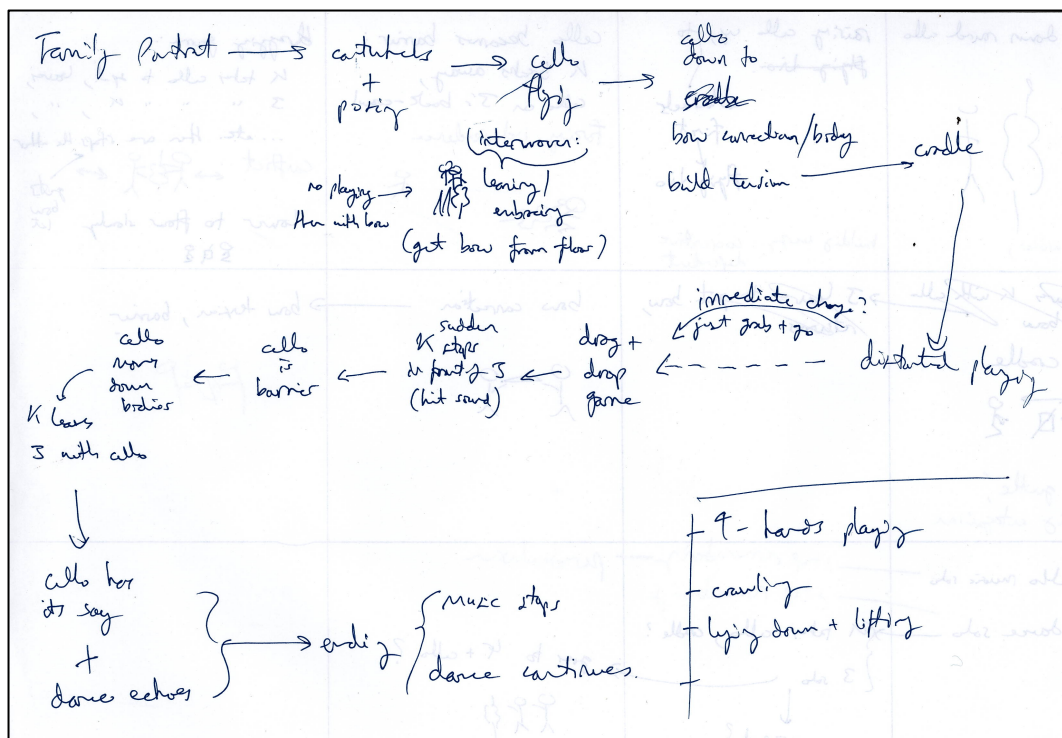


Figure 22. touch tales, combined structural blueprint

5.1.2 Audience Participation

The draft structural blueprints revealed thematic relations between certain scenes: a tension between abstract movement and representational theatre. In order to develop a more raw and unpredictable form that blended these, and foregrounded the concept and themes, we developed two strands of scenes (see Table 5). A participatory workshop strand was conceived as facilitating for the audience a similar sense of discovery to our working process. This audience participation would allow tactile and shared experience of themes presented in a performance strand. The interplay of these strands could play with forming and breaking the “fourth wall”.

Performance scenes	Participatory scenes
1. Family Portrait	
2. Unpacking the cello	
	3. Icebreaker
4. Cello dragging	
5. Anatomy lesson	[5. Anatomy lesson]
6. Cello dancing	
	7. Touch Awareness Workshop
	8. Cello playing
9. Family Stories	

Table 5. touch tales participatory and performance scenes

Two solo performance works programmed by Live Art Bistro at Beacons Festival 2014 provided models for initiating and managing audience participation. In *F*** me gently into the good night* by Rachel Parry, a short goal-oriented task performed individually by audience members developed a collective complicity that prepared the audience to perform longer tasks as a group.¹¹⁷ First, audience members were given a rubber stamp and inkpad with which to take turns stamping the submissive performer's skin with an expletive. Shortly after, the audience was taught an ironic chant problematising what a "good" citizen is within a mob mentality. When the performer's identity and role later changed metaphorically and literally to challenge that idea further, the performer began the chant as a protest so that without prompt the audience joined in chanting again. Finally, the audience supported the performer literally in crowd-surfing.

Conversely, audience participation in *One Man Cabaret* by Dan Craddock demanded riskier initial investment in an action. One at a time, volunteer audience members were invited onto the stage for an individual "private" performance. The special status given to the volunteer, who was also empowered briefly when asked what song they would like to hear, transformed into predictable but prolonged incapacity, as the performer performed the same awkwardly absurd warm-up routine song as to every previous volunteer.

Audience participation in *touch tales* first develops collective complicity, similarly to Parry, through an initial group activity in 'Icebreaker': inviting the audience to dance and perform several dance moves and hand gestures to the riff of 'U Can't Touch This' by MC Hammer, a Hip-hop song chosen for its pop culture status and titular theme of consent (see Figure 23).

The central scene, 'Anatomy lesson,' also breaks the fourth wall. One performer delivers the text directly to the audience in the manner of a lecture; the audience is not required to do more than listen (see Figure 24). Blurring the activity and passivity of the audience here aimed to draw attention to the act of looking and objectifying.

¹¹⁷ Rachel Parry, "Practice-Led Research," *Rachel Parry*, 2014, accessed Aug 15, 2014, <http://www.rachelparry.wordpress.com>.



Figure 23. *touch tales* premiere, 'Icebreaker' scene © Charlotte and Tim, 2015



Figure 24. *touch tales* premiere, 'Anatomy lesson' © Charlotte and Tim, 2015

Second, 'Touch Awareness Workshop' plays on the comfort developed in the shared 'Icebreaker.' Beginning with more simple hand gestures, the audience is invited to make physical contact with each other through their hands in an increasingly dark scene (see Figure 25).

Finally, 'Cello playing' asks for the greatest investment. Two individual members are invited onto the stage for separate, brief cello lessons: one actual without scripted text, and one imagined with scripted text describing cello technique (see Figure 26). In both cases, as with Craddock's work, the participants do not know what will happen or what to do; they must trust the performers to guide them.

While interweaving participation and performance aimed to direct visual and tactile experiences of the piece, the volume and timbre of sound was designed to highlight moments of tension and release. This consideration was in addition to dynamics and tones of the voice when delivering text. Composed music was limited to 'U Can't Touch This.' In 'Cello dragging,' the cello spike can create a thin, piercing or grating sound on the floor, echoing the violent seizing of the cello. A soft vocal improvisation was placed near the end to release tension built from this sound and the silence in 'Cello dancing' and 'Touch Awareness Workshop.'

Audience feedback was collected from two scratch performances to canvas the success of the work's approach to and communication of its themes. The feedback informed our use of movement, space, plus what performers and audience can do, how and why. Edits were made before the premiere to establish a clearer through-line by introducing early in the piece the range of its themes, tones, and the potential roles the performers and cello will take.



Figure 25. *touch tales* premiere, ‘Touch Awareness Workshop’ © Charlotte and Tim, 2015



Figure 26. *touch tales* premiere, ‘Cello playing’ © Charlotte and Tim, 2015

5.2 Devising Group Improvised Movement: *my my mime*

We are so used to moving efficiently through the world that we operate on autopilot a lot of the time. In fact, the phrase “thoughtless acts” highlights the predicament – we do most of the everyday things we do without consciously thinking about them.

– Jane Fulton Suri¹¹⁸

my my mime developed *shambles* and *assembly line* by engaging performers fully in creating movement material from their musical gestures. The notion of ‘thoughtless acts’ provided the stimulus to make a humorous choreographed piece for ensemble, using mime of musical gesture to explore the implicit drama of musical movements and relationships. The theme of identity looking at our individual actions in musical performance gave the title and defined three parts, ‘ensemble,’ ‘solo’ and ‘resonance.’ The light-hearted tone was influenced by an online photograph archive of music-theatre string septet The Gogmagogs.¹¹⁹ Similarly to director Lucy Bailey, I was interested in finding the ‘movement hidden in music’ and portray the music hidden in movement.¹²⁰

The piece was devised with The Assembled. Given that I was working with a student ensemble of twelve members with a broad range of experiences in movement and improvisation, I aimed to facilitate an open rehearsal space in which all could gain awareness of their bodies and develop their movements in their own time and develop physical material comfortably and thoughtfully.

My approach was to begin with an extended discovery stage over two months (see Table 6). This stage explored two ideas with two aims:

- the sounds and action of page-turning, in order to develop group interaction in improvisation;
- musical gesture, in order to develop individual and collective movement vocabularies to use in improvisation.

Both ideas involved a process of play, observation and discussion.

¹¹⁸ Jane Fulton Suri and IDEO, *thoughtless acts? observations on intuitive design* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books LLC, 2005), 179.

¹¹⁹ “The Gogmagogs,” *The Gogmagogs*, [n.d.], accessed Dec 8, 2015, <http://www.littleviking.co.uk/gogmagogs/home/home.php>.

¹²⁰ Lucy Bailey, “Director’s Note,” *The Gogmagogs*, [n.d.], accessed Dec 8, 2015, http://www.littleviking.co.uk/gogmagogs/directors_note/directors_note.php.

Year	Month	Workshop Activities and Performances
2015	January	page-turning exploration
	February	musical gesture exploration Copycat and Tennis games
	March	Circle game developing structure and devising movement
	April	devising movement cleaning and rehearsal towards performance
	May	cleaning and rehearsal towards performance <i>premiere</i>
	October	brief rehearsal period <i>second performance</i>
2016	March	brief rehearsal period <i>third performance</i>

Table 6. *my my mime* project timeline

The page-turning idea involved playing with the sonic results of turning speeds and number of pages turned, with musical improvisation using any material on arrival pages. The second idea shifted the primary improvisatory material to sound-producing, communicative, sound-accompanying and sound-facilitating gestures (the kinds of gestures made while playing and cuing in musical performance: see Chapter 1.8). Group interaction remained the focus, however, since I continued to invite group discussion and feedback about performers' approaches to playing their instrument and managing an extra task, about what they noticed about other performers' gestures, and about what meaning they took from noticed gestures.

To develop these gestures and their individual movement vocabularies, I set an observation task asking pairs to identify and compare their musical gestures. Pairs wrote down their gestures to be able to use them in movement improvisation and three miming games: Copycat, Tennis and Circle. Through discussion the group defined Preparatory, Performance, and Bringing-off gestures. Playing games that did not appear at that stage to contribute towards the actual material or structure of a final piece allowed the performers to develop their movement material freely without the pressure of needing to get material correct or of the right kind. With the group gaining confidence in performing movement, I introduced a structure for the piece.

Part 1 was designed to focus on the group's movement vocabularies through collective decision-making and communication in gestures and cues. Each performer collects an instrument before forming small subgroup clusters around the space to share movements with other performers. For the premiere, I specified that these subgroups

should form spontaneously ‘with performers nearest to you.’ For subsequent performances I specified the members of each subgroup, in order for The Assembled to rehearse the piece in a short amount of rehearsal time. In the latter case, each subgroup worked together to develop their shared gestures and movement sequences. In both cases I gave directorial feedback to subgroups during cleaning the whole piece.

Part 2 is a sketch working as a game in which a solo performer controls the ensemble’s pyramid movement drawing on the contemporary dance technique “flocking”. During this action, the ensemble creates accidental sound through lurching and keeping up with the soloist. The soloist’s inability to control the ensemble results in a silent crash to end the movement. Part 3 then begins with the performers searching for their resonance. As with *assembly line*, feedback from the performers informed refinement of the text score instructions.

At the site-specific premiere, the audience could choose their perspective by moving freely around the piece. For the second performance, in a seated concert hall setting, I added a lighting design to make the piece theatre, but no other changes were made to the piece. In the third performance, in a pedestrianised area of Goole town centre, I directed the piece site-specifically in a flash mob context, but due to the venue being in public and in the open-air I replaced the opening collection of instruments with an extended freeze-frame before the first Preparatory gesture (see Figure 27).



Figure 27. *my my mime* Goole performance opening © Castaway Goole, 2016

5.3 Composed Choreography: *BRETHREN*

BRETHREN is a theatre work about community and conflict, made in response to the 2015 (ongoing) refugee crisis and diverse reactions worldwide. The title was taken from Psalm 133, set in the Finale of Leonard Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*: 'Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.' The project was a directed devising process for a choreographed orchestra comprising any number of instrumentalists of all abilities. The Brethren ensemble was created through an open invitation for performers in the student and local community to combine with The Assembled.

The narrative structure and subtitles derive from *VIOLINS VIOLENCE SILENCE*, one of several neon artworks created by American artist Bruce Nauman in response to human rights abuses in Central and South America and South Africa during the early 1980s (see Figure 28).¹²¹ Nauman invites a re-reading of the titular, familiar words through setting up homophonic connections between them, their 'confluence' creating 'an ekphrastic sound poem in visual form that speaks of the extremes of music and silence, creativity and violence,' which curator Joseph D. Ketner II claims 'veil Nauman's cry of disgust over the violence that humans inflict on one another.'¹²² The words separate syllabically as the imagined pleasantness of violins is related to the destruction of violence.

My approach to physical medium was similar. I chose an orchestra, a group of instrumental families, as a metaphor for families occupying the same space. A choreographed work seemed appropriate, since the word 'orchestra' derives from the Ancient Greek *orkheisthai* 'to dance,' as well as referring to the physical site where the Greek choruses would perform, or nowadays the musicians.¹²³ In *BRETHREN*, different instrumental families occupy separate spaces of the same stage.

Simultaneously, I saw a deconstruction and reinvention of the orchestra as a microcosmic community critiquing contemporary culture. The notions of 'dissensus' and 'aesthetic community' of Jacques Rancière influenced this outlook: '[t]o the extent that it is a dissensual community, an aesthetic community is a community structured by disconnection.'¹²⁴ Rancière defines dissensus as 'a conflict between two regimes of

¹²¹ Bruce Nauman, "VIOLINS VIOLENCE SILENCE," (jpeg image of artwork, Tate Modern, London, 1981-2), accessed Dec 10, 2015. <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/nauman-violins-violence-silence-al00223>.

¹²² Joseph D. Ketner II, ed., *Elusive Signs: Bruce Nauman Works with Light* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2006), 27.

¹²³ "orchestra, n.," *OED Online*, 2016, accessed Dec 1, 2015, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/132287>.

¹²⁴ Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, 59.

sense, two sensory worlds.’¹²⁵ I took his example of ‘sound and absence’ practically and let the notion of ‘being together apart’ influence my choreographic decisions when sculpting movement material developed by the ensemble to make Part I – VIOLINS. Part II – VIOLENCE and Part III – SILENCE aimed to show ‘scenes of dissensus, capable of surfacing in any place and at any time’ through a heterogeneity of non-choreographed movement sequences.¹²⁶



Figure 28. VIOLINS VIOLENCE SILENCE, Bruce Nauman, 1981-2 © Tate, London 2016

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 58.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 48.

Initial research and development for the piece took place during a residency at Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity (see Table 7). There, I ran an experimental devising workshop for Musicians-in-Residence, inviting responses to a movement task. The task was for performers, in groups of 4 or 5, to create a scene in which they carried and treated their instrument as one of three movement motifs I was concerned with: a tool, a vessel, or a weapon (see Figure 29). The musicians provided verbal feedback on how they responded. I later consulted a faculty artist, violinist Jasper Woods, about a violinist's body and movement to inform the devising of Part I.

Year	Date	Workshop Activities and Performances
2015	27th November – 15th December	Banff residency: research and development of concept and process
	2nd December	workshop with Banff Fall Musicians-in-Residence
	6th December	meeting with Jasper Woods
2016	13th April	The Assembled: improvisation developing movement vocabularies (weapon, tool, precious object)
	17th April	strings only: improvisation developing movement vocabularies
	20th April	The Assembled: choreographing Part II and III
	23rd April	strings only: improvisation developing movement vocabularies; choreographing Part I
	24th April	strings only: choreographing Parts I and II
	27th April	meeting with lighting technician full ensemble: choreographing Parts II and III and cleaning these with movement director
	1st May	full ensemble: rehearsal towards performance string sectional: cleaning Part I
	4th May	technical rehearsal with lighting premiere

Table 7. *BRETHREN* project timeline

To make a significantly choreographed work with a mixed group, I decided that all musical material would be structured improvisation, that the form would be a simple succession of tableaux, and that music and movement would be devised and learnt together by rote. I sought to blur the boundaries between music, theatre and dance through a combination of:

- playing musical instruments;
- performing improvised pedestrian movement and representative actions;
- performing simple choreographed abstract movement sequences.



Figure 29. Banff Fall 2015 Musicians-in-Residence workshop, “weapon” group © James Whittle, 2015

When starting work with The Gogmagogs, director Lucy Bailey ‘began by using a series of acting exercises, working with physical movement in relationship to the release of sound.’¹²⁷ My rehearsal process began similarly, first giving the Brethren ensemble the Banff workshop task in order to develop movement in playful improvisation (see Figures 30–31). I also facilitated discussion, first, about how the feel and weight of musical instruments contributed to making movement, and, second, about the piece’s themes, to foster collective understanding, ownership and intention. The latter aim was concluded with running a game for the performers during warm-ups directly before the premiere. Standing in a circle, each performer gave a word describing what the piece is about to them, then again a word for each part.

I worked more as a choreographer to structure and shape the ensemble’s movements in the context of the piece. As well as referencing Nauman’s triangles, Part I was influenced by films of acrobatic performances by double bass sextet L’Orchestre de Contrabasses.¹²⁸ I used the flocking and Copycat games from *my my mime* to develop interactions between instrumental groups for Part II. Part III developed from the notion that ‘[t]he theatre “represents” us, both in the sense of showing us images of ourselves and in the sense of standing in and standing up for us.’¹²⁹

¹²⁷ Lucy Bailey, “Director’s Note.”

¹²⁸ L’Orchestre de Contrabasses, “L’Orchestre de Contrebasses – 06 Kora song [OFFICIAL VIDEO]” YouTube video, 6:52, posted by “Migrating Media Productions,” Feb 10, 2011, accessed Dec 9, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6nf1_QXpS7I.

¹²⁹ Kelleher, *Theatre & Politics*, 10.

This notion also informed the overall design aesthetic, with input from two external artists concluding the process. I invited dance artist Rachel Fullegar, of Gracefool Collective, to attend one later rehearsal as a movement director, to support cleaning the work by offering advice and feedback to the performers and me regarding qualities of movement. Consequently, for costume I requested casual clothing with understated colours. For the lighting design, created with technician John Rawling, soft hues were used to frame Part I and contrast with a normalising brightness in Part III.



Figure 30. *BRETHREN* devising rehearsal, 23rd April (i) © Gaia Blandina, 2016



Figure 31. *BRETHREN* devising rehearsal, 23rd April (ii) © Gaia Blandina, 2016

Epilogue

(i) Discipline Disciples

Life is a constant performance; we are audience and performer at the same time; everybody is an audience all the time. Performance is not a discrete event.

– Nicholas Abercrombie and Brian Longhurst¹³⁰

Or from a different perspective, maybe what is at stake is the idea that all music is music theatre. Perhaps we are finally willing to accept that the bodies playing the music are part of the music, that they're present, they're valid and they inform our listening whether subconsciously or consciously. That it's not too late for us to have bodies.

– Jennifer Walshe¹³¹

The New Discipline defined by Jennifer Walshe is indicative of a new aesthetic restoring the body as a locus for musical practice. I agree with Walshe in seeking to reclaim “music” as a term indicative of a shared practice governed by a musical approach to multiple disciplines, rather than use “music-theatre” (since ‘too much has happened since the 1970s’). Similarly, Walshe acknowledges ‘the inheritance of Dada, Fluxus, Situationism etc.’ and ‘Kagel et al.’ while the influence of these and performance art is emergent in the multidisciplinary practices of artists such as Andy Ingamells, Laura Jayne Bowler and Michael Picknett, to name but three. The sense of a burgeoning, collaborative, alternative scene blurring genre boundaries further is prevalent in numerous new music collectives, programmers and arts venues (such as squib-box, Bastard Assignments and Weisslich) that, in the last decade in the United Kingdom, have established alternative approaches to concert presentation.

I see my future work as being situated and developed within this scene. But, although Walshe qualifies the New Discipline as ‘not a school or a movement,’ I would not use the term to categorise my work. Echoing Artaud’s Theatre of Cruelty, Walshe intends ‘Discipline’ to signify a ‘rigorous approach’ to making and critiquing physical work. I define my collaborative approach, concerning how to enable musicians to access and create movement, as similarly rigorous. However, there is a paradox between

¹³⁰ Nicholas Abercrombie and Brian Longhurst, *Audiences: A Sociological Theory of Performance and Imagination* (London: Sage, 1998), 73, quoted in Helen Freshwater, *Theatre & Audience* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 70.

¹³¹ Walshe, “The New Discipline.”

the demands on time implied by Walshe's rigour and the brevity of 'always, always, working against the clock'. Composers may well be willing 'to perform, to get their hands dirty, to do it themselves, do it immediately.' But what of performers, given an enduring performance practice that is physical, virtuosic, unnatural, constrained and absurd, and unequivocally *musical*?

Walshe is redefining what "composer" means, but the inherited hierarchical systems of musical creation and exhibition (the composer-performer relationship) remain to be challenged. An 'opportunity to move fast and break things' does not guarantee space for a performer to develop their individual practice to incorporate a 'New' approach to the body, contrary to their current discipline. There is also a question of the wider inclusivity of this approach to performers not already comfortable with physical work. Any imposition of physical work upon the musician – upon an already intrinsic, embodied, and constrained physicality – ought to be resisted. Such resistance requires a method for working equally with the physical materials that are the intended locus of the work – the people who perform it.

(ii) Politics of Making: an Evaluation

Discussing 'various forms of social organisation and conflict' represented by a play's action (regarding Bertolt Brecht), Fredric Jameson argues that 'theatre is political, not only in its formal effects, but also [in] that it is itself a figure for the social more generally, which it seeks to divide and set against itself.'¹³²

Music is no less political than theatre – making music no less a political act. I can no longer discount political implications to making work, regarding:

- Who and what is the work for?
- Who is the work made with?
- Who owns the work?
- Who has the power?

Behind these questions are reservations that my work is *not yet* for some, in which case: who does the work exclude? Why? What other hierarchies does the work still maintain?

Regarding my aim to replace hierarchy with democratically divided roles, a degree of leadership was required in all directed and group devised projects. In some cases, stronger leadership was required. The premiere performances of *some Surrealist methods* and *assembly line* demonstrated the need to develop improvised responses and

¹³² Fredric Jameson, *Brecht and Method* (London: Verso, 2000), 72.

interactions more closely and selectively. In *some Surrealist methods*, juxtaposed and individual improvisatory material for Voice and Oboe would be more satisfying if more consideration were given to their combination. Likewise, the performance of *assembly line* could have been shorter overall. Although the work plays on notions of failure, defeated expectations, *non sequitur* and control, informal verbal feedback after the premiere indicated that the audience had understood the process quickly. Thereafter, the Director role had been the only surprise that rekindled a sense of unpredictability.

The criticisms of duration and timing are refinement issues reflecting the extent of my directorial decision-making at the time. For future performances of these works, I would allow more rehearsal time to reflect collectively on more nuanced approaches to the material.

In contrast, material composed for *a drawing-down of blinds* would have benefitted from a more integrated relationship. Focus on the pianist's physicality is lost during the overly long concealment section, which relies too much on only piano playing. The criticism can be extended to the fact that I assumed ownership of the work by composing this section without consultation. The mode of address is noticeably different between this work and the other piano works, *magical every time* and *temporary remedies for recurring evils*, which sustain their theatrical presence despite their shared degree of compositional ownership.

The combination of literary and physical understanding developed in the three piano works evolved an embodied compositional practice that made possible the later integrated collaborations *touch tales* and *BRETHREN*. Those works contrast considerably with the heavily abstracted material in *shambles*, the first integrated work.

Both *shambles* versions proved dry in tone because of their chain forms, which set playful movement material into a seemingly limitless sequence. Instead, material could be structured more tightly in each, in order to improve their strength as satire of the physicality of musical performance. Though *my my mime* is similarly rhapsodic, the visual connection between its beginning and end conveys a more digestible form. Smoother transitions and a lighter tone resulted from allowing the interplay of relationships between performers to shape movement material.

Making and combining more *shambles* will test the usefulness of the suggested devising processes in its text score more concretely. The definitive test of the scores for *shambles*, *CARNIVORE*, *assembly line* and *my my mime* will be performances and feedback by performers unfamiliar with my work, working without my input.

Arguably, *assembly line* and *my my mime* are more suited as educational, developmental pieces for a group to workshop their physical skills. I would not say that

their weight or significance as works is reduced, since I do not now see performance as a final product. As Abercrombie and Longhurst assert, the theatre of a performance product is not discrete from the theatre of its development. Process is integral to a devised performance, which is one transient fixed moment in the life of a work and the growth of a group.

The processes that developed from *That's Yer Lot!* onwards provided a foundation for making more thematically complex work in integrated collaborations. In *touch tales*, the most integrated collaboration of the portfolio allowed the most comprehensive analysis of extra-musical themes and the most detailed control and communication of these in its form. It was also the project that challenged me most as a composer-performer. *touch tales* could have been developed into an hour-long show. In an extended form, the work could complete the cycle from *tutti* audience interaction at the start to *tutti* interaction by the end (rather than progressing to interact with only two audience members). An extended form could also allow discussion of the themes with the audience, to foster engagement and enrich understanding of the themes further.

As the summative portfolio work, *BRETHREN* realised my aim to present musical performance as a metaphor for external social and political systems and as a microcosm of contemporary culture. Although the limited rehearsal time meant that I reverted to a more directorial role, rather than move further towards a collective practice, I regard *BRETHREN* as the most successful work in terms of combining devising techniques, working with a large group, with a clear political, extra-musical subject matter. I see my future work as evolving in this direction.

(iii) Future Paths

Through this portfolio, I found the process of making work to be connected to the performers' continuing, broader process of learning performance. This reflection indicates the research still to be done in bridging the creation of musical performance with its education—with the way music is taught, learned and experienced, particularly regarding function and use of the body.

This research will need to be carried out practically as a composer-performer in order to integrate research from theatre, dance and performance and live art disciplines with musical thinking in more depth. Music has much to offer a multidisciplinary practice by way of the metaphorical potential of its terminology: what do we mean when we discuss harmony, unison, or syncopation? In this light, the role of the composer-performer facilitating musical processes will need to be explored as:

- a curator of space
- a curator of creativity
- a curator of opportunity

My educational concerns are likely to manifest practically as participatory experiences. The combination of the educational and the participatory in my practice now constitutes a desire to raise awareness of the physicality and embodied aspect of music-making among a wider audience of performers and concertgoers of all ages and abilities.

Equally, this political dimension of my practice is now concerned with democratising my work further in the public domain. In this digital age of global sharing and interconnectivity, “my” work is synonymous with “our” work. Therefore, questions to confront include:

- How accessible is the work?
- How can accessibility to the work be improved?
- How is the work disseminated?
- Where can the work be performed?
- What is a suitable subject for the work? (What can the work say, what can it not?)
- Who and what is represented in the work?

These questions must be answered with the widest possible audience in mind, with a view to research promoting the live musical experience as the equal opportunity that it pertains to be. Finally, an aesthetic question: to what extent does style remain a product and not a process? At what point does style transform from product to process?

For now, to answer the four questions of the previous section: work is made as a response to an aspect of contemporary culture, a present facet of human experience. Work is made with those who want to make it and for a public who come to own the work through witnessing its performance. This sequence sees a transmission of power from the public, through the work and the makers, back to the public. This participatory work must be considered a legitimate and necessary form of activism. The concert hall, for all we inherit from its history and conventions, may yet need reclaiming as the site from which the activity stems. Music, as a theatre of social and political relationships, as a physical effort, will remain boundless. There is much we can do.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Collaborative Patterns

Seeing collaborative endeavours ‘as dynamic, changing processes,’ Vera John-Steiner identifies the following roles, values and working methods to show how aspects of collaboration. These non-hierarchical patterns constitute a spectrum of activity, from the informal exchange of information in distributed collaboration, to the ‘prolonged period of committed activity’ of integrative collaboration that thrives on ‘dialogue, risk-taking, and a shared vision.’¹³³

- **Distributed collaboration**
 - Informal and Voluntary
 - Similar Interests
 - Spontaneous and Responsive

- **Complementarity collaboration**
 - Clear Division of Labour
 - Overlapping Values
 - Discipline-based Approaches

- **Family collaboration**
 - Fluidity of Roles
 - Common Vision and Trust
 - Dynamic Integration of Expertise

- **Integrative collaboration**
 - Braided Roles
 - Visionary Commitment
 - Transformative Co-construction

¹³³ Vera John-Steiner, *Creative Collaboration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 197-203.

Appendix 2. Performances of Submitted Works, October 2012 to April 2016

Performers are given only when they differ to those listed in the List of Accompanying Material (see page 6).

Date	Title	Venue (Performers)
2013		
10 January	<i>some Surrealist methods</i>	MA recital, University of York
29 April	<i>some Surrealist methods</i>	MA recital, University of York (Jayson Green, Patrick Burnett)
8 May	<i>Remains of Elmet</i>	York Spring Festival of New Music
25 May	<i>That's Yer Lot!</i>	Collaborative Arts performance, Leeds
27 June	<i>That's Yer Lot!</i>	VANTAGE Arts Prize, Leeds
30 June	<i>some Surrealist methods</i>	Music and/as Process conference, University of Huddersfield
6 August	<i>this piece gets more magical every time someone writes ill of it</i>	Late Music Concert Series, York
9 November	<i>shambles 1 and 2</i>	Gracefool Collective fundraiser, Leeds
5 December	<i>shamble 2</i>	Undergraduate recital, University of York
2014		
4 January	<i>this piece gets more magical every time someone writes ill of it</i>	private recital, Seoul, South Korea
27 February	<i>assembly line</i>	University of York
30 March	<i>That's Yer Lot!</i>	Transform 14 Festival, Leeds
9 May	<i>CARNIVORE</i>	York Spring Festival of New Music
3 October	<i>a drawing-down of blinds</i>	St Stephen's Church, Bristol
18 October	<i>a drawing-down of blinds</i>	The Mint Methodist Church, Exeter
12 November	<i>a drawing-down of blinds</i>	Gloucester Cathedral
2015		
26 February	<i>touch tales</i> (scratch performance)	NEWK @ Live Art Bistro, Leeds
28 February	<i>a drawing-down of blinds</i>	Music in WW1 conference, University of York
3 March	<i>touch tales</i> (scratch performance)	Composers' Seminar, University of York
3 April	<i>touch tales</i>	Northern Art Festival #3, Sheffield
9 April	<i>touch tales</i>	SLAPmoves, York
24 April	<i>a drawing-down of blinds</i>	Southwark Cathedral
3 May	<i>my my mime</i>	York Spring Festival of New Music
5 September	<i>temporary remedies for recurring evils</i>	Late Music Concert Series, York
14 October	<i>my my mime</i>	'Watch again hear' concert, University of York
2016		
4 March	<i>temporary remedies for recurring evils</i>	Castaway Arts Fest, Goole (James Whittle)
6 March	<i>my my mime</i>	Castaway Arts Fest, Goole
4 May	<i>BRETHREN</i>	York Spring Festival of New Music
11 June	<i>this piece gets more magical every time someone writes ill of it</i>	'All About the Piano' concert, The Pound, Corsham (Alex Wilson, Nicholas Peters)

Appendix 3. Compositional Output, October 2012 to April 2016

Composed works are highlighted blue. Devised works are highlighted green.

More information on each work is available at: <http://www.james-whittle.co.uk/works>.

Date	Title	Instrumentation	Duration
2012			
October	<i>sunless dry geraniums</i>	soprano, clarinet in A	3'
October	<i>Emily Brontë</i>	solo viola-vocalist	5'
2013			
February	<i>my shadow and my self</i>	baritone, piano	7'
June	<i>'For who digs hills because they do aspire'</i>	6 instruments	8'
July–August	<i>Ten Erratic Miniatures</i>	oboe, piano	11'
August	<i>across Great Langdale</i>	solo piano	5'
September–November	<i>A Byron Elegy</i>	speaker, 3 dancers, 2 cellos	30'
2014			
January–February	<i>Darwin</i>	speaker, dancer, 2 cellos	30'
December–April	<i>Going – a song cycle</i>	baritone, piano	8'
March–June	<i>Rat Race</i>	referee, 5 instruments	8'
June	<i>in balneo canere</i>	SATB soli	4'
December	<i>The Undemanding Lover</i>	soprano, 5 instruments	4'30"
2015			
July	<i>Steptangle for stamping ensemble</i>	8 instruments	2'30"
November	<i>boxing / unboxing piece (for piano race)</i>	open instrumentation	variable
November	<i>11 pianos on the 2nd floor ('piano race')</i>	any number of pianos	variable
December	<i>Banff Postcard Piece series</i>	various	variable
December	<i>Imagine that</i>	4 performers	10'
2016			
December–February	<i>peakspeak</i>	voices, guitars, piano, percussion	7'
December–February	<i>peakspeak (b)</i>	voices, open instrumentation	7'
December–February	<i>Turning Point</i>	guitars, piano, percussion	8'
December–February	<i>Turning Point (b)</i>	open instrumentation	8'
December–March	<i>Not playing the clarinet</i>	solo performer	10'
February	<i>learning / unlearning</i>	2 open instrumentation ensembles	variable

Appendix 4. Conference paper “‘The thing comes alive’: theatricalising the concert hall in *Remains of Elmet*’

A shorter version of this paper was given at the 5th Music on Stage Conference, Rose Bruford College, 18-19th October 2014, accompanied by excerpts from a film of the premiere: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6LVfwFiHw20>.

The numbering of Tables and Figures continues from the Commentary. References have been amalgamated into the Commentary Bibliography.

Introduction

Over the past four years from my Masters degree into my current doctoral work, I have collaborated with musicians, dancers and poets on a range of pieces that combine music and theatre, and often text, which is a frequent stimulus for my works. My doctoral research is founded on the idea that music is as much a visual performance art as it is an aural one; my portfolio will examine how processes to compose and devise the theatre of musical performance can be combined. Today, I will demonstrate how composition, devising and literary analysis were integral to the creation of one such music-theatre work, *Remains of Elmet*.

I differentiate between three modes of practice and kinds of material in my work: composed, devised and semi-improvised. Depending on the concept, performers and performance context, pieces can vary from fully composed and notated, to semi-improvised, or fully improvised. Each piece in my portfolio features a different combination of compositional and improvisational techniques.

- **Composed** material is any created by the composer alone that is replicated by the performers. Any composed material can be made either before this series of workshops, or during the devising process.
- **Devised** material is any created collectively by all participants (composers, directors and performers), including its refinement and replication in performance. A work made completely by a devising process will allow all participants to develop the concept, structure and material of a work together in a series of workshops.
- As a technique employed during the devising process, **improvisation** is always directed in some way. I prefer to clarify the resulting material in performance as semi-improvised, as the material will always have some musical parameters fixed

and others kept free. Subsequently, material can be created that is flexible and adaptable to circumstances, while particular characteristics and functions can remain consistent from rehearsal to performance.

When composing or devising theatre, my compositional role has shifted to a directorial role in rehearsal. I have found this role useful when devising theatre with musicians, whose previous experience of theatre and movement may be marginal outside of a musical performance context. A preliminary devising workshop will always take place in which my initial theatrical ideas are shaped by how the performers respond. It is necessary to ensure that a person-centered approach tailors the theatre to the needs of all performers. A clear method and instruction allows all performers to access a thought process and replicate action with confidence in performance. Consequently, all performers may understand the concept, function and technique of the theatrical action.

Remains of Elmet was commissioned through the inaugural Terry Holmes Composer/Performer Award 2013, as the winning proposed work. The commission stipulated that a composer and a performer should collaborate to create a work for concert hall. Previously, my collaborator, Victoria Bernath, had commissioned a number of pieces as a “viola-vocalist”, a singing viola player. We created *Remains of Elmet* for solo viola-vocalist, solo string quartet, a sinfonietta of 16 instruments, and 24 voices divided into two choirs. The work is mostly uncondacted and lasts thirty minutes. In six parts, it sets five poems from *Remains of Elmet, a Pennine Sequence* by Ted Hughes, published in 1979 with the black and white photographs by Fay Godwin that partly inspired the collection. We also inserted extracts from a sixth poem that appears in *Elmet*, an expanded edition Hughes made in 1994. We had three weeks to rehearse for the premiere on 8th May 2013, given by Bernath with the University of York Chamber Orchestra, The 24 choir and conductor Jonathan Brigg.

1. Context and Text

Elmet was an Anglo-Saxon kingdom stretching across Yorkshire that included the western Calder valley, the landscape of Hughes’s childhood.¹³⁴ In supposing what remains of Elmet, the reader is invited to contemplate other kinds of landscape. The poems combine social, religious, physical and psychological matter to meditate on the

¹³⁴ Sagar explains how Hughes changed his initial idea to write ‘the autobiography of my childhood,’ aiming instead ‘for a blurred focus, generalised mood-evocation in each piece — something that would harmonise with Fay Godwin’s photographs’. Sagar, “Ted Hughes and the Calder Valley.”

decay of this landscape and its people. Three quarters of the way through, however, a transformation takes place: the landscape seems regenerated, reborn.

Critic and private correspondent of Hughes, Keith Sagar, observed that ‘*Remains of Elmet* is a lament for the cost of the Industrial Revolution both to the environment and to its inhabitants, but also a celebration of nature’s powers of regeneration.’¹³⁵ While these themes of loss, disintegration and regeneration were significant to our work, a converse remark by fellow Hughes scholar Ann Skea presented the principal idea of creating a music-theatre work from this poetry, saying, ‘the focus of *Remains of Elmet* is on the real world, peopled by real people.’ In this sense I intend “theatricalising of the concert hall” to be understood.¹³⁶

Throughout *Remains of Elmet*, Hughes employs imagery that conveys dualistic metaphors of decay and regeneration, fragmentation and unity. These formed the basis for musical and theatrical material in our piece, as I will outline later on. In the opening poem we are placed in the ‘cradle-grave,’ ‘[w]here the Mothers/Gallop their souls/Where the howlings of heaven/Pour down onto earth’;¹³⁷ a desolate place where ‘[n]othing really cares. But soil deepens.’¹³⁸ We encounter a chaos of creatures: ‘A chess-world... Fools... sheep... Fleeing wraith-lovers... Wounded champions... Shattered, bowed armies.’¹³⁹ The cyclical drama of generations ‘that ate each other’ begins.¹⁴⁰

Yet, the promise of the regenerative power of nature remains. ‘Before these chimneys can flower again/They must fall into the only future, into earth.’¹⁴¹ Even so, despondent nature ‘Lets what happens to it happen,’¹⁴² ‘[i]gnorant in ignorant air.’¹⁴³ Such promise grows doubtful, ‘at the dead end of a wrong direction.’¹⁴⁴ After the darkest point, a ‘rip in the fabric,’ a transformation occurs.¹⁴⁵ ‘Light Falls Through Itself.’ The cycle of destruction is breached as ‘The Word that Space Breathes’ is reconciled with ‘huge music’ and ‘opened rock.’¹⁴⁶ Finally, it seems, there can be rest: ‘The valleys went out./The moorland broke loose.’¹⁴⁷

¹³⁵ Keith Sagar, “Preface” to *Ted Hughes and Nature: Terror and Exultation*, Keith Sagar, 2012, accessed Oct 13, 2012, <http://www.keithsagar.co.uk/tedhughes.html>.

¹³⁶ Skea, “Regeneration in *Remains of Elmet*.”

¹³⁷ Hughes, “Where the Mothers” in *Remains of Elmet* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1979), 1.

¹³⁸ Hughes, “Lumb Chimneys” in *Remains of Elmet*, 3.

¹³⁹ Hughes, “Moors” in *Remains of Elmet*, 6.

¹⁴⁰ Hughes, “Remains of Elmet” in *Remains of Elmet*, 23.

¹⁴¹ Hughes, “Lumb Chimneys.”

¹⁴² Hughes, “A Tree.”

¹⁴³ Hughes, “Rock Has Not Learned” in *Remains of Elmet*, 22.

¹⁴⁴ Hughes, “Top Withens” in *Remains of Elmet*, 55.

¹⁴⁵ Hughes, “Widdop” in *Remains of Elmet*, 58.

¹⁴⁶ Hughes, “The Word that Space Breathes” in *Remains of Elmet*, 61.

¹⁴⁷ Hughes, “Heptonstall Old Church” in *Remains of Elmet*, 62.

The subtitle ‘a Pennine Sequence’ implies that the poems are to be read in their published order. The accumulating metaphors of decay, disintegration and regeneration therefore suggest that the complete sequence is one full cycle of life and death. This cycle is shown most distinctly by the apparent return to the ‘cradle-grave’ in the last lines of the final poem: ‘those words of my mother,/Joined with earth and engraved in rock,/Were under my feet.’¹⁴⁸ The transformation from decay into regeneration provided a template for global compositional choices.

2. A Music-Theatre Concerto

Dramatic ideas are often implicit in musical performance, embedded within the texture of the music and embodied by the ensemble on stage. It can simply be a question of whether this implicit theatre of performance is perceived or not: how often do you watch a string quartet and imagine four people to be having a conversation? As listeners we personify sound through our visual perception of performers. Composing the theatre of musical performance can make explicit extra-musical ideas.

This is not a new compositional idea, as the use of spatialisation in the instrumental music theatre works of Harrison Birtwistle demonstrates. In *5 Distances for 5 Instrument*, Birtwistle instructs the performers to be seated ‘as far apart as is practically possible.’¹⁴⁹ Birtwistle thus exaggerates the typical wind quintet configuration (who are seated stage right left to left: flute, oboe, horn, bassoon, clarinet), consequently emphasising and deriving drama from the inherent theatrical relationships within the quintet’s positioning. The exaggerated layout implies that there are five individual personae that have ‘distant’ relationships to one another, as Robert Adlington has observed.¹⁵⁰ Indeed, the ensuing musical drama emulates this theatre (whereby the opposed pairs of flute and clarinet, and oboe and bassoon, engage in quarrelsome dialogues while the central horn’s individual material is kept separate), confirming the word play on ‘distances’ in the title.

Our conception of the piece as a concerto focused on re-imagining the musical and theatrical traits of a concerto: the technical and physical virtuosity of the soloist; the theatre of a protagonist and chorus, and the relationship between their materials; lastly, the role of the conductor.

The only formal device that was adapted from the standard concerto form was the cadenza. Comprising Part V ‘Light Falls Through Itself,’ the cadenza serves as both the logical end point of the timbral disintegration that has reduced the ensemble to

¹⁴⁸ Hughes, “The Angel” in *Remains of Elmet*, 67.

¹⁴⁹ Harrison Birtwistle, *5 Distances for 5 Instruments* (London: Universal Edition, 1992).

¹⁵⁰ Robert Adlington, *The Music of Harrison Birtwistle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 46-7.

scratch tones and silence, before the beginning of the ensemble's regeneration. The poem is spoken softly by the viola-vocalist without any accompaniment, as if 'Stripped of all but their cry.'¹⁵¹ The stage lighting is reduced swiftly to a single spotlight on the square stage block for this part only, to enhance the sudden change to poetry recitation. In this way, we aimed to invert the typical cadenza function of a technically virtuosic musical moment to an introspective, contemplative moment of theatre.

Light Falls Through Itself

Loses most of itself
And all its possessions.

Falls naked
Into poverty grass, poverty stone,
Poverty thin water.¹⁵²

The theatre and music for our *Remains of Elmet* were conceived as a compressed version of Hughes's poetic sequence (see Table 8). The five poems were drawn from across the sequence, appearing in their sequential order as *attacca* movements. They were projected as surtitles throughout the performance to aid their intelligibility. We chose poems that we felt could best communicate the sequence's narrative arc, from disintegration to regeneration, without diminishing the logic of their own narrative. The subjects of our chosen poems themselves diminish, to convey a sense of a diminishing landscape.

Opening with a densely chaotic, fragmented landscape of the moors ('a stage for the performance of heaven'), timbre and texture disintegrate as 'generations... ate each other.'¹⁵³ The ensemble reaches a scratch tone by the end of 'A Tree.'

At the point of peripeteia, 'Telegraph Wires' (from the revised 1994 collection *Elmet*) contains fragments that feature only silently on surtitles:

The thing comes alive in your ear. ...

In the revolving ballroom of space,
Bowed over the moor, a bright face

¹⁵¹ Hughes, "Curlews Lift" in *Remains of Elmet*, 11.

¹⁵² Hughes, "Light Falls Through Itself" in *Remains of Elmet*, 59.

¹⁵³ Hughes, "Moors." Hughes, "Remains of Elmet."

Draws out of telegraph wires the tones
That empty human bones.¹⁵⁴

‘Light Falls Through Itself,’ a spoken cadenza for the viola-vocalist, follows, before the ensemble can regenerate through homophonic unison in ‘The Word that Space Breathes.’

Part	Poem	Collection	Viola-vocalist	Words used by Choirs
I	‘Moors’	<i>Remains of Elmet</i>	sings poem	‘moor’
II	‘Remains of Elmet’	<i>Remains of Elmet</i>	sings poem	‘glacier’
III	‘A Tree’	<i>Remains of Elmet</i>	sings poem	‘moor’ reprise ‘tree’ (Choir 1 only)
IV	‘Telegraph Wires’ (extracts)	<i>Elmet</i>	[voice tacet]	‘wire’
V	‘Light Falls Through Itself’	<i>Remains of Elmet</i>	speaks poem	[tacet]
VI	‘The Word that Space Breathes’	<i>Remains of Elmet</i>	speaks poem	Choir 1: ‘rock’ Choir 2: <i>in limine sapientiae</i>

Table 8. *Remains of Elmet* text structure

3. “Real people”: Protagonist and Choruses

In light of Ann Skea’s remark, I wanted the focus of the piece to be on the bodies on stage as much as on the music. We set the solo viola-vocalist role first as embodying opposing forces: voice and instrument. That duality is reflected in the composite ensemble of sinfonietta and choirs (see Table 9). The dramatic relationship between these is a transformation from two separate, juxtaposed blocks of sound in “Moors”, to a homogenous entity by the end connected by an ascending *tutti* melody (see Table 10).

At the start of the collage in “Moors”, the score combines measured and free time. The parts of the viola-vocalist, both Choirs, and the solo string quartet are completely notated and metred. The sinfonietta players are all given the same tempo but need not play in tempo together unless aided by cues from the viola-vocalist, their

¹⁵⁴ Ted Hughes, “Telegraph Wires” in *Elmet* (London: Faber and Faber, 1994), 126.

group leaders, or their neighbours. Squared numbers appear above sequences of cues, enabling the solo string quartet to differentiate and communicate.

Sinfonietta				Choirs	
Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4	Choir 1	Choir 2
Leader: Solo	<i>Leader: Solo</i>	<i>Leader: Solo</i>	<i>Leader: Solo</i>		<i>Conductor</i>
Violin 1	<i>Violin 2</i>	<i>Cello</i>	<i>Viola</i>		
Cor Anglais	Oboe	Bassoon 2	Piccolo	3 Sopranos	3 Sopranos
Trombone 1	Bassoon 1	Trombone 2	Alto flute	3 Altos	3 Altos
Cello 1	Violin 1	Double bass 1	Clarinet in A	3 Tenors	3 Tenors
Cello 2	Violin 2	Double bass 2	Bass clarinet	3 Bases	3 Bases

Table 9. Remains of Elmet choral and instrumental groups

Part	Viola-Vocalist	Solo String Quartet	Sinfonietta Groups 1-4	Choir 1	Choir 2
I	sings poem; voice/viola stichomythia	leads Groups 1-4	<i>tutti</i> collage	‘moor’	‘moor’
II	sings poem; voice/viola dialogue intensifies	leads Groups 1-4	episodes focus on each Group (4-1-2-3)	‘glacier’	‘glacier’
III	sings poem; viola decays to single notes	conductor-led improvisations timbre to <i>sul pont.</i>	leader cues improvisations, timbre to <i>sul pont.</i>	‘moor’; ‘tree’ in trios	<i>ad lib.</i> hummin g to silence
IV	voice silent; viola decays to scratch tone	accelerating then decelerating scratches	[tacet]	‘wire’	[tacet]
V	speaks poem; viola silent	[tacet]	[tacet]	[tacet]	[tacet]
VI	hums <i>in limine sapientiae</i> theme; speaks poem while playing <i>tutti</i> melody	<i>tutti</i> melody	gradual entries: <i>tutti</i> melody	gradual entries: ‘rock’ set to <i>tutti</i> melody	<i>in limine sapientia e</i> theme

Table 10. Remains of Elmet musical structure

4. Viola-Vocalist Virtuosity

The solo viola-vocalist role intended to combine musical, theatrical and physical challenges. The pitch contours of poetry recitation were exaggerated to through-compose the vocal line. The voice must convey the text clearly but without compromising the solo viola material, which acts as an antagonistic commentator to the voice. Furthermore, we did not want the text merely to be sung, but for the character to become a confrontational force with the ensemble: moving around the whole stage, inhabiting the space, engaging with other performers, and speaking the text as if soliloquising and addressing the audience directly.

Musically, constant dialogue between voice and viola was the starting point for conveying the turbulence of a disintegrating landscape. In 'Moors,' the material of one is reflected in the other from moment to moment to create a collage of stichomythia between voice and viola reflecting the 'chess-world of top-heavy Kings and Queens... Fools...' and 'Fleeing wraith-lovers.' The stichomythia is contrasted with longer solo passages for each, among which the viola presages the '*in limine sapientiae*' theme sung by the voice and Choir 2 in the final part.

5. Theatricalising the Concert Hall

Without using a conductor for the majority of the piece, the music and staging had to facilitate a clear hierarchy of events so performers around the stage could co-ordinate. From this impetus, we set out to theatricalise all elements of the concert hall: staging, movement, lighting and amplification.

The stage layout was conceived as a living, breathing landscape, designed specifically for the performance venue (see Figure 32). The idea of a central square stage block came from the phrase, 'A people fixed... Between their bones and the four trembling quarters.'¹⁵⁵ String quartet soloists were placed opposite and facing each side of this central block so that they could each lead one of four instrumental groups. Throughout the first two parts the viola-vocalist's viola cues the solo string quartet. They in turn echo the viola-vocalist's material, and in so doing, cue *solo* and *tutti* events within their respective groups.

This practical decision also served a dramatic function. By placing the quartet in isolated locations, the viola-vocalist was able to move round and engage each soloist in musical dialogue. This cyclical process is established in 'Moors' (see Figure 33), intensifies in 'Remains of Elmet,' whereon it cannot continue.

¹⁵⁵ Hughes, "Wild Rock" in *Remains of Elmet*, 17.

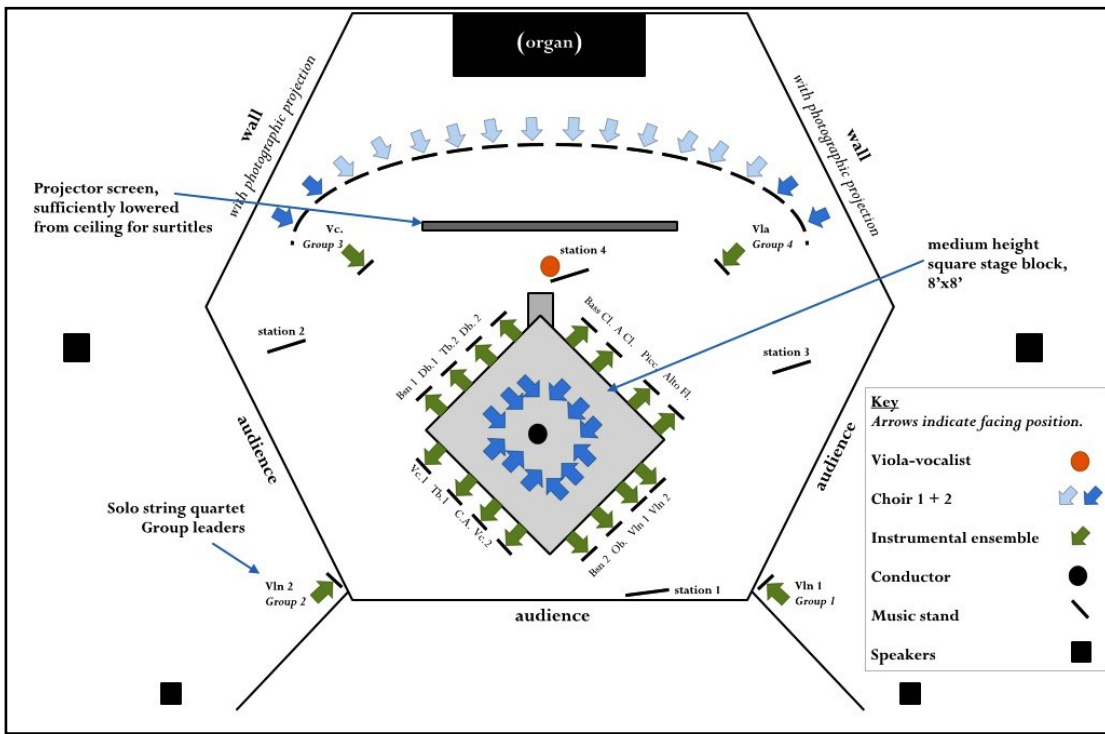


Figure 32. *Remains of Elmet* staging plan

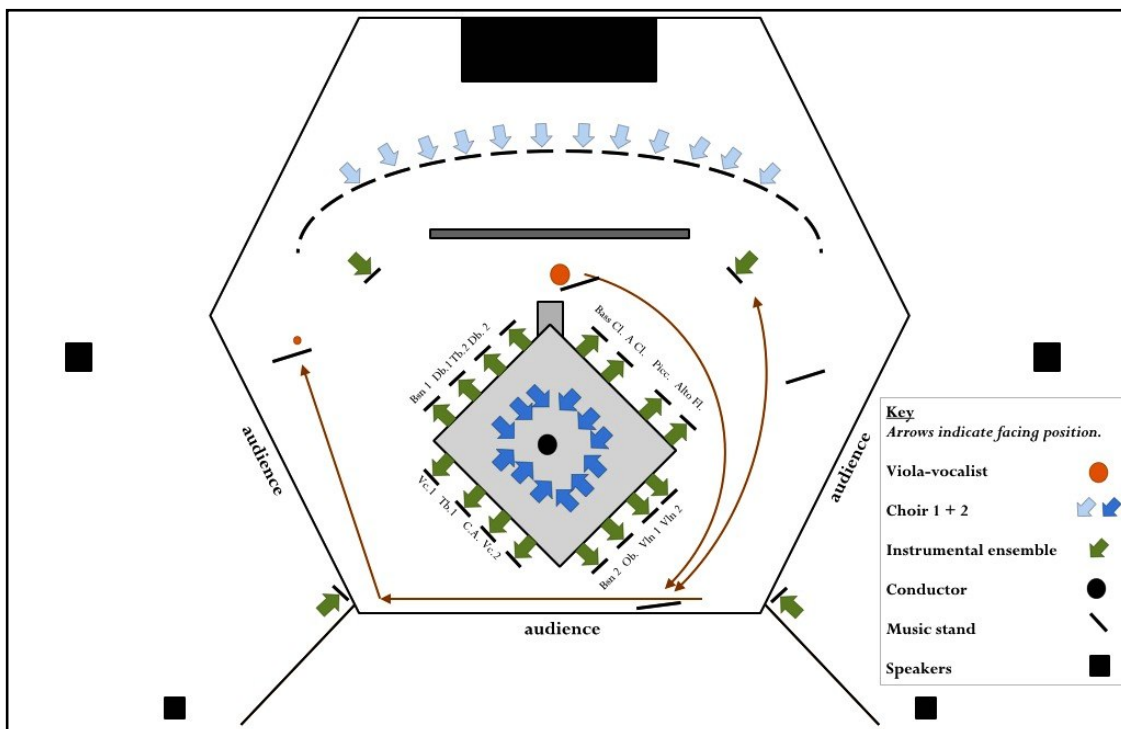


Figure 33. *Remains of Elmet, I – 'Moors'* staging plan

Choir 2 begins the piece clustered on the square block, as if they 'have a world to themselves.'¹⁵⁶ Across the back of the stage, Choir 1 forms a 'walled, horizon-woven

¹⁵⁶ Hughes, "These Grasses of Light" in *Remains of Elmet*, 4.

choir.’¹⁵⁷ Both Choirs are cued by the viola-vocalist’s voice. The role of the choirs is as a static resonance chamber of the text. Throughout the piece they vocalise ‘rock lumps for words,’¹⁵⁸ so that ‘vowels furl downwind, on air like silk.’¹⁵⁹ The choirs convey the essence of each poem by intoning phonetic fragments of one word per part. Although both choirs act as a collective unit in the first two parts, Choir 1 is more pitch-based, linear and smoother, while Choir 2 is less pitch-based, and more angular and percussive.

Additionally to the surtitles, sound projection of the viola-vocalist phases round the audience using four speakers, mirroring her path round the stage. The disjunction between her body and the disembodied voice seemed appropriate for creating a sense of distance and alienation.

In ‘Moors’ and ‘Remains of Elmet,’ the viola-vocalist travels clockwise around the square stage block. *En route*, her viola undergoes dialogues with each string quartet soloist. We intended this sequence to occur twice in the first two parts, with the second sequence being more agitated and confrontational. However, the difficulty of faster, more energetic stichomythia for viola and voice in the second part presented too many challenges at once. Instead, the viola-vocalist remained on stage right at the end of ‘Moors’ until the last line of ‘Remains of Elmet’ (see Figure 34). I was happy to accept this compromise since the second sequence can still be heard: each string quartet soloist plays in turn a more extended solo line against the viola-vocalist.

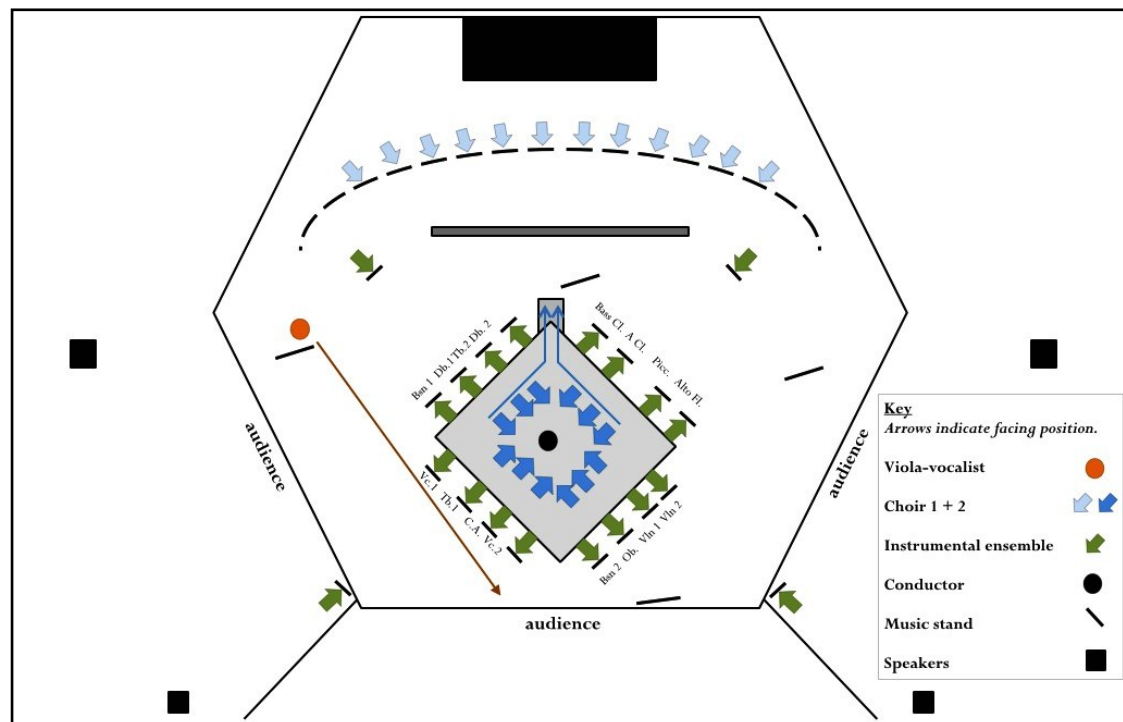


Figure 34. *Remains of Elmet, II* – ‘Remains of Elmet’ staging plan

¹⁵⁷ Hughes, “The Word that Space Breathes.”

¹⁵⁸ Hughes, “For Billy Holt” in *Remains of Elmet*, 49.

¹⁵⁹ Hughes, “Crown Point Pensioners” in *Remains of Elmet*, 48.

The image of ‘arthritic remains’ provided the stimulus for a grinding musical undercurrent in ‘Remains of Elmet’:

The arthritic remains
 Of what had been a single strength
 Tumbled apart, forgetting each other¹⁶⁰

For much of this part, the cellos and double basses play a duplet/triplet cross-rhythm. This ostinato underpins a second dialogue between the viola-vocalist and solo cello (see Figure 35). Their duo is a melodic line that presages the ‘*in limine sapientiae*’ theme (see Figure 36).

Figure 35. Score extract: *Remains of Elmet, II* – ‘Remains of Elmet,’ page 25

¹⁶⁰ Hughes, “The Sheep Went on Being Dead” in *Remains of Elmet*, 18.

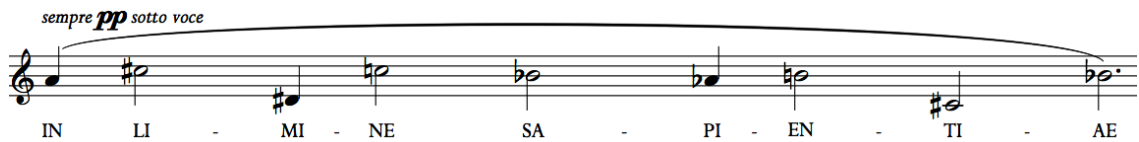


Figure 36. *in limine sapientiae* theme in ‘The Word that Space Breathes’

At the end of ‘Remains of Elmet,’ Choir 2 disperses (see Figures 37–38): four singers move to join Choir 1 while the rest move to form a barrier between the audience and the stage. This physical disintegration of their ensemble references the distancing that Hughes implies is an effect of time:

...the face
 Blue with arthritic stasis
 And heart good for nothing now
 Lies deep in the chair-back, angled
 From the window-skylines,
 Letting time moan its amnesia
 Through the telegraph wires

As the fragments
 Of the broken circle of the hills

Drift apart.¹⁶¹

Choir 2 become ‘tourists’ who ‘pick among crumbling, loose molars/And empty sockets.’¹⁶² Musically, they leave behind any previous material and may hum softly *ad libitum* until the fourth part, ‘Telegraph Wires.’ Meanwhile, ‘reeds of desolation’ are heard under a reprise of the calls of ‘moor’ from Part I, by Choir 1, whose ‘howlings’ seeming aggressive and aimed at Choir 2.¹⁶³

¹⁶¹ Hughes, “Heptonstall” in *Remains of Elmet*, 50-51.

¹⁶² Hughes, “Remains of Elmet.”

¹⁶³ Hughes, “Open to Huge Light” in *Remains of Elmet*, 5.

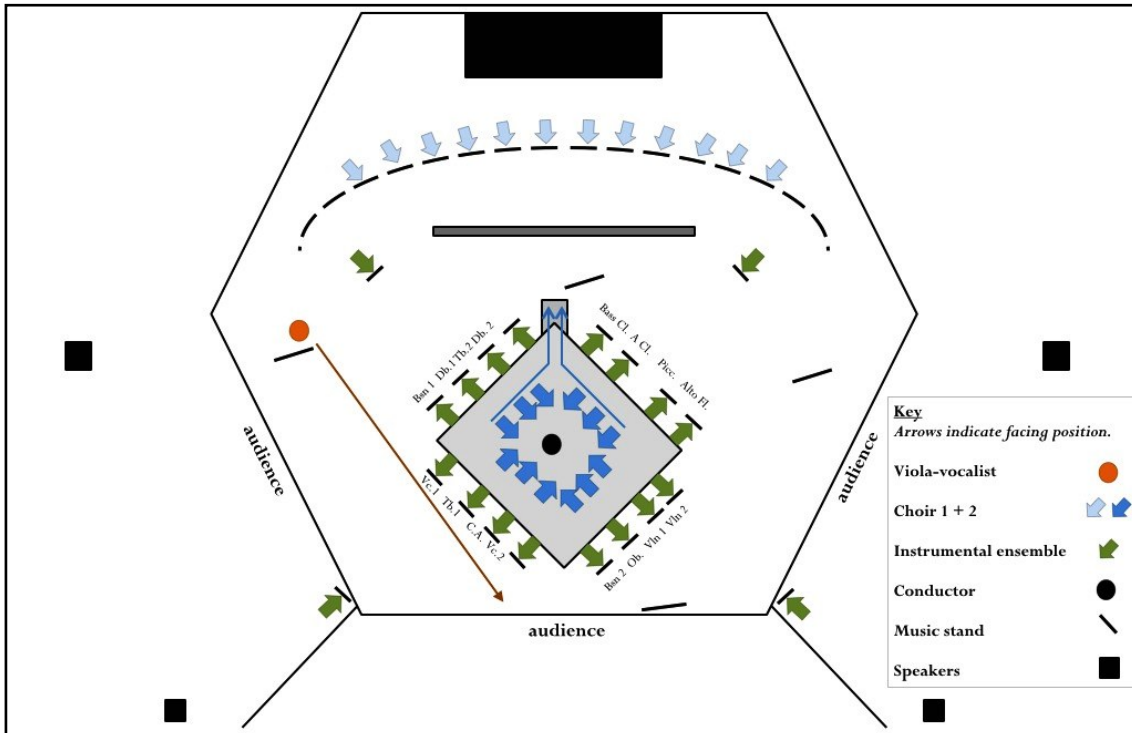


Figure 37. *Remains of Elmet, II* – ‘Remains of Elmet’ staging plan

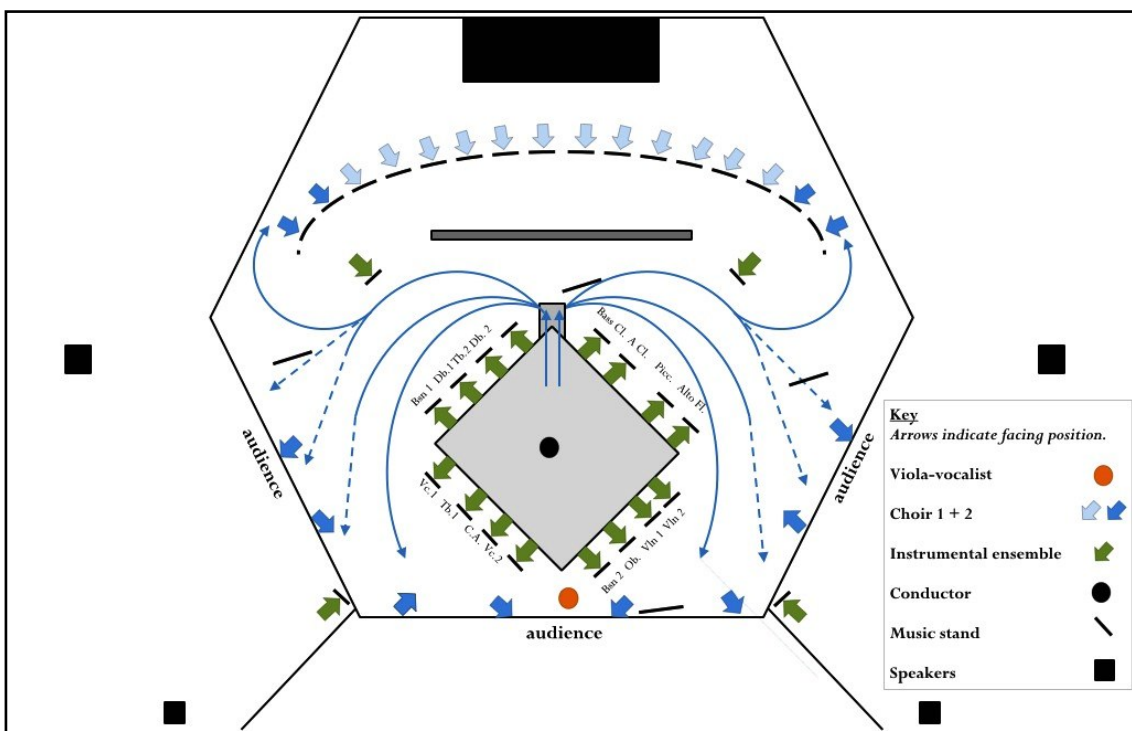


Figure 38. *Remains of Elmet, III* – ‘A Tree’ staging plan (i)

At their new locations across the front of the stage, the eight remaining singers of Choir 2 assume statuesque poses and perform a sequence of directed movements as a slowly changing, living tableau. It is as if ‘Trees, holding hands, eyes closed./Acted at

world.’¹⁶⁴ These movements were developed with the singers in workshops involving theatre warm-ups that allowed me to gauge the complexity of movements they could make. We devised a movement phrase using key words: ‘tree,’ ‘reach,’ ‘turn,’ ‘viola.’

6. The Conductor

Bernath and I made an early decision not to have a conductor for the majority of our work. For a conductor to appear in the piece at all, the role had to serve a dramatic function, if we wanted to create a piece that focused as much on individual players as on the whole ensemble. A conductor can often be a focal visual point conditioning the perceived landscape of musical performance; rhythm and regularity can be hard to ignore aurally when they are reinforced visually. Without a conductor, there could be a sense of spontaneity from witnessing 44 players exist in a performance space while a maverick soloist moves between them.

We decided to make the conductor a musical and theatrical feature of Part III, ‘A Tree.’ If in ‘Moors’ the viola-vocalist had described the ‘chess-world’ of an ensemble, and in ‘Remains of Elmet’ had attacked and removed the ‘stony masticators’ of Choir 2, it seemed appropriate that at this point in the piece the character would turn attention to a single figure, as a way of continuing this dissolution of ensemble. The poem describes a single form that has thus far been reduced but is still attempting to communicate.

A Tree

Under unending interrogation by wind
Tortured by huge scaldings of light
Tried to confess all but could not
Bleed a word

Stripped to its root letter, cruciform
Contorted
Tried to tell all

Through crooking of elbows
Twitching of finger-ends.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ Hughes, “Widdop.”

¹⁶⁵ Hughes, “A Tree.”

The conductor was concealed in the middle of Choir 2, where he was able to conduct Choir 2 discreetly for the first two parts. As “A Tree” begins and Choir 2 disperses, the conductor is revealed to the audience.

What follows is an aleatoric section in which the conductor replaces the viola-vocalist’s triggering role. The conductor performs branch-like gestures and movements towards each string quartet soloist, who has the choice of playing a fragment or not. The same triggering process takes place between the solo string quartet and their group players, who have a similar choice to play or not when their leader does. Mirroring this disintegration of the whole ensemble, Choir 1 no longer takes cues from the viola-vocalist, instead clustering in trios to improvise dialogues with each other. Meanwhile, the viola-vocalist reverses the previous cycles by now moving anticlockwise around the stage block (see Figure 39), directing her delivery of the text at the conductor, whom she describes:

Finally

Resigned

To be dumb.

Lets what happens to it happen.¹⁶⁶

The conductor and I experimented with a number of styles of movement in a workshop session and rehearsals, finally settling on a style that had a sense of slow, timed movement of leaning towards various groups and pausing, whilst simultaneously exploring distortions of the shape of the body (focusing on fingers, hands, elbows, arms). These movements are echoed by Choir 2’s movements.

In ‘Telegraph Wires,’ the conductor is replaced on the stage block by the viola-vocalist (see Figure 40). During rehearsal it emerged that there was an issue with removing the conductor from the stage completely, since Choir 1 found it necessary to have a conductor for the final part. The solution was for the conductor to walk forward (upstage) and step down from the square block so that he can remain visible to Choir 1 for the final part, while the idea of his removal is still maintained. During this part, Choir 2 turns from facing away from the stage, to face in towards the viola-vocalist.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

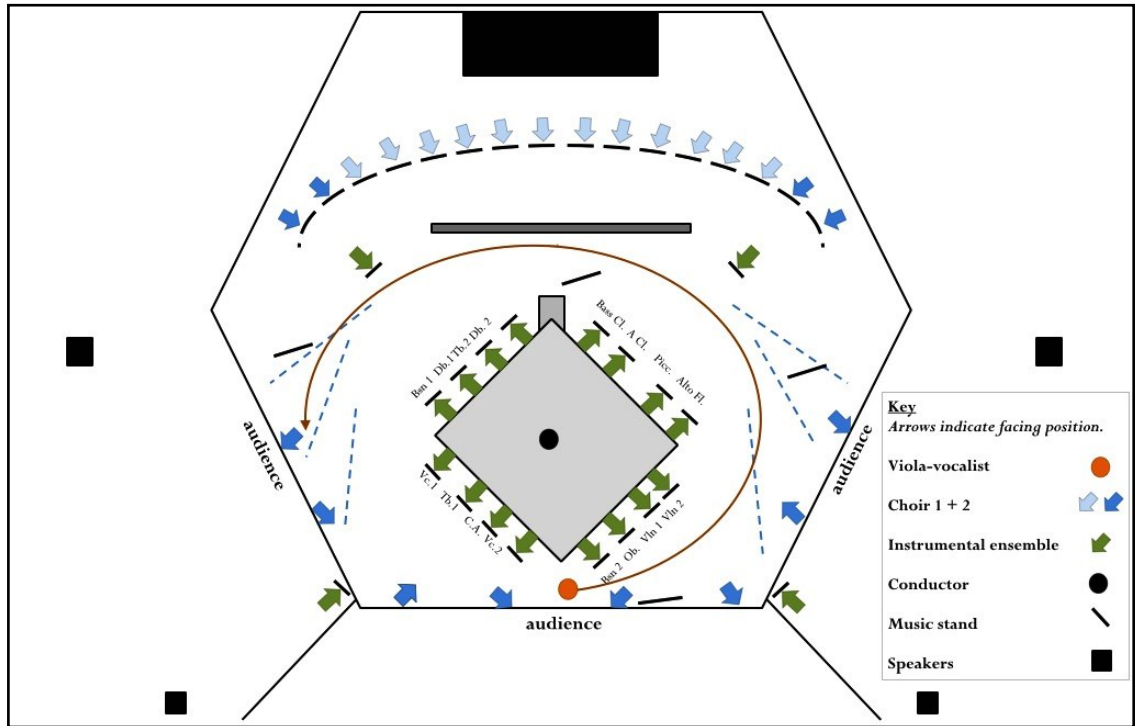


Figure 39. *Remains of Elmet, III – ‘A Tree’* staging plan (ii)

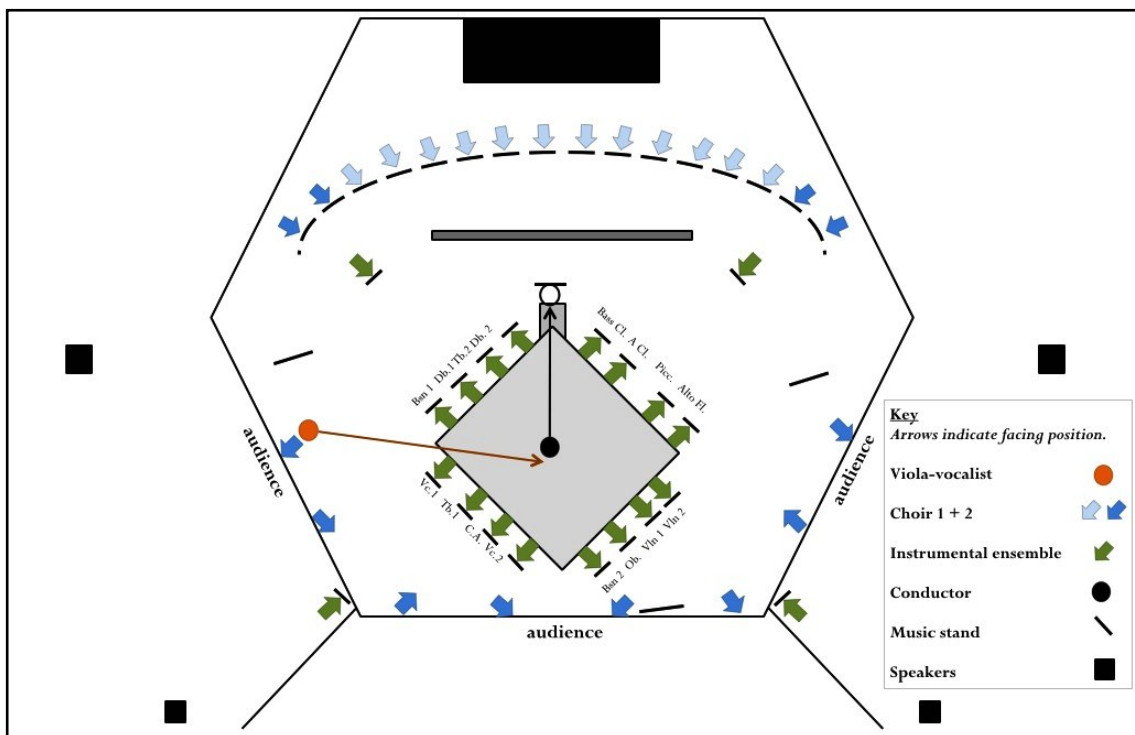


Figure 40. *Remains of Elmet, IV – ‘Telegraph Wires’* staging plan

7. Regenerating the Landscape

In the final poem we set, ‘accompanied’ signifies a renewed sense of wholeness, collective and acceptance:

The Word that Space Breathes

Through tumbled walls

Is accompanied

By lost jawbones of men

And lost fingerbones of women

In the chapel of cloud

And the walled, horizon-woven choir

Of old cares¹⁶⁷

After the cadenza, the solo string quartet introduce a chord built on a major third of A and C sharp, reawakening the viola-vocalist as the lighting fades up. The viola-vocalist then hums the ‘*in limine sapientiae*’ theme (“on the threshold of wisdom”) to the remaining Choir 2 singers, who begin to sing the theme individually.

A physical move inwards seemed appropriate here to coalesce and unify the ensemble on a central point. Choir 2 moves slowly to the stage block to cluster round the viola-vocalist, forming a collective embrace (see Figure 41).

The viola-vocalist recites this poem whilst playing a long, gradually ascending line. Gradually, all instruments and voices (save Choir 2) join in with the *tutti* melody when it reaches their range. Each instrument joins and eventually sustains one note from the melody. Halfway through the poem, a bass pedal A natural anchors a newfound context of a harmonic coherence. When the whole ensemble is sustaining, after the final line ‘The Messiah/Of opened rock’ there is a blackout. Each performer then swells to *fortissimo* and down to *piano* several times, independently, whilst also accelerating at individual rates. Each player’s final *crescendo* is marked as their loudest yet; when they are all silent the viola-vocalist remains for one final *crescendo*: ‘The valleys went out./The moorland broke loose.’¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ Hughes, “The Word that Space Breathes.”

¹⁶⁸ Hughes, “Heptonstall Old Church.”

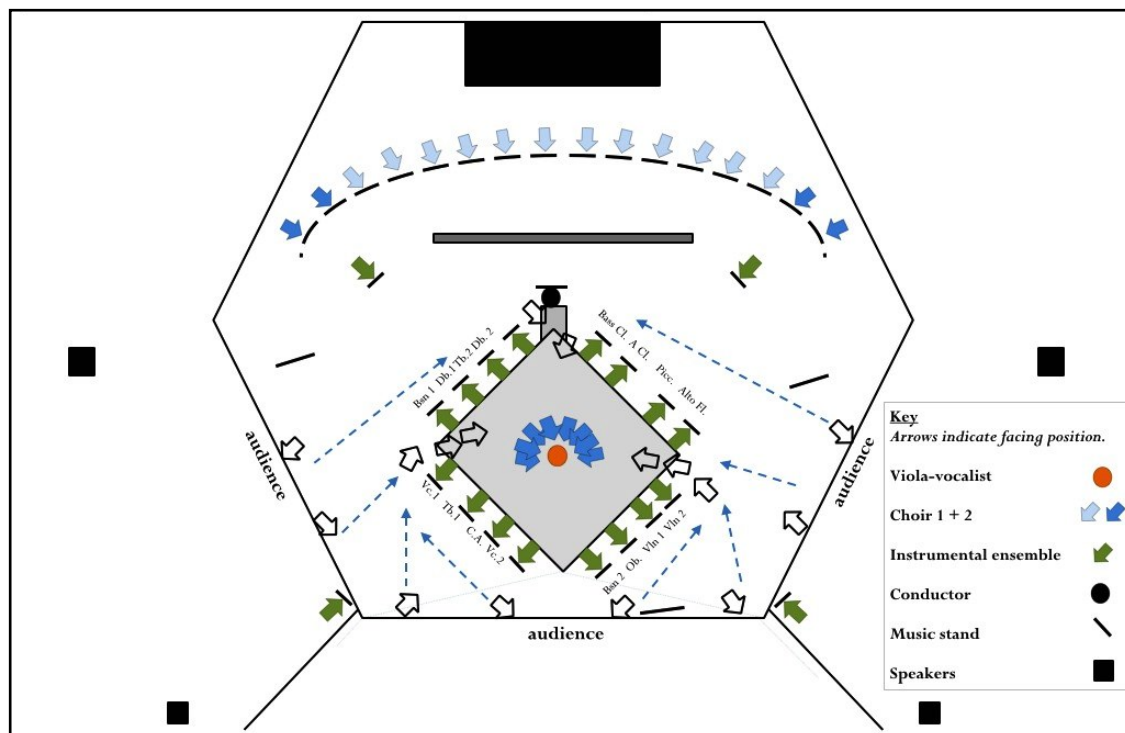


Figure 41. *Remains of Elmet, VI – ‘The Word that Space Breathes’* staging plan

That ‘The Word that Space Breathes’ is almost completely composed out with very little freedom, compared to the proliferation of semi-improvised material in “Moors”, may contribute on a conceptual level to one’s interpretation of the work. The intention was for the narrative of the piece to close on a firmer, more cohesive sense of collective, for which purpose regularity of rhythm, harmony and texture were employed. Closure from a sense of return to the beginning of the work is implied by Choir 2’s return to the ‘cradle-grave’ of the stage block. A blackout, intended to augment the audience’s focus on individual sounds, individual players, phases ‘Out of nothingness into nothingness.’¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ Hughes, “Widdop.”

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Live Performances

Dance

- A Room for All Our Tomorrows*. Choreographed by Igor and Moreno. Igor and Moreno. Northern School of Contemporary Dance, Leeds. Oct 16, 2015.
- Abba, Pastries and the Stiff Upper Lip*. Choreographed by Gracefool Collective. Gracefool Collective. Jul 29, 2014.
- Buzzing Round the Hunisucle*. Choreographed by Richard Alston. Richard Alston Dance Company. New Victoria Theatre, Woking. March 21, 2013.
- Café Repartee*. Choreographed by Carrieanne Vivianette. Carrieanne Vivianette. 'Impossible Lecture,' Beacons Festival, Skipton. Aug 9, 2014.
- Les belles de mer*. Choreographed by Zoe Parker. Yorkshire Life Aquatic. 'Impossible

Lecture,' Beacons Festival, Skipton. Aug 9, 2014.

Once more with feeling... Choreographed by Gracefool Collective. NSCD BPA1 students. Northern School of Contemporary Dance, Leeds. Mar 27, 2014.

P.L.A.Y. Choreographed by Snakebox. Snakebox. 'Impossible Lecture,' Beacons Festival, Skipton. Aug 8, 2014.

Scary Shit. Choreographed by Rhiannon Faith. Rhiannon Faith. Edinburgh Fringe. Aug 21, 2016.

Shimmer. Choreographed by Richard Alston. Richard Alston Dance Company. New Victoria Theatre, Woking. March 21, 2013.

Side Effects. Choreographed by Anton Lachky. Anton Lachky Company. Northern School of Contemporary Dance, Leeds. Jan 15, 2016.

The Devil in the Detail. Choreographed by Richard Alston. Richard Alston Dance Company. New Victoria Theatre, Woking. March 21, 2013.

The Office. Choreographed by Gracefool Collective. Gracefool Collective. VANTAGE Arts prize, Leeds. Jan 18, 2014.

The Roof. Choreographed by Frauke Requardt and David Rosenberg. Fuel Theatre. Inside Out Festival, Bournemouth. Sept 26, 2014.

This really is too much. Choreographed by Gracefool Collective. Gracefool Collective. The Civic, Barnsley. Oct 1, 2015.

Transmission. Choreographed by Simon Birch. Bees Andrews Company. University of York Department of Theatre, Film and Television. Jun 20, 2014.

WE (spelt you and i). Choreographed by Gracefool Collective. Gracefool Collective. West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds. Nov 16, 2013.

What the Body Does Not Remember. Choreographed by Wim Vandekeybus and Ultima Vez. CAST, Doncaster. March 10, 2015.

Woman with Eggs. Choreographed by Hannah Buckley. Hannah Buckley. SLAPsolo, York. Nov 12, 2014.

Performance Art

512 Hours. By Marina Abramović. Serpentine Gallery, London. Jul 12, 2014.

Alternative Tour. By Bill Aitchison. Inside Out Festival, Littlebredy. Sept 21, 2014.

Art Brothel. Collective Unconscious. 'Impossible Lecture,' Beacons Festival, Skipton. Aug 9, 2014.

*F*** me gently into the good night.* By Rachel Parry. 'Impossible Lecture,' Beacons Festival, Skipton. Aug 7, 2014.

I Wish You Were Here. By Nathan Birkinshaw. 'Impossible Lecture,' Beacons Festival,

Skipton. Aug 8, 2014.

Leaving the House. By Top Joe. 'Impossible Lecture,' Beacons Festival, Skipton. Aug 7, 2014.

One Man Cabaret. By Dan Craddock. 'Impossible Lecture,' Beacons Festival, Skipton. Aug 8, 2014.

Rhythm is a Danièle. By Dan Craddock. SLAPmoves, York. April 9, 2015.

Tamed. By Katharina Arnold. 'Impossible Lecture,' Beacons Festival, Skipton. Aug 7, 2014.

What If I Told You. By Pauline Mayers. West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds. Sept 30, 2016.

With Open Arms. By Adam Young. West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds. Nov 16, 2013.

Theatre

12am: Awake & Looking Down. By Forced Entertainment. Directed by Tim Etchells. PACT Zollverein, Essen. Feb 1, 2014 (via live webcast).

At a London Restaurant. By Anna Parker. 'Impossible Lecture,' Beacons Festival, Skipton. Aug 10, 2014.

Demons. By Common Ground Theatre. Directed by Tom Cornford. The Fleeting Arms, York. June 18, 2015.

Ear Trumpet. By Gobbledegook Theatre. Directed by Lorna Rees. Inside Out Festival, Littlebredy, Dorset. Sept 21, 2014.

Quizoola! By Forced Entertainment. Directed by Tim Etchells. Spill, London. Apr 12, 2013 (via live stream).

The Drowned Man. Punchdrunk. Directed by Felix Barrett and Maxine Doyle. Temple Studios, London. Feb 12, 2014.

WANTED. By Chris Goode & Company. Directed by Chris Goode. West Yorkshire Playhouse, Leeds. Apr 22, 2016.

Visual Art Exhibitions

Creed, Martin. 'What's the point of it?' Hayward Gallery, London. 2014.

Deller, Jeremy. 'English Magic.' Bristol Museum & Art Gallery. 2014.

Hirst, Damien. 'Damien Hirst.' Tate Modern, London. 2012.

Höller, Carsten. 'DECISION.' Hayward Gallery, London. 2015.

Nauman, Bruce. 'Artist Rooms,' York St Mary. 2013.

Palmer, Katrina. 'The Necropolitan Line.' Henry Moore Institute, Leeds. 2016.

von Rydingsvard, Ursula. 'Ursula von Rydingsvard.' Yorkshire Sculpture Park, 2014.