

Musical Ruins: a practice-based
approach to explore ruin as an
aspect of musical borrowing

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Musical Ruins: a practice-based approach to
explore ruin as an aspect of musical borrowing

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Abstract

I have always been fascinated by architectural ruins. Ruin depiction and aesthetics are commonly explored within various disciplines, including archaeology, literary theory and the visual arts.¹ When I first encountered the music of Helmut Lachenmann, whose oeuvre was compared by my then teacher to visiting the ruins of musical history, I was excited by the prospect of marrying these two disparate interests. By using this multidisciplinary perspective, I look to contextualise my own compositional practice of musical quotation.

In this portfolio of original compositions, I create 'musical ruins' that might establish a listener experience analogous to visiting an architectural ruin. I here define musical ruins as degenerated musical borrowing. Specifically, for the focus of this project, I ruin historical art music. The accompanying commentary seeks to shed light on my creative processes, to provide critical reflections on my practice and situate it within the two conceptual frameworks of ruin and materiality. Each chapter probes a thematic strand within the portfolio, using the compositions presented as examples and case studies. It should be noted that this research is directed primarily at discourses in contemporary music and composition, rather than the rich body of ruin scholarship it draws upon for metaphorical stimulation and reflection.

¹ Brian Dillon, ed., *Ruins* (London: Whitechapel Art Gallery, 2011); Brian Dillon, *Ruin Lust* (London: Tate Publishing, 2014).

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	3
Acknowledgements	4
Table of Contents.....	5
List of Figures.....	7
List of Audio Examples.....	8
List of Compositions and Recordings Submitted.....	9
Chapter 1: Introduction	10
1.1 Research Aims: Musical Ruin	10
1.2 Research Questions.....	12
1.3 Context	13
1.4 Methods and Methodology	20
1.4.1 Iterative cycle	21
1.4.2. Autoethnography	24
1.5 Conceptual Framework.....	26
1.6 Summary	30
Chapter 2: Bury, Unearth, Reveal.....	31
2.1 Discrete 'Bury' and 'Unearth' Assumption.....	34
2.2 'Bury-Unearth' Spectrum.....	40
2.3 Original Composer as Virtual Agent.....	43
2.4 Problematising the Bury-Unearth-Reveal method: A Case Study	44
Chapter 3: Story Telling, Non-Fiction, Documentary.....	53
3.1 <i>Memento for Kathryn (and being able to hold that forever)</i> (2018).....	54

3.1.1 Creative Process	54
3.1.2 A Souvenir	57
3.2 Hearing Triple.....	59
3.3 <i>A pursuit (or task), its arc, and the blisters traced</i> (2019).....	61
Chapter 4: Plasticity and Unearthing a Musical Story	67
4.1 Drawing upon an existing music's biography in <i>Preserve</i> (2020).....	68
4.2 Documenting an existing music's biography in <i>Of Red Herrings, Wild Celery, and Armed Men: The marginalia of little Symon</i> (2020)	73
4.2.1 Text.....	79
4.2.2 Visuals.....	82
4.2.3 Music.....	84
4.2.4 Tripartite Form.....	88
5. Conclusion	93
5.1 A Manifesto for 'Musical Ruins' and Musical Borrowing.....	93
5.2 Ethics and Legacy.....	96
Bibliography.....	102
Appendices	115
Appendix 1. List of Performances.....	115
Appendix 2. <i>A Manifesto for 'Musical Ruins' and Musical Borrowing</i> , typeset	117

List of Figures

Figure 1. Visual schematic of methodology and methods	23
Figure 2. Example of rhythmic manipulations in <i>What I find in Raking</i>	36
Figure 3. Voice extract from <i>Icon across Index</i> , page 2.....	38
Figure 4. Screen grab of <i>Icon across Index</i> draft.....	39
Figure 5. <i>To go along, however, is to thread one's way</i> , rehearsal mark A; and <i>Adagio</i> from Corelli's Trio Sonata, Op. 3 No. 2, bars 9-13	42
Figure 6. Process of translating Dufay's texture into compound multiphonics	45
Figure 7. Marginalia made for composite multiphonics	47
Figure 8. Example of post-it note draft for <i>Droning Falsities</i>	48
Figure 9. <i>Droning Falsities (for one's self)</i> , bars 65–69	49
Figure 10. 'Sacher' theme from Benjamin Britten's <i>Tema Sacher</i>	62
Figure 11. Initial idea presented to cellist Amy Jolly	63
Figure 12. Rhythmic ostinato from Ravel's <i>Boléro</i>	70
Figure 13. Journal entries documenting and arranging scholarly comparisons within the 'L'homme armé' tradition	75
Figure 14. Example of <i>Of Red Herrings...</i> digital collage draft	78
Figure 15. Example of paper collage draft of <i>Of Red Herrings</i>	80
Figure 16. Example of Soprano Saxophone sonic palette and references from workshop for <i>Of Red Herrings...</i>	85
<i>Figure 17.</i> Extract from <i>Of Red Herrings...</i> , Sop. Sax. part in 'Morton' section.....	87
Figure 18. Extract from OneNote draft of <i>Of Red Herrings...</i> , showing programmatic notes	89
Figure 19. A Manifesto for 'Musical Ruins' and Musical Borrowing.....	95

List of Audio Examples

Audio Example 1. Vowel stretch in *Icon across Index*

Audio Example 2. Selection of compound multiphonics explored during workshop for *Droning Falsities (for one's self)*

Audio Example 3. Selection of breath streams and angles explored during workshop for *Memento for Kathryn*

Audio Example 4. Excerpt from Amy Jolly's response to initial exercise

Audio Example 5. Example of instructions given during workshop for *Of Red Herrings...*

List of Compositions and Recordings Submitted

A list of performances to date is available in appendix 1.

1. *What I find in Raking* (2017) for String Quartet, c. 6 mins.

Recorded by the Arditti Quartet, 27 June 2019, Bilkent Concert Hall, Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey.

2. *To go along, however, is to thread one's way* (2018) for open ensemble, variable length.

Recorded by The House of Bedlam, 14 November 2018, Royal Northern College of Music.

3. *Icon across Index* (2019) for voice and lute, c. 15 mins.

Recorded by Leighton Triplow and Rosemary Hodgson, 6 March 2020, Trinity College Chapel, University of Melbourne.

4. *Droning Falsities (for one's self)* (2019) for contrabass clarinet in B[♭] and live stereo playback, c. 20 mins.

Recorded by Jason Alder.

5. *Memento for Kathryn (and being able to hold that forever)* (2018) for flute and live stereo playback, c. 3 mins.

Recorded by Kathryn Williams on *Coming Up For Air*. Huddersfield Contemporary Records HCR22CD, 2019. Used with permission.

6. *A pursuit (or task), its arc, and the blisters traced* (2019) for prepared 'cello and live stereo playback, variable length.

Recorded by Amy Jolly, 22 August 2019, Angela Burgess Recital Room, Royal Academy of Music.

7. *Preserve* (2020) for fixed media, c. 14 mins. Footage used with permission from the International Skating Union.

8. *Of Red Herrings, Wild Celery and Armed Men: the marginalia of little Symon* (2020) for trio, stereo playback, live electronics and video, c. 30 mins.

Recorded by Proximity, 14th February 2020, Royal Northern College of Music.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Research Aims: Musical Ruin

This document serves as a reflective and critical commentary upon my artistic practice. It accompanies a portfolio of original compositions in which I explore the various entanglements between musical borrowing and themes of ruination. In doing so, I aim to create ‘musical ruins.’

I have always been fascinated by architectural ruins. Ruin depiction and aesthetics are commonly explored within various disciplines, including, but not limited to, archaeology, literary theory, the visual arts, and both psychical and social geography.² When I first encountered the music of Helmut Lachenmann, whose oeuvre was compared by my then teacher to visiting the ruins of musical history, I was excited by the prospect of marrying these two disparate interests. By adopting this multidisciplinary perspective, I hoped to contextualise and reflect upon my own compositional practice of musical quotation.

At the beginning of the project, I defined musical ruins as borrowed musical material subjected to destructive or degenerative compositional techniques. However, as shall be shown, the notion of applying a transformational technique proved reductive and misleading. My definition of musical ruins has instead expanded to encompass *any* instance of musical borrowing whereby aspects of the existing music’s materiality and lived or shared history are considered. Due to the project’s scope, I limit my definition and exploration of musical ruins to that of borrowing and exclude other readings of musical ruination, for example practices

² Dillon, *Ruins*; Dillon, *Ruin Lust*.

of “dismantling” listed by critic Tim Rutherford-Johnson.³ Specifically, for the focus of this project, I ruin historical art music. This genre limitation was originally set for reasons relating to access and cultural ‘ownership.’ Considering my place within the academy, I have extensive access to such music in the form of scores, concerts and performers. Likely as a result of this context, I felt a part of this tradition and permitted to borrow it freely. In this sense, I was imitating and perpetuating the practices of composers such as Lachenmann and those named subsequently. However, over the course of the project my reasoning shifted as I looked to critique this tradition and acknowledge the limitations of the musical work (in this case defined as the score and/or recording(s)), thus distancing myself from an ideology that privileges the discursive object, in other words the product, over state and process.⁴

It should finally be noted that this project takes the ruin topic as a metaphor for the conceptualisation and creation of new artistic works. The established body of ruin scholarship discussed in this text (ranging from, but not limited to, studies in archaeology, social geography and aesthetics) is therefore used firstly as a springboard to stimulate compositional concepts, and secondly as a lens through which to later reflect upon my practice.

³ Tim Rutherford-Johnson, *Music after the Fall: Modern Composition and Culture since 1989* (California: University of California Press, 2017), 208-216.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 208.

1.2 Research Questions

At its starting point, the project sought to answer the following questions:

1. What degenerative compositional techniques might I employ to create ruined music, and how does each approach create a different type of ruin?
2. When does degenerated borrowed material become unrecognisable, and can I navigate this threshold to create the half-recognisable and evoke nostalgia and the uncanny?
3. Using a practice-based approach, can I illuminate the potential for poetic resonance resulting from ruin experience when degenerating existing musical material?

However, it shall be shown that over the course of the project, in which reflective practice has iteratively fed back into the theoretical design of the research, the reductive nature of these questions has made way for an exploration that is more nuanced. The above questions are therefore amended accordingly:

1. How do degenerative methods of working with borrowed music emerge from the material itself? To what extent does the borrowed music lead the creative process?
2. At what point does degenerated borrowed material become estranged in the creative process, and how can I navigate this threshold to evoke the uncanny?
3. By exploring and questioning notions of materiality that arise within musical borrowing, can I illuminate the potential for ruin phenomena?

1.3 Context

As stated, the oeuvre of Helmut Lachemann, in which he “recycle[s] the wreckage”⁵ of familiar music and dance forms in pieces such as *Tanzsuite mit Deutschlandlied* (1979/80), provided an early inspiration for my creative practice and the basis of an analysis in which I first began to articulate a relation between musical borrowing and ruination.⁶

However, the context of this relation is incredibly broad. Instances of explicit musical borrowing might be found in all genres of music across many time periods, ranging from the renaissance parody mass to sampling within hip hop.⁷ Furthermore, there are numerous examples of musical borrowing in which the source material is fragmented or destroyed, including the music of Igor Stravinsky, such as the ballet *Pulcinella* (1920), and Charles Ives, demonstrated in Symphony No. 4 (1910-1924). Further, composers such as Erik Satie and those of *Les Six* frequently reference and distort Baroque forms. Such practices continue into the late modernist and post-modernist eras. In *Efebo con radio* (1981), Salvatore Sciarrino, imitating the channel search on a dial radio, hints toward several musical styles.⁸ Similarly, George Crumb makes explicit reference to the music of Schubert in *Black Angels* (1970).⁹ The diverse body of music these two examples

⁵ John Croft, ‘Fields of Rubble: On the Poetics of Music after the Postmodern,’ in *The Modernist Legacy: Essays on New Music*, ed. Björn Heile (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2009), 26-27.

⁶ Mark Dyer, ‘Helmut Lachenmann’s *Salut für Caudwell*: an Analysis,’ *Tempo* 70, no. 277 (July 2016): 34-46.

⁷ J. Peter Burkholder, ‘The Uses of Existing Music: Musical Borrowing as a Field,’ *Notes*, Second Series 50, no. 3 (March 1994): 851-870.

⁸ James Denis Bunch, ‘A Polyphony of the Mind: Intertextuality in the music of Salvatore Sciarrino’ (Doctoral thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2016), 355.

⁹ Blair Johnston, ‘Between Romanticism and Modernism and Postmodern: George Crumb’s *Black Angels*,’ *Music Theory Online*, a journal of the Society for Music Theory 18, no. 2 (June 2012), <https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.12.18.2/mto.12.18.2.johnston.pdf>.

represent might be broadly typified by its manipulation of the borrowed material's pitch, rhythm and timbre. However, there are fewer instances where such practice is explicitly read through the theme of ruination. The following examples should be seen as representative of broader trends and genres.

Music historian David Metzger proposes that Luciano Berio's "restoration" of Schubert's Symphony No. 8, D 759, in *Rendering* (1989) "calls to mind collapsed buildings and chipped sculptures."¹⁰ Similarly, John Cage's "reproduction" of various operatic arias in *Europera 5* (1991) "serves as the agent of decay."¹¹ Metzger distinguishes the two works, and the acts of restoration and reproduction, suggesting the former seeks to regenerate the past, not for the sake of historical accuracy, but as an evocation of "loss and disintegration."¹² Other instances of restoration can be found in Michael Finnissy's *Mozart Requiem Completion* (2011), which the composer compares to "a new and modern church growing from the remains of an older building."¹³ Conversely, the act of reproduction effaces the borrowed material and diminishes its 'aura.'¹⁴ In both cases, Metzger elsewhere concludes that the quotation of an existing music acts as a "cultural agent"¹⁵ and invites a nostalgic negotiation of the past and present.¹⁶ Crucially, the borrowed material "stands out as a foreign element from the surrounding music"¹⁷ as the

¹⁰ David Metzger, 'Musical Decay: Luciano Berio's *Rendering* and John Cage's *Europera 5*,' *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 125, no. 1 (2000): 97.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 111.

¹² *Ibid.*, 103.

¹³ Michael Finnissy, 'Renowned composer and University professor Michael Finnissy completes Mozart requiem,' University of Southampton News webpage, published 14 November 2011, accessed 14 September, <https://www.southampton.ac.uk/news/2011/11/michael-finnissy-completes-mozart-requiem.page>.

¹⁴ Metzger, 'Musical Decay,' 106-109.

¹⁵ David Metzger, *Quotation and Cultural Meaning in Twentieth-Century Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 2.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

once familiar is reconstituted as alien and othered. I relate this phenomenon to art historian Michel Makarius' suggestion that representations of ruins "extend an open invitation to think of history as an ongoing process of dislocation,"¹⁸ and geographer Tim Edensor's observation that ruins contain "objects and forms of matter that the eye cannot identify, that appear unclassifiable"¹⁹ and become "enrolled into new human and non-human networks"²⁰ once their former purpose and meaning is lost.

Similarly, instances of musical collage have been read through ruin aesthetics. John Oswald's practice of 'plunderphonics' involves the sampling, fragmentation and knitting together of various commercial recordings resulting in a "high-density aural blast of popular culture."²¹ A seminal work from this series, *Plexure* (1993) was recently curated by the London Contemporary Music Festival in a concert entitled "Ruins in Reverse"²² after the concept from landscape artist Robert Smithson. Smithson coined the phrase to describe the perpetual development of suburban infrastructure. In contrast to the grand monuments and narratives of the Romantic ruin, this urban detritus stagnates mid-construction and assumes its own state of monumentality and ruination.²³ Oswald's Frankenstein-like process reconstitutes the borrowed pop music and renders it in a comparable state. This framing lends the fragments a tired nature and, similar to the collages of Kurt Schwitters, emphasises the "virtues of wear and of patina,"

¹⁸ Michel Makarius, *Ruins*, trans. David Radzinowicz (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 2004), 9.

¹⁹ Tim Edensor, 'Sensing the Ruin,' *Senses & Society* 2, no. 2 (2007): 223.

²⁰ Tim Edensor, *Industrial Ruins: Space, Aesthetics and Materiality* (New York: Berg, 2005), 66-67.

²¹ Rutherford-Johnson. *Music after the Fall*, 196.

²² Anon., 'Ruins in Reverse,' concert programme note, accessed 10 March 2020, <https://lcmf.co.uk/5-DecemberRuins-in-Reverse>.

²³ Robert Smithson, 'A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic,' in *Ruins*, ed. Brian Dillon (London: Whitechapel Art Gallery, 2011), 49.

creating, “within the language of [post-] modernism, a ‘ruin form.’”²⁴ I view Oswald’s work as outward-looking, as either low-art critique or parody of the music he borrows as well as the mechanisms of its production and distribution. By contrast, Johannes Kreidler’s practice of plunderphonics, or “‘Music with Music,’” seeks to scrutinise notions of identity (both his own and those he borrows) within an age of mass media.²⁵ I suggest my own practice similarly interrogates my creative processes and identity whilst working *with* the source’s infrastructure (e.g. performers and extra-musical paraphernalia), as discussed in chapter four.

Likewise, current composers are contextualising their own practices of musical borrowing and collage through the lens of ruination. In *JPR* (2016) for trio, Tom Armstrong borrows the near entirety of Jean-Philippe Rameau’s *Pièces de clavecin en concerts*. The movements of Rameau’s suites are distributed between the three performers, superimposed upon one another and heavily filtered with silence, creating a collage of erasure.²⁶ Armstrong reads his practice of re-purposing music materials not as ‘borrowing’ but specifically as a “technique of musical ruination”²⁷ – as a way “‘to make sense of the past.’”²⁸ Whilst Armstrong’s collage

²⁴ Makarius. *Ruins*, 201.

²⁵ Johannes Kreidler, ‘Music with Music,’ presentation given at Darmstadt Summer Courses for New Music, 27 July 2010, available on the composer’s website, accessed 9 September 2020, <http://www.kreidler-net.de/theorie/musicwithmusiclecture.htm>.

²⁶ Tom Armstrong, ‘Re-voicing Rameau: borrowing practice in Tom Armstrong’s *JPR*,’ notes from paper delivered at the ‘International Conference on Music Since 1900,’ University of Surrey, 11-14 September 2017, accessed 11 March 2020, <http://eprints.surrey.ac.uk/849044/1/Re-voicing%20Rameau.pdf>, 1.

²⁷ Tom Armstrong, ‘Composing Collaboration: Reporting on Achievements and Possibilities in Two Recent Pieces,’ notes from paper delivered at the ‘10th International Conference on Music/Sonic Art: Practices and Theories,’ Karlsruhe University of Music, 31 May - 2 June 2019.

²⁸ Jonathan Burrows, ‘Body not fit for purpose,’ *Performance Research* 20, no. 5 (October 2015): 82. Cited in Tom Armstrong, ‘Revision and Reworking as Compositional Strategies,’ notes from paper delivered at the ‘Perspectives on Musical Revision’ research event, University of Surrey, 11 March 2020.

and processes contrast significantly with Oswald's, *JPR* could similarly be said to be *about* the borrowed material. Whilst Armstrong never fully obscures the baroque source, his various restructurings seek to scrutinise the identity of the *Pièces*. In this instance, Metzger's binary conception of familiar and other are made ambiguous – the borrowed Rameau both infiltrates and is infiltrated by the silences. Alternatively, we might read Armstrong's method as an invitation to a performer or listener to estrange themselves from and reexplore a familiar landscape. This notion of estrangement factors into my own practice of borrowing.

Similarly, Norwegian composer Eivind Buene understands not only his own practice through this metaphor, but also the wider field of contemporary music. Buene describes his various borrowings of Bruckner, Brahms and Mahler in *Standing Stones* (2010), where "different methods of transcription highlight the take on music history as a sounding history,... as complex structures of sounds."²⁹ Such structures are treated like vulnerable architectural objects. In a programme note for *Possible Cities/Essential Landscapes* (2012), the composer states,

Moving through a city is a good metaphor for listening to new music... Traversing a city lets you meditate on construction and decay... And underneath the solid surfaces there's always nature, waiting to take over, to obliterate our structures with organic growth.³⁰

²⁹ Eivind Buene, 'Again and Again and Again: music as site, situation and repetition,' *The Arne Nordheim Centre for Artistic Research*, vol. 2 (July 2017): 101.

³⁰ Eivind Buene, 'About the work: Possible Cities/Essential Landscapes,' programme note for concert given at Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey, 24 June 2019.

It is unclear what Buene means by 'nature' with regard to music. I understand his metaphor to refer to any process, natural or manufactured, that similarly obliterates.

Additionally, deconstructive methods of borrowing are viewed as expansive and generative, rather than solely reductive and introspective. In *In spite of, and maybe even therefore* (2007), Simon Steen-Andersen borrows a fragment of Beethoven's Bagatelle, Op. 126, No. 5. Steen-Andersen obscures the quotation in quiet detached "freezes"³¹ arranged for flute, clarinet and horn. However, as these freezes gain rhythmic fidelity to the original, the instruments are gradually dismantled, inhibiting their traditional methods of sound production resulting in sonic disembodiment. The composer describes this process as a "'musical ruin'" in which "new relations and new ways of creating continuity"³² might be found. For a listener, the quoted source remains hidden and its specific identity is perhaps of no consequence. However, for Steen-Anderson, the Bagatelle provides a familiar framework within which to introduce conflicting transformational processes. The resulting choreography of instrumental piping and detritus, on the one hand new and removed from the Bagatelle, is nevertheless imprinted with the particularities of the Beethoven source.

Parallel to compositional trends of musical borrowing, practices of experimental performance have also been read using the ruin metaphor. Violinist Aisha Orazbayeva's performances and recordings of Telemann's Fantasias for Solo Violin, BWV 40: 14-25, consist of "personal and stylistic interpretations to versions marked by the distortion and fragmentation of the material through the use of

³¹ Simon Steen-Andersen. '*In Spite Of, And Maybe Even Therefore*,' programme note, 2007, accessed 10 March 2020, http://www.simonsteenandersen.dk/eng_descrip_in-spite-of.htm.

³² Ibid.

contemporary violin techniques.”³³ These techniques include circular bowing and extreme variances in bowing pressure and position, resulting in diverse sonic disembodiments of the Fantasias that, as one critic observes, “both edify and make ruin of the Baroque sculptures of music past.”³⁴ Elsewhere, I have compared such historically-liberated interpretations to “an archaeologist ever so gently brushing the sand from a familiar artefact.”³⁵ My reading perhaps betrays a personal bias toward sentimentality and nostalgia, but also accounts for individual process and experience. The relation between such readings and the Romantic fetishisation of ruins is explored and deconstructed below.

The use of ruin as a metaphor by composers and listeners to understand practices of degenerative musical borrowing is widespread. The purpose of this project is not to question or deconstruct this analogy, but rather, through creative practice, to explore its territories, limitations and its effectiveness to work within and borrow from neighbouring disciplines. How does my understanding of this metaphor change with varying methods of borrowing? Can the use of themes and methods explored in other disciplines refine and re-energise this metaphor? The research questions outlined above, and the methods below, seek to understand technical and phenomenological aspects from a personalised practitioner’s perspective. As such, it is hoped that other practitioners engaged in musical borrowing might sympathise with the project’s findings and expand their own practice or understanding.

³³ Aisha Orazbayeva, ‘Telemann Fantasias,’ CD liner notes. PRAH - PRAH009 (2016).

³⁴ Michael Baldwin, ‘Decontamination Double-Bill: #12 – fragmentation and distortion / #13 – Lecture about sad music and happy dance,’ concert Review, *Tempo* 72, no. 286 (October 2018): 75.

³⁵ Mark Dyer, ‘Interpreting Telemann: restoration and reconstruction,’ recording review, *Early Music* 46, no. 2 (May 2018): 347.

1.4 Methods and Methodology

As this project is concerned with the technical and phenomenological aspects of composition engaged with degenerative musical borrowing, I employ a primarily practice-based methodology coupled with and supported by autoethnographic methods. The principle ethos is to “‘know’ by doing, by experiencing.”³⁶ I document this doing and my thought processes through drafts of compositions and journal writing, in order to reflect upon and analyse my experiences.

My methodology is loosely based upon performing arts researcher Robin Nelson’s tripartite “dynamic model for process,”³⁷ which concurrently triangulates practitioner knowledge, critical reflection and conceptual framework. The first corner recognises the artist’s embodied ‘know-how,’ often tacit, that is relied upon to make work. The second point requires a conscious effort to reflect critically upon practice. First and foremost, this involves the documentation and analysis of the creative process to make tacit knowledge explicit, but also includes contextualising practice within a lineage to establish dialogue with other work and artists. The third corner of the model invites the practitioner to situate their work within a conceptual framework to include broader theoretical perspectives, find resonances across disciplines and embrace intersubjective and shared knowledge.³⁸

³⁶ Carole Gray and Julian Malins, *Visualising Research: A Guide to the Research Process in Art and Design* (Abingdon, United Kingdom: Routledge, 2016), 32.

³⁷ Robin Nelson, ‘Practice-as-Research and the Problem of Knowledge,’ *A Journal of the Performing Arts* 11, no. 4 (December 2006): 113-114.

³⁸ Robin Nelson, *Practice as Research in the Arts: Principles, Protocols, Pedagogies, Resistances* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 54 & 60.

I'm attracted to Nelson's model for several reasons. Firstly, it articulates a mode of working that is close to my own, whereby the playful and experimental creative act is complemented by satellite activities (Figure 1). These include reflective diary writing (a conversation with myself), reviewing similar practice within, and without, the field, and a willingness to engage with interdisciplinary modes of theoretical discourse including social geography, philosophy and aesthetics. This engagement with Nelson's third prong allows metaphor to play an integral role in the conceptualisation, manifestation and contextualisation of my creative work. Secondly, the model allows for a degree of flexibility whilst giving equal significance to the artistic work because "each corner of the triangle, each stage of the process of making and of research as well as the product itself, is seen as potentially knowledge-producing."³⁹ Thirdly, Nelson's acknowledgment of "performative"⁴⁰ scholarship has parallels with the post-linguistic perspectives sought in New Materialism,⁴¹ which I draw upon in my conceptual framework.

1.4.1 Iterative cycle

In order to probe the technical aspects of my starting first and second research questions, I conceived a loose working method to begin the project and a series of quasi-study compositions. The method unfolds as an iterative cyclical process. With each composition, I employ a destructive technique and, through altering the degree to which this technique is applied, explore the resulting threshold for the half-recognisable. I evaluate the outcome using qualitative methods, such as autoethnography and phenomenology, and thus attempt to illuminate the potential of the ruin metaphor, before repeating the cycle in the next composition

³⁹ Nelson, 'Practice-as-Research and the Problem of Knowledge,' 115.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 111.

⁴¹ Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2007), 133.

(Figure 1). As outlined by Nelson above, I am concerned that whilst theory might feed into and out of practice, it should not stifle the play and experimentation of practice itself.

I use the phrase 'destructive techniques', or 'techniques', to refer to prescriptive and systematic processes of transformation applied to musical materials. This is distinguished from the more general use of the term that refers to compositional practice. When beginning this project, I aligned my notion of techniques to modernist and post-modernist narratives where an autonomous creative agent can "Take an object / Do something to it / Do something else to it. [Repeat.]"⁴² This is illustrated in the music of Peter Maxwell Davies, who applies various rhythmic, metric and harmonic transformations to a thirteenth-century motet in his *Antechrist* (1967) to acquire "new derivations from the medieval material."⁴³ However, as shall be shown below, this conception of transforming found material proved superficial in my own practice and gave way to a more nuanced and collaborative method of working. In my concluding comments, I demonstrate how this new method ties in with broader ethical issues.

⁴² Jasper Johns, 'sketchbook' (New York: Self-published, 1964).

⁴³ Paul Griffiths, *Peter Maxwell Davies* (London: Robson, 1982), 57.

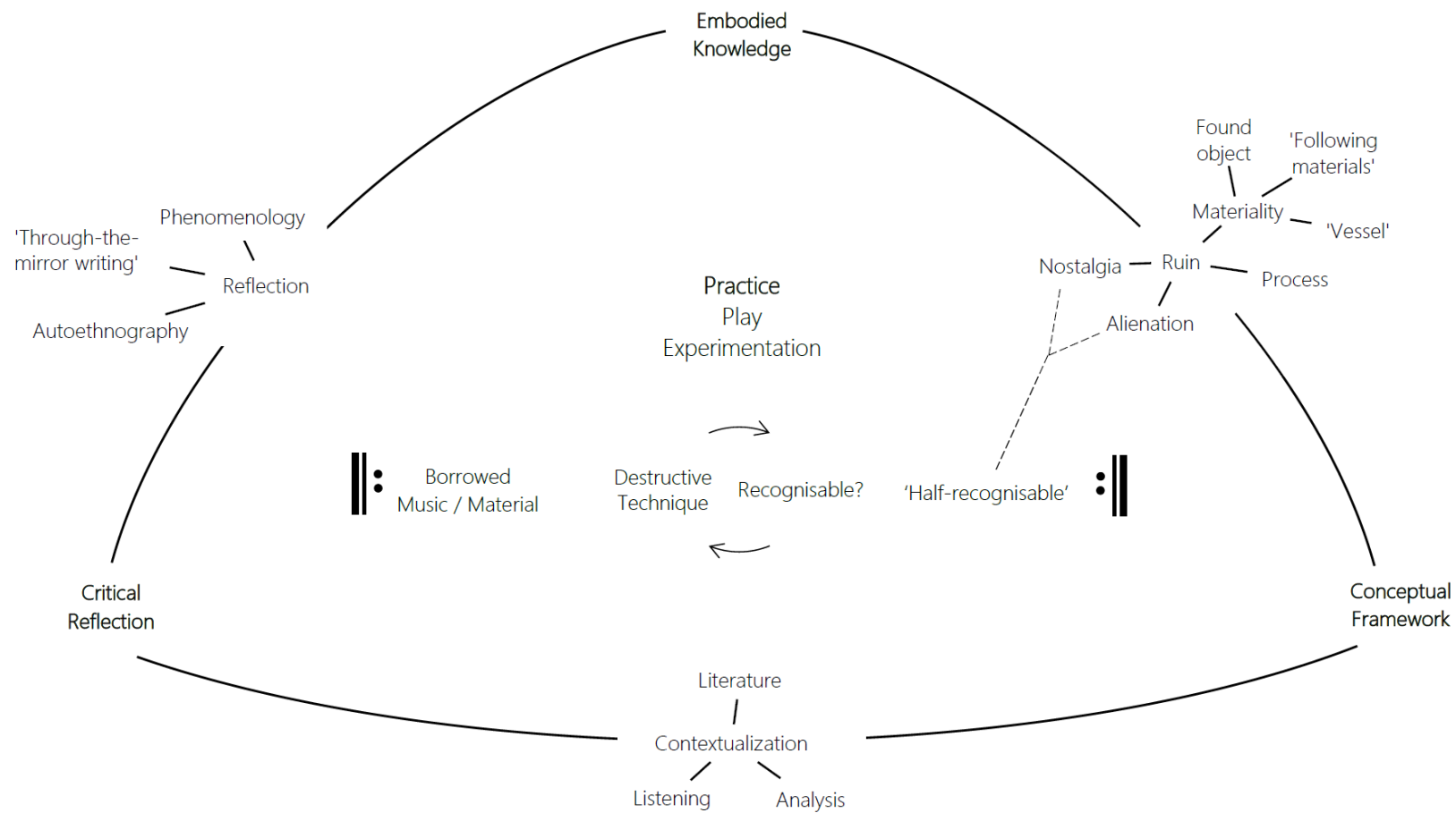


Figure 1. Visual schematic of methodology and methods.

1.4.2. Autoethnography

In order to reflect upon practice, I employ methods of autoethnography to highlight the phenomenological aspects of composition. The autoethnographic method “draws upon the author’s own (autobiographical) experiences”⁴⁴ and “seeks to connect the personal to the cultural and to locate both ‘self’ – however shifting and fragmentary – and others with a social context.”⁴⁵ This process occurs at two stages of the project. Firstly, I document the creative process in the form of compositional drafts and personal journal entries, reflexively identifying available artistic choices which feed back into practice. Secondly, following the creative act, I reflectively contextualise and analyse practice through the writing of this document. Both forms of ‘self-analysis’ are “an opportunity to extract knowledge from the intense experience of creating music, and also to feed a dynamic of creativity and transformation.”⁴⁶

In both instances, I employ “Through-the-Mirror writing,”⁴⁷ as proposed by therapist and creative writer Gillie Bolton in her conception of reflective practice. Through-the-Mirror writing is a method of reflective and reflexive writing that enables developmental, aesthetic and creative access into the interrelated self.⁴⁸

⁴⁴ Christopher Wiley, ‘Autoethnography, autobiography, and creative art as academic research in music studies: A fugal ethnodrama,’ *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education* 8, no. 2 (July 2019): 80.

⁴⁵ Jacquelyn Allen-Collinson, ‘Autoethnography as the Engagement of Self/Other, Self/Culture, Self/Politics, and Self/Futures,’ in *Handbook of Autoethnography*, ed. Stacy Holman Jones, Tony E. Adams and Carolyn Ellis (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2013), 283.

⁴⁶ Nicholas Donin, ‘Artistic Research and the Creative Process: The Joys and Perils of Self-Analysis,’ in *Patterns of Intuition: Musical Creativity in the Light of Algorithmic Composition*, ed. Gerhard Nierhaud (Dordrecht: Springer, 2015), 356.

⁴⁷ Gillie Bolton, *Reflective Practice: Writing and Professional Development*, 3rd ed. (London: SAGE, 2001, reprinted 2010).

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 70.

This involves making the self strange through the adoption of paradoxical aesthetic foundations, including “certain uncertainty, serious playfulness, unquestioning questioning.”⁴⁹ Bolton offers practical methods for Through-the-Mirror writing including story-telling, metaphor, knowing through writing, and establishing a dialogue with the self,⁵⁰ echoing philosopher and artist Kathleen Coessens’ suggestion that “the artist’s experience is traversed by doubts and dreams, by self-reflective questioning leading to a self-narrative in which the artist develops a ‘thinking dialogue between me and myself’ (Arendt 1978, 187).”⁵¹ I engage with Bolton’s methods in my journal and in this document, in which I log creative processes, converse with myself and engage in metaphorical speculation. I employ Through-the-Mirror writing as a means of pushing past a simple reflection in order to interrogate the self and practice.

Such methods seem appropriate in a project related to ruins. Contemporary social geographers such as Tim Edensor and Caitlin DeSilvey, whilst employing conventional forms of scholarship, also deviate toward more personalised and whimsical forms of essaying that seek to probe their own experiences of ruined spaces. Examples include the biographical account of a relocation to a Cornish harbour town and its eroding breakwater;⁵² an archival record of one’s ‘poking about’ in a derelict Montana homestead;⁵³ and, amateur photography from urban

⁴⁹ Bolton, *Reflective Practice*, 70-71.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 84-86.

⁵¹ Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, ed. Mary McCarthy (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978), 187, in Kathleen Coessens, ‘The Web of Artistic Practice: A Background for Experimentation,’ in *Artistic Experimentation in Music: An Anthology*, ed. Darla Crispin and Bob Gilmore (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2014), 79.

⁵² Caitlin DeSilvey, *Curated Decay: Heritage Beyond Saving* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 47-73.

⁵³ Caitlin DeSilvey, ‘Observed Decay: Telling Stories with Mutable Things,’ *Journal of Material Culture* 11, no. 3 (2006), 318-338.

explorations of British industrial ruins.⁵⁴ Such methods of “storying matter,”⁵⁵ rather than establishing orthodoxies, are presented in a “speculative spirit... to spark reflection”⁵⁶ and “strike chords with the theoretical themes... as an alternative source of information.”⁵⁷

1.5 Conceptual Framework

1.5.1 Ruin

I have developed a conceptual framework from the theme of ruin in the broadest sense. I couch this project within the diverse field of ruin study and representation, including academic and DIY scholarship, photography, documentary, practices of urban exploring and fine art. As outlined above, the ruin serves as a productive metaphor for composers engaged in various forms of destructive and degenerative musical borrowing. However, there is a friction between the musical output and creative process, between the ruined object and processes of decay.

Discussions of ruin aesthetics have undergone a drastic shift in recent decades. Previously, the ruin was epitomised as a discrete aesthetic object, inspiring the fervour of “*Ruinenlust*”⁵⁸ that includes nostalgia, awe, and reverie.⁵⁹ A commodity of the Romantic picturesque,⁶⁰ such notions have influenced heritage practices of “‘arrested decay’ – the maintenance policy applied to buildings to uphold their

⁵⁴ T. Edensor, *Industrial Ruins: Space, Aesthetics and Materiality* (New York: Berg, 2005).

⁵⁵ DeSilvey, *Curated Decay*, 6.

⁵⁶ DeSilvey, ‘Observed Decay,’ 335.

⁵⁷ Edensor, *Industrial Ruins*, 16.

⁵⁸ Rose Macaulay, *Pleasure of Ruins* (New York: Walker and Company, 1966), 76.

⁵⁹ Carlos López-Galviz et al., ‘Reconfiguring Ruins: Beyond *Ruinenlust*,’ *GeoHumanities* 3, no. 2 (2017): 549.

⁶⁰ Edensor, *Industrial Ruins*, 11.

structural integrity yet preserve their ruined appearance.”⁶¹ However, contemporary scholars have attempted to shift the intrigue of the ruin as object to the processes of ruination. Whilst philosopher Jacques Derrida suggests the ruin “is neither a spectacle nor a lore object. It is experience itself,”⁶² social theorist Carlos López-Galviz and others advocate “an understanding of ruins that incorporates verbs... qualifying nouns.”⁶³ Ultimately, artists and scholars recognise the creative capacity of decay, whereby the ruin is “always dynamic and in process.”⁶⁴

Considering this preoccupation of verb over noun, process over product, and becoming over being, I am struck by parallels found in creative practice-research. Many artist-researchers place an epistemological emphasis on the creative process – in which outcomes emerge following the artist’s individualised method of selecting and shaping, in turn dependant on acknowledged and tacit aesthetic influences and motivations – rather than the finished artistic product.⁶⁵ Thus, in a creative project concerned with ruins, I am conscious of the relationship and friction that exists between the borrowed musical object, the degenerative processes undertaken to render said music ruined, and the emergent artistic output.

⁶¹ DeSilvey, ‘Observed Decay,’ 326.

⁶² Jacques Derrida, ‘Memoirs of the Blind,’ in *Ruins*, ed. Brian Dillon. (London: Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2011), 43.

⁶³ López-Galviz et al., ‘Reconfiguring Ruins,’ 545.

⁶⁴ Dillon, *Ruins*, 14.

⁶⁵ Nelson, ‘Practice-as-research and the Problem of Knowledge,’ 112; Julian Klein, ‘What is Artistic Research?’ translated by J. Klein, *Gegenworte* 23 (Spring 2010): 4.

1.5.2 Materiality

The above framework with which I understand my practice is further refined through notions of 'materiality.' As well as considering sound itself as material and observing the materiality of its apparatus of production (e.g. instruments, loudspeakers, recordings, etc.), the word 'material' is used ambiguously in the field of composition to denote any sonic or non-sonic, abstract or actual matter – the 'stuff' – with which a piece of music is constructed. The nature of such building blocks is wholly diverse and might range from, but is not exclusive to, notational parameters, field recordings, the physical actions of a performer, or simply the ideas and starting points for a composition. However, for the sake of this project, I employ the term to specifically denote the existing musical source that is borrowed, as it is used by many in the field of musical borrowing.⁶⁶ Its use here alludes to a defined man-made object – a musical work – that is appropriated by another for creative means: a found object. We might instead view the borrowing of musical material akin to anthropologist Tim Ingold's conception of "following materials,"⁶⁷ as an exploration of and entanglement with the found object's grain or thingness and weaving this with an ever-evolving purpose.⁶⁸ Similar to Michelangelo discovering the statue within the block of stone,⁶⁹ sociologist Andrew Pickering describes such interplay as a "dance of

⁶⁶ Burkholder, 'The Uses of Existing Music: Musical Borrowing as a Field'; Jeanette Bicknell, 'The Problem of Reference in Musical Quotation: A Phenomenological Approach,' *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 59, no. 2 (Spring 2001): 185-191; Metzger, *Quotation and Cultural Meaning*; Richard Beaudoin, 'You're There and You're Not There: Musical Borrowing and Cavell's "Way",' *Journal of Music Theory* 54, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 91-105; J. Peter Burkholder, 'Musical Borrowing or Curious Coincidence? Testing the Evidence,' *The Journal of Musicology* 35, no. 2 (April 2018): 223-266.

⁶⁷ Ingold, 'The Textility of Making,' 93.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁶⁹ John Russon, 'The Project of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*,' in *A Companion to Hegel*, ed. Stephen Houlgate and Michael Baur (Chichester: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2011), 48.

human and material agency"⁷⁰ that is "structured as a dialectic of resistance and accommodation."⁷¹

I therefore widen the term 'material' to embrace notions of materiality and new materialism, both of which underpin contemporary ruin and archaeological scholarship, and provide a phenomenological lens through which to scrutinise the efficacy of found matter in the creative act. In the first chapter, I relay my own shift in perception from Aristotle's hylomorphic model, whereby form is imposed upon passive matter by an agent,⁷² to a scenario in which the borrowed music might resist or lead my creative processes. I relate the found object and its vitality in this process to a 'vessel' – a dynamic system of material properties, memories and dreams – and its propensity to be 'Thing-like': a *Thing-vessel*. In chapter two, I explore the borrowed material's capacity to act as a threshold over which diverse perceptions might be shared, by relating a performer's relationship to the existing music through documentary and artistic-ethnographic methods. In the last chapter, I combine notions of vibrant matter and storytelling in order to explore the borrowed material's 'plasticity' – the capability of being moulded – and how a music's own lived past might be drawn upon in the creative act. In doing so, my use of the term 'material' is extended from a found object or product to include process, emergence and entanglement.

⁷⁰ Andrew Pickering, *The Mangle of Practice: Time, Agency and Science* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 51.

⁷¹ Ibid., 52.

⁷² Tim Ingold, 'The Textility of Making,' *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 34, no. 1 (2010): 92.

1.6 Summary

As noted, the submitted portfolio and accompanying commentary reflect a radical change in my artistic practice and a divergence in the original project design. I began with the iterative cycle described above in a sincere, if rather naïve, attempt to regulate and trace my creative processes. However, in reality, the creative act was messy as I sporadically patched together various elements of the above methodology. I believe this messiness reflects a greater entanglement between myself and my borrowed materials, and a greater receptiveness to their emergent properties. Ultimately, this project reflects a growing uncertainty in my relationship to ruins and at least a partial departing from sentimental romanticism.

Chapter 2: Bury, Unearth, Reveal

In this chapter, I set out to describe a process of discovery relating to the manipulation of borrowed music, its fidelity to the original material, and my relationship with it as a maker. I initially presumed I could subject an existing piece of music to one or more transformational techniques that would alter its recognisability. Such techniques were intended to destroy or distort fidelity to the original source – a form of ‘burial’ – and render it in a state that might be perceived as analogous to an architectural ruin. Once such a state was established, I supposed the degree to which the transformative technique was applied as discrete. In other words, the technique could be switched on or off, the material rendered ruined or un-ruined.

However, in the process of composition, this method, rather than a binary application, revealed a more variable and nuanced analogue spectrum akin to a processing effect. At structural moments, I would lean toward the unprocessed end of this spectrum, momentarily allowing the buried original to be ‘unearthed.’ As the musical object is gradually revealed, commonplace traits such as triadic harmony or rhythmic gestures might ignite vague reference points, or the ‘partially-recognisable,’ for a listener. Such points might extend to a line as a listener is able to discern an unbroken melody reminiscent of the source material. I here acknowledge my early bias in the project toward such material aspects of the source. As quickly as it emerges, the melody recedes as the degree of ruin is increased. Can a listener be certain they heard this particular piece quoted, or that genre referenced? I hoped this continual ebb and flow of ambiguity would lead to a sense of the uncanny for a listener, extending at times to nostalgia. Such sentiments of the strangely familiar,⁷³ mysticism and displacement are often

⁷³ Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2003), 1.

associated with the Romantic notion of ruin experience.⁷⁴ It is noted that the contrived structural process discussed here contrasts with the erosion of, say, a ruined building, which is often (though not exclusively) arbitrary and leads to an emergent, rather than designed, form.

Furthermore, I began to realise that a borrowed music could not be distinctly labelled as recognisable, partially-recognisable, or unrecognisable. Whether manipulated to the point where the quotation collapses⁷⁵ or left untouched for maximum fidelity, the borrowed material is changed by its recontextualisation within new surroundings and, more pertinently, its framing by someone other than the original composer. Music philosopher Jeanette Bicknell claims that “a quoted passage does not cease to be quotational if some listeners are unfamiliar with it.”⁷⁶ At this point in the project, the earlier bias expanded to make a distinction between found material and my own framing of this material.

As I continued to work, I began to imagine the uncanny presence of the original composer of the borrowed music; a faceless spectre whose initial compositional decisions seemed to impinge or exact influence on my own. Rather than an ominous presence, I relate this mediative and existential experience to broader notions of musical intertextuality and ruin phenomenology. Robert Hatten describes the use of musical quotation as “suggesting or programming historical composer-agents as virtualized actors in various dramas of subjective consciousness.”⁷⁷ Similarly, in her survey of Sir Thomas Herbert’s visit to ancient

⁷⁴ Macaulay, *Pleasure of Ruins*, xvi; Christopher Woodward, *In Ruins* (New York: Vintage, 2001), 5; Edensor, ‘Sensing the Ruin,’ 223.

⁷⁵ Metzger, *Quotation and Cultural Meaning*, 12.

⁷⁶ Bicknell, ‘The Problem of Reference in Musical Quotation,’ 186.

⁷⁷ Robert Hatten, *A Theory of Virtual Agency for Western Art Music* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2018), 271.

Persepolis, Rose Macaulay proposes, "it is less these ['ribs and ruins'] that are seen and enjoyed than 'the old Persian magnificence' that haunts them."⁷⁸ This haunting extends to the "ghostly treading of feet... the swish of keels... the clanking of anchors, the chaffering of merchants."⁷⁹ The composer of the source material exerts a strange and posthumous agency across history.

Contemporary discussions of architectural ruin raise the importance and, following new materialist theory, the efficacy of matter. Whilst geographer Tim Edensor suggests ruins foreground "questions about materiality, value and apprehension of the material world,"⁸⁰ for architect Belinda Mitchell and archaeologist Karen Fielder, "both building and body are understood as *living material*"⁸¹ (emphasis added). In my own handling and discussion of musical ruins, I must address musical materials and their tendencies. On the one hand, I understand the distinctly profiled sonorities I employ in *Droning Falsities (for one's self)* (2019) as examples of theorist Matthew Butterfield's "microscopic musical objects."⁸² However, due to their inherent instability as sonic objects, for me, the configurations gain their own 'Thing'-like quality. Laurence Kramer uses this term for musical entities that are open-ended, semi-animate and intimate.⁸³ Whilst as notated objects the compound multiphonics might be surmised using technical and analytical language, as sonic Things I equate them to Jennifer Bennet's virtual

⁷⁸ Macaulay, *Pleasure of Ruins*, 144.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 311.

⁸⁰ Edensor, *Industrial Ruins*, 97.

⁸¹ Belinda Mitchell and Karen Fielder, 'Matter of the Manor,' *Interior Design Educators Council Journal of Interior Design* 43, no. 1 (February 2018): 54.

⁸² Matthew Butterfield, 'The Musical Object Revisited,' *Music Analysis* 21, no. 3 (October 2002): 349.

⁸³ Laurence Kramer, *Interpreting Music* (Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2010), 186.

"not-quite-bodies"⁸⁴ with their own trajectories, propensities and tendencies.⁸⁵ My material, and any bias toward it, is more complex than the source – it is nebulous, elusory and entangled.

2.1 Discrete 'Bury' and 'Unearth' Assumption

The process of burying, unearthing and revealing an existing musical material through the use and regulation of transformative techniques is prevalent in wider practices of musical borrowing. In 'Slow Sliding Reveal', the second movement of *To be beside the seaside* (2015), Joanna Bailie applies a frequency band filter to a recording of Beethoven's Symphony No. 4, Op. 60, before transcribing and neatening the results for orchestra.⁸⁶ Over the course of the movement, Bailie reduces the filter, gradually adding instruments and allowing more of the Classical harmonic and rhythmic content to be heard. Finally, the Beethoven Symphony is revealed untouched from bar 283. Various composers, including Simon Steen-Andersen, Richard Beaudoin and Christian Winther Christensen, employ similar tripartite processes, working from a state of estrangement toward that of fidelity, or what J. P. Burkholder describes separately as "cumulative setting"⁸⁷ in the music of Charles Ives, whose processes contrast significantly from those listed above. Whilst such approaches may not be intended as ruinous, this technical process and structural model provided the basis for my own compositions at the start of the project.

⁸⁴ Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: a political ecology of things* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2010), xiii.

⁸⁵ Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, viii.

⁸⁶ Joanna E. C. Bailie, 'Transcribing Reality: how the nature of audio and visual media have affected culture, perception, and the role of the artist' (Doctoral thesis, City, University of London, 2017), 185-187.

⁸⁷ Burkholder, 'The Uses of Existing Music,' 854-856; Metzger, *Quotation and Cultural Meaning*, 38-39.

My short (six-minute) string quartet *What I find in Raking* (2017), written for the Cuerda Quartet, demonstrates how I have developed these kinds of transformations. Here, I apply two transformational processes to fragments of the folk melody ‘Yonder Comes a Courteous Knight’ as recorded by Thomas Ravenscroft.⁸⁸ The first is a series of rhythmic manipulations, sustaining the monophonic line as arpeggios before compressing the rhythmic values into short homophonic attacks which are then augmented (Figure 2). The second involves timbral destruction, or “sonic disembodiment.”⁸⁹ I translate the melody, and its rhythmic transformations, into mostly natural harmonics played *pppp molto sul tasto*, resulting in a quiet murmur where the pitch content of the melody is affected with noise. Throughout the piece, I structure the process of rhythmic transformation in reverse and gradually incorporate more stopped and open strings at louder dynamics. The reveal occurs in bars 84–85, where I relax the first technique, and the quartet present the folk tune as a *klangfarbenmelodie*. Like Bailie’s unveiling of the Beethoven symphony, I strategically place the culmination of rhythmic fidelity toward the end of the piece as a structurally relevant moment. By gradually increasing rhythmic cohesion, I intend to create forward momentum. Yet, by abbreviating the moment of reveal, I hope to contain any potential excess of melancholic nostalgia.

⁸⁸ Thomas Ravenscroft, *Deuteromelia* (London: Thomas Adams, 1609).

⁸⁹ Bunch, ‘A Polyphony of the Mind,’ 367.

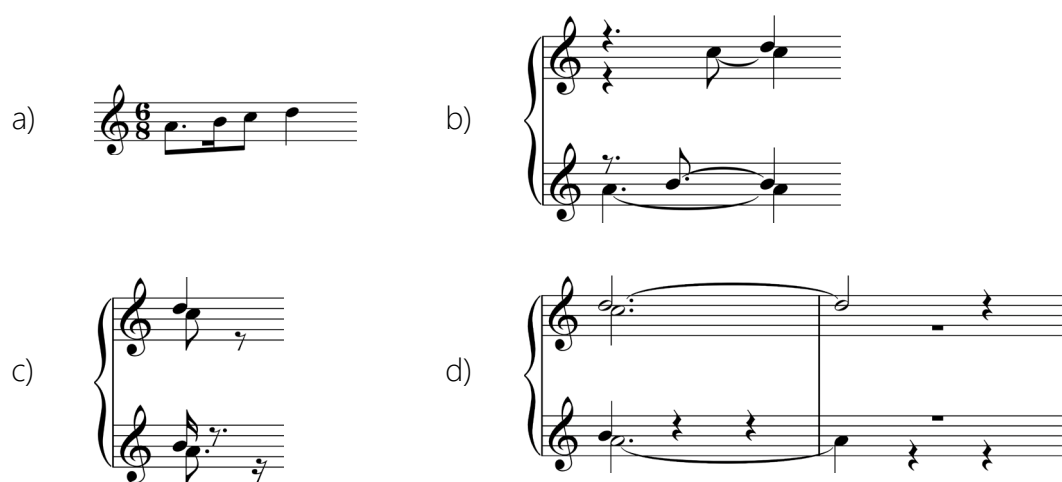


Figure 2. Example of rhythmic manipulations in *What I find in Raking*, a) fragment of ‘Yonder Comes a Courteous Knight’ melody; b) sustained arpeggio; c) compressed into single attack; d) rhythmic augmentation.

I adopt a varied approach to rhythmically destructive techniques in *To go along, however, is to thread one's way* (2018) for four unspecified instruments. When commissioned by Contemporary Music for All (CoMA) to write a piece for mixed-ability ensemble, I set about transcribing and subsequently deconstructing the *Adagio* from Archangelo Corelli's Trio Sonata, Op. 3, No. 2. I remove all sense of meter and rhythm, translating the latter using open graphic notation, and decouple the four metrically bound parts of the Corelli. Similar to the Trio section of Michael Finnissy's *Two uncharacteristic marches with a trio* (1999-2000) for wind quintet, each voice reads from its own separate part and plays independently from one another. I relate this to social anthropologist Tim Ingold's distinction of point-to-point traces versus meandering threads, or "transport" versus "wayfaring," where the former is destination-orientated and the latter journey-orientated.⁹⁰ Following Larry Goves' likening of Ingold's surface – the meshing of

⁹⁰ Tim Ingold, *Lines: A brief history* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016, first published 2007), 80-82.

threads – to musical time,⁹¹ I wanted to deconstruct temporality itself. I compare the emergent ruin, the inter-webbing of possible happenings and non-happenings, to Deleuze's unlimited Aion, where events subsist within both the infinitive and the instant⁹² rather than in preordained order. At each rehearsal mark, I relax this metric and rhythmic transformation and attempt to reconstruct Corelli's textures by synchronising, knotting and meshing the four parts again. Such moments recall James Saunders' comparison of regulated linear events in modular music to the interfaces of tangible physical objects.⁹³ I liken the sudden shifts from rhythmic freedom to delineated bar lines to smooth and striated time; waiting and going; and being and becoming.

In *Icon across Index* (2018), written for tenor Leighton Triplow and lutenist Rosemary Hodgson, I take a different approach to the bury-unearth-reveal model. As a means of disrupting and masking John Dowland's *In Darkness let me Dwell* (1610), I utilise a second borrowed material – the curacy text for the composer's burial place – as an analogue filter. I do this by intersecting the spoken curacy text with Dowland's music where the two share words, phrases or themes. The piece takes a linear form as I steadily increase the rate of musical intersection. In addition, I once again employ extended instrumental techniques to disembody the sounds, including unstable left-hand stopping and harmonics on the lute as well as syllabic manipulation in the voice. To apply both transformative processes simultaneously, I sampled guitar harmonics, the sung Dowland and spoken curacy text, before arranging them using audio editing software (Figure

⁹¹ Larry Goves, 'Michael Finnissy and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart: The Composer as Anthropologist,' *Tempo* 71, no. 280 (April 2017): 47-55.

⁹² Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester, ed. Constantin Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 8 & 64.

⁹³ James Saunders, 'Modular Music,' *Perspectives of New Music* 46, no. 1 (Winter 2008), 155 & 159.

4). Like Bailie, I then proceeded to notate and neaten what I'd assembled on the computer. The discrepancies between media translations yielded creative methods of working. For example, the computer easily allows me to stretch a sung vowel (Audio Example 1) yet trying to capture these phonetic complexities in notation led to very different results (Figure 3). At rehearsal marks six and eight, I partially reverse both transformational techniques and allow a degree of continuity, creating an increased fidelity to the Dowland song.

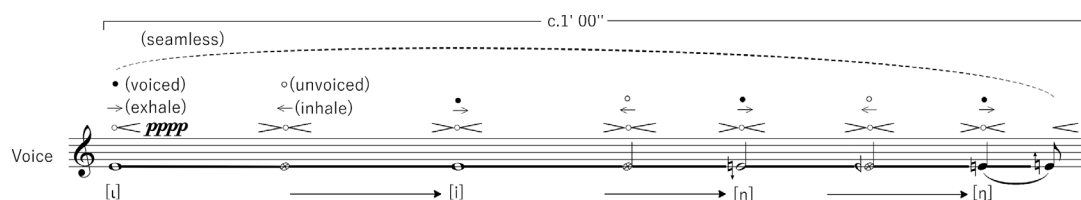


Figure 3. Voice extract from *Icon across Index*, page 2.

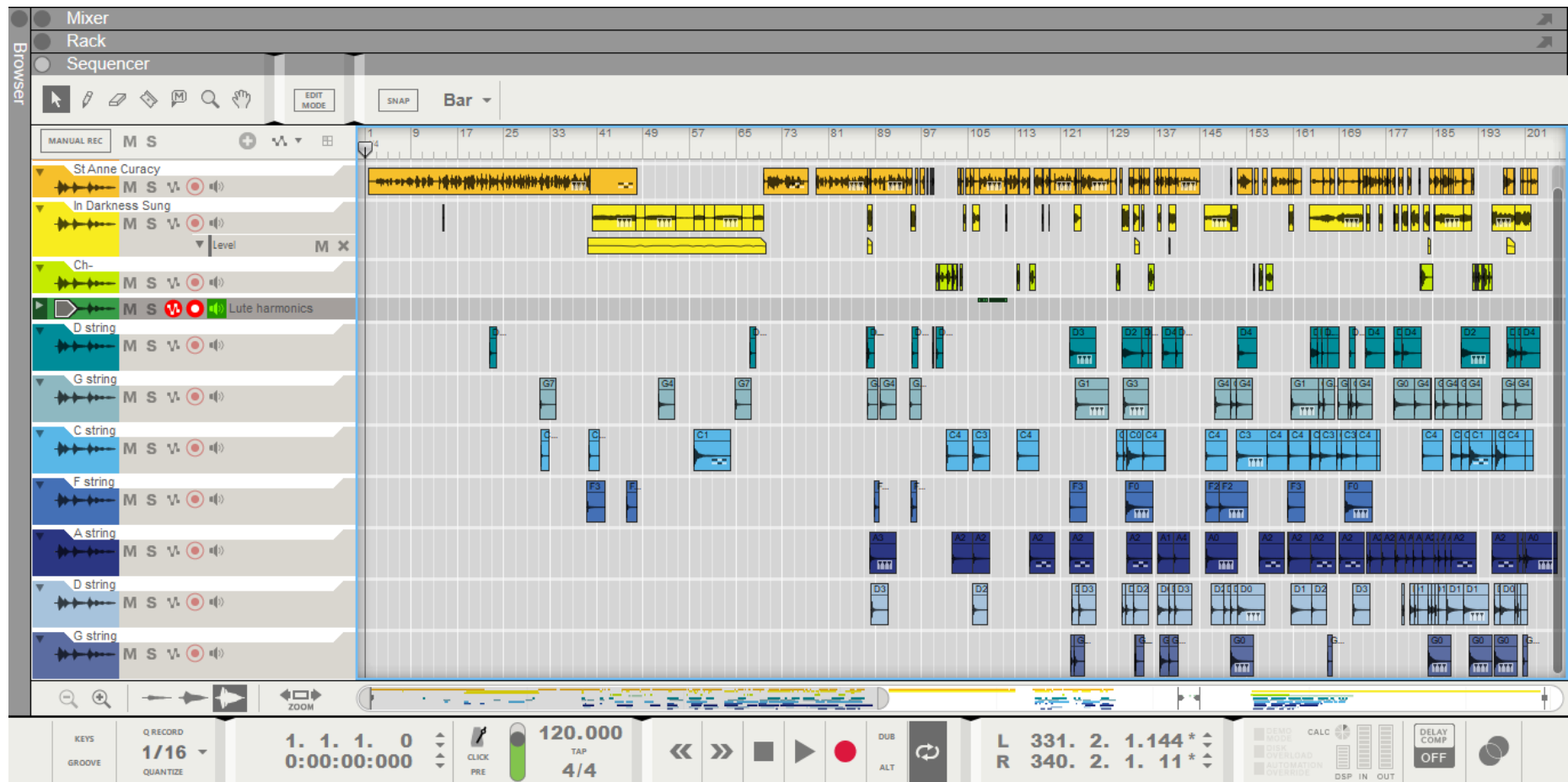


Figure 4. Screen grab of *Icon across Index* draft arranged using audio editing software.

2.2 'Bury-Unearth' Spectrum

My initial presumption regarding the bury-unearth-reveal model was, in hindsight, too binary, placing emphasis on the 'bury' and 'reveal' aspects in an on-off dualism. In practice, however, this process was more nuanced, the act of 'unearthing' functioning as an analogue spectrum. The weighting with which one can regulate this spectrum allows for more nuanced forms of 'reveal,' such as that in Simon Steen-Andersen's *In spite of, and maybe even therefore* (2007), as discussed in chapter one. As the static quoted harmonies gradually gain rhythmic fidelity to the Beethoven Bagatelle, the instruments are simultaneously dismantled. Thus, the reversal of one transformative technique coincides with the extreme application of another. In bar 100, this culminates in a highly ambiguous reveal as Steen-Andersen presents the Bagatelle as a disembodied rhythmic skeleton. Rather than evaluate whether the source material is recognisable or not, we might describe such a moment as 'partially-recognisable': a quotation that resides on the cusp of familiarity but keeps a listener guessing, leading to a sense of the uncanny.

Similarly, in *What I find in Raking*, my regulation of both techniques in conjunction with one another proved to be far more nuanced. At the reveal in bars 84-85, I coincide the reversal of the rhythmic manipulations with an extreme application of the sonic disembodiment technique, utilising noisier harmonics further up the overtone series. This results in an ambiguous whisper, hinting toward a cohesive melody. This denial of expectations constitutes what I am labelling as the partially-recognisable: the uncanny, a spectre, or a memory. Given the obscurity of the source material, a listener is more likely to identify the type rather than the token, an unspecified folksong. As such, rhythmic fidelity might be better thought of as rhythmic *clarity*, elucidating a genre reference. Thus, the 'reveal' becomes an intrinsic turn within the piece, as a listener relates it to what has proceeded rather

than relying on an extrinsic knowledge of the source. I hope this leads a listener to retrospectively reframe their listening, perhaps inducing a reflective nostalgia. Cultural historian Svetlana Boym uses this term to refer to an embracing of mnemonic distortion that “cherishes fragments of memory, and temporalizes space.”⁹⁴ The unearthing of the fragment, rather than the fragment itself, is given precedence.

Likewise, in *Icon across Index*, I employ the two transformative techniques – sonic disembodiment and textual filter – in contrasting manners to create the partially-recognisable. From rehearsal mark nine (pages 17-19), I explore instances where the Dowland song and curacy text share words that are only remotely similar and excessively intersect the two, leading to a continuity reminiscent of the song. At the same time, I intensify the sonic disembodiment modification. The result is once again ambiguous, a disjunct splicing of nonsense phrases sung *senza espressivo* accompanied by continuous dull harmonics. Within the context of the piece, this section maintains the proceeding continuity of rehearsal mark eight (pages 15-16) but the Dowland song is now incomprehensible in a different manner. In a sense, I use the music to ruin the curacy text, revealing a sort of limbo behind the promise of the Dowland song, and in doing so I other both. Here, I found the partially-recognisable could be achieved by pushing *beyond* what I perceived as recognisable, rather than as a nodal point leading toward it.

My approach varied significantly in *To go along...* Though the rhythmic and metric manipulations of the Corelli are ostensibly unpredictable and disruptive, they do not completely obscure the source material. Furthermore, at the moments of reveal, I transcribe and realign the Corelli faithfully. Where one might assume a binary listening of these two dichotomies, I recognise a different experience. For

⁹⁴ Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 49.

me, the reveals at each rehearsal mark assume a quality that differentiates them entirely from the original source despite their partial or near fidelity (Figure 5). I find these moments particularly uncanny, perhaps due to their surroundings and recontextualisation. I have done almost nothing to the Corelli material, and yet, as with all matter, I am reminded that “any two systems separated by so much as an infinitesimal spatial interval always possess separate states.”⁹⁵ The moment we as borrowers handle an existing music, no matter how little, it surpasses the threshold of recognition and is rendered infinitely strange. For me, this calls into question the role of the composer as a liberal and omnipotent subject, and asks who (or what) else might be at play.

a)

b)

Figure 5. a) *To go along, however, is to thread one's way*, rehearsal mark A; and b) *Adagio* from Corelli's Trio Sonata, Op. 3 No. 2, bars 9-13.

⁹⁵ Don Howard, 'Einstein on Locality and Separability,' *Studies in History and Philosophy of Science* 16: 171-201. Cited in Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 173.

2.3 Original Composer as Virtual Agent

At such moments of the partially-recognisable, my feeling of the uncanny began to intensify. In *To go along...*, this manifested during the creative process as sections of the source seeming to suggest themselves for repairing, and during listening as a strange realignment in the ears to adjust to the historic counterpoint. Whilst writing, I began to imagine the presence of the original composer. As we move between states of player independence and synchronicity, and the latter demonstrates its new identity within the context of the former, I find the partially-recognisable begins to resemble a memory of the Trio or, more specifically, Corelli himself. Within the knotting of contrapuntal lines and artificial ornaments, I would encounter an apparition of the Baroque composer – his influences, compositional decisions and memories. In the listening to and composition of the rehearsal marks of *To go along...*, Corelli is conjured as a virtual composer-agent, whose scribbling nib haunts my reknitting of his counterpoint.

I shared a similar sentiment in the writing of *Icon across Index*. In the cross-referencing of Dowland's song and the curacy text, it should be noted that I made no survey of the words the two texts would share beforehand. My motivation was purely historical and poetic. I established the strict process, Oulipo-like in its constraint, and felt at times like the Dowland song was meant to fit with the curacy text, or even that it forced its way in whilst composing the last section. This tension invoked a notion of 'surface' relating to depth and proximity, contrasting with Ingold's archi-textural meshwork of entangled lines.⁹⁶ Similar to my search for Corelli in *To go along...*, I began to envision Dowland residing below the surface of this material assemblage, determined to push through and rupture the

⁹⁶ Ingold, *Lines*, 83.

enfolded texture. Alongside the composer, I also began to imagine an abstract and similarly fictitious tenor. Here, I use the term tenor to refer broadly to lyricism, projection and expressiveness. How should this tenor be revealed, if at all? What if there is nothing below the surface despite all hints to the contrary?⁹⁷ At rehearsal mark nine, I look to reveal this nothingness, this lack of lyricism and expression. The anti-climactic and phonetic pointillism is a literal and poetic manifestation of the ‘tenor’ losing its voice and perhaps the ruin losing its grandeur.

2.4 Problematising the Bury-Unearth-Reveal method: A Case Study

In 2018 I was commissioned by Jason Alder to write a piece for contrabass clarinet. Following a demonstration by Alder of the instrument’s capacity for sonically rich multiphonics – possible due to the size of the bore and air column, and resulting overtone spectrum – I knew I wanted to borrow an early polyphonic texture. I chose Guillaume Dufay’s antiphon *Ave maris stella*. The hymn setting is a typical instance of the *fauxbourdon* technique, whereby a *cantus firmus* is harmonised by two voices a sixth and fourth below. I saw this as an opportunity to simultaneously employ a multiphonic – produced either through fingering or embouchure – and singing into the instrument (henceforth referred to as ‘compound multiphonics’) as a transformative technique with which to bury Dufay’s three-part texture.

The creative process began with a survey of each vertical harmony in the antiphon before replicating these intervals using sung tones and the available multiphonics in their various positions, transposed a semi-tone lower (Figure 6). This then evolved into an iterative procedure with Jason and the multiphonic

⁹⁷ A metaphor offered by my supervisor, Dr Mauricio Pauly, proved useful: Is this [the tenor] the tip of the iceberg, or just an iceberg’s tip?

fingerings he provided. Due to the limited number of corresponding intervals, each of Dufay's vertical harmonies assumed a distinct configuration when translated through the instrument and this technique.

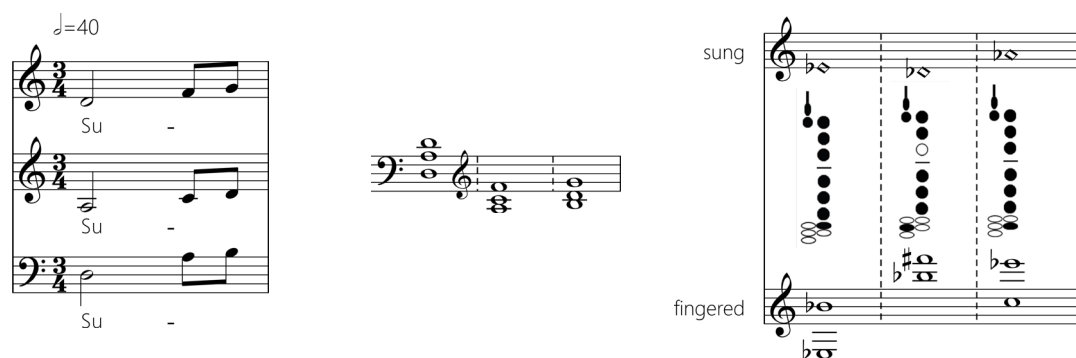


Figure 6. Process of translating Dufay's fauxbourdon texture into contrabass clarinet compound multiphonics.

Over several workshops, we began to discover that each configuration had its own properties (Figure 7, Audio Example 2). Whilst some sonorities would allow all three tones to be sustained stably, others would require balancing sung and fingered tones. Whilst one might permit a delicate clarity of pitch, another would shriek uncontrollably or reveal unwanted overtones. I applied a consistent process to arrive at these configurations, but each is pre-determined to yield highly distinctive and varied results due to the unstable apparatus: the instrument, breath and singer. The differences between each compound multiphonic were nuanced enough to be described as characteristics, and the sonorities themselves as musical objects or, as noted above, as semi-animate 'Things'.

I then began to compose with these Things, forcing them into horizontal sequence to reassemble Dufay's antiphon (Figure 8). Accordingly, from page five, I give Alder hypothetical objectives where he must achieve a form of part-leading and knit the sonorities together (Figure 9). At bar 141, I impose Dufay's original

rhythms upon the configurations to attempt a sense of fidelity. In both instances, new gestures emerge which, following Lawrence Kramer, I refer to as "gatherings."⁹⁸ Beyond reconstruction, I wanted to cultivate a scenario in which musical materials find their own way to reside; Kramer's expression, "a houseful of things,"⁹⁹ resonates with me here. By relinquishing a small degree of compositional control, I ask if I (and even my imagined Dufay) still feel at home here and which entities draw me closer to or alienate me from the hymn. This sense of the source composer's estrangement began to act as a personal gauge for recognisability. However, the unstable Things are still structured to align with my original method – an approach that would change in future practice, discussed in ensuing chapters.

⁹⁸ Kramer, *Interpreting Music*, 187.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 188.

Figure 7. Marginalia made for composite multiphonics used in *Droning Falsities*.

Section 1

Handwritten musical score draft for *Droning Falsities*, featuring multiple staves and sections of music. The score is heavily annotated with handwritten notes and includes several sections of music written on staves.

Key annotations and sections include:

- Section 1:** The top section, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It includes a section labeled "Sub. tacet" and a section labeled "bring voice in (with less only) (with this)".
- Section 2:** The middle section, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It includes a section labeled "fade tape part in to multiphonic very slowly almost imperceptibly. Only sounds on own briefly." and a section labeled "Sub. (intermittently)".
- Section 3:** The bottom section, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It includes a section labeled "Sub. tacet" and a section labeled "Sub. (intermittently)".
- Section 4:** The bottom right section, starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It includes a section labeled "Sub. (intermittently)".

The score is written on staves with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a time signature of 4/4. The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings (e.g., *pp*, *pppp*).

Figure 8. Example of post-it note draft for *Droning Falsities*.

Figure 9. *Droning Falsities (for one's self)*, bars 65–69.

Rather than a Cageian abolition of taste,¹⁰⁰ I relate my modest relinquishing of compositional control to landscape artist Robert Smithson's sculptures, which "emulate the process of entropy"¹⁰¹ as a creative impetus. As suggested by author Brian Christian, "entropy guides the eye. It gives every passage a secret shape."¹⁰² My pursuit of unstable sonic situations and their emergent outcomes led me to rethink my method and incorporate more entropic procedures. Could I establish a music-making scenario whereby musical Things, having emerged, are left to external forces that act upon them? Or, simply, could I let the music decay by itself? I return to these questions in the following chapters.

¹⁰⁰ Thom Holmes, *Electronic and Experimental Music: Pioneers in Technology and Composition* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 107; James McHard, *The Future of Modern Music: A vibrant new modernism in music for the future* (Salt Lake City: Iconic Press, 2006), 203–204.

¹⁰¹ James Lingwood, 'The Weight of Time,' in *Ruins*, ed. Brian Dillon (London: Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2011), 117.

¹⁰² Brian Christian, 'High Compression: Information, Intimacy, and the Entropy of Life,' *Agni*, no. 69 (2009): 158.

Moreover, during the composition of the pieces described in this chapter, a consistent problem arose in identifying the 'material' I was borrowing. I noticed a disposition (one I recognise as prevalent within contemporary music) to turn to the musical score as my first source of derivation. This more overtly manifests as graphic manipulations of the score, demonstrated in my *To go along...* (2018). In each of the pieces discussed in this chapter, however, I perceived a fundamental shortcoming whereby I borrowed, and by extension ruined, the notation rather than the music. In my reliance upon the score as material, I was here mistaking the trees for the forest. Such an approach, whilst honing a technical and procedural ability to transform borrowed music, ultimately proved inadequate. I began to view my borrowed material, the notated text, as an unsubstantiated frame of data rather than a body that could be ruined. This sentiment led to highly varied methods of borrowing that rely on collaboration, anthropology and archiving, and are discussed in ensuing chapters.

For now, I acknowledge *Droning Falsities* as a turning point in my thinking toward the bury-unearth-reveal method. The previous anthropocentric notion that I, an autonomous creative subject, could simply subject a notated piece of music, an inert object, to a destructive technique was supplanted. Instead, I began to sympathise with the concept of a 'vessel', used by geographer Caitlin DeSilvey's to describe ruinous heritage sites, "holding material memories of the industrial past in... place."¹⁰³ In a literal sense, the clarinet acts as an acoustic vessel, a resonant chamber in which spectral interferences occur. More pertinently, however, the Dufay antiphon itself acts as a material vessel in which I can situate myself as borrower, a dynamic system that houses me as a creative agent along with my motivations, tastes and dreams, alongside Dufay and the antiphon's material memories.

¹⁰³ DeSilvey, *Curated Decay*, 2.

The notion of inhabiting a vessel, an imaginary three-dimensional space, when borrowing might be explored further. Composer Richard Beaudoin compares borrowing to “finding oneself ‘on the plane of others.’”¹⁰⁴ Such a space in which to wander (or wonder) reinforces the notion of ‘wayfaring’ that arose in my conception of *To go along*... Furthermore, I relate the dynamic interaction between myself and the vessel to one’s movement through a ruined space, which Tim Edensor tells us:

is determined by whim or contingency in an improvisational path-making, according to what catches the eye or looks as if it might promise surprises or appears pleasurably negotiable... Progress through a ruin is comparable to the *derive*... [which] advocates a playful abandonment of purposive mobility.¹⁰⁵

I understand this catching of the eye as the extent to which the musical vessel, or Thing, leads me through the creative process, now entangled with material memories, historical baggage and sonic surprises.

Whilst the scope of this project does not allow for a broader investigation of artistic agency, provocations made by new materialist and post-humanist theorists are useful in understanding this entanglement. I relate with and am stimulated by Jane Bennett’s suggestion of a scenario where non-human entities assume their own propensities, trajectories and agencies, aside from, but often entwined with, that of the human.¹⁰⁶ Conversely, I recognise my own instrumentality within this entanglement. Ecologist Andreas Malm is sceptical of a situation where “the humans in question had no agency *qualitatively different* from... all the other

¹⁰⁴ Beaudoin, ‘You’re There and You’re Not There,’ 104.

¹⁰⁵ Edensor, *Industrial Ruins*, 87.

¹⁰⁶ Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, viii.

materials present”¹⁰⁷ and suggests agency resides with “the person who *instigates* the sequence.”¹⁰⁸ Ultimately, I recognise the limitation of words to describe any phenomenon that occurs in praxis. Jacques Lacan speaks of ‘*Das Ding*’, a thing in its “dumb reality”¹⁰⁹ that is unknowable, as part of the Real which is beyond the signified.¹¹⁰ I therefore defer to Karen Barad’s conception of a “posthumanist *performative* [emphasis added] approach... that specifically acknowledges and takes account of matter’s dynamism.”¹¹¹ Within this Thing-vessel, I can push at its walls, explore its underground cavities or even smash through the ceiling, but always within orbit and proximity to this home foundation.

¹⁰⁷ Andreas Malm, *The Progress of this Storm: Nature and Society in a Warming World* (London: Verso, 2018), 83.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 93.

¹⁰⁹ Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar. Book VII. The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959-60*, trans. Dennis Porter (London: Routledge, 1992), 55.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 54.

¹¹¹ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 135.

Chapter 3: Story Telling, Non-Fiction, Documentary

Retrospectively, I view the borrowed materials of the works discussed hitherto as lacking body. Considering my bias toward the notation of the source, toward cold data, my found object was an unsubstantiated frame. Afterall, Richard Beaudoin's 'plane'¹¹² is, by definition, two-dimensional. Unknowingly at the time, another conception of composing musical ruins began to unfold from, entangle with and expand upon the burial-unearth-reveal paradigm, which allowed me to scrutinise this self-perceived deficiency. I refer to this alternate method as art-anthropology, which includes storytelling, non-fiction and documentary-making. In response to Carlos López-Galviz et al.'s suggestion that "we should aim for an understanding of ruins that incorporates verbs... qualifying nouns,"¹¹³ I align my approach to a quasi-archaeological and -anthropological exploration of performers' relationships to existing music. Similar to López-Galviz et al.'s conception of architectural ruins, I look to treat existing music as windows into lived pasts, as triggers for memory and thresholds for intimacy and fantasy.¹¹⁴ Not only did this provide new avenues into how I might work with borrowed material, but also a framework for performer-collaboration, whereby learning "is carried forward in a process of life, and effects transformation within that process."¹¹⁵ If (musical) objects allow "our own perspectives to include an understanding of the perspectives of others,"¹¹⁶ such an approach would allow me as maker to "see things, and to hear and feel them"¹¹⁷ in the way my collaborators do.

¹¹² Beaudoin, 'You're There and You're Not There,' 104.

¹¹³ López-Galviz et al., 'Reconfiguring Ruins,' 545.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 533.

¹¹⁵ Tim Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* (Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2013), 3.

¹¹⁶ Christina Toren, *Mind, Materiality and History: Explorations in Fijian Ethnography* (London: Routledge, 1999). Cited in Joanna R. Sofaer, *The Body as Material Culture: A Theoretical Osteoarchaeology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 79.

¹¹⁷ Ingold, *Making*, 2.

3.1 *Memento for Kathryn (and being able to hold that forever)* (2018)

When asked by flautist Kathryn Williams to write a single-breath piece, I felt inexplicably compelled to tie this invitation in with the 'Debussy in 2018: A Centenary Celebration' conference at the Royal Northern College of Music. I therefore decided to borrow the opening flute solo from Debussy's *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, L. 86. I speculatively conceived Williams beginning the solo with the flute away from her mouth and bringing it closer. However, during our first correspondence, it transpired that the Debussy solo was significant to Williams after a rendition to her consultant following a sinus-related operation. The serendipity of my source choice was intriguing.

3.1.1 Creative Process

In our first meeting, we discussed the physical restraints of the sinus infection; the operation and ensuing solo for her consultant; breathing technique and various flautists' approaches to the *Prelude*; and Williams' 'Coming up for Air' project. She then played the solo several times, experimenting with varying degrees of proximity and gradient, as well as the speed of moving the instrument and breath streams (Audio Example 3).

Reflecting on this meeting, I was struck by the significance of our discussion, arguably as meaningful as the instrument or solo. Like artist-anthropologist Lydia Degarrod, "as I listened, I experienced sense memories"¹¹⁸ – the heady congestion of a blocked sinus, the popping of ears and harps, the swelling of a bloated diaphragm and *tutti* orchestra. Moreover, I was humbled by Williams' position as

¹¹⁸ Lydia Nakashima Degarrod, 'Collaborative art and the emergence and development of ethnographic knowledge and empathy,' *Critical Arts* 30, no. 3 (September 2016): 329.

"expert,"¹¹⁹ not solely in her skill with the flute but in her understanding of and confrontation with her past trauma. Following the methods of art theorist Dipti Desai,¹²⁰ I wanted my exchange with Williams to guide the direction of the composition.

I listened back to our recorded discussion and began sifting for important themes, quotes and imagery. Williams' description of the *Prelude* and the evocation expected from a player motivated me to include sampled extracts of the orchestral work for word painting. In this sense, Williams "transmitted memories, images and emotions that... shaped the images I created."¹²¹ Similarly, I was struck by Williams' desire to sustain the last note of the solo forever. I audio-stretch this note in the accompanying track and place it at the end of Williams' live performance. This moment is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, Williams realises she cannot hold it forever, and on the other, it provides an aspirational goal for her to strive toward. As described by Degarrod, "the collaborative process of making... involved the same emotional, imaginative and cognitive stages which are involved in the empathetic process,"¹²² allowing a mutual understanding between myself and Williams. This led to "a dialogical and embodied understanding."¹²³

In our next meeting, Williams and I discussed her activity during the accompanying soundtrack in performance and she suggested a series of held inhales at certain intervals. This challenged my notions of waste and intention. In

¹¹⁹ Dipti Desai, 'The Ethnographic Move in Contemporary Art: What Does it Mean for Art Education?' *Studies in Art Education* 43, no. 4 (July 2002): 317.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Degarrod, 'Collaborative art,' 337.

¹²² Ibid., 323.

¹²³ Ibid.

the production of instrumental sounds, the inhale is seen as refuse. In *Memento*, I give the inhale theatrical emphasis by doubling it in the tape, though its acoustic presence is eclipsed by the exhale, which I give an unaccompanied pedestal. Such dichotomies are reminiscent of the “negative space” that exists in the periphery of “‘good’ sound production”¹²⁴ in practices of *musique concrète instrumentale*. In the context of musical borrowing, this negative space, or waste, allows me to “construct meaning, stories and practices.”¹²⁵

I wanted to balance these moments of poetry with a documentary format, more specifically the podcast. Whilst I include discursive extracts in the tape part in an attempt to tell Williams’ story, I hope these fragments are not didactic for an audience; they can’t know her story *exactly*. Rather than exhibit Williams’ private world, I wanted to instead allow “a sharing of imaginary worlds through my direct involvement in art making. Instead of being an observer or witness, I was an active participant in the sharing of memories and images.”¹²⁶ Williams’ performance speaks to the “physicality of memory”¹²⁷ – a bodily story that is “‘ephemeral’... ‘a kind of evidence of what has transpired, but certainly not the thing itself.’”¹²⁸ A spectator can observe and interpret this performance, and even empathise with Williams, but they cannot *know* her experience of trauma via representation. This transfer of understanding is doomed from the start. We are not sharing Williams’ story, but our attempt to tell it. And yet, for me, this fatalistic endeavour is the source of the work’s richness and embodies an aspiration to communicate and identify with a stranger.

¹²⁴ Rutherford-Johnson, *Music after the Fall*, 203-204.

¹²⁵ Edensor, *Industrial Ruins*, 108.

¹²⁶ Degarrod, ‘Collaborative art,’ 326.

¹²⁷ Desai, ‘The Ethnographic Move,’ 314.

¹²⁸ José Esteban Munoz, ‘Evidence as ephemera: Introductory notes to queer acts,’ *Women and Performance: A Journal of Feminist Theory* 8, no. 2 (January 1996): 5–11. Cited in Desai, ‘The Ethnographic Move,’ 314.

3.1.2 A Souvenir

Following the composition of *Memento...*, Williams posed a query to me regarding its interpretation. My response, in not so many words, was, "I don't know, the piece is yours now." I liken my gifting of a miniature to Williams, which she owns and shapes, to a souvenir of her experience. I use the metaphor of a souvenir to read *Memento...* in various ways, including notions of distance and intimacy. Poet Susan Stewart claims, "there is no continuous identity between [souvenirs] and their referents. Only the act of memory constitutes their resemblance."¹²⁹ This recalls the failed endeavour to share Williams' experience. The objects – the flute, the Debussy solo, the breath itself – refer to a time of trauma, but it is only Williams' conjuring of her own memories that we witness and perhaps empathise with.

Another facet of the souvenir is the "distance in space – the souvenir of the exotic."¹³⁰ Stewart states, "such objects allow one to be a tourist of one's own life."¹³¹ This manifests in *Memento* as the physical distance away from the flute, the sonic distance from Debussy's original music, and Williams' estrangement from her previous self. Stewart goes on to say that the souvenir is "placed within an intimate distance; space is transformed into interiority, into 'personal' space."¹³² The literal and figurative distance between Williams and her instrument becomes another material 'vessel' for motivations, memories and dreams to inhabit. I compare this intimate space, with its shared secrets of struggle and personal triumph, to designations of ruins as spaces for 'Home Making,' as "temporary

¹²⁹ Susan Stewart, 'Separation and Restoration,' in *Ruins*, ed. Brian Dillon (London: Whitechapel Gallery and MIT Press, 2011), 36.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Ibid., 37.

¹³² Ibid.

places of shelter and abode... to accommodate bodies."¹³³ We as voyeurs witness Williams intimately traversing her life and experiences.

Stewart goes on to discuss bodily mementos. She describes the souvenirs Jonathan Swift's Gulliver collects on his travels from Brobdingnag as

samples of the body which simultaneously estrange us from the body... they speak to its dual capacities of excess and regeneration. They transform the human into the other and yet allow the possessor to know intimately that other in parts.¹³⁴

Williams joins the spectator as a tourist and explores her estranged former self. I relate this to comparisons made by Jacques Derrida¹³⁵ and curator Christopher Woodward¹³⁶ of ruin depiction with 'self-portrait', and Carlos López-Galviz et al.'s claim that "ruins are in part fascinating because they mirror, reflect, and extend our sense of the limitations of our own physicality."¹³⁷ Williams' performance of *Memento* therefore acts as self-portrait in which she can confront previous trauma and strive to expand the limitations of her body.

I am struck by Williams' determination following such trauma. Stewart tells us:

The exotic object is to some degree dangerous, even 'hot'.
Removed from its context, the exotic souvenir is a sign of survival – not its own survival, but the survival of the possessor outside his or her own context of familiarity. Its otherness speaks to the

¹³³ Edensor, *Industrial Ruins*, 24-25.

¹³⁴ Stewart, 'Separation and Restoration,' 38.

¹³⁵ Jacques Derrida, *Memoires of the Blind: The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 68. Cited in Makarius, *Ruins*, 232.

¹³⁶ Woodward, *In Ruins*, 168-176.

¹³⁷ López-Galviz et al., 'Reconfiguring Ruins,' 535.

possessor's capacity for otherness: it is the possessor, not the souvenir, which is ultimately the curiosity.¹³⁸

Everything falls away – the flute, Debussy, nymphs and fawns, even the breath itself. This piece is about Williams. Furthermore, I suggest that Williams, her memories and experiences are the source material I borrow or, even, that are lent. This conceptualisation provides an alternative perspective on the problem previously outlined regarding my reliance on the score as source. The materials of *Memento for Kathryn* are instead discursive and collaborative and are gifted by Williams as much as they are borrowed by me. As for their ruination, Stewart suggests “the souvenir retains its signifying capacity only in a generalized sense, losing its specific referent and eventually pointing to an abstract otherness that describes the possessor.”¹³⁹ This abstract otherness – what I’ve described as the doomed attempt to share Williams’ story – is the ruin of the Debussy solo, wherein the richness of this collaboration resides.

3.2 Hearing Triple

I now contextualise my method of storytelling within practices of borrowing a particular performer’s musical interpretation. In *For Mira* (2012), Cassandra Miller transcribes the idiosyncrasies of Kurt Cobain’s performance of *Where Did You Sleep Last Night* (1993),¹⁴⁰ tracing and fragmenting the singer’s rasping undulations for solo violin. Similarly, in his *Études d'un prelude* series (2009-2010), Richard Beaudoin borrows Martha Argerich's recording of Chopin’s Prelude in E

¹³⁸ Stewart, ‘Separation and Restoration,’ 38.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Cassandra Miller, ‘*For Mira*,’ programme note available on the composer’s website, accessed 21 August 2019, <https://cassandramiller.wordpress.com/2013/08/03/for-mira/>.

minor, Op. 28 No. 4.¹⁴¹ Beaudoin takes micro-measurements of timing and volume from the recording as his material and translates these through various processes. Beaudoin describes the borrowing of a musical recording as “hearing triple.”¹⁴² He proposes that a performance of his *Études* reiterates the accumulated creative acts, interpretations and commentaries – or, ‘hearings’ – of the original composer, the recorded performer and Beaudoin’s own. Whilst I find such a proposition attractive, I find Beaudoin’s conception too reductive for my own purposes and in need of expansion.

Within the practices of both Miller and Beaudoin, the performer plays an influential role that is, regardless, passive. By contrast, my collaborators discussed in this chapter play an active and creative part in the new work. The process of third-party interpretation, rather than a simple tri-part lineage, might be better thought of as a vast network. We instead hear a complex entanglement of each party’s influences, memories and aspirations, and also bring our own associations to bear. The “reciprocal feedback”¹⁴³ between composer’s, performer’s and listener’s interpretations might be thought of as a “musical geography” where an individual can “construct or ‘map’ their own meaningful networks”¹⁴⁴ within these entanglements. The notion of exploring a landscape, and perhaps a familiar one in the instance of musical borrowing, ties in with Eivind Buene’s ruined city, discussed above. As a composer, such a scenario is both limiting and immensely rich. I cannot know the scope of this far-reaching network I am accessing as it is

¹⁴¹ Richard Beaudoin, ‘Chopin Desséché – étude d’un prelude I,’ programme note available on the composer’s website, accessed 21 August 2019, <http://www.richardbeaudoin.com/chopin-desseche>

¹⁴² Beaudoin, ‘You’re There and You’re Not There,’ 102.

¹⁴³ David J. Hargreaves, Jonathan James Hargreaves and Adrian C. North, ‘Imagination and Creativity in Musical Listening,’ in *Musical Imaginations: Multidisciplinary perspectives on creativity, performance and perception*, ed. David Hargreaves, Dorothy Miell and Raymond MacDonald (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 157-158.

¹⁴⁴ Hargreaves et al., ‘Imagination and Creativity in Musical Listening,’ 166.

vast and mostly elusive. I am simply trying to contact some of its nodes and perhaps influence others indirectly.

In *Memento for Kathryn*, I take a broader definition of 'hearing' than Beaudoin, for whom the term concerns musical and notational interpretations. By comparison, my materials include Williams' experiences and imagery as hearings of the Debussy Prelude. In doing so, I engage with an imagined reality of the music rather than solely its notation and propose an expansion to the bury-unearth-reveal reading. Such an approach unfurls from and re-entangles with the two-dimensional method as it situates the notated data within a lived context as well as that of the newly written piece. The evocation of such a reality fleshes out the unsubstantiated plane into a landscape. This reality taps into a point on the network of interpretation, only hinted at by Beaudoin's "hearing triple", providing (no less than) a third vector to Beaudoin's and Cavell's plane. The data is rendered into a construct or corpus. For me, the borrowed musical material once again assumes a vibrancy and Thing-like quality of its own.

3.3 *A pursuit (or task), its arc, and the blisters traced* (2019)

When asked by cellist Amy Jolly to write a variation on Benjamin Britten's *Tema Sacher* (1976), I wanted to engage with and borrow Jolly's 'hearing' of the theme, specifically her changing relationship to the piece since beginning her commissioning project. Discussions to this effect lead to the following working process.

Britten sets the musical cryptogram using three motifs (Figure 10) which remain largely undeveloped throughout the piece. Following my translation and retention of a three-part texture onto a traditionally monophonic instrument in *Droning Falsities*, I asked Jolly to play Britten's motifs simultaneously. Impossible tasks have

been explored by numerous composers, often employing complex notation – most notably Evan Johnson, whose multi-stave *Supplement* (2004) for bass clarinet explores the over-ornamentation of a melodic line. Nonetheless, my approach deviates (in more ways than one) from Johnson’s with regards to duration and repetition. During our initial workshops, I asked Jolly to continually attempt to realise the impossible task for long periods of time and allow unpredictable outcomes to emerge (Figure 11, Audio Example 4). The motifs are incessantly repeated and allowed to interact and interfere with one another in their varying transpositions. As well as the theme’s pitches, I borrow other notational details of Britten’s motifs; dynamics, articulations and rhythms all conflict with one another.



Figure 10. 'Sacher' theme from Benjamin Britten's *Tema Sacher*. Reproduced with permission from Faber Music, London.

Lento Maestoso (♩)

II
I

Violoncello
scord. II=E♭

Note: attempt to play all three concurrently. Whilst I am aware this is strictly impossible, I am interested in the *attempt* to realise all pitches, rhythms and articulations accurately and the emergent differentiations that result as fatigue/boredom set in.

Figure 11. Initial idea presented to cellist Amy Jolly in our first workshop.

Asking a performer to fail at the impossible is problematic. Rather, I ask Jolly to confront the impossible notational puzzle and the meaning of failure within performance. She is therefore complicit in, rather than a victim of, such failure. During workshops, Jolly would adopt corrective measures and patterns of motivic privileging, struggling to relinquish her technique and overlook the instrument's limitations. We concluded that she needed another task or force to work against and encourage intuition. I therefore prepared Jolly's bow by wrapping woollen yarn round the hair, not dissimilar to Liza Lim's "guiro bow"¹⁴⁵ in *Invisibility* (2009) or Matthew Sergeant's twine bow in *[kiss]* (2014).¹⁴⁶ The resulting sound is muffled and muted, only rarely allowing the hair contact with the string – such moments

¹⁴⁵ Liza Lim, 'A mycelial model for understanding distributed creativity: collaborative partnership in the making of *Axis Mundi* (2013) for solo bassoon,' in 'Performance Studies Network Second International Conference 2013,' 4-7 April 2013, Cambridge, UK, available online, http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/id/eprint/17973/1/PSN2013_Lim.pdf, 5-6.

¹⁴⁶ Matthew Sergeant, 'Interview with Matthew Sergeant,' *ddmmyyyy* concert series, accessed 25 April 2019, <https://www.ddmmyyseries.com/Interview-with-Matthew-Sergeant>.

feel like perforations, reminiscent of Yasunao Tone's *Solo For Wounded CD* (1997). The inconsistent contact between the hair and fingers with the instrument also produces unpredictable harmonics. Furthermore, the wool directs the pacing of Jolly's playing. She must chase the bunching threads and wrestle with the bow as it snags on the strings, leading to charged interruptions. To navigate this puzzle, Jolly is required to balance intuition and technique, often compromising the latter. By giving Jolly an objective to chase, and in effect allowing her own technique to go to ruin, I once again encounter a musical Thing.

In my earlier practice, discussed above, I borrow and render a material using a given and variable technique. Conversely, in *A pursuit...*, I establish a degenerative scenario, compounded by multiple unstable endeavours. Britten's theme and notation serve as a stimulus for Jolly to attempt to compress musical matter into a hypothetical single moment. It is hard to pinpoint which entity impacts which as her movements become reactive and unconscious. I view this scenario as an entanglement between human behaviour and the agency of non-human matter. I therefore perceive an emergent gesture in its continual becoming and – following Smithson's disorderly entropic processes – unbecoming. The motifs disarticulate themselves in their co-presence with one another. Moreover, due to Jolly's growing fatigue on account of the snagging bow, this emerging gesture begins to break apart and form itself anew, demonstrating that "decay is as life-giving as it is life-taking."¹⁴⁷ Through the erosion of Britten's music, conversely, "things grow and encrust."¹⁴⁸ I relate my borrowing to ethnologist and landscape scientist Katarina Saltzman's concept of 'Composting', where decomposing waste products

¹⁴⁷ DeSilvey, *Curated Decay*, 11.

¹⁴⁸ Sergeant, 'Interview with Matthew Sergeant.'

also establish a process of composing.¹⁴⁹ Aside from Saltzman's fortuitous use of the latter term, I'm interested in how Britten's "materials (and meanings) begin to break down and lose their integrity."¹⁵⁰

I then looked to frame this process, this Thing coming into and out of being. As discussed, the subjection of a borrowed musical material to prescriptive transformational techniques is problematic, as is my ability to locate a threshold of half-recognition and structure moments of reveal. Rather, in *A pursuit...*, I explore a different form of control and precision. The score functions as a plan for Jolly's behaviour, a flowchart detailing her reactions to the apparatus (coloured orange in the score). At such moments, I implant additional material from the Britten source into the texture. Crucially, the scenario – the collision between performer, instrument and borrowed music – determines when and to what degree these moments of fidelity transpire. As composer (or composter), I am not a fully autonomous creative agent, completely free to wonder around the vessel I inhabit. I can attempt to manipulate the musical matter, akin to cultivating a seed¹⁵¹ or influencing genetic code,¹⁵² but it's manifestation will inevitably only bear trace evidence of my influence as the above procedures, puzzles and compromises entangle with one another. Like the network of interpretation mentioned, I can make contact with its nodes but I cannot know the reverberations of such actions. Following Jolly's partial but deliberate abandonment of performance technique, I subject my own autonomy in craft to ruin. In framing my borrowing with a performer's relationship to the music, I find the walls of my inhabited material

¹⁴⁹ Katarina Saltzman, 'Composting,' *Journal of European Ethnology* 35, no. 1, (January 2005): 63. Cited in C. DeSilvey, *Curated Decay: Heritage beyond saving* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 150.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ B. Eno, personal communication. Cited in David Toop, *Haunted Weather: Music, Silence and Memory* (London: Serpent's Tail, 2004), 186.

¹⁵² D. Dunn, personal communication. Cited in Toop, *Haunted Weather*, 193.

vessel are imprinted with an unfamiliar landscape (a musical geography) I must also negotiate.

Such an approach to musical borrowing and ruination could only have come about through the integration of Jolly's 'hearing' – her relationship to and descriptions of the Britten theme. She is continually and maddeningly confronted with the theme, drawing parallels with her need to practice and perform the original piece. This method of storytelling not only directly influenced my creative process, but also progressed my ability to work within the vessel previously described. I acknowledge a dichotic relationship whereby the looser I work with a borrowed material, the more effectively I perceive its efficacy as matter and engage with its Thingness.

Chapter 4: Plasticity and Unearthing a Musical Story

Following the composition of *A pursuit...*, I identified two conceptions of musical borrowing which, whilst emerging from one another in messy co-existence, felt distinct to me. Firstly, my manipulation of an existing music – a Thing – accommodates the agency of a non-human material that might lead my creative decisions. Secondly, an existing music might serve as a threshold for narrative, intimacy and fantasy, over which I might learn and share a performer's story. Whilst employing different methods – for instance, the latter is explicitly discursive and collaborative – these two approaches stemmed from similar threads. I wonder if my desire to work closely with performers was an attempt to hold onto something more concrete and tangible, owing to the ephemeral narratives emerging from the first approach. By foregrounding these two ideas and conceptually entangling their methods further, I looked to embrace their messy co-existence. If an existing musical material is indeed a Thing with its own propensities and tendencies, then I presumed it has its own story to tell, its own intimate history of social relations that it might share.

In their discussions of the body's materiality in relation to archaeological study, both Joanna Sofaer and Roberta Gilchrist note the inherent "plasticity"¹⁵³ of human remains. The body's "capability of being moulded"¹⁵⁴ results in an autobiographical record etched into the skeleton itself. Thus, material remains bear the traces of encounters, injury and habits. I appropriate this concept as a way of reading the approaches and reflective contexts outlined in previous

¹⁵³ Joanna R. Sofaer, *The Body as Material Culture: A Theoretical Osteoarchaeology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 71-76; Roberta Gilchrist, *Medieval Life: Archaeology and the Life Course* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2012), 44-45.

¹⁵⁴ D. F. Roberts, 'The Pervasiveness of Plasticity,' in *Human Variability and Plasticity*, ed. C.G.N. Mascie-Taylor and Barry Bogin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1.

chapters. Namely, that the decay of (musical) objects leads to a preoccupation with materiality, these ruins providing windows into lived pasts and social interactions. In doing so, I hope to explore the plasticity of musical bodies and investigate what avenues for composition this may open. Accordingly, I recognise a musical material has its own lived past (e.g. practices of interpretation and recording, listening trends, reception, etc.), the mnemonic traces of which I might draw upon in borrowing. By adopting plasticity, a concept rooted in the study of artefacts, as a lens through which to read my practice, I risk placing undue emphasis on the borrowed music as product. Within such a narrative, the processes of the object's transformations are obfuscated. However, the premise of plasticity as a framework relies on these processes manifesting in the newly created work as traces. Thus, within my reading and treatment of the borrowed material, both object and process are entwined.

4.1 Drawing upon an existing music's biography in *Preserve* (2020)

My fixed-media piece *Preserve* (2020) explores a chapter in the life of Ravel's *Boléro* (1928), scrutinising its use by and relationship with ice dancers Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean. However, the emergence of this narrative aspect was convoluted. I divide the creative act into three accumulative components: the percussion part, the acoustic ensemble and video editing.

The first began as an exploration of degenerative compositional processes. Similar to *A pursuit...*, I wanted to establish a musical scenario that embraced entropic processes and sought to make these visually, and even theatrically, explicit. Simply, the idea began as a fragment of music notation (initially unspecified) engraved onto a stone tablet, consequently drummed upon by a percussionist. As the percussionist strikes and wears away the tablet, she would then re-read the eroding notation and adjust her playing accordingly. I was interested in the

hypothetical trajectory of such a scenario, whereby the rate of notational erosion steadily decreases as notes are gradually replaced by silence.

I relate this idea to various forms of 'auto-destructive art,' in which the work is created through its own destruction.¹⁵⁵ This might be achieved through the use of unstable materials and environments, such as Andy Goldsworthy's various ice sculptures or Rhodri Davies' aeolian harps, where the work is left to interact with its surroundings and melt, break or change. Whilst we might view such processes as creating more 'honest' forms of ruination, I am similarly interested in music whose performance leads to its own *self*-destruction. In Larry Goves' *happy/boomf/fat* (2018), the score, printed on marshmallows, is eaten by the performers. Its realisation is altered by its consumption, presenting a comedic and uncomfortable tension between performer and material agencies. Likewise, in *Disintegration Loops* (2001), William Basinski left magnetic tape reels playing and recorded their decay.¹⁵⁶ The unfolding glitching pad sounds eventually dissolve into mechanic clicking. Whilst this piece became accidentally linked with the tragic September 11 attacks and their commemoration,¹⁵⁷ it does not tell a *musical* story.

In selecting a musical fragment to engrave, I sought a well-known piece of music with a distinct and repetitive rhythm. Due to my project's focus on art music, I perhaps unsurprisingly chose the ostinato from Ravel's *Boléro* (Figure 12). As well as a popular choice in symphonic repertoire, I recognised a strong association between *Boléro* and the Olympic Games for British listeners of a certain age following its use by Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean at the 1984 Sarajevo Winter Games. So entwined, at least within British culture, are the identities of the

¹⁵⁵ Gustav Metzger, *Auto-destructive art* (London: Self-published, 1959).

¹⁵⁶ Rutherford-Johnson, *Music after the Fall*, 218.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

figure skating choreography and orchestral suite that I felt compelled to draw upon this historical affinity within my borrowing.

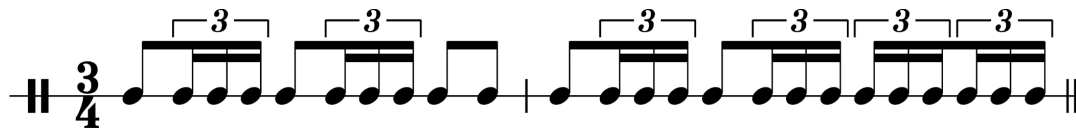


Figure 12. Rhythmic ostinato from Ravel's *Boléro*.

I consequently reconfigured my original idea and looked to notate the ostinato upon a block of ice. This new avenue seemed to suggest playful possibilities. I initially wanted to make the tablet sculptural and explored various methods for engraving the ice, including printing, etching, graphic transfer and sugar glass. However, many of these procedures are extremely difficult, expensive and time exhaustive. I realised that my priority, rather than an authentic explication of material properties, was to present a theatrical narrative for a concert hall audience. I therefore compromised with a composite 'score' where a piece of notated paper sits between separately frozen sheets of ice. Whilst the rippled paper clearly shows, I found its binding with the ice during erosion convincing enough to suspend disbelief. By entangling the ostinato with a biographically related surface, the piece references an episode in the borrowed music's past which subsequently reconfigures the source material in its new manifestation.

I tested my idea in a workshop with the Riot Ensemble for piano, harpsichord and percussion. Prohibited from preparing the keyboard instruments, I embraced the harpsichord's on-off method of sound production. Drawing once again upon *Boléro's* Olympic associations, I relate my binary approach to the instruments with the skates' contact with the ice. I slow down the Torvill and Dean footage and use it as a visual score, asking the players to match fragments of *Boléro's* melodic and

accompanying motifs with the proximity of their assigned skater's feet. In the workshop, this led to a fascinating splintering and unfolding of Ravel's music, beginning in mostly silence and clipped bursts and gradually building continuity in tandem with the growing boldness of the choreography. I once again draw upon this episode in *Boléro's* biography in my borrowing. The choreography, developed from the music, now works backward to reconfigure it. I envisioned the finished piece to consist of the ice drumming accompanied by the two keyboards and skating footage in a live concert setting.

However, with the cancellation of live events due to Covid-19 and the ensuing quarantine, I decided to revise the piece as a fixed media work. I began sourcing video recordings of instrumentalists performing the above tasks in isolation, allowing me to keep making music communally. With only the skating footage as coordinator, ensemble doublings become desynchronised resulting in an erratic heterophony. The texture is reminiscent of one I establish in *To go along...* By giving performers footage at differing speeds and manipulating the received recording accordingly, I wanted to exacerbate these rhythmic discrepancies and utilise the sonorities of the resulting pitch shifts. With all the recordings collated, I then set myself tasks in orchestration. As well as staggering instrumental entries to mimic Ravel's terraced orchestration, I hoped to draw attention to moments of melodic friction and affinity within doublings (e.g. the entry of the clarinet for a duet with the flute at 07'33"). After experimenting with various forms of video blending and glitch – a task made difficult due to available software, computer processing power and editing capabilities – I discarded the ensemble footage and use the audio only. Instead, I accentuate the quality of the skating footage and steadily increase levels of pixelation from 12'00" whilst finding sonic equivalence using bitcrusher distortion effects. This decision emerged directly from the retro Torvill and Dean footage, whose role in *Boléro's* history leaves traces that manifest within my borrowing.

In its assemblage of disparate borrowed materials – both musical and non-musical – and alignment of these through simplistic relations, this piece has a different quality to the others in this portfolio. Moreover, by discarding the performer video footage and effectively treating the instrumentalists as faceless automatons, I acknowledge a deviation from the performer-embodied approaches discussed in chapter three. Instead, *Preserve* verges on ironic and I view it as a departure from my more sincere and collaborative approaches in previous pieces. This perhaps demonstrates a personal bias toward the latter and how I view my compositional practice, but also reveals my complicated relationship to ruins. I cannot fully relinquish the Romantic reverence. Yet, ruins also allow one to indulge in playfulness,¹⁵⁸ and afford “the transgression of normative relations between people, space and things ... that tend toward the carnivalesque.”¹⁵⁹ Like the dilapidation of former Olympic venues,¹⁶⁰ I hope *Preserve* transcends the ludicrous and sombre aesthetic, and instead tells a story. Here, I scrutinise my plasticity reading in two ways. Firstly, I explore the capacity of notation to be moulded in real time through its realisation. Secondly, I draw upon a biographical encounter of *Boléro* as a material and trace its influence within my borrowing. Regardless of how *Preserve* fits within my portfolio or, for that matter, whether I feel it works as a piece at all, I was able to draw upon my approach and reading in later practice.

¹⁵⁸ Edensor, *Industrial Ruins*, 26.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 30.

¹⁶⁰ Ciaran Varley, ‘These haunting photos of abandoned Olympic sites tell their own stories,’ *BBC*, online article, accessed 11 November 2019, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcthree/article/de4004d3-97e8-467c-89a9-03290074e34a>.

4.2 Documenting an existing music's biography in *Of Red Herrings, Wild Celery, and Armed Men: The marginalia of little Symon* (2020)

Following the abstract communication of a musical material's story in *Preserve*, I wanted to explore a more narratory approach. I therefore began to design a multimedia documentary-style work that would outline the historical development of a borrowed melody. This idea evolved from a preliminary sketch in which I applied degenerative processes to a mensuration canon from Josquin De Prez's *Missa L'homme armé super voces musicales*. Consequently, I took the 'L'homme armé' parody tradition as the focus for the documentary, tracing its borrowing, manipulations and evolution from its conception up to the present day. I treat the melody like an unstable archaeological artefact – a threshold for intimacy and fantasy – and trace human behaviours of borrowing and lineage-mapping. *Of Red Herrings...* is written for three live instrumentalists, live signal processing, pre-recorded narrator, pre-recorded electronics, video and sculpture.

Although this piece developed themes of biography explored in *Memento* and *Preserve*, the scale and scope was unprecedented for me. I asked how I might uphold larger coherent narratives whilst still indulging in metaphor and fantasy (literally, red herrings). I therefore reviewed various art-documentaries and their analyses. In Sophie Fiennes' *The Pervert's Guide to Cinema* (2006), philosopher Slavoj Žižek presents a Marxist and psychoanalytical critique of Western Cinema. I was intrigued by Fiennes' establishment of a fragmented structure, "formed by the juxtaposition of film clip... and analysis"¹⁶¹ that "jolt the spectator... out of the comfort of the narrative continuity and identification."¹⁶² Such interruption is

¹⁶¹ Rachel Joseph, 'The Screened Stages of Slavoj Žižek: The Surplus of the Real,' *College Literature: a journal of Critical Literary Studies* 42, no. 3 (2015): 443.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 444.

exacerbated when “Žižek embeds himself within approximate reproductions of the sets of the films he discusses... and creates a surplus of meaning.”¹⁶³ This surplus, verging on the comical, adds a theatrical layer – a mimetic turn that is rooted within but also separate from the narrative offered. This is similar to Joanna Bailie’s conception of “compositing” in *The Grand Tour* (2015), “when some alien element is brought into the photos” to “provide an element of ‘animation.’”¹⁶⁴ I see such an approach as ‘animating’ the attempt of story-telling, and another layer to explore. These works motivated me to use varying media and formulate a narrative that is both disrupted and cohesive, in an attempt to both estrange and engage an audience.

The structure for *Of Red Herrings* emerged following my review of the extensive scholarship dedicated to the ‘L’homme armé’ tradition. Following the similarities and influences traced in analyses and musicological accounts from one mass setting to the next, I selected existent pieces to borrow. As shown, this process began with Joseph Sargent’s comparison of Josquin’s setting with those by Cristóbal de Morales and Giovanni Palestrina,¹⁶⁵ and spiralled outwards to include both later and earlier settings (Figure 13). By ordering and splicing the quoted musical materials into chronological order (Table 1), I was able to trace a single intertextual pathway through the intricate web of historical and artistic reference.

¹⁶³ Joseph, ‘The Screened Stages of Slavoj Žižek,’ 442.

¹⁶⁴ Bailie, ‘Transcribing Reality’, 129.

¹⁶⁵ Joseph Sargent, ‘Morales, Josquin and the *L’homme armé* tradition,’ *Early Music History* 30 (October 2011): 194-197.

Joseph Sargent poses a strong influence of Josquin setting on Morales' four-voice ~~no~~ l'homme armé mass. This in turn influenced a Palestrina setting?
p. 194-197 on canon and mensural similarities. + p 203

Rees links Morales with Guerrero setting, and Haas with Palestrina's (5-voice)

Palestrina uses archaic mensural complexities in 5-voice setting, term C against other voices in C (Haas, 1976, pp. 197-198) * and also Missa Pope Marcelli?

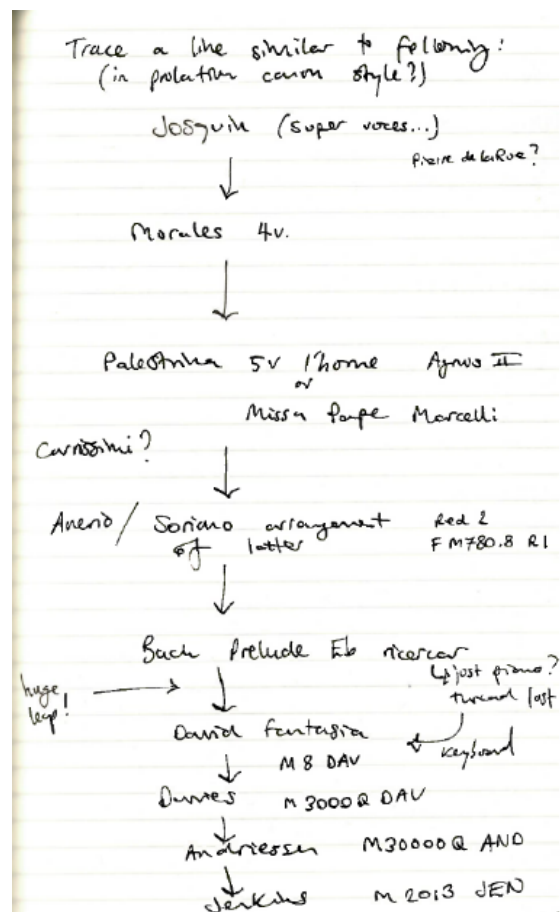


Figure 13. Journal entries documenting and arranging scholarly comparisons within the 'L'homme armé' tradition.

Table 1. List of music borrowed in *Of Red Herrings, Wild Celery and Armed Men*.

Attributed Composer	Work
Robert Morton (c.1430–c.1479)	<i>Il sera pour vous conbatu / L'homme armé</i>
Antoine Busnois (c.1430–1492)	Missa L'homme armé
Anonymous	Mass setting from Naples, MS VI E 40 (c.1470s)
Guillaume Du Fay (1397–1474)	Missa L'homme armé
Josquin des Prez (c.1450/1455–1521)	Missa L'homme armé super voces musicales
Pierre de la Rue (c.1452–1518)	Missa L'homme armé, 4v.
Cristóbal de Morales (c.1500–1553)	Missa L'homme armé, 4v.
Giovanni Palestrina (c.1525–1594)	Missa L'homme armé, 5v.
Giovanni Palestrina (c.1525–1594)	<i>Missa Papae Marcelli</i> (c.1562)
Giovanni Francesco Anerio (arr.)	Messa di Papa Marcello (1619)
J. S. Bach	Prelude and Fugue in E-flat major, BWV 852 from The Well-Tempered Clavier I (c.1722)
Joseph Haydn	Symphony No.102 in B-flat major, Hob.I:102 (1794)
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	String Quartet No. 16 in E-flat major, K. 428/421b (1783)
Ludwig van Beethoven	Symphony No. 5 in C minor, Op. 67 (1804–1808)
Felix Mendelssohn	String Quartet No. 1 in E flat major, Op. 12 (1829)
Hector Berlioz	<i>Symphonie fantastique</i> , Op. 14 (1830)
Frédéric Chopin	Prelude Op. 28, No. 4 (1839)
Richard Wagner	<i>Tristan und Isolde</i> , WWV 90 (1857–1859)
Johannes Brahms	Symphony No. 1 in C minor, Op. 68 (1876)
Johann Nepomuk David (1895–1977)	Fantasia super L'Homme arme
Peter Maxwell Davies	Missa super l'homme armé (1968, rev.1971)
Louis Andriessen	<i>De Materie</i> (1984–1988)

I then looked to interrupt this linear form by creating 'cuts' within the intertext. Derived from scholarly analyses, I make sudden references to other works much earlier or later in the timeline. These cuts manifest as direct musical splicing (for example, the short Bach fragments played on the piano) and as electronic manipulations of the present music, but also extend to the text and visuals. I made a digital scrapbook (using the free-form Microsoft OneNote), enabling me to cut and paste and literally work in collage (Figure 14). Like in *The Pervert's Guide...*, these cuts disrupt, but are conversely derived from, the same constructed world. I trace threads between each point of the referential network across time and media. The emergent form might be seen as simultaneously linear and circuitous.

Is mensural counterpoint?
between the Rue and Josquin presentations

"The spirit of composition which is so characteristic a trait of the Netherlands schools induced Pierre de la Rue to compose a *super altus* whose *in aggio*, which is only the most interesting specimen of mensural canons."

"...and the second *Agnus* is a four voice mensural canon. It seems highly likely that it was inspired by *super altus* three-voice *Agnus*. The canon consists of a single melodic line with four mensuration signs before it, E, O, C, and C. As in the *super altus* example, these signs serve to show how to interpret the notation in four different ways simultaneously. It is easy to agree with *super altus* movement that."

"La Rue's *Agnus* is a much more difficult piece to grasp than *super altus* *Agnus*. The principle reason for this is not the extra voice, though that is a significant complication. At van *super altus* *Agnus* can also exist in a canon to four voices, simply by the addition of another proportion sign, and the result is not significantly less satisfying or 'correct' than the more standard three voice resolution. La Rue's conception is quite different, because his is not a proportion canon, but a mensural canon that contains a proportion canon. Two of the four voices have proportional relationships, but the tenor and *super altus* are not just proportionally but *precisely* different from the other voices. One major difference between *super altus* *Agnus* and La Rue's is that *super altus* takes care that the rhythms should always be the same within all of the voices, although their individual relationships to one another are constantly changing. The principles of perfection, imperfection, and alteration are what complicate La Rue's canon."

Set text in mensural *super altus*

Revert to Josquin tempi relations

in La Rue tempo

From Josquin's point at parallel 10

Morales

"Though Morales's closing *Agnus* lacks the expansiveness and variety of *super altus* musicians, it nevertheless owes clear debts to *super altus*, showing particularly in the *super altus* of his movement and marking other points in more subtle fashion. Morales begins this canon with a brief set of imitative lines in the three upper voices, presenting an ascending motif – against two statements of the *super altus* *Agnus* tune's opening phrase in the *super altus*. In bar 36 the cantus voice picks up the tune, declaiming the entire A section – the only time in the entire mass the melody appears in the top voice... Against the cantus, the lower voices contain frequent inversions of the initial opening motif, now in a downward fourth descent, plus a more rapid ascending fifth half presented initially in the *super altus* and tenor. This latter motif, while obviously connecting with the characteristic fifth interval of the source tune, also resembles a motif in *super altus* mass at a similar middle point in his setting."

Figure 14. Example of *Of Red Herrings...* digital collage draft made in Microsoft OneNote.

4.2.1 Text

Following this initial research, I began constructing the documentary text by compiling and quoting the scholarship mentioned. I wanted to collage multiple and varied authoritative voices to create a hybrid narrative similar to that established by author George Saunders in *Lincoln in the Bardo* (2017). Saunders assembles diaries, published memoirs and invented facts to lend the “metahistorical novel”¹⁶⁶ a sense of verisimilitude and “historical self-consciousness.”¹⁶⁷ Following Fiennes, I then embed fragments of recorded text within the music they describe, reproducing the authors, their words and meanings within my reconstituted sonic world (Figure 15). However, whilst I liked the shift in voices and writing styles, I found the overly formal tone of my collated academic texts too impersonal. I instead wanted to offer a human perspective of a global phenomenon and decided to use the collated texts to create a falsified account from an individual.

¹⁶⁶ Brian May, ‘Back to the Future: History in/and the Postcolonial Novel,’ *Studies in the Novel* 29, no. 3 (Autumn 1997): 267–73. Cited in Moseley, ‘*Lincoln in the Bardo*,’ 7.

¹⁶⁷ Meritt Moseley, ‘*Lincoln in the Bardo*: “Uh, NOT a Historical Novel,”’ *Humanities* 8, no. 2 (May 2019): 6.

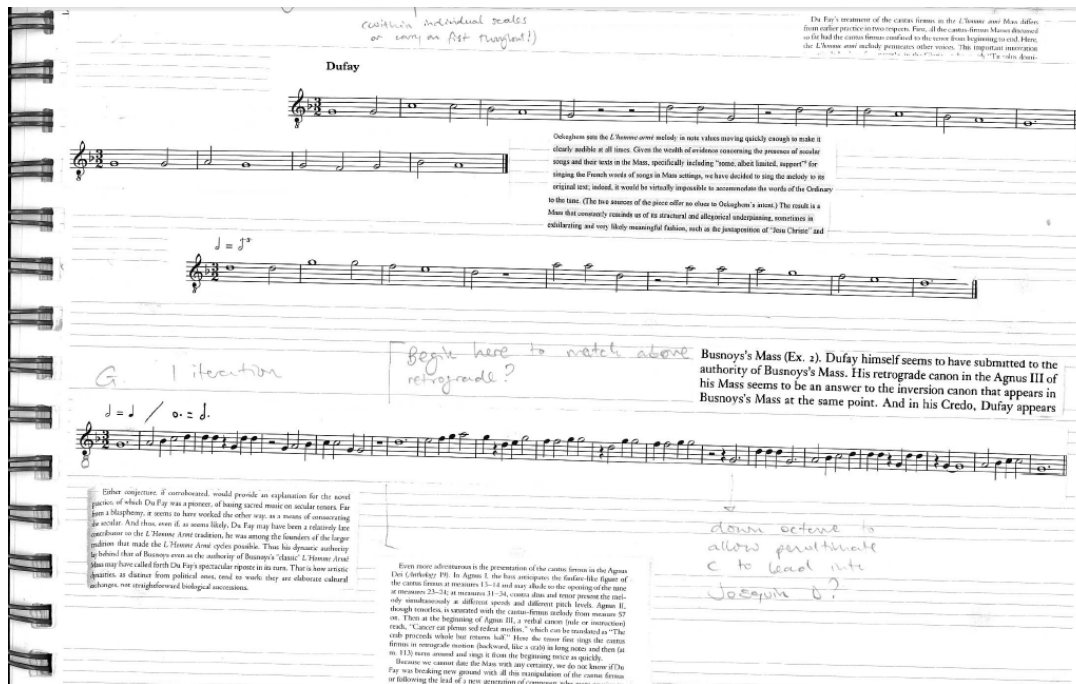


Figure 15. Example of paper collage draft of *Of Red Herrings...* (Texts by Richard Taruskin, 'Antoine Busnoys and the "L'Homme armé" Tradition,' *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 39, no. 2 (Summer 1986): 263; Allan W. Atlas, *Renaissance Music: Music in Western Europe, 1400-1600* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1998), 125 & 126; Richard Taruskin, *Music from the Earliest Notations to the Sixteenth Century*, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, Vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 499; Scott Metcalfe, 'Arms and the Man,' programme note for Blue Heron 'Ockeghem@600, Concert 3: L'Homme Armé,' available at Blue Heron, accessed 11 September 2020, https://www.blueheron.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/BHprogramOCT2015_WWW.pdf.)

After investigating the first appearances of the 'L'homme armé' melody, I recognised the prominence of the 15th century chorister Symon le Breton. I became fascinated with this elusive character and the scant details of his life, more specifically a book of music he left to his peer Guillaume Dufay.¹⁶⁸ From this small detail, I create a historic-fictional character and rework the collected texts into the bequeathed book's marginalia. I researched minute details of le Breton's life to build a sense of familiarity, before iteratively translating the borrowed scholarship into a first-person account. To help create a plausible and empathetic protagonist, I took heed of author Hilary Mantel's methods. In her construction of Thomas Cromwell in the *Wolf Hall* novels (2009-2020), Mantel leans on fact "without snowing readers with the fruits of her research"¹⁶⁹ and rediverts known facts through the eyes of her protagonist. Whilst this provided a model for my own text, I at times also wanted to bombard a listener with abundant specialist information in order to hint towards my narrator's reproduction and undermine his plausibility. Similarly, where gaps exist in the recorded history, Mantel attempts to "'bridge it... [and] build on what is plausible'" by utilising "the power of rumour."¹⁷⁰ This influenced my approach, where varying densities of information conversely accentuate gaps between the borrowed texts' tones and content. As a result, my text shifts between friendly memoir, documentary and argument.

Whilst I present most of the recorded text dry – with only mild effects processing – I wanted to embed the fixed audio in both overt and covert ways. An example of the former occurs in the 'La Rue' section. When describing the composer's

¹⁶⁸ Craig Wright, 'Dufay at Cambrai: Discoveries and Revisions,' *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 28, no. 2 (Summer 1975): 217.

¹⁶⁹ David Robinson, 'Interview: Hilary Mantel, author of Bring Up The Bodies,' *The Scotsman*, published 12 May 2012, accessed 7 April 2020, <https://www.scotsman.com/whats-on/arts-and-entertainment/interview-hilary-mantel-author-bring-bodies-1628580>.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

four-voice canon, I duplicate and overlay the canon text over four tracks at varying speeds corresponding with Pierre de la Rue's mensural ratios. I worry that my realisation of the canon sounds overly simplistic, but feel the dense sonic texture created suits the busy musical counterpoint it accompanies. This is perhaps a moment where the musical materials – the canon text – work against my own sensibilities. I also explore more covert forms of embedding the text. As the narrator describes Josquin's canon, I once again duplicate and overlay his words. However, I digitally manipulate the two time-stretched tracks. Using the spectral analysis programme SPEAR, I remove partials from the audio to create two 'ghosts' of the text and transpose these to correspond with Josquin's canon. The result is a low contrapuntal drone that accompanies the dry text and at times bears ghostly resemblance to the original audio's artefacts.

4.2.2 Visuals

When conceiving the visuals for the piece, I wanted to add a more immersive experience. However, I was concerned that the visuals should not be didactic and instead add a layer of abstraction by further entangling the narratives of ruination and borrowing. I therefore decided to borrow the visuals as well. I began collecting stock images of ruins and decay available in the public domain. Each set of images create a sequence of deterioration. I also create transitions and references between sets, borrowing Bailies' concept of 'compositing.' By using slow fades between images with comparable colour and content, I hope to animate the still images and create continuity whilst also evoking an alien intruder. I animate other images using a slow zoom pan, referencing the documentary

"Ken Burns effect"¹⁷¹ whereby a 2D image is given the illusion of depth.¹⁷² This technique also allowed me to survey and delight in the ruined imagery and, in the case of one slide, make oblique reference to Rose Macaulay's "'stairs that run up to empty sky.'"¹⁷³

Developing notions of embedding, my arrangement of the images is also influenced by the above scholarship in order to point toward the borrowed music and forms. Again, my approaches are at times literal. For example, my upturning of the first apple image to coincide with a comparison to Antoine Busnois' inversion canon, or my repeated amalgamation of the terraced building image to accompany Peter Maxwell Davies' musical transformations. Although the relation between visual transformation to scholarship is explicit to me, I wonder how perceivable this is to an audience. By reproducing musical associations made within scholarship using simple visual processes, I hope to evoke Fiennes' 'surplus' and add a complex poetic layer or mask. Furthermore, by keeping these references very brief and interspersing them with blank screens, I hope to increase the intrigue in this mask.

¹⁷¹ Randy Kennedy, 'The Still-Life Mentor to a Filmmaking Generation,' *The New York Times*, published 19 October 2006, accessed 15 April 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/19/arts/design/19lieb.html>.

¹⁷² Tom Green and Tiago Dias, *Foundation Flash CS5 for Designers* (New York: Springer, 2010), 512.

¹⁷³ Rose Macaulay, *The World My Wilderness* (London: Virago Press Ltd., 1983), 173. Reprinted by permission from The Society of Authors as the Literary Representative of the Estate of Rose Macaulay.

4.2.3 Music

I began composing the live instrumental part for *Of Red Herrings...* by surveying the methods of sound production for each instrument in order to delineate the sonic space the work might exist within. Following individual performer workshops, I elected a combination of fragile sustained sounds, including saxophone multiphonics and bowed piano (referring to the hurdy-gurdy), and natural harmonics on the guitar and piano. I hoped the percussive nature of the harmonics would create punctuation amidst more fluid textures. I then began to arrange the collected Mass fragments using these instrumental techniques.

However, once again, I was here mistaking the notation for the music. My fixation on the notation of the borrowed material, and my direct translation using the above instrumental techniques, led me to an impasse. My reliance on the cold data of the notation made the performer workshops feel impersonal. I therefore reworked my method to include greater player collaboration. Firstly, I devised a limited sonic palette, arranged into hierarchies, with which the players could freely realise verbal and graphic descriptions of each borrowed material. I supplemented this with group listening, allowing recordings of each Mass to function as reference points for the ensemble (Figure 16). I felt as if I were welcoming the ensemble – close friends I had worked with in previous projects – into the musical and historical world I had immersed myself within, a reversal of the processes I had established with previous collaborators where they invite me into their worlds.

Hexachord 1

'Hexachord' here refers to palette of sonorities used to realize text instructions in any given section. Each has a hierarchy of sonorities which denotes preference/privilege/frequency heard. Where possible, single tones might be isolated from multiphonic, otherwise interested in unpredictable/unstable (in)ability to realise a monophonic line. Embrace this!

Primary

(25) $S/C\sharp - 37$

Secondary

(87) $S/C - 6 + C\sharp 12$

(89) $S/C - 5 + C\sharp 12$

Tertiary

(20) $S/B F\sharp$

(32) $S/B E + Ta$

Always in reference to **L'Homme Arme** tune in its two variations:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fbdVNqPPstk> (0'00" - 0'30")

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ly_Cqzffwbk (0'0" - 0'45")

Morton

- Hexachord 1
- Duple compound time
- Fast. As an ensemble, this should be quite tight, together, with a little elasticity.
- Light (folky) dance, yet nasal/harsh. Think medieval/tudor court. A gaudy consort that is fresh in the mind from a recent past.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fbdVNqPPstk> at 0'30"
- Prominent rhythmic figures:



Gestural envelope:



Figure 16. Example of Soprano Saxophone sonic palette and references from workshop for *Of Red Herrings...* Multiphonic finger charts by Marcus Weiss and Giorgio Netti, *The Techniques of Saxophone Playing* (Kassel, Germany: Bärenreiter, 2010), 69, 70, 71 & 76. Reproduced with permission © 2010 by Bärenreiter-Verlag Karl Vötterle GmbH & Co. KG, Kassel.

This gave the ensemble more freedom whilst allowing me to retain a certain level of control. The players would improvise with the musical materials as I called out directing prompts, for instance, instructing the saxophonist and guitarist to reduce to a barely audible volume and float to a higher pitch, whilst asking the pianist to rise to the forefront (Audio Example 5). This process highlighted musical texture as a focal point and suggested a simultaneously fluid and fragmented treatment of the borrowed notation. I realised, for instance, that I needn't specify a certain multiphonic, but could provide the saxophonist with the desired qualities (pitch, timbre, articulation) and let them develop their own vocabulary across the workshops. Similarly, rather than through-composing musical lines, I could isolate recurring motifs and let the performers improvise (Figure 17). By transferring elements of creative control to the ensemble, I was subsequently able to direct my attention to the piece's duration and proportions. I made such decisions within the workshops whilst listening to the ensemble, balancing intuition and the pacing of the text which I would read aloud. In sections containing less text, I allow space for the ensemble to come to the fore and explore relationships between players, whilst in others I would naturally accelerate my reading of the dense text.

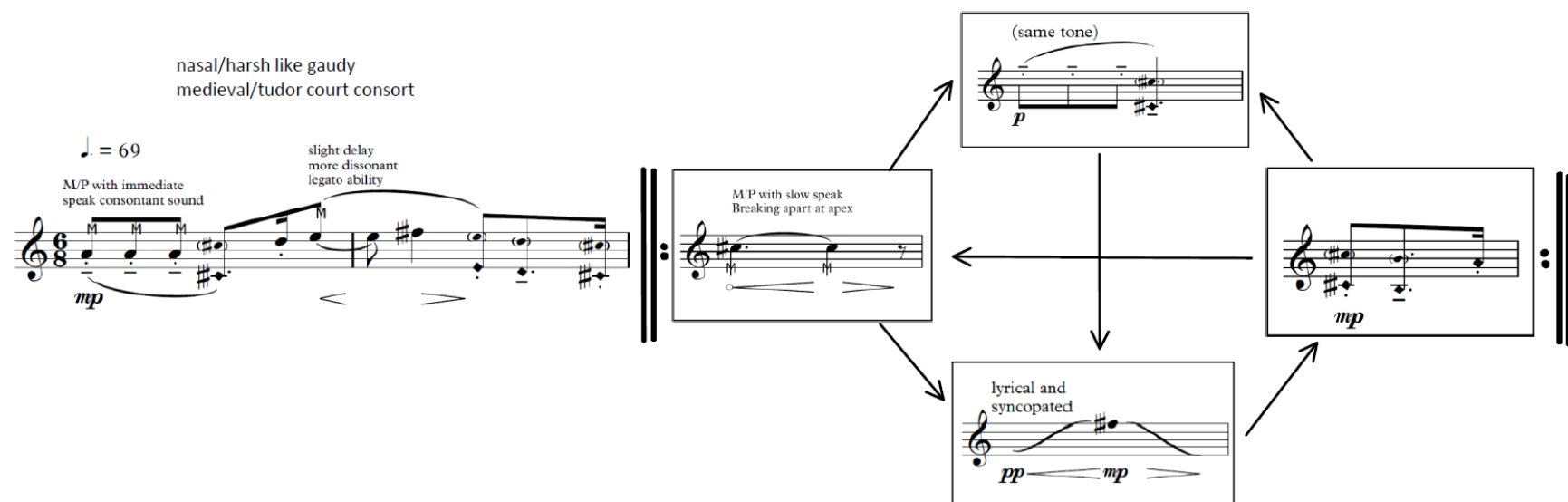


Figure 17. Extract *Of Red Herrings...* draft, Soprano Saxophone part in 'Morton' section.

4.2.4 Tripartite Form

I can identify the point at which I was able, as described above, to inhabit the Thing-vessel of this piece. This moment, a sudden crystallisation of thought, occurred between workshops. I recall a note made to myself, describing the floating Dufay section as falling and locking into the more mechanical Josquin canon. This led me to 'colour' the draft timeline sketched so far on OneNote using abstract language and metaphor which fed back into performer workshops (Figure 18). I might read this act as a graffitiing over, or claiming ownership of, the borrowed materials. Conversely, I entertain the possibility that the materials themselves suggested these framings following my placement of them in co-existence with one another. The entanglement of my creative agency with that of the borrowed material's is here brought to the fore.

In addition to the chronological and circuitous trajectories mentioned, I structure the piece programmatically with a twin-peak arc, culminating in the Josquin and Maxwell Davies sections, with sustained periods of languishing, melting and floating in between. My poly-structural design is akin to the simultaneously palindromic and programmatic form George Crumb establishes in *Black Angels* (1970).¹⁷⁴ Music theorist Blair Johnston suggests Crumb's fusion of romantic and postmodernist paradigms provides a solution to Adorno's 'modernist dilemma,' that of creating unity whilst not concealing nor mimicking the fragmentary nature of inherited musical materials.¹⁷⁵ Whilst *Of Red Herrings...* does not share the rhetoric of *Black Angels* and Johnston's reception of it, I find Adorno's dilemma useful in further scrutinising my reading of plasticity. The notion of trying to find a sense of wholeness whilst working with borrowed materials was a turning point in this project. By telling the story of a musical Thing – which is inherently plastic and mutable – whose history is entangled with our own, I am engaged in an act of "'self-preservation,' an impulse that seeks to maintain the relation between self and surround."¹⁷⁶ By inhabiting the 'L'homme armé' Thing-vessel and perpetuating its tradition, I recognise my own thingness separate from and entangled with others. Caitlin DeSilvey goes on to say,

The act of 'saving' implicates us, as individuals, in the biography of an artefact [...] With each act of preservation, the vulnerable object becomes (a little bit of) us, and its unmaking threatens to unmake our identities as well.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ Blair Johnston, 'Between Romanticism and Modernism and Postmodern: George Crumb's *Black Angels*,' *Music Theory Online*, a journal of the Society for Music Theory 18, no. 2 (June 2012), <https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.12.18.2/mto.12.18.2.johnston.pdf>.

¹⁷⁵ Max Paddison, *Adorno's Musical Aesthetics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 158. Cited in Johnston, 'Between Romanticism.'

¹⁷⁶ Aron Vinegar and Jorge Otero-Pailos, 'On Preserving the Openness of the Monument,' *Future Anterior* 9, no. 2 (Spring 2012), iv. Cited in DeSilvey, *Curated Decay*, 13.

¹⁷⁷ DeSilvey, *Curated Decay*, 13.

In acknowledging my selection of 'L'homme armé' materials as but one pathway that might have been taken through the intertext, I also recognise that this is as much my own story of unity and fragmentation. As borrower, I am also a vessel of material memories that other materials – human and non-human – might become entangled with and contaminate. Anthropologist Anna Tsing uses the latter term to describe how "a gathering become[s] a 'happening', that is, greater than a sum of its parts."¹⁷⁸ She explains that "we are contaminated by our encounters, they change who we are as we make way for others."¹⁷⁹ By embroiling myself – my memories, preferences and biases – within the 'L'homme armé' web, and the music, words and stories of others, a new mutual world is created that reconfigures my sense of self in relation to all other inhabitants.

Finally, I note that both pieces discussed in a chapter concerning plasticity include extra-musical elements such as sculpture, visuals and text, themselves often also borrowed. Following the notion of performer as material, this for me extends the notion that found musical materials are not solely musical. Because of the way they are interpreted, discussed, recorded and consumed, and that these activities might be in dialect with one another, I consider musical works to be intermedial, paratextual and multidimensional cultural objects. This possibility has led me to reflect upon my choices of borrowed material in *Preserve* and *Of Red Herrings...* Compared to the source materials borrowed in the rest of my portfolio, *Boléro* and 'L'homme armé' might be regarded as well-known and even 'popular' within the context of this project. As a result of their repeated use and 'wear and tear,' there is a greater amount of accompanying and orbiting documentation and therefore more dimensions to the ways in which I can explore and embed myself

¹⁷⁸ Anna Tsing, *The Mushroom at the End of the World: On the Possibility of Life in Capitalist Ruins* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2015), 27.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

within them. The extent to which I rely on such elements within these two pieces leads me to question whether the extra-musical paraphernalia that surrounds the borrowed materials is part of its life experience; the autobiographical record that musical materials amass as evidence of their inherent plasticity.

5. Conclusion

The compositions submitted in this portfolio, as well as the reflections I offer above, reconfigure my beginning assumptions and address my amended research questions accordingly. Regarding my starting first question, I acknowledge that whilst the application of *any* transformative ‘technique’ will undoubtedly change a source material, for me, this does not necessarily render it ruined. Instead, the method of transformation should be in some way (musically or biographically) derived from the borrowed music. The type of ruin created is therefore intrinsically dependant on the source material, as both object (the existing music and new composition) and process (method of transformation) are enfolded together, recognising the dichotomic conceptualisations of both ruin and creative practice. To that end, the threshold of recognition sought in my starting second question is a red herring. Instead, for me, a borrowed music is rendered infinitely strange following the most infinitesimal manipulation. A sense of the uncanny may alternatively be achieved by identifying points of intimacy between the borrower, the borrowed or any related agent (e.g. the original composer, a performer, etc.) and letting oneself become estranged from this sense of familiarity. Such notions account for the materiality and vibrancy inherent to borrowed existing music, itself an embodied and entangled material with various human and non-human histories. For me, this noticing, and my ensuing displacement as creative subject alongside the found object, is the only way to create musical ruins.

5.1 A Manifesto for ‘Musical Ruins’ and Musical Borrowing

By way of conclusion, I consolidate the primary themes and discoveries of this project in *A Manifesto for ‘Musical Ruins’ and Musical Borrowing* (Figure 19, Appendix 2). I have chosen this method of summary and dissemination for several

reasons. Firstly, whilst the manifesto format is only occasionally used in experimental music,¹⁸⁰ Gustav Metzger adopts it frequently in his propagation of Auto-Destructive Art.¹⁸¹ Metzger's aestheticised manner is typical of his Fluxus roots. Yet, many of the social geographers previously discussed adopt a similar tone of advocacy. For example, I read Caitlin DeSilvey's scholarship as a proposition to "explore the implications of a set of unorthodox premises,"¹⁸² which might "contribute to wider conversations about... heritage *practice*"¹⁸³ (emphasis added). Secondly, I look to counter electronic musician Matthew Herbert's forbidding of sampling in his manifesto.¹⁸⁴ Whilst a superficial reading might hold Herbert's stance in opposition to my own, the two may be seen to share motive. With his manifesto, Herbert seeks to avoid complacency within his practice. By promoting methods of musical borrowing that encourage respect, inclusion and collaboration, as described below, I similarly seek to subvert complacency. However, my manifesto is not absolute. It is a framework and catalyst for more considered ways of making. Thirdly, as a means of sharing discoveries within and changes to my creative practice as a result of an individualised project, and as a way of starting conversations with musicians engaged in similar practices.

¹⁸⁰ For example, Luigi Russolo, 'The Art of Noises Futurist Manifesto,' in *The Art of Noises*, trans. Barclay Brown (New York: Pendragon Press, 1986), 23-30; Matthew Herbert, 'manifesto: P.C.C.O.M (Personal Contract for the Composition of Music),' *Matthew Herbert*, accessed 8 July 2020, <http://matthewherbert.com/about-contact/manifesto/>; Jennifer Walshe, 'The New Discipline,' *Borealis*, accessed 8 July 2020, <https://www.borealisfestival.no/2016/the-new-discipline-4/>.

¹⁸¹ Gustav Metzger, 'Auto-destructive art' (London: Self-published, 1959); Gustav Metzger, 'Manifesto Auto-destructive art' (London: Self-published, 1960); Gustav Metzger, 'Auto-destructive Art, Machine Art, Auto-creative Art' (London: Self-published, 1961).

¹⁸² DeSilvey, *Curated Decay*, 5.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁸⁴ Herbert, 'manifesto.'

A Manifesto for 'Musical Ruins' and Musical Borrowing

A borrowed musical material is not an inanimate and amenable object.
It is vibrant.

The application of prescriptive transformative 'techniques' when borrowing is impossible. We are not the autonomous custodians of the materials.
Allow creative decisions to emerge from and be led by the material.
The act is collaborative.

You are borrowing sound, its notation, recordings and a network of related personalities and extra-musical paraphernalia.
You are borrowing memories and experiences. A musical material has its own lived past of usage, habit and encounters that shape it; it is plastic. You are borrowing a story. Tell it.

Treat the borrowed music and those related to it with respect.
This may or may not correspond with the legality of copyright.
Regardless, you do not own that which you borrow. The term must be widened to include lending, gifting, stealing, adopting, finding, etc.
The implications of such terms should be meaningful to those involved.

As the borrower, you are enroiled in the musical material's life.
You become the borrowing and add your own memories, motivations and dreams. Be vulnerable. Allow new memories and associations to form and change you.

Mark Dyer 2020

Figure 19. A Manifesto for 'Musical Ruins' and Musical Borrowing

5.2 Ethics and Legacy

The act of borrowing another's music, and the above notion of entwining these material's stories with my own, raises ethical issues regarding ownership, identity, and the distribution of creativity. This chapter explores the entanglement of these issues and my practice.

The context of the subsequent discussion should be briefly noted. I am composer of primarily concert music borrowing predominantly Western art music. As such, I am engaged in an act of privileging. Rather than a conscious and purposeful dismissal of other genres, I might attribute my exclusive borrowing of such music and alignment with modernist and post-modernist practices to a personal musical privilege. I have access to this particular culture through concerts, performers, recordings and score, whilst others might not. I might ascribe such privilege to my broader social standing, including my education, class, ethnicity and gender. I explore such issues only obliquely within my project. For instance, the Anglocentric lens through which I read *Boléro* in *Preserve*, or my purposefully patrilineal emphasis in the text for *Of Red Herrings...* Whilst my borrowing of the Western canon has certain legal and logistical conveniences relating to copyright, in direct contrast to practices of Plunderphonics whereby anything is up for grabs, I retrospectively acknowledge an unconscious sense of entitlement on my behalf. I feel enabled to borrow such music because I am part of, contributing to and perpetuating that culture. In doing so, I acknowledge the possibility that I indirectly dismiss other musical cultures. This is not my intention and if I were to redesign the project, I would engage with a broader musical spectrum. However, I predict a greater degree of investment would be needed on my part to remain respectful whilst borrowing from other cultures. By allocating time and resources so that I might learn from, collaborate with and contribute toward those within such cultures, I'd hope to situate the project within a more multicultural context.

Furthermore, I recognise that practices of borrowing occur within numerous other musical genres and that themes of ruination might also manifest within music- and sound-making practices other than borrowing. Moreover, such practices are often couched within wider social and scholarly perspectives of multiculturalism, appropriation and cultural borrowing. To that end, it is my opinion that practices of borrowing and notions of ruination within art music need revitalising with the broader narratives of cultural entanglement. This should occur across the full spectrum of disciplines, including musicological analysis and criticism, creative practices of composition, performance and programming, and curatorial practices in museums and instrument collections.

The majority of musical sources I borrow in this portfolio of compositions, consisting mostly of folk and early music repertoire, are out of copyright. Where this is not the case (for instance, Britten's *Tema 'Sacher'* and the Torvill and Dean video footage), I have sought and been granted use by the owner. In instances where I could not obtain usage rights (for instance, the Johann Nepomuk David, Peter Maxwell Davies and Louis Andriessen sources in *Of Red Herrings...*), I make only oblique allusion by rewriting and reimagining these works according to the scholarly writing that accompanies them. With regards to copyright of original artistic works, this portfolio poses no infringement.

However, a distinction must be made between the contents of copyright and therefore its limitations in designating ownership. On the one hand, copyright includes the musical score or text and designates ownership of the work's harmony, rhythms, etc., often (but not exclusively) presented using methods of descriptive notation,¹⁸⁵ which might be borrowed. On the other hand, copyright

¹⁸⁵ Mieko Kanno, 'Prescriptive notation: Limits and challenges,' *Contemporary Music Review* 26, no. 2 (June 2007): 232.

includes the sonic object, designating ownership based on hazy evaluations of audible comparison, the borrowing of which might employ prescriptive notation,¹⁸⁶ audio recordings or any method of sonic reproduction. In both instances, copyright is limited to designating ownership of musical *objects*. Whilst my borrowed material often begins as a found musical object, it at times also encompasses inherited processes such as the ‘hearings’ lent to me by various performers. What might a form of copyright look like that designates ownership of a musical process, despite varied notated and sonic results?

Furthermore, what notions of ownership might we consider beyond that of legal copyright? With a creative practice dedicated to the borrowing of other’s work, I ask, am I morally entitled to appropriate a musical source (in or out of copyright) and to what extent does the newly created composition belong to me? Such questions are pertinent with regards to artistic integrity but are perhaps just as important when we consider borrowed music to be an agentic material with its own history and memories. In such a scenario, Jane Bennet argues that, “not only is the difference between subjects and objects minimized, but the status of the shared materiality of all things is elevated. All bodies become more than mere objects.”¹⁸⁷ By acknowledging the vibrant and entangled agency of an existing music material in its borrowing, I attempt to identify and minimise the perceived estrangement between it, my creative processes and, me as creative subject. In the flattening of hierarchy between my musical materials and myself, I also account for the efficacy of their original composer or interpreting performers as a shared network of relations and material upon which I draw from creatively.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 235.

¹⁸⁷ Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 13.

Whilst notions of materiality are explored in the fields of sound art, ethnomusicology and music copyright,¹⁸⁸ I feel wider scholarship in the discussion, analysis and interpretation of art music is needed to explore the efficacy of matter. However, I anticipate initial difficulties in the fields of composition, performance and historical musicology, partially because such practices do not always deal with physical objects, but also due to the financial and ethical obstacles posed by the genre's infrastructure (e.g. copyright, programming, etc.). Rather, I believe a post-structuralist lens, similar to that which I have adopted and also found in various strands of new musicology,¹⁸⁹ might prove fruitful in the explication of materiality within other practices of art music. While existing responses might look at the 'stuffness' of notation, instruments and recording devices, this should extend to the more abstract use of metaphor, speculation and fantasy. My expectation is that notions of materiality are overly entangled within these fields and that the findings of such an approach would be messy. We as a discipline should embrace this mess and revel in its risks.

While I adopt a post-structuralist lens in my practice, borrowing the perspectives of new materialism and post-humanism, I'm mindful that such an attentiveness "will not solve the problem of human exploitation or oppression."¹⁹⁰ This perhaps starts with my terminology; the possessive pronouns "*my materials*", or "*their composer*," denote ownership or even dominion – the ability to freely manipulate a borrowed music corresponding to subjective taste and meaning. Rather, we

¹⁸⁸ Greg Downey, 'Listening to Capoeira: Phenomenology, Embodiment, and the Materiality of Music,' *Ethnomusicology* 46, no. 3 (Autumn 2002): 487-509; Henrik Bødker, *The Changing Materiality of Music* (Aarhus: The Centre for Internet Research, 2004); Michael Birenbaum Quintero, 'Exchange, materiality and aesthetics in Colombian *champeta*,' *Ethnomusicology Forum* 27, no. 1 (April 2018): 3-24; Asbjørn Blokkum Flø, 'Materiality in Sound Art,' *Organised Sound* 23, no. 3 (December 2018): 225-234.

¹⁸⁹ Kramer, *Interpreting Music*; Hatten, *A Theory of Virtual Agency for Western Art Music*.

¹⁹⁰ Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 13.

should account for the mutual contribution that the above agents make toward the new creative work, or, “how each intra-action matters in the reconfiguring of these entanglements.”¹⁹¹ I therefore regard the act of musical borrowing as a collaborative endeavour between human and non-human bodies. Such ‘intra-actions’ *are* musical materials in their becoming. Within this reconfiguration, my previous definitions and their states become elusive. The term ‘material’ now denotes both the borrowed music and the new creative work; the posthumous influence of the original composer, all subsequent ‘hearings’, and my own creative act; both object and process.

My notion of ‘techniques,’ which I previously aligned with the application of systematic and transformational processes, has eroded. The modernist fallacy of the artist as an autonomous creative agent who can simply take a ‘thing’ and do ‘stuff’ to it has proven, for me, far too simplistic. In my experience, a found musical object has numerous embodied histories and narratives. Consequently, my technique – or ‘stuff’ – is highly ambiguous, naturally entangled and consequently emergent. I pin down the term only with my notion of inhabiting a material ‘vessel’ – which I understand as the manifold that delineates and demarcates the above reconfiguration. I therefore relate the technique of borrowing to a negotiation of and conjoining with this designated territory. One who consequently creates new work is “one who participates from within the very process of the world’s continual coming into being,”¹⁹² or, “the very worlding of the world.”¹⁹³

¹⁹¹ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 160.

¹⁹² Ingold, *Lines*, 83.

¹⁹³ Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 160.

In the case of my project, this has led to more discursive methods such as interview, collaboration, and documentation, making work with and about people and objects. I have found such activities stimulating, and the creative isolation brought about by social distancing following Covid-19 has highlighted how important the social act of music making is to me. Following this project, I therefore look to embrace and develop storytelling, and even fiction, as a rigorous methodology. In particular, I want to elaborate on the processes I adopt in more overtly collaborative work, including *Memento for Kathryn* and *A pursuit...* This might include drawing upon established practices in the fields of education and anthropology, including methods of somatic learning, experimental collaboration or similar. Additionally, I might draw upon tropes and methods within literary genres such as magical realism. Ultimately, I look to reduce my emphasis on ruins and foreground threads related to narrative, documentary-making and social anthropology. By embroiling my creative practice and myself within such methods, I hope to pursue a more sincere effort for transparency of process instead of obfuscating behind art objects. Regardless, I hope to always make room for fantasy within my storytelling, so that I might employ the imagination to invoke fabricated, human and non-human perspectives into lived pasts, presents and futures.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. List of Performances

Nov 2020	<i>To go along, however, is to thread one's way.</i> The Chimera Ensemble, Winter Concert (online).
Sep 2020	<i>A pursuit (or task), its arc, and the blisters traced.</i> Fixed video installed at Warrington Contemporary Arts Festival Open Exhibition, Warrington Museum & Art Gallery.
Jun 2020	<i>Memento for Kathryn.</i> Kathryn Williams, #RNCMRemote Lunchtime Concert, Royal Northern College of Music.
Mar 2020	<i>Icon across Index.</i> Leighton Triplow and Rosemary Hodgson, Trinity College Chapel, Melbourne.
Feb 2020	<i>Of Red Herrings, Wild Celery, and Armed Men: the marginalia of little Symon.</i> Proximity, Royal Northern College of Music.
Feb 2020	<i>Memento for Kathryn.</i> Kathryn Williams, Constellation, Chicago.
Aug 2019	<i>Droning Falsities (for one's self).</i> Jason Alder, the 9th European Clarinet Festival 2019, Camerino.
Jul 2019	<i>A pursuit (or task), its arc, and the blisters traced.</i> Amy Jolly, Festival Musica da Casa Menotti.
Jun 2019	<i>What I find in Raking.</i> Arditti Quartet, Bilkent University, Ankara, Turkey.
Dec 2018	<i>Memento for Kathryn.</i> Kathryn Williams, Kammer Klang series, Café Oto.
Nov 2018	<i>To go along, however, is to thread one's way.</i> The House of Bedlam, Royal Northern College of Music.
Jul 2018	<i>To go along, however, is to thread one's way.</i> New Music for Winds, Royal Northern College of Music.

- Jul 2018 *Memento for Kathryn*. Kathryn Williams, Performance Studies International Conference, Norwegian Academy of Music, Oslo.
- Mar 2018 *What I find in Raking*. Cuerda Quartet, RNCM Chamber Music Festival, Royal Northern College of Music.
- Mar 2018 *To go along, however, is to thread one's way*. CoMA Festival, Royal Northern College of Music.
- Feb 2018 *Memento for Kathryn*. Kathryn Williams, Decontamination #12, Royal Northern College of Music.

Appendix 2. *A Manifesto for 'Musical Ruins' and Musical Borrowing*, typeset

A borrowed musical material is not an inanimate and amenable object. It is vibrant.

The application of prescriptive transformative 'techniques' when borrowing is impossible. We are not the autonomous custodians of the materials. Allow creative decisions to emerge from and be led by the material. The act is collaborative.

You are borrowing sound, its notation, recordings, and a network of related personalities and extra-musical paraphernalia. You are borrowing memories and experiences. A musical material has its own lived past of usage, habit and encounters that shape it; it is plastic. You are borrowing a story. Tell it.

Treat the borrowed music and those related to it with respect. This may or may not correspond with the legality of copyright. Regardless, you do not own that which you borrow. The term must be widened to include lending, gifting, stealing, adopting, finding, etc. The implications of such terms should be meaningful to those involved.

As the borrower, you are embroiled in the musical material's life. You become the borrowing and add your own memories, motivations and dreams. Be vulnerable. Allow new memories and associations to form and change you.