

Here and Now

Artistic Research in Music

An Australian Perspective

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Foreword

Here and Now is a snapshot of the artistic process, taken from a particular time and place among musicians based in Brisbane, Australia in 2013-14.

It is not a single story, but an entry *point* into the multiple ways we can approach the making of music. If we added 10 more authors, we would have 10 more approaches. What is in common here is the dedication to sound and music as a way of interacting with the world, providing windows of deeply considered process, transformation, interaction, isolation and collaboration.

Also in common is a two-part process: making the music, then interpreting this process through words to highlight the thinking behind the music. From performing the cadenzas in a Beethoven Piano Concerto to making jazz compositions based on Carnatic rhythmic structures, from a long-term investigation of prepared piano to building new listening environments, these are stories that reflect our time and place, here and now.

Introduction

Beyond Making: Thinking on Artistic Research

Vanessa Tomlinson and Toby Wren

This book is a contribution to understanding Artistic Research in Music — processes and transformations evidenced through the making of music, shared by the music-maker. *Here and Now* offers a window into the myriad of creative approaches and processes employed in a range of music-making activities, usually the domain of solitary practice, here rendered by the authors to enrich our understanding of creativity, of work, of reflexivity, and of music itself. The authors vividly capture diverse topics such as extending their sound world, finding inspiration, locating a context, collaborating, and forging new musics. The quest for knowledge here extends beyond the making of music as a creative act toward a sharing of experience: deep transformative understandings that while based on sometimes singular activities, are in reality, culminations of engaged artistic lives.

There are several aspects, or stages, of music-making that the authors in this volume address. Music-making requires an intimate knowledge of how to operate the equipment — the instrument. Years of technical training map habit and knowledge into every small act that is made, whether for speed in playing, efficiency in connections between notes, translating orchestration from the imagination, or sound quality, to name just a few examples. Professional musicians have taken years of development to understand how to control these nuances and develop a deep and immediate relationship with sound-making and the tool they use for the job. We might call this part of playing Instrumentalism, the intimate knowledge with how to make the instrument do what the performer needs it to do. It may in the past have been referred to as technique, but here we are talking about how the instrument itself is an extension of the body, and all the predetermined pathways of neural activity that can be called upon to control the instrument. Much of this work is pre-determined, reliable, practiced: in itself it does not produce music, but it is the necessary machinery to do so.

Producing music also requires the task of creativity, taking the source material (the idea, the manuscript) and finding an avenue through which to sound the ideas with respect to convention, performance practice, and context. Embedded in this sounding is of course Instrumentalism, mixed in with a myriad of other decisions. This is a process of mapping the music on to an individual, whether composed or improvised. It is what produces a unique footprint of interpretation in every performance. It can be a shallow affair, literally a reading of notes, or a deep embodiment of the score with agonising decisions at every step of the way. Even with the best of intentions these decisions may give way to spontaneous decision-making in performance, which opens up a new pathway, discovered and walked for the first time on stage. Which decision sounds better? How do we know?

Another important element to music-making is the place in which music is sounded. For much of history, music has been at least partially site-specific: composed for a particular cathedral's organ, composed for a parlour, a concert hall, or an outdoor setting. The site of music-making, the public sounding of the ideas, matters. Sites affect the resonance, the texture, and our perception of what is important in the music, changing the emotion, the perceived complexity, and access to the music. It also forms part of our realtime decision-making process as performers, and it is one of the reasons that each performance is unique. It literally sounds different to the performer. The real-time sounding of the music feeds back to the musician, consciously and unconsciously affecting their decisions based on listening to the here and now. Acoustic music does not come pre-packaged and ready to go. Each performance is a reaction to space and place and an interaction with audience and fellow musicians. It is a complex web of unknowable potentials.

From another perspective, the place of music-making can change the intent of the music altogether, such as when a music that achieves its relevance through participation becomes the subject of attentive listening in performance. Such transpositions can propose new directions for that music. Places are also not simply resonant sites, they are situated within a cultural sphere, where practice and enculturation contribute to the manner in which the work is apprehended. Working on the edge of cultural boundaries where there is no dominant musical site challenges how the music will be heard and understood.

Composition relies on this spatial and cultural situatedness, as much as it relies on the instrumentalism and creativity of the musicians. Composition can be the organisation of sounds in a particular order within a particular convention. Or it be an attitude in putting sounds together that depends on the experience and interests of the performers or audience. Composers can work along a continuum, attempting to control all of the musical elements, and at others times composers can simply facilitate a situation in which music-making can take place. In a sense, composers are in constant negotiation. They negotiate between tradition and innovation, between the memorial and the sensorial, between the sounds they imagine and the sounds that eventuate. They rely on stores of technical knowledge but they are dependent on the creativity of the musicians in sounding the music. As is often evidenced in these pages, the platform for much composition is play and experimentation. It requires knowledge of what might happen, but not of what actually will happen.

It might be clear by now that music makers exist within the world of the tangible and the intangible, the controllable and the uncontrollable. We can map out how to do things, for example analyse scores and teach elements of performance to make it "better, faster, cleaner, neater", but it is more difficult to understand why each individual makes particular decisions in their practice. There is a degree of forward planning in interpretation and creativity, perhaps what we may refer to as a methodology: a process of discovery based on years of relating to sound that provides an efficient way forward. This might be called a knowingness of how to approach particular phrases, how to weight particular chords. And there is just as actively a form of backward planning such as realisations of what did not work or a constant recalibration of intent to monitor events as they are happening, both on stage, both in rehearsal and in practice. These moments of discontent feed into the real-time performance or composition, and then affect the forward-planning of the next performance. This is not safeguarding, but knowledge creation: realisations about sound, composition, space, and people. It is the reason that musicians are obsessed with returning to the pieces they know. They aim to find out more and more about the inner workings of the music and by extension, of themselves.

New knowledge, in the case of all of the chapters herein, and in much Artistic Research generally, is twice constructed: embodied in performances,

recordings, or scores; and deconstructed, or reconstructed, through text. This requires a particular kind of interdisciplinary expertise of the artistic researcher: a mastery of creative practice, of critical reflexivity, and of text. It also requires a privileging of information, a kind of direction to the audience, similar to program notes at an event, that focuses their attention. This is at once a useful and a limiting process. In some sense, it is no different to other fields of enquiry, where data may be selectively attended to and where researchers may intentionally or unintentionally reveal a bias. It is particularly salient in the case of artistic research precisely because it allows us to glimpse the priorities, aesthetics and intentions of the artistic researcher. That is, the researcher, in directing us to attend to specific aspects of their music, affords us insights into what they consider important in that music.

Here and Now provides an opportunity to read about a range of practice-based research in music from a particular place and time, the Queensland Conservatorium, now. The writing here is representative of a vibrant research and music community that is host to different practices, styles and approaches. It is a collection that interrogates the process of making music and the decisions that sit within or beside the act. It is in this process, crystallised in writing, that we can begin to reach toward the intangible world of creativity.

What is important in creative work? The answer of course is that we can look at creative work in multiple ways and within multiple methodological framings. It is particularly exciting that the range of work in *Here and Now* is reflective of that range of possibilities. In these chapters, then, may be found a number of surprises. For readers familiar with the music described, it may be a revelation to find a chapter that perfectly captures or explains the nature of a work or process, just as potentially we find one that confounds us with ideas that seem distant to our own experience of music.

The book is divided into three parts: *Sounds Through Space and Time* examines the unfurling of structural ideas on both the micro and macro levels. *Playing the Subject* looks at the instrument itself, reimagining possibilities, extending ideas, pushing boundaries. Lastly, *Finding the New* considers the stimulations for creativity, crossing borders, cultures and neighborhoods searching for the creative muse. Each author puts their voice on their artistic process, adding stories to our bookcase of musical

knowledge. We hope that *Here and Now* reveals a little of the range and breadth of experience that is possible in this ethereal artform, one that communicates to us with such nuanced emotion, yet is so situated in the listening subject.

1

The Listening Museum

Vanessa Tomlinson



Introduction

This chapter will explore notions of listening, investigate the theoretical concept of The Museum of Listening, and reflect on practical applications of these ideas as a curator in The Listening Museum: a modular, multi-layered, interdisciplinary environment for the exploration of sound. The following thoughts are both an investigation of the theoretical underpinnings of this particular event, and a proposition for approaching new ways of presenting and understanding our capacity to experience sound.

The Listening Museum was a 2-hour site-specific investigation of sound in a multi-layered participatory journey through space and time. The concept arose from the desire to format a music-making event that centred on an inclusive notion of listening. It contained multiple contributing elements of sound production: intentional, unintentional, and functional sound produced

for aesthetic reasons, alongside merging value systems, hierarchies, and even responsibilities as the audience themselves became sound-making participants.

The site for the one-night museum event was Urban Art Projects, a factory for making large-scale public art, and the stakeholders — artisans from the factory, sound makers, the installation makers, the audience, performers, composers — all came to participate in the event with different expectations, and different notions of boundaries and responsibilities: How will the audience know what to do? When is an everyday act a sonic artwork? When is a composition no longer being respected? Are there “appropriate” levels of participatory music making? How is art transformed by space? How is our understanding of what is art transformed by context? How are relationships altered between audience and performers in a de-hierarchised presentation mode? How do audiences take agency of their own mobile listening journey?

In a paper titled *A Typology for Listening in Place*, presented at Mobile Music Workshop, Vienna, in 2008, Pedro Rebelo, Matt Green and Florian Hollerweger defined three different spatial archetypes to serve as metaphors through which we can articulate different types of relations between listener, sound and place: 1 The Theatre of Listening, 2 The Museum of Listening, and 3 The City of Listening.

The Theatre of Listening provides clearly defined positions and functions for the audience and for the production of sound — a set perspective to present the sound (a stage) and a set perspective to receive the sound (the seating). In addition there is a clear threshold that an audience crosses to enter the space, and a particular mode of listening.

The Museum of Listening also uses the concept of a threshold that identifies entrance and engagement — a defined space in which the listening will occur. However, in *The Museum of Listening* we add the concept of mobility, so a labyrinth of routes can be enacted by an audience activated into wandering toward and away from sound.

The third layer, *The City of Listening*, no longer has a clear entrance, has no boundaries. Mobility is favoured, and the listener is immersed in all sonic activities with no clear entrance or escape. *The Listening Museum* includes

elements of these three spatial archetypes, but focuses most strongly on the potentials embedded in *The Museum of Listening*.

These theoretical propositions, coupled with the aforementioned questions inform the central question underlying this event: what considerations need to be addressed in the construction of a non-linear performative event with the objective of exploring potential listening experiences of experimental music practices to a broad audience? Furthermore, through the investigation of this question, the potential of modeling a repeatable process and structure within which varied sonic content could be placed, underpinned the curatorial directive from the outset. This paper proposes a structural modeling that could be used as a starting point for parallel investigations of site-specific temporal art works, and a curatorial checklist (or starting point) for the construction of content.



Jessica Aszodi welding and singing Madonna songs. Urban Art Projects, 2013.

... Dressed in head-to toe welding gear, the figure – one metre inside the public demarcation line – hammers on various densities

of metal. At first it seems like a re-enactment scene, more akin to a historic museum than a listening museum. But since it is here, we begin to listen. Slowly it becomes clear that the figure hidden behind the heavy welding mask is singing. Strains are emanating that sound "like a virgin" – is that Madonna? The crackly distant voice mixed in with the unrelenting sonically dense metallic pounding seems incongruent from a single individual, and begins to open up a world of wonder, of memory, searching for a link in our own past for such a sonic scene...

On Listening

Numerous composers have been engaged with environmental listening as a primary compositional concern including Edgard Varèse and Pierre Schaeffer listening to cities, R. Murray Schafer listening to soundscapes, and Pauline Oliveros' practice of Deep Listening. We could potentially align environmental listening compositional activities into four broad categories of exploration when concerning space:

- Recording the environment, documenting the actual environment, and reworking the material into compositional frameworks, an historical practice which began with *musique concrète* in 1948.
- Listening to the environment, and using that as the starting point for compositional process. Again this has long historical precedents from Debussy's *La Mer* (1905) to John Luther Adams' *Become Ocean* (2013).
- Intentional sound placed in a site: a site-specific composition that examines particularities unique to the site, including of acoustic resonance, ambience, climate. Examples here include Alvin Lucier's *I am Sitting in a Room* (1969), and recent investigations by the Landscape Quartet.
- Constructing or repurposing an environment in which sound will occur. This could be anything from a concert hall designed for

particular sonic lockdown, to an outdoor festival, a garden, or a pre-existing structure.

Taking the last idea of “constructing an environment for sound”, we can examine the performance environment of the concert hall, clearly designed for listening to take place, and with a clear threshold that identifies entrance and engagement. Eric Clarke, author of *Ways of Listening*, notes that in a concert hall we are in an artificial relationship to the object: we cannot explore it, we are seated, made immobile, and listening from a particular perspective. The usual way to explore sound would be through touch or movement (dancing, tapping toes, looking at where the sound is coming from, exploring). The concert hall is a place for selective listening; the environment is constructed for certain sounds to be privileged and others to be ignored, judged, or suppressed. The presence of air-conditioning noise in a concert hall is an accepted sound intrusion, taken for granted, and is not part of the scored or intentional piece. The hiss of the speakers, loud or soft, in the rests of a piece (or intended potential silence) is simply part of the reality of concert-going and excluded from the listening field. These sounds align themselves to the idea of a drone and the listener can ignore them as information-limited sounds. Unexpected bursts of sound such as coughing, mobile phones, wrappers, realigning seating positions, are also undesirable sounds but are filled with information, thus distracting the listening experience for many audiences. This is a hierarchical listening environment that places different sounds at different levels of perception — the drone, the intentional (the piece of music), and sonic interventions.

This translation of layers of listening, can be compared to the site-specific aleatoric model of John Cage’s *Musicircus* (1967) which adopts an open-ended approach to layers of simultaneity. As Lucier points out, in indeterminacy, composition has “everything to do with discovery”. In Cage’s indeterminate music “one activity doesn’t have anything to do with another, but if they are happening at the same time, there is a relationship, or perhaps a non-relationship”. In Cage’s approach, the composition is a score which allows a unique result in each and every performance. *The Listening Museum* on the other hand chooses to control the unfolding of time, dissecting material and placing it intentionally in a large-scale compositional flow, to manipulate the experiential through-line of the work. It is inspired

by the Cagean approach, but reworked in a post-Cagean manner. The key here is to understand that the structure of *The Listening Museum* consists of discreet component parts for intentional results, not simultaneity for unintentional sonic joys.

The Listening Museum exploits the three aforementioned layers of sound informa — aiming for a non-hierarchical listening environment where the listener can choose the journey and the focus of their ears. *The Listening Museum* also adds a fourth dimension — audience participation, in which the audience completes their participatory transformation to generate elements of the musical material. The name *The Listening Museum* potentially forewarns that this is not just another concert, but a changed engagement with sound. The activity of listening from the concert hall is maintained, but expanded through multiple layers of non-aligned directed and non-directed sound activity. The audience has agency to investigate the process of listening, and the curators task, is to set up an environment in which investigation becomes a desired outcome. Sound is intrinsically and unignorably relational, and the environment produced in *The Listening Museum* gives the listener an active role, to the extent that the listener has become involved in the composition process. Mobility changes how we experience sound and space, and it is this transferral of agency that is intrinsic to the project.

To take this a step further, Pauline Oliveros asserts that in her Deep Listening workshops, the participant becomes the “composer, performer and audience”. Akin to the function of the free improvising musician who is drawing on all three dimensions simultaneously in order to prepare, do and listen. The curatorial project is therefore to encourage this paradigm of attentiveness among *The Listening Museum* participants including the employed musicians, installation makers, intervention creators, and the audience.

Issues of awakening attentiveness are also associated with the concepts of soundscape and listening within environments. R. Murray Schafer, who has an inclusive notion of listening connected to awareness, proposed the idea of the soundscape (listening to our environment) to redress the persuasive visual dominance of our appreciation of landscape. It is possible to appreciate the sonic environment of *The Listening Museum* as a piece of music within the paradigms associated with the concert hall: it has sounds

that are foregrounded, background drones, and sudden punctuations. These elements are similarly present when we add mobility into the experience — listening through walking and wayfinding. The concept of soundwalks, clearly captured through the writings of Hildegard Westerkamp and Anthony Magen, provide clear examples of the non-explicit act of learning to listen. Generally undertaken in silence (or without talking), collective soundwalking attunes the ear to an ever-deepening awareness of sound (sounds of what you can see in the distance, sounds beyond what you can see, sounds below your feet (etc) and reactively causes passersby to re-evaluate their sounds world. In *Scorescapes*, published in *Sound and Score*, Yolande Harris writes that “a fundamental way to engage with place and to actively understand one’s movement through environments is to conceptualise them as sounded maps and journeys”. This journey is the philosophical fabric of *The Listening Museum* and the project aims to illuminate the temporality of the experience.



Joy, Rosemary. Beauty Boxes, performed by Claire Edwardes and Vanessa Tomlinson.

... The large dusty factory is overwhelming; and hidden up barely lit stairs is a door to another world, the boardroom. Set half way along a table which might seat 12, are two women with wooden boxes in front of them: Boxes that look like old magic boxes and which require a certain tenacity from the opener to indeed open them. They sit in silence as the audience gathers, and then they begin tapping the boxes, then rubbing, then knocking, until a drawer rumbles open and out come a succession of objects. A metal scourer, that in the candlelight seems at first like a bejewelled rock; tiny beads, a pincushion, a piece of fine silk cloth. All industriously investigated by the two women eager to sound even the most banal of objects with respect and deep understanding ...

The Curator

The activity of a curator of temporal-based events does not necessarily mirror that from which the name emanates — the visual arts world and the gallery. There, curation is a tool for observation, diagnosis and categorisation, examining linkages between individual or collective artistic production in a specific milieu. Curating *The Listening Museum* includes organizing listening activities heard through time, highlighting a point of view, proposing juxtapositions of material, creating a temporal journey, and inhabiting spaces.

This aligns itself with Yolande Harris in her *Scorescapes*, where she writes that “rather than learning to listen in order to organize sounds into final compositions, asks us to use the process of composition to learn new ways of listening to sound”. This is a sonic proposition, and in this case an experiential exploration communicated through a verbal score where the performers and the audience are invited to participate in the event as collaborators. It is an improvisational unfolding of time, with formal elements (compositions) inserted as modular blocks of material, much as one would insert sonic activity in a game score of John Zorn’s *Cobra*.

Looking specifically at the emergent role of music creator for this temporal exploration of space, it was found that the concerns of the curator are inclusive of:

- Designing spatial, visual and sonic stimulus to transform the audience from a recipient-based mode of listening (*The Theatre of Listening*) to a participant (*The Museum of Listening*).
- Presentation of material from different traditions, with different value systems and environmental needs; the notated composition in which time is a fixed element; the improviser who can work reactively to the space, audience, flow, energy; the installations which demand a particular sonic space.
- Large-scale compositional aspects; the flow of time. If *The Listening Museum* is indeed a composition, then the unfolding of time, the sonic journey, the musical concepts of density, tension, stasis, spatialisation, emotional unpacking are still relevant.
- Analysis of site for sonic potential; the preparatory soundwalk examining the labyrinth of potential paths to engage with sound, and the spaces in which sounds could be situated.
- Balancing elements such as the amplified and the non-amplified, the effortful and the effortless, the loud and the soft, the close and the far, so that every element has presence.
- Communicating the timescale to the performers: instructing the unfolding of the event, and providing levels of negotiation with all parties to act in the best interests of the work.

The Application

The aforementioned concerns were used in the design of a six-part structure that involved spatial, sonic and social dimensions. The structure for the event was as follows.

The beginning: a clear starting point centred around the factory's function, using factory workers in a dramatic pouring of a bronze dingo

mould of Dennis Nona at the far end of the factory, some 70 metres from the entrance (10 minutes);

The opening through space: suspended tam-tam performances led the audience back toward the performance of a composition by Erik Griswold composed specifically for the event. This journey back through the space was designed to alter the audience relationship from a theatrical mode to an exploratory mode, or self-directed investigation of space (20 minutes);

The self-directed: at this point all intentional music stops, and the audience are left to wonder what to do next. There is no sonic cue loud enough to direct the crowd toward a new destination. A combination of confusion and aimless wandering leaves the crowd to individually explore the space, toward the installations spread over the building site, and toward participatory activities such as gong therapy (8 minutes).

The interventions: once the listening museum paradigm is set, and listening expectations have changed, two more layers of sound are added into the space — sound interventions, which might be loud enough to attract an audience, but so short that by the time they get there the event is over; and compositions — pre-determined works of sonic art than have a pre-set plan for the performer, and do not respond to the needs of the audience. In these set pieces, if the audience is losing focus on the performance, the performer cannot change parameters such as dynamics or tempo to keep the audience's attention. They are pre-set temporal objects, gazed upon by the audience. Within this section, all the performative offerings are equalised as events, destabilising any privilege of a composition (50 minutes);

The regrouping: even though many disparate events have been taking place over the past hour, the building itself has not yet been physically sounded. The regrouping is a chance for all performers to work toward the same goal and on the workers' whistle cues, instrumentalists play the structure of the factory. It also serves as a refocussing signal to herd the audience back into a single unit for the ending.

The ending: an extended 30-minute finale with often quiet works that take advantage of the intended recalibration of the audience in the regrouping. Beginning with a meditative installation piece where 20kgs of rice falls onto objects on the floor, the audience are then walked back up to the entrance for a virtually silent work for multiple ropes and finally ends as the piano begins to sound its entire range, other instrumentalists begin to

sound their instruments in sympathetic harmonic patterns scattered across the 2000m² of space, and the rope players splay outward to sound the floor of the building.



Erik Griswold's Spill (2009). Performed by Rebecca Lloyd Jones, Urban Art Projects, 2013.

... Out of the cacophonous, endless, multidirectional noise emerged stillness and attentiveness – a lady dressed in white with a suspended pendulum, awaiting time to start. The audience paused, still and attentive. The release of the heavy industrial pendulum, a giant metal funnel, began time again, and from the point of its cone rice began falling and falling as it marked a line backwards and forwards across the industrial factory floor. Objects were placed under the shower of rice: a single pitch from a rice bowl, and then another; the awkward clanking of metal as the objects changed; the memory of tropical rain as paper was placed on top; machine sounds constructed from falling rice. The audience were silent...

The Listening Museum, in the manifestation outlined here, seeks to redistribute sonic ideas. It uses compositions themselves as sounding events, integrating the event within and with the factory. Factory worker becomes artist as the audience witnesses metal heated to 400C and the translucent red liquid poured it into moulds. It is the same as their everyday work but through the changed context, the ritualistic dance necessary for two people to undertake this task in silent, dangerous parallel is a performance piece, complete with audience sighs, groans and finally applause. The ordinary (for some) has been transformed into the extraordinary, and the audience has accessed an activity normally occurring behind closed doors. Later in the event, factory workers enact sonic interventions, turning on and off massive stamping machines, grinders, welders — making musical choices based on the sounds of their machines.

Compositions, presumably written for the concert hall, are placed in the timeline of events as sonic activities — to be considered by the passing audience in any way they choose. Proximity and access to the performers and their sounds has altered, a multi-dimensional viewing is possible as is walking away from a composition. The durational privilege of the compositions has been altered, but the timbral and dynamic impact increased. The potential of the composition has altered and so to, the reception.

Installations that underpin *The Listening Museum*, akin to the drones in the concert hall, continue throughout the event — bleeding their sound world into others, interfering and disrupting. But the mobile participant-audience can discover these installations and enter into their sonic world, shutting out the “compositions” just as one shuts out the unintended sonority of air conditioning in a concert hall.

The line between audience and performer is further blurred by *Fluxus*/based performance interventions; an audience member starts sweeping the floor, another munches a sandwich in your ear, a dancer plays her costume, another starts hitting pieces of metal and breaking out into 80’s pop. Suddenly anything is possible, and formal participatory sonic investigations (singing bowls and cymbals) as well as informal spontaneous interactions seem a logical outcome.

Conclusion

The Listening Museum adds to an ever-growing body of literature, performances and recordings that focus on the place and space in which music happens. It demonstrates a move away from *The Theatre of Listening* toward *The Museum of Listening*, intentionally addressing issues of mobility/wayfinding and relationships between the listener/participant and space. The curatorial function in this work is to inhabit the space with sound objects — installations, compositions, events — that can illuminate listening potentials, provide sonic space for individual journeys, and still maintain the coherence of a large-scale composition. It is a proposition for repurposing a space on a temporary basis, and reconsidering our engagement with sound. Above all, it contributes to the wonder of our diverse aural environment and provokes listening. We orient ourselves to our environment. We look, we hear.

2

Restrung: Sounds unbound

The festival as immersive artwork

Danielle Bentley

Ebb and flow

Like electricity around a circuit, people are drawn through space

Following invisible threads – strings –

Nudging, dissolving, immersing, interacting

Cross-pollinating sounds, sights, feelings, conceptions and preconceptions.

Melding with past-present-future.

The frame with implacable depth ... drifting through the looking glass... turning on its head or off its feet.

Growing larger, smaller, further, closer...

Out of this frame merging with realities which crossed time... Bakhtian shadows and carnivalesque intrigue.

The moment becoming now and gone and already ahead.

Human intrigue and need to get out of it... out of here and into there...

... and down the rabbithole into a shifting, shaking musical universe...

Where old memories are felt like drifting fragrances ...

... deep within ourselves and with no point of reference.

Introduction

Imagine a music festival as an immersive artwork: A creatively constructed exploration of musical terrains, multisensorial and liminal experiences. In the immersive artwork, audience and artists play equal roles on the same plane. All the elements that make up a festival are carefully interwoven and framed, creating a wonderland of musical experience for participants. This was the governing concept underlying the curatorial approach used for *Restrung: Sounds Unbound*, the second edition of my cross-genre strings festival in 2012 at the Brisbane Powerhouse. The model for the festival was designed to enhance audience experience, representing a new way of

programming New Music that put the audience at centre stage. It was inspired by the idea of immersing festival-goers in an environment that encouraged open-minded listening. This essay explores how the *Restrung* model, when viewed through a Deleuzian lens, challenged the notions of new and newness — something which many festival directors argue is integral to the success and meaningfulness of a festival. This will be approached by describing the *Restrung* model and its conceptual framework, and imagining how *Restrung* might retain its innovative outlook into the future.

The Restrung Model

Within the festival maker community there has been a great deal of discussion about the future of the festival. Many feel that the “supermarket” style international festival models — like Edinburgh or Brisbane Festivals — have lost their sense of meaning. In *Cahier de l’Atelier: Arts Festivals for the sake of art?*, 2008, Tom Stromberg likens their programmes to television schedules. He laments that “the old vocabulary has lost its aura”. In the same issue, Ritsaert Ten Cate suggests that too often now, festivals have lost their meaning and innovation due to demands placed on them by stakeholders: government policy, sponsor requirements, tourism targets, city marketing and so on. He argues the need for a new “strong and inspired formula, that reinvents the very foundations of what a festival might be”. In this scenario, Stromberg suggests that the director might become a participating artist:

“...the director will no longer be the central figure at the head of the festival, but will work creatively and in various directions, initiating processes, creating networking opportunities between artists, confronting traditions and offering concepts that engage the public in the aesthetic work process.”

In this vein, I conceived the inaugural edition of *Restrung New Chamber Festival* in 2008 as a doctoral research project with two overarching objectives. Firstly, to explore the nature of contemporary string practice, and, to develop strategies to increase audience access to innovative musical

practices. The program comprised strings-driven bands and ensembles working across different genres. The core of the program was New Music. Given the complexities of categorising New Music — which has a tendency towards cross-pollinating myriad and sometimes disparate styles — a specific definition was developed for *Restrung*, co-informed by my colleagues Jean-Luc Nancy and Brian Hulse. Nancy imagines New Music as a “global sonorous space”, which Hulse describes as encompassing “a spectacular comingling of styles and an unprecedented explosion of creative possibilities”. Purposely open-ended, this definition allows New Music to drift from the classical music tradition and float within, between and across other genres, styles and artforms.

In addition to the music program, the *Restrung* model has sound installations, workshops and forums, and engages audiences through musical, visual, spatial, interactive and social features. This format was created as an alternative to programming New Music within the traditional classical music context. As an alternative, *Restrung*’s eclectic programming was designed to attract what R. A. Peterson called *omnivorous* listeners who defy the old-fashioned class conventions of high-brow and low-brow. Omnivores enjoy a wide range of genres, they are open-minded, curious, and actively seek out the new. Facilitated by the continuous free music program, audience members who decided to attend *Restrung* for a specific event would be encouraged to arrive early and/or stay late and experience other performances, thus presenting the potential for overall growth in access to, and audience numbers for, New Music.

Festival-as-immersive-artwork

The *Restrung* curatorial design used three components to bring the festival-as-immersive-artwork to life: video and sound installation works, a continuous music program and audience participation activities.

Restrung was conceptually inspired by Lewis Carroll’s *Alice in Wonderland*. Throughout history, festivals have provided a space where the normal everyday experience of time is replaced by a different temporal quality. Hans-Georg Gadamer, in *The relevance of the beautiful and other essays*, refers to this quality as “fulfilled” time and proposes that, unlike the experience of everyday time, “it is the nature of the festival that it should

proffer time, arresting it and allowing it to tarry". Likening a festival to a work of art, he suggests that the successful manifestation of fulfilled time through a festival or work of art is contingent upon all the constituent parts working to make a compelling whole. Drawing then on the idea of the "immersive artwork", a term most commonly used in virtual reality and networked art (although historically, the concept can be traced back to antiquity), the curatorial design is further deepened by its intention to draw participants into an embodied relationship with their physical surrounds. This is approached through the placement of visual, aural, tactile and interactive elements that work collectively to break down barriers between audience and stage, spectator and performer, music and art. Like Alice in *Wonderland*, it was envisioned that the *Restrung* festival-goer would enter a realm which they could explore and discover, and where liminal experience would overtake normal everyday temporality.

Musical Terrains

The *Restrung* music program leads audiences on a journey through multifarious musical terrains positioned within a variety of contexts. The Turbine Platform program comprised of continuous 40 minute performances, as one would experience at a pop or rock festival. This enabled festival-goers to hear a number of acts within relatively short time periods. Audience attendance was also encouraged by providing the program free-of-charge. To enhance the festival's immersive qualities, the video artist, Miss Random, live-mixed visuals for almost all groups, except for those who brought their own. The Turbine Platform is an informal space: patrons can bring food and drinks into the area, but also tend to respect that it is first and foremost a listening space — not a conversational one. The area is open to the building's main thoroughfare, which has both positive and negative aspects. Positively, patrons walking through are sometimes drawn up to the audience area to listen. Negatively, the space can suffer from high levels of ambient noise, necessitating amplification and making it inappropriate for subtle and quiet music making. Groups performing in this area were consulted prior to programming and advised to choose appropriate repertoire.

The program was extremely diverse, comprising an unorthodox mix of bands and art music ensembles. The curatorial approach of the *Restrung* programming therefore articulates the de-hierarchisation of classical and non-classical art music. The twenty-five performances included Ensemble Offspring, a New Music ensemble featuring strings, percussion, flute and clarinet; Silver Sircus, a 7-piece band inspired by post-rock and minimalist groove with strong visual and theatrical components; Trichotomy, a piano/bass/drums trio blending jazz, ambient music, avant-garde rock, free improvisation and contemporary classical music; Taraf Tambal, a Romanian folk and gypsy featuring violin, tambal and double bass; and Clocked Out's Strings Attached: a work for six percussionists which transforms the ensemble into a living kinetic sculpture.

I commissioned five emerging and established female composers to write *Restrung Miniatures*. The covert purpose of this project was to increase the percentage of female composers represented at *Restrung*. This agenda was not advertised openly in order to avoid *Restrung* being branded as a women's music festival — which it was not. Rather, it was part of an ongoing research project headed by musicologist Sally Macarthur, who has conducted a number of studies indicating poor representation of female composers on the Australian stage. Macarthur was interested to see the effects of positive discrimination towards female composers on programming and audience reception. The high percentage of female composers represented at *Restrung*, comprising 61% of the overall program, according to Macarthur, also had a positive impact on the overall number of female composers' works performed in Australia that year (Table 1). *Restrung* was host to works including the premiere of Sallie Campbell's *Nightingale Floor* and Susan Hawkins' dance score for Collusion's chamber ballet *Transient Beauty*. Choreographed by Gareth Belling, *Transient Beauty* plays with the idea of dancers and musicians performing equal parts on stage.

CITY	GROUP	% Women's Music Performed
PERTH	Decibel	15%
ADELAIDE	The Firm	12%
	Sound Stream	17%

	Earin Festival	0%
MELBOURNE	Melbourne New Music Festival	12%
SYDNEY	Ensemble Offspring	16%
	Chronology Arts	12%
	Halcyon	29%
BRISBANE	Restrung - Art music groups	61%
	Restrung - popular music groups	Approx. 10%

Table 1. Representation of Women Composers by Australian New Music Groups in 2012.

Installation Works: Exploring the Space

Four strings-inspired installations were commissioned and placed throughout the building providing festival-goers with the opportunity to author their own experiences by creating and manipulating sound, making music, and, through this process, interacting with each other. *light.sound.meditate*, created by Nathen Street, was an interactive kinetic, light and sound sculpture which used Tibetan singing bowls. Audience members shone torches at light sensors that were attached to eight small speakers, creating an array of unique sounds. Lawrence English's *as though your life depended on string*, was a tone sculpture focused around an audiovisual colour/frequency score. As the audience moved around the space, they experienced fluctuating tonal patterns generated in tandem by six specially tuned guitars. The guitars were connected by six live process feeds to speakers positioned underneath a series of relational sculptures. *Concentric Circles*, a stringed instrument invented by performance artist Velvet Pesu, was positioned in the Foyer. It was made with found materials, a penny-farthing bicycle and 40 recycled double bass, cello, and piano strings. It was amplified and played with two cello bows.

Finally, the *Restrung* mascot, the *Violinarium*, was re-assembled and placed outside the Powerhouse. Commissioned for the 2008 *Restrung*, the *Violinarium* proved too impractically large to find a permanent home after the festival was over. In 2010, it was purchased for \$5 on eBay from its maker, Beh Wattenberg, and it was stored in pieces under his house and in

his garden. Despite some sections of the *Violinarium* being entangled in years-worth of weed and vine growth, it was salvageable.

The *Violinarium* is symbolic of the nature of New Music. Made to scale from varnished plywood, plaster-of-Paris and amplified fencing wire, and with elephantine dimensions (12x4x3 metres), the *Violinarium* alters one's perspective of size and space. This experience is analogous to Alice's encounter with the bottle labeled "DRINK ME". Directly after drinking its contents, Alice begins to shrink:

"What a curious feeling!" said Alice, 'I must be shutting up like a telescope!' And so it was indeed: she was now only ten inches high, and her face brightened up at the thought that she was now the right size for going through the little door into that lovely garden".

Alice's predicament can be seen to embody Deleuze's theory of "becoming" in which everything is in a process of transition and flow. Experience has no beginning or end and no thing is a fixed entity in itself. Deleuze writes that Alice's predicament constitutes a "simultaneity of a becoming whose characteristic is to elude the present. Insofar as it eludes the present, becoming does not tolerate the separation or the distinction of before and after, or of past and future. It pertains to the essence of becoming to move and to pull in both directions at once: "Alice does not grow without shrinking, and vice versa". Common sense, he continues, "affirms that in all things there is a determinable sense or direction (sens)". Alice's situation is paradoxical as it is "the affirmation of both senses or directions at the same time". The notion of becoming opens the way to the virtual, to endless possibilities and an imagined and unknown future. Macarthur suggests that music which "embodies these qualities of the virtual, of opening up possibilities ... can be seen as becoming-music", or a "drift away from the dominant music".

Restrung reflected this through programming multiple kinds of music that exist contemporaneously, including New Music, classical and contemporary popular genres. In doing so, I aimed to move away from conceptions of music as "past" (classical), "present" (popular/New Music) and "future" (the

imagined/the unknown), and recontextualise them within a space of immanence, a Deleuzian term referring to the outlook in which: "To think is not to represent life but to transform and act upon life". The *Violinarium*, then, can be seen to be a philosophical representation of my ambitions for the festival.

Future imaginings

As a New Music festival model, *Restrung* improved audience access, promoted cross-genre original music across a broad spectrum of styles, experimented with cross-artform collaborations, commissioned new works by Australian composers and installation artists, and developed programs designed specifically for audience involvement (interactive installations, workshops, forums etc.). Given ideal circumstances, I would imagine *Restrung* to be a truly immersive experience ... an escape into a realm where the senses are saturated with musical possibilities. Temporality as experienced in the everyday world would cease to exist — replaced by the liminality of the festivalesque. It would be a place of multisensorial exploration, experimentation and freedom. A fertile ground for preconceptions to disappear and concepts to grow, interact, permute and transform. However, as Ten Cate says, "any knowledge of festivals is now obsolete. We have to make our own. Nobody – NOBODY – can tell you about the festival of the future. It won't exist if you yourself are not reinventing it".

If *Restrung* takes place again, it will re-emerge changed and reinvigorated. Drawing on Ten Cate, I believe that the most important thing for a festival is that it keeps evolving, keeps becoming something other than what has come before: "[r]epeat yourself and you short change yourself — and, even worse — you short change everyone who is in any way a participant". The model itself must be reinvented continually in order for it to fulfil its purpose as a vehicle for the imagined and unknown. Like Alice journeying through Wonderland, all directions must be embraced at once, challenging all preconceptions of the form. New is only new until it has been done.

3

On devising new cadenzas for Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto

Stephen Emmerson

How many of us have ever enjoyed hearing a concerto of Mozart or Beethoven stunningly and sensitively played, only to have the experience ruined at the end of a movement by the cadenza? Regrettably, this happens all too often. A show of empty virtuosity, perhaps, or wrong for the style of the concerto as a whole, or — the most common problem — a cadenza that is simply too long.

— Joseph P. Swain, 1998

Background



Performance of Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto at Youg Siew Toh Conservatory 28 October 2012. Stephen Emmerson (piano) with the Orchestra of the Music Makers conducted by Tze Law Chan

In October 2012 I had the opportunity to perform Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto in Singapore with the Orchestra of the Music Makers conducted by my colleague Tze Law Chan from the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory within the National University of Singapore. The performance was part of the programme of events within the Second Performer's Voice Symposium held at that institution. For some time Tze Law and I had been planning to present a concerto in a way that would give an audience insights both into the work itself and into its interpretation from the performer's perspective. The symposium offered the perfect opportunity to do this. Before the full performance a conference session was presented by soloist, conductor and orchestra to illustrate some of our ideas on the piece and illustrate them with selected examples.

To revisit, to reinhabit even, such an esteemed work is both a pleasure but also a somewhat daunting prospect. Though I perform regularly in public, like most professional musicians, opportunities to play concertos are relatively rare, and, quite apart from the technical difficulties involved, the challenges of concerto playing are significantly different from any other genre. Furthermore playing such a well-known work brings undeniable pressures. One is acutely aware that most lovers of classical music are very likely to have known it for many years and so comparisons with their favourite recordings from the greatest pianists are inescapable. Though I had developed a concept of the work and had strong aural and muscle memories from playing it previously, one returns to such a work not to repeat one's interpretation but to deepen it. The task was not, as a colleague suggested to me recently, akin to "reheating it in a microwave" but to find a fresh way to approach it. Writing new cadenzas for it was an integral part of this process.

Though our interpretation was traditional in many respects, for the performance in Singapore we experimented with an unorthodox seating arrangement of the pianist and orchestra, particularly in the positioning of the piano and woodwind players. As a pianist I primarily perform chamber music and the foregrounding of the piano soloist in front of an accompanying band was an impression I wished to avoid. Especially in this particular concerto, I wanted to be within the ensemble in order to enhance its chamber-music-like qualities. Tze Law was very open to the idea of experimenting with different seating arrangements and so we decided to

position the piano within the orchestra. Rather than the usual image of foregrounded soloist accompanied by orchestra I hoped this would suggest the sense of a large ensemble.

The first movement is particularly notable for the sense of chamber music-like interactions between the solo woodwind instruments and the piano. By having the woodwind players sit where the front desks of the strings would normally be, a degree of relatively intimate musical dialogue was enabled. I am not sure that the seating arrangement was completely successful but it was fascinating to realize how much difference such an adjustment makes. It elicited much comment from those who heard the performance in Singapore.

Undoubtedly such concerns did have a bearing upon the nature of the cadenza I would devise. It was clear to me from the start that a display of soloistic virtuosity was not to be a priority. But what type of cadenza would suit this context and approach?

The "aesthetic dilemma"

As Richard Kramer observes, "the very idea of cadenza is burdened with paradox and enigma". Philip Whitmore writes of the "aesthetic dilemma" facing the soloist in choosing the style of cadenza to play within a classical concerto. Performing one of the canonical cadenzas by the composer is problematic in so far as an essential aspect of a cadenza's traditional function is sacrificed. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the cadenza was expected to offer something, if not spontaneous then at least new, unexpected and hopefully surprising. Playing a cadenza where every note is familiar to most of the audience certainly goes against what Johann Joachim Quantz, in 1752, identified as a primary objective of a cadenza. Quantz wrote, "the passions can be excited much more effectively with a few simple intervals, skillfully mingled with dissonances, than with a host of motley figures." Joseph Swain notes that:

...the cadenza presents the concert artist with an unmatched opportunity for creativity in his performance of a repertoire that is very well known. This opportunity must be approached, however, with a sense of

responsibility that is only appropriate to the masterworks that will be recreated every time a new cadenza is composed for them.

Whitmore also notes the issue of “stylistic incongruity” when the language and performance techniques of a cadenza do not match that of the concerto. However he justly points out that both Mozart and Beethoven did not hesitate to do this when composing cadenzas for earlier concertos. Certainly various Romantic and modern cadenzas have been written that are unashamedly anachronistic in style. Nonetheless Swain’s criticism cited above is a warning about how much is at stake here with the potential to tarnish, if not ruin, the whole performance. Matthew Bribitzer-Stull goes further suggesting that:

Perhaps the reason we care so deeply about the cadenzas modern performers choose for this repertoire is not due simply to stylistic considerations but rather is because we fear that cadenzas penned by the inept will somehow impoverish the works in which we hear them.

On a more positive note however, he also reminds us that “the best cadenzas may invite us to rehear the music surrounding them”. While accepting Whitmore’s claim that “no solution to the problem can be entirely satisfactory”, the opportunity for a cadenza to offer a new perspective on the work, the chance to rehear the relationships within it, seemed to me to outweigh the possible risks.

Beethoven’s own cadenzas

The composer’s own cadenzas for this work have not all been viewed favourably. Donald Tovey, for example, wrote “[u]nfortunately Beethoven himself subsequently scribbled some astoundingly bad cadenzas to this most ethereal work”. Nonetheless the vast majority of performers of this work elect to play one of the composer’s own cadenzas. Beethoven himself wrote three for the first movement and two for the third. Referring to the various cadenzas that Beethoven wrote for his various concertos, Swain observes their “bewildering variety”:

While those of Mozart seem both to confirm and refine the vision of his contemporary theorists and present a consistent, functional, and musically logical solution to the cadenza problem, Beethoven's cadenzas seem to be a series of experiments, at times wildly contradicting most of the aforementioned theoretical guidelines, and at other times adhering to them with puritan restraint. Some are, by eighteenth-century standards, of gargantuan length... Evidently, Beethoven, unlike Mozart, did not have a firm conception of what the cadenza should be like, and his changing views about its place and purpose in the concerto would naturally affect the structure and function of each one he composed. So we must regard his collected cadenzas as a series of experiments.

I embarked on devising my cadenzas conscious of the fact that if something suitable didn't occur to me, any one of Beethoven's remained an acceptable alternative. In my previous performances of this work I had played the first and longest of the ones the composer penned for the first movement. It is a marvelous cadenza, one that is hugely satisfying to play and it is the one that the majority of pianists that I have heard in concert or on recordings choose to play. Beyond it being so well known, my only reservation was that it is very long and, given the collaborative chamber-music aspects that we wanted to underline, I felt that having such an extended solo in the middle was not necessary or even appropriate.

For a time I worked on the second of Beethoven's cadenzas, which though somewhat longer than the extremely short third one, was closer to the dimensions I had in mind. I had been impressed with its audaciousness in Aimard/Harnoncourt's recording with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. Alfred Brendel characterises it as "the architect [turned] genius running amok". Swain notes that, in this second cadenza, Beethoven ...

...tries to fashion an improvisation on the concept of unresolved harmonic tension... Not only is there not the slightest hint of any cadence, not even any dominant preparation before the end, but no key is consistent for more than five measures or so. The cadenza is a succession of wild harmonic, rhythmic, and tempo contrasts. A single thematic quotation and the main motive repeated at the end are this cadenza's only link with the parent movement.

As Steinberg notes, it has the other advantage of being “virtually unknown”. In fact he claims that “most audiences usually don’t believe it is by Beethoven”. In his estimation, it is “calculated to scare an audience into a state of extreme wakefulness”. As such, it would certainly satisfy Quantz’s requirement for a cadenza to be surprising. However, despite its undeniable impact, it became increasingly clear to me this was not the sort of effect I was after. In almost all respects, the approach I took in devising my own was fundamentally different.

I also considered a number of the cadenzas for this concerto that are available on the IMSLP site including Clara Schumann’s that Tovey preferred to Beethoven’s despite it being “feverishly Schumannesque”. These illustrated a fascinating range of approaches but in the end, none of them seemed suitable and they strengthened my resolve to develop one for my own purposes. I was emboldened by Tovey’s conclusion that “a good musician is justified in doing his own best.”

Spontaneous extemporisation or planned: Some historical views

Whether the player is making up the cadenza at the moment or has already sketched it in advance is not going to be obvious to the listener anyway, assuming that the performance is as it should be. — Daniel Turk, 1789.

When Beethoven was forging a career as a virtuoso pianist, he seems to have been content to improvise his own cadenzas but later, when deafness had ended his performance career, his preference seems to have moved towards cadenzas that were pre-composed. 1809 was a crucial year in this respect as one “of intensive preoccupation with cadenzas” after which “Beethoven never returned to them or used them again in his music.” Mies identifies this preoccupation as no less than a creative crisis but one that was to have profound ramifications on his later development. As a number of authors from Tovey onwards have noted, the task was to reconcile the compelling rhetorical spontaneity of the *ad libitum* tradition with Beethoven’s growing concern for increasing compositional control and integration of

materials. Frogley sees similarly as it as “an inevitable clash between Beethoven the composer for posterity, trying to fix a work once and for all, and Beethoven the spontaneous performer, ever sensitive to the multiple possibilities inherent in the material.” It is worth noting that Beethoven made no attempt to publish the cadenzas he notated that year so performers who might have considered performing it were still left with the responsibility of providing a suitable cadenza. Nonetheless, one might be tempted to conclude that, in notating a number of cadenzas for all of his previous piano concertos, he was challenging the established tradition of spontaneous improvisation. However both Türk in 1789 and even Quantz some decades earlier both had recommended that a cadenza should be planned.

At times, if your thoughts are distracted, it is not immediately possible to invent something new. The best expedient is then to choose one of the most pleasing of the preceding phrases and fashion the cadenza from it. In this manner you not only can make up for any lack of inventiveness, but can always confirm the prevailing passion of the piece as well. This is an advantage that is not too well known which I would like to recommend to everyone. Johann Joaquim Quantz, 1752.

[A cadenza] consisting of a choice of ideas indiscriminately thrown together which had just occurred to the player ... is too risky ... For my part, I would rather choose the more certain way which is to sketch the cadenza in advance. Turk, 1789.

I felt relieved to find that such historical sources did recommend planning the content of a cadenza in advance. Though I have devised cadenzas for other Classical concertos in the past, like most classically trained pianists, I felt in no way competent to extemporise in the style of Beethoven, certainly not in public! I was also heartened at the time by reading Bruce Ellis Benson’s book about improvisation (2003) where few of the various types of improvisation he identifies are in fact entirely spontaneous. I knew my cadenza would need to be devised in advance though I did not write it out until later – in fact, I only notated it for the purpose of attaching it to this paper. Even though its structure and much of the figuration was entirely determined in advance, there remained various details that continued to

change until relatively close to the performances. Only later did I read about historical views on this matter including Beethoven's cadenza "crisis" of 1809. Such reading corroborated the intention to craft a carefully considered musical statement that would both congruent with the work while also offering a fresh perspective upon it.

What materials to use?

... at least the larger part of the audience pays more attention during the cadenza and at this critical point expects almost more than from the entire preceding part of the composition. Turk, 1789.

From the start, anyone preparing a new cadenza is confronted with the basic questions of what musical materials to select and then what to do with them. For me this involved much trial and error at the piano over many weeks while I played around with all the thematic ideas to see what connections, extensions and new relationships could be drawn from them. Ultimately of course, so much was tried that never found its way into the final cadenza and I will not start to outline here the various possibilities that were explored but ultimately were not included. As mentioned above, virtuosic display was not a primary intention, although of course I recognised that there was some expectation for that element to be a part of it. I knew that I wanted the cadenza to be fairly short though I did not decide in advance what its dimensions should be. Ultimately it turned out to be 45 bars long. Beethoven's own three cadenzas for this movement are respectively 100+ bars, 51+ bars, and over 11+ bars, and so, in relation to those, the dimensions of mine seem neither too long nor too short. But the dimensions were less my immediate concern than deciding what the material would be employed. Should I, as Quantz recommended above, just choose some of the most pleasing passages? That was a good place to begin, though over time I hoped that a more compelling rationale would emerge.

In fact the concept of what the cadenza could be grew from my discussions and correspondence with the conductor Tze Law. As mentioned above, we had been considering for some time the possibility of how to present a concerto in a way that would give the audience an insight into the

nature of both the work itself and our interpretative approach. As a result I was articulating my thoughts about the work itself more than I would usually do. I always enjoy observing relationships in the music I am performing. Exactly how such musical analysis contributes to interpretation is difficult to ascertain and articulate, but I have no doubt that it contributes in innumerable valuable if subtle ways. Thus I was particularly struck by a conclusion from Matthew Bribitzer-Stull that:

the cadenza enjoys an ability to accomplish what prose cannot—a rapprochement among composer, performer, and analyst and an opportunity to use music itself as a vessel for musical discourse.

And that:

Skilfully composed cadenzas ... can initiate subtle yet profound rehearsals of music outside the cadenza space.

Rather than merely akin to a parenthesis, an interlude somewhat apart from the essential structure of the movement, I wondered how a cadenza might effectively illuminate something about the work itself and contribute meaningfully to it. The goal was less to say something about the creativity of the performer but more for the performer to say something original about the work.

Some observations about the work

Two of the most striking and most frequently discussed passages of the work are its famous opening and its remarkable second movement. The former, described by Charles Rosen as having “some exceptionally odd qualities”, involves not only the initial entry of the soloist but the remarkable nature of orchestra’s entry. It is worth underlining that both this opening and the second movement establish a special type of relationship between soloist and orchestra. Plantinga has drawn attention to the connection:

[the opening] calls attention at the outset to issues about the individual and the group that will be raised to a higher power in the second

movement, and it suggests from the first a particular musical persona for the soloist. The simple fact that the first musical statement is given out by the piano is less remarkable, surely, than the nature of that statement.

One might add that the nature of the orchestra's response is no less remarkable, especially as it appears to start in a relatively distant and certainly unexpected key.

Further connections between these two events are perhaps less obvious, but, I would suggest, equally telling. For a start, despite their different character, one might note that both movements begin with an arresting five-bar phrase which is answered, after a rhetorical rest, by what should be an utterly magical entry of a B-major chord. In the first movement the orchestra answers the soloist and while in the second the soloist responds to the orchestra. Neither response is in fact in the key of B-major — the key is not of structural significance in either movement – but the particular attention drawn to it at the start of the work leaves an indelible impression. As Steinberg notes

We may have pushed the B major shock to the back of our mind, but that experience remains alive in our memory and demands making sense of. Beethoven will not let us down.

Though the differences are obvious, such relationships between the two movements invite further comparison between them. We are accustomed to listen to each movement of a work as an autonomous piece that works with its own thematic material, even though there are numerous famous examples where Beethoven clearly intends the listener to hear that material in one movement bears a close relationship to that in another. Some other subtle relationships can be seen to connect the movements especially a short e-minor episode in the first movement (bars 102-103) that relates to the expressive peak of the second movement.



Figure 2. Beethoven Fourth Piano Concerto, 1st movement, bars 102-103.



Figure 3. Beethoven Fourth Piano Concerto, 2nd movement, bars 47-49.

However though the relationship above is fleeting and presumably not registered consciously by most listeners, it seemed significant to me in so far as the passage in the first movement anticipates what will later be one of the most expressive, indeed unforgettable, phrases in the following movement. The second movement has been building towards this point of arrival through successively rising phrases at least since bar 28. Not only does it use the highest and lowest notes in the movement but also introduces a piano texture, one spread across over four octaves, that is unprecedented in the movement. As Plantinga observes:

The newly dominant piano rises up once more to new heights for a third lyrical disquisition ... this one most eloquent and rhetorical of all – an intimation of the aria forecast by all that implied recitative and arioso.

And so, given its later significance, Beethoven's subtle premonition of it in the preceding movement seems to me noteworthy. It was this observation that led me to explore the possibility that my first-movement cadenza might also anticipate the central drama of the second movement.

Unlike the third and fifth of Beethoven's piano concertos, the second movement of his fourth concerto is in a closely related key. Indeed it is in the most closely related key: the relative minor. By this stage in the composer's development, his second movements were more often exploring other mediant and sub-mediant relationships that structurally provide a greater degree of tonal contrast than when all movements share the same key signature. It is worth underlining that the closeness of this key relationship in the fourth concerto enables certain ideas, such as those passages cited above, to be recalled easily across all three movements without any need for modulation.

The unique nature of the second movement is justly renowned. It is brief and compact, being by far the shortest middle movement of all Beethoven concertos but its dramatic impact far exceeds its modest dimensions. Charles Rosen (1971) refers to it as "perhaps the most dramatically conceived ever written". Despite the controversy surrounding Jander's proposal of the movement having very specific programmatic content, as a performer I find the imagery he suggests to be stimulating both generally and in some places specifically. This way of hearing and understanding this remarkable movement was prominent in our symposium discussion of the work. But whether or not one finds such narrative associations useful, it nonetheless reflects the movement's utter uniqueness.

Among the most striking passages in the second movement is the cadenza that Beethoven wrote out (from bar 51 to 63). Significantly he did not leave this one to the performer's discretion. It directly follows the expressive passage, the "intimation of the aria", considered above. Kinderman reflects upon "the impact of Beethoven's climactic, despairing cadenza". Elsewhere he refers to its "unforgettable climactic message — a cadenza featuring a loud sustained trill. The searing intensity of this cadenza is the apex and turning-point of the entire concerto".

Further, Plantinga describes its effect as:

one of nearly manic surface assaults on a harmonic object that remains immovable, an act of desperation whose futility recalls and validates the *una corda* resignation of the movement as a whole.

36

due e poi tre corde

cresc. sin' al.

ff

a 3 corde

(m.s.)

due, poi una corda

dim. sin' al pp

a tempo

I

Figure 4. Beethoven Fourth Piano Concerto, 2nd movement, bars 53-64.

As with the B-major chord at the opening, the F#-A-C trills can hardly fail to make a strong — indelible even — impression on the memory and Beethoven will later refer back to this striking gesture. For example, the third movement does make several subtle, but once recognised, unmistakeable references to these trilled notes. Figure 11 is one example but, appropriately, they are most obvious immediately after the cadenza and in the Coda as shown in Figure 12 and 13. It is surprising that, as with those in Figures 8 and 9, none of the many sources I consulted drew attention to these specific relationships between the movements. I have long heard these passages as explicit references back to the second but perhaps that is not common.



Figure 5. Beethoven Fourth Piano Concerto, 3rd movement, bars 248-251.



Figure 6. Beethoven Fourth Piano Concerto, 3rd movement, bars 410-416.

I always hear the start of the final Presto referring back to the earlier outcry of despair, now transformed into a gesture of positive affirmation, indeed, one might claim, to be one of dramatic resolution.

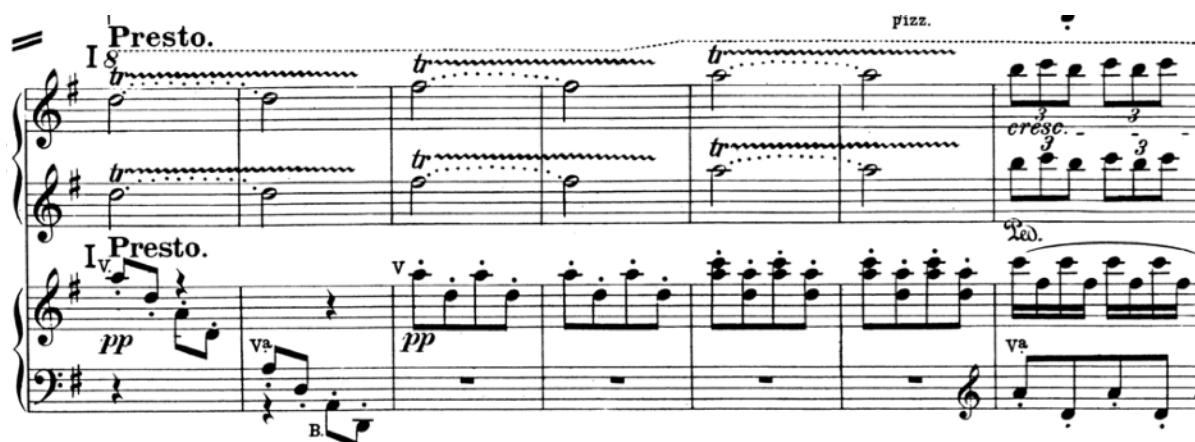


Figure 7. Beethoven Fourth Piano Concerto, 3rd movement bars 254-260.

Having observed Beethoven making such references between three movements, I felt some justification for anticipating material from the second movement in the first movement's cadenza. Clearly for a work that is not well known anticipating a movement that has not yet been heard is not going to register meaningfully but that is hardly the case here. Thus I decided to feature the F#-A-C trills, exactly as they appear in the second movement cadenza, in the hope that I would make the connection obvious. That would be the major event, an unexpected point of rupture, from which the rest of the cadenza would have to come to terms.

The other connection that I had observed between the movements, again one that appears obvious once one starts to look, is the prominence given to C major. As is the case with B major, it is not so much as a key of structural significance but is a frequent point of reference. Most obviously, the third movement pretends to start in this key. It isn't in fact in the key of C major. The movement just starts on the subdominant chord. Nonetheless, it clearly offers a life-affirming way out of the despair at the end of the second movement and thus in narrative terms may be seen as of crucial dramatic significance. As such, following premonitions of the drama of the second movement in my cadenza, I was aware that C major could also anticipate the later resolution.

I should also mention an observation I had read many years previously that left a strong impression on me. Charles Rosen observed that:

It is, in fact, with this fundamental triad that Beethoven attains his most remarkable and characteristic effects. At one point in the G major Piano Concerto, he achieves the seemingly impossible with it and turns this most consonant of chords (into which all dissonance must be, by definition, resolved by the end of the piece) itself into a dissonance. In the following measures, almost by rhythmic means alone and without modulating from G major, the tonic chord of G major in root position clearly requires resolution to the dominant (p. 387). The majesty and excitement combined in measure 27 come from the fact that it is the fundamental chord of the piece that is held for a full measure after being rendered unstable by the steadily repeated (and increasingly animated) movement into a D major chord.



Figure 8. Beethoven Fourth Piano Concerto, 1st movement bars 24-28, reduction for piano.

Might such an observation be underlined in the cadenza?

Key structures

An important consideration was how widely the cadenza would modulate. 18th-century theorists such as Quantz and Türk saw cadenzas as essentially a prolongation of the cadence and specifically discouraged modulation to any distant keys within a cadenza. Mozart essentially embodied that theory in practice. Clearly Beethoven himself digressed from that principle in some of his cadenzas from 1809, especially his provocative second cadenza for this first movement. Nonetheless, the short third one does in fact apply this principle being literally an extended cadence in the tonic key. Evidently both were options sanctioned by the composer. Again my decision in this regard was informed by observation of the work itself.

In Beethoven's second cadenza, I was struck by the fact that it launched immediately into A-flat major, a key that had barely been touched on in the movement or in fact anywhere else in the work. It soon turns to C minor, a much more closely related key but again one that is rarely featured in the work. For a time I considered that my cadenza might do similarly by featuring some of the keys that were not represented elsewhere. In fact, on closer examination I observed the range of keys that Beethoven touches upon across the work. I was aware of the work's "extraordinarily wide modulatory range", but I hadn't appreciated how wide it was, in fact, until I began to look for each key systematically. The result was Table 1, below.

Key		First movement	Second movement	Third movement
G	major	Tonic key governing the tonal structure	Alluded to in passing in bars 8-9	Tonic key governing the tonal structure
G	minor	Bars 271-272 (passing through it on the way to E flat major), Bars 280-283 (brief return after E flat major becomes German Sixth), Bars 301-302*		Bars 204- 208 (but as in first movement it is soon overshadowed by E flat major), Bars 349-350 (but again on the way to E flat major), Bars 248-290 (perhaps the most significant occasion)
F#	major			Bars 459-464
F#	minor	Bars 210- 216 (significant in the development.) Bars 37-40*		
F	major	Bars 138-139, Bars 309-310 *		
F	minor	Bars 193-200 (featured by the entry of soloist in development)		Bars 240-248
E	major	Bars 232- 236		
E	minor	Bars 31-32, 101-102, 140-141, 145-148, 237 (all of these are presented merely in passing)	Tonic key governing the tonal structure	Bars 48-56
Eb	major	Bars 272-280		Bars 208-224, and strongly from bars 251-270
Eb	minor			
D	major	As the dominant, it is structurally important as the key for second subject area.	Bars 18-24	As the dominant, it is structurally important as the key for second subject area.
D	minor	Bars 111-112 (in passing), Bars 303-304* and 134-135*		
C#	major			
C#	minor	Bars 216- 232 (an important key in the development section)		

C	maj or	Bars 33-34, Bars 142-143.		The Rondo theme implies this key at the start. Of particular note is the long dominant preparation of C major for the return of the Rondo in bar 160 (all the way from bar 132). Again, the return of Rondo theme at bar 416 is preceded by clear dominant prolongation from bar 402.
C	min or	Note its prominence in the second of Beethoven's own cadenzas.		The only indirect suggestion of this key is in the tutti from bars 391-398ish which turns to prepare for C major.
B	maj or	The significance of its placement in bars 6-8 can hardly be underestimated. Bar 35-36 Also significantly it appears in the recapitulation in bars 258-260. But overall it is much more important as a prominently placed chord (usually dominant of E) than as a key in its own right.		
B	min or	Bars 40-44, Bars 204-207.		
Bb	maj or	Bars 105-109 (Also in Beethoven's long cadenza the second subject is stated in this key.)		Bars 371-386
Bb	min or			Bars 227-236
A	maj or			Suggestions of A major function more as dominant of the dominant rather than as a strongly established key. For example bars 57-72. (It seems to be clear tonic-dominant in A major for the first few bars but soon it becomes evident that this is functioning as dominant of the dominant on the way to the second subject in bar 80.)
A	min or	Bars 29-30*, Bars 312-315.		
Ab	maj or			
Ab	min or			

This table is not intended to suggest that all these keys are of the structural importance or of any equivalence but, more modestly, to illustrate that across the work, even if they are foregrounded only briefly and in passing, most of the 24 keys are given some prominence at some point. As was noted earlier in relation to the remarkable way B major is presented so early in the work, the colours of various keys can leave an imprint on the memory even if they are not prolonged for many bars. Clearly the expected tonal polarity between the tonic and dominant tonal areas remains within the sonata form of the first movement and the sonata rondo form of the third movement. The table is just intended to underline that, even though all three movements share the same key signature, Beethoven's language is able to draw in a range of tonal colours that was uncommonly wide for his time. How might that observation be reflected in my cadenza?

As mentioned above, Beethoven's second cadenza starts in the distant and unexpected key of A-flat major. Perhaps significantly this is one of only four keys that are not been featured anywhere else in the work. I did consider featuring both A-flat major (or minor) in my cadenza but in the end decided against it. Ultimately I decided not to involve these overlooked distant keys. After observing that the work is already a wide pallet of tonal colours, I resolved in fact to do the opposite, that is to keep my cadenza predominantly focused on the keys that were already most important in the work, most obviously G major, E minor together with some references to C major and B major. I decided that these were to be the main tonal ingredients. Thematically I resolved to feature those ideas mentioned above — the opening of the piece and the F#-A-C trills and the climactic E minor phrase in Figure 9.

In terms of overall shape my concept developed into a cadenza in three sections. The first would unfold without surprises. Any virtuosic display, usually expected in a cadenza, would come in this section before a dramatic interruption that anticipates the drama of the second movement with the F#-A-C trills. Following that rupture, my plan was that the middle section would be freer, more contemplative and somehow work its way back around to the opening solo of the movement. Following that the overriding purpose of the third section would prepare for the serene mood at the orchestra's re-entry. These three main sections in my cadenza — whose function I have

tried to reflect in the titles of *Embarking*, *Rupture* and *Return* — are described in more detail below illustrated by score extracts.

Section 1 (Bars 1-11)

Embarking

Beethoven's three cadenzas for this movement all start off energetically. I tried a range of material to see what would be an effective and unexpected start, but decided to begin not with a loud dramatic statement but to creep in after the orchestra's preceding chords with the wonderful figure right in the top register of the instrument from bars 296-297, then continues to fall sequentially while growing in dynamic.



Figure 10. First-movement cadenza bars 1-3.

This descended to a passage taken from bars 248-249, that is taken from immediately preceding the Recapitulation, one that in fact features the F#-A-C diminished triad. As the section continues to build dynamically, this

diminished triad provided an easy pivot to e-minor, a goal that I knew would soon allow me to easily reference the second movement directly.



Figure 11. First-movement cadenza bars 4-6.

As this was to be the section of the cadenza most fiery and virtuosic, the following bars are a transposition of one of the most striking passages from the development section, an unforgettable and climactic passage that initially was presented in the remarkably distant key of C# minor (bars 224-230). That these bars finish with minimum trills suited my purpose perfectly as it could interrupt with an explicit premonition of the second movement's F#-A-C trills.

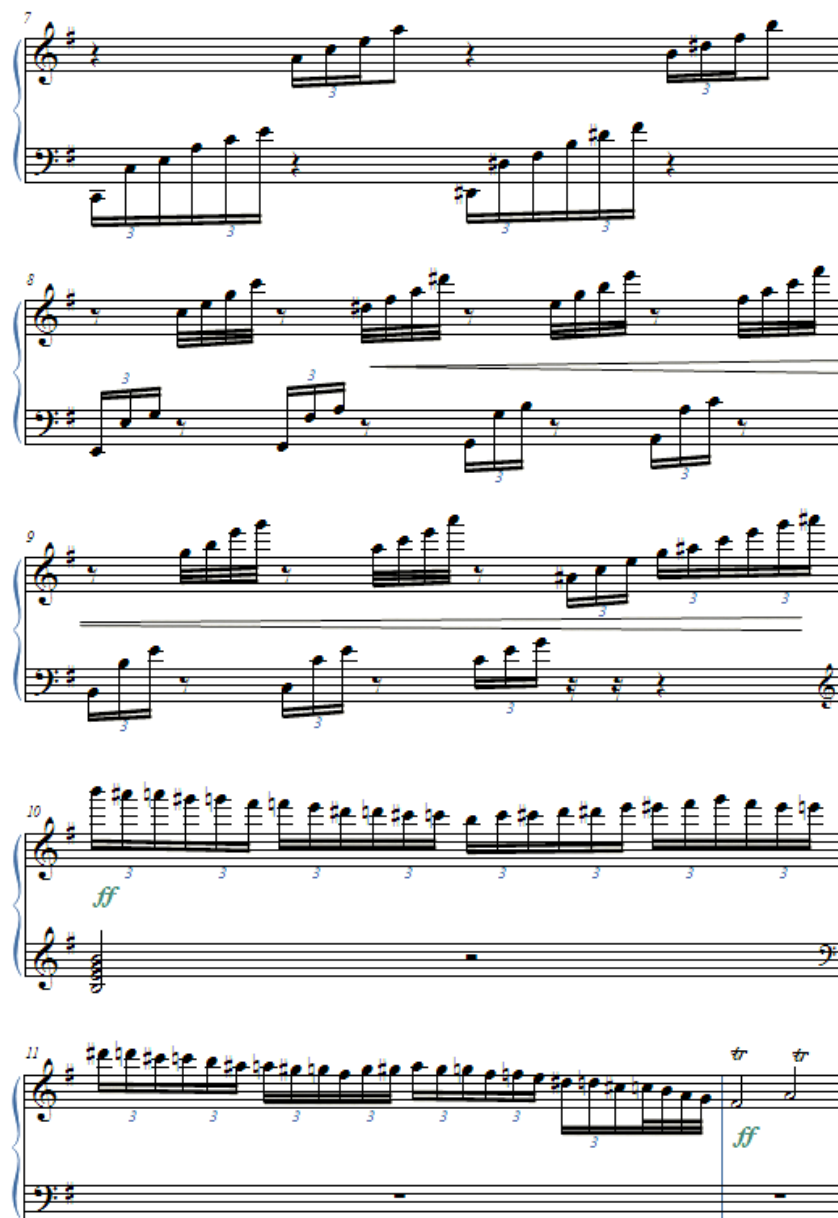


Figure 12. First-movement cadenza bars 7-12.

Section 2 (bars 12-24)

Rupture

I wanted this reference to what is to come in the second movement to be unmistakable and for it to seem to be a shock and a rupture that halts the fluency of the preceding passages. I wanted the response to it to be

rhetorical and both slower and freer in tempo. In fact, bars 13-18 here should have no sense of a consistent tempo. After the trill on the C, I imagine that some listeners will expect the chromatic descending lines from A-D# (as in bars 56-58 of second movement) to follow and I wanted to play with that expectation. To fulfill it too obviously would have been unsubtle but I did want the connection to be perceived and unmistakeable. I therefore decided to make the descent from A to D# diatonic and an octave lower, and to follow it with the broken diminished 7th chord of e-minor. The C-major chord that follows should be a refreshing surprise as it is not an expected resolution. But this seemed appropriate enough as a chord, if not a key, that, as mentioned above, I intended to reference/underline at various places in the cadenza. But then return to the diminished 7th chord and resolve it this time to e minor via a variant of the cadence in bars 36-38 of second movement.

The musical score for the first-movement cadenza, bars 12-19, is presented in three systems. The first system (bars 11-12) shows a rapid chromatic scale in the right hand, with triplets indicated by the number '3'. The scale ends with a trill on C4, followed by a fortissimo (ff) dynamic. The second system (bars 13-14) is marked 'Meno mosso' and features a trill on C4 in the right hand and a broken diminished 7th chord in the left hand. The dynamics range from forte (f) to mezzo-forte (mf). The third system (bars 15-17) is marked 'Ritardando' and shows a descending chromatic line in the right hand and a broken diminished 7th chord in the left hand, ending with a piano (p) dynamic.

Figure 13. First-movement cadenza bars 12-19.

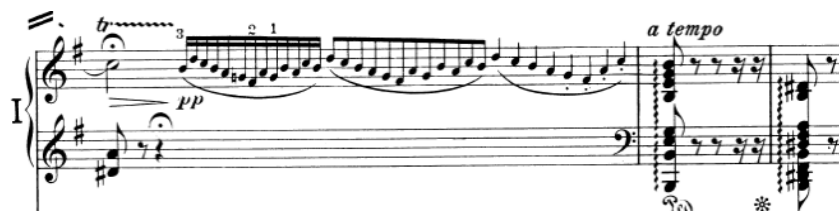


Figure 14. Beethoven Fourth Piano Concerto, 2nd movement, bars 53-64.

I originally wanted to give the cadence if not exactly, at least close to as it appeared there. Again I wanted those familiar with the concerto, that is likely to be the majority of people listening after all, to recognise the reference to the second movement but wanted to conclude on the dominant with the root of the chord on top so that it would fuse with — be the pivot between — the second movement that takes us back to the B-major chord with which the orchestra enters in the first movement.



Figure 15. First-movement cadenza bars 18-24.

This would be the moment when the music returns to that opening of the movement, when we leave the material of the second movement behind and recall that the most magical of moments is in the sixth bar of the piece but here recalled by the soloist as if a distant precious memory. As has been noted above, the special relationship between soloist and orchestra in this piece was immediately evident from this point. In general, I didn't want the soloist in the cadenza to play material that belonged exclusively to the

orchestra but I felt that here was an opportunity for a crossover. Significantly it also provides an immediate transformation from the despair of the second movement to the wonderful B major with which the orchestra had entered. Richard Wigmore has described that entry as if it were “entranced, distant, luminous” and I certainly wanted to evoke some aura like that again here. The material is stated unchanged for a few bars until a couple of changes of mode alter the perspective. The E-major chord in bar 21, a chord so rarely encountered in this work and so refreshing after so much E minor, is one to cherish as one plays. But, having made one change of mode, in the following sequence I darkened the expected D-major chord with a turn to the minor. Apart from the localised effect, this was done to set up what should be the most magical moment, when we leave the angst-ridden world of the second movement and the return of the G-major chord with which the piano opened the concerto.

Section 3 (bars 25-45)

Return

I enjoy hearing this chord as though one has come full circle, a procedure I felt was only made possible by coming via the B major. Beyond returning to a tonic triad, I would hope that even listeners without perfect pitch would recognise immediately the distinctive sonority of this glorious chord. It is not at all a common-garden-variety of G major chord. Plantinga describes it as:

a distinctive eight-fingered tonic chord in radically ‘close’ position (skipping no notes), an instant announcement of that new piano sound of the nineteenth-century, a saturated, intensely colored sonority in a middle register.

I enjoy holding the chord and just allowing the sonority to hang in the air (both at the beginning and especially here in the cadenza). The impression I was after was that time should seem to stop. Even though I hoped the opening would be recalled, a subtle difference should also be evident. We may be back to where we started but our perceptions have changed through the process.

But there is a further difference. At the opening this chord was clearly establishing the tonic key but here, being preceded by a D minor chord (with its seventh falling melodically to the third), this is not the case. Here, as Rosen observed elsewhere, a sustained tonic chord in root position sounds as a dissonance to be resolved. And I am tempted to describe its resolution to C major in the following bar in poetic terms like salvation or redemption as I believe the key suggests such matters when the third movement opens with it.

To underline this, I contemplated making some thematic reference here to the third movement but all my attempts to do this seemed too unsubtle. Instead the C major here was taken directly from bars 294-297. I also like the conceit that this passage in the concerto leads back to the material with which I started the cadenza (that is, from bar 298). We should seem to have already done at least one circle.



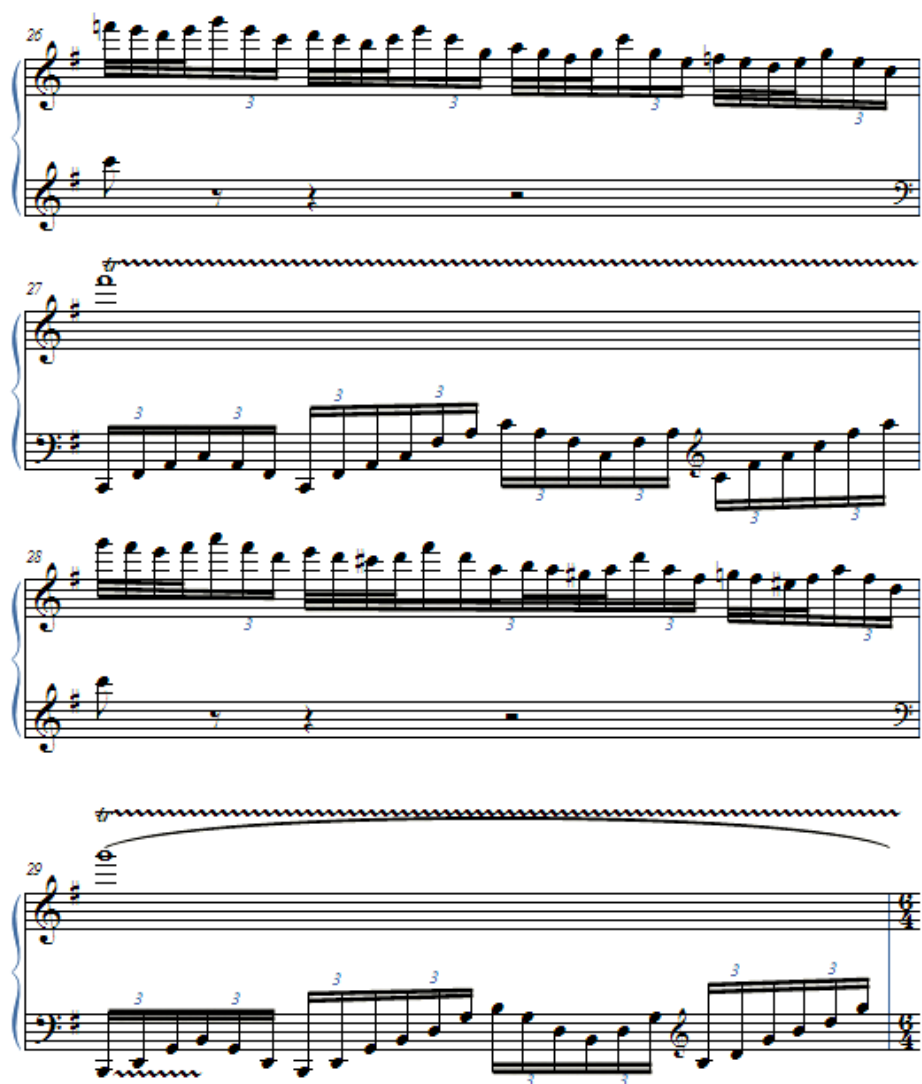


Figure 16. First-movement cadenza bars 25-29.

The last reference I wanted to make to the second movement was to evoke that strikingly expressive phrase in bars 47-50.



Figure 17. Beethoven Fourth Piano Concerto, 2nd movement, bars 47-51.

As was considered above (see Figures 1 and 2), a subtle premonition of this phrase occurs in bars 101-102 of the first movement so I had it in mind as an idea worth drawing attention to in my cadenza. But here it is presented transposed into G major. It sounds glorious in the major mode and up in that high register (and, as has been often observed, is obviously such a distinctive part of the piano writing in this concerto).

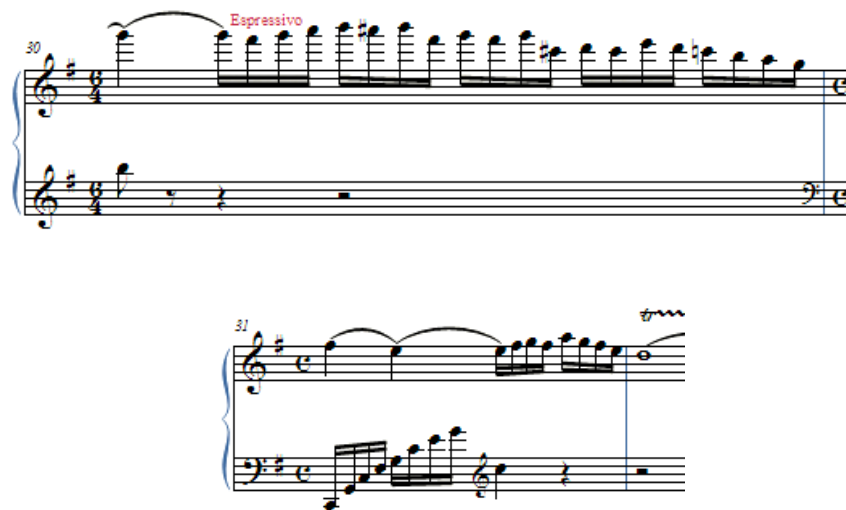


Figure 18. First-movement cadenza bars 30-32.

Harmonically, again the underlying harmonic progression from a G major to a C major chord also seemed appropriate. The idea was that having presented this phrase here so radiantly in the major mode, its recurrence in the minor mode in the second movement could be even more telling. Whether or not any listeners were aware of this and other such connections did not concern me, as I believe such relationships may register subliminally. Such relationships abound in Beethoven's music and I refuse to believe that his music would be as compelling without them.

The passage leads back to a sustained trill, so different in quality from that earlier long one on C. It is now a tone higher on D and the trills are about to rise. Trills are of course a sign to audience and conductor that the end of the cadenza may be near again that was an expectation I wanted to play with. As Whitmore has noted Beethoven "frequently sustains trills for long periods while motivic reference is made above or below".



Figure 19. First-movement cadenza bars 33-43.

So again the music returns to a variant of the theme from the opening of the work for four bars and that is joined to the second half of the orchestra's opening 8-bar phrase. Again I like to think of this as a metaphor for a reconciliation between the piano's and orchestra's versions of the opening material. Above the recall of these thematic elements, the trills have essentially risen step by step up to A which is of course the pitch beneath which the orchestra will re-enter. But not yet. I wanted to stretch this by an explicit focus on the F#-A-C now transformed from something of dread into something more radiant. Different inversions of the diminished triad answer in imitation to ascend right to the top notes of Beethoven's piano, at which point it comes out with the running notes that ended Beethoven's first cadenza.



Figure 20. First-movement cadenza, bars 44-46.

Third-movement cadenza

This was much simpler than in the first movement. Beethoven himself indicated that he wanted a short cadenza here with the explicit instruction of '*la cadenza sia corta*' (that is, 'let the cadenza be short'). It is, in Tovey's words, "an incident in one of Beethoven's greatest codas".

I was sorry not to play Beethoven's cadenza as it fits into the movement so well and is deeply satisfying to play. However, it seemed unacceptable to play my own cadenza for the first movement and use his for the third. I tried various ideas before deciding to use one of my favourite passages in the movement, one which in fact regrettably only comes once (in bars 272-279). It is the only time this pattern of alternating between the hands occurs with clanging dissonances. As a player, it is immensely enjoyable, so I decided to adapt it over essentially a second inversion of the tonic chord for 8 bars. And rather than having the bar's rest and pause before the orchestra comes back in, I decided to lead straight in with the pattern falling down to the A trills. Note that it is followed by the F#-A-C (now in an inversion), another transformation of that "turning point" in the work, growing with confidence from single, to double, to triple-note trills. So this third movement cadenza is obediently short — hopefully, from the listener's point of view, surprisingly so.

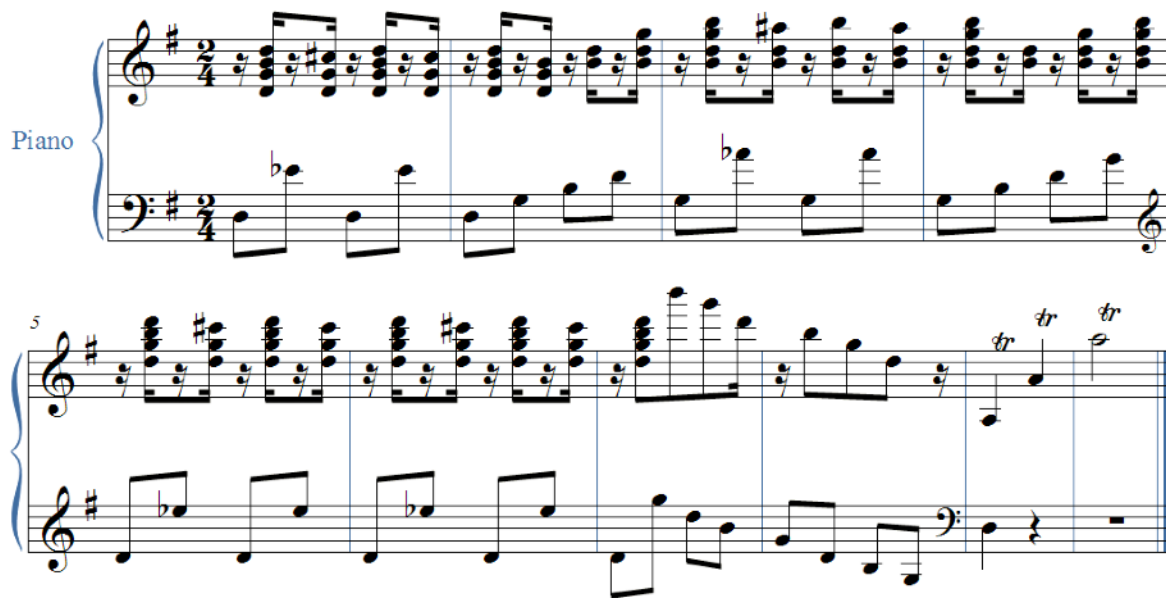


Figure 21. Third-movement Cadenza.

Final reflections

Ultimately how successful or otherwise, my cadenzas for this work are for others to decide. The many complimentary comments I received may have been due to politeness from people who may have felt compelled to say something. I certainly perceived that comments made to me were varied in their degree of sincerity, but nonetheless what seemed to be genuine enthusiasm from a few was encouraging. Of course, its degree of effectiveness in performance is far more important than any clever justification in words I could offer here. However, given that approaches to cadenzas are so rarely made explicit, or unpacked in any detail, and that my intentions here were unusual, my hope is that they may be of interest to others, and that others may be bold enough to look beyond playing the composer's own cadenzas and face head-on the aesthetic dilemma that devising a new cadenza inevitably poses. I was asked to play the *Emperor Concerto* with an orchestra in the following year and, I must say, I was somewhat relieved that the cadenza was not an issue there. It would seem that, by then, Beethoven himself evidently wished to avoid the cadenza dilemma.

Cadenza to the first movement of Beethoven's Fourth Piano Concerto Opus 58

Piano

The musical score is written for piano and consists of five systems, each with two staves. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 3/4. The first system begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The music is characterized by dense triplet and sixteenth-note passages. The second system features a crescendo hairpin. The third system includes a repeat sign. The fourth and fifth systems continue the complex rhythmic patterns.

6

7

8

9

10

ff

This musical score consists of five systems of piano notation, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#). Measure 6 features continuous eighth-note triplets in both hands. Measure 7 has eighth-note triplets in the bass and eighth-note pairs in the treble. Measure 8 shows sixteenth-note triplets in the bass and eighth-note pairs in the treble. Measure 9 contains sixteenth-note triplets in both hands. Measure 10 is marked *ff* and features a rapid sixteenth-note triplet scale in the treble, while the bass staff has a whole rest.

11

3 3 3 3 3 3

ff

Meno mosso

13

f *mp* *mf*

Ritardando

17

p *pp*

21

Poco a tempo

25

3 3 3 3 3 3

The image displays a musical score for a piano cadenza, spanning measures 31 to 45. The score is written for piano (p) and is in 2/4 time. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The notation is as follows:

- Measures 31-34:** The right hand features a melodic line with slurs and a trill in measure 32. The left hand provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes.
- Measures 35-40:** The right hand continues with a melodic line, including a trill in measure 36 and a long slur over measures 37-40. The left hand accompaniment continues with various rhythmic patterns.
- Measures 41-43:** The right hand has a melodic line with a trill in measure 41 and a long slur over measures 42-43. The left hand accompaniment continues.
- Measures 44-45:** The right hand features a rapid sixteenth-note scale. The left hand has a trill in measure 44 and a sixteenth-note scale in measure 45.

Figure 22. Cadenza for the first movement (complete).

4

Prepared to explore

The prepared piano

Erik Griswold

Introduction

For the past fifteen years, the prepared piano has been my musical laboratory. The main focus of my musical exploration, it's provided a springboard from which to dive into new creative streams. Prepared piano has served both as a performance medium and as a hands-on tool for composition and improvisation. Comprising thirty or so major projects, ranging from solo to ensemble, the body of work includes original compositions, arrangements of traditional music (Brazilian, Cuban, and Chinese), and radical reinterpretations of pop, jazz, and blues songs.

Much of my creative research has been concerned with a layering of musical ideas: polyrhythmic, polytimbral, even poly-stylistic collages. At the same time I've been searching out the music of the prepared piano, "sounding the instrument" in cascading textural improvisations, trying to create music which is borne completely of the medium. I'm fascinated not only by the sound world, a strange and beautiful percussive orchestra at my fingertips, but also by the cognitive dissonance it creates both for the performer and listener, and by the prepared piano's subversive nature. In its breadth of applications across musical styles and approaches, prepared piano has become, for me, a lens through which to explore the world.

Defining Prepared Piano

A prepared piano is a piano (usually grand) altered by placing objects and materials between and on the strings. Screws and bolts are placed snugly

between adjacent strings to lower the pitch, produce rich unusual harmonics, and introduce percussive and buzzing effects. Rubber and wood can be wedged or laced between strings to mute the tone, shorten the sustain, dampen the higher harmonics, and create a percussive attack. Paper and cardboard can also be used to affect the attack characteristics and produce unpredictable buzzing effects.

While the insides of the piano are radically changed, a prepared piano is generally played in an ordinary manner, on the keyboard. In my mind there is a clear distinction between “prepared piano” and “extended” or “inside the piano” performance techniques, such as plucking, bowing, strumming or rubbing the strings. Whereas “prepared piano” uses the traditional technique and gesture of piano performance, “extended piano” develops a new performance technique and gesture to extend the piano sound world. Of course the two techniques can, and have been combined in extremely interesting ways, but the main focus of my practice, and of this discussion is the unique possibilities of prepared piano.

Some Historical Context

John Cage famously pioneered the prepared piano in the 1940s beginning with his composition *Bacchanale*, reaching a full statement in the epic *Sonatas and Interludes*, and featuring in the indeterminate period as well. In those works he established a repertoire of sounds documented by Richard Bunker in 1981 in his manual *The Well-Prepared Piano*.

Though Cage should rightly be viewed as the pioneer of prepared piano, he was by no means the first or only composer or pianist to alter the sound of the piano with foreign objects. In Gary Butler’s fascinating thesis “Prepared instruments in improvised music”, he details examples of prepared piano from both the European classical and African-American traditions. In the early 20th century, composers Erik Satie, Maurice Ravel, and Henry Cowell (from whom Cage learned) all used prepared or extended piano techniques. Satie was apparently the first to use preparations, in his 1914 premiere of *Le Pige de Méduse*. Perhaps more surprising was the 19th century trend among piano-makers, who experimented with a variety of

pedal-activated effects that functioned in a very similar manner to Cage's prepared piano. When a performer of the period depressed the "mute stop," "harpsichord," "bassoon," or "Turkish" pedal, strips of leather, cloth, ivory, parchment, or metal would be mechanically lowered onto the strings to create a variety of plucked and percussive effects.

Much less known, but equally relevant, is the use of prepared piano techniques in the African-American tradition, including early blues and jazz pianists, who used strips of paper and leather to create percussive effects. Imagine a Boogie Woogie bass line accompanied by the noisy rattle of paper laced through the strings. As John Cage himself noted: "The altering of the sounds of a piano had been effected by hot jazz musicians in New Orleans by placing paper between the strings". The metallic twang of the tack piano (which has thumb tacks stuck into the piano hammers) is another example of prepared piano unrelated to the western classical model. In reference to Cecil Taylor's later use of metal sheets placed over the piano strings (in *Amplitude*), Butler notes that "Taylor's percussive piano technique may be more closely related to African and jazz precedents than the classical avant garde."

It is, in fact, the multiplicity of reference points, from both European and African-American sources, which connect classical and popular, avant-garde and folk, which fascinates me about the prepared piano.

The Colors of Prepared Piano

In my first prepared piano album, *Other Planes*, composed in 2000, I set out to explore the colors of the instrument in a systematic way. Each of the first five movements uses a single material or timbre, while the sixth combines layers: 1) Rubber mutes, 2) Rubber wedges & coated bolts, 3) Screws & bolts, 4) Paper, 5) Unprepared, but with electronic processing and voice, and 6) Layering of mutes, paper, rubber wedges and bolts. Each movement is an etude on a sound color, capitalizing on the sonic possibilities of rubber, metal, and paper. I wanted to create a music that would express each timbre, and, as it turns out, *Other Planes* established most of the colors I've used in subsequent projects. In the following section I will focus on materials, sounds, and musical textures in parts 1-4.

Rubber Strips. I experimented with a number of rubber materials with varying widths and thicknesses before settling on strips of “flat rubber elastic,”– the type you might find in the waistband of a pair of boxer shorts. I tried lacing them through the strings (over–under–over) at different positions: lacing across the harmonic nodes produced overtones, non-nodal positions produced “dead” tones. I came to prefer the resonant sound achieved by positioning them at the very ends of the strings (at either the pin block or the hitch pin end).

Rubber strips dampen the higher overtones, shorten the decay, and add a percussive slap or pluck to the attack. The sound has a hybrid quality, somewhere between plucked & struck, acoustic and electronic. Depending on the context, it can evoke marimba, hand drums, guitar, bass, or suggest a synthesizer pluck. This type of preparation is very sensitive to the touch of the piano: played at a soft dynamic, the muted tone and altered sustain dominate, but played at a loud dynamic, the “slap” or “pluck” of the attack becomes more prominent, like the sound of mallet hitting wood, hand hitting drum, or fingernail plucking string.

Rubber wedges and coated bolts. In Part 2, “Harmonic Plane,” I wanted to explore the rich overtones of the bass strings. After some trial and error, I found I was able to realize the sound I wanted by using soft rubber wedges or bolts coated in gaffer tape, placed at the harmonic nodes. The tone is a combination of upper partials (up to around the 7th) and flattened fundamental, resulting in a booming, hollow tone, like a distant church bell.

Bolts & screws. Across most of the piano range, bolts and screws produce a gong or cymbal-like quality. Distinct from the lower range, church-bell effect mentioned above, bolt preparations in the mid-range of the piano have a clear pitch, metallic attack and short decay, akin to a gamelan sound. Screws can be used in a similar way, but have a prominent buzz, reminiscent of the clangorous gongs and cymbals in Sichuan opera. In the upper octaves of the piano, screws can be placed on the harmonic nodes to create a sharp attack and delicate harmonic tone, evoking the sound of glockenspiel, or pipa.

Several factors contribute to the gong effect: 1) the bolts & screws “couple” with the piano strings, effectively making the strings longer, thus lowering the pitch, 2) there is a metallic ping to the attack, 3) unusual enharmonic tones are introduced, 4) the decay and sustain characteristics are altered, becoming shorter and more linear. Pitch and resonance can both be adjusted, depending on the mass and positioning along the string. Larger, longer bolts lower the pitch more. Placing them in the middle of the strings lowers the pitch the most; sliding them towards the ends gradually raises the pitch. The resonance is greatest if positioned on a harmonic node. Screws tend to have a bit of “play,” jostling around each time the hammer strikes the strings, and so introduce a greater degree of metallic noise.

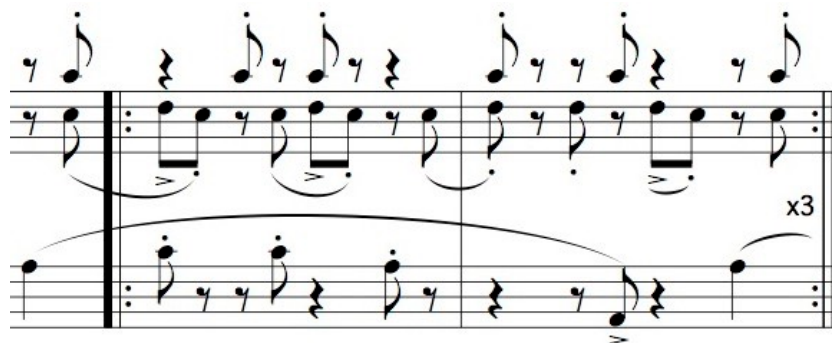
Paper. I’ve found paper to be among the easiest to use and most effective preparations. So I was quite surprised to note Richard Bunker’s dismissive assessment of it in *The Well-Prepared Piano* (“paper and cardboard are limited in preparation usage because they lack both malleable resilience and strength”). Paper can be laced between, or placed on top of strings to produce buzzing, rattling effects, like the noisy buzz of a fuzzbox guitar, or the rattle of a snare drum. Unpredictable by nature, it can slide and bounce around during performance, creating subtle variations of tone according to the intensity of vibrations. Nevertheless, I’ve always been able to recreate similar buzzing, rattling effects with a variety of different pianos and types of paper. Perhaps the unpredictable quality appeals to my improvisational instincts.

In performance, each section of *Other Planes* (with the exception of Part 6) has a unique pitch set and concomitant tone colour. Some movements focus on a small (e.g. two octave) subset of the piano range, while others range across the keyboard. One interesting aspect of this structure is that it creates cognitive dissonance with one’s normal expectation of a piano recital. Each time I begin a new section of the piece, the piano sounds utterly different!

Imitation

A percussion ensemble at my fingertips. Piano preparations have a unique capacity to evoke or suggest the sound of other instruments. Cage, in fact, initially developed prepared piano as a substitute for percussion, as he states in his Foreword to *The Well-Prepared Piano*. I sometimes think of prepared piano as a strange percussion ensemble at my fingertips, and in a series of pieces written around 2002, I explored the potential of recreating Brazilian, Cuban, and Chinese percussion styles.

Three Latin Rhythms was the first of this series of works, marking a return to Brazilian and Cuban percussion music I enjoyed playing as a teenager. I had gradually moved away from percussion, and towards piano as my main performance medium, so I was motivated by a desire to recreate those deep rhythmic grooves on the piano. I created layers of preparations that mirrored the instrumental and rhythmic layers of three traditional rhythms: Guaguanco, Maracatu, and Batucada.



This next example shows the opening of recurring motif of *Guaguanco*, in which small strips of paper created the choked, sharp attack of the claves; single-bolt preparations evoke the metallic tone of agogo bells, and rubber mutes in the bass and middle range create a conga-like effect. With the enhanced contrapuntal clarity of the strikingly distinct tone colours, I feel there is an illusion of three-dimensional spatialization – the clave, bell, and skin layers stand apart from each other in their own acoustic space.

Water Pushes Sand, on the other hand, takes as its starting point the sound and rhythms of Sichuan Opera percussion, which I studied Chengdu, during two Asia Link residencies, along with my partner Vanessa Tomlinson. In

WPS, Vanessa and I (as Clocked Out Duo) use prepared piano, found objects and western percussion to recreate the sounds of Chinese gongs, cymbals, and wood drum, combining it with our own musical elements to produce a collage of traditional rhythm and free improvisation.

This musical score is written for a prepared piano in 4/4 time. It consists of two staves: a treble staff and a bass staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and one sharp (F-sharp), and the time signature is 4/4. Annotations with arrows point to specific notes and symbols on the staves:

- Bolts:** Xiao luo / Small Gong (points to a note in the treble staff).
- Paper:** Xiaoze / Small cymbal (points to a note in the treble staff).
- Rubber mutes:** Da luo / Large gong (points to a note in the bass staff).
- Screws:** Da bo / Large cymbals (points to a note in the bass staff).

Chinese zithers. *Two Sichuan Folk Songs* provides a different example of instrumental imitation. In that work I constructed layers of preparations to mimic the sounds of plucked Chinese instruments. Margaret Leng Tan, among the well-known performers of Cage's music, wrote: "Griswold has literally coaxed a Chinese orchestral ensemble out of the instrument". In the example below, the right hand imitates the pipa, while the left hand alternates between gu zheng and wood drum. As before, the prepared timbres are used to create an enhanced sense of contrapuntal layers.

This musical score is for a piece titled "Two Sichuan Folk Songs". It features three staves: a treble staff, a bass staff, and a grand staff (treble and bass clef). The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score includes several performance instructions:

- Accel. (Accelerando):** Indicated by a right-pointing arrow above the treble staff.
- Rit. (Ritardando):** Indicated by a right-pointing arrow above the treble staff.
- Singing:** A label above the bass staff.
- mf (mezzo-forte):** A dynamic marking below the bass staff.
- 8va:** An octave marking above the grand staff.
- continue dynamic swells:** A label below the grand staff.

Cover versions: Preparation as a fractured lens. In several projects I've used prepared piano to create skewed versions of familiar material, drawing on jazz, blues, ragtime, punk, gothic rock, and country & western. The eclectic approach to style no doubt reflects my musical taste, but I believe the multiplicity of references also connects with the nature of prepared piano. The timbres of the prepared piano are not fully of any one aesthetic world. Part piano - part percussion; not quite Western - not quite Eastern; acoustic - but sounding a bit electronic; at once avant-garde and folksy; the prepared piano seems to suggest hybridity.

In some cover versions I've used preparations to evoke the sounds of other instruments. For instance, muted bass notes often stand in for bass or electric guitar (*Tired of Being Alone, Spike Driver Blues*), while buzzing paper is used to evoke the distortion pedals of The Cure and Iggy and the Stooges. This contributes to the performative aspect, perhaps putting a new twist on the "one man band."

Part of the fun of these covers has been finding creative ways to imitate these sounds. But the other part of the fun is using the preparations to create a skewed, off-kilter distortion of familiar riffs and melodies. The prepared piano acts as a "fractured lens" through which familiar melodies can be "viewed" (or a fractured filter through which it can be heard). Playing a conventional melody through the crazy filter of the prepared piano produces unexpected accents, staccatos, ringing tones, and strange dynamic profiles. A normally conjunct melody – playing a major scale, say - might be disrupted by changes in tone color, attack, sustain, and other characteristics introduced by preparations. Several projects have explored this aspect of prepared piano, including *More than my Old Piano*, *Prepared Monk*, *Prepared for Anything*, and The Cure's *Pornography*.

Prepared Monk (2003) set the compositions of Thelonious Monk for prepared jazz quartet. In addition to my prepared piano, saxophonist Tim O'Dwyer used a custom modified saxophone that produced buzzing and percussive effects, bassist Mark Shepherd applied aluminium foil, paper, and blue tack to the strings to create buzzing and muting effects, and drummer Danny Fischer utilized unconventional combinations of instruments to make hybrid drum kit sounds.

In *Prepared Monk*, we used preparations to create a sense of hyper-syncopation, in an attempt to try to give Monk's already surprising and

unpredictable turns of phrase a new dimension. The preparations produced unexpected juxtapositions of colour, new angles jutting out the existing angles of Monk's compositions. An accented leap in Monk's melody might be reinforced by a paper strip's popping staccato, or undercut by a clunky, metallic thud.

The soon-to-be released album *Prepared for Anything* applies prepared piano to diverse material. Artists who receive the prepared treatment include Jelly Roll Morton, Glen Campbell, The Cure, and Iggy Pop. Whereas my earlier arrangements were conceived individually (each song used its own tailored preparation), *Prepared for Anything* was conceived as a whole, the same preparations span the entire album, and thus, it can be played live without any changes.

Retuning & sounding the prepared piano: Interlocking microtonal scales. Unlike my cover versions and arrangements, which largely keep the tuning of the piano intact, my original compositions usually involve a hybrid tuning approach, using a combination of coloristic preparations, and pitch preparations (which lower the pitch and change the tone colour, like screws and bolts). In pieces like *Altona Sketches*, I work layer by layer, creating interlocking scales across the keyboard: a "rubber mute scale," a "double-bolt scale," "single-screw scale," a "paper scale," a "cardboard scale." The scales are usually asymmetrical, and often contain microtones.

Designing the preparations for these pieces involves a careful balancing of musical and logistical considerations. I want each layer to have a characteristic sound and tonality but still retain a "familial" relationship with the others. I try to create an interesting pitch collection or "voicing" both within the layers, and across the layers. In addition, I'm concerned with playability: they need to fit under the hands in comfortable shapes. When all these elements come together, the modal and harmonic relationships in the various layers became a kind of "magic square" – a matrix of possibilities, which can be revealed using either compositional or improvisational means.

Wallpaper music. In my most extreme application of prepared piano to date, *Wallpaper Music* (and the related *Ecstatic Descent*), I prepare every note on the piano, in such a way that the instrument is radically "retuned."

Instead of the normal chromatic scale, all the pitches are reconfigured to a single diatonic resonance (imagine the whole piano resonating in “E major”). At the same time, the normal “mono-timbre” of the piano is multiplied into a variety of muted, percussive, buzzing, and gong-like colors (with rubber strips, screws, bolts, card and paper). In performance my approach is to “sound” the instrument, striving to get all the strings resonating at once, using a rapid-fire pointillistic improvisation, or creating quick rhythmic clusters that blur together.

The approach that I’ve taken in these pieces is akin to action painting. I employ an extremely frenetic, pointillistic technique, consisting of very fast but irregular cross-hand playing, trying to avoid repetitive patterns and maintain a consistent level of energy and buoyancy. I perform the “action” of sounding the piano; the resulting music results from conscious and unconscious physical and aural feedback processes. I was inspired by the athletic performance style of Cecil Taylor. I imagined the rhythmic and textural complexity of Taylor’s music combined with an impressionistic sense of harmony and colour. Performances of *Wallpaper Music* are exercises in endurance. I try to play as fast as physically possible for one hour. For me this radically changes the relationship of action to reaction, of physical input to sound output. What will happen when I push myself to the limit? Will I reach a transcendental state?

Prepared piano and ensemble. I’ve already mentioned the close connection between percussion and prepared piano. Three of my percussion works, in fact, began as prepared piano solos – the duo *Simple Addition*, the trio *Nostalgic Strains*, and the sextet *In the Dream*. Starting from the solo pieces, I recorded, painstakingly transcribed and orchestrated them, trying to capture as much of the odd resonance, noise, harmonics and transients as possible. Those compositions use a combination of conventional percussion (vibraphone, marimba, drums, cymbals), and found objects (ceramic bowls, brake drums, metal springs), to recreate the hybrid sound world of prepared piano.

Old MacDonald’s Yellow Submarine (2004). Another area that seemed to grow naturally out of the prepared piano was the world of toy instruments. The clunky, awkward quirks and childlike sparkle seemed to

connect quite naturally to toy piano, miniature music boxes, and auxiliary noise-makers. I did some early experiments along those lines with *Clocked Out Duo* and in a collaborative project - *A Man in a Room Juggling* – which included improvisations with prepared piano, toy piano and squeezey bath toys, among other things. This idea reached full expression in *Old MacDonald's Yellow Submarine*, a solo tour de force I wrote for virtuoso Margaret Leng Tan in 2004. One of the techniques I used throughout the piece is to interchange the toy piano and prepared piano, in a kind of left brain-right brain workout. First a theme in the toy piano is accompanied by grand piano, then the toy piano accompanies grand piano. The roles of the two instruments swap constantly, maintaining a dizzy equilibrium, riffing on hybridity.

Concerto for prepared piano and percussion (2007). Eventually, percussion, toy instruments and prepared piano all came together in the piano and percussion." Through it's six movements, the piano is placed in a variety of settings. At times the percussion amplifies and extends the bass and treble of the piano, rendering it "Technicolor." Other times, the prepared sounds blend into the percussion textures in a collage. In Part 3 prepared piano cross fades into a toy quartet – the quirky enharmonics and clunky attacks of the one transferred into the other. The overall sonic effect is a subtle colour shift, while conceptually it plays with the "one man band" effect. As the music develops all the instruments swell and recede into one another - first toy piano, then ukulele, toy glockenspiel, melodica, and prepared piano - creating an organic, shimmering aural illusion.

Ecstatic Music (2008). An outgrowth of *Wallpaper Music*, with it's explored dense, cascading textures, *Ecstatic Music* expanded the intimate microcosm of solo prepared piano into a big band explosion. Scored for violin, flute, two clarinets, two trumpets, two tenor saxophones, two trombones, prepared piano, bass and drums, the wall of sound

At the start a series of intricately interlocking scales or modes slowly expand across the range of the woodwinds and piano. Each performer improvises energetic, jagged rhythms, which, combined together, create a blurred, pointillistic effect. Suddenly the brass and piano trio burst in with an

harmonic wall of arrhythmic syncopation, fusing elements of free jazz and minimalism. After a series of shifting duo improvisations, the piece somehow transforms into a gospel refrain, which slowly comes into focus in a single, blurring melody, passed around the stage.

Cognitive dissonance and prepared piano. Prepared piano creates cognitive dissonance for performer, altering the feedback between aural, visual, physical and mental processes. As a pianist, I spent years practicing the instrument, going through an extensive process of deeply familiarizing myself with its touch, memorizing scale patterns and techniques. My relationship to the instrument is based on that feedback process. As an improviser and composer I've also used the piano to create a mental architecture of music. My understanding of music itself is deeply connected to the complex feedback between physically playing the piano (and other instruments), studying the theory of music, and listening.

With prepared piano the feedback between the physicality of playing the instrument and the aural feedback that results is radically transformed. Familiar patterns performed on the keyboard – scales, chords, melodies, etc. – can produce entirely unfamiliar and surprising disjunctions of pitch, timbre, and dynamic. Conversely, by use of the detuning potential of some preparations, huge leaps on the piano keyboard can produce conjunct and timbrally uniform melodies. At times the confused jumble of pitches forces one to discover novel fingerings or unexpected asymmetries. At other times, simple scale patterns produce highly complex constellations of depth, tone, dynamic and pitch. Since the feedback which I've grown to expect over many years has been radically altered, I'm no longer consciously aware, or "in control," of what I'm doing in the same way. The act of performance becomes explicitly a mixture of conscious and unconscious processes.

A distance is created between my action as a performer and the sonic reaction of the piano. In set pieces such as *Three Latin Rhythms* or *Two Sichuan Folk Songs*, where I'm trying to recreate existing musical material (rhythm, melodies, harmonies) and evoke other instruments (claves, agogo bells, congas, pipas, yang qin), my role becomes more mechanistic. I perform the scored physical choreography, and the appropriate music results. I don't feel "in control" of the materials in the same way as I would with unprepared piano. Or I don't feel I can shape the music and control the

nuances of expression to the same degree. My physical attitude towards the music is altered as well. I “play” the prepared piano as if I were playing a “clave,” “agogo bells” or “congas.” The percussive rebound of the stroke is adapted to the sonic feedback.

On the other hand, in pieces like *Wallpaper Music*, acoustical phenomena are brought to the foreground. The qualities of timbre, dynamic, sense of distance, dryness/wetness, attack, resonance, harmonic/enharmonic content, noise/buzz are all heightened. Microtonal warbling, phase reinforcement and cancellation, ghost resonances and aural illusions abound. When playing (or listening) it’s easy to become absorbed in the strange resultant tones, the instrument’s “aura,” and to become disoriented. Performing at my personal limits of speed, intensity and physical endurance created a disorienting sensation. In this state I feel I no longer exert direct control over the music coming out of the piano. It’s more like I’m acting as a vehicle for the emerging sound. There is perhaps a sense of “meta control,” I’m aware that the energy and intensity of my performance relates to the intensity of sound texture, but I’m no longer controlling the details of the music in a conventional way. Like an out of body experience, I have the sense that the act of playing and listening has become disconnected. It can really mess with my head.

Prepared piano as sculpture. There is a sculptural aspect to prepared piano. The presence of bolts and screws jutting from the innards of the piano is both arresting and intriguing. The bolts, screws, rubber & paper strips, intersect, disrupt or extend the spatial geometry of the grand piano.

Two collaborative projects have delved into this sculptural potential. In the first, *Permanent Transit*, with artist Sarah Pirrie, we literally extended the piano preparations out of the piano case. Rolls of flat rubber elastic were woven through the strings and hung over the edge of the piano, spilling into a huge pile on the floor. This connected with other sculptural elements in the performance/installation. Projections onto curved hanging lace fabric, and a “ghost” piano, also made of lace, and hanging above the piano like a visual echo.

Another collaborative project, with New Zealand improviser and Maori music specialist Richard Nunns, explored the sculptural possibilities from an

environmental perspective. That project involved a series of environmental Soundings in locations around Brisbane. Nunns, Vanessa Tomlinson and me took a collection of instruments / sounding objects into natural environments — an estuary, and two forests, and improvised in a dialog with those environments. This involved deep listening, performance on instruments brought into the situations, and sound making with materials found in situ. At the culmination of three “soundings,” at Mt Nebo, Nudgee Beach, and Coombabah, we had the opportunity to bring our music to two concert venues, Brisbane Powerhouse and Queensland Conservatorium. In an effort to bring the sound of the natural environment into the venues, I prepared the pianos exclusively with natural materials — sticks, leaves, and stones. This produced not only distinctive sonic results, but also provided an interesting visual and conceptual intersection with the piano. I hope to develop the sculptural aspect of prepared piano more in the future.

5

Vocal entanglements

Exploring the links between music-making and performer-subjectivity at the Tanglewood Music Center

Jessica Aszodi

Introduction

I am a singer. I seek to change the performative outcomes of my work by questioning established habits in my embodied practice and by maintaining an awareness of my subjective identity within the musical context. My practice-based research adapts some simple methods into my daily routine to support a systematic way of paying attention to myself as I prepare to and reflect-upon performing.

For two months in 2013, I was a fellow of the Tanglewood Music Center in Massachusetts, USA, where I performed in a number of projects. This chapter will discuss two projects from that time, as case studies examining the intersection between musical preparation and the performer-subject. The first project was the realization of two new works by Robert Honstein. The second was performing in a production of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, directed by Mark Morris.

A problem that arises in this kind of self-reflexive research is that it is not possible for anyone to objectively describe his or her own experience. Yet as subjects able to self reflect, we are bound to question how we might improve our decision-making mechanisms and to develop methods that are fit to purpose; in my case, creating compelling performances. Through the course of this chapter I hope to make a preliminary examination of how practice and performance can be altered through a thoughtful examination of one's own presence within the working process.

This kind of practice-based research requires a methodology that is both bespoke and banal. The schedule of a festival like Tanglewood leaves little

time unaccounted for and requires participants to immerse themselves in relentlessly stimulating but rigorously controlled activity. I punctuated each day with physical exercise, keeping my artistic journal and reading self-selected theoretical literature. I combined this with extensive note taking in my classes and master-classes. These methods, enacted daily, allowed me to evaluate my experience as it evolved and to build self-determination into my routine.

In exploring the subjectivities of a performer's practice, it is useful to draw inspiration from the wider literature surrounding the voice as a site for critical or philosophical enquiry. Two key works, Roland Barthes's classic 1977 essay, *The Grain of the Voice* and Mladen Dolar's more recent *A Voice and Nothing More* offer rich theoretical representations of voice, the relationship between voice and self, and vocalism in society. The former is a seminal text exploring the relationship of voice to the identity of the vocalist, and the latter unpacks the relationship between voices, their originators and the society in which they move. Both texts have been highly influential in forming my singerly self-awareness and world-view. Vocality has been further unpacked and problematized by a range of theorists and as the voice as a physical bridge between subjects and the materiality of the voice.

In preparation for discussing my own practice, acknowledgement must be made to the vocal performers who, in the latter half of the 20th century, provided revolutionary models for how a singer's awareness of body and selfhood can radically redefine the parameters of singing in the context of western art-music: Cathy Berberian's remarkable impact on re-shaping notated vocal music, Joan La Barbara's redefinition of the practice of vocal arts and artists like Laurie Anderson and Pamela Z, whose intersectional contributions have re-made contemporary vocal performance. All are key examples of singers building a practice on their own terms and successfully transforming their art by challenging the assumptions of both practitioners and audiences.

It has been asserted that vocalists as human subjects are the physical site of, as well as authors of, their practice. I am interested in the singer's agency, as it is, housed within the body, being a primary producer of performance. In my practice I am trying to explore how that deep embodied agency interacts with the decisions I make in my daily practice. Connor explains these interconnectivities most clearly when he says:

My voice defines me because it draws me into coincidence with myself, accomplishes me in a way that goes beyond mere belonging, association or instrumental use. And yet my voice is most essentially itself and my own in the ways it parts or passes from me. Nothing about me defines me so intimately as my voice, precisely because there is no other feature of my self whose nature it is thus to move from me to the world, and to move me into the world”.

As I prepare works for performance I aim to find ways to commit to the musical, literary and extra-musical elements in as honest a fashion as I am able. I endeavour to unpack the musical work to find the most useful threads and, grasping hold of them, weave myself into the work and the work into me. This process actively binds me to the piece, laying the grounds for thoughtful and communicative musical agency. The firm foothold of this agency allows me to communicate as my self in a way that is transparent enough for introspective analysis, yet strong enough for committed communication in performance. What I am aiming for is not ‘self-consciousness’, the negative inner voice many performers describe, but a ‘consciousness of self’: being aware of my own presence within the work and the musical task at hand.

We choose to go the moon

My first performance at Tanglewood was in the premiere of Robert Honstein’s *We Choose to Go to the Moon*, realized by Bretton Brown (piano) Jocelin Pan (viola) and myself, with Dawn Upshaw and John Harbison as coaches. Honstein’s original composition set John F. Kennedy’s famed 1962 speech in which he outlined his aspirations for the US space program. The new work was paired with a companion piece, *Destination Moon*, a light-hearted pop tune from 1951. Honstein prepared an arrangement of the song for our forces, which was specifically influenced by Dinah Washington’s 1963 recording of the song. Both the speech and the song tapped into the zeitgeist of the early 1960s in America, full of hope and optimism. It was clear from early on that a successful realisation of these works would have to embrace the historical and personal narratives that underpin them. As an Australian singer born decades after the demise of both narratives’

protagonists, I had to find shared threads that might allow me to enter into their world in a sincere way. To do this, I focused upon the commonalities between the contemporary culture to which I am accustomed and the one in which Kennedy and Washington lived.

One day before the rehearsal, I was reading Philip Auslander's *Liveness: Performance in a mediatized culture* and I was struck by the following quote:

The progressive diminution of previous distinctions between the live and the mediatized, in which live events are becoming ever more like mediatized ones, raises the question for me whether there really are ontological distinctions between live forms and mediatized ones.

Living as we do in a time where almost everyone has some kind of public persona and where our actions are mediated more intensively than ever before, it occurred to me that Auslander's question directly related to the situation I was considering. I make few ontological distinctions between 'live' life and life as I experience it through media. I realised that the struggle to negotiate real and 'mediated' life could provide a link between my own experience and the experience of the characters at the centre of the narratives. In the early 1960s the media's attention acted upon the lives of President Kennedy and Dinah Washington in a fashion that would have been unimaginable a decade earlier. Kennedy was a savvy politician who utilised the media's power for his own gain. Washington did not cope well with the public spotlight she had acquired in tandem with mainstream popularity.

The tensions between private and public, lived and mediatized, would become a focal point of my preparation. The expanding reach of the media profoundly affected the public figures at the heart of these pieces. To make those effects 'real' for my self, I decided to imagine the metaphorical camera tightly framed around me as I prepared the work. I let myself feel the tension of being watched and allowed that sensation to seed inside my body as I went about crafting my realisation.

In *We Choose to Go to the Moon*, the first vocal sound comes a minute into the piece. The text unfolds slowly, carried upon a step-wise melody, that is broken up into cells which are repeated a number of times. At Dawn

Upshaw's suggestion I experimented with shifting the beginning consonants of words to come just before the stipulated beat, and drew them out for longer than usual. This technique seemed to give the text an added dignity, and emphasised the fragmentation of the phrase and growing the tension during the pauses in the vocal line. To augment this tension, I also decided to sing this section without vibrato.

I wanted to capture something of the strain experienced in 'high-stakes' public performances through my vocal choices. If I, like Kennedy, did not persuade my listeners of the great value of this text then the performance was diminished. In my choice to over-articulate the sounds within words, and by giving special potency to the rests the composer had given me, I felt able to slip into the experience of the politician – who attempts to pull the audience along by the sheer weight of their will.

To match these vocal choices, I adopted a physical posture that was inspired by the speech and the culture in which it was delivered. President Kennedy was famously adept at utilising television. I watched footage of the speech to study how he delivered it. Kennedy stared straight out, speaking with directness and with minimal use of gesture. I tried to find parallels in my own experience of addressing an audience, integrating this direct delivery into my muscle memory as I prepared for the performance. I practiced feeling grounded in my body as I sang the piece, trying to feel a low centre of gravity that would allow me to stand still but gather power from my breathing apparatus. I wore a suit-jacket over my dress that pulled back my shoulders, ever so slightly, adding to my feeling of formality. Then, once I walked out on stage I fixed my gaze and my sound to the back of the hall, as if projecting my self toward an invisible camera that would capture the performance for posterity.

I do not want to suggest I was 'playing Kennedy'. I was aiming to be firmly situated in my own body, but to take up these physical and remembered prompts to convey the serious stakes of the text, with something of the natural directness Kennedy had mastered. I was setting up a situation that would allow me to inhabit a physical condition that would draw from inside of me, the grave persuasive demeanour of the speech's orator.

The chosen companion piece, *Destination Moon*, required a different interpretive approach entirely. The song featured on the last album Dinah

Washington recorded, Dinah '62. After a distinguished career spanning two decades, Washington's last few albums had failed to chart well. At the time of the song's release she had just married her seventh husband. As a successful female African-American entertainer in mid-century America, Washington had had to deal with a lot of prejudice and hardship. On stage she appeared fearless, though she was never very comfortable on television. By the time this song was released Washington had become self-conscious of her figure (her death in December 1964, was attributed to an over-dose of alcohol combined with diet-pills). For my reading of the work I wanted, in my own small way, to take inspiration from Washington's story by creating a situation that exposed my own vulnerabilities and by requiring myself to 'entertain'.

Let it be said here that I cannot possibly understand what life was like for Dinah Washington. It would be dangerous to slip too casually into her shoes, given the still stinging relevant appropriations of African-American culture by white artists and the stark difference between the privileges I have enjoyed and the difficulties I can only imagine she endured. In order to inhabit the song with my body I had to find elements in her story that I could honestly relate to my own experience. By a process of conscious entanglement of narratives I worked towards an awareness of my self that allowed me to move naturally and respectfully alongside Washington's narrative. The most compelling connections between my life and hers seemed to be that we both have experienced a desire to appear recognisably successful and we have both experienced struggles with body image. For this performance I set up a scenario that would force me to confront those vulnerabilities and desires in the performative moment.

During the performance of *Destination Moon* I tried to keep my intention focused on the concept of pleasure: pleasure in the sensation of being watched, pleasure in my vulnerability and pleasure in the act of performing for the pleasure of others. I wore a very form-fitting dress and I was uncomfortably aware of how it revealed every bump. Though the idea of seeking to actively 'entertain' is one I usually recoil from, as I went through the mental preparations for the performance, I set myself the task of showing the audience 'a good time'.

Mark Morris' Dido and Aeneas

Later in the Festival I performed the role of First Witch in Mark Morris' 1989 production of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* which featured the Tanglewood Festival Orchestra, dancers from the Mark Morris Dance Company, soloists of the Tanglewood Festival vocal program and Stefan Asbury, conductor. Morris's production uses the music from Purcell's 1689 opera and takes the unusual step of removing the opera singers from the stage and replacing their bodies with the bodies of dancers. Both a singer and a dancer represent each individual character in the opera. It is the moving bodies on stage that the audience readily sees. The singers stand in a long line in a balcony behind the stage, wearing black. It goes without saying that this is an unconventional way of interpreting an opera.

For centuries, singers have been positioned at the front of the operatic apparatus, their performances the central locus of the unfolding pageantry. Morris' production renders the singers no more than voices. He splits each character in two, requiring that singers and dancers both relinquish sole-authorship over the characters that they are conditioned to see as their own.

I admit that initially I was pretty unenthusiased about what I had to do in this project. As a performer who so highly values embodiment the idea that I was to be 'just a voice' made me uncomfortable. It bothered me that I needed to be physically obscured in order to make the piece function as intended. I asked myself why Morris insisted on using live performers? The musicians and dancers rehearsed apart and, in a work where the timing and phrasing of the dance and the music were so integrally conjoined, it seemed risky to add the two together at the 11th hour. These thoughts were on my mind the day before the first performance when musicians and dancers were united for a single and final rehearsal. I felt myself bristle when Morris, who had not attended any of the musical rehearsals up until that moment, began shouting towards the balcony, demanding changes (of tempi, of timbre and re-allocating instrumentations). I wondered if the dancers would not have been better served by a recording, given the specificity of Morris' musical desires, that the musicians were not an ongoing part of the collaborative process with Morris' company, and that we needed to be hidden from sight anyway?

Throughout the rehearsal process I had been talking to colleagues, taking notes, journaling and trying out solutions on myself to try to alleviate some

of the tension I was feeling. While writing my journal after that final rehearsal, I realised that my negative emotional reaction was not about the lack of rehearsal time together but stemmed from my confusion about what my role really was in this project. At dinner before the first performance I brought up my impressions in conversation with Bretton Brown (a collaborative pianist and fellow at Tanglewood), who pointed out that piano accompanists spend much of their careers far from centre stage, bending to the often-insensitive whims of their collaborators. At that moment I guiltily realised that on many occasions I had failed to afford pianists the sort of agency and foregrounded embodiment I had demanded for myself. It should not need to be said that a collaborative pianist is as worthy of embodied empowerment as a singer. Most operas I have performed in have had dozens of people performing hidden from view, just as I found myself now. I was distressed by my conduct, complaining about being relegated to the balcony in this one production, when many of my orchestral colleagues spend months of their performing year hidden in a pit.

By the time I returned to the music the next day this realisation had sunk into my reading and experience of the work. I saw that in Morris's production the 'whole characters', as they are featured in Purcell's opera, are represented by a number of human subjects. The task of giving expression to those characters is divided between performers from different disciplines.

I began to like how this approach de-hierarchicalised the performance. This egalitarian scenario allowed the characters and events of the opera to be articulated by whichever performative mode seemed best fitting, without needing to accommodate the expectations or limitations of opera singers. If an event in the opera was best conveyed without words, the instrumentalists could carry the music. If a scene called for an intricate dance performed by queen Dido, the dancer Dido could achieve it effectively. If the scene required that Dido communicate a text with strength, the singer Dido could impart that text. In this production, instrumentalists, dancers and singers could work together to convey a rich subject-character, simultaneously and without hierarchy, within the same phrase.

Conclusions

The practice of singing is full of choices. By taking time to query the connections between my subject-self and the musical texts, my experience of performing in this festival was profoundly affected.

Conscious decisions, embodied habits, calculated entrainments of the body, reasoned and researched stylistic choices, intuited expressive improvisations of affect – all of these elements work their way into the realizations of pieces. The cumulative effect of this layering of choices, and body and awareness, result in performative outcomes that are complex in their subjectivities and hard to describe. I am conscious that what I describe here reflects only my own subjective experience and that I have included almost nothing that seeks to illustrate collaborative or instrumental elements of the process. These interactions seemed even harder to describe than the already murky situation I have chosen to focus on and, I believe, are beyond the scope of this chapter. If the reader is interested, several excellent examples of this kind of research can be found in the realm of instrumental music.

In *We Choose Go to the Moon*, the historical source materials that informed the compositions overflow with potent political and personal incident. Those events, while compelling, are not of my own time and milieu. With such powerful events embedded in these texts I needed to find a 'way in' for myself that was not completely overshadowed by an instinct to imitate or to 'sign-post' the underlying narrative. In order to ably communicate with the audience, I needed to find a way to fuse the text to myself. I wanted my intentions in the performative moment to be 'real' and so I sought to practice into my muscle memory an integrated emotional response that was born out of my own lived experience.

In Mark Morris' *Dido and Aeneas*, the evolution in my approach was almost certainly imperceptible for the audience, but it opened a door that allowed me to walk past my first impressions and towards a committed production of my singing self. Initially I felt like Morris was an absent ventriloquist pulling everyone's strings. I felt as if the production demanded that I divorce my voice and my body and that separation was a source of anxiety for me. I could not commit to the role because I did not understand what my contribution to the piece was supposed to be. Without commitment to the task, producing my voice felt false, as if I were trying to inhabit the ghost of some imaginary performance that had already occurred; or as

Carolyn Abbate describes it in *In Search of Opera*, like I was performing “as dead matter, subject to mortification and reanimation”.

By challenging my initial reading and seeking the perspective of my colleagues, I was able to move past my initial emotional reaction towards a richer understanding of the work and my role within it. Bretton Brown’s excellent insight, brought forward what should have been self-evident – that there are myriad ways of making a meaningful contribution to a musical piece that do not rely on the privileging of a performer’s physical body under the gaze of the audience. I realised to my shame, that I had blindly subscribed to an unhelpful convention of what an ‘opera singer’ should be doing in ‘an opera’. Through discussion and reflection, my view of the aims of the production began to change and from there my understanding of my place within it. Once I had grasped the real task at hand I was able to make peace with performing the voice, if not the body, of my character. I understood that in this instance the character I was part of creating was a post-structural, multifaceted tangle of subjects rather than a traditional discrete and unified one.

This production was created in 1989, built on the foundations of a lamentably traditionalist genre and using centuries old music. I think Morris’ representation of the characters’ subjectivity was a brilliantly subversive directional choice. This understanding was key in allowing me to commit honestly to the role I had to play. I could focus on the task of voicing a diffuse character and leave it to the audience to put the pieces of her together.

It might sound clichéd but I believe that the key components of good performance are commitment and honesty. The most compelling performances I have been audience to, all seemed to share these characteristics. I want to be able to sincerely share my self with listeners through my voice because voices are, as Dolar puts it: “...the very texture of the social, as well as the intimate kernel of subjectivity”.

I believe that many listeners intuitively understand this enmeshing of shared and individual experience through the voice. If the self I project outwards is insincere then the performance is compromised. In *We Choose to go to the Moon*, a process of conscious entanglement as a method towards sincere interpretation was the route for me to reach this ‘commitable place’. The project was an exercise in finding all the possible

spaces where I could enmesh my identity and physicality with the music and their under-lying narratives to convey the piece convincingly to the listener. In *Dido and Aeneas*, in order to reach that 'committable place' I had to identify and break through some unhelpful conventions I had absorbed into my value hierarchy; the work itself was good, but at first I failed to recognise how good it was and didn't understand my role within it. By interrogating my feelings and the broader stakes of the work I was able to identify and address a flaw in my artistic self-conception that will be transformative into the future.

We are caught up in the world and we do not succeed in extricating ourselves from it in order to achieve consciousness of the world.

As performers, aspects of our performative and embodied decision-making become hard-wired, reinforced over many repetitions and many projects, until they become conventions. When we encounter scenarios that upset these conventions, our initial reaction may be to dismiss the value of the experience altogether. However, these habitually comfortable constructions are not 'our own'. In these projects and during my time at Tanglewood the transformative learning came from the moments where my self and the music flexed to fit one another. If we can actively pursue space for inquiry, reflection and analysis in our artistic practice, difficult situations can be made into useful opportunities to reconsider ourselves and our music.

6

Re-imagining Bach's Goldberg Variations

Stephen Emmerson

Isn't it understandable that every musician would want to play this wonderful work? Its deep humanity, spirituality, optimism and intellectual power speak to us directly in these "distracted times". This is one of those journeys that can be repeated again and again.

— Andras Schiff, 2003

There is no moment when we will ever come to the end of what this music has to teach us, just as there is no moment when we will hear everything within it. It has the mysterious capacity to go on revealing itself without ever divulging the secret at its heart.

— Michael Ignatieff, 1982

Introduction

Some readers may be put off already by the effusive sentiments expressed in the quotations above. Such claims are distinctly unfashionable these days in certain quarters. However, the processes of returning to certain works over an extended period of time in order to go deeper into them - to find new resonances and meanings within them and yet never exhaust their possibilities - remains central to the satisfaction I derive from my musical practice. I know many colleagues who similarly value this sense of return and one does not need to search far to find evidence from renowned musicians to support it. Though it often characterised by people outside of the performance tradition as uncreative, unadventurous (and presumably lazy), I believe that, for many musicians involved in Western classical music, this experience of delving repeatedly into a work is among the most satisfying aspects of their musical lives. Indeed, to keep one's response to a work fresh and creative is among the most challenging aspects. The return is cyclic but I see such returns more like a rising spiral than a two-dimensional circle, as one never comes back to the same place. Of course one continues

to explore new repertoire to expand one's experience through learning new and unfamiliar music. That learning is essential to keep expanding one's horizons. Performing musicians such as myself will usually have a range of different performance projects going on at the same time, each at different stages of preparation. But one often finds that it is when returning to a piece after working on other repertoire that new perspectives emerge and can be found in it.

This paper will outline my experiences thus far with Bach's *Goldberg Variations*. Though the project that has been unfolding for several years, I expect it will continue to develop well into the future. In 2013 I believe my relationship with it achieved a state of some maturity but where it will move next remains open. In particular the chapter considers an arrangement of Bach's work that I made for two pianos in 2012. The context for the original arrangement is outlined together with a rationale that documents and discusses the specific approach adopted. Later sections of the paper consider some issues pertaining to performing and recording the arrangement and how both have evolved through the process. A concluding section speculates on where the project may develop in the future. The tone and much of the content of the paper is unashamedly auto-ethnographic in telling the story in personal terms and offering subjective opinions. It is hoped that it provides some insights into the nature of my creative practice by drawing attention to the range of factors, ideas and other stimuli that have fed into this project over an extended period of time. I also hope that the immense satisfaction I have derived from it will be evident.

Background context

I was tutoring at the Australian Youth Orchestra's National Music Camp in January 2011, when I received an email from Sonya Lifschitz, a former student at Queensland Conservatorium, asking if I would be interested in playing a programme for two pianos with her in the Four Winds Festival in April 2012. Originally the programme was to include the Bartok's *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* but later it became evident that the logistics of having percussion at the regional festival would be prohibitive and so a different programme for two pianos needed to be devised.

The Four Winds Festival is held just outside the small town of Bermagui on the southern New South Wales coast outdoors in a beautiful natural amphitheatre. A new sound shell had just been installed in the preceding months. Though an idyllic venue in some respects, it came with some acoustic and practical challenges even beyond potential issues of weather.



Figure 1. Four Winds Festival c. 11am Easter Sunday morning, 2012.

The festival had commissioned a new work for two pianos by Damian Barbeler, another former student at Queensland Conservatorium from the 1990s who I recalled well. Beyond the inclusion of his piece in the programme, the director of the festival, Genevieve Lacey was open to suggestions of what we would like to play. Various programmes were considered over the following months. Initial ideas were to play a

programme of 20th-century music including pieces by George Crumb and Olivier Messiaen, both of which would have complemented well the bird imagery in Barbeler's piece. However we remained unconvinced that such pieces were well suited to the particular context.

From early on, we did know that our performance was to be outdoors and in the morning. Only later did I realise that it was to be the morning of Easter Sunday. Fortuitously, by this stage we had decided that we would like to play some Bach. Even though he did not write music specifically for two pianos, it is well known that Bach spent much of his composing life arranging music, both of others and his own, for different purposes and instrumentation and these own precedents help to justify pianists and arrangers to engage with it with a relatively clear conscience. As Ivars Taurins has claimed "[i]t is surely a sign of the great universality of Bach's music that it can make a powerful impact regardless of the means through which it is presented".

An initial idea to arrange the Art of the Fugue appealed to me but such a complex and esoteric work hardly seemed suitable for that time of day nor was it likely to be a crowd-pleaser! But the proposal of arranging the Goldberg Variations for two pianos appealed greatly to both of us immediately and we were delighted when Genevieve approved of the idea. Few works have been arranged for such a range of instrumental combinations as the Goldberg Variations and so we felt we were joining quite an established club. Apart from its technical ingenuity, the work is one of such uplifting joy and dazzling brilliance that we all felt immediately that it could work well in that context. The arrangement for two pianos was conceived with this outdoor morning context very much in mind and I am sure that this influenced its nature in innumerable subtle ways. Also, our interpretation of it, that is, how we first played it, was undoubtedly influenced by the specific context as well.

Finding an approach

My initial idea was inspired by a performance I had witnessed of the *Deleuzabelli Variations* at ORCiM Research Festival in Ghent in September 2010 where Beethoven's *Diabelli Variations* were expanded most imaginatively and provocatively by Paulo d'Assis. As he wrote of the

conception: "Drawing upon the Deleuzian concepts of 'becoming', 'encounters' and 'lines of flight', this presentation proposes a view of Beethoven's 'Diabelli Variations' as a path of mutation and continuous metamorphosis, precipitated through the actualisation of connections among sound bodies of the utmost disparate origins, situated both in the past and the future. By considering the single variations not as closed, static substances, but as escaping doors from a temporary state of being; and by focussing upon them in terms of unfolding forces, of bodies affecting and being affected by other bodies, a dialogue on identity and difference will be proposed."

The frame of Beethoven's set was maintained but certain variations were arranged for different instrumental combinations (including two pianos, piano trio) and others were replaced by modern and contemporary pieces. I knew that I would be unlikely to present something as radical as that but the thought that one might position Bach in relation to contemporary music was appealing. Ultimately however my version tuned out to be a more conservative style of arrangement for reasons outlined below.

I made the arrangement over the summer months of 2011/12 and, to be honest, began it with little preconceived idea of what I was aiming for. I started with some vague ideas – similar to the *Deleuzabelli Variations* - of opening with the style of Bach but digressing further from Baroque style as the work progressed. I was yet unaware of Robin Holloway's *Gilded Goldbergs*, a dazzling fantasy for two pianos upon the work that soon moves away from Bach's style into a distinctly postmodern idiom. He retains the succession of Bach's variations but, as Holloway's Opus 87, in many respects it is closer to a genuine composition, or homage, than a transcription or even arrangement. Nonetheless, had we known of Holloway's piece, I suspect we would have ordered the score and played it at the festival. Even though I would still like to perform that version very much at some point, I am pleased that we didn't then. For me making the arrangement myself was a way to connect with Bach, and to really to get right inside what is an acknowledged masterpiece of the Western music.

I was also aware of the version for two pianos made by Josef Rheinberger in the late 19th century (1883, revised by Max Reger in 1915) and, in the early stages, we did consider playing that version. It is a fine arrangement in many respects but is very much a product of its time reflecting Romantic

ideas and sensibilities in both its pianistic textures and the performance practices it calls for. For example, the first few lines of Rheinberger's Variation 1 are shown below in Example 1. In this variation, he has kept the notes of Bach in the first piano part and added a complementary part for the second piano. Like various other Romantic arrangements of Bach, a large part of the additions are either providing countermelodies or filling out the harmonic texture. Quite apart from the abundance of performance instructions — dynamics, articulations and tempo — such bars reveal much about the approach adopted. His intention to refer immediately to the contour of theme of opening aria is obvious. Like Busoni's edition from the early 20th century, Rheinberger/Reger's version of the Aria removes its expressive ornamentation and thereby, to my mind, immediately loses so much of its charm and beauty. But one can observe in Example 1 how Rheinberger has provided a melodic countersubject in clear two-bar phrases that alter significantly the style of Bach. Bach's original texture here is reduced to a supporting background. Such an approach recalls Gounod's famous Ave Maria or, less famously, that of Ignaz Moscheles who in the 19th century added anachronistic melodic cello lines to preludes from the Well-tempered Clavier or even Reger's addition of a third lines to Bach's Two-part Inventions. Equally anachronistic in Rheinberger/Reger's approach is the frequent thickening of the texture with harmonic filler such as the chords in the second piano's left hand in the opening bars. The thickness of the texture can be controlled to some extent by the way performers balance the various levels but, to me, such chords remain unnecessary.

Playing this version would have saved a great deal of time and would have had its own rewards. I do enjoy the recording of this version by Tal and Groethuysen (Sony, 2009) who, I might add, play it superbly. But, as the CD notes by Suzanne Popp acknowledge, they alter much of the anachronistic performance directions in the score, even that of the Aria, to be more in line with our contemporary style of playing Bach on a piano. I find the Romantic conception of Bach fascinating and of course many pianists still play some of the Busoni transcriptions for piano. I have recordings of the Bach solo violin sonatas and partitas with Schumann's "accompaniments" for piano and, while I quite enjoy listening to them, they were not a model I wished to emulate.



Figure 2. Variation 1, bars 1-8 (arranged by Rheinberger/Reger).

Nonetheless I was aware that if my arrangement did not work out well, we could always return to this Rheinberger/Reger version and it would be satisfactory enough for our purpose. A Rheinberger/Reger/Emmerson version was a distinct possibility but I preferred to create my own version directly from the source. I have made various arrangements in recent years and derived great satisfaction from both devising and performing them so the prospect of seeing what I could do was irresistible. It was certainly clear to me from the start that filling in bars with sustained chords or accompaniment patterns would have no place. However beyond that, in truth, I began the arrangement with only the vaguest idea of what I was heading for but keen to see what evolved during the process.

I began with the first variation and it was clear to me that it needed to go beyond a mere transcription. With the original in only two parts, additional material would clearly need to be devised and, after the lovely aria, I wanted this one to kick off the variations with a profusion of “Brandenburg-esque” counterpoint. So I employed Rheinberger’s approach by entering Bach’s original Finale into the Piano 1 part and then seeing what I could add to it through a complementary part for Piano 2.

At first I tried various countersubjects through the opening section but none of them seemed adequate. My “breakthrough” occurred at the beginning of the second half when, again after playing around with various possibilities, I noticed that an exact close canon (at the distance of a quaver) was possible between the upper lines and, moreover, canonic imitation, a crotchet apart in the left-hand parts (with a few gaps), could also be sustained for a number of bars.



Figure 3. Variation 1, bars 17-21 (arranged Emerson).

As many will recognise, such close canons can be found in Bach’s music, the famous *Concerto in D minor* for two violins has many examples as does the 6th Brandenburg concerto, the opening of which is shown below.



Figure 4. J.S. Bach Brandenburg Concerto no. 6, 1st movement, bars 1-5, Viola da braccio.

As I alluded to above, the realisation of such possibilities was a decisive “breakthrough” moment in the arrangement process. Beyond such precedents elsewhere in Bach’s music, canonic imitation abounds throughout the *Goldbergs* - as is well known, each third piece being a strict canon at a progressively rising interval - so I decided to limit my additions to imitative counterpoint, canonic wherever possible, and to aim for my best approximation of Bach’s style. This was the point – very early on! - when I gave up the idea of an arrangement that “modernised” or “post-modernised” the work but set out to expand its textures where necessary while remaining within the boundaries of Baroque style.

The example below shows much of the first half of my arrangement of Variation 1 where various canonic possibilities presented themselves. Most satisfying of all was the discovery that, beyond the imitative figures used in the opening couple of bars, a canonic entry of the opening bars was possible from bar 3. It was deeply satisfying to find such possibilities that seemed to be latent and just waiting to be found. It may also be noted in bars 4-5 how the figures and leaping intervals of 10ths are reconfigured so it seems as though Piano 1 – Bach’s original that is – is now following Piano 2’s lead. Also one may note the close imitative counterpoint between both right and left hand parts from bar 8. Not only were such possibilities enormously satisfying to find, I find them enormously enjoyable to play. To perform the *Goldberg Variations* solo would be, I imagine, a daunting and rather terrifying experience until one has done them many times but to play them in partnership with another pianist transforms the experience into something far more enjoyable. To me that is not an inconsiderable attraction!

The image displays a musical score for Variation 1, bars 1-14, arranged by Emmerson. The score is written for two pianos (Piano 1 and Piano 2) and two pno. 1 and pno. 2 parts. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 3/4. The score is divided into four systems, each containing two staves. The first system shows the initial melodic and harmonic development. The second system continues the melodic lines with some rhythmic variation. The third system features more complex rhythmic patterns and melodic lines. The fourth system, labeled 'Var. 1', shows a continuation of the melodic and harmonic development, with some rhythmic variation.

Figure 5. Variation 1, bars 1-14 (arranged Emmerson).

I arranged one variation a day, most days, in January 2012. They were all imagined in my head at my laptop and were rarely tested at the piano until later. I found that devising them away from the instrument was an enormously satisfying aspect of the process.

I have always enjoyed both the hearing and writing of contrapuntal textures. Arranging the *Goldberg Variations* was among the most personally rewarding artistic projects I have ever done in part because it allowed me to immerse myself in that world of counterpoint. For a start, engaging closely with Bach's music by entering his lines via Finale software - not via a midi keyboard but with a mouse one note at a time - was a wonderful way to observe closely his ingenious, almost miraculous, counterpoint. At times I imagined it to be like the experiences of those apprentices in Bach's time that learnt their trade by copying out their master's scores and parts. But then my task was to go well beyond that in order to reimagine it as a dialogue between two musicians. It seemed an education and an adventure.

The approach was to maintain the style of Bach as best I could and, unlike Rheinberger, to try to keep linear clarity in the dialogue. I decided that, distinct from Rheinberger's approach, accompanying chords and patterns that just sustained the harmony would have no place in the "conversation". Few of the variations were to have the profusion of counterpoint and density of texture as my version of the first variation shown in Example 4 above. Most of my versions are closer to transcriptions with additions made only where I felt necessary, or when I couldn't resist it. But throughout, additions were restricted wherever possible to imitative contrapuntal lines.

Of the 32 pieces, four of them are in four parts, 18 of them in three parts and 10 are in two parts. So in arranging them for the four hands of two pianists, various strategies were employed to keep the four hands occupied appropriately. For the variations in four parts (nos. 4, 10, 22 and 30) I literally gave one part per hand and left it at that. I felt no need to add anything more as, for me, they are beautiful, feel natural and are completely satisfying to play in that form. Indeed by simplifying the part each pianist plays, much extra ornamentation became possible and devising that proved to be a delightful part of the process of preparing how to play them.

For those variations in three parts, Bach's lines were mostly distributed between the four hands in ways that often made the addition of extra material unnecessary. An extract from Variation 21 below illustrates how Bach's three lines could be distributed without the need for any additional notes.



Figure 6. Variation 21, bars 1-5 (arranged Emmerson).

In some cases Bach's material was alternated between the two pianists for example the opening bars from Variation 13 in Example 7 below.

Figure 7. Variation 13, bars 1-5 (arranged Emmerson).

As mentioned above, a majority of the variations in my arrangement are essentially transcriptions with only a few minor additions of extra imitative counterpoint. For example in the extract from Variation 2 below most of the

material has just redistributed Bach's lines but note the left-hand line in bars 2-3 of Piano 2 are added, being 'borrowed' from Rheinberger but acknowledged. Note also the figures in bars 5-7 in Piano 1's right hand are not in Bach's original but clearly incorporate the same descending triadic three-note figure from the preceding bars.



Figure 8. Variation 2, bars 1-7 (arranged Emmerson)

Among the biggest challenges was deciding what to do with those variations in two parts. In Variation 23 – one that can easily convey an overtly playful character – I simply called for each pianist to just use one hand, their right hands for the first half and their left hand for the second. But clearly that approach to the two-part pieces could only be done once!



Figure 9. Variation 23, bars 1-3 (arranged Emmerson)

Obviously a variety of approaches to this problem was desirable in order to characterise each piece as distinctly as possible. The profusion of extra contrapuntal lines in Variation 1 was only adopted a few times. The

particular case of Variation 11, a piece that ultimately required no extra notes to be added, is considered below.

Performance issues and the influence of recordings

Unlike Rheinberger, I did not add dynamics, articulation or tempo indications in the score I prepared in Finale though these were added in pencil in our printed scores when preparing for performance. I do not intend to include such markings when the score is published but believe, as presumably Bach himself did, that such matters are for each performer to work out and explore creatively. So many approaches to the performance of Bach's music can be convincing and I do not believe that an approach that prescribes matters such as articulations and dynamics should be imposed by an edition.

A central goal for both performance and arrangement is to enable one to experience a work afresh, to perceive new possibilities and meanings, to bring it to life from a new perspective. As the quotations from Michael Ignatieff and Andras Schiff underline at the top of this paper, certain 'classic' works seem to be inexhaustible by continually revealing new aspects no matter how many times they are revisited. As Piennar notes, the performer's role is "so much more than simply an enquiry after the 'meaning' of the original, or the 'intentions' of the composer" but "the 'classic' ... becomes a catalyst for exploring values he deems timeless". The enormously wide variety of commercially available recordings confirms not only the inexhaustibility of the piece but also the satisfaction that many evidently gain by re-experiencing it in various interpretations and arrangements.

The range of interpretations of such works surely belies any residual idea that there is some single ideal way in which such pieces should be played (or heard). It is a relief that the cultures of classical music have gone beyond that period in the latter 20th century when dogmatic ideas of how Bach must be played were stifling the range of approaches that were deemed acceptable. As George Stauffer tentatively observed back in 1997 we may be experiencing "the beginning of a new era, one in which performers knowingly – and unabashedly – seek a middle ground between what they know of Bach's conventions and their own personal tastes". Developments since then, I believe, have only confirmed this trend. Though of course most

classical musicians are historically-informed – to various extents admittedly - the use of composer's original instrument, its original tuning system and, more broadly, the use of historical performance practices are no longer mandatory for performances to achieve critical acceptance as the number of respected recordings of the Goldberg Variations on piano attest. A wide range of performance practices coexist and this strikes me as healthy. Moreover arrangements these days seem to be less widely frowned upon for their lack of authenticity. To me the very multiplicity of possibilities – that certain works can seem to say so many different things in the hands of different performers at different times - is an essential aspect of the traditions of Classical music that should be celebrated.

The *Goldberg Variations* are a striking case in point. A work that was widely regarded until the mid-20th century to be a rather arcane, pedantic set of counterpoint exercises suddenly became widely popular metaphorically "overnight" with the release of Glenn Gould's famous 1955 recording, the landmark event in the work's reception history. As Paul Elie (2012) writes, "there is no piece of music whose history is so divided into 'before' and 'after' by one performer as the history of the *Goldberg Variations* is divided into before and after Glenn Gould". I think it is worth underlining that this occurred not through any attempt to realise the composer's intentions but, significantly, through a dazzling recording on an instrument other than that which the composer specified that enabled people to hear its potential – dare one say, its spirit – in a way that was new and, for many, revelatory.

Beyond Gould's extraordinary pianism, the 1955 recording prompted a widespread re-evaluation of the work itself. To quote Elie once more, "With Gould's Goldberg Variations, Bach became modern". A work that up until then had been relatively rarely performed or recorded has since become widely known and has even entered popular culture through film. The pianist Charles Rosen has even claimed it to be "the most successful of all his [i.e. Bach's] works in concert performance today" and one might add, probably on CD as well. Of course harpsichord players still present the work and many have recorded it but the work has become primarily known on the modern piano. It is now widely considered to be a pinnacle of piano repertoire, a work that the most advanced pianists aspire to play. Over a hundred different recordings of the work are listed in the Wikipedia entry on the

Goldberg Variations and even more could be counted on Amazon.com. And there are no signs of the work's popularity abating. To quote from Jeremy Denk's wonderful site from 2012 mischievously titled "Why I hate the *Goldberg Variations*", the best reason to hate Bach's *Goldberg Variations*—aside from the obvious reason that everyone asks you all the time which of the two Glenn Gould recordings you prefer—is that everybody loves them. Not a moment goes by when someone doesn't release a new recording, accompanied by breathless press. They're like a trendy bar that (infuriatingly) keeps staying trendy.

Beyond different interpretations, the huge numbers of arrangements released on CD, most of them from recent years, are a clear testament to the satisfaction, and indeed pleasure, which can evidently be gained by hearing a familiar work sound different. A cursory look at the recordings of the Goldbergs available via Amazon.com shows versions beyond those for various keyboard instruments (harpsichord, piano and even organ) that include harp, accordion, woodwind and brass ensembles as well as a number recordings of the acclaimed arrangement for string trio by Dmitri Sitkovetsky (1984).

I myself own over a dozen recordings of the Goldbergs across a range of interpretative approaches and instruments and take great enjoyment from many of them. I still frequently listen to them and explore new ones. Among the many that impressed, both Sonya and I found Murray Perahia's (Sony, 2000) to be particularly inspiring. Perhaps unexpectedly, one of my favourites is the recording by the Canadian Brass quintet as arranged by Arthur Frackenpohl. It was this recording that drew my attention to the possibilities of dialogue in the work, to a way of presenting textures not just as complementary lines but as the answering back and forth between individuals who shape their playing in response to others. From the beginning I was keen to exploit this aspect in my arrangement. Certainly it was among the most satisfying aspects in both rehearsal and performance.

There is no doubt that preparing the *Goldberg Variations* for public performance as a solo pianist is an intimidating prospect. Like many pianists I suspect, I have flirted with them off and on for many years but, like the *Diabelli Variations* or the *Hammerklavier* or *Concord* sonatas, the prospect of playing such a monumental work in public is a daunting one. The *Goldberg Variations* are known to almost everyone who loves classical music through

any number of dazzling recordings by so many outstanding musicians. To cite Jeremy Denk again: "If there's anything more terrifying than adding another recording to the existing legacy, it's the idea of adding even one more word to the quivering mass of adulatory Goldberg verbiage."

Cory Hall in fact blames Gould's "electric virtuosity that have [sic.] scared away countless pianists from even touching Bach's masterpiece". The opportunity to embrace the work in partnership was far more appealing and probably realistic. Also, it seemed an excellent way to really "get inside the work" and experience the inter-dependence of its lines from the inside. Certainly I saw it as useful, if not essential preparation if I were ever to find the courage to perform it solo.

I was also aware that, by sharing of some of the extreme technical difficulties, our focus could be more on the musical rather than the technical challenges. These are certainly substantial enough. In fact Landowska feared that audiences were more attracted to the work for its virtuosity rather than its musical values. She claimed that:

The gluttony with which the public rushes to buy tickets to hear the *Goldberg Variations* saddens and discourages me. Is it through love for this music? No, they do not know it. They are prompted simply by the base curiosity of seeing a virtuoso fight with the most difficult work ever written for the keyboard.

I am hopeful that, being relieved of the work's notorious technical demands, the arrangement for two pianos enabled us to shape and characterise the lines more distinctly, and thus encouraged a fresh and playful interpretation. For example, as mentioned above, on many occasions we took the opportunity to ornament various lines in ways that would not be viable if played by one player. In fact we adjusted the answering ornamentation in Variation 2 many times from performance to performance. The Quodlibet (Variation 30), one of the variations in four parts, became increasingly and deliberately outrageously ornamented the more we played it. That piece, with its quotations and ingenious combinations of popular melodies, surely shouldn't be too serious and so the extravagance seemed appropriate. Here, as well as in other variations, the distribution across four hands allowed various interpretations that would not be possible with a mere ten fingers.

As is widely known, the *Goldberg Variations* were composed for a two-manual harpsichord that enabled easy crossing of the hands and this accounts for many of its most exacting difficulties when transferred on to the single keyboard of a modern piano. Though all the notes can be played by two hands on a piano, some adjustment to note lengths is required at times. While this is no secret, the extent to which such factors affect the way the music is interpreted is rarely acknowledged.

The opening of Variation 11 provides a most telling example. As Example 9 illustrates, it is evident that the right-hand's C# in the middle of bar 1 cannot be held its notated length while the same note is to be played in the left-hand. Moreover the crossing of the lines in bar 4 requires that the semiquavers be played detached. As a direct result, not only the articulation of particular passages is affected but, as a consequence, the character of the whole variation. Glenn Gould's 1955 recording is typical in presenting this variation with short staccato semiquavers and consequently with a rather perky character.

For some time I was unsure how to arrange this variation for two pianos. Being in two parts, I expected that additional material would needed to occupy the four hands but, as was often the case, I was cautious of adding superfluous material and spoiling the perfect purity of Bach's original. This was one of the last of the variations that I arranged – I certainly had not done them in order – and I had delayed trying this one as I wasn't sure what to do with it. In fact I recall starting to input some notes of it into Finale before having any clear idea of what I was after. However, once I realised that the falling lines were to be answered successively between the four hands (rather than between the two instruments) the arrangement of whole variation fell into place pretty much immediately.



Figure 10. Variation 11, bars 1-4.

As can be seen in the example below, no extra notes were needed to keep the four hands occupied and, more to the point, in this way the awkward cross-overs faced by a solo pianist are all avoided. Significantly this enables the lines to be played a legato and with a sense of cantabile that is not possible when played in one keyboard. The visual imagery I associated with this music was thereby able to become that of a luxurious garden in a Baroque painting with prolific vines entwined voluptuously, imagery that was not possible to achieve on a single manual piano when the touch is necessarily non-legato.



Figure 11. Variation 11, bars 1-7 (arranged Emmerson)

For me this variation is among the highlights of the arrangement to play.

Preparing for performance and recording

Preparations for our performances of the arrangement have all been challenged by the fact that Sonya and I live in different state capitals in Australia. Our rehearsals have necessarily been in concentrated bursts, most often for just the few days preceding a performance. As such they were

inevitably pressured and demanding but, were nonetheless always deeply satisfying musically. Another factor throughout our preparation for the Bach arrangement has been that we have mostly played it in programmes together with Damian Barbeler's *Bright Birds*, a work that is extremely virtuosic and demanding both in negotiating the complex choreography of the individual parts and in playing them together. Though relatively short in duration (around 18 minutes), its complexities involve intricate cascades of very fast notes usually in unpredictable, irregular patterns. We rehearsed both pieces across a few intensive periods spaced over several months before the first performance. But it has only been in 2013 that we have had what seemed to be the relative luxury of rehearsing the Bach arrangement on its own when we could focus exclusively on its considerable demands.

The premiere performance we gave at the Four Winds Festival was stressful for many reasons not least of which was wanting to do justice to Damian's new piece at its world premiere. But equally we did not want to fail to present a convincing *Goldberg Variations*. A recording team from ABC Classic FM was there so we were very aware of that extra pressure. And on top of that, there were challenges - not unusual for a regional festival - of getting access to the pianos to practice before the performance. In fact, the only time we could rehearse on the pianos on the day of the performance was at sunrise - that was at around 6am - and only for an hour. However, despite the level of stress being significantly above normal, we felt the performance went as well as we could have hoped. After the difficulties of *Bright Birds* had been negotiated reasonably well, we focussed well through the Bach which seemed to unfold with pleasing energy and accuracy. We looked forward to hearing the ABC FM recording hoping it would confirm that our perceptions were accurate. We later learnt that a technical issue due to a loss of power had interrupted the recording of our concert and that only some of *Bright Birds* and none of the *Goldbergs* had been recorded.

We next came to perform the arrangement (and *Bright Birds* again) in August 2012 in the inaugural Australian Piano Duo Festival held in Brisbane. We had rehearsed together in Melbourne a few times in the preceding months but mostly the intensive rehearsal time together took place largely in the few days in Brisbane preceding the performance. Not unexpectedly, to return to such large-scale works after some months, one sees and hears so many things differently. I would not say the interpretation changed in many

obvious ways but innumerable details were clearer in concept and execution. Overall, I believe a greater the sense of refinement and awareness had developed. Some obvious differences were reflected in the many changes to metronome marks that we habitually pencilled into our scores. Rehearsing with a metronome was central to what we referred to, in jest, as our “rigorous rehearsal methodology”. We felt freer to ornament much more profusely (especially in the Quodlibet, which as was mentioned, had already become deliberately extravagant in this regard.) We performed the arrangement in choreography of the individual parts and in playing them together. Though relatively short in duration (around 18 minutes), its complexities involve intricate cascades of very fast notes usually in unpredictable, irregular patterns. We rehearsed both pieces across a few intensive periods spaced over several months before the first performance. But it has only been in 2013 that we have had what seemed to be the relative luxury of rehearsing the Bach arrangement on its own when we could focus exclusively on its considerable demands.

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After the failure of the recording at the festival, we were very grateful that Stephen Snellerman from ABC Classic FM in Melbourne offered us the opportunity to record both *Bright Birds* and the *Goldberg Variations* arrangement for radio broadcast. This took place in early 2013 and was a welcome opportunity to get a recording that would not only be more accurate and settled than the premiere performance but, on two full-sized Steinway pianos and in the superior acoustic of the Iwaki Auditorium in Melbourne, we hoped that this could capture our intentions much better. We had two days to record the 32 pieces.

We recorded each variation separately with several takes to allow for any patching that might be needed in the editing process. Certainly we were

aware of the tempo relationships we wanted between successive variations and had deliberately taken out or minimised any ritardandos at the end of variations. (The recording of the August performance had drawn our attention to how these tended to break up the overall sense of continuity.) Though much of our rehearsal had been focussed on the timing and tempo relationship between successive variations, the recording process was undeniably a patchwork. This is hardly uncommon, in fact it is standard practice, but among our primary goals was to achieve a convincing continuity across the work as a whole. When we next returned to play the work together, our abiding concern remained for connections between variations and for the articulation larger structures.

We were well aware of tempo relationships between variations that Glenn Gould devised in his 1980 recording and we used similar principles to link certain groups of variations. Certainly we recognised the issue to be the crucial one. As Walter Schenkman wrote in 1975: "a decision made with regard to the tempo of any given variation immediately sets up the conditions for a definite relationship to be realized between that variation and those that surround it. In fact, it is the nature of the inner relationships thus established that ultimately determines the total character of the work in its performance."

In fact much of our rehearsal time involved readjustment of the metronome marks so that a similar sense of pulse could carry over between variations. Some rehearsals were entirely spent by playing the last bars of one variation followed by the first bars of the next to judge their relationship and how much space was needed between them. For example, we considered the first five variations to be a structural unit with only slight breaks between each successive piece. We did not intend to have a common pulse running through them but had consciously decided that the tempo for Variation 2 would be slightly slower than that of Variation 1. Similarly the pulse of Variation 3 would be another notch slower than that of Variation 2 but since the beat has changed from crotchets to dotted crotchets, the impression would be of a slight increase in the pace of the semiquavers. We then intended that the same dotted crotchet pulse would carry over from Variation 3 into Variation 4. Then the crotchet pulse in Variation 5 would be double that of the preceding dotted crotchet beat in Variation 4. As a result underlying the very contrasting character of these variations, there was a

clear plan of the tempo relationships which we hoped would connect them as a unit.

As Gould wisely observed in conversation with Tim Page: "I think it's a technique – the idea of rhythmic continuity – that's really only useful if everybody does 'feel it in their bones', you know, to use your words; experiences it subliminally, in other words, and absolutely nobody actually notices what's really going on." Needless to say perhaps, there are many things that a performer is aware of that one would not want the audience to notice consciously.

As I mentioned at the start, I perceive that our interpretation has attained a heightened level of maturity this year. We played the arrangement again in Toowoomba at the 11th Australasian Piano Pedagogy Conference held in June. Again rehearsal time together was very limited and it was somewhat daunting to play for pianists and teachers most, if not all, of whom we knew were likely to hold strong convictions on how Bach should be played! Unfortunately there were a few regrettable mishaps (especially in the first variation that got us off to a shaky start and an obvious mistake towards the end) and we came off the stage disappointed. However in retrospect, the recording of that performance showed that the continuity across the work was undoubtedly a marked improvement on our performances in the previous year. And fortunately the mishaps were less evident than we had feared. As I think every performer knows, it is so difficult to get a sense of perspective on one's own performance, even after hearing a recording of it.

Each time we came to perform it prompted changes not just to how we played it – articulations, dynamics, tempo, ornamentation etcetera - but to the arrangement itself. Many of these were minor adjustments of notes, octave registers, rewriting of counterpoint or redistribution of material between the pianos. The evolution of Variation 25 can illustrate the nature of such changes. This is the one that Landowska famously dubbed the "Black pearl". Being one of only three variations in the minor key, it is necessarily a highlight of any respectable performance of the work. Even more so than elsewhere, I was aware of considerable responsibility to judge the arrangement of this one as finely, as subtly, as convincingly as possible. Like Variation 13, the opening of which is illustrated in Example 6 above, the arrangement presents this variation as a dialogue back and forth between

the pianos in order to allow each pianist the opportunity to respond to the others' expressive nuance.

As can be noted in Example 11 below, the opening figure provided a rhetorical point of entry for the piano lines to answer each other. As was often the case in doing the arrangement, once a concept had emerged – usually within the opening bars – there seemed few difficult decisions to be made with the distributions between the two pianos often seeming to be self-evident. I love the way the entry of the second piano responds to the pathos of the opening with a desperate harmonic jolt from G minor down to F minor in the second bar. Now when I hear this variation played by a single pianist I miss that that sense of rhetorical response. Certainly, both here and in Variation 13, I cannot now play this variation on my own without imagining that sense of statement and response.



Figure 12. Variation 25, bars 1-4 (arranged Emerson).

I wished to avoid any sense that the alternations would become too frequent, or break the sense of line. I certainly wanted to avoid any sense of the pianos alternating too predictably. The top half of the diagram below illustrates graphically the alternations as they occurred in my initial arrangement. Though I have only put them in this form for the purposes of this paper, I was aware of such shapes at the time and was very attracted to their subtle asymmetries.

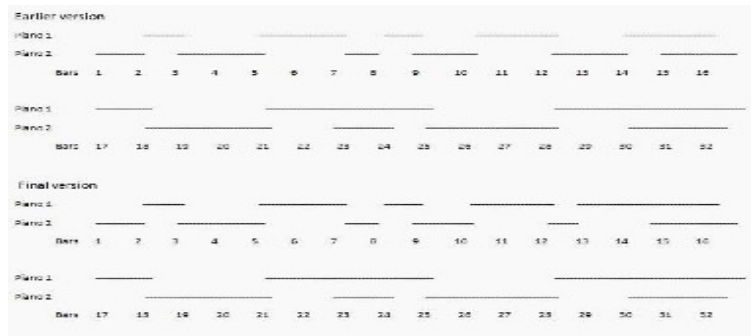


Figure 13. Alternations between the pianos in Variation 25.

As is evident, apart from some brief overlapping, the only places where the pianos play together are at the three cadence points (in bars 16, 24 and 32) where some extra material was added. This variation has been noted by various authors to evoke the Passion of Christ and the additional thirds were deliberately intended to recall similar passages in the *St. Matthew Passion*.



Figure 14. Variation 25, bars 14-16 (arranged Emmerson).

However, when we came to prepare it for the ABC recording, I was concerned that frequency of the alternations was breaking the sense of building that is such a feature of this intensely expressive music. Not only the torturous chromaticism but the building of harmonic tensions over such a large span is almost Wagnerian. And so in the bars leading to the cadence on the dominant (always in bar 16 of each variation) we decided in rehearsal that the alternations should be reconsidered to better build and sustain the line. We tried various versions and adjusted them many times we until

arriving at the version also graphically illustrated in the lower half of Figure 3 above. This version is even more asymmetrical but I like the way the larger units at the end of the first half prepare for those in the second.

As mentioned, numerous such changes across many of the variations continued to be made as we prepared for various performances but I now this feel that both the arrangement and our performance of it have settled into a stable form. It has taken a while but, after several performances, a recording and living with it for a couple of years, I now feel that I can stop fiddling with details. I hope that I can find a publisher who will recognise the pedagogical potential of the arrangement as I believe that it does make this work within reach of pianists who would normally not contemplate learning or performing it as a solo. Like the Chopin Preludes (or even *The Well-Tempered Clavier* for that matter), the relatively recent practice of performing and recording the whole collection of pieces in succession should not be the only option for engaging with such music. Despite the orderly structure underlying Bach's arrangement of them, it is worth being reminded that Bach is unlikely to have conceived the set for performance in a form close to what we are accustomed to hearing today. Even though it was one of the relatively few works that Bach published, it was, as far as we know, never performed in public concert during his lifetime. The work can, and perhaps should, be more often viewed in such a way as a collection of pieces and one advantage of my version for two pianos is that it makes them accessible to pianists across different levels of technical accomplishment. They range from the very simple (such as Variations 22 and the Quodlibet) through to advanced levels. Even in my version for two pianists, some variations such as 5, 20 or 29 remain virtuosic. Nonetheless, with a judicious choice of variations, the arrangement could be an excellent way to introduce a moderately accomplished pianist, not just to one of the acknowledged masterpieces of the Western canon, but to the challenges and delights of counterpoint and canon in particular while, in the process, providing the enjoyable experience of ensemble playing. I made this case of the pedagogical potential with a lecture demonstration at the Toowoomba conference and, if the many encouraging comments from the teachers present is a true indication, I expect that the arrangement could be of significant interest to piano teachers and amateur players.

Future possibilities (with repeats?)

Though the arrangement of the *Goldberg Variations* and our interpretation has reached a stage where it feels settled, there remains many possibilities for us to develop it further. Future performance possibilities are being planned in various forms.

The *Goldberg Variations* are usually performed in one of two forms, either with the repeats or without. As such, its duration is either around 40 or 80 minutes. The great majority of recordings do the repeats as it then takes a whole CD on its own. So far, all the opportunities we have had to play the work have been without repeats but the next stage for us will be to prepare the longer version. I expect this will not be a simple matter of playing each variation twice but will require much planning and preparation. It could be a relatively straightforward matter of deciding on some different dynamics and ornaments to do each second time and leave the differences to spontaneous expressive nuances. However the possibilities of rethinking it extend well beyond that. One option would be for the parts to swap between the two pianists at each repeat. That would immediately ensure a different perspective each time and, despite the considerable work needed to prepare the other half of the work, would have the advantage of us knowing each other's part intimately "in the fingers" rather than just by ear. However, though it would be thorough, I think that to exchange parts every time - twice for every variation - is not necessarily the best way to deal with the issue of repeats. I expect that a more imaginative way will present itself.

There is some debate about whether in fact the "all or nothing" approach to the question of repeats is the only alternative. For some, the issue is black-and-white. For example for Rosalyn Tureck claimed that "If you don't play all the repeats ... you are abusing the whole concept of the form." But Williams's distinction between conceptual and perceptual shape of the work seems pertinent here. Even in her performances without repeats, Angela Hewitt (2000) nonetheless always does both repeats in the Quodlibet "which is otherwise ridiculously short". Gould's 1955 recording omitted all the repeats but in his 1980 version he elected to include certain ones. Despite the objections of some purists, the many admirers of this version have evidently perceived the shape to be satisfying and convincing. Recordings by Pinnock (1980) and Pienaar (2011) have also made a case for a selective

approach to the repeats. I expect that we will want to perform the arrangement with full repeats several times to get the feel of that but may ultimately develop a form that selects certain ones. Though it may seem random, I am attracted to the idea of developing a form that takes close to an hour.

Another possibility that I have only recently become aware of is a collection of new compositions titled *Thirteen Ways of Looking at the Goldberg*. These are a set of twelve pieces for solo piano commissioned by the Irving S. Gilmore Keyboard Festival where they were performed by Gilbert Kalish in 2004. They include new variations in a range of contemporary styles by composers as diverse as Jennifer Higdon, Lukas Foss, David del Tredici, William Bolcom, Fred Hersch and Derek Bermel. Though Kalish has arranged them in an order for publication and performance (that takes around 50 minutes), they remain a collection of separate pieces and so the possibility of devising a suite that combine some of Bach's variations with some of these new pieces is an appealing thought. In the publication, Bach's Aria is given at the beginning and the end and Bach's sublime Variation 13 is inserted near the middle of the new set of variations. Clearly that idea of combining these new pieces within the framework of the Goldberg Variations could be developed in any number of ways. Perhaps I may end up with something closer to a "Deleuze-berg" Variations than I expected.

With or without the insertion of some of these new pieces, I am preparing towards a solo performance that may or may not include all the variations. Within that, I am also considering transposing some of them to provide tonal variety and structure. One of the "fatal flaws" Denk identified on his blog – admittedly with his tongue in his cheek – was the preponderance of the one key throughout. As he wrote, "no amount of artistry and inspiration ... can make you forget that you are hearing 80 minutes of G major; it's like trying not to notice Mount Everest".

Certainly Holloway's *Gilded Goldbergs* moves through a range of keys most effectively. But, even if one was to stay closer to Bach than he does, it does strike me that a key scheme could not only provide a satisfying tonal variety and structure but could help to distinguish the character of different variations. It is well known that 18th-century musicians assigned different affective characters to different keys and it seems obvious to me that, as

certain variations within the Goldberg set that have such distinct characters and affects, many of them would work well in keys other than G. To me some suggest alternative keys very strongly. For example it seems to me that the famous "Black pearl" (no.25) is eminently well suited to the key of F# minor, just as Variation 15 has, by contrast, a distinctly F minor character. To mention just a couple of other possibilities, the pastoral nature of Variation 3 suggests F major to me and Variations 6 and 19 for that matter work well in A flat major. Conversely the brighter quality of Variation 2 though suggests A Major to me (as does Variation 17). Though such associations have a subjective dimension, it would be interesting nonetheless to see how such changes of key may enable these pieces to be heard afresh. Clearly, if different keys are assigned then a new ordering would be necessary and one might devise a version that did not include all the variations. Any attempt to reorder them – to alter Bach's eminently rational structure - would no doubt be viewed by some as heretical but I suspect that it could be done convincingly. As ever, where one draws the line about what liberties are acceptable will differ from individual to individual but it seems to me that the general climate is much more ready to accept than it would be been not so long ago. It is likely of course that there will be some who will outraged by the prospect but there seems to be, at least in some quarters, an increasing openness towards creative experimentation I hope so. We shall see.

So the future of my ongoing engagement with this work may take various forms. Of course it is but one of the many and various performance projects that I am involved with. Which ones shall take prominence is never clear in advance as so much depends on unforeseen opportunities that emerge. I welcome the serendipitous in my life and musical career. For example, a close friend and colleague in Singapore is keen to play the arrangement with me and, though the partnership with Sonya has been a delight, it will be interesting to explore the work at some point with another fine pianist. The work continues to bounce regularly around inside my head as it has done for a couple of years. I have not begun to tire of it even slightly and consider it a privilege to be living with, and nourished by, such a piece on and off over this period of my life.

Some brief conclusions

It is hoped that this paper has provided a range of insights into the process of arranging and performing Bach's *Goldberg Variations* in a new version for two pianos. That many of these insights have been largely personal reflects, inevitably I believe, the true nature of the process that, for so many artists, is driven by their particular concerns and context. The frequent apparent digressions (especially through the extensive Endnotes below) may appear tangential but have been included to reflect and acknowledge the many diverse sources, ideas and influences that have fed – and continue to feed – into the project at every stage. Though a clear, concise research method has not been neatly articulated, it should be evident that the outcomes – a new arrangement of the work presented through performances and a broadcast recording – was the result of a rich multi-dimensional process that evolved through various stages of ongoing refinement over an extended period of time. Beyond the personal satisfaction it has given me, it is hoped it offers to others new and fresh ways of engaging with this iconic work.

7

Music at the end of my street

Louise Denson

In 2013, I had the good fortune to travel for three months in Europe and Canada, visiting family, friends and some of the great wonders of the natural and human world. While I enthusiastically welcomed this interruption to my annual routine, which has long been governed by the rhythms and rigours of the academic year, I was concerned about such prolonged lack of access to a piano. I determined that even if I were unable to keep my hands in shape, I would keep my ears and brain in shape through listening and composing. Before leaving, I loaded my digital audio device with CDs which I hadn't yet had time to absorb and appreciate; and I packed manuscript, pencils, a sharpener, an eraser, in case the excitement of a trip to the other side of the world would inspire me to compose.

As it turned out, despite long hours in transit and gaps in our itinerary where I theoretically had time to devote to music, I wrote nary a note, and most of the CDs remained unexamined. On the other hand, once back in Brisbane, I couldn't find enough hours in the day to listen to, think about, play and write music. This experience led me to reflect on my creative practice, and how, when and where it takes place.

It seems apparent that my urge to write music is stimulated by habit and routine, rather than novelty and adventure. This may well lack glamour and mystery, but it is logical. In Europe, my senses, thoughts and energy were fully occupied negotiating life in a series of foreign environments, and I seemed to have little mental or physical capacity available to do anything else. Finding the right train platform in Amsterdam, navigating through the back streets of Pisa in a car the size of a matchbox, marveling at the power and wonder of Niagara Falls, reconnecting with people I hadn't seen for many years – these and thousands of other matters large and small occupied me completely for the duration of the trip: there simply wasn't enough room in my head to hear my next jazz tune, art song or arrangement.

But immediately after my return, music started to flow. I completed two art songs and sketched three more; completed two arrangements for my jazz quintet and sketched two more for various instrumentations; edited and completed three tunes found in the inch-thick folder of ideas which usually gathers dust on top of the piano; and created arrangements and charts for various professional engagements. Suddenly I was thinking and doing music every day, which is always both a luxury and a pleasure.

So how, when and where does all this creative activity take place? As I am a pianist and an improviser, one might assume that the majority of my compositional practice takes place at the piano. And indeed, a great deal of work developing, arranging and orchestrating ideas does take place at the piano. Melodies and ideas for songs arise through improvisation, as well. But a surprising number of my musical projects start – or progress – far away from the piano, with melodies, rhythms, harmonies and sometimes lyrics coming to mind as I do something else.

Sometimes that 'something else' is a journey on public transport. I have a distant memory of sitting on a Greyhound bus, traveling across the Canadian prairie, writing lyrics and a sort of musical shorthand (which turned out to be indecipherable) on a scrap of paper. It was summer. The paper was purple, a page from a desktop block-note pad. The experience of having music sounding in my mind's ear that hadn't been written by someone else must have been a profound one for me to remember it so vividly at a distance of several decades.

In the more recent past, a tune that has long been in the repertoire of the Louise Denson Group was written between my flat in St. Henri and Concordia University in Montreal, a trip involving a short metro ride and a transfer to the #105 bus. Luckily I was carrying manuscript paper with me (on my way to a composition class), so unlike the early attempt at a folk song described above, this composition survived. Louise Denson Group recorded it in 2002 as "Sanctuary", and it now has a second life as "Maybe Tomorrow", with lyrics and an arrangement for voice, jazz rhythm section and strings.

In my Australian present, many ideas for compositions have been scribbled on an empty page of my diary. The lines that divide a day into half-hour blocks can be grouped in fives and turned into a staff. Thus ideas, which arise as I'm waiting for the #471 bus home at the end of a workday,

are not lost. The bus is almost always late: sometimes I have an idea well developed before it arrives, and completed (subject to review) by the time I get home. Three different sketches for the tune that became "Flame Tree" can be found in the pages around Christmas, 2009.

I am not alone in taking advantage of the individual immobility imposed by the collective mobility of a bus or train journey to write music. Duke Ellington famously created volumes of music in his Pullman car as his band criss-crossed the North American continent, a private paradise shielding them from various circles of the public hell of racism and segregation.

But overwhelmingly, the 'something else' that I seem to have found inspiring in the last many years, is walking. I live down the street from Toowong Cemetery, the largest and oldest cemetery in Brisbane, and my preferred venue for morning and evening walks. It covers 44 hectares of land and is well used by the local community for exercise, relaxation and dog walking. The hilly, winding paths are lined with lush, venerable trees – Bunya pines with their giant, edible cones – delicious, but deadly in a Newtonian encounter. Norfolk and hoop pines with their needle-y hands and fingers. Stately Kauris, ironbarks, paperbarks, redbbluegrey gums, flaming flame trees, heady mock orange hedges and deepgreen figs with their dense, fecund canopies.

Honeyeaters, lorikeets and figbirds shelter among the leaves, chattering among themselves and shrieking hysterically if dogs sniff their way too near. Clear calling koels, cacophonous cockatoos and the cheeky channel billed cuckoo up the volume as they circle in the sky. On the quieter side, tawny frogmouth owls try to turn themselves into twigs, leaning discreetly to the side, their mottled feathering blending with the bark. Once I encountered a large flock of corellas, taking refuge from the drought-ravaged west, feasting with abandon on the seeds and fruits fallen among the headstones.

The cemetery is vibrantly alive, despite its primary purpose of sheltering and honouring the dead. And the headstones tell every sort of story about life and death. Some graves are frequently tended, some have fallen into disrepair. Some who lie beneath have been well loved, others neglected, or even despised. Stories of loss, suffering, tragedy, and lives wasted in war. Couples who died within months of one another, and women who spent 50 years as widows. Honour and accomplishment celebrated, but shame well hidden. Agonising stories of children accidentally killed, and children who

never even had the chance to live. Inscriptions in languages from around the world, pledging eternal remembrance, commending loved ones to various gods.

The cemetery houses all: blameless or maleficent, ethical or corrupt, generous or miserly, worldly or naïve, insightful or ignorant, industrious or lazy, amicable or cantankerous, restless or content. The history of humanity lies at the end of my street.

Over the years, I have walked hundreds of kilometres in the cemetery, often in the company of my husband and our dog, but often on my own. My habitual constitutionals nourish me in many ways, keeping me physically limber, filling me with gratitude and wonder to have found myself living in such a rich and varied environment, and allowing me the space to think, to listen, and to hear what is emerging in my musical mind. "Fisherman Islands", a vignette accompanying the poem of the same name by Samuel Wagan Watson, had its genesis on such an outing. A hot, dry day, the birds silent, the rustle of tiny lizards under the leaves belying the stillness, just as fish lurk among the mangrove roots at the islands, never disturbing the water's surface.

Sometimes I work out musical puzzles as I walk. Should this phrase finish up, or down? Where does this melody want to go in the bridge of this tune? Will this idea work at a faster tempo, or over a straight quaver groove rather than a swing? How can I smooth out the transition from the first section of this arrangement to the new tempo in the middle? Music runs through in my mind. I sing to myself, tap a rhythm as I go.

The stories of the cemetery's residents can find their way into my compositions as well. "Gone Too Soon" and "Suddenly the Sun Went Down" were both inspired by poems inscribed on headstones, expressions of shock and distress at the sudden loss of a loved one. Lonely Wing, speaks of the search for relief from suffering, and the acceptance of things as they are. "Sun Samba" is about a glorious morning, the air cool, crisp and energising, like the thousands of mornings now enjoyed by the cemetery's tenants only via distant proxy.

My constitutionals allow regular reflection on my silent neighbours' stories of life and death, the two epics that command the sum total of human attention. The coalescence of time, space, contemplation and habit that I

experience every time I go for a walk, creates the music in my life. All I have to do is hurry home and write it down.

8

Bearing witness and music composition

Kim Cunio

Bearing witness

The term bearing witness is commonly accepted as being defined by the Quaker movement, a concept that arose as part of a greater religious commitment to non-violence, opposition to slavery, a modest lifestyle and a commitment to not partake of alcohol. Despite many machinations and changes in Quaker movements, society has been able to define an almost mythic Quaker way of thought that is passive, inclusive, spiritually minded and rooted in the ideals of social justice. I was introduced to the ideas of Quakers in my early twenties when working for Greenpeace, and they have stayed with me ever since. In another part of my work, facilitating inter-spiritual services with the writer Stephanie Dowrick, quaker thought is deeply inspirational.

Life is meant to be lived from a Centre, a divine Centre. Each one of us can live such a life of amazing power and peace and serenity, of integration and confidence and simplified multiplicity, on one condition – that is, if we really want to. There is a divine Abyss within us all, a holy Infinite Centre, a Heart, a Life who speaks in us and through us to the world.

In recent time bearing witness has become a conceptual framework to support good reporting. Reporters embed themselves into an event and seek to present it as it actually is, something that the Reuters response to the Iraq War typifies. This example, a dedicated web space, is populated by interviews and recollections from reporters (coupled with analysis and archival footage), showing what really happened to the reporters while they did their work.

Through five years of war, a team of 100 Reuters correspondents, photographers, cameramen and support staff have strived to deliver news to the world from Iraq - the most dangerous country for the press. These are

their personal stories, bearing witness through half a decade of conflict, which has taken the lives of 127 journalists, including seven Reuters staff.



Figure 1. Web excerpt from Reuters, *Bearing Witness: Five Years of the Iraq War*

There is a second interpretation in this process. Bearing witness allows an engagement with Buddhist notions of acceptance and impermanence that seek to train the mind to move beyond the craving and aversion that categorise modern intellectual thought. Such an interpretation requires more than casual reading or observance; this author believes that a sustained meditation practice is vital in our understanding the flow of thoughts that constitute our minds.

This is also the point in which bearing witness differs from formal ethnography. Bearing witness is a spiritual practice that can be explored through ethnography, not a new research method as such. As such I would suggest that any researcher wishing to work in a similar sphere spend time with the established methods of ethnography and personal reflection to develop a consistent method of using personal experience to collect and interpret data. It is not that ethnography does not have the collective space

for such investigations, more so that it does not contain the philosophical ideas that I find inspirational in bearing witness. It is also not a fixed method that can be easily made into a composition method.

Informed by this sensibility bearing witness in music research is something that can be framed into two simple questions:

How can I bear witness to some aspect of the world and respond to it through the process of composition / performance / improvisation?

How can I bear witness to the process of music making and respond to it with honesty and integrity?

The beauty of such an open research paradigm is that it allows the exploration and experimentation of the artist to be free from ideology, musical language or lineage. The artist does not have to defend notions of authenticity or newness, instead simply requiring a cogent self-examination throughout the process that can be stated simply...

Did I bear witness to the event?

How?

Have I interpreted the event?

How might this event influence future events?

Little 'r' research

I joined the Queensland Conservatorium in mid 2009 with an understanding that music making would be my primary mode of research. Many staff in Australian music universities make music, primarily giving concerts and presenting newly composed works. A growing number have also entered into a process of artistic experimentation. This is often done by early career researchers (ECRs), who fill a gap between the output of traditional academics and Graduate students. ECRs are increasingly engaging with 'little r' research (subjective, reflective artistic research), a process that includes personal reflection alongside traditional modes of music interpretation and

analysis, a type of research that has an inbuilt potential for bearing witness. This however is not always easy to achieve in the Australian tertiary sector. The following quote from an article by Dieter Lesage in *Art & Research*, 2009, broadly reflects the University system, which encourages reflexive writing, yet inherently seeks to limit its potential by privileging traditional course structures and modes of publication.

The insistence of universities on the obligation of a written supplement seems to demonstrate the university's lack of confidence either in the capacity of the arts to speak in a meaningful, complex and critical way in a medium of their choosing, or in the university's own capacity to make sound judgements on the meaning, complexity and criticality of artistic output as such. What might happen now is that juries will mainly base their judgement on a reading of the written supplement, because it complies with a long-standing format of the doctorate, as if it were the doctorate itself, while at the same time being tempted to consider the artistic portfolio merely as a supplementary illustration.

Despite the criticisms that can emerge from this reading Australian conservatoria still offer a valuable ground for these notions of research, allowing concurrent explorations of artistic practice, reflection and dissemination, which are difficult to facilitate in the marketplace of music. For the author this has led to projects in composition and performance, housed in the Artistic Practice as Research and Music Technology clusters of the Queensland Conservatorium Research Centre (QCRC), which constitute a narrative from discursive analysis towards artistic practice research.

The institution of subtle yet meaningful musical boundaries is crucial in structuring such research. If we call every artistic endeavour we undertake research we will not be doing artistic practice or research any favours. Certain artistic projects are 'research ready' while others are best viewed as professional practice and the academic artist must know the difference. ECRs and academic artists must also develop the capacity to respond to artistic literature as others respond to traditional literature in more discursive idioms. Publishing is also a different world in 'little r' research. Performing and sharing embodied research in a live performance or curatorial setting is increasingly a valid medium, alongside mixed presentations and web projects with accompanying exegetical responses. While publishing can be

important and vital to the reception of artistic research in the academy, the researching artist must make a distinction between the research itself and its dissemination. I have found three methods of response and category to help quantify my own work, with the final category incorporating the notion of bearing witness that is the heart of this paper.

Research embodied music

Sometimes realizing or performing music has an inbuilt research problem, which is well documented in new music, historical music and hybrid music forms. Recent decades have also shown that the interpretation of standard repertoire can be elucidated in this manner; for example the manner of how best to realize a cadence from the music of a particular composer is a problem best solved through music itself. Music performance and composition therefore contain a potential for embodied research, something that is of particular relevance to performers, but also increasingly to composers and technologists who can present an accompanying discourse alongside their music, as part of the artwork itself. An artistic discourse may respond to the major themes of the music or project, or in some cases openly state a research question with the answer presented in music. This method aligns with the model of HDR students who present a series of three recitals or composition folios with exegeses over the course of a two-year candidature.

An example of this in my own work is *Garden and Cosmos: The Royal Paintings of Jodhpur*, a series of concerts, installations and accompanying audio CD to accompany the Maharajah of Jodhpur's touring art collection, which visited Australia in 2009-10. In such a task the dominant response would be to present new or traditional Hindustani music alongside the visual art, as they both share a similar lineage. This supposition therefore framed the research: I would either have to accept or reject this dominant musical response, and as a non-Indian composer I felt it was not appropriate that I recreate the work of a living tradition. This meant that the music and the exegetical text of the liner notes could be condensed into one simple question: How might it be possible, without directly representing Indian

classical music traditions, to write music that responds to and inspires engagement with this art collection?

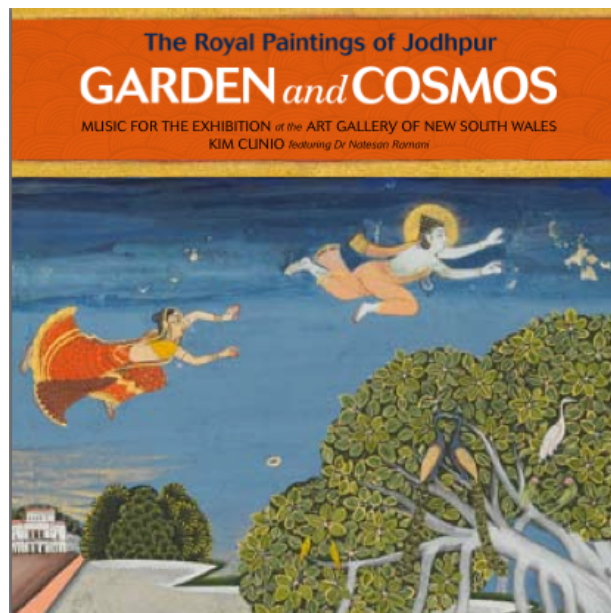
From this other questions arose which also contained embodied research potential.

How might I best to uncover and interpret rare medieval Sanskrit texts within the context of a visual / musical collaboration?

What musical languages might work best with this art? What methods have previously been employed and in what manner may these be extended?

What are the intercultural implications of a foreigner writing music to an idiomatic Indian visual art collection?

This form of thinking allowed the music itself to be the answer to these questions and my primary response, supported by an exegetical paper written with the Asian Art Curator of the Art Gallery of NSW, Jackie Menzies. The essential point is that the only real answer lay in the art itself. The following figure shows a recorded example, part of the visual folio collection and an underscore of one of the compositions.



Music as part of a larger research process

This research aligns with a number of the Queensland Conservatorium PhD students who are often required to formulate a conceptual framework that can link a number of diverse artistic explorations. Defining a conceptual space allows music to become programmatic in a historical sense. It responds to the intent of the composer/performer, and aligns the music to explore deep questions that pertain to the processes of composition, practice, rehearsal and performance.

The War on the Critical Edition (2009 onwards) is an ongoing project of mine, and an example of music making as part of a larger mode of inquiry in my work. This project has included three conference presentations and publications, incorporating the music of a double CD (*The Sacred Fire*, ABC Classics, 2007), a work for solo shakuhachi, as well as inspiring the writing and manipulation of new piano music. The project started as a response to issues raised in historical research into realization and performance practice, but soon grew to respond to the notions of illusion contained in technology based new music, something that would be impossible without an overarching conceptual framework. *Piano Games*, Part 2 of the project was launched in 2011-12, and involves the MIDI manipulation of a small number of newly composed piano preludes, with the aim of seeing whether non-derivative works can be created algorithmically within a Digital Audio Workstation without changing a note of the original score. In such a project reflection is a vital part of bearing witness, typified by the following ethnographic excerpt.

The genesis of *Piano Games* lies itself in technology. I was commissioned to work with the Australian author Dr Stephanie Dowrick on a CD of meditation commentaries in 2009. At the initial meeting it was decided that two new pieces of music would be written in addition to an underscore for the spoken word. At this point I mentioned that I had recently updated my piano sample library and proceeded to play a short prelude that I had rendered on a virtual Fazioli piano. At this moment I had a small epiphany, realising that for most people music technology still constituted pedals, boards and electronics, that the recent advances in synthesis and sampling

have gone almost unnoticed despite their ubiquitous presence in television, film and popular music.

Although I own a 75 year old Mignon grand piano and have access to all the resources of the Conservatorium, I decided at that moment to 'smuggle in' a sampled piano and cello to this commission, and pass the samples off as real players to see if anyone noticed. This was the birth of "Open Mind", the first piece in this project. The piano part was recorded on a \$200 plastic keyboard after which editing work was undertaken in a MIDI editor. The MIDI data from the performance was edited in relation to attack, decay, velocity and pedal duration, summed in the analogue domain and processed through the Bricasti M7, a newly released hardware digital reverb...Not a word was spoken, everyone from the company loved the work, and although it was obviously a 'fake' to me, I delighted in the fact that no-one even noticed. I then wished to extend the experiment to see if I could make new works from the one score.

Although part of a larger research project each piece of music in this collection must be judged on its artistic merits. This model of research does not just see music as a tool to illustrate a thesis. Instead it is the result of a living symbiosis between creative practice and critical thought facilitated by both research and the music. In this project, and in my larger protocols it is important that nothing contained in the process of music making is either hidden or taken for granted. The workings out of music making are vital aids to a deeper understanding of artistic practice and may well constitute the greatest point of difference between academic and non-academic artists.

Documentation during the process of making music is important in this method. Screen shots or videos of work are one cognisant manner in which the implicit can be made explicit. Figure 3, shows an example of this, illustrating how a modernist atonal work was realized from a pre-existing impressionistic piece without changing a note of the score. What we see from left to right are:

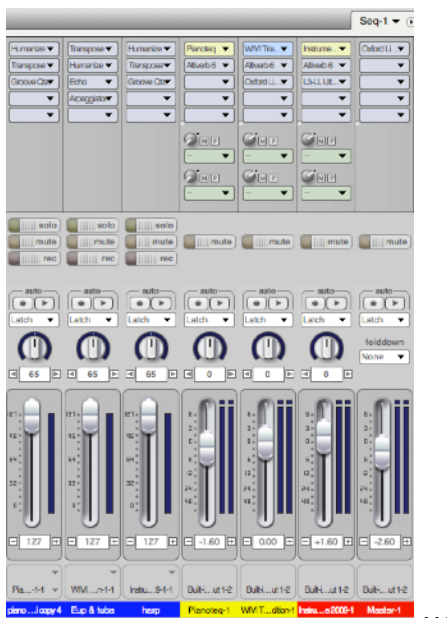
Mixing board, which shows plug in streams across the whole work. The blue tracks are MIDI score tracks. While each blue track has the same MIDI line they are labeled accordingly to the processing and virtual instruments they will trigger. The first is piano, the second winds, the third harp. Yellow tracks are virtual instruments, demonstrations of Pianotech and Wallander virtual instruments, which play the scores. The red tracks include a back up

virtual instrument, the Instruments for Finale, which plays the original score, followed by a master bus track which processes all the sounds prior to export.

A screen shot of a randomize function which substitutes a chromatic scale for the preexisting notes of the composition.

A screen shot of the spatiality of the winds placement in the Wallander virtual instrument.

Screen shots of the MIDI processing on the winds track. From top to bottom this includes. 1. A quantize function which synchronizes the score into a new rhythmic pattern. 2. An arpeggiator, which triggers new notes to be derived from the score. 3. A harmonizer, which adds notes from C3 to G1, bringing the score data into line with the ranges of trombone and horn chosen in the Wallander virtual instrument (b).



I have demonstrated how two different modes of interpretation have prepared the ground for reflective (witness bearing) research. However both seem to be derived from a 'standard' exegetical response to an artistic work, and presented broadly speaking no surprises. As good as both these methods were I felt certain that there was a level of depth and personal exploration that is part of the artist's life that was not being fully explored. I

wanted to see less separation between the artwork and my accompanying thought, hence the substitution of the term 'bearing witness' for 'artistic practice research'. I wanted to test the waters and see if I could work with direct experience as both a composer and reflective practitioner. I wanted to do more than incorporate auto-ethnography into my exegetical response, I wanted to believe fully that the artistic work was complete as is and to bear witness to it on every level.

Research as the record of bearing witness

A recent book chapter with colleague Paul Draper aired our thoughts on the process of improvising and writing a piece of music within the model of artistic practice research. The following words of A. Mountuori, from an article published in 2003 in *Human Relations*, were crucial in framing the process for me, in making the case that it is possible to write with a sense of depth and honesty about what is really happening during the process of music making.

This makes the task of being [an artist] also a task of self-development of finding one's own identity in dialog with and through the world one is studying. Then indeed, our work can become an inquiry into the dialogic and recursive relationship between subject and object, self and other, head and heart, an ongoing invitation to, and navigation of, the paradoxical nature of the creative process.

If this method is valid, simply bearing witness should be enough to influence my work as it is happening. There is something very simple about this premise, an admission that as soon as we observe anything we change it, (something that applies in everything from quantum mechanics to contemporary reportage and the writing of history). I understand this to mean that no matter how hard we try we will always have some reaction to the stimuli of our work, and that some part of our reaction will also be based on our inherent nature and social conditioning. This should not be merely written about later in the exegetical manner, it should be seen as a vital part

of the creative process that is constantly intervening. I could say it in even simpler language, that the extra musical is constantly entering the musical and the process of bearing witness to it is a process I wish to master.

In order for this to work the skills of the academic musician must still be employed. Record keeping, mapping and analysis are valid ways in which the collisions of ideas and thoughts can be seen, and preservation of sketches and drafts of new compositions can be crucial datasets to be explored. For performers the recording of the initial impressions of playing a work, or preserving multiple versions of it during the processes of learning the music are equally vital, not just to see how a problem is solved, but to see how the act of problem solving changes the aesthetics of the piece.

Finally this premise allows the use of emergent techniques, an active personal position in the writing process, the use of mixed media to convey impressions in an artistic manner, and the use of ethnographic and auto ethnographic modes of communication. This is something I explored in 2011 during the process of making ISHQ, a collaborative film with animator Louise Harvey. In an accompanying paper I sought to clarify these methods.

In addition to formal auto-ethnography, journaling as detailed by academic and author Stephanie Dowrick inspired the discourse between the practitioners. Dowrick advocates a connection between feeling, writing and reflection in her work *Creative Journal Writing: The Art & Heart of Reflection*, which is also cognisant to the project and its reportage.

This was to be important to me as Dowrick was also the librettist for *Rising*. I was able to respond to both the precepts of her book *Creative Journal Writing* and the libretto itself, something I prepared myself for by reading a number of her web posts that made the point that journaling needs to be a stable process before it can be mined for information.

In the private spaces of your journal, a genuine sense of possibility is renewed with every blank page. The inner critic can be sacked. The possibilities of style, mood and expression are limitless... Skills in observation and mindfulness, the capacity to "vent" effectively and an inspiring method to write freely and with great release and enjoyment are all available.

Rising

In 2010-11 much of Queensland, including Brisbane was decimated by a once in a generation flood. The ramifications of this were huge, a generation of urbanized, educated people quickly realized they had lost touch with the realities of the drought and flood cycle in Australia. The force of this flood came into direct conflict with the desire of Queenslanders to live and play 'by their rivers'. As a response the Queensland Conservatorium commissioned four short operas in response, for which I contributed a work, *Rising*.

Floods in Australia are nothing new, despite the often-cited statistic of Australia being the driest continent in the world. From the mid 19th Century the desire to have access to irrigation has meant that development has taken place often where it is least practical; on top of, or directly in the vicinity of a flood plain. While Australia has a proud record of dealing with natural disasters, (bolstered by a culture of volunteering), our corresponding record in regards to planning and mitigation is patchy at best. Planners and councils have consistently ignored the advice of scientists or the older generation of farmers who have been able to predict with stunning accuracy the paths of future devastation. Recent findings, which have mapped flood events to the cyclic change from the El Niño to La Niña weather systems have also been largely ignored. The addition of global warming creates a complicated situation where development and nature can be perceived as in direct conflict, and therefore inherently political.

I was affected in two ways. Just before the floods reached Brisbane I was performing at the Woodford Festival in South East Queensland, where cars (including mine), were routinely bogged and artists and patrons alike fell into a mire of mud and disillusionment. Further my entire house was packed up for a move and in storage on the Brisbane river. My contents were saved by the quick work of a thoughtful storage depot manager who placed my container on top of another, but I did not know for a month whether I had anything left. Many people were not so lucky, the broad consensus was that 200,000 people were directly effected either through direct damage, evacuation and in the case of an unlucky few, injury and death. A great deal of grief emerged before the start of a mammoth clean up that displayed many of the best aspects of community building. I had a deep and profound

experience of empathy, but not of the suffering itself. While I did bear witness to the Brisbane floods I was relatively unscathed by them.

Cut to the end of the next year. During Christmas 2011 I was in Auroville, near Pondicherry in South India, when I did experience a peak weather event. Cyclone Thane was the strongest cyclone of the season. It caused destruction on a scale comparable with the 2004 tsunami in the area I was living in, and like many I was shocked at the power of a cyclone close up. On the night of December 30 massive winds and rain buffeted the modest dwelling I shared with my wife and son; a shack surrounded by trees with no proper windows. By the end of the night we were trapped. Fallen trees that might have killed us barely missed our bedroom in an apartment that was completely flooded. We took shelter in the bathroom with towels to hold off the floodwaters and listened to the eerie sounds of nature spinning beyond our reckoning. The cumulative effect of the noise of the cyclone was almost indescribable. During that night I had a strong feeling of finally being able to understand the Brisbane floods a little. There were the feelings of incredible adrenaline, fear, the humour of making it a game to help a young child, the later shock and the long process of picking ourselves up. Forty-four people were killed, there was no running water or power for a month and we had to cue up for drinking water for the next three weeks. Suddenly we had entered the 'third world', and although we could have left at any point this was too great a learning experience to simply run from. We stayed for another month.



rsWe could critique the process and question whether it is possible to make sense of one flood event by participation in a cyclone. While this may be an area for further investigation I have no doubt that it is a routine part of how I make sense of the world. It is subjective and may not apply to all composers or researchers.

Making sense

After this cyclone my upcoming opera was in my mind. I decided that I must find a link between my personal experience of the cyclone and the flood I was to write about. After a few weeks one presented itself. I was introduced to the Svaram music workshop in Auroville, a place that was building a number of Indian and European instruments that might broadly be termed 'new age'. One instrument stood out as unusual. It was an experimental granite singing stone weighing over 100kg that was made on the supposition that ancient South Indians used to communicate through the resonating properties of stone, and indeed tune them in order to form a proto musical language. The instrument is covered with water and then rubbed with various parts of the hands and fingers, hence its primal connection to both flood and cyclone. When sounded it also exhibits a vague similarity with bowed wineglasses or crystal bowls. The temperaments sound almost Pythagorean, and the swirling effect of this instrument appear almost electroacoustic at times, as swirling partials routinely collide with each other. I was immediately impressed and my entire conception of what this short opera would be changed in less than five minutes.

While the instrument was certainly capable of making music it was by no means something that could fit easily with Western tonal / art music. In order to make this work I needed to drastically simplify my harmonic conception as I was faced the prospect of writing with various pedalistic combinations. Modality emerged over time as the main musical device, and in conjunction with the librettist a sub textual psychodrama was written to express the outpouring of emotions from the flood as opposed to a linear narrative. The singing stone became a symbol of the water in the flood as well as an instrument of experimentation. Its primary sound was derived from the interaction of water and skin, with additional sounds coming from

the sounds of water being poured on it as well as brushes and stick playing on it concurrently. The following example shows some of its key features, the ability to make sounds that appear at first listening appear to be manipulated as well as an intense resonant sound. Pulsating cluster drones and wildly fluctuating upper partials are key features of this instrument, which I recorded as electroacoustic parts for the opera.

The singing stone also allowed me to take another unexpected course in the work. The drone like nature of the instrument inspired me to sing fragments of medieval chant while I was playing it, and the sheer beauty of this music led to the choice of Pérotin's *Gradual Sederunt Principes* as an object of re-composition to be explored. This is an interesting phenomenon to me, that an experience in India could lead me back to the roots of the tradition I was composing in. While a detailed investigation of this is outside the scope of this paper it is an area that invites future reflective research.

The best way to share the feeling that this instrument gave me is to listen to the example below, the accompaniment to figure E. Here the stone is played across a C# drone with a mix of close and distant microphone techniques changing the spatialisation. A small fragment of *Sederunt Principes* is recomposed to the words 'save us'.

The text is also important in this piece. Over time it became a cross between a psychodrama and a medieval morality play. The characters are archetypal representatives of humanity underlined by a Greek chorus with the words repetitive and poetic. A small example illustrates this.

YOUNG WOMAN: Last night I dreamed. I stood upright. Bare feet, bare head, bare body, naked self. Bare feet, bare head, bare body, naked self. Bare body. Birds crying. Calling.

No land in sight. Bare feet, bare body, naked self.

CHORUS: Birds crying. Calling. Flying. Feeling. Flying. Waters rising. Birds crying. Calling. Flying. Feeling. Flying. Waters rising.

Drift. Drift. Drift. Save. Save.

We can see that the music is modal, repetitive wind fragments counterpoint a simple block like chorus, which is again underpinned by the singing stone.

Conclusions

At the onset of 2012 I conceived of two main types of artistic practice research that pertained to my own music composition, research embodied music, and music as part of a larger research process, both methods that have served myself and many other researchers. By the end of 2012 I had a third, research as a record of bearing witness, which had the potential to increase my personal connection to the research process.

It is not clear to me whether an engagement with 'bearing witness' has improved my music at all, but it has certainly changed what I have written. The boundaries I had put up between my musical and personal lives have now started to blur and everything seems capable of affecting everything else. This has changed how I am responding to the act of composition itself. While research embodied music and music as part of a larger research process are both functional methods to interpret my work within the exegetical model I was not personally as a researcher until now.

To restate this, I wanted to find a way to fracture the divisions between my personal and professional lives, something I did by working with the concept of bearing witness primarily as a person and therefore also as a composer and researcher. Over time I am hopeful that will allow me to write honestly and effectively about my work without feeling the potential conflict of emotion that writing within the academy can sometimes bring. Finally it is hoped that colleagues and students may also benefit by exploring this method alongside some type of mindfulness practice to support it.

It is timely to finish by answering the primary questions posed at the outset of the paper:

How can I bear witness to some aspect of the world and respond to it through the process of composition / performance / improvisation?

In regards to the composition of Rising it was by slowing down and allowing myself to experience an event of the world before writing music.

How can I bear witness to the process of music making and respond to it with honesty and integrity?

Through applying the methods of journal writing and self recording to allow myself a pool of inner data to work with, allowing the expression of feelings in the first person as a vital ingredient in the composition and its interpretation.

It is also possible to answer the specific sub-questions asked earlier in the paper:

Did I bear witness to the event? In the absence of bearing witness directly to the Queensland floods I bore witness to a cyclone the following year, and allowed that to flow through as a primary response.

How? By staying in a place (Auroville), where an act of destruction was happening and allowing myself the time to react to it.

Have I interpreted the event? Yes, I spent the time necessary to find a musical link, which was in the form of an experimental Indian instrument, a granite singing stone, which I used as a composition foundation in the new work.

How might this influence future events?

I feel that the act of observing myself alongside the world will be useful to me. Not in all music, but in music projects where I wish to be able to hone or redefine my methods or music styles not through a reductionist approach, but through a process of 'truth telling'.

Sounding Zameen

Crossing cultures and borders through electroacoustic music composition

Leah Barclay

In the last decade there has been a strong emergence of creative practitioners exploring the role of creativity and technology in environmental awareness and engagement. I have witnessed the dramatic effects of climate change in my lifetime, and as a composer I strongly believe there is a critical need to listen to the environment. I believe electroacoustic music using natural sounds, which may expose the state of the environment, could be a valuable device in exploring and understanding the ramifications of climate change.

My recent research began as an exploration of electroacoustic music in ecological crisis and evolved into a complex web of projects harnessing sound to raise cultural, social and environmental awareness. The resulting compositions were rewarding outcomes, yet it became the process itself that was most valuable. The process was not just about composing, but engaging communities in the environmental intentions of the project and inspiring others to participate in practices of listening, field recording, composition and collaborations. This resulted in a distinctive shift in my creative practice, essentially from an internal and often isolated process to an expanded awareness and social consciousness, where artistic outcomes have become milestones in broader creative visions that have engrained social purpose and cultural intent within a community and environment. This has shifted my perception of what it means to be a composer and inspired a spectrum of collaborations exploring the role of creativity in community empowerment, social activism and cultural change.

These projects have serendipitously taken me across the world, from the backwaters of South India to the centre of the Amazon Rainforest. While some have been wildly ambitious, and somewhat dangerous, others have explored methods of simply listening. The strong commonality between each

venture has been my approach to collaboration, not just with other musicians, but also with communities and interdisciplinary artists. These ambiguous declarations are undoubtedly best understood through the projects. Among the recent examples is *Zameen*, the first major performance outcome from *The DAM(N) Project*, a interdisciplinary venture that connects Australian and Indian communities around the common concern of global water security.

Zameen is a Hindi word meaning 'land'. It is a word that has become synonymous with the damming of the Narmada River in North India. To date over 30 million people have been internally displaced, and the resulting Indigenous activist movement – the Narmada Bachao Andolan – has become one of the most successful and sophisticated in contemporary history. Within *The DAM(N) Project*, *Zameen* is an immersive performance drawing on environmental field recordings, triptych visuals and contemporary dance that pulls the audience into the heart of a remote Indian community fighting for their way of life. The work was developed in Queensland and premiered at the Encounters India Festival in May 2013 and has since toured internationally. As this politically provocative and deeply emotional performance continues to reach audiences, I also see value in reflecting on the development on this project and the collaborative process of bringing it to life over the last three years.

The DAM(N) Project began in 2011 when a group of artists from Australia and India journeyed deep into India's Narmada Valley. We met and lived with communities that are gradually being submerged due to large-scale dam development and began a series of creative projects to tell their stories. *The DAM(N) Project* is focused on community capacity building and the creation of multi-platform creative content that can be disseminated internationally. It was conceived and developed in collaboration with Jehan Kanga, a Sydney-based producer, and S. Shakthidharan, the director of CuriousWorks, a cultural enterprise that grew out of a desire to give those in marginalised communities an opportunity to tell their stories. *Zameen* is our first collaboration together and draws on material collected from our initial journey in North India. Field recording is often an integral part of my creative practice, but in this project it became paramount, as the entire score is composed from pure and processed field recordings sourced directly from the heart of the Narmada Valley.

Damming the Narmada

The Narmada River, the core inspiration for this project, flows 1312 kilometres across three states making it the fifth-longest river in India. The fertile valley of the Narmada is home to diverse communities with an unbroken stream of human civilisation dating back hundreds of years. As with all rivers throughout India, the Narmada holds a potent cultural and spiritual significance for all those who dwell on its banks. India's independence movement marked the beginning of the construction of large-scale dams across the country, which were seen as a symbol of 'nation-building virility'. In 1961, The Narmada Valley Development Project (NVDP) was created with the intention of constructing 30 mega dams, 135 medium-sized dams, and 3000 small dams, submerging the entire Narmada River Valley. The damming of rivers continues to be a highly contentious subject across the world, particularly with dams being perceived as being among the 'oldest landmarks symbolising human's triumph over nature'. While dams were conceived with positive ideals, including the provision of irrigation, hydropower and water security, their negative social, cultural and environmental implications are implicit in today's society.

The diverse communities of the Narmada Valley lived sustainably for hundreds of years, but the damming of the river dramatically changed their way of living in all aspects of their existence. In 1985, this sparked the beginning of the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA), the social movement in India that had been actively fighting against the dams with determination and non-violent protests. With the support of the NBA, the communities of the valley became symbols of a global struggle against this unjust development. The reference and scope of the NBA organisation means it is able to mobilise thousands of people at relatively short notice to galvanise non-violent protests. While the communities are at the core of the NBA, the network is governed by a diversity of proficient activists who have been strategic about the dissemination of information and the alliances that have formed with the organisation over time.

Among the most significant initiatives has been the establishment, in 1991, of Jeevanshalas (Schools for life) as part of the Nav Nirman initiative

for Adivasi children. While the schools provide traditional education, they also recognise and teach Adivasi language and knowledge systems in an innovative format relevant to the community and culture. The communities acknowledge the positive impact these schools have had on their children, and this has inspired a younger generation of activists, many of whom aspire to educate others and passionately continue the initiatives of the NBA. Medha Patkar, a revered activist at the helm of the NBA, commented that 'the Jeevanshalas teach us how tribal communities, despite being deprived and neglected by the state, can develop their own methods of teaching and syllabi. This allows communities to provide education that is locally relevant and not standardized as dictated by needs of urban capitalism'.

In addition to the educational benefits, the unique school model has attracted wider attention to the movement, and has also featured in a documentary directed by activist and film-maker Manasi Pingle, titled *Jeevan shala: School of Life*, which has been screened internationally and received awards. The complexity and scope, overall, of the NBA has sparked a diversity of artistic responses, many of which have been responsible for its international exposure. While these mostly revolve around documentary films, perhaps one of the most influential responses was Arundhati Roy's article 'The Greater Common Good'. This essay echoes the intentions of the NBA movement, while Roy's skillful writing creates a passionate and compelling insight into the devastating effects of damming the Narmada.

There have been music compositions distantly affiliated with the movement, but the most prominent sounds of the Narmada lie at the core of the NBA movement. Commonly referred to as *naras* (slogans), these vocalised recitations have become synonymous with the NBA and underpin the *satyagraha* (non-violent protests). The *naras* often occur in a call and response format, with slogans about the demands of the people. They have a variety of functions within a *satyagraha* that include lifting the energy, punctuating speeches, encouraging participation, and welcoming activists into a community.

My initial research into the translation of the most prominent *naras* revealed that they were often politically charged and highly provocative. Examples include 'Vikas cha me yeh, vinaash nahi' (We seek right development, not destruction), and 'Jangal jangal dubadta, rupa thanin kay karta' (You are submerging forests, what's the point of planting trees?). The

naras are taught in the Jeevanshala schools and it is confronting hearing young children passionately shout naras such as 'Doobengeh par hatengeh nahi' (We shall drown but we shall not move). While some naras carry inherently tragic undertones, they are intended as a collective expression to unify the movement. As Routledge eloquently states, "Naras run like a river through the Andolan's political practice". For communities that do not necessarily share the commonality of language, naras are so engrained in the culture of satyagraha that they often become a shared voice. The significance of the naras formed the initial inspiration for an electroacoustic composition, but their complex functionality would require experiencing them in cultural context before the creative response extended beyond an idea.

The extensive literature on the Narmada offers insight into the tragic ramifications of damming the river, but it rarely explores personal stories, specifically the positive narratives of hope from the Adivasi communities. While the last twenty-five years had seen a diversity of creative responses, I felt there was scope for artistic responses of a more poetic nature, drawing on stories and experiences directly from the communities. Obviously, finding these stories would require reaching beyond the literature and venturing into the heart of the Narmada Valley.

In the field: Narmada Valley, North India

In November 2011, one year after *The DAM(N) Project* was conceived, the three collaborating Australian artists travelled to North India to begin the first creative development residency. I was joined by our producer Jehan Kanga, and S. Shakthidharan, our filmmaker and digital artist. Our initial days in India were spent in Bangalore working with the Attakkalari Centre for Movement Arts on the preliminary creative development with dancers who were participating in the project. The company had selected Sylvester Mardi and Meghna Nambiar, two of their repertory dancers, to travel with us to the Narmada Valley to meet the communities and create site-specific choreography. I was somewhat skeptical of Jehan's confidence in our unplanned travel itinerary, but he was adamant it was the best approach. On the first day we were propelled into the communities of the NBA and

serendipitously found ourselves interviewing key activists at the NBA headquarters in Badwani, Madhya Pradesh. We soon discovered there was a satyagraha happening in the nearby town of Jobat and immediately made plans to visit the site.

Arriving at the satyagraha induced in me a mixture of nerves and excitement. Naturally, I was pleased we had found a satyagraha, as we could easily have travelled for days without discovering anything. Yet, I was also slightly apprehensive about how the community would respond to our project. The NBA are constantly interrogated by journalists, who are notorious for spending just a short time with the activists in order to capture a superficial story. Understandably, the communities are tired of this approach, and, while our project was different, there was no reason for community members to support our ideas or even agree to interviews. Although this project was driven by a creative vision, I knew I wouldn't be confident going ahead with the development if we had a negative response from the community at the satyagraha.

The core members of the NBA are evidently media trained and certainly not afraid of cameras and microphones. Many also have an understanding of the value of artistic response, particularly for documentary films. They often view filmmakers in the same light as political activists, which in many cases is an appropriate observation as there are frequently shared intentions. We didn't see ourselves as activists, but I was certainly passionate about the role interdisciplinary art could play in social activism and cultural change, which is at the heart of *The DAM(N) Project*. As the role of the activist is a lifetime of relentless fighting and commitment, it was impossible to regard our concept as being anywhere near that of the involvement of the activists working with the NBA or to have the same impact. Ravi Agarwal, an artist and environmental activist working with the NBA, was recently quoted saying:

Artistic practices for me are informed by the same ideas that also inform activist interventions, though they may acquire very different forms. Artistic practices work in a frame of creating 'objects', which then become free-floating. Activist practices are rooted in specific issues and have an agenda of making an impact. For me artistic

practices have the space for contemplation and reflection on complex issues and can evoke a different set of responses than activist work. I do not see artistic practices as 'functional' but as expressions. For me, both forms are very important and intermingle in subconscious ways.

This quote provided a strong grounding for what we were trying to create through *The DAM(N) Project*. It was about immersing ourselves within these communities and responding in a way that was both poetic and enlightening through a variety of artistic media.

Fortunately, our team was welcomed at the satyagraha, and greeted by several activists including Shrikanth, who appeared genuinely interested in our intentions. The satyagraha was located in an open field, with almost 200 people living in a makeshift tent held together with plastic tarps and ropes. While we stood in the field discussing our project, the children were running past with big smiles to gather in the tent behind us. Seated in rows with their legs crossed, they began shouting naras across the valley. I was immediately disengaged from our conversation with an urge to retrieve my recording equipment from the car and capture this moving soundscape emanating through the valley. Shrikanth seemed to sense my fascination with the naras and encouraged me to record the children. We had been at the satyagraha for less than an hour, and I would have never intended to begin recording so soon, but the unpredictable nature of this trip was running through my mind. I felt compelled to record this moment, because it may be our only experience of the naras.

I retrieved my small recorder and a tripod and ventured towards the group of children. I was under the watchful eye of a number of the families at the satyagraha, who were understandably inquisitive about my intentions. The children didn't seem remotely concerned about the microphone; many began to shout louder with fiery gestures pumping their fists in the air. The first naras I recorded was 'Adivasi ekta zindabad, zindabad zindabad', which translates directly to mean 'Victory to tribal unity, victory, victory'. I wondered if this was a daily occurrence for the children, or if they were prepared for these moments when outsiders arrived at the satyagraha. I discovered not only was it a daily occurrence, but the children would recite

the naras at various intervals throughout the day, and enjoyed actively participating in the satyagraha.

The experience of the satyagraha was enlightening, it felt like we were welcomed into a family and encountered the surface of a vibrant community. Despite the utterly tragic circumstances of this event, the children appeared happy and the families seemed to be living harmoniously with essentially no shelter and limited supplies of food and water. Later that night some of the dreadful circumstances and heartbreaking stories were revealed around the fire, and it was difficult to stay composed while holding a microphone and hearing the translations. I felt guilty about my privileged lifestyle, but equally driven to create an artistic response that would be capable of telling these stories and empowering this movement. We all commented on the similarities between India and Australia, in how governments have atrociously treated Indigenous populations, particularly when it comes to land rights.

By the end of our interviews everyone at the satyagraha was gathered around the fire and they joined in singing naras to mark the end of this experience. There was certainly an intangible quality to the naras. The children's eyes lit up and the collective voices of the people created something so captivating it was almost impossible to articulate. After this experience, and while my microphones were still on, I asked Shrikanth about the translation of the naras they had just sang. He said, 'These are all struggle songs, each stanza, it's about your land has been submerged, you must stand up and fight, your jungle has been submerged, stand up and fight, your gods and goddesses have been submerged'. He finished by saying, 'You must stand up, you must wake up, you must fight'. I was struck by Shrikanth's translation and the experience of hearing these naras in cultural context. I knew this was the beginning of an important project.

While I was recharging my recording equipment the following day, I was listening to the initial satyagraha recordings and immediately began editing the interview and processing the naras with the sounds of the Narmada river. I instinctively knew Shrikanth's voice would be the first to speak in the initial composition, and the naras would be the unifying sound source underpinning it. I was concerned by the possible issues of cultural appropriation and wanted permission to process and edit the naras. As an outsider, I didn't want to be disrespectful to this sonic material that was clearly integral to the

NBA movement. I completed the first sketch in our hotel room over a few hours; the sketch weaved the naras with Shrikanth's voice and a processed hydrophone recording from the Narmada. It was important to me to gain this initial permission, so when we returned to the satyagraha I played the recording to Shrikanth and a number of the other activists on headphones. They appeared enthusiastic and Shrikanth, in particular, was visibly happy to hear his voice in this context. This initial sketch created on location was essential in sparking the aesthetic and direction of our artistic responses, and it has featured in all of our creative outcomes to date.

We continued capturing visual footage and field recordings in the affected landscapes. The resulting source material is predominately from the regional area of Jobat, where we heard stories and naras from more than 20 displaced groups who had gathered at the satyagraha. In our initial encounters in Badwani we interviewed Dayal Solanki, a young Adivasi whose story became a thread for our journey. He accompanied us to the extremely remote village of Badal, one of the most agriculturally productive regions in India that is now almost completely submerged. We stayed with Dayal's family in a small wooden shelter on the ridge of a mountain overlooking their flooded land. His family welcomed us and shared their story. While these experiences echoed the heartbreaking encounters we had heard at the satyagraha, it was particularly challenging listening to a family in their barren landscape that was once so abundant. The dancers responded to Badal through site-specific choreography at submerged sites, in this instance I was able to record their feet disrupting and breaking the rough soil where Dayal's family home once stood.

My approach to field recording in this location became quite intuitive, I wasn't seeking particular sounds but rather exploring what emerged in the valley. The sparse and unsettling soundscapes of the submerged Badal village were juxtaposed with children playing and singing on the cliffs. During the day, I offered the children my recording equipment, and they took great pleasure in recording each other throughout the afternoon. Later that night, I ventured out recording along the edge of the cliffs and found the silence across the valley quite disturbing. When I was about to stop recording I heard soft footsteps in the distance that appeared to be following me along the cliff face. It was too dark to see more than a few metres, so I sat on the side of the cliff pointing my microphones directly towards the

water. It was virtually silent, but I could hear distant voices in the opposite valley, while the footsteps and whispers gradually came closer behind me. I realised it was Dayal's younger sisters, who came and sat either side of me and started softly singing naras directed towards the water. This was such a surreal experience I could hardly move. The two girls happily took the microphone and giggled as they recorded their voices in the moonlight. I had assumed they had come at night because they were too shy during the day when they were around their older brothers and the other children of the valley. I found out later that they had been following me most of the evening and were making sure I was safe. It was quite peculiar to think that these young children had taken responsibility for me, but it was clear the children of the Narmada Valley had different priorities and acted well beyond their years.

The following morning, after waking up surrounded by chickens and a large buffalo standing over me, the soundscape had evolved along with the activities of the valley — families cooking, birds fluttering around the shelters, and people emerging from various parts of the valley heading towards the makeshift jetty. I managed to capture a wonderful recording of Dayal's father playing traditional bansuri flute, an unexpected occurrence that also included a traditional dance. The experience of meeting Dayal's family and staying in Badal remained vivid in my mind for weeks after our trip, and has, undoubtedly, been profoundly influential in the creative development of this project.

As with all of my creative explorations of rivers, hydrophone field recordings have become an integral element to my practice. I'm always eager to hear beneath the surface of the river, as the soundscapes reveal so many qualities, including the active marine life. Unfortunately, the hydrophone recordings in the Narmada River featured very little marine interaction, similar to the stagnant and lifeless bodies of water in the villages that were also virtually silent. I was reminded of a quote from Bawabhai, an Adivasi from the village of Jalsindhi in the Narmada Valley. He said the river had been silenced by the dam and lost its cleaning function, which had led to illness in the community. 'Narmada used to be a narrow, melodious river, where we could walk down through the forests to its edge. Earlier the river was melodious — now it has become a silent river'. The stagnant water now

carried countless viruses and diseases, which have resulted in many people fearing the water rather than worshipping it.

While the pure hydrophone recordings provided limited source material, the soundscapes with human interaction recorded from a boat were quite compelling. The sound of people washing dishes and clothes on the riverbank, splashes as people climbed into the boat and the creaking panels of the wooden vessel as we ventured down the river. The unpredictable recordings of the hydrophone abruptly dragging along the riverbed from our moving boat are not the most pleasing auditory experiences, but they captured some of the dystopian energy of this landscape. While this is perceived as a distorted sound, and something I would probably delete in other circumstances, I was compelled to make use of this recording in the project.

The other memorable field recordings were from the Jobat dam, one of the larger dams that submerged 1216 hectares across 13 villages, allegedly displacing 595 families. The recordings were captured during one of our final days in the Narmada Valley, when I was suffering from a migraine, and we were all nearing exhaustion. While many of the Narmada Valley field recordings captured vast spaces in tight timeframes, the recordings from the Jobat dam have a different quality, most likely induced by a migraine haze. The initial recording was a dripping tap creating a tiny pool of water near the stairs; I was mesmerised by this rhythmic soundscape and began tuning into the subtle sounds surrounding the vast dam. I recorded an old radio through the window of the security office, the bells around the neck on a wondering cow, and my footsteps along an abandoned path towards the dam. The metal steps along the dam wall acted like resonators propelling my footsteps along the bridge. This sounded quite incredible through headphones and, consequently, I experimented by sounding the stairs with various objects from the surrounding environment, much to the amusement of our driver. Most of the recordings along the bridge were the sound of flowing water, initially a light stream followed by an unexpected torrential deluge surging out of the relatively small pipes. The vibrations through the bridge bounced back from the water and stomping on the bridge created an explosive sound effect that echoed across the dam. While I was slightly delirious during these recordings, they are some of the richest soundscapes from the field trip and have featured heavily in the artistic responses.

Sounding Zameen

Upon returning to Australia, *Zameen* evolved into a holistic project that integrates innovative technology, diverse community perspectives, and true stories of resilience to create an immersive performance combining projections, choreography, and multichannel soundscapes. *Zameen* features live performances from dancers Ronita Mookerji and Sylvester Mardi, from the Attakkalari Centre for Movement Arts and triptych visuals created by S. Shakthidharan supporting my electroacoustic compositions created entirely from field recordings.

The work is divided into four different movements, 'Jobat', 'Badal', 'Submergence' and 'Hope', with the addition of Narmada Prelude, a site-specific opening for each performance. Each movement of the work draws from our experiences on site, ranging from abstract explorations of the powerful Narmada River to the heartbreaking naras sung by the children. Unlike similar interdisciplinary projects, where the auditory elements might function in a supporting capacity for the visual material or to heighten the emotional impact of the choreography, the first stage of *Zameen* was to compose the soundscapes. The soundscapes then provided inspiration for the creation of the visual media. While we collectively discussed the structure and thematic of the work, I was left with the daunting task of filtering through our source material and conceiving an electroacoustic world that would drive this production, creating a delicate balance between artistic response, sensitive storytelling, and personal encounters.

Spanning 12 minutes, the first movement, 'Jobat', begins with the sketch created on location featuring Srikanth's voice and the initial naras. The movement continues with recordings from the satyagraha processed with hydrophone samples captured along the Narmada. 'Jobat' fades into the subsequent movement with pure field recordings in 'Badal' at dawn. The soundscape sustaining the second movement is a processed and elongated recording of Dayal's father playing traditional bansuri flute, this is layered with Dayal's sisters singing naras on the cliffs and the sparse and unsettling soundscapes of the submerged village. The pure environmental field

recordings are contrasted with material where I actively sounded the land, ranging from footsteps and voices to striking objects in various locations.

Every sound heard in *Zameen* is sourced directly from the Narmada Valley and sculpted intuitively in response to its natural auditory qualities. The realisation of *Zameen*'s sound world is abstract and inherently experimental, making it unpredictable and at times challenging to experience. This is most apparent in the third movement, 'Submergence', where every sound is drawn from the Jobat dam recordings and processed into a dense and volatile soundscape. 'Submergence' concludes with the distorted sound of the hydrophone dragging along the Narmada riverbed before emerging on the surface. While this composition functions successfully in an acousmatic setting, the addition of S. Shakthidharan's emotive visuals delves deeper into the abstract world of 'Submergence' and intensifies the sonic language. The addition of choreography effectively brings to life the fixed media, creating a captivating hybrid performance that has been described as 'Mysterious, beautiful and utterly captivating'.

The final movement, 'Hope', is essentially a recapitulation of the entire experience, which acts as an auditory cleanser after the intensity of 'Submergence'. The gentle return of the children's determined and passionate voices is somewhat relieving after metaphorically dragging along the depths of the riverbed. The only time the naras are heard raw in the entire composition is in the final moment of the performance when the children's unaccompanied voices fade into the distance. The abstract and experimental nature of the work creates a world that doesn't directly represent the devastation of the damming of the Narmada River; instead, it delves into the heart of a remote Indian community fighting for its way of life. It explicitly leaves elements open for personal interpretation; however, the unprocessed voices in the final moments underscore the reality of this project and the sincere cries of the children who continue to fight with veracity and hope.

During our initial trip to the Narmada Valley we facilitated workshops and encouraged the children to tell stories from their perspectives by collecting images, video and sound. We have plans to return to the communities and develop capacity building programs that will enhance our creative endeavours. The DAM(N) Project seeks to connect global communities around the common concern of global water security and reveal the

ramifications of damming rivers that hold cultural and spiritual significance for the local communities.

The acousmatic composition that accompanies this chapter, *Sounding Zameen*, reflects the structure of the live performance, but concentrates on the sonic traits from each movement in a much shorter duration, essentially offering a preview of the experience. The process of creating *Zameen* highlights the richness that engaging with communities and their stories brings to artistic practice. While the initial stage is topically based on the relationship between water security in Australian and India, the long-term vision for *The DAM(N) Project* expands into other communities and cultures worldwide. This project highlights the impact social activism and community engagement has had on my artistic practice and illustrates a shift in my approach to composing. I am increasingly determined to exploit my artistic practice, in whatever form that may take, to assist communities and cultures in facing together the ramifications of social injustice and ecological crisis.

10

Rich and Famous

Writing intercultural world for jazz quartet

Toby Wren

Rich and Famous is a composition, improvisation, and performance project that fuses elements of Carnatic music (South Indian classical) with contemporary jazz harmony and instrumentation. It demonstrates a particular way of working in hybrid contexts, one that is based on syncretism and absorption of foreign techniques, rather than an intercultural collaboration. The suite of compositions demonstrates the deep influence of South Indian 'Carnatic' music on my practice, from the intricacies of phrasing, to specific rhythmic devices, to the ordering of compositions on the album. This influence is evident both in the compositions themselves, which deliberately engage with this musical 'other', and in the improvisations that reveal the extent to which this alternative musical discourse has been absorbed and internalised.

While the project is 'about' the combination of musical cultures, the execution of the work is almost entirely within a jazz paradigm. The ensemble is typical of jazz ensembles, and the performances and the recording featured western musicians playing for western audiences. The project acknowledges the limits of the performers in constructing a truly intercultural work. While my own engagement with Carnatic music has been long and deep, the other musicians are primarily from jazz backgrounds and training. During the rehearsal stage, the players were left to develop their own approaches to learning the music and constructing their own meanings from the compositional text. To that end, they drew on years of enculturation in western idioms in the realisation of a work that did not fit neatly within the continuum of contemporary jazz. The decision to run the rehearsals without reference to Carnatic practice was a deliberate collaborative constraint, but it raised a host of questions about the nature of

inter-cultural work, music learning, and culturally specific musical approaches that will be examined below.

In this chapter the musical work itself is the basis for the discussion, and I spend some time elaborating the construction of the compositional language and paradigms within which the musicians were working. Through this I demonstrate the intercultural language of the work, and by unpacking the collaborative process I hope to illuminate some of the issues of intercultural hybridity as relating to syncretic practice. This finds resonance in Clifford Geertz's notion of cultures as "an assemblage of texts", and in Louise Meintjes' observation that "the political is not merely an adjunct to the sound but embedded in it through strings of connected signs". I begin with an examination of the approach to hybridity to establish a context for the work, situating it as a syncretic result of hybrid practice. Then, I analyse the way that intercultural materials are used in two of the compositions, *Flood Lines*, and the title track, *Rich and Famous* (no italics, to differentiate from the album title), as well as looking at the way Carnatic structures are used within the overall structure of the album. This is accomplished through a phenomenological and ethnographic exploration of the composition process itself. Lastly, I examine some of the challenges that the hybrid context created for the ensemble, through the musicians' own observations of the process, recorded during a group interview.

Throughout, I employ the critical framework Discursive Interculturality, as developed in my PhD. Discursive Interculturality treats the music as a site for a semiotic analysis of the ways in which musical sounds index culture. In analysis of the compositions, it becomes a reflective tool for understanding the intersection of cultures, and, it focuses the discussion of the realisation of the work on cultural difference as implicated in the interpretive dissonances that arose in performance. The aim of this critique is both to celebrate and problematise cultural difference and provide a way of discussing intercultural work that moves beyond the existing paradigms of critical discourses of power. The writing addresses calls for 'microstudies' that enhance our understanding of music making in the world, particularly in the Asia-Pacific, and in the border zones between recognised cultures.

As a western jazz project influenced by an 'Other' music, *Rich and Famous* creates a problematic discursive space. While there is a long history of composers being influenced by the musics of other cultures, there is also

a large body of critical theory that has revealed the mechanisms of colonialism and appropriation. While the work occurs within one cultural context, it is argued that it operates within a hybrid aesthetic framework, rather than demonstrating a commercial appropriation of the other: Carnatic music is not invoked through stereotypical motives designed to conjure an exotic other, but as a component of a syncretic hybrid musical identity. There are of course residual questions about the legitimacy and inherent power imbalance of these kinds of expressions, and the extent to which they constitute an appropriation, however it is especially relevant to openly confront these cultural paradigms in the age of the Internet. What Stuart Hall calls the 'spectacle of the other' continues to exert influence over creative musicians, and I argue here that the discourse of hybrid cultural work needs to evolve to enable discussion of these works without generalising all hybrid representations as expressions of neo-colonialism.

My background

In the seven years leading up to *Rich and Famous* I undertook intensive studies of Carnatic music, especially rhythm, and collaborated with Carnatic musicians both in Brisbane, Australia, and Chennai, India. In 2004, I heard a recording of U. Srinivas performing Siddhi Vanayakam, and began a sort of quest. It was in Carnatic music that I finally heard the perfect realisation of the rhythmic ideas that I had been pursuing in my own work. The logical application of the additive rhythmic approach embodied in Carnatic music seemed at once to be exactly the kind of thing I had been working towards, and simultaneously, far beyond what I had conceived. At the time leading up to this revelation, my compositions had been inspired by western music that was itself inspired by Indian classical music. While I had been familiar with North Indian music since I was a youth, it had taken me a long time to get around to listening to Carnatic music. After hearing Siddhi Vanayakam, I began to listen to as much Carnatic music as possible, to research its structures and theoretical underpinnings, and to have lessons with Carnatic musicians. This involved travelling to Chennai, India, the home of Carnatic music, in 2006, 2009 and 2012 to study with leading Carnatic musicians and

to see a great many concerts. From my first exposure to Carnatic music I also began to explore musical hybridity, incorporating the techniques I encountered into my compositions and improvisations with mixed results.

A big part of the reason that Carnatic music spoke to me was due to the way that that tradition has developed its approach to rhythm. I have always been interested in unusual rhythms. The popular music songs that I was drawn to as a child were the ones that deliberately interrupted the flow of time: Black Dog (Led Zeppelin, 1971), Money (Pink Floyd, 1973), Good Morning, Good Morning, and Here Comes the Sun (The Beatles, 1967, 1969), for example. As an undergraduate I became obsessed with the unpredictable yet compelling additive rhythms of Messaien's *Quartet for the End of Time* (1941), and Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* (1913), with the overlapping metric cycles of the *Turangalila-Symphonie* (III, VII, IX movements, 1948), and with the relentless, effortless intensity of the Mahavishnu Orchestra (1971, 1973, 1975). All of these musics displayed the overt influences of Indian additive rhythms. Around this time I also began writing music that would eventually become the basis for my first band 'Babel' which featured similarly challenging rhythmic materials. The music was additive in a western sense, the phrase lengths added together without necessarily corresponding to a larger cycle; music that would be described as 'odd-meter' or occupying 'changing metres'. I also avidly followed the local Brisbane ensemble, Loops, which featured the electric bassist Jonathan Dimond (who also studied tabla), violinist John Rodgers, drummer Ken Edie, and guitarist Jamie Clark. The ensemble was rhythm-focused, demonstrating the influence of North and South Indian styles. Conversations with Rodgers and Edie helped me to refine my interest, not simply on additive rhythms in a Western sense, but additive rhythms that create drama through their relation to a consistent metric cycle. The relationship of additive rhythms to an underlying metre creates a rhythmic counterpoint, and allows ideas to be developed that create tension and resolution similar to the harmonic tension and resolution that underpins western harmony.

a)



b)



Figure 1. The same korvai (33333 5,5,5) first shown in changing metres in a western additive style (a), and then as different length phrases in relation to a persistent metre (b), 'Indian style'.

The influence on my practice has increasingly been drawn from traditional Carnatic music, but developments in Carnatic-jazz hybrids by other musicians have also informed my practice. For example, the Australian Art Orchestra and Sruthi Laya, Rudresh Mahanthappa and Kadri Gopalnath, and the various projects of R. Prasanna. It is not out of a desire to contribute to a fusion genre that motivates my practice, rather, the reason I write music in between Carnatic and jazz is to allow me to play with the musicians I most admire, and to articulate a musical identity that is informed by both traditions. My practice merges two musical cultures holistically: I listen to Carnatic and jazz music, I practice jazz and Carnatic guitar, I learn solkattu (Carnatic verbalised rhythms) and apply it to the music I write and play, I work with musicians from Carnatic and jazz backgrounds, and I write compositions that attempt to be relevant to both cultures.

Relationship to hybridity

It could be argued by some that *Rich and Famous* is a form of appropriation, as it clearly makes use of Carnatic music, a music that represents an exotic 'Other'. But for whom is this 'Other'? Certainly not for the musicians I associate with, half of who are from Carnatic backgrounds. And, based on my iTunes library, Carnatic would be considered equal if not the dominant culture represented. It could equally be argued that I am appropriating the language of Jazz. Despite having performed jazz professionally for over twenty years, I have no direct ties to the original cultural or historical context. In Australia, a country for which isolation is key to the national

psyche, it is not uncommon for musicians to associate themselves with musical traditions with which they have no direct access, stripping them of their historical and cultural associations in the process. More than being a symptom of Australianess, it is a symptom of globalisation that all cultures are visible, all are accessible, everything is hybrid. And, musicians and composers have long documented the ways in which they have been influenced by the other musics they encounter, and the ways in which they seek to reference those influences in the music they create. The discussion of these works is important precisely because this way of working is so common.

Of course, much depends on the sensitivities of individual cultures and individuals and the particular economic factors involved in the production of a creative work. Often it is clear when ethical boundaries have been crossed as in the case of artists who have profited from the music of others without compensation. This has been covered in reference to the music of Fanshawe, Paul Simon, Herbie Hancock, and Hollywood, among others. Equitable financial and intellectual property models need to underpin any intercultural project. For example, the only melodic Carnatic theme in *Rich and Famous* is a direct (and referenced) arrangement of Ramnad Srinivasa Iyengar's *Ninnu Kori*. But, we should also be critical of the ways in which cultures are represented within a musical work. With regard to *Rich and Famous* makes no attempt to emulate actual Carnatic music. Rather, techniques are employed that demonstrate the real and important influence of Carnatic music on my practice. However, even with good intentions it is possible for any intercultural work to reinscribe unequal power relations by making assumptions about aesthetics and process that limit the contributions of a particular culture. On the other hand, a work that seeks to create an open platform for cultural exchange and to allow for the emergence of culturally divergent approaches can actively work towards increasing our understanding of cultural difference and musical aesthetics.

I am not the first to observe that there are potential power differentials in any hybrid creation. However, I believe that the critical deconstruction of colonialism and hybridity by Edward Said and others has created the opportunity to reconstruct hybridity as an enabling space. Further, I believe that it is the role of the artist to illuminate power differentials in the way that they choose to engage with other cultures. This is especially necessary given

what Guillermo Gomez-Pêna calls 'corporate globalisation' and the neoliberalist agenda. Works that critically engage with other cultures without seeking to ignore power differentials offer a practical expression of ideals variously termed Critical Multiculturalism, Critical Transculturalism, and Intercontextuality, because they create a platform for the observation of cultural difference. Like Michael Desson, I "argue that this kind of intercultural improvised music is itself a form of theorising about culture". Such works are deliberately dialogic and offer a contrast to those that operate within a paradigm of appropriation and exploitation.

It is equally appropriate to apply this critical framework to analysis of collaborative projects as to works influenced by other cultures. *Rich and Famous* is such a work, based on a personal synthesis of two musical cultures, and an internal dialogue of influences. This is evident particularly at the time of composition, in which techniques from Carnatic and jazz musics are freely combined, rather than considering the manner in which they will be combined. In a sense, *Rich and Famous* is a manifestation of the "radical hybridity and polyvocality of all cultures", and reflects a constructed individual interculture. While its particulars are unique, its circumstances are not, and it is possible to see a range of hybrid compositional languages developing globally. It is important that such intercultural discourse is seen as constituting a symptom of post-postmodern hybridity, beyond what Martin Stokes called the "semiotic free-for-all" of postmodernism. Ralph Locke identifies this as the essential characteristic of exoticism, the invoking of materials "perceived as different from home by the people making and receiving the exoticism cultural product". In *Rich and Famous*, and other works that follow a dialogical aesthetic, Otherness is not signified, but cultural signs and associated meanings are juxtaposed and combined to create something new: differences between cultures are recognised, attributed, and celebrated.

Carnatic and Jazz musics have rich and complex historical and cultural contexts, and robust theoretical systems. There are many excellent texts that explain the context, theory, and techniques of Carnatic music, including the specifics of melodic variation and rhythmic practices. For jazz, the most complete insights into culture and practice are in Paul Berliner's landmark *Thinking in jazz*. Any text is, at best, a supplementary aid however: The real learning of Jazz and Carnatic musics are the direct, live experience of

concerts and lessons. I will not be attempting to improve upon the literature of Carnatic music, but restrict myself to explaining only those specific theoretical concepts that illuminate the present study, and the perceptual and processual musical differences transculturally. For economies of space, I have made an assumption that the reader will have enough passing knowledge of jazz to make sense of what follows. The intention is to enable understanding of the difficulties the musicians faced and the strategies they employed to successfully negotiate the Carnatic musical structures that they encountered.

Flood lines

A flood is the perfect analogy for the process of composing this, the first piece in the suite. After a long period of compositional dormancy, this piece emerged seemingly without conscious effort. There was no consideration of how to integrate Carnatic and jazz concepts: when I wrote the piece they were simply there, techniques that I knew how to use. The manner of incorporating these influences at the time of composing was syncretic, and at the same time, consciously aware: at each musical juncture there was a reflective process of choosing the technique that worked, regardless of origin. A quick tabulation shows some influences that can be identified post-fact via score analysis.

Carnatic	Jazz	Western Art Music
Melakarta Ragam	Instrumentation	Metric Modulation
Alapana pitch introduction	Local form (solo sections)	Timbral concerns
Periyar Moohara	Afro-Cuban influence	Pitch set theory
Korvais / Yatis	Formal 'solo' sections	Irrational metres

Figure 2. Table showing some of the influences on Flood Lines.

The first four bars of the composition were composed with the specific goal of interrupting the listener's rhythmic expectation, and of creating a logical

yet unpredictable rhythmic phrase. The rhythmic coordination between the listener and the sound object is a seemingly universal human attribute. Condon and Ogston called this 'entrainment'. "In entrainment, one person's rhythms become attuned to another, almost like a tuning fork." I am particularly attracted to the idea of entrainment, and of playing with the rhythmic expectations of the listener. Deciding on a precise realisation for this introductory figure took several attempts, some of which appear in Figure 3. A rhythmically dynamic bass line is heard, one that creates an ambiguous temporality. There is a strong impression of logic and metre, but the specifics are difficult to pin down. The articulation of this intention is through the use of a Carnatic mora (three phrase composition) that contains a yati (rhythms that expand or contract in a logical fashion). Importantly, this occurs over a consistent metre providing a rhythmic tension and release.

The yati provides a certain kind of expectation and surprise that interferes with a natural desire to synchronise with the beat of heard music. The surprise is layered by virtue of being at once perceptible as a logical repeating pattern, but one in which the precise method of its logic is difficult to comprehend on initial hearing. This feeling belongs to a type of rhythmic device rather than a specific figure, one that creates tension through logical steps away from and returning to the metric structure. This is common to the Carnatic tradition, but unlike other traditions in which specific figures are used to convey a specific bodily reaction (I think here of latin traditions in which specific rhythms, i.e., clavé, are named and consistently applied with the same effect).

The logic of the mora (333 4 3333 4 33333 4) is that a phrase (333) occurs three times, on each occurrence gaining one extra '3' (represented by a dotted quaver in the score). Interpolated between the expanding phrases is a longer duration, 4, here represented as a crotchet (four semiquavers duration). The method of generating this type of structural rhythmic device has become familiar to me after many years of practice of Carnatic solkattu (verbalised rhythms also called konnakol). It is applicable in any musical context in which a metric structure is subdividable.



Figure 3. Three aurally equivalent versions of the same idea, showing different temporal relationships to the metre.

Earlier drafts of the piece have the same rhythmic figure represented in several metric arrangements, shown above on different staves. The first staff shows the version as presented in the final score, as articulations of semiquaver subdivisions in common time. The second line is the same figure across four bars of 3/4, and the third, a more radical rendering in triplet subdivision. Each of these examples is heard as aurally equivalent. Of course, it would also be possible to notate the example with changing metres: 9/16; 1/4; 12/16; 1/4; 15/16; 1/4; which would potentially make the structure clearer in the score, but would conceal any relationship to a continuing pulse. It is common practice for Carnatic musicians to practice rhythmic ideas in a number of different thalams (metres), as above, as a standard developmental technique, and as an efficient way to develop new materials in different metres.

Similar to the process of developing the rhythmic aspect of the bass line, melodic/pitch materials were developed with general characteristics: in this case, restricted pitch classes for modal development that contained resonances, or seemingly unintentional, reminders of the blues. Developing this kind of pitch set from the perspective of Western theory is certainly possible, but my reference point in this case was the more immediately available knowledge of Carnatic renditions in raga Nattai (for example, Thyagaraja's Jagadanandakaraka, or Dikshitar's Maha Ganapathim) that provide exactly the kind of 'quasi blues inflection' that I was keen to emulate. The chief properties of the pitch materials of this raga are a #2nd in conjunction with a natural 3rd and a flattened 7th. The choice of scale material came from my knowledge of the melakartha scheme (developed by Venkatamakhi in the 14th c.), which systematically outlines the 72 possible

seven note scales. The sharpened 2nd degree creates a major-minor tension that referencing the blues, but used modally in conjunction with a natural 3rd it creates an unusual, bitonal, or tonally ambiguous effect.

The flattened 5th, here expressed enharmonically as a #4, and the flattened 7th are also invoked as 'blue' notes. An intentional cultural ambiguity is created by choosing materials characteristic of the blues, decontextualising them by invoking them through a raga, and executing them modally. In contrast to the rhythmic aspect of the bass line, the pitches used in the scale could not be definitely identified as being from a Carnatic origin and the fact that they are performed in equal temperament without reference to a drone, would not necessarily encourage an intercultural reading. The melodic ideas that are generated from the raga are also decidedly un-Carnatic: the bass and melodic lines appear in counterpoint, the melody emphasises the tritone, and there is an absence of ornamentation, all in line with Western practice. However, certain structural elements of the melody contain aspects of Carnatic aesthetics: the descending melodic motif is repeated three times as is common in Carnatic music; the predominance of certain tones in certain sections of the melody is relative to melodic direction; and, as developed in later live performances, there is a persistent upper-neighbour ornamentation of the sharp 4th degree.

We began to rehearse weekly from January 2011. There was no defined end to the rehearsal period. Despite the unfamiliar materials, I told the musicians that it was important to me that the music 'swing', meaning that the pieces would contain sufficient flexibility to enable them to feel 'right', and avoid being overly metronomic. The degree to which musicians can create forward motion and rhythmic synchronicity while also to a certain extent being "out of time", is one of the primary concerns of the musicians that I have played with, particularly the bass players and drummers. Awareness of Participatory Discrepancies, although usually not Keil's terminology, characterises the playing of the musicians I most admire. Therefore, we aimed not for quantised precision in performance, but rather a kind of messy, alert, and dynamic groove-as-process. The kind of reactivity necessary to play in this way would seem, based on this and other experiences, to require more attunement and understanding of each others' parts than a 'precise' reading of the music. This, coupled with the

unfamiliarity of the music, are the two main factors identified as affecting the lengthy duration of the rehearsal process.

The rehearsal process took eight months, a long time for any jazz project, even one with a complex, contemporary aesthetic. At several points in the group interview following the recording, the musicians mentioned that it was hard to pinpoint exactly what made the compositions so difficult to realise, often indicating intercultural factors as impacting their abilities to learn the music and to relate to one another in performance:

Chris Vale (CV): I felt pretty tentative to put new things other than what was dictated on the score, in terms of rhythmic structure, umm...

Toby Wren (TW): Did that change?

CV: It did slowly over time, but there was a lot... its not like any other contemporary jazz writing that I've ... its very... (long pause)... very foreign.

...

Joseph O'Connor (JO): I think Pacific Drop was the one that never really quite got there, I don't know, it shouldn't have been that hard...

Bassist, Andrew Shaw made several observations about the early process of working together:

Andrew Shaw (AS): Things sound familiar but you can't quite work out fast enough to jump on it, if you hear someone else doing it and you think, 'oh, I should be in that'...

TW: Rhythmic things?

AS: Yeah. But now: not. And that's probably an indication that we've got something going on. Actually, you know normally if it's really easy to play with someone straight away that means that its either a rare and amazing thing or that there's nothing challenging going on.

Shaw's observation is on the acquisition of the discursive language of not only the hybrid context, but of playing with new musicians. The implicit learning of each others' subtleties of rhythmic presentation and nuance is one that grows over time, essentially becoming more predictable and easy to

react to, something that Frederick Seddon calls “empathetic attunement”. Rather than leading to a perceptibly less risky performance situation, familiarity allows performers to take more risks, to make improvisatory excursions with the knowledge that they will be able to correctly interpret and respond to the musical nuances of the other players to enable them to regain their place in the metre or form. When speaking about moments of uncertainty in performance, Joseph O’Connor said: “its kind of where negotiation happens... it’s not even a point of disagreement its just clarifying what’s going to happen next”.

In reflecting on my own experience, these moment of uncertainty, in which the performers are temporarily unsure if they are in the same place in the metre or harmony, require two things to be resolved: 1) a musical statement by one of the players that demonstrates a particular relationship to the metre or harmony, and, 2) a correct interpretation of that statement by the other musicians. In jazz settings there are specific ways in which musicians can denote their relationship to the metre, such as using voice leading to resolve tension to the first beat of a new chord, employing archetypal phrasings, or referencing the written melody. These kinds of devices are acquired through enculturation and usually are not a part of formal instruction in jazz.

In the western context, due to enculturation in harmonically derived melodies, a melodic fragment that features the fifth and tonic in successive crotchets will most often be heard and contextualised as a dominant-tonic relationship with the tonic falling on beat one. While it might be possible to play these two notes in varying relationships to the beat at other times, if there is uncertainty in the group about whether we are all in the same place, the convention of the cadence (dominant-tonic) is too culturally ingrained to ignore. Carnatic music, by contrast, is free from the conventions and associations of functional harmony, and frequently provides examples of melodies that contain forceful dominant-tonic relationships that do not resolve to beat one. For example, the previously mentioned Jagadanandakaraka by the composer Thyagaraja, begins with an ascending perfect fourth, in which the lower note begins on beat one. Research by Trainor & Trehub in 1992 suggested that western adults lose the ability that children have to differentiate changes to a melody if those changes are consistent with the underlying harmony. This research indicates that melodic

perception is informed and modified by harmonic knowledge, a problem that would not occur for a listener schooled in a system not based on functional harmony. It would be interesting to further explore the ways in which this type of melodic treatment is perceived by a range of listeners from harmonic and non-harmonic listening backgrounds. Differences in perception in intercultural settings can have real effects on the empathetic attunement identified as important to improvisation. Musicians who have lower knowledge of each others' acquired archetypes, may easily misinterpret a musical gesture making resolution of uncertainty a more difficult task.

There was a conscious decision made not to explain how Carnatic musicians might approach the materials, based on the supposition that it might hinder interpretation for these musicians to have to learn a new set of interpretive frames. I was upfront about this way of working, and the musicians later agreed that this approach led to better outcomes:

TW: Are you interested to know the intercultural elements? Or, where these ideas come from?

AS: I am now that we've done it. For me, in the sense of doing the project I'd have to look at how helpful is that...

It is not unusual for performers to be unaware of the origins of the techniques in a composition, but in this instance the Carnatic techniques were deliberately and rigorously employed, distorting and distending the prevailing jazz paradigm so that the performers were forced to develop new techniques to perform the works. It is certainly true that my own knowledge of Carnatic techniques made it easier for me to learn the pieces, but for the other performers without my background it made sense for them to approach the pieces using the "tool kit", to borrow Reck's terminology, that they were most familiar with. It is uncertain in this project whether a more informed approach would have shortened rehearsals or produced better creative outcomes. It is difficult to know if the lengthy rehearsal timeframe would have been lessened had Carnatic rehearsal techniques been used to approach the work. Also unknown, is the facility with which Carnatic musicians may be able to interpret the same compositions. Regardless of the decision, some of the musicians had had previous experiences that were no-

doubt helpful. For example, double bassist Andrew Shaw had featured in the Carnatic-jazz series, *Cows at the Beach*, and drummer Chris Vale was aware of Carnatic rhythmic techniques, and often employed *solkattu* or a Westernised version of it, to internalise rhythmic structures.

Each week we worked on problematic sections of the compositions, moving closer to a concert-ready performance of the material. As the rehearsals progressed, and the musicians found ways to interact and merge their individual sounds, the sound of the group became more established. Bassist, Andrew Shaw, particularly remarked: "I was getting to know you two [Joseph O'Connor and Chris Vale], and how we were going to sit". A recurring theme in the interviews was that the musicians had to develop a certain threshold of familiarity or internalisation before they could approach improvising on the tunes with confidence. This echoes phenomenological, cognitive psychological and ethnographic accounts of the process of acquiring improvisational language.

JO: More so than most of what I'm doing it took me a while to feel comfortable enough with the composition to sort of take risks... it took me quite a while to get to the stage where I could go for something and maybe end up somewhere I wasn't sure where I was, and be familiar with what was going on in the bass line, and [respond] fast enough to naturally be able to pick up where I left off, I suppose.

Joe brings up an important element of the jazz approach to improvisation that moves beyond the idea of familiarity and internalisation. He suggests that it is important for him to be able to follow musical intuition beyond the point where he is comfortably aware of his precise location in the form or metric cycle, and that it is his sonic relationship to the other musicians that will enable him to find his way back. I cannot speak to the universality of this approach, but it resonates with my own practice, and is echoed by Jean-Michel Pilc in reference to jazz. This may be a point of difference from Carnatic practice, in which a rhythmic diversion, taken by the main artist (usually the singer) is assumed to have been previously worked out so that it resolves to the correct beat. In a Carnatic context this is necessary because the accompanists will often follow closely the rhythms of the main

artist. The main artist in Carnatic music must therefore be sure of the resolution of rhythmic improvisations, which must be undertaken with the confidence that they will be able to maintain and rejoin the rhythmic cycle without help from the accompanists.

There were various rehearsal strategies employed towards internalising the compositions, making them feel more natural to perform, towards a level of familiarity where risks and diversions could be taken.

Toby Wren: ...there were a few other things like that where we just looped them for ages.

Chris Vale: I remember when we just did that [points to score], like, a million times.

...

Joseph O'Connor: With both of those [tunes] I recorded the bass line and practiced over that... [regarding Flood Lines] I put the metronome in quintuplets and had it accent the first beat and practiced it in groupings, over that... probably not so much at the piano, just counting out stuff.

This intellectual working through of materials away from the instrument was also used in rehearsals, a point of difference from the typical jazz rehearsal. We would frequently clap the beat while singing our parts, or practice verbalising a particularly challenging part of the score. In order to familiarise ourselves better with quintuplet feels (used exclusively in Pacific Drop and in parts of Flood Lines) we spent time clapping and reciting various permutations of quintuplets, i.e., various combinations of semiquavers and quavers in quintuplets against a steady beat. This was necessary, as the compositions drew on the Carnatic practice of developing materials in various nadai (subdivisions). Where jazz musicians commonly improvise in semiquavers or triplets, Carnatic musicians will also improvise in quintuplets, septuplets and even ninetuplets (khandam, misram, and sankirnam).

Rich and famous

In the composition titled *Rich and Famous*, there is an opportunity to examine a different aspect of interpretation and ensemble work. The compositional aims of *Rich and Famous* were inherently intercultural: to write a fast 'swinging' tune (but not a swing), in a different nadai (subdivision). Swing is notoriously difficult to define, but has something to do with the restless energy created by a jazz ensemble, a feeling that maintaining the groove requires a sustained collective mental energy, an 'organismic tension' to paraphrase Paul Berliner. This group concentration is particularly crucial at very fast tempos, as the beats are closer together and performing a single note too far ahead or behind the beat could derail the groove.

Rich and Famous was conceived as being in an 11/4 metre, (not necessarily corresponding to a Carnatic thalam), with each beat subdivided into seven pulses (misra nadai), see below, Figure 4. Performing an entire work in septuplets is almost unheard of in jazz. It requires specialisation that many jazz musicians would consider outside the range of what they need to be able to cover.



Figure 4. The melody of *Rich and Famous* as originally conceived, an eleven beat cycle, subdivided to seven.

Because of the unusual and difficult nature of a tune in septuplets for the jazz ensemble, I made a decision to rewrite the work as eleven bars of 7/16 (see below, Figure 5) which I thought was closer to jazz praxis and would facilitate performability. Jazz musicians have considered performing in odd meters, especially 5 and 7, to be a necessary, if uncommonly required, skill, at least since the 1960s. The decision to write the tune in 7/16 had unforeseen consequences however.



Figure 5. The version that was initially presented to the group.

While the approach to the project overall was to allow the musicians to develop their own ways of rehearsing and practicing the tunes, after practicing *Rich and Famous* for some weeks, I felt that we were not achieving the desired 'swing' that we were aiming for, which required a rethinking of the rehearsal strategy. This motivated me to suggest a particular approach that was based on Carnatic practice: one that revealed the original intent of *Rich and Famous*:

TW: I remember at one point that I said I had been practicing...with just the metronome on beat one of the bar

AS: [After you said that] I started doing that with Rich and Famous...

JO: Yeah, same

AS: I think Rich and Famous was the only one I did the metronome on beat one 'cause for me that's a fairly unusual way of playing.

By suggesting that they rehearse with a metronome on beat-one of each bar, I was effectively encouraging the musicians to think of each beat as being subdivided to seven: a 'longer' seven, rather than a typical 2+2+3. This had the effect of focussing attention on the larger scale metric organisation, encouraging a reading of the composition as being in 11/4, as originally intended. Ironically, suggesting this rehearsal technique and reverting to the conception of the tune in its original metre (11/4 subdivided to septuplets) was the key to unlocking a more naturalistic interpretation by the group, even though 7/16 is far more common to jazz practice. The next week when we returned to playing the tune, the suggested way of practicing had had the desired effect and had enabled the tune to begin to swing.

Throughout the process, the drummer Chris Vale consistently applied diverse strategies to learning and becoming comfortable with the materials. Of the same passage (Figure 5), Chris says:

CV: In terms of getting this thing flowing for me, I did it two ways, I did the 'beat one' thing to sort of solidify that ... [but] because I play drums it has to flow for more than one bar, it has to be from point A to point B, so I started practicing [demonstrates] with the [metronome] every two bars, and then... I would take a four bar thing and write down all the different ways that I could play through it.

While maintaining a jazz frame of reference, Chris' approach is reminiscent of Carnatic drummers who exhaustively practice the permutations of a particular idea to build familiarity. It is also interesting that he identifies that drummers need to be able to 'flow for more than one bar'. That is, the task of a drummer is to connect temporal moments, rather than articulate a succession of events, an interesting observation on a practice based around sounds that effectively have no duration.

Another curious particular that emerged was that several of the musicians had been employing an approach that seems to come from Carnatic music via a different route.

JO: I know I've done that with Pacific Drop as well - doing 5/4 instead of 5/8...

TW: It seems to me a thing that jazz musicians, or Brisbane musicians I've worked with always seem to do - and I wonder if that comes from anywhere... I mean thinking in 2 bars...

AS: Ken [Edie], has said to me that he prefers to think like that, in terms of 7/8 or even 7/4 [instead of 7/16] because then you've got more possibilities with your subdivisions.

The technique described above involves considering two bars of 7/16 as one bar of 7/8, allowing an approach that is not consistently bound by the metre. I followed this up with the drummer Ken Edie, who believes that it is likely that he developed this approach when he was playing with the group Loops

in the 1990s. Although that group performed works that were inspired by Indian rhythmic approaches, he believes that this approach arose through a self-directed interest in rhythmic combinatorics rather than directly from Carnatic music (personal communication, 23 January, 2014). The sort of approach that Ken consistently applied involved doubling and halving rhythms in a cycle, as well as developing additive phrases that take up a number of beats. This has clear resonances with the Carnatic approach to rhythm: doubling the speed of metric cycles is an important element of the pedagogical approach to learning Carnatic rhythm.

By suggesting that the ensemble practice *Rich and Famous* with the metronome on beat one only, I also became aware of some common tempo relationships between tunes. In fact, I became aware that the four most important compositions on the album had tempos within 5 beats per minute of each other. The significance of this is that these works could be thought of as expressions of one tempo. That is, each composition was in a different subdivision in relation to a consistent tempo (Figure 6). I likened this to the way a *tani avarttanam* (percussion solo) develops ideas in successive *nadais* (subdivisions) in a Carnatic concert. In fact, I began to think of these central works as comprising a *de facto tani avarttanam* in which primarily rhythmic ideas were developed. The important consequence for the album was that this led me to think of the larger scale Carnatic structures that could be effectively employed.

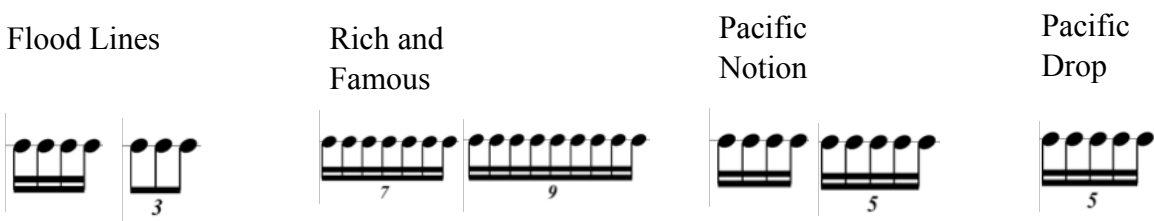


Figure 6. Each composition on Rich and Famous can be heard as articulating a different subdivision of the same basic pulse.

Album structure

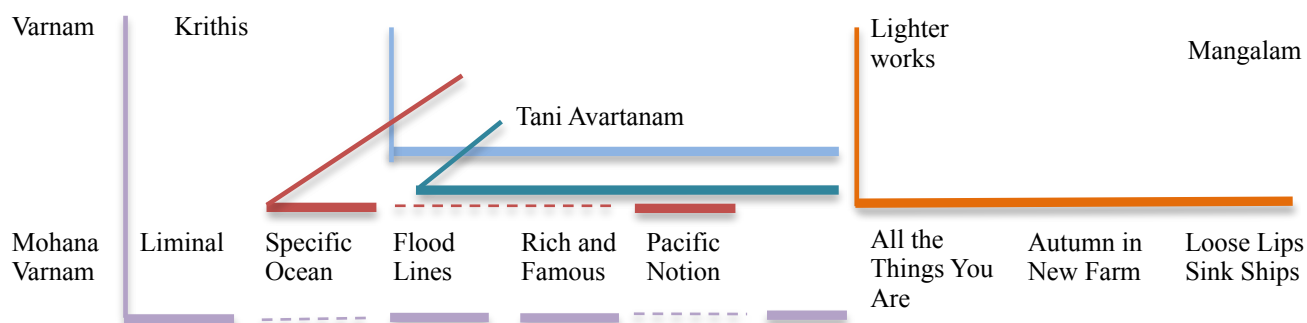
Rich and Famous is based on structures from Carnatic music at the micro and macro levels, including in the ordering of compositions on the album. The ordering of materials in Carnatic music is standardised and specifies the order and type of compositions that should be presented in concert, and also on a Carnatic album. The ordering became standardised at the beginning of the twentieth century, and is often credited to Arriyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar (1890-1967). Ludwig Pesch identifies three roughly equal duration phases in the Carnatic concert: In the first part of the concert a varnam (etude) is played followed by a number of krithis (lit. concert works) in a variety of ragams, the emphasis is on concisely rendering a number of compositions in medium and faster tempos. The varnam is an important introduction to the concert, because "the varnam [has] more to 'say' about a raga in a given metrical (tala) framework. For south Indian classical musicians, then, the varnam embodies a configuration of relationships which serves as a particularly rich resource of 'theorizing'".

The second phase of the concert is reserved for the main item, which has a heavy emphasis on improvisation. This item is in the form Ragam Tanam Pallavi, or an extended presentation of a krithi, and has a long alapana (unmeasured solo improvisation), followed, by tanam (a more rhythmic continuation of the alapana, still without metre or accompaniment), and finally by a brief composition that quickly becomes the basis for a variety of improvisational forms which may include changes of ragam (ragamalika), and the same composition presented in multiple subdivisions (i.e. in double speed, in triplets) against the thalam (metre). The main item also features the tani avarttanam (percussion solo), itself a highly structured improvisation including sarvallaghu (grooves) and korvais in various nadais (subdivisions), followed by a section in which the percussionists reduce their turns (koraippu), a standardised set composition (periyar moohara) and a final korvai which cues the reentry of the melodic instruments. The third phase of the concert features lighter works from the repertoire including adaptations of dance compositions, brief renditions of popular krithis, bhajans (devotional common repertoire) and even audience requests.

The ordering of materials on *Rich and Famous* is per the standardised concert format given above. It begins with a Varnam (etude), followed by krithis (concert works), which become more substantial towards the middle of the program, a 'main piece' that features an adaptation of the tani

avarttanam (percussion solo), and lighter works to finish. The first piece on the album is an arrangement of the Mohana Varnam Ninnu Kori by Ramnad Srinivasa Iyengar, and is the basis for an improvisational exploration of the mohana ragam, (analogous to a major pentatonic scale). As the first work in the series, it presents a Carnatic composition in a, more or less, traditional way, followed by an interruption in a distinctly jazz vein, before the two are reconciled: a melodic fragment from the varnam's melody is recycled for a bass line enabling group improvisation. In this way the influences are initially juxtaposed, making explicit the hybrid intent. There are several important ways in which the Carnatic concert format is varied, with structures being interpreted in different ways. The following figure demonstrates the elements of the Carnatic concert structure (top portion) mapped onto the ordering of materials on *Rich and Famous* (lower portion). Parallels are drawn between the three phases of a concert outlined by Pesch, with the most variation to format occurring in the central portion.

Carnatic concert



Rich and Famous

Figure 7. The album structure of *Rich and Famous* (lower portion) and its relationship to the Carnatic concert structure (upper portion).

In the central portion of the album, the lengthy improvisations that characterise a Carnatic 'main item' (ragam, tanam, and the tani avarttanam) are distributed across several compositions: *Flood Lines*, *Rich and Famous*, *Pacific Notion*, and *Pacific Drop*. The alapana, and tani avarttanam are used in unconventional positions within these four works, and at various resolutions. The alapana, ordinarily used as an unmeasured improvisation of

the ragam before a composition, is here used as a linking piece in between works. It is still an unmetered solo improvisation, but it is now semi-structured as a morphing of themes from the work preceding into the one to follow. The first alapana, Specific Ocean, is played by the double bass, the second, Pacific Notion, by the guitar. Carnatic alapanas also follow a logical developmental sequence, but one that is self contained.

Given my declared interest in Carnatic rhythms, the tani avarttanam becomes a major structural focus of the suite, and is distributed across the four central compositions. A literal rendition of a conventional periyar moohara in 7/4 is found early on in Flood Lines. Ordinarily, the periyar moohara is an audible cue to Carnatic rasikas (music lovers) that a tani avarttanam is ending. Here it is used not as a warning that the tani is ending, but that it is beginning, and an indication that Carnatic rhythmic structures are being employed. The 'final korvai' is found in Pacific Drop and is based on a style of rhythmic development associated with Palghat Raghu, (1928-2009) one of my teachers and greatest inspirations. This korvai is an expanding form (srothavaya yati) with phrases taking on a distinctive flavour through the addition of pauses in between notes within each phrase. The korvai is given below in solkattu and numeric notation (Figure 8).

Thadikitathom Thadikitathom Thadikitathom
Tha dhom , Dho om gu
Thadi , kita , thom Thadi , kita , thom Thadi , kita , thom
Tha dhom , Dho om gu
Thadi , , kita , , thom Thadi , , kita , , thom Thadi , , kita , , thom

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Figure 8. The Pacific Drop korvai, in the style of Palghat Raghu, which contains 75 pulses (15 bars of quavers in 5/8).

The unifying factor of the central four pieces, that conceptually frames them as the 'main item', is that they share the same tempo, roughly 60 beats per minute. As notated in the score, the time signatures of the pieces

are notated as 4/4, 7/16, 9/16, 8/4, and 5/8 respectively. However, hearing the works in a constant pulse of 55-60 beats per minute yields the result of simply changing subdivisions (see Figure 6), from chatusram (semiquavers), to misram (septuplets), to sankirnam (nonuplets), to various (in the guitar alapana), and finally to khandam (quintuplets). Thought of in this way, each nadai change of the tani avartanam becomes the stage for a development of melodic and harmonic material based on that particular nadai, an orchestration of a Carnatic percussionist's approach. It is difficult to insist that the four pieces be heard as being expressions of the same tempo, but an attempt is made to draw the listener's attention to it at various stages. In Pacific Notion, for example, the unaccompanied guitar improvisation occurs against an accompaniment of audible clapping of the thalam (metric cycle) in Carnatic style. The improvisation moves through several nadai, each time culminating in a korvai, before finally settling in khandam nadai (quintuplets). Once in khandam, the themes of the following movement, Pacific Drop, are introduced and so linked to the conception of changing subdivisions.

The rhythmic structures used in Rich and Famous are applied with varying degrees of adherence to Carnatic principles, but all would be recognisable to Carnatic musicians. While the techniques are often not strictly applied, they create musical environments that would not arise through an exploration of jazz forms alone.

Conclusions

I find intercultural work fascinating on many levels, both for its benefits and the problems that it raises. There is a historical and cultural richness gained by allowing divergent practices to coexist and creating a platform in which they can interact. The intercultural environment also offers challenges for musicians, and for audiences. In any musical genre, the audience and the musicians have developed a set of expectations which enables the listeners to participate in a kind of musical game: predicting the interactions, admiring the allusions, drawing their own comparisons to the history and culture that they share with the performers. In a hybrid context of course, some of these expectations will be unmet, as the listener is most often familiar with only one set of cultural expectations. Christopher Adler, notes

that “for every aspect that is familiar [about the intercultural work] there will be another that is unfamiliar; for every rightness about the work, a wrongness along with it...” Adler observes that unless the audience belongs to both cultures they will not be able to grasp the full meaning of the interactions. I would add that even a listener familiar with both genres might still be unsure of the nature of the hybrid project, whose goals often move beyond juxtaposition. Despite the fact that overtly hybrid music makes use of cultural archetypes and audience expectations it does so with the knowledge that only a very small number if any, of the audience will have developed critical frameworks necessary to understand the archetypes and allusions of both traditions. So, while a hybrid work may be constructed from defined component parts, there is a sense in which it may be heard as inhabiting a new genre, or Third Space, to use Homi Bhabha’s term (1994).

Perhaps the most important observation is that whether we consider hybrid work to be a new musical genre or a meeting of cultures, it must be based on intercultural dialogue to effectively challenge cultural critiques of hybridity. Collaborative projects that enable equitable contribution by different cultures are increasingly visible, however my analysis has demonstrated that discursive interculturality is also possible within a monocultural work based on a hybrid musical practice. Nevertheless, there are tensions between the aestheticising of discursivity and the idea of a monocultural synthesis of an external tradition. For some, influence may always be a form of appropriation, but enculturation and influence is not an act of violence in itself. Poststructuralism has revealed that creativity is culturally contingent, a recombination of pre-existing cultural paradigms. It is logical that hybrid expressions, the result of influence across cultures, will become more commonplace as we continue to interrogate and break down the borders of culture.

While theory is important, I am still sensitive to the particulars of the situation in which I am working. The intention of the project and the way that this is evidenced in the musical text, as well as the sensitivities of the cultures represented, were important considerations. The many Carnatic musicians or *rasikas* (music lovers) that I have spoken to are self-assured about their cultural heritage, and are in accord that hybrid or fusion projects will not detract from the centrality of their tradition, but rather broaden the scope of its appeal. I share their hope that my hybrid work will contribute to

the awareness of Carnatic forms, and to the ongoing critical discussion on cultural difference.

The Discursive Intercultural critical framework developed during my PhD research was used to analyse the ways in which cultures are represented in a work, and can be used to reveal the ways in which the contributions of cultures are limited in a work. While *Rich and Famous* is syncretic rather than collaborative, and occurs almost entirely within a western paradigm, cultural dissonances were highlighted throughout the rehearsal process. The analysis of cultural influences on the compositions, the problems they created for the performers, and the solutions that were devised, revealed aspects of interaction and interpretation that seemed to be foregrounded in the hybrid context. This was especially noticeable in the discussion around Carnatic and jazz cultures' conceptualisation of complex rhythmic structures. In the hybrid context, the musicians employed western and additive approaches to learning and internalising rhythmic structures including verbalisation of rhythms, and unconventional (for jazz) approaches to rehearsing (for example, with a metronome on beat one to internalise higher subdivisions of the pulse).

Empathetic attunement also emerged as an important factor in the comfort of the group, assimilation of musical materials and the generation of swing. Primarily it is the length of time that musicians have been performing together that determines the extent of their empathetic attunement, but in a hybrid context this is constrained by the unfamiliarity of the musical context. Simpler compositional models can accommodate empathetic attunement in intercultural collaborations, but here the focus was on dialogue at the composition stage that led to a more complex platform for the player interactions. The extent to which the musicians were able to empathetically attune to one another, and to swing, was peculiarly revealed through an analysis of the notation and re-notation of *Rich and Famous*. My own culturally-based assumptions about what would be the easiest way for the jazz musicians to assimilate the materials ended up limiting the extent to which the musicians engaged with the musical materials.

Rich and Famous raised as many questions as it answered. The project was significant for me personally, because it was perhaps the first time that I was aware of a natural integration of Carnatic elements in my composition and performance practice. It was something of a relief to find that these

influences were reflected naturally in my work after so long, as before the project I had wondered if it would be possible at all. Even though there are elements of the project that recall my earlier work, I also feel that it is the beginning of a different phase in my creativity, one that makes me excited and a little nervous. While this hybrid language is something I have been working towards, I have Christopher Adler's words ringing in my ears. But I continue to make music nonetheless, a project called *Black Mountain*, that builds on the ideas of *Rich and Famous*: a suite of uncompromising hybrid music that reflects my cultural influences. Perhaps the idea that compels me to continue, is a hope that rather than being variously incomprehensible to different cultures, it will occupy a hybrid space, one that speaks to our yearning to know and celebrate cultural difference.