

**The Dynamics of Mutuality in the
Composer and Performer Relationship**

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PhD

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Music

September 2016

Abstract

This PhD composition portfolio explores through practice the collaborative relationship between composer and performer. The work demonstrates an interdependence between the desire to work with a person or group of people and exploration of an abstract or conceptual idea. Many of these conceptual ideas are from the Jungian school of psychology, or drawn from the real life experiences of composer and/or performer. The commentary reflects on the differing nature of these relationships, and the effect this has on the work. Ideas laid out in Vera John-Steiner's book *Creative Collaboration*—such as 'integrative' and 'complementary collaboration', 'supportive partnerships', 'self-in-relation', 'thought communities', 'enterprises', and 'life-span approach'—provide context.

The portfolio follows and diverges from the atelier model used by composers like George Aperghis and Meredith Monk, and the director/composer auteur model as outlined by Eric Salzman and Thomas Desi in their book *The New Music Theatre*. It demonstrates that placing collaborators at the subjective centre of the work gives them autonomy within the compositional creative process, and the role of composer becomes more facilitator, less auteur.

This contributes to knowledge by enabling the composer to look beyond the *self* and towards society. One aim is composing pieces that are immediate, meaningful and have lasting resonance with the creators, audiences and future performers. This is achieved by writing music rooted in human psychology and personal experience. Another aim is to legitimise the total integration of emotion and reason within the creative process.

Ultimately, the portfolio presents research into the composer's role as psychologist, the pieces as therapy, and the impact this has on the individual, the collaborators and society.

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Contents of Portfolio

There are twelve compositions in this portfolio. Pieces 1-9 are presented separately in score form, each one with an accompanying DVD in the inside back cover. Performances of pieces 10-12 are on the separate DVD and their Production Scores can be found in the Appendix to this commentary.

Compositions

1. <i>Exercise in Futility</i>	20 minutes	17.5.2008
2. <i>I Want To Be Kind</i>	20 minutes	20.6.2009
3. <i>Jell-O On Springs</i>	10 minutes	29.11.2010
4. <i>Jell-O On Springs</i> Film	17.29 minutes	Sept. 2011
5. <i>Swimming Between Shores</i>	One hour	29.4.2015
6. <i>Healing</i>	4 minutes	6.3.2016
7. <i>graceful/full of grace</i>	6 minutes	1.5.2015
8. <i>Other</i>	13 minutes	25.7.2015
9. <i>Froth and Bubble</i>	6-9 minutes	6.3.2016
10. <i>I Long For Snow</i>	10.52 minutes	13.11.2015
11. <i>Knitted, Crocheted, Looped</i>	10.05 minutes	21.2.2015
12. <i>What Does This Moment Require?</i>	15 minutes	11.11.2016

Preface

I cannot do without the other; I cannot become myself without the other; I must find myself in the other, finding the other in me.¹

This PhD composition portfolio is practice-led, but the work diverges from the lone-scholar model. All the pieces have come into existence through collaborative and cooperative effort; each one having had a unique journey and outcome, each creative process differing in response to the personnel. At the centre of the portfolio is human relationship. The compositional process—despite focussing on relationship—does not subordinate the *self* but focusses on subjective co-creation of understanding, rather than objective individualistic creation of knowledge. It also, simultaneously, enables collaborators to contemplate *otherness*. This otherness is two-fold; being both the individual experiencing themselves as *other* and the individual *in relation* to others. Working with collaborators able to balance emotion with reason has enabled an exploration of these ideas. Exploring the other enables, ouroboros-like, a simultaneous way into the self and the community.

Vera John-Steiner's detailing of creative partnerships, articulated in her book *Creative Collaboration*, has helped to contextualise my collaborative relationships and further enables me to reflect on the mutual appropriation demonstrated in this portfolio through the 'interesting *dynamics of mutuality*'² between the creative individuals involved.

Our life-patterns are programmed from formative years and their patterns. My childhood, where individual musicality was celebrated but was not rooted in a shared experience of music-making, led to my musical life becoming other. For those whose formative years were not an experience of joint family endeavour, the collaborative process provides a surrogate family or community. It provides an environment where new adventures in co-creation enable growth in

¹ J. V. Wertsch, *Mind as action* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998): 116, quoted in Vera John-Steiner, *Creative Collaboration* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 5.

² John-Steiner, *Creative Collaboration*, 3.

knowledge but also a sense of affirmation and validation gained from the development of a shared new language or experience. John-Steiner states ‘There is an interesting analogy between childhood experiences and the experience of the adult in the throes of creation’³ and uses Howard Gardner’s description of the communication that occurs: ‘The kind of communication that takes place is unique and uniquely important, bearing closer resemblance to the introduction of a new language early in life, than to the routine conversations between individuals who already share the same language.’⁴

In the foreword to *Creative Collaboration*, David Henry Feldman reflects on the theories of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky. He acknowledges that John-Steiner’s study of collaborative partnerships rests on Vygotsky’s theory: a theory which has at its heart a ‘fundamental commitment to relationship as the central ingredient in human development’⁵. This is in contrast to that of Piaget, whose guiding principle is the idea that each person is ‘*individually* responsible for creating more powerful structures for perceiving and interpreting the world, and arrives at the pinnacle of mind’s power under *one’s own command*.’⁶

Central to Vygotsky’s theory is speech and language acquisition—children being brought into a thought community by others whose role it is to impart the knowledge of that community to the next generation. This gives them access to the cultural and intellectual riches of their society, enabling them to fulfill their individual potential. Whereas Piaget’s theory leans towards rejection of the community and is described in words such as power, control and command, Vygotsky’s theory is based on a synthesis between individual and community work resulting in ‘contributions to individual and social well-being’.⁷

In the commentary to his PhD composition portfolio Damien Harron writes: ‘There is something undeniably anachronistic about the genre of music theatre. It seems to represent a refusal to bow to the modern Western penchant

³ John-Steiner, *Creative Collaboration*, 123.

⁴ Howard Gardner, *Creating minds* (New York: Basic Books, 1993): 74, quoted in John-Steiner, *Creative Collaboration*, 123.

⁵ David Henry Feldman, ‘Foreword,’ John-Steiner, *Creative Collaboration*, xi.

⁶ *Ibid.*, ix.

⁷ *Ibid.*, xi.

for specialism in a single discipline.⁸ It is the multi-disciplinary nature of music theatre that makes it such an effective way to explore psychology and its reliance on many modes of expression make this much more easily achievable when people with different training, both musical and non-musical, collaborate to create it. It is a medium where both integrative and complementary collaborative experiences can exist and it is also a medium where the ‘self-in-relation’⁹ can be explored through relations with others.

Contrary to the Postmodern model—where the audience interpretation is all and the author is dead—or the auteur composer model—where the performer is the objectified vehicle for the composer’s voice, and we, the audience, are searching for that voice through the vessel of the composer—this portfolio explores the subjective placement of the performer at the centre of the process and performance. It enables them to feel heard and autonomous during the creative process and alive and present during the performance itself.

Luciano Berio’s vocal work has contributed to my love of contemporary music theatre. He was an auteur composer who formed close relationships which produced great work. The most notable was with his first wife, the singer Cathy Berberian, who much of his ‘early vocal and theatrical performance works were written *for* [my italics] and highly influenced by’.¹⁰ The large output for Berberian utilises her vocal capabilities to great effect, particularly ‘the highly emotive sounds that were transformed electronically by Berio to form his *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)* ... and *Visage*’.¹¹ In these instances the performer provided musical material that Berio went on to manipulate and organise.

Georges Aperghis’ work appears more collaborative; *Le Corps à Corps* was written closely *with*, and *for*, percussionist Jean-Pierre Drouet, and much of Aperghis’ output places the performer’s instrument and *personality* at the centre of the creative process. Some of this portfolio reflects a similar process to Aperghis’, except that it places a greater emphasis on the personality than the

⁸ Damien Harron, ‘Folio of Compositions’, (PhD commentary, University of York, 2007), 1.

⁹ J. L. Surrey, ‘The “Self-in-Relation”: A theory of women’s development.’ in Jordan et al., *Women’s growth in connection* (New York: Guilford Press, 1991): 51-66, quoted in John-Steiner, *Creative Collaboration*, 105-6.

¹⁰ Eric Salzman and Thomas Desi, *The New Music Theatre*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 175.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

instrument, and crafting narratives from real life experiences of the collaborators, rather than imagined ones. Other pieces are more in line with Berio's method, but in these instances space is always created within the creative process for direct performer input.

Meredith Monk's approach is very performer focussed, and gaining her permission to perform her work requires striking up a personal relationship with her, as the vocal ensemble *juice* will testify. Kerry Andrew wrote, after meeting the composer, that 'The difficulty for Monk has been in gaining her trust with pieces that are taught aurally and evolve over years of performances; juice were lucky enough to persuade her, through repeated recordings, that we would treat the works with sensitivity.'¹² Some of the pieces in this portfolio are not ready to be shared with new performers; *I Long For Snow*—written for *juice*—being a prime example. Therefore, the process which takes a piece developed intimately with a friend and collaborator from private to public score is explored in this commentary too. Some of my scores are presented thus for future performances to be realised by new personnel. Those like *I Long For Snow* remain a hybrid document in the Appendix; an example of what performers were provided with to work from.

My personality-focussed approach directly inspired the research aim of creating pieces which authenticate themselves as they unfold within both the process of creation and the moment of performance. In creating work in a way that balances emotional and intellectual responses to people, ideas and material the process becomes very akin to that of Method acting. With ownership over the material created, the performers do not relate to the score or material solely as an object to conquer or own, dominate or master. Instead they fully *inhabit* every moment of the performance. They are able to do this because the preceding creative process has enabled them to decide on how exposed and vulnerable they will be in the moment of performance. This autonomy enables emotional commitment from the performer; something essential for a live event that I intend to resonate with that performer, first and foremost.

This method has at its core the research aim of contextualising the composer's role in a specific musical community and in a larger non-musical one.

¹² Kerry Andrew, 'word-worlds; PhD in Composition', (PhD commentary, University of York, 2005), 9.

Within a community the composer can create pieces that use extra-musical material from all collaborators, thus presenting a commentary on life that is rooted in first-hand experiences as undiluted as possible.

It is my hope that, beyond the therapeutic effect some of these pieces have had on the collaborators during the compositional process, audience members can explore non-musical ideas with a potentially therapeutic effect also. Many of the pieces are rooted in psychological exploration and this is discussed in the following pages. If this work can join composition and psychology, maybe it can produce music as therapy.

Acknowledgements

This PhD would not exist if Professor Roger Marsh had not persuaded me back to my first love: music theatre. The pieces have enabled me to research my passion for psychology, people and life and Roger's support throughout has kept me on track. Thank you Roger.

All my collaborators have been the life in the pieces; their existence *is* the music. My thanks to them all: Ian MacDonald, Betsy Allen, Rainy Dias, Rachel Dyson, William Galton, Daphne Harvey, Penny Levick, Damien Harron, John Potter, Emily Kalies, Kerry Andrew, Sarah Dacey, Anna Snow, Margaret Hillier, Charlotte Bishop, John Cummins, Nilufar Habibian, Dan Hodd, Richard Oakman, Katie Wood, Merit Stephanos, Zoë Scheuregger and Kate Ledger.

Many things would simply not have happened without the expertise of the following people: Zillah Bowes, Sarah Dickenson, Ben Eyes, Jon Hughes, Oliver Larkin, Christopher Leedham, Lynette Quek, John Rawling, Martin Scheuregger and James Whittle.

Special thanks goes to Anna Snow and Kate Ledger for invaluable score proofing towards the deadline and my family for their support. Alfred and Ursula deserve particular mention for putting everything into perspective the way small children do.

Final thanks go to my husband, Chris, whose unfailing support and belief in me has enabled the long-term project that this PhD has become to be completed.

Author's Declaration

I declare that this PhD composition portfolio and accompanying commentary 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. All sources are acknowledged as References.

Chapter 1

Exercise in Futility

Exercise in Futility's reliance on the fusion of external non-musical elements seems like an act of allegiance with Vygotsky's theories. By placing trust in the power of social interaction, communication and psychological exploration over the individual desire for originality and ownership, the piece has at its core a collaborative ethos; a 'dynamic interdependence of social and individual processes.'¹

The piece marks a definite move towards writing music theatre that uses a psychological text or idea as a starting point. I had encountered the key psychological texts used in the piece in 2007 after embarking on counselling after my father's death that April. The books provided interesting concepts to explore; in particular the games articulated and discussed in *The Games People Play* by Eric Berne and the idea of training the will as discussed by Roberto Assagioli in *The Act of Will*. The piece also demonstrates the first supportive partnership, a term used by John-Steiner to describe a collaborative relationship which stretches beyond the creative and intellectual to meet 'each other's *emotional* needs.'²

In the *The Games People Play* I was struck by how the layout of the psychological life games described looked like an absurd set of instructions. We need instructions to play most games and the role of each player in these specific games is clearly defined. Explaining human behaviour in terms of a game is both liberating and crushing; thinking of alcoholism as a psychological game, rather than a physical addiction, is a struggle and this struggle was explored and worked out through the creation and subsequent performance of *Exercise in Futility*.

The structure of the piece is closely aligned to the chapters in *Games People Play* where each one describes a set of actions and then discusses them. Each Act in *Exercise in Futility* explores every day actions that, through their repetition, become diluted and stylised. This simultaneously represents their beauty and necessity but also their mundanity and restrictive nature.

¹ John-Steiner, *Creative Collaboration*, 5.

² *Ibid.*, 74.

The stepping is an exercise Roberto Assagioli advocates to strengthen the will. It must be performed each day for a few minutes and works because it is a futile exercise: unlike daily ablutions and chores it does not serve any purpose. Using stepping in the piece helped us explore the question of whether training the will enables us to break patterns of behaviour in our lives; those games we repeat that are, sadly too often, destructive.

The decision to create a piece using this material as a starting point and perform in it myself, was psychologically important. It was an acknowledgement of my desire to understand the concepts from the inside, rather than imposing them compositionally onto something and someone else. Through very physically embodying and exploring the concepts I was able to commit to communicating from a place rooted in feeling. This was an essential process at the time; I was assimilating the counselling through play and performance, utilising my musical training to self-care.

Despite this decision I had no desire to create a solo piece. Ian MacDonald is a friend I had met a few years previously and it was clear from the outset we had a mutual love and understanding of musical theatre, a similarly crude and slap-stick sense of humour and experience of the psychological issues I was exploring. With Ian I felt emotionally and intellectually safe enough to collaborate both privately in rehearsal and publicly in performance.

At the time of our collaboration I had little experience of Ian as a performer other than hearing him sing a short aria beautifully. I was able to intuitively understand we could successfully create a piece together because of the nature of our friendship; I knew he was a physically free and expressive person, with a healthy sense of the absurd. Ian's sense of humour and aptitude for physical theatre, alongside his musical abilities, meant we could realise my vision of musically and theatrically representing the games I had learnt that we all play.

As well as using psychological texts or ideas as a starting point, *Exercise in Futility* utilises other people's work compositionally to create a sonic collage. On a compositional level I did not attempt to translate the ideas I had encountered into pure music. The five live vocal lines I wrote were accompaniments to the movements demonstrated in each Act. The voices provide an almost

instrumental continuation of the backing track; working in a background, supporting role, like film music.

The texts were woven into the backing track as they were and their linguistic characteristics helped provide a speech-based rhythmic language to the piece. The best example of this is the analysis at the end of the Alcoholic game example within the chapter *Life Games*. It has a descriptive quality that is dry and clinical. The dialogue in it explains the psychology, but the effect is like a darkly comic script.

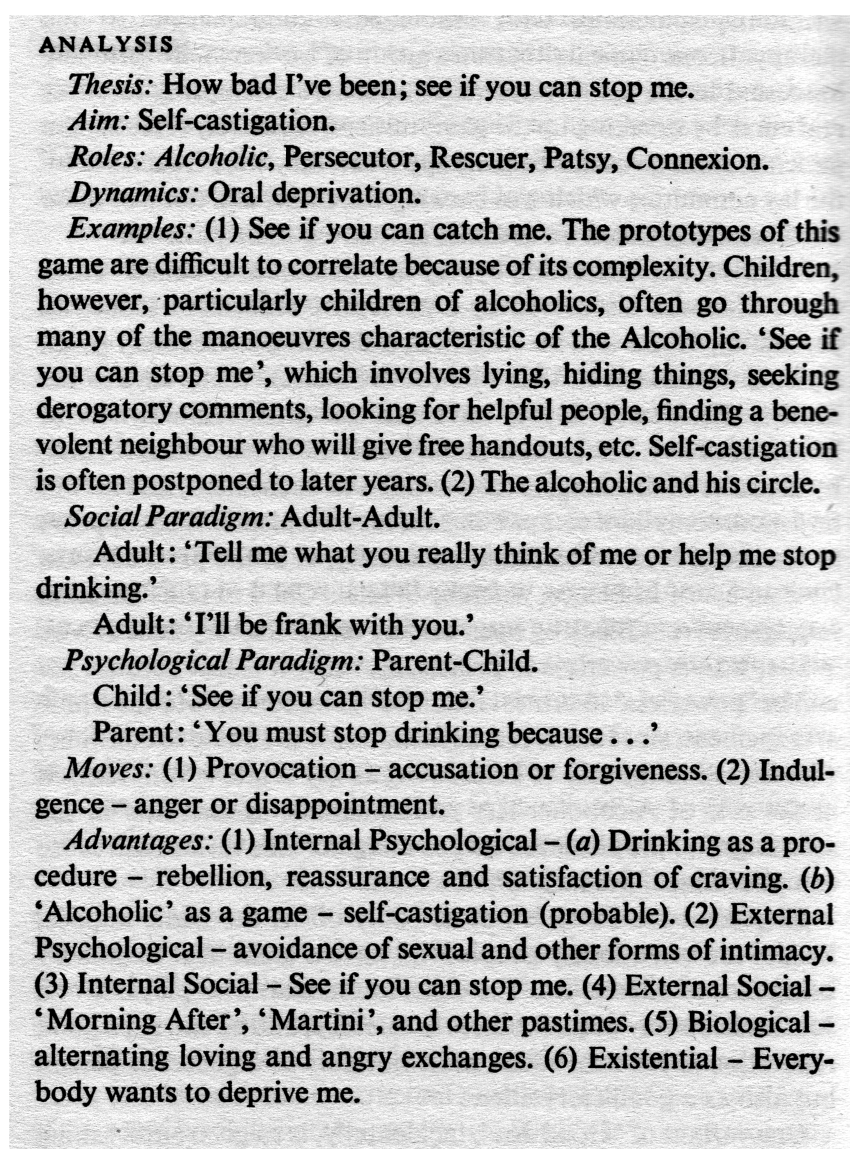


Figure 1. 'Alcoholic Analysis' from *Games People Play*.³

³ Eric Berne, *Games People Play* (London: Penguin, 1964), 70.

Alongside the texts I had discovered, Ian brought his own poems and word-play to the process. He was profoundly affected by the work of Sarah Kane and mangled snippets of her text were used as inspiration. Our ability to play together with these texts—so full of dark and upsetting ideas—is poignantly articulated by Kane in her play *4.48 Psychosis* with the line: ‘You allow this state of desperate absurdity.’⁴ We were able to improvise to generate material; one of the few examples of this process in the portfolio where, interestingly, improvisation plays a smaller role than probably expected, given the nature of the work.

Ian also wrote many fragments at the time—inspired by his life and our collaboration. The most playfully disturbing of these is a piece called *Script Without Ends*. Its use adds a dark undertone of domestic violence to the final scene of *Exercise in Futility*:

Morag shouts: Morag Morag Morag!

Ian replies: Less rag less rag less rag!

Morag goes over to Ian and scrutinises him intimidatingly and with menace.

She pokes him with a finger as if wondering what he is made of.

Morag: Yuk.

Ian punches her very dramatically and she falls to the fall.

Morag [standing up]: So you have issues with women?

Ian: No just rags. I hate rags. Ratatata ta.

Morag: All rags?

Ian: No just some rags. Maple Leaf Rag is okay ... more or less.

Morag: Look stop being so bloody slap stick, slapper ...

Reading the material we sourced was shocking, so we often laughed, or altered our voices, whilst recording ourselves. Psychologically we were using humour to help digest the concepts at a rate that wasn’t traumatic. Heightened speech, whispering, and varied pace helped us digest the content, whilst sonically manipulating texts such that the final backing track had the gruesomely comic

⁴ Sarah Kane, *4.48 Psychosis*, in *Complete Plays* (London: Methuen Drama, 2001), 220.

feel we were aiming for. A lot of the humour also sprang from the fun we had recording everyday sounds. Brushing teeth, washing, tube journeys and time in the pub are all there.

In the *Fighting Act* Ian and I made a series of sounds which mimicked the exaggerated and widely recognised sounds used in Kung Fu movies. This resulted in a slap-stick, but ultimately bleak, backing track for this movement, as slapping sounds were so closely placed against laughter.

Finally, sound effects from Apple Mac's application *Garage Band* were added. These sounds have become ubiquitous (especially the honking alarm sound found in many film soundtracks) and help the audience see the parody in the piece more keenly; the electronic sounds helping create distance from the impact of the real voices and the comically poignant rituals of the performers on stage.

Exercise in Futility marks the beginning of the collaborative working process explored in this PhD and its effect on the creative individual. My continued personal and professional relationship with Ian MacDonald confirms that a 'Sustained, mutually beneficial collaboration provides a mirror to an individual, broadening his or her self-knowledge, which is crucial to creativity.'⁵ It was the success of this piece—as both a work of art and a therapeutic process—that paved the way for the rest of the portfolio.

⁵ John-Steiner, *Creative Collaboration*, 48.

Chapter 2

I Want To Be Kind

I Want To Be Kind was developed over almost a year and is the best example of an atelier-style approach. The cast and I met most weeks and workshopped material as it was written. The process was extremely satisfying both in terms of the relationships formed, the creative process and final outcome. It is easy to see, when experienced, why so many composers of contemporary music theatre favour a workshop model to generate material. The piece is also the best example of one where I had a specific text I was inspired by—Piero Ferrucci's *The Power of Kindness*—and a specific performer I wished to write for, the pianist William Galton.

Coming towards the end of my time in London, I was examining life—and trying to distill it—through connections with the people in my world. *I Want To Be Kind* involves people drawn from the various circles I moved in and is an example of my impulse to create being facilitated and stimulated by these people. More important than representing areas of my London life, the collaborators were people with whom I felt comfortable sharing my thoughts around psychotherapy and drawing inspiration from. *The Power of Kindness* had been a helpful book when at an angry stage in the grieving process, it being particularly calming, freeing and rational. I knew this group of people would have the necessary dynamics and courage to explore the ideas this book presented bravely.

Accommodating my differing performers was an interesting job as I knew two of my musicians—Will and Daphne Harvey—were not comfortable expressing themselves too physically on stage. I already imagined creating a theatrical scenario which initially presented like a concert. I was curious about people's expectations when going to *listen to music* and, although not written, the piece was due to be performed in the *Ad Hoc* concert we had scheduled for summer 2009. The idea of a piece starting as if in the concert hall and then becoming something different was one which provided the performers with roles they were happy with. Once decided, these roles changed very little within the whole process.

This approach linked into my continued desire to enable my collaborators/performers to be supported when working with me. I do not wish to create situations where anxiety can occur, unless we are specifically exploring anxiety. This is not the same, however, as never stretching my performers. Knowing what was needed of them—with the acknowledged expectation of a little flexibility—was a factor which helped the group gel and focus.

Musically, the whole piece was underpinned and grew through the piano writing. I was keen to write for Will and he was keen to play something written for him, most of his repertoire being less contemporary. Originally a first study pianist, I grew up with Shostakovich's *Preludes and Fugues* and Bartók's *Mikrokosmos* and these influences helped inform the sound world. I took direct inspiration from Shostakovich's 9th Fugue in E major, and mimicked the ascending phrase in my own opening piano material. Then I incorporated the contrary motion between the two lines once the left hand entered.

Fuge 9 Fugue

Allegro (♩ = 126)

Figure 2. Excerpt from Fugue No. 9, bars 1-7.¹

¹ D. Shostakovich, Fugue No. 9 in 24 *Preludes and Fugues: Volume 1* (Hamburg: Sikorski, 1957), 53.

A lot of the more chordal piano writing was inspired by Bartók's *Microcosmos*, particularly the final 'Six Dances in Bulgarian Rhythm'. These pieces often feature interplay between chords in one hand and a melody line in the other, which alternate, often with phrasing which extends over a bar line. This was a technique I used extensively.



Figure 3. Excerpt from *Microcosmos* No. 151, bars 26-36.²

The starting pitch material for the piano writing was my response to a text I wrote:

I want peace,
 I want focus,
 I want calm.
 I want everything I have to be beautiful.
 I want everything I have to be useful.
 I want to be myself,
 I want to be forgiving,
 I want to be kind.

² B. Bartók, No. 151 in *Microcosmos* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1987), 54.

It is never sung as written below, but was an effective way for me to generate material.

The image shows a musical score for a song titled 'I Want Peace'. It consists of three staves of music, each with lyrics underneath. The first staff starts with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. The second staff starts with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The third staff starts with a treble clef and a 5/4 time signature, followed by a 3/4 time signature. The lyrics are: 'I want peace, I want fo- cus, I want calm. I want ev' - ry-thing I have to be beau - ti - ful. I want ev' - ry thing I have to be use - ful. I want to be my - self, I want to be for - giv - ing, I want to be kind.'

Figure 4. *I Want Peace* material.

The other organising factor was a basic psychological journey: a person thinks they want something; they are not happy; they examine these desires and find them lacking; they become angry; they examine the anger and see its causes; they realise that they want something different. This journey expanded out into more definite sections: 'In the beginning', 'Confusion', 'Recognition', 'Anger', 'Realisation' and 'Resolution' and these governed the structuring of the final piece.

The group dynamic was mutually accepting on the whole and members felt able to help share the work between them. After a session where we'd workshopped the idea of 'wanting' and we'd all written a list of wants and chosen a particular one for each performer, Betsy Allen facilitated a physical process where we generated movements to accompany these 'wants'.³ It was gentle, organic, based on the breath, and the results were beautiful. These movements became pivotal helping to articulate sections of the piece and defining the character relationships the performers were developing.

³ For the original list of 'wants' each performer created please see Appendix pages 79-80.

An interesting addition was that of the tenor material in Scene 8. Ian had expressed a desire to have a larger role and I wasn't sure how to accommodate his wish. I found it difficult that he needed this and felt the piece could be compromised and the group's dynamic disrupted. However, it transpired that an additional vocal line provided the impetus for a decisive change in energy, both physically and spatially. Having one of the on stage actors suddenly burst into song—and in a bold, operatic manner, like the soprano—threw the perception of how the characters related to one another into the air. In joining Daphne vocally Ian's role became more judgmental and patriarchal; the four women left on stage simultaneously beginning to dance in formation, taking on the undertone of automation and being controlled, subordinate. The obvious gender divide at this point (which could easily be avoided with a different cast in future) heightens the discomfort and the audience is forced to consider the contrast between the vocalists and pianist—those with controlling 'voices'—and the dancers, dancing silently to another's tune.

Ultimately I was glad I placed Ian's need above my personal sense of auteur autonomy. In being flexible and willing to place the personnel above the material, it transpired that both benefitted; in being kind to Ian I reaped the rewards of kindness myself.

In contrast to the difficulty of Ian's request was Penny's dance. I wrote the piano material for Scene 9 as a musical drawing together of themes and a theatrical moment of pause, contemplation and rest. I imagined the performers standing quietly, sitting, listening, crying even. After a few rehearsals Penny came to me saying she'd choreographed a dance for this section using everyone's movements. It was perfect. We included it immediately and it was a tremendous moment of symbiosis: our cohesion as a group had enabled one of its members to feel secure enough to contribute a fully formed idea. An idea that was summative and, as a result, one of my favourite moments in the piece.

A final point to discuss is the role of the venue in shaping the performance. As the *Ad Hoc* concert was called *Piano Theatre*, we had booked The Warehouse, knowing it had an excellent piano. Sadly, they were quite averse to us preparing it so we changed to a church in Pimlico. Rather than the minimal, uncluttered space we were expecting, with its contemporary music associations,

the church lent *I Want To Be Kind* a more ornate and symbolic backdrop. I decided to place Daphne in the pulpit and delay her entrance until just before she sang. This gave her role more of an oratory feel than I had initially intended. This wasn't negative, it supported her operatic sound, giving the piece an archaic gravitas, one with quasi-religious oratory associations.

The other significant change was to have Betsy on stage from the beginning. This made my initial idea of presenting the piece in terms of a concert tricky. Betsy was eight months pregnant when we performed and I did not want to miss the opportunity to have her sit there—in all her physical glory—making the audience wonder. It was a decision based on acknowledging the moment and the opportunities it presented that could never again be replicated.

The final result, captured on Zillah Bowes' beautiful film, confirms that placing Betsy centre stage was the right decision. It acknowledged the opportunity for a heightened theatrical and human moment; a moment where everyone was forced to imagine the person on stage, who was not born yet but very much with us. And it was an acknowledgment that, despite our attempts to creatively distill our experiences into fixed moments, life goes on.

Chapter 3

Jell-O On Springs

Jell-O On Springs was conceived through the desire to collaborate with Dr Emily Kalies in a way that would enable us both to perform the piece we wrote together. We were keen to explore a collaboration between two composer/performers and how it would work; both on a professional level, and as friends.

Starting points came from a personal approach too: we contemplated our differing hair colour, the instruments we played, our theatrical experience and our taste in entertainment. We also had a desire to explore female archetypes and the representation of women in films and everyday life. The characters became extended, exaggerated versions of elements of ourselves (Emily's character plays the violin and works in an office, mine is a photographer) and enabled us to scrutinise our lives at this point in a way that didn't produce an autobiographical work.

Outside of ourselves we mainly drew inspiration from the films of Marilyn Monroe—and the often explored relationship between 'blondes' and 'brunettes' in them—and films like *Fight Club*, where obsessive behaviour, mental illness and social isolation are explored. Another film that played a key role in shaping the piece was *The Notorious Bettie Page*, where the main protagonist is innocently unaware of the voyeuristic way in which she is manipulated and photographed. Exploration of the female form, as a whole and as fetishised body parts, became a focus of the piece. The other key inspiration was the repetitive nature of daily life and routine. Both characters have a routine and to some extent these routines define them.

Personal inspiration was in the form of Jungian psychoanalysis around creativity in women and their separation from parents, particularly the father, in a bid to gain individuation and a mature identity. Much of the piece—and the photographer character—was enriched by reading *The Pregnant Virgin* by Marion Woodman which explores in depth issues of addiction, obsession and finding the mature self. A lot of the photographer's masculine characterisation was created to explain, in a theatrical way, our character's inability to relate to herself as a woman. Her discomfort with her femininity and creativity manifested as her

obsession with and fetishistic deconstruction of Emily's character.

We were keen to give the piece theatrical thrust without writing a specific plot and we knew we did not want traditional dialogue. Particular attention was paid to the scripts of the Monroe films as they are so snappy and well written. In *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* the line "I've been thinking of doing something"¹ had particular resonance and enabled us to give the photographer character some direction. It is her character who goes on a journey; one of obsession, which eventually leads to her destructive behaviour.

We were keen to have the photographer character being obviously obsessed with a film, and therefore a heightened representation of life/popular culture. This became scene twenty-two in *Fight Club* where Ed Norton's character beats himself up in his boss' office to blackmail him. Our character used this scene to enable her own self-harming and therefore to vent her own frustrations regarding her obsession with Emily's character. A quote from that film was also used as inspiration: "Sticking feathers up your butt doesn't make you a chicken."²

We decided Emily's character was a violinist practising for an audition. The music she plays builds up into a piece but incorporates the frustrations of practising into the music. The music surrounding my character was all electronic and based around the *Fight Club* soundtrack. Whilst this worked for the theatrical performance in the National Centre for Early Music, it wasn't suitable for the film version. It was, however, a useful initial exploration of the world which the photographer inhabits.

Texts were drawn from my imaginings of the photographer's inner world, and photographic terminology. The photographic vocabulary is particularly pertinent as a lot of it is ambiguous when taken out of context, especially when juxtaposed with the female form.³

Whilst our performance in the NCEM was successful, we knew the piece had further to go; hence the decision to transform it into a stand-alone film. This medium liberated us to engage fully with the visual representation of women and do this by focussing fully on the voyeuristic nature of the material. A mix of film

¹ *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, directed by Howard Hawks (20th Century Fox, 1953), film.

² *Fight Club*, directed by David Fincher (20th Century Fox, 1999), film.

³ For the character work-up text I wrote see Appendix page 81.

and photographic stills, particularly close-ups, were used to objectify Emily's character much more; something that wasn't quite as foregrounded in the theatrical version, despite the intimacy of the set and audience proximity.

Most effective was the ability to edit together material from the two characters' separate worlds. Snapping quickly from one to the other kept the physical and emotional distance between the characters, but forced to audience to consider their effect on each other through the stark, swift, juxtapositioning.⁴

For the final film many more sound effects were used and manipulated, often the sounds associated with the daily repetitions, and the violin material itself. Our separate worlds on screen were further delineated by creating the soundtracks for them separately. I composed new electronic material to accompany the scenes where my character appears alone. Using *Garage Band*, I edited together found sounds associated with the on screen action and added beats and distorted versions of Emily's violin material. Our recorded voices—breathing, speaking, emotive sounds—were used too. Emily created the tracks accompanying her character's scenes in the same way; particularly noteworthy is the keyboard tapping sounds she so beautifully manipulated to become frantic, looping and oppressive.

As a collaboration *Jell-O On Springs* represented a joyful symbiosis. Emily and I worked together seamlessly and with much trust. In essence our relationship is very like those discussed in Chapter 4 of *Creative Collaboration*: "This collaboration combines two patterns ... the complementary pattern, in which participants bring different skills to each other, and the integrative pattern, in which participants develop a shared vision and strive for a common voice."⁵ Emily and I complemented each other by dividing the labour to suit our expertise. Emily wrote the violin music for herself and was the driving force when using the computer application *Logic* to organise material. I took more theatrical control over certain narrative elements (such as storyboarding and character development). Together we decided on plot and themes, planning our aims carefully so our mutual vision could be realised.

Another strength our collaboration demonstrated was a lack of

⁴ For the film storyboard see Appendix pages 82-83.

⁵ John-Steiner, *Creative Collaboration*, 110.

attachment to the piece. Because it sprung from a shared idea and the relationship was paramount we were able to scrutinise *Jell-O On Springs* soon after its realisation and create something new and separate from it: the film version. In doing this we generated two pieces of work from the same initial idea. The film is a fixed work, with ourselves as performers. The theatrical version is flexible and available in score form for others to reinterpret.

Finally, the most important outcome is the knowledge that we can, and shall, collaborate again in the future and it will work.

Chapter 4

I Long For Snow ¹

In music time is an explicit part of the work, but in visual constructions time is a hidden variable. It is part of the changes that the work undergoes as it ripens. A painting or a construction is often put aside for a while, to be completed much later.²

When we experience a piece of music, the inherent temporality is something we expect and understand. It begins, lasts for an amount of time, it ends. A work of fine art occupies a more tangible place in space once it is completed and, assuming it is not destroyed, will exist in time *always*, or constantly, until it eventually deteriorates. In certain circumstances it could be possible to closely scrutinise the piece—with the right art conservation knowledge—and see from the application of paint or other media whether the piece had breaks in its creation. However, this is not something a lay person viewing something in a gallery could easily see. The same idea can be applied to a piece of music. Despite what John-Steiner says, it is impossible to speculate without prior knowledge, when experiencing music, whether the piece took a long time to write and/or had gaps within the writing process.

I Long For Snow was started in 2009 when *juice* vocal ensemble came to the music department to run some composer workshops. I had wanted to write for them again since the success of previous pieces and was keen to create something which presented the opportunity to explore movement and theatre. Anna Snow, Sarah Dacey and Kerry Andrew (the members of *juice*) were also keen to explore this type of composition. Well versed in contemporary classical repertoire and accomplished performers unafraid to take risks, they admitted to feeling there was a gap in their work: more overtly physically theatrical pieces. Since our relationship was based on friendship and a history of learning,

¹ For the Production Score for *I Long For Snow* see the Appendix pages 84-93.

² John-Steiner, *Creative Collaboration*, 86.

performing and working together it made sense for me to be the composer to embark on this journey with.

Despite the relationship we already had, *I Long For Snow* was much more a process of writing for rather than with *juice*. As with other pieces, I created space within the process to allow the performers some creative freedom. I tailored the music to suit them as musicians, but overall this piece was least reliant on psychology; in both external stimuli and internal relationship.

I quickly wrote a poem with a verse for each performer. It took inspiration from the environment and my desire to be in a snowy place again. The basic melody was then written in response to the text and I imagined the whole piece being underpinned by this strophic approach. The workshop in 2009 proved a success and afterwards I wrote accompanying mobiles and thought about overall theatrical structure.

The interesting dynamic with this project was the idea that I wanted Anna, Sarah and Kerry to embody the physical side of the performance fully by having generated their movements themselves. Soon after the initial workshop we had another session where movements were devised to accompany their personal elements: snow for Anna, water for Sarah and air for Kerry. We generated these movements in the way demonstrated by Betsy during *I Want To Be Kind* rehearsals. These gestures acted as anchors for the piece as, over the trajectory of composition, they remained unchanged.

Time passed and other projects took the fore. With all my work I plan a performance, or have one in place, to write for. It is part of what drives my writing and can also be seen, philosophically, as a relationship with time itself, particularly a commitment to the future. With fine art, a piece is tangible once it is finished. This is not the case with music, even if a score is finished, bound and published. Until it is *performed* it exists in a limited sense.

We hadn't set a date for a performance and the piece, in its early stages, was too nebulous to programme into any of *juice's* forthcoming concerts. Knowing this was the case, I took the decision to add an electro-acoustic element to the piece. It was hard to have regular access to the trio so it made sense to record them and build as much of the piece up around them in their absence. It felt as if I were able to have them with me, in essence—if I couldn't in actuality

—and enabled me to keep working on the piece. I wrote a set of short mobiles which we recorded in many different sung and spoken combinations. This provided inspiring material to weave into the final backing track.

Part of my exploration of collaborations, in terms of their defining dynamics, is working out the balance of administrative work between parties and expectations around this. Despite the ensemble's commitment to the piece it was hard for them to programme the piece without serious pressure from me and a completed score. To support myself and make sure I got a performance I acknowledged that I would have to organise a concert myself.

Making this kind of decision with a creative project is hard. The energy and time required with this kind of undertaking naturally takes away from creating and I thought carefully about balancing the workload so the piece itself didn't suffer. It also made sense to try and programme a concert that would yield other positives for all involved. The resulting programme included Meredith Monk's *Three Heavens and Hells*, requiring an extra singing voice, which I provided; excerpts from Roger Marsh's *Pierrot Lunaire*, in which I acted as Narrator alongside *juice*; and Samuel Beckett's *Come and Go*, performed by *juice* and directed by me. This programme balanced favourite *juice* repertoire with new adventures and was also chosen to suit the Rymer Auditorium—a lecture and recital space within the Music Department at the University of York—our chosen venue.

As with *I Want To Be Kind*, I felt I was also responding to a venue. The Rymer has surround sound capabilities and this led me to create a specialisation of the backing track.³ Rather than a 'flat' soundscape, acting almost like a visual backdrop to the piece that the performers would perform in front of (which is what could occur in a more traditional venue, or in the Rymer with a stereo edit coming out of the two stage speakers), I was able to envelop the audience in sound.⁴

The recorded material now took on a spacial aspect and I thought about the sounds as if suspended around the audience, like pieces of a child's mobile. Thinking this way enabled me to tailor the live action more carefully as I knew sound cues could be harder to hear and positioning would really make a

³ For an example of how this specialisation looks in *Logic* see Appendix page 94.

⁴ For the Rymer speaker plan see Appendix page 95.

difference because the performers now had to create relationships with their own recorded voices, and those of the other two, across the auditorium space.

The final challenge was deciding to leave the piece alone. Musically it felt like it needed more material. I worried the piece didn't develop enough, didn't present a journey. It is very static. The women sing their verses and move round the stage in a loop, but they go nowhere. For a long time I worried about this, but couldn't generate anything new to remedy it.

When discussing this with Anna Snow we decided the performers had space within the score to improvise live. In the performance this was tentative as timing was such that we didn't rehearse this idea as fully as we'd have liked. However, the piece, in its final form, was very full visually and aurally and there is a limit to how much more sound could be meaningfully added to the experience.

The programme also supported the decision to keep *I Long For Snow* as it was. The final performance made sense when performed alongside *Come and Go* because, like the overlapping hands at the end of the Beckett, *I Long For Snow's* stasis explores waiting and a lack of answers. When discussing her direction of *Come and Go* in 1987 Brenda Bynum says 'It was as if Beckett were celebrating this mysterious aspect of woman and almost admitting that he didn't understand it. The questions the play raises are unanswered.'⁵

I Long For Snow is not as secretive as *Come and Go*; it does not have at its heart intimate female relationships, the exact nature of which we are left to guess. Instead of using words to blanket what is hidden, my text voices the individual, private desires of each character. Memory and past experience form a desire for a situation other than what is. Whilst the final unison does provide a musical climax and brings the performers together on stage, they never completely connect and are left separate at the end. We are not sure how long they will have to wait for the experience they long for.

As the process of writing *I Long For Snow* taught me how to wait, so the performance of it makes the audience wait. They are not satisfied by plot, things are not made clear. I am also going to wait for more performances by *juice* before the score is made public, if it ever is. Other potential performers will have to wait

⁵ Brenda Bynum, 'Interviewed by Lois Overbeck' in *Women In Beckett*, ed. Linda Ben-Zvi, (Illinois: Illini Books Edition, 1992), 51.

too.

Sarah Ruhl discusses the importance of waiting and her rhetoric makes me glad *I Long For Snow* is as it is because, as she says, ‘if waiting is lost, then will all the unconscious processes that take place during waiting get lost? And then might we see the death of the unconscious and the death of culture?’⁶

⁶ Sarah Ruhl, *100 Essays I Don't Have Time To Write: on umbrellas and sword fights, parades and dogs, fire alarms, children and theater*. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2014), 143-4.

Chapter 5

Knitted, Crocheted, Looped ¹

Collaboration across generations is an expression of hope.²

John-Steiner extends this quote into discussion on the relationships across generations that take place between mentors and mentees. My relationship with Margaret Hillier is not in that mould, but the chosen quote articulates what is at its core beautifully.

Margaret and I met when we were working on Jon Hughes' production of *The Women of Trachis* in the Guildhall, York. Margaret was an actor, I was assistant director. We immediately warmed to each other and have been good friends ever since. This friendship has extended to include her husband, Dave, and my husband and children. Despite the couple being the age of our parents we have a relationship with them that isn't parent-child, though they have extended a level of care towards us that has been very sustaining at times.

Margaret is not a hoarder but her house has things in it that have been passed down to her, and she has kept her children's things too. The couple continue to live in the house where they brought up their children, who are now adults. Margaret has found that the emotional impact of living with these objects has needed attention. The time we have known each other has coincided with my procreation and Margaret has been a real support through it. The juxtaposition of the changes in my life and the changes in hers seem linked; they are the opposite ends of the same journey. This recognition led to many interesting discussions and an inevitable decision to collaborate as a way to explore them.

Initial research took the form of looking at specific objects from Margaret's past. Having had a happy childhood, Margaret looks back fondly and has some objects that are associated with this time. We discussed a pair of red leather gloves bought in Rome, a beautifully printed story book her Grandmother used to read to her and a Sharp's Toffee tin which over the years has had different uses. Alongside these treasured items are things Margaret inherited from

¹ For the Production Score for *Knitted, Crocheted, Looped* see the Appendix pages 96-99.

² John-Steiner, *Creative Collaboration*, 151.

her mother and grandmother that she doesn't really want but can't get rid of. Lots of this *stuff* feels useless to Margaret but she doesn't see any of it being useful to someone else either. The result of this is being physically surrounded by objects that provoke an emotion and force Margaret out of the present and into the past. These real life experiences proved a rich theatrical resource.

It is important to state at this stage that *Knitted, Crocheted, Looped* is not autobiographical. During the baby-years our children were gifted many knitted clothes from family members. Our mothers, to be precise. The act of knitting a garment is often one of love. It also represents achievement and skill and these are concepts that are prevalent in the life of a musician and actor. Clothes are also, obviously, made to cover up our bodies. To protect them from the elements, keep them warm, and keep them respectable, amongst many other things. Focussing on a garment as a metaphor for relationships—with the self, with a child, with a stranger—seemed appropriate. Clothes keep things out, as well as cover things up.

During our research Margaret showed me some knitting projects she had on the go. Most knitters have a bag, or box, or room even, full of knitting things. I have met a few people who have started projects which remain unfinished; factors such as patterns that don't work, dislike of how the piece is turning out, boredom or lack of time all contribute to this. The overriding emotion often connected to this is, sadly, guilt. People often feel there is a duty or need for something to be finished. Maybe it was meant for someone else to wear and they could be disappointed, maybe the piece has taken a lot of work and therefore 'should' be completed. Either way the emotion linked often means the simple joy inherent in the act of knitting, of creation, is tinged with negativity, and this is a cycle that can perpetuate because of the static nature of guilt itself.

Inherent in guilt is self-criticism. This criticism comes from a place that does not allow space to contemplate a problem without judgement. This is why cycles of guilt are always repeated. Guilt is an emotion that enables the continuation of problematic behaviour. People equate feeling guilty with action: "I feel guilty about how badly I behaved but I am not a bad person because I feel so guilty." This cycle lets the person feel better about themselves without forcing action that results in a change of behaviour. Extrapolating this scenario out, it is

easy to see how emotionally complex relationships—such as with family members—can become entrenched simply because the overriding reaction to difficult situations was guilt.

Another reaction to guilt is to fix the problem by gift giving. An acceptable form of showing love and saying sorry, gift giving can assuage the feelings felt by someone and again the opportunity to look inward at the problem and tackle it is circumnavigated.

Knitting represents the idea of taking something that is useless in one form and transforming it into something useful. Taking a single thread and looping it together to make fabric provides a beautiful metaphor for the combining of memories into an experience of the past; the fabric of time itself. The action of knitting is also a very repetitive one. A recurrent theme in my work, repetition is used here to explore control and gathering together; repeated organising, collecting, buying and gathering are symptoms of hoarding and obsessive compulsive disorder.

In *Knitted, Crocheted, Looped* we re-imagined and explored all these ideas. The garment *Ma* is knitting has come to represent the unfinished business of a dysfunctional parent-child relationship. Themes of rejection, avoidance, and denial are explored through *Ma's* desire to finish the garment so late in her daughter's life. In finishing the garment *Ma* projects on to it the desire to have her relationship fixed, finished and sorted out. In its completeness she sees resolution.

The viola music in *Knitted, Crocheted, Looped* is a physical manifestation of both looping yarn and the psychological looping of the guilt process. It helps serve to make the role of *Mo* an ambiguous one. Changing between musician and actor, she seems to represent both daughter and stranger. There is also the play with time. Is the initial encounter with piles of clothes and the viola a sorting through of possessions after *Ma's* death? Is this done by the daughter, transporting her back in time to remember? Is *Mo* just a carer, who happens upon a stash of clothing and steals a jumper? Is the moment when they connect and the scarf is wrapped around *Ma's* neck real or imagined, happening now or a memory?

In keeping these questions unanswered *Knitted, Crocheted, Looped* is able to

inhabit a world where past, present and future are blurred and it is this ambiguity that helps create the feeling of loss that permeates the piece; the loss of memory and the loss of a relationship.

In terms of collaboration this project was similar to the *Portraits*. I definitely wrote the material *for* Margaret, rather than *with* her. But it felt more like collaboration than cooperation because of the use of our personal lives as inspiration; I responded directly *to* and *with* Margaret, and she to me. The whole process had to spring from a place of mutual trust because so much of the material was developed from personal, intimate, real-life subject matter. Real feelings were woven into the piece, and were at stake; the imagined drama that was realised sprang from thoughts we were having about our lives at that time. Most importantly, and happily, *Knitted, Crocheted, Looped* has become a piece which, in being an exploration of the past, looks firmly to the future.

Chapter 6

Swimming Between Shores

Maybe the crazier the world the more purposeful our images of self must become.¹

In his article *The Problem of the Third Generation Immigrant*, Marcus Lee Hansen discusses the pendulum-like swing of interest in history that happens between the second and third generations of immigrants. Put succinctly he states that ‘what the son wishes to forget the grandson wishes to remember.’²

Swimming Between Shores was performed in April 2015 and is a piece with multiculturalism and history at its heart. At the centre of the piece is my relationship with collaborator Merit Ariane Stephanos, and the collaboration was dependent on our conversations around Merit’s experience as a person and musician. We hoped to create a symbiotic exploration of both Merit’s self (and to a lesser degree, mine) and the society we both belong to. *Swimming Between Shores*, despite imperfections, was a great success.

As a woman with German and Egyptian heritage who has spent most of her adult life in Britain, Merit constantly questions her identity. She started her PhD at York in October 2014 and her research aims to explore how a performer with such a fluid personal and musical identity—spanning east and west—can vocalise this identity meaningfully and successfully.

Research started as soon as we were awarded the Terry Holmes Composer and Performer Award: a departmental scholarship to collaboratively write a new piece of music. Whilst the exact nature of the collaboration evolved over time, we immediately agreed to use gender as a starting point: as women we wanted to give voice to other women.

Merit and I decided to create a music theatre piece which drew upon the narratives and experiences of the Middle East, primarily through the writing of

¹ Howard E. Gruber, ‘The Evolving Systems Approach to Creative Work’, in *Creative People at Work*, ed. Doris B. Wallace and Howard E. Gruber (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 11.

² Marcus Lee Hansen, *The Problem of the Third Generation Immigrant* (Illinois: Augustana Historical Society, 1938), 9.

Arabic women; women who often articulate experiencing life as other. This aim provided a strong link between the personal and public, the internal and external. Merit—a woman with dual heritage—admits to often feeling other.

Personally, Merit sings a lot of Arabic music and setting these poems by contemporary and classical Arabic women is something she is professionally engaged with. Publicly it was a way to breathe life into these written words, to sing them off the page and to a public audience who, most probably, wouldn't have heard them before. Much of these women's writings deals with the conflicting nature of identity: through their explorations of these themes Merit was able to conduct her own, practice-led, research into her own identity.

Another aim was to present a world where the ancient and modern co-exist. This was important to us as it articulated the framework within which we all exist: those religious, political, sociological and biological parameters organising our lives to greater and lesser degrees. To do this we looked to our musical sound world, one where a modal tonality would sit in between Arabic maqam and Western scales acting as a bridge between them and a place where they conjoin. To do this we included Aramaic Chants.

Early in 2012 Merit spent three months in Lebanon studying these ancient religious chants. This music has a religious gravitas through the Western Christian symbolism in the language and an exoticism from the Arabic maqam. This was the perfect musical combination of an interdependent east and west. By placing these chants alongside contemporary Arabic women's writing we hoped to illustrate the perennial relationship with the past that we all have, whether we engage with it on a conscious level or not.

Merit and I have a friendship that stretches back to 2003, when we met in the New London Chamber Choir. A shared love of contemporary vocal music led us to perform in a soprano quartet together. Since my move to York in 2009 the professional part of our relationship was where we had diverged most; Merit spent most of this time since building up her career as an Arabic singer and composer.

For the collaboration to work we needed to engage with our own plasticity, to acknowledge the shift in our relationship and our selves, over time. Whilst *Swimming Between Shores* was born out of a successful collaboration it

required me to recognise this opportunity to scrutinise and adapt my working style and capitalise on Merit's continuing development as an artist.

This was in no small part inspired by seeing Merit perform in a production of *Holy Warriors* by David Eldridge at the Globe Theatre in the summer of 2014. This production seamlessly linked past and present events in the Arabic world and the music used blended the ancient and contemporary equally successfully.

In an interview in the programme, David Eldridge asks this question as a way to underpin his writing: 'How is it that history manages to repeat itself so endlessly and yet the lessons of history aren't readily accepted by those who often really shape history, in all of our names?'³ Whilst *Swimming Between Shores* doesn't try to answer this in the overtly narrative way *Holy Warriors* did, it was an idea that had to be grappled with. Another point Eldridge makes is that 'It became important not to try and pretend that I was writing an objective piece, but really to think about a fictional play'.⁴ It could have been easy to pressure ourselves into drawing together all our research with the aim of accurately representing other people's experiences. Instead, what was needed was simply to present other people's material in a way that encouraged the audience to engage and reflect. To be playful with the material in a way that enabled us, as performers, to inhabit it, and also piqued people's interest, enabling them to engage with voices they might not have encountered ordinarily.

So, what *Swimming Between Shores* became and now is—as the strapline in the score suggests—is *a woman's journey through identity*. On the surface, musically and theatrically, it presents a set of scenes through which Merit's character *The Wanderer* journeys. Key themes of love, travel, space and home unify the material. At a deeper level the piece functions to enable Merit to explore the ways in which her identity as a singer can manifest through various musical settings; settings which combine all the elements of our musical backgrounds in some form or another. It also functions by exploring my ability to not only link elements of my musical identity with Merit's, but use the collaboration with her to stretch and

³ David Eldridge, 'Interview,' theatre programme, *Holy Warriors*, 3-5. London: Globe Theatre, July 19-August 24, 2014.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

extend myself in a new direction. In retrospect I feel *Swimming Between Shores* pushed me to ‘*Develop what you lack.*’⁵ It enabled me to develop my personal creativity further because it forced me out of my comfort zone. Unwittingly, I embarked on a process the psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi would have recommended for me: ‘Keep exploring what it takes to be the opposite of who you are.’⁶

Whilst I was listening to Arabic music and Merit’s recordings of the Aramaic chants from the outset, it was our research into the writing of Arabic women that started the collaborative process and ultimately shaped *Swimming Between Shores*.

To be able to compose music that worked convincingly with Arabic influences and told Arabic stories, I had to find a way into Arabic women’s experiences to develop empathetic feeling. Gaining this approximation of a first hand experience is most effectively managed through conversation with another person—failing this, stories about their lives can be read. A book that enabled me to imagine another perspective was *A World I loved: The Story of an Arab Woman* by Wadad Makdisi Cortas. This book, whilst being richly detailed in terms of Middle Eastern history, particularly that of Palestine and Israel, was most notable due to Wadad’s love of the land itself. Descriptions of food, scenery and environment helped me to imagine the heat, scent and taste of a place I have never visited. These themes are not explicitly explored in the show, but thinking about and imagining them definitely helped to create an implicit sensory relationship with the other material; one which helped me creatively.

Supporting this approach was discussion with Merit around her relationship with food, because food for Merit represents a place where all her identities can be combined. It also represents a place where ingredients can be appreciated in their simplest form and where she can be creative. We talked about her love for natural yoghurt, olives, olive oil, eggs, bread, fish, and how cooking is something she loves to *do*.

In terms of identity being linked to the tasks we undertake, ‘we think of the creative person as highly task-oriented rather than ego-oriented [yet] it is also

⁵ Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, *Creativity* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996), 360.

⁶ Ibid.

true that the set of tasks taken as a whole constitutes a large part of the ego: to be oneself one must do these things; to do these things one must be oneself.⁷ Merit feels simultaneously like her creative self and her historical and genetic self when she cooks. It was acknowledgement of this that led to a notebook entry I made imagining what Merit's character might be *doing* on stage:

Merit is cooking. It is hard to see what. She is absorbed. She starts humming. It is ambiguous. We watch her cook. A man steps out and starts playing the violin. It is western sounding. He plays to her. She doesn't hear him. She continues to cook. Another man steps out and starts to play violin. It is arabic music. At this point Merit looks up and the western music stops. She seems to be remembering something. She stops humming and starts singing with the violin. Violin swells, then fades away. Silence. Merit seems to be confused. A memory? What triggered it? She returns to cooking. Are these men representative of Europe and the Middle East? Does their material morph from one thing to another and back again? Or do we keep them fixed? Do we pitch these men against each other? A brother versus a lover?

This section was the imaginative beginning for the scene which became *Forbidden Love*. I was keen to portray a male and female relationship in the show, primarily one based on romantic love. I wanted to do this to articulate a perennial and problematic double standard: the inequality between men and women in regard to sexual love relationships. This is a theme which has ancient and modern relevance and, from a feminist perspective, one which I wished to confront the audience with. For this I looked to the *Song of Songs* in the Bible for inspiration. This text, so rooted in Lebanon, and Arabic imagery and ritual, now resides in a book linked primarily to Western Christianity. Considering its context within the Bible, the text is luxurious and sexy. It was the reworking of this text into a dramatic scene, with the above scenario in mind, that led to the final composition.

⁷ Gruber, *Creative People at Work*, 13.

The poetry that Merit and I chose provided the loose structure for the piece. The spacial, abstract and sparse *Flaw of Space* by Sabah Zwein enabled me to articulate an idea of history and time through scientific allusions. Setting this with a string quartet allowed inspiration to be taken from the string writing in Charles Ives' *The Unanswered Question* which represents time itself through the still held chords which shift almost imperceptibly.

In contemplating what Merit would *do* on stage, what her character would be, we researched other women from Middle Eastern history: most notably Lilith, a Jewish woman pre-dating Eve; Theodora, a sixth century performer who became the wife of the Emperor Justinian; and Hypatia, the fifth century Greek mathematician, astronomer and philosopher. Whilst researching Hypatia I encountered the film *Agora* starring Rachel Weisz in the title role and in it she uses an Apollonian Cone. This is an object that shows the conic sections: circle; ellipse; parabola and hyperbola.



Figure 5. Apollonian Cone by Francisco Treceño Losada.⁸

⁸ These are my photographs of my cone, purchased from the maker for the show: <http://www.artmadera.com/>

This seemed like the perfect prop to have on stage; it articulated the confusion underlying a sense of identity formed from seemingly mismatched and contradictory parts, was a metaphor for the scenes and journey throughout the show and had an abstracted, sculptural quality that matched how we felt about *Flaw of Space*, giving its concepts a visual focus and enabling some of the words of the poem to be directly acted out.

Three Classical Arabic poems dating back as far as 700 A.D. were chosen for Merit to set and they explored themes of physical attractiveness, relationship with God and contentment with a simple life. These were texts we both loved and Merit had a particular affinity with them as she could understand the beauty of the Arabic directly and see how they would work musically. These pieces also marked the point where the relationship between us blurred from being performer and composer to composing performer and performing composer.

Having Merit compose the pieces which needed to set Arabic text ensured an authenticity I couldn't provide myself. We were working in a manner which allowed us both creative control over certain sections of the piece. This 'complementary mode of collaboration'⁹ demonstrated perfectly John-Steiner's description 'in which differences in training, skill, and temperament support a joint outcome through division of labor.'¹⁰

Once I had read it, Etel Adnan's *There* had to be included. It has a beautifully personal feel to it and is rooted in the exploration of relationships, but it also explores on a philosophical level concepts of home, nationality, war, displacement, disconnection and being the other.

A long poem made of many chapters entitled *There*, the poem has its own inherent structure and pacing which climaxes when the chapter *Here* appears around two thirds in. The point at which we hear Merit sing *There* in the show is roughly at the same point in the book where those words are written (directly before *Here*); shadowing the text's structure in the show helped the architecture of the piece.

The other texts we decided to use were two poems by Rumi, the thirteenth century Persian mystic poet, which beautifully articulate our thoughts

⁹ John-Steiner, *Creative Collaboration*, 70.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

on identity and its transient nature. Dame Carol Ann Duffy's *Originally* was used to set the scene by describing a modern Western experience of displacement and provided a nod to our shared Britishness.

A way into both understanding and organising the musical material was to widen my net a little to include research into Jewish folk music. Israel represents some of the paradoxes and complexity we were trying to articulate. In his book *Folk Song in Israel*, Michal Smoira-Roll talks of Israel as a fusion of contrary elements like refuge and nostalgia, vision and reality, antiquity and newness.¹¹ He goes further by describing the country as sociologically conditioned by a history of settlement and geographically a 'country placed in the East with her dominant culture coming from the West.'¹²

Israeli music often uses the Phrygian, Eolian and Dorian modes. These modes translate into maqam; the Phrygian mode being *Kurd* maqam, Dorian being *Nahawand Kabir* maqam. With these cross-overs in mind I was able to tonally fuse my musical material. A Jewish folk tune I found and used was *Orcha Bamidbar* and its tonality was suitably ambiguous; in Dorian mode, circling round and returning to D, it also contains a Bb but no C#. The figure below shows how I used it in the original saxophone line in *There*.

♩ = 50 *Rising and falling with the voice.*

Soprano Saxophone

Tenor Recorder

2

S. soul waits in a street cor-ner ca- fe, close to her, to her a-part-ment, to her

Sop. Sax.

Figure 6. Excerpt from *There*, bars 1-4.

¹¹ Michal Smoira-Roll, *Folk Song In Israel* (Tel-Aviv, Israel Music Institute, 1963), 1.

¹² Ibid.

This tonality enabled it to be treated flexibly, which is exactly what happened when I used it in my setting. Merit and Nilufar played it with an E quarter flat, so that it became like maqam *Saba*. This was a favourite maqam of ours and altering the folk song to bring it towards the maqam—as well as Merit’s improvised ornamentation of the vocal line—enabled *There* to become the piece within *Swimming Between Shores* that most successfully fused all the musical influences. It was also this research that gave me the confidence to look to English folk songs for inspiration too.

Converting the text from *Song of Songs* into dramatic form and writing the accompanying music was an example of all the research and collaborative elements coming together. The ensemble was formed by this point and comprised of a balanced group of musicians, spanning both age and experience. I had decided to perform too and knew I wanted to create a situation where there could be some dance or physical theatre. On studying the text, the repetition of ‘Daughters of Jerusalem’ spoke to me as a Greek Chorus and I wanted the romantic dialogue to be represented on stage with one of the male violinists—John Cummins—playing his dialogue whilst Merit spoke hers.

As the scene tackles the upsetting subject of women being physically punished for sexual behaviour, I wanted to use a melody with an equally poignant story to tell. The old English folk song *The Blacksmith* provided the story of a woman cruelly passed over for another, expectations of marriage dashed. Being in Dorian mode was also helpful; open A and D strings could be utilised well in the violin writing, supporting a folk style, and additions of Db, Eb, F#, Bb and C# at various points throughout all the parts helped me manipulate the music in various directions between mode and maqam. This musical ambiguity was deliberate; I wanted to create an unsettling sound world for an unsettling scene.

It was these elements, all housed by the structure of the scenes I had created with the *Song of Songs* text, that enabled *Forbidden Love* to be written relatively quickly and easily. It seemed, from the outset, like the anchor for the whole of *Swimming Between Shores* as it functions on the most purely dramatic level of all the set texts. It also drew a line under the part of the show concerned with male/female relationships in an active sense. From then on the show becomes more philosophical and deals with the other elements we decided to focus on.

Der Kanzler was kindly supplied by John Potter and provided an ancient Western musical inclusion.

fol. 545a (Bartsch: fol. 530a) 1

1. Got, schep - fer al - ler din - gen, 2. dîn wer - dez lop kein
6. dîn sint die hi - mel - trô - ne, 7. dîn ist diu naht, dîn

20

zun - ge mac 3. vol - spre - chen noch vol - sin - gen, 4. wie al - ler crê - a -
ist der tac, 8. dîn ist der sun - ne. schô - ne 9. nâch dî - ner hô - hen

-tiu - re kraft 5. in dî - ner hen - de stât. 11. die ster - nen sint dir
meis - ter - schaft 10. der hi - mel um - be gât, 13. vier e - le - ment in

Figure 7. Excerpt from *Der Kanzler*, bars 1-11.¹³

Its medieval melody line and old German text spoke simultaneously of a Christian God and the German language; Merit's mother tongue. Having it disembodied on the soundtrack and the melody used in *Words Fail, Bodies Fall* was a conscious decision on my part to use it as emblematic of an oppressive patriarchy.

The words used in Dan Hodd's solo are syllables and part-words from an annotation I made of Rumi's *Only Breath*. They are set to the melody of *Der Kanzler* and provide an invented 'fantasy-language'¹⁴, which helped Dan Hodd to vocalise his demonic male character. Setting this nonsense became like using some sub- or pre-language. It symbolised male appropriation of language and the voicelessness so many of the women, whose work we had read, had spoken of.

¹³ R. J. Taylor, *Der Kanzler* in 'The Art of the Minnesinger Volume 1' (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1968), 29-30.

¹⁴ Salzman and Desi, *The New Music Theatre*, 94.

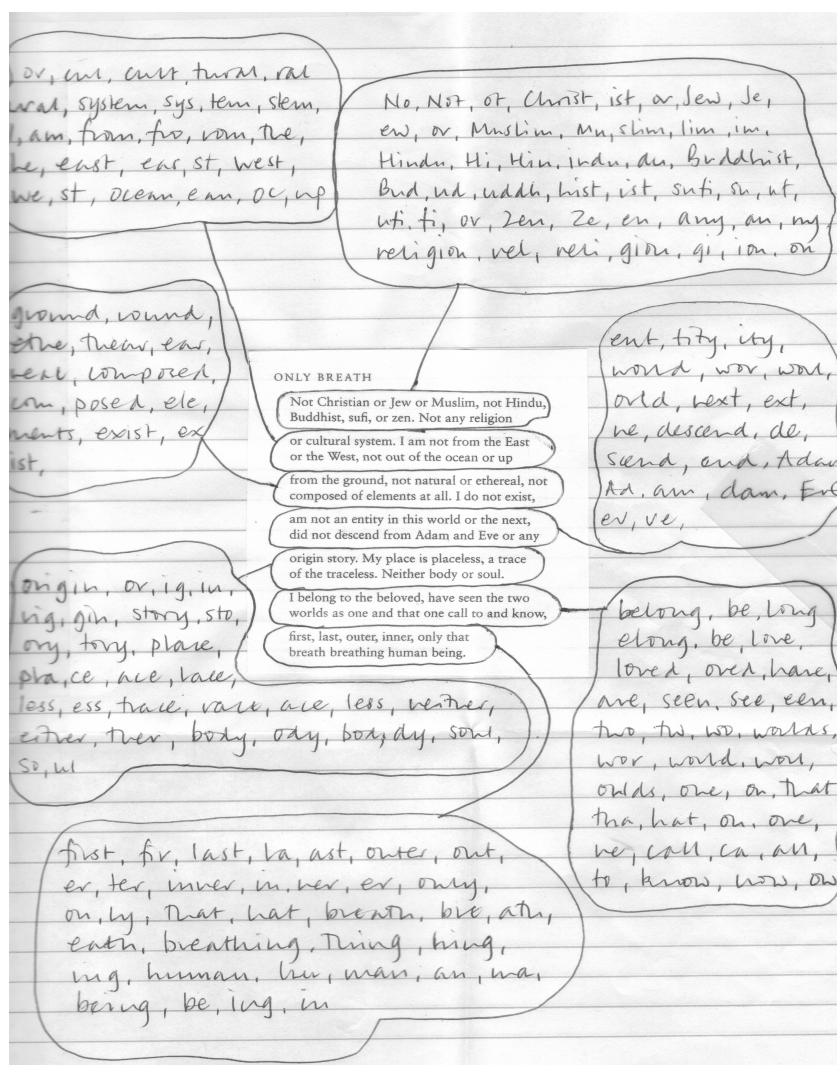


Figure 8. *Only Breath* annotation.

Placing it after *Stunning Looks* and before *Forbidden Love* helped Merit's character make the journey from the heights of her liberated musical and sexual expression down to the loss of her language, physical freedom and lover. By the time she does sing again—at the end of *Forbidden Love*—it is the Greek Chorus warning. She has learnt her lesson and been oppressed but not destroyed.

Trust is central to collaboration, particularly among dyadic partners. But it cannot be taken for granted. It needs nourishing. It may require honest confrontations of problems between partners and a willingness to adjust a relationship that has lost its original intensity.¹⁵

¹⁵ John-Steiner, *Creative Collaboration*, 83.

Merit and I have great trust in, and respect for, each other. *Swimming Between Shores* had a dyadic partnership at the centre that required negotiation, empathy and humour and the rest of the ensemble supported this by being willing and very able cooperators. Despite the fact that the majority of the performers were cast due to being willing and available—rather than being people I had chosen to collaborate with (the exception being John Cummins, who I invited onboard)—the result was an ensemble that became like a family unit and worked very fluidly.

A particular success was the addition of Nilfar, our qanun player, close to the performance. We had decided to incorporate an Arabic musician from the outset and Merit invited Nilufar soon after starting, but regular rehearsals in York with her were impossible. As a result I didn't write anything for her specifically. She worked with Merit in London on the Arabic pieces and *There*—which was originally intended for Merit, alto saxophone and tenor recorder—easily worked with the qanun. It was moments like this that showed the performers were more committed to the piece as a whole than their individual roles within it. Katharine Wood did not mind giving up her part in *There* to the qanun and Nilufar was accepted by everyone with joy and grace. As John-Steiner says: 'the Group was like a biological family that must adjust when a new relative is included.'¹⁶ Once Nilufar was there, it was as if she always had been.

The time scale for the commission meant the performance was our third full run through. It went very well indeed but more time would have meant more precision and maybe removing, or reworking, some material. On discussing the collaboration between choreographer Balanchine and Stravinsky, John-Steiner quotes Bernard Taper's discussion of Stravinsky's 'restrained, disciplined, yet uncommonly lyrical'¹⁷ score for *Apollo* and how it 'taught Balanchine the most useful lesson of his career: that he, too, could clarify his art by reducing all the multitudinous possibilities to the one possibility that was inevitable, that he could, as he has since put it, "dare not to use all my ideas."¹⁸ I don't feel we had the

¹⁶ John-Steiner, *Creative Collaboration*, 89.

¹⁷ Bernard Taper, *Balanchine: A Biography* (New York: Macmillan, 1974): 184, quoted in John-Steiner, *Creative Collaboration*, 93.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

time or space to remove some of our ideas. But I don't regret this either. *Swimming Between Shores* has a sprawling beauty that could be seen to represent the vast, contradictory nature of the world, people's relationship with it and experiences of it.

Overwhelmingly, when watching the film, I am struck by everyone's performances. Especially Merit's. Performing in the show meant I didn't have the wholly objective eye of an external director, so when I watch it now I am awed by Merit's total immersion in each and every character she plays. Merit's co-ownership of the ideas behind the piece, collaboration within the creative process and autonomy over certain areas of performance and composition meant she lived fully in the moment of performance. She plays with and within each character in the show.

Sarah Ruhl draws the parallel between children's play and adult life, saying 'Play itself is a primary process, not a luxury, not a hobby, but something all children must do to survive childhood.'¹⁹ What she goes on to say perfectly articulates how successfully *Swimming Between Shores* enabled Merit to explore her identity:

When I watch my children play, and they are at one moment a self-proclaimed mean turtle ... and then a grown man, each fiercely and completely, it reminds me of the primary human hope that identity might in fact be fluid, that we are simultaneously ourselves and the beasts in the field ... and that identity might be nothing more than dipping our Heraclitean feet in the river, moment to moment. And if identity is fluid, then we might actually be free. And furthermore, if identity is fluid, then we might actually be connected ... if we can be the leaves of grass and also the masses on the Brooklyn Bridge, then we can leave the ego behind and *be world* for a moment. And this is one reason why we go to the theater, either to identify with others, or to *be* others, for the moment.²⁰

¹⁹ Ruhl, 100 Essays I Don't Have Time To Write, 214.

²⁰ Ibid.

Chapter 7

Portraits

Understanding involves intimacy and equality between self and object, while *knowledge* ... implies separation from the object and mastery over it.¹

If the other pieces in the portfolio can be described as extrovert (irrespective of ensemble size they function on a larger scale, and are more theatrically overt) then the *Portraits* are introvert. They represent a more private approach and in terms of both relationships and ideas they deal with intimacy and detail. Conversely, they represent a more objective compositional approach, as I was not involved as performer in any of the pieces or immersed in a workshop scenario. I looked carefully *at* my performers and learnt about their instruments but still worked very closely *with* them to generate the material. It is fair to say that, fundamentally, I made a conscious attempt towards understanding my performers above knowing about their instruments.

Healing is the oldest of the pieces and was originally written for John Potter and Damien Harron. I did not workshop the piece with the players or collaborate with them on the piece, apart from checking with Damien whether the main marimba motif worked once I had written it. As a commission for the Roger Marsh celebration concert *Not A Soul But Ourselves*, I had a choice of performers from a group of artists and chose John and Damien as I knew them well.

Alongside this I also had the poem *Healing* by D. H. Lawrence in mind, having discovered it in *The Pregnant Virgin*. In the poem, the mechanisation of the human and the impact of this on wellbeing is discussed. The text struck me as two-fold: a wise, calm, sermon on the (then) modern condition, describing a broken, ill mechanism, rage bubbling just below the surface. It was perfect to set for two performers. The age of both men adds patriarchal gravitas and I wanted to use this particularly as, being the older, John could appear as the wise orator when delivering the text. I imagined John, seated, reading from a book, imparting

¹ Mary Field Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing* (New York: BasicBooks, Inc, 1986), 101.

this wisdom to us from centre-stage. Behind him, behind the marimba, would be Damien. He would be oscillating between an active, spiralling musical phrase—a definition of his character, his self—and a repetitive, in-out, defeated motif. I wanted this motif to be gentle but chilling, assembly-line-like in its perpetual motion.

My original thinking about John and Damien's onstage relationship and the trajectory of the piece was that John's words function as a soothing balm, which eventually 'heals' Damien and calms him into acceptance. However, the more I thought about things and re-read the text, the more I was dissatisfied. Lawrence seemed to be commenting more on how this situation would be replicated forever due to society's collusion with it and that this was a terrible state of affairs. Therefore the only outcome of the piece could be one where the marimba player became locked, contractually bound, by the end; any attempts to bring the notion of self above the mechanism of society's pressures abandoned. John's character had to, then, become someone giving a warning to us all, whilst presenting to us the physical manifestation of the results of the mechanism at work: Damien.

It is important to point out that I omitted a line from the text in this version of *Healing*. I found the line 'and a certain difficult repentance, long difficult repentance'² too full of religious associations to be comfortable with back in 2010. Repentance seemed to be linked inextricably to mistakes made through personal fault, of sin and sinning, and I felt uncomfortable with this at the time. My psychological journey had not progressed towards accepting the idea of cause and effect, or karma, as it has now. Whatever the exact reasons, the line did not sit well with me and I left it out. I was happy with this at the time and didn't feel any loss, either whilst writing or when hearing the piece performed.

The first performance went well, the piece being successfully tailored to the performers. I was able to write music that functioned and that John and Damien could perform from the score with little input from me. As a piece of

² D. H. Lawrence, 'Healing,' *D. H. Lawrence Complete Poems*, ed. Vivian de Sola Pinto and F. Warren Roberts (London: Penguin, 1993), 620, lines 8-9.

music theatre it was successful, but as an enquiry into a philosophical idea and exploration of the composer/performer relationship, it was incomplete.³

The 2016 version came into being as a direct result of the other *Portraits* being written. Whilst writing these I gathered together a small number of musicians and performed four pieces in York Art Gallery. I was curious to explore how my experience of both art and music changed when the two were placed together. It was this idea that led me to call the gallery presentation *Conjunction* and to use the programme to provoke the audience to think about the pieces in relation to the art and vice versa.⁴ What the *Portraits* then became is articulated well through John-Steiner's discussion of Howard Gruber's idea:

Gruber wrote of creativity as a complex human activity, within which a group of related projects and activities form an *enterprise*. This dynamic concept includes not only productive projects but also disruption, strategies for dealing with obstacles, and the possibilities of new, related projects when a current project comes to an end.⁵

Earlier in the PhD I had an idea for a *Duet Set*: a revolving group of musicians performing duos but never with the same partner more than once. Writing *Healing* had sparked this idea and I had begun to gather appropriate texts and think of who I would like to involve. The project became unworkable during the scope of the PhD, but the idea of using the same musicians across a few pieces stuck and was reignited when thinking of approaching the art gallery. As a result the four pieces became an *enterprise* and suggested a potential way to organise projects in future.

The idea of linking music to fine art started after the commission from Zoë Scheuregger to write a marimba piece. Knowing it was the first solo Zoë had ever commissioned, I wanted it to be not just for her but *from* her. During our initial conversation I noticed Zoë playing with her hair and found her to be graceful and sincere. I wanted to capture these elements of her personality and physicality—to allow them to be shown to the audience—and the idea of

³ For the Production Score of the 2010 version of *Healing* see Appendix pages 100-104.

⁴ For the *Conjunction* programme see Appendix pages 105-106.

⁵ John-Steiner, *Creative Collaboration*, 66.

thinking of this piece as a portrait was born.

Taking such direct inspiration from Zoë herself meant *graceful/full of grace* was written in a very painterly manner. Using this term, which describes art where the brush strokes can be seen and movement can be vibrantly expressed, is pertinent because it helped me convert my visual impression of Zoë into music. I wanted the bold gestures Zoë makes to play the sparkling chords at the beginning of the piece—representing physical beauty and grace—and the simple hand on the marimba—representing contemplation and acknowledgment of inner grace—to work together in the way Van Gogh’s pieces often combine movement and bold colour usage with appreciation of a very simple, everyday scene or object.⁶

As soon as we started work it became apparent the piece would need adjustment once it was written. In the first performance the chords didn’t ring out in a way I had hoped they would and I didn’t feel they were beautiful or sparkly enough. Other pieces in the same programme (notably Roger Marsh’s *Walking Away*) made extensive use of tremolo and adding this technique to the beginning achieved the desired affect. The physical gestures of putting sticks down and moving hair needed time to embed themselves and it was only in the performances in the gallery in March 2016 that I felt Zoë was becoming truly relaxed with the theatricality involved.

All of this fluidity was possible because Zoë had, from the outset, understood that our process would be two-way. I made it clear that I wanted Zoë to be part of the piece’s continuing evolution and she was comfortable with this relationship.

The other solo piece in the *Portraits* is *Other* for cellist Charlotte Bishop. Commissioned for a performance in Norfolk in July 2015, Charlotte and I decided to look directly at her life for inspiration. The reconnection and trust built up between us from *Swimming Between Shores* enabled us to focus on very personal subject matter. Sarah Ruhl’s quote below articulates one point of connection well: ‘tempting as it may be for a writer who is also a parent, one must not think of life as an intrusion. At the end of the day, writing has very little to do with writing, and much to do with life. And life, by definition, is not

⁶ For my blog on the piece for the Contemporary Music Research Centre in York see Appendix pages 107-108.

an intrusion.⁷ We decided to explore Charlotte's human relationships through her relationship with the cello. This approach worked well (and continues to do so) because of our shared empathetic understanding of each other on a non-musical, emotional level.

The movements in *Other* are depictions of people in Charlotte's life and having an external structure to build the piece around was very helpful. We also had a piece of music in common from a previous job together. I had written the music for another friend's Choreography MA final show, in which Charlotte played. The fragment of music for Charlotte had all the energy and bite we needed for one of the movements (*Strong Wants*) and I was able to tease out themes from it as starting points for all the others (see below: 4 and 5 in circles relate to material used in corresponding movements). More importantly, the fragment had a shared past experience at its heart—it reminded us of a previously successful collaborative encounter.

Both parts to be played as fast as possible!

arco (but one repetition can be pizz.)
Cello Decisive, bold, becoming annoyed, worn out.

Ranking loop
te at bottom
1st position.

LEST
IT
BE

Figure 9. Notebook annotation.

⁷ Ruhl, 100 Essays I Don't Have Time To Write, 5.

Other, and particularly *Time to Feel*, is inspired in no small part by David Lumsdaine's *blue upon blue* for solo cello. The piece is written on two lines; the upper named *Cantus*, the lower, *Commentary*. He keeps these two identities separate with different key signatures and techniques, and articulates his approach in a note at the beginning. He states the *Cantus* line is the 'music of the singing cello, well-tuned, and firm in its grasp of the mode.'⁸ No dynamics are marked in this line as Lumsdaine wanted these to be created by the player in response to the *Commentary*. Of this line he says 'It is essentially mobile; it's the cello of wood, gut and hair, and, except for the left hand pizzicati on the open strings and a couple of sustained harmonics, its pitch is always fluid.'⁹

The relationship between these two lines remains on two staves until the last phrases where the bar lines die out and all the material is on one staff. Here Lumsdaine creates the softness of a far horizon—where hills and clouds are fused by distance—with the use of ascending natural harmonics and a *pp* marking. We feel the landscape dissolve into the sky, the blues upon blues.

Chapelle Pommier, 29.8.91

Figure 10. Excerpt from *blue upon blue*, bars 48-end.¹⁰

⁸ David Lumsdaine, *blue upon blue* for solo 'cello (York: University of York Music Press, 1992), Notes.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., 3.

Time to Feel is a double portrait: it is Charlotte and another character conversing. Charlotte's material—which is in its most extended form in this movement—is on the upper line. When the two lines come together the material fuses, but there is a sense afterwards that, whilst still within one line, they are separating out a little again. These two musical ideas still remain distinct as I chose not to combine them to make something new at the end, as Lumsdaine did.

19

mf

24 *Flexibly, with desire.*

pp *mf* *p*

28

mf *p* *mf*

gliss. *gliss.* *gliss.*

32

Sul C until the end.

p

col legno *arco* *col legno* *arco* *col legno*

gliss. *gliss.* *gliss.* *gliss.*

Figure 11. Excerpt from *Other* 'Time to Feel', bars 19-end.

Practical research took the form of working closely with Charlotte on techniques such as bowing and articulation, but it was the personal research that stretched us both towards a wholly different way of working.

Much musical training and composition is geared towards mastery. It would be easy to presume that, in having written for the cello, I have become knowledgeable about it in a way suggesting an objective relationship and some level of mastery. I do not feel this to be the case. The understanding I have for the instrument is totally linked to my relationship with Charlotte and *her* mastery; the cello is a subjective extension of her, not an object in relation to her. This relationship and experience enabled a shift whereby I began to actively employ a procedure based on communal understanding over separate knowing. Rather than desiring to know about the cello, to objectify it and have mastery over it, I wanted to understand it as a part of Charlotte.

Having researched these concepts I am now able to see that *Other* encapsulates my desire to work empathetically. Charlotte facilitated this as she worked with me in the same way. We did not subtract our personalities from the process or the material to gain a certain objectivity, as this is not what we were seeking. In trying to understand Charlotte's subjective experience of her life we worked in a way outlined below:

Separate knowers try to subtract the personality of the perceiver from the perception because they see personality as slanting the perception or adding "noise" that must be filtered out. Connected knowers see personality as adding to the perception, and so the personality of each member of the group enriches the group's understanding. Each individual must stretch her own vision in order to share another's vision. Through mutual stretching and sharing the group achieves a vision richer than any individual could achieve alone.¹¹

Had I aimed to write a cello piece for Charlotte, in a more traditional sense, I may have composed a more technically impressive piece than *Other*. As it stands, the piece we have now represents a way for Charlotte to psychoanalyse

¹¹ Belenky et al., *Women's Ways of Knowing*, 119.

her life every time she plays or performs it. Every re-encounter enables Charlotte to think about the relationships in the piece as they were at the time and how they are now. She is also able to reassess her own evolution since the composition was written, where she is psychologically. I could not have realised this rich a vision alone; with Charlotte I came the closest so far to linking therapeutic and musical processes. Now discovered, this vision is one I want to strive for again and again.

Froth and Bubble set Adam Gordon Lindsay's poem and is the most theatrically imagined of the *Portraits*. From the outset, I decided to set it for two performers, creating a relationship on stage because the text suggested a dialogue I found interesting.

I cast Katharine Wood as the soprano because of the strong relationship we formed during *Swimming Between Shores*. In that show Katie was a multi-instrumentalist and her skills in this department underpinned the musical fluidity of the show. For *Froth and Bubble* I wanted to showcase her considerable vocal talent and acting ability and knew she would be the perfect choice due to her open-minded personality and ability to work well with others.

The palindromic nature of the musical material reflects the concept that change is one of the only constants in life.

Blowing bubbles during and in between phrases.
Vocal line is extremely free, both in tempo and dynamic.

With wonder, experimenting.

Soprano

Fro th

Violoncello

2

S. Fro, fro, fro, fro, ro th

Vc.

Figure 12. Opening two bars from *Froth and Bubble*.

We see echoes of a past experience in the return of the opening vocal material reversed at the end. The feel of this material has changed due to splitting the line between both performers and this supports the idea of change, creating a sense of moving forward, evolving.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for the final eight bars of the piece 'Froth and Bubble'. Each system consists of a vocal line (S.) and a violin line (Vc.).

The first system, starting at bar 57, features a vocal line with a box labeled 'Open mouthed hum.' above it. The vocal line includes a triplet of eighth notes and a glissando. The violin line also features a triplet and a glissando. The vocal line ends with the syllable 'Hnn' written below it.

The second system, starting at bar 60, features a vocal line with a box labeled 'Closed mouth hum.' above it. The vocal line includes a triplet and a glissando. The violin line also features a triplet and a glissando. The vocal line ends with the syllable 'Hnn' written below it.

Figure 13. Final eight bars from *Froth and Bubble*.

Improvisation was something I discussed with Katie and Charlotte whilst considering the text together. Space at the beginning of the score for both performers to express themselves freely—Katie with the bubble blowing and Charlotte whilst exploring the detuned Bb string—marked a firm move towards more performer autonomy and my evolving desire to remove myself from the piece in terms of strict control over every element. All these methods were employed as a direct result of the trust we had built up and a growing desire to enjoy the process as well as the performance. However, *Froth and Bubble* changed to accommodate placement in front of the divine *Halo* by Susie MacMurray—an intricate, site-specific mesh of golden wires placed on the back wall of the Madsen Gallery and imitating angel wings or a cloud of light. We were unable to

blow bubbles in front of this art work, so had the performers contemplate *Halo* instead.

To return to *Healing*, the rewrite was a far more joyful experience than I expected. It was also inextricably linked to my desire to perform the piece in York Art Gallery. It could be said that the gallery's reopening (after extensive refurbishment) brought *Healing's* rewrite into existence.

Before revision I had decided *Healing* would be performed in front of *Manifest: 10,000 Hours* by Clare Twomey; a huge sculpture comprising 10,000 identical bowls stacked on a black metal frame. Below is a photograph of Clare Twomey installing it:



Figure 14. Clare Twomey installing *Manifest: 10,000 Hours*.¹²

¹² Kippa Matthews, 'Manifest: 10,000 Hours with Clare Twomey,' (photograph, York Art Gallery, 2016).

The kind of work needed to make this sculpture immediately struck me as resembling the repetitive, monotonous and sometimes grueling nature of practising music. Taking into consideration discussions by authors Daniel Levitin and Malcolm Gladwell into the research that it takes 10,000 hours of practice in any field to become an expert, it seemed a poignant way to focus the thinking of both my performers and the future audience, when experiencing *Healing* in front of *Manifest; 10,000 Hours*. All the people in the gallery experiencing *Healing* would see, and hear, and watch, the results of many, many hours of work unfolding in front of them.

I wanted the audience to think about this in that moment and in particular how that work affects mental and physical health. I challenged them to do this by articulating my desire in the *Conjunction* programme. Sadly, I didn't receive any extensive feedback on this from the audience after the event, but feel these provocations were still worthwhile.

When initially meeting with Katie and Zoë, who I had decided to rewrite *Healing* with, I explained the above—to have the idea in their conscious from the outset—and when we set to work we spent a lot of time discussing the effect their own experiences of being musicians had on their lives. We also discussed the difference that two young women at the beginning of their careers—as opposed to two middle-aged men—would make to the piece. This was a key to focussing our thinking into the present and helped the women feel ownership over this new version.

The first change made with *Healing* was to reinsert the omitted line. It now made sense, and felt comfortable, to do this. The figure overleaf shows the music before the rewrite:

21 $\text{♩} = 100$ $\text{♩} = 45$

Mar. *f* *p*

T. *mf* $\text{♩} = 100$ $\text{♩} = 45$

and the wounds to the soul take a long, long time, on-ly time can help_

24 $\text{♩} = 100$ $\text{♩} = 45$

Mar. *f* *p*

T. *f* $\text{♩} = 100$ *mp* $\text{♩} = 45$

and pa-tience the re-a-li-sa-tion of life's mis- take,_

Figure 15. Excerpt from *Healing* 2010 version, bars 21-26.

The ‘repentance’ line acts as a pivot between the two halves of the poem and I wanted it to reduce the music to a single point—created with a monotone marimba line and prayer-like chromaticism in the voice. (The figure overleaf shows the reinserted line). This inclusion gives energy to the material; it springs towards the end of the piece with renewed fervour. As a result, the final version of the piece has much more ebb and flow, is a piece of two more distinct halves, rather than having one large arch structure.

10

28 $\text{♩} = 100$ rall. *p*

S. pa - tience, and a

Mar. $\text{♩} = 100$ *f* *p*

30 $\text{♩} = 45$

S. cer - tain diff - i - cult re - pen - tance long, diff - i - cult re - pen - tance, —

Mar. $\text{♩} = 45$ *pp* 3

32 $\text{♩} = 100$ *mf*

S. re - a - li - sa - tion of life's mis - take, —

Mar. $\text{♩} = 100$ *p* *f*

Figure 16. Excerpt from *Healing* revised version, bars 28-33.

The vocal line rewrite happened very closely with Katie. Balancing the emotional power of her voice with the lyric took trial and error and a few phrases were inverted as a result, most notably on the phrase ‘and patience’. Looking at the piece through the medium of a rewrite was an interesting critical process and a positive one. This was echoed in the work I did with Zoë; changing the time signatures to articulate the marimba motif more clearly for her improved the piece considerably because it re-articulated the space between the motifs and enabled them to grow gesturally as a result. Giving them their own bars on the page enabled Zoë to physically embody them more in performance and this was really satisfying.

Rewriting *Healing* was what linked music, performers, and the art gallery. It marked a definite shift in my thinking; that I could consider a venue *before* writing the music in future, and went on to do this, in fact, with *What Does This Moment Require?*.

The image I created to promote *Conjunction* on the web, which uses the artwork we performed beside, best articulates the symbiotic relationship of all the elements involved.



Figure 17. *Conjunction* image.

Alongside that it is helpful to consider Tony Kushner's quote which articulates the joyousness which the intimate partnerships I was involved in for *Conjunction* nurtured.

Marx was right: the smallest indivisible human unit is two people, not one; one is a fiction. From such nets of souls societies, the social world, human life springs. And also plays.¹³

¹³ Tony Kushner, 'With a little help from my friends', in *Thinking about the Longstanding Problems of Virtue and Happiness. Essays, a Play, Two Poems and a Prayer*. (London: Nick Hern Books, 1995), 40.

Chapter 8

What Does This Moment Require? ¹

We develop a taste, an addiction even, for the drama inherent in deeming everything good, bad, or indifferent.²

When nearing a deadline it is easy to get caught up in the difficulty of the work that needs doing and the desire for it to be over. A projection into the future occurs and thoughts settle on how it will feel to have the work finished. Time is wished away. But existing in this state undermines the work itself. If we, as musicians, constantly think about how *good* the work is in the eyes, ears, minds and experiences of the beholder we fail to experience it fully for ourselves. This in turn results in work that isn't truly *there*, doesn't commit to the moment it exists and unfolds in. All the people involved miss each other, somehow. Something is lost.

Kate Ledger and I met at baby massage with our daughters in Autumn 2013. It wasn't until the last session we learnt we were both musicians. Since that time Kate has seen my work and I have seen hers and we have spent a lot of time together with our children. When Kate asked me to write something for her concert *Child's Play* we both knew immediately it would have to explore the area in our combined experiences where being a parent and being a musician collide.

Throughout the portfolio I have discussed collaborations with other musicians, all of whom are friends. By the time Kate and I started work I felt truly secure in my process and our friendship. For Kate—the very epitome of a specialist, a pianist—working collaboratively was a new experience. It felt prophetic that I was finishing the portfolio with a piece that 'tried out' my skills as a collaborator by working with someone that I helped to collaborate. We had an interesting conversation where I pointed out to Kate that—contrary to what she thinks—she is a deeply creative person, and this is demonstrated through the phenomenally detailed understanding she has of the piano and incredible technical ability to bring its infinite variety to an audience. Furthermore, it was

¹ For the Production Score of *What Does This Moment Require?* see the Appendix pages 109-120.

² Sarah Naphali, *Buddhism for Mothers* (Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2010), 361.

these very abilities that taught me much more about the piano. The project immediately proved a point by John-Steiner: ‘That partners may develop previously unknown aspects of themselves through motivated joint participation.’³

To generate the material for the piece, Kate and I looked at the things we loved—the things that had shaped us. I looked at my youth—playing Bartók and Brubeck on the piano, my favourite chords—and we rejoiced in our mutual appreciation of Aphex Twin. We also discussed the emotional extremes of parenting and how judgement of ability—success and failure—links with the experience of being a musician. Buddhism was also a big influence: namely themes of identity, the Middle Way, and the Beginner’s Mind. The piece’s structure ended up being loosely guided by ‘what Buddhists call the ‘Eight Worldly Conditions’: Gain and Loss, Pleasure and Pain, Praise and Blame, Fame and Disrepute.’⁴ So, I supplied Kate with a sheet of musical snippets and Buddhist quotes and asked her to link them to each other:

What does this moment require?

*When seeing, just see. When hearing, just hear. When smelling an odour, just smell it. When tasting, just taste.
When experiencing a tactile sensation, just experience it. When sensing a mental object, just sense it.
Let things stop right there and insight will function automatically.*

We are what we think. All that we are arises with our thoughts. With our thoughts we make the world.

It makes me calmer.

We understand there is suffering in life and we have experienced a truer love.

Since there is no external saviour, it is up to each of you to work out your own liberation.

As mothers we feel the pain in the world more.

Loving a child teaches us what real love is: selfless, patient and forgiving.

Mothers can be so mercilessly demanding of themselves.

gentle, patient and persistent

Mindfulness is *knowing what’s happening at the time it’s happening.*

Regard each other with attention, patience and openness.

Beginner’s Mind: where you see each new moment with fresh eyes rather than falling back on the same old reactions.

I’ve stopped hurting myself.

Figure 18. Buddhist fragments I gave to Kate Ledger.

³ John-Steiner, *Creative Collaboration*, 187.

⁴ Naphali, *Buddhism for Mothers*, 258.

I also asked her to tell me how each snippet could be brought to life at the piano. Kate made the collage below from the material that spoke to her most, and this gave our piece its structure.

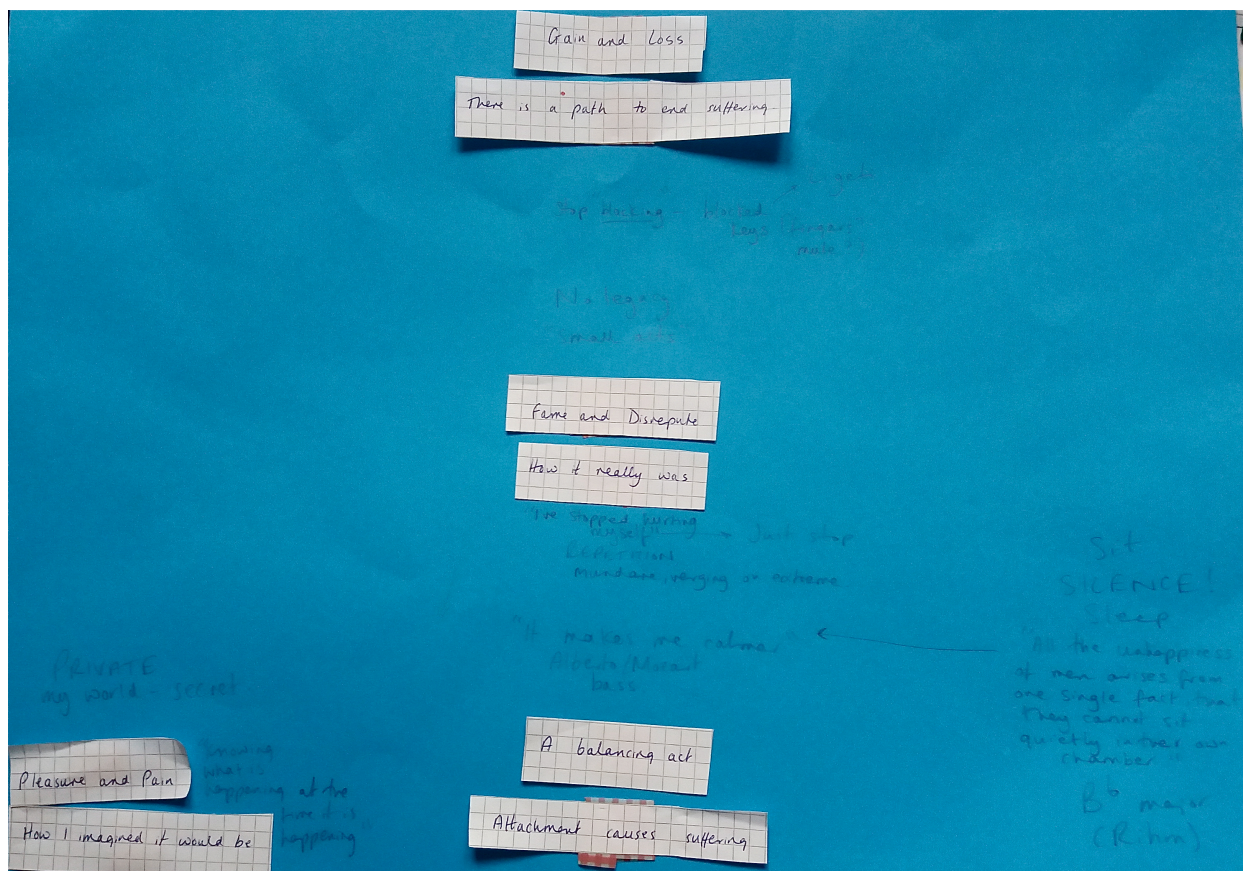


Figure 19. Kate Ledger's responses.

I only wrote material for Kate once she had suggested and demonstrated ideas at the pianos and suggested approaches. We had collaborated by rummaging through our lives and creating a collage with what we found.

As with other pieces in the portfolio, I also felt we were collaborating with a space. In addition to this we were collaborating with specific instruments. From the beginning we knew we were writing for the Fazioli grand piano in the Rymer and Kate's toy piano, a Schoenhut Elite Baby Grand with 37 keys. This level of fixity isn't often afforded a pianist. We delighted in scrutiny of each note on the Fazioli, in particular. This resulted in the use of Dbs and Gbs due to their particularly resonant quality. Bartók's understanding of piano resonance also

helped and the material in 'The Balance' takes his melodic writing as inspiration and uses pitches from 'Ostinato' in the *Microcosmos*.

Figure 20. Excerpt from *Microcosmos* 'Ostinato', bars 91-102.⁵

All semibreve and minim chords and rests should be paused to let ring. But timings can vary to help with pace and feeling.

"Small acts of great love."

50 *Powerful, excited.*

Figure 21. 'The Balance' from *What Does This Moment Require?*, bars 50-51.

⁵ Bartók, *Microcosmos* 'Ostinato', 37.

It was most important for us to create a piece which enabled Kate to articulate her new relationship with the piano, post-children. This is a relationship based on finding balance between extremes and is visually shown by use of toy and grand piano together. We discussed the musician's pre-occupation with being *good* and *right* and how this can be a stressful and dissatisfying way to exist. Instead we wished to create a piece which focussed on being a moment in time with a view to eradicating notions right or wrong.

Having collaborated with Kate in this way, I have felt dissolved into the music itself and that I haven't strictly composed. Instead I feel diluted into a 'thought community'⁶ that connects me to everything and everyone else. It almost seems as if I am the least important part of the equation needed to make the piece exist—that it wrote itself—and this is a curiously liberating feeling. As John-Steiner puts it:

taking risks, buoyed by collaborative support, contributes to a developing, changing self. Through collaboration we can transcend the constraints of biology, of time, of habit, and achieve a fuller self, beyond the limitations and the talents of the isolated individual.⁷

What Does This Moment Require? has at its heart the coming-to-terms with change and the desire to find a new way of living life. Parenthood is the catalyst for these changes and it is through acceptance of *being* a parent that both Kate and I have re-evaluated *being* musicians. The shift has occurred to being from *doing*. But it is a shift that doesn't leave doing behind; instead it is about doing whilst being *with* the doing—inside it. It is this shift that articulates the essence of how Kate feels when performing our piece. It is mindfulness, being in the moment, being truly alive.

Rather than being the piece that finishes the PhD, *What Does This Moment Require?* is the piece that starts my work—and in particular this working *relationship* with Kate—for the future. This piece stares, Janus-like, back at the other pieces, knowing it could not exist without them as ancestors, and forward to future collaborations.

⁶ John-Steiner, *Creative Collaboration*, 187-204.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 188.

Conclusion

The “front” is mathematics in its finished form—lectures, textbooks, and journals. The “back” is mathematics among working mathematicians discussed in offices or at cafe tables. Mathematics in back is fragmentary, informal, intuitive and tentative. ... In attempting to analyze the way scientific advances are co-constructed, it would be helpful to rely on both the “front” and the “back” of creative practices. Some scientists share only their finished products. Others, like the physicist Richard Feynman, reveal some aspects of their modes of thought.¹

The commentary to this portfolio has explained the *back* of my creative practice. The scores I wish to share constitute the *front*.

The compositions in this portfolio fall into three categories. The first comprises contemporary music theatre pieces, the scores of which function like theatrical scripts. They are the longest pieces and present the most scope for being explored and re-imagined by other people in future. The second group is the *Portraits*. They are the most traditionally musical and, whilst containing theatrical elements and a certain amount of space for interpretation, sit most comfortably in the concert hall. The last category contains pieces that, at present, exist only in film and document form. These pieces are too inextricably linked to the performers to be both emotionally or practically imagined by anyone else at present.

Negotiating the journey which takes a piece from intimate collaboration to public score is tricky. There is no set of rules which easily governs the process each piece has gone through; contradictions abound.

The oldest piece is *Exercise in Futility*. It is very personal and the poignancy of contemplating it at this moment, ten years exactly from my father’s death, has not gone unnoticed. This biographical detail aside I feel no proprietary attachment to it as a performer.

¹ John-Steiner, *Creative Collaboration*, 46.

The success of *Exercise in Futility* and the therapeutic effect it had has led me to tailor the score to promote future performances by different people. The private process remains in the background, between Ian and myself, and the foreground is the score. A new performance would be very interesting, both in terms of interpretation of the musical and non-musical material and also the relationship and dynamic between the performers themselves.

Another piece which I have treated in the same way is *I Want To Be Kind*. Despite its intimate links to the performers, who workshopped the piece from beginning to end, it would certainly work with another group of people.

Perhaps surprisingly, the score for the theatrical version of *Jell-O On Springs* is now available for others to perform. Emily and I have no plan to perform this piece again and I would be particularly interested in seeing a version using different combinations of gender because the piece is so reliant on gender, exploration of gender roles and gendered behaviour. As an exploration of mental health issues the piece also has potential to be used therapeutically—or provocatively even, in the right setting—as well. For these reasons I have presented the piece in score form.

The final piece in this group is *Swimming Between Shores*. As discussed, it only received one performance which was theatrically imperfect. But it offers the possibility of a re-imagining, and the score enables this. Despite exploring the interplay between personal and public themes, and its reliance on Merit at the centre, I feel that *Swimming Between Shores* has important things to say. Although the same group of performers will never come together to perform the piece again, I wanted to present the material in a way that could facilitate another performance, should others wish to mount one.

These four pieces have, to my mind, individuated from myself and the performers involved. This is in contrast to the next three which, despite being similar in scale and genre, still require some background work to be done.

I Long For Snow has, ironically, become fused with *juice* in the same way that Meredith Monk's pieces are *of* her performers. Whilst there was always communication with *juice* at each stage of its creation, this piece is the least collaborative in the portfolio. The women were all very cooperative, but the process worked because we kept to established roles; me as composer, them as

performers. The trio is such an established *organism* that it was a pleasure just to watch the women rehearse and the intimacy came from having a shared educational history between us. A lot of what we did was intuitive, rather than discussed, and so the work just happened.

With this in mind it would be relatively easy to integrate the musical material into the instructions in the production score, to depersonalise it, and present it to other trios, but I feel it needs more performances by *juice* themselves first. This is in no small part due to the relationship the live material has with the backing track. Because Anna, Sarah and Kerry's voices feature in the recordings there is a link between material that needs maintaining. The trio are well known and I am not sure their voices on a backing track with different female performers would function convincingly. An important intimacy could be lost.²

Knitted, Crocheted, Looped feels like a promise. I am very happy with the way it functions as a standalone ten minute theatre piece and the filmed performance was very effective and well received.³ However, it is the kernel for a larger scale work, which will still focus on Margaret.

I hope to secure some research and development funding for *Knitted, Crocheted, Looped*, post PhD, to enable an associative role with a theatre to be negotiated. I would also like to work with some psychotherapists, psychiatrists and counsellors specialising in dementia, hoarding and obsessive compulsive disorder, with a view to making this piece one which could explore these issues in a way that reaches beyond its theatrical context. If this piece can become an artwork which generates discussion around mental ill health and helps build awareness then my highest hopes for our work would be made real.

What Does This Moment Require? is a piece where the background is easily hidden by the foreground and a score for other performers could be produced. The collaborative nature and emotional meaning of the piece is not needed for someone new and despite our enjoyment of the Fazioli and Kate's toy piano the piece is not instrument specific either. For the moment the piece needs to remain solely Kate's. It is akin to *Other* due to its deeply personal subject matter and only

² For the Production Score for *I Long For Snow* see the Appendix pages 84-93.

³ For the Production Score for *Knitted, Crocheted, Looped* see the Appendix pages 96-99.

after a few performances by Kate will some emotional distance be available to her, enabling her to work on formulating the score with me. I do not feel able to present it publicly without her input and so, for the moment, the production document and film are how the piece is presented.⁴

Other, as mentioned, presents the flip side to this coin. Charlotte has performed the piece three times now and will continue to do so. It was easy to remove all traces of her private life from the details in the score; mainly because it is the most traditional piece of music in the portfolio. There was no need to detail a process to generate material, as with *I Want To Be Kind*, or elaborate on meaning. Anyone approaching it can pay as much, or as little, attention to the titles of the movements as they wish. It is pleasing that this piece can sit alongside others in the portfolio and be so different in its final form despite being developed through a similar process.

Healing, graceful/full of grace and *Froth and Bubble* do have more information at the beginning of the scores, whilst still being more score than theatrical script. This is needed to give context and aid musical interpretation. It has felt correct and, more importantly *safe*, to do this because nothing emotional or biographically personal was offered up by the performers from which to create these pieces. Personalities remain hidden.

I have presented the *Portraits* separately in score form, but their performance as a set in York Art Gallery has sparked ideas for further work within my non-musical community. Provoking the audience into a consideration of art and music together, and how one affects the experience of the other, is a concept I hope to explore further in future and strikes me as a way to embrace both purpose and chance more often—elements essential to creativity as articulated by Howard Gruber.⁵ The purpose in this instance was clear: writing for my friends, exploring and making sense of shared experiences and setting meaningful texts. The chance was offered when the York Art Gallery team said “Yes!”. Taking chances with alternative performance spaces in future is something I will strive for.

⁴ For the Production Score of *What Does This Moment Require?* see the Appendix pages 109-120.

⁵ Gruber, *Creative People at Work*, 11.

All the portfolio's scores come with an accompanying DVD of the performance/s. This is an important addition. I have stated clearly that none of the films are definitive versions, but seeing the productions is a helpful way to understand what is required of a new realisation. Even with the most musical pieces I feel the DVD is still essential. Much of my writing process involves visualising ideas and material and this supports my affinity with contemporary music theatre. The films also demonstrate how the venues shaped the music, something I have realised is an important part of my process too. Most importantly, seeing the original musicians performing these pieces is also a public declaration of their involvement and co-ownership over the material. This admission is not meant to put future performers off, but to provide a link to the original moment in which the event unfolded and authenticated itself.

Towards the end of her PhD commentary Dr Emily Kalies asks 'Which is more important: the process or the product? Does it matter?'⁶ Kalies' process involved working with collaborators to create a piece of work and her commentary discusses how successful these collaborations were in terms of the finished piece. A large proportion of her collaborations were not with friends. My model is very different to this. With the exception of a few members of *Swimming Between Shores*—who were cast due to their willingness and availability—all the performers in these pieces are friends, and the dynamics between us rely on emotional connections as much as professional ones. My answer to Kalies' question, so far as my own work is concerned, is that neither the process nor the product is paramount as they are symbiotically dependent. The desire for a binary understanding of the work, or creating a hierarchy, is irrelevant. A duality which seems more resonant, as this portfolio and accompanying commentary has attempted to show, is that these processes and pieces spring from 'the desire to overcome the limitations of the self and [are] a response to the alienation widespread in modern life.'⁷ In exploring points in our lives where we have felt other and integrating these moments into a collaborative music-making process

⁶ Emily Kalies, 'Collaboration: Creating with the Enemy?!', (PhD commentary, University of York, 2011), 88.

⁷ John-Steiner, *Creative Collaboration*, 124.

with a resultant therapeutic outcome we have proved that the ‘motivational sources of collaboration’⁸ are *as important* as the final product.

As an additional research outcome, this work has enabled me to contemplate my self-in-relation to my chosen community as a way to critically appraise my creative process. This is something I would not have managed as successfully had I engaged a more ‘Cartesian emphasis upon the primacy of the individual.’⁹

I already have future plans to work with Margaret Hillier, Charlotte Bishop and Kate Ledger and I hope to continue these relationships far into the future. In her final chapter on ‘Thought Communities’, John-Steiner states that she presents a

different theoretical framework. It is a life-span approach. Social, cultural, historical, and biological conditions together contribute to the realization of human possibility. Central to such an approach is the principle that *humans come into being and mature in relation to others*.¹⁰

The most important research outcome for me is having learnt how to take a life-span approach. It is this approach that will sustain my life as a composer and I hope this research helps others to do the same. I have come into being and maturity through the individual determination required to complete this PhD but this PhD—without the communal commitment of all my collaborators—would simply not exist.

⁸ John-Steiner, *Creative Collaboration*, 124.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 187.

Appendix

*I Want To Be Kind – Performers’ ‘In the beginning’ Texts
and final ‘wants’ 2009*

Betsy

In the beginning everything was pure chaos and all I wanted was stillness and silence. I thought that all I needed was a home. I thought I was able to make sense of things even though things made no sense. Things were rough and raw-hot. Then they got e x p a n s i v e. As time went by I was more able to open up my throat and swallow. I would look back and weep like a child. It made me feel lost like a kitten in the cold rain. Now, I am able to breathe. But, things are still chaotic. I look forward with a sense of no fear. Things are not the same- ever! Now I want you, girl, you.

Ian

(First – alone, normal)

In the beginning everything was peachy and all I wanted was her. I thought that was all I needed. I thought I was able to cope with anything. Things were stable. Then they got stranger. As time went by I was more able to see the truth for the trees. I would look back and cry thinking about it all. It made me feel ...well humiliated and stuff. Now I am able to at least breath more easily. But things are still not one hundred percent. I look forward with a sense of hope and am very glad that things are not the same. I am finding myself again. Now I want to put it all behind me and look forward.

(Second – whispered, frenetic, under Rainy's text)

In the beginning everything was whisky and pomegranates and all I wanted was ... well a yacht. I thought that was all I needed. I thought I was able to chop suey. Things were surreal but calmer. Then they got existential like a fish on the wire. As time went by I was more able know what it was like to be a mushroom or a teapot – and once even a cardigan. I would look back and forward. It made me feel abstract. Now I am able to ignore reality. But things are still orange when mother comes. I look forward with a sense of stupidity. Things are not the same as Big Brother. I am therefore I think, my cat pees in the sink. Now I want the cat in the hat-er-dickery-dock.

Rachel

In the beginning everything was red and all I wanted was blue. I thought that was all I needed. I thought I was able to be part of purple. Things were bright. Then they got brown. As time went by I was more able to colour myself. I would look back and darken. It made me feel hidden. Now I am able to blend better. But things are still mauve. I look forward with a sense of vibrancy. Things are not the same shade. I am bolder, now I want white.

Penny

In the beginning everything was blue and all I wanted was yellow. I thought that was all I needed. I thought I was able to mix it all up. Things were murky then they got brown. As time went by I was more able to see red. I would look back and blush. It made me feel oh so colourful. Now I am able to think pink. But things are still beige. I look forward with a sense of purple-ness. Things are not the same colour. I am a palate of anticipation. Now I want green.

Rainy

In the beginning everything was like apple pie and all I wanted was some cream. I thought that was all I needed. I thought I was able to survive with just that. Things were ridiculous. Then they got worse. As time went by I was more able to turn cartwheels with my life. I would look back and think I was looking forward. It made me feel carsick. Now I am able to walk in a straight line. But things are still topsy-turvy. I look forward with a sense of balance. Things are not the same old same old. I am spinning. Now I want to be still.

Will (not used)

In the beginning everything was dull and all I wanted was adventure. I thought that was all I needed. I thought I was able to fly. Things were too tame. Then they got more exciting. As time went by I was more able to break away. I would look back and see the shackles. It made me feel liberated. Now I am able to go against the flow. But things are still too tame. I look forward with a sense of expectancy. Things are not the same in the future. I am free as a bird there. Now I want it more than ever.

In the beginning everything was frustrating and all I wanted was a racket. I thought that was all I needed. I thought I was able to ace my opponent. Things were easy. Then they got more competitive. As time went by I was more able to slice my backhand. I would look back and see my score rising. It made me feel on top of the world. Now I am able to whitewash any challenger. But things are still not quite perfect. I look forward with a sense of Wimbledon. Things are not the same there as they are in Finchley. I am destined for greatness. Now I want a nap.

Individual 'I want' lines:

Betsy – I want a healthy body

Ian – I want to be the oldest person in the world

Rainy – I want what I don't have

Penny – I want to fly a plane

Rachel – I want to be more like my friends

Jell-O On Springs - Photographer's Character Work-Up
Morag Galloway 2010

1 - Photographic terms used in sound recording:

adjust, crop, scale, brightness, contrast, develop, wind-on, shutter-release, aperture, exposure, fixative, water, rinse, negative, grey-scale, sepia, black and white, bleached out, grainy, colour, composition, subject, object

2 - Dialogue 1:

"I have been thinking of doing something. It has been occupying my mind for some time. Something that will change me from the unseen to the seen. I hide behind things. I am looking but not looked at. I am compelled to be seen. I used to be fine existing in the shadows. I made that place my home. A place where I can slip in easily and slip out again, unnoticed. I don't want to lose this, but it is a place without light and I am beginning to fade. I don't want to fade away completely. I don't want to recede. I can feel parts of myself becoming transparent and it is making me afraid. I want to be tangible. To develop. Though I am happy to appear, as if by magic. I am not two-dimensional on a page, though. I take up more space than that. You can blow me up and out. I am blow up. I will blow up ..."

3 - Dialogue 2:

"Dreams of a sticky place. Dark colours that are indistinguishable from each other blending everything into blackness. I am always trying to get away from something and can only walk, never able to run. I am always walking up a mountainous, rocky terrain. Navigating boulders and rocks, having to use my hands, bend down and grasp objects to steady myself. The objects turn to items from my life or severed limbs or rotting food. It is worst when I get to the top. The top is not the summit. I get there and then another peak reveals itself. I look around and I am back at the bottom; like an impossible staircase. Worst of all I know I am in the dream, that it is a dream, but I can't stop it or get out."

4 - Dialogue 3:

"It makes sense to try and knock the hell out of things if you can. You have to approach things with energy, with aggression. Like what was always said: 'Sticking feathers up your butt doesn't make you a chicken.' If I am going to do this I am going to do this properly. I mean, for God's sake, there is no room for pretending or being half hearted. Either get stuck in or back off. Stick to your guns, don't pull your punches, keep your guard up, don't let the side down ..."

Jell-O On Springs - Film Storyboard
Morag Galloway 2011

JELLO ON SPRINGS - SOUND STORY - BOARD

SCENE ①



EMILY SEQUENCE

- 1st rep silent?
- 2nd rep sounds creek in
- 3rd rep cresc
- 4th rep loud & overlaid typing

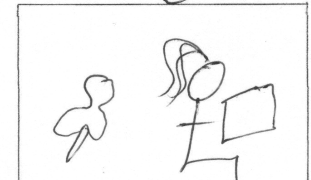
SCENE ②



M. BED WHITE

- Quiet breathing, no gasping sounds

SCENE ③

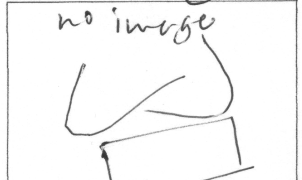


EM SEQUENCE

- 1st rep overlaid
- 2nd rep build
- 3rd rep typing

SCENE ④


no image



WATER TRAY [W]

- plain water sounds


SCENE ⑤



EM SEQUENCE

- continue water sounds underneath?

SCENE ⑥

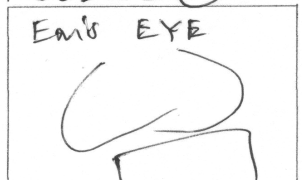


Spying scene

- camera sounds
- low, ominous beat - laptop planned to be footsteps?

SCENE ⑦


EM'S EYE



WATER TRAY [W]

- water sounds
- camera sounds

SCENE ⑧

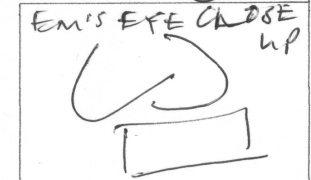


EM WALKING

- camera clicks
- gasps when she disappears?
- bass sound
- laptop walking


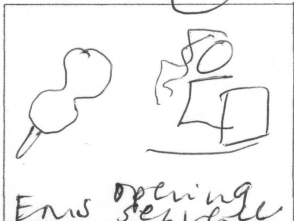
SCENE ⑨

EM'S EYE CLOSE UP



WATER TRAY [W]

- camera clicks with plops
- become typing sounds on her eye
- ominous bass sound

<p>★ SCENE (10)</p>  <p>PHOTOSHOOT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - camera clicks - ominous bass? - lip smacking? 	<p>SCENE (11)</p>  <p>BED WHITE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - breathing - clicking - water - gasping etc. 	<p>SCENE (12)</p>  <p>EM SEQUENCE</p> <p>FAST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - all sounds sped up - distorted?
<p>SCENE (13)</p>  <p>BED (W) B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - breathing - gasping & bad dream 	<p>SCENE (14)</p> <p>BAD DREAM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - plus punching and knives 	<p>STILLS MONTAGE?</p>
<p>SCENE (16)</p>  <p>EM REMOVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - full within ^{workout} practise? 	<p>SCENE (17)</p>  <p>MSELF HALL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - mashed up club mix & sounds 	<p>SCENE (18)</p>  <p>EM'S opening sequence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - original end soundtrack

@ stills of closeups

★ stills of photoshoot

I Long For Snow

A music theatre piece

For Juice

Premiered at The University of York, Rymer Auditorium
on 13th November 2015¹

Anna Snow, Sarah Dacey, Kerry Andrew

CAST

A soprano, a mezzo-soprano and an alto.

The names of the performers are used throughout this score, so for soprano actions read *Anna*, mezzo-soprano read *Sarah*, alto read *Kerry*.

SET AND PROPS

Position 1 - stage right, performer always lying on a block/floor

Position 2 - centre stage, performer always standing

Position 3 - stage left, performer sitting on a stool

These are referred to as Pos 1, Pos 2 and Pos 3 respectively throughout the score. For the 2015 Rymer premiere Positions 1 and 2 were swapped over. This was to accommodate sight lines. All positions can be swapped around to make most intelligent use of the performance space. Relationships between them—as detailed in the score—should be adhered to, however.

COSTUME

All black. Not too formal and enabling ease of movement.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

The **Backing Track** needs to be played through speakers positioned so that there is a sense the audience is enveloped with sound. For spaces such as the Rymer Auditorium, which has the technical capability, there is a **Spacialisation Backing Track** detailing which parts of the track can be heard through which of the eight speakers.

I long for snow

I long for snow.

For the sweep of a mountain,

For the gasp of fresh breath,

As I swoop down its shoulder

Thinking only in that minute

Of each second of the ride.

I long for the soft silence

The dampened muffled crunch

That the snow lends to everything.

I watch it flaking itself

Over the things that surround me.

¹ For the film of this performance see the DVD accompanying this commentary.

It shushes them, cuddles them,
 And presses them to sleep.
 I long for water.
 For the weight of the sea,
 For the gasp for lost breath,
 As I frog-kick and straighten
 Thinking only in that minute
 Of each second, of each stroke.
 I long for the wordless roar
 The yawning bellow crash
 That the sea shouts to everyone.
 I watch it kneading itself
 Over the pebbles surrounding me.
 It sneaks round them, oiling them,
 And fills in all their gaps.

I long for air.
 For the sprawl of the sky,
 For the gasp of clear breath,
 As I lie on my back
 Thinking only in that minute
 Of each second as a blink.
 I long for the outstretched sigh
 The smiling wispy clouds
 That the sky laces for everyone.
 I watch it powder itself
 For a night that will surround me.
 It blushes pink, dresses red,
 And scatters diamonds as it leaves.

© Morag Galloway 2009

Scene One - Snow

Sound cue 1 from 0.00 - 1.10 - Performers, from offstage, or various places in the performance space, begin to evolve their personal gesture.

Anna makes her hands move like snowflakes

Sarah is kicking a puddle

Kerry is blowing up a balloon and releasing it

First it is performed stationary, then whilst moving slowly towards positions on stage. Performers are in positions by 1.10: *Kerry* Pos 1, *Anna* Pos 2, *Sarah* Pos 3.

Sound cue 2 from 1.11 - 1.55 - Performers put out a hand from their positions and:

Anna tries to catch snowflakes

Sarah swirls her hand in water in front of her

Kerry reaches up to touch the sky

Sound cue 3 at 1.42 - the mobiles can be heard on the **Backing Track**

Sound cue 4 at 1.53 - Anna's voice is heard speaking on the **Backing Track**: "I long for snow ...". On this cue *Anna* stops moving and sings her verse. When *Sarah* and *Kerry* hear *Anna* sing the phrase 'I long for snow ...' they start doing 'snow' movements:

Sarah building a snowman

Kerry making a snow angel

The movements come to a close by 3.15.

Sound cue 5 at 3.16 - *Sarah* stands up and starts doing her personal gesture on the spot.

Sound cue 6 at 3.18 - *Kerry* stands up and starts doing her personal gesture on the spot.

Sound cue 7 at 3.20 - *Anna* starts doing her personal gesture on the spot.

Scene Two - Water

Sound cue 8 at 3.37 - With the entrance of the distorted music all three start moving, whilst doing their gesture, towards new positions for *Sarah's* verse. They are in position by 3.53: *Anna* Pos 1, *Sarah* Pos 2, *Kerry* Pos 3.

Sound cue 9 at 3.55 - Performers do new movements in these positions:

Anna makes a snow angel

Kerry is in a hot air balloon

Sarah dives into the water

Sound cue 10 at 4.25 - Sarah's voice is heard speaking on the **Backing Track**: "I long for water ...". On this cue *Sarah* stops moving and sings her verse. When *Anna* and *Kerry* hear *Sarah* sing the phrase 'I long for water ...' they start doing 'water' movements:

Anna is floating on back/going under and holding breath

Kerry is touching the water/splashing someone

The movements come to a close by 5.45.

Sound cue 11 at 5.48 - *Kerry* stands up and starts doing her personal gesture on the spot.

Sound cue 12 at 5.52 - *Anna* stands up and starts doing her personal gesture on the spot.

Sound cue 13 at 5.56 - *Sarah* starts doing her personal gesture on the spot.

Scene Three - Air

Sound cue 14 at 6.04 - With the entrance of the distorted music all three start moving, whilst doing their gesture, towards new positions for *Kerry's* verse. They are in position by 6.20: *Sarah* Pos 1, *Kerry* Pos 2, *Anna* Pos 3.

Sound cue 15 at 6.21 - Performers do movements in these positions:

Sarah is floating on back/going under and holding breath

Anna is building a snowman

Kerry is flying a kite

Sound cue 16 at 6.59 - *Kerry's* voice is heard speaking on the **Backing Track**: "I long for air ...". On this cue *Kerry* stops moving and sings her verse. When *Sarah* and *Anna* hear *Kerry* sing the phrase 'I long for air ...' they start doing 'air' movements:

Sarah reaches up to touch the sky

Anna is in a hot air balloon

The movements come to a close by 8.20.

Sound cue 17 at 8.20 - With the entrance of the distorted music *Anna* and *Sarah* stand up.

Sound cue 18 at 8.28 - With the entrance of the distorted whispering all three start moving towards their final positions: stood up as a trio, centre stage, as they would when singing in a traditional concert situation.

Sound cue 19 at 8.54 - All performers perform the final section as detailed in the score.

Sound cue 20 at 10.24 - *Anna* finishes gesture and stands very still.

Sound cue 21 at 10.36 - *Sarah* finishes gesture and stands very still.

Sound cue 22 at 10.46 - *Kerry* finishes gesture and stands very still.

$\text{♩} = 88$ *Flexibly, with wonder.*

Anna/
Soprano

I long for snow. For the sweep of a moun-tain, For the gasp

8

S.

of fresh breath, As I swoop down its shoul-der Think-ing on - ly

14

S.

in that min - ute. Of each se - cond of the ride. I long for the soft si - lence

20

S.

The damp - 'end muff-led crunch That the snow lends to ev' - ry thing.

27

S.

I watch it flak - ing it - self Ov - er the things that sur - round me.

32

S.

It shu - shes them, cod - dles them, and press-es them to sleep.

$\text{♩} = 88$ *With passion and elemental force.*

Sarah/
Mezzo-soprano

I long for wa-ter. For the weight of the sea,

7

M-S.

For the gasp for lost breath, As I frog-kick and straight-en

13

M-S.

Think-ing on-ly in that min-ute. Of each se-cond, of each stroke.

17

M-S.

I long for the word-less roar. The yawn-ing bel-low crash

23

M-S.

That the sea shouts to ev'-ry one. I watch it knead-ing it-self

30

M-S.

Ov-er the peb-bles sur-round-ing me. It

33

M-S.

sneaks round them, oil-ing them, and fills in all their gaps.

$\text{♩} = 88$ *Fancifully.*

Kerry/
Alto

I long for air. For the sprawl of the sky,

7

A.

For the gasp of clear breath, As I lie on my back

13

A.

Think - ing on - ly in that min - ute. Of each se - cond as a blink.

17

A.

I long for the out - stretched sigh. The smil - ing wis - py clouds.

23

A.

That the sky lac - es for ev' - ry - one. I watch it

29

A.

pow - der it - self For a night that will sur - round me.

32

A.

It blush - es pink, dress - es red, and scat - ters dia - monds as it leaves.

$\text{♩} = 92$ *Ardently.*

Anna/
Soprano

Sarah/
Mezzo-soprano

Kerry/
Alto

I long for snow. For the sweep of a moun-tain, For the gasp

I long for wa-ter. For the weight of the sea, For the gasp

I long for air. For the sprawl of the sky, For the gasp

Annotations: Move on 1st beat, Hold, Move on 2nd beat, Hold, Move on 3rd beat, Hold

8

of fresh breath, As I swoop down its shoul-der Think-ing on-ly

for lost breath, As I frog-kick and straight-en Think-ing on-ly

of clear breath, As I lie on my back Think-ing on-ly

Annotations: Finish movement, Perform whole movement, then arms down in rest., 3

14

in that min-ute Of each se-cond of the ride. I long for the

in that min-ute Of each se-cond, of each stroke. I long for the

in that min-ute Of each se-cond as a blink. I long for the

Annotations: Move on 1st beat and perform for whole bar, Hold, Small version of movement throughout whole phrase, Move on 1st beat and perform for minim, Hold, Move on 2nd beat only, Movement throughout whole phrase

19

soft si-lence, the damp - 'end muff-led crunch That the snow lends to

word-less roar, the yawn-ing bel-low crash That the sea shouts to

out - stretch'd sigh, the smi-ling wis-py clouds That the sky lac-es for

24

ev'-ry thing. I watch it flak-ing it-self Ov-er the things that sur-round me.

ev'-ry - one. I watch it knead - ing it-self Ov-er the peb-bles sur-round-ing

ev'-ry - one. I watch it pow-der it-self For a night that will sur-

30

Start very slow, tiny versions of movements to end of phrase, then stop on Anna's last line on backing track.

It shu - shes them, cod - dles them, and press-es them to sleep.

me. It sneaks round them, oil-ing them, and fills in all their gaps.

round me. It blush - es pink, dress - es red, and scat-ters dia-monds as it leaves.

Start very slow, tiny versions of movements to end of phrase, then stop on Sarah's last line on backing track.

Start very slow, tiny versions of movements to end of phrase, then stop on Kerry's last line on backing track.

mobile 1

S. I long for for the
S. I long for
A. I long for I long for

mobile 2

S. For the gasp!
S. Gasp!
A. Gasp!

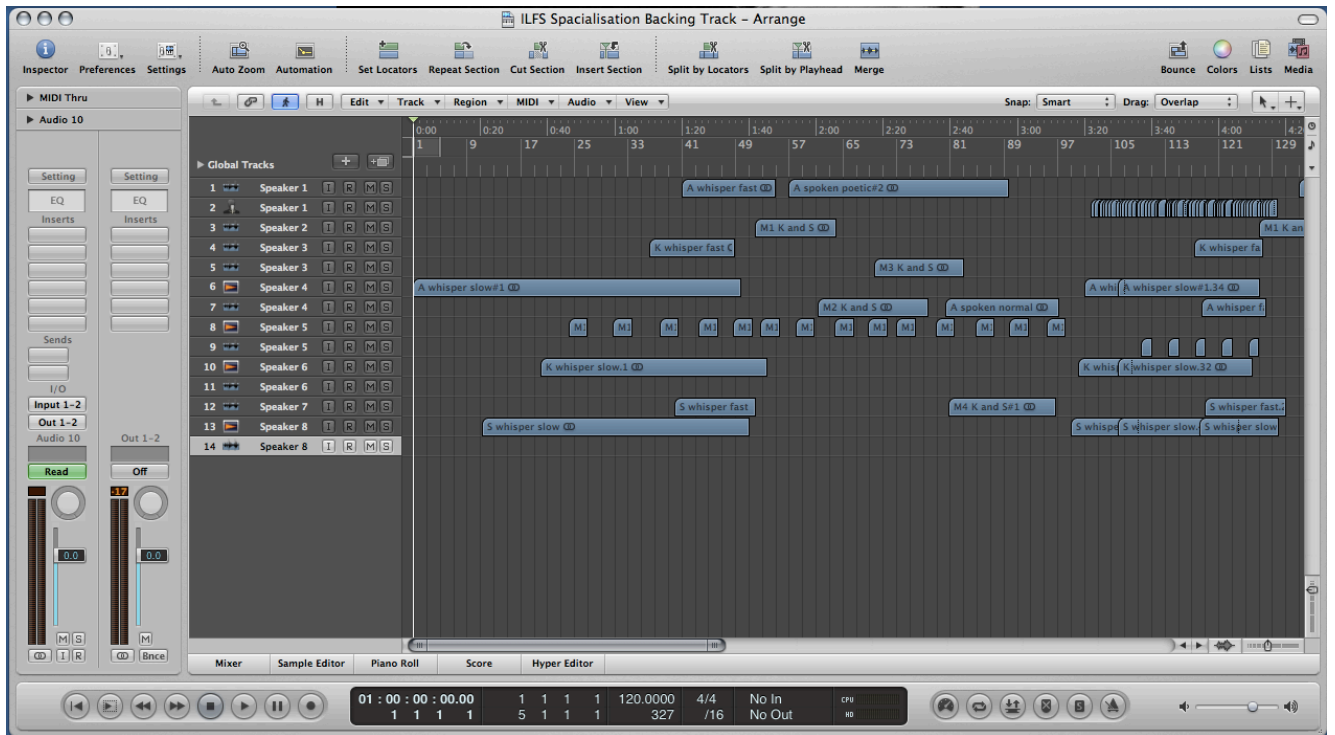
mobile 3

S. Of the ah/ride/stroke/blink
S. Ah/ride/stroke/blink
A. Ah/ride/stroke/blink

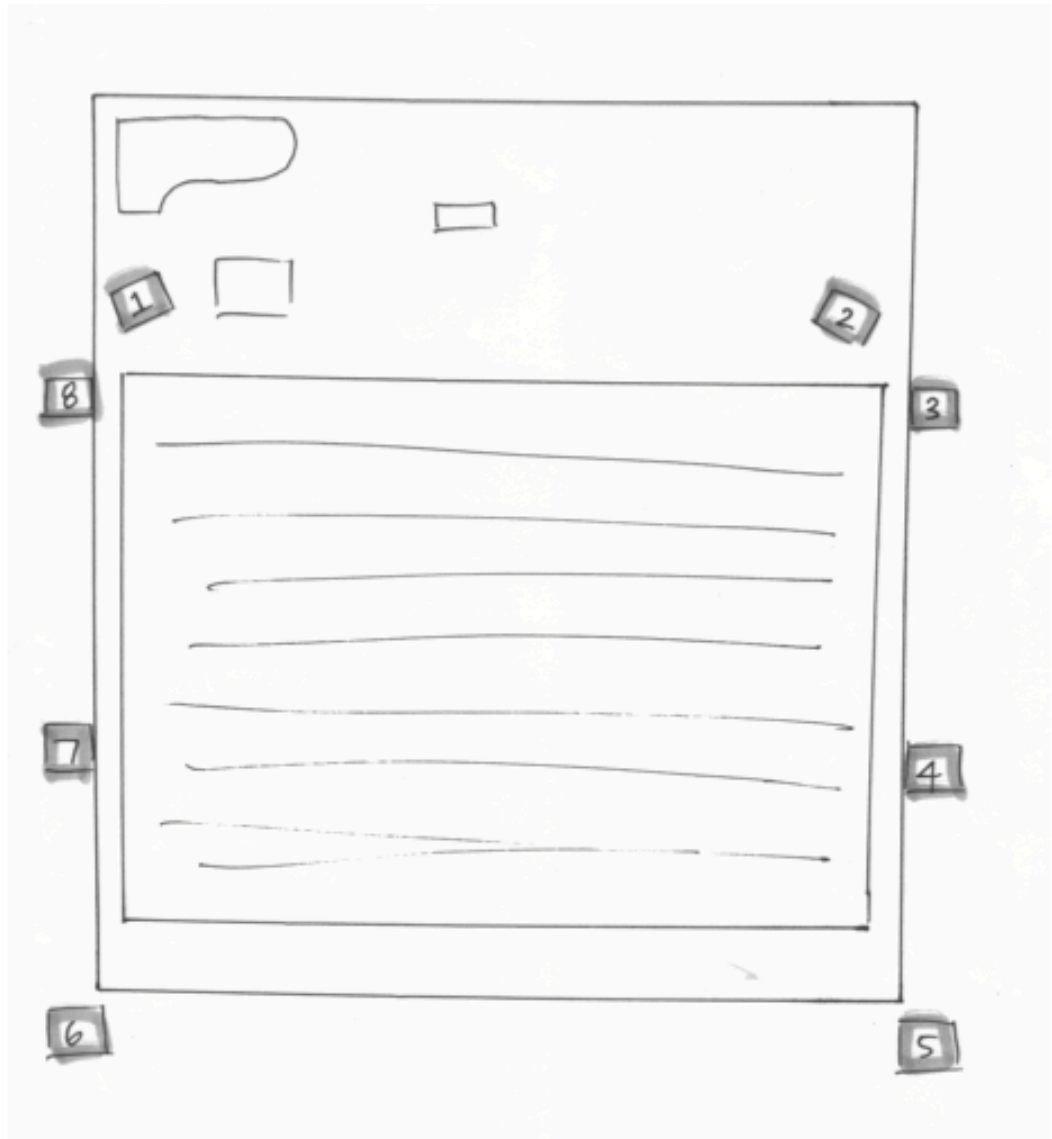
mobile 4

S. Ah, ev' - ry ah
S. That the ah ev - 'ry ah
A. Ah

I Long For Snow - Spacialisation Image from Logic Project
Morag Galloway 2015



I Long For Snow - Rymer Auditorium Speaker Plan
Morag Galloway 2015



Knitted, Crocheted, Looped

A music theatre piece

For Margaret

Premiered at *CentreStage*, at the White Cloth Gallery, Leeds

on 21st February 2015¹

Ma – Margaret Hillier

Mo – Morag Galloway

CAST

An old woman who can knit.

A younger woman who can sing and play a violin or viola.

SET AND PROPS

- A rocking chair centre stage for *Ma* to sit in.
- Knitted baby garments scattered around the rocking chair.
- A table or area where *Mo's* instrument can be pre-set covered in adult knitted garments that fit *Mo*.
- A scarf that fits *Ma* to be amongst the adult garments.

COSTUME

'Normal' clothes that are suitable for each character.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

The **Backing Track** needs to be played through speakers by a technician and positioned so that the audience feel they are in the room with *Ma*; an old, dusty room, clogged with memories. Care must be taken with balance so the actor playing *Ma* isn't ever drowned out, and the viola playing and singing can always be heard.

PRESET

It will be most effective if *Ma* can be preset as the audience enter; asleep in the rocking chair, holding knitting on her lap.

The **Backing Track** has approximately 3 minutes of a clock ticking on it before the action starts. This can be timed to play whilst the audience enters. Once the audience is settled lighting should change to indicate the start of the piece.

Scene One - I must get this finished.

Sound cue 1 at 3.10 - "*knitted, crocheted, looped*" is heard.

Ma wakes.

Mo ENTERS.

Mo starts looking at adult knitted clothing and assessing them, trying them on and discarding them.

¹ For the film of this performance see the DVD accompanying this commentary.

Sound cue 2 at 4.30 - “*no use*” is heard.

Mo discards an item, finds special jumper and puts it on.

Sound cue 3 at 4.55 - “*joined together*” is heard.

Mo has special jumper on, is pleased, stops moving.

Sound cue 4 at 5.02 - “*knitted, crocheted, looped*” is heard three times.

Ma starts knitting.

Sound cue 5 at 5.15 - *piano melody starts*.

After first piano phrase *Ma* starts speaking Part 1, whilst knitting.

When she stops speaking she stops knitting.

Part 1

I’m knitting again as I must get this finished.

I’ve been doing it for years and I must get it finished.

It was a jumper for her and now it won’t fit

but it could work for another

because I just can’t sit here

and have it still be there

looking at me

watching me

reminding me of what I’ve

not managed to achieve

not managed to make

not managed to finish.

Because if something isn’t finished and done what is it?

What can it be if it can’t become?”

Scene Two - It has to be something.

Sound cue 6 at 6.36 - *minor note on piano* is heard.

Mo picks up viola.

Sound cue 7 at 6.51 - *Mo* starts playing a repeated F natural on viola/violin—quietly, and with a stilted gesture—as if stuck in a loop.

Sound cue 8 at 7.01 - “*knitted, crocheted, looped*” is heard three times.

Ma starts knitting.

Mo starts viola loop below without changing physical gesture/dynamic.



Sound cue 9 at 7.18 - “*tangled*” is heard.

Ma starts speaking Part 2, whilst still knitting.

She becomes quite impassioned towards the end.

When *Ma* starts speaking *Mo* starts singing repeated loop below whilst still playing. It is at the same tempo and locks in with viola line.



When *Ma* says “loved one” *Mo* becomes more fluid and less mechanical, as if being affected by her words.

Viola/violin and singing both stop together abruptly at end of the speech.

Mo slowly lowers instrument and stands still.

Part 2

It has to be something.

Wool is made to make something.

To be knitted, crocheted, looped.

A straight line can't be worn; it's no use to anyone.

It is free to become tangled.

It has to be knitted, crocheted, looped.

Then sewn up, joined together.

Then you can wear it. A loved one can wear it.

Wear what you've made for them. Made of your love for them.

They are wearing your love. Wearing a soft manifestation of your love.

My love. My love knitted, crocheted, looped.

Scene Three - Grown up and gone.

Sound cue 10 at 8.32 - *female singing* is heard.

Sound cue 11 at 8.47 - “*her*” is heard sung.

Ma starts speaking Part 3, knitting only in gaps after each line of text.

Part 3

So I need to finish it for her. Even though it won't fit now.

Far too small. For a child really. A small child really.

And she's all grown up now. Grown up and gone.

Though I can't recall what she looks like now. Can't picture her face.

I suppose it's probably a bit like mine. Hair like mine.

Her hair was always like mine.

Though her eyes were his.

Mo turns around to face *Ma*.

Ma stops knitting. Really looks at knitting.

Do these colours go with those eyes?

Ma starts knitting again mechanically.

I'm not even sure they do, that they will, after all.

Mo picks up scarf and takes it to *Ma*.

Ma stops knitting and looks at *Mo* whilst she puts the scarf around *Ma's* neck. *Ma* looks away again.

Mo looks sad, then gets up and EXITS.

Sound cue 12 at 11.42 - "*can't picture her face*" is heard.

Ma starts knitting again, furiously, but stops soon after starting, as if energy has been spent.

Ma looks at knitting, lets it slowly fall to her lap and then slowly drops her head to chest—as if falling asleep—during remainder of the **Backing Track**.

Backing Track plays out, finishing with "*that they will, after all.*"

BLACKOUT.

Healing

A music theatre piece

For Roger

Written for The Marsh Celebration Concert,
at the Jack Lyons Concert Hall, University of York,
on 24th November 2010¹

Marimba – Damien Harron

Tenor – John Potter

SET AND PROPS

- A chair with arms for the Tenor to sit in whilst singing.
- The marimba must be placed directly behind the chair, about 10 feet away, so that the player and instrument can be seen clearly by everyone except the Tenor.

COSTUME

All black; both performers need to look very pale, the marimba player very ill.

NOTE ON THE PERFORMANCE

- The marimba player is representing the *mechanism*. The player needs to make sure that whenever there is repeated musical material the accompanying movements are as repetitive as possible.
- The Tenor is calm and reflective, but not without passion. He is singing to the audience as if he is imparting something extremely important, but his vocal line must always remain legato.

The text is taken from *Healing* by D.H. Lawrence:

I am not a mechanism, an assembly of various sections.
And it is not because the mechanism is working wrongly, that I am ill.
I am ill because of wounds to the soul, to the deep emotional self
and the wounds to the soul take a long, long time, only time can help
and patience, **and a certain difficult repentance*
long, difficult repentance, realisation of life's mistake,
and the freeing oneself
from the endless repetition of the mistake
which mankind at large has chosen to sanctify.

** This line in italics is not included in the setting.*

© Morag Galloway 2010

¹ For the film of this performance see the DVD accompanying this commentary.

Healing

Words D.H. Lawrence
Music Morag Galloway

Mechanical but frantic. Every time the *p* material interrupts there is a sense of being thwarted/blocked.

Marimba

♩ = 100

f *p* *f*

Tenor

♩ = 100

Mar.

♩ = 80 ♩ = 100

p *f* *p* *f*

Mar.

♩ = 70 ♩ = 100

p *f*

Mar.

p *f* *p* *f* *p*

9

Mar.

11

Mar.

Rall.....

8

T.

Rall.....

13

Mar.

$\text{♩} = 45$

$\text{♩} = 100$

8

T.

$\text{♩} = 45$

Legato *mf*

As if reading a story to someone,
calm but focussed.

$\text{♩} = 100$

I am not a mech-a-ni-sm,

15

Mar.

$\text{♩} = 45$

p

8

T.

$\text{♩} = 45$

an as-sem-bly of var-ious sec-tions. And it is not be-cause the mech-a-ni-sm is

17 $\text{♩} = 100$

Mar.

T.

work-ing wrong-ly, that I am ill

19 $\text{♩} = 45$

Mar.

T.

I am ill be-cause of wounds to the soul, to the deepe-mo-tion-al self

21 $\text{♩} = 100$ $\text{♩} = 45$

Mar.

T.

and the wounds to the soul take a long, long time, on-ly time can help-

24 $\text{♩} = 100$ $\text{♩} = 45$

Mar.

T.

and pa-tience the re-a-li-sa-tion of life's mis-take-

27 $\text{♩} = 100$ $\text{♩} = 45$ Look up and out, in wonder at the audience, if possible.

Mar. *f*

T. $\text{♩} = 100$ *mf* $\text{♩} = 45$ *f*

and the free-ing one - self from the

29 Look back down, defeated. $\text{♩} = 100$ $\text{♩} = 45$

Mar. *p* *ff* *p*

T. $\text{♩} = 100$ *ff* $\text{♩} = 45$ *mp*

end-less rep-e - ti - tion of the mis - take which man-

31

Mar. *p* *ppp*

T. *p* *ppp*

kind at large has cho - sen to sanc-ti - fy

CONJUNCTION

combinations of events or circumstances

An opportunity to experience musical duets and solos interacting with works of art; bringing into question the relationships and experience of both.

Sunday 6th March, 2016
York Art Gallery
Promenade Performances
12pm and 2pm

Concert One - 12pm

Starting in front of *Halo*, by Susie MacMurray, in the Madsen Gallery;

FROTH AND BUBBLE

Then promenading upstairs to the Burton Gallery, near the Venus and nudes;

GRACEFUL/FULL OF GRACE

Turning to the other end of the gallery, in front of the families;

OTHER

Finishing in the Centre of Ceramic Art, next to *Manifest* by Clare Twomey;

HEALING

Concert Two - 2pm

Starting in the Centre for Ceramic Art, next to *Manifest* by Clare Twomey;

HEALING

Then a short walk to the Burton Gallery, near the families;

OTHER

Turning to the side of the gallery, near the abstract art;

GRACEFUL/FULL OF GRACE

Promenading downstairs to the Madsen Gallery, to finish in front of *Halo*, by Susie MacMurray;

FROTH AND BUBBLE

... please turn over for more details and provocations ...

Performers:

Charlotte Bishop - 'cello, Katharine Wood - soprano, Zoë Craven - marimba
All music written by Morag Galloway

Art, texts, ideas, questions ...

I am interested in the constantly changing nature of human experiences. Nothing is ever stationary, nothing stays the same. In an art gallery we are often under the illusion that something has been created for us that is fixed in time and space. That is a certainty. We can visit it again and again, and it appears to remain the same. But it does not. We all, deep down, know works of fine art change over time like everything else. They degrade, need care and attention, careful positioning and even restoration. Due to their, often, long lives, the shifting perspectives around them change also. Therefore the calm we can experience in a gallery—looking at this tangible, inanimate object, unaffected by our ever shifting biology—can easily dissipate, or contract, into something else, if we think about it long enough ...

I have been struggling with the idea that musical compositions are ever truly finished. Life has shattered any illusion I had that things ever end in any real sense. Lately this struggle has evolved into a playfulness; and these concerts shall, hopefully, illustrate this. The pieces you will hear today have all been on journeys to get here. Like the paintings they have been carefully positioned, reshaped, added to, juxtaposed. The results are only 'fixed' in this moment of your unfolding experience; with the opportunity to see the concert twice, the order of performances reversed, that moment is over, and another begins ...

FROTH AND BUBBLE (words by Adam Lindsay Gordon) has been choreographed to respond directly to both *Halo* and the performers. The journey they go on is woven into the sculpture. This is the world premiere of this piece, on *Halo's* last day in the gallery ...

When watching I ask you to think about how the religious iconography around you, with the blues and golds, affects your experience of this work.

GRACEFUL/FULL OF GRACE was written in 2015 as a portrait of the performer. I paid much attention to her, both physically and mentally, as a musician and a person. The piece is for her alone; my gift to her. She is both subject, object, agent and canvas.

Today the piece will be performed in front of two contrasting groups of art. How does the difference shift your experience of the piece, the performer and the art?

OTHER was also written in 2015, again for the performer. It is a private affair. The subject matter, which directly relates to everything you will hear, was discussed in detail and profoundly respected. There are five movements:

Time to Feel/Healthy and Fine/Strong Wants/A Lazy Dream/Boisterous Talk

Whilst listening, contemplate the view you are getting into the homes of the families that surround the performer. Windows into other people's lives, a voyeuristic view, intimate moments ...

HEALING (words by D.H. Lawrence) was written for John Potter and Damien Harron in 2010. It has been rewritten for this performance and these performers. It takes much commitment and repetitive work to become a musician; some studies suggest that 10,000 hours practice is what it takes to be virtuosic, an expert. These hours can be joyful, frustrating, mechanical, inspiring ... they take their toll, whatever the 'end result'.

Here, next to *Manifest: 10,000 Hours* by Clare Twomey, I ask you to consider the repetitive nature of everything around you, but also the infinite variety. Also, consider the impact this kind of work, and all kinds of 'work', have on both physical and mental health.

If you would like to chat to me after the performances about your experiences I would love to hear from you. Please find me in the gallery - I will be watching and filming - or email me afterwards!
morag@moraggalloway.com

CMRC Blog Entry - 'Writing a Portrait'
Morag Galloway - <https://www.cmrcyork.org/>

This coming weekend I shall be lucky enough to hear the second performance of my marimba piece *graceful/full of grace*, written for and performed by Zoë Craven. I was thrilled to be asked by PercusSing to write this piece—and love the marimba—but, as with all my work, it was the performer I was keenest to capture.

When an artist paints a portrait the subject sits for them. Often for hours at a time, over weeks, even months. So a relationship is formed. From stillness and close scrutiny the artist paints a two dimensional image, whilst aiming to communicate four dimensions. As well as the sense of space the person actually takes up we, the viewer, always speculate as to the sitter's character; their soul. Think of the *Mona Lisa*.

So what of Zoë's soul?

A musician doesn't sit still in silence, without moving a muscle. Far from it. They are active, dynamic, slippery. And there is something between the artist and the subject: their instrument.

Percussion music can be particularly flashy. There are many angles and many notes. It can be breathtaking. The performers can end up running about. With tuned percussion the arms become wings, stretch, fly, skim. It is balletic, comedic, athletic. A marimba is big, a simplistic piano, the player Lilliputian in comparison. They have to try to grow, be everywhere at once.

When I first spoke to Zoë on Skype I noticed her hair. It is long and she played with it. Pulling it into a smooth ribbon under her chin. It was a graceful movement, a simple moment. This relationship with her hair becomes a theatrical gesture in the piece; grand and preparatory at the outset, intimate and tender by the end. Zoë sweeps her hair back and to each side and these movements

punctuate the music. Alongside the hair I saw a mixture of youth, beauty and vitality, but also focus, calm and simplicity. It made sense to try and 'paint' these qualities in my portrait of her.

And so the piece was born; a journey from something outwardly beautiful and impressive to something stripped back, resonant and thoughtful. Hopefully. But a painting takes time. The first performance was great, but a second, and future ones, means that time can be taken to tinker. To add more detail, or take it away. To look from a different angle.

I decided to take more time over the beginning, but add more decoration. This takes the form of tremelo and a slower tempo. The result is a sparkling, and physically Zoë can be more open to the audience. This glitter gradually fades and enables the spine of the piece to be revealed. Dead space from later on is culled and more movement added. It suddenly became visually clear what was needed. Homophony becomes polyphony. A fanfare becomes a lullaby. Or a prayer. As well as the hair gesture Zoë puts down her sticks, one at a time. They are abandoned, the beauty of the hand is considered. She embarks on a journey which takes her physically closer to her instrument, eventually she caresses the wood with her finger. Nothing is in between anymore.

As I write this a few more ideas need to be added to the piece. And after Saturday's performance I expect even more. However, *graceful/full of grace* will never be a fixed thing. This portrait is not a painting. I will continue to consider Zoë further, look more closely, from another angle. So next time I can try to reveal a little more.

PercusSing perform a Late Music lunchtime recital: 'Songs and Miniatures' this Saturday at 1.00pm, Unitarian Chapel, St Saviourgate, York.

What Does This Moment Require?

A music theatre piece

For Kate

Commissioned by Kate Ledger for her concert *Child's Play*,
to be premiered at The University of York, Rymer Auditorium
on 11th November 2016¹
Piano and Toy Piano - Kate Ledger

NOTE ON THE PERFORMANCE

This piece explores the idea of being mindful and present. It is a result of research into the experience of parenthood and the effect it has on other areas of life. Kate must make a conscious effort to accept that whatever happens in the performance was meant to be; any notion of good or bad, right or wrong, must be done away with.

NOTE ON THE MUSIC

This piece was not only written specifically for Kate, but also for her Toy Piano, a Schoenhut Elite Baby Grand, and the Fazioli Grand Piano in the Rymer Auditorium. The pitches and techniques chosen are a direct result of experimentation on these instruments and therefore attention must be paid to resonances.

STAGE SET-UP

As shown on the front cover the Toy Piano needs to be opposite the Grand Piano, so Kate can reach both at the same time. The piece requires Kate to move freely between both pianos and be able to play both at the same time.

The Buddha's words will help Kate, and the audience, prepare for the performance:

Do not pursue the past. Do not lose yourself in the future.
The past no longer is. The future has not yet come.
Looking deeply at life as it is in the very here and now,
The practitioner dwells in stability and freedom.
We must be diligent today.
To wait until tomorrow is too late.
Death comes unexpectedly.

¹ For the film of this performance see the DVD accompanying this commentary.

Moment One - Fame and Disrepute

1: "How it really was?"

Kate sits at the Grand Piano.

She plays Mozart's *Ab, vous dirai-je, Maman* 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star' Variation Number II.

It is impressive and joyous.

The Mozart is filled with the desire to impress but begins to get ahead of itself, somehow.

It ends abruptly on the penultimate G7 chord, with the notes held down in the right hand (RH).

The left hand (LH) tries to play up and down from middle C, but is blocked by the RH.

The RH hand presses down more notes so that eventually the only note the LH can play is middle C.

2: "Stop blocking."

The LH slows and stops trying to play as Kate lowers her head to the piano, resting her forehead on the lid.

Kate looks down the Grand Piano and plays section ① from *Private Pride*.

Moment Two - Loss and Gain

3: "Attachment Causes Suffering"

Kate brings her head up slowly and looks at the LH.

She plays the bass line from *Alberto Balsam* by Aphex Twin.

She then adds the melody line above with the RH.

This calms her and enables her to move around so she is facing the audience.

Kate feels able to take the RH over to the Toy Piano to play bits of the *Alberto Balsam* melody there.

The RH starts to disrupt things by playing *Attachment Causes Suffering*.

The music cannot be played correctly and this is frustrating.

Kate must attend to the RH.

Kate is now at the Toy Piano.

Kate determines to play the Mozart again.

It is not the same as it used to be and she stops in anger and frustration.

5: "There is a path to end suffering"

Kate looks at the Toy Piano as if working out what she can play on it.

She plays the simpler version of 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star'; *Simple Twinkle* (page 11).

She improvises.

F sharps enter the melody and then the RH plays fourths.

The LH moves back to the Grand Piano and plays the D flats and G flats from *Private Pride*.

The RH plays descending fourths, finally settling on D and G.
 The LH stops on D flat.
 Kate looks at the RH, then the LH.
 She slides the LH onto a D and plays the bass line for *The Balance*.

Moment Three - Pleasure and Pain

6: "I've stopped hurting myself"

Kate is calm but curious.
 She looks back at the RH and plays the melody for *The Balance* there once, looking at the Toy Piano as she does it.
 She then plays it again, looking at the audience.
 Kate pauses and takes the RH off the Toy Piano and over to the Grand Piano where *The Balance* continues.
 It is a new relationship.

7: "How I imagined it would be"

Finally, Kate takes her head down onto her right arm, facing away from the audience, and looks down the piano.
 Kate's LH plays *Private Pride*.
 Kate is knowing what is happening at the time it is happening.
 We are with her.

LIGHTS FADE TO BLACKOUT.

Private Pride

Morag Galloway

MUSIC NOTE:
 Pedal markings with the line bring off where indicated. Pedal markings with star bring off gradually and smoothly on preceding crotchet beats before star, with the star being the final lift off.

Hold down D flats until F harmonic can be heard pulsing.

Piano Left Hand Only

$\text{♩} = 40$ ① *With pleasure and pain.*

ff pp

Ped. Ped. Ped.

LH Pno.

8

②

Ped. * Ped. * Ped.

LH Pno.

15

③

Ped. Ped. Ped.

LH Pno.

22

Ped.

Hold down E flats until G harmonic can be heard pulsing.

LH Pno.

29

④

fff f pp

Ped. *

Attachment Causes Suffering

Repeat many times building in *Alberto Balsam* tune in RH. When established move RH over to Toy Piano and play melody there.

Morag Galloway

Trying to chill out and ignore. But life can't be ignored. **3**

RH Toy Piano
LH Piano

RH TP
LH Pno.

RH TP
LH Pno.

RH TP
LH Pno.

RH TP
LH Pno.

f

RH TP
LH Pno.

18 *Girding your loins...*

RH TP
LH Pno.

cresc.

23 From this point speed up.

RH TP
LH Pno.

25

RH TP
LH Pno.

27 *ff*

RH TP
LH Pno.

29

RH TP
LH Pno.

Repeat any/all of this page until exhausted.

31

RH TP
LH Pno.

32

RH TP
LH Pno.

33

RH TP
LH Pno.

fff

34

RH TP
LH Pno.

Palm smashes along full length of both keyboards towards audience. Rhythmically erratic and violent.

Press RH firmly down on TP with elbow in air.

Move LH over to TP and place down firmly on top of RH.

35

RH TP
LH Pno.

Red.

Simple Twinkle

Morag Galloway

This is a guide for improvisation only.

Harmony line 2

Harmony line 1

Melody

Toy Piano

5

Toy Pno.

9

Toy Pno.

Toy Pno.

F sharp/fourth chord line.

F sharp melody line.

Toy Pno.

Toy Pno.

The Balance

Morag Galloway

Body towards audience, but more relaxed posture than previously.

Tentatively, becoming confident.

RH Toy Piano
LH Piano

Both hands on piano. Turned towards it, but open, relaxed posture.

As if discovering the piano again.

Piano

5

8va

mf

Piano

10

(8)

Piano

15

(8)

3

Can be ornamented and tempo and rhythm freed up.

20 *mp*

24

29

A lot slower.

34 *"It makes me calmer."*

una corda

41

45

All semibreve and minim chords and rests should be paused to let ring. But timings can vary to help with pace and feeling.

"Small acts of great love."

50 *Powerful, excited.*

Piano *f*

Red.

52

Piano *pp*

Red.

54

Piano *f* *pp*

Lower head onto right arm on piano lid, looking away from audience.

56

Piano *f* *mp* *pp*

Red.

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