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Staging Scores: Devising Contemporary Performances from Classical Music

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In this article, Egan and Pinchbeck combine Postdramatic Theatre (Lehmann, 2006), Composed Theatre (Rebstock and Roesner, 2012) and Score Theatre (Spagnolo, 2017) to address the representation of classical music in two separate contemporary performances they were involved in making.

Egan addresses the question of 'adapting scores' in relation to Plane Performance's *Traviata* (2010), where Verdi's operatic score became the main 'text' from which the company were able to deconstruct and re-imagine the opera as a piece of contemporary theatre; one that celebrated the complexities and subtle nuances of the classical composition and brought a 'sense' of the opera to a contemporary theatre audience. The research focusses on the feedback loop between performance score and music score as an additive process of 'musicalising' the performance and 'theatricalising' the composition. Taking Etchells' understanding of the interplay between 're-enacting and reactivating' the score (2015) alongside Roesner's sense of sampling as 'the transformation of a citation into composable material' (2016) the research examines the useful exchanges that emerge between the disparate texts of the performance world and the many 'texts' present in the music score.

Pinchbeck addresses how to 'stage scores' by reflecting on *Concerto* (2016). The research is framed by Ravel's instruction to conductors to 'follow the score' and biographises a piece of music (*Concerto for the Left Hand*). Using verbatim text, autobiographical and postdramatic devising techniques and archival research, the work advances Rebstock and Roesner's definition of 'composed theatre' (2013) and Adrian Curtin's 'orchestral theatre' (2019) by using music to structure theatre in both form and content. *Concerto* 'stages scores' by creating post-dramatic, post-traumatic performance and de-constructing/de-orchestrating post-conflict narratives around its original composition to reconfigure the relationship between audience and performer into an immersive and embodied 'theatricalised concert' (Bonshek, 2006).

Introduction

In this article, we deploy overlapping conceptual frameworks to address contemporary performance work we were involved in making, which explored the representation and utilisation of classical music from theatrical and structural perspectives. We have been engaged in making score-based theatre since we started collaborating in the early 2000s and the two chosen case studies presented here are characteristic of our shared interest in a dramaturgical process that foregrounds music and musicality in the creation of new theatre performances. Combining elements of 'postdramatic theatre' (Lehmann, 2006), 'composed theatre' (Rebstock and Roesner, 2012) and 'score theatre' (Spagnolo, 2017) we expose how the two separate projects made use of the language, etiquettes, organisational structures, narratives and scores of classical music as creative inspiration for our respective devising processes. We have taken, as a creative prompt, Carolyn Abbate's description of classical music, not as a work but as an event: 'between the score as a script, the musical work as a virtual construct, and us, there lies a huge phenomenal explosion' (2004: 533).

Egan's process focussed on the internal workings of the score whilst Pinchbeck's extended beyond the score. In Pinchbeck's *Concerto* (2016) everything 'around' the score was converted into devising material. In Plane Performance's *Traviata* (2010) everything 'in' the score was converted into devising material. *Traviata* is more faithful to the music score but an audience is less aware of its structural presence. *Concerto* is less faithful to the score but connects to it through a music performance. In *Concerto*, movements are announced, referencing music. In *Traviata,* acts are announced, referencing drama. Yet in both case studies the performance material has been mapped on to the music. This article will assess what the musical score, as material (both that which is devised and physically present onstage), as an instruction (both for the performer to read and the audience to follow) and as a story of composition, can offer the theatre practitioner. Both performances immerse their audiences in the event and, in doing so, challenge the formal protocols of classical music. The audience is 'brought forward'; they become the orchestra; they become the characters in the story; they become surrounded by the music and the narratives it produces. Unlike most traditional concerts and operas, both theatre pieces allow their audiences to become active participants in the representations that are being enacted.

Egan addresses the question of 'adapting scores' through the creative process of devising *Traviata*, where Verdi's operatic score became the main 'text' from which the company were able to deconstruct and re-imagine the opera as a contemporary theatre performance. In the absence of a live orchestra and trained opera singers, Plane Performance presents an audience with a non-opera, drawn together from a compositional text (Verdi's sheet music), a musical text (an audio recording of the opera), a narrative text (the libretto), and an operatic text (the traditions associated

with performing opera). *Traviata* engaged with the opera from this expanded textual field, interrogating what aspects of the 'operatic' might traverse the theatrical stage. Elements such as the elaborate visual signifiers, the demonstration of vocal range and dexterity, the emotional impact of the event and the complexity of the music composition became the scaffolding from which *Traviata* was built. Thus, the performance tells the fictional story of *La Traviata,* set in 1850s France, in parallel with the real stories of the performers who are attempting to read, understand, play and present 'opera' from their own non-operatic perspectives.

Egan analyses the impact of his role as 'Music Director',[1] with specific reference to how his graphic scores, as translations of Verdi's music, guided the project. A central concern was how the performers' reading and playing of the music, as an embodied activity, might become theatrical. As an extension of Adrian Curtin's 'orchestral theatre', which highlights a desire to '"think theatrically" about an orchestra' (2019: 292), getting performers to 'think musically' about the theatrical material (through the re-purposing of the music score) can also serve to strengthen the interconnectedness of music and theatre. The musicians in Curtin's analysis become characters because they represent parts of the dramatic action and similarly the performers in *Traviata* become musicians because they perform parts of the music score. Focussing on this feedback loop between performance and music score, Egan observes the transformative effect of 'musicalising' the performance and 'theatricalising' the composition. Taking Tim Etchells' understanding of the interplay between 're-enacting and reactivating' the score (2015) alongside Roesner's sense of sampling as 'the transformation of a citation into composable material' (2014), Egan enables a dialogue to emerge between music score and performance score, between the staging of opera and the devising of contemporary performance.

Pinchbeck's *The Ravel Trilogy* (2014–2018) addresses how to 'stage scores' in three pieces (*Bolero*, *Concerto, Solo*). Each piece of theatre transforms a specific score into theatrical material, drawing on its history and the events that inspired it. For this article, Pinchbeck will focus on *Concerto* as it is the most explicit example of using scores as a dramaturgical tool and methodological framework. Using verbatim text, autobiographical and postdramatic devising techniques and archival research, the work advances Rebstock and Roesner's definition of 'composed theatre' (2012) and Curtin's 'orchestral theatre' (2019) by using music as a stimulus to structure theatre in form and content. Like *Traviata, Concerto* sought to introduce classical music to contemporary theatre audiences, by exploring, and making visible, the aesthetics and politics of classical concerts and piano recitals.

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[1] The title of Music Director was used to denote Egan's relationship to the materiality of the music as a composition rather than Musical Director, which suggests a relationship to the activity of presenting or conducting the music.

Concerto 'stages scores' by re-constructing/re-orchestrating narratives around its original composition and, at the same time, re-configuring the relationship between audience and performer into an immersive and embodied 'theatricalised concert' (Bonshek, 2006). Pinchbeck's research investigates musical approaches to dramaturgy and dramaturgical approaches to music. Here he will apply these critical lenses to his own practice-as-research, with specific reference to *Concerto*, by decoding and analysing how the musical score was rendered *as* performance and by drawing on interviews with the creative team.

Concerto invites the audience to become a figurative orchestra and observe the story of how Ravel's *Concerto for the Left Hand* was commissioned by Wittgenstein after he lost his right arm in World War One. It draws comparisons between Wittgenstein's and Ravel's experiences of war and the musical conflict between the two protagonists. Simultaneously, it explores a parallel narrative concerning the fate of Gavrilo Princip, who, after triggering the war by assassinating Archduke Franz Ferdinand, lost his left arm to tuberculosis. Before Princip's arm was amputated, it was tied up with a silver piano wire. The performance of *Concerto* follows this silver piano wire as a metaphorical thread, or *fils rouge*, throughout different narratives about war, conflict and musical composition.

The piece ends with a live recital of *Concerto for the Left Hand* by one-handed pianist Nicholas McCarthy.[2] On three occasions during the production run of *Concerto*, McCarthy was accompanied by a full orchestra and the piece was effectively performed 'in the round', with the orchestra positioned behind the performers and the audience sitting in front (see **Figure 7**). In both versions, the devisers/performers sat on piano stools using music stands to support their script/score, turning pages together. They invited the audience (and the orchestra, when present) to participate in moments of interaction, and cued them by speaking the word 'tutti'. This article explores how *Concerto* stages the score of Ravel's piano concerto and follows the structure of the music in its slow-fast-slow structure. Pinchbeck refers to other contemporary orchestral theatre that draws attention to the musicality of text, textuality of music, and places both audience and performers somewhere between a concert and a play.

We address the theoretical and dramaturgical concerns of *Traviata* and *Concerto* with reference to how both performances represent classical music in style and/or content. Our strategy for performance-making is explored through the (inter)musicality of

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[2] According to his website, concert pianist Nicholas McCarthy, is 'the only one-handed pianist to graduate from the Royal College of Music in its 130-year history. Nicholas is a champion of the dynamic and brave world of left-hand alone repertoire, a repertoire that first came into being in the early 19th Century and developed rapidly following the First World War as a result of the many injuries suffered [...]. Paul Wittgenstein was responsible for its 20th Century developments with his commissions with Ravel, Prokofiev and Benjamin Britten amongst others' (McCarthy, 2021).

text and (inter)textuality of music that is inherent in both case studies. We employ Benjamin's definition of prose in *One-Way Street* as a thematic through-line: 'Work on good prose has three steps: a musical stage when it is composed, an architectonic one when it is built, and a textile one when it is woven' (Benjamin, 2009: xxii). We explore these steps through our own case studies whilst also applying a complementary tripartite structure from Bonshek: 'I ask three questions of each work: what does [it] do, what does it interact with, and what kind of sensations or affects does it produce?' (Bonshek, 2006: x). These questions are overlapped with Benjamin's three steps for prose, enabling us to ask the following questions about the music score: (1) What does the score do? (musical) (2) What does it interact with? (architectonic) (3) What kind of sensations or affects does it produce? (textile). These theoretical starting points, after Bonshek and Benjamin, manifest themselves in elliptical introductions to sections of each case study: This is how it begins… (the score). This is how I begin… (the director/dramaturg). This is how they begin… (the performers). Finally, we ask, what does a dramaturg, or director, *do* when working with scores as a stimulus for contemporary performance? How are those scores made visible within it? Put simply, how can scores be staged?

Traviata: A Case Study in One Act

Figure 1: *Traviata* (Image credit: Plane Performance). Reproduced with permission of the company.

And this is how it begins...

> A prelude. Some red curtains.
> The curtain is raised.
> Violetta Valery, with the early stages of tuberculosis.
> A white dress.
> A head-set microphone.
> A transmitter.
> An audio processor.
> A mixing desk and amplifier. Some speakers.
> Three soloists.
> A conductor?
> An audience […] sat in a darkened room.
>
> An opera. *La Traviata*.
> Set entirely inside. (Plane Performance, 2010)

The text above is heard alongside the Prelude to *La Traviata* in the opening section of Plane Performance's practice-as-research project (See **Figure 1**), introducing not only the protagonist of the story, Violetta Valery, but also the company's means of production and the non-fictional details of the opera, which often remain tacit in conventional performance. The project sought to explore an alternative methodology for utilising and presenting the score and libretto, particularly when assumptions around how to stage the work are questioned. The subsequent performances presented these findings to an audience and demonstrated how Verdi's work could be reimagined through a re-framing of the musical content.

Opera scholar, Gary Schmidgall, notes: 'a *Traviata* performance without a superlative singing actress in the title role is as dismal a prospect as *Hamlet* without a fine prince' (1983: 3). Plane Performance's version of *La Traviata* did not fulfil this criterion. Instead, the project examined how to stage the opera without singers and orchestra and, rather than presenting a play version of the opera by stripping all of the musical content, it treated the musical score as another script that the company could dissect and modify, using Verdi's musical notation of *La Traviata* and Piave's libretto as *the* text for a devised theatre performance. Plane Performance has a history of deconstructing classic texts, developing contemporary reworkings of plays (*The Cherry Orchard* and *Three Sisters*), a movie (*Brief Encounter*) and a musical (*Carousel*). Artistic Director, Neil Mackenzie, takes these canonical texts as a starting point and in the same way that Etchells regards the score as 'a site of unrealised potential' (2015: 88) the texts

used by Plane Performance are seen as unfinished documents: scores that are to be interpreted, understood and realised by the company through a playful, interrogative rehearsal process.

Verdi's *La Traviata*, written in 1853, was chosen because of its canonical status and as 'the most frequently performed of Verdi's works for the lyric stage' (Schmidgall, 1983: 3). The opera is based on Alexandre Dumas' novel and play, *La Dame aux camélias* (1852), and tells the tragic tale of Violetta, a courtesan, who is forced to renounce her love for Alfredo Germont at the insistence of his disapproving father and then dies of consumption shortly after they reunite. Plane Performance not only present the fatal story, but demonstrate how the markings and compositional choices found in the score can also be valuable material for performance. In *Traviata*, the scores that the performers follow are present in the performance space, placed on music stands as a reminder that the performers are following, and activating, the material they read in front of them. The music of *La Traviata* is there to be played by the performers, just not in the conventional way with singers and instruments. These performers are not musicians. They don't have instruments. They don't even attempt to sing, but they do attempt to present, bar for bar, the music of Verdi's opera. The text being examined by the company had to include the broader compositional context of the opera. I [Kevin Egan] was brought into the research process to translate, and to re-orchestrate, the musical language of *La Traviata* into 'theatrical scores'.

In *Musicality in Theatre* (2016), Roesner uses the term *transposing* to explain the process of turning a musical score into a theatrical possibility, whereby the score is translated into an '"orchestra" of theatrical means: gestures, images, lighting, words' (Roesner, 2014: 214). The score of *La Traviata* was transposed into a language that could be 'played' by the director and performers, producing graphs and charts that could inform, for example, the structure of the performance, the emotional intensity of the performers' delivery, a set of gestural patterns and recurring motifs or the rhythm of the spoken text. In this way, the score became part of the devising process and kept the musical and theatrical realms in a discursive bind. *Traviata* reiterated what Verdi had written; it repeated the score but also re-invented it. This attitude of re-cycling and re-purposing the score accords with Roesner's definition of sampling, where 'any of the musical parameters (tempo, duration, pitch, timbre, volume) can be altered and samples can be combined, repeated, varied or fragmented' (Roesner, 2014: 222). Verdi's opera is sampled throughout the project, allowing elements of the composition (dynamic shifts, musical themes, rhythmic passages, etc.) to be embedded directly into the company's performance score during rehearsals. Verdi's composition becomes re-imagined and re-understood through

this transformation and follows a process similar to Rebstock's account of Elena Mendoza's music-theatre:

> The compositional process [...] does not stop when the score is finished; rather, it continues until the moment of performance, and the staging of the piece is to be considered right from the outset, instead of being understood as merely a subsequent interpretation of the score. (2019: 182)

Rebstock identifies the limitation of presenting a score as a fixed and stable artefact; what is 'written' cannot be the same as what is presented, even when the composer is not living. When devising a piece of music theatre based on a musical score, the latter must be altered so that a hybrid creation can emerge, one in which art forms are responsive to one another. With *Traviata*, the score guided the theatrical decisions in the way it informed the structure, tempo, dynamics and texture of the performance material, and the devising process necessitated an alternative arrangement of the musical score because it had to be compressed to fit a specific timescale, because sections had to be omitted or because parts of the score had been assigned elsewhere. Thus, both the performance and the composition had to adapt to accommodate the other. There is a Deleuzeian sense of *becoming* here, in the way that both the theatrical and operatic elements became deterritorialised and transformed through the way the company approached and understood both disciplines.[3] The staging of the operatic score became a more theatrical endeavour without the musicians to bring the opera to life. This, in turn, allowed the music of the opera to be experienced through an alternate system of representation that one might not consider *as* opera. Conversely, the performance material was guided by the operatic score and required an approach that drew more on the musical and operatic qualities of the theatrical material to become something that might not be recognised *as* theatre.

Traviata existed neither as opera nor theatre event; it became what I would term a kind of 'operatic-theatre' or 'theatricalised-opera', where a new plateau emerged. *Traviata* was becoming-opera in much the same way that Steven Pustay writes about Busby Berkeley's musical cinematic sequences of the 1930s as 'becoming-music'

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[3] Deleuze and Guattari examine the notion of becoming in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987), demonstrating a process of deterritorialization through a series of becomings. In the introduction they discuss the orchid and the wasp and how they transform one other (a becoming-wasp of the orchid and a becoming-orchid of the wasp), stating 'each of these becomings brings about the deterritorialization of one term and the reterritorialization of the other; the two becomings interlink and form relays in a circulation of intensities' (1987: 10).

(2015). Pustay suggests that an inverse taxonomy of music to that found in Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) can be applied to Berkeley's sequences, 'because Berkeley's films […] are structured like music – they are films where the image has "become music" in order to visualize and deterritorialize the milieu of the music itself' (Pustay, 2015: 178). In generating my own scores from Verdi's opera I was able to make the music more visible, helping to guide the company's actions and activities through a range of musical parameters. What an audience experiences, then, is not a representation of *La Traviata,* not music that works to support the dramatic action, but music that is seen and music that does not rely solely on its aurality. It is a theatre event that, through the embodiment and entanglement of the opera's composition, is extending out toward a non-musical opera; both Plane Performance's theatre and Verdi's musical composition are 'becoming-*Traviata*'. Similarly, Demetris Zavros applies Deleuze and Guattari's notion of 'becoming' in relation to his music-theatre practice. Zavros describes a section of his performance, *Metaxi ALogon*, where 'sound (music) is used to present the audience with a form of "deterritorialised" seeing and the visual is used to allow a "deterritorialised" form of hearing' (2012: 223). For *Traviata*, Verdi's score was deterritorialised through the 'theatricalised scores', allowing the formal composition to be experienced anew through its visibility on stage as document, gesture, structure and action.

And this is how I begin… I count the bars of the score, I catalogue the changes in dynamics, tempo, time signatures and voices. I pare the score down into acts, scenes, numbers and bars. I look for shapes from within the music. I find ways to extend the smallest component parts of *La Traviata*. I offer the company specific ways of 'playing' elements of the entire opera over and over again. My research was concerned with the arrangement of Verdi's notation into various performance scores, taking elements of the music and re-presenting them in a range of visual forms. These maintain a relationship to the original but the transformation enables non-musical (or non-music professional) performers to follow the score without needing to be able to read musical notation. For instance, **Figure 2** takes the entire score's tempo markings and re-frames them as a graphic score (with left to right denoting speed and top to bottom representing the number of bars), which allows the performer more scope and interpretive freedom to generate or shape the musical cues notated in the score. In rehearsals for *Traviata* I would conduct the performers using these graphic scores to moderate the emotional intensity of their delivery, or the speed at which they would execute a series of gestures. The whole structure of Verdi's choice of tempi was enacted and condensed into a short performance sequence.
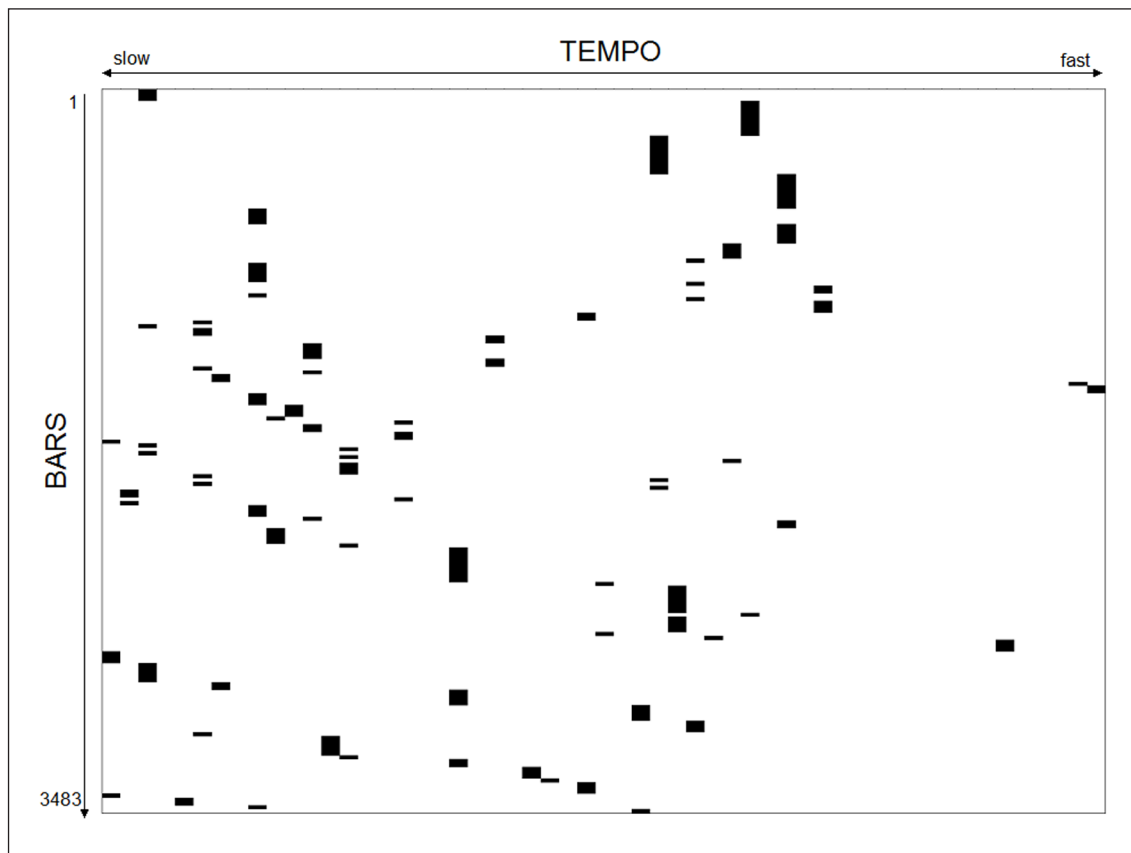
Figure 2: Traviata tempo score. Prepared by Kevin Egan. Reproduced with permission of the author.

My orchestrations did not deny the musical qualities of the opera; they merely found alternative ways to present them, taking into account the shape of the music and the expertise of those who sought to re-activate it. Plane Performance's *Traviata* was not an opera for musicians; it was a theatre project that engaged with the music, story and composition of the opera. Thus, the adaptation had to reflect this transference from music to theatre. This process of translation to fit a particular context or perspective already happens in the way a conductor might annotate and adapt an opera to satisfy certain time restraints, musical abilities or to change the narrative arc of a specific production.

David Hamilton notes that conductors have altered Verdi's music to 'improve' it because of an inherent 'lack' or a perceived problem with the original. He mentions the conductor Tuillo Serafin, who 'used to throw in a chord that served as a harmonic pivot' (Hamilton, 1983: 37) and claims that, for the purposes of consolidating the

gap between dramatic and musical tension, 'most conductors introduce a rapid descending scale in the violins, which by its brilliance and its direction makes a stab at discharging the accumulated energy' (ibid.) Hamilton offers a number of occurrences where Verdi's composition was not appropriate for the context in which it was played, bringing to mind Foucault's statement that any iteration of a text, which by its very nature becomes a commentary on that text, 'must say for the first time what had, nonetheless, already been said, and must tirelessly repeat what had, however, never been said' (Foucault, 1981: 58). *Traviata* demonstrates the elasticity of the score: as an instruction to play the music and as an instruction to re-write the music for the stage.

Plane Performance 'add-apted' Verdi's score, to use John Bull's term (Bull, 2018). Bull proposes that in an 'add-apted text the additions are both deliberate and significant' (2018: 284), Plane Performance offered a unique representation of the opera, but it still acknowledged its relationship and fidelity to Verdi's score. It presented the narrative structure, the musical structure, and an operatic structure. **Figure 3** shows the breakdown of Verdi's score into bars, scenes, acts, and score numbers, translated into a time-sequence that equates one bar with one second. This ensured the company maintained a structural relationship to the original and the 3,483 bars of the opera became fifty-eight minutes and three seconds of *Traviata*. The structure of the opera remained, but the time had been compressed. Bull identifies playwright Simon Stephens' approach to add-apting canonical texts as one 'which largely adheres to the narrative structure of the original but feels free to play with, in particular, dialogue' (Bull, 2018: 280). Plane Performance also adhered to the structure of *La Traviata*, as a narrative and a composition, whilst playing with how the music was translated and re-enacted.

In the introduction to *Nuclear War & The Songs for Wende*, Stephens refers to a recording that Wende sent him of 'The Song of Yes' (for which he wrote the lyrics) where he hears the orchestra's viola player roaring as the song reaches its frenetic finale: 'He was so excited by the song that he couldn't stop himself from roaring' (Stephens, 2017: 9). Stephens saw the viola player's expressive, spontaneous action as capturing 'the essence of the type of collaboration I have always cherished and want to encourage' (Ibid.). The viola player's ability to affect the composition, to not only 'play' the music but to *be* the music and change the music, is also evident in Plane Performance's *Traviata*. Just as Stephens' text supported the viola player's impromptu outburst, so too can Verdi's score, through my own filtering process, allow for a similar form of

Traviata Sections

Act 1						
Score No.	Bars (time)	Scene	Bars (time)	Description	Bars (time)	
No. 1	49			**Prelude**	**49**	
No. 2	796 (13:16)	Scene 1	58	**Introduction**	58	**181 (3:01)**
		Scene 2	395 (6:35)	Alfredo arrives	123 (2:03)	
				Brindisi	**194 (3:14)**	
				Waltz-Duet	78 (1:18)	**349 (5:49)**
		Scene 3	271 (4:31)	V goes to mirror	271 (4:31)	
		Scene 4	72 (1:12)	**Guests return**	**72 (1:12)**	
No. 3	252 (4:12)	Scene 5	252 (4:12)	**V Aria and Finale**	**252 (4:12)**	

Act 2a					
Score No.	Bars (time)	Scene	Bars (time)	Description	Bars (time)
No. 4	183 (3:03)	Scene 1	68 (1:08)	**Alfredo Aria**	**183 (3:03)**
		Scene 2	31	Anina enters	
		Scene 3	84 (1:24)	Alfredo Aria	
No. 5	398 (6:38)	Scene 4	14	**V and G Duet**	**398 (6:38)**
		Scene 5	384 (6:24)	V opens letter	
No. 6	311 (5:11)	Scene 6	104 (1:44)	**Violetta**	**104 (1:44)**
		Scene 7	34	**Germont Aria**	**207 (3:27)**
		Scene 8	173 (2:53)	Alfredo gets letter	

Act 2b						
Score No.	Bars (time)	Scene	Bars (time)	Description	Bars (time)	
No. 7	750 (12:30)	Scene 9	42	**Finale**	**42**	
		Scene 10	84 (1:24)	**Zingarelle**	**84 (1:24)**	
		Scene 11	201 (3:21)	**Matador**	**201 (3:21)**	
		Scene 12	173 (2:53)	**Alfredo! Voi!**	173 (2:53)	**360 (6:00)**
		Scene 13	91 (1:31)	Violetta returns	91 (1:31)	
		Scene 14	36	All enter confused	36	
		Scene 15	123 (2:03)	Germont enters	60	
				Largo del Finale II	**63 (1:03)**	

Act 3						
Score No.	Bars (time)	Scene	Bars (time)	Description	Bars (time)	
No. 8	204 (3:24)	Scene 1	59	**Violetta Aria**	59	**204 (3:24)**
		Scene 2	24	Doctor arrives	24	
		Scene 3	16	Doctor leaves	16	
		Scene 4	179 (2:59)	V takes out letter	105 (1:45)	
No. 9	74 (1:14)			**Baccanale**	**74 (1:14)**	
No. 10	320 (5:20)	Scene 5	466 (7:46)	**V & A Duet**	**320 (5:20)**	
No. 11	146 (2:26)			**Finale**	**146 (2:26)**	

Figure 3: Traviata timings and structure. Prepared by Kevin Egan. Reproduced with permission of the author.

collaboration, where the performers on stage may find themselves, metaphorically, roaring over the music – adding to, interpreting and 'playing' *with* the score, as can be seen in **Figure 4**.

My translated scores help to re-structure the performance according to Verdi's compositional choices, allowing for a re-assessment of the way in which the theatrical material functions and operates. The material the company generated was, in some ways, co-authored with Verdi, who served as what Roesner might call 'a kind of co-director in [the] process and an omnipresent additional collaborator on stage' (Roesner, 2008: 6). The company allowed the past and the present to sit side by side: a dialogue between a dead composer and a contemporary performance company. His written notation instructed and informed the project and gave them clues about how to perform or present the material; this material was then layered back over his score, added to it, and existed with it. In doing so, *La Traviata* haunts the performance of *Traviata*. These scores served to remind the company of the project's relationship to Verdi's music and to advocate for its use

Figure 4: Traviata (Image credit: Plane Performance). Reproduced with permission of the company.

within the creative process – to use it in the way that Stephens' writes about his own texts, to offer it as a suggestion: as something that needs to be engaged with, but something that does not eliminate the creative processes of those who use it: 'As long as the collaborators, however they define themselves, engage seriously with the content of the text they should feel a freedom to play and to explore' (Stephens, 2017: 3).

And this is how they begin… The performance replaces the orchestra with an audio track of sections of the music. It condenses the large number of musicians required for Verdi's opera to just three 'players'. The performers describe and demonstrate the music, following the three-act structure of the original. Voices are digitally manipulated to turn female performers into male baritones and tenors. The performers get caught up in the emotions of the music, in the tragedy of it all, in the intensity of the dramatic moment. They read, they play, they follow the music whilst an audience is drawn into the narrative of the opera. They are given a glass of wine during the party scene in Violetta's house in Act One, offered flowers when Violetta does the same to Alfredo as a promise to return, and are left with a picture of the performer's 'former years' as Violetta herself would like to be remembered. The audience is as close to the stage as an orchestra would be, and they too are invited to get lost in the moment, to get swept up by the big gestures and the histrionics.

Traviata lays out the opera, with the assumptions, misgivings, mistakes and conventions that it is bound by, and displays the 'operatic' in a comparable way to the multi-disciplinary company, Post-Operative Productions: 'our practice is deconstructive, anatomising rather than suturing the disparate components of the operatic' (Till, 2004: 22). The arias in *Traviata* are particularly directed towards the representation of the opera's musicality and demonstrate this anatomising of the operatic that Till alludes to. The aria is a focal point of operatic performance, typically featuring a rich sonic landscape and a virtuosic display of vocal dexterity. Yet the way in which this is manifested in the performance of *Traviata* is not quite the 'sweet music' you would expect. For instance, the audio that is heard in Violetta's first aria is a translation of the dynamic and tempo shifts that occur, bar for bar, in the aria. The original composition is substituted for a slow-paced, minimalist musical pattern involving the first three notes of the aria. Incidentally, the pitches an audience hears are an extended version of the very last note of the prelude, but electronically transposed: another instance in which Verdi's music is sampled and re-contextualised.

Figure 5: Traviata Violetta Aria 1. Prepared by Kevin Egan. Reproduced with permission of the author.

As can be seen in **Figure 5**, the performance score for these arias bears little resemblance to the operatic score from which the material is structured, yet the arias nonetheless follow a set of rules that are governed by the source text. In my score I used seven images from a filmed performance of the aria, which showed a range of facial expressions and postures of the singer playing Violetta, and these were arbitrarily assigned to the seven main notes of the scale. The pitches at the beginning and end of each musical phrase in the aria were used to identify which 'note-images' were to be included in my performance score. The images were then annotated to distinguish whether those notes were an octave higher and/or sharpened or flattened according to Verdi's original notation. These differences were represented in the performance by small shifts in the performer's re-creation of the note-images, such as the raising and lowering of the body or the direction of their gaze. The trajectory of the musical phrase (rising, falling or returning to the same note) was also used in the first aria to indicate the direction of travel that performer Anna Fenemore took; the number of bars for each phrase dictated the number of steps along the path.

Hamilton explains that the solo scene at the end of Act 1, which is the focus of **Figure 5**, was a well-established pattern for Italian opera of the time and consisted of:

(i)   An introductory recitative to establish the dramatic and emotional situation;

(ii)   An aria in a slow or moderate tempo;

(iii)   An episode in which the situation changes […] or a decision is taken;

(iv)   The cabaletta, a fast and vigorous concluding aria, repeated literally after brief intervening material for chorus or secondary singer.
(Hamilton, 1983: 36)

Even though Plane Performance's *Traviata* does not concede to the same demands of operatic convention, it does still mimic a trajectory that is structurally similar. As the company re-present the opera in the final sections of Act 1, the following pattern replaces, but contains, the opera's transition from slow to fast aria:

(i)   An introductory speech, projected, to establish the dramatic and emotional context of the aria;

(ii)   A physical translation of the aria as a slow, controlled walk, identifying the rise and fall of each musical phrase with specific operatic gestures.

(iii)   A break from the music, where the performer sits down and looks at the score, re-establishing her own presence.

(iv)   An animated and direct-address delivery of the text accompanied by the upbeat music *Happy Surf* from the film *Il Deserto Roso* (Antonioni, 1964).

In this section of *La Traviata* Plane Performance represents the shape and flow of the music through the visual cues of the performer. They represent the dramatic text by reciting the English translation (or by offering an English translation as an audio track when Fenemore recites the Italian version). They represent the dynamic and tempo shifts in the audio that is heard (which also 're-plays' the last note of the Prelude over and over again). They represent the operatic convention of slow to fast in its temporal organisation of the performance. They also allude to the skill and dexterity of the singer in the way the performer follows the intricate details of my translated scores, bringing the music to life. This is what the company did when they took the opera and placed it into a theatrical frame. This is how they used the music, took it apart and rearranged it: to represent the opera, to display the opera. To show the music and stage the score.

Concerto: **A Case Study in One Movement**

Figure 6: Concerto (Image credit: Julian Hughes). Reproduced with the permission of the photographer.

And this is how it begins...

> **Conductor:** It starts very low just double basses and then a contrabassoon
> **Musician:** The bass and the cello. He's presenting a dark start to the piece
> **Pianist:** I don't know what was going through Ravel's head at the time but it tells a musical story
> **Conductor:** And then slowly instruments come in, horns come in
> **Pianist:** I love that build up, that long orchestral build up
> **Musician:** There's definitely mood and emotion to it and your heartrate changes throughout the piece, your feelings.
> **Conductor:** There's a great big chord.
> **Pianist:** Elation (Pinchbeck, 2016)

This text above features interviews I [Michael Pinchbeck] conducted with a pianist, conductor and a cellist and was played as part of the original soundscape to *Concerto*

over Ravel's *Piano Concerto for the Left Hand* (1928).[4] I interviewed them as they listened to the same piece of music. They describe the opening section of Ravel's concerto, when the orchestra is playing before the pianist comes in and the way the music builds in the first pages of the score (See **Figure 6**). There were two lines of enquiry here, one musicological enquiry (what is being played?) and one phenomenological enquiry (how does it feel to play it?). As I interviewed the conductor, you hear him leafing through the score as he speaks and describes when the instruments come in. This recalls the way the composer, Salieri, describes Mozart's *Adagio for the Serenade for 13 Wind Instruments* in Peter Shaffer's play *Amadeus* (1981). Re-staged with a live orchestra at the National Theatre in 2016, *Amadeus* asks the audience to immerse themselves in the music and is part of a wave of what Curtin has termed 'orchestral theatre' (Curtin, 2019). Standing downstage listening to the music, Salieri speaks this text.

> **Salieri:** It started simply enough: just a pulse in the lower registers – bassoons and basset horns – like a rusty squeezebox. It would have been comic except for the slowness, which gave it instead a sort of serenity. And then, suddenly, high above it, sounded a single note on the oboe…
> *We hear it* (Shaffer, 1981)

It is Shaffer's stage direction, 'we hear it', which is most pertinent to this article's investigation. In the same way that Salieri is speaking over Mozart's *Adagio* and the audience is able to hear both the music and his description of it, so the voices of the musical interviewees (conductor, pianist and cellist) speak over the concerto that they are describing; the Conductor's final words 'there's a great, big chord' usher in the chord they refer to and the Pianist's final word 'Elation' is drowned out by the crescendo that brings in the piano. In these two examples, with performances inspired by Mozart and Ravel, the audience hears both composers' works but they are present in words and notes, text and music. Another interview is played over the music at the end of the performance of *Concerto*:

> **Conductor:** Conducting is breathing with your arms.
> **Musician:** The breath you take just before the conductor drops his baton is the most incredible moment you know when you run up a flight of stairs and you miss the top step and your heart is leaping out of your chest.
> **Pianist:** Nerves are going. Heart is pounding.
> **Conductor:** Let the target take the arrow. (Pinchbeck, 2016)

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4 I use the term soundscape for the hybrid landscape of original music and classical music. The soundscape for *Concerto* was composed by Chris Cousin, using samples from the original music and clips of interviews with the pianist (Nicholas McCarthy), the conductor (Paul Jenkins) and a cellist (Hester Claridge). You can hear an excerpt of this soundtrack on the promotional video for the performance here: https://vimeo.com/198220021.

This time, the interviewees were asked to talk about 'how it feels' to play this piece of music by Ravel and to consider 'what affects or sensations are produced' (Bonshek, 2006) in this 'evocative dramaturgy' (Barba, 2010). The answers are physical/physiological – 'breathing with your arms' – or emotional/visceral – 'heart is leaping out of your chest', 'Heart is pounding'. The image of 'running up a flight of stairs' presents a visual metaphor for the slowly building crescendo in the music and the heightened tension felt by the pianist waiting for his entrance. Compare this to Shaffer's *Amadeus* when Salieri describes leaving the concert of Mozart's music because of the pain he feels listening to the *Adagio*:

> **Salieri:** But the squeezebox went on and on, and the pain cut deeper into my shaking head, until suddenly I was running—
> *The music continues fainter underneath*
> —dashing through the side-door, stumbling downstairs into the street. (Shaffer, 1981)

We see here another parallel between *Concerto* and *Amadeus*: describing music while the music in question is heard and using image and metaphor to place characters or players in relation to the score and how it feels to play or hear it. Shaffer's *We hear it* means we are invited to feel it too. The target the conductor refers to might be the audience; the arrow is the music. Both scenes refer to a falling up or downstairs as a metaphor for the affects or sensations the music produces (similar to the 'falling' Egan references in **Figure 5**) but both *Amadeus* and *Concerto* are trying to make the audience 'feel' the music and contribute to a sense of Barba's 'evocative dramaturgy' (Barba, 2010). The fact that the musical score is also on display, in Salieri's hand, or on the music stands in front of musicians or performers in *Concerto* (see **Figure 7**), makes the audience aware of the score's presence as text/script. The National Theatre's 2016 production of *Amadeus* and my co-devised production of *Concerto* both use direct address to an audience, 'place' their audiences in other theatres at other performances, and have onstage technicians, stagehands and musicians in contemporary dress throughout. Even though the performance is 'set' at a Mozart opera in the 1790s or a Ravel concert in the 1920s, we are always reminded that we are *at* the theatre watching a show. Both performances place the audience *in* the music.

And this is how I begin… In September 2015, I was invited to make a devised performance with BA Contemporary Theatre and Performance students at Manchester Metropolitan University for an artist-led project. This led to a crossover between myself and Egan who, working at MMU, had already introduced students to notions of score theatre and composed theatre. When presenting a stimulus to the class during the first workshop, I played Ravel's *Concerto for the Left Hand* and presented a video of a pianist waiting for his cue to begin playing, which is not until after the first two minutes of

Figure 7: Concerto (Image credit: Julian Hughes). Reproduced with the permission of the photographer.

music have elapsed. Devising tasks involved how it 'feels' to be waiting to make an entrance and what may be happening in the body at that time and how it relates to performing.

I left the performers with the music and the image of a pianist waiting to play and asked them to research the people involved in the music and its conception: Ravel (composer), Wittgenstein (pianist) and Princip (assassin). The class talked about how Ravel had been lost in the woods outside Verdun during the war for 10 days, listening to gunfire. I asked the performers to think about how this might have affected the composer and his music. Ravel's *Frontispiece* was played and conversation shifted to the story of how Ravel wrote this tribute for five friends he lost during the war to be played by five hands. The group discussed Wittgenstein and how he lost his arm during the war, and how Princip's left arm withered away and was tied up using a piano wire. The metaphorical motif for *Concerto* became a piano wire: used to make music, played by a one-handed pianist who lost an arm in the First World War, written by a composer who was a truck driver in that war, and tied around the withered arm of an assassin whose gunshot caused that war. A piano wire was a conceptual throughline for the piece, whilst also literally enabling the piano onstage to play the music. It operated as a dramaturgical *fil rouge* for our performance.

When I returned to the students after a month, the resulting piece was called *Ten Days* and involved musical manuscripts, wine glasses, leaves, music stands, apples, pencils and a piano. All of these materials, concepts, contexts and performers would form part of the touring version of *Concerto*. For this version, more research was conducted into the lives of Ravel, Princip and Wittgenstein. During the devising process the ensemble composed all material together, writing and crafting *en masse*, with lines of varying narratives zig-zagging across one another. Ollie Smith (dramaturg) and I ('conductor/director') led the company in what Smith describes as 'navigating a way through, drawing out counter-melodies and 'keeping time'' (Smith, 2016).

Concerto was devised and performed with Katt Perry, Ryan O'Shea and Mark Hawkhead. They played specific, named characters (Ravel, Princip and Wittgenstein) and more generic roles (conductor, assassin and pianist). They were also onstage as themselves, dressed formally for a concert. We were joined for every performance of *Concerto* by the professional pianist, Nicholas McCarthy. Though he was primarily with us to play the score of Ravel's *Concerto for the Left Hand*, he acted as a 'piano consultant', revealing aspects of the music as we were exploring it. McCarthy described how he has to warm up before each performance to 'make friends with the piano' and 'prepare the engine' (Pinchbeck, 2016a) as much of what he plays across the keyboard requires him to move his torso as well as his hand. In this context, we might reframe McCarthy's role as piano-dramaturg.

Concerto had two possible variations: one performed with a solo pianist, the other with a full orchestra (and pianist). Both were designed to invite the audience to 'play the part' of the orchestra. Each audience member was given a selection of items – a musical manuscript (part of the score from *Concerto for the Left Hand*), an apple, a pencil – to be used at different times during the performance when performers said 'tutti', meaning 'all together'. At each performance, at least two rows of seats were lined up with music stands for audience members who wanted to sit at the front and feel more like they were part of the performance. Collated audience feedback often focused on how it felt to be 'part of the event' and sit 'in the orchestra', and the tangible shift from theatre performance to musical recital when McCarthy played. Plane Performance Artistic Director, Neil Mackenzie, wrote that:

> Being an orchestra is very much about collective creation, about highly skilled individuals working together to create a harmony, and there is something fascinating about seeing a theatre audience (and concert audience) as that. (Mackenzie, 2016)

Andrew Westerside, co-director of Proto-Type Theater, wrote:

> … a piano in the background vibrates with its silence. It's difficult, I think, because it's important. Or at least, the sound of that importance was the sound played loudest when I heard Pinchbeck's *Concerto*'. (Westerside, 2016)

The 'sound of silence' that Westerside describes lasts for 45 minutes when the piano is left un-played and is followed by an intense rush of notes that carry with them the images and narrative portrayed onstage beforehand. The music becomes augmented, inhabited with the story of its inception. *Concerto* invited audiences to make connections, to become active viewers by 'conducting' various sources and narratives about Princip, Wittgenstein and Ravel. It asked them to embrace intertextuality, between the musical score and the story of its composition, to encourage dialogue, reinterpretation and transformation of the material.

The devising process included field research in and around Paris. When I visited the *Museé Maison Ravel* I was offered a tour of the house and its garden. I recorded the audio and later transcribed and translated it as potential material. This tour formed the basis for a scene in the first draft of *Concerto*. The tour guide referred to 'Monsieur Ravel' in the present tense, as if he still inhabited his house. She recounted how he was once late for a concert because he wanted to change his socks. This material was repurposed when a concert pianist recalled going on tour with Ravel and we were able to place it into the narrative. The devising process was informed by Roger Nichols' 2011 biography of Ravel that documents how he used a walking stick and clapped his hands to mark time. We sampled these movements by using a walking stick, or clapping our hands, to represent the precision of Ravel's music. Ryan O'Shea, as Ravel, was meticulous in how he made these movements. As Eva Cybulska states of Ravel, 'Always meticulous about his personal appearance, he was unlikely to present himself, as he would a composition, to the world in an "unfinished" state' (Cybulska, 1997: 576).

And this is how they begin… During the making of *Concerto*, members of the creative team wrote blog posts, reflecting on the devising process. After a performance in Cologne, O'Shea reflected on a workshop the company led and recalled an audience member making 'insightful points about 'pushing the boundaries of theatre' and how this type of devising process, and the performance of *Concerto*, ebbs at the boundaries of theatre and even bleeds into other artforms such as music recitals' (O'Shea, 2018). *Concerto* took one year to make in response to a piece of music that lasts approximately 20 minutes. *Concerto* lasts over an hour, up to five times longer than the music than inspired it. The work explores what Etchells describes as 'pure dramaturgy. Making shape out of seconds' (2009: 71). Etchells writes about the relationship between composition and Forced Entertainment's work: 'performance for us was always closer

to certain schools of painting or musical composition than it might have been to drama…' (2009: 78).

It is in the composition of material for *Concerto* that the company '[made] shape out of seconds' and engaged in the temporal act of translating musical material into theatrical material. In doing so, they '[annotated] and [plotted] the timeline', following Etchells, and explored 'a scene with a structure, a piece of time that unfolds with a particular direction, a piece of time with a particular weight that can be used as an element in a larger dramaturgy' (Etchells, 2009: 74). According to the historical record, Ravel urged other conductors to stick to the tempo when conducting his work.[5] I endeavoured to 'stick to the tempo' when adapting it in performance and often Ravel's musical notations in terms of tempo or volume would become the 'stage directions' or the 'director's note'. If a performer asked how to perform a particular fragment of text or movement, I would often reply: 'Play it like the music'.

We used Ravel's music to underscore a sequence in which performers used objects as props, or as a 'score-prop' (Spagnolo, 2017). A musical manuscript, leaves, a walking stick, apples, batons and pencils became 'score-props', used to represent different signifiers in the story we were telling. However, performers found ways for objects to be transformed, so apples became bombs, batons became guns or cigarettes, and musical scores were torn and turned into snow. The objects occupy an 'in-between state', somewhere between apple and bomb, baton and a gun. Etchells cites an interview with Ron Vawter of the Wooster Group, who stated: 'What we tend to do… is to appropriate from several different sources at the same time. That way we can juggle all these separate things until the weights are familiar and then a new kind of theatre text is created between these different places' (Vawter in Etchells, 2009: 75).

Etchells suggests 'the text is what happens in between the material – the friction, the sparks, the silences that happen when two objects pass by each other' (Etchells, 2009: 75). Even when it was not used in the final performance, music had been used as scaffolding for the process. Rachael Walton, Artistic Director of Third Angel, movement dramaturg on *Concerto,* writes about how Third Angel uses scaffolding in devising material: 'Once we have a lot of these exercises, we try to connect them and then take the scaffolding down that's around them, so the process of making it isn't evident in the work that is shared' (quoted in Walton, 2018). Scaffolding enables something to

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[5] There is a detailed account of Ravel's infamous disagreement with Toscanini about how he conducted *Bolero* in Nichols' *Ravel* (2011: 301–302). According to a witness, 'Ravel merely pulled out an imposing old-fashioned watch out of his pocket… "A minute and a half too fast"', was all he deigned to say. Then he turned on his heel and walked with dignity out of the theatre. Toscanini and Ravel never met again' (Nichols, 2011: 301).

be built, but is not necessary when construction is completed. In *Concerto*, the music is the scaffolding, used as a structural form to hold the material. When material reached a point where scaffolding could be removed, we did so, but the music remained in the way performers tapped their baton on a music stand, crunched an apple into a microphone, or the character of Ravel marked time with his walking stick. The piano finale was marked by an absence of music, as the pianist left silences where an orchestra would play and the long *sostenuto* of each note was left hanging in the air. When we performed with an orchestra, we would still mark these silences, in the same way that the performers would make eye contact every time they turned a page of the 'score-prop'. Audience interactions with objects onstage included biting an apple, tapping a pencil on a music stand to welcome the pianist onstage, and tearing up the front page of the musical score of *Concerto for the Left Hand* and throwing it in the air. In doing so, their gestures became part of the musical notation of the piece, marking time with the score. These moments of togetherness, between audience and performer, spoke to the etymology of concerto. As Westerside writes in the programme note for *Concerto*:

> In a 1971 article for the *Italica* journal, A. C. Keys suggested that the etymology of *concerto* belongs in-part to a complex genealogy of *conserere*, the past participle of *conserto*: to join, to unite, to weave, and *consertare*: to compete, to strive, to fight. Following Keys, then, *concerto* is a word that reads uneasily, a word at war with itself. It is both unison and separation, a weaving and an unwinding, a calm and a chaos. It strikes me, as I reflect on the piece, that *this Concerto* is precisely that: a playing out of *conserere* and *conserto* which weaves its tale like a complex tapestry. (Westerside, 2016)

The piece explores other aspects of the narratives around the composition's 'ravelling and unravelling', such as Ravel's mental deterioration and the onset of dementia which, some scholars have argued, manifests itself in his later music via repetitive rhythms, for example, *Bolero* (1928). As Cybulska points out, 'Ravel composed it shortly after the emergence of the first neurological signs and symptoms' (Cybulska, 1997: 577). Neary suggests that '... perseveration is one of the most striking features in patients with fronto-temporal atrophy' (Neary, 1988: 353-361). Ravel's health is explored with reference to both a taxi accident that affected his ability to compose and remember material and to his diagnosis of Pick's disease. Nichols, Ravel's biographer, notes how 'the act of writing [became] impossibly difficult for Ravel' (Nichols, 2011: 334); however, Ravel left a corpus of challenging work. Ravel's contemporary, the pianist, Madeleine Grey, recalled that '[he] was terribly demanding to work with, because his scores left nothing to chance' (Nichols, 2011: 343). Ravel said of his concerto for the left hand, 'In

a work of this kind it is essential to give the impression of a texture no thinner than that of a part written for both hands' (quoted in Nichols, 2011: 318). Our conductor described hearing Ravel's music as a 'wave crashing down on you' (Pinchbeck, 2016a). This idea of a wave is referenced in the performance text: 'When the orchestra plays. It is like the sea is crashing over you' (Pinchbeck, 2016). *Concerto* explored this visceral sense of the music and its phenomenological impact. The question, 'what sensations or affects are produced?' (Bonshek, 2006), was answered not only in the devising process but in the performance text itself. The wave had a physical effect too, and by the end of our performance, *Concerto* had the aesthetic of an installation more than a concert, with musical scores, leaves, pencils and apples littering the usually pristine concert hall, to be the backdrop or *mise en scène* of the piano recital (see **Figure 8**).

Conclusion

And this is how it ends… It ends with a final shared reflection on a methodology defined through the authors' music-centric practice in the making of contemporary performance. It ends with a reference to the rhizomatic and tacit relationship between musicology and dramaturgy in this kind of work. The writer, Moises Kaufman, describes
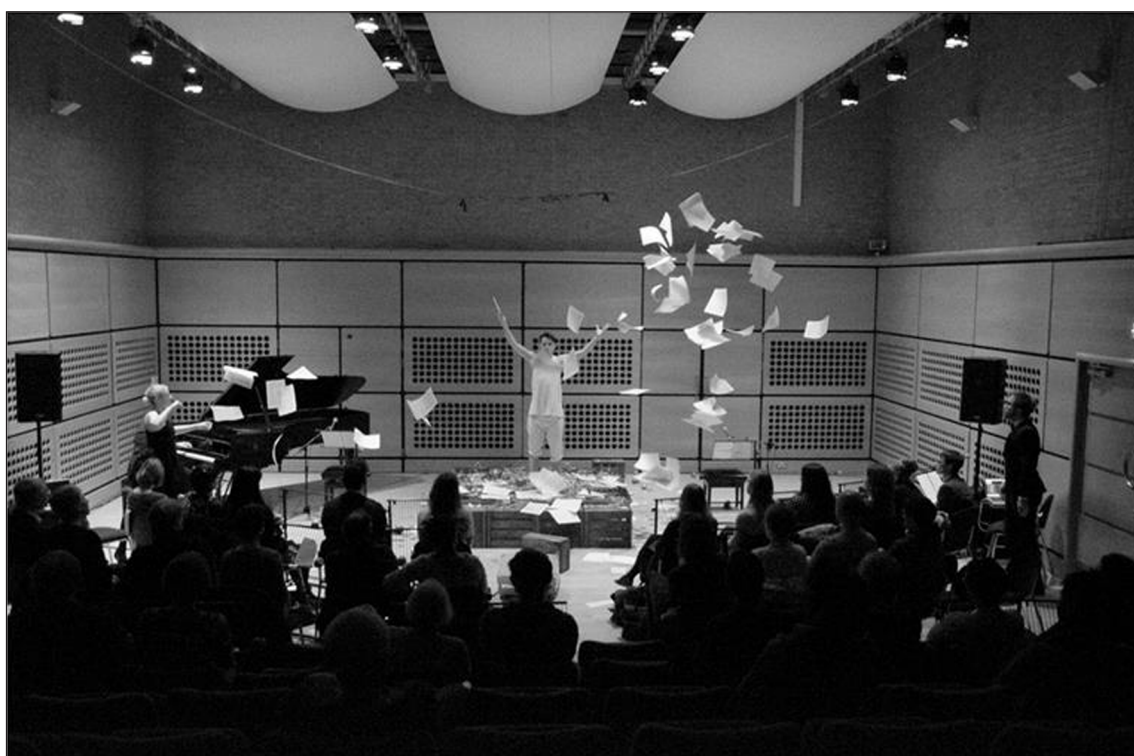
Figure 8: Concerto (Image credit: Julian Hughes). Reproduced with the permission of the photographer.

the process of researching his play inspired by Beethoven's final waltz, *33 Variations* (2007):

> I immersed myself in Beethoven's diaries and sketchbooks, did a great deal of historical research, and conducted a multitude of interviews with contemporary musicologists… Tables were soon covered with source material. (Kaufman in Bly, 2020: ix)

He writes of the work Mark Bly brought to the process as dramaturg as follows:

> Mark asked questions, questioned our assumptions, and gave us exercises to discover the truth at the heart of the play… [I]t launched us into a new sequence of discoveries. (Kaufman in Bly, 2020: x)

This article aimed to present the reader with the questions asked of the music and the composers who wrote it as part of the dramaturgical process. It sought to document discoveries whilst acknowledging that practice-research is a process of discovery in itself. Like the dramaturg or historian, the practice-researcher is looking for something, whether it is a logic, a structure or a story. In the case of these two case studies, the music was a scaffolding employed to build and inhabit a theatrical structure. This is visible to the artists/devisers/performers but not necessarily to the audience. It is the role of the director/dramaturg/music director to help the building of this structure, or the removal of it, once material can remain in place after devising. This is not without its challenges, as dramaturg and academic, David Williams, suggests: 'The most difficult thing of all… is that sense of being kind of close up and far away… having a real sense of how things are put together and how those details might relate to some broader structure that in turn will feed back into the micro-detail…' (Williams in Turner and Behrndt, 2007: 182).

This article refers both to a broad structure of score-based work and the micro-detail to give a sense of what was sought and how, in seeking it, the music (un)ravelled. Egan describes himself as concerned with form, using shapes and patterns of music to interfere with the structures of theatre. Pinchbeck is concerned with finding a dramaturgical structure to contain musicological and biographical content. Egan explores the notation of Verdi's opera, taking the strict bar-by-bar structure of *La Traviata* and transposing music-time into theatre-time. Pinchbeck explores the dynamics of Ravel's *Concerto for the Left Hand* and takes an audience on a journey that mirrors the music, following the composer's dictum that it should 'be played in two parts without pause' by ending the theatrical interpretation with a piano recital. Egan

sees theatre as a musical construct, and seeks to expose and translate the complexities of musical composition for theatre audiences. Pinchbeck sees concerts as a theatrical construct, and seeks to deconstruct, demystify or decode their formal conventions. Egan applies the formal process of deconstruction to composition to distil notes to a pure theatrical equivalent. Pinchbeck transposes musical dynamics into stage directions. *Andante* becomes the walking pace of a performer. A *crescendo* becomes a cue to throw the score in the air (see **Figure 8**). Both researchers see their respective scores as a rich source of theatrical material with the potential to be staged, restaged and reinterpreted, like music itself.

The two performances cited in this article prove that music scores provide directors and devisors with viable material with which to devise theatrical performances. They allow directors and devisers to work with pre-existing material from another artform. The story of composition is presented, so both the writing of it and the final score are explored in the same space-time, the same 'fictive cosmos' (Lehmann, 2006). We are not composers, but we have used methodologies to compose without composing, to play without playing. We are not musicologists, but we have taken a musicological approach to devising theatre. We are not musicians, but we have started with the score. Components of music are sampled throughout the performances as textual, visual and aural material. Composition exists in both works as material to be seen, heard and experienced by the audience. They test the inter-musicality Roesner highlights in *Musicality in Theatre*, in that they assign an 'important role to the audience's individual and collective knowledge of the origins, contexts and layers of meaning that certain musical materials, principles or styles bring with them' (2016: 221).

In analysing these case studies, we sought to inform each other's future creative processes when working with music scores. We propose new models for staging scores (incorporating narratives, genealogy, biography, musical structure etc.), which can be rendered visible in contemporary performance or represented in ways that differ from conventional performances of classical music. In doing so, we propose that musical scores and music history can provide fruitful sources of inspiration for the creation of devised theatre, and that this can lead to new ways of understanding, representing, and engaging with classical music. These case studies offer new, praxis-based models of devising score-performance that test the relationship between theatre and classical music, and, in doing so, challenge its contemporary cultural representation, resonance and relevance to audiences today.

Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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