

**Body as Performing Subject, Body as
Compositional Object:
The Pianist's Embodied Practice in the
Context of Composer-Performer
Collaborations**

Kate Harrison-Ledger

PhD

University of York
School of Arts and Creative Technologies

November 2023

Abstract

This research used collaborative practice, informed by my practical knowledge of the Feldenkrais Method, to investigate the nature and creative potential of my pianistic movement. The work involved developing seven projects in collaboration with different composers, each designed to explore different aspects of the moving body in relation to the piano. The focus of each project, their collaborative processes and working dynamics varied considerably, leading to a diverse range of artistic outputs: live performances of new pieces for piano, audiovisual pieces, and an exhibition.

My study and practice of the Feldenkrais Method informed this investigation. Developed by Moshe Feldenkrais (1904-1984), the Method's aim is to improve the effective and efficient delivery of actions by paying attention to the body's habitual tendencies as it moves. Increasing the awareness of habitual movements may lead to an improvement of *function* in relation to the body's interaction with an environment. Each collaborative project focused on identifying my performing habits: characteristic movements that have emerged over time and that incorporate remnants of previously learned techniques and different aspects of my embodied relationship to the instrument. The practice research explored the subjective nature and functionality of my habits, with the purpose not being to 'improve' performance, but rather to experiment with the creative possibilities of my habitual pianistic movements. As we worked, the projects gradually formed and shaped around my functional movement in two ways: either 'pushing against' or 'allowing for' it. As a result, the artistic output and accompanying critical text examine the situatedness of functional movement in performance. Moreover, the uniqueness of a pianist's functional movement, as something to creatively explore, not only underlines her subjectivity and its affordance in creative performance practice, but points to the necessity for an 'inside view' when exploring crucial aspects of performance that are significant to all bodies.

This thesis is accompanied by a portfolio of videos, images and recordings.

Table of Contents

Chapter One.....	11
<i>Situating an Investigation into a Functioning Body.....</i>	11
Introduction.....	11
<i>(My) Bodily Movements at the Piano</i>	11
<i>Artistic Exploration of Pianistic Movements</i>	11
<i>Related Fields of Research</i>	12
<i>A Specific Methodology</i>	14
<i>The Outputs of this Research.....</i>	15
<i>The Creative Projects.....</i>	15
<i>An Outline of the Thesis.....</i>	17
Subjectivity and Objectivity	18
<i>Interrelated Perspectives in Performance Research</i>	18
<i>Developing Bodily Knowledge</i>	20
Investigating Embodied Intentionality in Music Performance	22
<i>A Focus on ‘Live’ Performance</i>	22
<i>The Performer’s Movement as Embodied Will</i>	24
<i>A Performer’s Expectations</i>	28
A Performer’s Habits and Interpretation	33
<i>Technical Habits.....</i>	33
<i>The Interpretation of Experimental Music.....</i>	36
<i>The Subjective Experience of the Performer as Artistic Output</i>	37
<i>Introducing the Feldenkrais Method</i>	38
Chapter Two	40
<i>An Exploration of the Feldenkrais Method and How it Revealed this Functioning</i>	
<i>Performing Body</i>	40
A Method that Reveals my Habitual Ways of Moving	42
<i>Improving Movement Function</i>	44
A Feldenkrais Lesson.....	46
<i>‘Landing’ as a Proprioceptive Frame of Reference</i>	46
<i>The Bell Hand</i>	48
<i>The “dynamics of our own movement”</i>	50

Feldenkrais’s Concept of the Self-Image	52
<i>“Compulsive” and “Spontaneous” actions.....</i>	55
<i>Body Image and Body Schema</i>	57
<i>Organic Learning</i>	61
Feldenkrais as applied to instrumental performance practice.....	62
<i>Alan Fraser’s Pianistic Approach and How it Informed my Investigation</i>	63
Feldenkrais as applied to my own practice	67
<i>Ray Evanoff’s ‘When I’ (2015-17) for piano</i>	68
<i>Establishing an Approach</i>	72
The Analysis.....	74
<i>The first chord: a frame of reference</i>	74
<i>Differentiating Between Similar Physical Imprints</i>	80
<i>Initiating Gestures</i>	85
<i>My Performing Habits</i>	88
Chapter Three	90
<i>The Collaborations and Interactions.....</i>	90
<i>Shaping a Pianistic Technique that Acknowledges Habits</i>	91
The Artistic Collaborations	92
<i>Our Roles</i>	93
<i>“Dialogic” Collaboration.....</i>	96
<i>Collaboration as ‘Getting Together’</i>	98
<i>Experimenting as a Framework for the Creative Processes.....</i>	99
The Interactions that Formed the Collaborative Work	100
<i>The Performativity of Objects.....</i>	100
<i>The Interactions in Federico Pozzer’s ‘Moving Objects’</i>	102
<i>A Reaction</i>	104
<i>An Engagement</i>	107
<i>An Exploration</i>	109
<i>‘Pushing’ Against and ‘Allowing For’</i>	110
Chapter Four	113
<i>‘Pushing against’ my Functioning Performing Body: Ray Evanoff’s Give and Monica</i>	
<i>Pearce’s studies in restriction</i>	113
<i>Areas of restriction</i>	113

<i>Musical Deconstruction</i>	115
<i>Questioning the “performer-as-hero”</i>	117
<i>Trusting the Body, Even When it Fails: How We Worked</i>	120
Ray Evanoff, Give (2020-)	122
<i>A Dissection of the Notation, and Ourselves</i>	122
<i>Unconscious Decisions</i>	125
<i>Carving Out and Documenting a Unique Approach</i>	129
<i>I React to Being ‘Pushed’</i>	135
Monica Pearce, studies in restriction (2020)	136
<i>A Choreography for the Hands</i>	136
<i>Shaping an Interpretation</i>	139
<i>Playing Two Instruments at the Same Time</i>	145
Chapter Five	149
‘Allowing for’ my Functionality: Neil Luck’s Kate Limbo and Mark Dyer’s Subject	149
‘Authentic’ movements	150
<i>Exploration of the ‘Typical’ Movements I Make in Piano Playing</i>	150
Interactions: Subjective and Objective Perspectives	152
<i>‘Non-subjectivity’ as an Approach to Capturing ‘Authentic’ Movements?</i>	153
Neil Luck’s Kate Limbo (2021)	155
<i>‘Mundane’ Movements are Functional Movements</i>	155
<i>What Does a Pianist Do?</i>	158
<i>Interaction between Subjective and Objective Perspectives</i>	159
<i>Closing/Covering the Eyes</i>	164
<i>Changing the Pianist’s Immediate Performing Environment</i>	167
<i>Rudolph Laban’s “Kinesphere”</i>	168
<i>The Impetus for Pianistic and Non-pianistic Actions: Another Interaction</i>	172
<i>Changing the Wider Environment whilst Maintaining Function</i>	174
<i>Abstraction of the Pianist</i>	174
Mark Dyer’s Subject	176
<i>Exploring and Documenting My Memories</i>	177
<i>Discovering my Memories and Associations</i>	180
<i>An Examination of this Moment of Music</i>	182
<i>A Performance Analysis of a Moment?</i>	183
<i>Sandstone Steps</i>	187

<i>Discerning Different Performing ‘Selves’</i>	190
<i>My Younger Self</i>	192
<i>Creating a Film of a Memory, of a Pianist</i>	193
<i>Subjective Collaboration and Documentation</i>	198
Chapter Six	201
<i>An Equilibrium Between ‘Pushing’ and ‘Allowing’</i>	201
Arriving at an Understanding of Functioning	201
Ed Cooper’s ...they conjure aglow, movements...	203
<i>Constructing the Piece: An Equilibrium of Instruction and Freedom</i>	203
<i>Shaping a Performance: An Equilibrium of Intention and Non-intention</i>	205
<i>When ‘Pushing’ Becomes ‘Allowing’</i>	208
Conclusion	209
Appendix A: Scores	212
Ray Evanoff, Give (2020 -)	212
Monica Pearce, studies in restriction (2020)	216
Federico Pozzer, Moving Objects (2021)	236
Federico Pozzer, Breathing, Moving, Playing (2021)	267
Ed Cooper, ...they conjure aglow, movements... (2021)	272
Neil Luck, Kate Limbo (2021)	275
Appendix B: An Excerpt of the Practice Diary for Kate Small (Two)	281
Appendix C: Creative Writing	283
Section One: Ray Evanoff, Give	283
Section Two: Mark Dyer, Subject	285
Appendix D: Transcriptions of Conversations in Subject	286
Section One: February 1, 2021	286
Section Two: March 17, 2021	292
Section Three: 31 March, 2021	299
References	302

List of Figures

Figure 1. Ray Evanoff, 'When I' from Midway Through (2015-17), page 1.....	71
Figure 2. Ray Evanoff, 'When I' from Midway Through (2015-17), opening chord	74
Figure 3. A still image of the first chord of 'When I', taken from a video using a GoPro attached to my head. The arrow demonstrates the direction of the 'scooping' movement across my torso	76
Figure 4. Ray Evanoff, 'Kate Small One' (2020). The first miniature from Give (2020-21)	79
Figure 5. A still image of my seat and hand position as I prepare to move from the middle C in Kate Small One, taken from Ray Evanoff's Give. The arrow demonstrates the direction of the 'scooping' movement in my torso.....	80
Figure 6. Ray Evanoff, 'When I' (2015-17), page 1.....	81
Figure 7. Ray Evanoff, 'When I' (2015-17), page 3.....	82
Figure 8. Ray Evanoff, 'When I', page 1, with my annotations	83
Figure 9. Ray Evanoff, 'When I', page 3, with my annotations	84
Figure 10. Reduction of 'When I', pages 1 and 3	87
Figure 11. Sam Walton, "Kate Limbo (film) – 3" (photograph, Calder Bookshop, London, 2021)	95
Figure 12. Sam Walton, "Kate Limbo" (film) – 6" (photograph, Calder Bookshop, London, 2021).....	95
Figure 13. Federico Pozzer, Moving Objects (2020), section one, shape nine	105
Figure 14. A still image of shape nine taken from the video of Moving Objects. The balls must be positioned in alignment with and perpendicular to the strings.....	106
Figure 15. Federico Pozzer, Moving Objects (2020), first section, shape five	108
Figure 16. A still image of shape five taken from the video of Moving Objects. The triangles denote where I positioned the balls.....	108
Figure 17. A graded scale of the projects that move from 'pushing' against (Give) through to fully 'allowing' (Subject).....	111
Figure 18. Monica Pearce, smart aleck for toy piano (2011), bars 101-103. The quaver is equal to 120 beats per minute	115
Figure 19. Ray Evanoff, Kate Small One (2020-).....	123

Figure 20. Ray Evanoff, Kate Small Two point One (2020-)	131
Figure 21. A creative image depicting how chords seven and nine ‘felt’ for me to play	133
Figure 22. Monica Pearce, ‘study in stretch’ from studies in restriction (2020), bars 17-23..	137
Figure 23. Monica Pearce, ‘study in stretch’ (2020), bars 24-33	141
Figure 24. Monica Pearce, ‘study in practice’ from studies in restriction (2020), 46-57	145
Figure 25. Monica Pearce, ‘study in suspension’, 26-33. Throughout the study, the top line denotes toy piano; the bottom two lines denote piano. The crotchet is equal to sixty beats per minute	147
Figure 26. Table of pianistic and non-pianistic movements used throughout Kate Limbo.....	160
Figure 27. Neil Luck, Kate Limbo (2021), page 2.....	161
Figure 28. Neil Luck, Kate Limbo (2021), page 4.....	163
Figure 29. Neil Luck, Kate Limbo (2021), page 5.....	164
Figure 30. Sam Walton, “Kate Limbo (film)- 12”, photograph depicting my performance of Kate Limbo (2021), peace-sign/pointing finger’ section, page 5	166
Figure 31. “The main directional rays establishing three levels in cubic space.” The highlighted symbols (in blue, green and red) were significant to our devising of movements.....	169
Figure 32. Neil Luck, Kate Limbo (2021), page 6.....	172
Figure 33. J. S. Bach, Toccata in D major BWV 912, Edition Peters (1956), bars 76-84. The transition section is highlighted from bar 78 ³ to bar 80 ¹	181
Figure 34. J. S. Bach, Toccata in D major BWV 912, Edition Peters (1956), bars 110-114. The highlighted section beginning at bar 111 ³ (con discrezione) contains the descending semiquaver motif found at bar 79 ¹⁻²	184
Figure 35. J. S. Bach, Toccata in D major BWV 912, bars 79 ¹⁻² . The orange brackets group these notes into three paired dyads of semitones.....	186
Figure 36. My own ‘notation’ representing what I feel when I play bar 79 ¹⁻²	189
Figure 37. J. S. Bach, Prelude in F major BWV 880, <i>Bärenreiter Urtext</i> (1995), bars 1-6	193
Figure 38. “BWV 880- BBC memory- Storyboard 1”, created for this project’s film of my memory of a BBC film of Bach’s Prelude in F major BWV 880.....	195
Figure 39. “BWV 880- BBC memory- Shot 1” from the film of my memory of a BBC film of Bach’s Prelude in F major BWV 880	196
Figure 40. Sam Walton, “BWV 876 – 1”, photograph of my annotations of Bach’s Fugue in E flat major BWV 876. Bars 26-30 are in sharp focus.	200

Acknowledgements

First, I wish to thank the White Rose College of Arts and Humanities for recognising the value in my proposed research and for providing me with ongoing support, advice and solidarity. Many thanks to the University of York and its incredibly supportive community of students and staff for providing me with an artistic home throughout this PhD. Thank you to Mark Hutchinson for being my internal examiner and for providing his informative view on piano technique throughout my progression. In particular, I wish to thank Catherine Laws for her outstanding commitment and dedication as a supervisor. She has been a pillar of support at all stages of the PhD process. I owe my academic development to her integrity as a scholar.

I thank my wonderful collaborators who have contributed greatly to this PhD. The projects I carried out with Ray Evanoff, Monica Pearce, Federico Pozzer, Ed Cooper, Neil Luck and Mark Dyer have shaped my research in the most beautiful ways. Their unique creativity, open-mindedness and care have contributed to the rich development of my research and ongoing performance practice. Other collaborators who have made this research possible are James Redelinghuys and Angela Guyton. Our project was generously supported by the Terry Holmes Award at the University of York.

Thank you to Sam Walton for his essential contribution to my projects with Neil Luck and Mark Dyer. I also thank members of the Assembled ensemble for their enthusiastic and dynamic performance. I wish to thank certain members of the Feldenkrais community, namely Caroline Scott and Markus Wenninger, for sparking my interest in the Feldenkrais Method and for providing me with much needed ATM and FI lessons along the way. I also thank Alan Fraser, who has offered me extensive support and advice throughout my research, and I thank the students that took part in his Piano Institute in Overveen (November 2019).

I wish to thank various performance venues hosting the performance outputs of this PhD. These include Dai Hall (Huddersfield), The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, The University of Leeds, The University of York, York Late Music Festival, York Festival of Ideas, the Noisefloor Symposium, (Staffordshire University), Nott-far Festival (University of Nottingham) and Music, Monuments, and Memory Symposium: Centre for Life and Death Studies (University of Durham).

Finally, I must thank my wonderful network of friends and my gorgeous family for their endless support, warmth, humour and encouragement. I would not have finished this PhD without every single one of them. In particular, thank you to my loving husband Iain for being everything that I needed, at all stages.

Author's Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work that is my own, except where due acknowledgement to collaborators has been made.

This work has not previously been presented for a degree or other qualification at this University or elsewhere.

All sources are acknowledged as references.

To Bea and Miles

Chapter One

Situating an Investigation into a Functioning Body

Introduction

(My) Bodily Movements at the Piano

In the process of establishing a piano performance practice, shaped by the learning and performing of a multitude of piano pieces, my performing body has developed a unique way of moving. This involves many different types of movement that have formed, and continue to be formed, in response to different performing situations, music notations, and musician collaborations. I use and *trust* these movements to fulfil various pianistic actions and support different aspects of my performances. This includes such movements that could be considered as minor or nondescript that I make in servitude of grander musical gestures: a small shift on the piano stool to support my arms playing higher in the register; a quick intake of breath as I prepare for a daunting passage; an unconscious finger substitution for a particularly awkward passage of notes. These movements have emerged and become characteristic as I have responded to different musical scores and situations, as well as *in support* of my response to different musical scores and situations. These movements could be considered as my performing habits – my ‘preferred’ ways of moving – conditioned by my performing experience and serving me with a reliability that I can resort to when needed. I make these smaller, habitual movements to support my broader, intended goals whilst performing to the extent that they constitute my activity as a performer. In this respect, these movements may be regarded as ‘functional’: their purpose is to provide my actions in performance with effective, reliable support so that I may ‘function’ as a pianist.

Artistic Exploration of Pianistic Movements

This PhD constituted an artistic exploration of the movements I make at the piano whilst devising, learning, and performing new pieces for solo piano. This research used artistic

practice, in relation to a broad understanding of technique, to observe and analyse the way I move whilst considering what prompts me to move in particular ways. I wanted to develop a better understanding of how my particular way of moving affects my performance of different pieces of piano music and whether it could be considered as disruptive or, indeed, 'functional'. The aim of the PhD was to develop an explorative, experimental approach to considering the ways I move in performance, collaborating with composers to create studies and pieces that would potentially draw out certain aspects of these movements and their significance. It is important to note that this PhD was not an investigation into an audience's perception and understanding of such movements: this is a topic that lies outside the scope of this research. Rather, through exploratory artistic practice, this research developed my understanding of how and why I move at the piano. Could the understanding serve as a starting point for collaborative and experimental composition? How, then, would these compositions feed back into the ongoing development of an understanding of how and why I move at the piano?

In addition, although not the main purpose of this PhD, I considered whether the understanding of how and why I move at the piano could relate to performance practice more broadly. What would the understanding provide a performer as they prepare and perform pieces of music, particularly in relation to technique, interpretation, and performance creativity? How would it position the role of the performer and the skills they develop through practice? How would this approach view and position the role of different movements in performance?

Related Fields of Research

This enquiry drew upon research from a range of fields, drawing these perspectives into the defining of a specific methodology to explore the movements I make as I perform. This research context is further discussed below, but some of the key approaches included research into the role of the body in performance, such as Catherine Laws' examination of a performer's embodiment (2015) and her subjectivity and notion of 'self' in composer-performer collaborations (2019), along with other research in performance studies, often

from theatre and dance, that explores different perspectives of the body – in particular, that of Victor Ramírez Ladrón de Guevara, Wendy Houston and Anna Fenemore (2011). Helena De Preester’s neurological, phenomenological, and psychoanalytical perspectives on the body (2005) examined the different ways the body is perceived and experienced. She explores this further in relation to theatre performance and the body’s own perception and experience of itself as it performs (2007). My enquiry relates to research into the perception and meaning of movement in performance, and as such has been informed by work including Maxine Sheets-Johnstone’s understanding of movement as meaningful (2019) and the significance of movement in creativity (2013), as well as wider research into audience perception of gesture (Jane Davidson, 2007). Specifically, and in line with Mine Doğantan-Dack’s research into the phenomenology of the performing body from the performer’s own perspective, my enquiry explores a performer’s perception of their movement, therefore draws upon her research into the relevance of movement for the performer (2011) and the performer as researcher, specifically in the context of live performance (2012). The inclusion of a performer’s perspective of their performance allows the performer to be both the object and subject of this research: this will be discussed further in the section that follows this introduction in relation to Pierre Bourdieu (1999) and Kathleen Coessens and Stefan Östersjö (2014).

This PhD moves beyond the above research by drawing the insights of a somatic perspective on the body that values “experiencing [and] the personally meaningful intricacies of bodily structure and function”.¹ This is informed by Richard Shustermann’s “somaesthetics”, which advocates increasing an awareness of the body’s lived experience to improve the functionality of movement (2000). Improvement of a pianist’s function forms part of Cristine Mackie’s investigation into ergonomic piano performance practices (2018) and her carving of a holistic pianistic technique (Filipe Verdugo, 2018). This PhD focused on a somatic, experiential approach to piano performance but acknowledges the wider, technical fields of piano practices. This includes ergonomic considerations of the pianistic body (Richard Parncutt, John A. Sloboda, Eric F. Clarke, Matti Raekallio and Peter Desain, 1997; Barbara

¹ Don Hanlon Johnson, *Bone, Breath & Gesture: Practices of Embodiment* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1995), xvi

James and Margaret Cook, 2000) and various technical approaches, particularly György Sándor (1995) and Alan Fraser (2016).

On a wider level, my research relates to that of other performer-researchers in contemporary practice, perhaps especially Philip Thomas's work on the performer's response to notation in experimental music (2009), and his exploration of pianistic 'touch' in the moment of performance (2005). Research on the learning processes in and interpretations of experimental, complex notation, such as that of Ian Pace (2009) and Christopher Redgate (2007), is also relevant. My PhD also sits alongside more recent doctoral theses by contemporary performers whose work explores aspects of collaborative and/embodied practice, such as Heather Roche (2011), Mira Benjamin (2019) and Kathryn Williams (2021).

A Specific Methodology

Despite the depth and breadth of existing research into the performing body, there is little that addresses the specific role of a performer's movement from a perspective that draws together aspects of somatics, phenomenology, pianistic technique, and artistic creativity. To fill this gap, this PhD considers movement from the point-of-view of the performer in the process of engaging in explorative collaborative artistic practice with composers. Defining this gap led to a specific methodology that was used: this was fundamentally practice-as-research through collaboration with composers, creating new pieces (for and with me) for solo piano in which the movements of the performer formed the basis of the compositional material, though often in very different ways.

More specifically, to reinforce the somatic perspective of the performing body, I used the Feldenkrais Method, as founded by Moshe Feldenkrais (1904-1984), as a framework with which to consider the significance and meaning of my movement. The purpose here was not to examine the effectiveness of the Feldenkrais Method; rather, and for reasons that are later discussed in some detail, it was used as a practical tool with which creatively to explore my ways of moving whilst performing. Specifically, I applied the Method's particular use of

the word ‘function’ to my movements in the context of each project, drawing into play the Method’s stated aim of improving one’s ability to move and act in the world with more ease by improving their “function”.² Despite the potential ambiguity of this word,³ the Feldenkrais Method’s *Statement of Purposes* states “[b]etter function is evoked by establishing an improved dynamic relationship between the individual, gravity, and society. Feldenkrais, himself, defined function as the interaction of the person with the outside world or the self with the environment.”⁴ This definition provoked the role of interaction when considering the functionality of a pianist’s movements. I considered whether the movements I make in performance related to an interaction, and therefore could reveal how I was functioning within each project.

The Outputs of this Research

This PhD has led to the production of a portfolio of creative work, which includes live performances (with film/audio documentation); filmed/edited versions of performance; and additional documentation, mainly scores/directions/instructions and photographs.⁵ Each collaboration operated as a project and produced a different outcome. I have collated my body of work in the portfolio that accompanies this thesis. This diverse body of work was born of an explorative artistic approach that primarily considered the way I move as musical material.

The Creative Projects

The PhD comprised seven projects with seven composers: some projects created more than one piece and some projects involved additional artistic collaborators. Below is a list of the

² “Standards of Practice”, Section 1.2, *International Feldenkrais Federation*, as adopted by the IFF General Assembly in May 1994, accessed Nov 22, 2022, <https://feldenkrais-method.org/iff/standards-of-practice/>

³ “To function” is defined in the Oxford Dictionary as “to work or operate in a proper or particular way”; “a function” is “an activity that is natural to or the purpose of a person or thing.”

⁴ “Standards of Practice”, Section 1.4

⁵ Other additional documentation: visual images, objects, clay models, documented conversations and practice journals.

composers and the titles of the pieces that were created: the scores for these pieces are in Appendix A.

- Ray Evanoff, *Give* (2020-) a series of small miniatures for piano, initially named *Kate One*; *Kate Two*; *Kate Three*; and *Kate Two point One*.⁶
- Monica Pearce, *studies in restriction* (2020) for piano and toy piano. Five movements: 'study in independence'; 'study in stretch'; 'study in practice'; 'study in suspension'; 'study in 3-2-1'.
- Federico Pozzer, *Moving Objects* (2020) for pianist, ping pong balls, marbles, and grand piano; *Breathing, Moving Playing* (2020) for piano.
- Ed Cooper, *...they conjure aglow, movements...* (2020) for pianist, objects, and fixed media.
- Neil Luck, *Kate Limbo* (2021) for solo pianist and camera operator. This project involved photographer Sam Walton.
- Mark Dyer, *Subject* (2021-) a documentation of a pianist's memories of playing J.S. Bach. This project involved photographer Sam Walton.

These projects formed the main components of the research and for that reason are discussed in the written thesis. The breadth and diversity of these projects provided ample space in which to explore different aspects of my pianistic movements. Their varied outcomes emerged in response to each project's understanding of movement, function, and interaction. Each project considered my movements both *subjectively* – with an understanding of movement as being functional from my situated point of view – and *objectively* – maintained through observing how this function contributed to and affected each project.

⁶ These names are used throughout the thesis when referring to a specific miniature, despite their overall title being *Give*.

An Outline of the Thesis

This thesis first includes an extensive theoretical discussion that situates this investigation into the functionality of my movements, beginning with this chapter's exploration of the positioning of the performer in relation to existing performance research. As my research used the Feldenkrais Method, it is necessary for Chapter Two to outline its main principles that relate to my investigation and my experimentation with the Method in the learning of Ray Evanoff's 'When I'. My experience here produced a performance approach that I took into the collaborative projects, which I outline in Chapter Three. I use my project with Federico Pozzer to draw out particular aspects of this approach and outline the framework within which I position two understandings of how I function in practice. Chapters Four and Five constitute the majority of the practice-research that I carried out: my projects with Ray Evanoff and Monica Pearce, and my projects with Neil Luck and Mark Dyer. Chapter Six concludes the thesis: I use my project with Ed Cooper to demonstrate the key understandings of my research.

It is necessary to situate the creative work in such a way as to establish a thorough understanding of a performer's perspective of performance, thereby allowing each project to be discussed in relation to a performer's functionality. The discussions in these preliminary chapters will be drawn upon in the chapters detailing the creative practice. This doctorate's notion of functioning in performance draws on many perspectives, namely the Feldenkrais Method, but also numerous subjective and objective considerations. As such, to begin the situation of my research, this chapter will explore matters of subjectivity and objectivity in this kind of performance research to reveal how their combined perspectives informed my investigation into movement. The significance of subjectivity pointed to the role of a performer's *intention* in performance, specifically, what informs a performer as they perform and how this manifests as movement. This extends to the *expectations* that surround a performer, particularly from their own perspective, which is bound up in their performance tradition and/or instrumental training. Finally, this chapter will consider a performer's 'habits' and whether they contribute to, or disrupt, an interpretation. More specifically, this concluding section situates how such habits form a performer's subjectivity but that these habits are, indeed, 'functional'.

Subjectivity and Objectivity

Interrelated Perspectives in Performance Research

Establishing a subjective perspective on how I move, involving a thorough and practical exploration of how and why I move the way I do using the Feldenkrais Method, was able to position my movements in performance as distinct 'objects' to extract and use as compositional material. (By extension, these movements belonged to a performing body: an object that is situated and functions within the framework of a composed piece of music.) A subjective perspective provided each composer with an "insider's view on what happens in a musical performance",⁷ which provided "autoethnographic" aspects that "allow[ed] room for the situatedness and the subjectivity"⁸ of the performer. As such, a subjective perspective provided more information with which to define different movements as objects, according to each project.

The affordance of subjectivity in defining movements relates to Pierre Bourdieu's *Pascalian Meditations* and his "paradoxical observation" of objective and subjective considerations of the world:

The world encompasses me, comprehends me as a thing among things, but I, as a thing for which there are things, comprehend this world. And I do so ... *because* it encompasses and comprehends me; it is through this material inclusion ... that I acquire a practical knowledge and control of the encompassing space.⁹

Bourdieu distinctly defines this 'practical' bodily knowledge to include the body's subjective perspective of the world as well as objective considerations of how this body relates to the

⁷ Mine Doğantan-Dack, "The Art of Research in Live Music Performance," *Music Performance Research* 5, (2012): 39

⁸ *Ibid.*, 40

⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), 108

world. He extends his definition of space to include physical and “social space”, within which “[t]he ‘I’ that practically comprehends physical space and social space... is comprehended in a quite different sense ... It occupies a position there which ... we know is regularly associated with position-takings (opinions, representations, judgements, etc.)”¹⁰ This invites a subject’s unique ‘position-taking’ into their comprehension of a space, be this physical or social. Bourdieu’s inclusion of a social space allows for a comprehension of the situatedness of the body to include socially constructed notions of space, which incorporate specific presumptions: “social structures in the form of dispositional structures, of objective chances in the form of expectations or anticipations.”¹¹ Furthermore, his definition of the subject that comprehends this space is “not necessarily a subject in the sense of philosophies of mind, but rather a habitus, a system of dispositions”¹²: this habitus is significant enough for a subjective comprehension of bodily knowledge. Despite a ‘habitus’ being the manifestation of certain dispositions, preferences, or previously learned conditioning, they define a body’s subjective disposition and are relevant for “distinctly defin[ing]”¹³ practical knowledge.

In the context of artistic practice, Kathleen Coessens and Stefan Östersjö emphasise the fundamental and immanent nature of Bourdieu’s habitus as “the product of mostly unintended, nonconscious input through the conditions of existence or through the strategic intentions of other humans - for example, pedagogical action - which themselves are parts of the conditions of existence.”¹⁴ Their framing of Bourdieu’s habitus in the context of music performance practice includes its interaction with some form of *resistance*, such as a musical instrument or musical score.¹⁵ In contrast to the notion of musical instruments as “mediating tools put forth by Merleau-Ponty”, Coessens and Östersjö argue that “[t]he search for musical content, for a resonating interaction, does not result from the incorporation of the instrument as a transparent tool, but rather from the affirmation of its resistance, which it amplifies and plays with.”¹⁶ For this PhD, my encounter with various forms of resistance – a

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Kathleen Coessens and Stefan Östersjö, “Habitus and the Resistance of Culture”, in *Artistic Experimentation in Music*, ed. Darla Crispin and Bob Gilmore (Leuven University Press, 2014), 335

¹⁵ Ibid., 338

¹⁶ Ibid.

score, my instrument, the composer - contributed to defining and observing a subjective perspective on performance. Each project deliberately invited 'resistance', manifesting in numerous interactions, so that it could include the conditioned, 'habituated' dispositions that form my performing 'habitus'. It was the detail of how and why I move that developed this understanding and revealed how I specifically functioned and interacted within each project. This developed a distinct 'bodily knowledge' that is visible in the outcomes of each project.

Developing Bodily Knowledge

Such bodily knowledge may extend to artistic knowledge, which, according to David Gorton and Stefan Östersjö, "takes shape both in the materiality of an artwork and as performative knowledge embodied by the artist."¹⁷ In recognizing the issues found in objectively analysing and assessing performative knowledge, they suggest that artistic research practices must "develop methods to overcome this resistance" to understand artistic knowledge more fully.¹⁸ For this PhD, my consideration of movement and its precise relevance for the performer was my attempt at developing more detailed artistic knowledge. The significance of movement and its artistic effect is recognized by Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, who describes the capabilities of the moving body's creative imagination as being appreciated in the "thing" that is made. "Things" and "creations"¹⁹ embody the bodily movements that were used to make them, her use of these words highlighting their objective, creative and bodily value. The performances of each project embodied the subjective knowledge of the artists involved, revealing the significance of collaboration as a way of demonstrating the effects of bodily creativity, whilst providing each project with more interactions – more resistance – in an unpredictable manner. This created more

¹⁷ David Gorton and Stefan Östersjö, "Austerity Measures I: Performing the Discursive Voice", in *Voices, Bodies Practices: Performing Musical Subjectivities*, ed. Catherine Laws, William Brooks, David Gorton, Nguyễn Thanh Thúy, Stefan Östersjö, and Jeremy J. Wells (Leuven University Press, 2019), 37

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 38

¹⁹ Maxine Sheets-Johnstone, "Bodily Resonance", in *Moving Imagination*, ed. Helena De Preester (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2013), 21

complex outcomes, or 'things', whilst clarifying an understanding of a subjective performance perspective.

The acknowledgement of an embodied subjective perspective is significant for dancer Wendy Houston, who describes the body as “*somebody*, and is therefore localized and personal, and acts as a point of specificity”.²⁰ As noted by Bourdieu, a body’s perspective includes the conditions and implications of a certain social space, the objective considerations of what is expected from a body, but also her internal subjective “*journey*”²¹ as she continues to be ‘a body’. She argues that to ‘grasp’ any notion of a performing body, we must contend with what it is to be a body, which is often in interaction with others, or where it meets resistance.²² This highlights the potentially problematic issues that surround a performance practice, which Houston recognizes as the conflicts between external perspectives and internal preferences, as well as discrepancies between what she feels and what an observer sees as she performs.²³ For Houston, her “*journey through movement and performance practices has been a process of aligning [her] own internal perception with external commentaries.*”²⁴ Her example of an internal perception includes “*What if I moved like a bad dancer?*”, with exterior commentaries including “[t]hings like ‘relate more to the audience’, ‘don’t hurry that bit’ ...”²⁵. She goes on to explore how these conflicts may never be resolved but that this is part of being a body: “*...this stuff has to do with inside and outside, and it’s what the body is always up against.*”²⁶

The purpose of this PhD was not to avoid or eradicate such conflicts – or resistances – but to notice, explore and include them in each project. Clarifying my knowledge of such conflicts deepened my performative knowledge, which in turn deepened each collaboration’s artistic knowledge. For this, I needed to develop my bodily knowledge, which, through the use of

²⁰ Anna Fenemore, “Body: Introduction”, in *Performance Perspectives: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Jonathan Pitches and Sita Popat (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2011), 21

²¹ Wendy Houston, “Some body and no body: the body of a performer”, in *Performance Perspectives: A Critical Introduction*, ed. by Jonathan Pitches and Sita Popat (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2011), 34

²² In relation to Coessens and Östersjö’s framing of Bourdieu’s habitus.

²³ Houston, “Some body and no body”, 34

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid., 35

Feldenkrais, included: observing where movements originate in the body; feeling their sensations as I move; defining their purpose for a performance; and understanding their context within a performance. The manifestation and significance of these different aspects constantly changed but this changeability contributed to the investigation. It revealed functionality of movement as being something that shifts: as the meaning and relevance of my movements changed, their functionality, in relation to their context, also changed. Functionality of movement became something that was in constant flux and changed throughout a performance. This revealed subjectivity and objectivity as a dynamic of positions, where subjective and object perspectives interplayed, signifying the body as not merely a subject or an object, but as subjective and objective perspectives that folded into one another. This was particularly noticeable when considering the intentional aspect of a movement: the preconceived idea that activates a movement and fulfils a desired action. My embodied intentions were revealed at different stages of each project, sometimes incongruent with my movements. The following section will consider the role of intention in performance and its manifestation in movement, to provide a context in which to consider habitual movements and their function within performance.

Investigating Embodied Intentionality in Music Performance

A Focus on 'Live' Performance

To explore the specificity and nuance of live performance, Mine Doğantan-Dack strongly argues for an increased advocacy for the performer's unique perspective, specifically as they are performing.²⁷ She recognises live performance's

inherently indeterminate or unpredictable context ... related to the 'living' nature of the performance environment such that at any moment an acoustical, psychological or social incident in the performance venue could displace the

²⁷ Doğantan-Dack, "The Art of Research on Performance", 39

attention of the performer away from the music and from a focus on performance-making.²⁸

The very nuance of the live event means that performers develop skills to “keep going in the face of disruptive occurrences ... to create an illusion that he or she is in total control”.²⁹

Therefore, live performing may be viewed as an ever-developing, ever-adjusting skill. It is a skill that develops over a period of time, reflecting the personal and practical experience of the performer, but also changes in each moment of performance, where the body responds and adjusts to the live event.

Emily Payne regards the skill of live performance as unstable that “draw[s] attention to the processual and emergent qualities of musical performance.”³⁰ This instability means a skill is not static, and instead, ‘gives way’ to “the fluid and distributed dimensions of performance.”³¹ These sorts of performing skills complement the live event, “constituted in part by the immaterial but no less real powers of atmospheres and anticipation, stresses, and strains”.³² Over time, these skills combine to form a performance practice and manifest as the ‘preferred’, habitual movements that serve actions and support my body in performance.

The potency and particularness of live performance requires a flexible and reliable body that functions and is equipped to ‘survive’ what Stan Godlovitch terms as a “highly intricate event”³³. In this respect, and in line with Doğantan-Dack’s advocacy for a specific understanding of the performer-researcher, Godlovitch argues that music performance “provides an interesting framework for broader philosophical concerns about action;

²⁸ Ibid., 37

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Emily Payne, “The craft of musical performance: Skilled practice in collaboration,” *Cultural geographies* 25, no. 1 (2018): 3

³¹ Ibid.

³² David Bissell, “Habit Displaced: The Disruption of Skillful Performance,” *Geographical Research* 51, no. 2 (2013): 121

³³ Stan Godlovitch, *Musical Performance : A Philosophical Study*, (London: Routledge, 1998), 1

notably about intention, purposive-ness, skill, communication, and creativity.”³⁴ It positions bodily practices as actions, or “skillful bodily proficiencies” that relate to an environment, rather than “resources to hand that can be deployed unproblematically whenever desired”.³⁵

Doğantan-Dack examines how a performer manages unexpected moments in performance in order to ‘survive’ the highly intricate performing event. She regards these unexpected moments as ‘disruptive occurrences’ that are skilfully managed and require careful consideration in performance research proper:

When studying the musical content of live performances, the researcher needs to note that what he or she hears in the performance may be the result of the performer’s expertise in smoothing over an *unexpected, unintended* and possibly *unwanted* momentary loss of control in any parameter of the music such as timing, dynamics, articulation, textural balance, etc., rather than the result of *intended* expressive, interpretational choices.³⁶ [my italics]

Here, Doğantan-Dack depicts a crucial moment in performance where the performer must react quickly and manage an unexpected moment that has produced an unintended action. Significantly, she implies these moments are possibly *unwanted*, which reveals (1) that the performing body (potentially disruptively) carries out actions against their will and (2) that there are expectations that surround how the performing body acts.

The Performer’s Movement as Embodied Will

William James suggested that the intention to act – a person’s *will* – manifests as purposeful movement: “The only ends which follow immediately upon our willing seem to be movements of our own bodies. Whatever *feelings* and *havings* we may will to get, come in

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Bissell, “Habit Displaced”, 121

³⁶ Doğantan-Dack, “The Art of Research on Performance”, 37

as results of preliminary movements which we make for the purpose.³⁷ According to James, the body must regard this act as being possible to activate the necessary initiating movements. If not, this intention is not able to manifest as purposeful movement: as James stated, “if with the desire there goes a sense that attainment is not possible, we simply wish”.³⁸ The conscious idea that the act is unattainable conflicts with the idea to act: “the bare presence of another idea will prevent its taking place.”³⁹

A similar understanding of embodied will forms part of Rudolph Laban’s description of movement, which “arises from an inner volition which results in a transference of the body or of one of its limbs from one spatial position to another.”⁴⁰ He describes movement in simple terms, advocating “[e]veryday terms of language ... to describe, with precision, the position from which a movement starts, or the place to which it intends to go, and at which it finally arrives.”⁴¹ Such precision of movement (relevant for Laban’s choreography) assumes that the performer’s intention is clear (at least for themselves). My research in fact revealed my intention in performance as something more elusive and transitional; to develop an understanding of movement from the perspective of the performer, I required a more thorough understanding of what forms an embodied intention.

In relation to his theories on consciousness and unconsciousness, Bernard J. Baars has developed James’s notion of will, using his example of moving from a warm bed on a cold morning to illustrate the “reality” of volition.⁴² Baars argues that a body’s intention to move is compared with what it gleans from the surrounding context or environment. The perception of a cold room and a warm bed provides the body with evidence as it assesses the attainability of a potential act. In James’s case, getting out of bed is repeatedly regarded as being unattainable; the body is warm and does not want to face the cold. This

³⁷ William James, *The Principles of Psychology Vol. II* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1981), 1098

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Yun Kyoung Shin, Robert W. Proctor, and E. J. Capaldi, “A Review of Contemporary Ideomotor Theory,” *Psychological Bulletin* 136, no. 6 (2010): 944. Referencing James, *The Principles of Psychology*, 527

⁴⁰ Rudolph Laban, *Choreutics*, ed. Lisa Ullmann (London: MacDonald and Evans, 1966), 10. Laban’s ‘kinesphere’ will be returned to in the section on my project with Neil Luck in Chapter Five.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Bernard J. Baars, *In the Theater of Consciousness* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 130

assessment is not a fact – getting out of bed is completely attainable – but is made in response to what the body perceives. Whilst this assessment remains, movement is not initiated and the body remains in bed, even though it knows it will need to move at some point.⁴³

According to Baars, activity becomes inhibited because of “a conscious inner debate ... about the pros and cons of rising.”⁴⁴ When this debate stops, the idea to move from the bed comes into “consciousness long enough to trigger unconscious effectors, the nerve centers that control one’s muscles.”⁴⁵ Here Baars is exemplifying James’s *ideomotor theory* that demonstrates “how a conscious goal can recruit and activate automatisms to carry out a voluntary act.”⁴⁶ The unconscious processes that realise voluntary acts are significant for understanding the intentionality of acts. As noted by Timothy D. Wilson (2002), “consciousness itself is dependent on mental processes that occur out of view. We couldn’t be conscious without a non-conscious mind.”⁴⁷

In their contemporary review of ideomotor theory, Shin, Proctor and Capaldi (2010) note Greenwald’s (1970) revival of James’s ideomotor theory that developed into the ideomotor mechanism.⁴⁸ Significantly for very recent ideomotor theory, such as the theory of event coding (TEC),⁴⁹ Greenwald’s update of James’s theory considers “sensory feedback resulting from self-action [as being] a crucial mediator in action control.”⁵⁰ The body’s innate ability to store and recall the sensation of a previously conducted action is the mechanism that allows the action to become automated over time. Through repetition and familiarity, an intention is transformed from an abstract, conscious stimulus to a physical, ‘remembered’ felt sensation. Greenwald termed these triggering felt sensations as “conditioned

⁴³ James, *The Principles of Psychology Vol. II*, 1133

⁴⁴ Baars, *In the Theater of Consciousness*, 131

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Timothy D. Wilson, *Strangers to Ourselves: Discovering the Adaptive Unconscious*, (Harvard University Press, 2002), 20

⁴⁸ Shin, Proctor, and Capaldi, “A Review of Contemporary Ideomotor Theory”, 945

⁴⁹ This theory considers a much closer connection between perception and action, bringing it in line with contemporary theories of enaction (Alva Noë, 2004) and ecological perception (Bermudez, 1995)

⁵⁰ Shin, Proctor, and Capaldi, “A Review of Contemporary Ideomotor Theory”, 945

anticipatory images of response feedback”⁵¹ that “acquire discriminative control over their corresponding responses even without the original stimulus to trigger the responses.”⁵² To return to James’s case of moving from bed, the “conditioned” felt sensation of the cold room and its immanent discomfort serves as an anticipatory image that triggers the automatic response to remain in bed.

In examining the cognitive control of musical performance, Lutz Jänke considers such felt sensations as contributing to the body’s cognitive system in the carrying out of musical actions.⁵³ He states that “a movement can vary in many ways, including its angular direction, extent of muscle contraction, and motor neuron discharge. Thus, when practicing a particular movement various movement parameters have to be optimized.”⁵⁴ This optimization occurs in a similar way to Greenwald’s felt sensations, where physical sensations are stored as reminders of previous actions. Jänke describes a knowledge-based model proposed by Rosenbaum et al (1993), where “target postures (e.g. final movement positions including various constellations of submovements) are stored in movement memory. Each of the postures receives a weight that is based on the likelihood of success of the posture. The weights capture the costs of the posture, both in terms of the accuracy and the effort of execution.”⁵⁵ He goes on to speculate that for musicians, this optimization increases in line with their musical skill, providing them with “the control of particularly music-related movements. Thus, musicians can control more complex movements with less control effort.”⁵⁶

Returning to my investigation into functional movement, these different perspectives on intention, conditioning, and movement selection provide some understanding as to how

⁵¹ Shin, Proctor and Capaldi, “A Review of Contemporary Ideomotor Theory”, 945. Referencing Anthony Greenwald, “Sensory feedback mechanisms in performance control: With special reference to the ideomotor mechanism,” *Psychological Review*, 77 (1970): 85

⁵² Shin, Proctor and Capaldi, “A Review of Contemporary Ideomotor Theory”, 945

⁵³ Lutz Jänke, “From cognition to action”, in *Music, Motor Control and the Brain*, ed. Eckart Altenmüller, Mario Wisendanger and Jürg Kesselring (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2012), 30

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid. Referencing D. A. Rosenbaum, S. E. Engelbrecht, M. M. Bushe and L. D. Loukopoulos, “Knowledge model for selecting and producing reaching movements,” *Journal of Motor Behaviour*, 25 (1993)

⁵⁶ Jänke, “From cognition to action”, 31

and why I move the way I do in performance. As I perform, my body perceives and assesses the performing situation, which initiates unconscious processes. Using the ideomotor mechanism identified by Greenwald, my body recalls the sensations of anticipated actions, conditioned and refined through practice or previous performing experience. The anticipatory image that surrounds these actions become a conditioned response to what the body assesses in each fleeting movement of the performance; my body 'survives' the situation because these conditioned responses have been stored for me to use. It is these automated responses that the collaborative work drew out and considered as functional in performance. The project I carried out with Ray Evanoff, as explored in Chapter Four, starkly revealed such automated movements.

Bearing this in mind, my intention to act does not guarantee an intended action; in reference to Baars "a successful act of will does not typically emerge from some titanic inner struggle."⁵⁷ Rather, a successful act is the result of an unconscious response, a habituated, conditioned response that manifests as movement. Over time and through experience and refinement, movements of this sort are gathered to form a performance practice, representing a performer's set of preferred habits, or trusted solutions, that they resort to in performance. Therefore, intentions in performance must relate to these gathered, reliable responses: unpredictable, unconscious and requiring adjustment, precisely because they are made in the "inherently indeterminate or unpredictable context" of a performance.⁵⁸

A Performer's Expectations

This understanding of intention bears similarities with the previously discussed understanding of skill as being unstable, non-fixed and responsive to each fleeting moment of performance. This points to a consideration of the expectations that surround a performer and their performance of a work: if intention is non-fixed and responsive, how is it able to support an informed and pre-determined interpretation of a score? In addition,

⁵⁷ Baars, *In the Theater of Consciousness*, 133

⁵⁸ Dogantan-Dack, "The Art of Research on Performance", 37

Doğantan-Dack's description of unexpected, unintended moments as being *unwanted* implies there is a more desirable alternative that does not involve unwanted moments in performance. Importantly, Doğantan-Dack does not advocate a removal of unwanted moments – yes, they are “smoothed over” and skillfully dealt with – but she argues that these moments inevitably happen so require full acceptance and understanding as part of research into performance practice proper. Her use of the word ‘unwanted’ signifies a broader issue concerning the well-trodden “work-concept”, which as Ian Pace states involves “positions [that] more or less accept ... a subservient role for the performer in the face of both ‘work’ and compositional intent, and mostly that the ‘work’ exists as an abstract ideal.”⁵⁹ However, more pertinently to this PhD, Doğantan-Dack's use of the word ‘unwanted’ reveals the expectations that a performer may have of their own performance.

Anthony Gritten describes the expectations that surround a performer as imposed *demands* “that [manage] the performer's activity”.⁶⁰ He argues that these demands are active in both the practice room and the concert hall and “that it is in the nature of these demands that they divert the majority of the performer's energy towards their fulfilment.”⁶¹ These demands may be considered in two ways: as the demands of the score that the performer adheres to in order to preserve the intentions of the composer; and the demands of the performance practice that surrounds the performer. The demands of the score relate to Susan Bradshaw's notion of “a performer's responsibility”,⁶² where she argues that the responsibility of the performer is to commit to “the score ... regarded as a custodian of some original truth.”⁶³ She adds that a performer's starting point for an interpretation must be “unadulterated”⁶⁴ as the “unavoidable intervention of the third-party performer ... is ultimately responsible for the many slips that can come between original communicator (the composer) and the eventual communicatee (the listener).”⁶⁵

⁵⁹ Ian Pace, “Hierarchies in New Music: Composers, Performers, and ‘Works’”, in *Desiring Progress*, September 9, 2013, accessed June 29, 2022, <https://ianpace.wordpress.com/2013/09/29/hierarchies-in-new-music-composers-performers-and-works/>

⁶⁰ Anthony Gritten, “Dismantling the demands of performing,” *Music Performance Research* 9 (2019): 164

⁶¹ Gritten, “Dismantling the demands of performing”, 163

⁶² Susan Bradshaw, “A Performer's Responsibility” in *Composition – Performance – Reception: Studies in the Creative Process in Music*, ed. Wyndham Thomas. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 53

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 53

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 57

As explored extensively by Dan Leech-Wilkinson, such a view of performance is highly questionable and unrealistic. His research explores how the notion of an informed and appropriate performance of Western Classical Music is bound up in a “profoundly disturbed” ideology based on “contradictions and (frankly) hypocrisies”.⁶⁶ As he explains, interpretations of scores have changed across different generations of teachers, performers, and composers yet each one has maintained some level of legitimacy according to the ‘experts’ at the time of their realisations:

...while there will certainly have been a manner of performance expected by the composer, and during their composition the notes will necessarily have been imagined with that in mind, it’s clear that these scores we feel we know and love have been performed in many other ways, ways that if you go back far enough are radically other; and each generation has found these increasingly different manners to be perfectly suited to what they hear as the essential nature of the music.⁶⁷

In reference to Julian Hellaby,⁶⁸ Gritten refers to the preservation and literal interpretation of the “notated musical text” as *Texttreue*.⁶⁹ Ian Pace suggests an interpretation of this kind would be a ‘literalist’ approach that “maintains that the performer ... should try to execute the text as ‘exactly’ as possible, and that will provide most of what is necessary.”⁷⁰ On the other hand, Gritten describes *Werktreue* as having a slightly broader approach in that it includes the “publicly sanctioned and historically sedimented performance practices” as part of a performer’s interpretation.⁷¹ Pace suggests a similar interpretation to this would be a ‘scholarly’ approach, “informed by intense investigation of the exact notational

⁶⁶ Daniel Leech-Wilkinson, *Challenging Performance: Classical Music Performance Norms and How to Escape Them*, (2020) <https://challengingperformance.com/the-book/>, 12

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 19

⁶⁸ Julian Hellaby, *Reading Musical Interpretation: Case Studies in Solo Piano Performance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 5

⁶⁹ Gritten, “Dismantling the demands of performing”, 165

⁷⁰ Pace, “Hierarchies in New Music”

⁷¹ Gritten, “Dismantling the demands of performing”, 165

conventions employed and all other information pertaining to the composer's intentions (gleaned from known verbal remarks or writings on the matter, or more general information about their performance preferences in general)."⁷² An inclusion of these contextual details incorporates factors that are not found in the score but belong to the performance practice and inherited conventions that surround it. Leech-Wilkinson acknowledges the problematic nature of such conventions, particularly the ongoing and unquestioned approach taken by many teachers and pedagogues. He argues that "musicians, reinforced by the rest of the gatekeeping community, are teaching the same beliefs about what is proper—albeit with silently shifting practices—to the next generation, aiming to ensure that strict norms are passed strictly on."⁷³ The protection of what is 'proper' appears to be just as restricting or dictating as a *Texttreue*, or literalist, interpretation. However, does an understanding of *Werktreue* (translating as 'faithfulness to the work') include unavoidable factors that lie "beyond the score"?⁷⁴ Would Pace's 'scholarly' interpretation include a performer's conventions but also their habitual dispositions, which may be viewed as their unique performance practice? Perhaps such conventions and dispositions are unavoidable. As Pace points out, the inclusion of wider factors points to a "question of where and how the 'work' is to be found".⁷⁵ As the majority of classical performers are taught in accordance with a performance tradition or convention, the notion of unwanted moments in relation to the "work-concept" becomes even more elusive.

Doğnatan-Dack (2015b) uses Janet Schmalfeldt's book *In the Process of Becoming* (2011) as an example of how performers are attempting to address the relationship between a score and its performance. Schmalfeldt uses the word *becoming* to describe her process of interpretation of a musical form, or as she puts it, "*a retrospective reinterpretation within the larger formal context*",⁷⁶ as something transient that never quite arrives at a fixed, complete entity. She references Friedrich Schlegel's "pronouncement" of Romantic poetry, as "still in becoming (*im Werden*); indeed, this is its very essence, that forever can only

⁷² Pace, "Hierarchies in New Music"

⁷³ Leech-Wilkinson, *Challenging Performance*, 19

⁷⁴ Nicholas Cook, *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance* (New York ; Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2013)

⁷⁵ Pace, "Hierarchies in New Music"

⁷⁶ Janet Schmalfeldt, *In the Process of Becoming: Analytic and Philosophical Perspectives on Form in Early Nineteenth-Century Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 10

become, and never be completed.”⁷⁷ This appears to speak more to the non-fixed and forever adjusting aspects of the performing body. Perhaps Schmalfeldt is honing a specific “performer’s analysis”⁷⁸, particularly when she argues that her refreshed approach to an analytically informed performance integrates the challenges of performing into the theoretical analysis.⁷⁹ Doğanatan-Dack recognizes as much although argues Schmalfeldt’s approach does not go far enough and in fact “continues to reinforce – in disguise – a discourse that gives the analyst the upper hand in musical epistemology.”⁸⁰ As evidence, she notes Schmalfeldt’s description of the performer as being a projector of what is found through an analysis of the score, and that the creative choices made by the performer are “always those offered (and allowed) by traditional analysis”.⁸¹

Philip Auslander makes a similar comment about Nicholas Cook’s advocating of “music as performance”,⁸² arguing that despite Cook’s contribution to the “performative turn” in traditional musicology, he maintains “a privileging of the work.”⁸³ Although Cook suggests “the work” be renamed as “a script” as to incorporate the notion of performance as social interaction,⁸⁴ such interactions in performance would still be made according to the script, in other words, a ‘thing’ that “provides the design that underlies and thus determines performance”. For Auslander, whether a work or a script, this terminology “remains consonant with that tradition.”⁸⁵ As a solution, Auslander suggests the

concept of musical persona [that] does not depend on a definition of musical performance in terms of a normative relationship between a work and its

⁷⁷ Ibid. Referencing Friedrich Schlegel, *Kritische Schriften* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1972), 38-39

⁷⁸ This is explored by John Rink, who considers what is fundamental to a performer’s analysis, which for him is temporality. John Rink, “Analysis and (or?) performance”, in *Musical Performance: A Guide to Understanding* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 39.

⁷⁹ In particular, she champions what the performer chooses to do in analytical discussion of Schubert’s Piano Sonata Op. 42. Schmalfeldt, *In the Process of Becoming*, 21

⁸⁰ Mine Doğanatan- Dack, “The Role of the Musical Instrument in Performance as Research: The Piano as a Research Tool”, in *Artistic Practice as Research in Music: Theory, Criticism, Practice*, ed. by Mine Doğanatan-Dack (Abingdon, UK: Ashgate, 2015b), 171

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Nicholas Cook, “Between Process and Product: Music and/as Performance”, *Music Theory Online* 7, 2001

⁸³ Philip Auslander, “Musical Personae”, *TDR : Drama Review* 50, no. 1 (2006): 101

⁸⁴ Juan M. Loaiza, “Musicking, embodiment and participatory enactment of music: outline and key points”, *Connection Science* 28, 4 (2016): 412

⁸⁵ Auslander, “Musical Personae”, 101

execution. To the contrary, it allows readily for the possibility that work and performance assume different relationships within different discursive domains of music.⁸⁶

Catherine Laws appreciates such an approach, particularly Auslander's acknowledgement of the complexities that are involved in the identity formation of the performer.⁸⁷ As will be discussed in Chapter Five and the project with Mark Dyer, the notion of forming an identity through developing an understanding of my performing 'selves' revealed other ways in which to consider how I function in performance. A focus on the subjective nature of a particular movement led me to explore its habitual patterning, which drew out aspects of my history as a player. As such, the project with Dyer considered how a performer forms her identity whilst developing a broader understanding of functionality.

A Performer's Habits and Interpretation

Technical Habits

The above considerations of the work concept, a performer's intentions, and the expectations that surround what they do in performance reveals the significance of what might be understood as a performer's habits. In relation to the above considerations, a habit is complex, not simply a case of being what the body prefers in performance. A habit may relate to what a performer believes they need to do in response to a particular score, which may or may not include the traditions they were taught within. Such traditions become entrenched as part of a performer's daily approach to their instrument, which includes what they establish as part of a rigorous practise regime. This is considered by Heidi Blackie et al,

⁸⁶ Ibid., 102

⁸⁷ Catherine Laws, "Being a Player: Agency and Subjectivity in *Player Piano*", in *Voices, Bodies, Practices: Performing Musical Subjectivities*, ed. Catherine Laws, William Brooks, David Gorton, Nguyễn Thanh Thúy, Stefan Östersjö and Jeremy J. Wells (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2019), 94

who note the prevalence of uncompromising practise habits in the development of injury and overuse syndrome.⁸⁸ Such habits are formed during a musician’s education, which are then employed in professional practice.⁸⁹ Blackie et al found that a performer’s practise habits often include the belief that pain forms part of a thorough practise regime⁹⁰ and that musicians must play through pain to maintain progress.⁹¹ The role of establishing good practice habits is also noted by György Sándor, who states that “the spectacularly high incidence of ailments amongst pianists (fatigue, muscle pain, tendonitis, bursitis, and other temporary and chronic afflictions) is primarily the result of faulty practise habits, of excessive tensions, and of muscle-building exercises.”⁹²As such, he argues that “[t]he purpose of practice is to establish the right habits”, which, for him, is to effectively coordinate muscles rather than strengthen them.⁹³ This requires a performer to develop their bodily knowledge: as Cristine Mackie notes, a performer will achieve a skilled performance “[b]y deepening his/her somatic perception, through a more reflective body consciousness – with the resultant change in his/her postural habits”.⁹⁴ Here, habits, through somatic awareness, are located to hone an effective and reliable technique, which, through its historic development, has incorporated further regions of the body.⁹⁵

Alongside more recent piano performance approaches, Filipe Verdugo’s holistic approach to piano technique incorporates a full awareness of the body. He views the pelvis as providing the proximal support for the body with skeletal alignment reducing extraneous tensions through unnecessary holding.⁹⁶ Such an approach, that works with a pianist’s “unique anatomical characteristics and proportions”,⁹⁷ is argued by Verdugo as providing them with

⁸⁸ Heidi Blackie, Ronald Stone and Anne Tiernan, “An Investigation of Injury Prevention among University Piano Students”, *Medical Problems of Performing Artists* 14, no. 3 (1999): 142

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 141

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² György Sándor, *On Piano Playing: Motion, Sound and Expression* (Boston: Shirmer, 1995): x

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Cristine Mackie, *Rethinking Piano Performance: The Mindful Body* (London International Piano Symposium, 2018), 60

⁹⁵ Mackie cites the pianist and composer William Mason (1829-1908) as being the first to recognise the muscles of the forearm as the source of finger movement with the upper arm serving as a guide, thus incorporating wider-body efficiency. Mackie, *Rethinking Piano Performance*, 34

⁹⁶ Felipe Verdugo, “Biomechanical and Physiological Aspects of a Holistic Approach to Piano Technique” in *New Thoughts on Piano Performance*, ed. Cristine Mackie (London International Piano Symposium, 2017), 1

⁹⁷ Ibid.

“[e]ffective principles and healthy gestures that can be applied to the vast variety of musical and technical challenges that pianists face.”⁹⁸ However, Gritten views such an “ergonomic” approach as another example of a *demand*, where “corrective teaching” is “limiting the performer’s free play to a relatively minor role, measuring everything in a predetermined manner, and rejecting or revising anything that fails to measure up.”⁹⁹ For Gritten, what appears as “healthy” technique, argued as being beneficial for the pianist and allowing them to “convey [their] musical intelligence to the audience”,¹⁰⁰ continues to prescribe a set of demands. As found in the technical approaches of Sándor and Verdugo, a healthy technique requires a pianist to follow a detailed list of what they should or should not do. In addition, a performer’s ‘musical intelligence’ is further complicated by the various expectations that surround this; being able to convey musical intelligence depends on what the performer and/or listener understand to be musically intelligent.

The weighty significance of a performer’s (and audience’s) expectation is explored by Naomi Cumming, who considers “the musician’s preparation for performance (both short- and long-term)” as being where “‘habitual’ modes of expressive action are formed as responses to particular styles.”¹⁰¹ A performer’s years of extensive physical training “to the formation of culturally sanctioned sounds” develops various habits of *style*, and form part of what is required to be a performer.¹⁰² Here, Cumming’s notion of a musical habit signifies what a performer and audience have come to believe about the music they are playing, which must acknowledge the convention that surrounds its particular style.¹⁰³ Interpretation, and thereby performance, involves this acknowledgement from both the performer and listener.¹⁰⁴ In reference to what she terms as Charles Sanders Peirce’s “semiotic philosophy”,¹⁰⁵ Cumming positions bodily movements as creating material sound that represents something beyond its physical and material literality. In her example, for a violin to sound like a singing voice requires an acknowledgement of the convention that allows this

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Gritten, “Dismantling the demands of performing”, 166

¹⁰⁰ Mackie, *Rethinking Piano Performance*, 60

¹⁰¹ Naomi Cumming, *The Sonic Self: Musical Subjectivity and Signification* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 21

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 29

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 28

to be a possibility. A habit is therefore contextual – in this circumstance, musical and educational – and, as Cumming describes, is a “sign” for something beyond the physical sound production of the instrument. Importantly, it is interpretation that allows this to be the case: “[w]ithout interpretation, no material sound produced by a non-human instrument can be heard as a voice.”¹⁰⁶

The Interpretation of Experimental Music

To shift towards the performance and interpretation of experimental music, and my own practice, Philip Thomas argues that an “[i]nterpretation [of experimental music] must be defined by the way in which a performer responds to a score.” Here, he includes “the idiosyncrasies of the performer’s technique ... the accumulation of years of training (most usually for players of notated music from within the classical music mould of practical exams, competitions, universities and the Academy).”¹⁰⁷ Thomas acknowledges that a performer and their performance embody the particularness of their musical upbringing, which forms part of their interpretation. However, he advocates “more significantly ... the way in which the performer understands and acts upon the score itself as the defining sole context of the interpretation.”¹⁰⁸ He argues that performing “much score-based experimental” music involves *removing* what is typically associated with performing traditionally notated music – “issues of projecting unity, connectivity, intelligibility and so on”¹⁰⁹ – that have developed a performer’s idiosyncratic technique. Thomas advocates David Tudor’s use of “the term ‘make actions’ to describe what one does when playing music; it shrugs off centuries of tradition, schools of technique ... and dismisses the mystique of ‘interpretation’.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 29. Chapter Five outlines a discussion of imaginative interpretation in relation to Hellaby’s analysis of performances of J. S. Bach’s *Toccatina in D major* BWV 912. Hellaby, *ibid.*, 68

¹⁰⁷ Philip Thomas, “A Prescription for Action”, in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Experimental Music*, ed. James Saunders (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 79

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 78

Thomas's approach resembles Pace's literalist approach as explored earlier, which restricts a performer's responses to those that only relate to the score: "the score should not only be sufficient for all that the performer needs but should rule out external imposing factors such as matters of style and authenticity."¹¹¹ As part of this research, I explored whether a performer is able to 'shrug off' whatever their performing habits may be, perhaps their training, performance conventions and/or embodied dispositions. Initially, each project adopted a 'loose' experimental approach to the creation of the music to explore *how* 'shrugging-off' my performing habits could be done. We identified my performing habits and created music that explored an acceptance or a removal of these habits. Each project created a certain set of circumstances that would produce a particular 'response' in my body that manifests in performance. In regards to an experimental approach, this allowed us to maintain Thomas's "interpretative position" that is "devoted to the actions required by the score";¹¹² the nature of my response to the score demonstrated whether I was, indeed, able to 'shrug off' my performing habits. However, as will be discussed in the chapters that outline the individual projects, it became apparent that I could not 'shrug off' what I considered as my performing habits, nor have the desire to. I found these aspects of my performing activity to be crucial to the research and for the creative development of the artistic work.

The Subjective Experience of the Performer as Artistic Output

Returning to the earlier discussion of subjective and objective considerations of the performing body, developing an understanding of my performing habits shaped a subjective perspective. As explored, these habits could be considered as problematic, relating to Leech-Wilkinson's description of the 'disturbed' ideology of Western Classical Music,¹¹³ or unavoidable, conditioned responses that I resort to in order to 'survive' a performance. Cumming's notion of habits of style, including the complexity of musical habits that are

¹¹¹ Ibid., 80. A literalist interpretation is explored in the section on my project with Monica Pearce in Chapter Four.

¹¹² Thomas, "A Prescription for Action", 80

¹¹³ Leech-Wilkinson, *Challenging Performance*, 12

formed through preparation and education,¹¹⁴ point to the question of whether ‘externally imposed’ factors are indeed external. A performer’s idiosyncrasies, accumulated over years of training, may be (after Thomas) ‘external’: “imposing factors such as matters of style and authenticity.”¹¹⁵ For the performer, it is unclear as to what is external because the habituated nature of these factors feels distinctly internal. However, this very confusion, between the boundaries of intentions and habits that are always made in response to ‘a score’, reveals the subjective performer. As mentioned earlier, Coessens and Östersjö view the imposition of such factors – “mostly unintended, nonconscious input”¹¹⁶ – as forming different ‘resistances’ that a performer ‘plays’ with, producing a “resonating interaction”.¹¹⁷ Once again, in relation to Auslander’s musical “personae”, Laws recognises the process of “identity formation”¹¹⁸ and “the complexities of the process by which a performing self might emerge and the significant agency of other entities in the process, the other actors in the network of interaction that constitutes even solo performance.”¹¹⁹ Significantly, it was this specific site of interaction, between this body and various forms of resistance, that each project artistically (and experimentally) explored through performance.

Introducing the Feldenkrais Method

To understand the specific relevance, purpose and meaning of my movements in performance, I considered their ‘function’ in the context of each artistic project. This specified a notion of subjectivity as the functional actions I make in relation to specific interactions. The Feldenkrais Method provided a suitable approach for exploring my actions as its aim is to improve a person’s function through exploring how their body moves as it interacts with something else. The Method is grounded in the meaningful and “essential” nature of movement, or “self-direction”,¹²⁰ which positions movement as an embodiment of

¹¹⁴ Cumming, *The Sonic Self*, 21

¹¹⁵ Thomas, “A Prescription for Action”, 80

¹¹⁶ Coessens and Östersjö, “Habitus and the Resistance of Culture”, 335

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 338

¹¹⁸ Catherine Laws, “Being a Player”, 94

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹²⁰ Moshe Feldenkrais, *The Elusive Obvious* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1981), 14

intention that serves a particular function.¹²¹ Based on this fundamental understanding, the Feldenkrais Method provided a framework with which to consider the significance of my intended movements in performance, including their relation to my ‘functioning’, their relation to interaction, and their effects on the creative output of each project. As I practiced the Feldenkrais Method, I developed my bodily “self-knowledge”,¹²² which, in turn, contributed to the development of my performative knowledge and the artistic knowledge of each project. This was enhanced by each project’s collaborative aspect, particularly as the Feldenkrais Method’s positioning of function relates to a person’s interaction with their environment. As such, I combined phenomenological considerations of the performer¹²³ with their specific situation in a specific environment, finding that my movements had relevance, meaning and purpose (for me) but in relation to the artistic practices that were carried out in each individual project.

¹²¹ Sheets-Johnstone notes that intended movements belong to “animate bodies that, precisely in virtue of their forming distinctive repertoires of meaningful movement, are *mindful bodies*.” Maxine Sheet-Johnstone, “Movement: What Evolution and Gesture Can Teach Us About Its Centrality in Natural History and Its Lifelong Significance”, *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* XLIV (2019): 240

¹²² Richard Shusterman, *Performing Live: Aesthetic Alternatives for the Ends of Art* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2000), 180. This will be explored further in Chapter Two.

¹²³ This relates to Doğantan-Dack’s phenomenological perspective of the performing body: “an embodied, enactive and ecological perspective on the nature of the human subject.” Mine Doğantan-Dack, “In the beginning there was gesture: Piano Touch and the Phenomenology of the Performing Body”, in *New Perspectives on Music and Gesture* ed. Anthony Gritten and Elaine King (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 244

Chapter Two

An Exploration of the Feldenkrais Method and How it Revealed this Functioning Performing Body

The Feldenkrais Method underpinned my PhD's creative practice research: it provided a practical and theoretical tool with which to explore the functionality of the movements I make in performance. The Method, with its aim of improving the "effective and efficient"¹²⁴ delivery of actions carried out by the body by locating its habitual ways of moving, was significant for understanding the 'function' of my actions in relation to the interactions I encounter in performance: 'function' in Feldenkrais's terms pertains to "the interaction of the person with the outside world or the self with the environment."¹²⁵ The Feldenkrais Method's treatment of habits, including how they relate to function, provided an understanding of *my* performing habits. As will be explained, through observing how my performing habits related to the particular situation and the many interactions that this involves, I considered whether they could be considered as functional. This developed an understanding of movement that formed a basis for artistic exploration in the collaborative work.

To continue to situate my investigation, this chapter will explain and discuss various aspects to the Feldenkrais Method and their relation to my developing understanding of the performing body. The first section will explore some of the practical and theoretical components outlined in the Feldenkrais Method that informed this development: details of certain exercises, their purpose and efficacy in developing an awareness of habitual movement, and how they relate to Feldenkrais's theoretical frameworks, particularly his notion of the self-image. It is notable that some of the concepts of the Method bear similarity to recent ideas in certain aspects of phenomenology and perhaps especially

¹²⁴ Patricia A. Buchanan and Beverly D. Ulrich, "The Feldenkrais Method: A Dynamic Approach to Changing Motor Behaviour," *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport* 72, no. 4 (2001): 315

¹²⁵ "Standards of Practice," Section 1.4

embodiment theory, particularly that of body image and body schema.¹²⁶ Understanding these related but different perspectives on how the body functions provided me with a broader understanding of how I function in performance. Following this, I exemplify Alan Fraser’s application of the Feldenkrais Method to his piano teaching practice, which provided me with a practical, specifically pianistic, understanding of the Method; this then influenced my own experimentation with the Method as I learned and played Ray Evanoff’s ‘When I’ for piano. The chapter concludes by detailing a performance analysis of ‘When I’ based on aspects of my learning that were informed by the Feldenkrais Method. Specifically, this includes details that were then explored further in the collaborative projects.

Although much of this chapter is informed by Feldenkrais’s writings and research that examines the efficacy and applicability of the Method in therapeutic and creative settings, it is also informed by my personal experience of its practice. Throughout the PhD, I developed a regular practice, participating in symposiums, workshops and classes with Feldenkrais practitioners,¹²⁷ in person and online¹²⁸, while also working by myself, guided by recordings available online¹²⁹ or by using exercises from Feldenkrais’s various texts.

¹²⁶ Shaun Gallagher (2013) provides a key explanation of body image and body schema. De Preester and Knockaert (2005) explore multidisciplinary aspects of body image and body schema. De Preester (2007) takes this further to include performance perspectives that are more relevant to this PhD.

¹²⁷ I first practiced the Feldenkrais Method with Markus Wenninger after meeting him at Internationales Musikinstitut Darmstadt in 2008. I have studied with Caroline Scott since 2009 at her studio in Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire. During my research, we met monthly for one-to-one lessons and weekly for group online lessons. I studied with Alan Fraser as part of his Piano Institute in November 2019, the details of which are discussed later.

¹²⁸ Practices of Freedom: Feldenkrais and the Moving Performer Symposium, Bath Spa University, June 13, 2020; “Reducing Pain and Injury in Practice and Performance,” (Awareness Through Movement lesson, One Method: Many Ways – Daily Feldenkrais for Musicians during International Feldenkrais Awareness Week, 12 May, 2020); “From Feldenkrais to Improvised Movement and Writing” (workshop, Moving Pieces Collective, 20 February 2021)

¹²⁹ “Listen to Lessons”, *Feldenkrais UK*, 2023, accessed October 8, 2023, https://www.feldenkrais.co.uk/explore/listen-to-lessons/?audio_year=2020#list

A Method that Reveals my Habitual Ways of Moving

Founded by Moshe Feldenkrais (1904-1984), the Feldenkrais Method comprises numerous exercises that aim to improve the “effective and efficient”¹³⁰ delivery of actions carried out by the body. Each exercise explores an action by breaking down the discrete movements involved and bringing attention to their different aspects. This attention increases overall awareness of how an action is carried out by the body, revealing habitual or preferred ways of moving. Such awareness can be widened to parts of the body that contribute indirectly to this action, or to unnecessary muscular tension that has developed over time in its habitual carrying out. According to the Feldenkrais Method, attuning to the detail of how one’s body moves provides information about its habits; this information then allows the body to learn and self-organise, or self-educate.¹³¹ Specifically, Feldenkrais emphasised that this awareness involves a careful *sensing* of how the body moves,¹³² whilst providing the body with a ‘pause for thought’, where an intention is more able to manifest in a resulting execution. As Feldenkrais noted, “[t]his pause makes it possible to examine what is happening within us at the moment when the intention to act is formed as well as when it is carried out. The possibility of delaying action – prolonging the period between the intention and its execution – enables man to learn to know himself.”¹³³ In music performance, such a ‘pause’ widens the gap between an intention and the resulting action, providing a performer with a brief moment of objectivity before they carry out a movement.

Feldenkrais described his Method as a series of lessons “designed to improve ability”.¹³⁴ The lessons place a participant in the role of student, serving them with a learning opportunity with respect to how they are carrying out an action; Feldenkrais believed that this learning could apply to other situations as his “goal [was] to help people become self-directed learners who can apply the perceptual-motor skills and exploratory strategies teachers

¹³⁰ Buchanan and Ulrich, “The Feldenkrais Method: A Dynamic Approach”, 315

¹³¹ Cliff Smyth, “Feldenkrais Method and Health: Phenomenological Perspectives,” *Feldenkrais Research Journal* 5 (2016): 3

¹³² Feldenkrais, *Awareness Through Movement* (New York: Harper Collins, 1972), 58

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 47

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 57

believe to be fostered by Feldenkrais lessons to a variety of learning situations.”¹³⁵ Practically, these lessons may be viewed as exercises¹³⁶ that target different regions of the body. This includes distal regions – extremities such as the toes – and proximal, central regions – such as the muscular structure of the torso, including the muscles and ribs that support the movements of the lungs. Different areas of the body are incorporated into a lesson depending on the action that is being explored. Simultaneously, though, Feldenkrais argued that the whole body must be considered when improving any action: “the cooperation of the whole system is essential in optimal function and movement; when any one part does more than its share of the work, there is likely to be a breakdown, overuse and/or pain.”¹³⁷

In the Feldenkrais Method, regular performance of different lessons is encouraged to maintain physical and mental health or to aid an existing practice, such as theatre, dance, music, or sport.¹³⁸ Whether understood as lessons or exercises, their purpose is to develop a “conscious knowledge”¹³⁹ of how the body moves, or, as Lori Myers notes, “enhanced kinesthetic recognition”.¹⁴⁰ Both terms describe an increase in awareness of the body that provides a foundation for improvement: “detailed awareness of how a person currently organizes a solution to a movement problem is considered to be foundational to and seamless with improvement.”¹⁴¹ Cultivating this awareness allows learning to take place,¹⁴² which Feldenkrais referred to as organic learning.¹⁴³

The Feldenkrais Method sits alongside other somatic practices, such as those developed by Thomas Hanna (1928-1990), Ida Rolf (1896-1979) and F. M. Alexander (1869-1955).

Although the purpose of this research was not to compare the Feldenkrais Method with

¹³⁵Buchanan and Ulrich, “The Feldenkrais Method: A Dynamic Approach”, 316

¹³⁶ Feldenkrais, *Awareness Through Movement*, 63

¹³⁷ Lori Myers, “Application of neuroplasticity theory through the use of the Feldenkrais Method with a runner with scoliosis and hip and lumbar pain: A case report,” *Journal of Bodywork & Movement Therapies* 20 (2016): 305

¹³⁸ Smyth, “Feldenkrais Method and Health”, 5

¹³⁹ Feldenkrais, *The Elusive Obvious*, 94

¹⁴⁰ Myers, “Application of neuroplasticity theory”, 303

¹⁴¹ Buchanan and Ulrich, “The Feldenkrais Method: A Dynamic Approach”, 316

¹⁴² Myers, “Application of neuroplasticity theory”, 303

¹⁴³ Feldenkrais, *The Elusive Obvious*, 29. This will be returned to later in this chapter.

other somatic practices, it is worth acknowledging the overlap, especially with Alexander Technique, but also to note a key difference. Both Feldenkrais and Alexander developed approaches that notice habitual ways of moving in order to improve “the sensory appreciation of the use of ... mechanisms which [are] associated with the improvement in functioning throughout [the] organism.”¹⁴⁴ Part of the Alexander Technique involves ‘inhibiting’ the body’s habitual reactions to stimuli, which often involve “a use of the self which [*feels*] right, but [is], in fact, too often wrong for [the] purpose.”¹⁴⁵ Improvement in functioning is then achieved through “conscious employment of [the] primary control” of the body, which is “a certain use of the head and neck in relation to the use of the rest of the body”.¹⁴⁶ For Alexander, maintaining a “particular alignment of the head, neck and back” that is “ideal” allows “the rest of the body/self [to] fall into place.”¹⁴⁷ For Feldenkrais, there was no ‘ideal’ use of the body, as he considered effective functional movement as being relative to an individual that is moving whilst interacting with the environment. As will be discussed throughout this chapter, this understanding of movement was vital for the development of my research.

Improving Movement Function

In his discussion of attentional focus in motor learning and performance in relation to the Feldenkrais Method, Josef Mattes describes the effective delivery of an action as “improving movement function.”¹⁴⁸ In this, he includes the improvement of “simple activities of daily life, through being able to deal with a physical handicap ... to efficient and effective movement in life-or-death situations”.¹⁴⁹ According to Feldenkrais, an improvement of movement function frees an action from “tension and superfluous effort”.¹⁵⁰ This is because

¹⁴⁴ F. M. Alexander, *The Use of Self*, 2nd ed., (United Kingdom: Chaterson, 1946), 32

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 46

¹⁴⁷ Jen Tarr, “Habit and conscious control: Ethnography and embodiment in the Alexander Technique”, *Ethnography* 9, no. 4 (2008): 482

¹⁴⁸ Josef Mattes, “Attentional Focus in Motor Learning, the Feldenkrais Method, and Mindful Movement”, *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 123, no. 1 (2016): 260

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Feldenkrais, *Awareness Through Movement*, 87

“the resulting ease makes for greater sensitivity and better discrimination”, which is necessary for the body to learn: the practitioner “will now be able to identify unnecessary effort even in actions that formerly seemed easy to him”, which will provide him with “greater ease in action.”¹⁵¹

This removal of superfluous effort eases the movement and allows for a ‘better’ action with its goal more ‘successfully’ achieved. The problematic nature of the terms ‘better’ and ‘successful’ are to be understood as being relative to a particular body that is carrying out a particular action. As defined by the Feldenkrais Method’s *Standards of Practice*, the Method maintains a broad and varied applicability that does not specify particular actions: it “is an approach to working with people which expands *their* repertoire of movements, enhances awareness, improves function and enables people to express *themselves* more fully.”¹⁵² [my italics]. This definition does not specify a particular intention or purpose of action. It does not presume a person to have *a* function; importantly, it does not presume *how* they should function. In this respect, function is relative, based on Feldenkrais’s definition of function as “the interaction of the person with the outside world or the self with the environment.”¹⁵³ Function serves a particular action, carried out by a particular body, in a particular situation, in a particular moment. Improved function is relevant and available to all bodies that interact, which involves incredibly varied circumstances. An action carried out ‘better’, or a goal more ‘successfully’ achieved, is relative to individual circumstance. Feldenkrais explains this in reference to his frequent use of the words ‘better’ and ‘more human’ when describing what ‘improvement’ is: “These apparently simple words do not mean the same thing to all of us. The things a handicapped person cannot do have a different meaning to him than to a healthy person.”¹⁵⁴

This understanding of function, then, focuses on the significance of the subjective experience of a particular body and action, where improved functioning is understood from the unique perspective of the individual. The notion of improved function, therefore, is

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² “Standards of Practice of the *Feldenkrais Method*”, Section 1.2

¹⁵³ “Standards of Practice of the *Feldenkrais Method*”, Section 1.4

¹⁵⁴ Feldenkrais, *The Elusive Obvious*, 4

always contingent upon the extent to which it serves a particular moment; to consider it retrospectively removes the significance it had at the time. The relevance of the situation of action, 'in-the-moment', highlights the Method's focus on the attention and awareness of the body whilst moving, which includes its relation to an environment: by breaking an action down into the movements involved and bringing attention to their different aspects as they are happening, the body is more equipped to monitor and manage how it functions *as* it carries out an action.

Through observing my intentions and their relation to various interactions involved in the performing situation, I was able to develop an understanding of how and why I move the way I do at the piano. The explorative nature of the Feldenkrais Method meant I could observe my movements *as they are* in each moment of performance, both in terms of this body as it performs, rather than some imposed ideal, and in relation to the changing conditions of the environment as I perform. This enabled an understanding of the functionality of my movements as being constitutive of my performing activity, and subsequently their consideration as artistic material as explored in collaboration.

A Feldenkrais Lesson

'Landing' as a Proprioceptive Frame of Reference

In order to explain more precisely how the body increases awareness of its habits through the Feldenkrais Method, the following section examines what takes place in a typical lesson. It is common practice to begin a Feldenkrais lesson with some initial observations of the body to notice how it has 'naturally' arranged itself; depending on the exercise, this could take place lying down on the floor or sat on a chair. In her Feldenkrais session for musicians titled "Reducing Pain and Injury in Practice and Performance", Yeu-Meng Chan invites participants to undertake a "little scan" of the body, noting the length of the arms and legs,

and the positioning of the spine.¹⁵⁵ She focuses on the positioning of the arms in relation to the torso, inviting participants to:

Be curious as to where you've positioned your arms, as in, are they very near your torso? Are they far away from your torso? Is one closer to your torso than the other? And how have you chosen to place your hands on the floor? Are you resting on the palms of your hands? Or the little finger? Or perhaps the back of your hands?¹⁵⁶

It is important to note that these observations of the body do not involve directly looking at it. Rather, the observations draw on an internal sense, using proprioception: the perceptual system focused on the body's spatial relations.¹⁵⁷ José Luis Bermúdez notes that "[r]eceptors in the skin, muscles, tendons, and joints, operating in conjunction with the vestibular system, yield proprioceptive information about bodily position and movement that is crucial in orienting and acting within the world."¹⁵⁸ The proprioceptive system interconnects with the exteroceptive system as the body moves through the world¹⁵⁹ compiling a network of conscious and non-conscious pathways.¹⁶⁰

In my Feldenkrais lessons with Caroline Scott, this preliminary, proprioceptive, inner sensing of the body at the beginning of an exercise was referred to as 'landing'. The body 'as it has landed' is sensed and mentally noted, providing a frame of reference for recognizing any change of movement function. As well as noticing the 'natural' position it has adopted, how it feels is also acknowledged; for example, can it feel tension, warmth, or comfort?¹⁶¹ A

¹⁵⁵ Yeu-Meng Chan, "Reducing Pain And Injury In Practice And Performance", YouTube video, 52:35, posted by "Feldenkrais-Essex," May 14, 2020, accessed October 8, 2023, <https://youtu.be/UmOmQ5C7LDI>, 05:00-09:01

¹⁵⁶ Yeu-Meng Chan, 08:22-09:01

¹⁵⁷ Carl Ginsburg, *The Intelligence of Moving Bodies: A Somatic View of Life and its Consequences* (Santa Fe, NM: AWAREing Press, 2010), 64

¹⁵⁸ José Luis Bermúdez, "Ecological Perception and the Notion of Nonconceptual Point of View", in *The Body and the Self*, ed. José Luis Bermúdez, Anthony Marcel, and Naomi Eilan (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), 154

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ginsburg, *The Intelligence of Moving Bodies*, 64

¹⁶¹ Yeu-Meng Chan, 08:44-09:01

Feldenkrais exercise ends by noting these aspects again and comparing them with how they felt at the beginning. Recognizing any differences contributes to the building of an awareness of the body, particularly its proprioception. This exploration is highly subjective, drawing on the experience of an individual body and its circumstance. Once again, improved functioning is to be understood from this unique perspective.

Sensing the difference between two physical states allows the body to make a “discernment”, which Feldenkrais viewed as an imperative for learning.¹⁶² In their review of the effectiveness of the Feldenkrais Method, Susan Hillier and Anthea Worley recognise the role of discernment for “*learning how to learn*”: “perceptual discernments are predicated on a judgement that is positive (pleasurable, easy, and with less effort) compared with experiencing a less favourable feedback signal such as pain, strain, or discomfort.”¹⁶³ In the Feldenkrais Method, discernment of physical states affords options for movement; when an action is then repeated, the body will be able to ‘choose’ the ‘better’ option. These choices are unconscious¹⁶⁴ but are born of the organic learning process and are based on the information received via attentive sensing and awareness.

The Bell Hand

An specific example of a Feldenkrais lesson is the Bell Hand.¹⁶⁵ Once the body has ‘landed’, a participant opens and closes their hand whilst paying attention to how slowly and smoothly this can be undertaken. The tips of the fingers and thumbs are brought together in the centre of the palm, mimicking the opening and closing of a flower. Moving attentively and slowly may feel “difficult” for different people, which Feldenkrais suggested “comes from the fact that these varying degrees of clarity create a discontinuity in the flow of images we

¹⁶² Feldenkrais, *Awareness Through Movement*, 58

¹⁶³ Susan Hillier and Anthea Worley, “The Effectiveness of the Feldenkrais Method: A Systematic Review of the Evidence,” *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, 2015: 1

¹⁶⁴ Smyth, “Feldenkrais Method and Health”, 12

¹⁶⁵ Yeu-Meng Chan uses the Bell Hand exercise as part of her “Reducing Pain and Injury in Practice and Performance” lesson, 15:33-15:50

have of these bodily parts.”¹⁶⁶ Monitoring the slow movement of the hand in the Bell Hand exercise increases its “clarity”¹⁶⁷ through awareness, which, over time and through practice, reduces superfluous effort. As the hand moves through the multiple positions and angles involved, it is possible to observe the minute details of this movement: “More delicate and improved control of movement is possible only through the increase of sensitivity, through a greater ability to sense differences.”¹⁶⁸

The aim of this exercise – and, indeed, most Feldenkrais exercises – is maintaining an easy kinaesthetic quality whilst moving. Cliff Smyth suggests this could be:

(a) to reduce effort to only the level necessary, (b) to make the movement as smooth as possible, (c) to work well within the limits of their range of movement, (d) unless the movement needs to be ballistic, to make the movement “reversible” (be able to change direction at any time), (e) to make the movement at an even speed (without sudden acceleration or deceleration), and (f) breathe easily, or have appropriate use of the breath with the movements.¹⁶⁹

Feldenkrais understood moving slowly as creating “the conditions in which a nervous system – or, rather, a person – can learn most easily”.¹⁷⁰ This is noted by theatre practitioner Victoria Worsely, who is also a Feldenkrais practitioner: “while the Method uses a lot of small, slow movement, it is for the sake of learning, and not for the sake of always moving slowly and gently.”¹⁷¹ Moving slowly reduces discomfort, therefore, frees awareness to hover around previously undetected areas; as Feldenkrais practitioner Carl Ginsburg notes, “Discomfort and painfulness capture the attention and thereby reduce or eliminate sensory awareness.”¹⁷² The simplicity of the Bell Hand exercise – the opening and closing of the fingers – means it can be applied to many different situations and activities. Feldenkrais practitioner Margaret Haye notes examples as diverse as helping a boy with cerebral palsy

¹⁶⁶ Feldenkrais, *Embodied Wisdom: The Collected Papers of Moshe Feldenkrais*, ed. Elizabeth Beringer (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2010), 5

¹⁶⁷ A term used by Caroline Scott in my Feldenkrais sessions.

¹⁶⁸ Feldenkrais, *Awareness Through Movement*, 59

¹⁶⁹ Smyth, “Feldenkrais Method and Health”, 5

¹⁷⁰ David Zemach-Bersin, foreword from Feldenkrais, *Embodied Wisdom*, xvi

¹⁷¹ Victoria Worsely, *Feldenkrais for Actors: How to Do Less and Discover More* (London: Nick Hern Books, 2016), 9

¹⁷² Ginsburg, *The Intelligence of Moving Bodies*, 224

to communicate verbally, to the positive impact for a cellist with focal dystonia in her fourth finger.¹⁷³

*The “dynamics of our own movement”*¹⁷⁴

To challenge habits, the Feldenkrais Method encourages the observation of further regions of the body beyond the specific point of focus, even while a more localized movement is maintained: this constitutes the Feldenkrais Method’s whole body approach.¹⁷⁵ In addition, a lesson often uses mental imagery to aid such an exploration. For example, as part of another exercise,¹⁷⁶ Yeu-Meng Chan invites students to imagine their hand as a paint brush made of silk: they move as if ‘painting’ their leg. The mental image of movement is distinct and detailed, formed by attending to the nature of the action – to paint – and the material of the paint brush – silk. Moreover, it induces a particular quality of movement – or “dynamic”¹⁷⁷, in Sheets-Johnstone’s terms – in the fingers and thumb, while invoking further regions of the body.

Sheets-Johnstone articulates such observation as “attuning to” the qualitative character of movement, which might include “its smoothness, its abruptness, its arcing trajectory, its swiftness, its constrictedness, its jaggedness, its intensity”.¹⁷⁸ She argues that these qualitative characters constitute a movement’s “dynamic”, and that such attunement is “critical to what we accomplish or do not accomplish with respect to ‘things’ or ‘creations.’”¹⁷⁹ Through attention to these dynamics in the processes of artistic creation, “we have the possibility of becoming more keenly kinaesthetically informed and astute.”¹⁸⁰

¹⁷³ Margaret Kaye, “The hand as the human outer brain”, *Margaret Kaye: Feldenkrais Practitioner*, 2023, accessed October 8, 2023, https://www.feldenkrais.net.au/?page_id=14

¹⁷⁴ Sheets-Johnstone, “Bodily Resonance”, 21

¹⁷⁵ Yeu-Meng Chan, 15:50-16:30. Chan encourages combining the bell hand exercise with rolling the hand; she asks students to bring attention to the rest of the body.

¹⁷⁶ Yeu-Meng Chan, “Reaching with a Soft Hand”, *Feldenkrais UK*, 2023, accessed October 8, 2023, <http://www.feldenkrais.co.uk/audio.php>

¹⁷⁷ Sheets-Johnstone, “Bodily Resonance”, 21

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

In his discussion of the phenomenological aspects of the Feldenkrais Method, Cliff Smyth questions the extent “one’s intentionality (e.g. competitiveness ‘with oneself’ – a feeling that one could or should do more, feelings of incompetence or wanting to ‘do it right’, excessive striving, or disregard for one’s comfort)”¹⁸¹ impacts on the effectiveness of movement. For Feldenkrais, the adoption of a certain intentionality instils certain emotional habits, “habitual responses and patterns of thoughts”¹⁸² that are developed and integrated with the body’s “ways of moving... of feeling and being.”¹⁸³ According to his Method, a particularly self-critical intentionality disrupts an action, most often because it manifests as “tension and superfluous effort”,¹⁸⁴ but also, because of the unpleasant, even traumatic, emotional sensations that become associated with the action. This effort or anxiety, then, hinders effective movement because “force that is not converted into movement does not simply disappear, but is dissipated into damage done to joints, muscles, and other sections of the body used to create the effort.”¹⁸⁵

As a way to challenge this, the Feldenkrais Method encourages participants to adopt a different attitude whilst acting, such as “moving and attending to oneself without judgment, with an intention of care, or with a playful sense of curiosity.”¹⁸⁶ Worsley argues “you can see and feel the difference in breath, in muscle tone, in stance, even in someone’s eyes and voice when there is a shift in how they feel. And vice versa, when the person senses a physical shift, the way they are feeling almost always shifts with it.”^{187 188}

¹⁸¹ Smyth, “Feldenkrais Method and Health”, 6

¹⁸² Worsley, *Feldenkrais for Actors*, 165

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 166

¹⁸⁴ Feldenkrais, *Awareness Through Movement*, 87

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 58

¹⁸⁶ Smyth, “Feldenkrais Method and Health”, 5

¹⁸⁷ Worsley, *Feldenkrais for Actors*, 166

¹⁸⁸ Smyth notes the findings of Laumer, Bauer, Fichter and Milz, who found the Feldenkrais Method to be therapeutically effective for the treatment of people with eating disorders. The results demonstrated that “the effectiveness of the Feldenkrais Method can be concluded especially for the problematic zones typical for eating disorders (Garner, 1990), like hips, thighs and buttocks as well as torso and arms as described in the literature. The general physical appearance receives a more positive assessment and attitude which points to a generally improved body feeling and improved relationship with the own body.” Uwe Laumer, Manfred Bauer, Manfred Fichter and Helmut Milz, “Therapeutic Effects of the Feldenkrais Method (Awareness Through movement) in Eating Disorders”, *Feldenkrais Research Journal* 1 (2004): 13

To explore my performing habits, I developed an awareness of the way I move to locate traces of tension, superfluous effort or emotional sensations. This revealed certain “internal conflicts”¹⁸⁹ that related to different aspects of the performing environment, such as my physical relation to the piano; my production of sound; my perception of the score. As mentioned above, I was interested in exploring the subjective and often personal nature of these conflicts and their potential enhancement or disruption of my performing activity: this was to arrive at an understanding of functioning that is subjective and relates to a situated performing environment. What would happen if I fully permitted these conflicts into the performing environment? How would they be considered artistically as I explore them with others in various projects? To begin to answer these questions, I explored the origins of any conflicts in relation to Feldenkrais’s notion of the self-image, which, he argued, “governs our every act”.¹⁹⁰ As will be explored throughout this thesis, I revealed many traces of my development as a performer and what it means to be *this* performer. My self-exploration of the different movements I make in performance discovered different areas of conflicted yet meaningful functioning, whilst contributing to the collaborative artistic practice.

Feldenkrais’s Concept of the Self-Image

Feldenkrais’s notion of the self-image served as a framework for understanding some of the conflicts I noticed in performance, which often manifested as resistances to moving in a certain way. Feldenkrais developed his concept of the self-image to contextualise the way a body moves; he proposed that the self-image is the body’s personal and experiential frame-of-reference, based on previous life-long learning, that enables a body to develop a perception of itself, in relation to an environment, and informs how it acts. He “emphasize[d] that acting in the world involves knowing how and knowing one’s self in

¹⁸⁹ Moshe Feldenkrais, *The Potent Self* (Berkeley, CA: Frog Books, 1985), 8

¹⁹⁰ Feldenkrais, *Awareness Through Movement*, 3

action”,¹⁹¹ and that the self-image is revealed in the ways in which a body acts – how it walks, speaks, behaves, performs, and so on.¹⁹²

Feldenkrais argued that a self-image “is conditioned in varying degrees by three factors: heritage, education and self-education”,¹⁹³ the details of which will be explored below. In the early developing stages of his Method, Feldenkrais identified these factors and their shaping of a body’s self-image to develop an understanding of movement that relates an individual and their placement within a society. He considered certain aspects of society, most notably education, as shaping the way in which a body moves, and that this can create a “heightened blurring of identities.”¹⁹⁴ Indeed, as part of his Method, Feldenkrais encouraged an individual to build an awareness of their identity through noticing their unique way of moving. In relation to my research, my aim was to explore the factors that have conditioned the way I move; I used the Feldenkrais Method to observe any resistances that I noticed in myself, in performance, and relate them to an aspect of my self-image. In particular, as a classically trained pianist, I was interested in exploring the effects of my musical education on the way I move in performance.

Feldenkrais regarded the body’s heritage as “the most immutable”,¹⁹⁵ defining it as that with which a body is born: “the biological endowment of the individual – the form and capacity of his nervous system, his bone structure, muscles, tissue, glands, skins, sense – are all determined by his physical heritage long before he has any established identity.”¹⁹⁶ Significantly, Feldenkrais argued that heritage is what makes a body “a unique individual in physical structure, appearance, and actions.”¹⁹⁷ For him, valuing this individuality was important for improving functioning, as the nature of ‘improvement’ and functioning are relative to the individual: “if a man wishes to improve his self-image, he must first of all

¹⁹¹ Ginsburg, *The Intelligence of Moving Bodies*, 286

¹⁹² Feldenkrais, *Embodied Wisdom*, 3

¹⁹³ Feldenkrais, *Awareness Through Movement*, 3

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 5

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 3

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 4

learn to value himself as an individual, even if his faults as a member of society appear to him to outweigh his qualities.”¹⁹⁸

Feldenkrais recognised the impact of a society on the individual, particularly in terms of how a society’s conventions, beliefs, expectations or traditions may conflict with a body’s particular heritage. For him, the effects of a society manifest as a “pattern of concepts and reactions common to a specific society”,¹⁹⁹ which he termed as ‘education’. It is what the body is taught to believe as it grows and develops. It “instills a pattern of behavior and values.”²⁰⁰ Feldenkrais understood education as a framework with which to ‘improve’ a community of people more broadly,²⁰¹ as well as providing individuals with validation and space to “give expression to particular personal inclinations that are organic to [their] personality”²⁰² – in other words, with validation of their ‘heritage’. However, in his view, society’s “trend to uniformity”²⁰³ can mean that individual, inherited traits are opposed, challenged, or “debased”²⁰⁴. This may lead to the individual adjusting to a society, “either by suppression of the individual’s organic needs, or by the individual’s identification with the society’s needs”.²⁰⁵ Feldenkrais argued that while many people might find this situation satisfactory, such acceptance is “superficial” and “external”, not “revitalizing” and “organic”,²⁰⁶ manifesting as “anxiety and remorse” and engendering a constant urge to realise aspirations and desires.²⁰⁷ He went so far as to describe most adults as living behind “a mask of personality that the individual tries to present to others and himself.”²⁰⁸

To explore the tensions relating to a body’s heritage and education, Feldenkrais advocated self-education, which he viewed as “the active force that makes for individuality”.²⁰⁹ He

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 19

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 3

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 4

²⁰¹ Ibid., 5

²⁰² Ibid., 6

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 7

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 6

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 4

believed an individual has an innate capacity to act accordingly and that through self-education, namely by practicing his Method, they can “complete and clarify one’s self-image by paying attention to the spatial and temporal orientation of one’s body [and] bring about a growth in self-knowledge.”²¹⁰ Forming part of the self-image, self-education empowers an individual to overcome educational or societal imposition and choose how to control their actions.

“Compulsive” and “Spontaneous” actions

Feldenkrais asserted that two specific forms of action relate to the self-image. First, compulsive movements are made passively and without choice, “enacting partly our defiance of the habit and partly our compliance with it.”²¹¹ The body uses a habitually-learned pattern of movement, most likely learned through ‘education’, to carry out a compulsive action, often unconsciously: “[t]he habitual pattern shoves aside the intended movement pattern, but one does not have the least awareness of what is happening.”²¹² Here, the “habitual self-image has taken over” and despite the body’s intention to move in a certain way, the movement is “compulsively” hijacked.²¹³ Feldenkrais argued that this explains “why we find it so difficult to improve our bodily performance by focusing only on the learning of specific actions.”²¹⁴ A person perhaps detects a level of discomfort, even pain, whilst attempting a certain action. Despite this, they believe themselves to be acting appropriately, according to what they have been taught about the act, therefore continue to act the same way, regardless. This demonstrates how compulsive habits can manifest as unintended acts to the extent that there is a felt lack of control.

²¹⁰ Feldenkrais, *Embodied Wisdom*, 14

²¹¹ Feldenkrais, *The Potent Self*, 8

²¹² Feldenkrais, *Embodied Wisdom*, 16

²¹³ Feldenkrais provides a small exercise to demonstrate a compulsive, habitual movement: “Place the palm of your right hand behind your head and the palm of the left hand on your forehead and try to rotate the head right and left. Instead of rotating the head, many will rotate the head, eyes, arms, and torso right and left like a single block.” Feldenkrais, *Embodied Wisdom*, 16

²¹⁴ Feldenkrais, *Embodied Wisdom*, 10

Philosopher Richard Shusterman considers the manifestation of unintended actions and their relation to “effective will”²¹⁵ as part of his “somaesthetics”²¹⁶ manifesto: an aspect of his “embodied philosophy”.²¹⁷ Acknowledging various somatic practices, including the influence of the Feldenkrais Method and Alexander Technique,²¹⁸ Shusterman argues for a renewed philosophical understanding of the soma that is based on the heightened and invigorated lived experience of the body. This includes more focus on the “active, transformative”²¹⁹ body, its senses and emotions, and an increase in its awareness of habits; he terms this “somaesthetic awareness”.²²⁰ In relation to compulsive habits and their effect on performance, Shusterman considers a golfer who struggles to alter their technique: their “conscious will is unsuccessful because deeply ingrained somatic habits override it, and he does not even notice this failure because his habitual sense perception is so inadequate and distorted that it feels as if the action intended is indeed performed as willed.”²²¹ This may include the application of a ‘correct’ golfing technique that conflicts with an inherited, unchangeable aspect of the golfer’s physiology.²²² As with Feldenkrais’s discussion of compulsive action, the golfer continues to act in accordance with deeply ingrained habits. There is a clear parallel, here, with instrumental training, where goal-orientated, teacher-led learning forms a significant part of a performer’s education. The impact of such instrumental learning on the experience of the performer, and its relation to the Feldenkrais Method, is explored in more detail later in this chapter.

For Feldenkrais, such compulsive tendencies originate in how actions are initially learned, and as a result the actions might carry a particular negative or intense emotional association.²²³ Importantly, the body learned these actions through *interaction*; the nature of the interaction may have instilled an emotional response that continues to impinge on

²¹⁵ Shusterman, *Performing Live*, 139

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 138

²¹⁸ Ibid., 137

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Ibid., 140

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² This is also considered more extensively in the field of Sports Biomechanics. “Sports Biomechanics and Motor Control Research”, *Loughborough University*, 2023, accessed October 12, 2023, <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/microsites/ssehs/biomechanics/index.html>

²²³ Feldenkrais, *The Potent Self*, 8

the learned action. For the golfer, negative emotional associations may relate to the expectations or manner of a particular teacher, or the intensity of competing professionally; again, there is a parallel with instrumental training. According to Feldenkrais, such negative learning experiences instill anxiety in the body, which continues to be associated with the learned action²²⁴ and is “expressed through muscular tension”.²²⁵ As noted above, superfluous muscular tension will “reduce or eliminate sensory awareness”,²²⁶ thereby hindering the body’s ability to adjust. Ultimately, this inhibits effective and efficient movement.

Feldenkrais argued that through self-education, the body can reduce the anxious state embedded in compulsive actions, and that this then allows for “spontaneous” movement. He defines spontaneous actions as those “where we are left to ourselves to work out our own way, as in learning to comply with the demands of our bodies”;²²⁷ this relates to his shaping of his Method that enables an individual to *learn how to learn* by focusing on their own senses and awareness. For Shusterman, this is “an individual’s felt improvement”²²⁸ that has “no fixed external standard, no stereotypical representation, of what good or improved body feeling must be.”²²⁹ Through obtaining necessary “knowledge of one’s own bodily dimension”²³⁰ whilst taking responsibility of actions, the body moves with more effective autonomy: “a better mastery of the will’s concrete application in behavior.”²³¹

Body Image and Body Schema

Feldenkrais’s concept of the self-image, including compulsive actions and spontaneous actions, may be compared with the more recent concepts of body image and body schema. In forming my specific practical approach to the collaborative work, I considered these

²²⁴ Ibid., 10

²²⁵ Ibid., 9

²²⁶ Ginsburg, *The Intelligence of Moving Bodies*, 224

²²⁷ Moshe Feldenkrais, *The Potent Self*, 8

²²⁸ Shusterman, *Performing Live*, 152

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ Ibid., 139

²³¹ Ibid.

concepts and their bearing on the elusive aspects of intentionality and function in performance; this developed a deeper understanding of the Feldenkrais Method whilst contributing to my notion of functioning in performance.

Body image and body schema are two concepts for understanding bodily “mechanisms”²³² that explore the “situatedness” of the “situated body”²³³. They provide two aspects to understanding the effect of a body’s particular situatedness and the “significant and experiential differences”²³⁴ this entails. Shaun Gallagher defines the body image as “a system of perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs pertaining to one’s own body”²³⁵ that serves the body with a unique perspective that supports its functioning. This may be understood as the body’s intentionality towards itself, where “[o]ne’s own body is the intentional *object* of a set of intentional states directed to it”.²³⁶ Body image, then, shapes the intention and, therefore, effect of an action. In contrast, Gallagher defines the body schema as “a system of sensory-motor capacities that function without awareness or the necessity of perceptual monitoring.”²³⁷ According to Helena De Preester, one particular function of the body schema “is to maintain posture and to move without *consciously* monitoring motor activity”.²³⁸ In music performance, the body schema supports the body’s developed execution of numerous complex and nuanced actions, allowing it to ‘survive’ a performance.²³⁹ To avoid confusion between the body image and body schema, Gallagher notes that the body image is how one’s body “appear[s] as part of one’s perceptual field”, whereas the body schema is how one’s body “constrain[s] or shape[s] the perceptual field”.²⁴⁰

²³² Helena De Preester, “To Perform the Layered Body – A Short Exploration of the Body in Performance”, *Janus Head* 9, no. 2 (2007):349

²³³ Shaun Gallagher, “Introduction: The Arts and Sciences of the Situated Body”, *Janus Head* 9, no. 2 (2007): 293

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 293

²³⁵ Shaun Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2013), 24

²³⁶ De Preester, “To Perform the Layered Body”, 355. Referencing Gallagher and Cole, “Body image and body schema in a deafferented Subject”, *The Journal of Mind and Behaviour* 16, no. 4 (1995): 371

²³⁷ Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind*, 24

²³⁸ De Preester, “To Perform the Layered Body”, 355

²³⁹ This was discussed in Chapter One.

²⁴⁰ Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind*, 17

De Preester uses the “conceptual/clinical/experimental tools of *body image* and *body schema*”²⁴¹ to consider aspects of the body in performance, suggesting that the performing body is “approached in terms of its constitutive layers ... enabl[ing] us to conceive of the mechanisms that make performances possible and operational, i.e. those bodily mechanisms that are implicitly or explicitly controlled or manipulated in performance.”²⁴² I applied her positioning of body image and body schema to my exploration of my functioning performing body, specifically, the habitual responses I make as I perform; using De Preester’s terminology, I considered these habits as bodily “layers” that house different actions, on “different levels of consciousness (and unconsciousness).”²⁴³ This positioned habits as being *necessary* for functioning, that I ‘switch to’, rather than avoid or remove. To view habits as such, I practiced the Feldenkrais Method to develop my somatic awareness, or self-knowledge, of my body as I performed.

The notions of body image and body schema cannot be directly mapped to Feldenkrais’s idea of the self-image, but there is some overlap. Ginsburg suggests that Feldenkrais’s self-image may be considered as a “dynamic interlocking”²⁴⁴ of body image and body schema. This interlocking is noticeable when the body learns and refines a skill,²⁴⁵ which involves switching between conscious attention (body image) and more automated activity (body schema).²⁴⁶

Body image has similarities with Feldenkrais’s articulation of the self-image’s ‘education’: to a certain extent, they both provide the body with “a pattern of behavior and values”²⁴⁷, or “perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs pertaining to one’s own body”.²⁴⁸ According to Feldenkrais, such patterning may manifest in ‘compulsive’ activity, which may relate to

²⁴¹ De Preester, “To Perform the Layered Body”, 365

²⁴² Ibid., 349

²⁴³ Shusterman, *Performing Live*, 315

²⁴⁴ Ginsburg, *The Intelligence of Moving Bodies*, 286

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Gallagher notes that “[f]ocused attention, or the lack of it, on specific parts of the body may alter postural or motor performance.” Gallagher, “Dimensions of Embodiment: Body Image and Body Schema in Medical Contexts”, *Handbook of Phenomenology and Medicine*, ed. by S. Kay Toombs (Dordrecht: Springer, 2002), 152

²⁴⁷ Feldenkrais, *Awareness Through Movement*, 4

²⁴⁸ Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind*, 24

Gallagher's specific understanding of the 'body image': as well as "the subject's *perceptual* experience of his/her own body", Gallagher includes "the subject's *conceptual* understanding (including folk and/or scientific knowledge) of the body in general ... and ... the subject's *emotional* attitude toward his/her own body."²⁴⁹ Furthermore, Gallagher states that such "conceptual and emotional aspects of body image are no doubt affected by various cultural and interpersonal factors"²⁵⁰, which bear similarity with the educational and societal factors that condition Feldenkrais's self-image.

Considering these overlapping perspectives contributed to a practical understanding of how and why I move at the piano. As I carried out the collaborative projects, my developed understanding enabled a full and tangible exploration of my movements, the experience of which fed into the artistic work. Gallagher notes that the concepts of body image and body schema are not absolute and that their experiential qualities are more nuanced and complex. He notes that the "content" of conceptual and emotional aspects of the body image "originates in perceptual experience",²⁵¹ signifying the body's perception of its situatedness in forming a 'self-view'. Furthermore, Gallagher notes that in "most instances, movement and the maintenance of posture are accomplished by the *close to automatic* performances of a body schema";²⁵² this suggests that most movements require some level of conscious awareness, even those that appear to be fully automatic, therefore, the body uses a subtle combination of body schema and image. As such, in practice, I considered my automatic movement as a way to notice how I was functioning: I questioned my level of control of a certain action, how this relates to a particular interaction, and the impact of any habits.

²⁴⁹ Gallagher, "Dimensions of Embodiment", 150

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Gallagher, "Dimensions of Embodiment", 150

²⁵² Ibid.

Organic Learning

Feldenkrais used the term *organic learning* for the type of learning that arises through self-education and self-knowledge. It embodies an individual's development of awareness through sensing; their discernment of different movements, a recognition of their own emotional conflicts, and – as Shusterman puts it – a trust in their “felt improvement”.²⁵³ For Feldenkrais, organic learning must take whatever time it needs: “you cannot alter the time, the sequence, or the length of it.”²⁵⁴ Consciously discerning a movement allows the body to detect the more ‘favourable’ option (pleasurable, easy, and with less effort), “guided only by the sensation of satisfaction when each attempt feels less awkward as the result of avoiding a former minor error which felt unpleasant or difficult.”²⁵⁵ In particular, “organic learning is ... unconcerned with any judgement as to the achievement of good or bad results. It has no obvious purpose of goal.”²⁵⁶

Feldenkrais's notion of organic learning differs from what he viewed as scholastic learning, often found in standardised education settings, that fits to “a desired goal” prescribed by a teacher, or organization:²⁵⁷ “[t]he teacher knows what he is teaching and where he leads his students. The students know what they learn and when they have achieved the learning to the teacher's satisfaction.”²⁵⁸ Such teacher-led learning is prominent in instrumental training, particularly where accordance with a particular tradition or pedagogy is considered to constitute a student's ‘success’. To explore organic and scholastic learning, and what this might mean in the context of a specific practice, the following section examines an example of the current use of the Feldenkrais Method as part of a piano training programme: my experience as a student at the Alan Fraser Piano Institute, in 2019. Fraser incorporates the Feldenkrais Method as part of a pedagogical and technical approach to piano performance. As a response to my experience at the Institute, I used the Feldenkrais Method to carry out my own performance analysis of Ray Evanoff's ‘When I’ for piano. The results of this analysis

²⁵³ Shusterman, *Performing Live*, 152

²⁵⁴ Feldenkrais, *Embodied Wisdom*, 81

²⁵⁵ Feldenkrais, *The Elusive Obvious*, 30

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁷ Feldenkrais, *The Elusive Obvious*, 31

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

shaped and defined a particular approach to performance that I took into the subsequent collaborations that formed the practice research in this doctorate. It also developed an understanding of the practical and technical affordances of the Feldenkrais Method.

Feldenkrais as applied to instrumental performance practice

In recent decades, artistic practitioners have trained to become Feldenkrais practitioners to establish holistic and ‘healthy’ teaching and performance practices, whilst broadening their artistic work.²⁵⁹ The Feldenkrais Method is more recognized in theatre and dance practices, particularly in other areas of Western Europe; however, more recently, musicians based in the UK have trained as Feldenkrais practitioners to develop specific practices that help other musicians with various aspects of their music making.²⁶⁰ For example, *Feldenkrais for Musicians* is a body of practitioners who work specifically with musicians, offering improvements in physical and mental performance as well as general well-being. By incorporating the Feldenkrais Method into an instrumental practice, they suggest, a musician will notice a “Reduction in tension and effort”, “Increased quality and range of movement” and “Increased mental clarity and enhanced learning skills”.²⁶¹ I was interested to see how the Feldenkrais Method, grounded in freeing the individual from imposed beliefs and ideals, could work in accordance with a classical piano practice. How could Feldenkrais’s processes of organic learning, driven by sensing subjective satisfaction rather than an externally prescribed goal, allow for the rigour that is found in a dedicated instrumental practice? Moreover, what constitutes the ‘improvement’ of an instrumentalist’s practice?

²⁵⁹ A key example is Anna Juren, who is a choreographer, dancer and performer. Her work looks “to expand the term choreography in engaging the body in different states of physical, sensorial, kinaesthetic and mental experiences, questioning the boundaries between private and public spheres”: this incorporates her practice as a Feldenkrais Practitioner. Anna Juren, *Performing Arts Research and Training Studios, School For Contemporary Dance*, 2023, accessed October 10, 2023, <https://www.parts.be/teacher/anne-juren>

²⁶⁰ Yeu-Meng Chan is a pianist, who came to the Feldenkrais Method after experiencing injury; Emma Alter is a violinist who uses Feldenkrais as part of her teaching practice.

²⁶¹ “Home”, *Feldenkrais: Resources for Musicians*, 2023, accessed October 10, 2023, <https://feldenkraisresourcesformusicians.co.uk/>

Alan Fraser's Piano Institute is an example of how Feldenkrais is being used in combination with a piano teaching practice. Fraser has developed a programme of study, aimed at advanced players, that incorporates his training in the Feldenkrais Method and T'ai Chi Chuan into a Western classical approach to performance and technique.²⁶² Graduates from his institute reportedly have achieved an "expanded range of tonal colour; deeper musical expression; increased speed and suppleness; other technical challenges resolved; complete injury recovery".²⁶³ As part of this PhD, I took part in Fraser's programme²⁶⁴ to explore whether his approach could inform my own understanding of the Feldenkrais Method, specifically as applied to piano technique and performance, and to consider what it might afford my investigation into a functioning body.

For me, the most significant part of Fraser's teaching was his musculoskeletal structural technique. It draws on the Feldenkrais Method's aim to reduce muscular tonus so that the "skeletal structure is able to fulfill its function."²⁶⁵ Based on the innate structure of the hand, this technique reorganizes the hand's muscular-skeletal function; in Fraser's words, "a functional hand is a potent hand".²⁶⁶ He regards "the hand as a mini-body"²⁶⁷ that walks on the keys with the "power and stability" of T'ai Chi walking.²⁶⁸ This partly relates to Fraser's disinclination towards relaxation and 'arm-weight' technique – an approach used by many modern pianists but first defined by Tobias Matthay (1858-1945)²⁶⁹, influenced by Rudolph Maria Breithaupt (1873-1945) and supported by William Mason (1826-1908). Rather than forcing the depression of the keys through a primary focus on the fingers, arm-weight technique encourages pianists to allow their arms to fall freely, harnessing their weight to support the fingers' depression of the keys.²⁷⁰ In line with advancements in knowledge of

²⁶² Alan Fraser, *The Craft of Piano Playing: A New Approach to Piano Technique*, 2nd ed., (Lanham/Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2011), 4

²⁶³ "Piano Somatics: Piano technique for the 21st century", *The Piano Somatics Institute*, 2016, accessed October 10, 2023, <https://www.alanfraserinstitute.com/institute.php>

²⁶⁴ This programme took place in Overveen, NL, 20-22 November 2019

²⁶⁵ Feldenkrais, *Embodied Wisdom*, 18

²⁶⁶ "Piano Somatics: Piano technique for the 21st century"

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁸ Fraser, *The Craft of Piano Playing*, 53

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 47

²⁷⁰ Mackie, *Rethinking Piano Performance*, 33

physiology in the early twentieth century, this ‘free falling’ constituted a shift “away from the old high finger school with its exceedingly energetic action and resulting tensions”.²⁷¹ More recently, a similar approach can be found in György Sándor’s free fall technique: Sándor argues that “[s]ince [gravity] is ever present, it is futile to ignore it: we might as well cooperate with it and save our own energy wherever possible.”²⁷²

Fraser argues that arm-weight technique produces a harsh sound: “You can hear the lack of functionality in a harsh, dead, weighted sound. The sound must be very carefully monitored and not just allowed to ‘sit’. A ‘sat’ sound is the result of habit and what we come to accept. We stop listening.”²⁷³ For Fraser, a ‘sat’ sound impinges on the soundboard, therefore he encourages students to imagine ‘grasping’ with their hand as they depress the keys: “[w]hen the grasping function of the hand is in action as it moves the key, the fewer compressive shocks are transmitted to the soundboard”.²⁷⁴ In addition, he argues too much reliance on gravity develops inactivity in the fingers, which dissipates energy to other parts of the body and forces them to compensate: “other parts must carry the load for this overly loose area. Here counterproductive tension in one place results not from over-contraction but from over-relaxation elsewhere!”²⁷⁵ As an alternative, Fraser encourages students to employ the innate structure of their hand to counteract the dead weight of the arm: “[t]he grasping action done while the hand lies on a flat surface evokes [a] curious phenomenon: the surface blocks the extremities from approaching one another, so instead the center of the hand rises, creating an arch structure.”²⁷⁶ This arch “possesses tremendous structural integrity, as long as it does not collapse”.²⁷⁷ This structural integrity means “[t]he weighted touch is mitigated by the *anti-gravity function* – the hand’s natural capacity (inherent in the grasping action) to carry the full weight of the arm effortlessly, elegantly on key.”²⁷⁸

²⁷¹ Reginald R. Gerig, *Famous pianists and their technique*, new ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 329

²⁷² Sándor, *On Piano Playing*, 37

²⁷³ Alan Fraser Institute Masterclass, 21 November 2019. Fraser notes a similar point in his book *The Craft of Piano Playing*, 38-39

²⁷⁴ Alan Fraser, “At the Piano: The Hidden Physical Component in Listening,” *The Feldenkrais Journal* 32 (2020-2022), 44

²⁷⁵ Fraser, *The Craft of Piano Playing*, 40

²⁷⁶ Fraser, “At the Piano”, 44

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 47

²⁷⁸ “Piano Somatics: Piano technique for the 21st century”

At the institute, Fraser's focus on the function of my hand incorporated other areas of the Feldenkrais Method, particularly the association between sensing and learning. Drawing on Feldenkrais's whole-body approach to movement, Fraser effectively activated my hand's innate structure by bringing my awareness to other parts of my body, in particular, my shoulders. As part of his piano programme, Fraser led an Awareness Through Movement lesson, which follows a specific format in as outlined in the Feldenkrais Method. In a typical lesson, a Feldenkrais practitioner guides a student's attention to specific areas of their body; in Fraser's Awareness Through Movement lesson, my attention was brought to the connection between my shoulder and hand.²⁷⁹ His lesson encouraged me to sense the movements of my fingers in the area around my shoulder and neck. This increased sensitivity awakened a more detailed understanding of the movement in my fingers and supported me in continuing to explore his musculoskeletal technique.

Fraser's technical approach shares some elements with contemporary summaries of efficient movement in piano playing, particularly in obtaining a balance between arm weight and finger action. Penelope Roskell suggests harnessing gravity in the movements used to activate the keys, to avoid using unnecessary force. Similarly to Fraser's approach, Roskell notes the "need to release the arm so as not to resist the force of gravity. The way we control the descent to the keyboard determines the quality of the sound produced."²⁸⁰ This is similarly explored by Lora Deahl and Brenda Wristen, who draw upon scientific understandings of "[a]xioms and laws from physics, biomechanics, and ergonomics [to] shed light on piano playing and help clarify how the body moves".²⁸¹ They consider how movement relates to a pianist's performing environment, pointing to a need for "somatic awareness as well as ergonomic concerns."²⁸²

²⁷⁹ This lesson was based on an Awareness Through Movement lesson titled the Periscope. It takes place lying sideways on the floor; the arm is positioned upright like a periscope and serves as a frame-of-reference throughout the lesson. "This lesson softens, mobilizes and integrates the use of the chest and shoulders." Nick Strauss-Klein, "The Periscope", *The Feldenkrais Project*, July 18, 2023, accessed October 10, 2023, <https://feldenkraisproject.com/lesson/periscope-1/>

²⁸⁰ Penelope Roskell, *The Complete Pianist: From healthy technique to natural artistry* (London: Peters Edition, 2020), 34

²⁸¹ Lora Deahl and Brenda Wristen, *Adaptive Strategies for Small-Handed Pianists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 52

²⁸² *Ibid.*, 39

In regards to sound, Roskell suggests a pianist can “control the drop, using partial release of muscles for a more gentle approach to the note.”²⁸³ However, in contrast to Fraser, she suggests a pianist may *choose* to “release muscles fully and drop with the full force of gravity onto the keyboard (free fall) for a full rich sound”.²⁸⁴ For Roskell, the free fall technique is still a possible approach, depending on the sound the performer wishes to produce.

Despite their detailing and contextualizing of a pianist’s technical and bodily apparatus, the above summarisations do not directly address *how* a pianist may develop control of a specific aspect to their movement. Although Deahl and Wristen allude to the impact of “[c]ognitive/psychomotor problems” that affect a pianist’s execution of their intended movement,²⁸⁵ they do not specifically provide guidance for how this may be improved.

At the time I attended the course of Fraser’s institute, my technique used arm weight, which I had learned from previous teachers.²⁸⁶ To Fraser’s ears, this was creating a harsh sound: the arm weight was, he said, causing my hand arch to collapse and this was affecting the tone quality. Using his knowledge of the repertoire I had brought with me to the institute,²⁸⁷ we explored how I could re-organise the structure of my hand and reduce the harshness of my sound. He demonstrated ‘good organization’ in his hand, but I struggled to consciously ‘raise’ my hand arch and form the shape he was modelling. He drew my attention to how the metacarpophalangeal joints could “stand up”²⁸⁸ to form the arch in his hand, but I could not make the ‘correct’ shape nor work out how to locate it within my movements. Simply forcing my hand into the required shape did not produce the desired effect, to the extent

²⁸³ Roskell, *The Complete Pianist*, 34

²⁸⁴ Ibid.

²⁸⁵ Deahl and Wristen, *Adaptive Strategies for Small-Handed Pianists*, 24

²⁸⁶ Much of this relates to György Sándor’s approach.

²⁸⁷ John Adams, *Phrygian Gates* (1977-78); Olivier Messiaen, *Catalogue d’Oiseaux – “Le Courlis Cendré”* (1956-58). I chose these pieces for their emphasis on stamina and extreme ranges of colour. I was also familiar with these pieces and was interested in discovering any habits I had developed.

²⁸⁸ Fraser, *The Craft of Piano Playing*, 63

that I struggled to play a single note whilst forming this shape. I found my first few lessons with Fraser frustrating, which he recognised and regretted.

This experience highlighted the impact of the methods used to teach piano technique, and we might relate this back to Feldenkrais's advocacy of organic learning processes that allow a student to learn at their own pace by attuning to their body. As mentioned earlier, Feldenkrais opposed scholastic learning because it requires a student to fit to an externally-prescribed goal. Notably, problematic effects of such learning have recently been found in research by Helena Gaunt into one-to-one instrumental tuition in a conservatoire. Gaunt found that some students had become too dependent on their teacher and struggled to find their own motivation: they "became overwhelmed with a desire to achieve the same things as the teacher, and lost touch with the sense of their own identity and path."²⁸⁹ This demonstrates that too much reliance on the perspective of the teacher can create a lack of self-knowledge in the student. In my experience, with Fraser's approach, his inclusion of Feldenkrais principles aims at an approach that teaches technique from a student perspective and as such it seems akin to Feldenkrais's organic learning. However, as Fraser acknowledged, the process of this requires time to allow his suggested changes to my technique to occur. I found that in my many private practice sessions following my lessons with Fraser, accompanied by further enquiry and exploration as part of the PhD, I was able to become familiar with his 'stand-up' technique.

Feldenkrais as applied to my own practice

My experience at Fraser's Institute demonstrates an explorative approach to teaching that combines a non-goal directed Feldenkrais practice with more conventionally classical musical performance techniques and pedagogy. The fundamental principles that are encountered in traditional instrumental training, with particular notions of rigour and

²⁸⁹ Helena Gaunt, "One-to-one tuition in a conservatoire: the perceptions of instrumental and vocal students," *Psychology of Music* 38, no. 2 (2009): 186

discipline, alongside certain expectations surrounding a performer, often do not allow for more intuitive and somatic approaches to instrumental technique. Indeed, dancer and Feldenkrais practitioner Thomas Kampe applies Feldenkrais to his dance practice to reveal the potentially harmful remnants of his pedagogical training. For him, Feldenkrais provides a form of “undoing”; he recognises “[s]omatic pioneers including Bess Mensendieck... or Moshe Feldenkrais... [who] directly articulated their concerns towards the repressive effects of culture on the embodiment of self, and also speculated on the impact of processes of undoing, de-culturing, or un-conditioning on the social field.”²⁹⁰ Fraser’s teaching, particularly its incorporation of similar processes of ‘undoing’,²⁹¹ focused on my existing way of playing and considered ways to ‘undo’ it. This shifted my dynamic with the keyboard, and I managed to adopt Fraser’s ‘stand up’ technique. More broadly, from my deepening understanding of Feldenkrais’s ideas, as set out above, in this PhD I used the Method to explore similar aspects of my technical and musical education which might be thought of (following Kampe) as ‘repressive’ and requiring some ‘undoing’. However, more pertinently to my research into how I function, I was interested in deliberately *turning to* the various oppositions, or “resistances”²⁹² that arose when applying the explorative practice of Feldenkrais to the strict, technical ‘demands’ of certain approaches to new music performance. Rather than immediately ‘undoing’ areas of conflict, my aim was to locate them then evaluate their impact on my technique.

Ray Evanoff’s ‘When I’ (2015-17) for piano

I began this by experimenting with the Feldenkrais Method whilst learning Ray Evanoff’s ‘When I’, the second piece from *Midway Through*, a set of seven pieces for solo keyboardist playing piano, prepared piano, toy piano, and music box (2015-17). It was written for pianist Mabel Kwan and performing it is a major undertaking for any pianist. Evanoff deliberately

²⁹⁰ Kirsty Alexander and Thomas Kampe, “Bodily undoing: Somatics and practices of critique”, *Journal of Dance & Somatic Practices* 9, 1 (2017): 4

²⁹¹ Fraser’s approach is influenced by his teacher Phil Cohen, whose teaching practice included processes of ‘unlearning’, rather than ‘undoing’, as a way to reinvigorate a musician’s relationship with their instrument. David Harder, “The Man Who Taught Me Unlearning”, *Inspired Work*, May 9, 2018, accessed July 10, 2023. <https://www.inspiredworkservices.com/the-man-who-taught-me-unlearning/>

²⁹² Coessens and Östersjö, “Habitus and the Resistance of Culture”, 338. See Chapter One.

used multiple keyboards to present the performer with different techniques and expose the nuanced changes of touch and sound production between instruments, sometimes occurring within the same movement. The inherent complexity of this instrumentation can be traced to Evanoff's inspiration for the piece: Dante's *Divine Comedy* and in particular the journey that Virgil undertakes. In his performance direction Evanoff writes "[j]ourneying through Hell is unsteady. Making art can also be unsteady.... sometimes one is grimly resolved (Virgil: 'Necessity, and not delight, impels us')." ²⁹³

The piece was composed in 2015-17 – prior to this PhD – but I worked on it because it contained composition elements that Evanoff was hoping to explore further in our collaboration, *Give*. More importantly for my research, 'When I' contains traditional and idiomatic forms of notation – time signatures, tempo markings, phrasing, rhythms, dynamics, articulations, and so on – that require similar technical approaches to Fraser. For the purpose of my PhD, I used this early experimentation of the Feldenkrais Method to experience Fraser's approach but through my practice. I chose 'When I', as opposed to other experimental works, for its use of traditional notation and its potential relatability to the concerns that Fraser addresses in his teaching. ²⁹⁴

To extend this experimentation of the Feldenkrais Method, I also chose 'When I' for its particularly complex use of traditional notation. Evanoff's composition may be thought of as 'complex', but it is a type of complexity that includes numerous details within a limited space, be this a reduced amount of measured time, or a narrow dynamic spectrum. For example, in a section of four-part counterpoint from 'When I', as shown on the top line in figure 1, the various notational details include layered irrational rhythms, sometimes consisting of micro rhythmic divisions; combinations of different articulations, such as a *staccatissimo* with *tenuto*; and rapid fluctuations between *ppp* and *pp*. The execution of these details require a detailed level of dexterity and independence between the fingers to clearly differentiate the four parts and the many types of touch and attack; this is made

²⁹³ Ray Evanoff, *Midway Through* (2015-17), performance directions

²⁹⁴ These mainly concerned his skeletal structural technique in relation to sound production, extending towards a whole-body awareness whilst performing.

more challenging by the fact that these details all occur within five quavers, where quaver equals 85 beats per minute.

The various notational details require a micro awareness of how I move whilst touching the keys, which can be overwhelming to manage comfortably in performance. Evanoff's compositional approach may be thought of as dictating a performer's embodied way of playing by using notation to create a type of 'puzzle' that has a distinct 'playing solution'. This solution is unique to each performer as it relies on their physicality, provoked further by Evanoff's inclusion of sections that are impossible to perform accurately. Moreover, his use of notation limits how I respond to the score, and I struggle to remain consciously aware of my actions in performance, often instilling a heightened, almost panicked, level of focus. However, his complex notation gives prominence to its physical realization and my attempts at being accurate.

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system begins with a tempo of 150 and includes markings for 150, 85, 105, and 75. The second system begins with a tempo of 50 and includes markings for 15, 35, 150, and 150. The score includes numerous slurs, ties, and dynamic markings such as ppp, pp, and mp. A Pedal section is indicated at the end of the second system.

Figure 1. Ray Evanoff, 'When I' from *Midway Through* (2015-17), page 1

As my experimentation with the Feldenkrais Method concerned a deliberate *turning to* the various oppositions that might arise when applying the Feldenkrais Method to the strict, technical ‘demands’ of certain approaches to new music performance, I learned ‘When I’ and evaluated its learning process to deliberately draw out these oppositions. I considered what I personally found challenging in Evanoff’s notation before locating a bodily approach that would reveal different ways of tackling its various challenges and perhaps bring me closer towards a playing solution. Importantly, this process was from my perspective: it drew attention to *why I* found certain sections challenging as a way to notice aspects of my functioning. This included my performing habits, sometimes relating to my self-image as according to the Feldenkrais Method. Importantly, this experimentation with the Method contributed to the development of a bodily approach, and ultimately, to my performance of ‘When I’.

Moreover, in relation to the artistic aspect of my PhD, my experimentation with the Feldenkrais Method allowed me simply to notice any areas of conflict between the demands of performing ‘When I’ and my innate functionality. Whilst developing my practical knowledge of the Method, particularly its shaping of the performance practice that I used throughout the PhD, the areas of opposition I noticed in the learning process of ‘When I’ informed my and Evanoff’s eventual collaboration on the piece *Give*. Our history of collaboration has formed a trusting, working relationship that deliberately explores the challenges posed by his notation. As such, our relationship formed a basis for exploring the learning process of ‘When I’, together: this enabled a shared perspective of my functioning, which fed into our collaborative work on the piece *Give*.

Establishing an Approach

As I learned ‘When I’, Evanoff was invited to witness the various stages of this highly personal process. As mentioned above, the challenges involved were the kind we wanted to perpetuate in our collaboration on *Give*; Evanoff’s direct involvement in my process of realisation meant that we could explore these challenges and their possible approaches, the experience of which fed into the subsequent work.

The main challenge was to accurately produce all of the notational details, even when this appeared to be impossible. Despite our acknowledgement of impossible sections, we explored different approaches to investigate how I functioned in response to this challenge. This brought my attention to my physical engagement with my instrument and the way I moved as I attempted to perform certain aspects of the notation. A performer's learning process is highly personal and contextual: some performers share their approaches, providing accounts, including with respect to the learning of complex music.²⁹⁵ Christopher Redgate argues that "[t]he practice strategies a performer uses to prepare the music for performance will have a significant effect upon the final product."²⁹⁶ His approach to the learning of complex music, which he defines as "music that is technically at the limits of performability and extremely complex at many levels", involves aspects of "going back to basics with a whole new range of techniques" and developing new skills for the first time.²⁹⁷ Similarly to Redgate, I used the Feldenkrais Method as I learned 'When I' to explore my habitual technical approach, whilst evaluating practice strategies based on the Method and their effect on my performance.

To incorporate the Feldenkrais Method into the learning process of 'When I', I conducted a type of performance analysis that focused specifically on my movements, particularly those that relate to aspects of the Method mentioned above. This includes Feldenkrais's notion of organic learning and the discernment of movements, their sensations, and their relation to other parts of my body. Other aspects include Feldenkrais's notion of 'landing' and how it positioned a certain bodily shape as a frame-of-reference, as well as his notion of 'compulsive' and 'spontaneous' movements and whether it could be used to understand why I responded to the notation in certain ways. This analysis noted the movements that contributed to the bodily approach I developed in learning the music as well as details pertaining to the forming of bodily shapes, their sensation, certain finger choices and

²⁹⁵ See Ian Pace, "Notation, Time and the Performer's Relationship to the Score in Contemporary Music", in *Unfolding Time: Studies in Temporality in Twentieth Century Music*, ed. Darla Crispin (Leuven University Press, 2009): 179

²⁹⁶ Christopher Redgate, "A Discussion of Practices Used in Learning Complex Music with Specific Reference to Roger Redgate's AUSGANGSPUNKTE", *Contemporary Music Review*, 26 (2), April 2007, 141

²⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 143

preparatory movements. The analysis included certain habitual movements and considered their specific purpose, bringing my attention to their functionality. This attention on the embodied aspects of my performance was inspired by John Rink’s definition of a “performer’s analysis”²⁹⁸ that prioritises matters relevant to a performer over those of more conventional and theoretical (written) analysis: “most performers carefully consider how the music ‘works’ and how to overcome its various conceptual challenges.”²⁹⁹ This analysis was equally inspired by Doğantan-Dack’s phenomenology of the performer, particularly her focus on the performer’s experience, conscious awareness and musical relevance of bodily movement for the performer.³⁰⁰

The Analysis

The first chord: a frame of reference

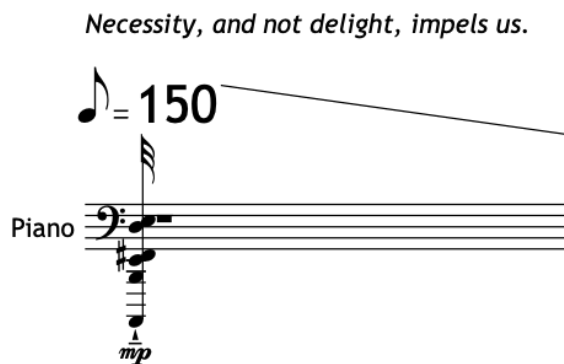


Figure 2. Ray Evanoff, ‘When I’ from *Midway Through* (2015-17), opening chord

²⁹⁸ John Rink, “Analysis and (or?) performance”, in *Musical Performance: A Guide to Understanding*, ed. John Rink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 39

²⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 35

³⁰⁰ Mine Doğantan-Dack, “In the Beginning was Gesture”, 247

The first chord of 'When I', given in figure 2, appears ten times throughout the movement. It requires a specific bodily angle and pianistic touch to be played accurately. This involves producing a fully sounding chord wherein all notes are equally weighted; a precise duration, bearing in mind that Evanoff's notation of both *tenuto* and *staccatissimo* will affect this duration; and the production of *mp*. The accurate performance of these notational details is impacted by the physical aspects of this chord, which include its specific layout on the keys, requiring a distinct hand shape, and its location in the low register of the piano to the left of my seated position. To produce this chord, my body and seat must be positioned in a certain way to enable me to reach to the left with my elbow 'scooping' across the torso (see figure 3). My torso must remain upright with my chest parallel to the keyboard, rather than the spine rotating to the left, to enable my right hand to play the F2 sharp with my second finger and the D3 with my fourth finger. It is possible for my right hand fifth finger to play both the D3 and E3, but this provides little relief to the necessary positioning and will likely result in inaccuracy of the notational details. Another option may be to position myself closer to the low register, in other words, move my seat to the left. However, after producing the chord, I move back up the piano (to the right) in time for the counterpoint section in the middle register. Therefore, fully positioning myself in front of the lower register is not an option.³⁰¹

³⁰¹ The video "When I - a version" was also filmed using two other camera angles, providing further perspectives of my movements. Ray Evanoff, "When I – a version," YouTube video, 01:54, posted by "Kate Harrison Ledger," May 31, 2020, accessed October 25, 2023, <https://youtu.be/IsIwezMVd4Q>



Figure 3. A still image of the first chord of ‘When I’, taken from a video using a GoPro attached to my head. The arrow demonstrates the direction of the ‘scooping’ movement across my torso³⁰²

Ray incorporated this distinct chord quite deliberately, so as to provide the pianist (and listener) with a recognizable ‘landmark’ throughout its performance. The specific physicality and frequent repetition of this chord serves as a supporting guide for the pianist, as Virgil was for Dante. Despite being notated with different tempi, articulations, dynamics and durations, and placed in different contexts, the chord has a unique physical imprint, and thereby provides me with a ‘known’ island of security that I feel and sense with each repetition.

In the Feldenkrais Method, the notion of organic learning uses the tactile sensation of how a movement feels as a focus for comprehending that movement and retaining its memory in the body. As Feldenkrais states, organic learning “is guided only by the sensation of satisfaction when each attempt feels less awkward as the result of avoiding a former minor

³⁰² For the full video, see: Ray Evanoff, “Can I? Head,” YouTube video, 03:36, posted by “Kate Harrison-Ledger,” March 28, 2020, accessed October 25, 2023, <https://youtu.be/Kg6mBaaeTO8?si=yICLQIP7x2rRC1d7>

error which felt unpleasant or difficult.”³⁰³ By focusing on the feel of a chord, whilst deliberately increasing an awareness of its bodily affect, I developed a tangible sense of security, partly because of the chord’s apparent ‘awkwardness’. I associated the physical sensation of the chord with my intention to produce the notational details and their resulting sound. I found myself inviting and accepting all of this chord’s bodily sensations as part of my understanding of it: an angular awkwardness becomes an enjoyable twist.

The notion of organic learning relates to Feldenkrais’s characterization of the central nervous system as “the best structure on earth for individual (ontogenetic) learning.”³⁰⁴ As the central nervous system “distributes impulses which activate the muscles and are the cause of all movement”,³⁰⁵ it houses our processes of learning, specifically implicit learning.³⁰⁶ As Lori Myers notes, “the central nervous system encodes new experiences and has the ability to change quickly, learn new behaviours and skills, and recover lost functions”;³⁰⁷ it accounts for neuroplasticity. My practice and performance of the first chord (and its various repetitions) in ‘When I’ utilises the central nervous system through a focus on sensation: by attuning to the unique physical imprint of the chord, I cement its embodied knowledge by forming new neural pathways; this attunement to sensations forms part of my bodily approach to learning ‘When I’.

In addition, this chord provides a performance of the piece with frequent and tangible ‘landings’, in Feldenkrais’s terms. Beginning the piece with this chord resembles the ‘landing’ that occurs at the beginning of a Feldenkrais lesson: ‘landing’ provides the body with a frame of reference when noticing the effects of the lesson. As I return to this chord throughout ‘When I’, traversing the various sections, it provides me with a ‘known’ moment whilst revealing the effects of the journey I have just undertaken. The ‘known’ quality of this

³⁰³ Feldenkrais, “The Elusive Obvious”, 30

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 37

³⁰⁵ Ibid., 21

³⁰⁶ Baars, “In the Theater of Consciousness”, 60

³⁰⁷ Myers, “Application of Neuroplasticity Theory”, 300

chord is such that I am able to observe any changes to its context: it allows me to reflect on the changes that have occurred during complex passages between each chord.³⁰⁸

This chord was significant for how I learned 'When I', the details of which were shared with Evanoff. In my process of developing a practical application of the Feldenkrais Method, this chord informed and shaped a physical playing solution, leading Evanoff to include it in the first miniature for our collaborative work *Give*, which had a working title of 'Kate Small One' (see figure 4). The final left hand chord of this passage (B6, C7 sharp, A7 sharp) is an inversion of the 'frame of reference' chord. Despite the different pitches, it requires a similar, recognised physicality, 'scooping' my arm across my torso to place the thumb on A7 sharp and my fourth finger on C7 sharp. To develop this chord further, Evanoff embedded more restrictions to dictate a playing solution more distinctly. He notated this chord at the end of a short, compact gesture, which involves numerous, detailed movements. This includes the movement of the right hand as it leaps from the middle C: this note is circled in red in figure 4 and the position I use to play it is captured in the still image in figure 5. Using the thumb, fourth and fifth finger is unavoidable for the inverted chord at the end of 'Kate Small One': in order to produce a clean, controlled sound, I must use the 'scooped' arm position (as mentioned in relation to 'When I' but inverted) to maintain structural support. This involved aligning my wrist, forearm, upper arm and shoulder, bringing the whole of my body to the top register of the keyboard, in other words to the right.

³⁰⁸ In terms of the composition as a whole, 'When I' acts as a frame of reference throughout the entirety of *Midway Through*. Its compositional material returns throughout the whole set of movements, its reappearance serving the pianist with familiar points of contact, hopefully provoking some reassurance.

♩ = 80

Stem Up: LH

ppp spz
sffz sfz mf

Piano

mp mp

5:4

1

5:4

Stem Down: RH

Figure 4. Ray Evanoff, 'Kate Small One' (2020). The first miniature from Give (2020-21)



Figure 5. A still image of my seat and hand position as I prepare to move from the middle C in *Kate Small One*, taken from Ray Evanoff's *Give*. The arrow demonstrates the direction of the 'scooping' movement in my torso³⁰⁹

Differentiating Between Similar Physical Imprints

The way in which I used the 'frame of reference' chord demonstrates the benefits of bringing attention to a distinctive physical imprint during the learning process. This approach was useful for cementing this chord as a known shape throughout the piece. However, Evanoff composed, quite deliberately, two sections that use similar chord shapes but include slight differences that affect my fingers and positioning on the keys. In these two sections, I found that focusing solely on the physical imprints of the chord shapes did not allow me to differentiate between them. The difficulty of this produced, in me, compulsive responses: I would retreat into an instinctive mode of performance and often confuse the two sections. The confusion I experienced in performing these sections suggests they were too detailed in their notation, or in fact, beyond my ability to play accurately; as noted

³⁰⁹ This image is taken from a video of a practice session of *Kate Small One*, again using a GoPro attached to my head. See: Ray Evanoff, "Kate Small (One)", YouTube video, 02:36, posted by "Kate Harrison-Ledger", October 12, 2020, accessed October 25, 2023, <https://youtu.be/zWe-d48RDpo>

above, such experiences were not considered a matter of failure, as if I was ‘falling short’ of expectations, whether Evanoff’s or mine. Instead, moments of confusion were, in fact, exemplifying my functioning body: they were providing my experimentation with the Feldenkrais Method, and indeed our collaboration, with specific areas of focus.

The musical score is presented in four systems. The first system begins with a tempo marking of 85 and a dynamic of *pp*. It features a melodic line with slurs and an arpeggiated accompaniment with a 3:2 time signature. The second system continues the melodic line with slurs and includes dynamic markings of *ppp* and *pp*. The third system introduces a 5:4 time signature and features a dynamic of *pppp*. The fourth system concludes with a 3:2 time signature and dynamic markings of *pp* and *ppp*. A dashed vertical line connects the first and second systems, indicating a continuation of the piece.

Figure 6. Ray Evanoff, ‘When I’ (2015-17), page 1

The image shows a musical score for four staves. At the top left, a tempo marking indicates a quarter note equals 85. The first staff begins with a *pppp* dynamic and features a series of notes with slurs and ties, with a 3:2 ratio indicated below. The second staff continues with similar patterns, including a 5:4 ratio. The third and fourth staves show further development of the complex counterpoint, with various dynamic markings like *pp* and *ppp* and rhythmic ratios such as 3:2 and 5:4. The notation is dense with slurs and ties, indicating a highly textured and intricate piece.

Figure 7. Ray Evanoff, 'When I' (2015-17), page 3

These two sections of 'When I' involve complex layers of counterpoint, dynamics, articulations, and rhythm (see figures 6 and 7). Both sections encompass a small pitch range that is easily covered by two hands, however, consist of four separate parts played simultaneously, wherein each part contains numerous complex details. Although not identical, the pitches, rhythms, dynamics, and physical structures of these two sections are very similar, particularly in how they relate to the overall temporal arc of each section. In practice, I was drawn instinctively to the physical imprints of these sections but frequently confused them, not in terms of the specific pitches but more the physical shapes and angles

between the black and white keys. In other words, I confused the implicit, physical aspects of my movements.

The image shows a handwritten musical score for the piece 'When I' by Ray Evanoff, page 1. The score is written on four staves of music. The tempo is marked as 85. The score includes various dynamic markings such as *pp*, *ppp*, and *pp*. There are numerous handwritten annotations in blue and black ink, including the words 'straight/pnd', 'soft', 'curl', 'before', 'after', 'digging', and 'either way'. The score features complex rhythmic patterns, including 3:2, 5:4, and 3:4 time signatures, and is heavily annotated with fingerings and articulation marks. A vertical dashed line is drawn through the score, and several red vertical lines are also present. The annotations include circled notes, arrows, and various symbols like 'A' and 'E' with arrows pointing to specific notes.

Figure 8. Ray Evanoff, 'When I', page 1, with my annotations

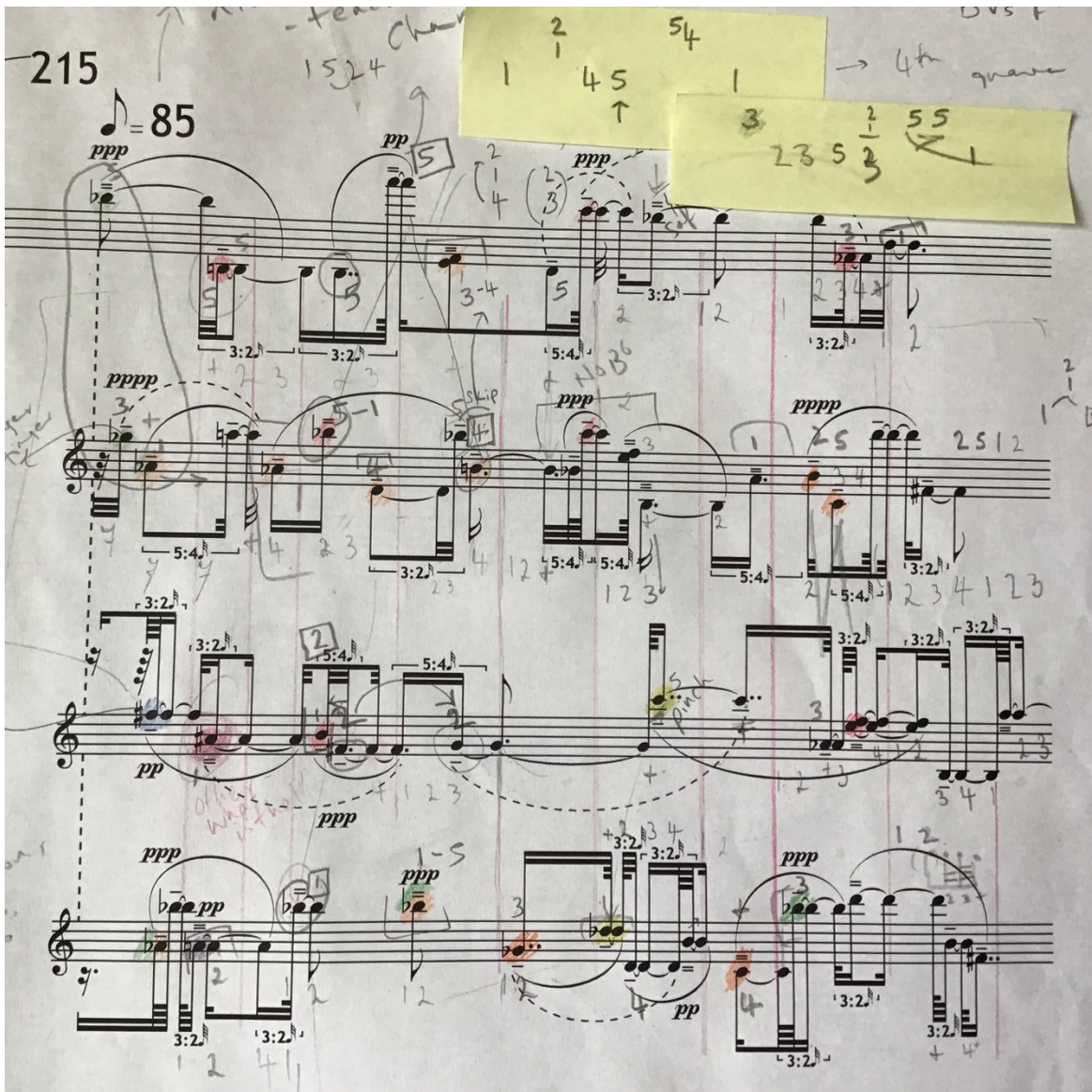


Figure 9. Ray Evanoff, 'When I', page 3, with my annotations

Colour key for figures 8 and 9: red – rhythmically together with a note in another part; yellow – a distinct rhythmic duration; orange - a main beat, half beat or quarter beat; blue - the loudest note compared to the surrounding parts; green – signalling the beginning of a specific gesture.

As a way of differentiating these implicit, physical aspects of the passages, so as to find a playing solution for these sections, I highlighted details on the score that require specific attention or focus; in other words, moments where I need to 'work'. Figures 8 and 9 show how, using different colours, I highlighted specific notes that required a particular focus or action. Rather than focusing solely on the physical feel of these chords, these colours highlight musical characteristics of the passage, particularly rhythmic relationships. This, and some careful fingering choices, provided me with technical, pianistic areas of learning and I

progressed a little through the learning process. However, I continued to confuse the sections and play inaccurately. Therefore, to develop a further level of differentiation, I explored my physical connection to the sensations that I felt whilst performing the highlighted musical aspects. I began to locate specific notes that represented the initiation of necessary physical shifts.

Initiating Gestures

A deeper exploration of my physical engagement with the piano shifted my attention back towards the more physical, functional aspects of my learning process whilst maintaining a technical focus. The notes highlighted in green in figures 8 and 9 denote the beginnings of different gestures that are initiated by bringing an attention to these notes. Focusing on these specific notes provided me with a brief moment in which I was able to shift my attention, cognitive and physical, to the next gesture and the movement it requires. For example, in figure 8 on the bottom line, my left-hand plays a D4 with my fourth finger on the last triplet demisemiquaver of beat two. In practice, I found that bringing attention to this D enabled me to flow into the following gesture; this gesture involves longer durations (the B5 flat, C6 and F4 sharp) and new pitches (F4 sharp and C6), therefore felt like a significant musical shift that required awareness and preparation. Importantly, the marking of these gestures was an organic part of my learning process that emerged as I learned the music and combined the score's musical details with the necessary physical shifts I need to make.

The above relates to the attention that is brought to the initiation of a movement in a Feldenkrais exercise, where the 'tonus' of the muscles is noticed. Feldenkrais defined the tonus of the muscles as "the state of their contraction before their activation by the will."³¹⁰ Slow and careful attention to the "fundamental tonus" of a muscle, where it begins to prepare for a movement, will change its "control mechanisms", affecting "the entire half of

³¹⁰ Feldenkrais, *Awareness Through Movement*, 91

the body containing the part originally worked on.”³¹¹ I found that bringing attention to these brief moments of muscle activation provided a foundation for the ensuing gesture and more control over its movement. In combination with other musical and technical markings, these moments highlighted in green were able to fill some of the gaps in my functioning.

I combined these moments of attention – both technical and physical – to form a distinct map of these two sections of the piece. Serving as an experiment, I conducted a reduction to see if this would increase my ability to differentiate between similar musical materials across the sections. Figure 10 depicts the two sections reduced to the hand shapes, movements, and fingerings I used. It demonstrates the strong similarity between the notated pitch shapes and their corresponding fingerings, whilst pinpointing specific differences I could use as part of my learning process.

³¹¹ Ibid.

The image shows a musical score for 'When I', consisting of two staves. The top staff is a reduction of section 1 on page 1, and the bottom staff is a reduction of section 2 on page 3. Each staff has a treble and bass clef. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5 above or below notes. Chord shapes are indicated by numbers above or below groups of notes. The top staff has six chord shapes, and the bottom staff has eight chord shapes. The key signature is one flat (B-flat).

Figure 10. Reduction of 'When I', pages 1 and 3

The top staff is a reduction of section 1 on page 1; the bottom line is a reduction of section 2 on page 3. I refer to each chord as a 'shape' and number them from left to right, e.g. first shape, second shape, etc. The tied notes represent notes that are carried through into the following shape.

In the first shape of section one (figure 10, top staff), my left hand second finger must take A4 flat: this allows my right hand to play D6 in the second shape. In section two (figure 10, bottom staff), the same A flat is taken by my right hand, which provides a difference that I can use to separate the two sections, although it is surrounded by aspects that are not different. In both sections, shape two requires a thumb on A4 natural and a second finger on B4 flat in the left hand, creating a distinct shape that I associate with this shape's physical imprint. However, my fifth (and fourth) fingers play different pitches (C4 and D4 in section one and just B3 in section 2) whilst my second finger and thumb maintain the distinct shape. Therefore, these two physical imprints feel almost identical: their difference in pitch slightly affects the overall shape, but not significantly enough to produce a clear differentiation between the physical imprints.

Another example can be found in the third shapes of the reductions. The ‘b minor’ shape in the left-hand in both sections involves a fourth finger on D4. However, this chord is notated in two different inversions, first inversion in section one, root position in section two. Additionally, B6 flat in the right-hand is taken by my fifth finger in the second section, changing to a thumb to reach the following A7. In the first section, I must play this B6 flat with my right hand third finger, which allows my fifth finger to play the C above. In both sections, the thumbs generally hover around B5 natural (and A5 sharp) throughout. This can be seen in the second and fourth shapes in section one, and the third and fifth shapes in section two. Despite my conscious acknowledgment of these differences, the shapes continued to be constituted through the same physical imprint. They also appear at similar points in the temporal arc of each section, which further contributes to their similarity.

In this way, despite the experiential confusion described above, this process of marking significant initiating movements and explicitly differentiating between the sections helped me to find an increasingly accurate playing solution.³¹² As opposed to simply marking rhythms and fingerings, I consciously noticed the movement characteristics of the shapes and embedded their differences into the developing physical imprints. Guided by Feldenkrais’s organic learning, I focused my attention on how these imprints felt and increased my awareness to locate finer and more attuned levels of differentiation.

My Performing Habits

Exploring the exact differences between these two sections, I noticed my compulsion to play them as accurately as possible, but also to draw back and distance myself from the amount of information in the score. In accordance with Feldenkrais’s notion of compulsive movements, my intention was affected by my sense that this music was just “too difficult”,³¹³ and that this was in contention with my compulsion to achieve accuracy, engrained through my musical “education” that forms part of my self image.³¹⁴ This resulted

³¹² As discussed in Chapter Four, we continued to explore the limitations of ‘accuracy’ in our collaboration on the piece *Give*.

³¹³ Feldenkrais, *Awareness Through Movement*, 87

³¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 4

in tension and an urge to stop; however, as noted by Feldenkrais, “since the urge to enact them is greater than the urge *not to*, [I] enacted [these movements] compulsively under an emotional pressure.”³¹⁵ This resulted in numerous automatic, unintentional acts accompanied by anxiety,³¹⁶ perhaps better understood as my performing habits. However, these habitual acts were examples of how my body functions in performance. The various moments of confusion, difficulty or anxiety that I experienced whilst learning ‘When I’ were revealed through my experimentation with the Feldenkrais Method, explored further through the collaborative discussions surrounding my learning process. The Feldenkrais Method aided me in pinpointing distinct areas of activity whilst playing, which were particularly noticeable when I encountered conflicts with the notation, with Evanoff, or my instrument. These moments of conflict were moments of functioning that were, in fact, fruitful and taken into our collaboration on the piece *Give*. Indeed, *Give* attempted to draw out more of my compulsive, automatic reactions by countering my musical expectations and movements and including them as compositional material.

I explored the Feldenkrais Method in different ways to ensure I develop a broad understanding of the way I move in performance that I could take into the collaborative projects. This included obtaining experience of the Method’s general practice in order to observe its benefits for my everyday movement, but also its application in artistic practices, particularly Fraser’s Piano Institute. As I became more familiar with the Method and began to apply it to my own performance practice, its understanding of movement became significant for my research into a functioning performing body. This included bringing attention to how I interact in performance, what I may be interacting with and how this interaction relates to my performing situation. In particular, the Feldenkrais Method’s positioning of habits and their relation to a body’s functionality formed an understanding of my performing habits and their relation to what may be viewed as my functionality in performance. As I took this understanding into the collaborative work, my habits were, then, viewed in different contexts, which meant they functioned in different ways: this was shaped by the collaborations and the ways in which we worked.

³¹⁵ Feldenkrais, *The Potent Self*, 9

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 10

Chapter Three

The Collaborations and Interactions

My understanding and practice of the Feldenkrais Method shaped a performance practice that positively acknowledged my performing habits. In the learning of ‘When I’, these habits manifested as moments that could be considered (after Doğantan-Dack) as “unwanted”:³¹⁷ inaccuracies, technical inefficiencies or moments of information overload. Rather than applying the Feldenkrais Method to improve unwanted characteristics by adjusting my movements, I used it to develop my self-knowledge: particularly my awareness of my ‘already existent’³¹⁸ functioning. The performance analysis of ‘When I’ positioned the necessary physical adjustments that I make in response to notation as *functional*. This perspective then fed into the collaborative work.

Chapters Four and Five outline the details of the collaborative work, in particular my projects with Ray Evanoff and Monica Pearce (Chapter Four) and those with Neil Luck and Mark Dyer (Chapter Five). Having reflected on this creative work, Chapter Three provides a preliminary overview of my collaborative approach by highlighting certain aspects of the creative processes I used to demonstrate their significance for my research. These include the role of collaboration and how it relates to the performance practice that I developed through the Feldenkrais Method. The collaborative work involved various experimental processes of creative exploration and development, which shaped an understanding of how I function in performance whilst drawing attention to specific interactions. Using my project with Federico Pozzer as an example, this chapter then outlines these interactions and how they occurred in my performance of his music. My experience here brought my attention to how the interactions *felt* in performance, which, when applied to the other projects, enabled me to develop a broader understanding of the collaborative work and the various ways it affected my functioning.

³¹⁷ Doğantan-Dack, “The Art of Research on Performance”, 37. See Chapter One.

³¹⁸ This draws on Sheets-Johnstone’s description of bodies as being innately effective and efficient because we have “learned our bodies and learned to move ourselves effectively and efficiently in the world.” Sheets-Johnstone, “Bodily Resonance”, 19. This is explored in more detail in Chapter Five.

My experience of the Feldenkrais Method led to a reconsideration of what I understood as my technique, which partly incorporated aspects of Fraser's technique. Fraser's "stand-up"³¹⁹ technique did not replace my already existent technique; rather, it contributed to my ongoing development as a performer. The gradual honing of technique relates to the Feldenkrais Method, which, as Feldenkrais stated, is not concerned with "replacing one action with another, for we are primarily interested in the more dynamic question of how we control ourselves."³²⁰ In this respect, newly learned actions join forces with previously learned ones; for me, Fraser's technique joined forces with my existing technique, contributing to an overarching technique that "composites"³²¹ more localized, sub-techniques.

Ben Spatz reconsiders what is understood as technique, in relation to practice, to include, as part of its definition, different sub-techniques from "domains of physical culture, performing arts, and everyday life".³²² By positioning technique as "embodied practice [that] is structured by knowledge"³²³, Spatz notes dancer Randy Martin's description of bodies as being "multiply composed"³²⁴ and that many techniques "overlap in a dancer's body."³²⁵ This results in what Martin refers to as technical "residue", where one "technique may appear in the midst of another."³²⁶ As such, Martin "places the 'movement' of dance on the same plane as that of social and cultural movements"³²⁷ that, similarly, leave a residue. For Spatz, therefore, "[t]echnique is knowledge that structures practice" [Spatz's italics]³²⁸ and includes different domains of technique in order to "conceive the field of embodied

³¹⁹ Fraser, *The Craft of Piano Playing*, 63. See Chapter Two.

³²⁰ Feldenkrais, *Embodied Wisdom*, 14

³²¹ Randy Martin, *Critical moves: Dance Studies in Theory and politics*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 139. Referenced by Ben Spatz, *What Can A Body Do? Technique as Knowledge, Practice as Research* (London/New York: Routledge, 2015), 36

³²² Spatz, *What Can A Body Do?*, 1

³²³ Ibid.

³²⁴ Martin, *Critical Moves*, 167. Referenced by Spatz, *What Can A Body Do?*, 36

³²⁵ Spatz, *What Can A Body Do?*, 36

³²⁶ Martin, *Critical Moves*, 167. Referenced by Spatz, *What Can A Body Do?*, 36

³²⁷ Spatz, *What Can A Body Do?*, 36

³²⁸ Ibid., 1

practice as fundamentally epistemic ... which in turn leads to new and provocative ideas about the relationship between specialized and everyday practices.”³²⁹

Spatz’s notion of overlapping techniques resonated with my understanding of functioning in performance. Their positioning of technique as moving between different domains of life was significant for understanding my ‘situatedness’ in performance: it suggested I could choose from multiple techniques, from different areas of embodied practice, in order to ‘function’. The learning of ‘When I’ involved a similar process: it required a series of progressive stages, each differentiating more of the material as I homed in on an ‘accurate’ performance. Importantly, this “emerged”³³⁰ through experimentation with different techniques and adjustments before I found a ‘functional’ solution. It was this attitude – of exploration, experimentation, and differentiation – that I took into the collaborative projects. The Feldenkrais Method provided a suitable understanding that pertained to *improving* how I learned and played ‘When I’. Taking this understanding into artistic, creative collaborations with several composers provided me with an opportunity to *unravel* the process and sort through the multiple layers of functionality that lay within my piano performance.

The Artistic Collaborations

The collaborative component of this PhD was vital for unearthing, then exploring, aspects of how I function in performance. Working with others in devising new experimental pieces for solo piano, whilst drawing on my experience of the Feldenkrais Method, developed my understanding of the movements I make whilst performing. Each collaboration focused on my developing perspective on the way I move in relation to my understanding of technique. Furthermore, this perspective acknowledged and included the effects of interactions within

³²⁹ Ibid., 2

³³⁰ Payne, “The Craft of Musical Performance”, 3. See Chapter One.

a performing environment, the nature of which varied depending on the artistic work. The composition of new pieces (for and with me) for solo piano used my unique way of moving as the basis of the compositional material, but in very different ways: each collaboration involved different interactions, and so produced widely different artistic outputs.³³¹

Our Roles

Collaborating with composers (and, indeed other practitioners) invited interactions with different people that affected my investigation. Our approach was to create new things that embodied their creative process, including the interactions involved in each process. As Sheets-Johnstone notes, the qualitative characters that constitute a movement's "dynamic" are "critical to what we accomplish or do not accomplish with respect to 'things' or 'creations.'"³³² Furthermore, she argues that "our native capacity to think in movement" provides a "natural" type of knowledge that allows us "to move ourselves effectively and efficiently in the world."³³³ In this respect, each collaboration was treated as an explorative project that considered my movements as *effective* in relation to my situated functioning performing body and each project's specific context. The openness of each project, in this regard, meant that the roles and interactions shifted as the work evolved, often producing unpredictable results.

As composer and pianist, we had a shared point of interest: a keenness to create music based on my developing notion of functional movement. Each composer understood and prioritised this differently: the differences emerged as we worked and as a result our roles, as 'composer' and 'pianist', shifted. As the nature of each collaboration was open and explorative, we were able to focus our attention on the interactions – how they felt, how we adjusted to each other, how we progressed – rather than the creative outcomes.³³⁴

³³¹ My use of the word interactions draws on Laws's description of the "emergence of performer subjectivity from an individual's interactions within an ecology". Laws, "Being a Player", 84

³³² Sheets-Johnstone, "Bodily Resonance", 21. See Chapter Two.

³³³ Sheets-Johnstone, "Bodily Resonance", 21

³³⁴ This supports Sheets-Johnstone's use of the terms "things" and "creations" to describe something that is created by bodies. My bodily input, in relation to the collaborative interactions, is visible in the 'things' this PhD created.

The project with Neil Luck provides an example of this shifting of roles. We created *Kate Limbo* – a film that focuses on the situation of piano performance through its depiction of a pianist who makes different movements, alone, in a room.³³⁵ Luck had many roles that he shifted between: the composer, as well as the film’s director, editor and producer. For the filming he was the camera operator, whose movements and camera positions were choreographed, by Luck, to work alongside mine; this shifted his role to that of a co-performer. Whilst filming, he moved around me so that he deliberately captured, or deliberately ‘missed’, my movements, the detail of which created the film’s arc. The movements I make in the film are distinctly ‘pianistic’ but performed away from a piano, extending my role from that of a pianist into a broader conception of being a performer.³³⁶ The final edited performance is from Luck’s perspective, which, intentionally, shapes a viewer’s reception. To include a wider, objective perspective of *Kate Limbo*, we involved photographer Sam Walton³³⁷ to document the filming process (see figures 11 and 12). Walton’s photographs provided this project with an additional viewpoint, from an additional agency. As well as providing a documentary of the project, this viewpoint contributed another artistic perspective that shaped our understanding of this performing body.³³⁸

³³⁵ Neil Luck, “Kate Limbo (2021)”, YouTube video, 06:34, posted by “neilluck”, September 11, 2021, accessed October 26, 2023, <https://youtu.be/EmGLbiZoKK4?si=1GYCm3bZfatVst6d>. This project is discussed in Chapter Five.

³³⁶ As my ‘pianistic’ movements were performed away from the piano, they were in danger of being ‘faked’. I explored moving ‘authentically’ with my Feldenkrais practitioner Caroline Scott and *Bred in the Bone* Theatre Company. This is discussed in Chapter Five.

³³⁷ samwaltonphotography.com

³³⁸ The catalogue of photographs are in the portfolio.



Figure 11. Sam Walton, "Kate Limbo (film) – 3" (photograph, Calder Bookshop, London, 2021)



Figure 12. Sam Walton, "Kate Limbo" (film) – 6" (photograph, Calder Bookshop, London, 2021)

The shifting of roles was more extreme in *Subject*, the project with Mark Dyer. We began as ‘composer’ and ‘pianist’ who were interested in creating a new piano piece. As a way into the creative process, we explored aspects of my existing practice and technical approach, which, eventually, included my memories of learning and playing music by J.S. Bach. Our collaboration comprised intimate conversation, with Dyer operating as an inquisitive interviewer gathering detailed information about my memories— for example, I recalled my younger, naïve self discovering Bach for the first time.³³⁹ This process shifted our dialogue towards that of a therapist and a client; importantly, this included the respect, confidentiality, and emotional space that forms part of a therapeutic relationship. As a result, we decided that presenting a performance of a composed piece of music would limit the personal perspective we discovered; therefore, we used different artistic media (drawings, film, clay models, sound art, edited transcriptions of the interviews, an exhibition, photographs) to document our collaborative work.³⁴⁰ For *Subject*, and indeed *Kate Limbo*, our willingness to adapt our roles, emerging as a result of our collaboration, resulted in diverse artistic outcomes.

“Dialogic” Collaboration

The specific ways in which we collaborated affected the development of each project. In their research into collaborative writing, Lisa Ede and Andrea Lunsford (1994) consider what constitutes effective collaboration, leading them to distinguish two types: hierarchical and dialogic.³⁴¹ They define hierarchical collaboration as “highly structured and hierarchical...with productivity and efficiency as primary goals”,³⁴² whereas dialogic collaboration is “loosely structured, participants’ roles are fluid and the problem of articulating or reaching goals is of great importance.”³⁴³ Lunsford and Ede’s description of

³³⁹ For an example of these conversations, see Kate Ledger, “Subject 880: c. 1999,” *Kate Ledger Piano*, 28 October, 2023, <https://www.kateledgerpiano.com/subject-i>

³⁴⁰ Further details of this and *Kate Limbo* will be returned to in Chapter Five.

³⁴¹ Andrea A. Lunsford and Lise Ede, “Collaborative Authorship and the Teaching of Writing”, in *The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature*, ed. Martha Woodmansee and Peter Jaszi (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994), 433

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ Ibid., 433-434

dialogic collaboration resonated with the collaborations in my research. As an approach, it enables a fluidity of roles, as mentioned above, and prioritises a project's creative process, rather than its outcome. Similar ways of working are noted by Sam Hayden and Luke Windsor in their review of recent collaborations between composers and performers. They suggest that composers are sometimes reluctant to collaborate with performers to avoid "giving up creative control"³⁴⁴; however, for Hayden and Windsor, a "focus on collaboration may move the working style away from the tendency to prioritise the output of composition towards a desire to reflect on and improve the processes which come prior to this."³⁴⁵

Significantly, the way we worked throughout each project nurtured and developed each collaboration's particular dynamic. Drawing on Lunsford and Ede's description of dialogic collaboration, Mary Alm uses the term "intimate" to characterize this way of working that "emphasize[s] the emotional and social dimensions of such collaboration."³⁴⁶ In contrast to hierarchical collaboration, "intimate collaborators experience the process as intense and demanding; both individuals give their whole selves to all phases of the work."³⁴⁷ Working intimately was significant for my collaboration with Evanoff, the majority of which constituted candid conversations. After receiving a score from Evanoff, I would learn it and provide feedback on how it felt to play, whilst pointing to areas that seemed straightforward, awkward, or impossible. In response, Evanoff would share his conceptual perspective. Our sharing of our perspectives was respectful, honest, and open, and relied on an attentive, trustworthy intimacy. This way of working instilled, in us, a confidence that enabled us to share more about the inner workings of our creative processes, such as my performing habits. It was these personal details on our separate perspectives that fed into our collaborative work.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁴ Sam Hayden and Luke Windsor, "Collaboration and the Composer: Case Studies from the End of the 20th Century", in *Tempo* 61, 240 (2007): 31

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

³⁴⁶ Mary Alm, "The Role of Talk in the Writing Process of Intimate Collaboration", in *Common Ground: Feminist Collaboration in the Academy* ed. Elizabeth G. Peck and Jo Anna Stephens Mink (Albany, NY: State of New York Press, 1998), 126

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ The project with Evanoff will be discussed in Chapter Four.

Collaboration as 'Getting Together'

Collaboration contributed to the artistic aspect of this investigation as a purposeful "getting together"³⁴⁹ with others to deepen our understanding of the performing body. According to Maria Lind, artistic practitioners have collaborated particularly where art has been redefined.³⁵⁰ Lind defines collaboration as "an open-ended concept", with developments in artistic practices changing the way collaboration is "structured and motivated"³⁵¹. For Lind, such approaches stem from a dissatisfaction with the state of a situation, which motivates change and, as such, reveals "a pronounced affinity with activism and other current ways of getting together around shared concerns, as well as a marked interest in alternative ways of producing knowledge".³⁵² For myself, in addition to my curiosity, I recognized how various conflicts relating to my practice – between myself and different external 'demands', such as a score, a composer or a particular performance approach – are managed to *reduce* their effect on performance. My dissatisfaction of this empowered me to join forces with others to locate such conflicts and, in fact, consider their creative effect on performance.

Another benefit of collaboration is its ability to allow each collaborator to be greater than themselves. This is noted by Vera John-Steiner, who describes collaboration as providing a "mirror" that reveals something previously unknown: a "third dimension, a deeper view, to their knowledge of themselves."³⁵³ The potential for such discoveries is more likely when a collaboration maintains flexible roles: this is noted by Hayden and Windsor in relation to collaborative problem-solving, who argue that "the composer might be more open to creative solutions which arise from dialogue with a performer, and the performer might feel such contributions are more welcome."³⁵⁴ For these reasons, I collaborate with composers because it empowers me to discover more. I find collaboration immensely satisfying: I enjoy

³⁴⁹ Maria Lind, "The Collaborative Turn", in *Taking Matter into Common Hands*, ed. Johanna Billing, Maria Lind and Lars Nilsson (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2007), 16

³⁵⁰ Ibid.

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² Ibid.

³⁵³ Vera John-Steiner, *Creative Collaboration* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 63

³⁵⁴ Hayden and Windsor, "Collaboration and the Composer", 30

the shared space between two like-minded people and the capacity it has to be “playful and creative”.³⁵⁵

Experimenting as a Framework for the Creative Processes

In Chapter One I noted that each of the collaboration projects involved a loose adoption of an experimental approach to the process of artistic creation. This draws on the experimental approach to performance as characterised by Philip Thomas. His approach is based on David Tudor’s term “‘make actions’ to describe what one does when playing music; it shrugs off centuries of tradition, schools of technique... and dismisses the mystique of ‘interpretation’.”³⁵⁶ As part of each project’s creative process, we explored *how*, and *if*, ‘shrugging-off’ my performing habits was even possible, and, importantly, whether this was something we wanted to achieve. Each project focused on producing different responses in my body, based on Thomas’s approach to simply ‘make actions’. However, we considered what constitutes such an action, which includes its performing habits that, perhaps, relate to a certain tradition or technique. Relative to each project, this consideration revealed nuanced aspects of performance that we wanted to explore further and include as part of the creative process, and not ‘shrug-off’. As mentioned above, the nature of each collaborative process was open and explorative, therefore, revealed different and, sometimes, unpredicted aspects of performance.

Thomas also considers the ‘here and now’ of performance in forming his experimental approach. In his performance analysis of Bryn Harrison’s *être-temps*, Thomas focuses “on each moment in time”³⁵⁷ and prioritises the uniqueness of each attack. His focus remains on the interaction between him and the piano, within which he sculpts his sound through touch.³⁵⁸ In relation to his approach that ‘makes actions’, the attention that Thomas brings to ‘the moment’ in performance is potentially risky as it may rely too heavily on a

³⁵⁵ Laws, “Being a Player”, 84

³⁵⁶ Thomas, “A Prescription for Action”, 78

³⁵⁷ Eric Clarke, Nicholas Cook, Bryn Harrison and Philip Thomas, “Interpretation and performance in Bryn Harrison’s *être-temps*,” *Musicae Scientiae* 9, no. 1 (2005), 39

³⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

habituated response that, perhaps, includes 'external' factors he is keen to remove. My research deliberately turns to this risky area by exploring how each artistic project could instill, in me, responsive actions (in line with an experimental approach) but that are made 'in the moment'. This opens up the possibilities of how I may respond, enabling my actions to use my habituated way of playing in order to function.

Such an enquiry into the momentary and unpredictable nature of movement is experimental, in the sense examined by Jennie Gottschalk in her discussion of recent experimental music practices: it embodies "a position – of openness, of inquiry, of uncertainty, of discovery. Facts or circumstances or materials are explored for their potential sonic outcomes"³⁵⁹. As such, the collaborations explored the potential sonic outcome, but also performance, of subjective activity manifesting in movement. My unique movements formed the basis of these enquiries; their sonic outcome and performance were unknown as each collaboration began.

The Interactions that Formed the Collaborative Work

The Performativity of Objects

Collaborating with composers who adopt experimental processes provided each project with a wide landscape in which we could be truly (after Laws) "playful and creative"³⁶⁰. The explorative nature of the projects positioned me, as the performer, in interaction in different environments and contexts, and with different others. This included interactions with non-human agencies,³⁶¹ which incorporated Andrew Pickering's *performativity of*

³⁵⁹ Jennie Gottschalk, *Experimental Music Since 1970* (Bloomsbury: New York/London, 2016), 1

³⁶⁰ Laws, "Being a Player", 84

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 83

material into this investigation.³⁶² Through noticing the impact of a material agent on scientific experimentation, Pickering points to “a notion of material performance and agency: the sources did something in the world that was crucial to experimental practice but that the naked researcher could never have accomplished on his own.”³⁶³

As part of her artistic project *Player Piano*, Laws explored “the nature and extent of performer agency, particularly as manifested through the interaction of body and instrument in the space of performance.”³⁶⁴ Her methodology involved collaboration with composers to “explore, draw out, even exploit aspects of what they think of as [her] characteristics as a performer, and that would bring other things into the piano scene: other sounds, objects, and activities.”³⁶⁵ My research was to develop a notion of how I function in the ‘here and now’ of performance based on how I move whilst interacting; this included interactions with different non-human agencies, both directly and indirectly, as part of each project’s artistic exploration. A significant example is my interaction with the piano, which involves my interaction with its piano stool. The materials of the piano stool and the surface on which it stands incorporate their performativity – in the sense evoked by Pickering, as the ability to affect change in the world – by affecting how I move: a smooth, leather stool would allow me to slide on its surface, depending on the material of my clothing; a smooth polished floor may cause the legs of the stool to slip, depending on the material of the legs. When situated as such, my body is aware of the performativity of materials and compensates for it. In Feldenkrais’s terms, my discernment³⁶⁶ of the different materials manifests in how I move, be this with more confidence or more caution: this discernment helps me to function. As I explained in Chapter One, this PhD was primarily concerned with my performing movements: their observation (aided by the Feldenkrais Method) has allowed me to understand their function and how this relates to a situated, interacting

³⁶² Pickering attributes the *performativity of material* to Ian Hacking’s shift from “traditional epistemology to a more balanced and materialized version of science.” Andrew Pickering, “Material Culture and the Dance of Agency”, in *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*, ed. Dan Hicks and Mary C. Beaudry (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 192-193

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, 193

³⁶⁴ Laws, “Being a Player”, 84

³⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 86

³⁶⁶ In relation to the Feldenkrais Method, “perceptual discernments” provide information that allows the body to choose how to move. Hillier and Worley, “The Effectiveness of the Feldenkrais Method”, 1. See Chapter Two

body. In this respect, my movements are “meaningful”³⁶⁷ as they afforded this investigation information. It was important that I was the agent, or subject, of these interactions, so that I could comprehend my situation whilst observing how and why I move.³⁶⁸ My comprehension of my situation developed as the projects incorporated extraneous objects as part of their artistic exploration. This was most notable in my project with Federico Pozzer and our piece *Moving Objects* (2020) for grand piano, ping pong balls and marbles; for the score, see Appendix A. The piece requires me to use my breath to blow and move balls that are positioned on the strings inside the piano: this alters my interaction with the piano, whilst incorporating many satellite interactions, in particular my interaction with the balls.

The Interactions in Federico Pozzer’s ‘Moving Objects’

In relation to all the collaborations in this thesis, I determined three types of interaction that I encountered in performance: a *reaction*, an *engagement* and an *exploration*. Within each project, these interactions shifted and altered, often relating to the agency of different human and non-human others. In what follows, I outline these different interactions by drawing attention to the specific interactions with different objects in my project with Pozzer.

This project formed part of Pozzer’s own research that explores how a performer’s breath can be used to determine timing within a composition. As a pianist himself, Pozzer “was fascinated by the way the breathing of non-wind players could regulate the timing of sounds”.³⁶⁹ We created two pieces: *Breathing*, *Moving*, *Playing* and *Moving Objects*. I worked with Pozzer to explore how the regulation of my breathing, through his composition, affected the way I moved in performance and, by extension, my production of

³⁶⁷ Sheets-Johnstone, “Movement: What Evolution and Gesture Can Teach Us”, 240. See Chapter One.

³⁶⁸ This is contributed to by Bourdieu’s perspective that “is encompassed (as an object) *and* can comprehend (as a subject).” [Bourdieu’s italics]. Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, 108.

³⁶⁹ Federico Pozzer, “Breathing in Composition and Performance: Portfolio of Original Compositions and Written Commentary,” (PhD dissertation, University of Leeds, 2021), 1

sound. In *Moving Objects*, he explored specifically how breathing as blowing creates an interaction between me and different types of balls that I blow on the strings of a grand piano. This interaction formed the basis for creating and workshopping different tasks, wherein their timing and completion is “shaped by the reciprocal relationship between the act of blowing and [the balls’] movement.”³⁷⁰

Moving Objects has three main sections. I will focus on the first section, which requires me to use my breath to move ping pong balls into different shapes on the strings of a grand piano.³⁷¹ Pozzer and I devised a graphic score consisting of nine different shapes to create with the ping pong balls, each to be created within nine different time limits that range between twenty seconds and three minutes. Importantly, the full amount of allocated time must be used. As I move the ping pong balls with my breath, their unpredictability requires constant adjustment and assessment, resulting in an improvised performance. The sound of the balls’ movements and my breathing create the sonic content of this section. Discussing experimental improvisation with sounding objects, Andy Keep notes that “[t]his exploratory process seeks to create artistic statements that are responsive to the emerging sonic properties of an adopted or appropriated sounding object. The combination of artistic approach and performer activities that underpin this practice are considered here as the notion of *instrumentalizing*.”³⁷² Similarly to Keep’s notion of instrumentalizing, my monitoring of the ping pong balls, which have their own agency, required me to adjust the way I was interacting with them. The development of this revealed three different types of interactions, the most explicit being a *reaction*.

³⁷⁰ Ibid., 62

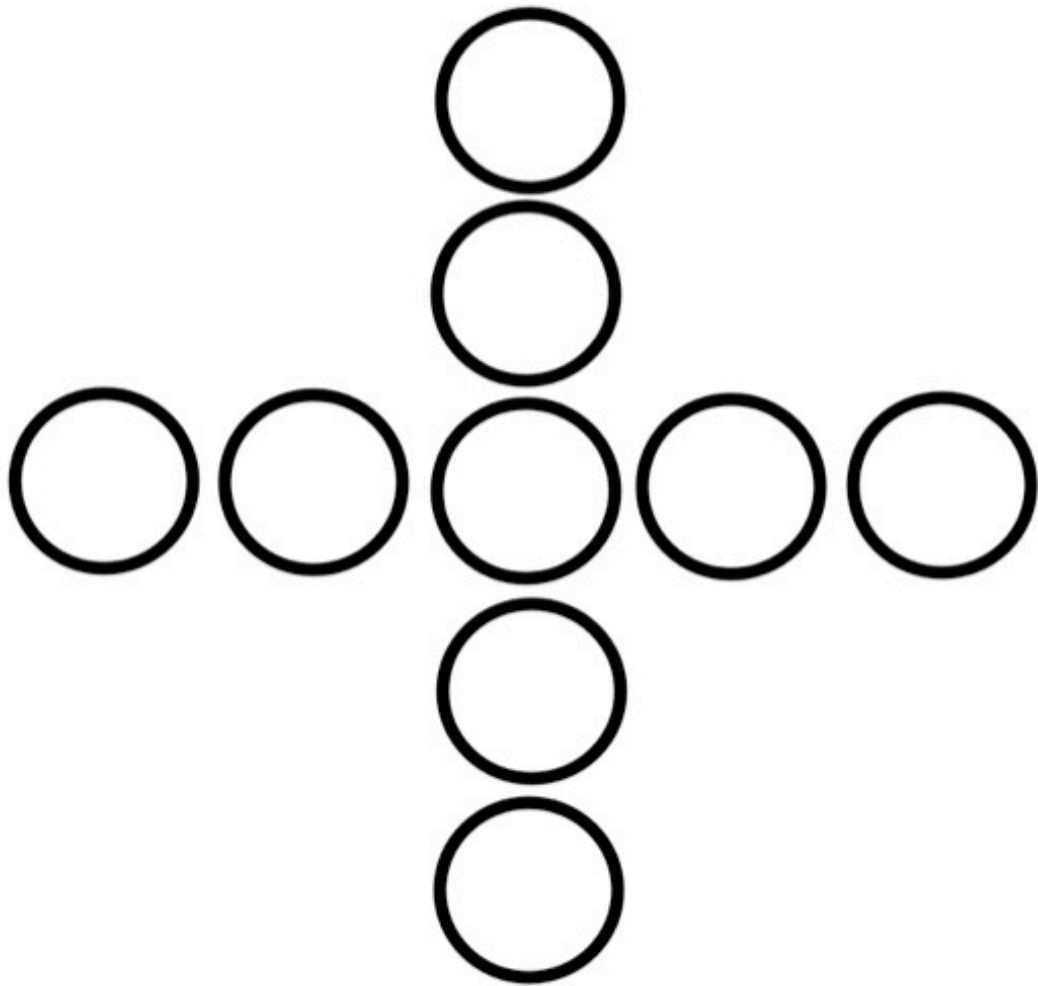
³⁷¹ For the performance, see Federico Pozzer, “Moving Objects”, YouTube video, 33:27, posted by “Kate Harrison-Ledger”, January 12, 2021, accessed October 26, 2023, <https://youtu.be/cBgWJyhoO5Y> This video is also in the portfolio.

³⁷² Andy Keep, “Instrumentalizing: Approaches to Improvising with Sounding Objects in Experimental Music”, in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Experimental Music*, ed. James Saunders (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2009), 113

A Reaction

When reacting, my body moves as it responds to something; this might be an instruction, the notation, an object, sound, or the acoustic. In the first section of *Moving Objects*, I reacted to the movement of the ping pong balls in the context of the score's instructions. The balls were unpredictable and fast, requiring me to adjust my position whilst continuing to form them into different shapes. Their material and density affected my attempts at this. The balls are light, which allows them to be blown and manipulated with relative ease, sometimes unintentionally. This causes the balls to, then, interact with each other, which contributes to my continuous reactions and attempts to 'control' them. Furthermore, the relative smoothness of the piano's middle-register strings created another precarious interaction with the balls: the middle register of a grand piano is large enough to provide plenty of space to move the balls into shapes, but the lack of resistance due to the smoothness of the strings made it difficult to control them.³⁷³

³⁷³ This contrasts with the strings of the low register that are thick and ridged, therefore, create more friction. This friction makes it more difficult to move the balls with my breath, as is explored in the third section of *Moving Objects*.



time limit: 0'20"

Figure 13. Federico Pozzer, *Moving Objects* (2020), section one, shape nine

My reactions often involved multiple body movements, depending on the shape into which I was attempting to form the balls and the time allowed for this process. The ninth shape, which is a cross (see figure 13), is complex as the balls are positioned in alignment with the strings of the piano as well as perpendicular to that alignment. The way this shape relates to the piano strings can be seen in figure 14. Achieving this shape was difficult: any correct

positioning of a ball was immediately affected by the moving of others, which can be in the video at 11:35-12:00. This, as well as the limited time allocated (twenty seconds) instilled a slightly panicked reaction: I attempted to move the balls quickly by blowing them harder. This reaction involved many movements in different parts of my body: I found myself adjusting my feet to position my upper body closer to the balls, thereby, increasing the effectiveness of my breath; my hands gripped the piano lid in support of my torso as I breathed; I arched my back and lifted my shoulders to enable my ribs to expand, allowing me to exhale more deeply; my cheeks expanded and my lips tightened to increase the air pressure.³⁷⁴

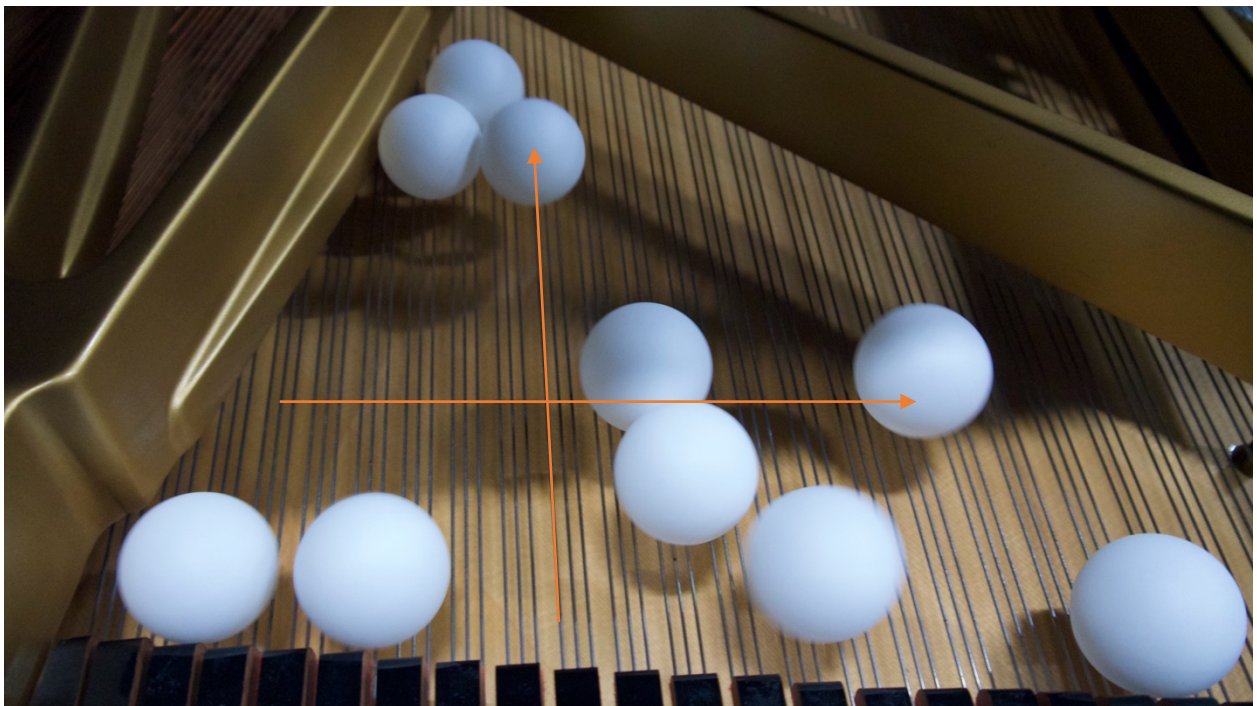


Figure 14. A still image of shape nine taken from the video of *Moving Objects*. The balls must be positioned in alignment with and perpendicular to the strings

Significantly, in terms of the investigation into my functioning performing body, this reaction to the forming of shape nine demonstrates an aspect of my functioning. As I explored the

³⁷⁴ My chosen camera angles bring a viewer's attention these bodily movements.

behaviour of the ping pong balls and their interaction with the piano, the unpredictable movements of the balls instilled many quick and automatic responses made without preparation or anticipation. Such a reaction is functional and demonstrative of a body that innately 'knows' what to do in response.³⁷⁵ The way I responded to the specific performing environment of *Moving Objects* is similar to Eric Clarke's discussion of the way an organism responds to an environment, in terms of "resonance": Clarke notes that "[r]esonance is not passive: it is a perceiving organism's active, exploratory engagement with its environment."³⁷⁶ Furthermore, an organism's "pick-up of environmental information is intrinsically reinforcing, so that the system self-adjusts so as to optimize its resonance with the environment."³⁷⁷ In relation to my experience of performing *Moving Objects*, this ecological understanding positions the 'situation' – the parameters of the performance as well as my engagement with these parameters – as something that changes whilst my interactive participation progresses. This revealed another type of interaction – an engagement – pertaining to my discovery of a situation whilst I continued to interact with it.

An Engagement

My use of the term engagement pertains to an ongoing and shifting interaction between myself and an aspect of a performance. In contrast to a reaction, an engagement appeared as a reciprocal interaction: as I react, what I am reacting to changes. Whilst engaging in the first section of *Moving Objects*, I remained attuned to interactions in the context of the score's instructions. On reflection, much of this section involved an engagement, rather than a reaction. This is particularly so with the fifth shape (see figure 15), which I am allocated three minutes to produce: on the video, I begin to form this shape at 06:03. In contrast to the ninth shape's short time, three minutes is more than enough time to form shape five. The balls are formed into three separate small groups that rest against the

³⁷⁵ This draws on Sheets-Johnstone's notion of already existent functioning. Sheets-Johnstone, "Bodily Resonance", 21

³⁷⁶ Eric Clarke, *Ways of Listening: An Ecological Approach to the Perception of Musical Meaning* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005) 19

³⁷⁷ Ibid.

dampers (see figure 16). Each group can be formed separately without affecting the others. Therefore, it was possible to perfect each group with time to spare. This encouraged me to engage with the passing time and shift my interaction with the balls. In contrast to a more automatic reaction, as experienced with shape nine, I remained conscious of the changing situation, aware of the time remaining and how this affected my next move.

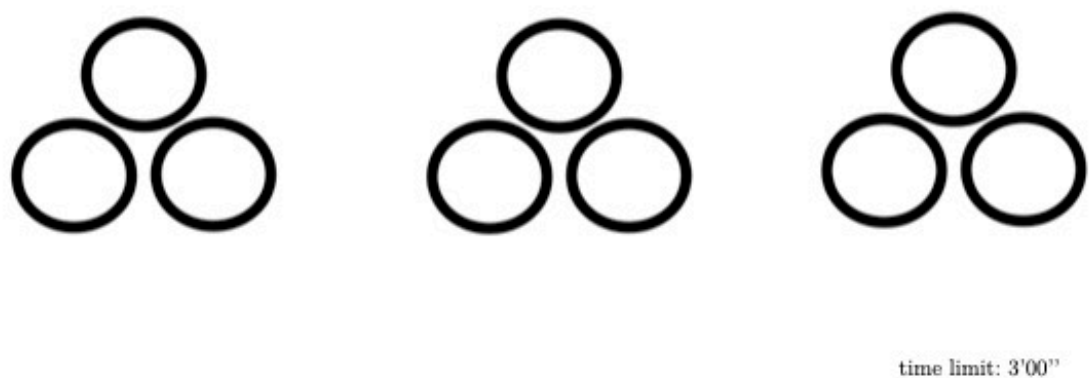


Figure 15. Federico Pozzer, *Moving Objects* (2020), first section, shape five



Figure 16. A still image of shape five taken from the video of *Moving Objects*. The triangles denote where I positioned the balls

An Exploration

The third form of interaction – an exploration – often emerged as a consequence of an engagement, as I assessed the changing situation. When deep in an engagement, an idea could emerge that I might decide to follow, despite the unpredictable effects of this on the performance. I was conscious of these decisions and their adherence to the broader requirements of the piece. These explorative movements were inquisitive and improvised, contributing to the contingent outcome of the piece whilst providing opportunities for me to ‘play’.

As with the fifth shape, here my engagement with the elapsing time resulted in a ‘drawing out’ of the task; perhaps a kind of conscious ‘filling of’ the time. Rather than simply using time to form the groups of ping pong balls, as required by the score, I used the time to explore small areas of movement and sound that arise ‘in the moment’: this musical playfulness with the balls can be seen at 06:30 on the video. Here, I make an unexpected sound that I quite like, which I could relate to the amount of breath I had just used. I decided to make this sound again and then playfully to repeat it. This is naturally disrupted at 07:05, when the ball becomes stuck and is no longer affected by my breath in the same way. I adjust my angle to recreate this moment. However, as the ball remains stuck, I move on to the next small group.

Recalling Pickering, I can understand my decision to abandon this exploration is a response to the material of the balls and how this relates to their situation. Their performativity halts my exploration, and I am forced to return to the task. This unique, unpredicted moment disappears as soon as it arises, highlighting the constant changeability of the interaction between human and non-human agents. Pozzer’s piece *situated* me within an interactive performing environment, which I perceive and interact with reactively, in engagement or exploratively. As Laws states, a performing “ecology” cannot exist without the subject that encounters it, and their interactions constantly change it: these interactions and their

changeability form part of a performer's particular subjectivity, "their relative priority, and hence their significance in the production of performer subjectivity, varies."³⁷⁸

Each collaborative project in this doctoral study involved the different types of interactions as outlined above and will be explored in subsequent chapters. My use of the word interaction attempts to encompass the different and often complex dialogues, relationships and dynamics, between different aspects of each performance, that arose as I explored how I functioned. As part of this research, I focused on how these interactions *felt* as I performed: some interactions impinged upon my movements, and others allowed them to remain as they are. What I noticed here led to my consideration of their restricting and freeing aspects.

'Pushing' Against and 'Allowing For'

As the interactions varied, so did the nature of my movements and what I understood to be my performing habits. My habits were revealed at different points in each project: during the creative process, during conversations, as a response to notation and during the performance of the music. I became aware that I had been completely blind to some habits, I felt frustrated by others, and some I recognised as 'what I always do' when playing certain music. For example, in *Give*, my habits hindered my performance of the music; in *Kate Limbo*, my habits were candid movements that were choreographed to form a performance; in *Subject*, my habits unraveled my memories of playing J. S. Bach. Despite the differing effects of my performing habits, even those that felt frustrating as I experienced in *Give*, they were considered as constitutive of my functioning; any 'negative' effect on the realisation of the score was, in fact, an aspect of our compositional material. Based on how they felt to play whilst performing and their effect on my movements, I organised the projects into a graded scale of pushing and allowing 'forces'.

³⁷⁸ Laws, "Being a Player", 84

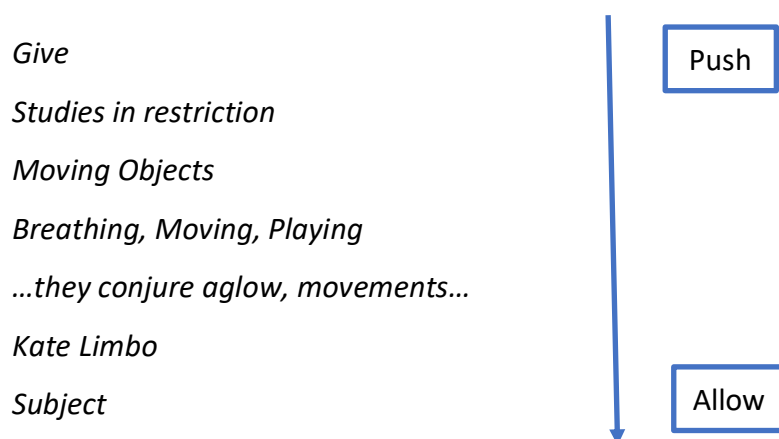


Figure 17. A graded scale of the projects that move from ‘pushing’ against (*Give*) through to fully ‘allowing’ (*Subject*)

The projects that felt like they were *pushing against* my habits deliberately sought and adjusted an aspect of my functioning so that I could more accurately realise a score. Through collaboration, we incorporated certain restrictions or specific details into a score that instilled, in me, a functional response. In this respect, the way I moved in performance embodied the deliberate ‘pushes’ being made against my functioning. Importantly, ‘pushing against’ was something I invited into this investigation; despite requiring me to make potentially disruptive, uncomfortable, or unnatural adjustments in my body, these projects and their positioning of my functionality shaped the way I moved and constituted the material of the music. This included moments in performance where I failed, starkly revealing my lack of control, intention, or ability. This will be explained in detail in Chapter Four.

The projects that developed pieces wherein my habits were *allowed* to be present deliberately included more intentional, nuanced, or even explorative movements. In the collaborations, our understanding of ‘allowing’ was vague and difficult to grasp. Our aim was to locate ‘what I already do in performance’ and maintain a sense of its ‘authenticity’ whilst creating a piece of music, but this became more complex as we explored quite what that involved. We became less sure of what our performed ‘outcome’ would be, frequently changing our minds and leading to longer periods of project development. Likewise, the

complexity of 'allowing for' my movements led to these projects producing numerous outcomes; the ideas revealed themselves differently in different media, which developed my understanding. Despite the apparent 'freedom' that this way of working offered, it was in fact more much more complicated than we initially realized (as is discussed in Chapter Five, particularly with respect to how I objectively considered what 'I' do in performance.)

The following chapters explore the details of the projects that most significantly pushed against my functioning, and those that fully allowed for my functioning. Chapter Four explores *Give* and *studies in restriction*, the two most prominent projects that pushed against my functioning. Their positioning of my body as something that *adjusts* provides this thesis with a preliminary understanding of how these projects directly affected my functioning. Chapter Five then explores *Kate Limbo* and *Subject*, the projects that most 'allowed for' my functioning. These collaborations positioned my body as something that is *adjusted to*, the sonic outcome contributing to the preservation of my 'authentic' movements.

Chapter Four

'Pushing against' my Functioning Performing Body: Ray Evanoff's *Give* and Monica Pearce's *studies in restriction*

This chapter focuses on the two most prominent projects that 'pushed against' my functioning whilst performing. The interactions involved pertain to the composers' deliberate restriction or enhancement of various physical and technical components: this was to affect how I functioned as a pianist. These projects treated my functioning (in Feldenkrais's terms) as something that could be exposed and potentially 'improved' through the collaborative and compositional processes.

Areas of restriction

My previous experiences with the composers of these projects led me to invite them to collaborate with me as part of this PhD. The experimentation with the Feldenkrais Method in the learning of Ray Evanoff's 'When I' (discussed in Chapter Two) revealed areas of functioning that I wanted to collaboratively explore and develop. I had previously performed compositions by Monica Pearce that explore technical and physical restriction at the keyboard; similarly, my learning of her music had revealed areas of functioning that I was keen to explore further. Evanoff and Pearce appealed as composers who were mindful of the physical parameters of piano playing and the potentially restrictive nature of notation and technique. In similar ways to me, they consider restrictive aspects to performance to be productive in regard to the realization of music. Evanoff and Pearce have completely different compositional styles – including very different aesthetic priorities and notational techniques – and this led to two contrasting musical outcomes. The ways in which we collaborated were also different, particularly in terms of how the compositional material was generated; this will be explained in more detail in the relevant sections. However, from my perspective as the performer of their music, Evanoff and Pearce shared a similar understanding of how a performer relates to a score, evident in their compositions. For the

PhD, this manifested in three aspects of the process in common between the projects: the composers' identifying of defined, functional, often unnoticed movements buried within my technique; their use of the restricting and disrupting nature of these movements *as* compositional material; a deliberate focus on my negotiations with the various parameters of the score in the process of finding a suitable playing solution.

Throughout both collaborations, the areas of my functioning that were restricted pertained to my physicality, technical ability, and interpretative freedom. Both composers explored the extent of these by posing me with 'impossible' areas within the notation. As explained in Chapter Two, Evanoff's notation is complex, particularly with regards to his inclusion of many notational details within a restricted amount of measured time or reduced sonic spectrum. His use of fast tempi and wide-ranging register exaggerates the performer's physical engagement with their instrument, which contends with their accurate production of minute details of dynamic, rhythm, and articulation. Despite their efforts, a performer often remains 'out-of-reach' of a playable solution and – on the surface, at least – the performance satisfaction might seem minimal. Indeed, it can feel as though Evanoff is attempting to deliberately 'deconstruct'³⁷⁹ the idea of an accurate rendition of his music by layering numerous details and obfuscating any clear solution. By extension, a performer might 'deconstruct' their learning approach, even technique, as they attempt to find the solution. Despite the antagonistic nature of his composition in this respect, his approach provided me with a welcome opportunity to inspect the nuances of my technique, my accuracy and my production of sound in performance: this formed an important part of the investigation.

My experience of performing Pearce's music had revealed similar themes of physical restraint. Pearce frequently composes for toy piano and deliberately exploits the smaller dimensions of the instrument. In *smart aleck* (2011), the pianist plays figures of close intervals, especially minor seconds (see figure 18) that require the pianist to maintain a

³⁷⁹ This terminology is taken from Claus-Steffan Mahnkopf's articulation of "musical deconstruction", a compositional approach that emerged in the 1980s. He explores this in his essay "On Musical Deconstruction", in *Musical Morphology*, ed. Claus-Steffan Mahnkopf, Frank Cox and Wolfram Schurig (Hofheim: Wolke Verlag, 2004), 9. This will be returned to in this section.

small shape with their hand; these figures are positioned in succession across the keyboard. In playing the piece, I found that the specific placement of the figures restricted my wrist to the extent that it was inhibited from aligning with my hand to support my fingers.³⁸⁰ This created a distinct awkwardness that made it difficult to be accurate but, to me, was appealing for my research. Pearce's notation was forcing me to move differently, particularly compared to my habitual understanding of what would be technically reliable. Her notation was exploiting uncomfortably exposed areas of my functioning in performance. Despite the physical and mental discomfort of this, I welcomed Pearce's compositional approach as way to explore my instinctive application of technique and my adjustment to 'composed' restrictions to how I perform.



Figure 18. Monica Pearce, *smart aleck* for toy piano (2011), bars 101-103. The quaver is equal to 120 beats per minute

Musical Deconstruction

The two compositional approaches apparent in these earlier pieces – the overwhelming notational material in Evanoff's 'When I' and Pearce's deliberate interventions in technique in *smart aleck* – deliberately disrupt a performer's attempt to satisfactorily realise a score.

³⁸⁰ This technique focuses on maintaining alignment between the forearm and the thumb/ fingers. This is outlined by György Sándor in his technical manual *On Piano Playing: Motion, Sound and Expression* (Boston: Schirmer, 1995), 55

This notion of deliberate disruption shares similarities with “musical deconstruction”, a compositional approach that emerged in the 1980s.³⁸¹ According to Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf, “with the advent of musical deconstruction, the network of fundamental musical and compositional terms undergoes a wholesale shift” to the extent that it changed the notion of the musical ‘work’, which in turn shaped new approaches to new music performance practices.³⁸² Mahnkopf notes that musical deconstruction poses deliberate contradictions, or impossibilities, within a ‘work’, which produces a seemingly accepted performance practice that constitutes “essentially approximative” realisations.³⁸³ Importantly, in the compositions that Mahnkopf considers to enact a form of musical deconstruction, “[t]he musical work is damaged in its identity in twofold fashion: through the immanent subversiveness of its fabric and structure, and through its eternally ‘partial’ realization.”³⁸⁴ Music that deliberately contradicts itself, is impossible, or is conceived as inevitably leading to performance errors, merges the score with its bodily performance: the “partial realization” constitutes the very identity and aesthetic. This symbiotic, integrative interaction between body and score is fundamental to the notion of deconstructed music and it informed how I framed the projects with Evanoff and Pearce. Despite the projects ‘pushing against’ my functioning, they served as designated spaces in which to deconstruct how I function in performance.

This designated space ‘showcases’ an unapologetic yet convincing view of an effortful body that is very much ‘at work’. A performance of this kind is potentially daring for all involved as this music constantly risks collapse and presents failure as a viable – even sought after – option. The outcome is unknown and fragile; it permits a performer to let go of the idea of being fully and totally in control and to resist the expectations that weigh upon them in live performance.³⁸⁵ Indeed, this very concept is being researched by a group of contemporary

³⁸¹ Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf, “On Musical Deconstruction”, 9

³⁸² Ibid.

³⁸³ Ibid.

³⁸⁴ Ibid. 9-10

³⁸⁵ Gritten, “Dismantling the demands of performing”, 164. The expectations that surround the performer was discussed in Chapter One.

music practitioners as part of the Performing Precarity project.³⁸⁶ They ask “what kind of practices emerge when traditional conceptions of beauty and perfection are relinquished in favour of precarity, fragility, risk, instability, failure, and mutual dependence between performers, composers, technologies, and audiences?”³⁸⁷ Specifically, the project seeks to reveal a performer’s “resulting experience of interconnectedness and heightened sense of vulnerability ... by shining a light on the nature of precarity in performance.”³⁸⁸

To present a performer as being fragile, even broken, brings attention to “the bodily operations at work”,³⁸⁹ making the body immediately “visible”.³⁹⁰ In reference to the body in live art performance, Helena De Preester considers the way in which “the body abruptly and explicitly comes into visibility and resists forms of objectification that may put it to rest, to clarity and obviousness.”³⁹¹ When the body is made visible, it is no longer able to ‘rest’ in the role an audience expects: for music performance, this might include an expectation of bodily control, poise, and competency. When confronted with such visibility, any discomfort felt by an audience is revealing of what is “subjectively and/or socially expected from the body and its embodied subject.”³⁹²

Questioning the “performer-as-hero”³⁹³

Marc Couroux fully explores the gains – for performer, audience and composer – of inviting this kind of discomfort into the performance space proper. Critically analysing his learning of Iannis Xenakis’s *Evryali* (1973) – an ‘impossible’ piece for solo piano – he explains how he

³⁸⁶ This project is being carried out under the Norwegian Academy of Arts with Jennifer Torrence, Lisa Streich and Laurence Crane. Ellen Kristine Ugelvik, “Performing Precarity,” *Norwegian Academy of Music*, June 29, 2023, accessed August 23, 2023, <https://nmh.no/en/research/projects/performing-precarity>

³⁸⁷ Ugelvik, “Performing Precarity”

³⁸⁸ Ibid.

³⁸⁹ De Preester, “To Perform the Layered Body”, 350

³⁹⁰ Ibid., 351

³⁹¹ Ibid., 352

³⁹² Ibid.

³⁹³ Marc Couroux, “*Evryali* and the Exploding of the Interface: from Virtuosity to Anti-virtuosity and Beyond,” *Contemporary Music Review* 21, no. 2-3 (2002): 53

“was forced into a serious reconsideration of [his] social function as artist”,³⁹⁴ but that this opened up the possibility to “build a whole new set of instrument-performer relations.”³⁹⁵ Couroux argues for a possible ‘deconstruction’ of performance by asking “[w]hat might conceivably happen if the performer is deliberately inefficient? What would be the sonic result of such explorations?”³⁹⁶ His enquiry is a response to Western classical music performance practice of the last 150 years, which, he argues, “has been inextricably fueled by the Olympian ego present in every performer, a ritual based in outward ‘demonstrations’, a self-definition always attained by an external affirmation of ability: the performer-as-hero.”³⁹⁷

A similar observation is made by Edward W. Said, who relates modern musical performance to “an athletic event in its demand for the admiringly rapt attention of its spectators”.³⁹⁸ He views the “professionalization of performance” as being “responsible for the widening distance between the performing ‘artist’ and the listener who is in a relatively weak and not entirely admirable position.”³⁹⁹ This positions ‘an audience’ as a group of spectators who attend a Western classical concert to witness something ‘other’ to themselves, perhaps allowing them to escape the normalcy of everyday life. To question this, by presenting an audience with an inefficient performer, perhaps forces them to face their own inefficiencies. This shatters the opportunity for escapism and potentially instills discomfort; it also reduces the ‘safe’ distance from the artist.

Anna Fenemore’s definition of the “spectating body”⁴⁰⁰ provides an explanation as to how an audience perceives and reacts to a performance. In reference to Alva Noë’s enactive approach to perception, Fenemore explains how the body perceives through understanding what they themselves do, or “are *ready* to do”.⁴⁰¹ As an audience “prob[es] at the visual

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

³⁹⁶ Ibid., 55

³⁹⁷ Ibid., 53

³⁹⁸ Edward W. Said, *Musical Elaborations* (London: Vintage, 1992), 2

³⁹⁹ Ibid., 3

⁴⁰⁰ Anna Fenemore, “Every body: performance’s other bodies”, in *Performance Perspectives: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Jonathan Pitches and Sita Popat (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2011), 40

⁴⁰¹ Alva Noë, *Action in Perception* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004), 1

scene” they gather “sensorimotor understanding” shaped by their own “conceptual understanding”⁴⁰² and lived experience:

We perceive as spectators in performance through a combination that has been – possibly not entirely usefully, because of the implication of time past – articulated as *body memory*. But these *memories* are, in the enactive theory of perception, our ability to know the body’s potential for action in response to certain situations/limitations/restrictions.⁴⁰³

Fenemore’s positioning of the “spectating body” is in the context of theatre performance. Her point draws on the broader field of embodied cognition, which has been explored extensively in relation to music performance and an audience’s perception.⁴⁰⁴ For example, in exploring a similar concept to Fenemore, Arnie Cox notes that “part of how we understand music involves imagining making the heard sounds for ourselves, and this imagined participation involves covertly and overtly imitating the sounds heard and imitating the physical actions that produce these sounds.”⁴⁰⁵ Importantly, an audience’s perception includes “an amodal, empathetic, visceral imitation of the exertion patterns that would likely produce such sounds”,⁴⁰⁶ which bears a similarity with Fenemore’s description of the spectating body that perceives an action through its implicit understanding of that action.⁴⁰⁷ To compare these examples of an audience’s perception with Said’s comments on the “widening distance between the performing ‘artist’ and the listener”,⁴⁰⁸ an audience perhaps lacks the ‘body memories’ – the ‘know-how’ – of the increasingly professionalized, ‘Olympian’ feats of modern performance. Indeed, as Said argues, an audience “feel[s] the impossibility of attaining the packaged virtuosity of a professional performer”.⁴⁰⁹ A ‘broken’

⁴⁰² Fenemore, “Every body”, 40

⁴⁰³ Ibid., 41. Fenemore’s concept “body memories” will be returned to in Chapter Five.

⁴⁰⁴ In the field of embodied cognition in music performance, key work includes Marc Leman, *Embodied Music Cognition and Mediation Technology* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008) and Rolf Inge Godøy and Marc Leman, *Musical Gestures: Sound Movement and Meaning* (New York: Routledge, 2010).

⁴⁰⁵ Arnie Cox, “Hearing, Feeling, Grasping Gestures” in *Music and Gesture*, ed. Elaine King and Anthony Gritten (London: Routledge, 2006), 46

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁷ Fenemore, “Every body”, 40

⁴⁰⁸ Said, *Musical Elaborations*, 3

⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

performer, who is inefficient and cannot fully realise a score, is perhaps more consistent with an audience's 'body memories', relating to "conceptual" and "sensorimotor understanding"⁴¹⁰. Does this 'reliability' between performer and audience, therefore, reduce their proximity? Does an inefficient performer draw an audience in, generating an empathetic response based on their own enactive understanding of what they are viewing?

Trusting the Body, Even When it Fails: How We Worked

As explored in Chapter One, Greenwald's renewal of James's ideomotor theory considers "sensory feedback resulting from self-action [as being] a crucial mediator in action control."⁴¹¹ The body's innate ability to store and recall the sensation of a previously conducted action is the mechanism that allows the action to become automated over time. These stored sensations serve the body with physically-imprinted memories that the body uses to function effectively in performance.⁴¹² Through collaborative and creative exploration, my research attempted to locate such memories in my body by noticing their effect on my performing activity. In the projects with Evanoff and Pearce, these memories were positioned as aspects of my playing to improve or work around – to be 'pushed against' – be these my engrained technical habits, personal preferences, or automatic body schema.⁴¹³ The aim of these collaborations was to resist these physical memories and create music *despite* them.

For the collaboration with Evanoff, our collaborative process formed around my reactions to his notation. Evanoff presented me with *Kate Small One* in response to our work on 'When I' as discussed in Chapter Two. I explored different playing approaches pertaining to my developing understanding of Feldenkrais and my pianistic technique. As I carried out this process, I noticed that my body often resorted to different performing habits, relating to its physically-imprinted memories, as I responded to his notation. These habits shaped my

⁴¹⁰ Fenemore, "Every body", 40. Referencing Noë, *Action in Perception*, 33

⁴¹¹ Shin, Proctor, and Capaldi, "A Review of Contemporary Ideomotor Theory", 945

⁴¹² Jänke speculated that for a musician, their optimized cognitive system accrues many of these physically imprinted memories, or felt sensations, creating a network of 'successful' bodily knowledge. Jänke, "From cognition to action", 31

⁴¹³ Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind*, 24. This was discussed in Chapter Two.

performance of the score which, to him, was not always adhering fully to the notation. The score was not changed to accommodate these habits; rather, we used the score to notice how these habits arose and understand them further. Evanoff explored how to use notation (in his next score *Kate Small Two*) to produce and develop similar responses from me. We then carried out the same process with *Kate Small Two*, and then later *Kate Small Two Point Five* and *Kate Small Three*: these scores are in Appendix A.

My collaboration with Pearce began with discussions about how restriction could be ‘played with’ and what restriction specifically means for a pianist. Pearce is a pianist herself and has extensive experience of writing for piano and other keyboard instruments. She was able to empathise with a pianist’s perspective on their technique, and therefore comprehend the concept of physically-imprinted memories as constituting technique. She composed five studies for piano and toy piano – *studies in restriction* – each one exploring a different aspect of piano and toy piano technique as a way to draw out my physically-imprinted memories; these studies are in Appendix A. After her composition of each study, we discussed how my body responded to its specific challenges. I drew her attention to my interpretation and, in some cases, this persuaded Pearce to alter her score. However, similarly to my collaboration with Evanoff, the challenges posed by her score often produced the physical responses we sought: she fed these into her ongoing compositional process, although in quite a different way to Evanoff. As will be discussed in the section on *studies in restriction*, Pearce’s notation is less complex than Evanoff’s, to the extent that she leaves certain aspects much more open to interpretation.

The following sections of this chapter explore some of the relevant details of my projects with Evanoff and Pearce, examining how these projects ‘pushed against’ my developing understanding of functioning whilst differing in their musical outcomes. Through examining the different aspects of Evanoff’s notational detail and Pearce’s application of technique, this section considers the responses I had to their notation in performance. As a method of exploration, my approach maintained Thomas’s “interpretative position” that is “devoted to the actions required by the score”.⁴¹⁴ Our exploration of my response drew out certain

⁴¹⁴ Thomas, “A Prescription for Action”, 80. See Chapter One

details pertaining to my performing habits, allowing us to consider to what extent I was able to (after Thomas) ‘shrug off’ my performing habits.

Ray Evanoff, *Give* (2020-)

Chapter Two outlined a ‘movement’ analysis of ‘When I’ that sparked numerous discussions with Evanoff about notation. These discussions provided the foundations for *Give*, beginning with *Kate Small One* that was introduced in Chapter Two. We shared our subjective experiences, dissecting them and subsequently developing them into the miniatures *Kate Small Two*, *Kate Small Two point One* and *Kate Small Three*: these are collectively titled *Give*.⁴¹⁵ Our candid conversations formed a crucial part of the creative process; as explored in Chapter Three, this collaborative process is comparable with Mary Alm’s “intimate” collaboration that is able “to emphasize the emotional and social dimensions of collaboration”.⁴¹⁶ Furthermore, the way we worked was underpinned by “kindness..., which makes space for novel, rich and exciting practices”.⁴¹⁷

A Dissection of the Notation, and Ourselves

As mentioned above, this project formed around my response to Evanoff’s notation, which invited interactions between different aspects in forming an understanding of how I functioned. I observed my responses to the notation that were often quick, automatic and, in Feldenkrais’s terms, compulsive.⁴¹⁸ The nature of my responses revealed a difference between Evanoff and myself, particularly the contrast between how a performer perceives

⁴¹⁵ We presented a performance of *Give* and discussed our process of collaboration as part of the *Noisefloor Symposium*. “Small(s) for solo piano (2020 -): transatlantic collaboration + conversation in 2020-2021.” in *Noisefloor Symposium*, Staffordshire University, 11-12 May, 2021, accessed July 4, 2023, <https://youtu.be/JI6BJWVxqM>. The performance of *Give* begins at 13:43

⁴¹⁶ Alm, “The Role of Talk in the Writing Process of Intimate Collaboration”, 126

⁴¹⁷ In devising contemporary theatre, Kate Hunter emphasises kindness’s ability to “foster a rigorous and fruitful collaboration”, and that it “underpins deep friendships, long histories and tacit understandings”. Kate Hunter, “Compassionate Irritability: Interdisciplinary collaboration as an act of kindness”, *Performance Paradigm* 16 (2021), 271-272

⁴¹⁸ Feldenkrais, *The Potent Self*, 8. This, and the concept of spontaneous action, was explored in Chapter Two.

their own sound, and how a composer conceives a sound.⁴¹⁹ Ultimately, this project became an enquiry into how I function (via reaction and movement) when attempting to realise a notation that deliberately ‘deconstructs’ its own process of performance. For this, I had to accept the demands of the music whilst noticing how I functioned as I performed.

Give aimed to limit my options for interpretation, adjustment, and compromise. This ‘pushed against’ my instinctive, habitual responses, whilst drawing attention to my physical encounter with the notation. Evanoff’s notation is tightly bound to its physical realization, wherein every detail is focused on the endpoint of each specific sound. In this respect, Evanoff uses notation to prescribe my actions⁴²⁰ to the extent that it restricts my choices as a performer: this can be seen in the very first note of *Kate Small One* (see figure 19).

The image shows a musical score for the first note of 'Kate Small One' by Ray Evanoff. The score is written for Piano and features a complex, multi-measure notation. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 80. The left hand (LH) is labeled 'Stem Up: LH' and the right hand (RH) is labeled 'Stem Down: RH'. The notation includes dynamic markings such as ppp, spz, sffz, sfz, and mf. A 5:4 time signature is indicated at the bottom. The score is written on a grand staff with a treble clef for the piano part. The notation is highly detailed, with many notes and stems, and includes a large bracketed section for the RH part.

Figure 19. Ray Evanoff, *Kate Small One* (2020-)

⁴¹⁹ Out of all the collaborations, my interactions with Evanoff involved the most resistance and disagreement. However, this was valuable to the work.

⁴²⁰ Thomas, “A Prescription for Action”, 77.

This first note, a middle C, is a grace note that commences a three-note rising gesture. As the notation states, this note is assigned to the right hand. It is the lowest note of the cell: therefore, I extend my arm across my torso to reach it, creating a specific shape in my body. This shape can be seen in two films of my performance of this piece that use different camera angles: “Kate Small (One)” was filmed using a GoPro attached to my head,⁴²¹ and “Give (one): take one” was filmed using a camera positioned to the right of the keyboard.⁴²² To travel across the keyboard at this tempo, I need to let go of the middle C quickly, perhaps using an attack that involves springing from the keybed whilst the key is being depressed. However, the *tenuto* and dynamic of the middle C (*mp*) encourage me to linger on this note and play it with a delicate, *cantabile* presence. A quieter dynamic (*p*) would permit less presence, allowing this C to be ‘flicked’ as I move up the keyboard; a louder dynamic (*mf*) would permit less caution, perhaps allowing it to be ‘grabbed’ as I move. Evanoff’s marking of *mp* compels me to ‘sing’ this note, which goes against my prioritisation of quickly moving across the keyboard.

The addition of *staccato* to the notation here contributes a further restriction of performer choice. *Tenuto* plus *staccato* suggests an isolated attack, requiring both ‘lingering’ and ‘releasing’ qualities, which makes this note difficult to blend into the overall line of the music. However, this note is notated as a grace note, which suggests that it should be incorporated into the line. At the same time, a grace note lacks rhythmic value and is therefore ‘out of’ time: it is not notated as part of the rhythmic division of the beat. The quick tempo and overall rhythmic activity of this cell requires a strict sense of time, but the addition of the grace note contributes a further distinction, between notes that are ‘out of’ and ‘in’ time: this creates added complexity. The YouTube video “Kate Small (One)” captures my exploration of how to play this middle C and its effect on the subsequent gesture.

⁴²¹ Ray Evanoff, “Kate Small (One),” YouTube video, 02:36, posted by “Kate Harrison-Ledger,” October 13, 2023, accessed 29 October, 2023, <https://youtu.be/zWe-d48RDpo>. I perform this shape at 02:05-02:09

⁴²² Ray Evanoff, “Give (one): take one,” YouTube video, 03:58, posted by “Kate Harrison-Ledger,” April 10, 2021, accessed October 29, 2023, <https://youtu.be/4UcsARB0g1g>. I perform this shape multiple times.

Evanoff's attempt to prescribe my actions, by binding them to his notation, only revealed the unquantifiable and contradictory nature of notation. Despite the extensive detail and layering of notation, certain moments remained open to interpretation. For example, the notes that follow the middle C in *Kate Small One* – a grace note followed by a demisemiquaver – are notated with a double *tenuto*, deliberately included in this piece as a result of our many discussions about the realization of 'When I'.⁴²³ To expressively lengthen the grace note seems appropriate, given this notation, particularly as the grace note is 'out of time' and, on paper, has no specific rhythmic value that could interfere with the metre (the same cannot be said of the demisemiquaver). However, what I perceive as the transitional nature of these notes and the overall momentum of the cell contrasts with any instinct I might have to 'sink' into these *tenuto* notes. For me, their distinct sonic identity connects directly to their choreography and how I move across the keyboard. This manifested a pragmatic response concerned with logistics and timing, rather than the expressive quality of these notes. As with 'When I', my interpretation of this notation meant relegating certain notational parameters in order for performance to be viable.

Unconscious Decisions

During the process of collaboration, I noticed that the way I was responding to Evanoff's notation often felt beyond my control. Listening to my recordings of *Kate Small One*, Evanoff could hear a lack of 'presence' in the double *tenutos* and suggested that I take more time over them. In our discussions, I agreed with this, but in practice my body seemed unconsciously to take over and 'ignore' the double *tenutos*. It seemed I was more concerned with reaching the top of the keyboard in time. This response was revealing in relation to the underlying questions of the project: it constituted an example of how I functioned in relation to this notation. I considered why I was responding in this way: was it because of my habituated preferences, a self-preserving reluctance, or an actual inability?

⁴²³ 'When I' includes single tenuto and double tenuto in the first contrapuntal section – see Chapter Two, figure 6. Evanoff and I had different understandings of tenuto: I included a slight expressive 'lengthening' to the double tenuto notes, which, to Evanoff, made them 'out of time'.

To investigate, I made more recordings of *Kate Small One*.⁴²⁴ The details of my and Evanoff's responses to these – what we noticed – evidenced our separate agendas and priorities. As the composer, Evanoff was able to abstract a sound from the action that produced it; as the performer, I instinctively merged the sound with its action. To my ears, the inaccuracies Evanoff heard were in fact traces of their physical production of sound. Unlike Evanoff, I was not able to remain objective and perceive my sound as being separate to its physical production.

An example of this can be found in the fourth note of *Kate Small One* (see figure 19). An E-flat is played on the final hemidemisemiquaver quintuplet of the beat and is notated *sfffz* with a *tenuto* plus *staccatissimo*. In listening to my many recorded executions of this, Evanoff noticed that this note was never loud enough: in his words, it “seemed good but not yet truly shattering.” I carefully considered my approach, remaining attentive to how I was sitting, aiming, and landing. This involved maintaining a close observation of my movements whilst playing, as well as the carrying out of Feldenkrais exercises targeted at specific areas of my body. The main target area was my hips,⁴²⁵ particularly the right hip, where I hold tension (possibly due to a lifetime of piano pedaling.) These exercises aided me in pivoting towards the middle C whilst maintaining the E flat as the central position of my seat. Additionally, these exercises provided support in my feet with more weight towards my right foot.

Felipe Verdugo's holistic approach to piano technique contributed to this active seated position on the stool,⁴²⁶ particularly his emphasis on aligning the spine. As he states, “misalignment creates tension in the muscles supporting the spine and upper limbs and interferes with an effective healthy and technical approach to the piano.”⁴²⁷ Better alignment of my spine allowed my fingers to spring from the middle C, supported by an active use of the oblique muscles in the torso. In terms of a technical approach, I utilized

⁴²⁴ Ray Evanoff, “Give (one): take two,” YouTube video, 02:56, posted by “Kate Harrison-Ledger,” April 10, 2021, accessed October 29, 2023, https://youtu.be/m_qNgdk-vw8

⁴²⁵ As well as carrying out one-to-one sessions with my Feldenkrais practitioner Caroline Scott, I also carried out Vreni Booth's lesson “Freedom in the Pelvis (for Horse Riders)”, “Listen to Lessons”, *Feldenkrais UK*, 2023, accessed 6 November, 2023, https://www.feldenkrais.co.uk/explore/listen-to-lessons/?audio_year=2018#list

⁴²⁶ Verdugo, “Biomechanical and Physiological Aspects”, 4

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*

Alan Fraser's structuring of the hand and György Sándor's more traditional technique that enables a combination of "gravity"⁴²⁸ and "thrust".⁴²⁹ The details of this technical approach included using a hammer-like attack with third and second fingers and thumb combined to form a bird's beak shape, which relates to Fraser's innate structure of the hand,⁴³⁰ and hitting the key from a height with muscle tension, combining Sandor's gravity and thrust. My exploration of this can be seen at the beginning of the practice video "Shattering E flat".

This combined approach, involving both technical and physical aspects, managed to produce a certain level of force. However, Evanoff still wanted a more forceful E flat. I acknowledged that I was perhaps restraining myself, the reasons relating to the context surrounding this note. For instance, the E flat lasts for only one tenth of a quaver – a minute amount of rhythmic space – and this felt too brief for the production of such a forceful dynamic. Moreover, the E flat is off the beat and leads straight into the E natural, which is on the beat. Instinctively, I wanted to play the E flat lightly and with less emphasis than the E natural; however, the physical force of the E flat's notation contradicted its identity in other respects. In addition, the E natural is marked *spz* – a much less forceful articulation – contributing further to my overall confusion. Related to this is the immediate distance my right hand covers after playing the middle C. For this leap, the E flat is my goal – my landing note – which would feel more comfortable and secure if it had the assured weight of a downbeat. This large leap across the keyboard is precarious, compounded by the tempo. As mentioned, the grace note offers a small amount of 'free' time but remains compacted when measured against 80 beats a minute. As a final point, the E flat is a black key, which contributes a further 'danger': despite black keys being taller and easier to distinguish, they are thinner and open to slips.

Understanding its wider context, the E flat can be understood to represent a "threshold of capability, and raw physicality".⁴³¹ By acknowledging the various aspects of this note, I was able to observe my instinctive functioning in response to this notation. My knowledge and

⁴²⁸ Sándor, 1995, 37

⁴²⁹ Ibid., 108. Despite Sándor describing "the *thrust*" as a technique that does not employ gravity, I explored how I could employ it, combining Sándor's and Fraser's techniques to execute this specific note.

⁴³⁰ Fraser, *The Craft of Piano Playing*, 70

⁴³¹ Gottschalk, *Experimental Music Since 1970*, 77

understanding of the precarious context that surrounds the E flat impacted my ability – even my volition – to play it with ‘enough’ force. As explored in Chapter One, my intention to play this note ‘as hard as I dare’ only manifests as appropriate movement if my body regards it as being possible. The ‘reality’ of volition is explored by Bernard J. Baars, who argues that the body compares its intention to move with information it has gleaned from the situation: if the movement appears unattainable, this will conflict with the intention to act: “the bare presence of another idea will prevent its taking place.”⁴³² Additionally, a conscious intention to act does not guarantee its manifestation in action: “a successful act of will does not typically emerge from some titanic inner struggle.”⁴³³ Rather, a successful act is the result of an unconscious, conditioned response that manifests as movement. Therefore, the way in which I function whilst responding to this notation could be regarded as unconscious and “*distributed* ... in which the real work is done by millions of specialized, sophisticated systems without detailed instructions from some command center.”⁴³⁴ Accordingly, I may never be able to play this note with the force that Evanoff desired. The reasons for this relate to the unique way in which my body functions in performance; this functioning is based on the unconscious utilization of habituated priorities and preferences.

Another consideration is that my body was acting “compulsively”⁴³⁵ in Feldenkrais’s terms. As explored in Chapter Two, compulsive actions, in Feldenkrais’s conception, result from my habituated self-image and the development of certain patterns and beliefs. Here, my self-image may be informing my knowledge of the E flat and characterizing it as something that is precarious or “too difficult”.⁴³⁶ According to Feldenkrais, this knowledge creates tension in my body, leading to ineffective action, as well as an “urge”⁴³⁷ to stop. However, “since the urge *to* enact ... is greater than the urge *not to*, [I] enact ... compulsively under an emotional pressure.”⁴³⁸ In line with the Feldenkrais Method, my ‘holding back’ might be viewed as a

⁴³² Shin, Proctor, and Capaldi, “A Review of Contemporary Ideomotor Theory”, 527

⁴³³ Baars, *In the Theater of Consciousness*, 133

⁴³⁴ *Ibid.*, 6

⁴³⁵ Feldenkrais, *The Potent Self*, 6

⁴³⁶ Feldenkrais, *Awareness Through Movement*, 87

⁴³⁷ Feldenkrais, *The Potent Self*, 9

⁴³⁸ *Ibid.*

compulsive reaction to this notation, but one that is automatic, unintentional, and accompanied by anxiety.⁴³⁹

Carving Out and Documenting a Unique Approach

In discovering my unconscious responses to this notation, I subsequently explored whether I was able to *include*, not remove, this aspect of my functioning to form a specific approach to playing Evanoff's notation. Rather than getting frustrated at what appeared to be a lack of physical control, I turned towards the experience and observed what my body saw, heard, felt, and imagined as it played the parts of the notation that were producing unconscious reactions in my body. This practice of close awareness forms part of the Feldenkrais Method, where participants are encouraged instinctively to create personal associations with particular movements as a means to explore how their body is carrying them out.⁴⁴⁰ The purpose is to increase the depth and detail of the sensations that accompany a particular movement to increase embodied 'self-knowledge'. Similar observations were drawn out of my reaction to Evanoff's notation and used to clarify distinct goals for action: the purpose was to override my body's unconscious decision to 'hold back'.⁴⁴¹

I kept a practice diary as I learnt (and re-learnt) the various sections of *Give*, an excerpt of which is in Appendix B. Evanoff provided a few prompts for exploration by asking me where do I start? What stands from a technical standpoint? As Evanoff and I worked remotely, I created videos to illustrate the detail I had provided in the diary.⁴⁴² The videos and diary provided an unlimited and unashamed space to document aspects of my learning process and detail my actions and experience; this provided a record of my subjective experiences, which we used to develop an understanding of my unconscious decisions. I included physical and technical aspects of my learning process, such as fingering, timing, touch, positioning, balance and voicing, and imaginative aspects that reflected my experience,

⁴³⁹ Ibid., 10

⁴⁴⁰ This was explored in Chapter Two. Yeu-Meng Chan suggests participants of her lesson imagine their hand as a silk paintbrush as way of exploring how to move.

⁴⁴¹ Setting a distinct goal is advocated by Cristine Mackie, who argues it is vital if performers are to function as effectively as possible in performance. Cristine Mackie, *Rethinking Piano Performance*, 98

⁴⁴² These videos are in the portfolio.

including mental pictures, memories, discomfort, satisfaction, internal thoughts and feelings. Evanoff occasionally contributed his reflections on specific aspects of my learning process, specifically, how his understanding of my experience informed his composition. For example, in the Practice Diary in relation to my record of learning *Kate Small Two*, Evanoff appreciated my consideration of whereabouts, on the key itself, my finger should strike in order to achieve the notated dynamic and articulation.⁴⁴³ My exploration of specific finger positions provided the collaboration with a new avenue that he considered in his composition of *Kate Small Two point One*.

Returning to *Kate Small One*, I reflected on how it felt to play the E flat-E natural-F gesture as discussed earlier. I explored what arose in my imagination whilst playing this gesture, using fantastical language and drawing to describe and clarify what I noticed. I wrote a piece of creative writing depicting the various details, which drew attention to the less technical aspects of my learning process. Here is a small section pertaining to the E flat-E natural-F gesture (the full version is in Appendix C):

The attack of the E flat is like chopping steel with an axe. It's dangerous and is likely to be mis-judged if I have any shred of doubt. The thin blade of the axe and the smooth shiny surface of the steel means it's likely I'll slip off target and scratch the steel. The inevitable slip is caught by the F, then the F sharp, almost like the wobble after landing off-balance. It's not that graceful and requires re-iterated firmness to make sure I don't finally fall over.⁴⁴⁴

This image provided some clarification of this tightly compact gesture. The E flat, E natural and F almost align vertically, yet their distinct notational details require the performer to separate out the attacks. The use of this elaborate image aided me in meeting the technical impossibility of this gesture more directly. It allowed the concrete experience of this gesture – the physicality of sound production and the mechanics of the instrument – to be surpassed by something imaginative, creative, and fantastic.

⁴⁴³ See Appendix B, 2

⁴⁴⁴ This piece of writing has not been edited since I created it.

Another example can be found with *Kate Two Point One*, which focused on exploring the possibilities of touch (see figure 20). Here, Evanoff combined an extensive dynamic range (*pppp-fff* plus *spz*) with *tenutos* and *staccatos* on their own, together, and in parentheses. As with other areas of *Give*, these markings are especially challenging in the context of the complex notated rhythms and the registral placing of the pitches.⁴⁴⁵

The image displays a musical score for a piano piece. The top system features a treble clef with a tempo marking of quarter note = 37. The key signature has two flats. The score is divided into measures with various dynamic markings: *pppp*, *ppp*, *ff*, *fff*, and *mp*. Articulations include *spz*, *f*, *p*, *mf*, and *pp*. The bottom system shows the pedal part with a bass clef, including a 'Ped' marking and a '5:4' time signature. The score is characterized by complex rhythmic patterns and a wide range of dynamics.

Figure 20. Ray Evanoff, *Kate Small Two point One* (2020-)

⁴⁴⁵ Although the chord shapes also differ, they were not as restricting as the dynamics, articulations, rhythm, and register, so were a less important parameter.

The seventh chord is marked *ff* and *tenuto*, with a *staccato* in parentheses. Evanoff ordered these markings hierarchically: priority is given to the marking that is closer to the notehead (*tenuto*).⁴⁴⁶ The duration of the chord is a semiquaver followed by a semiquaver rest within a rhythmic ratio of three crotchet beats in the time of two: this precise duration is potentially affected by the tenuto plus staccato. I explored shortening this chord, but only slightly as I must maintain the tenuto. The nuance of these notational parameters required a carefully considered response.

The ninth chord is marked *fff* with a *tenuto* in parentheses and lasts a full quaver. My first response to the parentheses was to produce a tenuto but with less weight, which made this chord shorter, revealing similar issues to those discussed in relation to the double tenuto in *Kate Small One*. The notated pedal applies to the eighth chord; the hemidemisemiquaver rest at the end of the quintuplet stops the eighth chord whilst the ninth chord continues. I was tempted to shorten the duration of the ninth chord, however, the rest at the end of quintuplet stops me from releasing the ninth chord too early. Instead, I had to ‘suggest’ the tenuto in parentheses for chord nine another way, leading me to explore the imaginative depth and detail of the sensations whilst playing this chord.

First, I observed the technical and practical aspects of chords seven and nine, including the way in which I depressed the keys, their level of depression, the frame of my arms, the way I released the keys and how I was seated on the stool. In the portfolio, this can be seen in the practice video “Small Two point One: Workings” at 03:34-04:06. As I continued to explore this, sensations emerged that I used to draw an image, as seen in figure 21.⁴⁴⁷ The lines, reading from left to right, represent the duration and depression of these chords. The detail of how the lines begin and taper depicts their attack: how I continued to hold them, and how I released them. Whilst depressing chord seven, my body remains firm and ‘high’ – as though seated from above and pushing downwards into the keys: the small curves at the

⁴⁴⁶ This detail will form part of Evanoff’s eventual instructions for performance, which he explains as: “increased proximity to notehead equals increased importance/‘centrality’ to interpretation, with additional noteheads modifying the basic conventions of interpreting the primary notehead-adjacent articulation, i.e. a tenutoed staccato is different than a staccatoed tenuto.” Email exchange, August 26, 2023.

⁴⁴⁷ This image was also explored in our presentation “Small(s) for solo piano (2020 -): transatlantic collaboration + conversation in 2020-2021,” *Noisefloor* symposium.

beginning of the lines depict a ‘pinched’, tight attack. The release of the chord is abrupt; its duration attempts to resist any decay in sound. I used the word ‘robotic’ to further detail how this chord felt to play. In chord nine, I ‘half-sink’ into the keys as I depress them: my body collapses and my back curves outwards. The deep curve of the lines depicts a degree of commitment to this, with the release being the same as the attack. However, the *tenuto* in parentheses limits my full commitment to this shape. I observed that I was breathing quite shallowly as I played this chord, due to the restriction of the parentheses paired with *fff* causing a small amount of frustration. The ‘bursting’ lines at the end represent a springing action that I used to release the chord abruptly and stop the sound.

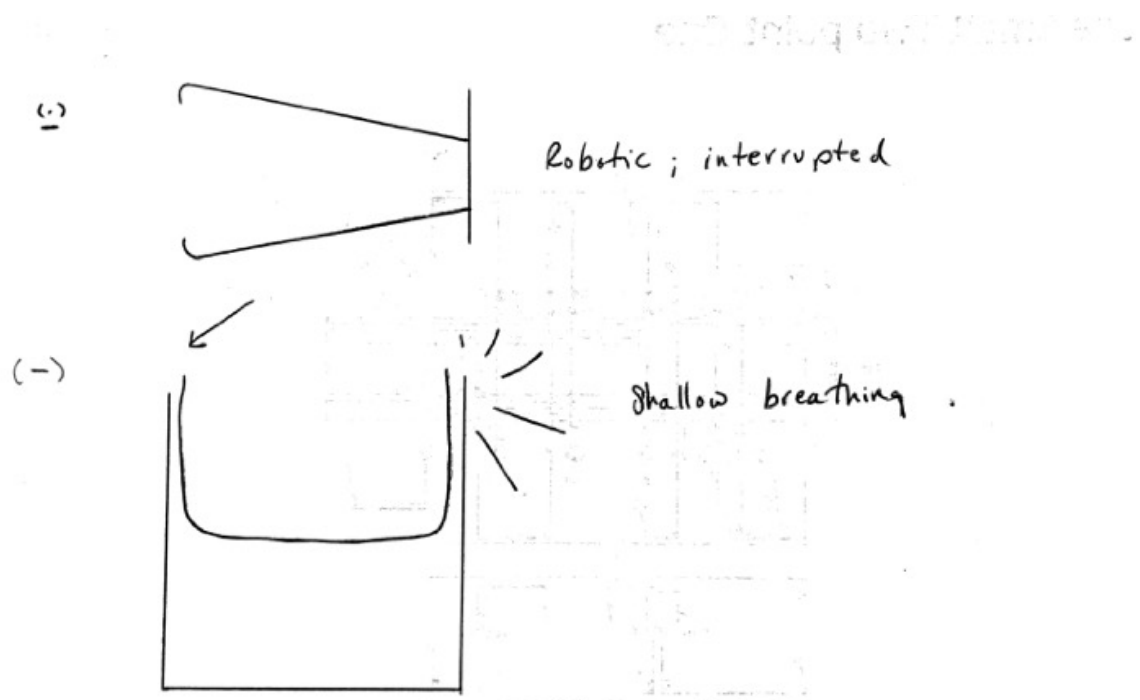


Figure 21. A creative image depicting how chords seven and nine ‘felt’ for me to play

As with *Kate Small One* and the creative writing I carried out, exploring imagery whilst playing these chords in *Kate Small Two point One* was, in fact, my way of processing the task that involved amalgamating several nuanced aspects of the notation to form a unified image. This image served as a goal, which, in practice, instigated my actions. This is an

example of a “perceptual-action gestalt”⁴⁴⁸ that, in this circumstance, draws on the principle of “a gestalt as a *holistic pattern* that is ‘more than the sum of its parts.’”⁴⁴⁹ The minute notational details were unified with the sensations of their physical engagement, forming “a unified perceptual–motor gestalt pattern extending across space, across time”.⁴⁵⁰ Stuart T. Klapp and Richard J. Jagacinski argue that when performing a difficult task, “a motor gestalt can function to enable coordinated action.”⁴⁵¹ My use of fantastical and quite “abstract” imagery – “abstract in the sense that they do not include tactical details regarding muscular contractions”⁴⁵² – manifested in concrete “strategic action.”

This example of my ability to create unified perceptual–motor gestalt patterns is an example of how I functioned whilst performing Evanoff’s music. I deliberately explored the fantastical images because they appeared to be a part of my inherent functioning. The images emerged as my body perceived and instinctively responded to this notation; this resulted in various (after Noë) enactive responses, where my body adjusts as it perceives, and continues to perceive, its environment.⁴⁵³ Exploring the fantastical images was my attempt to dwell in this performing activity, to remain present and observe what happens as way to glimpse this performing body.⁴⁵⁴ Additionally, these images were highly subjective, aided by my Feldenkrais practice, and served this PhD with internal investigations of what I associate with this notation. This provided more information about why I was responding and moving the way I was whilst performing, which revealed how I was functioning whilst responding to the notation.

⁴⁴⁸ Stuart T. Klapp and Richard J. Jagacinski, “Gestalt Principles in the Control of Motor Action”, *Psychological Bulletin* 137, 3 (2011): 443

⁴⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 444

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 447

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*

⁴⁵³ Noë, *Action in Perception*, 2

⁴⁵⁴ In Chapter Five, this is explored in relation to my project with Mark Dyer, where sensations, associations and memories were deliberately ‘drawn out’ of my performance of J. S. Bach.

I React to Being 'Pushed'

This project made discoveries about my performing body through analysis of my recordings and, importantly, the subsequent discussions that allowed us to exploratively consider why my body reacted the way it did. My reactions to the notation were quick and busy: it was difficult to stop and ponder how and why I was moving the way I was in the moment of performance, in other words, I was being 'pushed against'. As such, this project required the analysis and collaborative discussion in which Evanoff and I dissected and increasingly understood my reactions, underpinned by the (after Alm) 'intimate' interaction between the two of us.

Give 'pushes against' my functioning more than any of the other projects in this PhD. We committed to creating a series of miniatures that, through the combination of the precise compositional choices that involved many internal contradictions, produced a particular kind of embodied engagement; the intimate, dialogic nature of our collaboration enabled the details of this engagement to be our main focus for creativity. Throughout the performance and collaborative exploration of these miniatures, my embodiment seemed to shift violently between a self-awareness that is explicit and 'visible'⁴⁵⁵ – I am aware of minute aspects of my physical positioning, preparation, and execution – and an awareness that gets lost as I perform: perhaps this is where I merge with the notation. The pure, functional action of these miniatures meant that an objective awareness of my movements was difficult to maintain.

In contrast to Evanoff, my project with Monica Pearce explored how to restrict a performer through notation whilst providing them with opportunities to more freely interpret the music. These opportunities provided space in which I could more objectively perceive my actions whilst performing, separating it from Evanoff's notation that prompts purely physical and instinctive responses. The following section considers how Pearce's composition *studies in restrictions* maintained some 'deconstructive', physical aspects of performance whilst permitting the performer to make some musically informed decisions.

⁴⁵⁵ De Preester, "To Perform the Layered Body", 352

Monica Pearce, *studies in restriction* (2020)

My project in collaboration with Monica Pearce created *studies in restriction*, five studies each exploring a different aspect of piano or toy piano technique: videos of their performance are in the portfolio. These studies are similar to *Give* in their restriction of my body's choices as it performs. However, what separates them is their apparent simplicity, particularly in comparison to *Give*. Pearce's simpler approach to notation and writing for piano moves the focus of restriction to the inner workings of performance that lie beneath the surface of the music. This involved conversations about our perspectives of technique and piano performance, and our keenness to force private aspects to the foreground. As part of her approach, she sometimes leaves areas of the notation open to interpretation, allowing me to make musical decisions. Importantly, these decisions must relate to each study's focused technique whilst considering dynamics, register, tempo, and the sonic and mechanical features of the instrument (for example, the geography of the keyboard and its rate of tone decay). Although these appear as standard things to consider when forming an interpretation, Pearce considered this process as central to the development of her material. Furthermore, she focused on specific techniques to restrict my choices for interpretation.

This section begins by focusing on the second study – 'study in stretch' – to outline the interplay between technique and interpretation and the issues that arose. These issues will then be explored in reference to the third study – 'study in practice' – and the fourth study – 'study in suspension'.

A Choreography for the Hands

'study in stretch' explores the span of the pianist's hand as they shift between carefully choreographed chords. For most of the study, the pianist's span is at its maximum in order to

hold various chords that consist of large intervals. Pearce’s choice of pitches creates specific hand positions and a choreography for the hands: often the piece involves positioning the hands so that they fit closely around each other and maneuver between positions. There are instances where there is only one possible hand position.

In bars 18 and 19 (see figure 22), Pearce’s notation limits the positioning and movement of my hands. The rhythmic durations of the chords overlap – both hands hold chords at the same time – and their pitches cover the same area of the keyboard (G4 – C6). Therefore, the hands effectively have to move under and over one another when moving to a new chord. Technically, this would be more manageable if one hand was assigned chords of black keys and the other white: the two hands would then be able to sit one over the other despite working in the same pitch area. However, while some chords work this way, there are moments where Pearce deliberately forces certain hand positions, so as to disrupt my management of this technique. Despite the simplicity of the music, Pearce’s careful consideration of the chords and their effect on my technique ‘pushes’ me to use certain movements and positions. In contrast to Evanoff’s notation, these moments of restriction are less obvious to an audience and speak more to a performer’s private engagement with the notation.

The image shows a musical score for two staves, likely piano and right hand. The score is for bars 17 through 23. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The first staff (treble clef) starts with a rest in bar 17, followed by chords in bars 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22. The second staff (bass clef) has chords in bars 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22, with a triplet of eighth notes in bar 20. Dynamics include *p* (piano) in bar 17 and *mp* (mezzo-piano) in bar 22. The notation features large intervals and overlapping rhythmic durations between the two hands.

Figure 22. Monica Pearce, ‘study in stretch’ from *studies in restriction* (2020), bars 17-23

The compass of the left-hand chord in bar 18 consists of white keys, requiring a relatively 'flat' position. However, this chord includes a central black key, which forces my hand to be slightly raised. Whilst holding this chord, I must pull my left hand towards my torso and play on the edge of the keys, to make room for my right hand to play on top: this can be seen in the video "'stretch' Example" at 00:06. The right hand chord consists of black keys and can therefore be positioned forwards, on the upper areas of the keys. However, the following left hand chord in bar 19 does not easily fit around this because I cannot fit my left hand underneath the right at this moment in the bar. The B flat in the left hand chord must be played by the fifth finger, which, for me, positions my hand above the black keys as seen in the "'stretch' Example" at 00:12. My initial instinct (due to the position of the right-hand chord) was to slide the left hand under the right. However, in doing this, my left hand 'squashes' the right hand and, as a result, accidentally presses some notes.

Another aspect of this study's choreography for the hands is the way in which the chords immediately follow one another. Each chord is held until the next begins, which limits the time available to adjust between each position. An example can be found in bars 20-22 (see figure 22) where one note of a chord is released before the others, and is then played by the other hand on the next beat. In bar 20, the C5 is played by the right hand thumb, which releases in time for the left-hand fifth finger to play the same note. This creates an extra movement in the right hand: through a rotation in the forearm, my open palm lifts to isolate the stretch between the second and fifth fingers: this can be seen in the "'stretch' Example" video at 00:15. I make a similar movement in bar 22: F5 is first played by the right hand thumb and then played by the left hand fifth finger. However, in this instance, the hand positions are further compromised as both chords are mostly white keys, which forces me to draw both hands towards my torso and limits the ability to play in the same area of the key: this can be seen in the "'stretch' Example" video at 00:24. As with bar 19, the right hand is 'squashed' by the left as it plays the chord on beat four in bar 22.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁵⁶ Additionally, the positioning of the chord on beat one is specific, requiring my thumb to 'thread' underneath the left-hand third finger that plays F sharp.

The examples above demonstrate how Pearce incorporated a technical use of ‘stretch’ into her composition. Stretching the hands into various positions is required by a lot of piano music, and therefore was not a new technique to me. However, this study, particularly through its use of simple and slow-moving material, deliberately highlights ‘stretch’ as a technique, perhaps more so than in music that is more virtuosic or complex. Her composition brings a deliberate attention to ‘stretch’ but, more importantly, how I – as this pianist – manage ‘stretch’. Indeed, this was the purpose of this PhD: to use collaboration in creating new works, for me, that demonstrate aspects of how I function in performance.

In response to Pearce’s focus on ‘stretch’, I maintained an interpretation that prioritised, even ‘showcased’, ‘stretch’. However, I found that prioritising ‘stretch’ meant enhancing certain aspects of the music (incorporating other techniques) to allow ‘stretch’ to be clear in performance. These other techniques related to the rhythmic duration and finger release of the chords, their pitch placement in relation to the natural decay of the piano and the use of pedal.

Shaping an Interpretation

As mentioned above, the constant succession of chords limits the available preparation time, bringing further attention to my positioning of the chords. One possible option would be to use the pedal to hold the chords, therefore providing more time to prepare. However, as my interpretation remained focused on ‘stretch’, I felt that increasing the preparation time would remove part of this study’s purpose and reduce the meaning of ‘stretch’ as a technique. Therefore, I made it a priority to physically hold these chords and not rely on the pedal: this was a ‘purist’ approach that relates to a ‘literalist’ approach to interpretation outlined by Ian Pace, that “maintains that the performer ... should try to execute the text as ‘exactly’ as possible, and that will provide most of what is necessary.”⁴⁵⁷ This approach was

⁴⁵⁷ Pace, “Hierarchies in New Music Performance”, 2013. As discussed in Chapter One, Philip Thomas argues that the “the score should not only be sufficient for all that the performer needs but should rule out external imposing factors such as matters of style and authenticity.” Thomas, “A Prescription for Action”, 78.

my attempt to use the notation *alone* to prompt my movements as a way to separate my response to the notation from any additional musical elements that I may include in performance.

At the climax of the study (bars 17-29), many of the chords are notated in the high register of the piano, where the tones quickly decay. This inherent decay contradicts the notated durations of the chords: it was immediately apparent that it would be futile to hold them for their full notated duration. This affected my interpretation, particularly my initial priority of holding the chords for their full duration before moving to the next position. I decided to exaggerate some dynamics as an attempt to lengthen the decay: for example, I played the right-hand chord in bar 25 *forte* (rather than *mezzo forte*) to create the notated build in tension (see figure 7). However, whatever the attack, I could not produce chords of the notated duration due to the decay: my attempts at this can be seen in the video “‘stretch’ Example” at 00:34-00:40. Another aspect was that some stretches in this section were too wide for my hand span, particularly in bar 27 as seen in figure 23. Pearce was aware that I could not physically play a minor tenth with one hand yet included one here (and one in bar 17 – figure 22). My lack of control over these different chords revealed my strong intention to physically sustain them. The result was tension – both physical and mental – as my literalist interpretation was not providing me with the sound I wanted.

Figure 23. Monica Pearce, 'study in stretch' (2020), bars 24-33

I decided to use the pedal to prolong the decay of the chords in the high register, where possible. This persuaded me to readdress my literalist approach, which I applied to the rest of the piece: I used the pedal to create smoother transitions between the chords. I considered how I had arrived at an interpretation that was making it easier for me to move between the chords. Their choreography was deliberately designed by Pearce to expose awkward transitions and restrict the performer. However, it was clear that in order to showcase stretch, I had to 'do more' than what the score notates, namely, use the pedal to prolong the decay of the chords and create audible joins between them. I considered whether this response to Pearce's score was, indeed, 'doing more' than the score, or whether this response was born of a purist approach that was committed to the score? Thomas's distinction between "music which is *projected* and music which is *investigative*"⁴⁵⁸ highlights how the former concerns interpretation, where the performer 'adds' in order to present the notation. In performing Pearce's music, the question for me became whether

⁴⁵⁸ Thomas, "A Prescription for Action", 77

‘adding’ led to an enhancement of the purely notated materials: one that allowed the crux of the piece to be clear. Does this enhancement bring my sound closer to what I believe is implied by the score? In response to these issues, I continued to negotiate ‘technique’: I attempted to strike a balance between the requirements of the piece (stretch) and the actuality of performing it, resulting in an interpretation that was neither literalist, nor free. Instead, I occupied a space ‘in between’,⁴⁵⁹ which, to my frustration, felt a little non-committal and led to my questioning of my integrity as a performer of experimental music.

In this way ‘study in stretch’ forced me to accept paradoxical moments of performance. This included an acceptance of truly impossible moments and the incorporation of effective compromises into performance. Her deliberate inclusion of impossible chords forced me to ‘let go’ of technicalities that were beyond my physical capability. This created a particular engagement with the notation that revealed an aspect of myself that desperately wants to play this chord as written but has to ‘cheat’. It revealed my purist intention, no matter how impossible it may be, and created a further interaction: that between myself and an ideal version of myself. As well as revealing some of the *multiplicities*⁴⁶⁰ that were involved in exploration of the performing body that lies at the heart of my PhD research, this moment of interpretation guided my attention to something that I had previously unnoticed.

Through Pearce’s establishment of contingent technical engagements with my instrument, my unconscious musical tendencies and preferences became part of their realization. In this respect, this highlighted a ‘deconstructive’ aspect of the piece, where the identity of this work only exists in its partial realization. Drawing on De Preester’s approach to the body “in terms of its constitutive layers”,⁴⁶¹ it was via the interactions between different aspects of myself that the different ‘layers’ of my performing body became apparent. These ‘layers’ include both the hidden and the non-hidden: those I notice whilst attempting impossible moments – my management of technique; noticing an ideal version of my performing self;

⁴⁵⁹ Occupying the space *in between* extremes was explored in my project with Ed Cooper. This will be discussed in Chapter Six.

⁴⁶⁰ The role of multiplicities was greater in my project with Mark Dyer, which is explored in Chapter Five. In particular, this chapter considers the interaction between different aspects of myself (or indeed, ‘selves’).

⁴⁶¹ De Preester, “To Perform the Layered Body”, 380

or my lack of 'stretch' – and those layers that are apparent and observed by an audience – the physical shapes I make whilst performing; the fragility of the decaying sound.

The issues explored in 'study in stretch' were extended into the third movement – 'study in practice,' for piano – and the fourth movement – 'study in suspension,' which is for piano and toy piano. The purist priorities I set for myself in 'study in stretch' changed in the contexts of 'practice' and 'suspension'. Once again, my literalist approach to performance was exposed whilst preparing these studies. I maintained the technical purpose of these studies as the priority when forming an interpretation, which, as with 'study in stretch', incorporated other technical aspects.

'Deconstructing' a Pianist's Practice

'study in practice' depicts how a pianist might learn a passage of music by bringing attention to how she must simultaneously read the score and organize her movements whilst playing. Here, Pearce requires the pianist's hands to cross over, reaching beyond their typical registers: the right hand is sometimes notated in bass clef and the left hand is sometimes notated in treble clef. Similarly to 'study in stretch', 'study in practice' is constructed to draw attention to the technique of crossing the hands. The piece begins with each hand playing separately before the same material is repeated but hands together. Finally, the material is repeated once again, with the tempo increased and the durations shortened.

I considered a similar approach to the one I used for 'study in stretch', that prioritized the 'practice' purpose of the study. I understood this as being the act of aiming the hands towards different, unusual positions. As the durations of the chords immediately follow each other, I also chose to hold the chords for as long as possible in order to showcase the movements between the chords. As the piece progresses, the shorter durations and increased tempo quickens the movements between chords and makes them more obvious. I found that the preparation for each chord was an internal mental process of reading,

planning, and aiming. I experimented with waiting until the last minute before moving. However, as with 'study in stretch', there were inherent gaps in the sound as I moved between the chords. Therefore, I used some pedal to bridge these gaps in the sound.

The fastest section of the piece – section B – caused me to produce some movements that I did not expect, or intend, to make, but that created a unique choreography of the hands. The hands move quickly between registers and frequently swap positions: this requires one hand to be above the other as they pass each other. In bars 49-51 (see figure 24), the hands move from a central position to a swapped hand position. My decisions here were instinctive and included an unconscious preference to have my right hand in position before my left: this can be seen in the video “‘practice’ Example” at 00:13-00:19. This moment of organizing the hands revealed the way in which I prepare and move them, which includes my prioritization of my right hand. The latter is perhaps a result of me being right-handed, plus the traditional dominance of the right hand in Western classical music, which has become an engrained aspect of my technique.⁴⁶² In bar 52, I swap the hands over: as can be seen in the “‘practice’ Example” video at 00:20, my right hand is above the left as it plays F1. There is a crotchet rest on beat one, followed by a note on beat two and another on beat four. My instinct to swap hands relates to my interpretation, which is based on a recognition of their rhythmic strength and the ‘celebratory’ arrival at this point of the study. In respect of this, I provide my arm with more space to resonate the Fs, showcasing the ‘off-beat’ nature of these chords. Despite this interpretation relating to a musical aspect of these notes, it was an instinctive response to the notation, brought about by Pearce’s deliberate focus on rhythmic hand placements.

⁴⁶² As explored in Chapter One, it is difficult to distinguish between (after Thomas) external, imposing factors relating to Western classical music traditions, and the internal aspects of my functioning whilst performing.

46 **B** ♩ = 80-90

49

52

♩ = 60

56 *p* 8^{va}

Figure 24. Monica Pearce, 'study in practice' from *studies in restriction* (2020), 46-57

Playing Two Instruments at the Same Time

'study in suspension' is for piano and toy piano and involves similar technical issues relating to the management of score whilst moving the hands. These are distinctly re-contextualized

through this study's addition of the toy piano, creating a new parameter of restriction. Throughout the study, the piano and toy piano are played in rhythmic unison. I must divide my attention between the instruments, managing their difference in touch, informed by their tone and decay, whilst maintaining an accuracy of rhythm and pitch. The purpose of this study is 'suspension', which I understood as my suspended position between the instruments and my production of a distinct timbre by creating simultaneous, balanced attacks on both instruments. However, Pearce 'disrupts' my control through her composition of rhythm and pitch, forcing me to carefully monitor the page whilst aiming for the lowest and highest notes on each instrument. By extension, this produced a particular interpretation.

The rhythm in the study is not complex but is detailed enough to demand my attention. The majority of the attacks are 'held' for more than one beat, creating a sonic effect that is 'suspended' and still, and not particularly rhythmic. However, Pearce's placement of the attacks within the bars effects the way the performer must prepare and play them. For example, in bars 26-33 in figure 25, the durations vary between notes of 3, 4, 5 or 6 quavers. There is no stable metre, so I must concentrate on the durations whilst incorporating changes of time signature. Combined with Pearce's choice of wide-ranging pitches, I must prepare ahead for these changes so that I carefully place them in time.

Figure 25. Monica Pearce, 'study in suspension', 26-33. Throughout the study, the top line denotes toy piano; the bottom two lines denote piano. The crotchet is equal to sixty beats per minute

The pitches in the study occupy high and low areas of each instrument's keyboard: I must play the highest and lowest notes on the toy piano, and similarly widely-spread pitches on the piano. As with the rhythm, pitches are often in unison (or the same pitch in different octaves); any mistake I make is obvious to a listener, so these pitches require exact placement and care. However, Pearce includes some slight deviations, where the hands suddenly play a semitone apart across the instruments (see bar 31, beat three). Again, this is not complex but requires my attention for accuracy.

Pearce's composition of rhythm and pitch continuously holds my attention and pushes me towards a distinct performing activity that orientates around each attack. As mentioned, the sonic result is relatively still and seemingly simple, but the act of producing these notes requires constant planning, shifting and careful finger placement. This determines how I sit at the instruments: I must occupy a certain position to be able to play both the toy piano and piano.⁴⁶³ Importantly, the playing of two instruments and the widely-spread pitches in

⁴⁶³ The full video of this study's performance was filmed using a GoPro attached to my head. In the video, the movements of the camera demonstrate the movements I make as I read the score and check my finger placement on the piano and toy piano.

'study in suspension' removed the intention I held for 'study in stretch' and 'study in practice', which was to hold the notes for as long as they are notated. To play 'study in suspension', I relied on the pedal and resonance of the instruments to maintain the duration of the notes. In relation to the study's purpose of 'suspension', this brought further significance to each simultaneous attack: for it to last the duration, it required a certain level of attack and a sonic balance between the two instruments.

The interplay of the various techniques explored in 'study in stretch', 'study in practice' and 'study in suspension' created performances of negotiation, involving many careful assessments and considerations of how to produce the music's various technical components. The composition embodied various pianistic habits that were either made visible or kept hidden from a viewing audience. Through developing an understanding of these habits – through her own experience, through mine, through collaboration – Pearce used them to position deliberate moments for me to negotiate. The tensions that emerged here were expressive and felt joyful to explore and perform.

The projects I carried out with Pearce and Evanoff explored the interaction between the pianist and their score, focusing on their reading of notation and an application of an appropriate technique. Importantly, these projects deliberately interfered with what might otherwise be seen as a standard classical music process: they scrutinised and disrupted, which pushed me towards particular interpretations to the extent that aspects of my physical and technical engagement with my instrument became the focus of composition. It was through this that the various aspects of my performing body were revealed, exposed, and treated as compositional material.

Chapter Five

‘Allowing for’ my Functionality: Neil Luck’s *Kate Limbo* and Mark Dyer’s *Subject*

This chapter focuses on the two most prominent projects that ‘allowed for’ my functioning in performance: my projects in collaboration with Neil Luck and Mark Dyer. Specifically, here my functioning was regarded as something that already exists in my performing body, having developed over time and through my experience as a piano player. This contrasts with the notion of functioning in the projects with Ray Evanoff and Monica Pearce, where my functioning was regarded as something I do that could be improved; our collaborative work was a way of exposing and examining this. In the projects that ‘allowed for’ my functioning, I considered what constitutes my existing functioning, how it manifests in practice before exploring how it could be used creatively. This was not to position my functioning body as something that inherently fails or struggles, but as something that is interesting and nuanced, to the extent that it can be used as a basis for creative collaboration.

This chapter first outlines some commonalities between the projects; namely, their attempt to capture what I characterized as ‘authentic’ movements in my performance. Such an approach revealed complexities regarding notions of objectivity and subjectivity. As with Chapter Four, this introduction is followed by two substantial sections outlining the individual projects, which include details of how we worked and what we produced, and, importantly, the ways in which we explored a sense of ‘authenticity’.

‘Authentic’ movements

Exploration of the ‘Typical’ Movements I Make in Piano Playing

As noted in Chapter Three, Sheets-Johnstone states that “[w]e know not just *how* to move in such ways; ... we know *that* moving in such ways fulfils certain desires or aims, or ... accomplishes or brings certain results.”⁴⁶⁴ She argues that a body is innately effective and efficient because we have “learned our bodies and learned to move ourselves effectively and efficiently in the world.”⁴⁶⁵ This understanding formed the basis of the collaborative work with both Luck and Dyer: we were interested in identifying the nuanced, often unnoticed details of my functional movement, particularly movements that could be regarded as being an essential part of piano playing. As we worked, we found that such details were difficult to locate: the process required careful examination of what I do before, during and after performing, so that we could notice unique, momentary movements. Furthermore, as we considered such movements as being *typical* of my functioning, we explored their ‘authenticity’. As is further discussed in this chapter, the inherent complexity surrounding any notion of ‘authenticity’ – particularly in the contrived contexts of these artistic projects – invited further exploration. Apart from anything else, this resulted in these projects becoming much lengthier in terms of the necessary periods of discussion, experimentation and project realisation.

The project with Neil Luck created *Kate Limbo*, a film that focuses on the situation of piano performance through its depiction of a pianist, in a room, who makes pianistic movements with no literal sound.⁴⁶⁶ The piece is grounded in Luck’s approach to “experimental music theatre”,⁴⁶⁷ which is often multidisciplinary with a focus on the mundane, ‘everyday’ aspects of performed movements. The project brought together our joint interest in these often unnoticed aspects of movement, which we sought to identify and explore creatively.

⁴⁶⁴ Sheets-Johnstone, “Bodily Resonance”, 19

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁶ Neil Luck, “Kate Limbo (2021)”, YouTube video, 06:34, posted by “neilluck”, 11 September, 2021, accessed November 1, 2023, <https://youtu.be/EmGLbiZoKK4?si=GZJ4D3OsSe3HA72JKL1>

⁴⁶⁷ In Neil’s words, his “work is primarily realised by musicians and is somewhat theatrical.” Neil Luck, “Interdisciplinary Practice as a Foundation for Experimental Music Theatre” (PhD thesis, University of York, 2020, 13

⁴⁶⁷ Luck, “Interdisciplinary Practice as a Foundation for Experimental Music Theatre”, 14

However, such aspects were difficult to identify as isolated actions, particularly as our aim was to compile different types of action to form a piece. As such, our project required many months of exchanging and testing ideas, and this involved developing multiple iterations of the piece. As *Kate Limbo* gradually formed, our focus turned to more defined areas of my piano activity, requiring more nuanced descriptions of movement and uses of notation.

Subject, the project developed with Mark Dyer, shared with *Kate Limbo* a focus on what was regarded as my typical, 'already existent' functioning, which we viewed as being 'authentic'. However, unlike the other projects in my PhD, the outcome of *Subject* was not a performance but rather an exhibition, presented live and also online,⁴⁶⁸ documenting the conversations and objects that emerged through our exploration of performer identity. Our project created many things: photographs, clay models, a short film and drawings, all of which presented some aspect of my piano playing. The collaborative work constituted in-depth and intimate conversations about my memories of playing J. S. Bach, which were recorded and later studied before being used as part of the overall documentary. As with *Luck*, we explored the 'authenticity' of my memories and the extent to which they constitute my identity as a pianist. The sprawling nature of this process enabled us to scrutinise the outer edges of my functioning and present hidden, underlying aspects of how I perform. In both projects, my functioning was defined according to how I interacted and moved in response to 'others', in different performing situations, and was then considered in terms of how it related to the respective compositional viewpoints.

In Chapter Four, I invoked Fenimore's 'body memories'⁴⁶⁹ and related this to Greenwald's description of the body's innate ability to store and recall the sensation of a previously conducted action. These stored sensations serve the body with physically-imprinted memories that it uses to function effectively in performance.⁴⁷⁰ For the projects with Evanoff and Pearce, my physically-imprinted memories were 'pushed against' through creative processes that disrupted my execution of their notation. For the projects with *Luck*

⁴⁶⁸ See Kate Ledger, "Subject", *Kate Ledger Piano*, accessed November 8, 2023, www.kateledgerpiano.com/subject

⁴⁶⁹ Fenimore, "Every body", 40

⁴⁷⁰ Jänke, "From cognition to action", 31. This was discussed in Chapter One.

and Dyer, despite the very different compositional approaches, these memories and their subjectivity were things to 'allow for': to seek and preserve. Whether constituted in my technical habits, personal preferences, or automatic body schema, the aim of both projects was to identify, collect and preserve my physical memories before using them in creative collaboration.

Interactions: Subjective and Objective Perspectives

The interrelation of objective and subjective perspectives played a significant part in how each project sought 'authentic' movements. For the project with Luck, we explored both subjective and objective considerations of what I 'do' when I perform at the piano. My increased awareness of my performing activity fed into my subjective understanding of my movements, which was aided and enhanced by my practice of the Feldenkrais Method. However, I also attempted to develop the sense of an objective awareness of what I 'do', trying to view my habituated activity as though from the outside. This was not to undermine the inherent subjectivity of this activity, but to position it differently, allowing me to identify previously unnoticed aspects. I shared with Luck my subjective understanding of a certain movement that he, or I, had noticed. We explored my understanding of a movement's purpose, my level of awareness of it, or how it relates to my overall functioning. Luck also suggested we explore movements that he had noticed in 'pianists' more broadly, not necessarily those that are unique to me. These suggestions were born of a much greater objective perspective, perhaps belonging to common perspectives of what pianists 'do'. However, when I performed these suggestions, they became tainted by my subjective experience, which I then shared with Luck. Overall, these overlapping perspectives created an arena of complex interrelations, within which we could consider what I 'do' in performance.

In the collaboration with Dyer, I recalled images and sensations that I associate with playing music by J. S. Bach, which often included vague, abstract memories I have of learning a specific section of a piece. As I explored these memories, I experienced what felt like an

interaction between my current self – situated in the present, carrying out this project – and my younger self learning and playing Bach – situated in the past, carrying out certain actions. This produced an overlap between subjective and objective perspectives, as my recalling of memories required me to consider my past self as if separated from my present self. I attempted to view my past self objectively, from my subjective perspective in the present. Additionally, discussing these subjective memories with Dyer, who contributed a different objective perspective on my activity, but one shaped by his own subjective experience, increased the project’s overall complexities in its seeking of ‘authentic’ movements.

‘Non-subjectivity’ as an Approach to Capturing ‘Authentic’ Movements?

As each project began to shape a preliminary understanding of ‘authenticity’, we explored movements that exist within my performing gestures, or those I make in support of another movement, to the extent that we included what felt like unplanned or unintended movements. As mentioned earlier, we were interested in identifying the often *unnoticed* movements buried within my typical functioning. However, for these to maintain any sense of ‘authenticity’, we adopted an approach that maintained an objective perspective, which, we hoped, would isolate different movements as ‘things’ in themselves. Initially, this approach resembled Jennie Gottschalk’s articulation of a “non-subjective” approach in experimental composition, in which “a composer ... often feels a necessity to remove her own subjectivity – tastes, associations, discernment, emotions – as much as possible from the process of making the work.”⁴⁷¹ For Gottschalk, such an approach provides a “rich, subjective, differentiated experience”⁴⁷² for the listener, through its removal of the composer’s own subjective experience. However, as each project developed, it was clear that what we sought, in fact, fully engaged our own subjective experiences: individual tastes, associations, discernments, and emotions. As we scrutinised the specific nature of different movements and the memories that surround them, our respective subjective perspectives determined their ‘authentic’ nature, but this very process revealed the question of what

⁴⁷¹ Gottschalk, *Experimental Music Since 1970*, 3

⁴⁷² *Ibid.*

constitutes ‘authenticity’ and how it may be assessed. As we attempted to locate ‘authentic’ movements, the overlapping of subjective and objective perspectives exposed the inherent complexity with this very notion, particularly as considering any movement as ‘authentic’ might vary according to positionality. Therefore, in a similar way to the understanding of functionality of movement that underpins this thesis,⁴⁷³ the ‘authenticity’ of movement was something that constantly changed in relation to its situated perspective.

Despite these complexities, we embraced what we thought and felt about different movements as a way to develop each project. Our very negotiation of ‘authenticity’ enhanced our shared understanding of the similarities and differences in the ways in which we identified different aspects of my movements in practice, and formed the very basis of the creative development. As a result, our notion of ‘authentic’ movement was fully subjective, which included the way in which such movements were produced, in both collaboration and performance. Each project achieved this differently in relation to specific interactions: this is outlined in the more detailed discussion of each project, later in this chapter.

The following section focuses on the project with Luck and considers how our respective practices overlapped in creating *Kate Limbo*. The piece required me to perform defined, pragmatic, ‘functional’ movements – those that I make in support of ‘grander’ gestures when playing – but away from a piano. To maintain these movements’ authenticity, we centred on three specific aspects: the musical, pianistic (and non-pianistic) nature of these movements; the ways in which they are produced in response to instruction; and their recontextualization through composition and performance.

⁴⁷³ As explored in Chapter Two, functionality is relative, based on Feldenkrais’s definition of function, which is “the interaction of the person with the outside world or the self with the environment.” “Standards of Practice of the Feldenkrais Method”, Section 1.4.

Neil Luck's *Kate Limbo* (2021)

As noted earlier, *Kate Limbo* (2021) is a film about the situation of performance: it depicts a pianist (in this case me) in a room, who makes pianistic movements with no literal sound most often away from a piano. Chapter Three outlined the different roles that Luck adopted in creating *Kate Limbo* – composer, director, editor, producer, camera operator, co-performer – all of which shaped my investigation of the functionality of movement, particularly in relation to my interaction with these roles. My portfolio includes two films of the piece, the first being its main medium as a film, which involved Luck as the film's camera operator, editor and producer (*Kate Limbo 1 – KL1*). The piece's second film is a documentary of its live performance. We transferred *KL1* to a live setting, which involved my performance of similar pianistic movements and Luck's puppeteering of objects positioned in the performance space (*Kate Limbo 2 – KL2*). For the purposes of this thesis's discussion of movement, this section will focus on how we created *KL1*.

'Mundane' Movements are Functional Movements

Luck defines his work as “experimental music theatre” in that his “work is primarily realised by musicians and is somewhat theatrical.”⁴⁷⁴ His musical and compositional practice “always features music”⁴⁷⁵ but exploratively crosses disciplines to move the “lens” to include visually significant and affective aspects of musical performance. This involves his inclusion of broader artistic perspectives, and different media and modes of presentation: “concerts, but often ... galleries, or theatres, or public spaces, or ... radio, or video”.⁴⁷⁶ Based on this approach, we considered the musical, or pianistic, functional movements I make in performance as visually significant and affective. Once identified, these movements were ‘moved about’ into different contexts and placed alongside ‘non-musical’, or ‘non-pianistic’, movements to create a deliberately uncanny tone.

⁴⁷⁴ Neil Luck, “Interdisciplinary Practice as a Foundation for Experimental Music Theatre”, 13

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid.

Nicholas Royle describes the uncanny as having a “peculiar commingling of the familiar and unfamiliar. It can take the form of something familiar unexpectedly arising in a strange and unfamiliar context, or of something strange and unfamiliar unexpectedly arising in a familiar context.”⁴⁷⁷ This recontextualization of the familiar is employed in Luck’s theatrical approach and his attention on normalcy, or the mundane. In an interview for *The Quietus*, he explains that his “interest in physicality has moved from being quite a conceptual thing to, now, [being] more interested in bringing it back to a much more mundane, everyday level”⁴⁷⁸. The interviewer, Robert Barry, highlights what Luck is referring to by explaining to the reader that in his role as editor of Luck’s words, cutting the ‘erms’ and pauses, he has removed “[the] inherent failure – the little splutters and falters that exist in almost all speech and that, arguably, represent a constituent feature of human communication [that] have been, for the most part, ignored and excised by music. Until, that is, the music of composer Neil Luck.”⁴⁷⁹ As Barry explains, the smaller, “human” aspects that surround a ‘grander’ statement, be this verbal or musical, could be regarded as ‘getting in the way’ of successful communication. Likewise, it was the “human” aspects that surround pianistic gestures that this project sought. More specifically, and in relation to my investigation of functionality of movement, we sought the movements that allow performance to function: the “little splutters and falters” that allow someone to process and communicate their musical intention. This contributed to our notion of mundane movements as those that are functional and made in support of wider pianistic action.

Our interest in such movements was evident in our initial conversations. Here, Luck invoked the work of playwright, theatre director and filmmaker Richard Foreman, particularly his staging of the “corpse” of an idea. In Luck’s words, “this is identifying what is bad, or what is not working in a particular scene or situation, but rather than excising it, focus on it, draw out its qualities, or reframe it in a way that allows it to speak and express itself.”⁴⁸⁰ Luck refers to Foreman’s manifesto, which proposes “a theatre which focuses not on literal representations of reality but rather on a representation of the conflicting impulses that

⁴⁷⁷ Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 1

⁴⁷⁸ Robert Barry, “Corporeal Engagement: An Interview With Neil Luck,” *The Quietus*, July, 2016, accessed November 8, 2023, <https://thequietus.com/articles/20631-neil-luck-interview>

⁴⁷⁹ Barry, “Corporeal Engagement: An Interview With Neil Luck.”

⁴⁸⁰ Email exchange, August 2019

‘stand under’ and define our experience of reality.”⁴⁸¹ In particular, it is how theatrical events are arranged, or “assembled”, that create “conflicting, inexplicable, surprising combinations [that] reverberate with one another in revealing ways”.⁴⁸² This accounts for Luck’s interdisciplinary approach to defining his experimental music theatre practice and his need for “multiplicities”. Rather than confusing matters, he finds a “doubling, tripling, piling up of perspectives” useful; “it’s somewhere within these overlapping fields, or within the liminal spaces between practices and discourses, that my compositional research and practice lies.”⁴⁸³ Similarly, it is within liminal spaces – between intention, action, habit, and interpretation – that the movements I sought were situated. Such movements exist within my larger performing gestures; they allow me to prepare, adjust, or compensate ‘in the moment’ of performance. An additional liminal space for consideration was that between a pianistic and a non-pianistic action, and what defines the difference.

Evan Johnson’s *mes pleurants* (2019-2020) for piano provides an example of a composer’s attempt to capture similar aspects of the performer’s functionality. Johnson brings attention to the supporting actions that occur in a piano performance, perhaps those that are often ‘too noisy’ or ‘non-musical’. His composition focuses a listener’s attention on the unique sound of these actions to be heard as musical ‘things’ in themselves. He notes “inherently silent” actions, whilst “others may turn out to be so, contingently”,⁴⁸⁴ and marginal sounds that are only audible to the performer: the sound of naturally occurring body positions resulting from the notational choreography, or sounds that are not quite fully produced. Significantly, Johnson states: “nothing in the concert performance of this work should be considered as ‘theatrical’ or purely visual in nature”.⁴⁸⁵ Similarly to Luck, Johnson requires these movements to be ‘normal’, emblematic of his prioritising of a performer’s physicality. In this respect, both composers present a performer’s movement as material; however, in contrast to the approach in *Kate Limbo*, Johnson focuses on how movement *sounds*, allowing the noisiness of the performing body to be heard as part of the music. Indeed, this

⁴⁸¹ Richard Foreman, *The Manifestos and Essays* (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 2013), 69. Referenced by Luck, “Interdisciplinary Practice as a Foundation for Experimental Music Theatre”, 55

⁴⁸² Luck, “Interdisciplinary Practice as a Foundation for Experimental Music Theatre”, 55

⁴⁸³ *Ibid.*, 19

⁴⁸⁴ Evan Johnson, *mes pleurants* (2020), performance notes, ii

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

was noticed by Ben Harper who reviewed Ben Smith's performance of *mes pleurents* recorded in 2021: "[y]ou hear the thought process itself, in all its agonising uncertainty, without the cleaned-up end product."⁴⁸⁶

What Does a Pianist Do?

The project with Luck began with observations of how I move while performing, with a focus on interstitial or preparatory movements, along with those that orientate around a particular action. We closely observed what my hands do on the keys: for example, how my hands shift between positions, or how I begin or end a passage of music. Additionally, we conversed about a pianist's 'touch', specifically: the physical contact between a pianist and their instrument. I considered how my movements support the creation of a distinct touch, depending on the music I am playing. This was influenced by Thomas's careful consideration of touch and his utilisation of different areas of his finger to manipulate his production of sound.⁴⁸⁷ With respect to creating a singing touch, Doğantan-Dack describes a specific type of "initiatory gesture" made by the pianist that "involves the fingers and the hand assuming a fixed position before striking the keys, and the rhythmic group thus delivered displays less micro-fluctuations in terms of its intensity."⁴⁸⁸ Fundamentally, touch is the physical action of sound production but is surrounded by many contributing movements: it therefore became significant to our project, relevant for defining how I move (as will be explored later in the section on changing a pianist's immediate environment) as well as demonstrating the singularity of touch and the inherent separation between a pianist and their piano. This understanding of touch played into our creative situating of the pianist in *KL1*, leading to our *abstraction*⁴⁸⁹ of the pianist from her typical performing environment and her production of sound.

⁴⁸⁶ Ben Harper, "Evan Johnson: lists, little stars," *Boring Like A Drill*, November 2021, accessed 8 November, 2023, <http://www.cookylamoo.com/boringlikeadrill/2021/11/evan-johnson-lists-little-stars.html>

⁴⁸⁷ Eric Clarke, Nicholas Cook, Bryn Harrison and Philip Thomas, "Interpretation and Performance in Bryn Harrison's *être temps*", *Musicae Scientiae*, 9 (2005), 39

⁴⁸⁸ Doğantan-Dack, "In the beginning there was gesture", 257. Additionally, she recognizes "[t]he unity of the initiatory gesture and the tone produced" as forming part of the performer's listening experience as they perform. *Ibid.*, 258. The latter contributed to our abstraction of the piano from the pianist in *Kate Limbo*.

⁴⁸⁹ In relation to the collaborative aspect of my research, I have deliberately included this word because it was used frequently by Luck to describe what he perceived as the relationship between a pianist and their instrument. Although this relationship may be thought of as a separation, or a disjunction, the word

Interaction between Subjective and Objective Perspectives

As we observed my movements, we noticed the interaction between subjective and objective perspectives of my performing activity. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, these perspectives were difficult to separate out, particularly when attempting to notice what I 'do' objectively. The difficulty I found here perhaps relates to the concepts of body image and body schema.⁴⁹⁰ As stated earlier, the movements this project sought were functional and supportive of wider pianistic action. Importantly, these movements were initially unnoticed; they were difficult to notice because they were embedded into my habituated functioning and carried out unconsciously. Such movements constitute the body schema mechanism and, as Gallagher notes, "constrain or shape the perceptual field".⁴⁹¹ Significantly, the body schema "function[s] without awareness or the necessity of perceptual monitoring"⁴⁹² and therefore exists, by its very nature, outside of conscious awareness. Noticing these movements shifts them into my consciousness, allowing them to be considered more objectively and "as part of one's perceptual field."⁴⁹³ This shifts movements into self-awareness, where they perhaps become shaped by intention, and are no longer purely functional. The transformation of these movements, as they become conscious, accounts for the difficulty I found in legitimately labelling movements as 'functional.'

Luck wanted to include non-pianistic movements – those that were less habituated and outside of my subjective functionality – alongside the pianistic, to create a wider and richer repertoire. Such movements were rather simple and mainly used my hands, allowing them to be easily switched to and from pianistic movements. The involvement of less habituated non-pianistic movements instilled responses that shifted my perspective from subjective to objective: this created brief moments of separation from my body. The table in figure 26 lists *Kate Limbo's* pianistic and non-pianistic movements. The score in figure 27 demonstrates how some of these movements were notated by Luck.

abstraction supported the creative work by inviting us to consider, more directly, the absence of something that is significant to the relationship between a pianist and their instrument.

⁴⁹⁰ Gallagher, *How the Body Shapes the Mind*, 24. This was explored in Chapter Two.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 17

⁴⁹² *Ibid.*, 24

⁴⁹³ *Ibid.*, 17

Pianistic	Non-pianistic
Move your fingers on an imaginary keyboard as though playing a specific piece of music: ⁴⁹⁴ 'half-remembered'; 'the very edge of a muscle memory': <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With eyes closed • With one hand whilst the other hand covers the eyes 	Stand up and point your finger in the air
Re-enact the moment after the end of a performance: acknowledge an imaginary audience	Rotate your body and cover your eyes with your hand
Play silent notated chords played in mid-air	Snap your fingers
Prepare to play Beethoven's op. 53, ' <i>Adagio molto</i> ', but then abandon	Push your left palm over with your right hand finger
Play silent arpeggios with specific fingering in mid-air	Conduct a silent chord in the air
Play three fingered dyads whilst rotating the hand towards you	Rotate your forearm upwards from an imaginary keyboard
Play several <i>glissandi</i> that start and end on specific chords/notes	Demonstrate your elbow/wrist joint to an imaginary camera
Play grace note octaves at the top of an imaginary keyboard	In mid-air, mime an iPad swipe command then mark the sign of the Cross
'Phantom limbs': Imagine playing Chopin's <i>Prelude in D flat</i> , Op. 28 No. 15 whilst sitting on your hands and with eyes closed.	Make a peace sign with your left hand whilst covering your eyes with your right hand; swap and point in the air with your right hand whilst covering your eyes with your left hand
Push back from the piano and slump; 'dummy' play with your fingers with the heels of the hands on the edge of the keyboard	Lift your right leg and shake it erratically

Figure 26. Table of pianistic and non-pianistic movements used throughout *Kate Limbo*

⁴⁹⁴ I chose J. S. Bach's *Prelude in E flat Major* BWV 876 because it was an existing part of my repertoire and was explored as part of my project with Mark Dyer, which is discussed later in this chapter. In addition, the physical and rhythmic aspects of the prelude created, in me, specific movements that complemented Luck's instruction.

2

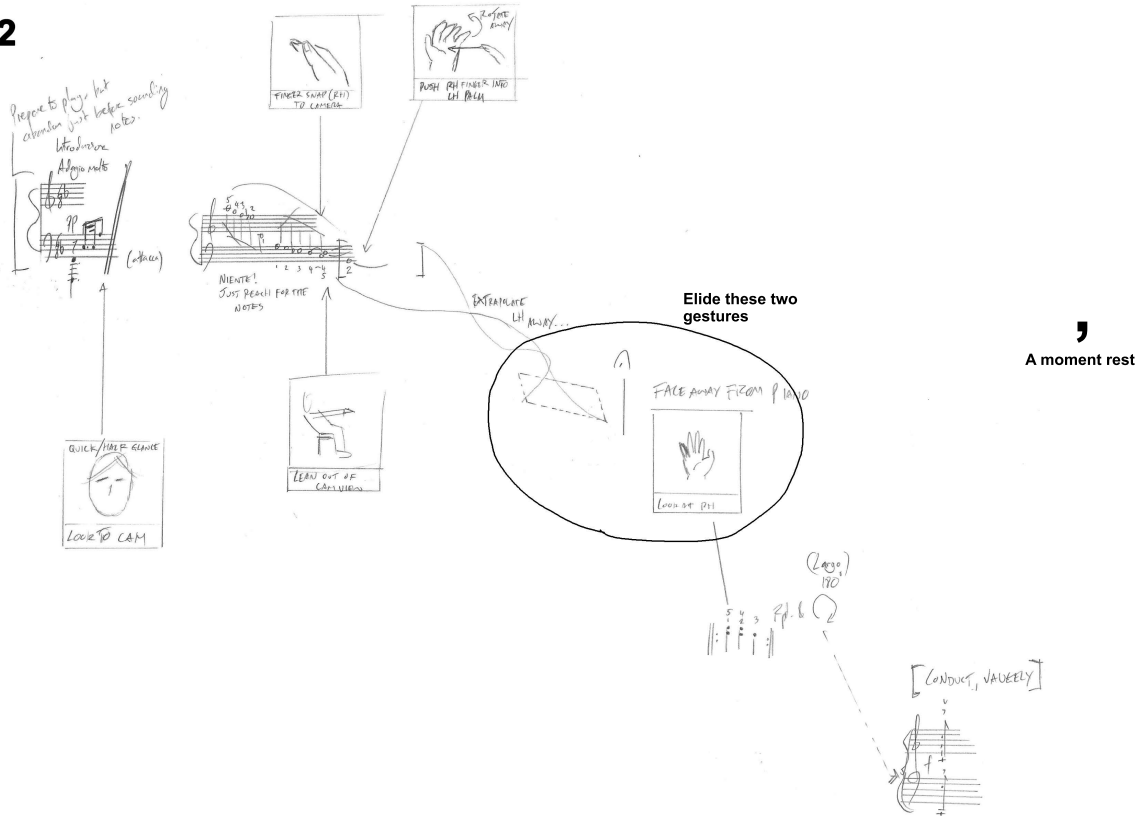


Figure 27. Neil Luck, *Kate Limbo* (2021), page 2

Once we had identified and collected these different movements, we explored how we could draw attention to their ‘pianistic’ or ‘non-pianistic’ nature through their exaggeration, combination and transformation from one into another. In this respect we were changing a pianist’s behaviour to something that was perhaps strange, unexpected, or uncanny, but nevertheless still recognisably ‘pianistic’.

I used the Feldenkrais Method throughout this project to locate the detail and exactness of these movements. This practice allowed me to increase a movement’s acuity and sensation as something functional and implicit – relating to my subjective perspective – or something deliberately shaped and explicit – relating to my objective perspective. Through close attention to how they felt, I ‘sat with’ these movements and observed their edges and intentionality. This increased acuity constituted these specific movements as ‘things’, which made it possible to collect them and bring attention to them through exaggeration, but also isolation, restriction, and repetition. As an experiment, Luck suggested that I should imagine

certain actions in impossible situations, to see how we could begin recontextualising these movements. This was aided by the Feldenkrais Method's use of mental imagery to challenge habitual ways of moving, the process of which was discussed in Chapter Two.⁴⁹⁵ In this respect, I was using the Feldenkrais Method to find a way of moving 'naturally' in performance; my Feldenkrais practitioner referred to this as "finding the authentic you." This process allowed me to locate any subconscious holding or restriction in my body that occurs in unfamiliar, unusual situations. For *Kate Limbo*, our fundamental aesthetic of 'authenticity' required a full awareness of how I moved and a developed understanding of both subjective and objective perspectives on my movement.

The pianistic movement called 'phantom limbs' (see the bottom image in figure 28) involved sitting on my hands and imagining playing repertoire of my choice; I chose Chopin's *Prelude in D flat major* (the 'Raindrop Prelude'), Op. 28 No. 15.⁴⁹⁶ I allowed my body to move as though I was playing this piece of music, but whilst sitting on my hands. As my hands were restricted, the swaying of my torso was isolated and therefore became an exaggerated aspect of this musical action: this can be seen in *KL1* between 03:27 and 03:50. My eyes were shut, which helped me to fully imagine myself playing. It is important to note that I did not exaggerate the movements of my torso; the movements are those that I would make if actually playing. This is because I was imagining playing specific repertoire. Despite sitting on my hands, I even imagined touching the keys, allowing my body to move as 'authentically' as possible.

⁴⁹⁵ In particular, Yu Meng Chan's delivery of her Feldenkrais lesson "Reaching with a Soft Hand".

⁴⁹⁶ The reasons for this choice relate to the project with Mark Dyer, which involved exploration of my memories of learning different repertoire. Chopin's *Prelude in D flat major* forms a part of my piano history and development. I learnt it when I was a teenager, living at home with my parents, the sensation of which is still embodied in how I play it today. I wanted to see how isolating these my movements whilst playing this piece could contribute to this project's objective idea of 'a pianist'.

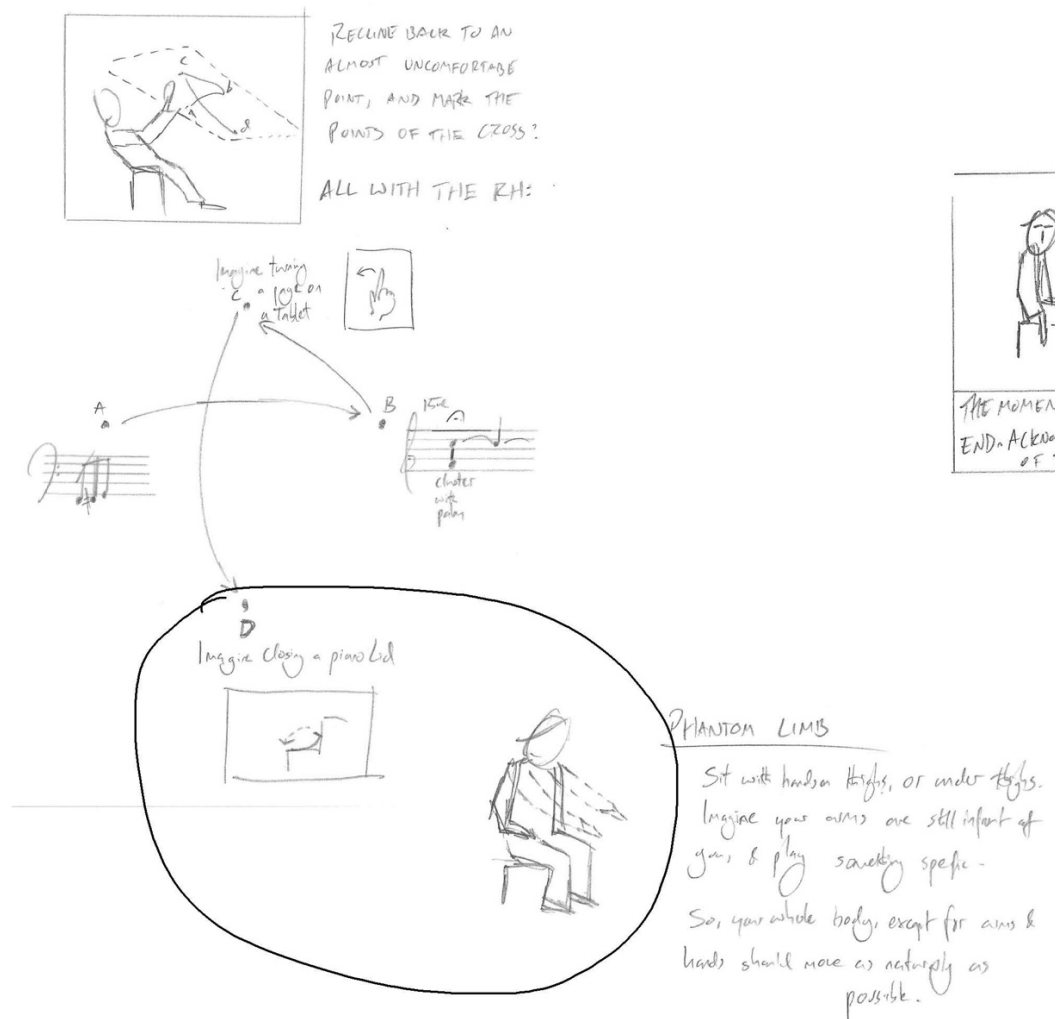


Figure 28. Neil Luck, *Kate Limbo* (2021), page 4

In the soundtrack of *KL1*, my playing of this piece can be faintly heard, as though someone ‘off-camera’ is playing this piece whilst I am ‘on-camera’ swaying with my eyes closed. As I am the pianist of this piece, the context for both visual and audio aspects is altered, creating an abstraction of my sound. This, plus the contributing role of the soundtrack, is discussed below.

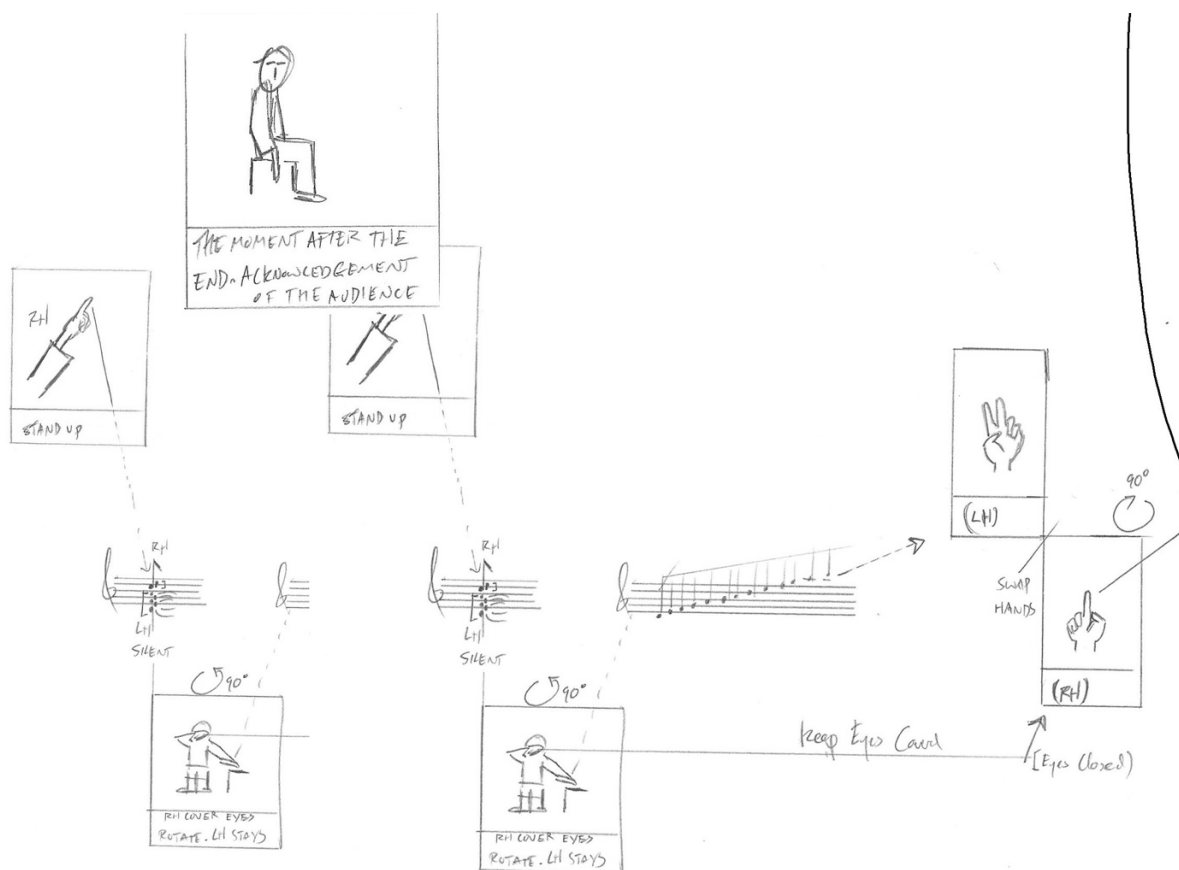


Figure 29. Neil Luck, *Kate Limbo* (2021), page 5

Closing/Covering the Eyes

An example of a non-pianistic movement occurs in a section that begins with my body rotating ninety degrees to face the audience. After playing an imaginary scale, I then switch between making a peace-sign with my left hand and pointing with my index finger on my right hand. This action is repeated excessively and quickly. My other hand in each action covers my eyes, making a complex choreography of hand positions (see figure 29, bottom image). In *KL1*, this can be seen between 04:41-05:07. Pianistic and non-pianistic movements in combination with closing or covering my eyes contributed another way in which we were disrupting my subjective activity and changing pianistic behaviour.

Closing the eyes in performance is often considered as a sign of (traditionally) expressive playing. Jane Davidson's extensive research on the movements made by classical music performers includes a case study that mapped facial expressions to body movements. Through close observation of a performance by the pianist Lang Lang, she was able to compile his unique "movement repertoire".⁴⁹⁷ This consisted of "compound" facial and bodily expressive movements, where particular bodily movements were always accompanied by a particular facial expression.⁴⁹⁸ In addition, she found these expressive movements to link to the structure of the music being performed,⁴⁹⁹ concluding that "the facial expressions provided information of a similar type to the overall bodily movements, offering an additional layer of information about expressive intention."⁵⁰⁰ As Davidson notes, the effect of this is palpable for an audience: "I can experience [expressions of physical release] as I observe the dynamics of the performer as observed on film, or indeed in the live performance context."⁵⁰¹

For the 'phantom limbs' section, closing my eyes aided the internal image of playing the Chopin *Prelude*, creating the distinct movement in my torso. In the Feldenkrais Method, closing the eyes whilst carrying out exercises is employed to remove visual distractions and increase attention on the details of the activity. In this respect, the movements in my torso were more 'realistic' and pianistic. Closing my eyes maintained my focus on the details of this internalised activity and allowed it to feel 'normal', and therefore functional. Additionally, in viewing the footage, my closed eyes evoke the effect of the 'uncanny': the inwardness signified by the closed eyes makes it feel disconnected from the audience, yet closed eyes imply calmness, which is accompanied by the somewhat familiarly 'pianistic' movements in my torso.⁵⁰² An audience views my face as it carries out a private, internal activity with closed eyes, and so I appear disengaged and distanced.

⁴⁹⁷ Jane Davidson, "Bodily movement and facial actions in expressive musical performance by solo and duo instrumentalists: Two distinctive case studies." *Psychology of Music* 40, 5 (2012): 617

⁴⁹⁸ For example, Lang Lang closed his eyes whilst he made two different body positions: whilst his head was shaking (side to side) and whilst leaning back with his head tilted upward. *Ibid.*, 616

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 617

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 623

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 618

⁵⁰² This draws on Royle's description of uncanny as having a "peculiar commingling of the familiar and unfamiliar". Royle, *The Uncanny*, 1

Covering the eyes, as in the ‘peace-sign/pointing finger’ section, has playful connotations, but was used by Luck to create a climactic build in tension. In the context of the final piece, this section marks the final climax: I quickly change between peace-signs and pointing, continuing to do so whilst the soundtrack undergoes a dramatic build. In *KL1*, the entirety of this section occurs between 04:41-06:00. The coordination of this section was difficult to perform and required careful coordination that was not always perfectly executed. In addition to making peace-signs and pointing, lifting my hands to cover my eyes contributed another hand shape to coordinate. The speed of these actions was beyond being comfortable (deliberately so), and resulted in a lot of rather clumsy, but ‘authentic’ and functional, movement. The frantic dynamics of these movements can be seen in Sam Walton’s photograph of this section in figure 30.



Figure 30. Sam Walton, “Kate Limbo (film)- 12”, photograph depicting my performance of *Kate Limbo* (2021), peace-sign/pointing finger’ section, page 5⁵⁰³

⁵⁰³ The full collection of Walton’s photographs for *Kate Limbo* (film) is in the portfolio.

Changing the Pianist's Immediate Performing Environment

Another way in which we recontextualised these movements was by changing my typical performing environment: this included changing my immediate environment – the surface on which I move and play, including its dimensions and vertices – and the wider environment – the space in which I move and play. This revealed another interaction that affected how I moved: that between myself and the environment in which I perform.

We began this locally, by exploring the lateral movement of my fingers in relation to the piano keys. We considered shifting the dimensional plane of the keyboard to explore how my movements could function at different angles. Luck created an animation of a keyboard moving in space, which is included in my portfolio. He suggested I follow its movements and imagine that the surface on which I was playing was a plastic sheet laid over the top – one that would be moved around, vertically and horizontally, sometimes violently, taking my hands with it. This was impossible to do in a literal sense: However, we were interested to see what would happen when I imagined and moved in response to the movement of the animated keyboard. In Luck's words: "what if that sheet suddenly dips down at 90-degrees to the keyboard, and so your finger and hand movements are mapped onto the instrument in an entirely different, 'wrong' way."⁵⁰⁴

Through exploring this exercise, we became aware of the limited dimensions in which both a pianist and a piano usually operate. As can be seen in the video "My Response to the Hands Video (Head)" (filmed using a GoPro attached to my head) I create extreme angles with my body to the extent that my typical interaction with my instrument is significantly altered. Following the floating keyboard and playing imaginary keys, I was able to lift and execute pianistic movements away from a physical keyboard. Despite the piano's three-dimensionality, the way in which it is (conventionally) played is often two-dimensional. Whilst performing, the pianist usually remains seated, facing the keys, and is often viewed from the side by an audience. Although pianistic technique incorporates height and depth within movements of the hands and arms, and extended techniques require a pianist to

⁵⁰⁴ Email exchange, May 2020

stand up and play the inside of the piano, a pianist remains inherently restricted by their physical relation to the instrument. This led us to consider how this relation could be altered to allow the pianist (in this case me) to be viewed from different angles. We used Rudolph Laban's *Kinesphere* and imaginary keyboards to consider how I could move beyond traditional dimensions to alter my immediate performing environment.

Rudolph Laban's "Kinesphere"

Rudolph Laban defined movement as "a transference of the body or one of its limbs from one spatial position to another. The outer shape of each movement can be defined by changes of position in space."⁵⁰⁵ He used the term "kinesphere" to denote the space that immediately surrounds the body, which he distinguished from general space. The body occupies and moves within the kinesphere, a "sphere around the body whose periphery can be reached by easily extended limbs without stepping away from that place which is the point of support".⁵⁰⁶ This sphere moves with us, as we reposition to a new place and change our point of support; we carry our kinesphere with us, "like an aura."⁵⁰⁷

Using Laban's directions, we explored how I could move within my pianistic kinesphere. We considered how I might "outline the boundary of this imaginary sphere"⁵⁰⁸ and locate its edges, angles, and trajectories. How would this relate to my position at the piano? Was it possible to increase my repertoire of movement whilst remaining inside my kinesphere?

Laban defined 26 directions of movement within a body's kinesphere: these "radiate from the centre ... [which is] the 27th point of direction."⁵⁰⁹ He used the image of a cube to demonstrate the possible trajectories, involving the "three-dimensional cross", the "diagonal cross" and the "diametral cross"⁵¹⁰ (see figure 31). The directions, or "rays", of the "three-dimensional cross" include "three spatial levels": one on the floor (deep level), one at mid-

⁵⁰⁵ Rudolph Laban, *Choreutics*, ed. Lisa Ullmann (London: Macdonald and Evans, 1966), 10

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 13

⁵¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 16

height (medium level) and one above the head (high level).⁵¹¹ There are also sideways (left and right) directions and forwards and backwards. The directions of the “diagonal cross” occupy the eight directions between each corner of the cube.⁵¹² The directions of the “diametral cross” are those directions that sit between the directions of the “three-dimensional cross” and the “diagonal cross”.

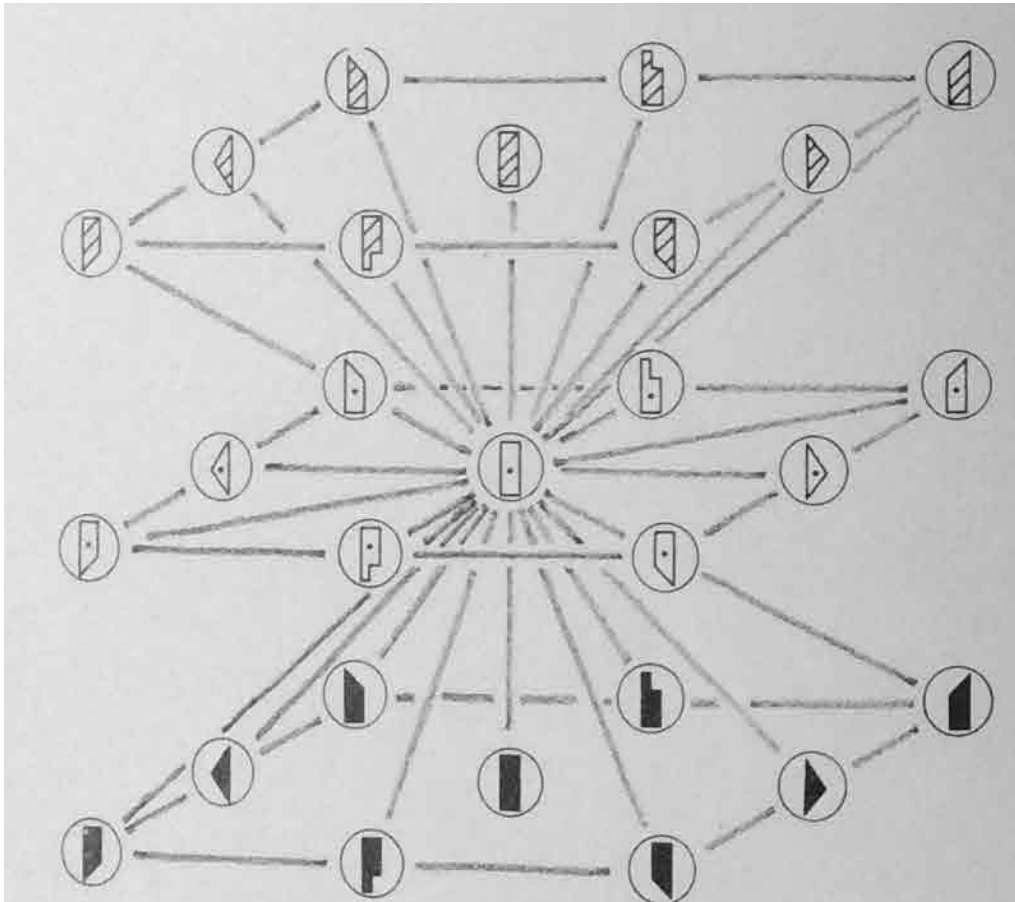


Figure 31. “The main directional rays establishing three levels in cubic space.” The highlighted symbols (in blue, green and red) were significant to our devising of movements⁵¹³

In figure 31, the symbol highlighted red represents a diametral direction. Laban considered this particular point within the kinesphere as “high forward”: it sits between “high” and “forward” (three-dimensional, highlighted in green), and “high forward left” and “high

⁵¹¹ Ibid., 12

⁵¹² Ibid., 14

⁵¹³ Ibid., 16

forward right” (diagonal cross, highlighted in blue).⁵¹⁴ The combination of the three-dimensional, diagonal and diametral crosses creates a multi-directional map for the possibilities of movement from a fixed stance. It also marks the edges of a body’s kinesphere. Importantly, this is not exhaustive of the possible directions: Laban noted, as the first fact of space-movement, that “[i]nnumerable directions radiate from the centre of our body and its kinesphere into infinite space.”⁵¹⁵

Luck and I used Laban’s kinesphere to alter the trajectory of movements made from my stance at the piano, to explore some different directions not used in traditional piano playing. For example, at one point in the piece, I sit facing the keys and move backwards, leaning away from the keys to make pianistic and non-pianistic gestures in a high, forward direction (see the top image in figure 28). Despite the altered dimension of the keyboard, my connection to the imaginary keys remained as detailed as possible while carrying out my movements at this tilted angle. I used my Feldenkrais training to move effectively and with clarity whilst remaining aware of my centre of support at the piano. Each minute aspect of a movement drew its support from my stance, which accommodated the different trajectories of my actions. Here, I increased my “awareness of unconscious physical organization, movement and action”⁵¹⁶ so as to move along a new trajectory within my kinesphere.

In another section, I rotate my position so as to face the audience. Here, I play specific chords on an imaginary keyboard raised in a high forward direction (see figure 32). This positioning of the stance and extension of my arms allows an audience to see my hands from underneath when I play certain chords. Luck deliberately notated chords that are narrow in range, requiring a ‘pinched’ hand position, or wide-spanned, to create a choreography of awkward adjustments around the black keys. My eyes are also closed, which allows me to fully concentrate on the shape of each chord and imagine their specific touch. The effect is rather strange: the audience views the claw-like shapes my hands make. The extent of this strangeness can be seen in a rehearsal video of this section of the piece, “*Kate Limbo*, pages 1-3”, specifically between 01:00-02:54. The chords were notated in

⁵¹⁴ Ibid., 12-13

⁵¹⁵ Ibid., 17

⁵¹⁶ Myers, “Application of neuroplasticity theory”, 301

relation to piano technique: they were distinctly functional pianistic movements, potentially recognisable to an audience. However, they are viewed from a different angle and in an altered, unfamiliar environment. This changed their context and meaning, again inviting a sense of the uncanny, and perhaps rendering these pianistic hand shapes unrecognisable.

My focus on the touch of these imaginary keys shaped the way in which my hands moved. Alongside Thomas's and Doğantan-Dack's exploration of pianistic touch, as noted earlier, my approach was inspired by dancer William Forsythe's *Improvisation Technologies*: a series of exercises that explore improvised movements in space. Throughout his video exercises on *Lines*, Forsythe orientates his body around imaginary lines to demonstrate the precision of his movements. In 'Complex Operations 1: Inclination Extension',⁵¹⁷ Forsythe maintains the trajectory of a limb that is inclined in a particular direction. He moves along this inclination and orientates the rest of his body around its position in space. This was useful for exploring the angles of my imaginary keyboard in my kinesphere: I maintained the keyboard at the same angle as it extended along a certain inclined trajectory, allowing me to lift my movements and execute them at different angles. As Forsythe states in his 'Approaches 3: Knotting Exercise', "it is very important that you learn to rotate your limbs and torque your limbs so that your approaches are extremely rigorous and very pristine."⁵¹⁸ This related to my prioritisation of 'touch' as I observed and collected my functional pianistic movements: the actions required this tactility and specific orientation around my fingers in order to remain pianistic.

⁵¹⁷ William Forsythe, "Forsythe-Lines-Complex Operations-1-Inclination Extension," YouTube video, 00:50, posted by "GrandpaSafari", May 24, 2008, accessed November 9, 2023, <https://youtu.be/wsRnVW96KN8>

⁵¹⁸ William Forsythe, "Forsythe-Lines-Approaches-3-Knotting Exercise," YouTube video, 02:02, posted by "GrandpaSafari," May 24, 2008, accessed November 9, 2023, <https://youtu.be/47rZsMhcnS0>, 00:11-00:23

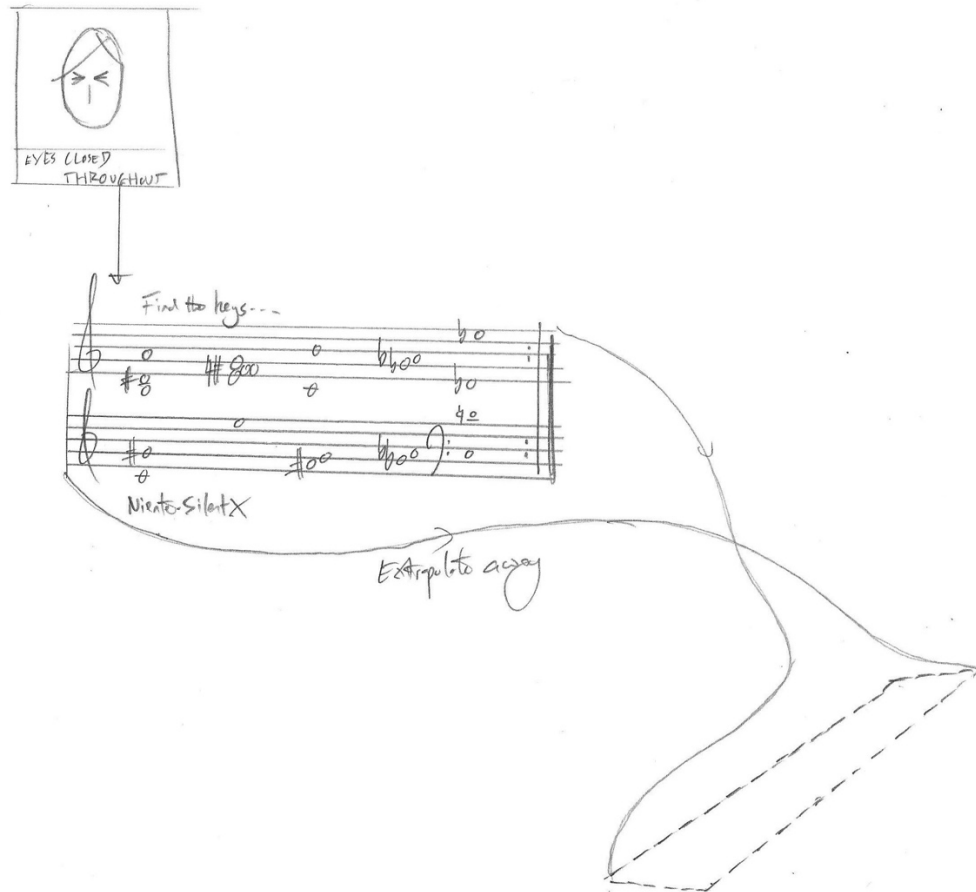


Figure 32. Neil Luck, *Kate Limbo* (2021), page 6

The Impetus for Pianistic and Non-pianistic Actions: Another Interaction

Luck organised the pianistic and non-pianistic movements into a piece: he interweaved different movements, switched between others and varied their relation to each other. He created a score for the piece using musical notation, graphics and text that instruct me how to execute the different movements (examples of the score are shown in figures 27, 28, 29 and 32; the full score is in Appendix A). As can be seen in the score in figure 32, Luck notated specific chords, drew facial expressions and included the instruction “extrapolate away” to convey how I perform different actions. Despite Luck’s score providing detailed instructions and outlining a structure to the piece, it did not instruct me *when* to execute the movements in performance. As mentioned earlier, the sound for *KL1* was created separately to the actions I make, therefore, there was no production of sound impelling me to move. We also knew that Luck would carry out further edits to the film in post-production: my movements

were not the only factor we considered in creating the piece's distinct flow. In order to perform these notated movements, I required a further impetus or instruction to respond to: this would, we hoped, allow me to perform them spontaneously and with functionality, which was important for maintaining their 'authenticity'. As a result, Luck used his voice to record guided instructions for me to follow whilst performing, informing me *when* and, sometimes, *how* to make these movements – I have included "Kate Limbo Recorded Instruction" in the portfolio. As such, the recorded instruction created another interaction – that between myself and the prompt I was responding to – which aided in defining how I functioned, and moved, in performance.

As well as prompting me when to move, Luck's recorded instruction conveyed subtle yet significant details through his use of descriptors and unique tone. An example is the way he instructs me to execute the chord at the bottom of page two. A C major chord is notated in the score (see the bottom right image in figure 27), marked *forte* with strong accents but with the additional instruction to "conduct, vaguely", which seems to contradict the strong musical characterisation. However, this chord immediately follows a busy section, and Luck conveys the idea that it can occupy a lingering 'space': the quality of movement is inferred from his words but also their timing, pauses, stresses and tones: "and just in the most, *abstract* way, conduct that, *featherlight* chord."⁵¹⁹ Together, these various components created a unique movement that we understood to be mundane and authentic. The score implies a sense of strength and command in the action of this conducting, but Luck's recorded instruction suggests that it is slightly distracted or hazy. The effect is uncanny, with the exactness of the movement recontextualised into a less familiar setting. This specific moment appears in *KL1* between 02:16-02:25: as can be seen, other components also contributed to the recontextualization of this movement.

⁵¹⁹ "Kate Limbo Recorded Instruction," 02:21-02:30

Changing the Wider Environment whilst Maintaining Function

The recontextualization of the various pianistic and non-pianistic actions is very apparent in the film setting of *KL1*.⁵²⁰ There is a piano in the room, but I am not seen playing it. However, I am seen sitting down – on chairs and at the piano – and this provokes the idea of a pianist, in partnership with the pianistic movements. The abstract setting is stark but perhaps provides a contrasting backdrop to the various actions I carry out. The careful creation, consideration, and execution of pianistic and non-pianistic movements, relating to our understanding of movement and their necessary functionality, meant they could withstand this unusual situation: they could be ‘moved about’ into different contexts, according to Luck’s compositional aesthetic. In other words, they were robust enough to be treated as compositional material. This demonstrated my functioning without my usual ‘tools’ – a piano, a live audience, my production of sound – and that this functionality can be transferred into different contexts.

Abstraction of the Pianist

Our shaping of specific movements allowed them to be recontextualised to the point where, in *KL1*, I am fully removed from my typical performing environment and the production of sound. This is emphasised by the way in which *KL1* was filmed by Luck: he used a Gimbal, a piece of filming equipment that uses counterweights to maintain the smooth tracking of shots, allowing Luck to move freely whilst filming. The movements of his camera contributed equally to the performative effect. In the ‘conducted chord’ section of the film, for example, the position of the camera is unusually high and it moves as if taking a continuous shot. Using the timing of the recorded instruction, Luck carefully choreographed his movement with the camera around the space so as to deliberately capture and miss my movements in different ways. Using the Gimbal meant he could move freely in the space and perform alongside me as a duet partner.

⁵²⁰ *KL1* was filmed in the basement of the Calder Bookshop, London

Additionally, Luck's editing process contributed to the recontextualization of movements. The film consists of numerous cuts between shots of the same action. This created the "multiplicities" that Luck prioritises in his composition. The layering of my movements creates multiple 'Kates'; the fact that my movements are sometimes caught midway-through, or just as I'm finishing, contributed to this. The brief glimpsing of my action implies that it continues to happen 'elsewhere' but cannot be seen. As mentioned, it was important for me to perform these movements as authentically as possible to allow a viewer to be convinced and then led in these confusing directions. The clarity and definition of our pianistic and non-pianistic movements meant they could be manipulated and shaped by Luck's filming and editing.

Another obvious contribution to the recontextualization of my movements is the soundtrack Luck created, which involves both non-diegetic and diegetic elements.⁵²¹ As noted earlier, a short section of the soundtrack includes my playing of Chopin: this recording was made in the same location as the film, but I am not 'seen' playing: its function is non-diegetic. Additionally, certain sound effects were recorded in the same location and enhanced in post-production. Some of these relate diegetically to what is seen on the screen – for example when I open and close a door, which can be seen in *KL1* between 02:10 – 02:13. However, others are distinctly abstract and it is not clear whether they relate to the action or not. For example, there is a shot of a chair that is paired with a quick zoom of the camera and a low throbbing sound, occurring in *KL1* at 00:52. This could be interpreted as a rumble possibly heard and felt in the room by the protagonist. However, the chair is clearly not the source of this sound and no effects of this rumble are seen on screen, implying that this sound is nondiegetic. This deliberate abstract pairing of sound and image contributes to *KL1*'s overall uncanny effect.

Ultimately, the role of the sound is distinctly filmic. Much of this relates to Luck's distinct compositional approach, which is very often focused on the relationship between sound and

⁵²¹ Non-diegetic sound has an external source and is not meant to be heard by the characters seen on screen. Diegetic sound has an internal source and is assumed to be heard by the characters on screen. The latter includes sounds that are made in post-production but represent a source seen on screen, for example foley.

image. Michel Chion's notion of the "audiovisual contract"⁵²² served our project with an understanding of how applying recorded sound to a film of my movements could change their meaning. As Chion states, in his discussion of the audiovisual contract, sound can imbue film with "added value":

By added value, I mean the expressive and informative value with which a sound enriches a given image so as to create the definite impression, in the immediate or remembered experience one has of it, that this information or expression "naturally" comes from what is seen, and is already contained in the image itself.⁵²³

This provides some understanding of Luck's preference for dwelling in the various liminal spaces and "overlapping fields"⁵²⁴ involved in this project, with the result that the audience is not quite sure of what they are viewing. It draws attention to my functional movements in a unique way whilst highlighting my abstraction from my instrument. In relation to Gottschalk's discussion of "non-subjectivity" in experimental music practices,⁵²⁵ abstracting my movements from sound was a way of non-subjectively presenting my subjective activity. By defining and fully accepting distinct subjective and functional activity and placing it in a different context, it could remain 'as it is', untainted, and 'authentic'; it was treated as experimental musical material.

Mark Dyer's Subject

Developing an understanding of 'authenticity' formed part of my project with Mark Dyer, although in a different way to my project with Luck. We considered the 'authenticity' of my

⁵²² Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 1

⁵²³ *Ibid.*, 5

⁵²⁴ Luck, "Interdisciplinary Practice as a Foundation for Experimental Music Theatre", 19

⁵²⁵ Gottschalk, *Experimental Music Since 1970*, 3

memories of playing music by J.S. Bach. Our documentation of memories involved their detailed exploration and scrutinization, which expanded our understanding of identity formation, particularly in terms of how this relates to a performer's functioning. As we worked, I noticed my resistance to exaggerating or elaborating my memories: I wanted them to remain accurate and 'true'. However, as the project developed, we embraced the role narrative can play in observing a younger self and recalling memories, inevitably shaped by time passed, nostalgia or even trauma. As such, our exploration of performer identity included the retrieval of not only memories but also the stories that surround them. As different narratives emerged, we considered how their shaping contributed to our understanding of my functioning in performance.

As with the other projects, the processes we used involved different interactions, including between subjective and objective perspectives, particularly my attempt to recapture my younger self from a distance in time, and therefore as if from outside; as if objectively. Importantly, the honest sharing of my memories required an 'intimate'⁵²⁶ interaction between me and Dyer, so that the subjective aspects of these memories – their “tastes, associations, discernment, and emotions”⁵²⁷ – could be fully drawn out. In this respect, this project was the most extreme in how it would 'allow for' my functioning in performance.

Exploring and Documenting My Memories

Through exploring my memories of playing of J. S. Bach, we examined the different ways in which these manifested. For example, we explored physically-imprinted memories relating to my knowledge of early keyboard technique and interpretation of Bach's music.⁵²⁸ This included my memories of certain piano teachers and their teachings, or performances by professional pianists that I had witnessed and been inspired by. However, attached to these memories were the emotions that I formed through their experience, as well as abstract

⁵²⁶ Alm, “The Role of Talk in the Writing Process of Intimate Collaboration”, 126. See Chapter Three.

⁵²⁷ As explored above in relation to Gottschalk's articulation of “non-subjectivity” in experimental music. Gottschalk, *Experimental Music Since 1970*, 3.

⁵²⁸ This draws on Fenemore's description of 'body memories'. Fenemore, “Every body”, 40. Jänke notes the role of physically-imprinted memories that optimise music performance. Jänke, “From Cognition to Action”, 31. See Chapter One.

sensations or associations that have developed over my years of playing Bach. As we explored different pieces by Bach, whatever arose as a memory was treated as a precious artefact or monument and considered as contributing to a formation of identity. Through numerous conversations, and our retrospective examination of their recordings, we collected different memories carefully, revealing them one layer at a time. We then explored how to preserve these memories – as though they were ‘easily damaged’ – and present them honestly, so that they held onto their full subjectivity.

As noted above, this project very much focused on documenting the process of exploring a performer’s identity formation, with a view to creating not a piece but a documentation of artefacts. This drew on Dyer’s own compositional approach and his interest in composing ‘musical ruins’. He terms his approach “art-anthropology, which includes storytelling, non-fiction and documentary-making” and allows for a “quasi-archaeological and -anthropological exploration of performers’ relationships to existing music.”⁵²⁹ Specifically, he “look[s] to treat existing music as windows into lived pasts, as triggers for memory and thresholds for intimacy and fantasy.”⁵³⁰ For Dyer, these details provide compositional material: he regards “the performer themselves as the subject of the piece”,⁵³¹ which “attempts to elucidate something about the performers (a past struggle, or their own work).”⁵³²

For this project, we used my experience of playing J. S. Bach as a trigger for recalling emotional and physical memories that, to both of us, appeared significant in the forming of my pianistic identity. These memories were, in one respect, a ‘factual’ autobiographical account of my playing experience from significant periods in my life. However, this project did not simply produce an account of my playing history; rather, our deliberate and curious exploration of my memories transformed them into expansive and fantastical images. This

⁵²⁹ Mark Dyer, “Musical Ruins: a practice-based approach to explore ruin as an aspect of musical borrowing,” (doctoral thesis, The Royal Northern College of Music in Collaboration with Manchester Metropolitan University, 2021), 53

⁵³⁰ Ibid. Dyer is referencing López-Galviz et al.’s conception of architectural ruins. Carlos López-Galviz, Nadia Bartolini, Mark Pendleton and Adam Stock, “Reconfiguring Ruins: Beyond Ruinenlust,” *GeoHumanities* 3, no. 2 (2017), 545

⁵³¹ Email exchange, July 2020

⁵³² Ibid.

did not diminish the authenticity or subjectivity of these memories but developed our understanding of the complex process of identity formation. As Laws notes in relation to autobiographical writing (drawing on the work of Trinh T. Minh-ha), the process of autobiography can “[open] up questions about the status of the self [which] offers possibilities but not answers: it is aware of its own constructed status”.⁵³³ As autobiographical details are recounted, “we are confronted by the ‘pastness’ of something that purports to be true of the presented self.”⁵³⁴ Indeed, as I explored my memories with Dyer, I felt obliged to ‘stick to the facts’ to maintain this project’s search for ‘authenticity’. However, it was only through their open and imaginative exploration that my memories were able to take up space and fully blossom.

The following sections provide an account of some of my memories we explored: those that surround three sections of music taken from three pieces by J. S. Bach: the three-part fugue from his *Tocatta in D major* BWV 912, the *Prelude in F major* BWV 880, and the *Fugue in E flat major* BWV 876. These pieces emerged as being significant as I conversed with Dyer; each conversation was recorded and transcribed, then analysed to pursue further details of the memories. A transcription of the conversations, relevant to this thesis, is in Appendix D: *Transcriptions of Conversations in ‘Subject’*. Throughout the following section, I refer to the transcribed conversations in order to discuss these memories, the responses I had to unearthing them and how this relates to the notion of functioning explored in my research. It is worth noting that this project began in January 2021 during the COVID-19 pandemic, and therefore comprised many online conversations. Despite the potential disruption to our practices, this way of collaborating allowed us to focus on conversation, specifically as a fruitful method of working and, indeed, a practice for composition. As well as providing a detailed record of our collaboration, our online conversations contributed a vital aspect to our final documentary output.

⁵³³ Catherine Laws, “Performing Being a Pianist: Gender and Embodied Subjectivity in Performing Annea Lockwood’s *Ceci n’est pas un piano*”, in *Performance, Subjectivity, and Experimentation* (Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2020), 132. Referencing Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 28.

⁵³⁴ Laws, “Performing Being a Pianist”, 132

Prior to our first meeting, Dyer suggested a simple starting point:

Have a think about an existing piece that you have a particular relationship to - be it emotional, physical (perhaps you notice a piece makes you move in a particular way?) or pedagogical (at any stage of your life). My idea simply involves me sitting in on a rehearsal of this piece and asking you to be attentive to and put a microscope over moments of peculiarity, which we can discuss and explore further.⁵³⁵

This suggestion instantly appealed to my (then) developing understanding of the Feldenkrais Method and the way it was informing my doctoral investigation. Dyer's suggestion to observe minute aspects of performed movements felt similar to the attention that is brought to movements carried out in numerous Feldenkrais exercises.⁵³⁶ He was inviting highly subjective moments of performance into our initial conversations, which meant that we were immediately 'allowing for' my movements.

My instinctive response to his suggestion was to play J. S. Bach's *Tocatta in D major* BWV 912. Specifically, I chose the transitional bars that end the improvisatory '*Adagio*' section and precede the three-part fugue. The '*Adagio*' section begins at bar 68 and the three-part fugue at bar 80, with the specific transition is in bars 78-80 (highlighted in figure 33). Based on my initial and rather instinctive response to his request, our collaboration became an unravelling of my reasons for choosing this precise moment of music.

⁵³⁵ Email exchange, January 2021

⁵³⁶ Specifically, I considered my intentionality or attitude whilst moving, as explored by Cliff Smyth in relation to a phenomenological understanding of the Feldenkrais Method. Smyth, "Feldenkrais Method and Health", 5. See Chapter Two.



Figure 33. J. S. Bach, *Toccata in D major* BWV 912, Edition Peters (1956), bars 76-84. The transition section is highlighted from bar 78³ to bar 80¹

Using my understanding of the Feldenkrais Method, we explored the way I move and considered what I associate with this passage. Based on Sheets-Johnstone's "attuning" to a movement's particular dynamic, I considered the qualitative character of my movement to observe "its smoothness, its abruptness, its arcing trajectory, its swiftness, its constrictedness, its jaggedness, its intensity".⁵³⁷ In relation to this, based on Smyth's understanding of movement, I considered my intentionality whilst playing, noticing any "competitiveness ... a feeling that [I] could or should do more, feelings of incompetence or wanting to 'do it right'".⁵³⁸ In particular, I noticed feelings of self-doubt, to the extent that I felt slightly embarrassed when playing Bach in front of Dyer. This led to our consideration of the circumstances in which I initially learned this piece, inviting an exploration of my 'self image' in Feldenkrais's terms.⁵³⁹ We explored distant memories of piano lessons that were sometimes tinged with vulnerability and naivety. These memories were elusive and took

⁵³⁷ Sheets-Johnstone, "Bodily Resonance", 21

⁵³⁸ Smyth, "Feldenkrais Method and Health", 6

⁵³⁹ This was explored in Chapter Two.

some time to unlock, although they were triggered by a physical or pianistic aspect of my playing, or a certain topic we explored in conversation. As we unraveled these memories, we moved further away from the concrete context of the piano and into more ‘fantastical’ realms.⁵⁴⁰

An Examination of this Moment of Music

I performed Bach’s *Toccatà in D major* BWV 912 as part of a diploma exam that I took in the summer of 2007. This was the year between my undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, a transitional time not only for my development as a player but also as an adult in her early twenties. My experience of preparing for the diploma was enlightening and cathartic: my interpretation and performance skills matured, enabling me to draw out the finer details of the music. The *Toccatà* was the only piece I programmed that was composed before the twentieth century: it represented my love for J. S. Bach whilst I was developing a burgeoning interest in contemporary music.

As Dyer and I explored the various memories and associations that arose through conversation, it was not clear if they were from 2007 – the time of learning and performing this music for the first time – or had developed over the years. The way in which we probed and tested the ‘authenticity’ of these memories and associations was a strange and detailed process but one that became a necessary part of the project. The way I interacted with the memory of my younger self created an odd juxtaposition of multiple ‘subjects’ and revealed the different ways I regarded a sense of *me*, as this player, and the multiple ‘layers’ of my performing activity.⁵⁴¹ We considered which layers were contributing to how I play *now*, and which layers had contributed to how I had played *then*. The multiplicities we discovered and the confusion we experienced during the process contributed to our developing understanding of ‘authenticity’ with respect to my functioning in performance.

⁵⁴⁰ I explored similarly fantastical realms as I learned Ray Evanoff’s ‘When I’, as explored in Chapter Two.

⁵⁴¹ De Preester, “To Perform the Layered Body”, 380

As I mention to Dyer in our conversation,⁵⁴² I chose this section of the *Toccatà* (highlighted in figure 33) because I had noticed quite how I move in playing it, and also that this felt similar each time I played it. Drawing on my early memories of learning the music, whilst maintaining an awareness of how I was moving, I explored my musical interpretation of this section. I noticed that I prioritised the cadence at the end of the improvisatory section as it transitions into the fugue: this was noticeable in my timing of the music and the way I moved. As seen in the transcribed conversation, I refer to the preceding improvisatory section as being “quite free” and that it slowly becomes “a structured little piece.” I talk about the touch I use for the transitioning passage beginning at bar 78³ and finishing at bar 79²; I refer to 78³⁻⁴ as being “thick” and 79¹⁻² as being “more detached” and “jerkier”.⁵⁴³ I also note my control of the detached touch, which becomes more connected as it reaches the beginning of the cadence at 79³.

A Performance Analysis of a Moment?

This part of our conversation involved musical and technical details that could be discussed in relation to research into analytically-informed performance, particularly the North German multipartite style that is discussed in relation to this *Toccatà*.⁵⁴⁴ As Julian Hellaby notes, the style involves “improvisatory passages (*stylus phantasticus*) and stricter contrapuntal or fugal sections”,⁵⁴⁵ which pose contrasting aspects that a performer must manage as part of their interpretation. Hellaby compared four different recordings of the *con discrezione* section of the *Toccatà* (bars 111 to 126); a passage from this section can be seen in figure 34. As Hellaby notes, this section provides ample space for performer interpretation: “[d]ue to its highly non-prescriptive nature, [*con discrezione*] suggests an interpretative field which can accommodate personal choices, especially in the durational area, to a greater degree than do the interpretative fields surrounding most other kinds of

⁵⁴² See Appendix D: Transcription of Conversations in *Subject*, Section One, 284

⁵⁴³ Appendix D, Section One, 285-286

⁵⁴⁴ Julian Hellaby, *Reading Musical Interpretation: Case Studies in Solo Piano Performance* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), 68. Referencing Stephen Crist, “The Early Works and the Heritage of the Seventeenth Century”, in *The Cambridge Companion to Bach*, ed. John Butt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 81

⁵⁴⁵ Hellaby, *Reading Musical Interpretation*, 68

notated music.”⁵⁴⁶ Although the *con discrezione* passage was not the passage that I focused on with Dyer, it has similar characteristics and constitutes one of the *Toccatas*’ “free fantasy interludes’ ... [that] reflect the type of piece that the young Bach may have improvised”.⁵⁴⁷ As can be seen in figure 33, the section I chose contains ‘dramatic’ *tremolos* (bars 68-70) and quick scalic passages (75-76), interspersed with chords that hinder the momentum (bar 79³⁻⁴). Furthermore, both sections involve the six descending paired semiquavers that inspired much of our explorative discussions: in figure 33, these semiquavers are at bar 79¹⁻², and in figure 34 these semiquavers are at bar 111³⁻⁴ (*con discrezione*). The passage I chose was the precise transition between “free” and “strict” sections: the contrast between these “opposing elements” spurred me to find a particular interpretative approach.⁵⁴⁸ It is perhaps the transitional nature of this passage that enabled such extensive and imaginative explorations of my memories and associations.



Figure 34. J. S. Bach, *Toccatas in D major* BWV 912, Edition Peters (1956), bars 110-114. The highlighted section beginning at bar 111³ (*con discrezione*) contains the descending semiquaver motif found at bar 79¹⁻²

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid., 69

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid., 69. Referencing Richard Jones, “The Keyboard Works: Bach as Teacher and Virtuoso”, in *The Cambridge Companion to Bach*, ed. John Butt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 136.

⁵⁴⁸ Hellaby, *Reading Musical Interpretation*, 68

In reviewing the conversation with Dyer, I noticed some similarities between my interpretation and Hellaby's performance analysis. For example, I play bar 78³ to bar 80¹ with free durations not 'bound' to the notation,⁵⁴⁹ drawing out the improvisatory style of this section. I carefully mark this section's cadence and the closing of the improvisatory style by slowing down as I approach bar 80 and setting a strict "new tempo"⁵⁵⁰ to signify the down beat of this new section. I play the motif in bar 79¹⁻² in a slightly declamatory style, preparing for the cadence of this section whilst foreshadowing the return of the motif in bar 111. However, Dyer noticed that some of my musical decisions were inconsistent, with others perhaps contrary to an interpretation informed by an understanding of the *toccata* style. For example, he noted that I play bar 79¹⁻² as paired dyads but as three pairs of semitones, not as three sets of descending fourths (see figure 35). Moreover, he noticed that I detach the first two pairs, but not the third that bridges beat 2 into beat 3. In conversation, I also admitted to playing the "stricter" section beginning at bar 80 (see figure 33) with a deliberate use of colour. I use pedal to join two repeated notes in bar 81 and play the melody in bar 81 with a deliberate lack of tone: "slightly see-through, or it – you know – it's like up here somewhere and it's, or it's an echo."⁵⁵¹

⁵⁴⁹ Hellaby refers to C. P. E. Bach's advice for performance of this *toccata* style, which has similarities with recitative style: "metric signature is in many ... cases more a convention of notation than a binding factor in performance." Hellaby, *Reading Musical Interpretation*, 68. Referencing C. P. E. Bach, *Essay on the True Art of Playing the Keyboard Instruments*, trans. William J. Mitchell (New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1949), 153

⁵⁵⁰ Appendix D, Section One, 286

⁵⁵¹ Appendix D, Section One, 289



Figure 35. J. S. Bach, *Toccata in D major* BWV 912, bars 79¹⁻². The orange brackets group these notes into three paired dyads of semitones

In discussing these observations, Dyer and I delved into my reasoning and underlying musical understanding, which revealed different aspects of myself as a player and the identity I seemed to have formed. I referred to different approaches that other pianists might take and related them to what I do. I alluded to playing the *Toccata* non-traditionally in my description of what other pianists do: “*classically*, in terms of traditional technique [demonstrating a finger swap], you’d do that, you’d flick it, and you’d change finger. Whereas I [demonstrating with pedal] I even pedal it, because I want it to be... its *legato*”.⁵⁵² Throughout our conversation, I referred to what I think an informed interpretation ‘should’ include, thereby positioning my interpretation as ‘wrong’.

The way in which I speak about my musical decisions in the transcribed discussions reflects habits formed through my lack of confidence in performing Bach, and indeed other “great” composers.⁵⁵³ This lack of confidence relates to the ‘demands’⁵⁵⁴ that are placed on a performer. As noted by Gritten, these demands “manage a performer’s activity”⁵⁵⁵ and reduce their creative choices to those that are dictated by the various conventions of the work concept⁵⁵⁶ or particular performance practices. A noisy discourse surrounds

⁵⁵² Appendix D, Section One, 286-287

⁵⁵³ Leech-Wilkinson, *Challenging Performance*, 37

⁵⁵⁴ Gritten, “Dismantling the demands of performing”, 164. See Chapter One.

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵⁶ Pace, “Hierarchies in New Music”

interpretations of Western classical composers such as Bach. For me, this discourse creates self-doubt in my musical decision-making. Indeed, when Dyer observed and identified how I played the descending motif in bar 79, my response was wary and I admitted to not knowing why I do this: “So you see, *now* I'm thinking about it, I'm like, I don't know anymore.”⁵⁵⁷

Sandstone Steps

This moment in the conversation played a crucial role in the development of the project and its artistic outcome. In exploring *why* I had chosen this moment of music, then *how* I play it, and then admitting that I was not sure why I play it the way I do, we were exploring less tangible memories and associations that I have with this moment of music. It was within this very abstract and vulnerable space of self-doubt that we were able to explore distinct manifestations of my identity as a pianist.

As we continued to explore the way I play bar 79, I began to draw on more personal and imaginative associations. I felt able to share a particular image that lies deep within my imagination when I play these pairs of notes:

KH-L: So the image that I guess, ‘normal day’, without me thinking about this so much, the image of *that* bit, is like... Oh God, this is where I get really, metaphorical and I'm sorry about this, but...

MD: No got for it.

KH-L: You know, like a *step*, but it's not a *clean* edge. It's like, sandstone and it's been worn a little bit and it's like, you would maybe, *slip* off the edge of the step, because of that, rather than *cleanly* step down to the next one. That's what I think of there [laugh].⁵⁵⁸

⁵⁵⁷ Appendix D, Section One, 288

⁵⁵⁸ Appendix D, Section One, 289

As can be seen from the transcription, I was apologetic for this answer; I was wary that my reasoning for inconsistent articulation – I play the first two pairs of semitones detached and the third *legato* – is perhaps lazy, too ‘exotic’, or inappropriate for a performance of Bach.⁵⁵⁹ As this piece is a *toccata* in *stylus phantasticus*, it could be argued that such freedom of imagination is perfectly legitimate. Indeed, in reference to Cummings and her suggestion of directing an “attitude of imagination” towards “affective qualities in sound”,⁵⁶⁰ Hellaby suggests that *con discrezione* “accord[s] ... a very broad topical mode”⁵⁶¹ for interpretation, which “especially engages the imagination”.⁵⁶²

My divulgence of the sandstone step metaphor was candid and born of our free-flowing and open conversation. Dyer was drawn to this particular metaphor and wanted to explore it further. He suggested I write creatively as a way to provide as many details of the image as possible.⁵⁶³ We wanted to explore how my conception of the sandstone steps transferred through my fingers and into my touch on the keys, leading us to create a specific notation (see figure 36) that represents my touch and the feel of the descending semiquaver motif. The arrows represent the ‘push’ and ‘pull’ of the expressive energy I noticed as I play. The thickness of the lines represents the weight of my touch, as though gravity were pulling me down the ‘sandstone steps’ and increasing my momentum. The swooping arrow notated above the numbered noteheads represents a necessary ‘slowing down’ as I reach the bottom of the line. The numbers represent the fingers I use for these ultimate notes, their large noteheads representing the surrender of my fingers to the keys and the extensive vibrations of the strings in this register.⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁵⁹ In reference to Stephen Davies, Gritten notes that the demands in performing Western classical music determine “appropriate” interpretations. Gritten, “Dismantling the demands of performing”, 164. Referencing Stephen Davies, *Themes in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2003a), 54.

⁵⁶⁰ Cummings, “The sonic self”, 58.

⁵⁶¹ Hellaby defines a broad topical mode as containing “... performance qualifiers which appeal to the imagination ... or the emotions ... but do not specifically instruct concerning tempo or articulation” Hellaby, *Reading Musical Interpretation*, 38

⁵⁶² *Ibid.*, 69

⁵⁶³ See Appendix C: Creative Writing, Section Two.

⁵⁶⁴ We also explored another image relating to these vibrations: “But then, because it goes down there, it's actually quite resonant and it's quite ‘bassy’. And it... there's a vibration there when I do it. And it's like there's a moth trapped in that encasing.” See Appendix D, Section Three, 15

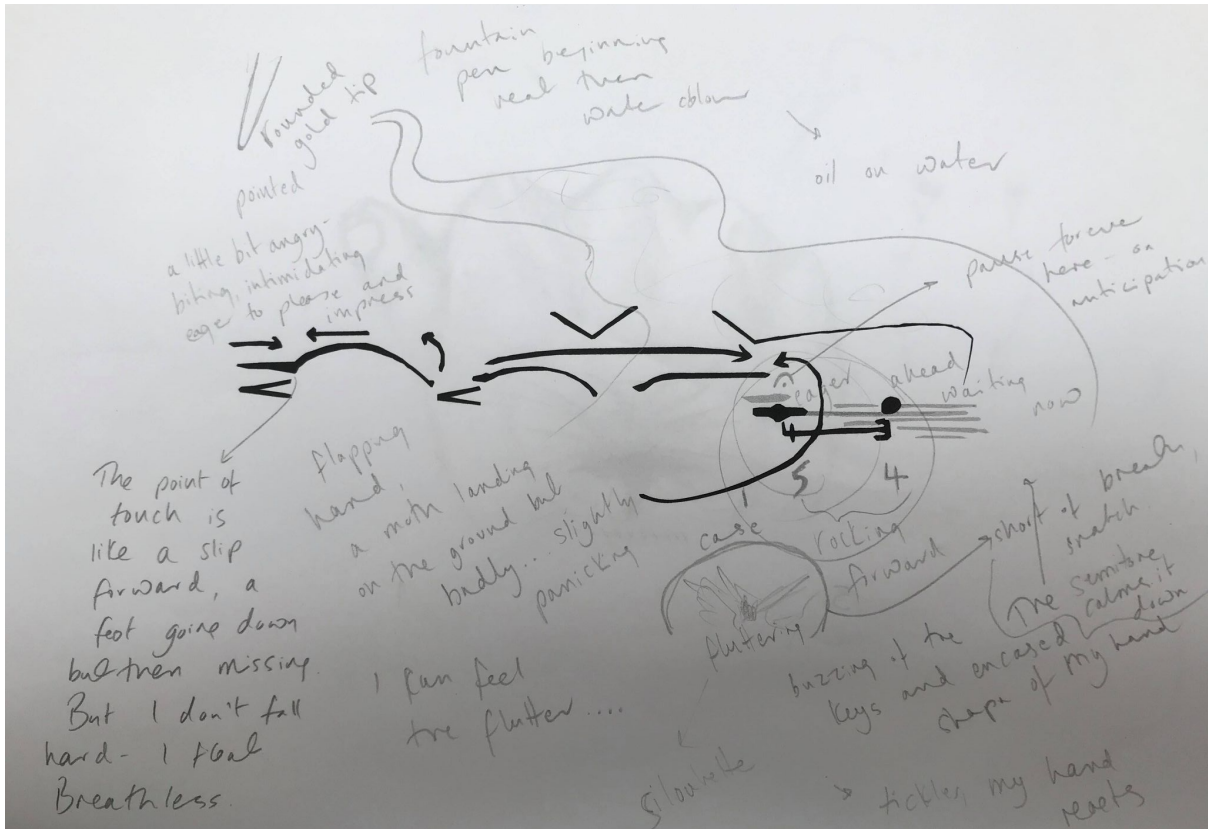


Figure 36. My own 'notation' representing what I feel when I play bar 79¹⁻²

Our exploration of the sandstone step metaphor eventually led to the creation of clay models of the imprint of my hand as it plays the motif: photographs of these models are in the portfolio. The imprint of my fingers created the overall shape of the models and the creases and cracks within in the clay. Through our extreme focus, care and delicate 'drawing out' of what we considered 'authentic' details of my playing, this passing moment of conversation led to a creative documentation of my pianistic identity. However, what I find most revealing about this exploration is the initial caution with which I shared such fantastical associations with Dyer. I found that this apparent guardedness in fact revealed multiplicities of 'me', all of which contributed to this project's continued exploration of pianistic identity. It revealed that in order to function in performance, I adopt different performing "personae".⁵⁶⁵ Moreover, to me, it was not always clear which one is 'correct', nor which one I even listen to.

⁵⁶⁵ Auslander, "Musical Personae". See Chapter One and Chapter Three.

Discerning Different Performing 'Selves'

As noted earlier, our attempts at locating certain 'authentic' memories and associations revealed their fleeting and elusive nature. However, the confusion we experienced in our exploration of 'authenticity' contributed to our understanding of performer identity and the way I function in performance. In her practice research examining performer subjectivity, such confusion is recognised by Catherine Laws: "the impossibility of disentangling the subjective and objective is central to the understanding of the embodied, contextual, and social production of subjectivity".⁵⁶⁶ As I disentangled the reasons I had for my particular interpretation of Bach, I noticed, in me, different perspectives on how and why I play, perhaps identifiable as 'selves' and belonging to different "musical personae"⁵⁶⁷. There was the 'cautious self', who carefully stated her musical intentions and feared being criticised for being 'incorrect'. The 'correct self' knew that for Bach a fantastical interpretation was perhaps risky, so she compares herself with the 'cautious self'. There was also a 'guilty self', which both Dyer and I noticed in our respective selves. We admitted to feeling slightly sheepish about our immediate instinct to choose Bach as we were aware of the issues for a performer who decides to play the music of a "great composer".⁵⁶⁸ As Leech-Wilkinson points out in his deconstruction of the power that Western Classical Music holds over its performers,⁵⁶⁹ in choosing Bach we were in dangerous territory. Particularly for me, our choice to play Bach resulted in this project exploring the impact of these wider issues including the fact that I only play Bach in private, for myself. Despite Bach feeling like a very natural choice for both of us, we were surprised at what appeared to be our continued entanglement with the powerful hold of (after Leech-Wilkinson) performance "norms".⁵⁷⁰

More significantly for this project and its exploration of 'authenticity', I identified some younger selves. These included the self from 2007 who played this piece for her diploma, as well as the self who conversed with Dyer in 2021. More recently, as my 'present self' analysed the transcript of the conversation, I questioned what I said, and felt unsure

⁵⁶⁶ Laws, "Being a Player", 85

⁵⁶⁷ Auslander, "Musical Personae", 101

⁵⁶⁸ Leech-Wilkinson, *Challenging Performance*, 37

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 13

whether I agreed with her. I was aware of numerous emotions and ideas that arose as I explored my responses to Dyer. Some of these emotions and ideas were perhaps present whilst I was having this conversation, and others emerged as I tried to make sense of my words. As the purpose of this project with Dyer was to fully explore this 'authentic' performing body, the doubt I had, and continue to have, in response to my own testimony demonstrates the elusiveness of such a body.

This observation I made about my own 'self' may be compared with Auslander's concept of the performing "persona". As he argues, "to be a musician is to perform an identity in a social realm":⁵⁷¹

personal identity may be seen as something one performs ... One can speak of performing a self in daily life just as readily as one speaks of performing a text in a theatre or concert hall. In short, the direct object of the verb to perform need not be *something* – it can also be *someone*, an identity rather than a text.⁵⁷²

Notably, the conversation with Dyer discussed here took place during our first official meeting and so likely involved the two of us making 'good' impressions and setting a professional tone for the collaboration. Although the conversation was relaxed and our discussion open-ended, my impulse to display my specific knowledge of Bach performance practices and technique demonstrates my 'social' performance of a knowledgeable and trustworthy "persona". The feelings of caution that we recognised in our decision to explore Bach perhaps impelled this trustworthy "persona" to come forward and demonstrate their knowledge. As we continued to explore this moment of Bach, we explored other examples of multiple 'selves'. This naturally led to the exploration of other pieces of Bach, but specifically, my memory of my teenage 'self' watching another pianist performing the *Prelude in F major BWV 880*.

⁵⁷¹ Auslander, "Musical Personae", 101

⁵⁷² Ibid.

In a later meeting, Dyer and I discussed my lack of confidence in performing Bach and the fact that I play his music only in private. As in our first meeting, Dyer posed some questions, this time in relation to pedagogy: “I suppose the pedagogical use/aspects of Bach is hard to miss. What significance does this have for you, both in terms of your personal learning, as a teacher, or just looking at piano playing/rep in general?”⁵⁷³ To answer to this question, I admitted to loving Bach: “Bach is intimate for me – it is music that is able to hold a personal interpretation. It has a lot of open space for exact sound – nothing is washed away with pedal, and nothing is hidden. I love it for this.”⁵⁷⁴ However, with this love comes feelings of guilt. As can be seen in the conversation that followed this email exchange, I stated that to enjoy what you are playing is self-indulgent: “And so initial thoughts... Yeah, is that we are being luxurious or self-indulgent by *enjoying* it so much.”⁵⁷⁵ I related these feelings of self-indulgence to my experience of performing experimental music,⁵⁷⁶ influenced by approaches similar to Gottschalk’s discussion of “non-subjective” composition of sound,⁵⁷⁷ or Thomas’s experimental approach to performance⁵⁷⁸ as mentioned in Chapter One. Additionally, I connected these feelings of self-indulgence to the privacy I associate with Bach, commenting that as a teenager I kept my enjoyment of Bach hidden.⁵⁷⁹ I mentioned a film I remember watching when I was a teenager of a pianist playing Bach’s *Prelude and Fugue in F major* from the *Well-Tempered Clavier II*, BWV 880. The conversation with Dyer captured my initial and candid ‘piecing-together’ of what I could remember about the film. I could only remember the first twenty or so bars of the *Prelude* (I have included the first six bars in figure 37), but I remembered particular details about the way it was filmed, how it sounded, and the way the pianist moved his fingers. As I recalled these hazy memories, I considered how my younger self would have remarked upon the performance of another pianist; I tried to access what my younger self was thinking and which aspects of his performance I noticed.

⁵⁷³ Email exchange, March 2021

⁵⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁵ Appendix D, Section Two, 290

⁵⁷⁶ Appendix D, Section Two, 292

⁵⁷⁷ Gottschalk, *Experimental Music Since 1970*, 3

⁵⁷⁸ Thomas, “A Prescription for Action”, 78

⁵⁷⁹ Appendix D, Section Two, 292-293

Praeludium und Fuga 11, F-Dur

61

Præludium 11 BWV 880 (Fassung A)

slow

5

5

5

ling

flow in

p

Figure 37. J. S. Bach, *Prelude in F major* BWV 880, Bärenreiter Urtext (1995), bars 1-6

Creating a Film of a Memory, of a Pianist

My memory of this film provided another opportunity to explore the multiplicities of my performing self. We decided to create a film of my memory of the BBC film, in which I would play the part of 'the pianist', using only my memories to guide the filming and recording. Importantly, at the time of the project, we did not attempt to find the original film: this was to maintain the understanding of an 'authentic' performing self and my memories *as* memories. Our shared understanding of 'authenticity' involved positioning memories as belonging to *my* perspective, even if this meant they were incomplete, inaccurate, or exaggerated. Moreover, my subjective perspective was complicated by the fact that I was acting out a role initially played by someone else. Together, this created an odd juxtaposition of 'subjects' that required a discernment between what I would do and what I perceived 'the pianist' to be doing.

Despite the incompleteness of this memory, there were some details that appeared very clearly:

Erm.. and he played it [I gasp] just, everything ... I start it ... and he played it *really slowly*. I don't... I can't... I don't know his name. It was this guy, who had *long* hair, and he had rings on his fingers, I remember that, like, *really* massive rings. And the shot – so I'm going to try and show you – the shots were like this close [demonstrating to the camera] and his fingers were like rolling through? ⁵⁸⁰

As can be seen from this snippet of the conversation, my memory grasped at various details, sometimes incoherently. We created a storyboard of what I could remember with the snapshot of each memory providing a specific camera angle. I drew images of four different memories and included as many details as I could. My drawing alone was not able to capture everything; therefore, I included descriptions of different associations, sensations and feelings to provide more details. For example, the image I drew for the first shot of the film (see figure 38) includes finer details such as the type of clothing the pianist wore, and certain feelings I remember, such as “warmth” and “sleepy”. Its realisation as a camera angle is in figure 39.

⁵⁸⁰ Appendix D, Section Two, 295

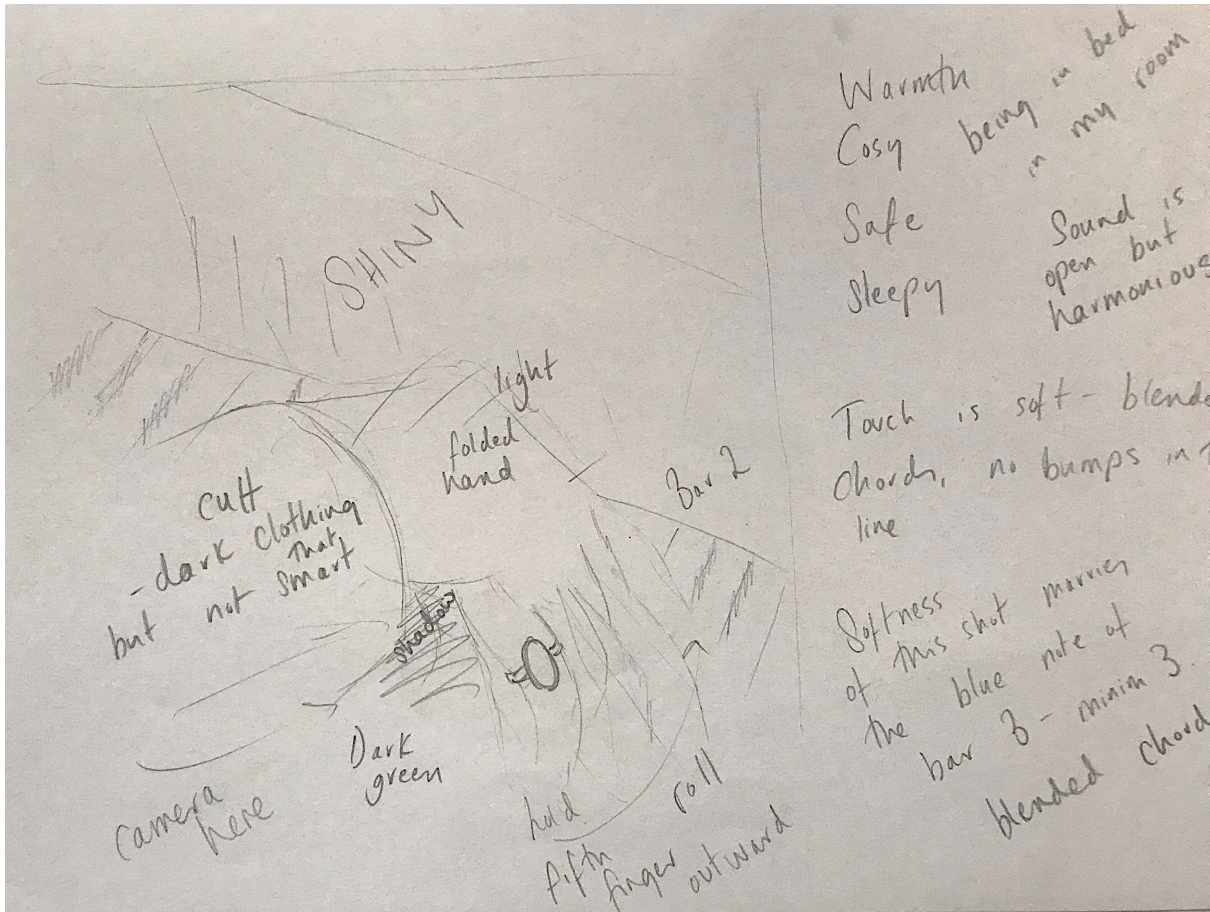


Figure 38. "BWV 880- BBC memory- Storyboard 1", created for this project's film of my memory of a BBC film of Bach's Prelude in F major BWV 880



Figure 39. “BWV 880- BBC memory- Shot 1” from the film of my memory of a BBC film of Bach’s *Prelude in F major* BWV 880 581

After using my memories to create the storyboard, we were able to decide upon a venue for filming and plan the camera angles, the lighting and the sound. I remembered the location of the film being “stunning”⁵⁸² and that the pianist played a grand piano: we therefore used a concert hall with grand piano.⁵⁸³ I remembered the sound of the BBC performance being “a thick sound ... almost like it was, recorded from the bottom up”.⁵⁸⁴ Therefore, we positioned microphones close to the bass and low treble strings of the piano, as well as physically attaching contact microphones to the soundboard so as to create a similarly deep and mellow sound. Importantly, for this project and its relation to my doctoral investigation of the movements I make in performance, I found my embodiment of ‘the pianist’ an interesting experience. It felt awkward to adjust my ‘natural’ movements on the keys: despite my admiration of his “rolling through” and “unfolding of the music, in the fingers”,⁵⁸⁵ these movements were not instinctive to how I play. I spent some time trying to adjust how I

⁵⁸¹ The four storyboard images and shots are in the portfolio

⁵⁸² Appendix D, Section Two, 295

⁵⁸³ The RNCM (Manchester) granted us access to their concert hall.

⁵⁸⁴ Appendix D, Section Two, 296

⁵⁸⁵ Appendix D, Section Two, 295

moved whilst playing the piece, which involved deliberately positioning my hands to form the shapes that I noticed in the BBC pianist's hands. However, despite my appreciation of the pianist's performance in the BBC film and its role as an inspiration for how I developed as a pianist, my instinct was to play this music differently to him. I wanted to play it quicker and lighter, grouping the quavers into groups of four to demonstrate the time signature of three minims in a bar (see figure 37). As I continued to explore these movements, I noticed different selves: the teenage self who was initially attracted to these movements, the self who recognises that they do not instinctively move this way, and the self who adjusts their body in creating a version of these movements.

The Feldenkrais Method aided my exploration of the various 'selves'. As I explored the way I was moving and its relation to my functioning, I established temporary notions of what 'I do', depending on what was required for each moment. Importantly, there was not *one* self: what I understood as what 'I' do constantly changed – in the course of making the film, but also beyond, and it continues to change today. Laws describes the use of "I" by a performer as "a useful pronomial container for the performer: a particular entity, a particular body. But that is a function, a carrier of something that is neither singular nor fixed."⁵⁸⁶ However, this non-fixity did not mean that I was not able to grasp a notion of what 'I' do, no matter how briefly. Through my practice of the Feldenkrais Method, my focus and attention of my movements, that are functional and made in interaction with something else, in performance, felt 'known', clear and autonomous, and allowed me to do what I needed to do. In these moments, I had a sense of something that was 'me'; as the interactions changed and the movements altered according to function, my notion of what 'I' do developed but remained 'me'. As such, this project afforded a developing understanding of 'selves' as revealed through memory, reflection and analysis of conversation. Consequently, this invited subsequent exploration of additional pieces by Bach, as my different selves remain attached to my early experiences of his music. For example, we explored Bach's *Fugue in E flat major* BWV 876, which I studied as part of my undergraduate degree in 2004, and this invoked a

⁵⁸⁶ Laws, "Being a Player", 89

self that was learning attentively under the guidance of a teacher, perhaps nervous and insecure while preparing for and playing through certain difficult passages.⁵⁸⁷

Subjective Collaboration and Documentation

As explored throughout this chapter, Dyer's role in this project was significant in drawing out and fully exploring my memories. In Chapter Three, I discussed the importance of collaboration as a means to invite different kinds of interactions into my investigation, to aid the observation of how I function in performance. Throughout my doctoral research, I have recognised the value of "dialogic collaboration",⁵⁸⁸ which enables intimate and kind discussions, facilitating a dynamic in which the participants feel able to take risks. Dyer's role as something like an inquisitive interviewer or respectful therapist was vital for my divulging of highly personal and subjective details about my playing activity. In relation to Kate Hunter's discussion of collaboration as kindness, our dynamic offered a "lateral and generative approach to making work with others which makes space for novel, rich and exciting practices."⁵⁸⁹ It was kindness that created a safe space in which I could share my candid and informal descriptions of personal yet vague memories of my younger self, and it was these memories that constituted the project's creative outcomes.

Related to Dyer's practice of "storytelling, non-fiction and documentary-making",⁵⁹⁰ the process of documentation served my investigation with a particular way of exploring the messy nature of 'what I do' in performance. Our project was not to locate specific examples of a performer's interpretation, nor to unequivocally define a performing 'self'. Instead, documentation allowed us to sit and 'ponder' my performing activity and deliberately draw attention to the ambiguity of 'what I do'. We kept our presentation minimal and attempted to exhibit our findings without interfering too much in the material as produced. This included exhibiting excerpts of our conversations verbatim, for example without editing out

⁵⁸⁷ We focused on bars 37-46 of the *Fugue in E flat major*, which I remember as being a difficult passage.

⁵⁸⁸ Mary Alm, "The Role of Talk in the Writing Process of Intimate Collaboration", 126.

⁵⁸⁹ Kate Hunter, "Compassionate Irritability", 271-272

⁵⁹⁰ Mark Dyer, "Musical Ruins," 53

the faltering, confusing and sometimes nonsensical parts of our communication.⁵⁹¹ Our inclusion of these details created a presentation of a performer who is a little unsure of herself but is ‘authentic’. It allowed the multiple versions of both myself and Dyer to contribute to the creative shaping of the project, explicitly apparent in our allusions to various “personae”⁵⁹² in conversation.

As part of our preservation of ‘authenticity’, we photographed various related objects for an in-person exhibition at Dai Hall, Huddersfield (February 2023). We invited photographer Sam Walton to photograph annotated scores of the Bach pieces, the clay models of my hand imprints, and various personal objects from the time periods in which I played the different compositions. We worked with Walton to capture *my* subjective perspective: the exact way in which I imagine the scores, or the way the objects appear in my memory. For example, figure 40 shows the photograph Sam took of my annotations of Bach’s *Fugue in E flat major* BWV 876. I made these annotations to investigate the full extent of what I associate with every bar of this piece. The perspective of this photograph is sharply focused on the specific passage I think of when I recall this piece.

⁵⁹¹ This relates to Luck’s attempt at finding the “human” and mundane in performance, as explored above.

⁵⁹² Auslander, “Musical Personae”.



Figure 40. Sam Walton, “BWV 876 – 1”, photograph of my annotations of Bach’s *Fugue in E flat major* BWV 876. Bars 26-30 are in sharp focus.

Walton’s clean and unobtrusive photography speaks to the care we took in presenting our objects: we viewed them as precious artefacts that could be ‘easily damaged’. Here, and through our inclusion of unedited excerpts of our conversation, we attempted to frame the full subjectivity of the project’s materials.

Chapter Six

An Equilibrium Between ‘Pushing’ and ‘Allowing’

Arriving at an Understanding of Functioning

This doctoral thesis has demonstrated the ways in which my projects with Ray Evanoff, Monica Pearce, Neil Luck and Mark Dyer created, quite differently, compositions that either ‘pushed against’ or ‘allowed for’ my instinctive movements in performance. The thesis has detailed the compositional approaches and creative processes we used and the development of my own performance approach: the natures of these different creative perspectives produced the various types of interactions that affected the way I functioned in performance. Importantly, the projects took into consideration an understanding and an acceptance of my ‘already existent’ functioning.⁵⁹³ As discussed in Chapter Four and Chapter Five, this manifested in the shifts between my conscious and unconscious awareness of my actions, and between subjective and objective perspectives of my “musical persona”.⁵⁹⁴ Importantly, my research maintained a necessary focus on the unique, often-hidden perspective of the situated individual performer – as though viewing their activity from the ‘inside’. This exposed nuanced aspects of subjectivity and experience in performance, which was vital for developing this doctorate’s notion of functioning but also for the broader phenomenological understanding of a performer’s activity. Despite the focus in this research on the individual, the depth and breadth of the collaborative work demonstrates how a subjective perspective can be shared and explored, and then form the basis for creating new things with others.

To complete the understanding of functioning, in relation to the core questions of the work, I considered the ways in which music composition can both ‘push’ *and* ‘allow’ for my

⁵⁹³ This is based on my “native capacity to think in movement”, as discussed by Sheets-Johnstone, “Bodily Resonance”, 21. See Chapter Three.

⁵⁹⁴ Auslander, “Musical Personae”, 102. See Chapter Five.

instinctive movements in performance. As noted in Chapter Four, the projects that ‘pushed against’ my functioning prompted instinctive reactions, often made outside of my conscious awareness. Conversely, as explored in Chapter Five, the projects that ‘allowed for’ my functioning prompted lengthy and personal exploration during which I recalled ‘authentic’ movements and memories. As a final experiment, which served as a conclusion to my overall investigation, in a collaborative project with composer Ed Cooper I explored what I considered the space *in between* ‘pushing’ and ‘allowing’. Rather than maintaining a separation between ‘pushing’ and ‘allowing’, we were interested in exploring the dynamic between these two forces in a performance and in how to create the necessary compositional contingencies for exposing it. In practice, this dynamic was often felt as an equilibrium between the forces in performance that either ‘pushed’ or ‘allowed’ for my movements. The specific nature and effect of this equilibrium revealed functionality as something that emerges in relation to an individual and her situation, and this relates to Feldenkrais’s definition of function as “the interaction of the person with the outside world or the self with the environment.”⁵⁹⁵ As such, the project with Cooper and our deliberate investigation of the spaces *in between* ‘pushing’ and ‘allowing’ demonstrated just how constantly and quickly functionality can shift in relation to interaction. This was vital for the initial enquiry into my subjective experiential activity in performance and for establishing an understanding of how and why I move the way I do.

Given the positioning of my project with Cooper as a culmination of the research and the finding of a point of equilibrium, this chapter first discusses the relevance of its creative process, drawing this out as a way to frame and conclude the doctorate as a whole. Through its focus on the space in between ‘pushing’ and ‘allowing’, outlining this project serves this thesis with a final understanding of my functioning in performance. Following this, the chapter offers some concluding comments with respect to my overall investigation.

⁵⁹⁵ “Standards of Practice”, Section 1.4

Ed Cooper's ...they conjure aglow, movements...

Part way through the period of my doctoral research, I discovered Cooper's work and was immediately drawn to his deliberate exploration of liminal states within music listening and performance. In watching a performance of his piece *Between Focus* (2019)⁵⁹⁶ – a guided improvisation for pianist and dancer – I noticed a disparity between the way the performers were moving and the sounds they were making, as though they were moving in response to aspects of the performing environment that were not apparent to me as an audience member. I was intrigued to understand the compositional processes involved, particularly as they were creating certain interactions within the performance and causing the performers to move in particular ways. Primarily, these interactions included the apparent disconnection between the performers and their sound, but also the performers' different treatments of the piano: as an object, an instrument, or as part of the performing environment. The latter here extended to the performers' interaction with 'others' found within the performing environment, such as the piano but also the piano stool, the floor, the space, as well as each other. The attention of the performers seemed to shift, apparently in relation to these interactions. These different, rather diffused, interactions were affecting the way they moved, which appealed to my developing understanding of functioning. In exploring a possible equilibrium of different performance states, I wanted to know how Cooper's composition had led the performers to move in these particular ways.

Constructing the Piece: An Equilibrium of Instruction and Freedom

Our collaboration produced *...they conjure aglow, movements...*, a piece for piano and a pre-recorded audio part. The score for the piece is in Appendix A; a video of its performance is in the portfolio. This section will first focus on the construction of the piece, beginning with

⁵⁹⁶ Ed Cooper, Marianna Minasowa and Gabriel Jones, "Between Focus (2019)," YouTube video, 11:13, posted by "Ed Cooper," Dec 19, 2019, accessed July 4, 2023. <https://youtu.be/d8yOlivMmpQ>.

the creation of the pre-recorded audio part. The details of how this audio part was used in the final performance will be explained in the next section.

From the beginning of the project, we deliberately sought the spaces in between different aspects of our creative processes. In creating the audio part, we consciously explored the space in between musical instruction and freedom. Cooper asked me to film and record five separate thirty-minute improvisations on my upright piano, in which I was free to explore any areas of my instrument: an excerpt from the initial video of these improvisations is in the portfolio. I identified specific locations on the instrument where repetitive actions would make distinct sounds. For example, I scribbled with a pencil on the brass pressure bar, which made a small scratching sound; my pencil occasionally slipped, which made a squeaking sound. Cooper also suggested some things for me to try that similarly explored the sound of small repetitive actions. For example, he suggested I wear thimbles on all of my fingers and gently 'tickle' the tuning pegs. This made a very delicate metallic sound, slightly enhanced by the harmonics of the pegs and the strings. In relation to our exploration of the space in between instruction and freedom, these initial improvisations were kept free and specific to my upright piano. They were distinctly personal in their level of detail and expressivity. The intimate relationship I have with my own instrument permitted me to play its often-hidden areas. As such, my improvisations felt spontaneous and experimental, and created busy activity that was unique to my instrument (and me). Moreover, they constituted the first layer of our piece: sounds that were *free* and fully 'allowed for' my particular situation at home and immersed in explorative improvisation.

Cooper compiled our ideas and formed a set of written instructions for recording the audio part, which became the first part of the score. To include a level of restriction and maintain our exploration of the space in between freedom and restriction, Cooper suggested an additional instruction that slightly *restrained* these improvisations: he included a direction that all improvised sounds "should be performed *excruciatingly quietly* and slowly, on the threshold of total collapse at any moment. Aim to bring out as much focussed sound as

possible but avoid ‘climaxes’.”⁵⁹⁷ Whilst recording the improvisations, I would tentatively explore a sound; as it began to grow, I reduced its energy, or shifted to another idea, before it could reach its peak. As such, this instruction brought my attention to the space *in between* a sound’s initiation and the point at which it peaks, according to my own judgement and continual exploration. It encouraged me to interact closely with the sound as it unfolded, requiring constant attention and quick reactions, particularly in noticing the sound as it began to peak. This focus instilled a hovering state of hesitation and adjustment in my body that felt neither free nor restricting. Rather, it occupied the space *in between*.

After I had recorded the improvised ideas, Cooper then used them to create the audio part, which is two hours long. He edited my recordings significantly, incorporating abrupt cuts between sounds, the layering of multiple sounds, diffusion and spatialization, and numerous adjustments to balance and volume. Cooper’s aim was to process my sounds extensively, such that they became unpredictable and confusing to hear, for me and an audience. The detailing of the pre-recorded audio part, and the processes used to create it, highlights our initial decision to include it in the composition: it provided an ‘other’ for me to interact⁵⁹⁸ with, one that is both familiar and unpredictable. The inclusion of both familiarity and unpredictability exposed another space ‘in between’. Once we had created the fixed media part, we considered its specific contribution to the piece as a whole, and in particular how I would interact with it in a performance. Similarly to our construction of the pre-recorded audio part, we wanted the piece and its performance to occupy another space in between: between action and non-action.

Shaping a Performance: An Equilibrium of Intention and Non-intention

Cooper and I explored how to create instructions for a performer that would direct her (in this case my) performance – intentions, movements and sound production – to be made in

⁵⁹⁷ Ed Cooper, ...*they conjure glow, movements* (2020-21), instructions for creating the “Pre-Recorded Material”

⁵⁹⁸ As explored in Chapter Three, different interactions manifested in different ways: to me, some felt like interactions, despite the fact that I was interacting with something that did not change in response to my actions.

relation to the audio part as it is played back. We continued to occupy spaces ‘in between’ and so incorporated further unpredictable aspects into these instructions. For instance, we decided that performance would always involve an excerpt of the audio part, but that a random number generator would be used to select a timecode. The excerpt can also last anywhere between five and twenty minutes. This method of selecting the excerpt, often found in experimental, indeterminate music, incorporates a non-intentional approach to the piece by removing my ability to choose a particular section.⁵⁹⁹ In performance, the selected excerpt is disseminated around the space in surround sound, according to the performing environment. We considered *how* I would, then, interact with the audio part in performance and perform in and amongst the heavily-processed recordings. Our discussions created instructions that focused on my interaction with these sounds. We decided that as I perform, I should listen closely to the excerpt and attempt to “occupy and explore the threshold”⁶⁰⁰ between the sounds I hear through some form of action, with or without my further production of sound. Cooper’s instructions for performance include the following:

Find the path between the sonorities of the fixed media: occupy and explore this threshold through your live interaction with the piano. Ensure that the fixed media is at a quiet but clearly audible volume, so your actions blend or sometimes either source comes to the forefront of attention. Use your body—indeed, sometimes use substantial but gentle gestures—as an interstice to make this liminal space perceivable. Listen to the shape of sounds; represent and enact these contours through your bodily movements—this might be literal or imaginative. Use gestures and sounds different to those that comprise the fixed media. You might not always need to be making sound, but you must always be moving.⁶⁰¹

In performance, this detailed instruction requires me to maintain a constant and focused interaction with the fixed media part. My close attention to the sounds I hear, particularly the space *in between* each sound, prompts me to change or continue with my current

⁵⁹⁹ Chapter Five explores Gottschalk’s articulation of “non-subjectivity” as an approach to removing a subjective perspective of my performing activity. This fed into our exploration of non-intentionality in the performance of *...they conjure aglow, movements...*

⁶⁰⁰ Cooper, *...they conjure aglow, movements* (2020-21), Score for Live Performance

⁶⁰¹ Ibid.

action. As a result, I often remain in a state of anticipation of what might be coming next, producing neither action or inaction. Importantly, Cooper insists that my preparation for a performance must remain minimal: according to his instruction, “[p]ractice is encouraged but calculation of fixed routes throughout the material is *strongly* discouraged.”⁶⁰² This permits a certain level of preparation, relating to the types of sounds I may want to include in a performance, and so incorporates a certain level of intentionality. Moreover, the performance is to an extent a free improvisation, and therefore subject to my own ideas. However, the methods used to construct the piece and prepare the performance deliberately restrict my ability to make specific, concrete intentions in advance. These methods include Cooper’s processing of the fixed media part, his method for selecting the excerpt, and his discouragement of calculating routes. Together, these methods created a performing activity that relied on my ability to make intentions quickly, often resulting in numerous non-intentions.

Cooper stipulated in the instructions that I should make actions that blend with the sounds I hear in the fixed media, with or without the live production of sound. This detail makes a deliberate distinction between a movement that makes a sound and one that does not. We considered what occupies the space in between these two types of movements and explored how to incorporate such a space into our piece. An example can be found in the fixed media part, which includes sounds that I recognise – my unique improvised sounds – and sounds that are less familiar, due to their highly processed nature. As I perform the piece, these two types of sound are difficult to differentiate: the movements I make in response might result in a sound, but might also only look like they do, and any such distinctions become diffused amongst the wider activities and sounds of the performance.

As a result, my movements merge with both the sounds I hear played back *and* those I produce in performance, which creates, in me, a state of immersed reactivity. I struggle to separate out my attention, intentions, actions and exploration. In performance, I *function* by remaining in a constant state of interaction with the changing nature of my performance,

⁶⁰² Ibid.

which unfolds in two different ways: through my *reactions* to the fixed media, and through my *exploration* of movement. My reactions are made quickly and in response to particular aspects of the performance, especially the recorded playback; my exploration of this evolves as I assess the changing performance situation.⁶⁰³ However, I noticed that in performance, I was, in fact, constantly oscillating between reactions and explorations, which felt like an equilibrium of activity. Whilst performing, this equilibrium felt as though it was both ‘pushing against’ and ‘allowing for’ my performing movements.

When ‘Pushing’ Becomes ‘Allowing’

The hovering state of performance that I experienced in *...they conjure aglow, movements...* can be attributed to the composition’s combination of restriction and freedom. Cooper’s composerly discouragement of full preparation for performance appeared, at first, to be restricting, as it forced me to improvise and react to unknown aspects of the fixed media in the moment. However, in the event this did, in fact, permit me to act spontaneously, which produced a pleasingly busy and mindful state of performance. It freed me from predetermining goals or ideas ahead of performance, and I found I was able to let go of expectations (such as those explored in Chapter One) that I have built up around performance: expectations concerning notions of perfection or success. A performance of *...they conjure aglow, movements...* permits me to occupy and hold my attention in the ‘here and now’, and this is extended through the focus on movements, which emerged spontaneously, reactively and exploratively as I progress through the performance. Notably, this process consolidated the ways in which my practising of the Feldenkrais Method, throughout my process of research, had developed my understanding of how I move and increased my trust in my self-knowledge. Importantly, this was recognised and validated in the various collaborations, but perhaps especially here, with Cooper.

⁶⁰³ In Chapter Three, I explored a similar state of interactivity that I experienced whilst performing Federico Pozzer’s *Moving Objects*. This involved reacting to, engaging with and exploring certain aspects of the piece.

Conclusion

The purpose of this PhD was to explore the movements I make at the piano, specifically in relation to how I function in performance and what this affords creative collaboration. I developed a notion of functioning based on Feldenkrais's definition in terms of "the interaction of the person with the outside world or the self with the environment."⁶⁰⁴ Through extensive, explorative artistic practice research, especially in the context of collaboration, and with the inclusion of ongoing practice of the Feldenkrais Method, I developed an understanding of my particular ways of moving, examining these in relation to (and through) different stages of the various creative processes. Each collaboration positioned the notion of functionality differently, revealing it as something that fluctuates in relation to the nature of the music and the interactions involved in its performance. The extent of this was only discovered through the experimental and explorative way I worked: the strategic inclusion of collaborations with very different composers, and the instigation of quite different creative processes, impacted the way I moved in varied and unforeseen ways.

The interactions developed in the doctoral collaborations and performances brought my attention to the 'here and now' of performance and its fundamentally shifting nature. I developed an understanding of my movements by acknowledging their relation to their function in interaction: this encouraged me to embrace the unpredictability of the performance situation and utilise my unique functioning. My unique functioning includes habitual movements, personal preferences, or certain aspects of my training as a classical pianist. However, my research has carved an approach that does not attempt to remove or (after Thomas) "shrug off"⁶⁰⁵ these aspects of my functioning; rather, in relation to my unique situation within an unpredictable performing environment, these aspects are positively utilised. As such, the developed approach, as outlined in this thesis, while necessarily focused on the individual body and subjective experience, makes a significant contribution to existing perspectives on performance, particularly those that consider the

⁶⁰⁴ "Standards of Practice", Section 1.4

⁶⁰⁵ Thomas, "A Prescription for Action", 78

phenomenological experience of performance.⁶⁰⁶ My research points out crucial aspects of performance that are significant to all bodies, because of its very focus on the situatedness of functioning.

Beyond this, the research reveals a performance approach that utilises the “embodied, enactive and ecological”⁶⁰⁷ perspective of the performer. In addition to creating new artistic work, my doctoral exploration of the inner processes of performance and situated embodiment provides insights, alongside those contributed by my drawing together of a disciplined piano technique, creative collaboration and the explorative practice of the Feldenkrais Method. However, through the particular focus on the way I function when situated in different performances, my approach touches upon ecological considerations of musical activity, which opens up further possibilities in terms of understanding performance as a kind of ecology.⁶⁰⁸ Despite the different approach and specific context, this understanding resonates with ecological perspectives on music, particularly Eric Clarke’s ecological approach to the perception of musical meaning⁶⁰⁹ and Mine Doğantan-Dack’s consideration of the experience of “the ‘living’ nature of the performance environment” in developing the “performer-researcher”.⁶¹⁰ Nevertheless, there exists little exploration of an ecological approach, such as Clarke’s, from the situated position of the solo performer, who (as opposed to Clarke’s listener) is positioned *inside* a musical performance. In this respect, my project potentially lays ground for new performance methods, perhaps including the development of particular embodied techniques, interpretations or adaptable skills that would enable a performer to shape their own unique practice. Moreover, establishing an ecological approach to performance would create new opportunities for collaboration with others, thereby contributing further to the development of new artistic music practices.

Ecological approaches to music have considered the significant role of collaboration in various creative and performance practices.⁶¹¹ Indeed, my ongoing performance practice

⁶⁰⁶ Doğantan-Dack, “In the Beginning there was Gesture, 247-248

⁶⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, 244

⁶⁰⁸ Laws, “Being a Player”, 84

⁶⁰⁹ Clarke, *Ways of Listening: An Ecological Approach to the Perception of Musical Meaning*, 4-5

⁶¹⁰ Doğantan-Dack, “The art of research on performance”, 37. See Chapter One.

⁶¹¹ For example, recent research has explored ecological approaches to performance: Linson and Clarke discuss an ecological account of group improvisation. Linson and Clarke, “Distributed cognition, ecological theory and

and individual creativity is enlivened through collaboration: it allows me to develop a practice as a situated performer, whilst incorporating many aspects of my creativity. Importantly, I have found that the attentive way I interact with ‘others’ – a collaborator, a particular object, or the shifting performing situation – is developing, in me, a mindful practice of ‘witness’, during which I fully “stay-with”⁶¹² an ‘other’. This has inspired new projects with composers and developed further work with Federico Pozzer, Mark Dyer, Ed Cooper, and Ray Evanoff. Here, we have explored further regions of our practices and ventured deeper into our overlapping perspectives, where our roles are less defined and our creations more varied. This has also led to our collaboration with other practitioners, such as a Kundalini yoga practitioner⁶¹³ and a practising witch and shaman.⁶¹⁴ Our confident incorporation of other practices, as we develop our art, is based on the trust and mutual attention we build through practice, and our mutual desire to be ‘with’ others.

group improvisation”, *Distributed Creativity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 52. Payne explores the in collaborative “creative processes of musical performance” when performers workshop on a new piece. Payne, “The craft of musical performance”, 3

⁶¹² Lisa Samuels considers ‘witness’ as a deliberate turning “towards an attention with the engaged art event, an attention that does not seek to be somewhere other than in relation.” This closes the distance between a perceiver and the art they are engaged; this could extend to a performer and the performance they are engaged in. Lisa Samuels, “Witness in kind”, *Performance Paradigm* 16 (2021), 60

⁶¹³ Federico Pozzer’s *A Few Sequences* (2021) focuses on small repetitive actions at the piano, resembling a focused Kundalini yoga practice. Ed Cooper and I created *Bodies In Between* (2021) a guided embodied listening mediation.

⁶¹⁴ Ed Cooper and I created *Hekate’s Voices* (2022-23), a piece for three piano parts and audio. The piece includes field recordings from spiritual landscapes. I have carried out extensive healing and ritual work with a shamanistic witch.

Appendix A: Scores

Ray Evanoff, *Give* (2020 -)

Kate Small (One)

Ray Evanoff

Stem Up: LH

Stem Down: RH

Piano

5:4

Tempo: ♩ = 80

Dynamics: ppp, mf, mp

© Ray Evanoff/ASCAP 2020

Kate Small Two

Ray Evanoff

$\text{♩} = 80$
(Stem Up)
mf

5:4

Piano

3:2
pppp
(Stem Down)

Kate Small Three

Ray Evanoff

The musical score is written for Piano. It begins with a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 80$. The score is divided into several measures with complex time signatures: 3:2, 5:4, 3:2, 5:4, 3:2, 5:4, 3:2, and 5:4. A circled section at the top is labeled "(upper layers)" and contains a *pp* dynamic marking. A later section is marked "hold until -inaudible". The score concludes with a *f* dynamic marking and the instruction "(chords)". A *Sost.* marking is also present. The score is written on a grand staff with treble and bass clefs.

Kate Small Two point One

Ray Evanoff

1

$\text{♩} = 37$

spz

Piano

5:4

pppp

ppp

ff

mf

pp

mp

3:2

3:2

Ped

5:4

© Ray Evanoff / ASCAP 2020

Monica Pearce, *studies in restriction* (2020)

studies in restriction

for piano

I. study in independence

Monica Pearce

$\text{♩} = 60$

ff pp *mf pp* *ff pp*

p *mp*

ff pp *pp ff*

p *mp* *p*

con pedale

Copyright © 2020

23

Measures 23-24. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), 4/4 time signature. Measure 23 starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic. Fingerings 4 and 5 are indicated for the first two notes. Measure 24 ends with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The bass line consists of quarter notes with fingerings 4 and 5.

25

Measures 25-27. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), 4/4 time signature. Measure 25 starts with a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic. Measure 26 has a forte (*f*) dynamic. Measure 27 has a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. A tempo marking of quarter note = 80 (♩ = 80) is placed above measure 26. Fingerings 4 and 5 are indicated throughout. The bass line continues with quarter notes and fingerings 4 and 5.

28

Measures 28-30. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), 5/4 time signature. Measure 28 features a complex melodic line with triplets and fingerings 4, 5, 4, 3. Measure 29 has fingerings 5, 4, 3. Measure 30 has fingerings 4, 5, 4. The bass line has fingerings 4, 5 in measure 28 and rests in measures 29 and 30.

31

Measures 31-33. Treble clef, key signature of one sharp (F#), 5/4 time signature. Measure 31 has a tempo marking of quarter note = 90 (♩ = 90). Fingerings 4, 5, 4, 3 are indicated. Measure 32 has fingerings 5, 4. Measure 33 has fingerings 4, 5, 4. The bass line has fingerings 4, 5, 4, 3 in measure 31 and rests in measures 32 and 33.

34 $\text{♩} = 70$

38

42

46

51

p

53

pp

studies in restriction

for piano

II. study in stretch

Monica Pearce

♩ = 60

p
con pedale

6

mp

10

pp

17

p *mp*

24

mf

8^{va}

8^{va}

3

Copyright © 2020

2 (8) 8va

28

p

Detailed description: This system contains measures 28 through 33. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. Measure 28 starts with a whole rest in the treble and a whole note chord in the bass. Measures 29 and 30 feature a treble line with eighth notes and a bass line with sustained chords. Measure 31 has a treble line with a half note and a bass line with a half note. Measure 32 has a treble line with a half note and a bass line with a half note. Measure 33 has a treble line with a half note and a bass line with a half note. A dynamic marking of *p* is placed in measure 31. An 8va marking is at the end of the system.

34 (8)

Detailed description: This system contains measures 34 through 38. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. Measure 34 has a treble line with a half note and a bass line with a half note. Measures 35 and 36 have treble lines with half notes and bass lines with half notes. Measure 37 has a treble line with a half note and a bass line with a half note. Measure 38 has a treble line with a half note and a bass line with a half note.

39 (8)

mp

Detailed description: This system contains measures 39 through 42. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. Measure 39 has a treble line with a half note and a bass line with a half note. Measures 40 and 41 have treble lines with half notes and bass lines with half notes. Measure 42 has a treble line with a half note and a bass line with a half note. A dynamic marking of *mp* is placed in measure 39.

43 8va

mf *f*

Detailed description: This system contains measures 43 through 46. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. Measure 43 has a treble line with a half note and a bass line with a half note. Measures 44 and 45 have treble lines with half notes and bass lines with half notes. Measure 46 has a treble line with a half note and a bass line with a half note. A dynamic marking of *mf* is placed in measure 43, and a dynamic marking of *f* is placed in measure 45. An 8va marking is at the beginning of the system.

47 8va

mp

Detailed description: This system contains measures 47 through 51. It begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. Measure 47 has a treble line with a half note and a bass line with a half note. Measures 48 and 49 have treble lines with half notes and bass lines with half notes. Measure 50 has a treble line with a half note and a bass line with a half note. Measure 51 has a treble line with a half note and a bass line with a half note. A dynamic marking of *mp* is placed in measure 47. An 8va marking is at the beginning of the system.

54 (8) 3

Musical score for measures 54-58. Measure 54 is marked with a circled 8 and a dashed line above it. The score consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a series of chords and notes, with a dynamic marking of *pp* (pianissimo) starting in measure 56. The bass staff contains a series of notes, also with a dynamic marking of *pp* starting in measure 56. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of measure 58.

59

Musical score for measures 59-63. Measure 59 is marked with a circled 8 and a dashed line above it. The score consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The treble staff contains a series of chords and notes, with a dynamic marking of *p* (piano) starting in measure 59. The bass staff contains a series of notes, also with a dynamic marking of *p* starting in measure 59. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of measure 63.

studies in restriction

for piano

Monica Pearce

III. study in practice

♩ = 60

Musical notation for measures 1-7. The piece is in 4/4 time. The bass clef staff contains the music, starting with a *pp* dynamic. The right hand is silent. The music features a series of chords and moving lines in the bass. A *mp* dynamic is indicated at the end of measure 7. The instruction *con pedale* is written below the staff.

con pedale

Musical notation for measures 8-14. The piece continues in 4/4 time. The bass clef staff contains the music, starting with a *pp* dynamic. The right hand is silent. The music features a series of chords and moving lines in the bass. A *p* dynamic is indicated at the end of measure 14. The time signature changes to 6/4 for the final two measures.

Musical notation for measures 15-21. The piece continues in 4/4 time. The bass clef staff contains the music, starting with a *pp* dynamic. The right hand is silent. The music features a series of chords and moving lines in the bass. A *mp* dynamic is indicated at the end of measure 21. The time signature changes to 6/4 for the final two measures.

Musical notation for measures 22-27. The piece continues in 4/4 time. The bass clef staff contains the music, starting with a *p* dynamic. The right hand is silent. The music features a series of chords and moving lines in the bass.

Musical notation for measures 28-34. The piece continues in 4/4 time. The right hand staff contains the music, starting with a *pp* dynamic. The left hand is silent. The music features a series of chords and moving lines in the right hand. A *pp* dynamic is indicated at the end of measure 34.

Copyright © 2021

2

30 **A**

mp *mf*

37

p *mf*

44

8^{va}

46 **B** ♩ = 80-90

♩ = 80-90

49

52

3

Musical score for measures 52-55. The score is in 4/4 time and consists of two systems. The first system contains measures 52 and 53, and the second system contains measures 54 and 55. The bass clef part features a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The treble clef part contains chords and melodic fragments.

Musical score for measures 56-57. Measure 56 is marked with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 60$ and a dynamic of *p*. It features a complex melodic line in the treble clef with many beamed notes and a dotted line indicating an octave extension (8^{va}). Measure 57 is a whole rest in both staves.

studies in restriction

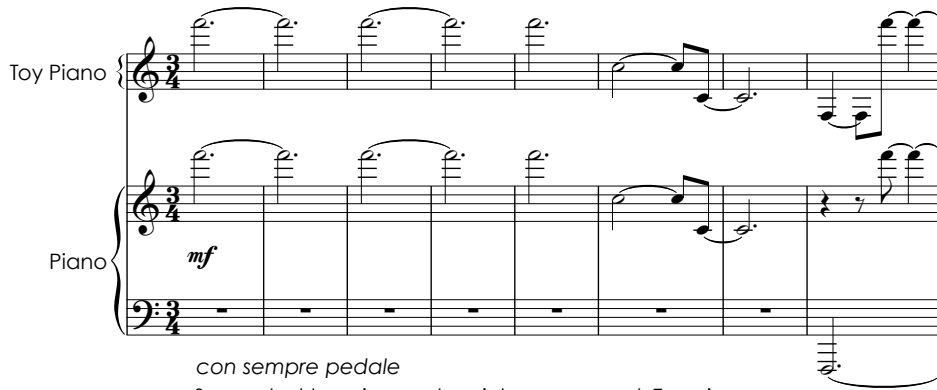
for toy piano and piano

IV. study in suspension

Monica Pearce

♩ = 60

Toy Piano



Piano *mf*

con sempre pedale

Suggested toy piano set up is legs removed. Toy piano can be set up on top of the piano (if grand) or to the right of the piano on a table at similar height.

9



p

15



Copyright © 2021

2

A

20

26

34

B 40 *accel.*

p

C ♩ = 80

47

f

56

f

studies in restriction

for piano and toy piano

V. study in 3-2-1

Monica Pearce

♩ = 60

Toy Piano

mf

2

3

4

5

Copyright © 2021

2

6

5 5 6 6

5 5 6 6

6 6 6 6

6 6 6 6

6 6 6 6

6 6

6 6 6 6

6 6 6 6

A 6 6 6 6

f 6 6 6 6

12

Musical notation for measures 12-13. The right hand plays a continuous sixteenth-note pattern with a '6' fingering below each group of four notes. The left hand plays a similar sixteenth-note pattern with a '6' fingering below each group of four notes.

13

Musical notation for measures 13-14. The right hand has a '6' fingering above the first measure and below the following three measures. The left hand has a '6' fingering below each of the four measures.

14

Musical notation for measures 14-15. The right hand has a '6' fingering above the first measure and below the following five measures. The left hand has a '6' fingering below each of the six measures.

15

Musical notation for measures 15-16. The right hand has a '6' fingering below the first four measures, and '6', '5', and '5' below the last three measures. The left hand has a '6' fingering below each of the six measures.

17

Musical notation for measures 16-17. The right hand has a '6' fingering below the first four measures, and '6', '6', and '6' below the last three measures. The left hand has a '6' fingering below each of the six measures. A *mf* dynamic marking is present in the right hand for the final three measures.

4

B

19

f

21

23

25

ff

27

28 5

29

30

C
31 *mf*

33

6

35

5 5 6 6 6 6 6 6

5 5 6 6 6 6 6 6

37

f

6 6 6 6

6 6 6 6

38

6 6 6

6 6 6

39

6 6 6 6

6 6 6 6

40

6 6 6 6

6 6 6 6

41

6 6 6 6

6 6 6 6

42

6 6 6 6

6 6 6 6

43

6 6 6 6

44

5 5 6

Federico Pozzer, *Moving Objects* (2021)

Three Sections:

Section 1: Blow on some ping pong balls placed inside of the piano, attempting to form the shapes shown in the score.

Section 2: Blow on some marbles, attempting to form the sequence of colours indicated in the score.

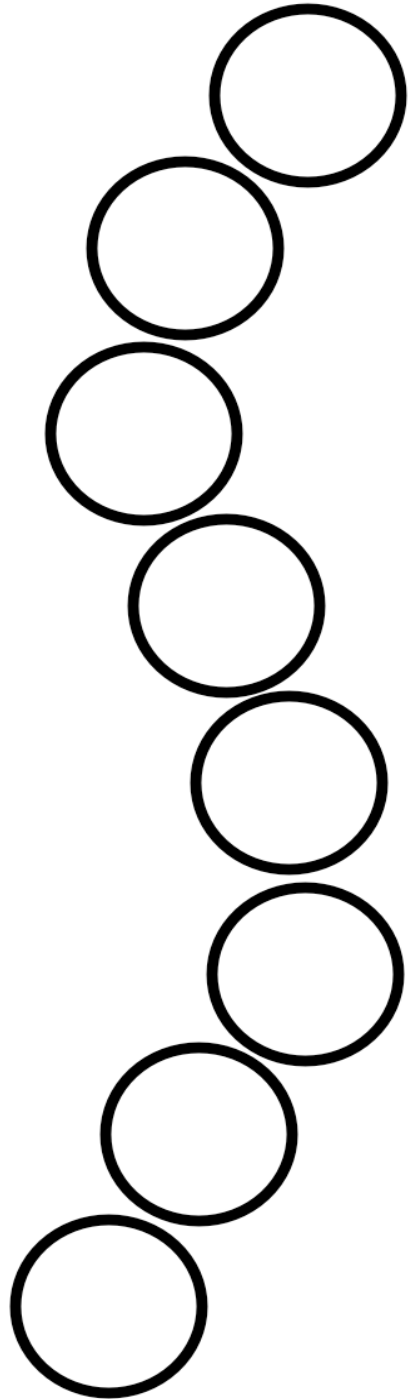
Section 3: Blow on some marbles that flow down the strings, attempting to push them back towards the bridge.

Sustain pedal throughout.

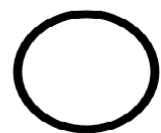
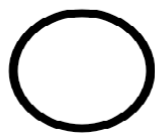
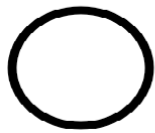
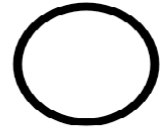
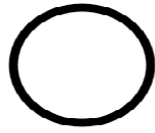
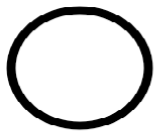
Section 1

A set of x ping pong balls is placed on the middle-register strings.

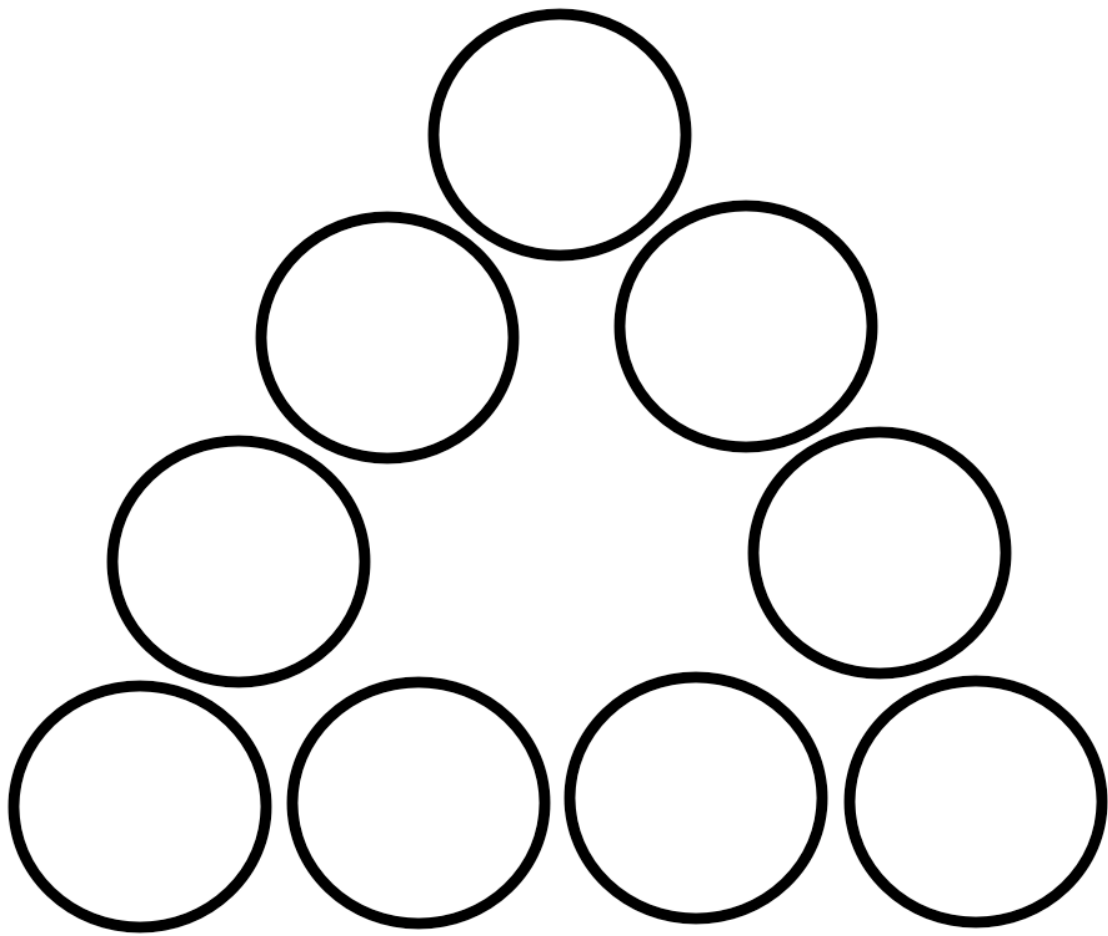
In each page of the score there is a shape. Blow on the balls in order to form the shape shown in the page within the indicated time limit.



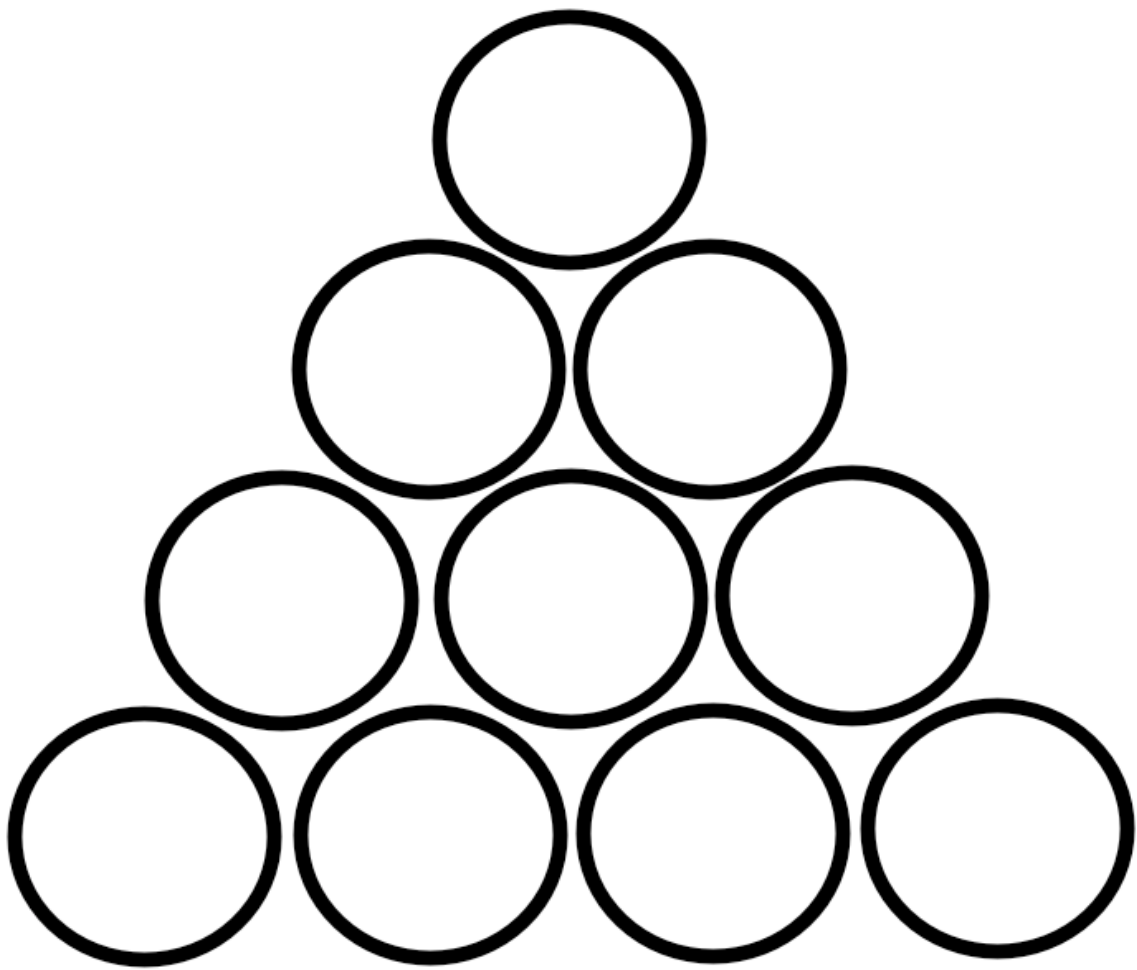
time limit: 0'30''



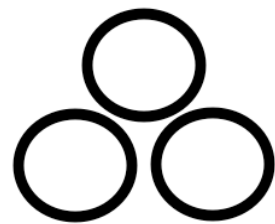
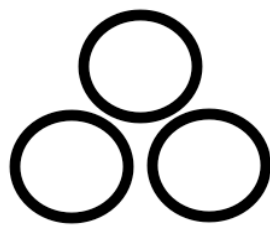
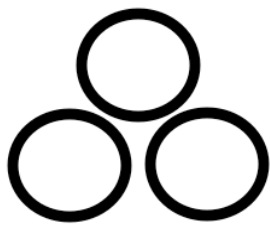
time limit: 1'00''



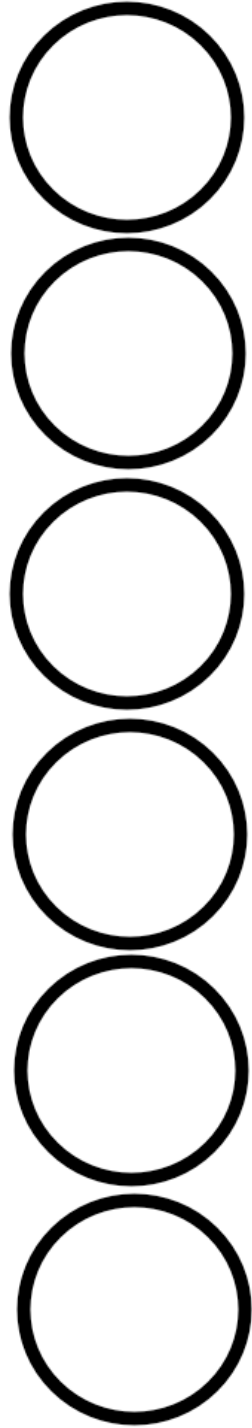
time limit: 1'15''



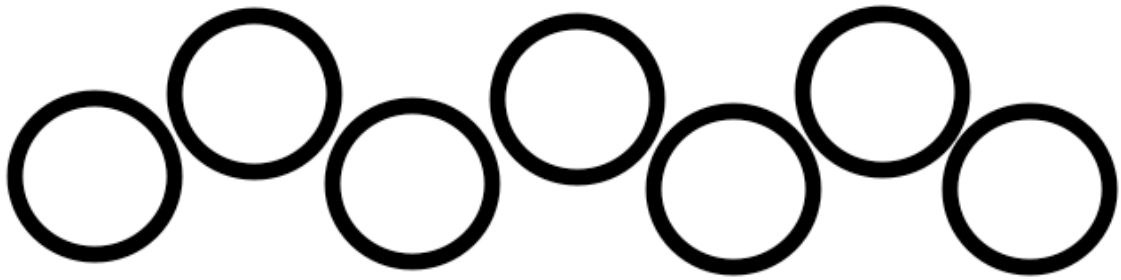
time limit: 2'00''



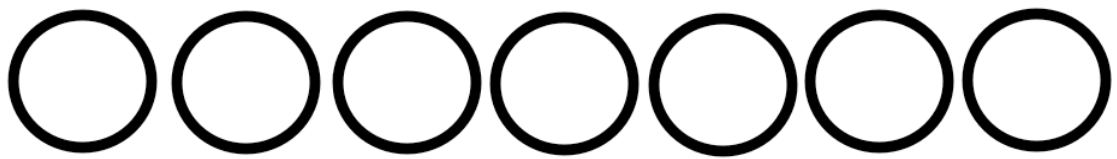
time limit: 3'00''



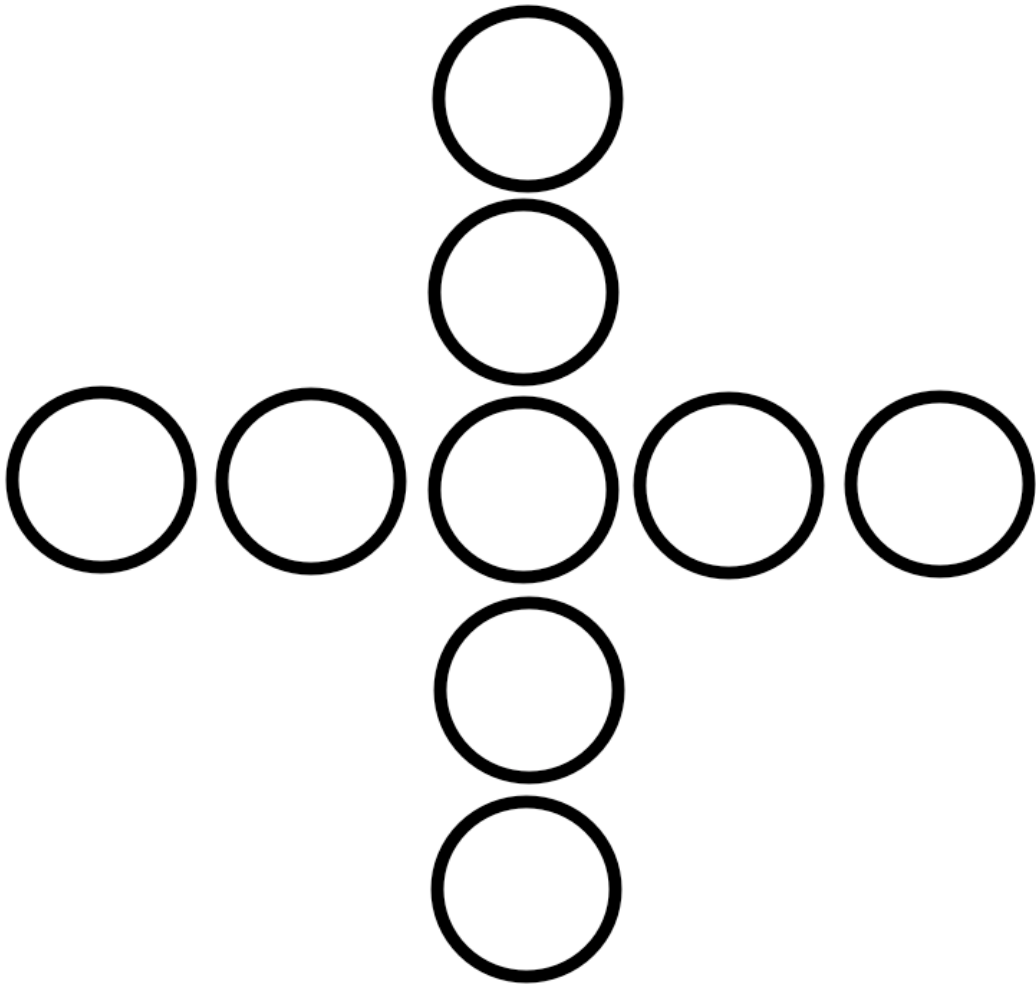
time limit: 0'30''



time limit: 0'45''



time limit: 0'30''



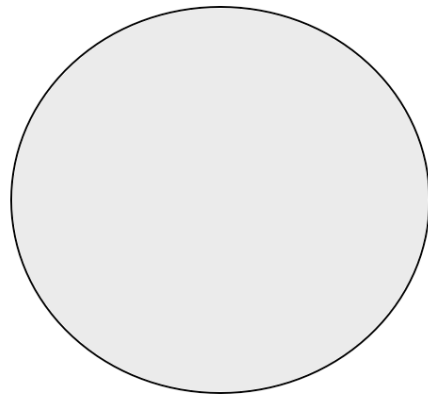
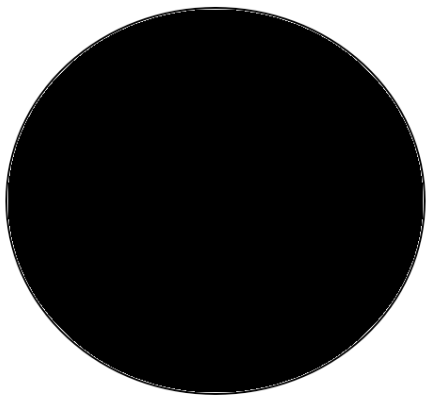
time limit: 0'20''

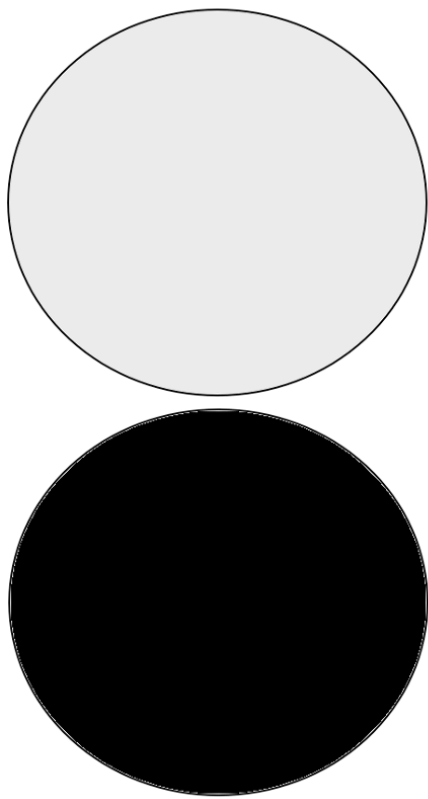
Section 2

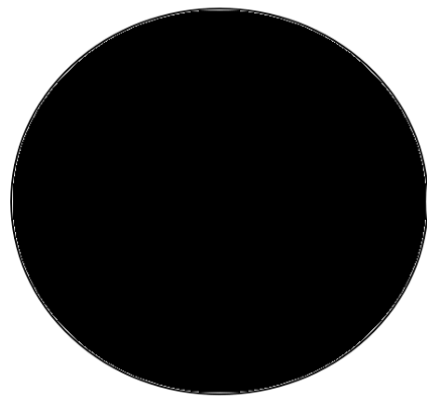
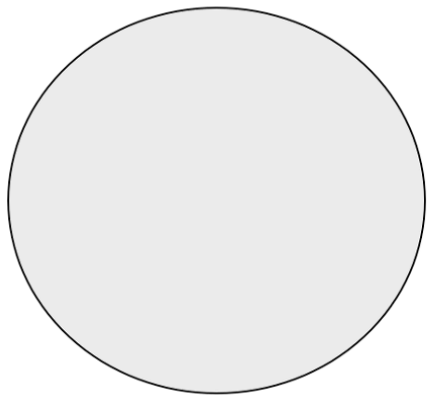
Either two, three, or four coloured marbles are placed on the middle-register strings.

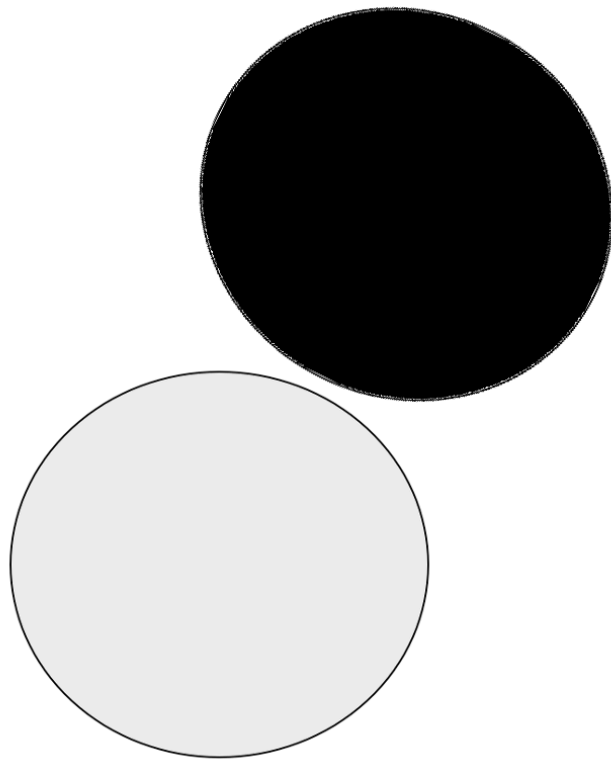
In each page of the score there is a sequence of colours / shape. Blow on the marbles in order to form the sequence of colours / shape shown in the page. The performer should either add or remove one or two marbles according to the amount of marbles indicated in the page.

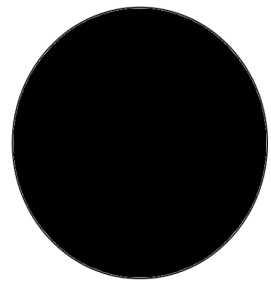
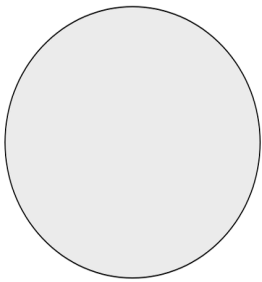
The pages can be performed in any order and the order should be selected randomly.
Time limit for each page: 45 seconds.

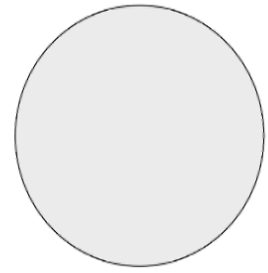
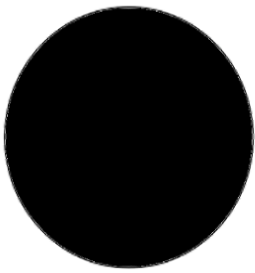


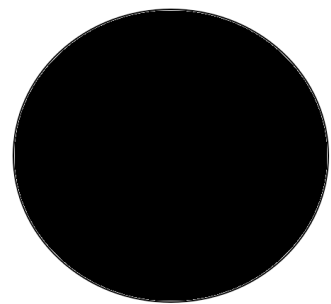
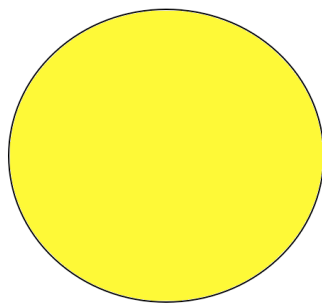
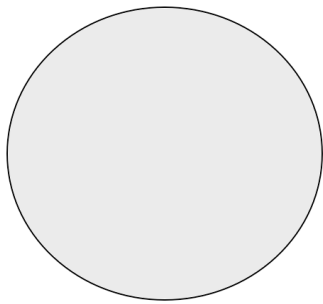


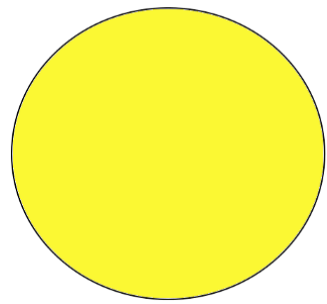
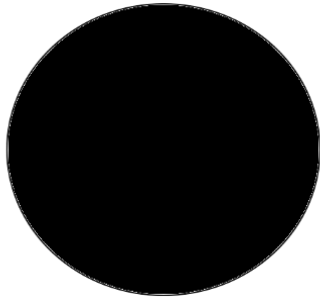
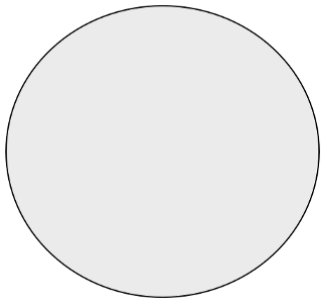


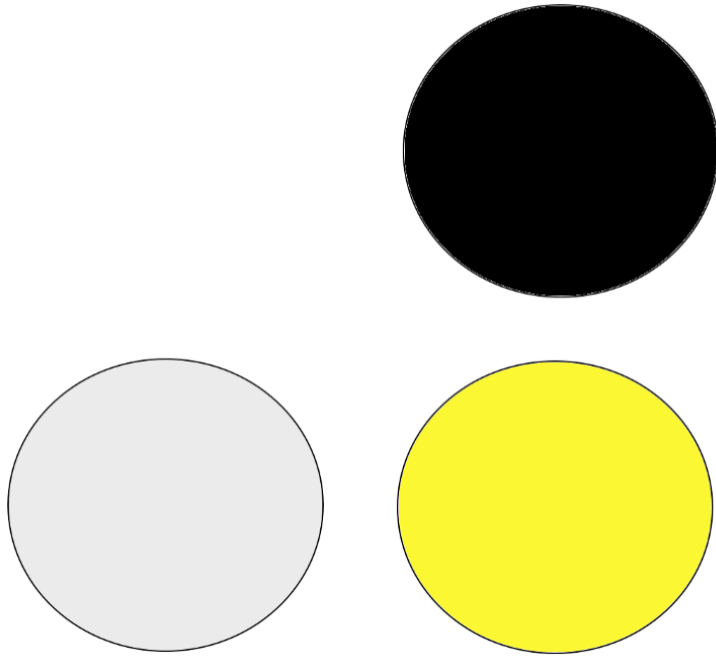


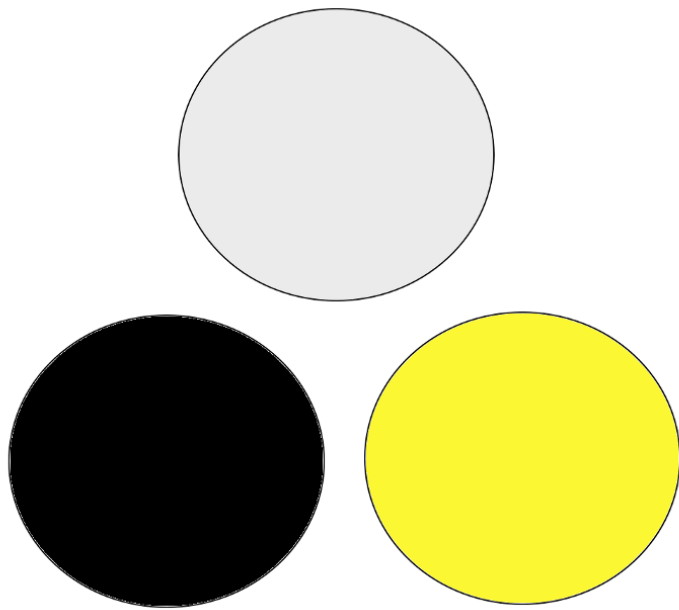


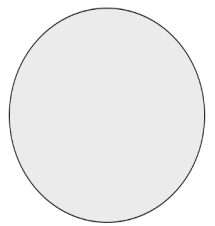
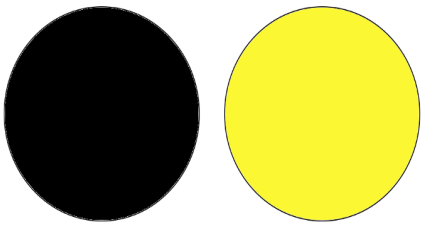


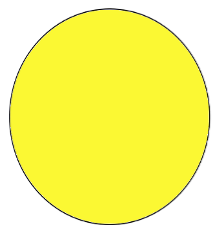
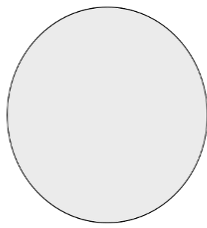
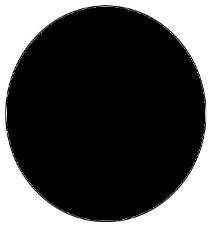


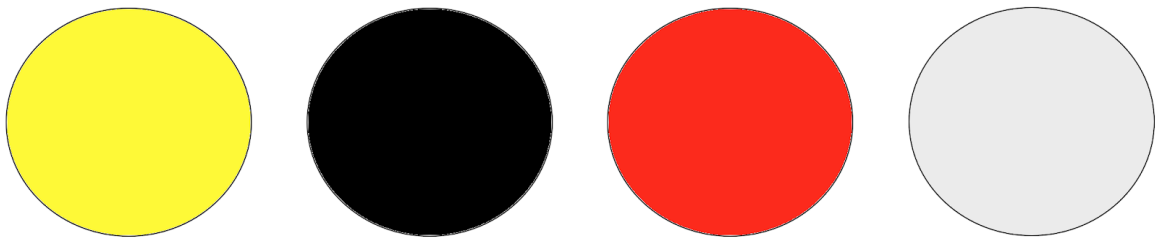


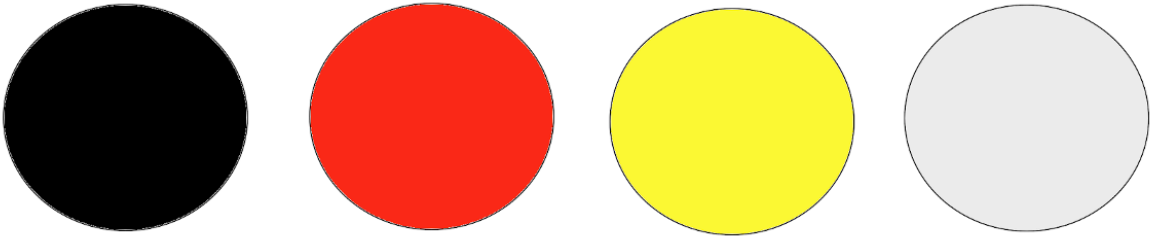


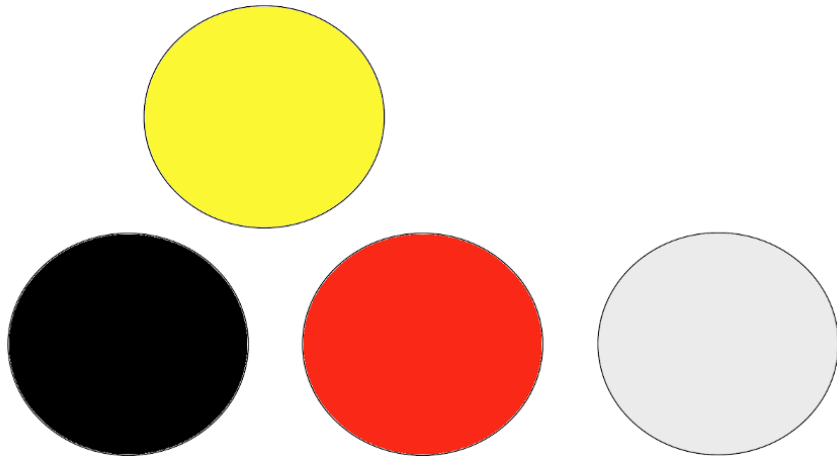


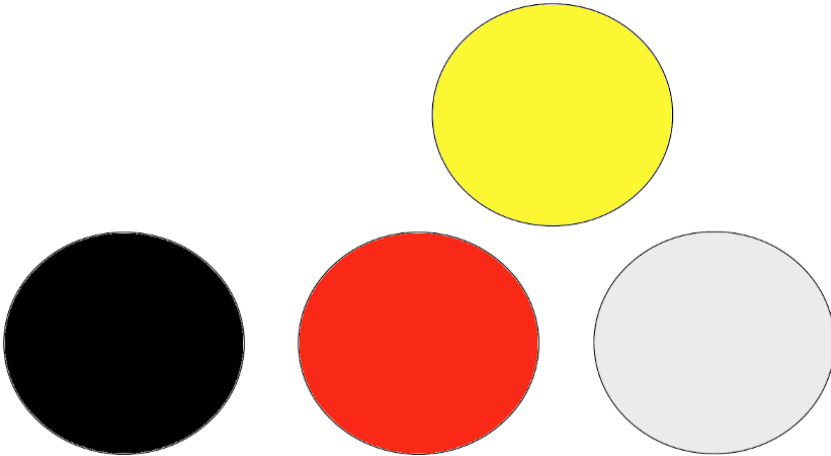


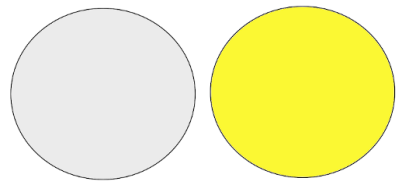
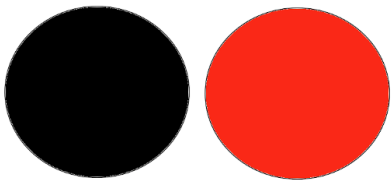


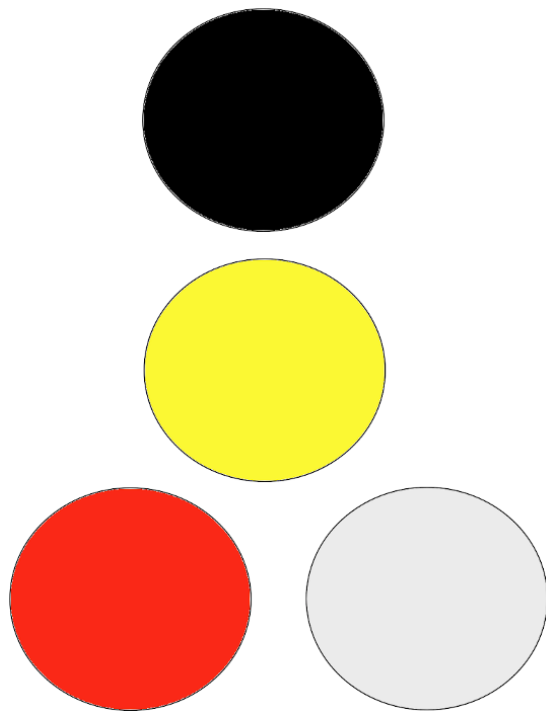












Section 3

From the opposite side of the piano a marble (15–16mm) is placed between two strings of the lower register and let it flow down the strings towards the dampers.

The marble should not reach the dampers but you are not allowed to stop it with your hands. Blow on it and push it constantly back towards the bridge.

Every 30 seconds, another person places an additional marble between two other strings next to the previous ones and let it flow down.

The section is finished when a marble reaches the dampers.

You may bring part of your body inside of the instrument as shown in the picture below.

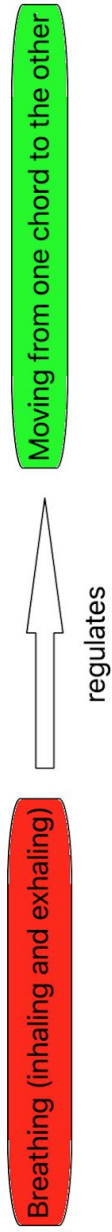


Federico Pozzer, Breathing, Moving, Playing (2021)

4 sections:

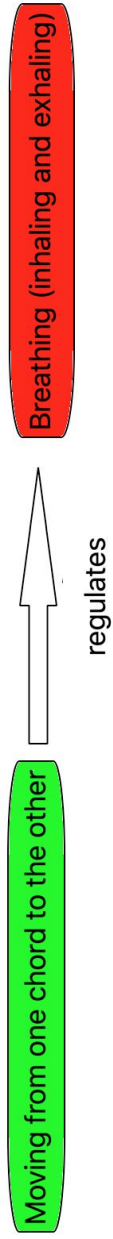
In each section play all the chords below. Generate a random sequence of chords for each section.
For each section follow the instructions below.

Section 1



Play the 1st chord.
The length of your inhaling regulates the moving speed from the 1st chord to the 2nd chord.
Play the 2nd chord.
The length of your exhaling regulates the moving speed from the 2nd chord to the 3rd chord.
etc.

Section 2



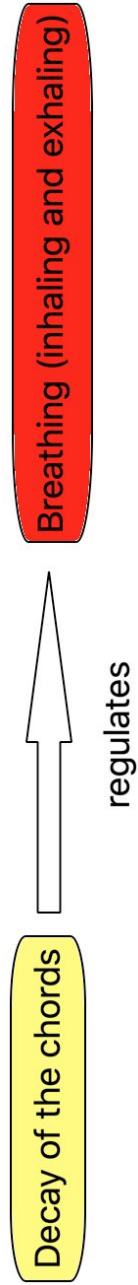
Play the 1st chord.

The moving speed from the 1st chord to the 2nd chord regulates the length of your inhaling.

Play the 2nd chord.

The moving speed from the 2nd chord to the 3rd chord regulates the length of your exhaling.
etc.

Section 3



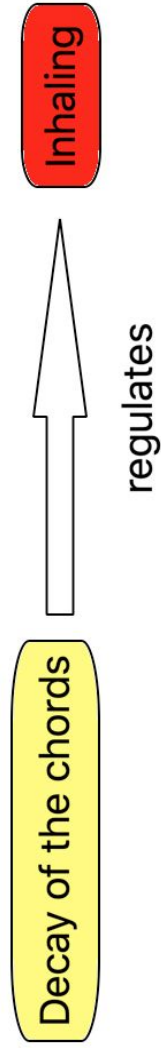
Play the 1st chord. The time the 1st chord takes to decay regulates the length of your inhaling. When the sound of the 1st chord is completely decayed move to the 2nd chord.

Play the 2nd chord. The time the 2nd chord takes to decay regulates your exhaling. When the sound of the 1st chord is decayed completely move to the 2nd chord.
etc.

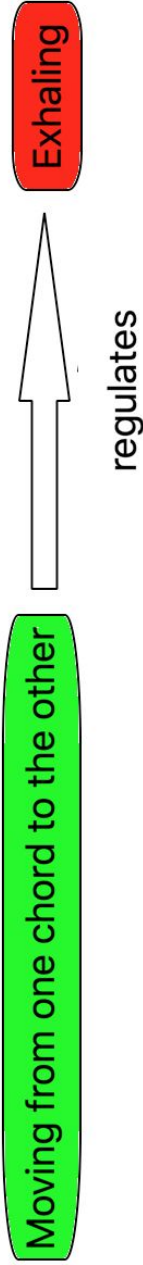
Moving is free.

If you need to recover, change the octave of the chord and play it in the higher register.

Section 4



Play the 1st chord. The time the 1st chord takes to decay regulates the length of your inhaling.
Move to the 2nd chord.



The moving speed from the 1st chord to the 2nd chord regulates the length of your exhaling.
etc.

If you need to recover, change freely the octave of the chord and play it in the higher registers.

Ed Cooper, ...they conjure aglow, movements... (2021)

Performance Notes

This work consists of pre-recorded parts and a live performance. At least five takes of the pre-recorded material lasting at least 30 minutes each should be sent to the composer ahead of time. These recordings will be compiled into a fixed media track that should ideally be disseminated in surround for a live performance. This sonic palimpsest lasting two hours may loop round indefinitely. Any section of it may be used for a live performance of 5–20 mins. This may be preceded and succeeded by long duration of only the fixed media. It should be played quietly, but always be clearly audible.

Performer might be in the centre of the performance space with audience members surrounding them, who needn't be formally seated. Ideally use a grand piano with the sustain pedal down throughout. Indeed, in an ideal setup, the fixed media and piano setup would be left as a quasi-installation for audience members to pass through, with performances only happening very sporadically.

Ideally, several small light sources will irregularly, slowly, and independently fade on and off. If this is not possible, the piece should be performed in very low lighting with lots of small candles placed around the performance area.

If the performance is filmed, the final video should not include the first or last few minutes of the pianist's live performance, but insist on an incomplete *in medias res* style. Furthermore, I suggest the performance is captured using a single shot, with the camera person in constant motion around the performer, searching for angles in which the performer's body visually merges with the piano.

This work is extremely quiet, thus putting itself at constant risk of collapse. Some performance techniques may not be possible as such severe dynamics, but they should still be attempted. Gestures and their resultant sounds may totally rupture and disintegrate, or not sound at all.

—

always disintegrating but totally focussed; in great conflict with itself; clarity is perceivable but in the future

Pre-Recorded Material

Use these text prompts as a guide for improvisations lasting at least 30 minutes. Instructions might be performed in any order and not all must be used in each rendition; each should occur for irregular durations of at least a couple of minutes. When transitioning between prompts, do so very slowly, allowing one gesture to interfere with the next; this needn't be done consistently.

Prompts may occur simultaneously if possible. Sustain pedal wedged down throughout.

These should be performed *excruciatingly quietly* and slowly, on the threshold of total collapse at any moment. Aim to bring out as much focussed sound as possible but avoid 'climaxes'.

Place metal thimbles on all ten fingers and spread them widely on low piano strings. Exerting a fair amount of pressure, try to bring the fingers together, so the thimbles are in a straight line. Never get there.

Spread both the hands out and scrape, as if trembling, all of the nails on top of crumpled paper placed on piano strings. All fingers should always be moving, as independently as possible.

Bow one or a few low strings with strands of nylon thread. Keep this motion constant, revealing harmonics, but veil them as they appear: exist in a moving threshold.

Using a glass bottle or similar cylinder, bow some strings; keep the sound at the threshold of noise and pitch.

Very slowly slide each hand from opposite ends of the keyboard to the other; this may take several minutes and the moment of crossover will be cumbersome. Rub the keys, bringing out as much sound as possible—pitches may sound but do not aim for this.

Gently gyrate your fingers on top of top keys; aim to depress the keys but never to sound a pitch. If a pitch sounds, slowly move to another area of the keyboard, maintaining the trembling motion. Imagine the hands like timid clouds chasing each other.

Make sounds from the tuning pins; always use both hands. Objects might be used. Use the similarities in sonorities that you come across as stepping stones to the next action.

Using either end of a pencil, scribble along the pressure bar, *always* varying the pressure and speed of your movements—these should be in constant motion. One or both hands might be used. The pencil may occasionally slip and hit a string, but do not aim for this.

With varying speeds and pressure of grip, rub the hands along the muffler felt and hammers.

Use a pencil to hit the hammers. As many pencils may be simultaneously used as desired. Bring out as much pitch as possible whilst, as always, existing along the threshold of silence and sound.

Using objects, gently beat around the edges of the piano. Find the resonant spots and immediately discard them.

Jostle the *una corda* pedal with foot; bring the hammers as close the strings as possible but do not aim to hit them.

Use a violin bow to bow one string in a circular motion of varying shapes and speeds. Use the other hand to scrape this string with either the fingernail or a coin.

Score for Live Performance

Take a moment to focus your aural attention. This might be through a brief meditation, a Deep Listening exercise, or any other similar activity. Become aware of your sonic environment and your place within it.

Find the path between the sonorities of the fixed media: occupy and explore this threshold through your live interaction with the piano. Ensure that the fixed media is at a quiet but clearly audible volume, so your actions blend or sometimes either source comes to the forefront of attention. Use your body—indeed, sometimes use substantial but gentle gestures—as an interstice to make this liminal space perceivable. Listen to the shape of sounds; represent and enact these contours through your bodily movements—this might be literal or imaginative. Use gestures and sounds different to those that comprise the fixed media. You might not always need to be making sound, but you must always be moving. Let this process last for 5–20 minutes.

The fixed media is designed to make this process difficult, as the liminal space I ask you to make apparent has boundaries that falter, evade attention, deceive, or simply disappear: indeed, what constitutes 'between' may change from context to context. Because of this, it is likely that you will be in a state of constant renegotiation, always moving towards stability but unlikely to arrive there and, even if you do, this will be swept away at a moment's notice in favour of relentless transition. Practice is encouraged but calculation of fixed routes throughout the material is *strongly* discouraged.

1

5 4

CHANGE FROM MEMORY. FL, OR LH

HAVE A HAND OUR CARDS KEYS WOULD BE. EITHER RH OR LH. YOUR FINGERS ARE YOUR HELP-MEMORIES. OR SORT OF MEMOIRS, MENTALLY. THE GIVE OF A FACE

MENTAL, LOOK AWAY. DEADENED, OR CLOSE EYES. YOUR OTHER HAND. PRACTICES TICS. HOLD YOUR HEAD (SHAKE, HAIR, EYES, ETC.)

STAND UP

CROSS UP. BRING YOUR OTHER HAND UP TO YOUR HEAD

attacca

THE MOMENT AFTER THE END-ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AT THE AUDIENCE

2

Prepare to play, but
don't just keep spreading
the arms just before
starting.

Allegro molto
pp
(Cello)

PUSH RH FINGER INTO
LH PALM

FINGER SWAY (RH)
TO CAMERA

MIRATE!
JUST PERCH FOR THE
NOTES
1 2 3 4 5
6 7 8 9 10

Elide these two gestures

FACE AWAY FROM PIANO
LEAN INTO P1

ENTRANCE LH MOVING...

LEAN OUT OF
CAMERA

QUICK/HAR GLANCE
LOOK TO CAM

A moment rest

(Legg)
170
5 4 3 2 1
P1. 6 5 4 3 2 1

CONDUCT, VAUQUELY

3

ALL at d.c. 100

FH

Clitoris

Rotates elbow

Elbow

Hand

Interrupt half way through, then start again

THE MOMENT AFTER THE END. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE AUDIENCE

Perform to an imaginary camera. After the interruption, find a different imaginary camera.

Demonstrate a joint
 Communicate as clearly as possible, but no voice.
 But, maybe imagine you're having a conversation?

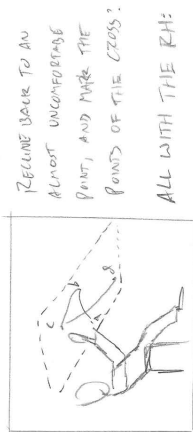
(Punch)

15 sec

Elide together

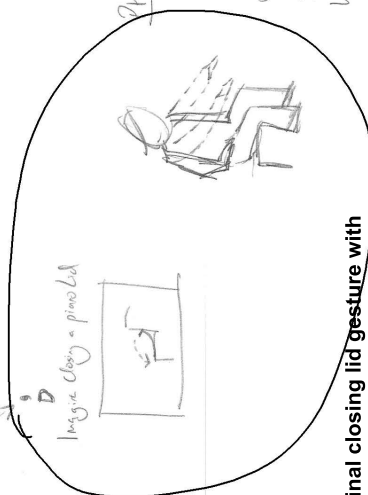
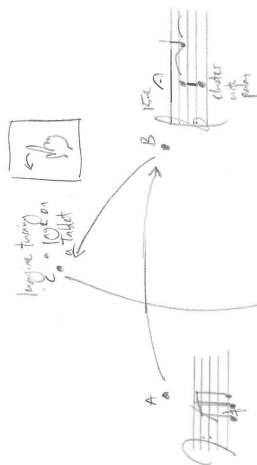
attacca

4



RETURN BACK TO AN ALMOST UNCONSCIOUS POINT, AND MARK THE POINTS OF THE CROSS?

ALL WITH THE RH:



Elide this final closing lid gesture with getting into position for Phantom Limb.

Interrupt half way through, then continue

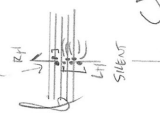
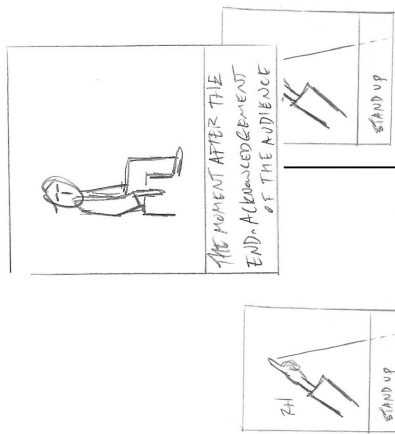


PHANTOM LIMBS

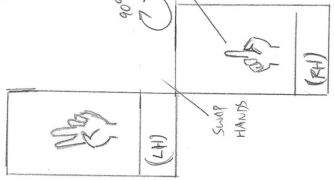
Sit with hands high, or under thighs.
 Imagine your arms are still in front of you, & play steadily specific -
 So, your whole body except for arms & hands should move as naturally as possible.

'Fade out' to just sitting, still, calm, eyes closed in a brief moment of stillness.

Interrupt half way through, then restart



Keep Eyes Closed



(Eye closed)

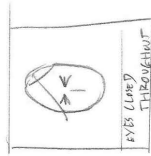
Elide these two gestures

attacca

PUSH YOURSELF AWAY FROM THE PIANO
 BUT
 KEEP THE HEEL OF YOUR PALMS ON THE EDGE OF THE KEYBOARD.
 SWAMP HEAVILY.
 DUMMY PLAYING SOMETHING SPECIFIC WITH YOUR FINGERS, IN THIS POSITION.

15th - 17th 15th - 15th 16th - 15th
 Cluster

Elide these two gestures



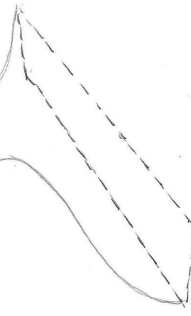
Find these fingerings, initial with arms spread. At some point, move your arms and hands together, off to one side.

15th 16th 17th 18th 19th 20th 21th 22th 23th 24th 25th 26th 27th 28th 29th 30th 31th 32th 33th 34th 35th 36th 37th 38th 39th 40th 41th 42th 43th 44th 45th 46th 47th 48th 49th 50th 51th 52th 53th 54th 55th 56th 57th 58th 59th 60th 61th 62th 63th 64th 65th 66th 67th 68th 69th 70th 71th 72th 73th 74th 75th 76th 77th 78th 79th 80th 81th 82th 83th 84th 85th 86th 87th 88th 89th 90th 91th 92th 93th 94th 95th 96th 97th 98th 99th 100th

Hand

Change hand shape:

Extrapolate away



Appendix B: An Excerpt of the Practice Diary for *Kate Small (Two)*

Technical and fantastical observations of my learning process. These observations are accompanied by various demonstrative videos in the portfolio: Ray Evanoff, Give, Small Two, Practice Videos.

July 14, 2020

Technical observations	Fantastical observations	Evanoff's observations
<p>Where do you start? I sit down at the piano with it. This is my instinct and I don't ignore it! I'm going to stick with one part for quite a while, and I'll start with the sixes because they fill the minim.</p>	<p>At first glance, I'm imagining overgrowth and tangled but straight stems of plants. There's also an elegance to the phrasing of the sextuplets. It feels 'classical', relatable and is likely to be carried into my first playing.</p>	<p>In general, the videos are dope. So helpful in concretely communicating the physicality of your learning process, and how this interfaces with the mental. Seeing you work through things from such an introductory stage is super helpful! It makes your starting points so concrete to me.</p>
<p>I play the RH <i>pppp</i> line to hear the tone, adjusting it when I move up the piano, as well as when I add the 'harsh' articulation (there's a danger this articulation makes it too loud – see video <i>Touch difference as separates</i>). I also think about the exact duration of this and whether it's possible for my attacks to stop exactly. The slight reverb and softness of the key release means this may not be possible. I then move between the two phrases rather playfully, feeling the timing and deciding what the beginnings and endings of these phrases feel and sound like. There's variability here, which I'll bear in mind as I get to know the cell more.</p>	<p>The tone of the chord-change within the sextuplets is like a semitone step that has the drama of a song.</p> <p>I need to get closer to the sound in order to control these chords, so I bend in. It feels like a caring, 'mothering' position where I'm taking care of these notes. I watch them being played with affection.</p> <p>The chords are cute. The soft dynamic of the LH chords makes them sound like something non-pianistic. Like gruffs from a big teddy bear, or whispered coughs.</p>	<p>I especially love all the angles and how they highlight aspects of your executional experience: how watching from above places emphasis on the hands and arms, versus how being able to see your face instantly involves more mental and emotional aspects, etc. Very cool, and perhaps worth expanding and integrating as the project grows and we continue to devise ways of documenting its full scope.</p>
<p>What stands out from a technical standpoint? At first glance the balance between the two dynamic markings. I will want to get the feel of these dynamics first and keep this mind when finding the chords. I note the change in</p>	<p>The first chord hands together: my RH forearm moves into my right side ribs, and LH moves forward to compensate for the F sharp. The hands create a backward C shape, but I feel like LH is vertically higher than the RH, like it's reaching higher</p>	<p>Something that jumps out in the <i>LH, then together - balance</i> video is how where a finger strikes the key factors in, and is shaped by, the particular demands of these and other such especially thorny chords. I had thought</p>

<p>register in relation to the dynamics. Before playing a note, I can already imagine how I would balance this. The articulations are more connected to my positioning.</p>	<p>up the piano, and I'm trying to climb the piano. The RH locks in close on a comfortable groove and the LH is reaching for the next step.</p>	<p>about this a lot on my own when messing with chords and experimenting with voicing, etc: how the relative spread intervals and challenging combinations required not only specific hand positions but, at times, striking a particular key in a particular place (further emphasized by articulation and dynamic). This may be something to discuss and explore more in depth in the future: where a finger strikes a key.</p>
<p>I try to maintain both the quiet dynamic and articulation. I play around with my hand shape in order to get the <i>pppp</i> dynamic. I have to be more rigid and collapsed in my hand shape i.e. claw shape rather than grasped, which is not my primary option but I use it on occasions like this. I also move the hand more towards the black keys to find a more controllable place in the key depression. Around the middle is perhaps the best option. My hand shape is slightly less collapsed for the higher chord because the angle is different for my RH: it feels 'nicer'. I listen carefully, checking that the notes sound equal. The phrasing is likely to make them uneven so I need to be careful here. I also move my head closer to the keys, bending at the hips. I find it easier to control my sound and hear in this active position.</p> <p>LH! The chords here are awkward(ish). Having the thumb on the F sharp makes it slightly harder to control but again I adjust around this. See video <i>LH fingers; first leap</i></p>	<p>Articulation, stopping the notes and the positioning of the hands: I feel like my head is lower than my shoulders. It's sinking lower. I also play without looking to engage my touch more. I feel this further down my arms, in my upper arms: I decide to 'hang out' here.</p>	<p>More fancifully, in watching these videos, I am really struck by the elemental nature of the language we're building and the movements we're cultivating. How stripped down and "from square one" everything is, in a certain sense (as well as how that is a product of your willingness to engage with it this intensely from this initial and stripped down a stage!)</p>

to RH then stay on quintuplets		
-----------------------------------	--	--

Appendix C: Creative Writing

Section One: Ray Evanoff, *Give*

Exploring a fantastical response to *Kate Small (One)*

The downbeat of the whole gesture is like jumping off a high ledge. There is a “GO” but then no sound for most of this quaver beat. I still have to gear myself up to this downbeat, and there is still a sense of intense action despite beginning this gesture with a rest. The movement begins with focus and intent, and I wait for the notes to begin. But this wait is short and I feel breathless in its anticipation. I know I have to commit completely to the imminent gesture or it’ll totally fail.

The momentum begins with a rounded shape – a curve or arc, but then turns lumpy, or jagged. Not sharp, but staggered or broken up into little steps. Each step gets me to the goal, but it’s very precarious and the route is not laid out ahead of me. The grace notes are still (just) within the curve, but the E flat shatters any remnants of the curve. It changes the shape immediately.

The middle C hangs out on the edge of my positioning. I can’t commit any further or I won’t get up to the top register in time. But I want to press and sound that C - it’s so full of tone and has a quality of dense velvet fabric that leaves a mark when pressed. It’s inviting but I can’t linger here.

The fleeting LH grace notes (B flat, D) are on the edge of being present. They are so quick I can’t hear them, and are played as if something (or someone) is pushing my palm up and away from the piano. It’s disconcerting as this restricts my contact with the space above the keys, and I want to be closer. I hook my 3rd finger against the F sharp in order to find security. This encourages the upward push on my palm forwards, almost too far and feels like it might tip forward. I aim to ‘lean in’ and find security in the next attack.

Moving away from the curve shape, the E flat begins a new shape in my body which is drawn using the point of my right elbow. It is wing-like, with my elbow extending out to the right and then rising upwards, bringing my shoulder closer to my ear. I open out my right side-ribs and rotate slightly around my spine to accentuate the full height of this wing shape. This shape is completed when I play the last F sharp, adding the final stretch by extending the fingers on the key and flexing the wrist. From fingertip to elbow is now standing vertically, stretched to capacity.

The attack of the E flat is like chopping steel with an axe. It's dangerous and is likely to be mis-judged if I have any shred of doubt. The thin blade of the axe and the smooth shiny surface of the steel means it's likely I'll slip off target and scratch the steel. The inevitable slip is caught by the F, then the F sharp, almost like the wobble after landing off-balance. It's not that graceful and requires re-iterated firmness to make sure I don't finally fall over. The final jab of the F sharp (and the completion of the wing-shape) forces rather violent compensatory reactions from elsewhere in my body. To allow the fingers, wrist and forearm to stand up so tall, plus the elongation of my side-ribs, my head swoops down and looks to the right. It's so swift and involuntary that it feels like someone is pushing me under water. It's a disorientating experience and at that moment, the surface of the keys becomes the surface of the water. I'm looking at my contact with the keys but from underneath.

However, added to this swoop of the head is the tight restriction of the left hand chord. Its necessary firm position and touch requires me to get closer to the keys and commit my whole hand forward. I'm not granted the full satisfaction of the head swoop under water, and I have to restrain whatever sense of escape I wanted from this movement. I have to balance the two forces here and find equilibrium. The restrain each one has on the other's completion causes a strong tightening in my torso, as if I'm about to withstand a strong force. My fingers are less clear to me at this point as I dig deep into the trunk-like support of my core. The shape I make is contracted and folded in on itself, like someone being squashed, but it is strong in its underlying energy.

The E natural *spz* is intangible and imperceptible. I only know it exists in its preparation, and maybe its transition to the left hand's next attack. As it rolls out of the thumb, D grace note, I sense the space between my thumb and 2nd finger. The space here is huge, as though I'm holding a pebble with only these two fingers. I can't squash this pebble and must shift the combined finger shape to poke the E natural. The actual touch of this note is like a spark of static electricity. It exists and ceases within this moment of touch. I want a bigger sense of this note but its energy (and identity) relies on this sense being almost absent.

The overall feeling of this gesture is crumbling, slippery and hard to swallow. It has the tangibility of holding lots of textured things in my hands, but these things are hard to hold onto and are easily dropped. I desperately want to keep hold of them all but, like in a nightmare, I can't do it and the panic of trying to grasp them all makes me wake up unnerved. The gesture wants to be held and almost hooks in to my hands to stay there, but I'm sweaty and the hooks are too small.

Section Two: Mark Dyer, *Subject*

Exploring the Image of the Dyads in bar 79, beats 1 and 2

There's a momentum to it: you begin to walk down sandstone steps, but in the dark. You can't rush, and the steps are a little bit treacherous because of their age. You are slightly excited to be walking down them – they have significance, perhaps being part of a historically famous castle. However, you have to be careful, and in fact lean on the wall that wraps around them, your hand stroking the curved wall that is shiny and smooth from thousands of previous touches. The steps lead around a small corner: you can't quite see what's around it, and it is this that impels you to rush a bit. There is candlelight at the bottom, its flicker enticing you down. You feel safe but anticipate what's to come. Perhaps preparing yourself for something too emotional or moving to endure, so you take your time and allow the corner to come to you one step at a time.

Appendix D: Transcriptions of Conversations in *Subject*

The audio recordings of these transcribed conversations are in the portfolio that accompanies this thesis.

KH-L: Kate Harrison-Ledger

MD: Mark Dyer

Section One: February 1, 2021

Excerpt begins at 22:37

KH-L: I find it *absolutely* fascinating, because I do the same every time. There's something about. I mean, I was saying earlier, wasn't I? That it seems to be *time* that I prioritise. Erm, but I, I know this ... it's probably common to a lot of players, but what I love about *live* performance is *my* sense of time? And how by not playing, or playing, or holding, or whatever, I can make everybody else's sense of time change. And that, I think, is like, I think it's like a superpower, you know what I mean? That *performance* can do that.

So, I've always, I always talk about it, and like, the priority that - this is obviously more *classical* music - but the priority that [beat] *one* gets, from what that *means*. And so, for everything that's going on in the score, it's like ... at the end of the day, it's about *one*, and getting to *one* again. Erm...

A very black and white way of putting it, but ... I find that interesting. Definitely.

[...]

Continued at 24:03

So it's kind of like, you've got this, it's the transition in. So, you know like, I don't know if you know the *Toccatas* well or anything, but, we've got these like, quite *free* sections? And it's, it's like a really *young* Bach, just being rather, erm, just *daring* himself a little bit, which I find, I just, it's *wonderful*. It's *so lovely* to sort of be this free.

Erm, but he's *slowly* becoming into a structured little piece, like a three-part piece, so it's like, it's like it's *becoming this* piece.

So if I kind of go from here, erm...

[KH-L plays 78¹⁻²]

And then.

[KH-L plays 78³⁻⁴ and 79]

Whoops – [KH-L misses the sharpened 7th for this chord at the cadence.]

And then ...

[KH-L play bar 80 and bar 81¹⁻²]

So it's *that*, right? I just find that, absolutely like, "What?" Because it's, so you've got this, *very*, you know, we begin this like...

[KH-L plays bar 78³⁻⁴]

...introduction of something at this point is, is more straight forward it's more, erm... I guess, measured. If you see what I mean, like...

[KH-L plays bar 79¹⁻²]

And then for some reason there...

[KH-L plays bar 79¹⁻² again]

...I have to play it like that, and I'm like, *why*?

[KH-L begins to play bar 79¹⁻² but interrupts herself]

The other thing I do here - I'm going to have, so many tiny detail things to say. I'm sorry, and it's going to be really boring [laugh]

MD: No, no ...

KH-L: ... it's just a pianist's brain coming out here, I'm sorry.

MD: Those are the gems.

KH-L: [laugh] Yea! So, yeah like, erm...

[KH-L begins to play bar 78³⁻⁴]

...this is very thick, *here*. But then this...

[...then plays bar 79¹⁻²]

...is slightly more detached. And it's like it ... the movement is "du-du-du", it's like, *jerkier?*
Whereas here...

[KH-L begins to play bar 78³]

It's like *one, one* thing yeah?

[KH-L plays bar 78³⁻⁴ again]

And then here, sort of...

[KH-L continues into bar 79, ¹⁻²]

And then...

[KH-L plays bar 79³⁻⁴ whilst speaking]

Almost like a different tempo again. And then this is beat 1...

[KH-L plays bar 80]

New tempo

[KH-L continues into bar 80]

And *there* as well

[demonstrating bar 80³⁻⁴]

So it starts [demonstrating bar 80³] *Stroke?* And then *that* [beat 4] is *really* pointed
[demonstrating 80³⁻⁴ again]

And then it just disappears into itself there.

[KH-L begins bar 80 again and continues to bar 81³]

And I finish on a thumb. I don't know why either. And there's no *need* for me to finish on a thumb. I think it's because of control [demonstrating this note with a thumb]. And it's, a *wonderful* little, semiquaver to downbeat, [demonstrate] and *classically*, in terms of

traditional technique [demonstrating a finger swap], you'd do that, you'd flick it, and you'd change finger. Whereas I [demonstrating with pedal] I even pedal it, because I want it to be, it's, it's *legato* [demonstrating again]. So even though it's the same notes, they're, they're one thing.

Erm. Yeah, so that interests me big style, I was like, and I do it the *same* every time [beginning to play bar 80] I don't know why. There's even a bit of [demonstrating bar 80³] Can you hear the separation there? They should be together.

[KH-L plays bars 80-82]

And *there* as well. So *there* again, I do this, so it's, *this* [demonstrating separation technique] that I do if I want to do more... [demonstrating bar 82³ twice]

So, in a way, it's quite a harsh sound. And again, you would be discouraged to do *anything* like that, because it's...

MD: There's a lot in the *wrist*, isn't there? Rather than the...

KH-L: Let me just turn you up a bit, hang on. Say that again?

MD: There's a lot in the wrist, there, rather than the fingertips, which is...

KH-L: Oh yes...

MD: Even. Even you talking about, when something is sort of...in, so, *all* in one hand, there's a real, *turning* of the wrist there, that, you know, almost has the, you know, I'm *watching* legato. As well as hearing it, erm...

KH-L: Yea

MD: Whereas what's happening, in that sort of little cadential moment, and it goes, goes down, and the two ... the little bit of detached. What's your wrist doing there?

[KH-L plays bar 79¹⁻²]

KH-L: So it's like, let me do it...

[KH-L plays bar 78³⁻⁴ then bar 79¹⁻²]

[interrupting herself] Can you see? Can you see that?

MD: Just about. [KH-L plays bar 79¹⁻² again]

KH-L: It's kind of, what it's like. I guess it's, it's little pairs [demonstrating bar 79¹⁻²] but again [demonstrating 79¹⁻² again] that would be maybe a bit more traditional, exaggerated, but it's more...[demonstrating 79¹⁻² again] it's almost like it *falls* down? [demonstrating 79¹⁻² again]

MD: Hmmm.

KH-L: And it's the detachedness. I find it very, very difficult to teach that, type of detached playing because it's not...

[KH-L plays bar 79¹⁻² very detached, then bar 79¹⁻² less detached]

And it it's, between detached and 'attached' [laugh], you've got like so many, different layers?

MD: Ah! I mean, try and explaining.... as a composer, when you've written things with tenutos, and, legato slurs, and the player just looks at you and is like, well do you want tenuto, or do you want legato? Well...

KH-L: What?

MD: ...I kind of want, you know, this...

KH-L: Oh my goodness!

MD: ...'in-between', detached, but joined. But there is, that exists! You know it's, erm...

KH-L: Well, like, maybe it's, this [demonstrating bar 79¹] sense of connection in the *movement*, but the actual... the fingers, definitely *there* ... [demonstrating bar 79¹ again]. It's definitely detached [demonstrating bar 79¹⁻²] but like, *just*? It's like, you know [demonstrating bar 79¹⁻² less detached] *that* would be legato. [Demonstrating bar 79¹⁻² more detached] It's like a *step* away from it. And sometimes I might make it a little bit *more*? but then it's very quiet as well. So the....

[KH-L plays bar 79¹⁻², repeating the last two notes]

...then just a little bit more on that bottom one [repeat last two notes again]. And because it's down there, I don't need to give it, anymore than that really.

MD: There, I can hear a difference, so ... so you've got these two little, these little erm.... dyads, right? But... each one falls down to the next. Whereas, on that last one, you connect the two dyads, whereas before it's almost like the connection is made between, the *second* note of each one, and connecting it to the *next* one?

KH-L: Right.

MD: Whereas, then the last one changes to "No, we're going to have the pair connected." And I wonder if that has a sense of that detachedness.

[KH-L begins to play bar 79¹]

KH-L: Do you mean that [repeating 79¹⁻²] there?

MD: Yeah.

[KH-L plays bar 79¹⁻², then bar 79¹]

KH-L: So you see, *now* I'm thinking about it, I'm like, I don't know anymore.

[KH-L plays bar 79¹ twice]

I'm trying to... when I play it [repeating 79¹] I'm *not*.... So the image that I guess, 'normal day', without me thinking about this so much, the image of *that* bit, is like... Oh God! This is where I get really, metaphorical and I'm sorry about this, but...

MD: No got for it.

KH-L: You know, like a *step*, but it's not a *clean* edge. It's like, sandstone and it's been worn a little bit and it's like, you would maybe, *slip* off the edge of the step, because of that, rather than *cleanly* step down to the next one. That's what I think of there [laugh].

Because it's just that sort of [playing bar 79¹⁻²], you know, it's muffled anyway down there. It's, it's blurry anyway, and I think to sort of treat it... Of course! I'm playing Bach on a piano, so it's a whole different, kettle of fish, but you get this "Well, Bach was written for a ... harpsichord and therefore, that would have been played like this." But, at the end of the day you can't disregard the *sound*, that you are making. It's like, "this is the sound I am making." So I guess, my interpretation of - and I do play a lot of Bach - my interpretation of it is to.... Yeah, is to apply it to, like, you know, what's actually happening.

And I think range ... *range* is a huge thing, erm. So even like melody, the melody notes, so sort of like [playing A and G] say, between, A and G, or something like that around here, even different ones have different... like, purities. If you see what I mean. Erm...

[KH-L plays bar 80³⁻⁴]

Like B is, I don't know! I even have like a little kind of connection there, and depending on which one I'm playing, I'll probably do a slightly different, *touch*. Depending on the context. Erm...yeah, so like, here you've got....

[KH-L begins to play bar 80³⁻⁴] ... Quite strong here [then bar 81¹⁻²]

But then here ... [playing bar 81³⁻⁴] I'd make this soft [playing the melody in 81³⁻⁴ only] and it's almost dance-like [and again]. So again I'd go, detached, but [melody in 81³⁻⁴ again] just slightly [and again] and I think, you know normally you'd maybe be like "Well that needs to be louder because it's higher up, and it's fighting against the rest of the piano". But I'd rather it be almost like... slightly see-through, or it - you know - it's like up here somewhere and its, or it's an echo ... which is quite nice.

Finishes at 34:30

Section Two: March 17, 2021

Excerpt begins at 03:12

KH-L: You know those questions you asked me in the email? They really caught me out!

MD: I'm sorry.

KH-L: No! It's... I quite liked it because I was like, this *means* something. This is like, this is getting an emotional response from me. And I thought gosh! I haven't really ... quite, realised that before, erm because I think it's quite easy just to sort of, like, *loosely*, talk about like the baggage of, say, teaching or convention or whatever, which we've been talking about anyway, and it being, you know, I think us considering what habit is, and perhaps not always seeing it as a bad thing; it's, it's a very sort of intimate thing, and a very *revealing* thing. But, I *guess*, it's, I think the way that I was feeling about those, like this *indulgence*, and things, it was like... I kind of thought "yeah, I think that I *shouldn't* be doing these things, you know? It's a *should*. It's a *should*, erm... which is, it's a really loaded word. So yea! I was surprised at how, how much I felt that actually. I didn't realise it was in Bach.

MD: Mmm?

Trying to remember what you asked me now.... Because I think I. Yeah, because, I think the initial one...Sorry Mark, just trying to find an email....

Yes, there we go. So, um. I put like....

[Reading out MD's email] "What significance does this have for you? The pedagogical use aspects of Bach. Both in terms of learning and" – I'm just looking at – "piano playing in general." And I think that yeah, that was sort of like, hmmm. It was *that* question that suddenly made me think about these things. Erm...

And I sort of said "I'm quickly replying to this" because I think I had loads to say about that, and I think I wanted to sit down and really start think about the response and I just didn't have the time, when you sent the email, so I just thought, well, I'll just say kind of like almost the first things that come to my head?

And so initial thoughts... Yeah, is that we are being luxurious or self-indulgent by *enjoying* it so much. Erm...and I think that's, that's the sort of *main* thing, um.

Because it was even. I had, you know, we've been doing this little...so you know, whether it's part of projects like this, or I've been doing this piano forum on a Tuesday with pianists, who are 'locked down' without their instruments, at Uni, and we're just sort of talking about... a lot of it's about sharing, erm, inspirational videos or like, you know, discovering new pieces that you want to share, and it's just like a little space to kind of, share piano music.

And you know, we all had to kind of think of a video that inspired us?

And my – I might have even said this already – but the first video I think of are these really like – back when I was a teenager – that the BBC filmed, some Bach preludes and fugues? Erm... and they were like, (sigh) ah, when were they on? They were like... so it is maybe 5 minutes of TV, timed, and it was like either before the news or before *Newsnight*, or something like that. It was like just before like a main programme.

And it was just ... a prelude and a fugue.

And it was different pianists, but Joanna MacGregor was one of them. Angela Hewitt was one of them, erm... and then there was some chaps. But I didn't know who they were. And yeah, and it was just like just a prelude and fugue, and you'd just like watch it, and it was filmed *beautifully*. Like really close ups of fingers and it was very sort of intimate and I was like I don't know. I just was absolutely sort of sucked into it. And I've tried to find them online and you can't find them.

So anyway....

So that would be my inspiration. That would be like, I remember watching it and thinking, things: about playing, about touch, about sound. About what Bach sort of made me feel, erm... and yeah that was like... and, but and that's, an *early* memory for me.

Erm..

Yeah so, but and then I find it interesting that, I feel like that, it shouldn't, it shouldn't be that. And I don't know where that's coming from. I think that's what my point is.

MD: By, so when you say indulgent, that it shouldn't be, *that*. What's the *it*, that you're referring to?

KH-L: I think it's um... like my. Erm... My voice, I guess. My like, sort of, *artistic* voice, maybe? I think that's like, what I'm *saying*, as a pianist.

Erm...

Cos I think I've always, I've always thought I know, you know, *personally*, I'm like, "well, I know how I want to play Bach." But I don't think it's for...[laugh] I don't think it's for the public, or whatever.

Erm... I don't know.

Maybe it's different now, maybe now I'm a bit older, it is a bit different, but then, even so, I wouldn't... I wouldn't go and do a programme of Bach, I just wouldn't do it even though I

feel like it's... It speaks a lot to me, and I feel like I know what I would do with it, and things like that, you know?

MD: So is the indulgence, is that, regarding that sort of, almost, keeping it to yourself, then?

KH-L: I think it's ... I think the indulgence comes from, I don't think I should be enjoying what I play that much.

MD: [Laugh] *Really?!*

Kate: Yea.... [laugh] Because I don't think that's my job. My job isn't to enjoy it. My job is to ... *deliver* it and to enjoy it so much, is self-indulgent, I think.

I don't know.

It's the experimental mind, isn't it? It's like, it's *that*. I'm so like *tarnished* with Huddersfield. Because it's like, you know you mustn't, indulge and wallow in this sort of, *lush* world. It's like, you know, play it and then go home, and that kind of thing. Which, yeah, it's weird. It must, I don't know, I think it was, it's probably like, yeah. It's probably a lot of that. Erm yeah.

But I don't, I don't *teach* that. I mean, I'm like "express the hell out of this!" You know, I say to *all* my students. There is no... You can't express enough. *Be* expressive, and I feel like I am expressive as a player, but the repertoire I choose, I can only be, you know, it's a certain type of expression or it's like, you know, you can only go so far with it, erm. So even like that Matthew Lee Knowles piece, I played it *expressively*. But, it's obviously in a really extreme piece where there's very little going on in terms of – there's no phrasing or melody or anything, so it *is* just chords, but I play them as expressively as I *can*. So I think that's kind of, I guess that's like... Maybe that's like what I like. It's taking that expression, but then putting it in a completely, like *misaligned* context, and I think that, that I find *that* very interesting. You know, as an art form, as it were.

And yeah, so maybe it's that.

MD: How does that...feeling of indulgence, or feeling that you shouldn't be enjoying it, how does that link to those, BBC videos, do you think?

KH-L: Hmmmm... So that was kind of like a.... Those BBC videos were... so is when I was, you know, I was old enough to have like a TV in my bedroom, so, you know, and it was like, you know when you, it's that's, just ... I loved watching things in my bedroom. Erm... I was really into film, and I used to watch all sorts of films and all that kind of stuff. And it was like, I don't know, I used to watch like quite extreme things, so like lots of David Lynch or, I don't know, like, erm .. Japanese horror, like when it all came out, it was, I was kind of at the right age. So like, early noughties, sort of late 90s I was sort of, in my teens. So it was like erm...I guess it's that coming of age thing where you kinda just, yeah, you get to kind of watch all of this stuff,

and my parents didn't know about it and they were usually on like late at night and I used to, you know? And it was, it was great! And then part of this was watching these 'Bachs'. And no one knew I watched them um, and it wasn't like I kept it a secret, but I think I'm, I've always being very self-conscious of the fact that I like to watch things like that.

Even when I was like, 16 or whatever. I didn't wanna watch MTV. I wanted to watch *that* and so I wonder if it was like... it was like a *secret*, which is really interesting, isn't it? Erm...

And I would sort of say "I'm just going to go up and watch something" and it would... I'd just go up and watch *that*.

As it was, you know, and I would have to kind of *announce* it to the family that I was going somewhere, and it was like "where are you going?" you know. And it would be like, I don't know! It was just a bit kind of, it was *odd* that I couldn't share it. I don't know why. My mum would have *loved* it, because she's into, all that, you know, she's into Bach and she's a singer and things like that, so.

Yeah. I don't know it was it was all part of that kind of ... world of discovering things for the first time, but by yourself.

MD: Mmm...And it's interesting that, your playing of Bach now is still something quite private.

KH-L: Mmm.

MD: I wonder how the two are...[gestures 'linked' with his hand]?

KH-L: Yeah, this is it! Is it that, 16-year-old *me*, still, kind of... because the other thing is like, as a teenager I played the piano, that's what I did. I didn't like, wanna go out, well I did go out but it was, it was always like ... that's what I did with my time. Erm. And I didn't really listen to music, I played music. It was like I just played the piano all the time.

And I was like, discovering things for the first time.

Erm... my mum, like I said, she's a singer and she's a pianist as well, so she has, music? At home. I didn't have a teacher, I just played, erm ... and I eventually kind of had lessons and things, but it was all quite, I just sort of, taught myself really, like *through* playing, but I was discovering music *through* playing. And I think I just remember sitting at the piano in like, I'd create programmes. I'd like programme things together, or I'd like, cut a piece in half and then go straight into something else to kind of create this, almost like a mix, you know?

[Laugh] Just things like *that*. And that was like that's what I do is a teenager. You know I didn't go out and drink and you know stuff like that. Um?

And again, it, it, was a bit private, so when my friends were like, wanting to know why I didn't want to go out and stuff, it was like, "aww, you know?" And because I wanted to go home and play. So I didn't tell anybody because it's really, nerdy.

MD: I know from, from first-hand experience, that Bach isn't cool.

KH-L: [Laugh]

MD: When I went to a friend's party and this was, this was easily late teens, so this was, you know, you know people... it was very much about drinking and then, you know, their parents had a *piano* and it was almost like "Mark. You can play the piano. Give us a tune!" I was like, "Ah s**t! The only thing I know how to play off by heart is Bach!"

KH-L: [Laugh]

MD: So I just sat there playing Bach and everyone's like "What are you doing?!"

KH-L: [Laugh] Yea so suddenly, party dies. [Laugh] Awww man.

[...]

Excerpt continues at 18:24

MD: Tell me about these videos some more. You mentioned about how they were *filmed* and I wonder if there's an aspect of how they were filmed, but also, sort of, if there are any qualities of the video that you remember, that really sort of, stick in your mind?

KH-L: Yeah, oh! So I mean, the *sound*, definitely, because it was, again... My mum's, erm, a really early music, *fan*, and so everything she listens to is authentic, right? [Laughs] She loves like, authentic Vivaldi, right? And it's just proper blasting isn't? It's like "*toot toot!*" you know? And she loves like erm, she's not like, she's not into sackbuts and things like that, but she likes Bach to be quite, er, robust, shall we say? Where as, I love the other end of the scale where, you know, you get on a piano and you're just, you're very expressive and, you know, *rubato*. The way Andras Schiff plays, I would say, as well just, just, fill a space with Bach, you know? And so yeah, so there was one, and the one actually that I always, still, to this day, *love* this piece, because of the way it was recorded. So it's the one, it's in book 2. Let me just, and it's the one in F? Do you know that one [holding up the score to the camera]?

MD: Is that the *Prelude*?

KH-L: Yea. So it's like...

[KH-L plays bars 1-4]

That one.

Erm... and he played it [gasps] just, everything ... I start it ... and he played it *really slowly*. I don't... I can't... I don't know his name. It was this guy who had like *long hair*, and he had rings on his fingers, I remember that, like *really massive* rings. And the shot – so I'm going to try and show you – the shots were like this close [demonstrating to the camera] and his fingers were like rolling through? Because it's all these scales coming down and I just remember watching his fingers fold down, over, these, like, this line. And it's like, this is one of those preludes that just plays itself. I feel it's just so, it's like a ticker-tape of just...line. And notes. Um...

And yeah, it was. It was just *remember* it *really well*. And I was just like, gosh! You know? And I think a lot of them, as well, I hadn't heard a lot of them either, so they did the whole lot over a series, you know, over like, whatever.

It wasn't like... They were kind of like, there for a while, so even when they'd done them all, they'd repeat some and it was just like, it was almost like something that came before the weather, you know, like just a little, a little thing, I mean like "What?" How wonderful is that? I mean, bring *that* back. You know what I mean?

Erm yeah, so it was kind of like just a little, palette cleanser or something on an evening. But yeah, I remember the filming, so very, very close up and just, I could sort of see the unfolding of the music, in the fingers. Erm... Very, very intimate. I mean, I think most of it was filmed at the keys. Occasionally you get like a longshot, and it would be in this, *stunning* room. So it was like some sort of historic room, so there may be some like, you know, something old in the background, always on a grand piano.

MD: Yea?

KH-L: And then, but it was more about the ... the *fingers*? I'll be honest. Not even really the *face*. Because you know when you get... You see the faces of pianists and they're like doing all this kind of stuff [mimicking a pianist] but I think that's kind of, irritating *sometimes*, sometimes it's... you know. But it wasn't any of that either. It was very much fingers. Erm... so yeah, that was, and that really kind of like, I could, you know ...I could really connect with that, I guess.

MD: You mentioned the sound as well, so, what? This is late, late nineties/noughties, is this?

KH-L: So when will it be? It'll be.... Yeah. I think, probably more early.... When was I living at home? God, I can't remember. So I went to Uni in 2003, so yeah. Yeah, probably about then, early noughties.

MD: So we're not talking about, sort of, you know, crackling vinyl-type recording or anything like that? No?

KH-L: No. It was like, I guess with the sound it was more you could hear....the piano was.... You know it, you could hear that it was on a modern piano, so like, erm...a *thick* sound, so, you know, and it was kind of, it was almost like it was, recorded from the bottom up: do you see what I mean? So it was like this sort of, very much about the weight of the sustaining notes.

MD: Mmm.

KH-L: You know, it was just a *thick*, a thick sound. It was *so expressive*, and I think that was as well, it was, you know, they were playing – certainly Joanna MacGregor, who is a kind of another little, inspiration I guess, erm, because she played an *allemande* [gasps]. When did she...? I think she just... I can't remember why, or if it was in...? It was in a programme, I remember. But I can't remember why she was sort of mentioning that, but there's a... a D major? Is it? Oh God, my brain! Anyway, she played this *allemande* and, erm, she was saying like, it was like one of her, *go-to* pieces and they're asking her why and she said "Oh. It's one of those pieces that you can just play late at night." And it's like [laugh] And again, this, sort of, for *yourself*, and it's like, that *allemande* as well, I've played it a few times now, and it's like...It's just something that you sit with, for like, three to four minutes. And inspect it and listen to it and then just put it away again. It's not for anybody else. It's *lovely*. It's *lovely*!

MD: [Laughs] Mmm. I think...You should *definitely* be able to get those videos if you contact the BBC and... they'll be in the archive.

KH-L: Yeah. I mean...

MD: They're pretty good, the BBC, in terms of, like, responding, and, you know, if they've got stuff...

KH-L: Oh Okay, yeah.

MD: See if you can. You know, cheekily link it to your research, and things like that, but...

KH-L: Yeah?

MD: I mean, they'll definitely have it. The BBC archive is incredible, it's... So yea.

KH-L: Okay, I'll do that.

MD: A trip down memory lane.

KH-L: Oh God, I know.

MD: It's funny...

KH-L: I don't know if they'll look really dated now, I don't know. You know?

MD: Yeah, probably. It's funny, I don't know if this is similar, but I, I've been trying to tap into a feeling I've been getting, and this is different because this is something that you ... *actually* experienced and, I'm not saying you're being nostalgic? But there's probably elements of nostalgia looking back on that. And I've, so ... I've always loved it, but I've really been getting back into *Desert Island Discs* at the moment.

KH-L: Oh yea!

MD: I fricking love it. I absolutely love it... erm, and hearing the theme tune for that... That is, that makes me like really, you know, I really *feel* things when I hear that. And it takes me, back to, it makes me think of, sort of, seventies, eighties BBC. So you're talking about like *The Archers*, sort of? I don't know very, very BBC production, very safe. BBC production, very safe, possibly a bit white middle class, but very culturally inquisitive.

KH-L: Yea.

MD: Yeah, very Radio 4 kind of thing.

Section Three: 31 March, 2021

[The following conversation is about an image I drew in response to the descending paired dyads at bar 79¹⁻². This image forms part of my portfolio: Mark Dyer, BWV 912,

Excerpt begins at 01:23:02

KH-L: Uhm, can I just talk about ... [demonstrating to the camera] *this* picture?

MD: Yeah. Yeah for sure.

KH-L: Because this is actually, really ... because I did this last night, this picture, and I ended up dreaming ... I had quite a scary dream, right? So, my dreams are so, *Technicolor*, because

I'm like literally ... I'm just thinking of these mad ideas all the time. And my dreams are really, kind of intense [laugh] because of it ... yeah it was just, yeah ...

So, *basically*, this ... *Uh!* It's making me a bit creepy. So, I've got a huge fear of moths, right? I *hate* moths, and I've got, you know, even now I'm like getting a bit twitchy on my hand. But for some ... when I go down the piano, you've got "*da-da, da-da, da-da-dum*". And it's actually [fingers] 1, 5, 4, because I did the 1, 4, 3 ... Basically there are two ways that I could do it, and I think the 1, 4, 3 depends on, how I then play the next bit. Erm, but for 1, 5, 4 ... erm ...there's, basically its two options, depending on what I do next, so I kind of see it as alternatives.

But, I was lingering on the 1, 5, 4 a little bit because, I guess, it finishes there? So it was a little bit more of a finish ... and a settle ... to use the 1, 5, 4.

But when I do 1, 5, 4, it creates *this* shape [demonstrating a rounded hand shape] because it's quite a small interval. And "*da-da -dum*" – like that. And I keep thinking of this, like, rounded encasing? Shape? And so that was kind of like the beginning of this, and I, I love that shape. I use it, or, you know, I think about that shape a lot. And usually when I'm using the 1 and the 5.

But then because it goes down there, it's actually quite resonant and it's quite bassy. And it ... there's a vibration there? When I do it? And it's like there's a moth, trapped, in that encasing ... erm ... and I was just thinking about it.

Added to that is this sense of ... this thing almost falling? Like, the line here – the notes going down – it's almost like they fall a little bit. So I was thinking about a *moth*...sorry, it was like a flapping hand, going down. A moth landing on the ground but badly, and it starts to panic a little bit? So, it's like "ah!". And then, it sort of then became, encased in my hand, so it's almost like I *control* the moth as I get to the bottom, and like sort of, like, gather it up, erm, but ... I don't like it [laugh] because I don't like moths!

Erm, yeah. But I can feel that, it's like, I can feel the buzzing.

And then, yeah, I was picturing, like, the silhouette of the moth. So it's like the hands, and then they're just being this like, again, *light*. *Light* again! And just this silhouette of this moth sort of like slowly calming down, I guess, as the cadence finishes.

So yeah, there you go. That's, why ... er ... that's where my imagination went last night.

MD: [In reference to the drawing] What are the ... little ticks, underneath the moth?

KH-L: That's me trying to kind of ... I wanted to try and put the sound of it. Erm, and I was just thinking like a, "*brrrrrrrr*", like a, like that's like a rolling of the 'R', but I didn't ... it wasn't, so it's kind of 'R's, but then actually when I did them, I did them very close and it was more like, "*t-k-t-k-t-k-t-k*", like that sound. So it's like, just like, or you know like erm.... I don't know, like, on a bike, you know, when you've got like a bit of plastic on your wheel and it goes "*trrrrrrrrr*" as it goes round, like that kind of sound?

But it's a *harsh* sound because I don't like it, I guess, but...

MD: Yeah, how, how afraid of... well, how much do you dislike moths?

KH-L: Like, Ultimate, ultimate fear.

MD: OK, I was, supposed to try to find some audio recordings of moths flying, but maybe that's...

KH-L: *Ergh!* No, it's OK. I don't mind. I mean, the thing is though, I like that I don't like it, in a way, because it's adding this... because there's this *fear* attached to this thing, right? It's a bit intimidating. It's a bit like ... the *grandness* of this line and, we've said it's like this organ *toccata*. It's very sort of like, in charge, and there's, just, I just have this kind of like ... I just immediately get intimidated by that, and so I quite like ... this idea of it being a little bit like ... unnerving? I guess?

You know! I don't ... It would be great, because that's ... there's something ... Weirdly enough, I think, moths are beautiful creatures. You know they're like, just their whole thing, right? Erm [laugh]...the fact that they disguise on trees and ... ergh ... I don't like them, but if one ... if I was in the same room as one, Oh my God! You wouldn't even see me. I would just be *gone!*

And I spend the summer ... oh it's awful Mark ...because in the summer, honestly, I just spend my days avoiding moths. So like even, I've got, I've got a fear of [laugh] you know, when you have a light on at night time and you've got your window open, I've got a fear of that. Because it's like I cannot have, because, like you know, it's like right we need to either turn the lights off or like shut the windows and ... oh man. Anyway.

MD: So this is adding so many dimensions to the, the gold light thing?

KH-L: [Laugh] I know! And just looking at my own hand – that is *my* hand, I copied it, and then like, I've drawn a moth on it, I was like, what am I doing?

MD: But, the *warm* light that we've been discussing, there's some weird, connotation there, in terms of the moth being attracted to that.

KH-L: Yeah, I know, right? And it being a little bit like, I don't know like summer evening.

MD: Yeah

KH-L: I know.... So sorry, I don't. I don't know. I just thought that is what I think of. And now I'm playing it now, it's like, it's quite strong now, is that. It's like, yeah, that's really quite interesting. It's not a bad thing, I don't think.

MD: It's a great picture.

References

Alexander, F. M. *The Use of Self*. 2nd edition. United Kingdom: Chaterson Limited, 1946

Alexander, Kirsty and Thomas Kampe. "Bodily undoing: Somatics and practices of critique." In *Journal of Dance & Somatic Practices* 9, no. 1 (2017): 3-12

Alm, Mary. "The Role of Talk in the Writing Process of Intimate Collaboration". In *Common Ground: Feminist Collaboration in the Academy*, edited by Elizabeth G. Peck and Jo Anna Stephens Mink, 123-140. Albany/NY: State of New York Press, 1998

Auslander, Philip. "Musical Personae." *TDR: Drama Review* 50, no. 1 (2006): 100–119.

Bach, C. P. E. *Essay on the True Art of Playing the Keyboard Instruments*, translated by William J. Mitchell. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1949

Bermúdez, José Luis. "Ecological Perception and the Notion of Nonconceptual Point of View". In *The Body and the Self*, edited by José Luis Bermúdez, Anthony Marcel, and Naomi Eilan, 153-173. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995

Bissell, David. "Habit Displaced: The Disruption of Skillful Performance." *Geographical Research* 51, no. 2 (2013):120–129

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Pascalian Meditations*. Translated by Richard Nice. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999.

Buchanan, Patricia A., and Beverly D. Ulrich, "The Feldenkrais Method: A Dynamic Approach to Changing Motor Behaviour." *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport* 72, no. 4 (2001): 315-323

Carrington, Sarah, and Sophie Hope. "Taking Play Seriously". In *Taking Matter Into Common Hands*, edited by Johanna Billing, Maria Lind and Lars Nilsson, 114-117. London: Black Dog Publishing, 2007

Cassidy, Aaron. "Performative Physicality and Choreography as Morphological Determinants". In *Musical Morphology*, edited by Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf, Frank Cox and Wolfram Schurig, 34-51. Hofheim: Wolke Verlag, 2004

Chion, Michel. *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, edited and translated by Claudia Gorbman. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994

Clarke, Eric, Nicholas Cook, Bryn Harrison and Philip Thomas. "Interpretation and performance in Bryn Harrison's être-temps." *Musicae scientiae* 9, no. 1 (2005): 31-74

Clarke, Eric. *Ways of Listening*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2005

Coessens, Kathleen, and Stefan Östersjö. "Habitus and the Resistance of Culture". In *Artistic Experimentation in Music*, edited by Darla Crispin and Bob Gilmore, 333-347. Leuven University Press, 2014

Cook, Nicholas. *Beyond the Score: Music as Performance*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013

Couroux, Marc. "Evryali and the exploding of the interface: From virtuosity to anti-virtuosity and beyond." *Contemporary Music Review* 21, no. 2-3 (2002): 53-67

Cox, Arnie. "Hearing, Feeling, Grasping Gestures". In *Music and Gesture*, edited by Elaine King and Anthony Gritten, 45-60. Routledge: London, 2006

Crist, Stephen. "The Early Works and the Heritage of the Seventeenth Century". In *The Cambridge Companion to Bach*, edited by John Butt, 73-85. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997

Cumming, Naomi. *The Sonic Self: Musical Subjectivity and Signification*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000

Davidson, Jane. "Qualitative insights into the use of expressive body movements in solo piano performance: a case study approach." *Psychology of Music* 35, no. 3 (2007), 381-401

Davidson, Jane. "Bodily movement and facial actions in expressive musical performance by solo and duo instrumentalists: Two distinctive case studies." *Psychology of Music* 40, no. 5 (2012): 595-633

Davies, Stephen. *Themes in the Philosophy of Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2003a

Deahl, Lora and Brenda Wristen, *Adaptive Strategies for Small-Handed Pianists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017

De Jaegher, Hanne, and Ezequiel Di Paolo. "Participatory sense-making: An enactive approach to social cognition." *Phenomenology and the cognitive sciences* 6, no. 1 (2007): 485-507

De Preester, Helena, and Veroniek Knockaert. "Introduction". In *Body Image and Body Schema : Interdisciplinary perspectives on the body*, edited by Helena De Preester and Veroniek Knockaert, 1-18. Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2005

De Preester, Helena. "To Perform the Layered Body – A Short Exploration of the Body in Performance." *Janus Head* 9, no. 2 (2007): 349-383

De Preester, Helena. "Moving Imagination: Headlines and themes". In *Moving Imagination*, edited by Helena De Preester, 1-18. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2013

Doğantan-Dack, Mine. "In the Beginning was Gesture: Piano Touch and the Phenomenology of the Performing Body". In *New Perspectives on Music and Gesture*, edited by Anthony Gritten and Elaine King, 243-265. Farnham: Ashgate, 2011

Doğantan-Dack, Mine. "The Art of Research in Live Music Performance." *Music Performance Research* 5 (2012): 34–48

Doğantan-Dack, Mine. "The Role of the Musical Instrument in Performance as Research: The Piano as a Research Tool". In *Artistic Practice as Research in Music: Theory, Criticism, Practice*, edited by Mine Doğantan-Dack, 169–203. Abingdon, UK: Ashgate, 2015b

Doğantan-Dack, Mine. "Expressive Freedom in Classical Performance: Insights from a Pianist-Researcher". In *Musicians in the Making: Pathways to Creative Performance*, edited by John Rink, Helena Gaunt, and Aaron Williamson, 131–35. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017

Dyer, Mark. "Musical Ruins: a practice-based approach to explore ruin as an aspect of musical borrowing." Doctoral thesis, The Royal Northern College of Music in Collaboration with Manchester Metropolitan University, 2021

Feldenkrais, Moshe. *Awareness Through Movement*. New York: Harper Collins, 1972

Feldenkrais, Moshe. *The Elusive Obvious*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1981

Feldenkrais, Moshe. *The Potent Self*. Berkeley, CA: Frog Books, 1985

Feldenkrais, Moshe. *Embodied Wisdom: The Collected Papers of Moshe Feldenkrais*, edited by Elizabeth Beringer. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 2010

Fenemore, Anna. "Body: Introduction". In *Performance Perspectives: A Critical Introduction*, edited by Jonathan Pitches and Sita Popat, 20-21. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2011

Fenemore, Anna. "Every body: performance's other bodies". In *Performance Perspectives: A Critical Introduction*, edited by Jonathan Pitches and Sita Popat, 38-51. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2011

Foreman, Richard. *The Manifestos and Essays*. New York: Theatre Communications Group, 2013

Fox, Christopher. "Why Experimental? Why Me?" In *The Ashgate Companion to Experimental Music*, edited by James Saunders, 7-26. Farnham: Ashgate, 2009

Fraser, Alan. *The Craft of Piano Playing: A New Approach to Piano Technique*. Second edition. Lanham/Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2011

Fraser, Alan. "At the Piano: The Hidden Physical Component in Listening". In *The Feldenkrais Journal*, 32 (2020-2022): 42-70

Gallagher, Shaun. "Dimensions of Embodiment: Body Image and Body Schema in Medical Contexts". In *Handbook of Phenomenology and Medicine*, edited by S. Kay Toombs, 147-175. Springer: Dordrecht, 2002

Gallagher, Shaun. *How the Body Shapes the Mind*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2013

Gallagher, Shaun. "Introduction: The Arts and Sciences of the Situated Body." *Janus Head* 9, no. 2 (2007): 293-295

Gaunt, Helena. "One-to-one tuition in a conservatoire: the perceptions of instrumental and vocal students." *Psychology of Music* 38, no. 2 (2009): 178-208

Gerig, Reginald, R. *Famous Pianists and Their Technique*. New Edition. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007

Ginsburg, Carl. *The Intelligence of Moving Bodies: A Somatic View of Life and its Consequences*. Santa Fe, NM: AWAREing Press, 2010

Godøy, Rolf Inge and Marc Leman. *Musical Gestures: Sound Movement and Meaning*. New York: Routledge, 2010

Gottschalk, Jennie. *Experimental Music Since 1970*. New York/London: Bloomsbury, 2016

Greenwald, Anthony. "Sensory feedback mechanisms in performance control: With special reference to the ideo-motor mechanism." *Psychological Review* 77, no. 2 (1970): 73-99

Hanlon Johnson, Don. *Bone, Breath & Gesture: Practices of Embodiment*. Berkely, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1995

Hayden, Sam and Luke Windsor. "Collaboration and the Composer: Case Studies from the End of the 20th Century." *Tempo* 61 (2007): 28-39

Hellaby, Julian. *Reading Musical Interpretation: Case Studies in Solo Piano Performance*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009

Hillier, Susan and Anthea Worley. "The Effectiveness of the Feldenkrais Method: A Systematic Review of the Evidence." *Evidence-Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine* (2015): 1-12

Houston, Wendy. "Some body and no body: the body of a performer". In *Performance Perspectives: A Critical Introduction*, edited by Jonathan Pitches and Sita Popat, 33-37. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2011

Hunter, Kate. "Compassionate Irritability: Interdisciplinary collaboration as an act of kindness." *Performance Paradigm* 16 (2021): 271-279

James, Barbara and Margaret Cook. "A sustainable playing technique for piano performance: Movement science and implications for curricula". In *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Performance Science 2013*, edited by Aaron Williamson and Werner Goebel (Brussels: Association Européenne des Conservatoires, 2013): 769-774

James, Willilam. *The Principles of Psychology Vol. II*. Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1981

Jänke, Lutz. "From cognition to action". In *Music, Motor Control and the Brain*, edited by Eckart Altenmüller, Mario Wisendanger and Jürg Kesselring, 25-37. Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2012

John-Steiner, Vera. *Creative Collaboration*. Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2000

Jones, Richard. "The Keyboard Works: Bach as Teacher and Virtuoso". In *The Cambridge Companion to Bach*, edited by John Butt, 136-153. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997

Keep, Andy. "Instrumentalizing: Approaches to Improvising with Sounding Objects in Experimental Music". In *The Ashgate Research Companion to Experimental Music*, edited by James Saunders, 113-129. Farnham: Ashgate, 2009

Klapp, Stuart T. and Richard J. Jagacinski. "Gestalt Principles in the Control of Motor Action." *Psychological Bulletin* 137, no. 3 (2011): 443-462

Laban, Rudolph. *Choreutics*, edited by Lisa Ullman. London: MacDonald and Evans, 1966

Laumer, Uwe, Manfred Bauer, Manfred Fichter and Helmut Milz. "Therapeutic Effects of the Feldenkrais Method (Awareness Through movement) in Eating Disorders." *Feldenkrais Research Journal* 1 (2004): 1-17

Laws, Catherine. "Embodiment and Gesture in Performance: Practice-led Perspectives". In *Artistic Experimentation in Music: An Anthology*, edited by Darla Crispin and Bob Gilmore, 131-141. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2015

Laws, Catherine. "Being a Player: Agency and Subjectivity in Player Piano". In *Voices, Bodies, Practices: Performing Musical Subjectivities*, edited by Catherine Laws, William Brooks, David Gorton, Nguyễn Thanh Thúy, Stefan Östersjö and Jeremy J. Wells, 83-167. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2019

Laws, Catherine. "Performing Being a Pianist: Gender and Embodied Subjectivity in Performing Annea Lockwood's *Ceci n'est pas un piano*". In *Performance, Subjectivity, and Experimentation*. Edited by Catherine Laws, 125-148. Belgium: Leuven University Press, 2020

Leech-Wilkinson, Daniel. *Challenging Performance: Classical Music Performance Norms and How to Escape Them*, (2020) <https://challengingperformance.com/the-book/>

Leman, Marc. *Embodied Music Cognition and Mediation Technology*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008

Lind, Maria. "The Collaborative Turn". In *Taking Matter Into Common Hands*, edited by Johanna Billing, Maria Lind and Lars Nilsson, 15-31. London: Black Dog Publishing, 2007

Linson, Adam and Eric Clarke. "Distributed cognition, ecological theory and group improvisation". In *Distributed Creativity: Collaboration and Improvisation in Contemporary Music*, edited by Eric Clarke and Mark Doffman, 52-69. New York: Oxford University Press, 2017

Loaiza, Juan M. "Musicking, embodiment and participatory enaction of music: outline and key points." *Connection Science* 28, no. 4 (2016): 410-422

López-Galviz, Carlos, Nadia Bartolini, Mark Pendleton and Adam Stock. "Reconfiguring Ruins: Beyond Ruinenlust." *GeoHumanities* 3, no. 2 (2017): 531-553

Luck, Neil. "Interdisciplinary Practice as a Foundation for Experimental Music Theatre."
Doctoral thesis, University of York, 2020

Lunsford, Andrea A and Lisa Ede. "Collaborative Authorship and the Teaching of Writing". In
The Construction of Authorship: Textual Appropriation in Law and Literature, edited by
Martha Woodmansee and Peter Jaszi, 417-438. Durham and London: Duke University Press,
1994

Mackie, Cristine. *Rethinking Piano Performance: The Mindful Body*. London International
Piano Symposium, 2018

Mahnkopf, Claus-Steffen. "On Musical Deconstruction". In *Musical Morphology*, edited by
Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf, Frank Cox and Wolfram Schurig, 9-21. Hofheim: Wolke Verlag, 2004

Martin, Randy. *Critical moves: Dance Studies in Theory and Politics*. Durham, NC: Duke
University Press, 1998

Mattes, Josef, "Attentional Focus in Motor Learning, the Feldenkrais Method, and Mindful
Movement." *Perceptual and Motor Skills* 123, no. 1 (2016): 258-276

Minh-ha, Trinh T. *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*. Bloomington:
Indiana University Press, 1989

Myers, Lori, K. "Application of Neuroplasticity Theory through the use of the Feldenkrais
Method with a Runner with Scoliosis and Hip and Lumbar Pain: A Case Report." *Journal of
Bodywork & Movement Therapies* 20 (2016): 300-309

Noë, Alva. *Action in Perception*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004

Pace, Ian. "Notation, Time and the Performer's Relationship to the Score in Contemporary
Music". In *Unfolding Time: Studies in Temporality in Twentieth Century Music*, edited by
Darla Crispin, 149-191. Leuven University Press, 2009

Parncutt, Richard, John A. Sloboda, Eric F. Clarke, Matti Raekallio, and Peter Desain. "An Ergonomic Model of Keyboard Fingering for Melodic Fragments." *Music Perception: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 14, no. 4 (1997): 341–82.

Payne, Emily. "The craft of musical performance: Skilled practice in collaboration." *Cultural geographies* 25, no. 1 (2018): 107-122

Pickering, Andrew. "Material Culture and the Dance of Agency". In *The Oxford Handbook of Material Culture Studies*, edited by Dan Hicks and Mary C. Beaudry, 191-208. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010

Pozzer, Federico. "Breathing in Composition and Performance: Portfolio of Original Compositions and Written Commentary." Doctoral dissertation, University of Leeds, 2021

Ramírez Ladrón de Guevara, Victor. "Any body? The multiple bodies of the performer." In *Performance Perspectives: A Critical Introduction*, edited by Jonathan Pitches and Sita Popat, 21-33. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2011

Redgate, Christopher. "A Discussion of Practices Used in Learning Complex Music with Specific Reference to Roger Redgate's AUSGANGSPUNKTE." *Contemporary Music Review* 26, no. 2 (2007): 141-149

Rink, John. "Analysis and (or?) performance". In *Musical Performance: A Guide to Understanding*, edited by John Rink, 35-58. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002

Rosenbaum, D. A., S. E. Engelbrecht, M. M. Bushe and L. D. Loukopoulos. "Knowledge model for selecting and producing reaching movements." *Journal of Motor Behaviour*, 25 (1993): 217-227

Roskell, Penelope. *The Complete Pianist: From healthy technique to natural artistry* (London: Peters Edition, 2020)

Royle, Nicholas. *The Uncanny*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003

Said, Edward W. *Musical Elaborations*. London: Vintage, 1992

Samuels, Lisa. "Witness in kind." *Performance Paradigm* 16 (2021): 60-73

Sándor, György. *On Piano Playing: Motion, Sound and Expression*. Boston: Schirmer, 1995.

Schick, Steve. "A Percussionist's Search for Models." *Contemporary Music Review* 21, no. 1 (2002): 5-12

Schlegel, Friedrich. *Kritische Schriften*. Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch, 1972

Schmalfeldt, Janet. *In the Process of Becoming: Analytic and Philosophical Perspectives on Form in Early Nineteenth-Century Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011

Sheets-Johnstone, Maxine. "Bodily Resonance". In *Moving Imagination*, edited by Helena De Preester, 19-36. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2013

Sheets-Johnstone, Maxine. "Movement: What Evolution and Gesture Can Teach Us About Its Centrality in Natural History and Its Lifelong Significance." *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* XLIV (2019): 239-259

Shin, Yun Kyoung, Robert W. Proctor, and E. J. Capaldi. "A Review of Contemporary Ideomotor Theory." *Psychological Bulletin* 136, no. 6 (2010): 943-974

Shusterman, Richard. *Performing Live: Aesthetic Alternatives for the Ends of Art*. Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 2000

Smyth, Cliff, "Feldenkrais Method and Health: Phenomenological Perspectives." *Feldenkrais Research Journal* 5 (2016),
<https://feldenkraisresearchjournal.org/index.php/journal/article/view/23>

Spatz, Ben. *What Can A Body Do: Technique as Knowledge, Practice as Research*.
London/New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015

Tarr, Jen. "Habit and conscious control: Ethnography and embodiment in the Alexander Technique." *Ethnography* 9, no. 4 (2008): 477-497

Thomas, Philip. "A Prescription for Action". In *The Ashgate Companion to Experimental Music*, edited by James Saunders, 77-98. Farnham: Ashgate, 2009

Verdugo, Felipe. "Biomechanical and Physiological Aspects of a Holistic Approach to Piano Technique". In *New Thoughts on Piano Performance*, edited by Cristine Mackie, 1-19. London International Piano Symposium, 2018

Wilson, Timothy, D. *Strangers to Ourselves: Discovering the Adaptive Unconscious*. Harvard University Press, 2002

Worsely, Victoria. *Feldenkrais for Actors: How to Do Less and Discover More*. London: Nick Hern Books, 2016

Websites (with named author)

Barry, Robert. "Corporeal Engagement: An Interview With Neil Luck." *The Quietus*. 27 July, 2016. Accessed November 8, 2023. <https://thequietus.com/articles/20631-neil-luck-interview>

Evanoff, Ray. "Narratives". *More Everything: Wanting, Uncertainty Club*. Winter, 2017. Accessed September 21, 2022. <https://uncertainty.club/narratives/>

Fraser, Alan. "Piano Somatics: Piano technique for the 21st century". *The Piano Somatics Institute*. 2016. Accessed October 10, 2023.
<https://www.alanfraserinstitute.com/institute.php>

Harder, David. "The Man Who Taught Me Unlearning". *Inspired Work*. May 9, 2018. Accessed July 10, 2023. <https://www.inspiredworkservices.com/the-man-who-taught-me-unlearning/>

Harper, Ben. "Evan Johnson: lists, little stars." *Boring Like A Drill*. November 2021, Accessed 8 November, 2023. <http://www.cookylamoo.com/boringlikeadrill/2021/11/evan-johnson-lists-little-stars.html>

Juren, Anna. "Teacher". *Performing Arts Research and Training Studios, School For Contemporary Dance*. 2023. Accessed October 10, 2023.
<https://www.parts.be/teacher/anne-juren>

Kaye, Margaret. "The hand as the human outer brain". *Margaret Kaye: Feldenkrais Practitioner*, 2023. Accessed October 8, 2023. https://www.feldenkrais.net.au/?page_id=14

Pace, Ian. "Hierarchies in New Music: Composers, Performers, and 'Works'". *Desiring Progress*. September 9, 2013. Accessed June 29, 2022.
<https://ianpace.wordpress.com/2013/09/29/hierarchies-in-new-music-composers-performers-and-works/>

Strauss-Klein, Nick. "The Periscope". *The Feldenkrais Project*. July 18, 2023. Accessed October 10, 2023. <https://feldenkraisproject.com/lesson/periscope-1/>

Ugelvik, Ellen Kristine. "Performing Precarity". *Norwegian Academy of Music*. June 29, 2023. Accessed August 23, 2023. <https://nmh.no/en/research/projects/performing-precarity>

Websites (without named author)

Feldenkrais: Resources for Musicians. "Home". *Feldenkrais: Resources for Musicians*. 2023. Accessed October 10, 2023. <https://feldenkraisresourcesformusicians.co.uk/>

Feldenkrais UK. "Listen to Lessons". *Feldenkrais UK*. 2023. Accessed October 8, 2023. https://www.feldenkrais.co.uk/explore/listen-to-lessons/?audio_year=2020#list

Loughborough University. "Sports Biomechanics and Motor Control Research". *Loughborough University*. 2023. Accessed October 12, 2023. <https://www.lboro.ac.uk/microsites/ssehs/biomechanics/index.html>

"Standards of Practice". *International Feldenkrais Federation*. Adopted by the IFF General Assembly in May 1994. Accessed Nov 22, 2022. <https://feldenkrais-method.org/iff/standards-of-practice/>

Scores (other than those included in Appendix A)

Bach, J. S. *Prelude and Fugue in D minor* BWV 875 (Bärenreiter Urtext, 1995)

Bach, J. S. *Prelude and Fugue in E flat Major* BWV 876 (Bärenreiter Urtext, 1995)

Bach, J. S. *Prelude in F major* BWV 880 (Bärenreiter Urtext, 1995)

Bach, J. S. *Tocatta in D major* BWV 912 (Leipzig: Edition Peters, 1956)

Evanoff, Ray. 'When I' from *Midway Through* for solo keyboardist on piano, prepared piano, toy piano, and music box (2015-17)

Johnson, Evan. *mes pleurents* for piano (2021)

Pearce, Monica. *smart aleck* for toy piano (2011)

Online Videos

Ed Cooper, Marianna Minasowa and Gabriel Jones. "Between Focus (2019)." YouTube video, 11:13. Posted by "Ed Cooper." Dec 19, 2019. Accessed July 4, 2023.

<https://youtu.be/d8yOlivMmpQ>

Ray Evanoff. "Can I? Head." YouTube video, 03:36. Posted by "Kate Harrison-Ledger." March 28, 2020. Accessed October 25, 2023. <https://youtu.be/Kg6mBaaeTO8?si=yICLQIP7x2rRC1d7>

Ray Evanoff. "When I – a version". YouTube video, 01:54. Posted by "Kate Harrison-Ledger." May 31, 2020. Accessed 14 Sep, 2022. <https://youtu.be/IsIwezMVd4Q>

Ray Evanoff, "Kate Small (One)." YouTube video, 02:36. Posted by "Kate Harrison-Ledger." October 13, 2020. Accessed 29 October, 2023. <https://youtu.be/zWe-d48RDpo>

Ray Evanoff, "Give (one): take one," YouTube video, 03:58. Posted by "Kate Harrison-Ledger." April 10, 2021, Accessed October 29, 2023. <https://youtu.be/4UcsARB0g1g>

Ray Evanoff. "Give (one): take two." YouTube video, 02:56. Posted by "Kate Harrison-Ledger." April 10, 2021. Accessed October 29, 2023. https://youtu.be/m_qNgdk-vw8

Ray Evanoff and Kate Ledger. "Small(s) for solo piano (2020 -): transatlantic collaboration + conversation in 2020-2021." In *Noisefloor Symposium*, Staffordshire University, 11-12 May, 2021. Accessed July 4, 2023. <https://youtu.be/JI6JBjWVxqM>

William Forsythe. "Forsythe-Lines-Complex Operations-1-Inclination Extension." YouTube video, 00:50. Posted by "GrandpaSafari." May 24, 2008. Accessed November 9, 2023.

<https://youtu.be/wsRnVW96KN8>

William Forsythe. "Forsythe-Lines-Approaches-3-Knotting Exercise." YouTube video, 02:02. Posted by "GrandpaSafari." May 24, 2008. Accessed November 9, 2023.

<https://youtu.be/47rZsMhcnS0>

Luck, Neil. "Kate Limbo (2021)." YouTube video, 06:34. Posted by "neilluck." September 11, 2021. Accessed October 26, 2023. <https://youtu.be/EmGLbiZoKK4?si=1GYCm3bZfatVst6d>

Yeu Meng Chan. "Reducing Pain And Injury In Practice And Performance." YouTube video, 52:35. Posted by "Feldenkrais-Essex." May 14, 2020. Accessed October 8, 2023.

<https://youtu.be/UmOmq5C7LDI>

Federico Pozzer. "Moving Objects." YouTube video, 33:27. Posted by "Kate Harrison-Ledger." January 12, 2021. Accessed October 26, 2023. <https://youtu.be/cBgWJyhoO5Y>