

Alors On Danse!

**Think-Do-Living the Embodied
Musicking Subject**

James Nicholas Redelinghuys

PhD

University of York

Music

April 2022

Abstract

This portfolio of compositions and commentary takes as its subject the musicking body and the entanglement of embodiment and composition. The five practical projects are all centred on a constellation of concerns about the musicking body which the thesis develops. The first chapter is a phenomenology of my creative practice, starting with my body sitting on a chair, at my desk. From this stationary position I draw out a series of continuities, discontinuities, and resonances, showing my composing body to be always entangled with all the material conditions of my practice. The second chapter, through a discussion of embodied perception, proposes that this body is a doubling of intense unification and indeterminacy. I begin with John Cage's advocacy of 'sound without purpose' – sound that does not serve a predetermined outcome – and suggest that this implies that the musicking body is indeterminate and also syncretic. Synaesthesia and psychosis serve not only as ways of to approach this 'sound without purpose' but also as descriptors and inspirations for my practice. The third chapter situates the previous two in social contexts, particularly regarding gender – drawing heavily on the work of Hélène Cixous – and the limitations and opportunities presented by the Coronavirus pandemic. This thesis concludes by acknowledging the limitation of my research-practice, particularly regarding race, and by suggesting some new avenues and considerations for this research-practice to take in the future.

List of Contents

Abstract	page 2
List of Contents	page 3
List of Figures	page 4
List of Accompanying Material	page 5
Preface: Mushroom Music	page 6
Acknowledgements	page 26
Declaration	page 27
1. Sitting in a chair, choosing to have a coffee	page 28
1.1. One and Two Chairs at a Desk	page 32
1.2. SAMO© SHIT GRAPHEMES	page 37
1.3. Dance Dis/Continuities	page 55
2. Bodies Without Purpose or The Anarchy of Its Parts	page 70
2.1. Synaesthetic Music	page 77
2.2. Polyamorous Knots	page 85
2.3. Listen (If You Dare) to Birds	page 102
3. Mirror Universe	page 122
3.1. Re/Reflection	page 122
3.2. Medusa the Muse	page 125
3.3. Plague Walks	page 147
Conclusion	page 164
References	page 171

List of Figures

1. Aerial shot of Sheena Bennett's *Relationality Proposition*. page 7
2. The prototype of the physical copy of *SAMO© SHIT SONGS*. page 40
3. Cover of *SAMO© SHIT SONGS*. page 41
4. A comparison of graphemes and musical notation from *SAMO© SHIT SONGS*. page 43
5. Opening bars of *PRELUDE* from *SAMO© SHIT SONGS*. page 45
6. Graph of the development of e/E/Ξ in *SAMO© SHIT SONGS*. page 48
7. Sketches of waves by Janacek. page 50
8. A sound-image anthropology of *SAMO© SHIT SONGS*. page 54
9. Bars 4-5 from *Dance Curves*. page 56
10. A preliminary sketch by Angela Guyton. page 87
11. Untitled drawing by Angela Guyton for *Androgynette*. page 91
12. Comparative graph of *Body Etude* and Angela Guyton's *data mosh, home, instructional, and colorwork*. page 95
13. Rehearsal mark B from *Voices of Birds in Queer Harmony*. page 119
14. Comparison of dissociative states in *Fran Bow* and *Voices of Birds in Queer Harmony*. page 120

List of Accompanying Material

Redelinghuys_109004733_DanceCurvesScore.pdf

Redelinghuys_109004733_DanceCurvesInstrumental.mp4

Redelinghuys_109004733_DanceCurvesLive.mp4

Redelinghuys_109004733_SAMOScore.pdf

Redelinghuys_109004733_SAMOPerformance1.mp4

Redelinghuys_109004733_SAMOPerformance2.mp4

Redelinghuys_109004733_VoicesOfBirdsScore.pdf

Redelinghuys_109004733_VoicesOfBirdsPerformance1.mp4

Redelinghuys_109004733_VoicesOfBirdsPerformance2.mp4

Redelinghuys_109004733_BodyEtudeScore.pdf

Redelinghuys_109004733_AndrogynetteExplanation.pdf

Redelinghuys_109004733_AndrogynettePerformance.mp4

Redelinghuys_109004733_IsolationOffices.mp4

Redelinghuys_109004733_SongsToWashYourHandsTo.mp4

Redelinghuys_109004733_IsolationYule.mp4

Redelinghuys_109004733_IsolationWalkNewYear.mp4

Redelinghuys_109004733_IsolationWalkSamhain.mp4

Preface: Mushroom Music

It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties. It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories.¹

So: here is my musical story, which I am using to make my other my musical stories. I

begin this thesis with a piece not formally included, which arose as part of a series of collaborative conversations² with my fellow think-doer Sheena Bennett.³ She organised an improvisation event, *Relationality Proposition* (coincidentally performed on my birthday), during which the performers 'attune[d] to and compose[d] with string-like materials ... exploring their qualities of engagement: movements, non-movements, directionality, orientations, pace, negative space, interactions, collisions, vibrations, etc.'. The aim of this event was to

attune to the event and explore the event's multiplicitous nature of engagement ... **Relationality** is far reaching, in that it is not bound by outcome. Rather, potentiality and emergence are located directly within the expression and are distinctly felt.⁴

A performer takes the end of one string and moves around the voided space (a field, if you will). Depending on how they move, the tension on the string varies, sometimes

1 Haraway (2016) p. 12.

2 *Ballet of Images in Androgynette* is my own interpretation of these conversations.

3 This piece and additional commentary on it will be published in Bennett's upcoming doctoral thesis *Composing with the Event: Techniques that Move Toward Neurodiverse Perception/Sensation*.

4 Bennett (2021) (original emphasis).

staying slack, or maybe becoming taut. These strings vibrate, or *resonate*. Their resonances are sympathetic with other people's movements around the space, or may be actively vibrated by either person. This string is vibrant, alive, animate; non-human, but vital. This very material thread fills the in between and acts on the people with intention. The strings are both distinct from and of the humans that hold them: they begin at the point where the skin ends and extend the tactile sense of the skin beyond this end locus. In this way to not hold a string is similar to holding one, the same endpoints and extensions marked by an absence, a space which nevertheless contains many molecules.



Figure 1: An aerial shot of Sheena Bernett's *Relationality Proposition* (taken 15th July 2021)

It is clear that in describing one of performer's actions I am describing all of the others' actions. All of the performers move around the space, all of them tauten and

slacken the strings, resonate and are resonated in turn. These phenomena do not occur linearly or independently. Indeed, the strings which have the potential to be straight (perhaps heterosexual) are curved, like gravitational waves distorting spacetime. Even within Kurt Vonnegut's time jumping *Slaughterhouse Five*, or Samuel Beckett's looping *Waiting for Godot*, the structures of prose and of the traditional score limit what events can be expressed simultaneously, and thus the potentialities of phenomenological fields; what is more readily accomplished in superpositions of time and space in Hieronymus Bosch's multiverse triptych *Garden of Earthly Delights*, Karlheinz Stockhausen's poly-orchestral (polyamorous?) *Gruppen*, or Fullbright Studio's thematically and narratively queer video game *Gone Home*.⁵ In that the strings both touch and are touched, vibrate and are vibrated, connecting and demarcating the skin that bounds each human, the result is chaotic like a Funnel-web spider's web, not stereotyped as an Orb-weaver's. A tug on one strand shakes the entire web, at parts imperceptibly, and at other parts enough to create a structural shift. The strings are literally tangled in a sprawling, amorphous web and, with this, the meaning and agency of both the strings and those holding them are entangled.

This touching and re-touching is the site (sight, hearing) of what Merleau-Ponty termed 'the chiasm', partially outlined in the unfinished manuscript of *The Visible and The Invisible* (1964/1968). This chiasm is a turning back and forth between self and other, consciousness and unconscious experience, our perception of the thing and the

⁵ Ursula K. Le Guin entertains a similar notion of simultaneity in *The Dispossessed*.

thing itself as perception. Merleau-Ponty argues against 'age-old assumptions' of an abyssal separation between body and world asking 'where are we to put the limit between the body and the world, since the world is flesh?'.⁶ He gives an example of a handshake: why would 'the experience of one sole body in one sole world ... not open it to other bodies? ... I can feel myself touched as well and at the same time as touching ... Why would not the synergy exist among different organisms, if it is possible within each?'.⁷ These strings are a means of touching and being touched, but are also always reversible, where the other touches and is touched in turn. James Schmidt in *Maurice Merleau-Ponty: Between Phenomenology and Structuralism* (1985) summarises this chiasm using the common optical illusion of an image that can be seen as either a duck or a rabbit:

It enjoins us to look neither at the duck, nor the rabbit, nor the oscillating series duck-rabbit-duck-rabbit-duck-rabbit ... Rather, we must learn to look at the pattern of lines which cleave space in such a way as to make a hinge around which ducks and rabbits may pivot.⁸

It is not where the structure produces difference, but where the structure makes itself indeterminate. It is unimportant what my scores are, how they are realised in performance and documentation, or how I reflect on them, or how these elements relate to each other, but how they are structured such that they might perpetually turn around each other: 'the performer is no longer producing or reproducing the sonata: he [*sic*]

⁶ Merleau-Ponty (1964/1968) p. 138.

⁷ Ibid. p. 142.

⁸ Schmidt (1985) p. 159.

feels himself [*sic*], and the others feel him [*sic*] to be at the service of the sonata'.⁹ In this spirit this thesis does not attempt to offer a concrete account of the experience of a body. Although I freely change between composer, performer, and writer, or centre another performer or audience member in a context, I am not claiming an authority on these positions but using them as a particular excitation to produce and examine resonances across multiple pieces. The world of this portfolio is 'what I live through. I am open to the world, I have no doubt that I am in communication with it, but I do not possess it'.¹⁰ In this non-possessive openness, all that is left to me is to describe a set of possible relations.

This research on the body in a creative, performative context will inevitably intersect with Ben Spatz's *What a Body Can Do: Technique as Knowledge, Practice as Research* (2015) in a number of ways. Both he and I affirm the primacy of the body, and insist on the necessity of examining this body through action.¹¹ However, while Spatz focusses on an epistemology of epistemic technique (a concern that tacitly backgrounds my creative practice and that might prove to be an interesting foil to my ideas in the future), my research is primarily ontological, or looks to theories which undo the division between ontology and epistemology. Furthermore, while Spatz is concerned with a 'relatively reliable' reality and practices 'that can be repeated with some degree of

9 Merleau-Ponty (1964/1968) p. 151.

10 Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) pp. xviii-ix.

11 Spatz (2015) p. 2

reliability, so that what works in one context may also work in another',¹² both the portfolio of compositions and this thesis affirm the opposite.

And so I return to indeterminate, perpetually moving network of *Relationality Proposition* and grab one of these strings and dance with the performers, grounding (or literally earthing) the creative practice, writing, and reasoning in this portfolio by invoking three naturalists who have been particularly influential for me. I am not claiming that my research is scientific, nor will I interrogate with them in the body of this thesis. Nevertheless, my musicking – a question not of what the music is but of the actions that constitute it; in the words of Christopher Small, 'to take part'¹³ – is significantly informed by stories of non-human critters, fungi, matter, and probabilities. My think-do-living has never been separate from naturalism (it is purely a matter of fate that I study music and not my other love mathematics) and an account of my composing is incomplete without reference to it. Even those these narratives are only occasionally made explicit, I urge the reader to bear them in mind while reading, not as metaphors or analogies but as prefixed material conditions which enable me to compose.

The first author is Donna Haraway, whose string figures (SF) I have just entangled myself in. As a composer, shut away in a room, I am one of Haraway's underground chthonic ones, 'those who are monsters in the best sense; they demonstrate and perform the material meaningfulness of earth processes and critters',¹⁴ like collaborators,

12 Ibid. p. 42.

13 Small (1998) p. 9.

14 Haraway (2016) p. 2.

like audiences, like readers; those who I offer kinship with in my acknowledgements. I enter into a sympoetic relationship with all those who engage with my portfolio. Sympoesis describes a doing with companions: it is story-telling, narrative, music-making with others. My relationship to all those who have engaged and will engage with this portfolio is 'always partnered all the way down, with no starting and subsequently interacting¹⁵ "units"¹⁶. It is always trans*species¹⁷, and I acknowledge that my most frequent collaborators are the cornucopia of non-human critters who make up 10% of my body mass. That my name usually stands alone on the cover of any document or the titles of any video is a convenience of format without any bearing on the reality of the text. Eduardo Viverios de Castro, in an email exchange with Haraway, writes that 'Animism is the only *sensible* version of materialism'.¹⁸ It is not only a rational conclusion but one that is of the senses; perhaps even perception itself is always animistic. Far from reducing my research to the human, this term explodes the possibilities of interconnectivity, situating this portfolio is holistic interpretations of narrative, phenomena, and matter that I come to know with my body.¹⁹

The second is Suzanne Simard and her groundbreaking work in forestry and mycology summarily storied in *Finding the Mother Tree: Discovering the Wisdom of the*

15 This is not to say there are no *intraactive* processes.

16 Haraway (2016) p. 33.

17 It is vital to note from the outset that the prefix 'trans-' is always entangled with the trans-species, transition, transmission, transformation, transience, translation, transgression, transaction, transgender, and many other terms besides. I use the asterisk where this is in need of emphasis, a common device in online transgender discourse, to signify these many interpretations, refusing to assign to it any finality. c.f. Hayward and Weinstein (2015) p. 198.

18 Email exchange between De Castro and Haraway in Haraway (2016) p. 88 (original emphasis)

19 I will return to the topic of 'animism' in the conclusion as a possible avenue for future study.

Forest (2021). Simard spearheaded the discovery 'that [trees] are in a web of interdependence, linked by a system of underground tunnels, where they *perceive* and connect and relate'²⁰. The materiality of these trees and assemblages is not like the bodies I concern myself with but identical to them: that they are displaced by time, space, species etc. is purely incidental and besides the point. Simard is a bisexual woman, an identity she interweaves with her research practice or the results thereof. She also writes of how disability, brain tumours, are both a consequence of and also a point of epiphany in her research. Both of these modes of living will return with a vengeance in due course. While this portfolio is certainly not arboreal, is it not quite rhizomatic, a term which seems to stay with the mono-species. Rather the combinations of creative practice and prose, collaborators and technology seem more mycorrhizomatic. There are trees, mother trees and offspring, and their roots; and these arbors give life to and are sustained by fungal networks, many species snaking through the earth, mushrooms attached to bark, interweaving knots that form truffles which I do not care to eat, and the organic, mineral, and decaying humus that envelops and nurtures these networks (which Simard did care to eat as a child). This humus is the remains of my rotting composer-*auteur* corpse. I am completely literal when I say that 'my musicking self is lichen'.

Like Haraway's chthonic ones, like ribbons in knots and the Medusa's snaking hair that I will subsequently engage with, these mycorrhizomes are tentacular, very literally expressed by musicking fingers, legs, and tongues; cables crawling across the floors at

²⁰ Simard (2021) p. 4 my emphasis.

concert venues connecting all manner of audiovisual equipment; paths that I walk; the networked strings of violins, cellos, guitars, pianos, and harpsichords; internet cables that connected me to collaborators both before and during the pandemic; and the circuits of several Apple products that gave their lives to see this portfolio created (I make no excuses for my consumption of rare earth metals). As I come to intimately engage with perception and neurology in Chapter 2, I strongly resist cognitivist and purely human models on the basis of the mother trees. For me the most astounding of Simard's discoveries is that the forest pattern 'has similarities with our own human brains ... Chemicals identical to our own neurotransmitters. Signals created by ions cascading across fungal membrane'.²¹ It would be irresponsible, downright false for me to claim 'the body' or the process of 'embodiment' as belonging to a single species, or a linear consequence of cognition. I think about octopuses, that they have relatively small centralised brains and yet have a brain that is weaved throughout their body through dense networks of neurons. I imagine all bodies, all material to be cephalopodic; or maybe the mesmerising *Stygiomedusa gigantea*, at once alien and beautiful, is a more appropriate image.

Thirdly, I come to the trans*gender quantum physics of Karen Barad in *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (2007). They propose an agential realist account of matter:

matter does not refer to a fixed substance; rather, *matter is substance in its*

²¹ Ibid. (2021) p. 5 original emphasis.

intra-active becoming – not a thing but a doing, a congealing of agency.

“Matter” does not refer to an inherent, fixed property of abstract, independently existing objects; rather, “matter” refers to *phenomena in their ongoing materialization*.²²

Agential realism does not make the claim ‘matter possesses human agency’; rather, it is to say that agency is an always attribute of matter and as the body is matter so it is agential. The sound, the images, the electronics, and the organic bodies of this portfolio are all part of the same materially unfolding phenomenon. Of particular note is their neologism *intraaction* which I will often use. It is a term worth clarifying, and Barad defines it as:

*the mutual constitution of entangled agencies ... in contrast to the usual “interaction” ... the notion of intra-action recognizes that distinct agencies do not precede, but rather emerge through, their intra-action ... agencies are only distinct in relation to their mutual entanglement; they don’t exist as individual elements.*²³

The musical implications are rife, from sound (pitch, duration), to physical gesture (parts of the body, modes of sensing), to the performance (performers, score, technology, audience, space), to collaboration (the actors, the relationships between them, systems of support), and an intraaction between each of these networks. This intraaction is indeterminate, informed by Neils Bohr’s interpretation of quantum mechanics, that the nature of matter is not fixed and unknowable, as per Werner Heisenberg’s uncertainty

22 Barad (2007) p. 151 (original emphasis).

23 Ibid. p. 33 (original emphasis).

principle, but indeterminate in its ontology. This returns us to the chiastic duck-rabbit, where it is not a mere matter of our perception that the thing changes, but that the thing and our perception of the thing are indeterminate and acting and reacting on each other. I cast myself in the role of the seer in a Classical sense: the seer does not certainly foretell, but produces a quantum field where the realisation of the vision might be fulfilled across an infinite probability of superpositions. Indeed, Greek mythology leaves open the possibility that the seeming realisations of these prophecies are completely coincidental to the prediction; and there is the possibility that my video documentation is completely coincidental to my composing.

I hope in this portfolio to address what I perceive as lacking in contemporary musicologies of the body. That I seldom reference any musicology is not an oversight. In almost all of my reading for this thesis I have never seen my body (nor the bodies of any of my closest friends) under discussion from a musical perspective. Indeed, most musicology has a habit of relying on narratives that preclude my existence. This thesis is in no small part a personal, cathartic project; an attempt to see something of my musicking self on paper. This is not always the case, and on this note I would like to single out the work of Michael B. Bakan and his research on autism and music – an excellent starting point is his recent book *Speaking for Ourselves: Conversations on Life, Music, and Autism* (2018). His writing for the most part is transcripts of conversations he has had with Autistic musicians (in person, over email, chatrooms, sharing poetry and music), with only slight edits and commentary. He notes that '[his] voice is always present

in the role of the main, and usually sole, conversation partner', that 'the ultimate shape and content of this work cannot help but be largely a product of [his] own invention'.²⁴ Nevertheless, 'it takes two to tango, and in the end each conversation unfolds as a mutually transformative duet'.²⁵

The same is true in my practice and writing, except that I am subject, compiler, editor, and commentator alike in a system of dissociated selves. *Alors On Danse!* is me *speaking for myself* in my own idiosyncratic embodied language: I am in conversation with a myriad of other collaborative voices, but my role here is to present myself as an intraactive emergence from these conversations, rather than something true to the others. I can only account for myself and offer it up such that others might find themselves in it: 'an expression of experience by experience'.²⁶ As a South African born in 1995 to obscure my self, or to shy away from polemic seems culturally irresponsible, or nationally immoral. My rhetoric speaks about my existence with certainty because such particular, quantum accounts work towards iteratively troubling and reinscribing the universal without the intent or claim that it describes or ultimately constructs this universal. Finally, I hope this portfolio moves towards something beyond the anthropocentric (an accusation that Barad has levied against materialism, structuralism, and poststructuralism alike). Like traditional musicology, ecomusicology is all too often all too concerned with non-human music with the human at the centre (and implicitly all too concerned with Western classical music). Perhaps chimeric duck-rabbits are a more

24 Bakan (2018) p. 6.

25 Ibid. p. 7.

26 Merleau-Ponty (1964/1968) p. 155.

appropriate focus. I will come to acknowledge in the conclusion that I am not always successful in this regard, but I also remain hopeful that this lays the groundwork (the fungal networks) for future research on the matter (or mattering). There is always something queer in my living, and I offer this up for the reader (best beloved) to join me on a winding walk through the turbulent last four years of my life.

*Qui dit fatigue dit réveil
Encore sourd de la veille
Alors on sort pour oublier tous les problèmes ...
Est-ce la zik ou des problèmes
Les problèmes ou bien la musique? ...
Mais c'est ton corps
C'est pas le ciel
Alors tu t'bouches plus les oreilles
Et là tu cries encore plus fort
Et ça persiste
Alors on chante...
Alors on danse ...
Et ben y en a encore...
– Stromae, *Alors On Danse*²⁷*

This portfolio is comprised of five major composition projects and three chapters of commentary.

1. *Dance Curves (after Kandinsky, Rudolph, Palucca)* (2018-2019)

The score was recorded in January 2019, performed by Claire Babington, Kate Ledger, and Valerie Pearson, with Pal Kerekes as sound engineer, and Rebecca Gallon as videographer. The piece was performed live in May 2019 at MOVE|MEANT, a performance and exhibition event organised by Maja Palser and me. This performance

²⁷ Stromae (2009).

was made in collaboration with Vanessa Grasse, who devised a series of four improvised dances independent of the videos. Lynette Quek provided technical support. The full score is included [DanceCurvesScore.pdf], accompanied by two videos: the instrumental version [DanceCurvesInstrumental.mp4], and the live performance with Grasse, with the instrumental version visible projected on screens and inserted as a cutaway in the edit [DanceCurvesLive.mp4].

2. SAMO© SHIT SONGS (2018-2019)

This piece was performed twice over the course of this degree. It was premiered by Ella Taylor and me in May 2019 at MOVE|MEANT. It was subsequently performed by Hannah Ambrose and Dominic Floyd in November 2019 at a concert organised by the Chimera Ensemble. The score's layout was very slightly modified for the second performance, though no changes were made to the content, and it is this version that is included here [SAMOScore.pdf], along with a video of each performance [SAMOPerformance1.mp4] [SAMOPerformance2.mp4].

3. *Voices of Birds in Queer Harmony* (2018-2020)

Voices of Birds was performed in January 2020 by Peyee Chen, Kieran Crowley, and Catherine Fahy. Jack Bishop, Rachel Singer, and Helen Southernwood provided the prerecorded chorus. Lynette Quek assisted with the live electronics and recording, and Matt Hua provided the lighting and projection. Two edits of the performance are included: an unedited single shot of the whole stage [VoicesOfBirdsPerformance1.mp4],

and an edited version with closeups of the performers

[VoicesOfBirdsPerformance2.mp4]. There are two differences between the score [VoicesOfBirdsScore.pdf] and the performance that should be noted. Firstly, the performers did not wear featureless masks as indicated. Secondly, the chorus as well as the entirety of the second section were prerecorded. These recordings were projected through five speakers spaced around the concert hall, rather than a single speaker in the middle of the stage. Nevertheless, I have chosen to leave the score as originally intended.

4a. *Androgynette* [documentary and workshop] (2019-2021)

Androgynette was a collaboration between Angie Guyton, Kate Ledger, and me as part of the 2019/2020 Terry Holmes award, an award given by the University of York music department to a composer and performer pair to collaboratively create a new piece for soloist and ensemble. There are two distinct products that arose from this collaboration. The first is a series of media we produced to document our process and core ideas. I was significantly involved in two of these. *Three Refractions of a Body Etude* is a video essay that was presented at the Nott-Far Midlands Contemporary Music Symposium in December 2020. As well as writing *Body Etude*, I wrote the script for the video.

Androgynette: An interactive demonstration was a workshop organised by Ledger for the York Festival of Ideas 2021. Guyton and I created a version of the final two pages of *Body Etude* with which the audience could interact. I present and discuss this from

1:00:00-1:13:00. For copyright reasons these videos have not been uploaded, but can be found at the following links:

Three Refractions of a Body Etude <<https://youtu.be/TfjT3hpDMj4>>

Androgynette: An interactive demonstration <<https://youtu.be/hthCO78KAAs>>

More resources, including the full gallery of Guyton's drawings, two written testimonials by Ledger and me, and the above videos embedded can be found at <<http://www.jamesredelinghuys.com/androgynette>>.

4b. Androgynette [performance] (2019-2021)

Androgynette culminated with a performance in June 2021, with Ledger, The Assembled, and me. Ben Eyes provided tech support, recorded, and edited the performance, and lighting was provided by John Rawling. The performance is in three sections: the first two were structured improvisations which were collectively devised during rehearsals. The third section combined a full performance of *Body Etude* by Ledger interspersed with improvisations from the Assembled. I have included the final version of *Body Etude* [BodyEtudeScore.pdf], as well as an explanation of the improvisations [AndrogynetteExplanation.pdf]. For the video included here I have overlaid the text from the programme notes [AndrogynettePerformance.mp4].

5. *isolation music* (2020-2022)

isolation music is a series of electroacoustic pieces written during and as a response to the Coronavirus pandemic, with contributions by Sheena Bennett, Julia Bidoli, and Maja Palser. This ongoing project is made up of five pieces:

1. *isolation offices* [IsolationOffices.mp4]
2. *songs to wash your hands to* [SongsToWashYourHandsTo.mp4]
3. *isolation Yule* (2020) [IsolationYule.mp4]
4. *isolation walk (new year 2021)* [IsolationWalkNewYear.mp4]
5. *isolation walk (Samhain 2021)* [IsolationWalkSamhain.mp4]

The pieces were unscored, and as such the videos are presented without accompanying notation.

6. Commentary

The compositions and chapters in this portfolio are cosmological, comets orbiting a star, string figures walking around a field, or witches dancing around a cauldron during a sabbat. This commentary consists of nine essays of varying length and style across three chapters and, although the chapters form a largely linear, expanding narrative they nevertheless invite re-readings of each other as they each offer iterations of the same phenomena. In chapter 1, *Sitting in a chair, choosing the have a coffee*, I position myself at my desk with manuscript paper and laptop in front of me. My chair (punning on the

French *ma chair*, 'my flesh') is at the centre of my experience where my composer-*auteur*-self dies, only for its decaying corpse to feed future phenomena. I sit down on it, get up from it, rotate on its axis, and from this vantage point I transcend my present and listen to my past and future. After sitting down I take up my pen and begin writing *SAMO© SHIT SONGS*, and I observe the idiosyncrasies in Basquiat's and my graphemes: e/E/Ξ. These graphemes signify various geographies in my practice, at once containing, reaching out, and fragmenting my writing and performing. The seemingly dichotomous relationship between continuity and discontinuity is shown to be part of the same process: the relationship between iterations of image, score, and performance in *Dance Curves* simultaneously connects and pushes apart the various media. I conclude by noting that by positioning my chair at the centre of my experience I paradoxically intend my consciousness towards the affective network in which I sit.

In chapter 2, *Bodies Without Purpose or The Anarchy of Its Parts*, I move from my desk to the performance space. I consider the body as a matter of perception, proposing an all too under-considered definition of synaesthesia: rather than draw on neurological models, I turn to anecdotal and poetic accounts of synaesthesia (including my own) to define it as a derangement of sense [*sentir*], rather than a combination of senses. Synaesthesia becomes 'the rule', a quantum field from which perception emerges. I expand on this definition through the lens of neurodivergence – autism, dissociation, and psychosis. I illustrate this derangement through the synecdoche of a hand being bound up in ribbons, a gesture which opens the performance of

Androgynette. The collaboration between Angie Guyton, Kate Ledger, and myself is a constellation of different sensory practices, each of which collapses on and reproduces each other, even going so far as to warp our sense of spacetime. My discussion of *Voices of Birds in Queer Harmony* focusses on psychosis and dissociation as exemplars of embodied synaesthesia. The fragmentation of text, geography of actants around the performance space, and the dis/embodied²⁸ use of electronics, all situated in an ultimately fugal form, point to where our perception of bodies and our bodies as perceiving entities deconstruct themselves.

Chapter 3, *Mirror Universe* (my one and only Star Trek reference), steps back even further by addressing overarching concerns that have arisen over the course of the degree. These analytical arguments are combined with creative writing: personal, intimate accounts that are inexpressible in my creative practice. The capital 'I' used in the rest of this thesis invites the reader to inhabit it; employing a lower-case *i*, a line separated from a dot that is nevertheless the same letter, to signify a relationship between my self and the world that is at once internal and external (strange though that I use 'eye' instead of 'ear'). *Re/Reflection* is a commentary on a brief prose passage I wrote as part of *Androgynette*. *Medusa the Muse* is an examination of queer genders and sexualities in my practice. I begin with Hélène Cixous's 'The Laugh of Medusa' and imagine what I desire through writing with my gendered body. I outline where this desire might be realised in my practice before considering the converse: that my

28 I frequently use such slashes, adapted from Barad's writing, to indicate phenomena that are both embodied *and* disembodied, or continuous *and* discontinuous etc., rather than one *or* the other.

gendered self is evident where it is invisible and inaudible. It is where my body at a desk or in a performance space perceives what is not there, at the strange connection between 'I can' and 'I cannot' where I entangle myself in an androgynous bisexuality. *Plague Walks* focusses on the struggles and changes in my practice over the course of the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic. This event necessitated a necessary change in my practice brought on by a change in the world and its disabling effects on my life. This narrative is explored through the ongoing series *isolation music*, in particular the phenomenon of 'walking' and the sensory ethnography that accompanies it. I propose this as a necessary change, one that is authentic to me in an intra-/post-pandemic world. Although I end on what is seemingly an existential crisis, this is a point of optimism, or even a relinquishing of egocentric desire, opening myself to whatever will come in the future.

Acknowledgements

*This portfolio is dedicated to anyone who feels kinship with my experience
– your musicking-matter matters!*

I would like to thank all performers and technicians who have collaborated with me in my practice. You are the realisation of my prophecies.

I would also like to thank my supervisors, Roger Marsh and Bill Brooks, and my friends Julia Bidoli, Maja Palser, Sheena Bernett, and Tom Lubek for their unwavering support.

Above all, I would like to thank all who work at Spring Espresso on Lendal, who have made this degree physically and emotionally possible through a steady supply of caffeine and good humour.

Declaration

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

1. Sitting in a chair, choosing to have a coffee

*She does nothing all day, but sit down and cry,
Touches the sky, and wishes to play ...*

– Blonde Redhead, *The One I Love*²⁹

Joseph Kosuth's 1965 *One and Three Chairs* is the archetypical work of conceptual art. It consists of three objects: a physical chair, flanked by a photograph of a chair, and a blown-up dictionary definition of a chair. The subject is simple, and unambiguous: a chair. This is confirmed by the title. The chairs have no obvious practical context. They just are in the gallery, which might itself be virtual: Alejandro Schianchi presented the work in computer space in 2002, ironically entitled *Untitled*. I sit in this chair when I compose, and it is oriented towards a desk, paper, pen, and laptop. I sit in a second chair as an audience oriented towards a performance space, or perhaps a chair on stage oriented to this audience, and in so doing I subject myself to an unspoken, yet heavily policed etiquette. I cannot escape from or relax into this chair as I do when writing. I return to a third chair to edit documentation of these performances, and write this commentary. I am left with one portfolio and three chairs.

One and Three Chairs is externally unframed. Although each object possesses a not insignificant interior and a surface, there are no frames in the classical sense. The physical chair rests on the floor, without plinth or significant demarcation, and the

²⁹ Blonde Redhead (2014) Track 5.

photograph and the writing disappear into the wall. The surface of each object, while remaining part of the object, touches and tunnels through the exhibition space. In her analysis of the historical context of the work, Carolyn Wilde notes that 'Kosuth's work breaks with boundary conventions altogether ... the only thing that contains [the objects] is their proximity and juxtaposition'.³⁰ The chair, photograph, and definition are, respectively, presented live, as a document, and as a written abstraction. Temporally, the chair exists in front of us in the present. The photograph seems to reflect a documentary process preceding the presentation of the three in the gallery, yet it postdates the creation of the chair. The definition describes the chair (one defines something already in existence), informs us what the chair is (to manufacture this chair one must know what a chair is), and exists outside of the confines of *this one* chair as an abstraction of *many* (potentially three) chairs. Yet chair, photograph, and definition are all given to us simultaneously, as if they emerge together as one in the same gestural act. The same is true of this portfolio: score, performance, and documentation each exist in their own history and geography, describe and redescribe each other in similarly distinct trajectories of time and space, and yet through being listed together as 'accompanying materials' are somehow presented as a whole in this portfolio.

Though Kosuth positions them in a particular way, the juxtaposition of the objects, and the creation of their framing is reproduced by the entry of a viewer. One might turn to face one of the objects in particular, stand so close to one that the others are

30 Wilde (2007) p.129.

occluded, stand to the side so that one is in the foreground, or turn away so that the objects are perceived in memory only. The frame of *One and Three Chairs* is not only constituted but extended and contracted by the viewer. Viewers approach the room containing the objects in the context of the art that surrounds them. They then approach the chairs which exist on their own only to leave the gallery: the potential frame of the chairs – that which contains them – extends to encompass the whole building. I have declared in the preface that various forms of documentation – score, various recordings, and my own subsequent anecdotes and analyses – exist within the frame of certain pieces with only the vainglory of an author long since dead as justification. I name this one portfolio and many parts. However, I also aim to intercede as a reader, and through this intercession create the pieces after they are written by distancing the parts, yet showing a continuity of bodies. I approach each part as existing in its own frame, and move out to see each part extend into the other. All of the actants in this assemblage, virtual and actual, come together in a combined onto-epistemological process. The meaning and materiality of the chairs and the parts of this portfolio perform quantum leaps through the air, marking each chair as the same because of their separation and juxtaposition, and the discontinuity of being apart in space-time as a type of continuity. Like an electron's diffraction pattern changing upon observation, the chair changes upon our use of instruments and observation within time, through the use of different chairs. I suggest the same is true of 'the piece' as a matter of our embodied experience of it.

With this story in mind I outline the entirety of my compositional process: I get out of bed (a space that 'deliberately' mimics Tracey Emin's *My Bed*), take my many medications, and walk across the corridor to my study. In so doing I turn away from my bedroom, away from my kitchen, away from my bathroom, and away from my front door, thereby delineating the spaces that support me by breaching their frames.³¹ I enter my study, so framing my workspace, turn right and sit in the chair that faces my desk, itself bounded by a rectangle and forming a new frame. I turn to look out of a window, taking in the layers of images through a dirty window pane outlined by white wood: this constitutes the background of my compositions. And at last, I reach for manuscript paper and a pen and make the only meaningful choice available to me: to have a cup of coffee. It is precisely in a one and three chair that this portfolio begins, as I sit down, pick up a pen, and intend my body (my flesh, *ma chair*) towards a pad of manuscript paper. After this, I sit in another one-and-three chair to listen and reflect on these pieces, and I eventually come to sit in a final one-and-three chair to write this commentary. *Alors je danse!*

31 This narrative bears a strong resemblance to the theory of symbiogenesis. Most notably propounded by Lynn Margulis, symbiogenesis describes the formation of new cells by these cells 'eat[ing] each other, get[ting] indigestion, and partially digest[ing] and partially assimilate[ing] one another'. The symposium of music making is a breaching of frames, where bodies are 'eaten', come together through porous cell walls, and are partially digested resulting in the formation of a new collaborative organism. The movements and orientations of bodies in this portfolio, exemplified by my coming to my desk point to each of them being inside of each other, a complicated ever evolving 'living together' within a whole phenomenon. c.f. Haraway (2016) pp. 58-67.

1.1. One and Two Chairs at a Desk

All of my compositions begin as hand-written manuscripts to a greater or lesser extent. Some are fully realised; others are left as a series of sketches that I enter into engraving software. For pieces with traditionally scored notation, this process might also be preceded by improvisations or workings out at an electronic keyboard. If I am to discuss my musicking body and make this body the subject of this commentary, then my body sitting at a desk and writing by hand must be the totality of an account of my authorial experience. In asserting this, I do not exalt this experience above all other parts of the music-making process or above any other moment of living. Rather, by isolating the creation of the score as a matter of sensing I am able to speak of it alongside performance and listening. John Dewey's *Art As Experience* brings the bodies of both artistic experiencer and creator to the fore of art making in the same way. In the case of the latter, the 'composer of music ... can retrace, during the process of production what they have previously done'.³² Dewey argues that this obliges the creator 'to think out their ideas in terms of the medium of embodiment', for 'every work of art follows the plan of, and pattern of, a complete experience'.³³ This embodiment is that which situates my body within its environment, continuous with a living experience, and against 'the fear of what life may – bring forth'³⁴ (though perhaps writing as an agoraphobe in the middle of this pandemic, where life itself is fearful, my aim is to acknowledge and

32 Dewey (1934/2005) p. 53.

33 Ibid. pp. 53-54.

34 Ibid. p. 23.

engage fully with this fear, rather than pit myself against it). Though this commentary retraces my composition after the process of production, writing on my practice is also a creative process that needs to be considered as an embodied medium in itself which presents and re-presents, mimics and undoes the body during the process.

Back to the present of my desk: in the first book of *Ideas*, Edmund Husserl uses his own account of writing to demonstrate a phenomenology that links cognition and action. 'In front of me ... lies this white paper. I see it, I touch it'.³⁵ But Husserl goes beyond describing a mere meeting of external material and internal cognition, he amplifies the frame of his experience. 'I am turned towards the object, to the paper. ... Around and about the paper lie books, pencils, ink-wells, and so forth ... in the "field of intuition"'.³⁶ Sitting in a different chair, in a different country, in a different time, my experience is of course somewhat different. Unlike Husserl, the first thing I note is that the paper of my Faber & Faber manuscript pad and Moleskin notebooks is more yellow than white. Moreover, this paper is visible only to me. The paper that performers see – and the documents given in this portfolio – are printed on white paper, either through engraving the scores on a computer, or digitally adjusting the manuscript after scanning it. Around me are pen, books, a laptop and a phone. Of course, the paper Husserl writes on is inaccessible to me (indeed, even printings of his work I perceive only on a laptop screen); but still, 'on the paper I read *about* the paper that is apprehended by Husserl'.³⁷

Through all of the removes of the music-making process the paper I write on is

35 Husserl (1913/1931) p. 168.

36 Ibid.

37 Ahmed (2006) p. 26 (original emphasis).

inaccessible to the performer and the audience, as are the gestures I make and the sounds I hear in my study. Yet they play and hear something about the paper I write on through hearing, playing what is written on the paper.

As I write, my keyboard sits behind me: to reach it I must rotate my chair and move it across the room. In the very mechanical process of crafting a score, there is an attenuation between my working out sections on an instrument and what appears on the paper. I am more likely than not to forget what I have played outright in the course of this turn. Sometimes I laugh this off, and write down something straight from my imagination. Other times, I turn back to the keyboard, and attempt to recall what I played previously or, failing this (again, in the majority of cases), compose something new. Before the score leaves my desk, I already make it inaccessible to myself. My consciousness, my mind that is turned towards the other, is perpetually broken in the turning towards, and turning away from desk and keyboard. The paper disappears from and re-enters my field of perception. I reframe my compositional tools through the orientation of my body in space; and, importantly, I break through these frames sitting on a chair. This one chair is two chairs: one bound up in performance at the keyboard, the other in writing at the desk. The performer reads this writing on the page that I produce, and similarly turns away from the page towards the instrument and the audience in a gesture that marks the final, deadly disjoining of the piece from living experience.

This is the same as my compositional gestures but reflected; through all the disjointed, birthing processes I end with a turn towards the page; and the performer turns away from it. However the forgetfulness of these transformative, rotating joints are still in place. The score is the point of departure, itself standing out in luminous white on a stand or desk. Marks are made on the score: fingerings, directions etc. The instruments lie in the background, part of the tools that enable this writing. Through the process of practicing the score retreats from the performer's perception as they focus their attention on the instrument, physical gestures, and the audience. The indeterminate spaces in the score emerge by them receding into the background and their prescriptions being forgotten. By the performance, the score has been so thoroughly forgotten that its contents, that which it specifies is unavailable to the audience.³⁸

The process of crafting a score is my own forgetting: I write in order to forget my intentionality. In that the production of the score is an archive of my composing body, engaging with the page is itself an act of forgetting. Reflecting on Derrida's *Archive Fever*, Shane Moran observes that 'when we write, when we archive, we produce a substitute for what is represented, and this mnemonic trace is also the means of erasure'.³⁹

My body is significant in this portfolio where it is inaudible and invisible in the

38 Kate Ledger, with whom I collaborated in *Androgynette* demonstrates this process in a series of videos entitled *Can I?*, showcasing the process of learning Ray Evanoff's *When I...* She begins at her desk, examining the score. The hands that will touch the piano initially touch the paper. She draws lines on the page to better see the vertical relationships between the staves. Like my manuscript paper, it is a luminous object on a homogeneous background. In subsequent videos she has turned away from her desk, and now sits at her piano. The score is still present, but the camera now focuses on her hands touching the keys. The score is still in our field of vision, but only as it is contextualised by the instrument. She never turns back to the desk. <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLwjLG1IrLrUjWn0SZfXCl_fnd9A3XaaUz>

39 Moran (2004) p. 287.

performance. The videos presented show the performer on stage, while the score, the ghost of my body, absent or present, is a tool in the background of the image. Whether as a composer or a listener, my body is turned towards the erasure of my body, where the destruction of itself 'belong[s] to the process of archivization and produces the very thing it reduces'.⁴⁰ Again, we observe many people sitting on many chairs; in their juxtaposition they are one piece, and yet in this same juxtaposition they are divided into distinct objects bounded by their own skin. Even at the beginning of the writing process, where the thought of the piece being performed is hidden from me, the relationships between graphics on a page and physical gestures pull themselves apart and bind themselves together in a series of approaches and retreats, knowings and forgettings. If the scores are to be performed, my composing body sitting on a chair must turn in that chair to forget itself.

Before the piece materialises in a theatrical performance space, the crafting processes are materialised in theatrical gestures. If, as Richard Schechner identified, the underlying process of a theatrical event is gathering, playing out an action or actions, and dispersing, 'people [coming] to a special place, [doing] something that can be called theatre ... and [going] on their way',⁴¹ then composing is the coming to and moving away from the score, physically and narratively. Through as simple a gesture as turning, I centre the written score as the focal point of my craft on the stage that is a desk, and in so doing make it a document *about* conception *on* the page. I arrive at my

40 Derrida (1995/1996) p. 94.

41 Schechner (1988/2003) p. 176.

desk through walking, breaking through the frames of my continuous living experience so as to designate composition as its own bound experience, leaving this space and arriving at rehearsal and performance venues. This traces a ritualistic procession,⁴² wending between paper and concept, showing the whole process to be the same phenomenon. I follow subterranean fungal networks that are in themselves the unification of the forest. All of my pieces in this portfolio, being written at the same desk, on the same chair, by the same hand, could be used to explore these relationships, but two in particular bear the most apparent resemblance to, and yet make the most radical departures from my gestures: *SAMO© SHIT SONGS* and *Dance Curves*.

1.2. SAMO© SHIT GRAPHEMES

The very first parts of this portfolio to be written down were the title *SAMO© SHIT SONGS*, and the design of the cover. Having ordered a facsimile of Basquiat's journals in late 2018, I decided very quickly to set fragments of them retaining his stylised layout and script as compositional material, sketching out the entire structure in what can only be described as a single manic evening. In this title, 'SAMO©/same-old', I declare three sets of relationships: that these songs are the same as other songs; that each song in the cycle is the same as the others; and that however they were performed they would be the same. This is evidently the case. Like classical lieder, this cycle is scored for voice and piano. While I retain the vernacular and idiosyncratic spellings used by Basquiat, there are few adventurous techniques: infrequent spoken passages, a portamento and

⁴² C.f. *ibid.* pp. 177-179.

occasional quartertones in 'Prayer', and some atypical layouts in the 'Interludes' hardly detract from the predominantly classical writing. Insofar as they constitute one cycle, the songs are all the same. Conspicuously, the 'Prelude' and 'Postlude' are very literally the same, with different bars cut out from each. Whereas typeset scores push the character of the graphics to the background, in *SAMO*© the deliberate peculiarities of my handwriting are brought to the fore. The songs are unified by this irregular foregrounded writing in a way that unified type cannot. Finally, in that the performances bear resemblance to the score, and in that they are all one-and-many set/s of songs, we might conclude that there is a sameness across performances.

Just as I observe a remove between the rest of my living space and my desk, between my flat and performance spaces, so also there is a distance between me and the manuscript pad (at this point in time I take the pen as something already held in and extending my hand). I return to Husserl and his white paper. That this paper and my body in relation to it is a material thing perceived (*cogitatum*), and not reducible to idealised perception (*cogitatio*) through a Cartesian dualism,⁴³ is the outcome of a matrix of bodily sensations: 'through sight, touch, hearing etc., in the different ways of sensory perception, corporeal things somehow spatially distributed are *for me simply there ... "present"*'⁴⁴ in time and space. The paper is a thing of the past in its material formation; it is also of the future in its potential for performance that unfolds as part of its materiality. This paper becomes apparent to me, as do these pasts and futures, exactly

43 Husserl (1913/1931) p. 65.

44 Ibid. p. 51 original emphasis.

when/where it sits at my desk and I write on it. At my desk, I experience composition as primarily tied to sensation, where the history of the score is born out of the geography of my body. Here I am particularly concerned with the haptic relationship: the paper that lies on the desk apart from me on the chair comes into my present, and from this becomes that which may be perceived in and through performance, when/where I hold it down with my left hand and write on it with my right. In retaining a handwritten score, the performers might be as conscious of these actions in the future as I am in the present.

The piece was presented to the performers as a card folder made from the title page and the instructions (fig. 2). Inside, each song is folded together in its own booklet, so that each can be easily rearranged as units. This is a score that cannot be spaced apart from, left untouched by the performers. It must be opened up, touched, and reordered by the performers using the same gestures that I used to arrange these pages on my desk. For the sequence of the cycle to come into being aurally, awash with temporal considerations, the spatial distance must first be played with. The form of the piece is *there* when the performers' bodies are likewise *there*. This is another sameness: as the page becomes structurally meaningful through the same gesture, the manuscript page touches the photocopied and edited page. Sitting at my desk, I reach out to touch this paper and, like a Classical oracle, the array of possible performances for me simply appear.

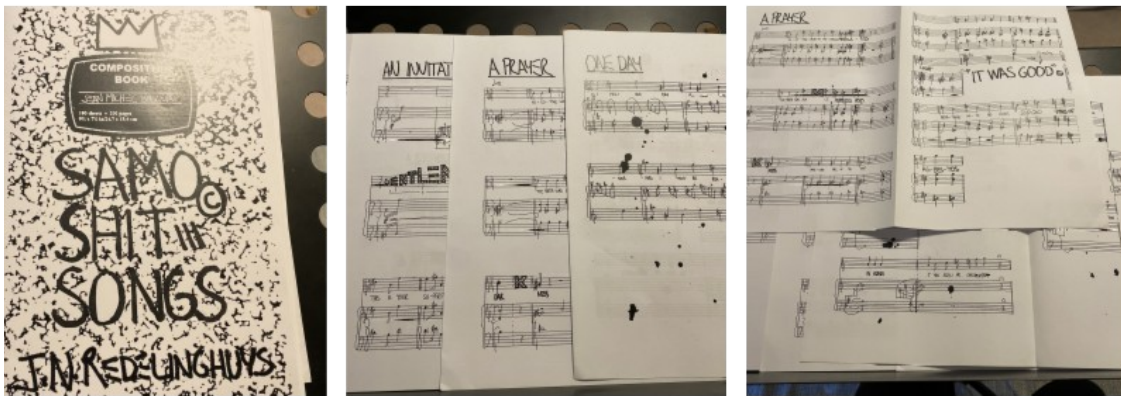


Figure 2: The prototype design of the physical copy of *SAMO© SHIT SONGS* that the performers received.

Back at my desk, I notice a series of gaps on the cover of the score (fig. 3). At the top, furthest away from me, is a crown, a symbol ubiquitously used by Basquiat as both a motif and a signature. Below that, in a self-contained area, we are told that this composition book belongs to Jean-Michel Basquiat. And below that, outside of the black border, we find the title. The background of the 'A', the two 'O's, and the copyright sign have been removed; this, combined with the size of the letters, causes the title to stand out against the mottled cover. Finally, at the bottom of the cover, half-hidden by the background, I write my name. In being ordered in this way, the graphics move towards me, bring the distanced page into my present. The piece is firstly graphical: it is Basquiat's journaling, but more importantly it is the form of his journaling, rather than the semantics. All of the songs set the form of the letters and their space on the page before setting the meaning of these letters as language.

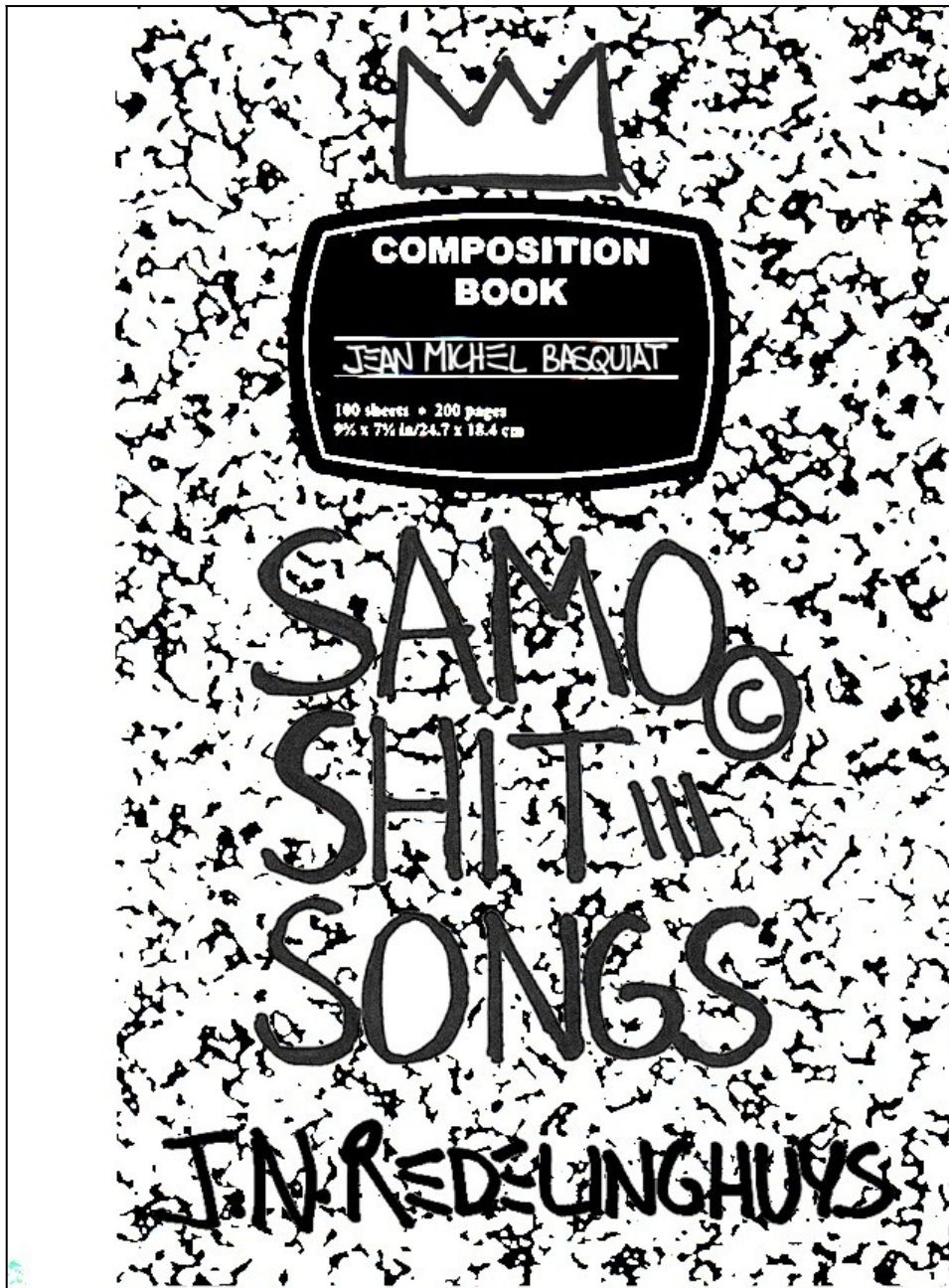


Figure 3: The cover of *SAMO© SHIT SONGS*.

Above and before Basquiat, the songs, or myself as composer, there is the paper of a book that lies next to the manuscript pad. This facsimile of Basquiat's journals is first in my perception, before I turn to writing. But by the time these songs are performed, perhaps even by the time they are presented as a score, the journals are an abstract spectre, forgotten on my desk, without the certainty of the words 'Jean-Michel Basquiat',

or any musical notation. A crown dominates the cover (it is at the top, and it also carries the symbolic authority of a crown) and it is the furthest removed from me; further from both my body and my name at the bottom of the page. Though the crown, the name, and the layout of the source material are present, a physical and conceptual space leads to the conclusion: 'this piece is not the same as the journals.' Now I open the card folder, and I see the first page of music notation, and notice other spaces between the graphics that have to be navigated in order to perform the piece: a space between the vocal staff with the texts beneath and the piano part below. Like editing out the interior of certain letters on the cover, I edit out blank staves, making the filled parts more prominent, and exaggerating the gaps between these parts.. I began with a sameness reaching across space time between facsimile, manuscript, score, and performance; but now, within that same arrangement, an irreducible rift has appeared, binding together score and performance, yet pushing away facsimile and manuscript.

The treachery of Es

The title *SAMO© SHIT SONGS* is explicitly inspired by René Magritte's *La Trahison des Images* (1929). 'These are the same old songs', and 'this is not a pipe [*Ceci n'est pas une pipe*]', and I name the cycle as something that it both is and is not. Both declarations are heavily stylised calligrams: a graphic that is significant not only in the perception of its semantics, but also in the perception of its form. Basquiat's journals are written entirely in capital letters. The 'G' curves around in a spiral like a treble clef; the 'Y' curves

upwards in a 'U' shape before abruptly descending like a minim; the 'E' [Italian 'and'] is the most distinctive, consisting of only three parallel lines, like a Greek capital 'Xi' [Ξ] (fig. 4).



Figure 4: Comparison of my musical and textual script in *SAMO© SHIT SONGS*.

The same three lines appear on the cover, a nod to the use of *SAMO©* as a graffiti tag by Basquiat and Al Diaz, some instances of which are quoted on the instructions page. Here the three lines act as one half of an exaggerated scare quote, undecided as to whether or not these songs are the same old shit. This 'Ξ' mimics the three staves per system, a simultaneity, but negates the sense of verticality, a hierarchy, between them. Without a vertical line at the start binding the horizontal lines together, the 'Ξ' similarly proposes the deconstruction of a hierarchy between voice and accompaniment that is indicated by the standard vertical at the beginning of each system. Each of the three lines is presented on its own terms, each independently emerging *ex nihilo*; each line is of approximately equal length, annihilating by themselves *ad nihilo*. Although Latin, like music notation, is written from left to right, it is not difficult to imagine these lines running right-to-left, or starting in the middle and expanding outwards. Basquiat's hand,

the lines vary between being drawn parallel, and having them explode outwards left-to-right (a variance I attempted to emulate).

These lines are omnipresent in the structure of *SAMO*©. Individual songs, such as 'Psalm', 'Interlude 1', and 'Interlude 5' play with the vertical positioning of lines of music on a page; the indeterminate ordering between 'Prelude' and 'Postlude' sees the songs superimposed, in parallel striations, until performance; and the elements of the triple journal-score-performance are variously above and below each other at different points in the music making. There are spatial separations between musical notation and text, between the piece and the journals that inspired it, between the score and the performance; and these pairs and their internal elements are the same and contradictory versions of each other. 'We return to the page ... because the words we now can read underneath the drawing are themselves drawn ... I must read them superimposed upon themselves ... The represented pipe is drawn by the same hand and with the same pen as the letters of the text.'⁴⁵

45 Foucault (1968/1983) p. 23



Figure 5: The opening two bars of the 'Prelude' from SAMO© SHIT SONGS.

The performers are instructed to 'begin with the Prelude', and so the cycle invariably begins on an E at the bottom of a rolled chord. The Italian directions, *Semplice* and *con Ped[ale]*, are written in my usual hand; the same is true of performance directions in the rest of the cycle which are in Italian, with only a few exceptions. The 'e' curls around itself and closes the loop, coming to a playful relationship with the indeterminacies that constitute this piece. This particular form of 'e' seems to signify something complete in itself. The curl of this 'e' resembles a note on a system, which bounds itself as a circle or a dot indicating pitch – only to then reach out with a stem to constrain this pitch in time. In both an 'e' and a minim I make the loop first. The gesture of my hand comments upon on how a same-o song is written. It starts with the text, drawn first by a poet, a lyricist, a composer, or a journaling artist. And once it has crossed the divide to end up on manuscript paper, sitting beneath lines that look like the strange other 'Ξ', it is attached to another type of circles: note-heads. And from

there, the stems that reach out from the staff to the text, which only fully emerges once sung. Like *One and Three Chairs* or the empty manuscript paper, these Italian directions reach out and become meaningful only in juxtaposition. (What meaning does the score have except in our perception of it? What meaning do these directions have except in how they inform the graph beside them?). Ironically, once these graphemes become attached to sung text, the musical E disappears: the singer does not sing an E until the end of the 'Prelude'. However, unlike the chairs, music's graphemes bound: there is an historical certainty in them. The trained musician knows what is meant by *Semplice* or by a minim; and we might expect a smaller degree of uncertainty in their interpretation from performance to performance. The clefs, the notes, the standard directions close the cycle in the 'SAMO©-same-old'; and, in doing so, they limn the indeterminacy of the stylised lyrics. These marks, these directions are the ghosts of the same-old music of past song cycles, brought into relief with the openness of the 'Ξ', which sits in the gaps between staves, while *Semplice* and *con Ped.* encompass the system above and below. Attention is drawn to 'the small space running above the words and below the drawings' to which we seldom pay attention, where 'on these few millimetres of white ... are established all the relations of designation, nomination, description, classification'.⁴⁶ This small space is a space of conflict between various notations, where the sameness of each says of the others 'we are not the same.'

46 Ibid. p. 28.

These two styles of es [German 'is'] and Ξ s lie obliquely apart from one another. It is not until the third syllable of 'CITIZEN' that they E are vertically aligned, and even here the sustained E in the piano is only a decaying memory of what it was. Hence, this relationship traces the second form of 'Ξ', where the lines open out at an angle left to right, and close right to left, as in the title PRELUDE Ξ . Similarly, although the performance directions and the sung text, the vocal staff and the piano staves, run in parallel, they connect obliquely, sometimes converging, sometimes diverging. Again similarly, we might compare the two performances of *SAMO*© included in this portfolio as processes of coming together and moving apart – between the two realisation, between score and performance, and between performers within the performance space. The first performance, by Ella Taylor and myself, was a more-or-less classical interpretation of the score, staged as lieder. This arose somewhat out of necessity, as we only had a few hours in which to devise and rehearse a performance; but, upon reflection, I can see some of my own authorial biases in the performance, and much of the interpretation of the score was based upon how my hand drew the letters, not on the ways in which they could be deranged. Taylor and I performed it side by side, staying in parallel like the lines of the first form of the 'Ξ'; but we also produced a type of unity by together inhabiting the same interior of the 'e'. The two graphemes came together in the divide as a similar sameness.

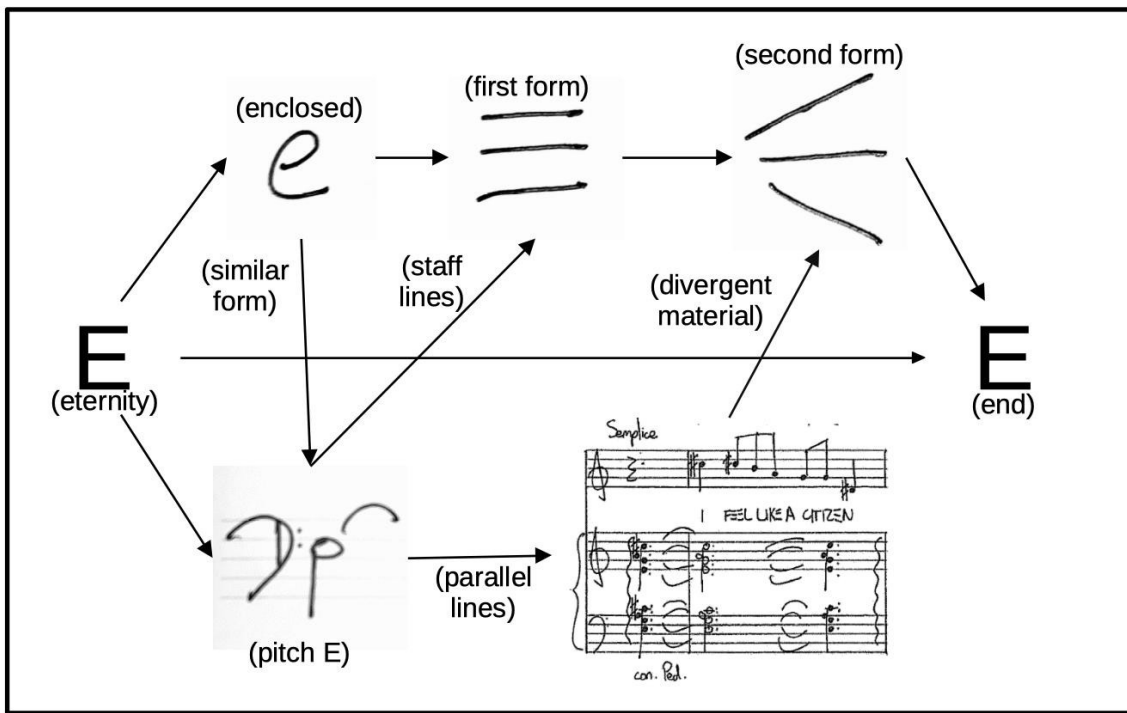


Figure 6: A diagramme of the evolution of Es in *SAMO© SHIT SONGS*. This chain of signifiers is at once cyclical - beginning and ending and beginning again on 'e' - and simultaneous - the Es are not sequential, but always creating each other.

In contrast, the second performance, by Hannah Ambrose and Dominic Floyd, was devised entirely without my input and without reference to the first performance. While there were some similarities in the ordering of the songs (which I attribute to a classical aesthetic of contrasting slow-fast movements), the significant differences testify to the destructive power of the gaps in the score. Between the notation and the text, and in the white spaces edited out between systems, there is an impassable region, out of which interaction becomes difference. The blank space between the image of a pipe, and the declaration 'this is not a pipe' asserts the identity of each, only for this discourse to collapse; through a process of cyclical references, both lose their own identities.⁴⁷ The way in which Ambrose and Floyd navigated the score was another iteration of a

⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 54.

comparative reading of the classical and graphic notation. Taylor and I found an agreement between the two; but these notations have the same potential to contradict each other and themselves in the same in between spaces. More so than in the first performance, there is a profound sense of loneliness in the second, a kind of cruel isolation that feels especially resonant as I reflect on it in the middle of a pandemic. The interpretations of 'Prayer' and 'One Day' in particular reach back past the score, past my composition to an intimate, quasi-religious journaling practice. Again: although there is a playfulness to it, and a strong sense of interaction, '2 Girls' devolves into something truly antagonistic, especially compared to the first performance. Each exclamation of 'PΞNALIZΞ' that breaks up each verse is itself contained within a box, only to be fragmented by two Ξs, pushing the performers further apart, even forcing the pianist onto a different instrument. The spaces within 'Ξ' relegates the performers to their own contained 'e'. The voices adherers to a tonal centre E throughout. By contrast, the accompaniment starts with a pedal on E that becomes a weak but still audible E in the middle of harmonies in the second, only to disappear completely in the third. Like the second form of the 'Ξ', the separation between the lines diverges over time, and in the same way so does the performance.

Sensory graphemes

To look back over these graphemes thusly traces an ethnography of my practice. It is a brief anthropological study of people around and through the perception of a score; a

sensory anthropology (as championed by Sarah Pink and Tim Ingold in contrast to an 'anthropology of the senses'). Significantly, in my practice, the score is neither a representation of nor a recipe for musical phenomena; rather, it itself moves through the whole sensory-musical experience. Ingold gives an example of this ethnography when examining '[his] favourite composer' Leoš Janáček. He reproduces the page from Janáček's notebook on which the composer records 'how ... he stood on the seashore and notated the sound of the waves'⁴⁸ in three stages:

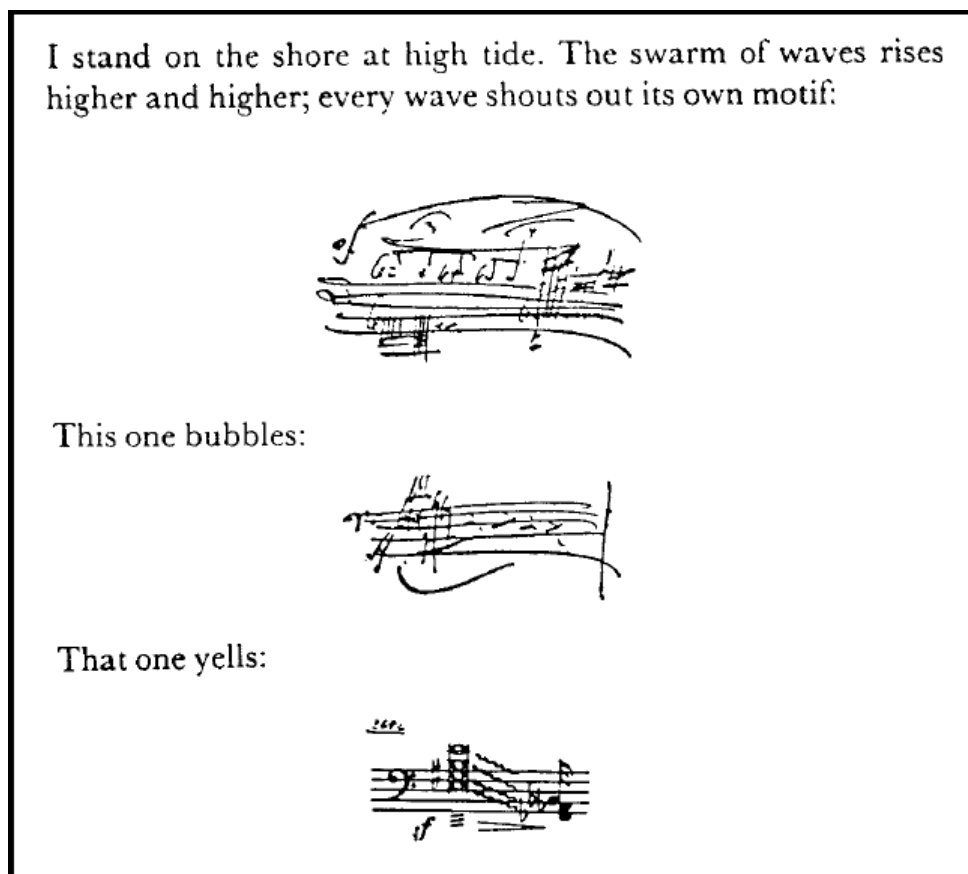


Figure 7: Janáček's sketches of the sounds of the waves, as he stood on the shore at the Dutch port of Flushing in 1926.

There are several overlapping comparisons to be found in Janáček's sketches. We might understand that three different waves have come to be expressed in different

⁴⁸ Extract from *Janáček's uncollected essays on music* (1989) in Ingold (2000) p. 23.

musical content, in different musical script, or in the flow represented by the lines of the notation. Alternatively, we might say that the form of the notations themselves constructs these waves, making them shout, bubble, or yell. We might also question if these are indeed three successive waves, or instead three consequences, three 'ripples' within a single cascade against the rocks: the body of the wave, held together by surface tension yells, in a neat, type-set notation; the lighter foam bubbles where the wave breaks; and the sea spray shouts in a notation that is difficult to read (one feels the spray more than one sees it). What is clear is that this exercise does not glorify the visual documentation of sound; rather it is a way of working through listening with the whole body.

SAMOC SHIT SONGS does not represent a 'natural' phenomenon such as waves, but it does capture an ethnography of my work space, tools, and the presence of the facsimiles of Basquiat's journals in that space and as one of these tools. It skews towards the anthropological rather than the ecological, to whatever extent these disciplines are distinct. Representation is not at stake here. Neither Janáček nor Ingold take the notation in the notebook to be representative, or even a documentation, of the waves. It is a part of a sensory ethnography; it visually and haptically connects the waves, the sounds of these waves, and the notation of these spatial and sonic forms. 'For Janáček is not just hearing, he is *listening*. ... the movement of the composer's consciousness resonates with the sounds of the waves, and each sketch gives form to that movement.'⁴⁹ And though I am removed from these waves, and Janáček's notation has come to me

49 Ingold (2000) p. 24.

through another author's book open on my laptop screen, I might nevertheless grasp all of these connections, and integrate myself into this web through sitting in my chair.

As a composer, I engage with my score through my perceptions just as the performer or listener does, grappling with the same curls, lines, removes, connections, and impasses. The Ξ s that I observe in Basquiat's journals are given form by the movements that I make with my pen, and these are given form by performance. It is not simply that the score is representative – it has never left that which it references in the first place. *SAMO© SHIT SONGS* is the same as Basquiat's journals, because it never truly leaves them; the notations in the score are an extension of the phenomenon of my reading of the journals, at once documenting and remaking them; and the performances of *SAMO©* never leave the score, but reiterate it and its foibles. Sound 'grows out of our entire being ... *There is no sound that is broken away from the tree of life*'.⁵⁰ Thus, this sensory auto-ethnography of myself as an author, which on a surface level seems horrendously egotistical, is also an ethnography of the piece, because I come to know the piece as a reader even as I am authoring it. 'The echoes of the yell are the reverberations of your own being as it pours forth into the environment.'⁵¹

I can now, reflecting with my senses, read the various forms of the Ξ s as diagrams of the cosmology of the piece and particularly of the page's and the ink's vibrant, resonant materiality. There are certainly parallel forces at play (' Ξ '). The score, performance, and documentation each have their own life, and this life comes into

50 Janáček in *ibid.* p. 24.

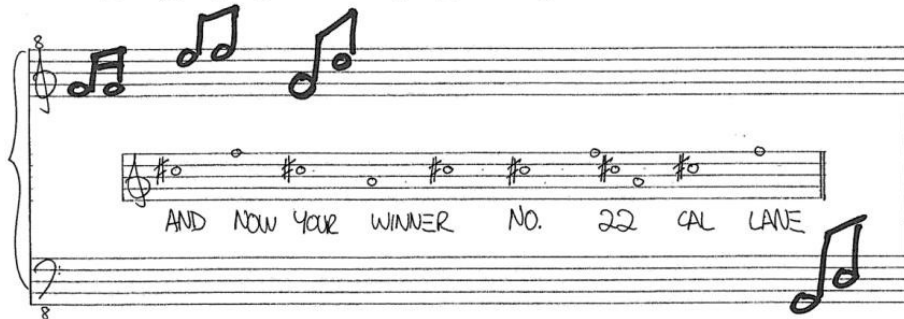
51 Ingold (2000) p. 24.

being in the blank spaces between the lines, where they disjoint and become, if not antagonistic, isolated. But, like the second form of the 'Ξ', they also reach out at oblique angles to depart from each other at these disjoints, where two interpretations of a score end up as *misrepresentations* of each other. And so I return, once again, to those ubiquitous one and many chairs and that ubiquitous desk that is part of my life, the environment in which I know these pieces – a very quotidian 'e'. And I understand that it is my body sitting at the desk that reaches to touch a journaling Basquiat, potential performers, and potential listeners through pages and pages of practicing and producing these various scripts. The journal I reference ... the hand-written score ... the document presented to the performers ... the performance ... the recording ... and our perceptions of these phenomena in their differences ... are all the same old shit.

I sit at a desk in my flat. A facsimile of Basquiat's journals sits next to me. We are both silent.



Here the geography of the page sings:



Here my pen shouts over the page:

INTERLUDE 5

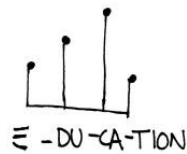


Figure 8: My sound-image anthropological imitation of Janáček's waves.

1.3. Dance Dis/Continuities

ESTRAGON: Perhaps he could dance first and think afterwards, if it isn't too much to ask him.

VLADAMIR: [to Pozzo] Would that be possible?

POZZO: By all means, nothing simpler. It's the natural order.

– Samuel Becket, *Waiting for Godot*⁵²

Almost a century ago, Gret Palucca performed a gesture, Charlotte Rudolph took a photograph of her, and Wassily Kandinsky abstracted these photographs in a series of line drawings. In May of 2019, Vanessa Grasse devised a series of improvised dances based on these images, but independent of my score which could then be performed alongside a projected video. At some point in between (closer in time to the latter than the former) on a loose scrap of paper I draw two parallel lines, descending obliquely left to right. In these two lines I sketch out both a history of *Dance Curves* was, and what it will be. This sketch, and several others like it – curves, angles, points – and some musical techniques were then made into a score for violin, cello, and piano. The finished score is recorded some months later. In bar 4, Valerie Pearson enters with a long glissando, followed by an imitative glissando from Claire Babington (fig. 9). Despite beginning at different points in time they both finished on the same downbeat, with a sudden gesture across the body of the instrument.

This opening is performed in a single bow movement, and continues beyond the instrument as the arm extends, and the bow flicks outwards. Later in the movement, the

⁵² Beckett (1986) p. 39.

violin and cello glissandi diverge, moving up and down independently, yet always end together on the same (though sometimes inverted) gesture that moves across the whole of the instrument and beyond. Where the Ξ s or es of SAMO© signify a continuous divergence, the parallel lines of the *Dance Curves* score converge, at once internally continuous and separated by large gestures and bars of rests. Kandinsky's *Dance Curves* was part of the modernist project of 'elucidat[ing] the fluidity of interchanges between the arts'.⁵³ Palucca, Rudolph, and Kandinsky begin a glissando, and I enter after, imitating it. At some points these glissandi might diverge, moving up and down independently, yet the whole constellation ends on the same gesture at a performance in May 2019, converging in an abstraction of one hundred years of trans*media games. In this way I enter into the narrative surrounding contemporary dance in the early twentieth century.

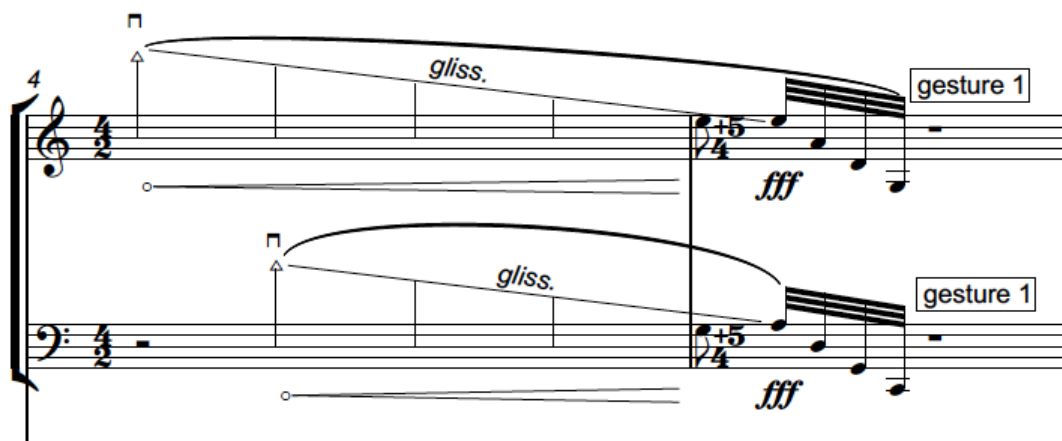


Figure 9: Violin and cello glissando in bars 4-5 in *Dance Curves*.

In SAMO©, which was written at the same time as *Dance Curves*, my focus was on the interplay of minutiae, how one grapheme adjoins another symbol, or how a page in

⁵³ Kandinsky (1982) pp. 519-523 in Funkenstein (2007) p. 390.

a facsimile can account for a position on a stage. *Dance Curves* is more concerned with the relationship of whole artworks contained within more evident, more opaque frames. Palucca stands out clearly on a background, Rudolph's photograph and Kandinsky's line drawings are easily distinguishable, and the typeset score is even more distinct from the multimedia performance in a deconsecrated church. Of course, there are quasi-literal quotations in *Dance Curves*: the parallel lines became glissandi in the first movement; the preponderance of arcs became circular bowing and sweeping string piano gestures in the second movement; the firmly grounded feet, together with a gently curving left arm, constitute a dialectic of material in the third; and the predominantly downward gestures of the fourth movement were derived from similar downward lines in the line drawing. Nevertheless, in that each piece of media are so self-contained, so clear in their intent, to quote these gestures does not imitate the whole in the same way as does copying the graphemes and layout of Basquiat's journals as a series of open-ended musings. Kandinsky notes this dualism in contemporary dance, writing that dance can be an end in itself⁵⁴ or 'one element within the total work – dance, music, painting'.⁵⁵ The distinct art disciplines, although 'separated by walls', come together through the relation of "'inner," medium-specific elements'.⁵⁶ *Dance Curves* – that is the whole hundred year long lineage, Kandinsky's images, my piece, the performance, and the relationships between these – is simultaneously walled, framed, and bound together. And the binding is not a matter of representation or imitation. Funkenstein notes that 'Kandinsky

54 Huxley (2017) p. 279.

55 Kandinsky (1982) p. 716 in *ibid.* p. 279.

56 Kandinsky (1982) p. 264 paraphrased in *ibid.* p. 269.

is concerned with abstraction, not pictorial representation of the human body ... The drawing's lines ... [create] complex relationships of drama and balance, relationships that served as the basis for both Kandinsky's art and Palucca's dancing ... Kandinsky drew lines that converge and separate'.⁵⁷ A queerer account than representation is needed to link the various media.

This process the transitions from and binds one medium to another is a process of abstraction, of course: this is abstract art. As for *SAMO©*, to shift the focus of the discourse to embodiment, and know the body through the body, requires a consideration of the performativity of each stage. I begin by imagining Palucca's performance; although it approaches me through a still photograph (like the manuscript paper, at a distance which becomes apparent only when facing it and perceiving it), we might think about what comes before and after this moment. A notable characteristic of *Dance Curves* – the Palucca-Rudolph-Kandinsky project – is that the static image elicits a sense of movement, something vital, even though we perceive it as a 'still' image. Kandinsky's practice saw 'the stage composition of the future as the unification of these mediums [sound, body, and colour-tones] through movement'.⁵⁸ Insofar as it is motion, each point that is photographed emerges from the field of that which is not visible. The same vision might apply to the entire process of adapting *Dance Curves*; the individual media presented in this portfolio are only expressions of that which separates and connects each other which is not explicitly presented. For Rudolph to photograph

57 Funkenstein (2007) p. 396.

58 Huxley (2017) p. 269.

Palucca's gestures is to arrest their temporality. One might argue the reverse is true of the score: the atemporality of the image that is before me in the present, as I reach out to touch it, leaves my present when it materialises as performance. What this score is as a thing is known through drawing its lines and curves before the dots, lines, and curves are re-traced by the performers. In the first image, I imagine how Palucca might gesturally create such a pose, planting her feet firmly on the floor, as all three performers do in bar 2, before lowering herself, and extending her hands downwards. She must also come out of this pose, pulling her body back up as her hands come closer to the centre of her body (see bar 48). That this whole movement is expressed in a momentary photography is echoed in the score as a material object that is arrested in time. The performers' gestures in the present of the recording are constituted within, and form part of a reciprocal making with, the stillness of the two parallel lines, and a footnote explaining the gesture. I do not mean here to affirm or refute that the score signifies or instructs the movement of the performers; rather, I say simply that the plastic materiality of the score that we see and touch is coterminous with the ontology of these movements.

Points and lines and scores and videos

That Kandinsky abstracts this photograph into a line or a curve is itself indicative of the movement of his hand, the same as my composing hand, extending my body the same as Palucca's own hand, arm, torso, and legs. His account is not dissimilar to my own

description of writing SAMO©: a line 'is the track made by the moving point ... It is created through movement – specifically through the destruction of the intense self-contained repose of the point'.⁵⁹ And Funkenstein writes:

Palucca's feet are firmly planted on the stage, such that she appears to barely move, [which is also true of my sitting at a desk] but the "cold-warm" dynamic in the diagonals creates tension, or a "force inherent in an element." When Kandinsky combines that tension with the lines' direction, he delineates the fundamental components of movement.⁶⁰

The abstraction of Rudolph's photographs that reduces Palucca's gestures to the foundation of her movement resides as much in Kandinsky's gestures with a pen as in the lines that appear on the page. In asserting the discrete frames of each artwork, the artists draw out the similarity in the insides of these media: we understand Kandinsky's drawings to be full of movement because we see, even trace out with our own bodies, similar gestures in these drawings and in Palucca's body. Even though we can no longer see Palucca's body move over time, the trans*media artistic process from gesture to gesture takes place over time, and each piece of media is in itself the echo of a process in time. Her body moves as a spectre throughout the composition and performance of *Dance Curves*. Even when I engraved these lines on a laptop, I made the same hand gesture, stretching each line by moving my finger across a trackpad.

The same cannot be said of editing the instrumental recording. The movements are similar – dragging cells of video or audio to different points on a digital work station

⁵⁹ Kandinsky (1926/1947) p. 57.

⁶⁰ Funkenstein (2007) p. 396.

– but the end result is a series of discrete parts. To draw a line is to make a continuity of points that form a whole; to edit a video is to break up a line (a take) into a discontinuity that nevertheless is reformed into a whole by rendering. Rather than duplicating a whole imagine in a new continuity, editing breaks apart of an image and reforms it in a new continuity. Even though Kandinsky deconstructs Palucca's body, the underlying structures remain the same and are even emphasised. The order of her body is not annihilated; quite the opposite. I have accounted for the difference between my yellow manuscript paper and the edited white score of *SAMO©* above; though there is a continuity in the internal gestures of using a laptop, we nevertheless recognise a dissociation between my hand and what the performers perceive. This dissociation is more pronounced in *Dance Curves*: in *SAMO©* the scanned score bears a strong resemblance to my manuscript even though it is mediated through my laptop, but the computer-engraved *Dance Curves* bear a weaker resemblance to my sketches. This process also erases the possibility that the reader will know that the handwritten sketches existed at all (it is not uncommon for composers to compose directly on engraving software). The mediation of score and recording through my laptop is archiving as a process of forgetting. Palucca's body, the performers' bodies, and my body drift further into absentia.

Grasse devised her improvisation based on Rudolph and Kandinsky's images. I shared with her the videos, their order, and the basic structure and length of each, but we agreed that she need not, even should not, follow this structure, or even begin or

end at the same time. Grasse's dancing returns us to Palucca's originating movements through reintroducing time to the still image; it has travelled through a series of abstracting processes to become something distinct from and yet similar to the original. She is the double of Palucca, channeling Palucca's movements as if she were the voice of an artistic ancestor. We can track the continuously changing relationship between music, video, and dance in the narrative of the past; but when they are performed together in the present they are simultaneous, mutually referential, yet separate. Foucault ascribes the 'rupture' in the history of art between 'resemblance and affirmation' to Kandinsky: 'a double effacement simultaneously of resemblance and of the representative bond'.⁶¹ Placed side by side, Rudolph's photographs and Kandinsky's line drawings apparently represent each other. However, when we dissociate the photograph and drawing, or the art and score, or the video and dancer, this relation fails. This is exactly what occurs between Grasse's dancing and my video. They occur in the same building, but unfold in different media, in different spaces, and in different planes; each begins to refer only to itself, and that they exist in the same space and time seems coincidental. When we ask what the performance is, we 'can reply only by referring itself to the gesture that formed it: an "improvisation", a "composition"'.⁶² Grasse's dance and my video reference the same source but not each other; their relationship cannot be mutually representative, only similar. It is a quasi-Heisenbergian system: as we turn our attention towards the continuity of the relationship of media through time, that which connects dancer to

⁶¹ Foucault (1968/1983) p. 34.

⁶² Ibid.

photographer to artist to composer to dancer again – that is, the velocity of the piece – the arrangement of elements within the performance space – that is, their position – seem disjointed, and vice versa.

From this, we might go on to question the strength of this relationship even when the media are juxtaposed. To what extent can there be a bond between Grasse's dancing and my video, or between Kandinsky's *Dance Curves* and my piece, if they stand for themselves in their own frames? Magritte's *Les Deux mystères* reconstructs *La Trahison des Images*. The original pipe and text sits, framed on an easel, with the same pipe painted, unframed, on a wall behind it. The relationship of image and calligram is redoubled. Perhaps most importantly, as with the 'few millimetres of white' in *La Trahison des Images*, these relationships are made possible by the spacial separation of the pipe on the easel and the pipe of the wall. 'Hounded from the space of the painting, excluded from the relation between things that refer to one another, resemblance vanishes'.⁶³ Rather than a constructive force of two things constituting a whole in their discreteness, it is the similarity of gestures in dance and video that enables us to navigate where the two are dislocated. In the relationship of similar things, differences are affirmed and multiplied, that 'dance together, tilting and tumbling over one another'.⁶⁴ The millimetres of white on the page or the centimetres of space between the chairs is large for the audience to walk around in it. For me, this was the ultimate success of *Dance Curves*: Grasse entered before the video, perpendicular to the nearest

63 Ibid. p. 46.

64 Ibid.

screen, moved behind and away from a different screen in the second movement, and after a break reentered through the audience, only to end up standing still at a midpoint, and all the while the audience turned and moved to see her and this distort the relative positions of dancer and video. The audience was enabled, even required, to trace out everything that I have written above, to join in the same weird procession as Palucca, Rudolph, Kandinsky, Grasse, and myself.

Dances and projections

And so I come to the triple documentation of *Dance Curves*, which is characteristic of this entire portfolio,⁶⁵ and the general discourse that emerges around the documentation of performance: documentation in score in the first video of only musicians; in the juxtaposition of this with Grasse's dancing; and all of these as part of the same history as Rudolph's and Kandinsky's documentations. Amelia Jones, in "'Presence" in absentia', argues against the false dichotomy drawn between the experience of one who observes a performance live and one who comes to it through documentation. 'While the experience of viewing a photograph and reading a text is clearly different from that of sitting in a small room watching an artist perform, neither has a privileged relationship to the historical "truth" of the performance'.⁶⁶ But even before I ask this question arises for an audience, it is clear that it applies equally to

⁶⁵ I do wish to emphasise that although I take *Dance Curves* as a convenient example, the same arguments can be applied to everything in this portfolio, including this commentary, especially since the central subject is the body. This is of particular concern for the reader: how can one as a reader know what I present here, and how can I present my practice such that a reader might know it?

⁶⁶ Jones (1997) p. 11.

authors and performers. As I argue above, *Dance Curves* as an historical and geographical narrative exists not only because of the continuity of certain bodies but also because of where this continuity fails. Rudolph and Kandinsky, by dint of the media they work in, fail to represent or even eliminate Palucca's actual movements through time, but they virtually testify to the temporality of her gestures. That this document – *Dance Curves* – might become two performances apart in space hints at a prior intimacy.

Philip Auslander, in 'The Performativity of Performance Documentation' outlines a 'traditional' distinction between the documentation of pieces designed for live events (the documentary), and performances designed to be recorded (the theatrical).⁶⁷ Palucca's gestures and the instrumental video of *Dance Curves* fall under the latter category, while Grasse's performance falls under the former. However, dismissing as ideological the 'presumption of an ontological relationship between performance and document'⁶⁸, in which the event precedes and authors the document as ideological, Auslander instead proposes that both are performative and that it is '*the act of documenting an event as a performance [which] constitutes it as such*'.⁶⁹ Dispensing with this ontology, and with its various certainties about the procession of construction and meaning, we might play with the linearity of documentation. If 'the performance is always at one level raw material' and also 'the final product ... with which it will inevitably

67 Auslander (2006) p. 1.

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid. p. 5 (original emphasis).

become identified',⁷⁰ we can imagine that both material and product are in the present, at my desk, as I write, edit, read, and reflect. The score seems particularly galvanised by this reading: it is no longer only an instruction for a performance; it also documents the performance, as the performance documents it. The performance is constituted in the score, and vice versa; and as this score is material, that which I produce at my desk, the embodiment of author, performer, and reader alike are equally and similarly apparent to each other in their own presents and always exist in each other's pasts and futures. The instrumental video and its projection alongside Grasse's dancing, even though they are presented as distinct wholes in this portfolio, are not final in themselves; they are raw materials that reference themselves, other materials in the past, and what they in turn produce. This point is particularly significant with respect to my reflection and the reader's listening.

Jones asserts that neither someone watching a performance live nor someone watching at documentary video has a more privileged relationship to the truth of the piece; but that is not to say that either has unfettered access. Auslander argues that 'the presence of that initial audience has no real important; to the performance as an entity';⁷¹ and as the privileged position of the singular subject viewing the piece is undermined, so does the chronologically ordered hierarchy of the musicking process. It is the interjection of the body as a material in flux and the perception of the work that approaches us that has occupied this chapter; this ultimately denies any ontological

70 Ibid. p. 3.

71 Ibid. p. 6.

certainty in my practice. The flux comes from a mediation of bodies by bodies, such that 'there is no possibility of an unmediated relationship to any kind of cultural product'.⁷² The score, the performance, documentation, listening, and reflection form a continuity through the ruptures caused by the interjections of the body that I describe at the beginning of this section; and where these bodies are multiple and 'equally intersubjective',⁷³ the condition is one of a unity produced through heterogeneity. Jones concludes her account of the documentation of body art by both drawing on and refuting Artaud's proposal that a 'direct communication will be re-established between the spectator and the spectacle',⁷⁴ arguing that that 'such a dream must be viewed as historically specific rather than epistemologically secure'.⁷⁵ Perhaps, looking past the clearly historical ideology of this desire, an ideology that is no longer viable in our postmodern condition, this immediacy of Artaud's desire for 'direct communication' in itself founded upon the fracturing that the body, which is always in flux, always indeterminate, brings. Only a sensory engagement with the materiality of the piece can account for the historical and geographical *différance* of both body and artwork.

The modernist project of unifying the arts as a fluid continuity (which spurred Palucca, Rudolph, and Kandinsky's project) falters in the face of this performative reading of documentation. That same reading becomes embodied when Grasse improvises independently of my score, moving in a three-dimensional space in between

72 Jones (1997) p. 12.

73 Ibid.

74 Artaud (1958) p. 90 quoted in Jones (1997) p. 17.

75 Jones (1997) p. 17.

two dimensional projected videos. It is precisely 'the relationship of these bodies/subjects to documentation (or, more specifically, to re-presentation) that most profoundly points to the dislocation of the ... centred modernist subject'.⁷⁶ Palucca remains the originating subject, even the originator of the documentation, of Grasse's performance. However, the range of gestures we can imagine on either side of that still photograph no longer seems as narrow or obvious, and Kandinsky's particular way of abstracting Rudolph's photography seems less certain. In a performative process, the iterations become the thing itself, and the point of origin retreats from our perception and can even fail to be original. I draw two parallel lines on a loose scrap of paper, sketching out the history of *Dance Curves*, ending with a sudden gesture. These are gestures that dissociated yet similar, without hierarchy, as is also their relationship with Kandinsky's lines and Grasse's movements; and within these lines I show that in working with these gestures in these ways my *Dance Curves* sits alongside all the other *Dance Curves* by all the other creators, that to be part of this history is to dislocate its genealogy, 'for in fact space does not comprise points, lines any more than time does'.⁷⁷ And this is the insurmountable crux of this entire portfolio, which consists of nothing more than documents upon documents of my body sitting in a chair at a desk. In writing this commentary, in editing videos, in staging performances, or even in producing the material score, I have no more access to my composing self or the piece than you, the

76 Ibid. p. 12.

77 Merleau-Ponty (1964/1968) p. 195.

reader. I come to know these pasts and futures only through my perception in the present, and of this I am ignorant.

2. Bodies Without Purpose

or

The Anarchy of Its Parts

Emperor of South Seas is Shu; Emperor of North Seas is Hu; Emperor of the Middle is Hundun. Shu and Hu oftentimes meet at Hundun's Land. Hundun treats them very well ... Shu consults Hu about how to repay Hundun's virtue [of hospitality], saying, 'People all have seven holes to see, hear, eat, and breathe; this [person] alone has none. Let's try and dig them.' Daily one hole is dug; seven days, and Hundun dies.⁷⁸

In an imagined dialogue 'between an uncompromising teacher and an unenlightened student'⁷⁹ (I presume I am the latter), John Cage asks 'what is the purpose of this "experimental" music?', which is answered 'No purposes. Sounds'.⁸⁰ I affirm this in this portfolio. I am wholly concerned with sounding, soundful, sound-possible bodies and with embodied sounds; all the pieces in this portfolio are intended toward sound. However, implicit in the teacher's affirmation is a deconstruction of a vernacular definition of sound. The teacher does not claim there is no consequence; rather, they are encouraging the student to detach themselves from a specific realisation in performance, from sound with a purpose. Disarticulated from a singular or discrete

78 The story of Emperor Hundun, quoted in Wu (2007) p. 264.

79 Cage (1968) p. 13.

80 Ibid. p. 17.

purpose – and the consequent atomisation of the body – an inexhaustible potential of sound is practically undifferentiated from sound without any purpose.

That it is now without purpose, without a determinate materiality, it can no longer be entangled with an autonomous ear; it is always made with a unified body that likewise is indeterminate. In a later essay, Cage provides a further explanation: new music is ‘a way of waking up to the very life we’re living’,⁸¹ and the uncompromising teacher adds that ‘each human being [here let us replace “human being” with “humanimal”] is at the best point for reception’.⁸² Cage concludes: ‘where do we go from here? Towards theatre ... We have eyes as well as ears’⁸³ (the ‘we’ in this quote embraces composers, performers, and audiences alike – indeed, all musicking bodies that sit in all chairs). This is an explosion of sound through and of the body because the body is living, because it exists in social and physical space, and because it is within the whole perception-phenomenon of the theatre of eyes and ears (and many other parts besides!). This new music theatre is not the coming together of separate theatres or a theatre of parts created by and known by a body of parts disassembled into constituent sensations; it is a unitary theatre of a unitary body.

From this germ of a concept, and from reflecting on a range of anecdotal and empirical evidence that I offer below, I arrive at a general set of descriptors of my current practice:

81 Ibid. p. 12.

82 Ibid. p. 14.

83 Ibid. p. 12.

1. My body, the bodies my composing hand proboscises, and the materialisations of these bodies are intraactive. Parts and whole are not related in a temporally linear causality (I write, the performer interprets, the audience hears, the supporting infrastructure is ignored); they emerge together. This can be observed on many levels: my hand and the graphics on a page, the performer and the score, the architecture and the sound, the listener and the performer; and ultimately in all the iterations of 'the piece'. The vertical orientation between these levels is as intraactive as their horizontal arrangement. The resultant force is oblique: queer.

2. These embodied processes are never acute or final, but an open-ended living experiences (bound by birth and death, or part of an eternal cycle depending on one's preference). They are underpinned by a *conatus* that serves *only* 'to present dynamism for what it is by stripping it of any finalist significance'.⁸⁴ If the bodies in the assembly are conative, then then 'pieces' are equally so: the writing composer and performer, and the reading performer and listener, are not opaquely framed activities; rather they are framings of experience that serve only to break the frames and extend the experience itself. In this way, the tracing of bodies – from my compositional body sitting in a chair, to the listener, watcher, and reader, including those we have turned away from – is a matter of similitude, not resemblance, in that it is formed of and in turn begets repetitions.⁸⁵

84 Deleuze (1968/1990) p. 233.

85 Foucault (1968/1983) p. 44.

3. These bodies do not move towards or away but obliquely across. The sound-sight synaesthete does not focus on the source of the sound, or turn away from it, but across it to a space in which different perceptions are at play. The hearing deaf person, the seeing blind person, or the walking paraplegic neither evidence nor deny common-sense definitions of these words; they explode the language of the body. Such bodies are neither visible nor invisible, audible nor inaudible; instead, they move through the reversible visible-invisible/audible-inaudible. In this way, they suggest an emancipation, even a sanctification, of the background field of quantum probabilities from which a sensory experience can emerge. David Burrows in *Sound, Speech, and Music* persuasively shows that 'sound always deals in non-Euclidean geometry'⁸⁶ – that is, the spatiality of sound does not conform to an intuitive, linear causality – though he fails to extend this insight beyond the purely auditory. A synaesthetic perception that ranges from composition to performance moves freely across a stage out of which parts might eventually be limned. 'A *direction* is not *in* space: it is in filigree across it ... The mind is neither here, nor here, nor here'.⁸⁷

These concepts and techniques are antagonistic to the atomised musicking body.

A distinction between musical and extra-musical produces and is produced by a body of parts, and this distinction – whether it be between music and noise or between sound and not-sound – is valid if and only if they are objectively distinct outside of our

86 Burrows (1990) pp. 18-19.

87 Merleau-Ponty (1964/1968) p. 222.

engagement with them, so that the modes of perception by which we know them generate distinct experiences in different parts of a body. In this model, perception and the body are thus atomised prior to the experience or creation of sound, and the musicking body from composition to reflection is subsumed into a 'dictatorship of its parts', rather than a cosmic body that 'can only keep going, without ever inscribing or discerning contours'.⁸⁸ In musically uniting the body, a careful distinction must be made between including the extra-musical in the musical performance space – which affirms the distinction by putting the two in relation, and dis-including the extra-musical by making the distinction nonsensical. As with perception and the body of parts, there is a distinction to be drawn between, on the one hand, the interaction of distinct senses (plural) and intraactive sensory organs that are deconstitutive diffractions of a whole, indeterminate body. In composing with the body, which is ethically indeterminate,⁸⁹ continuous, and deferred because its sound is purposeless, one also comes to be dissatisfied with classical reason and with the classical musicking body.

I identify this critique of sound, and from this critique this portfolio's compositional method, as a type of embodied madness (though this is tautologous – madness is always of the body, and the body is always mad), the perceptions and terrors of which I hope to demonstrate. If, as Foucault narrates in *Madness and Civilisation* 'in the serene world of mental illness, modern mad [sic] no longer communicated with the madman ... the language of psychiatry, which is a monologue of reason *about* madness,

88 Cixous (1975/1976) p. 899.

89 C.f. Barad (2007) pp. 391-396.

has been established on the basis of such a silence'.⁹⁰ The musical and the extra-musical are likewise positioned within the self-same dialectic as cure and madness, confinement and liberation. The emancipation of 'extra-musical' to become musical, and of the eye, orientation, and motor functions to become ways of hearing is only to be accomplishing when a discussion is based the subjugated knowledges of non-normative perception. Madness is a *coryphaeus*; it is thus musical and theatrical, and it is the source of knowledge of the musical and the theatrical. Medieval and Renaissance music in Europe were not concerned with sound as something by the ear as much as the spatiality of architecture, iconography, procession, and ritual; the move to the institution of the concert hall – a 'house of confinement' – together with a clear distinction between static performer and utterly sedentary audience, and with the reduction of music to disembodied sound that is the province of the ear ... all this constitutes a musical twin of the psychology forces of the classical age that 'reduce[d] to silence the madness whose voices the Renaissance had just liberated'.⁹¹ This cannot be undone by the integration of the extra-musical into the musical, or by forcing an interaction of senses; it can only be done through being subsumed into a unity informed by the extra-musical. 'Victory is neither God's nor the Devil's: it belongs to Madness.'⁹²

The pieces in this portfolio attempt to give voice to these attributes of music because they describe what I perceive and embody – specifically an Autistic, synaesthetic, dissociative world. Because it is this particular embodiment that writes the

⁹⁰ Foucault (1961/1991) xii-xiii.

⁹¹ Ibid. 38.

⁹² Ibid. p. 23.

portfolio, the entire portfolio finds itself grounded in some expression of embodied madness, from the altered perception of Kandinsky's line-drawings in *Dance Curves* to Basquiat's self-medication in *SAMO© SHIT SONGS* to the ludic psychosis of *Voices of Birds in Queer Harmony* to the dissociative ennui of *isolation music*, to the major depressive episode and suicidal ideation for which I found relief in the meditations of *Androgynette*. None of these madresses can be truthfully reduced to the psyche or to cognitive processes, but are always encompassed by a passion that shows them to be the same as the movement of bodies through physical and social spaces. When madness is the foundation of knowledge, knowledge and knowledge-making itself becomes absurd (or even Absurd). I can only hope that facing this mad or maddening absurdity is a path to undoing a musicking body as dictated by parts, towards something that 'envelop[s] segments of the body and ideas of the soul in a kind of absurd unity'.⁹³ The body in this portfolio is necessarily so devoid of determination and reason that it becomes useless and inaudible; thus it becomes the beginning, rather than the end, of embodied composition, in which the sound remains forever without purpose. This embodied madness is nothing; the absence of purpose becomes sound, for 'the paradox of this *nothing* is to *manifest* itself, to explode in signs, in words, in gestures.'⁹⁴

93 Ibid. p. 93.

94 Ibid. p. 107 (original emphasis).

2.1. Synaesthetic Music

I use the term 'synaesthesia' to refer to this sound without purpose as it is expressed in a unified body, and as a description of the body I compose with. As such some discussion of the term is warranted, particularly as I wish to distance it, and my composition of embodied music from psychiatric and cognitivist thought. Further, I distance my use of synaesthesia from the psychiatric and the cognitivist to distinguish between an interaction of the senses and an intraaction of sense. Compositionally the former presents many sensory components on a stage; the latter – which I will show describes the approach in this portfolio – opens out a sensory experience into many diffractions. Common speech might describe this singular experience as a combination of senses; cognitivists might locate it in the mind as a computation of what of the body perceives. Synaesthesia, on the other hand, reveals a continuity between thought and extension: '[the senses] cannot be opposed to "intellect"', only through 'the continuity of the organs' that makes artistic experience possible'.⁹⁵ Jessica Wiskus, in *The Rhythm of Thought: Art, Literature, and Music after Merleau-Ponty*, writes:

Those who theorize about synesthesia but have not experienced it may imagine it as a sort of layering or blending of two different sensations: simply a color within a sound. But an additive notion does not suffice in describing the phenomenon; like the experience of depth, in which two different images offer more than a sum of breadth and width – an experience that opens an entirely new dimension – synesthesia is transformative.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Dewey (1934/2005) pp. 22-23.

⁹⁶ Wiskus (2013) p. 155.

Wiskus gives an example from her own experience. Perceiving bells in Vienna, Colours 'streamed out of the tower into a small clutch of sky': a high bell, gold and sparkling, and a low bell of dark cobalt. The sound were not translate into colour in her brain mediated by her experience. Rather, they were always already colours, the very 'materiality of sound'; the ontology of the bells in spacetime were 'not only sound but now color'.⁹⁷ Far from being reduced to an internal cognitive process, it is an attribute of sound itself, without the purpose of the ear alone. Nor is it the property of the bells alone, but fills the space between bell and listener: the act of hearing the bells is not limited to an intention towards the bells, but intending obliquely across the seemingly negative space. Neither actant are wholly passive or active, but transform the very ontology of the entire assemblage. While an escape from commonsense, it is the reality of madness because it is a trans*human communal-sense.

If we accept Merleau-Ponty's assertion that 'synaesthetic perception is the rule',⁹⁸ then we might come to understand this experience as universal not because it is part of a cosmogony of reason, but because it offers a chaotic cosmology of bodies in which 'the transcendence of the present makes it precisely able to connect up with a past and future, which conversely are not a nihilation'.⁹⁹ The synaesthete is not a fortune-teller, but an oracle whose prophecies are perpetually deferred. Arthur Rimbaud writes poetry as a seer 'as if he were a synaesthete himself',¹⁰⁰ surely the same can be said of any artist (and

97 Ibid. 154.

98 Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) p. 266.

99 Merleau-Ponty (1964/1968) p. 196.

100 Wiskus (2013) p. 115.

certainly any composer) who works with and within perception: 'the Poet makes himself [sic] into a seer [see-er, hear-er] by a long, involved and logical *derangement of all the senses*. ... He [sic] arrives at the unknown, and when, bewildered, he [sic] ends up losing his [sic] understanding of his [sic] visions, he [sic] has, at least, seen them!'.¹⁰¹ The body I use to compose, and the bodies that enter into the assemblage, are part of this unending field of potentiality, passionately useless yet necessary.

This synaesthesia is brought into historical context and theatrical space by Artaud, a proponent of theatrical madness, himself afflicted by the asylum, maligned for insanity.¹⁰² His Theatre of Cruelty considers the show, staging, stage language, musical instruments, lighting, costume, the audience, props, decor, and other attributes together¹⁰³ – not conceptually or physically but as a unique, unified yet heterogeneous language 'somewhere in between gesture and thought'.¹⁰⁴ This, he expounds, will rescue theatre from 'human, psychological prostration',¹⁰⁵ recognising theatre as a mind-body unity, and returning it to a body of madness: '[musical instruments] will be used as objects, as part of the set. Moreover, they need to act deeply and directly on our sensibility through the senses'¹⁰⁶ if this is to be 'somewhere in between gesture and thought',¹⁰⁷ in a new theatrical language of mind-body unity. Artaud's radical

orchestration finds a complement in John Zorn's *Theatre of Musical Optics* (1975-). In

101 Rimbaud in *Ibid.* p. 115 (original emphasis).

102 Foucault names Artaud, alongside Nietzsche, as one of the 'barely audible voices of classical unreason'. (1961/1991) p. 281.

103 Artaud (1964/201) pp. 66-67.

104 *Ibid.* p. 63.

105 *Ibid.*

106 *Ibid.* p. 67.

107 *Ibid.* p. 63.

interview with Jay Sanders of the Whitney Museum of American Art, Zorn describes the sensual relationship of his sound objects: 'you take a small rock and you put it between a piece of a metal machine and a piece of a bandaid with blood on it, and then it takes on a different meaning'.¹⁰⁸ Such found objects are sonic in their optics, that is they are sound received by the ear yet still light received by the eye. 'It's music without sound ... you look at some of the sound art projects that have happened in the past 30 years ... it belongs in the art world, but its a sound. If you can make art with sound, can't you make music with objects?'¹⁰⁹

The disabled body is another expression of what I am terming synaesthesia; where language does not incarcerate the body but, instead, the heterogeneity of bodies deconstructs language, especially the language of perception. Blind people say 'I see what you mean'; deaf people say 'I hear what you are saying'; paraplegics say 'I am going for a walk'. It would be patronising at best to succumb to logocentric fallacies by dismissing such language as false or 'merely' a metaphor. Sunaura Taylor, in conversation with Judith Butler as part of *Examined Life* (2008, directed by Astra Taylor), speaks of her own experience of 'what the medical world has labeled as arthrogyriposis'.¹¹⁰ She reflects on the movement of her body through space and cultural gestures in San Francisco, affirming that her movement in a wheelchair through the city is indeed walking, offering an example of getting a coffee:

108 <<https://youtu.be/uX0m3LAude8>> 0:37 (accessed 15/04/2022).

109 Ibid. 1:09.

110 Taylor (2008) 1:06:33.

I could go into a coffee shop,¹¹¹ and actually pick up the cup with my mouth and carry it to my table, but then that ... that becomes almost more difficult because of the – just the normalising standards of our movements, and the discomfort that that causes when I do things with body parts that aren't necessarily what we assume that they're for. That seems to be even more, um, hard for people to deal with.¹¹²

Butler goes on to relate the disabled body to gender and sex – 'it comes down to, you know, how people walk, how they use their hips, what they do with their body parts, what they use their mouth for, what they use their anus for, or what they allow their anus to be used for'¹¹³ – and notes that both are expression of the Deleuzian question 'what can a body do?'.¹¹⁴ These actions, and reactions within social contexts, are produced and reproduced when a composer, performer, or listener comes into contact with an extended technique, or a theatrical gesture. What do the string players use their bows for, what does the pianist use her fingers for, what does the composer use their legs for? To write a theatrical gesture is to abandon the certainties of 'what a performer's body can do' in favour of a question that is answerable only insofar as any answer is immediately abandoned. The relatively empty score for *Body Etude* asks the performer what level of control is possible, but it leaves indeterminate what gestures, muscles, ligaments, and positions create this fine control. Such writing leaves the performer without a platonic body, impairing the violinist's and cellist's bow movement in the

111 I type this quotation in a café.

112 Taylor (2008) 1:04:49.

113 Ibid. 1:11:42. I come to this point in *Medusa the Muse*.

114 Deleuze (1968/1990) pp. 217-234.

opening of *Dance Curves* and Soloist 1's diaphragmatic control in *Voices of Birds in Queer Harmony*. My often employed spaced-out stagings similarly ask 'what can a listener's body do?', entreating different movements from the listener: turning to face directions other than straight ahead at a singular medium in the centre of the stage, to hear in fact with eyes, ears, and motor functions all together. My experiences working with performers, and receiving feedback from listeners, have run the gamut of possible reactions, from active engagement, to confusion and even to refusals by some performers regarding certain gestures. In my compositions, I can hope only to evoke a terror of an embodied madness that will undercut a culturally acceptable experience.

Disabled persons, speaking of and with their bodies and moving in space, show the conceit of a linguistic and material certainty that there are many senses or a body of many parts. Such lives offers a path to rethink a living and artistic experience of the body that is indeterminate, one in which the body is not constructed prior to its embodiment. Certainly walking is a part of all music, whether it be a theatrical gesture on stage, the entrance of performers and audience, or a support system as we travel to rehearsal, walk to a desk to write, walk to get food. Legs, crutches, and wheelchairs are ways of knowing musical sound in the same way as the ear. Kagel crafts an epistemology of Beethoven through walking around Bonn in *Ludwig van* (1969),¹¹⁵ and (as I will show) the performers in *Androgynette* come to know Guyton's drawing – sonically, visually, somatically – through movement in space. To read sign language (or even a score) is to

115 Kagel (1969) 01:25-09:00.

hear the words, a perception of sound that is not energy travelling through a medium received by the ears. Similarly, we come to understand the pianist's position on a stage, the movement of the composer's and fine artist's hands, and the negative space on stage as sound, as an affirmation of music as only sound even as we speak about it through a unified body. If neurodivergent, disabled, and insane bodies are to be recognised as authors of music, then 'sight', 'hearing', 'turning', and 'movement' are revealed to be little more than linguistic conveniences for the intentions of consciousness, the directing of the experience that I am terming (in a similar convenience) 'synaesthesia'; they cannot function as descriptors of self-contained senses or an atomised body.

In *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, Karen Barad, demonstrates not only the links between the physics-philosophy of Niels Bohr and the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty but extrapolates this by applying it to the non-human. Bohr and Merleau-Ponty are both concerned with examples of blind patients who begin to receive sensations in their eyes after cataract operations.¹¹⁶¹¹⁷ In such cases, the formerly blind person's experience of sight is not the reliant on of eyes, but of sticks and body movement. 'The blind man's [sic] stick has ceased to be an object for him [sic] ... its point has become an area of sensitivity'. To recognise a shape, a letter, or a direction the person must trace it with their body – 'the mere touching of a paper rectangle or oval gives rise to no recognition, whereas the subject recognizes the figures if he [sic] is allowed to make exploratory

116 Barad (2007) p. 157.

117 Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) p. 258.

movements'¹¹⁸ – just as composers and performers trace sound-sight-score-interpretation with their bodies. Tiresias far-sees *because* he/she is blind.

The ethics of materialism and phenomenology in the twenty-first century invite us to consider the non-human. Barad does so with reference to brittlestars: invertebrates that are able 'to flee from predators in the murky ocean depths without the aid of eyes ... its entire skeleton forms a big eye'.¹¹⁹ The brittlestar extends towards light through its entire body; so also performers stand in darkness and silence and extend towards light and sound through their instruments, and the concert space; listeners extend towards music through turning in their chair, walking around an exhibition, gripping on to a programme note; and the composer extends towards all this through their hand and desk. Furthermore, these examples come about not only through the movement of human actants, but all the non-humans who enter into the assemblage. In synaesthesia, we find it possible not only to examine a human's perception of music, but to probe music's own perception – instruments, performance spaces, electronics, and sound itself without purpose – and the reversibility between the two. The granadilla wood of my clarinets and its role as a sonic and sculptural performer is bound, unbound, and re-entangled with the light that fed the tree. Barad writes 'clearly, we do not see merely with our eyes'.¹²⁰ Likewise, we clearly do not hear merely with our ears; clearly we do not sense with our separate organs, our body of parts; clearly, we do not make music with or

118 Ibid. p. 123.

119 Barad (2007) pp. 369-70 quoting the September 2004 New York Times article *Eyeless Creature Turns Out to Be All Eyes* by Jonathan Abraham <<https://www.nytimes.com/2001/09/04/science/eyeless-creature-turns-out-to-be-all-eyes.html>> (accessed 15/04/2022).

120 Ibid. p. 157.

of parts. 'Looking, listening and touching ... are not separate activities, they are just facets of the same activity: that of the whole organism in its environment',¹²¹ and clearly, synaesthesia is the rule of perception and never more so than in music.

2.2. Polyamorous Knots

In all time past it is. In all time to come it is. It has not been nor yet will it be. It is all. Nothing is unseen.

– Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*¹²²

The collaboration between myself (composer), Angie Guyton (artist), and Kate Ledger (pianist) in *Androgynette* is an ideal space for revealing this synaesthetic background in music and making the case for such a background to be the focus of composition.

Guyton described our collaboration as being like a polycule: what better description of the social and sensorial relationships at play? Brigitte Vasallo in 'Monogamous Mind, Polyamorous Terror' (2019), drawing on Foucault, Evans, and Federici, explains that monogamy is being 'not a practice: it is a system ... patterns of relationships with established mechanisms for the exchange of information and social control'.¹²³

Polyamory in contrast is an indeterminate system (there is no one graph that describes a polycule) that in one gesture undoes the dichotomous monogamies among artists, performers, and composers, and ties them together in fluid, even ludic relationships.

Our practice in *Androgynette* was a terrifying, irreversible decent into social and perceptual madness: an interconnected space, like the lighted sound of bells dancing in

121 Ingold (2000) p. 261.

122 Le Guin (1969) p. 208.

123 Vasallo (2019) p. 681.

the sky or a Zoom meeting with collaborators during a pandemic. Polyamory not only is a terror within the polycule but also terrifies those outside it: persons who are morally invested in the authority of monogamy, the dictatorship of its parts. As we embraced this cruel theatre between ourselves, we offered it to audiences and performers that they might share in our terror.

One of Guyton's earliest sketches, an imagine of a hand, bound in ribbon, with the caption 'THE WRAPPING OF HANDS (fig. 10)', became, for me, the defining image of this project. This image does not reduce *Androgynette* to a single, universal hand; rather, it serves as a synecdoche for the active bodies engaged throughout the process, from composer to audience. The conceptual and material hand is at play – a playful play – at every stage: where Guyton and I moved our pens over paper, and Ledger moved her hand over keys in the self-same gesture. As well as binding our six hands together in a sympathetic network, these wrappings also restricted us. In writing a virtuosic piano piece we were bound within the image of the Lisztian virtuoso with fingers, arm, torso, and legs ironically *unbound*, and free-flowing. Such an image is monumental and ideal: definitionally phallogocentric. In contrast, 'androgynette' is a neologism that is male, female, and in between; playful, coquettish, and anti-monumental; and vaginal, penile, and intersex. We began bound in a masculine virtuosic, yet our aim was not freedom, but to find a new way to wrap our hands; and this resultant 'quiet' virtuosity is bound, restricted, even contorted in the passionate madness of trans*media synaesthesia.

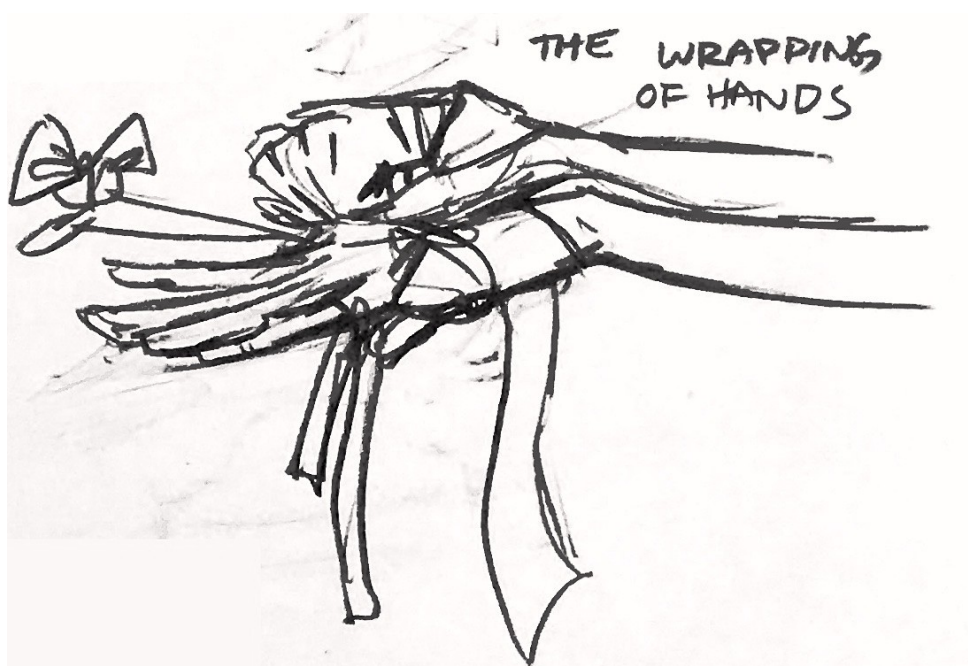


Figure 10: A preliminary sketch by Angela Guyton during the early stages of our collaboration.

Even though Guyton's caption tells us the hands are being wrapped, there is ambiguity in what is being depicted in the image. The right hand seems to be at once tying a knot and undoing it. The image superimposes all of the geographical and historical parts of our process at once; it marks the point in our music-making that transcends the present. It makes our past and future continuous, and we ourselves into seers through our deranged senses. It leaves us with space to imagine the hands in any condition. The Coronavirus pandemic limited how we could contact each other; our hands never physically touched, bound by travel restrictions, but they nevertheless tied themselves together in the same sensory trajectory. For our hands to touch they had to become part of a mycorrhizal network with other links and knots: internet cables, signals, laptop circuits, geographical and temporal relationships, gravitational distortions in space time reconfigured to facilitate collaboration. Initially wrapped up in

our own methods and ideas, our own bodies of parts and apart, we by necessity became rewrapped in a different cosmological assemblage that transformed our practice.

I remain in this knot even in a reflexive mode; I do not offer a pure account of an audience member's experience but an expression of how they too might be entangled with Guyton, Ledger, and me. This knot, a diffraction of the above synecdoche, opens the performance, stating our intent. Ledger's hands are wrapped in black ribbon (an image that is not *not* kinky), and she sits facing away from the piano. Her body consciousness has turned away from the piano because at this point what her body can do is wrapped in an intellectual pianistic technique that she has received through years of training and practice – a piano technique intended towards a loud virtuosity that frames the body, so that hands and instrument are subsumed under the musician's will. Her geography raises the question, 'if the body must be subjected to an ideal form, so that it and the piano merely mediate between my will and the music, why do I need even to turn my body?' The machine revolts against the ghost by going on strike. Ledger faces the audience to invite them in, and she undoes the knots. They fall on the floor in a tangle. The ties haven't disappeared, but they are now chaotic, connecting the soloist's body to the entire space. She rotates towards the piano, pulling in the audience and ensemble with new links that have been creating by the unbinding.

From this image, Guyton created a second image: a new, different-yet-similar hand, from much the same side-on, descending perspective (fig. 11). Some strings are

still visible, but they are no longer neatly tied up in a bow. This second hand is all that remains after the first is unbound and rebound, but it is still in a state of flux. It is more obviously Cubist than the first sketch, but rather than offering many epistemological perspectives of an ontologically still object, such as in works of Salon Cubism, the object itself changes in space-time, as in Duchamp's onto-epistemology of a *Nude Descending a Staircase, No. 2*. The hand at once has five fingers, no fingers, many fingers, attached fingers, fingers connected by links, and fingers that have completely broken away. The fingers are at once intimately attached to the hand; extend beyond skin, muscles, and ligaments; and some, in between, are curved in such a way that beckons something else to touch them. Ledger demonstrated this at one of our few pre-pandemic meetings: her arm, hand, and finger lowered to depress a single key with her middle finger and then lifted up, so the finger, still depressing the key, rose up *en pointe*, resembling the hand position favoured by Balanchine and the New York City Ballet. Far from being a gestural *mise-en-scene* layered over sound, this single movement is animistic, at once material, phenomenological, and spiritual. This is a gesture that appears again and again in *Androgynette*, from lifting a pen to write the score, to the final bars of *Body Etude*, cutting obliquely through all parts of the embodied assemblages at play.

All of Guyton's later drawings were small, drawn in the centre of an A4 sheet with most of it left blank. The hand's extension seems to be in vain; there is nothing there to touch. The same could be said of the composer's hand, reaching out to touch a performer's body that initially appears not really there. However, as we learn from

contemporary physics, a void is never empty, and the performer's hand is always already there. Virtual particles emerge and nihilate spontaneously described by the chiasm of quantum probabilities. We begin with the score, full of spaces between lines and dots that at once connect and separate them, and with absent details: while *Dance Curves* and *Voices of Birds in Queer Harmony* are quite prescriptive in how their gestures are described, such directions are both missing and present in *Body Etude*. In this void a 'particle' emerges, indescribable in both position *and* velocity: Ledger extends her arm over her head, gesturing a certain sound that is both audible and inaudible, visible and invisible in the score. She finishes the gesture; the 'particle' nihilates, but space of possibility remains. The hand reaches through the score into the negative space of Ledger's performance, only for her hand to similarly extend itself in collaboration with Guyton. The image of the broken-up hand is similar to the sound of the hand, and the sound is similar to the image. Together, both form a sensory ouroboros. In this way the image is strongly synaesthetic – as soundful as the score and performance, bound up in ear, eye, and hand, and transforming without purpose. In yet another iterative process, these hands are extended into the negative space of the concert hall: the white space of the image is the same as the sound that emerges and nihilates in the architecture as the ensemble walks around in *Ballet of Images*.

Guyton's sketch graphically realizes the absurdity in all definite hands. Are the additional fingers cyborg appendages – instruments, performance, recording, concepts – diffractions of what the hand is? Or are they superpositions of the hand over time?

These and other possibilities all ask 'what can a hand do?'. We cannot reasonably conclude that this hand is *a priori* described by five fingers in a particular arrangement and with a certain functionality. There is no body schema that precedes the hand's embodiment in spacetime; rather, it is underpinned by and contingent on historical and social contexts. Perhaps the hand is not there at all. Indeed, it is so deformed from a common-sense conception of a hand that one could reasonably say it is something else. It is diagnosably psychotic, an issue I will return to in the context of *Voices of Bird*;, but here, this is precisely the point where perception returns to the unreason of synaesthesia. At this moment the synecdoche of 'the hand' alone fails and, in its absence, gives way to the totality of the body.

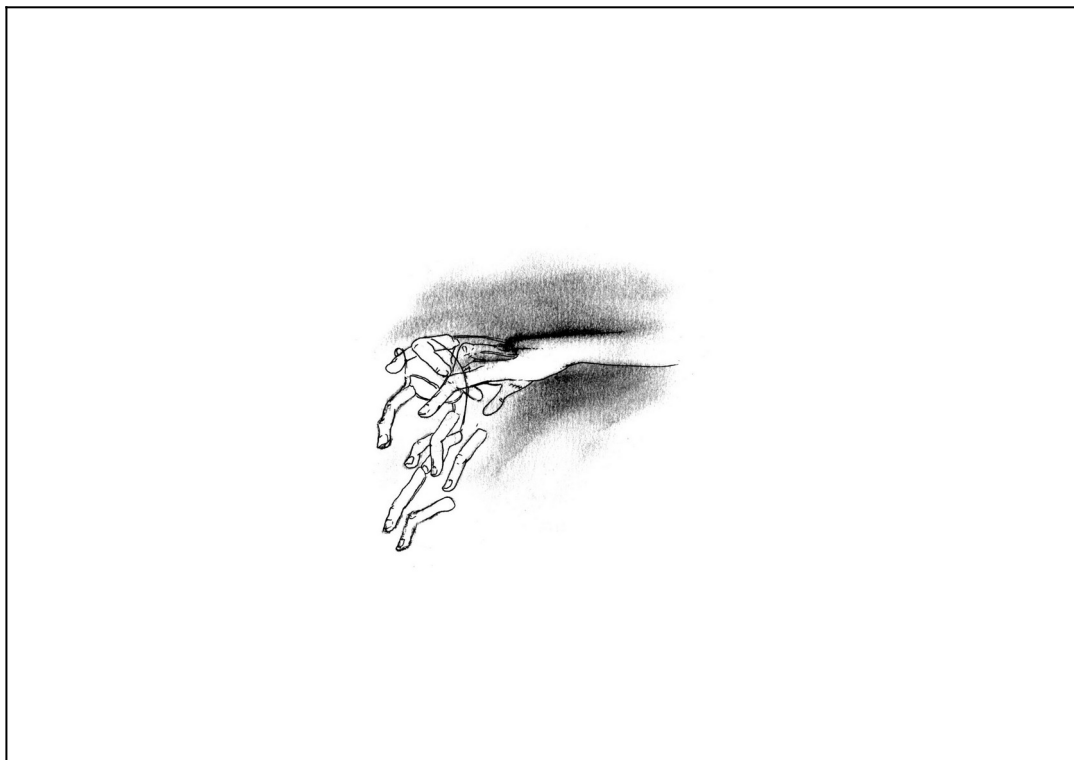


Figure 11: An untitled drawing by Angela Guyton for *Androgynette* (number 16 in the series). This image was used for the performance of *Ballet of Images*.

Hand mosh

To find a way through yet stay with our polyamory, consciously turning across its terror rather than avoiding or succumbing to it, we began working through colour-sound-gesture synaesthesia as a way of communicating, inspiring, and realising our aims. This is not a metaphor for 'there is no *metaphor* between the visible and the invisible ... *metaphor* is too much or too little'.¹²⁴ The same is true as I locate this in madness: in the passions that form the basis of the possibility of madness 'qualities have no need to be communicated because they are already common to both'. The expression of sound and image in relationship, we felt, whether by experimenting with colour-sound-gesture synaesthesia or ludic realisations on stage in *Ballet of Images*, is not a matter of constructing or causing these relationships but of diffracting the heterotopia always already present in the bodies involved into various waves and particles.

Our trio initially presented these ideas in an interactive (better: intraactive) workshop organised by Ledger as part of the York Festival of Ideas in June 2021.¹²⁵ Part of this workshop was a presentation of the final two pages of *Body Etude* in the form of a game. Ledger recorded and Guyton refracted these pages as four videos: a succession of colours and shapes; a home video version with Ledger's hands taped up like an

124 Merleau-Ponty (1964/1968) pp. 221-2

125 This can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/hthCO78KAAs>. The relevant section is from 1:00:00 to 1:13:00, though the reader may benefit from, or at least enjoy, watching and participating in the entire workshop. The quality is somewhat compromised by a slow internet connection that reduced the frame rate. Because of this, the reader may benefit from watching each video track separately, which can be found at https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLoq4pELlanXI_MAO0IVqmBAwfRC-xNDz. Nevertheless, the concept is evident, and potential for a more refined version apparent.

athletes (much of our collaborative work took place virtually at Ledger's home piano); an 'instructional' video, for which Guyton drew a diagram of each of Ledger's gestures; and a video of glitches and distortions called a 'data mosh' (fig. 12). The four videos were layered over a single audio track; during the workshop, I live cut between the videos in Adobe Premier in response to numbers suggested in the Zoom chat (1, 2, 3, or 4). Each iteration of the game produced a different, collaborative continuity – a different path through fungal networks or a different tangle of ribbons – made from the four shots. Each game asked, answered, and then deferred the question 'what can Ledger's body do?'. The game itself was extracted from earlier plans for presenting *Androgynette*, a multimedia exhibition with attendees changing tracks themselves (this unrealised version may still materialise: it is waiting in the white of Guyton's drawings and the gestures between in Ledger's playing).

The track 'color', made up of nothing more than colours and shapes, was the most direct reference to the history of synaesthesia in art: our first attempts at realising sound-colour were adapted from Scriabin's *clavier à lumières* system, most associated with *Prometheus: The Poem of Fire*. Writing on the association between colour and sound in this tone poem, Danuta Mirka notes that it forms a 'horizontal correspondence', an equivalence of arts that is 'distinguished from "vertical correspondence," which coupled the physical world and the transcendental sphere'.¹²⁶ She affirms that *Prometheus* was a development of a synaesthesia (albeit an artificial one) in that it is a subjective impression;

126 Mirka (1996) p. 233.

however in no way does this suggest it is a less authentic synaesthetic experience. Even in its systematic rigour, calls 'forth his internal world of coloristic imagination'.¹²⁷ And, like Wiskus, this is always entangled with the very materiality of the world. Even when such a relationship is artificial or systematic, it is still located at the joint of the visible and the invisible. Both sound and colour belong to the same vital materiality. They are not immaterial abstractions nor do they signal a return to a cognitive model that would make the internal mind the site of the self. The vertical assignments of pitch to colour are uninteresting. It is merely a mechanical process of realising a one-to-one correlation. But they result from subjective choice; and in this subjectivity, we find ourselves in the outside of a causative hierarchy, so that we work alongside the piece rather than dominating it. It is the inconsistency in assigning sound to sight and vice versa that are synaesthetic, rather than a consistent, objective system. Likewise, the inconsistencies between my composer's hand and Ledger's are the means by which sound and sight are joined in the score.

127 Ibid. p. 237.

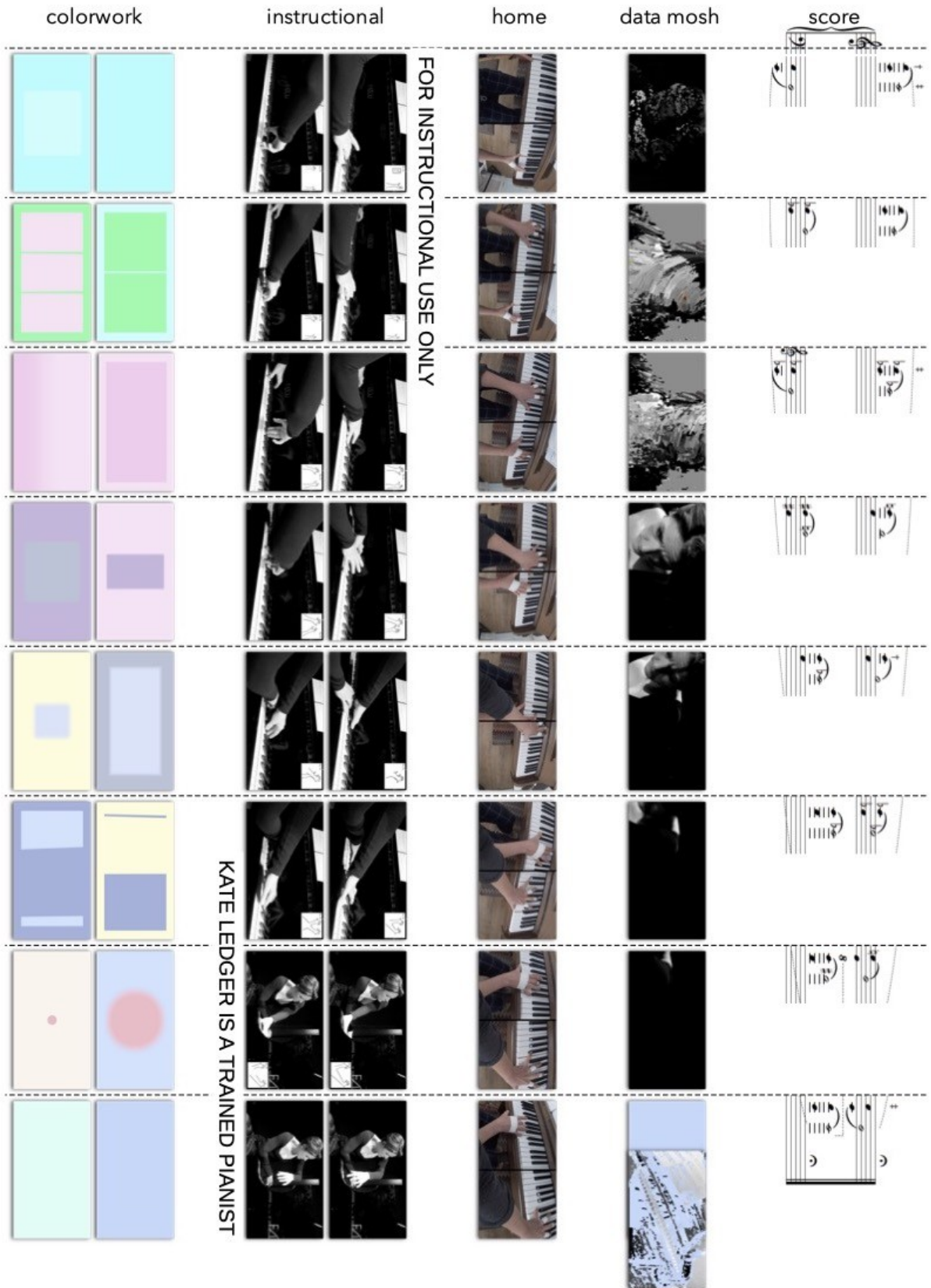


Figure 12: A comparative graph of the last system of *Body Etude* and Guyton's four video realisations.

On the surface, Guyton's videos seem rooted in a succession of discrete presents, a superposition of sensation layered in space but linearly causal and disjunct in time. The above graph exaggerates this, as did ordering them vertically in the Adobe Premier interface for the workshop. However, this exercise also serves to confuse the chronological and hierarchical ordering of score, sound, and video, in part because these different expressions are juxtaposed horizontally. That one of the videos is designated as 'FOR INSTRUCTIONAL USE ONLY', replete with diagrams resembling those in piano methods, makes this video primary: this is where Ledger received her instructions, not the score! Even though we might retrospectively, intellectually say 'of course this was made after the score', our immediate perceptions invite us to imagine something else: what if Ledger is reading from the diagrams? The shape of her hands is given by these diagrams, and the pitches are that undetermined elements found in the space between diagram and keyboard. To write a score for *Body Etude*, then, would be to document a single possible expression of these hand shapes. There are two inverted chronologies; and to resolve them, we abandon linear causality and position our bodies side by side, each dependent on the other's perception. Our collaborative synaesthesia lies not only across each unified body, but across a unified assemblage of *bodies*.

What happens if we use this video for some other purpose than instruction, or if an untrained pianist uses it? Maybe this is what happened in 'data mosh': pushing the limits of what is explicit in the score causes our perception of it to deteriorate. Moreover, the probabilistic processes are reflexively mediated by offering control of them to an

audience, who now doubly instruct the instructions that instruct other instructions. And so I return to my desk, sitting in a chair, and writing the score: what happens if my gestures are used in some way that is not instructional? What pianistic training enables and disables their use? I can only put forward the question 'were Ledger's gestures informed by the intention of the score, or is the intention of the score caused by said gestures?'; and I cannot answer this without determining what a body can do. So I must reply 'both', thus deferring my own composing body. Paradoxical as this is, it is not a contradiction; it is simply a break in a representationalist understanding of the score. My hand acted first, but its gestures were 'caused' by Guyton's. Like a seer, for my body to sit down at a desk and write a score, I act on the basis of a future yet to happen, and I act with the totality of my synaesthetic experience.¹²⁸

Ballet of Images

The same polyamory was the process behind *Ballet of Images*, the second section of *Androgynette*, from rehearsal to performance. The section was rehearsed in three stages. At first, six images were arranged on stands around the rehearsal space, and ensemble members were invited to move around the space, interpreting the images with their instruments, voices, and gestures. I suggested several possibilities: imitating the body positions in the images and discovering what sound results; interpreting the

¹²⁸ Such a reading echoes interpretations of delayed-choice quantum eraser experiments: 'it's not that the experimenter changes a past that had already been present ... The point is that the past was never simply there to begin with, and the future is not simply what will unfold; the "past" and the "future" are iteratively reworked and enfolded through the iterative practices of spacetime mattering ... all are *one phenomenon*', Barad (2007) pp. 310-317. Our own experiment 'erased' the score to show that it was never simply 'in the beginning', that all the material including own bodies emerge intraactively.

image as a sound; reading it like a graphic score; or simply performing whatever affect one experiences. I also emphasised being conscious of the way one moves between the images. Were the movements casual, or performative? Were the movements independent of, informed by, or in turn inform their interpretations of the images? How did their movements connect the image-points and extend them into the space in between?

In the second stage we discussed the first. After some general questions, I asked individuals to perform one of the images, and the rest to guess which image it was. The answers ranged from unanimously correct guesses through split guesses to unanimously guesses. The latter two proved the most valuable. The image of a single, for example, finger provoked pointillist sounds for a string player, but something sustained for a wind player. Other images were interpreted differently purely on a subjective basis. To my impish delight, several members of The Assembled expressed a degree of discomfort with Guyton's distorted, somatically queer images. It is no coincidence that the broken-up hand, used in both rehearsals and performance, references Masamune Shirow's *Ghost in the Shell* (a cyberpunk media franchise that both Guyton and I love and discussed at length and that formed a common language for our collaboration). A hand exploding into many parts is a recurring image used,¹²⁹ perhaps most notably, in the 1995 film adaptation (directed by Mamoru Oshii), as a room of cyborgs type away at keyboards to access information.¹³⁰ Imitating these

129 Masamune (2004) p. 98.

130 Oshii (1995) 0:45:55, 0:55:00.

images, Guyton's hand reaches out to access that which is outside of its skin, across the white space and into the performers, who then gesture to the audience. It is deliberately body horror, where terror and madness trouble the body.¹³¹

The third stage, an exercise that became the structure of the performance, combined the first two. The performers moved around the space; upon reaching an image, they performed it as in the first exercise and then resumed moving around. Upon encountering another performer, the two would play their interpretation, and then move away. They each would guess which image the other had selected, and move to it (correctly or incorrectly). They then interpret this new image: were their movements independent of, or informed by, or completely changed by the other's interpretation of the images? And so the game continues: *alors ils dansent*. In performance, the same interactions are apparent as in our video experiments. There is a vertical assignation of image to performance, but it is queered by the subjectivity of interpretation. Even if a performer encounters an image twice, the interpretations will not necessarily be consistent. Furthermore, the images interact together horizontally, at once caused by and causing each other. Despite her obviously crucial role in their creation, Guyton is no longer the primary originator of her own drawings; what they are is derived and originated by performers coming to and leaving them again and again. The performance is performative, iterative – drag shows without an origin. All the time the

131 There is a strange yet productive paradox when a musician, and especially an instrumentalist, express discomfort with fuzzy, cyborg images. After all, these describe us perfectly, from our idiosyncratic gestures to our connection with technology inside and outside of our bodies. The discomfort – the terror – is directed at polyamory: that one's self is not wedded to a single body but a mychorrhal assemblage of partners. No other reaction seems appropriate to this project.

assemblage, *The Assembled*, knots together. The movements of the performers around the space trace lines that become so convoluted that they cannot help but bind together; at each image the performer becomes bound up in it, only to turn away from it, pulling an invisible thread that falls to the floor. Much like Ledger's gesture at the beginning of *Androgynette* and even her reference to the score in *Body Etude*, the live audience twist themselves like a spool, turning to look at performers who move around the entire hall. This potentially infinite game ended when Ledger and I pushed a piano across the stage, at once scything through the invisible lines, and making the game impossible. It was a kind of death, but one that inexorably led to a reincarnation in *Ballet of Repetition* and *Body Etude*.

In keeping with Coronavirus regulations, none of the performers were allowed to be within two metres of each other. The intimate circle in *Ballet of Self-Doubt* and the almost-touching bodies in *Ballet of Images* that I had imagined fell apart; but that only served to show the intimacy of the gaps. Though we might touch something, we never come into contact with it. The atoms of our hand are repulsed by the atoms of the object we 'touch', and yet they are connected by an exchange of electrons. The physical space between performers, images, and audience draw attention to the joints between what is possible, inaudible, and invisible in Guyton's images, and what becomes audible and visible in the performers' own joints as they move around and play instruments. Guyton's hand extends through the gaps between it and its fingers, through the negative space surrounding it until it permeates, even encapsulates the entire performance space; and

performers and audience alike come into a haptic with it merely by existing in this spacetime-mattering (to use a Baradian term).¹³² These joints are points of turning: one of the images becomes definitely soundful as a performer approaches, performs, and turns away; then, in the absence of being being sounded and seen that follows the image returns to indeterminacy. A similar process occurs when two performers meet, perform, and turn away from each other. Even when they are not in the vicinity of one of the images on a stand, the image is created in the space between them. The actual image is part of the virtual image, and we know it because the performers turn to face them and turn away, always-everywhere part of the same process, and all the time extended through the negative space.

At the very end of *Androgynette*, Ledger remains still, seemingly left alone in the dark, with only a decaying dyad for company. We know this is not a terminus because we have previously heard her move and play and we will see the lights come up for a bow, but it also connects the silences before and after the performance, in which the materiality of the piece remains always plural. 'Fact and essence can no longer be distinguished ... because ... the alleged fact, the spatio-temporal individual are from the first mounted on the axes, the pivots, the dimensions, the generality of my body, and the ideas are therefore encrusted in its joints'.¹³³ Wiskus turns across the sight and sound of the bells to experience them, precisely at their dis/jointing. It would be reductive to say that *Ballet of Images* is synaesthetic because it combines two senses: it is a whole,

132 C.f. Barad (2007) p. 182.

133 Merleau-Ponty (1964/1968) p. 114.

deranged process that points to a generalised body that is not unitary, but layered; no determined or purposeful, only soundful. From this, my several selves as composer, performer, and listener, displaced in space-time, separated by gesture, are dis/continuous; my hand, which began typing a proposal for this project in a café in late 2019, touches an audience in 2021. The work, detached from the author, 'at every moment ... exists in the triple dimension of present, past, and future ... always in expectation of its own meaning'.¹³⁴ The same iterative dis/jointing describes our collaboration. In Guyton's exploding hand, the possibility of all the hands that are both within and without the picture is found in the joints, the dis/continuities; as in *Ballet of Images*, music that is sound without purpose, is found where there are gaps and miscommunications that are at once haptic and distant, similar and distinct, visible and invisible, audible and inaudible.

2.3. Listen (If You Dare) to Birds

*Lying on my back, I heard music
Felt unsure and catastrophic
Had to tell myself it's only music
It blows my mind, but it's like that ...
Incurable paranoiac, hysterical depression...*
- Blonde Redhead, *In Particular*¹³⁵

I first encountered critical discourse around altered perception and psychosis through the multimedia project *Listen (If You Dare): An Unlikely Companion to Voice-Hearing*, a

¹³⁴ Lefort introduction in *ibid.* p. xvi.

¹³⁵ Blonde Redhead (2000) Track 2.

booklet attached to the multimedia project *Listening to Voices*, co-investigated by Gail McConnell, Jo Collinson Scott, and Debbie Maxwell.¹³⁶ While I have never been diagnosed with any schizoid condition, I nevertheless recognised myself in the dissociative experiences of those who hear voices. Just as the graphical interjections in the booklet fragment and disturb the main text, yet also point to the plurality of the text itself, my own experiences range from out-of-body experiences to hours spent in paracosms indistinguishable from consensual reality, from paranoia to knowing that I am dead. These experiences are not located in an inner ego bounded by skin; schizophrenia and dissociation are as much conditions of the body in space than of the psyche. In a review of the phenomenology of altered perception, Pienkos et al write that 'alterations in bodily self-representation have been suggested to be [a] core component of schizophrenia'.¹³⁷ Psychosis is the point where idealism and objectivism become irreality, where reality deconstructs itself; it is a passionate link between mind as consciousness and body as extension,¹³⁸ and its locus, therefore, is the porous skin. This playful matrix of inner and outer forms the basis of *Voices of Birds in Queer Harmony*.

Space in between

My initial conception of this piece was quite binary: one singer represented lucidity, the other represented something altered. Some of this remains, with the lyrical chromaticism of Soloist 2 and the percussive, deconstructionist technique of Soloist 1

136 Collinson Scott et al (n.d.).

137 Pienkos et al (2019) p. S70.

138 Foucault (1961/1967) p. 88.

respectively forming an extension of the quotidian diatonicism and magical chromaticism of late nineteenth-century opera (perhaps most notably exemplified in Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*). Although the soloists' styles kept this distinction over the piece's development, their functions became more reciprocal: the piece's overall structure is defined by each soloist's 'ego' extending into the other through the percussionist. With this decision made, other aspects of the piece – the instrumentation, the way the soloists and chorus interacted, the internal structure of each section, and the overall structure – all served to move the percussionist from one side of the stage to the other, and back again.

This is *mā*, a central concept in Zen Buddhism, and by extension of the post-war Japanese dance *Butoh*. *Mā*, a concept without a Western equivalent, denotes a negative, in between, yet active space. Writing with the experience of years of *Butoh* training, Sondra Horton Fraleigh compares this particular emptiness to the music of Takemitsu, Schönberg, and Glass, where the democratisation of consonance and dissonance and the centring of time itself is opposed to the forward-moving harmonic tension-resolution of Romantic music: 'the spaces between tones in music as between breaths in the body become eloquent in present-centred aesthetics when consciousness has the opportunity to shift from its forward orientation to experience relief'.¹³⁹ While Western dance is largely concerned with steps and gestures, *Butoh*, reclaiming many of the aspects of *Danstheater* that themselves were derived from

139 Fraleigh (1999) p. 203.

Eastern dance, shifts its focus to the transition between steps. These transitions do not emerge as a consequence of the steps themselves, but alongside them. Fraleigh describes this history as an international 'theatre of sense impressions and the space *in between* through which they move'.¹⁴⁰ *Mā* not only extends through space but also allows the mind to extend outside of the skin. It occupies an invisible space that is revealed in the joints in the visible, in the spasms and contortions of *Butoh*. Of a performance by Yoko Ashikawa, Fraleigh writes 'she performs with an emptying or absence near mystical nothingness that erases identity and ego ... She gives up the dance to the space around her'.¹⁴¹ This is also the case in the metaphor of mycorrhizal networks that pervades this commentary, in the white of Guyton's drawings, and in the space between performers in *Ballet of Images*.

A prime example i from this international expressionist Musik-/Danstheater is Kagel's *Pas de cinq*.¹⁴² The telos of *Pas de cinq* is not accomplished when the performers reach the vertices of the pentagon, or bump into each other is not the telos of the music; rather, it emerges with a series of fully-notated steps in between. These, in turn, emerge with the staging, with paths constructed of various materials, themselves inaudible, that give rise to the sound of these steps. The system of materials underfoot, the feet stepping in rhythm, and the whole body moving through space are very literally vertical, but in practice these are arranged horizontally, without hierarchy. The spaces in between, connecting and contrasting the steps, the white page of the score, and the

¹⁴⁰ Fraleigh (2010) p. 6 (original emphasis).

¹⁴¹ Fraleigh (1999) pp. 177-178.

¹⁴² Kagel (1965).

potential of the performing bodies are all found in the variety of materials used across the paths. The percussionist in *Voices of Birds* traces a similar path. The sound produced is a consequence of the instruments encountered in the immediate space and in the immediate present; the encounter becomes meaningful in the continuity between past and future, left and right, that is the course of the piece as the percussionist's body is juxtaposed with the instruments through moving horizontally across the stage. History and geography exist in the same spacetime mattering. The singers, similarly juxtaposed, emerge with, not against, after, or before the percussionist's actions. Their contrasting styles and disjointed entries are linked is because they are separated, and they are separated by something that is not voice. The lighting, projection, and electronics dislocate the sound-image of the soloists; their embodied consciousnesses are forced into dissociative, out-of-body experiences that lie in between them and the audience.

Textual fragmentation

From the start, I conceived *Voices of Birds in Queer Harmony* as using a Virginia Woolf text, and I quickly settled on using *Mrs Dalloway* as the source. First and foremost, Woolf's writing does not abstractly co-opt altered experience, but extends Woolf's own bisexual, bipolar life. It is the product of a psychotic writing about psychosis. Secondly, I was inspired by the character Septimus Smith, who hears 'the voices of birds and the sound of wheels chime and chatter [which I replace with percussion] in a queer harmony growing louder and louder'.¹⁴³ *Mrs Dalloway* leads up to and away from Smith's suicide,

143 Woolf (1925/1992) p. 83.

a symmetrical structure that is paralleled in *Voices of Birds*, which pivots around 'I will kill myself' (on page 30 of the score). Finally, Woolf's writing style mirrors the interplay of text and heard voice represented in *Listen (If You Dare)*. The novel opens with the titular Mrs Dalloway walking through London to 'buy the flowers herself'.¹⁴⁴ From the beginning the narrative is dissociative, as if we are returning from an out-of-body experience into the present, without the context of past or future. The lights come on, the soloist exclaims and doubles over, and the percussions hits the snare. Woolf's language offers a vague mirage of Mrs Dalloway's itinerary and actions but a clear musical vision of what she senses. The sentences are long and meandering, but fragmented into short clauses, which leap between ideas, images, and sensations in irregular, staccato rhythms. At times, who the narrative voice is becomes ambiguous, as if a heard voice were entering into the otherwise single perspective. However, all this remains subsumed in the same background experience: buying flowers. Mrs Dalloway's invisible, inaudible task is realised in her sensory experience by these breaks or jumps in consciousness that dislocate these experiences from her living. Deleuze and Guattari give their own account of the materiality of Woolf as a writer: 'she says it is necessary to "saturate every atom" ... the moment is not the instantaneous, it is a haecceity into which one slips and that slips into other haecceities by transparency. To be present at the dawn of the world'.¹⁴⁵

144 Ibid p. 35.

145 Deleuze and Guattari (1987) p. 280.

None of Woolf's language is apparent in *Voices of Birds*; it is deconstructed to the point of unintelligibility, save for the words 'NONSENSE' and 'LOOK' which gradually fragment and combine on the projection, and out-of-context fragments sung by Soloist 2 in a classical style that muddies their audibility. The deconstruction of the text is less a stylistic choice than an extension of the text itself: rather than representing the text, I wrote the soloists' material in parallel with it. *Voices of Birds* moves away from a lexical certainty in the words themselves and towards a synaesthetic background of sensation: sound without purpose. Such a deconstructionist setting asks 'what can a body do?'. In *Music after Deleuze*, Edward Campbell poses again this 'Spinozan/Deleuzian question' and quotes Célia Houdart on Aperghis's *Avis de tempête*: the 'minimally comprehensible' semiotics direct the listener to 'a kind of language [that] reaches us, simultaneously near and far'.¹⁴⁶ So also, in Merleau-Ponty, perception transcends the present to reach, simultaneously, the past and future. And in *Voices of Birds*, my present setting of fragments from *Mrs Dalloway*, sitting at a desk, transcends its surroundings to reach both contemporary compositional techniques and antique texts from Shakespeare and Aristophanes.

The couplet from *Cymbeline*, 'Fear no more the heat o' the sun / Nor the furious winter's rages', serves as a refrain throughout *Mrs Dalloway*, an historical link, but also one that at once fragments and binds together the novel's narrative. It asks us to reconsider or remain with the terror of altered perception, much like I propose a staying

146 Houdart (2007) p. 88 in Campbell (2013) pp. 154-155.

with the terror of 'polyamorous' hands. 'Fear no more, say the heart, committing to its burden ... And the body alone listens to the passing bee; the waves breaking; the body barking';¹⁴⁷ the performers on stage; the pre-recorded chorus; the projections. With this refrain, we come to think of *Mrs Dalloway* as an ancient Greek play, with the protagonist donning successive masks¹⁴⁸ as she transitions from one perspective, one geography, one history to another. But then who is the coryphaeus? Certainly not the protagonist: Mrs Dalloway's voice is too fragmented to lead others in sounding; indeed, at times it succumbs to the multitude of sensations around her. Nor is it the author: Woolf, too, seems to have little control of the stream-of-consciousness narrative she penned. Rather, it is Mrs Dalloway's body, and specifically her body within the world, her *In-der-Welt-sein* that leads the chorus from a state of silence and invisibility. In the middle section of *Voices of Birds*, an extract from Aristophanes' *The Birds* [Ὄρνιθες] supplies text for the sounds of the birds that Smith. Again, the audibility of the words fades, leaving behind a dissociative sensation that prioritises the potentiality of the body. The soloist's body listening, gives rise to her singing; it is the position of the performers in the geography and history of the performance space and the textual process of fragmentation that is channeled, as if they were possessed, into music.

At the end of her journey, Mrs Dalloway finds herself in Mulberry's the florists; rather than fulfil her task she explores the depth dimension of a single moment, yet again dissociating into the synaesthesia of sights, smells, sounds, and memories. The

147 Woolf (1925/1980) p. 61.

148 The option that the soloists wear masks was not realised in the performance of *Voices of Birds in Queer Harmony*, but it is explicit in the score as a possibility for future stagings.

background of the noise from the street, the sensation of the flowers, specific memories, and allusions to abstract events are offered to the reader as possible refractions of the field of the florists. 'Oh! a pistol shot in the street outside! "Dear, those motor cars," said Miss Pym',¹⁴⁹ and Mrs Dalloway connects her far-off, timeless thought to the near of the present. The second soloist emerges out of the chorus, and sustains 'the world' as if to affirm the Heideggerian *In-der-Welt-Sein*.¹⁵⁰ A sudden shot from the percussionist on a tom-tom arrests the world into a new consciousness. And so the first soloist resumes singing nonsense – n-o/ō/ö-n-s/sh-e/ee/ü-n-s/sh – all while someone, Mrs Dalloway, the percussionist, the audience's consciousness, or the sound itself is moving through space.

Multimedia dissociation

All the lights are dimmed. No performers are visible: they are disembodied, heard through speakers placed around the performance space. An image of a collaged bird is projected. Even invisible, the bodies are present; we see them on the screen. Building on Houdart, Campbell notes that in Aperghis' *Mechinations* (2000) a similarly deconstructionist language, a 'phonemic play',¹⁵¹ performed by four singers, is projected on to four video monitors above them. By Aperghis' own account, the performers, the sounds and objects they produce, and, more germanely, the projection of these objects and the manipulation of the whole by a fifth party are 'like a concrete expression of the

149 Woolf (1925/1990) p. 42.

150 And in this case the only place the world can crack its whip is on the self, the lucid psyche flaying itself apart.

151 Campbell (2013) p. 155.

phonemes, as if what is uttered were naming these objects'.¹⁵² The actants are dis/continuous. The staging is fractured, as is the language, as is control over the (re-)production of the human sounds and images; and, through this, the actants materially reproduce each other through a continuous play; which in turn is realised in diffractions of the whole; and so on. The audience is thereby brought into this assemblage: the disjunction of the performing actants binds them together in deranged perception, and the audience, though conventionally separated from the stage, is subsumed in the altered, dissociative experience of the performers, rather than being pushed away, made into voyeurs.

This dissociation, even in the fragmented staging, is never the destruction of perception but rather its deconstruction. Dissociations, hallucinations, psychoses are part of the same structure as synaesthesia in that they belong to the 'antepredictive world, and our bewildering proximity to the whole of being in *syncretic* experience'.¹⁵³ The description of my practice as embodied madness is justified: dissociation and synaesthesia are not simply psychiatric descriptors but the experience of sound without purpose, where the perception of sound, of musicking, loses its 'apodeictic certainty'.¹⁵⁴ All human and non-human subjects in the performance space are continuous in a discontinuity, and discontinuous in a continuity. This staging, and the use of deconstructed signifiers, both gesture towards a Theatre of Cruelty.

152 Aperghis quoted in *Ibid.* p. 155.

153 Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) p. 400 (my emphasis).

154 *Ibid.* p. 400.

As the opening chorus of *Voices of Birds* finishes, stage lights come up, the projection changes to 'NONSENSE' (the collaged text individuates each phonic which are further deconstructed as these letters are gradually torn apart), the speaker in front of the soloist is switched on, varying amplitudes and resonances are added to the sound controlled by Lynette Quek and myself, the first soloist doubles over, and the percussionist strikes a snare. Only the latter two gestures are visible expressions of flesh, but the entire assemblage acts as one body, a cyborg of flesh, machine, and *mā*. It is at this point that the performance dissociates. The audience initially sits in darkness, surrounded by speakers that play the prerecorded chorus; all that remains are the listeners' own bodies, each in a state of introspective mindfulness. The voices of the chorus, the birds in queer harmony, are inside their bodies. As the next section begins, they turn towards a stage, becoming embroiled in chaotic events from which they are spatially removed. In the same moment, perception is pulled into the body, as the sound is evidently coextensive with movement on stage, unlike the disembodied voices of the chorus. Yet both contrasting instants constitute the same breaking and remaking of a body consciousness. And as the disjunct staging is extended, the entire space comes to exist as near and far, dissociated and embodied. The performers and audience inhabit the same space defined by the erasure and separation of bodies, metaphorically or literally experiencing an out-of-body state; and yet, in the same way, it is possible to experience this as something ironically of the body.

An hysterical fugue

The overall structure of *Voices of Birds* is that of a fugue, replete with subject, answer, exposition, episodes, and stretto. It is also in an hysterical fugue state. It is a fugue of both musical material and body consciousness. Emma Sutton joins together Woolf's writing, fugue states, and musical fugues in 'Shell shock and hysterical fugue, or why Mrs Dalloway likes Bach'.¹⁵⁵ Mrs Dalloway's daughter, Clarissa, is a lover of Bach, drawn to a detached formalism, rather like Septimus Smith's temperament. Sutton notes not only that Bach was very much in vogue in the early twentieth-century, a reaction against mystical Wagnerian operas that is echoed in my turning away from similar romanticism in conceiving *Voices of Birds*, but also that fugue doubles as a medical term that conceivably encompasses both Smith and Woolf. Woolf in her diaries wrote that *Mrs Dalloway* is 'the world seen by the sane and the insane side by side'.¹⁵⁶ A fugue is etymologically 'to flee', and it thus also suggests flight (as with Smith's birds): composer's, performer's, and audience's embodied consciousnesses dance around each other, not necessarily with the same intent, but nevertheless interlinked.

Sutton argues that a fugal structure is the driving force of the narrative of *Mrs Dalloway*. At one level this is schematic, with the novel following strict forms and patterns. At another level, it is poetic, as is evident in the novel's opening: sensory experiences and memories thereof enter successively, layering and interacting with each other. Each stop on Mrs Dalloway's journey is an exposition, a clear statement of

¹⁵⁵ Sutton (2011).

¹⁵⁶ Woolf quoted in *ibid.* p. 20.

the foundational materials for her experience, which then gives way to a succession of episodes comprised of free polyphonic sequences and fragments of the subject, always built from this exposition. Throughout, she is driven by a single flight: to buy flowers. But Sutton goes further, positioning the experiences of the three main characters, 'Clarissa's party, [and] her memories of Bourton ... Peter Walsh's memories of Bourton, his love for Clarissa and life in India ... Septimus' memories of war, his mental illness and medical treatment',¹⁵⁷ as subject, answer, and countersubject respectively. The fugal structure of the novel is grounded in the relationships between characters. The exposition of a fugue is characterised by clear entries of the subject, layered with answers. Thus, even though subject and answer can be separately distinguished, their co-existence inexorably contributes to the overall fugal impetus. So also in the novel; Sutton suggests that the fugal structure allows Woolf to suggest 'a continuum of experiences ... rather than separating the ... "insane" and merely "nervous"'.¹⁵⁸ The imitative forms of a fugue are the expression of some intellectual *mā*. While they serve different harmonic functions, the subject pulling away from the tonic and the answer returning to it, they are part of the same harmonic scheme. In *Mrs Dalloway*, although each character has a separate identity, that identity is linked to the others in a relational continuum.

As in the novel, there are three primary characters in *Voices of Birds*: the two soloists and the percussionist. The first soloist provides the subject, a frenzied series of phonics and gestures, with a countersubject provided by the percussionist. The second

157 Ibid. p. 20.

158 Ibid. p. 23.

soloist, although stylistically very different, provides the answer. The first soloist seeks to break apart the text ('harmonically' moving from I to V), and the second provides a tonal answer, bringing the text back to itself (V-I). Their juxtaposition makes clear the entire tonality-body-consciousness of the piece. As in a classical fugue, the percussionist's countersubject functions as counterpoint to both subject and answer, acting at times as accompaniment and at times as a foil to the subject/answer, occasionally even rising to prominence. My writing incorporates some literal references to formal counterpoint, for example anachronistically setting the Shakespeare text in a style that refers to the German chorale tradition. But more significant is the counterpoint between texts of different styles and eras, a triple fugue of language, history, and geography. The experiences of the three characters that Sutton identifies as corresponding to subject, answer, and countersubject are not based solely in the present; they incorporate the characters' memories. So also for my treatment of the Shakespeare text; its style is removed from its Elizabethan origin (the subject), and the musical setting evokes a German chorale and variations (the answer). This dissociation functions as a vague fugue-state rather than a strict lucid appropriation. The histories and geographies of the texts play out their own polyphonic game alongside the vertical points of imitation, as different performers singing different texts are displaced in spacetime, move between the virtual and the actual, and operate in different rhythmic patterns, metres, and even tempi.

Voices of Birds reaches a stretto in the middle section, as the two soloists sing the same material, the same subject, entering successively (if only by a quaver) but overlapping. The stretto is accompanied or even subsumed by the flying voices of birds that underlies the central narrative of the piece. Or, perhaps, it is rather the whistling bird-song that constitutes the stretto in various augmentations and diminutions heard over a *cantus firmus*. The third section switches the subject and answer and, by so doing, reveals the two soloists to be complementary transpositions of each other rather than antagonistic. As at the outset, it is the entrance of the listener that truly pulls together these disparate elements. A composer can write a fugue in many voices, distinguishable graphically and by different hand gestures, only to become part of one body when the performer sits down at a keyboard. In *Voices of Birds*, the performing body is virtual, and the totality of its resultant harmonies materialises through the synaesthetic perception of the audience.

Lu(d/c)i(c/dit)y

I have alluded to a sense of play not only in the piece but also in the experience of altered perception. As I worked my way through writing *Voices of Birds*, I began a playthrough of *Hellblade: Senua's Sacrifice* (2017), developed by Ninja Theory. The game centres around the character Senua, an ancient Nordic woman shunned by her tribe for her psychosis; the player takes control of her as she journeys through Helheim on a quest to save the soul of her lover. All the while she is accompanied by incessant

voices commenting, guiding, and interfering with her quest. I cannot help thinking of these as the voices I hear, the images I see, and the sensory delirium as I move through the odyssey of composing. The game has, since its launch, been lauded for its portrayal of psychosis. Writing on the poetics of *Hellblade*, Eoghain Meakin, Brian Vaughan, and Charlie Cullen note that this is one part of the dual narrative: an exterior journey doubled by an interior experience; the same duality that underpins *Mrs Dalloway*. These successfully coexist and reverse upon each other, they argue, because of the distancing of 'the audience from the player character so that they can see both scenarios at once'.¹⁵⁹ In *Voices of Birds*, the audience is distanced from the action on stage not only geographically but perceptively. The singers stand on opposite sides of a stage, a percussionist occupies a state of flux in between, a projection is seen behind the performers, speakers are in front and positioned around the performance space: the audience's perception is divided and yet subsumed in an indeterminate whole. The many actions of *Hellblade* and *Voices of Birds* – distant heard voices, near images, the protagonist's past and present, the space between virtual game and actual player – fold 'over [themselves] to create a cascade of meaning',¹⁶⁰ a positively fugal effect.

Hellblade is particularly notable for its use of spatialized audio design, interwoven into both the narrative and the gameplay. Voices appear all around the player; virtual sounds seem to come from actual points near and far in an immaterial world. Near the beginning of my play through, I approached a tightrope that Senua

¹⁵⁹Meakin, Vaughan, Cullen (2021)

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

must traverse to continue. As Senua stepped on to the tightrope a voice to my right and behind me simply said 'fall'. I obeyed, and I failed the game. Soon after came another puzzle: here I had to listen to the voices' advice, to align Senua with disparate objects such that they aligned with each other to reveal a pattern. Both ignoring and obeying the voices are means to progress through the ludic possibilities of the ongoing experience. A similar game plays out in *Voices of Birds*. The basic staging – two soloists with an intermediary performer – was in part inspired by Kagel's *Match*, for two celli and percussion. In *Match*, the percussionist acts as a referee for the match between the two cellists, trying to assert some degree of control over a game that frequently gets out of control. Sometimes the percussionist's instructions are obeyed; more often than not they are ignored. The piece opens with cellists playing successive Bartok pizzicatos: shots fired across the stage with the percussionist caught in the crossfire. The percussionist interrupts with a single marimba note. Regardless, the cellists continue, and so the percussionist repeats the same note. The cellists obey this time, transitioning to quiet tremolos and harmonics.¹⁶¹ Similarly, in *Hellblade*, responding to the same voices, I fall off and I walk a tightrope; failure and progress, obedience and disobedience both amount to explorations of the same consciousness. And at rehearsal mark B of *Voices of Birds* (fig. 13) the percussionist first attempts to imitate the vocalising and is silenced by a 'SH!'. The next two times, the percussionist decides to interrupt the soloist. In response, the soloist attempts to disobey the percussionist, before returning to the same vocalisations as were heard at rehearsal mark A. The fragmented staging and phonics

¹⁶¹ Kagel (1966) 00:19-01:12.

that beget continuity are subjected to a series of games that use both continuity and discontinuity as ways of working through themselves. And, once again, this all converges on the audience who looks at one performer or another, listen to one musical line or another, and in so doing plays with their perceptions of the whole.

Figure 13: Rehearsal mark B (page 7) from *Voices of Birds in Queer Harmony*.

While writing *Voices of Birds*, I also turned to the point and click adventure *Fran Bow* (2015), developed by Killmonday Games both as a model of layering perception, and as a horrifyingly accurate analogue for the concert hall in which *Voices of Birds* eventually found itself. The story of a young girl relegated to an asylum and heavily medicated, it is less auditory than *Hellblade* but points more emphatically to a superposition of many realities. Fran journeys through five vertically aligned realms, from earth to a primordial light; she may also chose whether or not to take medication that reveals different layered facets of each of these realms. Like Wiskus's synaesthetic experience of bells, a passive overlay of sensations does not fully describe Fran's experience; what she experiences are transformations of the same world that are presented to us by her subjective agency. This metastructure of realities is not presented as metaphor (recall that in bringing together the actual and virtual 'metaphor is too

much or too little'); nor is it made into a disability except by incompetent and abusive adults. Like Fran, I found myself trapped in an asylum – the concert hall – primarily for logistical reasons. The dimensions of the space, the static audience, separated from the stage, were given to me: my creative agency was to be found in the movement within this geography and in the hallucinatory in between of these spaces, as if I too were taking a drug that allowed me to move between the layers.



Figure 14: A comparison of dissociative geographies in *Fran Bow* and *Voices of Birds in Queer Harmony*. At this point in the game, Fran has taken her medication, and the carceral violence of the asylum she is imprisoned in is expressed as gore. While *Voices of Birds* is not violent in the same way, it is a similarly dissociative experience. The fragmented projected 'NONSENSE' is another layer of the stage's geography, rather than a separate entity: a virtual 'gory' ripping apart of a comparatively ordered arrangement.

At some point, I hope to remake *Voices of Birds* outside of this ultimately carceral institution, one of the 'memorials the rise of [white supremacist, capitalist,

heteropatriarchal]¹⁶² nationalism and imperialism',¹⁶³ at some point, and the edited video was a step towards imagining this. Irrespective of the social architecture of classical concert halls, *Voices of Birds* is to be staged in three parallel layers – speakers at the front, humans in the middle, and projection at the back. But these are not representational; rather, all are similar to each – that is, they are all repeating iterations of each other – and none of them can claim primacy. They are performances of each other without an origin. None of these layers presents itself as a representation of reality, unless we yield utterly to anthropocentrism and ignore the cyborg at play. Each level is situated at the joint between the actual and virtual, the visible and the invisible, the audible and the inaudible. The synaesthetic perception of juxtaposed, superimposed theatres points to a structural fugue state, one to be cherished rather than remedied. A composition that began life as a misguided representation of psychosis has ended up, through the dis/arrangement of bodies, becoming psychotic in itself.

162 Adjectives I have added in the spirit of bell hooks.

163 Dewey (1934/2005) pp. 6-7.

3. Mirror Universe

3.1. Re/Reflection

For as long as I can remember, I have experience[d] extended dissociative episodes. Sometimes I feel like I'm outside of my body, controlling a puppet. Sometimes the world around me seems unreal, or hyperreal. Sometimes I am completely in my own fantasy world, so much [so that] I can't even see or hear what's going on around me. I used to think this meant that my essence and my body were completely separate, that my 'ghost' was outside of my 'shell'. But in recent years, and especially with this project, I have changed my view.

perhaps this is a karmic condemnation of myself as a composer that i have only come to resolve at the end of this degree.

this experience speaks, in psychoanalytic terms, to a continuity between inner ego and external non-ego. spatially, this places my experience on my spiritually, phenomenologically, and materially porous skin, the locus where my composing is entangled with that outside

I ask what my relationship to my

instruments is, what my relationship with a piano via Kate is, what my relationship to pen and paper via Angie is. [These relationships] aren't strictly part of my biology, but they are tactile and virtual implants, cybernetic enhancements; prostheses for the purpose of making noise; not quite as extreme as biohacking, but very real cybernetics. I dissociate from my biological body, but I feel intact with my musical machines. Surely then they are part of my body, because they are sensory extensions of myself.

of my skin-shell.

and it is in these relationships that the oracular hand acts.

this is not a phenomenalist account, but an irreal critique of realism and idealism.

I don't think my 'shell' ends at my skin. My physical body extends to everything I can sense, whether someone else would call it real or not. Who has the right to tell me what is real for me? And since what I sense, what I immediately know is my essence, my soul, my ghost, these are part

nevertheless, the skin, where contact to manuscript paper, to laptops, and to

of my body – actually the same as my
body! My dissociation is not a removal
from my body, but my body and mind
extending themselves, either further into
this reality, or maybe some other universe!

...

... Maybe
this is insanity, or psychosis, but I don't
think there's anything wrong with that.

In *Ghost in the Shell*, Motoko

Kusanagi asks herself if she really exists;
her brain and her body are completely
cybernetic. What if her memories, her
ghost, were also synthetic? Does that make
her not real? She never finds an answer ...

*instruments is made is a vital location for
discussion because it is the porous limning
of our bodies within the background of the
world.*

*i know my experience through my body as
i extend; i know my experience through my
mind as i think. Spinoza proves that these
are both attributes of the same substance.
because this is where madness returns to
music.*

*in contrast with Gilbert Ryle's 'ghost in the
machine' which affirms a deterministic
difference, and a reinscription of a
dominant, active, immaterial mind over a
subordinate, passive, fixed body,
Misamuna Shirow's 'ghost in the shell'
troubles and defers the mind and body.*

*neither mind nor body describes Motoko's
experience; only the negative space in
which, like Magritte's The Treachery of
Images, both lose meaning.*

... I'm an Absurdist. I cannot bring myself to say that I am real (which is not to say that I actively believe I don't exist!). But whether or not I'm real, I can only do. Doing makes me. I make music. And I'm fine with that.

Written as part of *Androgynette* in Imbolc 2021. Commentary added Samhain 2021.
<<https://jamesredelinghuys.com/androgynette/writing/#rereflection>>

3.2. Medusa the Muse

Yet you cannot think of a Gethenian as "it."
They are not neuters. They are potentials, or
integrals.

– Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*¹⁶⁴

'I am spacious, singing flesh'.¹⁶⁵ Hélène Cixous's seminal essay 'The Laugh of Medusa'

[*Le Rire de la Méduse*] (1975/76) is a call to writing: writing as an integral¹⁶⁶ part of the *conatus* of a gendered body. She proposes an *écriture féminine* [feminine writing] that

¹⁶⁴ Le Guin (1969) p. 127.

¹⁶⁵ Cixous (1975/1976) p. 889.

¹⁶⁶ Le Guin and I play on *intégral* and *integral*. While they work in opposing directions, they both describe limit experience: the former approaches zero, a one dimensional point inside the self; the latter approaches infinity, an infinite summation. Both describe reciprocal processes of embodiment: the emergence of the specific from a universal possibility, and the iterations of the specific that produce this universal.

'moves beyond the constraints of phallogentric thought' to describe 'a path towards thought through the body'.¹⁶⁷ Although her ultimatum for a new form of writing is addressed to women, in the process of reaching this specifically ambiguous writing style she necessarily moves through an androgyny (the androgynette) from which all gender variations might find a writing of their own beyond the phallogentric. Such an androgyny enables sex, in much the same way as my use of synaesthesia and dissociation enables and defers perception. Both processes are universal, but universal only in that they perpetually undermine the essentialism of the body. Her argument postulates two types of bisexuality (a term which here invokes a being, in both a sexual and morphological sense, that is outside of a heterosexual paradigm, or, through the Medusa/medusoid even something trans*species).¹⁶⁸ The first is 'bisexual, hence neuter',¹⁶⁹ which she flatly rejects. To this she opposes an 'other bisexuality', a *vatic* bisexuality, which multiplies 'the effects of the inscription of desire, over all parts of my body and the other body'.¹⁷⁰ The etymology of 'vatic' bears some consideration: like Medusa's hair or the pianist's fingers, it seems to snake in many directions all at once. Merriam-Webster identifies it as primarily rooted in Latin *vates*, meaning 'seer' or 'prophet'. But *vates* in turn relates to 'Old English *wōth*, meaning "poetry," the Old High German *wuot*, meaning "madness," and the Old Irish *fáith*, meaning both "seer" and "poet".¹⁷¹ This word contains all of the narratives in this commentary: the poetry that is music to Rimbaud's poet-seer sitting at a

167 Bray (2004) p. 71.

168 C.f. Bostow (2019) pp. 808-813.

169 Cixous (1975/1976) p. 883.

170 Ibid. p. 884.

171 Merriam-Webster (n.d.) "vatic".

desk, whose derangement of sensation is realised in a passionate madness. These are here all recast as queerly gendered modes of artistic practice. This body is one of unending mutability, one that 'derives pleasure from this gift of alterability'. It is 'spacious, singing flesh on which is grafted no one knows';¹⁷² defined by transformation, and this transformation is songful. All this is a starting point for my reflection on gender in this portfolio; it serves to frame some of my work, but, more importantly, to look to and draw down a millennial future for my practice: 'to break up, to destroy; and to foresee the unforeseeable, to project'.¹⁷³

My point here is not that this vatic bisexuality describes or was realised in my practice in the course of this degree. To draw such a summary conclusion would be to deny the potentiality of the gendered body. Indeed, there are many occasions on which I feel that I failed to authentically write with my body as myself. But, these failures is part of the same chorus as the successes, and I am the *coryphaeus* and singer of both. First, though, I confess that I have regularly found myself 'threatened by the big dick', still leading 'a loyal master to the beat of the drum'.¹⁷⁴ The resulting pieces were created in social, historical, and geographic contexts that I cannot truthfully claim I have always felt comfortable inhabiting; they utilise notations, performance traditions, styles of writing, and strategies for reflection which stem from the adaptation of certain pasts in ways that I have not yet developed the courage to challenge. I in no way disavow these pieces, and in my writing above I present them as fertile starting points for future work.

172Cixous (1975/1976) p. 889.

173 Ibid. p. 875.

174 Ibid.. pp. 891-892.

Nevertheless, I am aware of a certain lingering sadomasochistic pall in my practice,¹⁷⁵ the same type of polyamorous terror I address in the context of *Androgynette*, the same kink that binds Ledger's hands. I have previously noted (and employed) a chronic dissociation of sensory perception in my practice, but here I find myself contending with a dissociation in my sense of self. Both types of dissociation are limit experiences, blurring the distinction between unrelenting terror and divine ecstasy. I also recognise that the form of this commentary might itself be a failure of the self: as a requirement of this degree, I present myself as writer and reader and take both to be a single subject that is a candidate for said degree. Writing about my writing is iterative and open, just as composing, performing, and listening are diffractions of each other, but insofar as the goal is to *clarify* my writing, I close this loop. I agree to provide this commentary, writing *on* my compositional process rather than as *part* of it, and I thereby give this act telos, destroying of the mutability of my composing body by speaking about its finalities, rather than allowing it to remain in implicitly bisexual writing. And here, at the end of the process, I ask if this degree has been a fulfilment of my desires or a failure in this regard, or, even more, if it has been defined by an inability to recognise what distinguishes these outcomes or even to acknowledge that they can be distinguished. I am aware that I mask, but not when, how, or what these masks look like. In what ways have I straightened myself in making this portfolio?

175 I wonder, with a sense of mounting existential terror, if this is similar to Elfriede Jelinek's *The Piano Teacher* (1983).

I can ...

Cixous insists on a promise of a *jouissant* 'I can': 'her writing *can* only keep going'.¹⁷⁶

Écriture féminine is utopian, to the point that it has provoked criticism: it 'carries with it a number of conceptual and political problems ... the avant-garde over-estimates the liberatory effects of its own productions through a rather naive faith in the transformative power of art'.¹⁷⁷ But, I choose to be optimistic, and I begin with a comparably positive outlook (hoping to return to something similar by the end of this section). Part of this 'I can' resides in the faith that a particular form of desire is realisable, and for now I imagine the infinite, integral possibility of writing myself. Cixous rhetorically asks 'haven't I read the "Signification of the Phallus"?' But, she continues, 'what's a desire originating from a lack? A pretty meagre desire'.¹⁷⁸ And even as I express fear that my desires are unfulfilled or unknowable, I am not frightened but desirous of everything of myself, for 'I, too, overflow; my desires have invented new desires, my body knows unheard-of songs'.¹⁷⁹

Over the course of this degree, my most pleasurable experience, the one in which my genderqueer/intersex desire was most ecstatically fulfilled was watching the audience during *Dance Curves*. The audience occupies a space, leaving another space empty only because a small step designates a stage. Grasse enters from a space to the

176 Cixous (1975/1976) p. 889 (my emphasis).

177 Bray (2004) p. 32.

178 Ibid. p. 891.

179 Ibid. p. 876.

side partly obscured by a screen, and some of the audience peaks around to glimpse her. At the end of the first movement and into the second, Grasse moves behind one of the screens, her silhouette interacting with the images on screen as something like a representation of a representation of a representation of a representation. Some audience members remain where they are, looking on her askew, while others move to look at her through the screen. In the third movement, she enters through the audience, and the step that defines a normative difference is made insecure, even subverted. For the fourth movement, she retreats to a pillar near the back of the performance space, rooted (mycorrhizome-d) in place. To view her now is to observe her in the background of a voided space, obliquely across the focal point of the venue.¹⁸⁰ In *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*, Sarah Ahmed gives an example of a meal, innocuous at first glance, at an island resort. She and her partner enter the dining room, only to find 'table after table, couple after couple, taking the same form: one man sitting by one woman around a "round table"... the same form repeated again and again'.¹⁸¹ To sit side-by-side with her partner is to disrupt this pattern. If they obeyed the binary man-woman-man-woman... pattern, they will perceive each other obliquely across the table in a different orientation to the heterosexual couples. Ahmed describes this as a 'failed orientation', 'out of line' with the heterosexual patterning: 'the queer couple in a straight space hence look as if they are "slanting"'.¹⁸² However, Ahmed

180 This focal point is more fully occupied in the first performance of *SAMO© SHIT SONGS*.

181 Ahmed (2006) p. 82.

182 Ibid. p. 92.

makes clear that this consequence is not failure; rather, the entrance of the queer body causes an implicit destruction of the heterosexual space.

These images redescribe the performance space, the table, the desk at which I write and read. The same Husserlian account of sitting at a desk that I built upon is rethought by Ahmed in terms of the queer body. For Husserl, the act of writing brings the paper, the inkwell, the background of his perception towards him is dependent on that these objects 'and the table point in the same direction'.¹⁸³ They are arranged in a straight (read: heterosexual) geography. I think of my own geography at the desk: the paper and pens are in front of me, but Kandinsky's images are off to one side, and to perceive them I must look across the page, observing the objects' proximity at a slanted angle. I must also contend with the forgetful perversity of a 180 degree rotation when I turn to face my keyboard: not only is the page no longer straight in front of me, but also viewing it or the keyboard requires an active comportment of my body that removes one or the other from my perception. Similar angles move pervade the forms of the *Dance Curves* score. The first and fourth movements variously repeat, but never fully develop or integrate two subjects that are neatly divided between piano and strings. The second and third rearrange this difference vertically, arranging the subjects simultaneously but no less present. 'To write is to note down the music of the world, the music of the body, the music of time ... Because difference constitutes music ... like relationships between notes coming from instruments that are different but that are in

183 Ibid. p. 88.

harmony ... Music is also a sexual difference'.¹⁸⁴ In *Dance Curves*, this clear sex difference is found between the subjects, their motifs, and their instrumentation.

But, like all of my discussion of bodies and perception, mind-body, self-other, hearing-seeing, actual-virtual, light-dark, these subjects are interesting not in their individuality or even in their oscillation but in the dis/joints between them. The Merleau-Pontian chiasm that I have previously used to deconstruct my practice recurs in Cixous' concept of the 'third body'. Both recognise that the process of embodiment takes place not only in the self or the other but also in an exchange between self and other that iteratively redoubles upon itself. 'Cixous suggests', Bray explains, 'that the third body ... is also a space through which new representations are embodied'.¹⁸⁵ Cixous herself writes 'I am under the cosmic tent, under the canvas of my body and I gaze out ... a *Third Body (Troisième Corps)* comes to us, a third sense of sight, and our other ears – between our two bodies our third body surges forth ... but in order for the third body to be written, the exterior must enter and the interior must open out'.¹⁸⁶ These bodies turn towards and turn away in such a way that they might turn again in turn. And so Kandinsky and I turn towards and away from each other, as do strings and piano, high register and low, audience and dancer, and all this dis/harmony is a sexual difference; but, freed from the determinism of a heterosexual polarity, they repeat this difference (motif A, motif B, motif A...) without an evident purpose: 'sound without purpose'. The score and Kandinsky's images are not reproduced under a heterosexual contract – one

184 Cixous (1994/1997) pp. 46-47.

185 Bray (2004) p. 117.

186 Cixous (1991) p. 53.

which obliges them to entertain the same desires and practices as their ancestors, a modernist continuity of lines and media, the same straight genealogical lines as in a family tree. As we enter a conventional concert hall – which, like Ahmed’s table, is classically always heterosexual – we sit in such a way that we might face an other, on stage outside of our self, that we reproduce the stage in our perception on its own terms: the performers produce phenomena that audience members, by social contract, reproduce in their own perception by intending their consciousness towards the stage in a particular direction. To enter a space in which, by contrast, we must twist our bodies’ (sexual) orientation to reframe these spaces is to disrupt this difference.

It is precisely these points of turning, the few millimetres between images and manuscript pad, the axis on which my chair (*ma chair*) rotates, the barlines and periods of decay between motifs, the steps that the audience must walk to see the performer from an oblique angle, that bring into being a third, bisexual body. There is something similarly bisexual in the fugue state of *Voices of Birds in ~~Not Accidentally~~ Queer Harmony* (to mimic the typographical approach of Collinson Scott et al). In conventional Freudian readings, the female body is essentially hysterical because of its fixed, pre-determined anatomy; in a Cixousian reading, this hysteria is an historically contingent morphology that allows for a ‘model of resistance’:¹⁸⁷ ‘the historical or “poetic” body ... allows [Cixous] to hypothesize women’s writing as, in part, a translation between language and corporeality’.¹⁸⁸ This reading of hysteria is played out in Woolf’s and

187 Paraphrasing Banting in Bray (2004) p. 36.

188 Banting (1992) p. 231.

Clarissa Dalloway's own bisexuality; where the musical fugue and psychological fugue states they identify with are a 'counterpart [counterpoint] to the feminized condition of hysteria ... Fugue may have been a condition of men, but its proximity to hysteria lent it a "feminine" colour'.¹⁸⁹ The hysteria of the textual, stylistic, temporal, and spatial dis/harmony is coterminous with the gendered difference between the two soloists and between the audience and human and nonhuman performers on stage. However, this chiasm does not arise from the mediating percussionist in themselves; rather, from the traces left as the percussionist moves across the space emerges a phantasmic, third body. This comes into being when/where the audience turns across the arrangement on stage and sees a relationship between the two soloists that arises from when/where the percussionist has been or may be; or when/where the viewer of the edited video looks across the screen to bring one of the four shots into consciousness; when, more generally, the perceiving flesh in some way always fails to fully translate the entirety of the other standing before it. It faces something polymorphous, a woman with snakes for hair; it inundates itself in this psychological and gendered terror, and it laughs.

Transition to X ...

around the time i began writing Body

Etude i attended a performance of

Einojuhani Rautavaara's Piano Concerto

No. 1. my initial thought on hearing the

189 Sutton (2011) p. 19.

In the first version of what would eventually become the last system of *Body Etude*, I gave the instruction 'continue until it becomes utterly impossible, allow the physical tension to reflect in the sound, or resist the tension' ...

... By extending her left arm over her head in a yogic stretch (a gesture I never anticipated, but should not have been surprised by), Ledger managed to play the whole of the phrase. I removed the instruction, but we did not forget it ...

... In

*opening was 'this is grotesque'. i left after the first movement, suffering from agoraphobic anxiety. however, i have come to reconsider this assessment. this concerto is precisely the opposite of the grotesque, a category in which we might include the pianistic 'biohacking' of Cage's Sonatas for Prepared Piano, the disconcerting cyborg marriage of voice and electronics in Monk's Our Lady of Late, the trans*human bodies of Butoh that come to resemble the branching of Ophiocordyceps unilateralis, and the yogic twisting required for Ledger to play the final section of Body Etude. rather, the concerto was phallic. it was a monument to the soloist's and composer's egos, Perseus's sword pointing outwards to thrust, while Medusa's polymorphic head is held aloft, decapitated, and as such no longer capable of changing.¹⁹⁰ it was*

performing this gesture, Ledger arrived at a point of insurmountable tension, with her body locked in place, unable to extend any further. We ended the performance of *Androgynette* with this position.

Paradoxically, we appear to have been petrified by the Medusa, and we face the possibility that the vatic bisexuality I am concerned with has reached a heterosexual terminus. After extending itself to a limit, Ledger's body simply cannot. This passage ends with a double bar line, and this terminus is reproduced in

virtuosic in the most masculinist sense, so fast and loud that the sound dictated the soloist's movements prior to their embodiment.

the concerto restrained my consciousness without consent as a bright object that not only refused to be part of a background but disallowed all background existence. one might listen to and look at the pianist, or cover ones ears and eyes, but there was no possibility for a sensory anarchy that would permit me to see the sound in the context of the architecture or hear the negative space between the piano and any other instrument. sitting in my seat, i could only turn towards the sound in raptured fascination, or away from it in horror, but I could not position myself obliquely. at all points, my body consciousness – and dare i say perhaps even the soloist' – was

190 The allusion is both to Benvenuto Cellini's 16th-century *Perseus with the Head of Medusa* and to Luciano Garbati's 2008 response *Medusa with the Head of Perseus*.

Ledger's performance with the implicit expectation that this will in turn produce a terminus. Surely enough, the performance and our collaboration ends at this point, and a heterosexual contract is fulfilled.

subordinated, positively or negatively, to this monolith grounded in musical cosmogony through the cessation of fluctuating embodiment. i wanted Androgynette to be anything but this: i wanted it to be grotesque in its bisexuality.

I cannot ...

Perhaps the foremost critique of the utopian idealism of 'I can' is given by Iris Marion Young in her 1980 essay 'Throwing Like a Girl'. She begins with a critique of Erwin Strauss's 1966 description of the difference between the way girls and boys use their bodies to throw, in which Strauss concluded that this is 'the manifestation of a biological, not an acquired difference'.¹⁹¹ Aiming to bring 'intelligibility and significance to certain observable and rather ordinary ways in which women in our society typically comport themselves and move differently from the ways that men do',¹⁹² Young counters that Strauss's analysis amounts to the erasure of female experience, a positivist anatomical account that excludes entirely the existential and morphological. In living as both subject and object, Young argues, and with these modes of being separated so that a woman 'cannot be in unity with herself, but must take a distance from and exist in discontinuity with her body', 'she gazes at it in the mirror, [and] worries about how it

¹⁹¹ Strauss in Young (1980) p. 138.

¹⁹² Young, p. 139.

looks to others'.¹⁹³ Young maintains that doing takes primacy over thinking; but, Weiss notes, although the Merleau-Pontian 'I can' is 'clearly still operative in these types of experiences, the simultaneous worry that "I cannot" fulfill[s] these demands ... the bodily intentionality Merleau-Ponty is describing as a universal experience, thereby compromising our sense of bodily agency".¹⁹⁴ The Merleau-Pontian 'I can'¹⁹⁵ is situationally limited, and the historical and geographical comportment of the female body demonstrates this limitation.

*i distinctly recall my own
piano teacher saying that
only men and boers can
play Beethoven.*

Young acknowledges that the scope of her paper is narrow. It is restricted to 'contemporary, advanced industrial, urban, and commercial society',¹⁹⁶ and to 'the sort of physical tasks and body orientation which involve the whole body in gross movement'.¹⁹⁷ In defining her paper's limits, she invites further research, particularly into 'less task-oriented body activities, such as dancing'.¹⁹⁸ Many, if not all, of the pieces in this portfolio might be suited to this: movements which cross over between gross and fine, whole body and part, all present under 'sound without purpose'. The performance

193 Ibid. pp. 153-4.

194 Weiss (2015) p. 79.

195 C.f. Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) p. 159.

196 Young (1980) p. 140.

197 Ibid. p. 155.

198 Ibid.

of *Androgynette* illustrates the workings of research through practice, and the worries that accompany this: the performers begin in stillness and, having selected an appropriate piece of repertoire, begin to rehearse and refine it and their bodily comportment in a highly ritualised system. But practicing does not belong to the stage, rather to the home. The composer facing their desk, the performer facing the audience, and the audience member travelling to the performance venue are all sustained by, yet cast an anechoic shadow on, the same domestic space. This is a space historically (even presently) coded as feminine, 'in which women, as wives and servants, do the work required to keep such spaces available for men and the work they do'.¹⁹⁹ Perhaps, in this reading, *Androgynette* actually fails at presenting a performance, and the performers fail to comport themselves in the requisite performative mode. The performers and their instruments stand as objects, move as parts of a machine, traversing a tightrope between Ryle's 'ghost in the machine' and Shirow's 'ghost in the shell'. Testing small movements, individuated gestures, and fragments of repertoire detaches them from the whole subject, makes impossible the *Dasein*, and invites viewing the performer as a mobile sculptural object. Artaud proposes that musical instruments 'be used as objects, as part of the set';²⁰⁰ but here to assign this role risks generating a negative, limiting affect. Yes, the performers do work with and through their own subjectivity; but they occupy a cultural space objectifies subjects in gendered terms and in which the body has already acquired gendered expectations. Although this theatre is not 'task-oriented',

199 Gilman (2002) in Ahmed (2006) pp. 30-31.

200 Artaud (1964/2010) p. 67.

it is nevertheless suffused with the expectation that performers face the audience and play without timidity. But when this expectation is not met, something else materialises, perhaps in the shadows at the centre of the circle, or in the audience's own memories. The virtual body we perceive in the reflective mirror of practicing appears on the actual stage as a third body, a gendered interchange.

Gail Weiss proposes an amendment to Young's critique of 'I can', writing that 'the nagging doubts of the "perhaps I cannot" ... should not ... be attributed to a failure in the power of "I can" but rather to a failure in the cultural imaginary'.²⁰¹ Analogously, one might argue that the failures of *Androgynette* arise not from the failure of the body of the female or gender non-conforming performer to appear as a subject on stage, but from the failure of the staging to produce a space in which only the masculine subject can legitimately, successfully occupy. Worries about the performers' subjectivity and their bodies' objectivity in *Ballet of Self Doubt* arise not because their gestures and performance 'cannot', but because they exist in a space, like Ahmed's table, in which such gestures are disruptive. There is certainly something of *Body Etude* – quiet, slow, timid, lonely, even terrified – that fails to expand throughout the performance space, that decouples Ledger's body from a masculine, 'loud' virtuosity. The title is a misnomer, a placeholder we came up with for a workshop that stuck.

Of course, all etudes are of the body. The transcendental etude, first and foremost, acknowledges the limitations of the body, only to fight against them to

201 Weiss (2015) p. 82.

triumph, severing the Medusa's head and holding it aloft in victory. Crucially, however, the transcendental etude, possessing neither open-ended flux nor failing imminence, must not reveal these limitations in performance. The performer generally says 'I can', but the performer of the etude says, more specifically, 'I can perform this without deviation from the score, without the fear of "perhaps I cannot"'. Transcendental etudes are concerned with the body, what the body can and cannot do *only insofar as* the performer transcends this body, subordinating it to the score, leaving a space in which *only* the 'I can' can legitimately exist. Perhaps, since it was intended as a critique of this type of virtuosity, *Body Etude* should have been retitled *Imminent Etude* or even *Etude That Rethinks the Traditional Transcendental/Imminent Distinction*. *Body Etude* makes demands on the performer, in fact, that are similar to those made by the transcendental etude: every draft I sent was met with 'make it more difficult', until we reached a point – 'bar 12' – where the music was unfeasible to learn.²⁰² To remove this passage is to raise the spectre of 'I cannot': 'perhaps this cannot be part of the piece'; 'perhaps I cannot physically perform this'; 'perhaps I cannot successfully perform this live'.

This edit was a failure. *Body Etude*, as Ledger and I imagined it, always turns its attention to where the body fails; the 'I can' is not opposed to the 'perhaps I cannot' but is rather conjoined to both 'perhaps I cannot' and 'I certainly cannot'. To write with and reflect on the body is, for Dewey, an obligation to live, to refuse to fear life; for Husserl, it is to bring the page towards him against a background of tools, and to connect to the

²⁰² This section which, for convoluted and unimportant reasons, we referred to as 'bar 12', still exists in *Three Refractions of a Body Etude*, together with a visual commentary on our struggles with it. See <<https://youtu.be/TfjT3hpDMj4>>, from 8:04–8:38.

reader's body through similitude; for Cixous it is to realise an essence, a subconscious desire through doing. In keeping with all three, these reflections serve not as self-flagellation but to unpick the relationship between 'I can' and 'I cannot' that is always already present. What is needed here is an account which reconciles but does not undo the gendered differences that arise in the music. To conjoin 'I can' and 'I cannot' is to offer failure as a queerly gendered mode of being, because it is to say that the 'I can' is itself a heterosexual expectation – as is the certainty that our collaboration would produce the virtuosic 'bar 12' in accordance with our desires, or that the subjectivity of the performers' gestures would be represented in the audience's perception on its own terms – and that we could not present this in a way that would position ourselves outside this reproductive system. Cixous' third body is the spectre between sexual partners; 'it is a complex autobiographical meditation on the relationship between the narrator and her lover'.²⁰³ However, this relationship is always one of alterity and impossibility. Gendered beings meet, clearly including both 'I can' and 'I cannot'; they come together and apart and, in so doing, produce a new body. Within the emergence of the third body or the 'other bisexuality', and within the connections and continuities formed is a failure in that it is a difference, *différance*, and irreducible otherness: 'No. I loved. I was afraid. I am afraid. Because of my fear I reinforced love'.²⁰⁴

Ahmed, beginning with the same

as i performed Ballet of Self-Doubt, i

Husserlian desk that I employed, outlines

stood still, but did not find stable

203 Bray (2004) pp. 62-63.

204 Cixous (1991) p. 2.

a failure in queer perception and turning.

footing ...

As Weiss argues, this failure occurs within

straightness, that is, in facing the score as I

i started breathing, but did not take air

write, working towards a performance,

into the bottom of my lungs ...

working in a traditional concert venue,

constructing a portfolio.

i play the first E (Ξ) of Lutosławski's

Dance Prelude No. 4, but my embouchure

collapses ...

i play the first phrase, but my breath

runs out before the end ...

i struggle against my subjective body,

invisible to the audience who see me

hardly moving, a statue ...

i get out of bed which i fail to make,

take my many medications, and walk

across the corridor to my study ...

i turn away from the rest of my flat, and

that which is outside ...

For Husserl, the page approaches him as

he is oriented towards it; but this

orientation generates a disorientation

(perhaps a homo- or bisexual orientation-

that which is not in front) as an essential

corollary. An intellectual experience which

is productive, the Cixousian extension of

desire through writing, through music

making, is essentially twinned with

'disorder' and 'the *vital* experience of

giddiness and nausea ... and the horror

with which it fills us'.²⁰⁵

and, at last, i reach for manuscript

paper and a pen and make the only

meaningful choice available to me: to

have a cup of coffee ...

i look at the yellowish manuscript pad,

take it in my hand, and move it towards

me. i touch the score, see it in the

foreground of my vision, and i hear

everything that it isn't ...

finally, I give up on composing, and

skype a friend and her Alaskan malemute,

Ahmed suggests that *Silence. we howl together, and listen to the*

'a queer orientation would ... approach

harmony ...

"the retreat" as an approach ... In the

retreat of an object a space is cleared for a

new arrival'.²⁰⁶ Paradoxically, the page

205 Merleau-Ponty (1945/1962) p. 296.

206 Ahmed (2006) p. 169.

retreats only by means of the same turning to face it that permits it to approach: 'of course, we still have to be facing an object to notice that it is retreating'.²⁰⁷ Because the page retreats, I lose sight/sound of what is upon it, and what my intention was. This enables a perception of what the page is not; the indeterminacies on the page that I cannot know for certain become the focus of my practice. In thus gendering the page and my body's relationship to it, I affirm many of my previous arguments: the transcendence of the across through past and present shown by Merleau-Ponty in *The Visible and the Invisible*; the simultaneity of delayed-choice quantumeraser experiments expressed in video; the derangement of senses that is synaesthesia; and the dis/continuities of

*this is a form of bestiality, a trans*species fucking which point to intimate haptic relationships across spacetimeattering through communicative technology ...*

207 Ibid.

media in which new arrangements can be constructed. 'Indeed, it is to say that

inhabiting forms that do not extend your shape can produce queer effects, even when you think you are "lining up." There is hope in such failure, even if we reject

publicly (as we must) this sexual and social conservatism'.²⁰⁸

and i turn my consciousness towards the materials i use to write, the organic and inorganic components that form instruments, the internet connections which enable collaboration, the snakes on

Medusa' head ...

The Medusa I have presented is a trans*gender, trans*species, and most germanely also an oracle and a muse, and so I must attempt to channel her voice to foresee the unforeseeable in my own practice. In that my flesh is spacious, that it is singing, it must authentically fail and despair in this way. And so to conclude I defer to Andrea Dworkin, who, with a mythological model, extends androgyny beyond the individual and towards fucking and community²⁰⁹ – that is, towards the material and social engagements I have addressed in chapters 1 and 2 respectively. From her invocation of the bisexual self I desire in my practice this: 'Once upon a time there was a wicked witch ... / and she was also called a witch / and her name was ... Medusa'.²¹⁰

*and i turned to face her.
and she was laughing.
and she was singing.*

208 Ibid. p. 174.

209 Dworkin (1991) p. 174.

210 Ibid. pp. 31-32.

3.3. Plague Walks

Music is a cooperative art, organic by definition, social. It may be the noblest form of social behaviour we're capable of ... And by its nature, but the nature of any art, it's a sharing. The artist shares, it's the essence of his act.

– Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Dispossessed*²¹¹

The Coronavirus pandemic is cruel. This is indisputable, certainly; one only need look at the rates of death, disablement, and increasing precarity across the world (in the seven days prior to writing, 238,938 people have been diagnosed and 1,984 have died due to the virus in the UK alone).²¹² It is a plague, again by definition, readable alongside such historical plagues as the Black Death, the Spanish flu, the AIDS crisis, or the epidemic of police violence in the USA. But it also is, or at least contains, the potential to be Cruel *and* a Plague. I use these doubled words to evoke Antonin Artaud. The Plague is the force of social disruption, synonymous with a cultural disruption which engenders a metaphysical and artistic death and reincarnation. As the literal plague wrecks the body, the metaphorical Plague is collapses a 'normal social order',²¹³ a crisis that, like theatre, 'simulates the dark, unindulged passions ... [cleansing] the performer and spectator alike in its collective experience'.²¹⁴ The Theatre of Cruelty is both the Plague itself and what emerges from it. Artaud's destructive, iconoclastic, anti-reformism theatre is always social. It exists because 'the distinction between civilisation and culture' is recognised as

211 Le Guin (1974) p. 146.

212 <<https://coronavirus.data.gov.uk/>> (accessed 15/04/2022).

213 Artaud (1962/2010) p. 15.

214 Bermel (1977) p. 11.

'artificial'.²¹⁵ And it is of protest: in the ways that it virulently opposes nostalgia, music theatre is a Cruel Plague; in ways that that music theatre longs for or attempts to recreate a pre-pandemic norm, it is simply a cruel plague.²¹⁶

In Chapter 2, I briefly discussed the influences of Artaud on my stage compositions; I now come to use Artaud's imagery to break away from them. Cruelty and the Plague, now capitalised, take on an almost mythical quality, and this is deliberate: Artaud's narratives draw extensively on myth and a desire for mysticism and magic. The last two years feel unreal, an infernal bad story we cannot stop reading. In a mythological context this is inevitable: Apollo's domain encompasses music, healing, and plagues alike. And reading Camus' *The Plague* [*La Peste*] I was horrified to see each event in the novel coming true, in order. On a personal level, this pandemic has seen a decrease in my ability to go outside, a disabling of my ability to travel, and two traumatic medical crises; and, ultimately, it has shattered any confidence in my practice or myself as a musician. Yet such a plague is a catalyst for a Plague, a reconsideration of my creative desires and needs, and a concluding contradiction of this entire thesis in the face of an analytical and ethical consideration of recent events. Artaud begins his discussion of the plague with the most recent major outbreak of bubonic plague in Marseille in 1720, and something similar is happening here. That plague was situated in a long, continuous cycle of plagues, which appear to be increasing as climate changes advances and, of which, the Coronavirus pandemic is the latest.

215 Artaud (1962/2010) p. 4.

216 Ibid. p.5.

For me, an exceptionally eloquent – perhaps *the* most eloquent – critique of pandemic life is to be found in Bo Burnham’s Netflix special *Inside*. Stuck at home for a year, Burnham produced a musical/stand-up commentary, documenting the ins and outs of his daily, isolated life and critiquing the performative limits of media at a time of crisis without contact. A brief song about the diminished status of unpaid interns (a jazz number with Burnham in appropriately dark glasses and shot in black and white) is suddenly interrupted by Burnham speaking to the camera, giving ‘a reaction video to the song that you just saw [him] perform’. The song appears in a cutaway box, and Burnham provides a faux-intellectual description – ‘so the idea with this song was basically that there’s so many songs in that past about working-class jobs but not a lot about the labor exploitation of the modern world’ – followed up by some meandering comments about the state of his beard. At the cut in the song, this commentary appears in the cutaway box, with the original music video in an even smaller cutaway-within-a-cutaway. After a brief moment of confusion, Burnham starts providing a reaction to his reaction video, only for this to be iterated once more, so that four Burnhams appear in increasingly smaller frames. In a self-reflective mode but with no less self-awareness he opines ‘I’m criticising my initial reaction for being pretentious ... and I think that, “Oh, if I’m self-aware about being a douchebag, it’ll somehow make me less of a douchebag.” But it doesn’t.’²¹⁷

217 Burnham (2021) 26:08-29:12.

There is something always true about this, even of this commentary, and it speaks to the ethico-onto-epistemological limitations of any reflection and particularly reflections of and by the body, where the self is iterated into a simulacrum and pushed further and further away. But, stuck inside, this skit also asks 'what is the point?' – not only of the genre of online reaction videos but also of media-commentary during the pandemic. It ironically dismisses its own adequacy, only exacerbating the discontinuities of pandemic life. If it is for the audience how do we react? With a laugh, one hopes, but I for one did not spend a year in a shed creating a Netflix special. Perhaps I should have. Do we laugh because we recognise ourselves in his experience, or because *Inside* is incongruous with our own experience, because it is inadequate in a depiction or critique of our lives? If Burnham created it for himself, what purpose does this serve (particularly as it is publicly available)? However, even if *Inside* is solipsistic, it is made in a way that permits all of us to inhabit Burnham's 'I'; what is being performed is not so much the specifics of today's condition as the absurdities and doublings that underly a C/cruel P/plague and Theatres thereof. *Inside* provides, through music theatre, simultaneously a triple function of social criticism, relief, and archive; it situates itself in the centre of music and works towards understanding music's outside all as part of an aesthetic and social Plague.

In this triple function of social criticism, relief, and archive, my own *isolation music* is primarily an (auto-)ethnographical methodology: a record and creative analysis through composition of experiences in York during the pandemic. More specifically, it is

a *sensory ethnography*, an examination of the environment through and as perception. Such a methodology is always interdisciplinary, taking many forms that include (but are not limited to) speaking, listening, sitting, eating, drinking, writing, reading, painting, performing, and , of particular relevance to *isolation music*, walking. In her many contributions to sensory anthropology, Sarah Pink advocates walking as an onto-epistemological practice: 'walking can be a multisensory everyday life practice that may be shared with other to enable researchers to understand their practices, perspectives, experiences and places'.²¹⁸ Walking is how I move from my bed to my desk, how I come to exist in the same space as a collaborator, how I trace out stage designs in space with my own body, how I get to the café where I sit and type the words 'how I get to the café'. A subset of a walking ethnography is the soundwalk, in which 'walking is intentionally used as a research method ... ethnographers have used walking methods that emphasise sound'.²¹⁹ These include not only live walks in a variety of contexts, but also the acousmatic composition of soundscapes.²²⁰ Pink also discusses the role of videography in expressing sensory ethnography: video is 'part of the ways in which the ethnographic place becomes one of sharing with audiences'. The edited video is 'a deliberate rendering of place, itself loaded with ideologies, theory and more'; the viewing of the video, almost invariably in another place, invites the viewers to 'become entangled corporeally, affectively and intellectually in an ethnographic place'.²²¹

218 Pink and Howes (2010) p. 332.

219 Pink (2015) p. 114.

220 Ibid. pp. 173-4.

221 Ibid. p. 172.

Walking ethnographies often focusses on the ability of an audience either to walk with the scholar/artist, or to replicate the artist's walk, emphasising that the shared experience of the walk is this walk is facilitated by a shared space. I propose that this is also true of *isolation music*, even though the audience is never in the same spaces as I am or was. As I observe with reference to *Inside* such recursive removes are simulacra for a common pandemic experience. They are still touching – still haptic, even erotic (recall that to touch is to be repulsed by the object while electrons are exchanged) – but a new, situational mediation must be taken into account. The interpretation and dissemination of ethnography, like its research-practice component, is not a uniform, linear, or heavily disciplined practice; and, in its interdisciplinary nature, walking seems to have a particular affinity for art, from poetry to performance. In 'Walking across disciplines: from ethnography to arts practice', Pink, Hubbard, O'Neill, and Radley note a reciprocal relationship between walking art and academia that is mutually reinforced by both. Not only is 'the work of very established walking artists ... been attended to by academics', but also 'the work of artists who use walking as part of their practice is becoming increasingly influential in academic work'.²²² I attempt to occupy both roles here.

Questions around the representation (or opposed to this, similitude) of such a practice are inevitably raised: the listener/viewer has no connection with my own walking routes, or my own staying at home, and many of the raw audio and footage I

222 Pink et al (2010) p. 4.

use are either grossly affected or processed to the point where there is no discernible relationship to the original. It is both a pipe, not a pipe, the relationship of pipe and not pipe, and the way these relationships relate to each other. In writing for the journal *Visual Studies*, Pink et al of course emphasise the visual attributes of the performance art under discussion, but argue that to walk in a visual context is to expand the meaning of *visual*. Likewise, to walk in a soundscape is to expand the meaning of *aural*, showing the musical to not only depend on the whole organism but also to emerge with this organism and with this organism's network. This reflects an ongoing dispute in ethnography, exemplified by debates between Howes and Ingold between a 'culturalist and representational trajectory', and 'non-representationalist or more-than-representationalist accounts'.²²³ This entire portfolio is strongly aligned with the latter position (as I show in Chapter 1), and this is perhaps most obvious in *isolation music*. The videos are self-evidently mediated, but this is not to say that they produce a difference between the actual and the virtual. What it permits is an engagement with what I have identified as the background of pandemic experiences: a troubled reciprocal relationship between the self and other.

To walk is often to walk with others, be it side-by-side with a human companion and their technological appendages, through and amongst groups of people, or in biological harmony with non-human critters, plants, and fungi. In this way it draws people together: 'when walking together people might share a rhythm which produces

223 Pink (2015) pp. 10-11.

"closeness", demonstrating how "social interaction during walking is a full bodily experience".²²⁴ I was the sole participant in the two isolation walks (the only explicit contributions to *isolation music* by others are from three friends in the *how to wash your hands* series), but these walks nevertheless demonstrate or even construct a range of affinities. Chief among these is the closeness produced by absence, where to walk *without* another becomes a caring, communal gesture where a participatory walk might amount to violence. The videos I have created, through being heavily edited and non-participatory, are no longer representative but, like Magritte's pipe, they are similar to the original experience; and in this way they are closer to pandemic life than something unmediated or participatory would be. The resulting rhythms and harmonies produced are nothing so indeterminate and clear as Cage's *4'33"*, but organised yet obscure in the style of Schulhoff's *In Futurum*.

In the deferral and conceptual silence of *In Futurum* and *isolation music* experience is elliptical: [...]. The symbolic representation of an ellipsis is a written device, a row of rests, a speakable gap, a sensorial social fragmentation. Jenny Chamarette positions the ellipsis as a link between Merleau-Ponty and Cixous. She extends the concept beyond the three-dot symbol to include 'extended em-dashes' and 'extended space within which textual conventions dictate that text should be present', concluding that ellipsis can signify 'the possibilities of connotation ... between spaces, words or phrases'.²²⁵ An ellipsis, she says, is additionally 'an interruption in the diegetic flow of

224 Lee and Ingold (2006) p. 69 in *ibid.* p. 112.

225 Chamarette (2007) p. 35.

signification', a phrase that I associate with the interrupted soundscape when lockdown commenced in the UK. For Merleau-Ponty, particularly in his later explicitly post-structuralist writing, the break is not perceptual but ontological, where it functions in the same way.²²⁶ The focus turns to the invisible, inaudible flesh: I transcend the stasis of my chair (*ma chair*) and go for a walk. The ellipsis is where embodiment enters Cixous' writing, an in between in which the third body appears, apart and together with the other, as discussed above.²²⁷ It returns not only in my advocacy of a hopeful sound without purpose but also, in the face of a P/plague, in a silence and a hopeless purposelessness. As much as walking is capable of regulation – of evenness in rhythm, correct posture, or locations proscribed according to laws or cultural norms – it is equally capable of disruption, in the irregular steps that successively make up the walk or in idiosyncratic forms of walking (I felt quite self-conscious in my movements when recording the *isolation walks* in a way that I do not experience on stage). Summarising prior studies, Tim Edensor writes that walking is entangled both with the instantaneous and the continuous and iterative; where one might radically situate oneself within and apart from a cultural context. He concludes that people attune themselves to the rhythmicity of the moment through breathing, gestures, pace of movement and speech'.²²⁸

Walking is also capable of decentering the human. Ingold notes that walking decenters the self: 'while each person is at the centre of their own field of perception

226 Ibid. p. 37.

227 Ibid. p. 45.

228 Winkler and Wylie in Edensor (2010) p. 72.

and action, the position of this centre is not fixed'.²²⁹ Furthermore, he notes that walking characterises far more than human behaviour: 'Batek women from Pahang, Malaysia, say the roots of wild tubers 'walk', as humans and other animals do'.²³⁰ And walking is intrinsic to change over space and time: the loci traced by walking are produced with the points that lie along them. It is not that an already defined entity walks but that walking forms and iterates this phenomenon always with the other. 'If one accepts that mobility, flux and change are normal conditions of our contemporary world, then issues of *becoming* rather than *being* appear more in tune with the manifold process by which differences are materialised, embodied and experienced'.²³¹ There is also something of the walk in Simard's encounters with visible and invisible fungal pathways; she recounts her coming to mother trees:

I stopped to absorb the forest's wisdom. I walked up to an elder birch along the Eagle River where I had collected the soil for transferring to the planting holes. Running my hands across the papery bark stretched across its wide, sturdy girth, I whispered the tree thanks for showing me some of its secrets.²³²

Such worldings do not anthropomorphize the non-human, making them 'walk' metaphorically; they show that walking was never solely of the human in the first place. Walking does not describe human locomotion but rather it describes the intraactions of human and non-human materiality: that which supports walking (shoes, pathways, stages, desks, healthcare), that by which we come to archive it (cellphones,

229 Ingold (2000) p.144.

230 Ibid.

231 O'Neil and Hubbard (2010) p. 47 (original emphasis).

232 Simard (2021) p. 100.

microphones, DAWs, NLVEs, manuscript paper), and that which is inaudible, invisible, and untouchable (other people's paths that I intersect, networks of mechanisms that produce the above, sounds that become less common as lockdown begins, two-metre distancing that becomes intimately haptic, perhaps even viruses themselves).

In 'Walking in rhythms: place, regulation, style and the flow of experience', Edensor emphasises the temporality of walking, which crosses the 'calendrical, diurnal and lunar, life-cycle, somatic and mechanical ... multidimensional, multiscalar dimensions of time-space'.²³³ Likewise, *isolation music* spans the gamut of times from years, to days, to minutes, to one second per step. The first spatio-temporal scale expressed in *isolation music* is defined by both an increase in time scale and a decrease in geographic range: that we are in an indeterminate ongoing pandemic (at the time of writing over two years long) begets a gradually narrowing field of motility. My range of walking is now restricted to York, and, even more than that confined to my flat; at best I simply repeat same walking route when I am able to get out. The disturbance of pandemic life has coalesced into neurotic regularity. *isolation walk (new year 2021)* and *isolation walk (Samhain 2021)* both record the same path with similar audio processing and accompaniment. The differences between the two are expressions of this macro-temporal scale: not only the changing seasons (which reflects a worlding which ontology is unaffected by the pandemic) but also changes in the human soundscape which reflects the changing politics of the pandemic. I encountered only one couple in

²³³ Edensor (2010) p. 69.

new year 2021, recorded just before a sudden lockdown, but I passed many people in *Samhain 2021*. Even as the small-scale spatial and temporal rhythm of my walking became regulated, in the iteration of these walks a larger irregular rhythm is revealed.

The second spatio-temporal scale functions in the opposite direction: the evolving yet bounded time and space of my walking and recording at home producing is both a microcosm and an opening-up of an unbounded experience of pandemic life. The *isolation offices* and *how to wash your hands* series express an overwhelming sense of ennui during the first lockdown. I am spatially isolated, but my affect expands: they are attributes of the pandemic but they are also the means by which I establish commonality with others. The limited time I spent filming the isolation walks traces a particular assemblage in the moment, yet it also traces that which emerges from an ever-evolving field of possibilities. In that these two dimensions simultaneously oppose and reinforce each other, it is iterated walking, not a single act that produces the experience of space and time; and so also does staying at home. The isolation walks are always both walking withs and isolated incidents.

isolation Yule is the point of intersection of these two paths, directly conjoining walking and staying still. The sounds of morning (kyrie 1) were taken from a two-hour-long field recording made with a microphone hanging out my window (the same setup used to collect sounds for *isolation offices*). After pressing 'record' I went for a walk: the recording was unaffected by my walking, but it also records the absence afforded by my departure. The hate preacher (actually a man *standing* in place while a speaker next to

him blared out this speech – which, if it needs saying, I outright condemn – is only to be found by walking. I come back home to take the panoramas and opportunistically record the midnight singers (kyrie 2), so, while what I could record was now restricted, it meaningfully reflected another iteration of the York soundscape, rather than a removal from it. The whole process did not establish inside and outside as stable antithesis but offered both as parts of a larger (mycorrhizal) network of supports that can accommodate both in a single system.

Above all, walking is significant in that it is an intensely quotidian practice: ‘while much walking literature and art focusses upon certain exceptional walking experiences’,²³⁴ *isolation music* focusses on the mundane. *isolation offices* and *songs to wash your hands to stay at home*, while the *isolation walks* traverse the same ‘safe’ routes I usually walk, only made exceptional by the circumstances of the pandemic. As I note above, quoting Sunaura Taylor, ‘to walk’ can and must be understood to embrace the differences between disabled and able-bodied walkers.²³⁵ Such differences were exaggerated in the course of the pandemic. At the time of *isolation walk (new year 2021)* I was part of a demographic that could walk outside and the explicit title cards establish this difference. The gulf between being able to walk and being confined indoors not only signifies a disablement but also works to reinscribe this disability, further disabling the ability to walk. Walking and not-walking are both central to

234 Ibid. p. 70.

235 While Pink argues that ‘walking is not the only form of motility’, and that it may not be an appropriate form of mobility in engaging with the disabled body (2015 p. 111), I still contend that a deconstruction of ‘to walk’ creates a space for forms of moving outside perambulation.

isolation music, as is the awareness that both are part of the complex P/plague experience. *isolation offices* and *how to wash your hands* are both stationary; but both take place within phenomena of walking, specifically where walking is limited or impossible. In their subsequent juxtaposition with *isolation walk (new year 2021)* and *isolation walk (Samhain 2021)* the difference is highlighted and troubled. The latter two videos frame the ability (for me) to walk or go 'for a walk' as the pre-pandemic norm, but this makes the stationary the not-walk; and, conversely, declares the not-walk as the pandemic norm is to recast walking as not-stationary.

This is not to say that the categories have been reversed (and now re-reversed) but that they always produce each other. Where the rhythms of walking cease and 'place appears to be stable, they disguise its endless maintenance ... through the reproduction of the changing same'.²³⁶ At the beginning of this portfolio I am stationary at a desk, writing and producing pieces which move around performance spaces. My practice is enabled through walking. Now I walk through a garden, percussing the ground and other objects with my feet and umbrella, only to interpret this sitting down at my laptop; to be stationary is enabling. But these practices are not so distinct: even though the order is seemingly reversed, like all the writing/composing/performing discussed in this portfolio they are not deterministically linear but iteratively emerge as a single phenomenon. Burnham is stuck at home until the final few minutes of *Inside*, when he walks out the front door, only to find his studio space is on a stage in a theatre; he is

²³⁶ Edensor (2010) p. 69.

unable to open the door to get back inside. Going outside remains inside. An attentive music making in the pandemic shows inside/outside, stationary/moving, and writing/performing to be always inside each other.

This is the tension present in my (re-)assessing my practice over the past two years, and it is also an encouragement for future directions. It is speculative; but in this way I return to the string figures that headlined my preface. On an ethical note, I would also argue that to base a practice on something other than the disruptions of our current P/plague is a cruelty (not Cruelty) directed at everyone who has suffered. I can no longer walk on stage or even into a recording studio without masochistically inscribing a performance direction: 'have a panic attack'. My collaboration with Guyton and Ledger reached a point where, frustratingly, we could no longer touch; but now I have no interest in this close touching. Artaud declares that there will be 'no more masterpieces';²³⁷ but, in that the Theatre of Cruelty is a reaction, he still depends on the existence of these masterpieces.²³⁸ I have argued above that the continuities and discontinuities of *Dance Curves* create each other, and so will the continuities and discontinuities of any of my future practice. I still have a desire for the same interactivity, the same iterative collaboration as in all of my live pieces. Of particular interest to me is to start integrating my practice with table-top role-playing games and visual novel video games, utilising both the guided improvisation techniques of *Androgynette* and the soundscapes of *isolation music*, showcasing and collectively creating both. I will always

237 I am happy to confirm that no masterpieces were created or destroyed in the making of this portfolio.
238 Artaud (1964/2010) p. 55.

walk to my desk, but this gesture – which is always similar to walking to a performance space – is no longer an affirmation but a troubling.

i have repeatedly found myself engaged in conversations concerning alternatives to the concert hall. the move to virtual concerts and alternate modes of practice seemingly came out of necessity, not from a desire for change. however, this necessity was framed as universal, replaced matrices of specific needs – for disabled, neuroqueer, precarious populations (among many others) – that is, for those outside of the dominant art-music imagining. in the wake of establishing these new practices, the conversation turned to the restoration of what had come before. the return to the normative mode of preceding years is the imperative to which the new mode is in service – an utterly narcissistic nostalgia. more dispiritingly, this nostalgia, with its negative affect, limits the possibility of discourse. once the crisis

Nothing short of everything will really do.

– Aldous Huxley, *Island*²³⁹

of the dominant is solved, those attributes of this crisis that are

specific to the subjugated are obliterated.

just as the state coopted the language of the body for the purpose of class warfare – to

239 Huxley (1962) p. 132.

*'heal' the economy – so musicians have begun to
coopt the needs of disabled and neuroqueer bodies in
the name of restoring a system built around excluding them. i
found the very issues i had become concerned with repeated back
to me and against me so as to benefit an institution in which I could not
comfortably exist (either ethically or psychologically), but with which I was
required to engage through an unspoken social contract. to engage with a community
of musicians required traumatic maskings that have erased my sense of self. what
is at stake is not a reconciliation or schism between parties, but the recognition
that one of these parties exists at all; and because of this the social
drama which disproportionately affects one party
is locked in a perpetual state of crisis.*

I have no idea what's awaiting me, or what
will happen when this all ends. For the
moment I know this: there are sick people
and they need curing.

– Albert Camus, *The Plague*²⁴⁰

*if there is one conclusion that i am forced
to reach from this degree, it is the
possibility that, for me, music practice
outside of practice-based research is an
unobtainable, unliveable enterprise. nor is
it desirable. it is cruel without Cruelty.*

240 Camus (1947/1948) p. 185.

Conclusion

**God is Power –
Infinite,
Irresistible,
Inexorable,
Indifferent.
And yet, God is Pliable –
Trickster,
Teacher,
Chaos,
Clay.
God exists to be shaped.
God is Change.**

– Octavia E. Butler, *Parable of the Sower*²⁴¹

It seems perverse to conclude this portfolio, which has at all points resisted ending. I can only offer provisional thoughts, summaries of discursive *methods*, and my oracular vision of my future. The most charitable assessment of my discourse is that I have wormed my way out of concluding any line of thought with a provisional statement that could be deconstructed in a sentence. Likewise, a generous listener might point to the rough and ready documentations of compositions and see where they might be expanded upon or developed; I am interested where I might abandon them and pursue other iterations. If there is any singular conclusion it was forgone before a single note was written: that to exist with/through/as a body is an irreducible experience. The past four years have been an exercise in passively postponing reduction; that is, actively

241 Butler (1993) p. 24.

pursuing iterative-induction. In the same way that I fail to consistently face my desk straight on, so I have failed to produce a singular continuous subject at the end of this degree. The pieces in this portfolio do not document a development in style or technique, or even variations on style or technique, but attempts at reinventing my practice around a continuous set of concerns. Likewise, I have resisted building upon and refining a through-argument in this commentary, opting instead to shine light on my practice from different angles such that it casts various shadows, revelling in obfuscation. I have made my bed in nurturing humus, visiting Emperor Hundun in his misty land, where 'the process of knowledge is a messy advance to novelty ... clarity-dynamics made alive in its habitat of unclarity-mist'.²⁴²

Musicology is all-too-often concerned with what bodies do, how they act in performance, how we perceive this, and all of this might be expressed in performance, experimentation, and prose. I hope this portfolio gestures towards where each of these phenomena are unclear, where a practice or a discussion of any and all of them is always shrouded in a misty failure. This portfolio is concerned with thick spacetime-matterings, where the space, the time, and the matter resonates off, with, and back onto, a plethora of bodies within each other. The page, lying on my desk, gripped in my hand, marked by my pen, is never stationary. It jumps across space and time to appear on a music stand, or on the reader's screen, but still remains entangled with that same yellow-ish manuscript pad on a desk. My body sits in front of this page. I have come to it, and I will

242 Wu (2007) p. 272.

move away from it; yet in the moment that I face it, signifying what is in front of me, I signify what is not in front of me. Then I rotate to face a keyboard, subtending this space, queering the relationship between what approaches and retreats from my perception, a coupling of self and other that represents a third body. Perhaps, after getting up from the desk, I move to a concert hall, or maybe away from it on a wending walk, or just to my lounge to point a microphone out of my window. Like Kosuth's *One and Three Chairs* which opened my discussions, these horizontal arrangements push beyond the frames that I have crafted (let me, after Barad, call these what they are: agential cuts), similar to other pages, other pens, other hands, other chairs, other walks in a way that asks, in another recurring analogy, if there are two pipes? If there are 'two drawings of the same pipe? Or yet a pipe and the drawing of that pipe, or yet again two drawings each representing a different pipe?'²⁴³ Or yet again, yet again, yet again... Likewise, these arrangements extend beyond their vertical striation: the small area of my desk resonates with my larger study resonates with an even larger performance space resonates with the enormity of wiring and servers that make up online communication. I resist a Cartesian mind-body duality, and as such I am hesitant to describe this as a Cartesian plane: it is more like an Argand diagramme.

However, there are some paths not taken, some considerations not given which need to be to be acknowledged and addressed in future iterations. My practice, my documentation, and my discourse here is inundated with the geographies I live in, and

243 Foucault (1968/1983) p. 16.

the masks I wear. I still drink coffee in the European style (though I am experimenting with Japanese styles). My practice and thinking at the beginning of this degree were ungrounded, un-cosmological, sitting somewhere in the sky. I positioned myself within an Enlightenment cosmogony, limited to 'the civilizing efforts of the agents of sky gods', rather than consorting with 'the chthonic powers of Terra'. Largely inspired by Haraway, through engaging with SF my thinking and practice are now heavily influenced by Daoism, Shintō, and African animism, and there are many inferences to these concepts in this commentary. 'Sound without purpose' is *wei wu wei*, action without action, and I have tried in this thesis to dislocate myself from a desire for a particular deterministic outcome from any piece. This commentary however has for the most part remained sky-bound; I fully admit this was out of fear, lacking the courage to push my readings of predominantly French philosophy beyond metropolitan Europe. My ideas are not expressed in their own terms – though I come close in the more intimate reflections of chapter 3 – and in this way I sacrificed ethics for the sake of expediency. For this research to progress, I must write in these terms unapologetically, and fastidiously engage in this comparative literature.

Race is egregiously neglected in both my practice and my writing. While the body here under discussion is not explicitly white it is situated in a white hegemony. I acknowledge that all of the gestures in the portfolio, from the extraordinary to the quotidian, are racialised. Franz Fanon, in *Black Skin White Masks* (1952), like Husserl positions himself at a table.

I know that if I want to smoke, I shall have to reach out my right arm and take the pack of cigarettes lying at the other end of the table. The matches, however, are in the drawer on the left, and I shall have to lean back slightly. And all these movements are made not out of habit but out of implicit knowledge. A slow composition of my self as a body in the middle of a spatial and temporal world – such seems to be the schema. It does not impose itself on me; it is, rather, a definitive structuring of the self and of the world – definitive because it creates a real dialectic between my body and the world.²⁴⁴

Fanon argues that there is no positive body schema prior to cultural and historical context, no comportment that is not entangled with spacetime mattering. Husserl's white page, my yellow manuscript paper, and the black-brown African granadilla wood of my clarinets are skins of certain colours. The same gestures I have shown as being underpinned by neurodivergence, queerness, and quantum and mycological weirdness – all of which reveal a tension between my living and what is expected of me – are similarly always underpinned by race. Furthering my discussion with reference to race is yet another hinge, another line subtending a page that has produced a duck-rabbit structure – I propose duck-rabbit-kitten. It is yet another iteration of certain masks over certain skins.

244 Fanon (1952/2008) p. 90.

Many old and new gestures are available to me: firstly, I might sit in my chair and face my desk the same as ever. Even though the geography appears the same, it emerges from a far greater set of probabilities that I have imagined, entangled with far more particles that I have discussed. In the fourth movement of *Dance Curves* the audience looks obliquely across a voided stage to see Grasse in the background; this void is reflected back at the audience in a different orientation to reveal a lack of black and brown faces. Secondly, I might sit in my chair, facing my desk, and turn in new ways. For me to reach for cigarettes and matches the same as Fanon entangles me in a vastly different spacetime mattering. I have no pretence of imitating Fanon in a sort of blackface, but rather to rotate on my chair such that I might face and turn with other think-doers in different racial configurations. I imagine *Androgynette in* particular as a fruitful starting point for new turnings. While Ledger's contorted stretchings seem to deconstruct particular masculine norms, her white body moves effortlessly through the space. Her hands, bound in black ribbons, are reflected in the polished wood of the piano without disrupting the colour of the surface. I plan to reiterate this project with other think-doers to imagine where *Androgynette* might be troubled by different pianist's racial histories.

Finally, I might change my walk to my desk. Perhaps my gait is the same – awkward, sometimes tripping over myself for no reason – but instead of crossing the hall to my study, I instead walk to the kitchen and brew some coffee (either a filter coffee – black, with hints of brown and red in certain lights – or with a layer of white steamed

milk above it), or to the lounge and lie on the couch with my manuscript paper. I might entangle myself in vastly different ways to new projects; ways that will be unclear until they occur which in turn co-create the past. This is a point of complete uncertainty, and I am euphoric for it. The process of clarifying situates me always in an unclear space. After four years of work I am more lost in the mist than at the beginning; but there are fewer holes bored into my face. God, *Deus sive natura*, is change. *Alors on danse, et ben y en a encore...*

References

- AHMED, Sara (2006) *Queer Phenomenology: Objects, Orientations, Others* (Durham and London: Duke University Press).
- ARTAUD, Antonin (1964/2010) *The Theatre and Its Double* trans. Corti, Victor (Richmond: Alma Classics).
- AUSLANDER, Phillip (2006) 'The Performativity of Performance Documentation' in *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art* 28:3 (Cambridge: The MIT Press).
- BAKAN, Michael B. (2018) *Speaking for Ourselves: Conversations on Life, Music, and Autism* (New York: Oxford University Press).
- BANTING, Pamela (1992) 'The body as pictogram: Rethinking Hélène Cixous's écriture féminine' in *Textual Practice* 6:2 (Routledge) pp. 225-246.
- BARAD, Karen (2007) *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham and London: Duke University Press).
- BECKETT, Samuel (1986) *Waiting for Godot* in *Samuel Beckett: The Complete Dramatic Works* (London: Faber and Faber) pp. 7-88.
- BERMEL, Albert (1977/2001) *Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty* (London: Methuen Drama).
- BERNETT, Sheena (2021) *Exploring Relationality as the Expression of Engagement in the Event* (n.p.).
- BLONDE REDHEAD (2000) *Melody of Certain Damaged Lemons* (Touch and Go).
- _____ (2014) *Barragán* (Kobalt).
- BOSTOW, Raquelle K. (2019) 'Loving Across Borders: The Queer, Transspecies Intimacies of Cixousian Sexual Difference' in *MLN* 134:4 (Johns Hopkins University Press) pp. 806-825.
- BRAY, Abigail (2004) *Hélène Cixous: Writing and Sexual Difference* (Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillan).

- BURNHAM, Bo dir. (2021) *Inside* (Netflix).
- BURROWS, David L. (1990) *Sound, speech, and music* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press).
- BUTLER, Octavia E. (1993) *Parable of the Sower* (London: Headline Publishing Group).
- CAGE, John (1968) *Silence* (London: Marion Boyars).
- CAMPBELL, Edward (2013) *Music after Deleuze* (London and New York: Bloomsbury Academic).
- CAMUS, Albert (1947/1948) *The Plague* trans. Gilbert, Stuart (Random House, Inc.).
- CHAMARETTE, Jenny (2007) 'Flesh, Folds, and Textuality: Thinking Visual Ellipsis via Merleau-Ponty, Hélène Cixous and Robert Frank' in *Paragraph* 30:2 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press) 34-49.
- CIXOUS, Hélène (1975/1976) 'The Laugh of Medusa' trans. Cohen, Keith & Cohen, Paula in *Signs* 1:4 (Chicago & London: The University of California Press) pp. 875-893.
- _____ (1991) "*Coming to Writing" and Other Essays* ed. Jenson, Deborah intro. Suleiman, Susan Rubin trans. Cornell, Sarah, Jenson, Deborah, Liddle, Ann, Sellers, Sellers (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press).
- CIXOUS, Hélène & CALLE-GRUBE, Mireille (1994/1997) *Hélène Cixous Rootprints: Memory and Life Writing* trans. Prenowitz, Eric (London and New York: Routledge).
- COLLINSON SCOTT, Jo et al (n.d.) *Listen (If You Dare) An Unlikely Companion to Voice-Hearing* (n.p). <<http://www.listeningtovoices.org.uk/res/ListenIfYouDare.pdf>> accessed 15/04/2022.
- DELEUZE, Gilles (1968/1990) *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* trans. Joughin, Martin (New York: Zone Books).
- DELEUZE, Gilles and GUATTARI, Félix (1987) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* trans. Massumi, Brian (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press).

- DERRIDA, Jacques (1995/1996) *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* trans. Prenowitz, Eric (Chicago & London: The University of California Press).
- DEWEY, John (1934/2005) *Art as Experience* (New York: Penguin Group).
- DWORKIN, Andrea (1991) *Woman Hating* (Plume).
- EDENSOR, Tim (2010) 'Walking in rhythms: place, regulation, style and the flow of experience' in *Visual Studies* 25:1 (Routledge) pp. 69-79.
- FANON, Franz (1952/2008) *Black Skin, White Masks* trans. Markkamm, Charles Lam (London: Pluto Press).
- FRALEIGH, Sondra (1999) *Dancing Into Darkness: Butoh, Zen, and Japan* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press).
- _____ (2010) *Butoh: Metamorphic Dance and Global Alchemy* (Urbana, California, and Springfield: University of Illinois Press).
- FOUCAULT, Michel (1961/1991) *Madness and Civilisation: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* trans. Howard, Richard (London and New York: Routledge).
- _____ (1968/1983) *This is Not a Pipe* trans. Harkness, James (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press).
- FUNKENSTEIN, Susan Laikin (2007) 'Engendering Abstraction: Wassily Kandinsky, Gret Palucca, and "Dance Curves"' in *Modernism/modernity* 14:3 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press) pp. 389-406.
- HARAWAY, Donna J. (2016) *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham and London: Duke University Press).
- HAYWARD, Eva and WEINSTEIN, Jami (2015) 'Introduction: Transanimalities in the Age of Trans* Life' in *TSQ: Transgender Studies Quarterly* 2:2 (Durham: Duke University Press) pp. 195-208.

- HOUDART, Célia (2007) 'Avis de tempête: Georges Aperghis' in *Journal d'une oeuvre* (Paris: Éditions Intervalles).
- HUSSERL, Edmund (1913/1931). *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy* trans. Gibson, W. R. B. (London and New York: Routledge).
- HUXLEY, Aldous (1962) *Island* (London: Chatto & Windus).
- HUXLEY, Michael (2017) 'The Dance of the Future: Wassily Kandinsky's Vision, 1908-1928' in *Dance Chronicle* 40:3 (London and New York: Routledge) pp. 259-286.
- INGOLD, Timothy (2000) *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on livelihood, dwelling, and skill* (London and New York: Routledge).
- KAGEL, Mauricio (1965) *Pas de cinq* (Universal Edition).
- _____ dir. (1966) *Match* (n.p.) <https://ubu.com/film/kagel_match.html> (accessed 08/09/2022).
- _____ dir. (1969) *Ludwig van* (n.p.) <https://ubu.com/film/kagel_ludwig.html> (accessed 08/09/2022).
- KANDINSKY, Wassily (1982) *Kandinsky: Complete Writings on Art* eds. Lindsay, Kenneth C. and Vego, Peter (Boston Massachusetts: G.K. Hall).
- _____ trans. Dearstyne, H. and Rebay, H. (1926/1947) *Point and Line to Plane* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation).
- KILLMONDAY GAMES dev. (2015) *Fran Bow* (Killmonday Games).
- LEE, Jo and INGOLD, Timothy (2006) 'Fieldwork on Foot: Perceiving, Routing, Socializing' in eds. Coleman, S. and Collins, P. *Locating the Field: Space, Place and Context in Anthropology* (London Routledge) pp. 67-86.
- LE GUIN, Ursula K. (1969) *The Left Hand of Darkness* (New York: Ace Books).
- _____ (1974) *The Dispossessed* (London: Gollancz).

- JONES, Amelia (1997) "'Presence' in absentia: Experiencing Performance as Documentation' in *Art Journal* 56:4 (New York: CAA) pp. 11-18.
- MASAMUNE, Shirow (2004) *Ghost in the Shell* (Dark Horse Manga)
<https://archive.org/details/ghostinshell0000shir_w1b2> (accessed 15/04/2022).
- MEAKIN, Eoghain, VAUGHAN, Brian, and CULLEN, Charlie (2021) "'Understanding" Narrative; Applying Poetics to *Hellblade: Senua's Sacrifice*' in *Game Studies* 21:2 (n.p.) <http://gamestudies.org/2102/articles/meakin_vaughan_cullen> (accessed 15/04/2022).
- MERLEAU-PONTY, Maurice (1945/1962) *Phenomenology of Perception* trans. Smith, Colin (London and New York: Routledge Classics).
- _____ (1964/1968) *The Visible and the Invisible* ed. Lefort, Claude trans. Lingis, Alphonso (Evanston: Northwestern University Press).
- MERRIAM-WEBSTER (n.d.) "vatic" in *Merriam-Webster.com dictionary*
<<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/vatic>> (accessed 15/04/2022).
- MIRKA, Danuta (1996) 'Colors of a Mystic Fire: Light and Sound in Scriabin's *Prometheus*' in *The American Journal of Semiotics* 13:1 (Kent: Semiotic Society of America) pp. 227-248.
- MORAN, Shane (2004) 'Archive Fever' in *Alternation* 11:1 (Center for the Study of Southern African Literature and Languages) pp. 283-298.
- NINJA THEORY dev. (2017) *Hellblade: Senua's Sacrifice* (Ninja Theory).
- O'NEILL, Maggie and HUBBARD, Phil (2010) 'Walking, sensing, belonging: ethnomimesis as performance practice' in *Visual Studies* 25:1 (Routledge) pp. 46-58.
- OSHII, Mamoru dir. (1995) *Ghost in the Shell* (Manga Entertainment).
- PIENKOS, Elizabeth et al (2019) 'Hallucinations Beyond Voices: A Conceptual Review of the Phenomenology of Altered Perception in Psychosis' in *Schizophrenia Bulletin* 45 suppl.:1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press) pp. S67-S77.

- PINK, Sarah (2015) *Doing Sensory Ethnography 2nd Edition* (Sage).
- PINK, Sarah, HUBBARD, Phil, O'NEILL, Maggie, and RADLEY, Alan (2010) 'Walking across disciplines: from ethnography to arts practice' in *Visual Studies* 25:1 (Routledge) pp. 1-7.
- PINK, Sarah and HOWES, David (2010) 'The future of sensory anthropology/the anthropology of the senses' in *Social Anthropology* 18:3 (European Association of Social Anthropologists) pp. 331-340.
- SCHECHNER, Richard (1988/2003) *Performance Theory* (London and New York: Routledge Classics).
- SCHMIDT, James (1985) *Maurice Merleau-Ponty: Between Phenomenology and Structuralism* (New York: St. Martin's Press).
- SIMARD, Suzanne (2021) *Finding the Mother Tree: Discovering the Wisdom of the Forest* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf).
- SMALL, Christopher (1998) *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press).
- SPATZ, Ben (2015) *What a Body Can Do: Technique as Knowledge, Practice as Research* (London and New York: Routledge).
- STROMAE (2009) *Alors On Danse* (Vertigo)
- SUTTON, Emma (2011) 'Shell shock and hysterical fugue, or why Mrs Dalloway likes Bach' in *First World War Studies* 2:1 (International Society for First World War Studies) pp. 17-26.
- TAYLOR, Astra dir. (2008) *Examined Life* (Zeitgeist Films)
<<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8rEgclMamZE>> (accessed 15/04/2022).
- VASALLO, Brigitte (2019) 'Monogamous Mind, Polyamorous Terror' in *Sociological Research Online* 24:4 (SAGE) pp. 680-690.

- WILDE, Carolyn (2007) 'Matter and Meaning in the Work of Art: Joseph Kosuth's *One and Three Chairs*' in eds. Goldie, P. & Schellekens, E. *Philosophy and Conceptual Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press) pp. 119-137.
- WISKUS, Jessica (2013) *The Rhythm of Thought: Art, Literature, and Music after Merleau-Ponty* (Chicago & London: The University of California Press).
- WOOLF, Virginia (1925/1992) *Mrs Dalloway* in *Collected Novels of Virginia Woolf* ed. McNichol, Stella (Houndmills and London: The MacMillan Press Ltd) pp. 33-176.
- WU, Kuang-ming (2007) "'Emperor Hundun 渾沌": A Cultural Hermeneutic' in *Dao* 6 (Springer) <<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11712-007-9016-y>> (accessed 15/04/2022).
- WEISS, Gail (2015) 'The normal, the natural, and the normative: A Merleau-Pontian legacy to feminist theory, critical race theory, and disability studies' in *Continental Philosophy Review* 48 (Springer) pp. 77-93.
- YOUNG, Iris Marion (1980) 'Throwing Like a Girl: A Phenomenology of Feminine Body Comportment Motility and Spatiality' in *Human Studies* 3 (Springer) pp. 137-156.