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DECONSTRUCTED NARRATIVES

*A Composer's Perspective on Form,
Process and Review*

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**by
Jacob Thompson-Bell**

SUPPORTING COMMENTARY

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Full List of Works for Ph.D. Submission

Open Instrumentation/Graphic Score

Collages and Soundtracks approx. 20' - 60'

(Collages: *Procession, Songmaking, Viola Fragments, Rhizome*)

(Soundtracks: *Notes From a Meeting, Dreamscape on a Performance, St. Luke's Soundtrack*)

Film

Slightly Before, Just After 17'

Symphony Orchestra

Ludwig in the Room (2, 2, 2, 2 - 3, 2 - perc - str) 10'

Waiting For You (2+picc, 2, 2, 2 - 4,2(1d), 2+bass, 1 - 3perc - str) 6'

Chamber

Meeresstille: A Recollection (st qt) 17'

Three Cubist Portraits (fl d picc/afl, ob d ca, cl d bcl)
(*Scherzo Fratturato / Adagio Automatico / Allegro Cristallo*) 11' - 12'

Dance Form (fl, trb, vln, vc) 5'

Verbatim (pf solo) 7'

Acousmatic/Electronic

Notes From a Meeting (stereo) 8'

Full List of AV Media for Ph.D. Submission (With Durations)

General CD1

TRACK 1 <i>Ludwig in the Room</i>	09:34
TRACK 2 <i>Waiting For You</i>	06:02
TRACK 3 <i>Notes From a Meeting</i>	08:12
TRACK 4 <i>Verbatim</i>	07:09
TRACK 5 <i>Dance Form</i>	04:27
TRACK 6 <i>Viola Fragments</i> (Workshop)	07:04

General DVD1

TRACK 1 <i>Viola Fragments</i> (Showcase)	05:10
TRACK 2 <i>Songmaking</i>	10:37
TRACK 3 <i>Viola Fragments</i> (Video of Work in Progress)	01:55

Meeresstille CD2

TRACK 1 <i>Meeresstille Deconstruction</i> (Fischer-Dieskau/Moore)	01:40
TRACK 2 <i>Meeresstille: A Recollection</i> (String Quartet)	17:11
TRACK 3 <i>Dreamscape on a Performance</i>	05:35

Meeresstille DVD2

TRACK 1 <i>Slightly Before, Just After</i>	16:59
--------------------------------------------	-------

Soundtracks CD3 (see inside cover of *Collages and Soundtracks*)

TRACK 1 <i>Notes From a Meeting</i>	08:12
TRACK 2 <i>Dreamscape on a Performance</i>	05:35
TRACK 3 <i>St. Luke's Soundtrack</i>	04:31

Abstract

Deconstructed Narratives

A Composer's Perspective on Form, Process and Review

This project takes the form of a series of compositions in a variety of styles and media. Presented alongside the scores and recordings, the ensuing commentary engages with the creative/research process, documenting significant activities and insights as they arose during the course of the investigation. The documentation aims to mimic the compositional techniques employed in the scores referenced, and is consequently delivered through a mixture of media — this includes written word, graphical analysis, illustration and audio deconstruction.

The research project centres on narratives and their expression (or repression) through music. “Narrative” is here used to mean: temporal syntax — its presence, or absence, and the possible implications for reception and critical discourse. The enquiry begins with structuralist approaches, those bound by formal architectures in sound that seek to guide temporal perception (Chapter One). Drawing on the work of Jonathan Kramer (1988), this section divides the enquiry into two distinct time-based varieties — “multi-linearity” and “non-linearity” — explored in detail through a number of original compositions.

In the second stage, I explore interdisciplinary strategies, using visual media to organise sound non-temporally, or in “non-narrative” terms (Chapter Two). This second stage investigates the relationship between process and product, and between action and research, in the context of musical composition, drawing on post-structural and performance research theories (Nelson 2006; Lyotard 2005; Barthes 1977), and finding ways in which a multi-media approach can be used as a means of analysing creative practice. Through exploring process-product relationships, this second stage also seeks to deconstruct the means of production traditionally underlying musical composition — from-composer-to-performer-to-listener — identifying ways in which these clearly defined roles can become unstuck, mixed and even reversed in certain contexts.

Building on the developments of the second stage, the works referenced in Chapter Three concern sound as a physical presence: a tangible, sensate medium that implicates all of us in its production (Voegelin 2010; Toop 1997). This final stage explores ways in which (musical) sound can be engaged with on a non-semantic level, as an “anti-narrative”, without the structural connotations of a language. This

exploration takes the form of a self-contained series of deconstructions of Schubert's *Meeresstille* (1815). The series begins with an audio transformation of a recording by Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Gerald Moore, which is transcribed and recomposed into an extended string quartet movement, expanded into a five-day audio-visual installation, and transformed into a 17 minute film reimagining the recording process for the string quartet. Each of these stages emphasises the means of production (bow movements, movement around a performance space, etc.) over and above the presence of an emotional or linguistic meaning, though these aspects may also be discernible in the work considered.

The project loosely concludes by stating some key insights gained over the course of the research, followed by a series of open questions outlining new paths to explore based on the work already undertaken.

PROLOGUE

First Principles

This project centres on narratives, expressed through music, constructed and dismantled through music. “Narrative” is here used to mean: temporal syntax — its presence, or absence, and the possible implications for reception and critical discourse.¹ The enquiry begins with structuralist approaches (Chapter One), those bound by formal architectures in sound that seek to guide temporal perception. Following on from this, I explore interdisciplinary strategies, using visual media to organise sound non-temporally (Chapter Two). This second stage also investigates the relationship between process and product in the context of musical composition, and general research, finding ways in which a multi-media approach can be used as a means of analysing creative practice. The final stage of the research process (Chapter Three) concerns sound as a physical presence: a tangible, sensate medium that implicates all of us in its production. This final stage explores how (musical) sound can be engaged with on a non-semantic level, without the structural connotations of a language (or narrative). In exploring this aspect of sound, I have employed a range of media, from score-based composition for string quartet, to installation art and video. This third stage of the project takes the form of a series of companion pieces on Schubert’s original lied *Meeresstille* (1815), presented as a score for string quartet and a self-contained CD and DVD, including audio reflections and an original film.

My ongoing creative practice is itself the means and subject of this research project; the text can be considered a documentary, illustrating some of the creative techniques employed, underlining the motivations behind it, and recounting insightful experiences encountered throughout the process. At the same time, the combination of written observations, analytical drawings and textual experiments, is a demonstration of my creative activities generally, and replays many of the techniques employed therein. As such, whilst the structure outlined above serves to clarify the research activities, there are times when one category begins to bleed into another (for example, the analytical sketchbooks at the end of Chapter One employ similar interdisciplinary approaches to the scores referenced in Chapter Two).

Inevitably, as with any research project, the depth of investigation is limited by space. More symptomatically for a creative project such as this, the depiction of the surrounding context (artistic and academic ancestors, peers and guides) is very much a subjective art. Of course, this should not be taken to mean that the approach

is without precedent; the existing context for my research is discussed below with reference to the work of artists such as John Cage and David Toop. Nonetheless, the analyses of my own works, and brief observations on the music of other composers, focus on them with specific reference to the aims laid out above and at the beginning of each chapter. These evaluation criteria are not invoked to delimit or explicate the compositions themselves; rather, they serve as temporary filtration devices, calibrated to emphasise certain common ground between my works, and my indebtedness to the efforts of others in and around my field. In the final judgment, the music is, of course, subjective, volatile, and should be a far broader experiential phenomenon than can be conveyed in the account below.

At this point, I should state clearly that this commentary, and its relationship towards the compositions in my portfolio, is intended to be problematic. In the pages following, there is a continual antagonism expressed between a formalistic, idealised understanding of musical works as self-contained structures, each complete with its own essential syntax; and an open, post-structuralist understanding of musical “works” as relativistic constructs, extracted temporarily, inconsistently, even incoherently from creative process. This account offers a third way, embodying the principles of both dialectical extremes: in order for a dialectic to hold, there must be a fixed, universally defined form and function for this commentary and its associated works; and yet, the dialectical scales are balanced by the very possibility of universal dialectics being impossible.

It should become increasingly clear as this written account progresses that my entire research process is approached as a piece of relative work, changeable with each fresh interaction, resembling in many ways the rules of a game, built from assorted features of the pieces (often in the literal sense of the word “pieces”: fragments selected) I have produced in response to general questions about musical narrative. As my research has progressed, the distinction I initially sensed between composing and reviewing has been gradually eroded to the point that pieces (visual, musical, textual) initially created for aesthetic enjoyment, are here presented as analytical vantage points on other works (Chapter Three is particularly representative of this tendency). These presentations should not be regarded as definitive analyses; rather, they are attempts to encourage further interaction with the ideas and materials of my portfolio.

This commentary is intended to provide authoritative arguments and insights into my creative practice. However, one of the central premises of this account is that human creativity problematises authority - sharing it, reversing it, exacerbating it. Whether or not the present author’s authority should resume following the creative testing described above is a matter for each individual reader to decide. In seeking to engage with creative process, this commentary admits the possibility that it may

never be finished, even after its final draft has been bound securely and deposited on a shelf — wooden or digital. Each new reader must carry out the essential task of *per-forming* this “work” according to their needs, limitations and preferences.

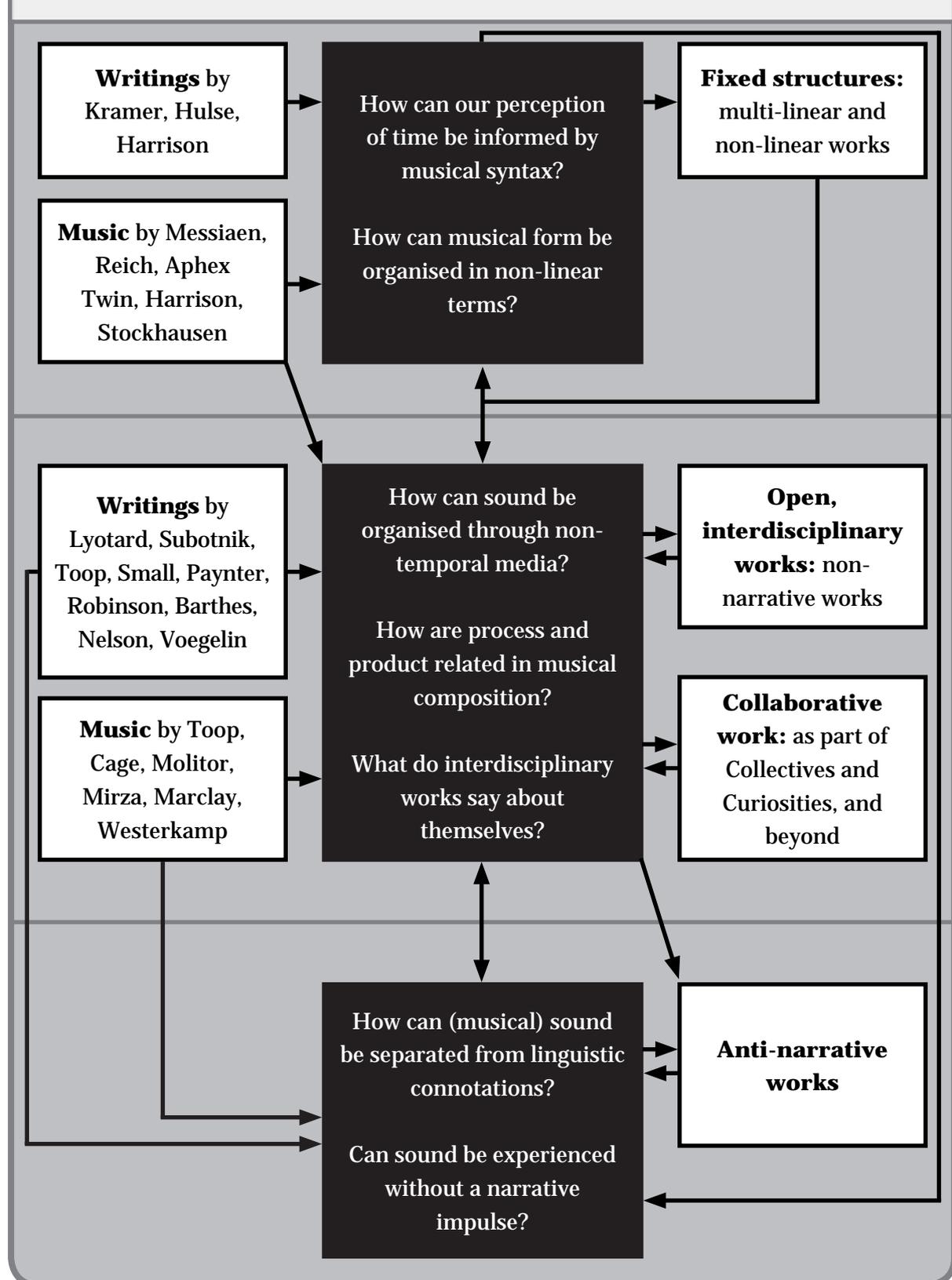
The collected materials of this project are then a kind of temporary snapshot: they will take on new meanings in future incarnations, in new contexts, though they are taken together for now. Where insights have been gained through this process of curation and collection, the observations are documented within this text. The flowchart overleaf provides a timeline overview of the research process, identifying the central research questions together with their respective inspirations, musical and otherwise.

Personal Motivations

Alongside these aesthetic, theoretical and practical observations, I also want to offer a short ideological interlude, an opportunity to voice my personal motivations for engaging in this research. This project, including the music, words and pictures, is an attempt to express the way I see the world. As a research objective, expressing oneself might seem a little lightweight, even self-indulgent. Yet expressing an idea, a feeling, a state of being, is precisely the role of any creative artist. This expression can be achieved in an immeasurable number of ways, often through representational, dramatic work; through a kind of hypnosis or meditation; or through the creation of social situations that encourage certain types of behaviour in participants. Music engages with all these ways of expressing, and many more besides. Bringing creative arts into a research environment means validating that subjective process: using the technical means of individual artists to both examine and act out different ways of interacting with and experiencing the world around us, as well as the relationships between people and cultures. This effectively means that creative practice “is” the research process and could be contrasted with other approaches to practice-based research, which often reposition creative practice as the process to be “researched” into. In many respects, this challenges the status of “knowledge” *per se*; the wider implications of this are explored below in the context of practice-as-research (see Chapter Two), drawing on the writings of Robin Nelson (2006), Rose Subotnik (1996) and John Paynter (2008).

Research Flowchart

Showing influences and project structure



Chapter 1

TIME

(Deconstructed Narrative)

This section focusses on music as a quasi-textual practice, organised into a temporal syntax that can be harnessed to deconstruct itself. This means that, whilst the works discussed below are designed as deconstructed narratives (i.e. syntactically problematic); they nonetheless rely on a language that is linear and consequential by default. Their focus is therefore on perceptions of time — how musical structure can manipulate our sense of forward-moving time in performance.



Time and Structure

Judy Lochhead comments ‘that which can be separated from its original and defining temporal place-context while still retaining part of its original significance... [is exemplified by] eating the foods associated with the morning no matter what time of day’.¹ In other words, though as an abstract dimension, time is a smooth plane extending in two directions (back to the past and forward to the future), as a perceived reality, time is fractured, striated, malleable.

WAITING FOR YOU, A COMPOSITION FOR ORCHESTRA: A WHIP CRACK; STRINGS; BRASS;
POLYPHONY SHARED BETWEEN PICCOLO, XYLOPHONE AND GLOCKENSPIEL...

Musical structure can exploit this malleability of time in a number of different ways. In the work of some composers, notably Messiaen and Stravinsky, the experience of time in music has been paramount. More recently, in the music of Minimalists such as Steve Reich or Philip Glass, experiential time comes somewhere close to a state of suspension (or at least extreme slow motion) owing to the level of repetition and the very gradual rate of change. The infinite scope for repetition in electronic music by Richard D. James (a.k.a. Aphex Twin), or the unchanging textures of the music of Arvo Paert similarly engage with this notion of temporal suspension.

In an effort to categorise my own work in these areas, it is possible to identify two principal structural approaches: “multi-linearity” and “non-linearity”. These structures must remain closed or, if they do allow for flexibility, they must impose significant limitations in order to exercise a sufficient level of control over the order of events and their distribution in time. Both multi-linearity and non-linearity refer to different ways of experiencing time during musical performance — on the one hand, it is felt as a series of dislocated statements or fragments; on the

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other, as a cycling or repeating experience. Crucially, whilst time-based musical structures might seek to develop new and innovative kinds of movement, they are fundamentally reliant on linear narrative: it is impossible to arrive at a deconstructed perception of time without some sense of linear, dramatic propulsion (the “ordinary” consequential time of a ticking clock) against which the deformations can be measured. This can be contrasted with “non-narrative” and “anti-narrative” works (discussed in Chapters Two and Three, respectively), in which the sense of time is conceptually less important than the impact of non-temporal media (i.e. visuals).

TWO FURTHER CRACKS OF THE WHIP; ORCHESTRAL HOCKET; IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWED BY A
ROCKING FIGURE FROM UNISON STRINGS AND HORNS...

Multi-Linearity

Multi-linearity implies that several perceivable interleaved narratives are present simultaneously. Statements must be capable of sounding connected in a non-consecutive way or otherwise self-contained, so that the performance is not experienced as a continuous, homogeneous whole.

A WHIP CRACK; CLARINETS AND BASSOONS; BRASS AND STRINGS; POLYPHONY SHARED
BETWEEN XYLOPHONE AND GLOCKENSPIEL; STRINGS AND WOODWIND...

In practice, an interleaved narrative would likely not proceed *A B C D 1 2 3 4*. It might oscillate in the manner: *A 1 B 2 C 3 D 4*; or in some other more scrambled narration. This category refers equally to less rigidly structured works encountered through the following: *A 1 y 3 ? w 7 **. Here, each defined gesture is heard in an illogical sequence but the overall impression is of a series of distinct passages in forward-moving time. Importantly, these works must offer a series of defined statements that are clearly differentiated from what immediately precedes or follows, even if there are connections between temporally disparate sections.

PIZZICATO IN THE DOUBLE BASSES; TWO TRUMPETS...

Brian Hulse writes, ‘In relation to actual music, a score only exists *per se* as a slender, moving window...during the course of listening, an extraordinary field of temporal objects — past, present, and yet to come (and all these in some sense present) — develops concurrently with whatever sound is actually engaging the ear at any given moment.’² By extension, if a musical composition is constructed from a series of “moments” etched into the score, experiencing those moments in performance will

have the effect of fracturing the normal perceptual continuity between past, present and future. The extent to which this temporal plane is fractured will differ from one listener to another and, given the volatility of live musical experience, the exact result will necessarily be unpredictable; nevertheless, the difference between a block-like construction and a linear drama should still be perceivable.

Multi-linearity corresponds to a certain extent with Jonathan Kramer's theory of "multiply-directed time", defined by Kramer as dependent 'on underlying linearity being perceptible even when not presented in a linear order.'³ My category also bears a resemblance to Kramer's "moment form"⁴ characterisation of extreme levels of contrast (which itself borrows from Stockhausen's initial use of the term in relation to his 1964 composition *Momente*).⁵ Kramer regards moment form as a series of dislocated statements, which deliberately thwart attempts to understand them as a linear narrative (due to their disjunction), thus giving the impression of suspended time. My category simplifies Kramer's distinction, dealing with any musical structures which seek to present disjunct narratives, whether as a deconstruction of some underlying linear narrative, or as part of a resolutely block-like structure. The unifying feature of all these works is a conception of time as being articulated by a strictly pre-determined musical syntax: a narrative.

A CYMBAL SPLASH; ROCKING FIGURES IN THE HORNS AND STRINGS; ORCHESTRAL HOCKET;
POLYPHONY SHARED BETWEEN XYLOPHONE AND GLOCKENSPIEL; A SWELLING ORCHESTRAL
CHORD; PIZZICATO DOUBLE BASSES; OBOES AND CLARINETS PUNCTUATED BY VIOLINS; AN
ORCHESTRAL ASCENT CUT OFF BY THE HEAVY BRASS...

Non-Linearity

This second category suggests movement through time is notionally suspended. Whilst the presence of linear time is unavoidable, the experience of that time can be affected by narratives that proceed incredibly slowly, or repetitiously, giving the impression of suspended time, or circularity. These works can be utterly static (as in La Monte Young's *Composition 1960 #7*, in which B and F-sharp are held "for a long time"), or active in cycles (as in Terry Riley's *In C*, 1964).

This category is similar to Kramer's notion of "vertical time": a piece that 'does not begin but merely starts. It does not build to a climax, does not purposefully set up internal expectations, does not seek to fulfil any expectations that might arise accidentally, does not build or release tension, and does not end but simply ceases.'⁶ In effect, vertical time seeks to eradicate the sense of causality we feel when listening to music, in order to downplay the sense of forward moving time during performance. However, I avoid using Kramer's original term because I am

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referring to works that may be totally static; or that might feel resolutely linear at times by treading a circular path. In other words, non-linear pieces can avoid moving altogether, or they can obsessively and repetitively move towards the same point.⁷

PIZZICATO IN THE DOUBLE BASSES; WOODWINDS; POLYPHONY BETWEEN XYLOPHONE AND GLOCKENSPIEL; COUNTERPOINT IN THE BRASS; SWELLING C-SHARPS IN THE STRINGS AND HORNS; AN ORCHESTRAL ASCENT CUT OFF BY THE HEAVY BRASS. NOW FOR AN ENDING...

Beginnings and Endings

Whilst developing structures in the moulds outlined above, I have had to deal carefully with allusions to beginning and ending, these being fundamental tenets of linear narrative. Kramer notes that ‘Every musical performance starts and, some time later, stops. It does not follow, however, that every composition has a beginning and an ending’⁸ — this is an important distinction for composers. Beginnings have to be wellsprings of the performance to come. Beethoven’s *Eroica* symphony (1806) has a beginning: two E-flat major chords and a principal theme in the cellos that pervades the movement. *Starting* simply means making it clear that there is an increased level of intentionality behind what is happening now, compared with what happened immediately before the composition started.

Endings, on the other hand, tie up the loose ends, closing off potential excursions into new dramatic territory. Aphex Twin’s *Mt. Saint Michel Mix+St. Michaels Mount* (2001) initiates a gradual erosion of the track to create a clear ending, inserting minuscule segments of silence at shortening intervals, until the music stops altogether.⁹ *Stopping* simply means making it clear that there is a decreased level of intentionality behind what is happening now, compared with what happened immediately before the composition stopped.

Of course, compositions can begin with an apparent source point for music to come, yet deny the implications of that opening — consider Tippett’s explosion of Beethoven’s Symphony No. 9 in his own Symphony No. 3 (1972). Others end somehow inconclusively and yet offer a partial resolution through musical rhetoric — Tippett’s questioning chords at the close of his Symphony No. 2 (1957) decline to resolve the tensions of his four-movement work. This begs the question, if a composition does not clearly state an opening source point (or beginning), and also avoids end-weighted resolution, are the contrasts between the different gestures in the piece really *tensions* at all?

This question underlies my compositions *Waiting For You* (CD 1 T2) and *Ludwig in the Room* (CD1 T1). Both pieces present their material in a non-hierarchical structure, in which the different sections are intended to retain an equal

importance that owes little or nothing to their respective durations. Each section is also juxtaposed with the previous and following materials, without attempting a smooth transition between them. In this sense, both of these pieces can be classed as multi-linear: each defined gesture is juxtaposed like a static object, but the overall impression of the piece is of a series of distinct passages in forward-moving time.¹⁰ Neither of these pieces entirely dispenses with a beginning or an ending; however they both undermine the sense of movement between these two structural points.

Waiting For You separates out every distinct section with a percussive crack. The piece also opens with a whip strike, so the sense of a beginning is rendered progressively less certain as the composition continues, even though the harsh gesture may feel like a source point at first. The ending has some aspects of tonal closure about it, finishing with a semi-tonal shift downwards, and combining the quartal harmony of the large crescendo gesture in bb.52 - 56, with the harmony based around half-diminished chords present most emphatically in the section marked 'Florid and Flexible', bb.20 - 29. However, its finality is perhaps diminished due to the consistent sequence of changes that has preceded it. Even with this faux-finality, the narrative offers the distinct possibility that the music will simply restart with another type of material, new or heard previously, most likely on a whip crack.

Despite the more violent time-keeping device of the whip, *Waiting For You* draws on Messiaen's luxuriant depiction of infinite time in *Trois petites liturgie de la présence divine* (1944), particularly the first movement, subtitled *Antienne de la conversation intérieure*. This movement closes with a lengthy sustained chord, somewhere in the region of 10 seconds (depending on the duration of the pause), held throughout the ensemble. The effect is of a complete narrative arrest: the music is totally static. Even so, its finality feels problematic because it has already been heard. The movement is a simple ternary form, so the grandiose statement of closure is deliberately undermined by its simple function as a repeating structural block. In much the same sense, the semiotic intention of the final bars in *Waiting For You* is relatively inconclusive, suggesting a dying away, rather than an emphatic closure.

Ludwig in the Room shares this desire to fracture the perception of narrative: it is, on one level, a tonal and thematic deconstruction of the first movement of Beethoven's *Eroica* symphony. The piece is suffused with E-flat (the tonic sonority of Beethoven's work) and littered with thematic fragments from the movement (i.e. b.80 in the strings is an excerpt from the principal theme). There are also more large-scale structural references to the piece, made through the *Allegros* (i.e. bb.46 - 53), which directly quote the transitional section between first and second subject areas in the recapitulation of Beethoven's movement (bb.482 - 489, *Eroica*) combined with extra layers of elaborating counterpoint. Second violins, violas and cellos remain most faithful to Beethoven's score during these sections; against this backdrop, flutes

and first violins decorate the melodic line, running in triplets against duplet quavers from the original, whilst bassoons and double basses overload the harmony with chromatic scales moving at different rates. The extra layers derail Beethoven's logical harmony, crash landing the music, before launching into new territory at RM 6. See the harmonic reduction overleaf for a more detailed demonstration of how tonal harmony is distorted in this piece.

These harmonic and textural features work on musical materials throughout the composition, including passages which are not derived from Beethoven's piece. The woodwind interjections, puncturing the static strings at RM 2, 3 and 4, all feature heavily doubled notes to mimic the harmonic stasis achieved by holding down the sustaining pedal on a piano. Where there are fleeting passages of linear writing (i.e. trumpet bb.54 - 65), the dynamism is quickly absorbed by collaging together orchestral families playing different material simultaneously, as at RM 7 and 8. In fact, the woodwind passage beginning at RM 7 is itself a layering of Beethoven's thematic material, brought up to a level of density at which the tonal propulsion of the original is undermined, leaving the music to cycle through a fixed harmonic space based around E-flat major. In short, these compositional techniques are all geared towards offering a temporal experience which is by turns fragmented, or static. Selecting Beethoven's dramatic movement as a source material helps throw the experience into relief, just as Schubert's composition can offer a comparatively linear work for my string quartet, *Meeresstille: A Recollection* (Chapter Three/ CD2 T1).

Ludwig in the Room is a useful example with which to revisit the discussion above on Kramer's fine-tuned distinctions between "multiply directed" and "moment form" works, in comparison with my own more general categories of "multi-linearity" and "non-linearity". *Ludwig in the Room* is responsive in part to both of Kramer's definitions. It can be considered moment-based in its denial of propulsive linear writing, particularly during the *Allegretto* sections, with block-like interjections from woodwinds and a sustained chord in the strings (the deliberate discrepancy between the lively tempo marking and the static writing that ensues is one way of drawing the conductor's attention to this). At the same time, the piece is a deconstructed symphonic drama, featuring interleaved segments of material that could be understood to have their own linear logic, but that are interrupted, even abrogated. Follow, for example, the appearances of the woodwind block already mentioned: RM 2, 3 and 4, punctuated by the *Allegro* material at RM 5, and then resurfacing at RM 11, 12 and 13 before being entirely superseded by the compound time section, RM 16 - 25. The compound-time section is itself a repeating framework of woodwind syncopation and a strings chorale (these are initially heard bb.133 - 141). The two materials finish together and begin their cycles together, stalling the sense of musical motion. The repetitions are marked by short passages of sparse writing between

woodwind and wood block (i.e. bb.142 - 145). The cycles are cut through by a gradual proliferation of brass instruments outlining a pentatonic chord (G-flat, A-flat, B-flat, E-flat, D-flat), which perhaps lends some linear momentum to the music.

This periodic reappearance of materials at different stages of the piece, in slightly varied forms, has the effect of splitting the structure into several types of musical movement: the static blocks of woodwind; the abrogated *Allegros*; and the opening chordal exchange (which also finishes the piece). However, the essentially static nature of all of these constituent materials makes a sense of interleaved linearity hard to follow. Even the *Allegretto* section, RM 6 - 11, is built from collaged blocks, each presenting a fragmented deconstruction of Beethoven's thematic material. RM 16 - 25 is an alien structure inserted into an otherwise shorter composition (it could conceivably be omitted without damaging the pacing of the piece), so the fact that it carries aspects of linearity is, to some extent, superfluous. Understanding the piece as a series of interleaved static statements might be more accurate, but that undermines a multiply-directed reading, which relies on 'linearity being perceptible even when not presented in a linear order'.¹¹

Case Study: *Waiting For You*

Waiting For You is constructed from groups of interlocking structures, related to one another through a series of approximate 2:3 ratios. These structures are clearly defined by tempo, texture, instrumentation, and melodic or thematic attributes, and are separated out by a percussive crack or whip strike (i.e. b.10). In 'Case Study Diagram 1', opposite, I identify thirteen structures, grouped into five larger units comprising the entire piece.

GROUP I: bb.1 – 19 ['With fantasy'; 'Broad'; 'Wild'; 'Fantasia']

GROUP II: bb.20 – 56 ['Florid and Flexible'; 'Wild'; 'Fantasia']

GROUP III: bb.57 – 84 ['Rigid; military'; 'Broad']

GROUP IV: bb.85 – 113 ['Fantasia'; 'Broad']

GROUP V: bb.145 – end ['Ecstatic']

The work was composed in blocks and shuffled into various formations, rather than written consecutively. Though each structure was composed with a more or less strong sense of linear motion, these "mini-narratives" were cut and repeated throughout the compositional process in order to disrupt their initial logic. This technique is clearly evident in the fragmentation of the structure marked 'Wild' (bb.33 – 47), which is pre-empted by a fragment of itself, bb.8 – 9, prospectively "extracted" from bb.37 – 38.

Case Study Diagram 1

Ratio relationships between structural elements of *Waiting For You*

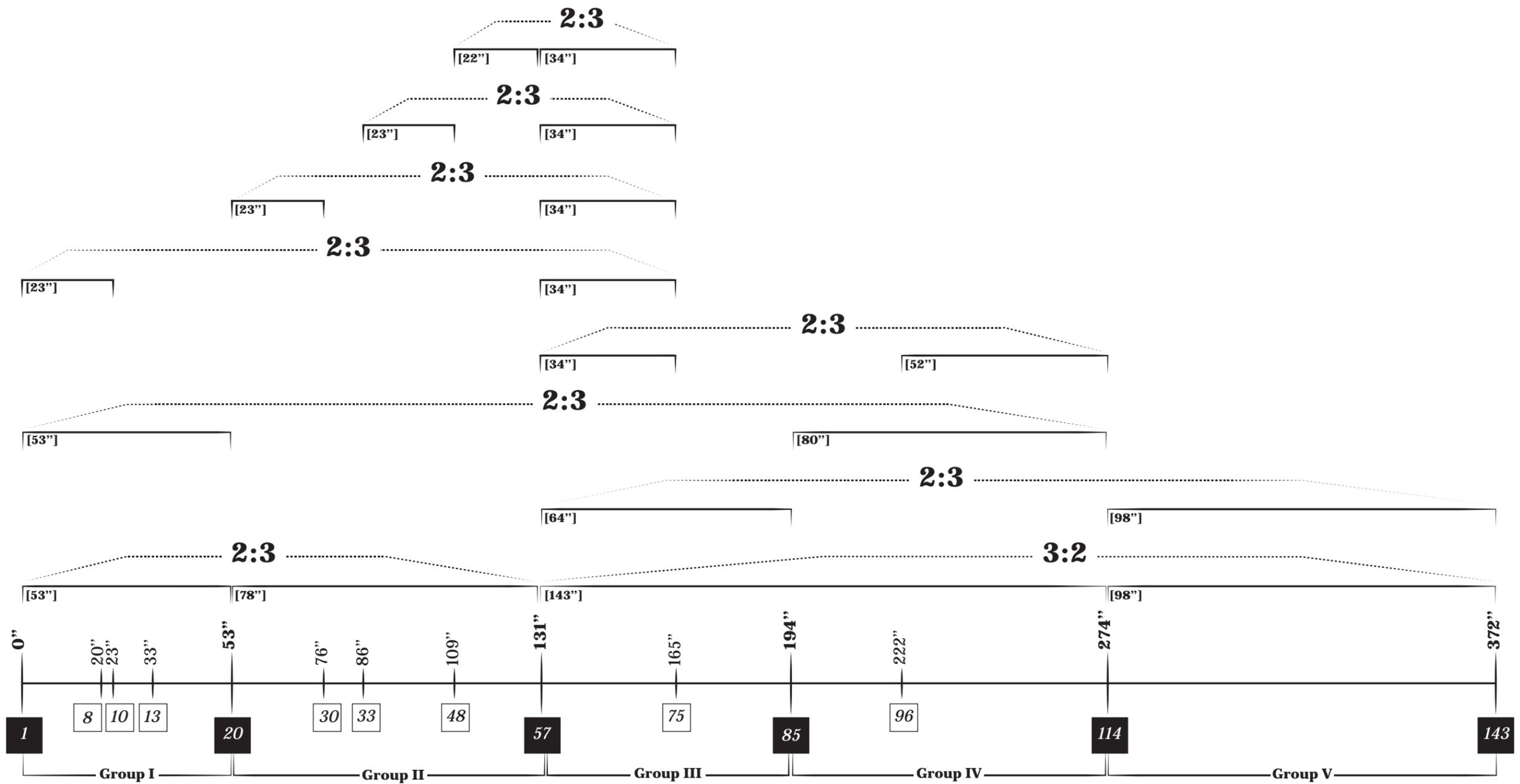
KEY:

Boxed text = bar numbers at the start of each structure

Boxed text (black box) = start of each group (and structure)

32" = 32 seconds

All ratios are between durations in seconds



As the process of composition progressed, these durational proportions became increasingly consistent. When analysed in seconds, the relative lengths of each group, and many of the comprising structures within them, can be expressed as a series of 2:3 ratios. 'Case Study Diagram 1' presents approximate 2:3 ratio relationships between groups and some of the smaller structures within them as defined above.

When composing, the groups identified were divided up according to their topical allusions to beginning and ending, or by thematic associations, rather than by any formalised structural principle. For example, the structures marked 'Florid and Flexible', bb.20 – 29, 'Rigid', bb.57 – 74, and 'Ecstatic', bb.114 – end, all share similar melodic features, all offer a clear, sustained textural break with the preceding material, and are all used to indicate the start of a new group. The ratio-related end result was probably intuitively mapped out as I worked, though its pervasiveness only became clear once the composition was complete.

It should be noted that 'Ecstatic' is the only self-contained structure in the groups indicated. It is actually possible to divide up this final structure into three passages or phrases, bb.114 - 123(2), bb.123(3) - 129(1) and b.129(2) - end; however, these cannot constitute separate structures, as there are no whip strikes to fracture the continuity of the material, unlike previously in the piece. There is also a level of developmental progression between phrases that is not present in consecutive material earlier on: the first phrase sets up a texture which is gradually expanded, without the thematic material changing considerably; the third passage is then an extended, reorchestrated repetition of the second. 'Ecstatic' should feel like an opening to a new group because of its thematic connection to 'Florid and Flexible' and 'Rigid', and because of its clear, sustained textural break with the preceding material.

These compositional and analytical techniques owe a great deal to Stravinsky's *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* (1920, revised 1947) and Kramer's analysis of its proportions. Kramer identifies approximate ratios of 2:3 operating throughout Stravinsky's work.¹² Kramer speculates that these proportions encourage listeners to group together structural sections in a non-linear order, rather than consecutively. My own compositional decisions stem from a similar concern.

Listening from start to finish, *Waiting For You* presents, on one level, a progression from shorter to longer structures (see diagram, p.11): GROUP I relates to GROUP II through the ratio 2:3, and GROUP III relates to GROUP V in the same way, whilst GROUP IV has approximately the same duration as GROUP I, consequently building from GROUP I in the ratio 3:2 (i.e. GROUP IV:GROUP I). In this way, the piece builds up progressively more substantial structural groupings.

However, when combined, GROUP III and GROUP IV present the reverse ratio with respect to GROUP V, shrinking 3: 2, where GROUP V is the shorter. This might initially appear to indicate a parabolic structure, building to a durational

peak between GROUP III and GROUP IV before tailing off in GROUP V to close. This reading is complicated however, by the fact that GROUP IV can be traced back to GROUP I in the ratio 3:2 (i.e. GROUP IV:GROUP I). This effectively means that, from a narrative point of view (understood in terms of temporal syntax), the work simultaneously extends (GROUP I:GROUP IV) and shortens (GROUP III+IV:GROUP V), by the same proportions, the groups from which it is comprised.

This conflict is intensified by the ability of one structure to present identical ratios with multiple other structures, making a sense of linearity hard to follow. For example, the passage marked 'Rigid', bb.57 – 74, is perhaps most readily understood as a development of 'Florid and Flexible', bb.20 – 29, sharing melodic and textural features, and extending the duration in a 3:2 ratio (i.e. Rigid:Florid). However, this progressive narrative is undermined by the fact that 'Rigid' has an equal relationship to 'Wild' and 'Fantasia' (bb.33 – 47 and 48 – 56, respectively). By establishing consecutive identical ratio relationships with three of the four structures in GROUP II, 'Rigid' divides the structural grouping, making problematic the previous cohesion which allowed the 2:3 ratio to be heard between GROUP I and GROUP II.

Even so, in the absence of thematic and structural linearity, voice leading between structures in *Waiting For You* retains a high degree of harmonic continuity. This has the effect of drawing to attention the discontinuity already discussed. The diagrams overleaf show how this voice leading is realised. An annotated score, from bb.7 – 10, is also given following the diagrams. Chords are numbered and colour coded to distinguish their functional (red) or auxiliary (blue) status.

'Case Study Diagram 2' shows a two-stave reduction of the last chord of b.7 to the first chord of b.8, and the last chord of b.9 to the first chord of b.10 – in other words, the joining progressions between 'Fantasia', 'Wild' and 'Broad', making up part of GROUP I. Though texturally and thematically separate, the structures share a general harmonic shift from fifths on B-flat, to fifths on A-natural, ending with an auxiliary G-natural, which forms a tritone with the C-sharps immediately preceding and following it (bb.9 - 10). The B/F-sharp dyad (b.7) can be considered an auxiliary also, partly due to its brevity, and partly owing to its context, sandwiched between instances of the B-flat/F-natural dyad. Note also that pitches played by the xylophone in bb.8 and 9, whilst highlighted in the annotated score, have been omitted from the diagrams below, given that the notes are all octave colourations of pitches played by other instruments.

'Case Study Diagram 3' indicates an implied stepwise descent from B-flat to G-natural, followed by a leap of a tritone to C-sharp. The bracketed G-natural in Diagram 3 does not in fact appear in the register indicated until the final rendition of the 'Broad' material, bb.96 – 103, when the pitch is stressed by horns and violas in b.99, together with C-sharps in the bass.

This effectively completes a symmetrical voice leading pattern between G and G, split evenly by C-sharp. In this way, harmonic continuities are set up not only between adjacent structures but also between structures further apart.

The overall form of *Waiting For You* is thus intended to accommodate linear propulsion, in a dramatic context that denies the necessary tensions and resolutions required for such a narrative, largely through the presence of the conflicting linearities identified above. In other words, my aim was to develop a work that corresponded with my definition of multi-linearity, in which “several perceivable interleaved narratives are present simultaneously”.

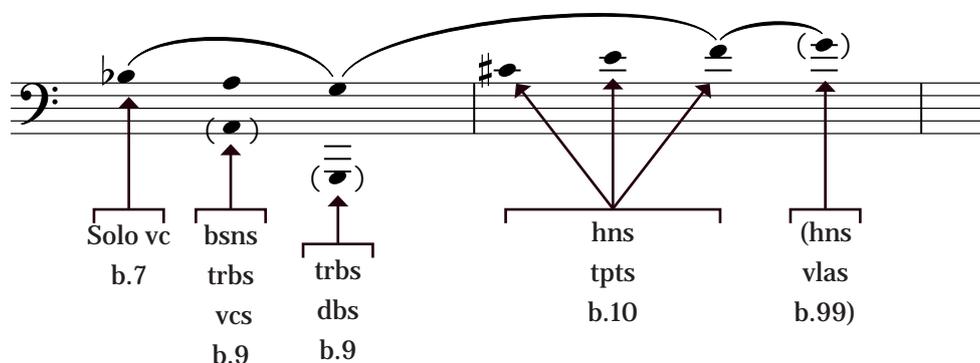
Case Study Diagram 2

Showing joining progressions between b.7, 8 and 9 in GROUP I



Case Study Diagram 3

Showing implied stepwise descent between b.7, 8 and 9 in GROUP I

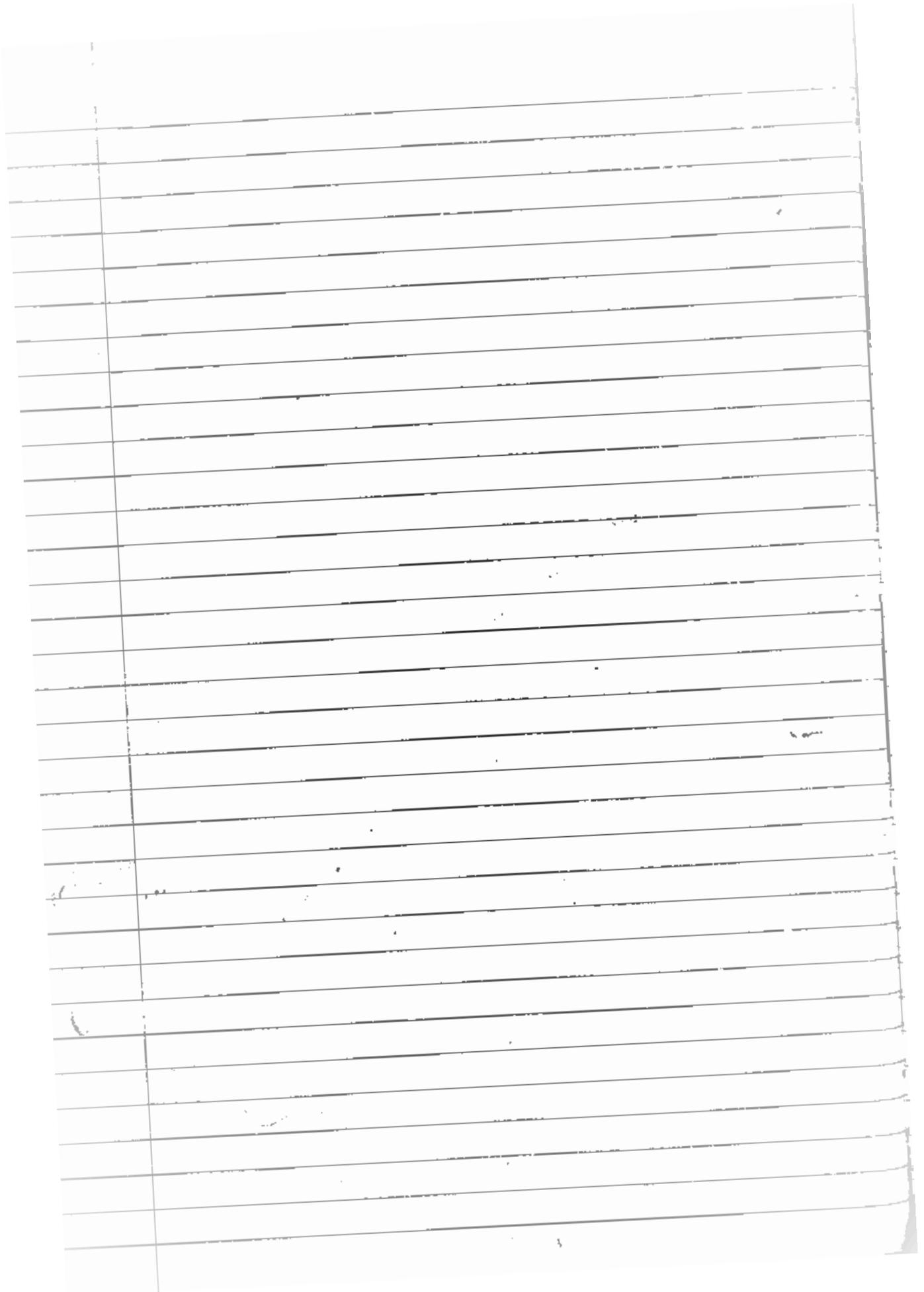


ANALYTICAL SKETCHBOOK

Some reflections on Dance Form
and Three Cubist Portraits

Non-linear and
multi-linear

Non-linear



CONTENTS

Listening to Love 7	IV
Drawings on Dance Form	VI
Reflections on Three Cubist Portraits	(VIII - XVIII)
Scherzo Fratturato / Adagio Automatico	VIII
Allegro Cristallo	XII

IV • Analytical Sketchbook

As I write this, I am listening to *Love 7* (2005) by AFX (moniker of musician Richard D. James):

This is something with no need to move forwards, more like a repository for beat patterns than a developing organism — an architectural container for layered musical objects. Strangely, it calls to mind Messiaen's *Quatuor pour le fin de temps* (1942) — in the first movement, *Liturgie de cristal*, Messiaen leaves the players revolving around a metric pattern in the piano; free layers of bird song in the violin and clarinet; a plaintive melody in the cello.

Love 7 is a kind of kit for music-making. James adds and subtracts layers to show different possibilities within his system, giving the impression that everything is already there before he begins, and that *Love 7* is simply one of a range of possible architectures available.

Composed with these ideas in mind, my piece *Dance Form* (CD1 T5) is roughly five minutes of the same contrapuntal material distributed variously between four instruments (flute, trombone, violin and violoncello). *Dance Form* can be understood as a non-linear work: the music is static, anti-developmental, presenting something more like a solid architecture in sound. I imagine that I could write this piece with a different pattern between the four voices, and still preserve the identity of the work.

Dance Form is equally indebted to the repetitive cycles of Reich. His *Music for 18 Musicians* (1976) runs for over 50 minutes, weaving a series of energetic, interlocking beat patterns. Both Reich and James demonstrate that general stasis doesn't have to be achieved through static music; sound can hurry nowhere, like a spinning top whirring on the spot. (See opposite for NOTE 1)

The drawings overleaf engage with *Dance Form* on the terms laid out above: as a static structure that exists in time but that does not actively mark its progression from one moment to the next. Regarding musical repetition and variation, the composer Bryn Harrison suggests, 'listening to music can give us the experience of a visceral or even tactile dimension of time that is not possible through mere speculation or pure theoretical discourse.' (See opposite for NOTE 2). My drawings attempt to capture something of this "tactile" quality of music in a fresh medium.

LISTENING TO LOVE 7:

1" bouncing beat: synth beat and counter beat
in higher square lead sound

34" sustained chord starts up, changing very
little

54" hi-hat samples kick in

1'00" reverbed voice adds a new emphasis

1'27" reduction of layers, decrease in density

1'42" only voice, plus clapping sound, plus that
sustained chord

1'55" just the opening beats (or something
reminiscent)

2'19" strong beat pattern back

2'34" voice reverb back, chords gone

2'54" granulated glissandi moving downwards

3'20" all layers heard so far are now sounding
together in polyphony

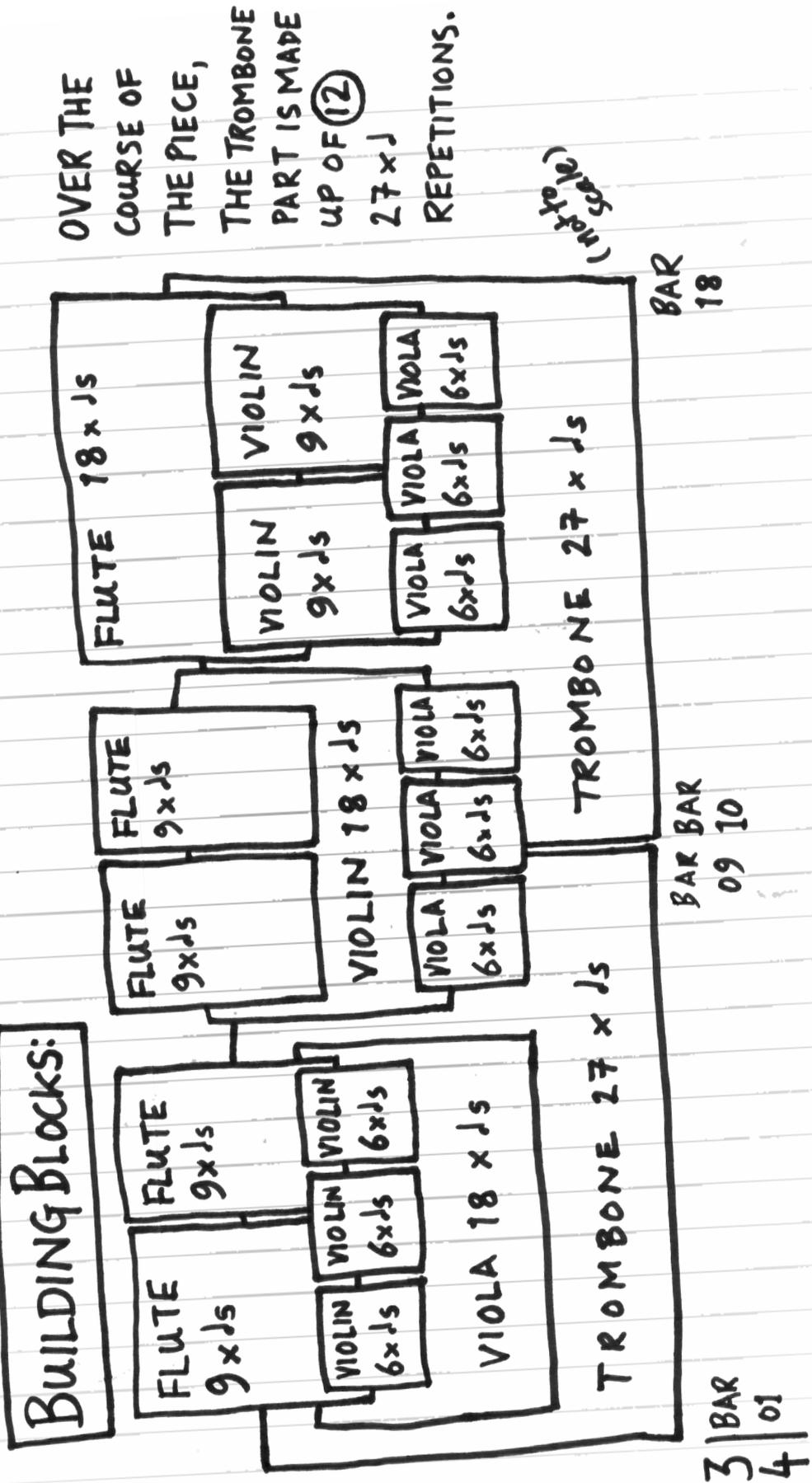
4'00" glissandi have stopped

4'16" the voices have dropped out

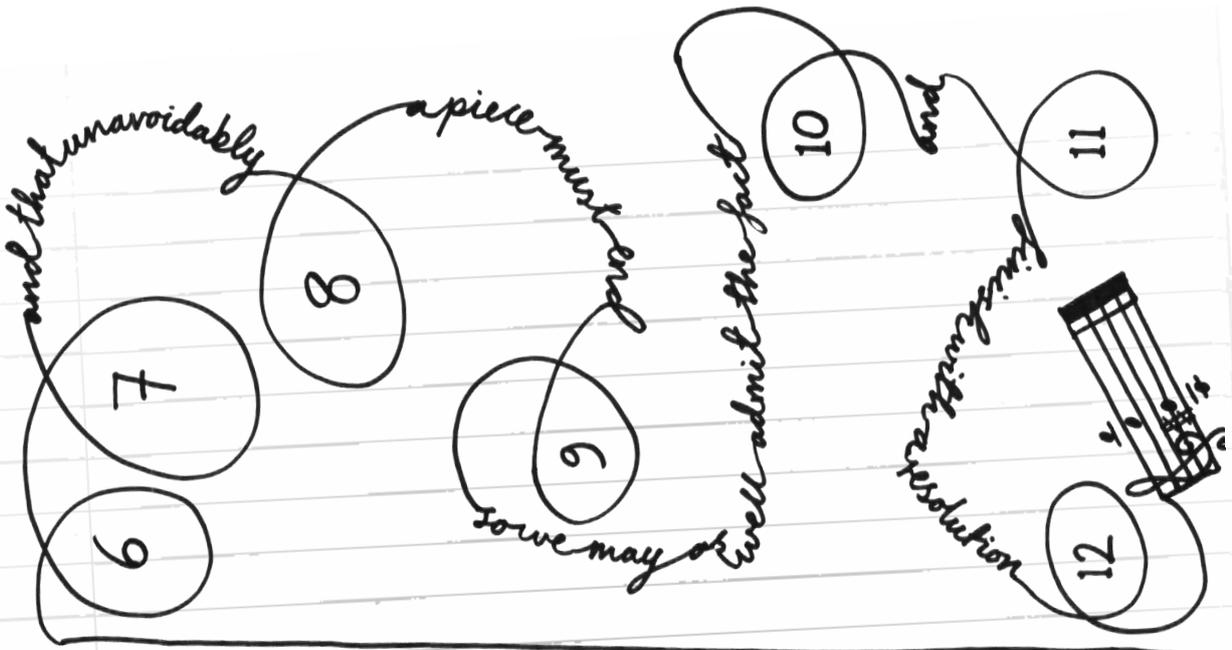
4'46" the track ends

NOTE 1: Bryn Harrison notes a similar tendency in the visual work of artist Bridget Riley, suggesting, 'repetition is at the root of both movement and stasis.' (Harrison, B., 'Cyclical structures and the organisation of Time' (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Huddersfield, 2007), p.4)

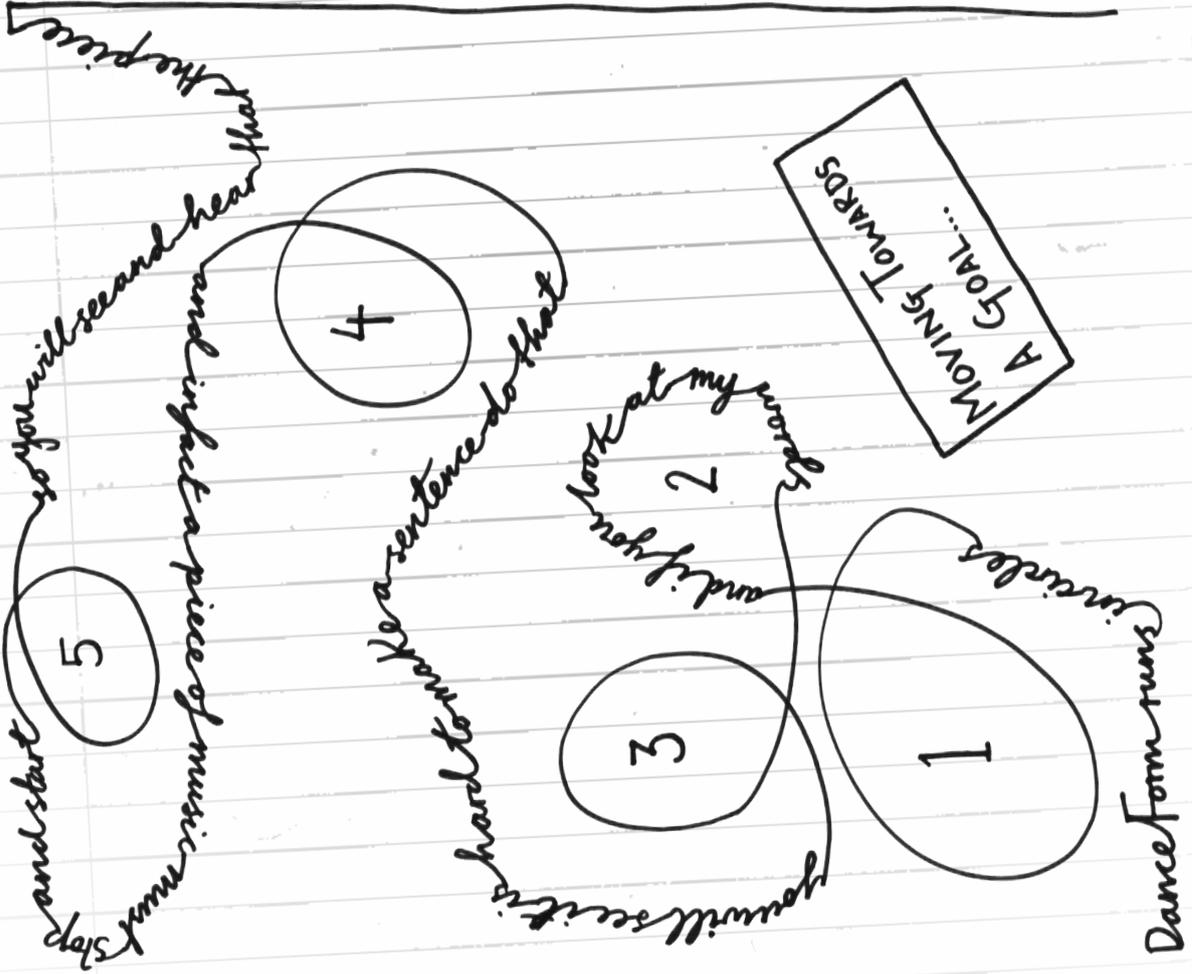
NOTE 2: Ibid., pp.1 - 2



OVER THE COURSE OF THE PIECE, THE TROMBONE PART IS MADE UP OF 12 27xJ REPETITIONS.



IS CUT THROUGH WITH INTERJECTIONS IN A MAJOR WHERE THE HARMONIES ALIGN SAVE FOR THE TROMBONE WHICH OBSTINATELY PLAYS C NATURALS A N D ALL THIS IS TO SHOW THE FACT THAT ONE GESTURE MUST FOLLOW ANOTHER I N TIME



REFLECTIONS ON THREE CUBIST PORTRAITS:

Scherzo Fratturato: movement 1

This opening movement will not be discussed here in detail, owing to its clarity and brevity. The collage of independent voices throughout, and the mechanical cycling of the section marked 'rigidly metronomic', is designed to set the stage for more detailed explorations of non-linearity (movement 2) and multi-linearity (movement 3) to come.

Adagio Automatico: movement 2

Movement 2 uses a slowly unfolding harmonic progression, shared between alto flute and bass clarinet. The sequence of chords is extended throughout the movement until five different tetrachords have been sounded (F-sharp/ C / D/ A-flat; D-sharp/ B/ F/ A; D/ G-sharp/ B-flat/ E; C/ D/ G/ E; A-flat/ C/ F/ E-flat). The oboe rides over the top of this framework, playing from an entirely separate harmonic structure based on a tetrachord (E-flat, G-flat, B-flat, D-flat), adding further pitches as the movement progresses (E, G, C, A, B). Generally speaking, the oboe plays notes that are not currently heard in the other parts, allowing it to retain a degree of harmonic independence, in addition to its rhythmic and registral dissociation from the rest of the trio. To reinforce the invariance of the movement as a whole, the oboe melody is made from repeating blocks in variation (i.e. bb.39 - 40, 47 - 48, 55 - 56, 72 and 73 share rhythmic and melodic features).

The following commentaries offer some vantage points on the structure of the Adagio through verbal and visual deconstruction. The analyses are intended to review the movement in terms of its narrative qualities. As a result, they employ similar non-linear strategies to order their materials. The music repeatedly doubles back on itself harmonically and rhythmically, so the interpretations below emulate this repetitiousness in a variety of ways.

Block structure of movement 2, *Three Cubist Portraits*

One number/letter = one quaver beat

Introduction - bb.1 - 18

1 1 1 1 R R 1 1 1 1 R R 1 1 1 1 R R 1 1 1 1 R R 2 2 2 2 R R 2 2 2 2 R R R R 3 3 3 3 R R R R
 2 2 2 2 R R 2 2 2 2 R R 1 1 1 1 1 1 R

bb.19 - 31 (with repeat)

R R 1 1 1 1 R R 1 1 1 1 R R 1 1 1 1 R R R R R R 2 2 2 2 R R R R 2 2 2 2 R R R R 3 3 3 3 R R R R 2 2 2 2 2 2 R
 R R 1 1 1 1 R R 1 1 1 1 R R 1 1 1 1 R R R R R R 2 2 2 2 R R R R 2 2 2 2 R R R R 3 3 3 3 R R R R 2 2 2 2 2 2 R

bb.32 - 44 (with repeat)

R R 2 2 2 2 R 1 1 1 1 R R 1 1 1 1 R R 1 1 1 1 R R 1 1 1 1 R R 2 2 2 2 R R R R 2 2 2 2 R R R R 2 2 2 2 R R
 R R 2 2 2 2 R 1 1 1 1 R R 1 1 1 1 R R 1 1 1 1 R R 1 1 1 1 R R 2 2 2 2 R R R R 2 2 2 2 R R R R 2 2 2 2 R R R R

bb.45 - 55

R 3 3 3 3 R R R R 3 3 3 3 R R 4 4 4 4 R R R R 4 4 4 4 R R R R 3 3 3 3 R R R R 3 3 3 3 R R 3 3 3 3

bb.56 - 62 (with repeat)

R 3 3 3 3 R 2 2 2 2 R R R R 2 2 2 2 R R 2 2 2 2 R R 2 2 2 2 R R
 R 3 3 3 3 R 2 2 2 2 R R R R 2 2 2 2 R R 2 2 2 2 R R 2 2 2 2 R R

bb.63 - 85(end)

R 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 R R 1 1 1 1 R R 1 1 1 1 R R 2 2 2 2 R R 2 2 2 2 R R 2 2 2 2 R R 2 2 2 2 R R 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3
 R R 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 R 4 4 4 4 R 4 4 4 4 R R 5 5 R R 5 5 R R 5 5 R R R R R R R R R R

NB/ IF read aloud, bracketed words should be spoken quietly and expressionlessly.

ADAGIO AUTOMATICO: VERBAL COMMENTARY

One word = one sounding quaver

One bracketed word = group of rests

This smooth flat sound (is).

Bar 1

This smooth flat sound (it) -

This smooth flat sound.

(Is) a smooth flat sound (it) -

Sound is tightly wound (this) -

Smooth sound it is tightly wound.

(Now)

Bar 10

Cut above the ears (it) -

Bar 11

Cut above the ears

(This) sound is tightly wound (this) -

Sound is tightly wound

(Is) a smooth flat sound tightly wound.

(Is) this a smooth sound (it) -

Is a smooth sound (it) -

This smooth flat sound

(This) sound is tightly wound.

(This) sound is tightly wound.

(Is) cut above the ears (this) -

Is a smooth sound tightly wound? (It) -

Bar 18

REPEAT

(Is) this a smooth sound (it) - Bar 19
 Is a smooth sound (it) -
 This smooth flat sound
 (This) sound is tightly wound.
 (This) sound is tightly wound.
 (Is) cut above the ears (this) -
 Is a smooth sound tightly wound? (It) - Bar 31

REPEAT

(Is) a sound tightly wound (it) - Bar 32
 Smooth flat sound is.
 (This) is smooth flat sound (it) -
 Is a smooth sound (is) -
 This sound it is a smooth flat sound (it) -
 Sound is tightly wound (is).
 Sound is tightly wound.
 (This) sound is tightly wound. Bar 43

(A) cut above the ears (this) - Bar 44
 Cut above the ears (this) -
 Close crop print copy is.
 Close crop print copy (it) -
 Cut above the ears (it) -
 Cut above the ears (a) -
 Cut above the ears (is). Bar 54

REPEAT

Cut above the ears (a) - Bar 55
 Sound is tightly wound.
 (This) sound is tightly wound (it) -
 This sound it is tightly wound (is). Bar 61

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This is a smooth flat sound (is it) -

Bar 62

A smooth flat sound (it) -

Smooth flat sound is (it) -

Sound is tightly wound (a) -

Sound is tightly wound.

(This) sound is tightly wound (it) -

Sound is tightly wound (a) -

Cut above the ears

Cut above the ears (is).

Cut above the ears

Cut above the ears (is)

Close crop (a) -

Print copy (is) -

Close crop (a) -

Finished product (a) -

Finished product (is) -

Finished product (is) -

(It)

Bar 84 (end)

Allegro Cristallo: movement 3

Movement 3 is playable as a standalone piece and is the most substantial of the set. It can be imagined as a complex of set building blocks, locked together in a multi-linear structure. In practice, each type of material is subtly altered, intuitively, during the piece. Nonetheless, it is possible to categorise the "pure" forms as follows. Whilst some of the materials shown do not feature exactly in the movement, their derivatives can all be found in the music.

ALLEGRO CRISTALLO: PURE FORMS

Allegretto ♩ = 63

Picc
ff
Ob
ff
Cl
ff

Picc
p
ff
Ob
p
ff
Cl
p
ff

FRAMING MATERIAL:

A fanfare to open and close *Allegro Cristallo*. This material does not appear anywhere in the main body of the movement. Neither does this pure form appear at any point; instead, two versions are dovetailed around b.5, whilst the final statement omits the first 3 crotchets and doubles durations in the final triplet figure.

Bar numbers: 1 - 4 | 5 - 9 | 151 - 156

Allegretto ♩ = 63

Fl.
mf
Ob
sfz
Cl
mf sfz
sfz

CHIMING MULTIPHONICS:

A hyperactive exchange combining multiphonics in oboe and clarinet with trills in the flute. The pure form appears first bb. 22 - 25; other versions are truncated or combined.

Bar numbers: 10 - 12 | 22 - 25 | 26 - 28 | 43 - 45 | 72 - 75 | 82 - 84

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Allegro ♩=72

pp

sfz

pp

BACH'S PRELUDE:

An excerpt from the opening bars of J. S. Bach's E-flat major Prelude, from The Well-Tempered Keyboard, BWV 852. This pure form is preserved throughout, save for instrumentation.

Bar numbers: 13 - 16 | 39 - 42 | 52 - 55

Allegro ♩=72

Fl. *f*

Ob. *f sonore*

Cl. *f sonore*

COUNTERPOINT:

A dense contrapuntal bundle between all three instruments. The pure form first appears bb. 29 - 33(1). Generally used in groupings of two.

Bar numbers: 17 - 21 | 29 - 33(1) | 33(2) - 38 | 63 - 71

Allegro ♩=72

Picc
ff

Ob
ff

Cl
ff

FANFARE:

A fanfare which acts as a replacement for the opening frame gesture, gradually establishing itself from b. 46 onwards. The pure form is heard with a repeat, which has an extended final ascent (i.e. bb. 50(2) - 51).

Bar numbers: 46 - 48(1) | 48(2) - 51 | 76 - 81 | 107 - 112

Allegretto ♩=63

Fl
p sfz mp sfz

Ob
p mp

Cl
p mp

INTERLOCKING CYCLES:

A pattern of interlocking phrases played by each instrument. This pure form is, in reality, an extract of a larger process moving towards a coincidence of phrase lengths lasting 10 crotchets (Flute), 6 crotchets (oboe) and 4 crotchets (clarinet). Some passages begin together, others are interrupted but coincidence is not reached until b. 115. This initiates a decrescendo until the framing material re-enters b. 151, and the piece ends. The pure form is defined by the length of the flute phrase.

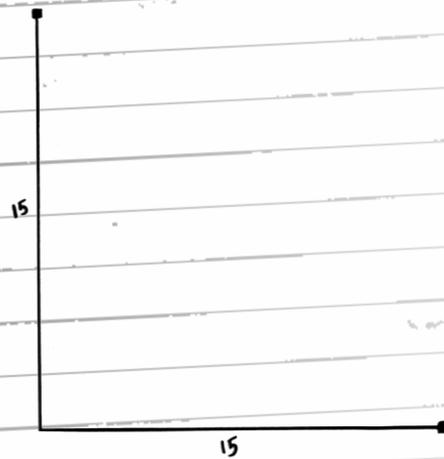
Bar numbers: Composite versions heard 56 - 62 | 85 - 106 | 113 - 150

GEOMETRY: When reviewing the structure of *Allegro Cristallo* in light of the "pure form" materials above, I found that, rather than drawing out the structure as a series of consecutive stanzas, it was possible to think of the movement as a gradually evolving physical space, which proliferates in a multi-linear pattern.

Each line in the diagrams below denotes one version of the material indicated adjacent, defined in relation to the pure forms shown above. Numbers show the length of the material in crotchets, rounded down to a whole number, and approximated to an imaginary 2-D or 3-D polygon (some of the resultant shapes are in fact impossible in physical reality). This allows the conceptual space and pattern of development (if any) to be illustrated more clearly.

FRAMING MATERIAL

Bars 1 - 4 AND 5 - 9



CHIMING MULTIPHONICS/

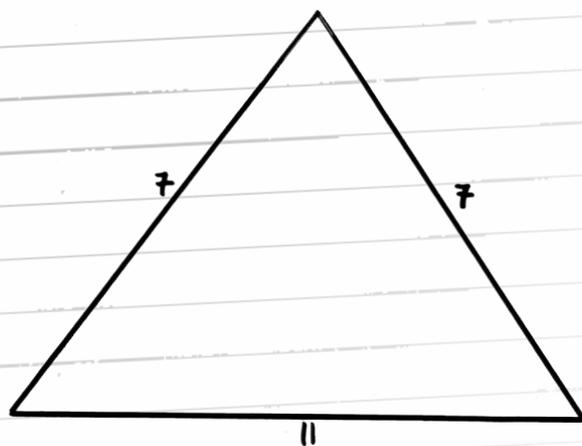
Bars 10 - 12 (7 crotchets)

BACH'S PRELUDE/

Bars 13 - 16 (7 crotchets, final quaver rest omitted)

COUNTERPOINT

Bars 17 - 21 (11 crotchets, final extra quaver omitted)



CHIMING MULTIPHONICS/

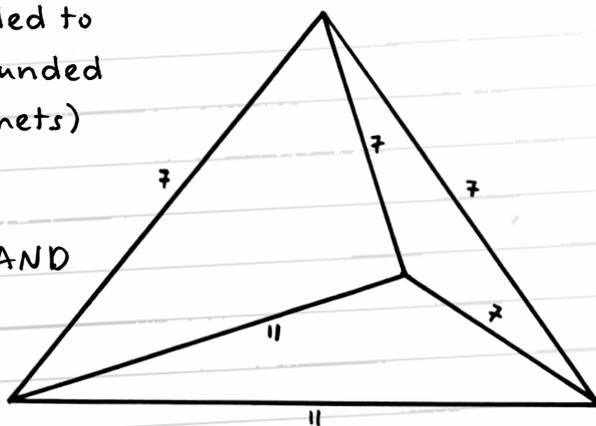
Bars 22 - 25 (8 crotchets rounded to 7) AND 26 - 28 (6 crotchets rounded to 7) AND bb.43 - 45 (7 crotchets)

COUNTERPOINT/

Bars 29 - 33(1) (11 crotchets) AND 33(2) - 38 (11 crotchets)

BACH'S PRELUDE

Bars 39 - 42 (7 crotchets, final quaver rest omitted)



FANFARE/

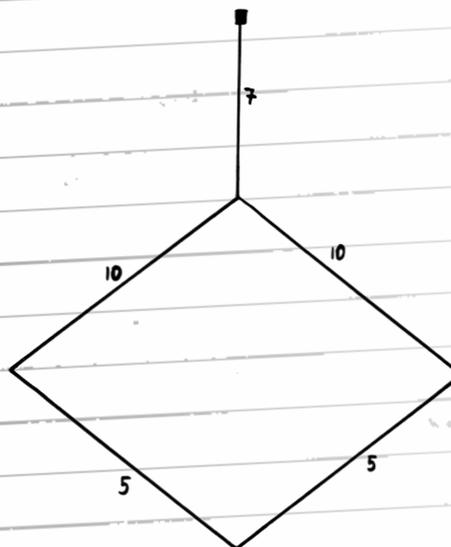
Bars 46 - 48 (1) (5 crotchets) and 48(2) - 51 (5 crotchets, extended statement simplified)

BACH'S PRELUDE/

Bars 52 - 55 (7 crotchets)

INTERLOCKING CYCLES

Bars 56 - 58(2) (10 crotchets) AND 58(3) - 60 (10 crotchets) (final partial rendition omitted, bb.61 - 62)



COUNTERPOINT/

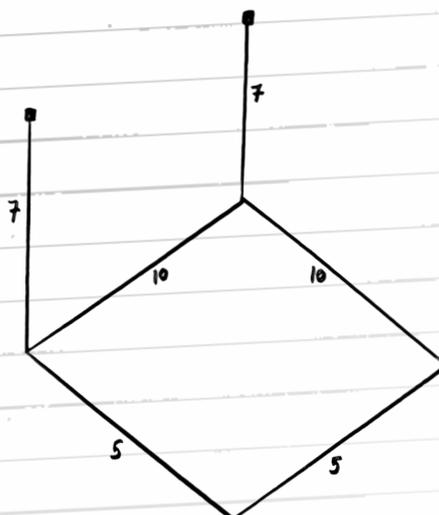
Bars 63 - 66(1) (9 crotchets rounded to 10) AND 66(2) - 71 (11 crotchets rounded to 10, omitting final quaver)

CHIMING MULTIPHONICS/

Bars 72 - 75 (7 crotchets, omitting final quaver rest) AND 82 - 84 (6 crotchets rounded to 7)

FANFARE

Bars 76 - 78(1) (5 crotchets) AND 78(2) - 81 (7 crotchets rounded to 5)

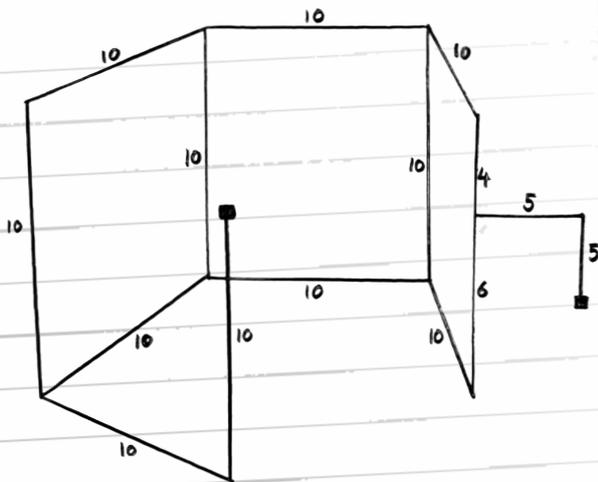


INTERLOCKING CYCLES/

Bars 85 - 89; 90 - 94; 95 - 99;
100 - 104 (10 crotchets each) AND
split between 105 - 106 + 114 - 115 (4
+ 6 crotchets) AND 116 - 120; 121 -
125; 126 - 130; 131 - 135; 136 - 140;
141 - 145; 146 - 150 (10 crotchets
each)

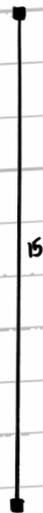
FANFARE

Bars 107 - 109(1) (5 crotchets) AND
109(2) - 112 (7 crotchets omitting
final quaver rest, rounded to 5)



FRAMING MATERIAL

Bars 151 - 156 (end) (14.75
crotchets including final crotchet
rest, rounded to 15)



Chapter 2

PROCESS/PRODUCT

(Non-Narrative)

The following section explores what I have termed “non-narratives”: structures that take an interdisciplinary approach, being expressed through non-temporal media, in addition to their more “musical” characteristics. These works are also deconstructions of compositional process, opening out their form through a play between media. As such, they represent a means for engaging in an embedded process of review, moving towards a deconstructed notion of the “work” and corresponding research “knowledge”.



The discussion below is constructed as a patchwork of connected statements, each with a separate subtitle. The statements themselves can be categorised usefully into the following four groupings, which recur throughout the chapter: research methodology and my compositional process for this strand of the enquiry; theoretical context, including a range of standalone quotations punctuating the text; conclusions; and non-narrative works I have composed. The chart given overleaf identifies how segments might be considered under each grouping, providing the relevant page number. It will be noticed that some subheadings are split between several different categories, indicating that discussions surrounding a particular musical work will be used to illustrate different topics at different points in the chapter. The given order of segments throughout the chapter following is designed to allow more lateral, literal connections to be made between the statements than would be possible in a purely linear presentation. However, the chart is intended to clarify possible connections between disparate segments so that readers will be able to engage with topics in isolation if desired.

Artworks as Analysis

With regards to this research project on deconstructed narratives, works like *Waiting For You* have a problem: their syntax is not a widely standardized language. The best that can be managed in terms of deconstructed narratives is a series of crude (not necessarily aesthetically ineffective) juxtapositions. This is because there is not a definite frame of reference for listeners, there is no generally agreed syntactical or performance convention that has been deconstructed. On the other

Chart of Connections Between Segments in Chapter Two

PAGE NO.	METHOD/PROCESS	CONTEXT	WORKS	CONCLUSIONS	
19	Artworks as Analysis				
20	(Chart of Connections)				
21	Artworks as Analysis (ctd.) (Quotation: p.24 John Cage)				
22					
23					
24		Deconstructed Everything (Quotation: p.26 David George)			
25					
26			Collages and Soundtracks	Read Aloud	
27	Collectives and Curiosities	Quotation: Salomé Voegelin			
28		Action and Reflection (Quotation: p.30 Robin Nelson)			
29	Viola Fragments				
30					
31			Notes from a Meeting		
32					
33		Source Points			
34	Viola Fragments				
35					
36				Viola Fragments	
37					
38			Minor Analysis		
39					Viola Fragments
40		Sound in Other Media			
41			Songmaking		
42			Verbatim		
43	Verbatim Collage				
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hand, my compositions like *Ludwig in the Room*, *Meeresstille: A Recollection* (see Chapter Three) and *Rhizome* (see *Collages and Soundtracks*) are deconstructions of music other than themselves. *Rhizome* draws on my own compositions and those of my Collectives and Curiosities¹ collaborators; *Meeresstille: A Recollection* reimagines a Schubert leid.

It is not important that listeners recognise all (or any) of the allusions to Beethoven or Schubert, or to the work of my contemporaries; instead, I hope that they will identify elements of the familiar (tonal harmony or classical instrumentation perhaps) represented in an unfamiliar context, or that there is a combination of disparate elements. In effect, these pieces offer deconstructions of existing unities. The interaction of these layers not only provides ample scope for creating the kinds of multi-linear and non-linear narratives essential to the temporal strand of my enquiry (see Chapter One); it also engages with the possibility that one artwork might reflect upon another. In the context of a research project, this raises the question: which elements should be considered as artworks and which should be cast as reflections? On top of this, we should ask: if analyses are understood as creative works, approached actively by the initial creator and subsequent participants (listeners/readers/viewers), how much does the presence of different individuals affect the character and aesthetic of analytical investigation?

Robin Nelson comments, ‘If knowledge in...performance practices is like the “knowhow” of riding a bicycle and incommunicable in words but disseminable through a process of workshop education (in the etymological sense of *e-ducere* “leading through” to knowledge), then practice-as-research practices begin to meet acceptable criteria for research which approximate to scientific and scholarly investigation.’² In the context of composition-as-research, this can be interpreted to mean that the works themselves constitute the research outcomes and processes. The scores, recordings, derivative works, live performances, and curated combinations, provide a means for investigating the questions posed, at the same time as being a result, or product of that investigation. The emphasis on “leading through” can cast scores as inviting interaction, so that a reader/listener/viewer must engage with the work on “home territory” as it were (sound through sound, writing through writing, image through image), in order to enjoy its full possibilities.

This idea suggests the possibility of a truly creative investigation on all levels. It is necessary, of course, to acknowledge to some extent Nelson’s cautionary note that ‘although an arts practice or artwork may stand alone as evidence of a research outcome, it may be helpful, particularly in an academic institutional context where much rides on judgements made about researchworthiness, for other

evidence to be adduced'.³ My response has been to engage in a process of curation (live performance and installation, as well as through the collection of works and media evidenced through this portfolio) as a means of providing commentaries that employ many of the same creative aims as the works on which they claim to comment, even though they may be articulated through a different form of media. Even this written commentary is itself a work contributing to my portfolio, in parallel with its status as a document of the works to which it refers.⁴

Approaching my research as an integrated process of action and reflection has helped me to tackle the difficulty of pinpointing the knowledge-value of the project. John Paynter argues that musical performance, once written and theorised on becomes '...information... transformed into essential knowledge which, although it may be interesting in itself, has nothing directly to do with what is experienced. Rather it appears to suggest that in spite of all the careful artifice of those who labour to create it and present it, *music has to be explained*.'⁵ Paynter's criticism is a reaction to musicological and critical practices that seek to explicate music — to eradicate (or at least diminish) the presence of doubt in the process of making. Those doubts might be connected with reservations about aesthetics, authenticity to the composer's intentions, technical proficiency of composers and performers, intellectual and emotional reception, and so on. Such critical approaches fall under what Joseph Kerman dubs "positivistic musicology".⁶ Paynter's dissatisfaction is with positivistic music education (and by extension the underlying analytical and critical philosophy) that seeks to engage with musical performance and works only (or principally) as tangible literary entities; whether as score-based works, or through textual critiques formed after the musical event itself. I hope that positioning the score, and my understanding of it as the composer, as part of a complex of features (materials and concepts) which make up a performance-experience, has allowed me to avoid this oversight. I am using composition as a research method because I believe it is most appropriate to the kinds of narrative investigations I have proposed.

More broadly, I have chosen creative approaches to engaging with my work (i.e. those that are not grounded in traditional scientific rationalism) because I believe the arts cannot (indeed should not) be reduced to a series of quantifiable attributes. Such a research procedure is not only damaging to the reader/listener/viewer, it is also limiting for the practitioner, who can easily become fixated on measurables at the expense of the unquantifiable process of interaction everyone expects from the arts. Writing about creativity in education, Ken Robinson says, 'Creative insights often come in non-linear ways, through seeing connections and similarities between things we hadn't noticed before. Creative thinking depends greatly on

what's sometimes called divergent or lateral thinking, and especially on thinking in metaphors or seeing analogies.⁷ Robinson's equation of creativity with non-linearity is intriguing for a research project such as this, which aims to investigate deformations and suppressions of linear musical narrative.

This idea of a non-linear approach can be taken further still. Rose Subotnik undertakes a critique of structural listening, whereby the listener is expected to remain passive and objective in their "contemplation" of the compositional architecture. We might imagine structural listening as representative of a structured, narrative pattern of knowledge dissemination: from-composer-to-score-to-performer-to-listener. Subotnik takes Mikhail Bakhtin's arguments on literature, and applies them to music, arguing that 'structural listening reinforces not active engagement but passivity on the part of the listener, suppressing an inclination to participate in some sort of active dialogue with music.'⁸ Once this participatory urge is licensed through more creative methods of enquiry and presentation, then the passage of knowledge breaks away from the traditional hierarchical arrangement between creator and observer; it exists simultaneously in the experience of all concerned, and is infinitely extendable with each fresh interaction.

In fact, this deconstruction of the authorial narrative (composer-performer-listener, or action-reflection) could be seen as a "non-narrative". That is to say, a process that does not entirely dispense with the traditional roles, but nonetheless makes them openly available for all involved in the process, whatever their ostensible entry point (initiator/recipient). The very act of communication can be understood as a non-narrative art (i.e. not reliant on a clearly defined source or apotheosis), in which the different parties construct and project meaning simultaneously with one another. Jean-François Lyotard puts it thus: 'No one, not even the least privileged among us, is ever entirely powerless over the messages that traverse and position him at the post of sender, addressee, or referent'.⁹

All of this has far reaching consequences for the status of so-called "objective" knowledge generally, not to mention significant political implications relating to *who* knows and *how* they know *what* they know. Much institutionalised research is conducted as though the researcher is generating a commodity that can be "sold" on to would-be "knowers". Process-based (or action-) research is a direct challenge to this kind of product, operating instead in a grey area between action and reflection, blending together the carrying out of research and its dissemination. The responsibility of the researcher is thus shifted from producing a sealed (hopefully unassailable) product, to providing a means for others to engage in a process of open-ended investigation. This has a direct parallel in the life of the composer (who I would argue is not fundamentally different from a self-styled researcher

in any case), who has a balance to make between products that have some level of predictability in their delivery, and the creative process, which must be accessible to others wishing to contribute (i.e. perform, listen, look, review).

JOHN CAGE: 'AND WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF WRITING MUSIC?...A PURPOSELESS PLAY...NOT AN ATTEMPT TO BRING ORDER OUT OF CHAOS...BUT SIMPLY A WAY OF WAKING UP TO THE VERY LIFE WE'RE LIVING'.¹⁰

If creative practice can be used to conduct research, it would seem equally true to say that research can be creative practice. These are in fact slightly different statements: the first suggests that knowledge production can be facilitated through creative means; whilst the second implies further that knowledge production is itself a creative process, one that therefore shares all the same inconsistencies, confusions and unexpected enjoyments encountered in the making of artworks. An analogy might be to say that eating does not simply have the result of making one less hungry; it *is* the act of making oneself less hungry. The action cannot be separated out from the result, except in an abstract realm.

Deconstructed Everything

Christopher Small recasts the word “music” as a verb, challenging what he regards as a reification of what is essentially *praxis* — a theory-making process of continuation and creation.¹¹ This corresponds with Barthes’ approach to language and “Texts” — in his usage an uncontextualised practice of signifying without a singular determined “signified”, i.e. open to interpretation.¹² This project can be regarded in the Barthian sense as a Text, through which readers/writers are encouraged (hopefully empowered) to develop meaning — “to mean”.¹³ Not only to project external ideas (for that would render this entire project superfluous) but to delve into the practicalities made possible by the combination of words, music and images. In the case of collections like *Collages and Soundtracks*, the interpretative role of audiences and performers is essential to the conceptual fulfilment of the pieces. With regards to works like *Waiting For You* the audience is encouraged to respond actively, though the relationship between the listener’s involvement and the final product is less explicitly articulated than in the case of the graphic scores comprising *Collages*. As such, this project is intended to present the collected works (and sub-collections) in an open manner: as materials to be ordered and re-ordered; to be interpreted and re-interpreted; and, in the case of works that have some claim to autonomy (i.e. *Waiting For You* or *Ludwig in the Room*), misinterpreted. This approach seeks to avoid the problem identified by Barthes through which

interpretation (in Barthes' view a subjective violence) constitutes a 'vice which holds the connoted meanings from proliferating.'¹⁴ Instead, writing (to which we can add "musicking", and even listening and looking) is 'a performative, a rare verbal form (exclusively given in the first person and in the present tense) in which the enunciation has no other content (no other proposition) than the act by which it is uttered...'.¹⁵

Salomé Voegelin draws on Heidegger's theory of the "Thing", to propose an "empirical" objectivity for material sound, which generates itself even as it is observed. Her interpretation of Heidegger's concepts serves here as a useful extension of Barthes' ideas. Voegelin refers to the 'hearing of the material *Unterbau* as its sensorial *Oberbau* without the dialectical differentiation'.¹⁶ Heidegger's terms refer respectively to the materiality of the object (*Unterbau*): its physical presence; and to its active manifestation of its own qualities (*Oberbau*): its "thing-ing", as it is reached and dialogued with in a phenomenological encounter. The resulting erosion of the dialectic between what sound "is" and how it is received (perceived) is thus understood without prejudicing in favour of subject or object. Taken in light of this commentary, any consideration of this text as a verbal representation of the musical works alongside it must also remain aware of how the works are formed through our engagement with them on levels, and contexts, not identified by this text. At the same time, whilst this text is offered in part as evidence of my experiences of the works making up this project, it is also an objective work in its own right, constituted empirically through the reading of it, and subject to the same licenses of interpretation afforded to the musical works it discusses.

It might be most productive to allow for interpretations to occur based simultaneously on *pre*-conceptions and *per*-ceptions — engagements with my works (this text included) that are a contradictory mixture of historical-cultural assumptions about what to expect, structural prescriptions made by one work on another, and experiential judgments in the moment of listening, reading or looking. This project is a post-structural game, compiled in turn by structurally closed musical works (like *Waiting For You*) and comparatively open, interdisciplinary pieces (to be discussed below) in combination; and by a parallel non-dualistic participation based variously on semiotic understandings (those rooted in a shared structural "reading") and sensation-based experiences (in the moment; heterogeneous). Certainly, this is the fate of all artworks; my research is an attempt to dissolve any dialectical impulse that might creep in between structuralist and post-structuralist standpoints: the claim to semiotic-structural language made by works like *Waiting For You* is rendered problematic by their presentation alongside works that challenge this rigidity (see *Collages and Soundtracks*, discussed below).

At the same time, my more open scores are, to an extent, “read” and thus made semiotic through my quasi-analytical review in this text. All this is designed to challenge and avoid the forming of dualistic viewpoints on my work (i.e. time/space, read/heard, understood/felt, linear/non-linear) in favour of a deconstructed participation embracing equally the demands of realisation and evaluation made by a research process.

DAVID GEORGE: ‘THE POSTMODERN DEBUNKING OF MODERNIST HIERARCHIES . . . HAS ENABLED PERFORMANCE TO CLAIM ITS PLACE . . . AS THE PRIMARY ONTOLOGY.’¹⁷

Read Aloud: WRITING — HEARING — reVIEWING Music

A spoken introduction delivers experiences on the production of sounds, sonic events, sensory information, signs, sibilance, the passage of words, warped, weakened, woven, when sound, slipping signs, strange noises now, with moving lips, lapping tongue tied tones tremor to tell their tale... Each word a prism, reflecting and refracting itself; each mark leaving an indelible absence of certainty smeared across a page, folded and torn, lodged beside the others, proudly pressed, glowing with definite possibility; stolen, borrowed, remembered some time later, rich in deceit, a junction to wherever, stepping beyond itself, limited by its own body, yet, under constant gaze, peeling away to season another stew.

Writing music is already a cross-sensual experience — a visual, graphical performance of an imagined (or actual) sonic event. To reflect on music is to recall one aspect of that performance, or related performances, and to reform it — not necessarily to improve it, as in the usual sense of the word “reform”, but to replay its performance in another time and place, through a new pair of eyes and ears.

Collages and Soundtracks

This is a compilation publication featuring all of the graphic scores and collage scores included in this portfolio. Both *Viola Fragments* and *Songmaking* are considered below as standalone pieces, so the compilation adds another layer of collection and curation to reinforce the same techniques in the individual scores themselves. Background on the collection is given in the notes to the volume itself.

In addition to the collage and graphic scores selected, *Collages and Soundtracks* includes a selection of electronic ambient works I have produced in the past two to three years. These are intended to be listenable as standalone pieces (*Notes From a Meeting* also appears here as a separate submission), or used as part of a performance of any of the “collages” included. The performance of *Viola Fragments*

COLLECTIVES AND CURIOSITIES

Collectives and Curiosities is a collaborative venture which I have co-directed since November 2011, alongside composers Michael Betteridge and Emma-Ruth Richards. Our work has been predominantly cross-arts, involving dance, film, sculpture and photography, as well as a mixture of acoustic compositions (closed and open forms) and electronic works. Our collaboration has primarily been focused on recycling one another's compositions.

This has extended to our work with visual artists and dancers, who have made interpretations of works we have produced. This process of reinterpretation stems from my research interest in creative practice and review already discussed.

SALOMÉ VOEGELIN: 'CRITICAL THEORY NEEDS TO . . . INVITE TO BE READ IN THE SAME EMBODIED EFFORT AS THE WORK PERCEIVED.'¹⁸

Relevant projects to this portfolio include || : *figure refraction ground* : || (see Chapter Three) and *Mixed Media* (referenced below as part of *Viola Fragments*). The latter project developed a large-scale multi-media process (with a final show on 21 June 2013) exploring connections between media, specifically researching ways in which the different elements could provide vantage points on the creative process. These ideas have undoubtedly found their way into this submission, though this project can only include work developed alone, even if the pieces were presented (and often reimaged) in Collectives and Curiosities performances.

The legacy of my collaborative work, with regards to this submission, has been to illustrate how commentaries might be made on musical works. Research projects are ordinarily understood to articulate themselves through words, even if the primary medium is different (i.e. musical composition). My work as part of Collectives and Curiosities has suggested that verbal articulation does not possess any innate clarity; rather, it is the media distance between music and the tools we use to examine performance and composition that is important. Simply because words are not music, they expand and refresh our perspective on music. Likewise, there seems no reason why film, sculpture, spoken word or any other medium cannot be used to articulate aspects of musical activity. More problematically perhaps, there are ways in which performance can be understood to have an analytical stance on scores, and *vice-versa*, a concept explored in the collected works of *Collages and Soundtracks*. This embodied conception of action and reflection provides insights on artworks that are applicable in both specialist and non-specialist contexts, as combined aesthetic and analytical experiences.

shown on film (DVD1 T1) incorporates the score for that piece combined with *St. Luke's Soundtrack* (see CD3 T3). Many of the gestures and performance choices were determined in collaboration with the player, so the film should only be regarded as one of many possible performances. Likewise, the recording submitted of *Songmaking* (DVD1 T2) only shows one way of performing the piece. Given that the pieces are all potentially standalone or performable in combination, and that the scores are all flexible on their own, and ready to be combined even more freely with the soundtracks, it is impossible to separate out the constituent elements into four or five (or eight) individual pieces for submission. The point is that it is possible to talk about separate incarnations of each collage or soundtrack (as I attempt for *Viola Fragments* and *Songmaking* below) but that there is no definitive “the piece” to be discussed. All this is designed to facilitate exploration of non-narrative (i.e. breaking down the link between cause and effect) relationships between the process of action and reflection, where the stages are enfolded, and cannot be separated. Sylvano Bussotti's map-like graphic scores exist in a similar state. His *La Passion Selon Sade* (1966) explores the physical space of the page as a musical journey, the score being less a direct transposition of Bussotti's musical idea, than it is a map of a listening space constantly in formation.

In some respects, the scores allow for a reversal of the Modernist visualising principle, whereby sound is rendered formal through visual terminology and metaphor.¹⁹ In *Collages and Soundtracks*, the visual landscape (tangible, visible, representational) can be explored through sound (intangible, invisible, experiential). The reverse is still possible, meaning that the collection can be used, shifting from visual to sonic vantage points, to review (re-hear) the possibilities of the complementary media. In this way, the act of analysis is bound into the work itself, and susceptible to subjective treatment in a way that objective analytical judgements seek to avoid.

Action and Reflection

Artists and musicians have long been exploring the idea of simultaneous action and reflection. The heritage extends to Marcel Duchamp, John Cage and Cornelius Cardew; and more latterly to David Toop, Haroon Mirza and Claudia Molitor, amongst others. All these artists deal (or dealt) in a combined process and product, where the way we (and they) interact with their work is consciously invoked as a process of analytical judgement, either through spatially defined works that must be “navigated” (see p.32 for a discussion of Mirza's work in this area), through improvisatory approaches in response to ambiguous notational imagery (i.e.

VIOLA FRAGMENTS

WORK IN PROCESS . . .

My studies below were sent to violist Paul Beckett (October 2012)

Op. 120 (No. 240)
pp cresc. ff dim.
pp f ff
ff pp cresc.
(cresc.) ff

Op. 180 (No. 360)
pp ff
ff
ff
(mf) f ff fff

Op. 40
ff p ff mp f mp ff
mp f
pp

Op. 60
mf cresc. ff
ff dim.
ff dim.
mp cresc. p

Cardew's *Treatise*, 1963 - 1967), or other methods.

Claudia Molitor's *That's not quite how I remember it...* (2012) and David Toop's *Spirit World* (1997) both engage with the means of production as an experience leading to an associated product, which is itself an action — they are residue from explorations (Molitor's of the act of writing things down and hearing them back, Toop's of a field recording expedition along the Amazon), yet they are also artefacts conjuring up their own activities and experiences. This could be said of all music, art and research, yet these artists reflect it consciously in the relationship between their process and the artworks they create.

What makes Molitor's work so exciting for me is her combination of different types of media which can be used to cross reference one another. Molitor refers to herself as “post-disciplinary”, though what interests me about her work is its “inter-disciplinary” quality, the inter-play between mediums which, though related, remain somehow conceptually and experientially differentiated. That balancing trick allows her work to draw attention to itself meaningfully, without refusing the possibility of different interpretations. What once demanded to be called “work”, in homage to a seriousness of intent, has become a “play ground”, a fluctuating centre for activity on or around the aims of Molitor herself.

For Toop, even the act of writing has become a game, eliciting equally strong aesthetic responses as it does intellectual judgements. Simon Reynolds refers to Toop's book *Ocean of Sound*²⁰ as “musicated” writing.²¹ Toop is in part riffing on the perceived opposition between text as specific and sound as ineffable. His written accounts blur these definitions considerably, eroding the specificity of writing and pointing to the physicality of sound.

ROBIN NELSON: 'THERE IS . . . A PLAYFULNESS TO MUCH POST-STRUCTURALIST . . . WRITING WHICH IS . . . ATTRACTIVE TO ARTS PRACTITIONER-RESEARCHERS. THERE IS A DELIBERATE PLAYFULNESS . . . IN OBFUSCATORY WRITING WHICH CONSCIOUSLY DRAWS ATTENTION TO THE PROBLEMATICS OF DISCOURSE . . . FREE PLAY BEYOND RULE-GOVERNED ACTIVITY.'²²

The work of Hildegard Westerkamp approaches the dualism between sound and text from the other side. Her composition *Kit's Beach* (1989) uses field recording, studio processing and even a brief quotation from Xenakis, to weave an ambiguous tapestry ostensibly related to a visit to the eponymous location in Vancouver. In Westerkamp's case, it really is hard to distinguish her composition from a piece of didactic research — her voice narrates the sonic transformations throughout the recording. At the same time, the piece does not accurately fit the concept of review as a process of clarification; Westerkamp's account is highly personal, playful, and ultimately (deliberately) partial.

Notes From a Meeting (CD1 T3)

This piece grew out of a collaboration I undertook in May 2013, working alongside dancer Julie Havelund and filmmaker Belinda Ackermann. The final (submitted) composition went through several transformations, guided principally by the varying contexts for which it was required.

I came to the collaborative process late, at a point when fragments of a film had already been compiled, based on a short improvised dance that Belinda had shot of Julie. Julie's dance was improvised within the confines of an oblong patch of sunlight shining through a window of the Siobhan Davies Dance Studio (London). The resultant images were heavily processed and created a clear opposition between shadows and sunlight. Belinda's film also sampled elements of her work for *Mixed Media*, a Collectives and Curiosities project (see p.27) being developed concurrently. The *Mixed Media* elements were based on film of LSO St Luke's, meaning that the work I was presented with blended footage of two separate locations: the interior of the Siobhan Davies Dance Studio, where Julie had improvised her dance, and the exterior of LSO St. Luke's, inside of which our Collectives and Curiosities project was taking place.

The collaboration followed a playful approach, exploring varying combinations between layers without seeking to attribute formalised connections between the different media. Our initial group discussions centred on the idea of Belinda's work as a "film", both in the sense of its media qualities, and in the literal sense of a transformative layer between the viewer and the dance.

Responding to both film and dance, I selected sounds recorded from Julie's footfalls and (paralleling Belinda's use of St. Luke's footage) samples from my recordings of St. Luke's and the soundtracks I was developing for our Collectives and Curiosities performance. Early versions of *Notes From a Meeting* were built around the chiming sounds featured on *St. Luke's Soundtrack (CD3 T3)*. As the composition developed, these elements dropped out in favour of softer, mid-frequency sounds, reflecting the ambient quality of the imagery in Belinda's film. My intention was to create a piece of music that gave the impression of a daydream, a detached state of consciousness that is nevertheless reflective of the external environment, just as Julie's dance meditated on the space in which she was positioned.

Working together, we expressed the integration of the layers, or lack thereof, as follows:

"Independently conceived movements, images and sounds overlap like translucent layers, a narrative of displaced times and places — a private glint of sunlight, a chattering midday park, a church façade in a cloudy city. *Notes From*

32 • Deconstructed Narratives

a Meeting flickers between these varied times and locations, inspired by notions of density, proximity, abstraction and the possibilities of playful exchanges in the process of making.”²³

As our discussions continued, the sound became a diary (or note book) of the development process, incorporating audio from our planning discussions, Julie’s footfalls whilst dancing, journeys made across parks close to my home in London, as I craved some space to think about the project.

The final film, together with my soundtrack, lasts four minutes exactly. The extended soundtrack version (included in this portfolio) was subsequently created for a live solo dance performance with the same artists. The new dance was to be improvised, so my track was adapted to allow it to be looped by dovetailing the beginning and ending.

Maintaining interest for the greater duration of the new version (08:12) presented two broad compositional problems: the need for greater contrast and depth of “perspective” (i.e. more complex, developing layers of sound), and the possible addition of sounds not featured in the original, to allow greater variation. In some respects, this was manifest through a more traditionally narrative approach: the music unfolds from an opening flute motive, leading through the various themes (children screeching, footsteps, voices, etc.) before returning to an extended version of the flute music at 06:04, leading into a final coda 06:37 - end.

There are even features that work to suspend time in a way similar to *Meeresstille: A Recollection* (Chapter Three) and *Dance Form* (Analytical Sketchbook): the harmony is static throughout; the level of variation is often very subtle; the amount of repetition makes a progression more difficult to identify. However for me, this work is non-narrative: it uses a “real” narrative of creative process but fragments and transforms it to the extent that the purely sonic features (the surface texture) of the audio become the defining features of the composition.

The final version combines sounds from the following categories, recorded at various times before, during and after the main development process for *Notes From a Meeting*, and combined to form the extended soundtrack version of the piece:

1. Julie’s footsteps - Recorded 8 May 2013
2. Group discussions on the work and development process - Recorded 8 May 2013
3. Sounds recorded in my local park - Recorded May 2013 (approx.)
4. Bell chimes (pitch shifted and time stretched) - Recorded November 2012 (approx.)
5. A variety of sustained chords, recorded on pianos at the Royal Northern College of Music - Recorded 18 March 2013

6. The sounds of me playing a flute - Recorded May 2013 (approx.)
7. The processed sound of me singing (lowered in pitch and equalised to highlight the sound of my breath) - Recorded May 2013 (approx.)

Of course, any composition built from recorded sound will incorporate media recorded at different times, not necessarily in the order presented in the piece. However, *Notes From a Meeting* re-orders sounds tangibly related to the development process described above. In the context of my creative process, the piece is a deconstructed narrative in the most literal sense possible: an example of free associations, in which a fortnight or so of creative activity is combined with temporally dislocated fragments, and reordered into a single eight-minute track. The final result is a suspension of time, a crystallised version of the time taken to make it.

Source Points

Writing around the turn of the millennium, David Toop predicted that ‘Music in the future will almost certainly hybridise hybrids to such an extent that the idea of a traceable source will become an anachronism.’²⁴ That future now seems a present reality. The ready availability of open-source audio editing software makes it so easy to transform recordings and capture sounds from the world around us that anyone with a computer, and a little spare time, can be a recorded artist. The range of uploaded media on the internet, much of it Creative Commons, is testament to this fact. Reflecting on the creative situation in the mid-90s Toop suggests ‘songs are titles, source points, initialisations, indicating the beginning and the reference point for a process of continual transformation.’²⁵ Toop’s position resonates with the Barthesian concept of authorship discussed above, though, given the technological context in which he is writing, Toop’s vision of the inter-relationships between “texts” (or “songs”) is perhaps more literal than Barthes’ initial conception.

This idea fundamentally challenges the concept of inspiration: how can anything be original when the volume of creative output is so extreme? This raises the related idea that critical review will itself be a similarly pluralistic assembly of existing ideas (hopefully many of them drawn from the work being reviewed). Toop quotes Brian Eno’s 1992 lecture, *Perfume, Defence and David Bowie’s Wedding*: ‘We are in short... increasingly un-centred, un-moored, living day to day, engaged in an ongoing attempt to cobble together a credible, or at least workable, set of values, ready to shed it and work out another when the situation demands...seeing which combinations make some sense for us — gathering experience — the possibility of making better guesses — without demanding certainty.’²⁶

CUT UP AND COLLAGED:

1/ *Viola Fragments* was developed for a Collectives and Curiosities project, called *Mixed Media* (dance, film, music, collage) at LSO St. Luke's on 21 June 2013. The project was developed alongside co-directors Emma-Ruth Richards and Michael Betteridge, with choreography assisted by Johan Stjernholm, and was supported by the LSO Soundhub 12/13.

2/ There is a short film of a performance given below (DVD/TV) taken from 18 May 2013 at LSO St. Luke's, as part of a showcase concert through the LSO Soundhub 2013

3/ *Viola Fragments* is a series of snapshots of fragments of a putative whole — a landscape populated by fragments of music, arranged on a vast corkboard

4/ Fragments themselves are snapshots of studies developed with violist Paul Beckett — deconstructions of the originals

5/ The landscape is sampled in snapshots exploring overlapping areas, so that fragments are wholly or partially repeated throughout the score

6/ Despite its non-narrative conception, the piece still deals with repetition and variation (tenets of musical linearity)

7/ The score consists of six A3 pages shuffled — each contains six or seven coloured fragments (different colours denote different tempi)

VIOLA FRAGMENTS

SCORE DEVELOPED FOR NOVEMBER WORKSHOP AT LSO ST. LUKE'S

Full version given in *Collages and Soundtracks*

The collage features several musical fragments for Viola:

- FAST** (top left): A short melodic phrase in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The dynamic is *mf*.
- MEDIUM** (top middle): A fragment in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The dynamic is *pp*.
- FAST** (top right): A short melodic phrase in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The dynamic is *pp*.
- FAST** (middle left): A longer melodic phrase in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The dynamic is *mf*.
- MEDIUM** (middle right): A longer melodic phrase in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The dynamic is *pp*.
- SLOW** (bottom middle): A fragment in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The dynamic is *mp dolce*.
- MEDIUM** (bottom right): A longer melodic phrase in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The dynamic is *p*.

VIOLA FRAGMENTS: CROSSING MEDIA

VISUAL (DANCE) DIARIES IN RESPONSE TO VIOLA FRAGMENTS

The work in progress was presented at a Collectives and Curiosities group workshop, at LSO St. Luke's, 19 November 2012

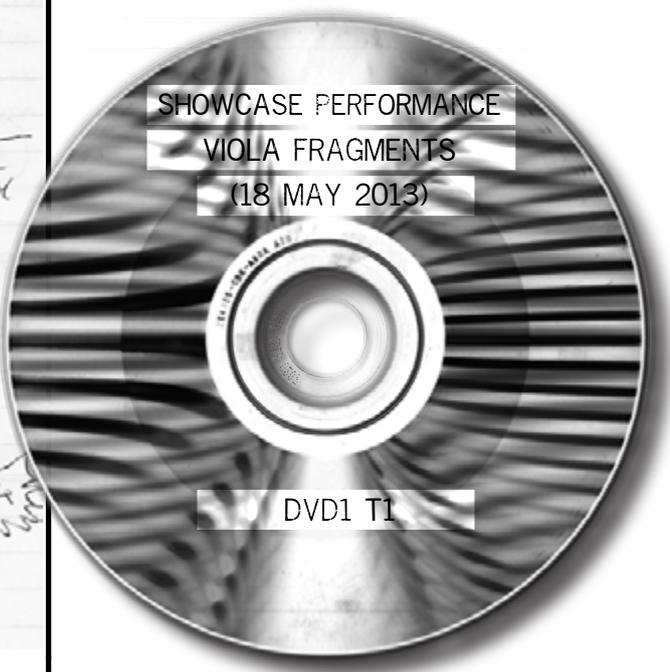
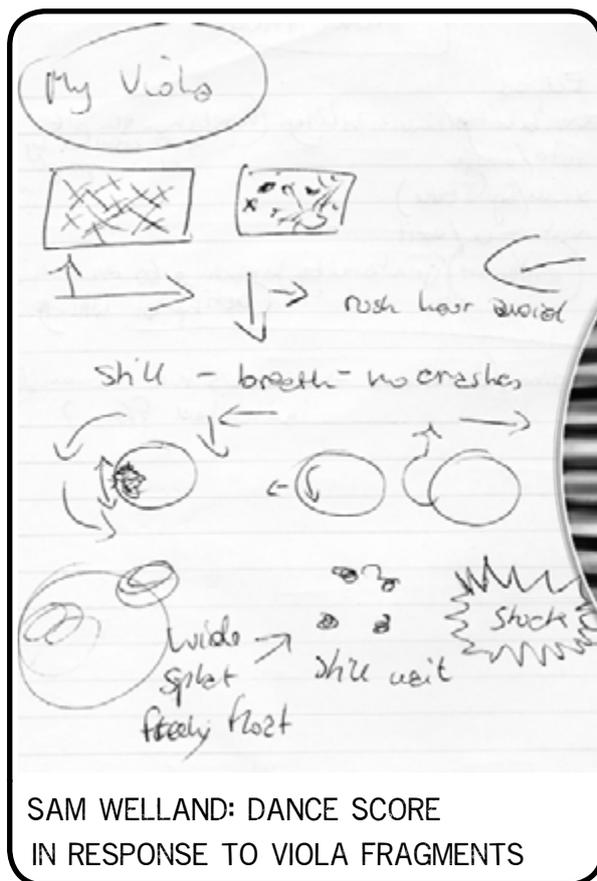
JULIE HAVELUND: DANCE SCORE
IN RESPONSE TO VIOLA FRAGMENTS



8/ This is an attempt to imagine musical form as a spatial/visual landscape, and performance as a journey through that. The lack of certainty about where (and when) gestures are "supposed" to fall fulfils the non-narrative impulse in my work.

9/ I like to think the combined media can make a collective impression — my review of the sounds is based on the image, my review of the image is based on the sounds...

10/ The 18 May 2013 DVD performance referenced overleaf (DVD1 T1) includes St. Luke's Soundtrack, which is provided in Collages and Soundtracks (though this is optional in performance): the audio uses samples (processed beyond recognition) from dancers, compositions by my collaborators, and general chattering, footfalls and sounds from our development process.



Minor Analysis

Brian Hulse proposes an analytical paradigm that is flexible to the demands of context and the fluctuating influence of experience. Hulse imagines an analytical practice based on a “minor science”, defined as investigation with ‘a receptive, flexible relation to its material, subordinating its operations to the “sensible conditions of intuition and construction – following the flow of matter” [from *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.373]. It allows itself to be imprinted, rather than imprinting (imposing) itself on its object.²⁷ Where traditional analytical models place themselves *a posteriori* to the work, minor scientific analyses assume a coextensive relationship with it. “Minor analysis” is no less a part of the “work” than it is a commentary on it, illustrating the impossibility of reviewing a work without creating a new one in its place.

This continual recursion of action and reflection (or work and commentary) can be allowed to become immersive to the extent that the categories no longer matter. Writing about the use of profound bass in music Toop remarks, ‘With massive volume and density, categories barely matter...Music is felt at its vibrational level, permeating every cell, shaking every bone, derailing the conscious, analytical mind.’²⁸ The same might be said of action and reflection: when fully considered, the conceptual distinctions become so heavy that they collapse in on themselves.

VIOLA FRAGMENTS: SHOWCASE

VIOLA FRAGMENTS PERFORMED BY PAUL BECKETT AT LSO ST. LUKE'S, 18 MAY 2013

The performance given on DVD includes *St. Luke's Soundtrack* (from *Collages and Soundtracks*).

Observations coming out of the process:

- Compositions can traverse a middle ground between closed and open forms, allowing for narrative presentations and non-narrative ones based on the same score. Non-narrative compositions can be performed like dramatic narrative works (as evidenced by the DVD performance opposite). Deconstructions of narrative can be worked directly and meaningfully into the development, so that each stage relates to the next through a process of recomposition. The various stages of the development can be used to generate new or related works in musical or other media, i.e. dance.
- Given the open quality of the initial work, its relationship to any resulting works (such as the DVD performance, *St. Luke's Soundtrack*, dance scores shown above, and so on) can be best understood as an exchange, rather than a linear process from the source to the products — this amounts to a deconstruction of the standardised relationship between source and product.
- The film adjacent represents the culmination of my collaboration with violist Paul Beckett. As should be clear enough from the materials already provided, I acted throughout as lead artist. Nonetheless, Paul's contributions extended to suggestions regarding structure, notation and, for the DVD performance, a partly independent selection and reordering of materials. This flexibility is an inherent part of the concept of the piece, so Paul's version can be considered one of many possibilities.

Sound in Other Media



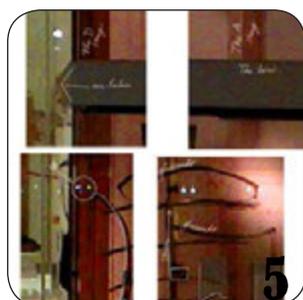
Artist and composer Haroon Mirza says of his work, 'I don't believe there's any difference between composition with sound and composition with objects in space or lines in drawing...'²⁹

Mirza's 2012 Spike Island exhibition in Bristol (entitled /|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|/|) consisted of numerous pieces, all of which linked rhythmically and tonally between rooms in the gallery; the structure relied on timers to automatically activate percussive sculptures. Mirza suggests the installation could be understood as an album of eight works, in collaboration with sculptor James Clarkson, who provided the "cover art".³⁰ Of course, Mirza's work goes well beyond this format; its spatial distribution is cut through by the mixing of the sounds around the gallery, whilst the connection of the sounds themselves is split by the dislocation of their respective sources.



Mirza's work asks fascinating questions about sound and structure, as well as reimagining the position of the audience in the interpretation of musical works, as they exist both as pre-determined narratives, and as physical spaces that can be accessed more freely.

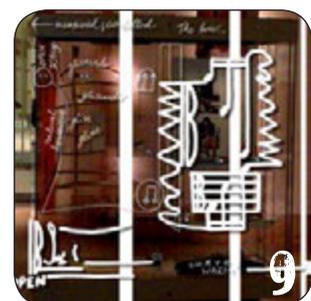
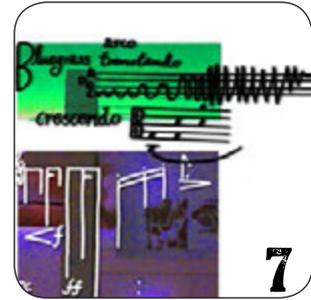
This dialogue between sound as a temporal narrative, and its means of production in space has been a fascinating one to engage with. For me, this has been translated into graphic (visually motivated) scores, which imagine aspects of the means of production (notation in this case) as being aesthetically valid products in their own right. Composers such as Sylvano Busotti, Christian Marclay and Cornelius Cardew have been highly influential in this area. Marclay's *Shuffle* (2007) is a good example of how visual media can provide a meaningful aesthetic critique of associated performances. Marclay's "score" is comprised of a series of over-sized playing cards displaying photographs of musical notation in everyday situations (i.e. a tattoo). These are intended as visual art, yet Marclay also suggests basing performances around them. The eclectic mixture of imagery acts a commentary on whatever comes out in performance. If it is an integrated soundworld the cards cut across that; if it is a performance full of juxtapositions and inconsistencies the cards will reinforce that.



Songmaking (DVD1 T2)

My score, written for solo viola, is a reconstruction of information and images based on a group of seven 19th-Century Inupiat bow drills (fire-making implements) housed at the British Museum. More information about the materials incorporated in the piece is included immediately before the score in *Collages and Soundtracks*. The score was originally performed by Paul Beckett, at the British Museum, alongside the bow drills on which it is based, on 5 July 2013, in the layout shown on this double-page spread (each panel was 190 x 190mm). A studio recording, together with the original visuals from the score (as presented on this double-page spread) is given on DVD as part of this submission. My post-production separation of the piece into three separate sections is intended to emphasise both the curatorial quality of the structure, and essential element of creative decision-making required of the performer, as well as the effect of the performance context (here influenced by the availability of gamelan instruments at LSO St. Luke's). The credits are accompanied by a putative "song", made from the interpretations of the viola player (though in reality multi-tracked by me). My subsequent reworking of the score into the *Collages and Soundtracks* format hopefully helps reinforce the idea of the piece as a curated collection, offering possibilities for different combinations of its materials.

Surprisingly, given these apparently open qualities, *Songmaking* has provided me with fresh approaches to fixed structure. The two versions of the score combine fragmentary elements developed along visual lines, in a relatively linear fashion. The bow drills imagery comes first and last, whilst *All songs have been exhausted...*³¹ acts as a refrain. Fixed into this structure, the annotated photographs prompting bow and string gestures grow in detail and complexity between panels five and nine (see examples). In effect, this piece makes a partial journey back towards time-based music. This can be contrasted with *Viola Fragments*, in which studies with a clear linear path are actively fragmented in order to undermine their structure. Of course, as the latter piece demonstrates, it is still possible to construct a narrative drama from such deconstructed materials.



Verbatim (CD1 T4)

The score for this piano miniature is simply one of many possible routes through a visual collage I created from pianist Jing Ouyang’s repertoire list (see opposite). The piece was performed at the Royal Northern College of Music on 14 June 2013, as part of the Gold Medal Weekend. My selection of pages from the original scores was largely random, based on what I could find to hand, and on what created potential contrast with pages I already had. Likewise, the translation into standard notation is entirely subjective, freely making assumptions about clefs and tempi. My omission of portions of the collage is equally intuitive, based on what I felt would work structurally. Similarly to *Songmaking*, this piece is a bridge from visually determined collage scores back to formal rigidity and the precedence of temporal narrative. The slow chiming sections (as at the opening) are a rhetorical device used to arrest the flow in much the same way as the twists and turns of *Three Cubist Portraits* (see *Analytical Sketchbook*).

However, my return to these initial ideas came with a counterbalancing change of my position in the creative process. In order to fix the collage in simple notation, I became the articulator of the structural possibilities within the imagery, rather than leaving the process at an open-ended stage, after which the performer would string together the fragments (cross reference *Viola Fragments*). In a sense, I have had the opportunity to explore my own role as “performer”, not in a live sonic context, but as a participant in a larger creative process, a reader-performer who moves through the space of the collage to trace something that can be fixed in time, determined from start to finish rather than top to bottom. The annotated panel opposite shows some of the phrases selected.

The performative verb here would be “writing”, through which I explore my own ability to “mean”.³² This suggests that my notational response to the collage is just as piecemeal and questionable (subjective) as the violist’s performance of my *Songmaking* score. In this respect, not only the relationship between action and reflection, but also between creator and interpreter, can be deconstructed.

The original visual collage is provided opposite, annotated on the first page, to show how I arrived at some of the notes in the score. Of course, as an “original” the collage is problematic — there is nothing original about it. Considering the critical potential of the collage when read against the final score, or watched during the performance (recording), we might conclude that it can act as a diffuse representation/interpretation of the notated score and performances, again sidestepping its claim to originality. This kind of reflexive play, where objects and activities can become unstuck and change their status, has become a defining feature of this research project. Taken together, the “portfolio”, “commentary”, “scores”, “imagery”, “recordings” and “analyses” are the largest, most ambitious deconstructed narrative I have produced.

VERBATIM COLLAGE

SHOWING THE COLLECTION OF MATERIALS USED TO MAKE THE SCORE

This image is a collage of musical score pages, heavily annotated with handwritten black ink. The annotations include large, irregular circles and loops that group specific musical phrases or sections. Arrows point from these circles to other parts of the score, suggesting relationships or transitions. There are also numerous scribbles and diagonal lines drawn over the original notation, some of which appear to be corrections or deletions. The original score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *p* (piano) and *f* (forte). French lyrics are interspersed throughout the score, including "somme mystérieux", "peuple", "pauvre de plus en plus caressante et em", "arrivé", and "cresc.". A page number "130" is visible in a small box. The overall effect is one of a working draft or a composer's process, showing the evolution and selection of musical material.

figue.
Presto. (♩ = 144)

f

p

cresc

leggiere

poco rit.

dim.

Sehr schnell

RÉE
(Op. 116)

Ruhig fließend $\text{♩} = \text{ca } 80$

2 $\text{♩} = 69$

p *legiato* *f* *precip.*

Allegro ($\text{♩} = 144$)

p

5

p *f*

MENUET
Tranquillo ($\text{♩} = 120$)

p dolce e semplice

axalto) 8

f *p*

p *cresc.*

11 rit. - quasi vivace 12

left and right hand
p articulated separately

17 *più p*

p

p cresc.

124 5

Moderé ($\text{♩} = 88$)
(Dans un rythme sans)

"pina" *p très de*

Cédez

This page of musical notation is densely packed with staves and includes several key features:

- Handwritten Annotations:** The number "160" is written in a box on the lower-left staff. The number "34" is written above a staff in the lower-middle section. The sequence "1 2 3 4 5 6" is written in large numbers on the bottom right.
- Circled Section:** A section of the lower-middle staff is circled in black, with a "dim." (diminuendo) marking above it.
- Dynamic Markings:** "pp" (pianissimo) is written in the lower-left and lower-middle sections. "p" (piano) is written below the circled section.
- Performance Indicators:** Various symbols like "V" (accents), "w" (trills), and "7" (fingerings) are scattered throughout the notation.
- Staff Layout:** The notation is arranged in a grid-like fashion with multiple staves per system, some of which are partially obscured or cut off at the bottom.

6

MENUET Tranquillo (♩ = 120)

p dolce e semplice

p *cresc.* *cresc.* *calando* *ten.*

più p *più p* *cresc.* *p*

12 *p cres.* 12 *p cres.* *res.*

Modéré (♩ = 88) **Modéré** (♩ = 88)

(Dans un rythme sans rigueur) (Dans un rythme sans rigueur)

p *très doux* *p* *più p*

pp *pp* *toujours pp*

très doux

The image displays a page of musical notation, likely a score for a piano or similar instrument. The notation is arranged in several systems, each with multiple staves. A large, white, circular area is superimposed over the center of the page, obscuring the underlying musical notation. The visible notation includes various musical symbols, such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Dynamics like *p* (piano), *pp* (pianissimo), *f* (forte), and *ff* (fortissimo) are present. There are also markings like *piu p* and *p marqué*. The notation is annotated with handwritten numbers and symbols, including *12/1*, *133*, and *11*. The overall appearance is that of a complex, deconstructed musical score.

5

MENUET
Tranquillo (♩ = 120)

p dolce e semplice

8

p

9

p *cresc.* *f dim.*

11

rit. *quasi vivace* 12

left and right hand
p articulated separately

17

più p *cresc.* *f*

p cresc.

Moderé (♩ = 88)
(Dans un rythme sans rigueur et caressant.)

"piano" p très doux

pp expressif

pp *toujours pp*

très doux

Cédez

Non-Narrative: A Summary

Narrative deconstruction can be a fully articulated part of the creative process. Instead of simply creating works that have formally determined (deconstructed) narrative patterns, works can be made which are developed through a playful, interdisciplinary methodology, which encourages ways of interacting with them aesthetically that are not exclusively based in time. Similarly, works which are initially based in time can be recontextualised through other (non-temporal) media, in order to engage with them in non-narrative terms. This suppression of temporal characteristics allows for a more experimental kind of enquiry, with less predictable results and a more embedded role for the audience/participant, who actively interprets the work rather than passively navigating its structure. The intersection of visual and performative media in much of my portfolio is a way of encouraging this multi-faceted type of engagement. From a research perspective this has profound ramifications for the kind of knowledge I can aim to produce. The portfolio is intentionally incomplete in many ways, requiring...

Chapter 3

PHYSICALITY

(Anti-Narrative)

This section explores sound as a physical medium — one that textures space, resonates our bodies, and implicates all of us in its production.

The ensuing account comprises a series of deconstructions I have made of Schubert's *Meeresstille* (1815). This final section is only sparsely narrated in words, instead using other media to engage with the “anti-narrative” impulse in sound, its constant renewal in the moment, informed by memory but inescapably of the present — a medium, like light, without an inherent semantic status. Much of the work below examines the means of production as an exploration of sound *per se* in addition to any emotional or linguistic motivation underlying the activity — a “physicalisation”. Voegelin states, “The subject in sound is an empirical not a transcendental subject and so is it object.”¹ In magnifying bow gestures through film, mapping performance space through installation, and conflating production and reception by embracing noise, I am seeking to highlight and celebrate this immediacy of sound, “musical” and other. The discussions below should be read in conjunction with CD2 and DVD2, provided alongside this document.



A Song



Warm, mellifluous, measured, unhurried, undulating figures tremor deeply and ripple away, sound waves foam in my ears. Schubert's lied is an elegant example of understatement, picturing a single mood of calm resignation; a sailor stranded perhaps, miles from land, surrounded by an implacable, unmoving ocean.

Goethe's poem *Meeresstille* is the subject of Schubert's composition:

Deep stillness reigns on the water;
motionless, the sea rests,
and the sailor gazes about with alarm

at the smooth flatness all around.
No breeze from any side!
It is fearfully, deathly still!
In the enormous expanse
not one wave stirs.²

My deconstruction, referenced above, takes a fragment from an original recording by Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Gerald Moore³ and remoulds the performance into a static soundscape. In comparison to the poetic narrative above, this study offers a state of mind, rather than the emotional journey of the original. Cross reference Robin Rimbaud's (a.k.a. Scanner) 2011 *Floral Derrangement*, which processes and stretches the well known *Floral Dance* to 130 times its original length, transforming into an ambient piece, quite removed from the dance-themed original. Sound in my study, and Scanner's piece, is in some sense both subject and object — understood as a medium as well as (or instead of) a representational language. Where Schubert's music is about Goethe's poetry, my sound is about Schubert's music.

A Transcription

Recomposed and transposed for string quartet from the sounds heard above, and presented as a score in 10 variations (including the theme, bb.1 - 57). The studio recording provided below was performed by the Aomori Quartet, at the Royal Northern College of Music. A study score is provided separately. The central question: at what point in the composition (if at all) do the sounds become specifically “sounds” and not “syntax”? Then, if the piece is a purely “sonic” experience, can it still be a narrative about Schubert's original?



A Performance

A five-day audio-visual installation, as part of Collectives and Curiosities, called || : *figure refraction ground* : || (funded by a Royal Northern College of Music Research Grant, produced in association with Blank Media Collective, at BLANKSPACE Gallery, Manchester; 25 - 29 September 2012). New pieces from visual artists were commissioned by our group in response to musical ideas (conveyed initially to the artists through a mixture of notation, verbal description and recorded sounds). The visuals were browsable at all opening times, whilst musical performances were scheduled on two separate evenings (days one and three). Each performance lasted three hours, with five repetitions of my string quartet (*Meeresstille: A Recollection*) heard each night. The quartet was performed simultaneously with a selection of graphic scores (including a version of my score *Rhizome* from *Collages and Soundtracks*) by solo oboe and clarinet (day one), and vocal pieces (day three) in adjacent rooms. A bar was also provided selling beers and wines during each of the scheduled performances.

Throughout the installation, four omni-microphones were placed around the gallery recording the sounds of the music as well as the noise of people around the space. The amplified sounds were concurrently broadcast via an array of speakers, layered with recordings of each of the previous installation days. The gallery was split across two floors, allowing for sounds from downstairs to be broadcast upstairs, and *vice versa*.

The mixture of times (via the recordings) and spaces (via the crossed broadcast from upstairs to downstairs) — as well as the inevitable dissolution of personal space as the gallery became crowded on our opening night, and audience members consumed the alcohol on offer — gave a sense of saturation, with the gallery building increasingly acting as the smallest unit of structural measurement. It was hoped that this would allow the compositions and visual pieces created as self-contained works (my quartet included) to be investigated less as linguistic statements, more as contributing ingredients in a concentrated sensorial experience.

The maps shown below were designed by me to hang alongside illustrations by my collaborators showing connections within the shared space of the gallery. The images are designed for visitors to reflect upon and follow either with the eyes as visual pieces, or with their feet as physical routes. In this sense, the maps can be considered as mixed-media scores pointing towards possible performances. The actual floor plan of the gallery is also given, along with brief descriptions of the contents of each room for reference.

BLANKSPACE GALLERY

DISTRIBUTION OF VISUAL AND MUSICAL WORKS IN THE SPACE

KEY TO INITIALS BELOW:

JTB = Jacob Thompson-Bell

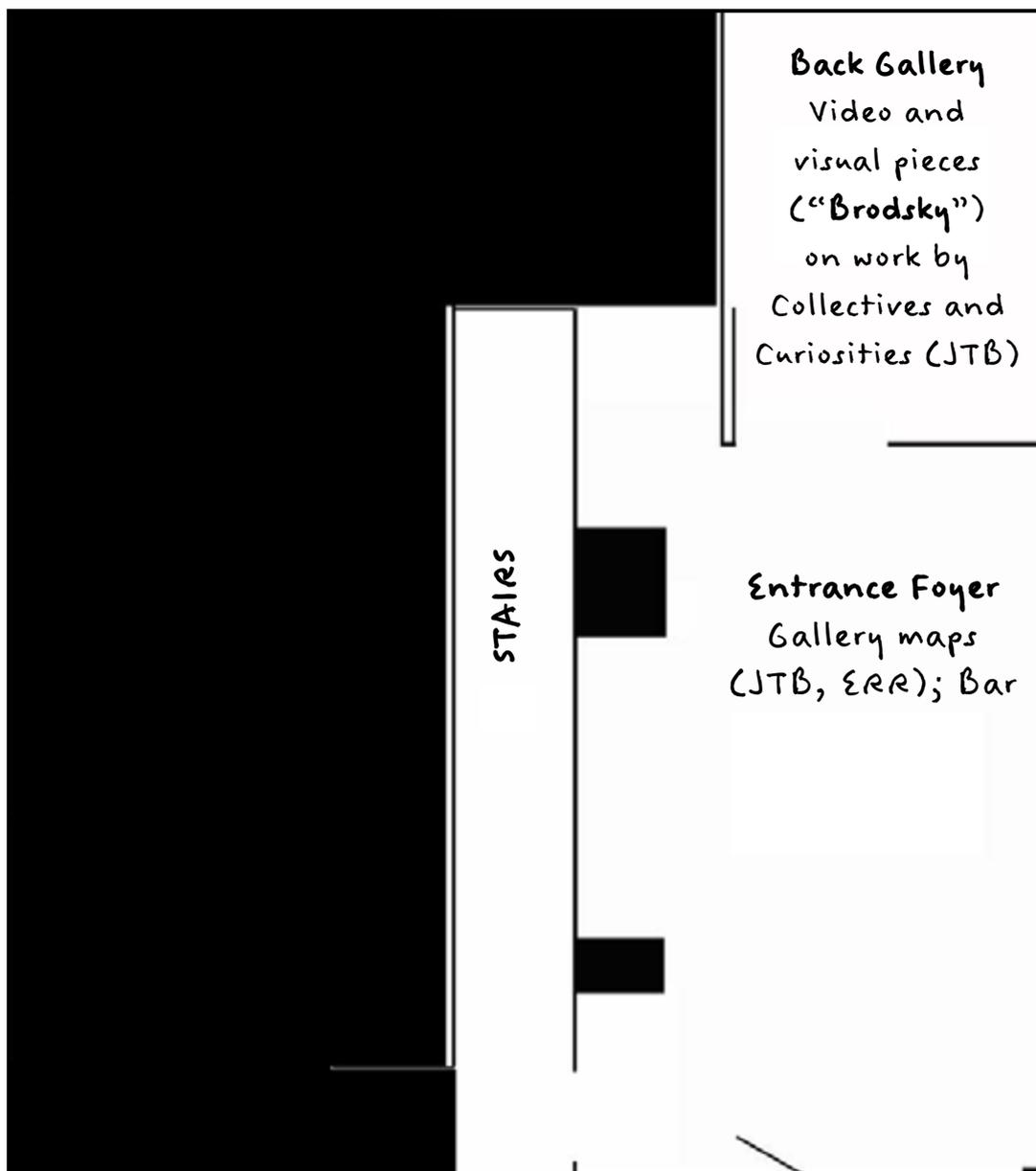
HA = Hayley Andrew

MB = Michael Betteridge

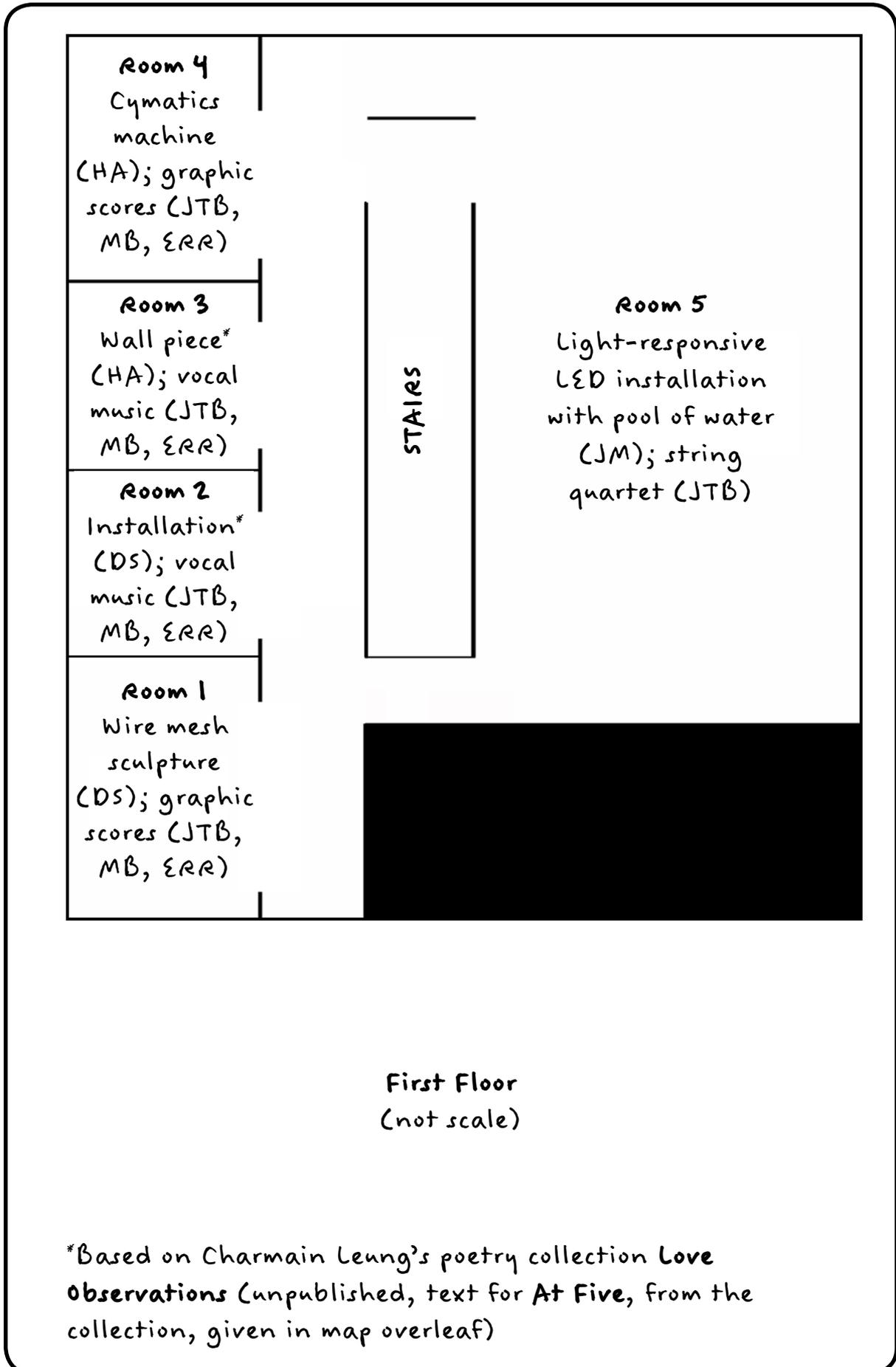
DS = Debbie SHarp

ERR = Emma-Ruth Richards

JM = Joanne McClung

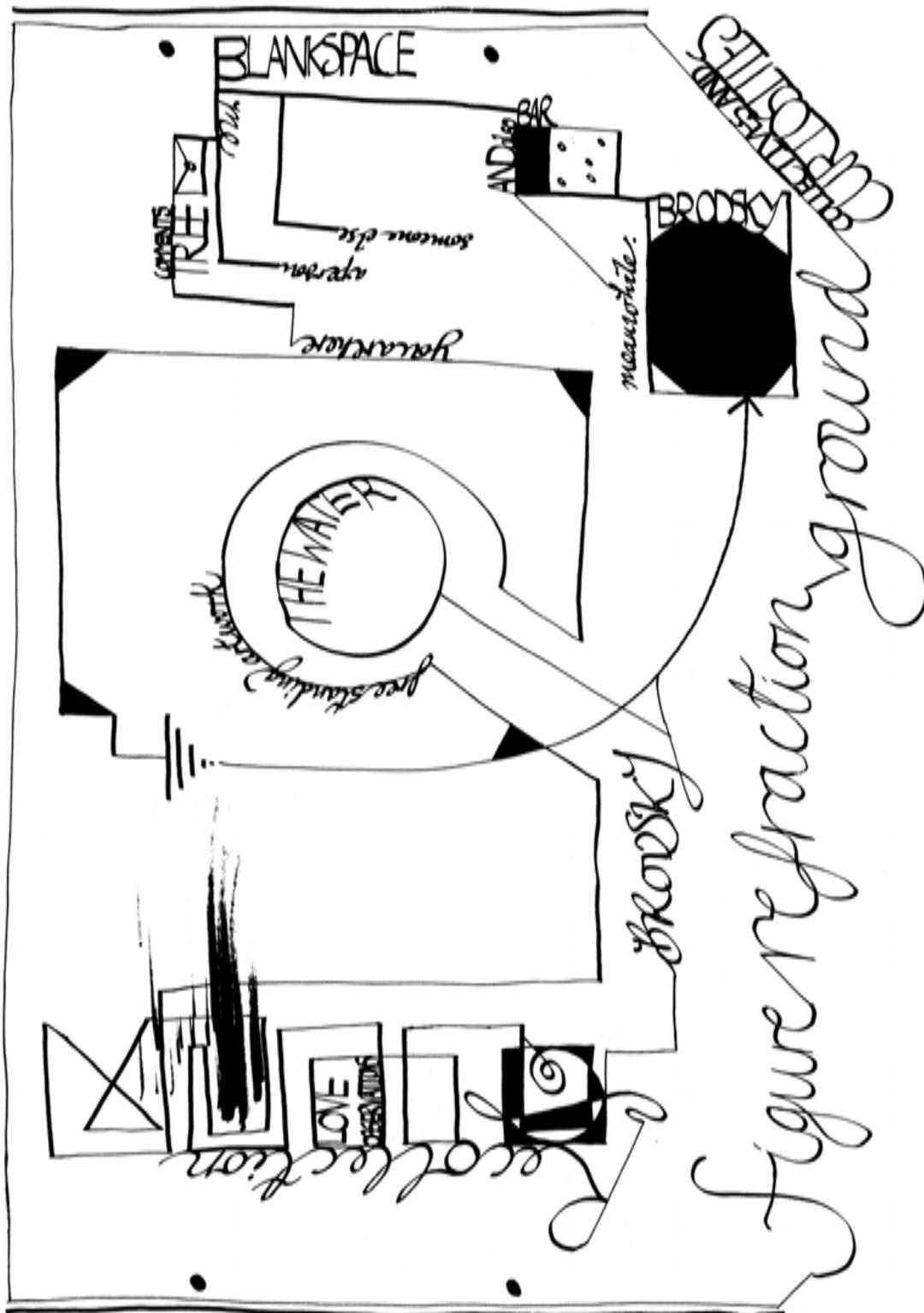


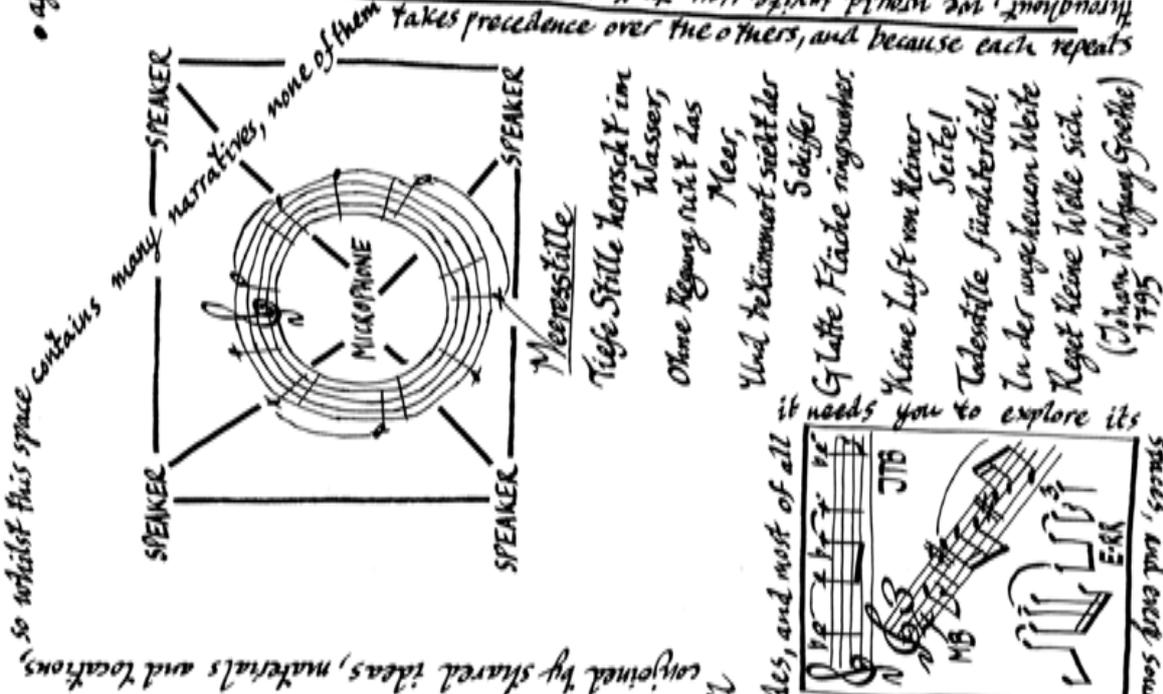
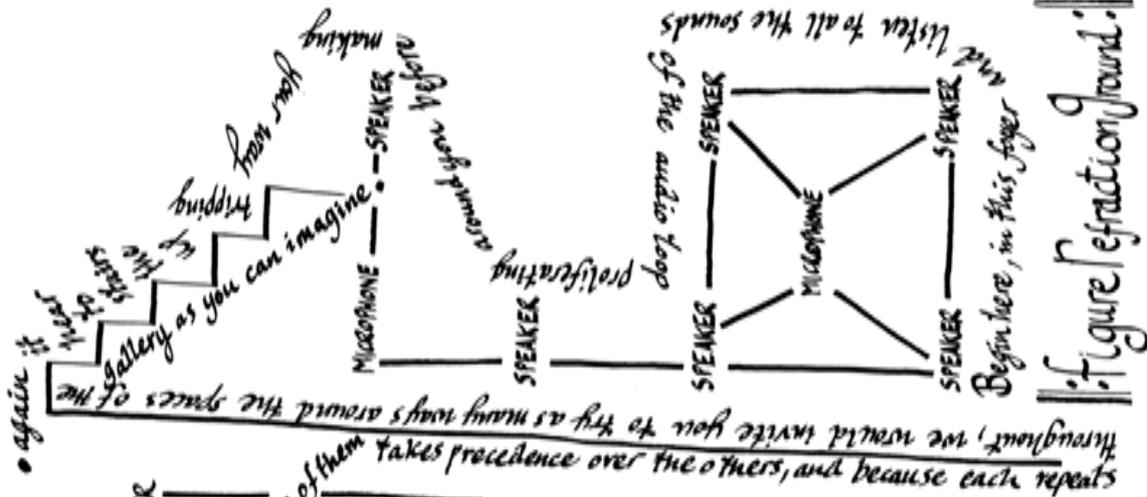
Ground Floor
(not scale)

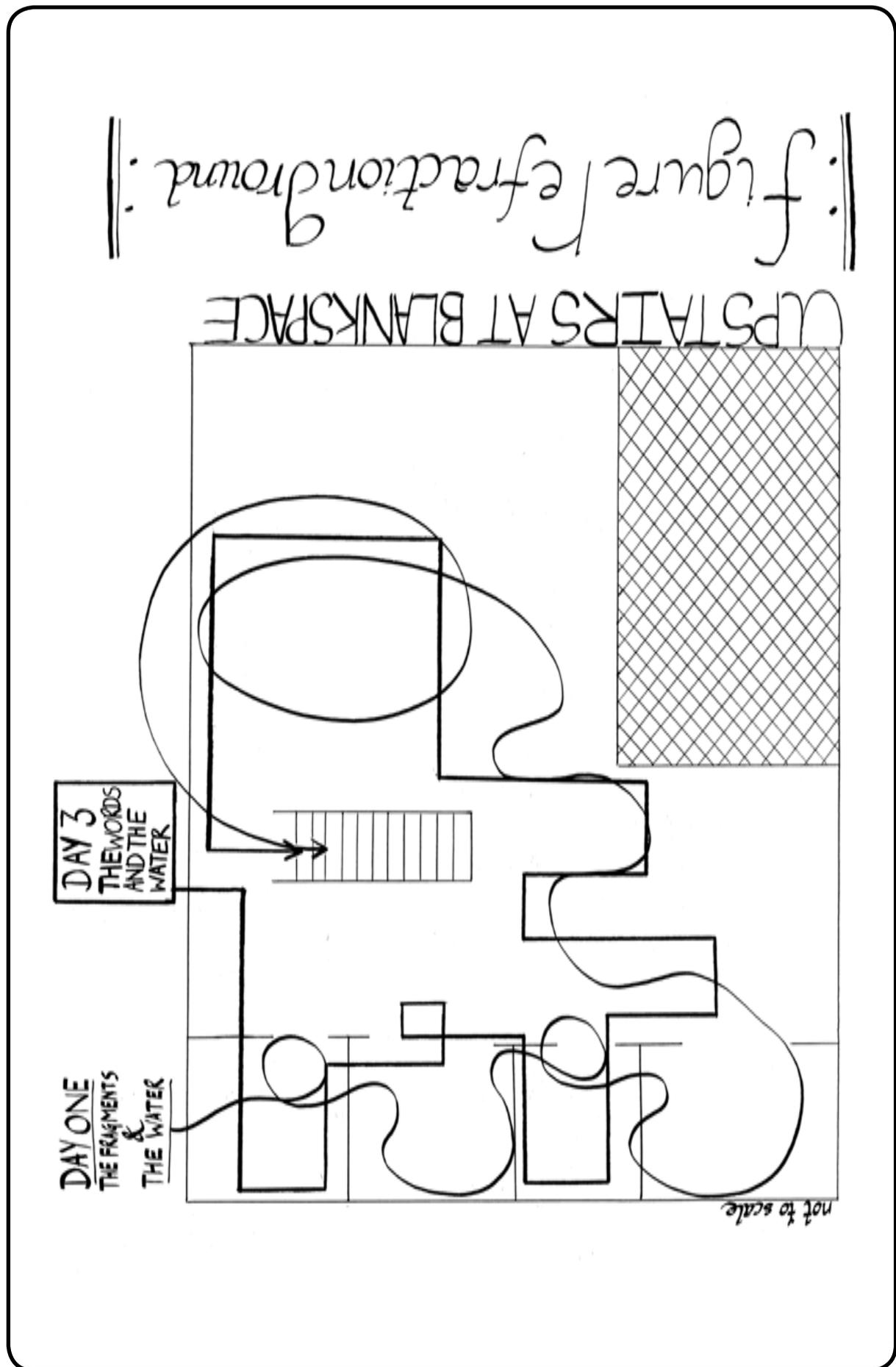


II: FIGURE REFRACTION GROUND :II

MIXED-MEDIA "SCORES" MAPPING THE CURATED COLLECTION OF WORKS

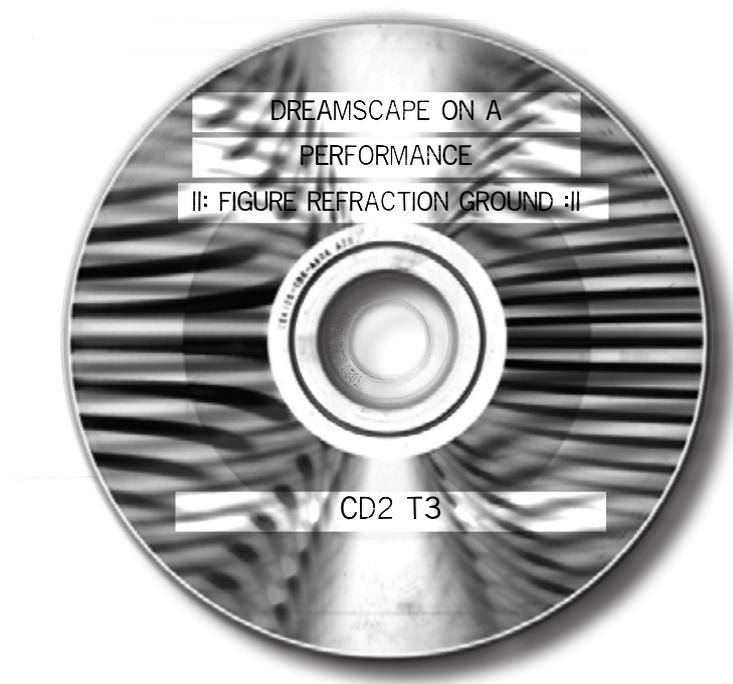






A Recollection

Given the performative nature of the research being discussed, any attempt to qualify the results here will be at best partially representative. The audio piece referenced below, *Dreamscape on a Performance*, is a processed mixture of sounds from each of the days of the installation, combining the quartet(s), graphic scores, vocal music and prominent ambient sounds of the visitors to the gallery (many of whom felt inclined to perform musically themselves). Cross reference Jana Winderen’s *Energy Field* (2010), which presents mixtures of sounds recorded in the Barents Sea (Greenland and Norway). Winderen’s compositions do not directly transmit the sounds she heard on location (they are processed and reordered) but the creative mixture does capture something of the raw power of the ocean, and emotional impact of the northern seascape. In a similar sense, my piece is not intended so much as a re-presentation of the installation, but is offered as a remoulding of the contents of the gallery building that week. Its noises are designed to be savoured in an almost culinary sense.



A Production

Sounds from a string quartet. This film — *Slightly Before, Just After* — was shot as part of the recording session for the studio recording referenced previously, and represents the culmination of my work on Schubert’s lied. The central question: when understood as a medium which is physically “produced”, does sound lose

its representational dimension? Then, does the analytical magnification of seeing hands and bows producing sound hint at a paradoxical status for musical analysis generally – where a desire to consolidate and decode a volatile, ephemeral medium (sound) results in a fixation with observational detail over emotional meaning, so that the process of signification becomes more important than the thing signified, even if it is the ostensible product which is being “decoded”? Such a state would quite possibly dissolve any real distinction between subject and object, between action and reflection, between cause and effect; and more specifically in this film, between image and sound, between form and content.



(in) CONCLUSIONS

How to conclude a research project that thrives on multiple interpretations?

Throughout, I have sought to engage with my scores in a variety of ways. One approach has been to view them as finite works, limited by their number of pages. Such analyses are helpful for their simplicity of judgement, the straightforward engagement with the means of composition — how the notes on the page were arrived at and conceived of. I have also imagined some of the relationships possible between my scores and subsequent interpretations of them by performing musicians, reading analysts, and listening interpreters. This kind of enquiry is more diffuse, though its results are perhaps more wide ranging, more broadly applicable and useful to those not engaged directly in the production of “musical” sounds. For a composer, such an approach is surely indispensable in ensuring musical works are relevant and absorbing for participants at all possible stages of the creative process (from composer to passive listener).

At the same time, I have imagined my analyses as aesthetically motivated works in their own right, and my compositions as analyses. This strand of investigation has shown how works initially designed as sealed structures can spawn unpredictable offspring when filtered through different media (sound through image; image through sound). Building on this ambiguity between saying and meaning (or between composing and analysing), and with reference to the ideas of Salome Voegelin, I have questioned the very ability of sound to convey a collective meaning at all, creating work based on an understanding of sound as a medium “produced” rather than “read”. In the Barthian sense, this is offered as a kind of authorial suicide (though this dramatic imagery should acknowledge the essentially positive nature of a relinquishment of authority).

This project has been designed as a series of questions that perhaps cannot be answered definitively. It is a sequence of essays on sound/music and narrative meaning without a prescribed end goal. The collected musical works and films represent some kind of an answer, though their exact details are necessarily ineffable. The ongoing process of deconstruction and double meaning running through the project means that at any moment, theoretically at least, any stage of the carefully designed written structure articulated above could crumble into its neighbour. Sound as a physical medium could unwittingly become non-narrative through its reliance on interdisciplinary media, whilst non-narrative work could become time-based if the visual deconstruction of the score were hidden. On one

level, this boils down to an asynchrony between my intentions as a composer and the uncontrollable (desirably so) activities of latter participants in my work. The paradox of the creative researcher is that they are required to become, temporarily, subjects towards themselves — that is to say, onlookers to their own process of production. The difficulty of course, is that it is impossible to separate oneself from the analytical process, so that one inevitably enters a new creative activity as a means of drawing on the last. This *ouroboric* self-analysis, akin to the symbolic serpent that eats its own tail, in fact points to a more universal situation. Just when we believe we are communicating a shared meaning, we become aware of ourselves as isolated subjects — our mind wanders, or we become fixated on a particular feature.

This project is designed as a deconstructed game, utilised to deconstruct the so-called separate works within it. In effect, it can mean (almost) anything you want it to — this is surely the (hopeful) fate of all self-expression: that it will give rise to someone else's means of production. For which reason, the written observations and notations of my project may be discarded *ad hoc* in favour of new productions based on my starting points. Of course, I would hope also that readers/listeners/viewers will be content to temporarily humour the arbitrary rules of my game as set out in each of the three sections, if only to find them lacking for their own needs.

This state of affairs brings my research full circle, meaning that the deconstructed, ultra-subjective position in which I find myself can, paradoxically, be articulated through the rhetoric of a formalist semiotics. Borrowing from my investigation of deconstructed perceptions of time in Chapter One, I can say that, in western culture at least, creative production boils down to a process of objective differentiation, through which artists aim to define a “work” that, whilst not necessarily hermetically sealed, may be sufficiently delineated as to be repeatable and somehow materially alien to its environment. Put simply, it must be clear when a work begins and ends, even if these terms are open to interpretation. The result is that I have been able to play games with my works, as well as “within” my works but that I cannot fully explain what my works are beyond noting my intentions in making them.

Throughout the preceding commentary I have sought to separate arts research from the methodologies and evaluation criteria of scientific research. Where scientific research is intended (ideally) to categorically answer research queries (or at the very least point towards methodologies that will be able to achieve this), arts research is intended to open up an increased field of activity. Nevertheless, leaving aside the issue of reception for a moment, and considering the collected works and this commentary as a complete research project, there are some general conclusions that can be drawn. Perhaps most importantly, I have found that an expanded, cross-media understanding of my role as “composer” is essential to the task of investigating musical narratives. Without accounting for a wide range of possible access points

in the creative narrative (the process of creation and elements of musical structure included), it is only possible to consider a very narrow area of study. Opening up the media platforms to incorporate visuals, dance or film (as well as others), has allowed me to comment not only on the intended rhetorical meaning behind my works, but also to identify what expectations I am making of audiences, performers and myself in the creative process (narrative).

Furthermore, this expanded approach has suggested some practice-as-research models that are not overly reliant on words. Accounting for musical composition through textual commentary alone can have the effect of dichotomising the active (sonic) and reflective (textual) capacities of the composer-researcher. Introducing a range of media is helpful as a means of triangulating this relationship, thereby presenting new avenues for composition, and offering an analytical process that, given its partial status as composition, need not exist solely within the confines of specialist academic institutions.

Of course, in reality, these “conclusions” conceal a fantastic proliferation of new creative questions: what kinds of roles can different participants (composers, listeners, performers, etc.) take in the formation of musical structures? If the boundaries between media are so ill defined as to allow for musical works to be structured visually or textually, what kind of media is a composer supposed to work in? Exactly how subjective is musical perception – are shared musical experiences possible at all?

In Walt Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* (1855) he invites us not to imagine his text as the end point of our journey. His words seem to fit the ethos of this research project, which aims to stimulate and inspire further enquiry, even as reflections are made on works that have already been made:

‘Draw nigh and commence

It is no lesson . . . it lets down the bars to a good lesson,

And that to another . . .’¹

Acknowledgements

This project is by nature a highly personal one. It deals with my own approaches to composition and ideas on the reception of music. As such, I would not presume my words or compositions to speak on behalf of my colleagues or peers. Nonetheless, I am doubtless indebted to my supervisors Adam Gorb and David Horne for their guidance and input on my scores as they developed, and to my Director of Studies, Martin Blain, whose advice has been indispensable in completing the present commentary.

Such an undertaking also requires a great deal of time and support, luxuries I owe to the enthusiasm of my friends and family who attended my concerts and installations, promoted my music, and listened patiently to me discussing my work more often than they should have.

During the course of my research I have been very lucky to have access to first class recording facilities and equipment both through the Royal Northern College of Music (RNCM) and the LSO Discovery Team. The technical advice of Steve Guy (RNCM) and Chris Rogers (LSO) has been extremely important in producing many of the recordings and films comprising this project.

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Finally, I want to thank my wife, Emily, for remaining enthusiastic and supportive throughout. Her encouragement has been the most important of all.

Notes

Prologue

1 In his 'Structural Analysis of Narratives', Roland Barthes suggests '...one could say that temporality is only a structural category of narrative (of discourse), just as in language [langue] temporality only exists functionally, as an element of a semiotic system; from the point of view of narrative, what we call time does not exist, or at least only exists functionally, as an element of a semiotic system.' From: Barthes, R., *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath. (Fontana Press, 1977), p.99

Chapter 1: TIME

1 Lochhead, J., 'The Temporal in Beethoven's Opus 135: When Are Ends Beginnings?', in *In Theory Only*, 4:7 (1979), p.4

2 Hulse, B., 'Thinking Musical Difference as Minor Science', in *Sounding the Virtual*, ed. Brian Hulse and Nick Nesbitt. (Ashgate 2010), p.36

3 Kramer, J.D., *The Time of Music* (Schirmer, 1988), p.46

4 Ibid., Chapter 8

5 Stockhausen, K., 'Moment-Forming and Momente', in Robin Maconie. ed., *Stockhausen on Music* (Marion Boyars, 1989)

6 Kramer, J.D., *The Time of Music* (Schirmer, 1988), p.55

7 This cyclical quality doesn't necessarily have to be reflected at all times throughout the piece. Henri Dutilleux's violin concerto, *Les Arbres des Songes* (Schott Music, 1985), has a fairly traditional linear trajectory, which Dutilleux upsets with a return to the gestures of tuning-up between the two movements of his work. At the end of movement one, the oboe is instructed to play a concert A, leading to a full orchestral re-tune, as though the music has transported back through time to the point at which the movement began (in other words, it has come full circle). Dutilleux's device is a classically dramatic one, relying on the perception of the gesture as relating to a period before the "music" began, rather than a harmonic or thematic organisation, though Dutilleux does ingeniously reorganise the orchestra into the harmonic world of his second movement before recommencing his more typically linear journey.

8 Kramer, J.D., *The Time of Music* (Schirmer, 1988), p.137

9 James, R. D., *drukqs* (WARP, 2001), CD track 10. The "ending" begins shortly after

7:04 into the track.

10 See the passage on multi-linearity, p.4 of this text

11 Kramer, J. D., *The Time of Music* (Schirmer, 1988), p.46

12 Ibid., p.281

Chapter 2: PROCESS/PRODUCT

1 A cross-arts platform I co-direct, and co-founded in 2011 with composers Michael Betteridge and Emma-Ruth Richards, discussed at greater length in Chapter Two.

2 Nelson, R., 'Practice-as-Research and the Problem of Knowledge', in *Performance Research*, 11:4 (Routledge, 2006), p.107

3 Ibid., p.112

4 John Cage's various essays on compositional process and structure are good models for this kind of simultaneity of creative and analytical outputs. His 'Composition as Process' lecture (1958) is a discussion of his composition *Music of Changes*, lasting the exact same duration as the musical work, and designed to be heard with sections of the work interpolated. Cage, J., 'Composition as Process', in *Silence* (Marion Boyars, 1977), pp.18 - 34

5 Paynter, J., 'Music in the School Curriculum: Why Bother?', in Janet Mills and John Paynter, eds. *Thinking and Making* (OME, 2008), p.180. Emphasis in original.

6 Kerman, J., *Musicology* (Fontana Press, 1985), pp.43 - 44

7 Robinson, K., *The Element* (USA, 2009), p.77

8 Subotnik, R., 'Towards a Deconstruction of Structural Listening', in *Deconstructive Variations* (University of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp.169 - 170

9 Lyotard, J.F., *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, trans. Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi. (MUP, 2005), p.15

10 Cage, J., *Silence* (Marion Boyars, 1977), p.12

11 Small, C., *Musicking* (Wesleyan Music Press, 1998)

12 Barthes, R., 'From Work to Text', in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath. (Fontana Press, 1977), pp.155 - 164

13 Barthes observes, 'to listen is not only to perceive a language, it is also to construct it'. Barthes, R., 'Structural Analysis of Narratives', in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath. (Fontana Press, 1977), p.102

14 Barthes, R., 'Rhetoric of the Image', in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath. (Fontana Press, 1977), p.39

15 Barthes, R., 'Death of the Author', in *Image, Music, Text*, trans. Stephen Heath. (Fontana Press, 1977), p.145

16 Voegelin, S., *Listening to Noise and Silence* (Continuum, 2010), pp.18 - 19

- 17 David George, quoted in Nelson, R., 'Practice-as-Research and the Problem of Knowledge', in *Performance Research*, 11:4 (Routledge, 2006), p.109
- 18 Voegelin, S., *Listening to Noise and Silence* (Continuum, 2010), p.108
- 19 Ibid., p.34
- 20 Toop, D., *Ocean of Sound* (Serpent's Tail, 2001)
- 21 Reynolds, S., *WIRE Magazine* (2012), vol.338, p.38
- 22 Nelson, R., 'Practice-as-Research and the Problem of Knowledge', in *Performance Research*, 11:4 (Routledge, 2006), p.109
- 23 Notes From a Meeting online video version: <https://vimeo.com/66168340>
[accessed: 02/10/2014]
- 24 Toop, D., *Ocean of Sound* (Serpent's Tail, 2001), p.14
- 25 Ibid., p.105
- 26 Ibid., p.11
- 27 Hulse, B., 'Thinking Musical Difference: Music Theory as Minor Science', in Brian Hulse and Nick Nesbitt, eds. *Sounding the Virtual: Giles Deleuze and the Theory and Philosophy of Music* (Ashgate, 2010), p.30
- 28 Toop, D., *Ocean of Sound* (Serpent's Tail, 2001), p.273
- 29 Toop, D., 'Cross Platform', in *WIRE Magazine* (2012), vol.337, p.21
- 30 Ibid., p.21
- 31 *All songs have been exhausted...* is an Inupiat song. The version used as part of *Songmaking* was taken from a loose transcription of the recording available on Boulton, L., *The Eskimos of Hudson Bay and Alaska* (Folkways Records, 1955)
- 32 C.f. my discussion above (p.16) of Roland Barthes' ideas on "texts"

Chapter 3: PHYSICALITY

- 1 Voegelin, S., *Listening to Noise and Silence* (Continuum, 2010), pp.15
- 2 Goethe, J., *Meeresstille*, trans. Emily Ezust. from 'The Lied, Art Song, and Choral Texts Archive' (<http://www.lieder.net/> - accessed: 31/10/13)
- 3 Schubert, Franz., 'Meeresstille', in *Samtliche Lieder*, performed by Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau and Gerald Moore (1966 - 72) (Deutsche Grammophon, remastered 2010)

(in)CONCLUSIONS

- 1 Whitman, W., 'Who Learns My Lesson Complete', from *Leaves of Grass* (1855), ed. Malcolm Cowley (Penguin Classics, 1986), p.140; 4 - 6

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