

RTRSRCH



Beginning with music, continuing otherwise.



L = left ear

RTRSRCH Vol.1 No. 3  
March 2010  
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contains

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In this fourth edition of RTRSRCH you will find nine contributions from as many music makers. They present one or several of their works, and share their motivations and sources of inspiration. Theatrical sound improvisations on dismantled piano wrecks, an interactive operating table for the listener to lie on and physically experience the sounds of an imaginary operation, or the organisation of a 'new music demonstration' in the streets of Oslo: the works presented in this RTRSRCH issue are diverse. Nevertheless, they are united through their resistance to categorisation. Musical references remain present in most contributions, however it is their visual, theatrical and above all their intersensory and conceptual characteristics that demand attention. This is even more remarkable given that all contributors share a similar background in classical music. Most are trained composers, some are classical music performers. Therefore the title of this journal is more than a metaphor for the artistic thinking that becomes apparent in the presented works. It refers most of all to a biographical reality of the participating artists.

Since extra-sonorous elements play a role in all contributions, it would be tempting to dedicate this journal to a multimedial or interdisciplinary theme. Reflection on multimediality or interdisciplinarity has been prominent in the performing arts since the nineties. Accordingly, art music has not been able to escape this renewed attention to the 'inter' and the 'multi', although in general it deals less confidently and easily with medial cross-overs than do contemporary theatre, dance  media art. This is in part due to a lack of openness in the field, but also to an intrinsic resistance offered by the musical medium and to a culture where 'the musical material' is approached as something of an abstract nature.

To meet this musical individuality on the one hand and to avoid the commonplaces of multimedial or interdisciplinary reflection in the performing arts on the other, this fourth RTRSRCH journal opts for an alternative approach. In the works discussed here the collective, interdisciplinary creation process is – while important – not our primary concern. Instead we have collected new music examples in which individual creators bear full responsibility for the artistic concept, including where 'extra-sonorous' aspects are involved. Thus we hope to stress a problem in multimedial thinking that in our opinion has been underexposed: in an artistic product, the confluence of different media and disciplines must at a certain point be concretised. In the context of a multidisciplinary collaboration, this responsibility is ideally taken up by all participating disciplines. Nevertheless, in practice such collaborations mostly result in a repartition of tasks, with interaction occurring rather indirectly. A 'fruitful collaboration' usually implies that a considerable level of autonomy is safeguarded for the participating disciplines.

When multimedial implications are approached from the individualistic perspective however, the definition of 'musical material' – and thus also the notions of 'craftmanship' and 'discipline' – are put to the test. Problems of foreground and background, and of medial interferences arise. There is also the resistance of expectation-al patterns and reflexes in conventional contexts of performance. From the perspective of their

classical education, the work that contributors present here could be understood as 'fait divers', as an excursion that is exciting though without long term repercussions, or as a subversive experiment that intends to tackle the conventions of an artistic discipline. Such a description immediately conjures up the resistance similar experiments often still have to face. As long as the inter- or transmedial creation needs to profile itself as an 'in-between art' in contrast to a practice with clearly recognisable contours, it can only be appreciated on the basis of its 'otherness', of its capacity to surprise within a familiar programme. However, the shock effects which John Cage or Mauricio Kagel were still able to generate in art music half a century ago are no longer to be expected today. In art music, the 'other', the experimental or the subversive has long been neutralised to a recognisable gesture.

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forms of sonorous 'in-between art' risk slipping through the cracks in a pragmatic sense: they may be too extra-musical to be taken seriously in the musical domain, or still too recognisable for a contemporary musical practice to be incorporated into existing dance or theatre programming. The works presented here are thus predominantly encountered at open, alternative and mainly small-scale festivals, or in programmes where 'frontier art' of all kinds is the norm rather than the exception. Some of these experiments seem to counter this problem by no longer profiling themselves as 'music', but rather as 'sound art', 'performance', and so on. The recent zeal to define and distinguish itself in the process as a new, fully fledged art form responding to specific characteristics only seems to shift problems of identity and ambiguity.

With this collection we thus want to make a statement. Armed with only the fact that we easily collected nine contributions (it could have been many more) of classically educated musicians who are developing a hybrid or different practice as an individual, who are all active in Western Europe and belong more or less to the same generation, proves that we can no longer speak of outsiders, but of an essential part of contemporary musical practice. This does not imply that the work presented here can be considered as mainstream, and even less that it can claim a significant share in the programming of contemporary art music. It is however a clear sign that a new generation of educated musicians is attempting to redefine their practice, or that some of them simply no longer feel bound to one particular medium. Moreover, by gathering various concrete examples, we want to try not to present their work as an exceptional situation. Instead, by juxtaposing them, we intend to search for underlying patterns and shared motivations. What is it that distinguishes the musical experiment anno 2010 from the openings forced by the artistic buccaneers of the previous century? Is something typically twenty-first century emerging in the musical frontier art of today, or should we rather speak of a continuation of a twentieth century practice? We leave it to the reader to discover cross connections and differences themselves. We will limit ourselves here to suggesting several paths that have occurred to us when preparing this issue.

In contrast to the modernist or twentieth century experiment, the artistic motive expressed in this journal rarely seems aimed at radical change or negation of an existing practice. The works of art presented in this journal are generally not revolutionary in the literal sense. In the contributors' words, a dialectic attitude with regard to music history rarely figures either. An exception to this is Frederik Croene's contribution. In his 'le piano démécanisé', pianos are literally dismantled until

nothing more than a strung carcass remains. The piano and the complete musical culture embodied by it appear in Croene's project as a final point that only offers hope for new life when the deconstruction process is completed. A life in which the theatricality of gesture and the immediate contact between bodily action and sound can get much broader attention. Croene is above all a performer, and his dismantling concept is inspired by the physical and mental discipline required to play piano. Escape from the instrumental or musical bodice does not, however, seem the prime source of inspiration in most cases. On the contrary, for some composers the existing musical practice and its performance in particular seems to be a starting point that offers (re)new(ed) potential to embark on intersensory explorations, even if this leads to a hybrid practice which is difficult to place within the outlines of classical music.

According to Simon Steen-Andersen, the tendency towards an ever more idiomatic approach to instrumental music - which can also be recognised in the 'authentic performance practice' of old music - potentially leads to a 'hyper-concrete definition' of music by its instrumentarium. In the most radical case, the concrete instrumental action is no longer a means of realising an abstract sound idea, but it starts

conditioning the sound ideal completely. In a certain sense, it becomes itself the musical objective. At the point where sound ideal and sound execution coincide, words such as 'abstract' or 'concrete' lose their meaning. Precisely at that point, writes Steen-Andersen, a new potential arises that re-enables composition and performance. Composition then becomes the elaboration of an action score, an idea which he tests in his cycle next to besides, a recycle.

The choreographical aspect of corporal gesture in musical performance plays a significant part in Steen-Andersen's oeuvre. Notably, corporal gesture is a theme that often returns in various contributions. Although it is almost never mentioned as such, this is a theme not without musical prehistory. The mime-like Thespian Play and almost equal / meistens gleich by Falk Hübner recalls twentieth century performance concepts by Mauricio Kagel and Dieter Schnebel. By depriving the musician of his instrument and by letting him perform in a kind of 'playback situation', the physical effort and the resounding of the music are disconnected. In its turn, such a disconnection leads inevitably to an emphasising of the visual, theatrical or choreographical aspects of music performance.

Remarkably similar is the concept of Marianthi Papalexandri-Alexandri's No

Name, although in her case the attention for everyday movement unveils a rather Cageian input. Even so, both examples point to a current theme in the performing arts. The treatment of the physical gesture of a musical performance as an autonomous given has nearly become a genre in itself in recent years (and in popular music; think of the air guitar world championships). Moreover, it is a theme that has not only caught the attention of composers, but also of young choreographers (Xavier Leroy) and video artists (Sam Taylor-Wood).

In this current fascination for the disconnection of musical action and its immediate auditory result, we may perhaps distinguish a trace of the awareness of a living environment where the relations between cause and effect, or between presence, effort and result have become volatile. Human expression no longer has a self-evident form. Today arts' interest is not only centred on the unveiling of human intentionality, nor on the development of new forms of expression. The area in which a great number of artists seem to be active today, is the area between intention and articulation. It is an ephemeral zone where, not coincidentally, a lot is moving in the technological and social sense. Between intention and articulation, hidden automation occurs, input and output are connected in a specific way via

digital or biotechnological designs, and virtual identities acquire real shapes. The control or regulation of these activities could be described as a '(re)mapping', or as the design of a model of input and output.

In a couple of contributions, similar procedures seem to come forward as the pre-eminent strategy with which intersensory or transmedial explorations can be undertaken. The artistic 'mapping' of different worlds with each other distinguishes itself from traditional associative or symbolic thought by its systematic and procedural character on the one hand, and by the utter arbitrariness with which different data sets or information fields can be joined on the other (where spontaneous associative thought generally relies on ingrained, physically or culturally embodied relations).

An obvious example of mapping activity in contemporary music can be found in the practice of 'live electronics'. In a purely acoustic performance situation, there is a direct relationship between bodily action and sound result. However, as Cathy van Eck states in her article:

"From the moment sound is transduced into electricity, these relationships become totally arbitrary and are open for any form of connection... I see the loss of the direct relationship between the moving body and the vibrating material, or between what is heard and what is seen, as an opportunity to be able to compose these relationships now."

We do not necessarily have to search for the artistic mapping in a technological or instrumental design. Intersensory or intermedial experiences not only rely on the materiality of outer facts, they are primarily the result of a perceptual and mental activity. In the 'Letter Pieces' of Matthew Shlomowitz, the actions of a dancer are linked in a 'literal' way to the sonorous actions of a musician. Not by means of me-

chanics or of a digital interface, but based upon an alphabetic letter structure and an interactive creation process: the performers generate actions and sounds from the letters. The performers have total freedom in choosing which actions or sounds correspond to each letter of the score; nevertheless, the result is a tight coupling between what one sees and hears.

"when an action and a sound are performed together, we perceptually couple them even if they share no material relationship. A central idea of all the pieces is shifting these relationships," writes Shlomowitz.

However, it is only because of repeated simultaneity of the same actions and sounds that transmedial bindings can occur and be contradicted in a later stage, often to comical effect.

The use of repetition as a tool for medial differentiation is also something Marianthi Papalexandri-Alexandri mentions in her article:

"I allow the first repetition of the gesture to emerge as a non-spontaneous emotional expression. By repeating the same gesture I offer a different meaning and function, while extensive repetition proposes a further transformation of the function and meaning of the gesture. In this way ... I incorporate theatrical, choreographical, musical, and everyday life aspects associated with gestures."

Strategies of differentiation through repetition, although of a very different kind, can also be found in Steven Prengels' enigmatic Visite Guidée Mâlique, an obstinate musical lecture of Joyce's Finnegans Wake through Marcel Duchamp's The Large Glass. However different in intention or style all these examples may be, none of them seems to involve an early-twentieth century endeavour to obtain im-

mersive synesthesia, let alone that some kind of 'truth' would be pursued through the combination of different media. Rather, motivation seems to spring from the pleasure and involvement produced by the creation of temporary literalness, or in Prengels' case, the creative manifestation enabled by the translation of a literary work through the somewhat random filter of a work of visual art.

While the design of the intersensory or intermedial mapping leaves room for imagination and creativity, there is one element that the musical experiment must continually take into account. In the buffer zone between intention and expression we not only find the freedom of 'mapping', but also the much less free embodiment the artistic design needs to cope with. In Laura Maes' *Oorwonde*, the connection between the artistic design and the bodily action and observation acquires an inescapably corporal reality. The listener lies on an operating table for an almost clinical experience during which localised feeling and listening are so interdependent that physical distance is no longer possible. The listener becomes performer and observer at once, with his or her body as an interface.

Strikingly, this body is often referred to in a literal and abstract way. Not only the body as an entity that gesticulates or articulates itself musically, but also as an entity which experiences music and is affected by it. In the conception of the body as the area where musical action, vibration and resonance take place, a genuine relevance of new art music might develop. Where before music earned its high status on the basis of its ability to express and arouse emotions, today a major role seems to be reserved for musical thought in which 'bodily state and localisation' can be explored and made tangible.

This does not signify that we can reduce the subject of new art music to a physical discourse. Let alone that 'the body' could turn into the subject of some type of musical mysticism. Maybe it is typical for the authors' backgrounds in classical music that the body is approached with a certain matter-of-factness. This attitude is probably also connected to the instrumental context in which the performing and perceiving body keeps operating and which demands sonorous efficiency and a certain sense of realism.

The corporal reflexivity that appears in these contributions does not imply that the corporal can be considered as the end of an artistic quest. In analogy with Simon Steen-Andersen's idea of the 'hyperidiomatic', a possibility for new abstractions begins at the point where physical and musical experience entirely coincide. Or in Falk Hübner's words, certain physical aspects of the existing musical practice can be 'abstracted away', so that the presence of musicians and/or listeners becomes potential compositional material. One could state that through this abstraction, music is again isolated from its execution so that it can be represented in an (action) score or, as is the case with *Oorwonde*, in a technical design. What counts then is no longer the representation of a sonorous sound ideal, but of a gesticulatory, theatrical or virtual music (the 'harmony of the spheres' is coming close, on a human scale).

We can find an illustration of this all in David Helbich's 'Keine-Musik', a composition especially written for this issue, to be performed by the reader. Not music, but the formal presence of score-like instructions stresses the musical background of the author, and in the same movement also the title of this journal. This piece, which has the subtitle 'Ohrstücke/earpieces', again presents a situation in which performance, observation and experience are localised in the here and now of one and the same body. Most of all, however, this is a composition that we could label 'conceptual'. The non-conventional character of all the work presented in this edition of RTRSRCH implies that every contribution involves conceptual creativity; an artistic thinking that challenges the very concept of music.



piece



Cathy Van Eck,  
*Hearing Sirens*,  
since 2005,  
for mp3-players  
with portable  
horn-loudspeakers

## Where music starts, Cathy Van Eck

Music was an activity during which intentional movements by a performer transformed into perceivable vibrations of an object. The perception of both these actions, as well as the perception of both the body of the performer and the material of the object undergoing these actions, resulted in an interpretation and a critical judgement by the audience and/or performer. The movements of the performer were potentially influenced by this interpretation and critical judgement.

The direct relationships described above were valid for the production of music until the invention of technologies for sound recording and sound reproduction. These direct relationships between movements, body, vibrations, materiality and perception were distorted as soon as sound was able to be transmitted through space (telephone and radio) or time (sound recording). I would like to emphasise that it is sound only which was transmitted, because all other elements of musical performance discussed above stayed where they had always been. It is precisely this isolation of one component of music which destroyed the relationships mentioned earlier.

There was much intense debate during the twentieth century concerning the possibilities of new technologies in music. I would like to divide the most radical positions into the isolated approach on one side and the instrumental approach on the other.

The isolated approach regards sound as the only component of music. Sound, and therefore music, should be without any reference to any other connotations formerly associated with music making (whether this might be the vibrating material or moving body). Consequently, for this approach new technologies were the ideal way to achieve this kind of music perception. This approach can be found in *musique concrète*, but also in the *elektronische Musik* of the Cologne School and many other forms of electroacoustic music. In its most radical form, this music is supposed to be heard without any reference to the world outside of sound. The medium producing the music, whether a musical instrument, recorded sounds, or the electronic equipment itself, should be imperceptible.

The instrumental approach, on the contrary, regards the separation of these elements of musical performance as a loss. The main aim is to achieve a performance practice with electroacoustical sound production technologies, which is as similar as possible to the former non-electroacoustical music practice. New technologies should not influence the musical practice at all. On the contrary, they should be developed in such a way that they behave as though not utilising new technologies. The separation between the various activities of a musical performance, as a result of using electroacoustic technologies, should be imperceptible. The development of the synthesiser is a good example of this approach. Whereas the sound producing methods of a synthesiser are not bound to any specific playing method, the synthesiser only became a really popular instrument after Robert Moog added a traditional keyboard for playing the sounds, and therefore bringing it back within conventional performance practice.



I think of the contrasts between these two approaches as a potential for my compositional practice. I see the loss of the direct relationship between the moving body and the vibrating material, or between what is heard and what is seen, as an opportunity to be able to compose these relationships now. Due to their disconnection, it is possible to compose new perceivable relations between movement and vibration. The relationship between the movements of the body of the performer and the vibrations of the material of the instrument played are compulsory, as long as no electroacoustic sound reproduction is involved. From the moment sound is transduced into electricity, these relationships become totally arbitrary and are open for any form of connection.

At the heart of my musical practice is the perception of interplay between movement and sound. There are stories in the bodies which make movements. There are stories in the movements they make, and there are stories in the objects which are played, and in the techniques used to play them. I try to work with those stories as compositional elements. Music starts not with sound, but with a movement which might produce sound as a result.

Groene Ruis – a project for a sounding tree (p. 24)

During this performance, I look for the musical instrument in a small tree. I play the tree with movements which are known from a traditional musical instrument: I pluck its branches as if they were the strings of a small harp. Every pluck on the tree causes an electronic ploing sound (in fact an enveloped sine wave) and for this reason the movements of the performer seem to have transformed the tree into a musical instrument. After a while though, the ploings break away, and the amplified sound of the tree itself becomes audible. The illusion of the tree being a musical instrument collapses. The tree does sound now, but in accordance with what it looks like. Whilst in the beginning my instrument-playing movements seemed to cause the sound, it is now the materiality of the tree itself which seems to cause the sound.

The perspective on musical performance changes: the first part concentrates on the activity of performing movements; the second part concentrates on the object which receives these movements. This change of perspective would not make any difference in the case of non-electroacoustical music, since as mentioned earlier, their relationships would have been compulsory. In this example, plucking a tree in a certain manner without electronics would have had only one possible sonic result. Due to the use of electroacoustical and electronic aids, the sounding result is no longer dependent on either the movements of the performer or the material itself, and for this reason plucking the tree in a certain manner can have an endless amount of sonic results.

Both the electronic ploings and the amplified sound of the tree itself depend on two contact microphones attached to the tree. The tree functions as the membrane for these contact microphones. My movements cause the tree to vibrate. These vibrations are barely audible, but clearly perceptible for the contact microphones. The microphones transduce the vibrations into electricity, and from that moment onwards the relationship between the movements of the performer and the sound can be composed. During the first part, the vibrations of the tree picked up by the contact microphones are used by the computer to trigger the ploing sounds. During the second part, these vibrations are sent directly through the loudspeakers and therefore the amplified vibrations of the tree itself are heard.

piece



Later in the performance a hairdryer is added. There are again several situations: first the tree is blow-dried in a way known from everyday life. The sound of the hair dryer is processed though, and develops a sound identity which no longer reminds us of the everyday object. The hairdryer is moved in different ways: sometimes in a realistic way, as though drying hair, or in this case, the tree. During other parts of the performance, the movements made with the hairdryer are highly stylized, abstract and controlled, as though an instrument is being played.

The performance, which takes as its departure point the story of the greek nymph Daphne, who changed into a tree to escape the love of Apollo, switches between actions which are perceived as musical actions, and actions which are more closely related to everyday life.

In Blik – a performative sound installation (p. 24, 25)

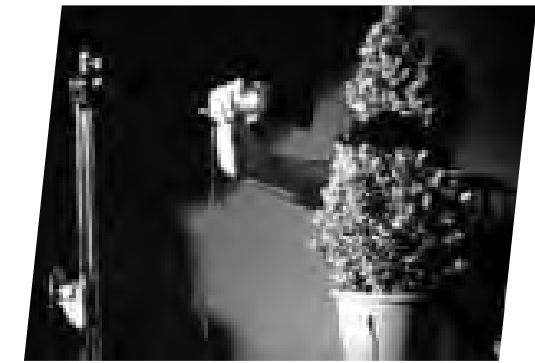
In in blik there are no musicians on stage. Five tin can towers placed on tactile transducers produce the sound. Tactile transducers function as loudspeakers without membranes. They vibrate depending on the electric current they receive, but contrary to loudspeakers with membranes, they barely produce any sound. They transmit their vibrations directly to the tin cans placed upon them. The tin cans amplify these vibrations and make them audible. Depending on the way the tin cans are placed upon each other and the height of each tower, every tin can tower will amplify the vibrations through its own characteristics.

Also during this performance, an identity change takes place. The tin can towers not only get vibrations which make them sound, but also much stronger vibrations which make them move. The tactile transducer is in this case comparable to a percussionist hitting the tin cans. By moving the tin can towers I want to give them characteristics which are typical of a performer and not of an instrument. From the moment they start to move, shake and “walk” forward, their identity changes into an intentional performer instead of a passive sounding object. They move between object (the instrument played on) and subject (the musician who is playing, making movements to make sound). The border between listening to a sounding object on one side, and sounds made by a moving performer is crossed. The vibrations of the material change into the movements of the performer and the instrument transforms into a performer.

Hearing Sirens – a project for mp3-players with portable horn-loudspeakers (p. 20)

Listening is often done with private loudspeakers in the ears of the listener. With hearing sirens I wanted to reverse this situation. The ears of the performer are extended by big yellow horns in which two loudspeakers are mounted. The sound, a composition based on the sound of sirens, is played from an mp3 player. The performer is the listener of this composition, whose listening is made audible for other listeners. The performer diffuses the sound into the environment by her movements.

The specific construction of the horns and the fact that they are portable gives them special acoustic possibilities. Due to the big horns, the sound is diffused very directionally, and is reflected by the environment in which the performance is done. Therefore the audience will often hear the early reflections before the direct sound. Through a small movement of the performer, the pattern of the reflections, which are perceived



*groene ruis*, 2007,  
for a small box tree,  
hairdryer and  
live electronics



*in blik*, 2008  
for tin can towers  
and electronics



by the audience, can change enormously (see the scheme below). In this way, the horn loudspeakers reveal the acoustical characteristics of the environment. Depending on the material characteristics of the environment, different frequencies will be reflected. The sound of each performance is different whether done in the hills, in a landscape with snow, in a city or in a theatre hall, although it is the same mp3 sound file being played. The activity, which would normally be recognised as listening, is now developing into a musical performance. The movements of listening become perceivable and these movements become movements of performing, playing the environment as an instrument.

Documentation of these performances can be found on the author's website:  
 groene ruis [www.cathyvaneck.net/groeneRuis.html](http://www.cathyvaneck.net/groeneRuis.html)  
 in blik [www.cathyvaneck.net/inblik.html](http://www.cathyvaneck.net/inblik.html)  
 hearing sirens [www.cathyvaneck.net/HearingSiren.html](http://www.cathyvaneck.net/HearingSiren.html)



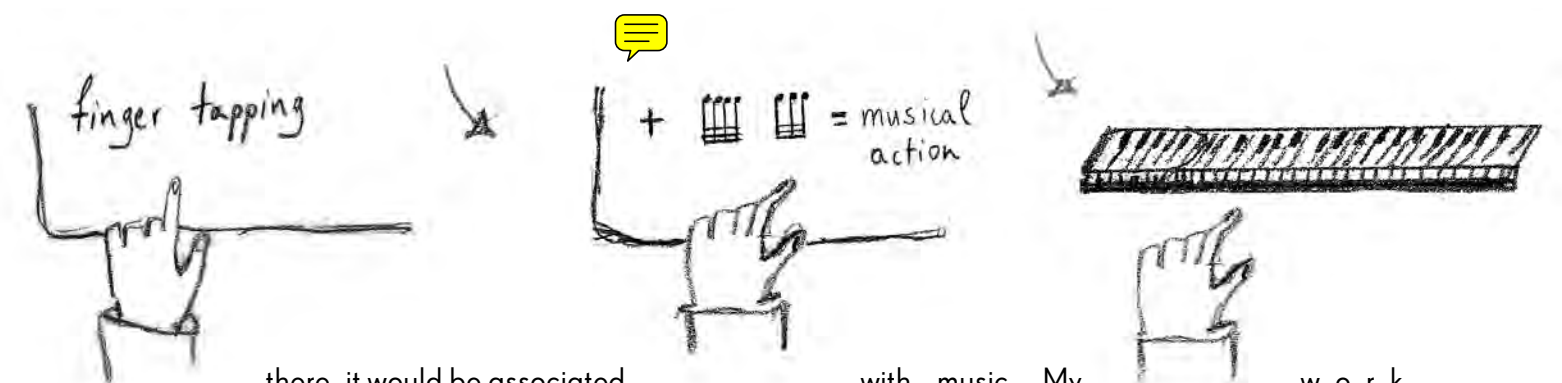
# amplifying the physical gesture

# marianthi papalexandri- alexandri

Gestures have their own associations and histories. My intention is to examine the conditions under which a gesture adopts a different function according to context, and to explore gesture as a reflection of habitual behavior. In my work, I use sound as a result of movement. I explore how gestures can replace sound and silence (sonic absence–visual presence) and how they can be developed into audio-visual concepts.

No Name (2004) for 2 musicians without instruments

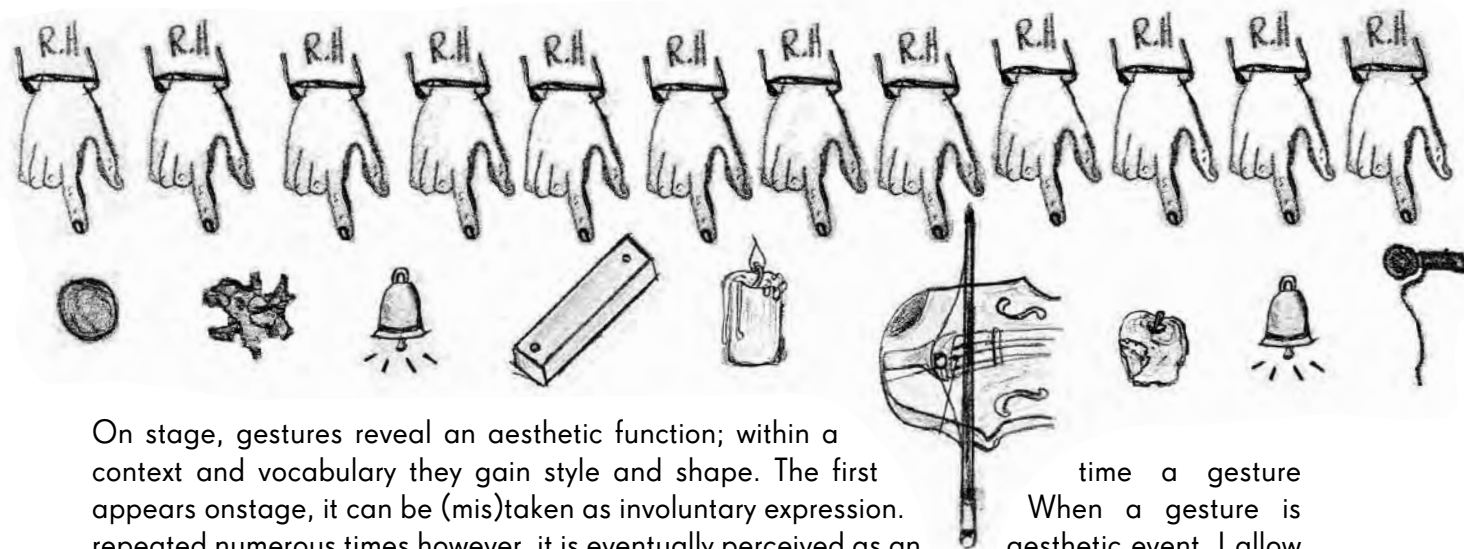
Everyday movement becomes music. Where is the line that tells you tapping your fingers on a table is not music? It's just a gesture of daily life, but if there were a keyboard



there, it would be associated with music. My work  
 No Name examines the line that separates theater, music,  
 dance and everyday life. No Name is a work for magnetic tape and two musicians  
 without instruments. It is for a trombonist and a pianist sitting on opposite sides of a table, explor-  
 ing the musical, theatrical, dance-like character of different bodily movements (physical actions).  
 The pianist uses his fingers and hands, tapping or brushing the table to create sound. These  
 are gestures taken from daily life, expressing moments of boredom or waiting. There is nothing  
 to hide here. The moment a pianist raises his hand and lands his index finger on the table, it is  
 impossible for the body and mind to forget or to ignore the habits formed through practicing. In  
 short, does a reflection of behavior of performers, like dancers or athletes, develop throughout  
 years of practice? The trombone part has a more reserved and internal character. Most of the  
 bodily movements happen inside the body. The trombonist takes a breath as slowly as possible,  
 filling small parts of the lungs, isolating the air. After a few minutes it finally reaches the mouth  
 and he breathes out.

## Repetition

The form of the piece is based on a loop of a series of actions. Performers repeat the series of actions again and again, while the audience may walk in and out at anytime. Repetition here offers the possibility of looking again and again, listening again and again, and experiencing every moment again and again. It's repeatable, but not a mimesis or a copy. Repetition allows both performer and audience to explore the same gestures again and again under different conditions.



On stage, gestures reveal an aesthetic function; within a context and vocabulary they gain style and shape. The first time a gesture appears onstage, it can be (mis)taken as involuntary expression. When a gesture is repeated numerous times however, it is eventually perceived as an aesthetic event. I allow the first repetition of the gesture to emerge as a non-spontaneous emotional expression. By repeating the same gesture I offer a different meaning and function, while extensive repetition proposes a further transformation of the function and meaning of the gesture. In this way gestures can be perceived in many ways by losing and regaining function through repetition. In repetition I incorporate theatrical, choreographic, musical, and everyday life aspects associated with gestures. Finally, it offers the chance to experience all the possible associations related to gesture.

#### Rhythm

The action of tapping is taken from everyday life. But we do not tap in a mechanical way. Precise repetition makes it artificial. Rhythm excludes any possibilities of perceiving this moment as being derived from daily life or as being a theatrical gesture. It is purely musical.

#### Visual repetition

I used to avoid repetition - any kind of repetition. I used to think of repetition as evidence of lack of inspiration or laziness. I am happy to find that I have changed my mind. Repetition has beauty.

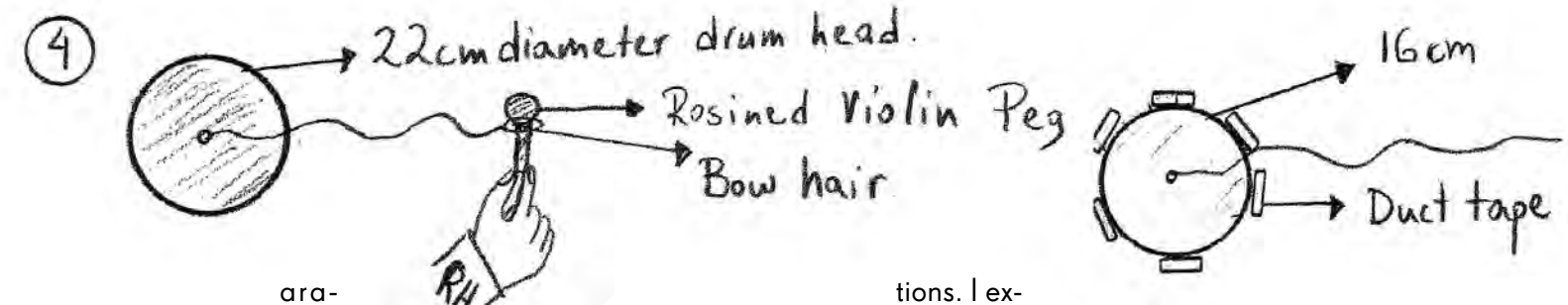
You enter an exhibition. Nobody tells you how many times to look at a picture, painting, sculpture, or space. Nobody indicates how and for how long you should observe a piece of art. You can revisit a gallery as many times as you wish (if you can afford it, and within the lifespan of the exhibition). Imagine a gallery full of the same image. Would you perceive this as a repetition? Repetition in the visual arts exists with the recurrence of the same color or shape or figure. This is visual repetition.

With music things are different. Most of the time, you attend a concert sitting silently and you can experience the same sound again only if this particular sonic moment is repeated within the piece. The piece has a specific length and it can only be experienced at that particular moment. Sonic repetition offers multiple revisits.

What about visual repetition in music? In my work I take a sound that has been repeated for a while and then I keep the physical gesture and remove the sound from it. In this way you can still see the gesture but it does not produce sound anymore. However the continuation of the same gestures -even when no longer audible- through repetition offers a type of visible sound. You can see it and therefore you can still hear it.

#### Preparations

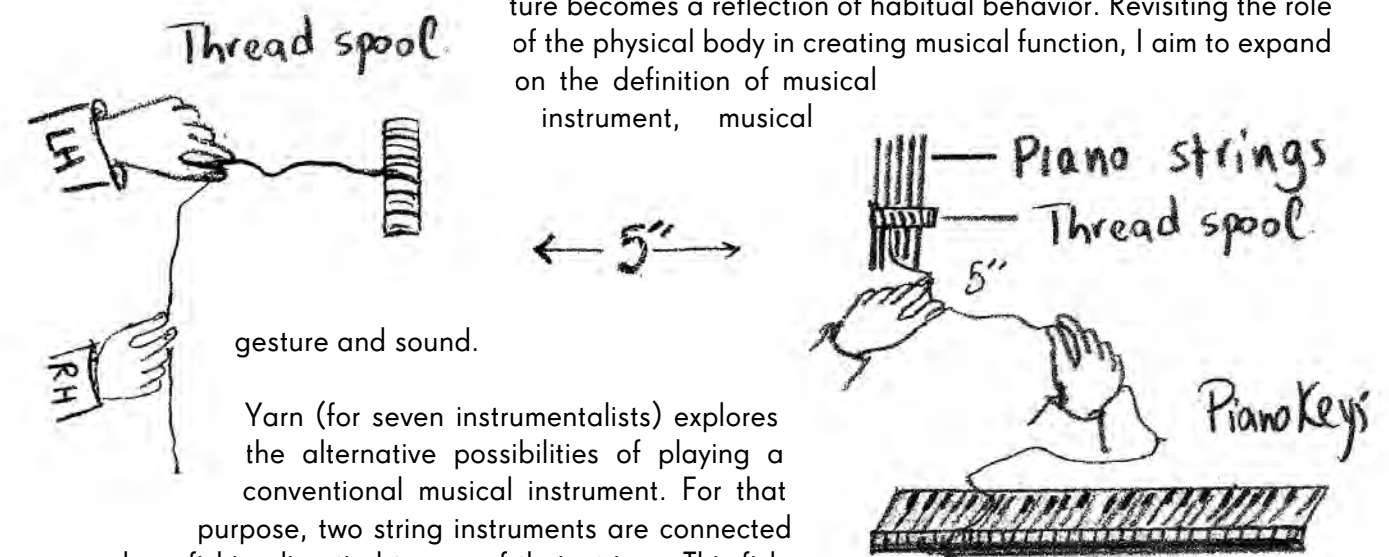
My intention is to make performers aware of their actions and habits, to reveal the effort they make while performing, and to make them examine their own behaviour. Performers develop a very specific relationship between instrument and body. Through years of practice they acquire an inherent sense of how to adjust mind and body while interpreting musical scores. Consequently, performers establish physical behavior which leads to a certain automated process and aesthetic approach. A large part of my work is formed through the manipulation of conventional instruments by prep-



ara-amine this type of sound production and the corresponding behavior of the performer. In manipulating the instrument, I constrain habitual actions to force more immediate reactions in the performer. Their reactions in turn allow new forms of behavior and communication in the ensemble.

#### Yarn

Composing Yarn (2008), I focus on analyzing the instrumentalist's bodily movement and behavior and the idea that the instrument is the extension of her/his body. In this way, I show how a gesture becomes a reflection of habitual behavior. Revisiting the role of the physical body in creating musical function, I aim to expand on the definition of musical instrument, musical



gesture and sound.

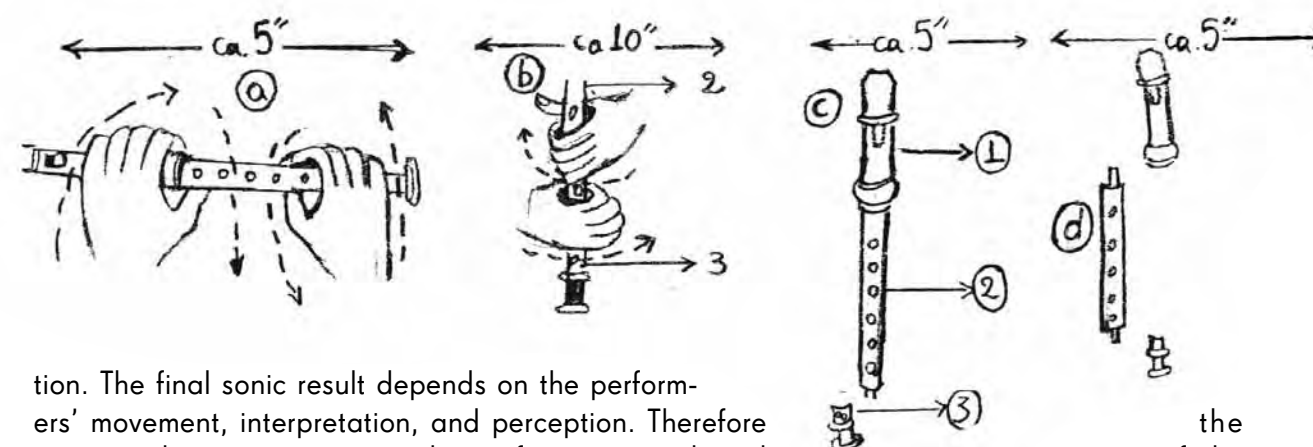
Yarn (for seven instrumentalists) explores the alternative possibilities of playing a conventional musical instrument. For that purpose, two string instruments are connected by a fishing line tied to one of their strings. This fishing line is bowed and transmits the sound to the two connected instruments. The fishing line then becomes the main percussive instrument. In this way the percussionist and the two string players have to coordinate their bodily gestures in order to achieve the ideal sound. The slightest bodily movement will change the tension of the fishing line, affecting the sound. In other words the performers stay silent, but they are still active. The aim is to replace sound with vision and to maintain the energy of the piece by keeping the performers in a state of constant physical movement. In this way Yarn explores the conditions under which a physical gesture gains a different function according to context. It also suggests 'energetic silence' within such preparation, indicating that physical gestures themselves can replace both sound and silence. To these ends Yarn uses an iconographic notation that depicts physical gestures in line with musical functions.

Handwritten musical score for piano, featuring staves 12 and 13. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings (e.g., *mp*, *mf*, *ff*). Key annotations include "SUSTAIN", "Perc.", "VI.1", "VI.2", "Vla", and "VI.c". The score is divided into measures with time signatures (e.g., 5", 10", 15", 20", 30", 40", 45"). The notation includes complex rhythmic patterns and articulation marks. The score concludes with a double bar line and a final measure.

## Iconographic Notation

The use of iconographic notation is aimed at highlighting the visual aspect of the performance, and at encouraging performers to focus equally on sonic and visual elements. Iconographic notation displays a detailed description of movement rather than a sound result. It indicates how to play and on what part of the instrument to play. Thereafter it provides illustrations of the physical actions – movements which create sound.

In addition, it explores the idea of what I call 'hidden rhythm'. In this way it replaces conventional rhythmic indications with a detailed visual or iconographic representation of the physical movement. In other words, it does not ask for the performer to count notes but rather to focus on the idea of sound as a result of a series of physical movements. It suggests a length for each gesture. It seeks different possibilities for creating and notating rhythm. (For example a performer is asked to assemble and disassemble a recorder). A specific time frame is given for each ac-



tion. The final sonic result depends on the performers' movement, interpretation, and perception. Therefore iconographic notation invites the performer to explore the anatomy of the instrument. However, it does not ask the performer to improvise. This type of notation explores the elaboration of different types of behavior. It can be analytical, but flexible. This notation aims to create an unrepeatable sonic-visual experience for both performer and listener. It aims to activate a dynamic process through interconnections and interrelationships. Each part works in relation to the others. In this way each player has to follow (emulate or imitate) the others' speed dynamic, pitch and energy. This type of music can be explored fully only in real time performance. It is a method which asks that the performers listen, watch, communicate and work on things together. It aims to draw attention to the kinesthetic aspect of the performance while avoiding adopting any theatrical function. Instead, it focuses on alerting the performer to their habitual perceptions.

## New Instruments

Besides adapting existing instruments, I create new instruments including mechanized sound devices; in this way I explore new bodily movements and sounds by building mechanisms which mandate and manifest different approaches to musical interpretation. I have been working, in collaboration with the sound artist Pe Lang, on projects using self-constructed, motor-driven instruments which function both as sound sources and as kinetic musical scores (kinetic objects on stage determine speed, dynamic and other musical parameters). The works are presented as a combination of live performance and audio-visual installation, and aim to question the difference between performing and operating. The idea is to expand and question the role of the performer in contemporary music. What are the differences between the actions of playing, operating and acting?

www.marianthi.net

<http://www.marianthi.net/yarn.html>

<http://www.dustedmagazine.com/features/342>



## “...as if you would...” Falk Hübner

What I would like to discuss in this essay are some thoughts about conceptual and practical problems and struggles concerning a new, upcoming performance, to be premiered in Amsterdam in April/May 2010. I do not by any means present something conceptually finished here; it is my wish to discuss the problems and struggles of a new performance, the problems I encounter while conceptualising and creating a piece, or even before starting with the actual creation in the rehearsal process. As a composer, director and researcher, I am interested in creating music theatrical performances, more specifically in creating 'musical choreographies'; these do not necessarily have to include any music. I develop pieces with musicians as theatrical performers, and am interested in the impact of experimental set-ups on the professional identity of musicians in theatre. Working from the main medium of music and composition, I seek to push its boundaries into the media of theatre and performance. What I'm looking for is a theatre that is inhabited by musicians that 'provide' another theatricality than that of actors or dancers. I am fascinated by a theatre that does not

have to include music, but breathes a musical energy originating from the movements and the profession of the performers.

### The past

Musicians 'perform' in many contemporary music theatre productions: In most of these performances, musicians perform music as musicians, and do something 'on top' of their profession - singing (in the case of instrumentalists), speaking, writing (as in amplified form in *Schwarz auf Weiss* by Heiner Goebbels), walking or moving in carefully organised choreographies, etc. The audience experiences an extension of the musician's profession, built on top of the profession which is always present. What interests me in contrast to this is the idea of abstracting away specific qualities or abilities of the musician's profession, yet at the same time using certain abilities very explicitly indeed. In my 2008/2009 performance *Thespian Play*, a saxophone player performs a musical choreography without his instrument, quasi-miming what happens on the soundtrack.<sup>1</sup> He does not make a single sound during the whole piece, and has no instrument. Although the instrument and the control of sound and timing are taken away, the

performance needs to be performed by a musician - specifically a saxophone player, because it demands in-depth physical knowledge of saxophone playing. Performing without an instrument has enormous consequences, as the performer has to learn the piece in a very different way, and practicing requires a very high amount of concentration. In order to enable the performer to play the piece, I use only musical material as a basis, recorded together with him and his instrument. This way he knows the acoustic surroundings intimately, and also the physical origin of the sounds, enabling him to produce the movements in his body to mime these sounds - although without his instrument. A striking effect is that, by taking away the instrument, one really gets to see the player and every detail of the body while performing. By taking away the instrument, the musician becomes transformed into a theatrical performer.

### The future

In my next performance, almost equal / *meistens gleich* for conductor and percussion player, I am seeking to push this concept further, and work on an independent yet musical movement language - the performative use of the



musical movements as autonomous movement material, and create a music theatrical choreography for conductor, percussion player and loudspeaker installation. There are no instruments on stage. The two players will perform a choreography of musical movements that are rooted in their professions. How far can musical movements be developed towards choreographic material, and how far can the boundaries of musical performance be pushed towards choreography or dance?

The largest part the performance will be in silence. At specific moments the performers will hold still, and electronic interludes come out of the eight loudspeakers arranged in the stage space. The loudspeaker installation is the only sound source in the whole performance. This setting implies a shifting (and alienation?) from traditional musical functions and their social implications. The conductor is forced to leave his position as musical director, and both musicians are put aside in equal roles as performers.

#### **In-between and moving: The present**

*Problem 1:  
The problem of necessity*

A 'musical choreography' becomes strong and convincing at the

moment when the performer fills the movement with musical meaning. If a director/choreographer just lets the musicians produce abstract movements, there is a risk that they appear meaningless or amateurish, as they do not belong to the experience of the musician. I try to create an intense and tight relationship to musical movement, because at the moment when the musician can link the movement he performs to a musical action or musical instrument, he can fill the movement with meaning and intensity. For instrumentalists the problem is a solvable one, because they are highly skilled in knowing what their instruments produce under various physical circumstances (such as finger settings or the speed of a drum hit).

In the case of the conductor this becomes more complex. For a conductor the instrument - an ensemble or orchestra - is always different, depending on the ensemble, on the piece being played, and on the mood of the performance etc. With his movements, the conductor not only precedes any played note, but also reacts very strongly to sounds he hears from the orchestra. In part this can be rehearsed. To a larger extent it cannot, since the sound happens in

the here and now of the performance. The conductor needs the orchestra in order to produce many of his movements. The problem in this case is thus not in the direction from the conductor to the (missing) orchestra, but from the orchestra to the conductor. If there is no orchestra, thus no feedback to react to, why should he conduct?

One possible, elegant solution to this problem could be that the conductor in the end simply won't be a conductor anymore; he becomes a performer, rendering the orchestral feedback unnecessary. As a task-based performance, the conductor could try to convince the audience of a certain sound he has in his mind: a forte-accent by the strings does not only sound different than the same accent played by the brass, it certainly also looks different when watching the conductor. It would be possible to collect material by breaking the orchestral direction practice down into elements, different dynamics, different orchestral groups, articulations, phrasings, tempos, etc., and search for all the small and large differences between the different movement qualities, and thus generate the performance material. With such a strategy the close reference to orchestral conducting

piece



remains present, but the conductor is freed of the necessity of feedback from the orchestra. Ultimately, I am looking for the musical energy and presence of the movements more than the music itself (in fact it is arguable if I am creating music). Imagine a percussion player moving as if striking a large tam tam with full energy, only without the beater and the tam tam. You almost hear the sound, and you certainly feel the energy.

*Problem 2:*

*The as if – problem*

I plan to work with the performers on movements which bear a strong reference to their musical practice. As a first step, I would ask the percussion player for example to imagine hitting a bass drum fortissimo, but without the beater and the drum. In contrast to Thespian Play, the percussion player has to imagine the sound completely, without any physical or audible feedback. Thus, in a way I am asking the performer to move as if he would hit a drum; I am asking him to pretend to do something that he in fact does not do, or to reproduce something that is not really present on stage. Is this approach just a way of dealing with musicians as if they were actors? Do the musicians have to act as if they were a conductor and a

percussionist? The last thing I would want as a music theatre maker is to let the musicians do any acting; this would end up in an amateurish performance with musicians doing something they are not very good at.

I will try to solve this conceptual and practical problem by starting with the profession of the musicians. All movements have their origin in the musical movements either of conducting or of playing percussion instruments. From this starting point I will try to expand the quality of the movement, for example by slowing it down, stopping in the middle of a movement, letting one movement fade into another, or combining it with other movements from everyday life. The originally musical movements become transformative, choreographic movements; for the audience these movements do not necessarily have to have a recognisable relation to their origin; most important is that the performers can link every movement they do to its origin, and thus to their professional practice as musicians. At the point where that succeeds, the musicians are able to perform the choreography convincingly and will be able to fill it with energy and meaning. Thus even in

silence their professional identity as musicians becomes manifested in the choreography, although these movements are displaced and dislocated, and transformed from musical into performative or choreographic movements. This resonates with German theatre theorist Erika Fischer-Lichte when she proposes with reference to Judith Butler that identity as bodily and social reality is not predefined in any ontological or biological sense, but the result of performative acts. However, the movement, especially for the performer, refers to another action, and to another meaning, namely the musical action. This musical action usually serves the need to produce sound, thus is merely a means to reach the actual goal of producing sound. What I do is accentuate this action, and transform it into the central element of performance. The movement is no longer a means (naturally in traditional musical performance the movement to produce sound also has performative potential), but the sole focus, as there is no sound.

© Being a performance for saxophone player without saxophone, soundtrack and video, Thespian Play was developed as work-in-progress in close collaboration with the performer Heiner Gulich. A trailer of the performance can be seen on [www.falk-huebner.de/work/ThespianPlay](http://www.falk-huebner.de/work/ThespianPlay).



# 'Le Piano Démé- canisé' Frederik Croene

## The secret automaton.

The piano mechanics between the keys and strings acts as a buffer between the pianist and sound. In this case, the way the sounds are to be produced has beforehand been determined. It is sound technique protocol that the pianist, from the beginning of his study, learns to conform; any form of sound adventure is crippled. This turns the pianist into a nostalgic character, doomed to think in terms of and play according to ancient rules. The black and white geography of the keys encorsets him in a hierarchical system of notes. The pianist is, in this case, a rigid vision, a willing servant to the secret automaton.

## The intimate authenticity of sabotage.

Along with the disappearance of inner parts of the piano, the former education of the pianist becomes insignificant. Not only that the entire piano repertoire becomes impossible to play but his training, stylistic knowledge and idiomatic intuition also become useless. Nevertheless, this sabotage is not a provocation but the ultimate expression of a creative process. The pianist reaches, through the many hours of practice necessary to master an instrument, a fiery physical bond with his instrument. Again and again hands and fingers devote themselves to the keys in a repeated attempt to hear the instrument as an extension of the body. That desire for a perfect symbiosis between the physical body of the player and the instrumental sound is freed when, thanks to the disappearance of the mechanical armour, fingers can finally touch the strings.

## A guide for the nostalgic pianist.

The pianist, in the process of dismantling his instrument, is prised out of his role as an interpreter. He's left behind in a situation where only improvisation and composition can save him. Disarmed as he is, the nostalgic pianist seeks support in a number of rules which remind him of his pianistic identity:

- a.  
He turns an old upright piano onto its back after the keyboard and all the mechanical pieces have been removed.
- b.  
He only uses his hands and parts of the instrument itself for playing; no external objects are utilised to manipulate the strings ('extended piano techniques'). Neither does he make use of electronic devices to alter the sound ('piano and electronics')
- c.  
He records everything himself and there is no cutting, pasting or layering in the recording
- d.  
He plays the compositions a few times without pausing, consequently choosing the best versions for the album

"I decided to sabotage the piano and therefore my education at the conservatory. All scores become unplayable, I become inert from a piano player's point of view. The sense of direction disappears, there's no more of that black and white geography, only bass copper strings to the right and shorter and shorter strings to the left. Classical note systems become unusable. The love for the instrument is so strong however that I choose to recover the wreckage of the piano (keys, pieces of fabric, metal tenons...). I use the keys as multipurpose mallets, I sometimes introduce piano parts in between the strings and re-build the instrument which can't be relied to produce exact notes anymore. Furthermore, nothing keeps me from listening to the sound of the varnish being scraped off. Freed from classical tuning I stretch the broken strings right across the frame."

The dramatic dismantling turns the piano performance into a theatrical experience. You see the pianist as a percussionist squeezing sound out of an obsolete, retired object. No use in being a refined, cultivated pianist as a dandy now, you need muscled arms and a strong back to conquer the uselessness of the instrument. Any concert, when employing this new-found instrument, becomes unpredictable due to the fact that the keys and the frame, not built for this, wear out. The metal pins of the keys have a layer of felt that may come off at any moment, immediately sharpening the sound. The pin might also pierce the key, making it unusable. Bass strings especially tend to break. The keys easily get caught in between strings; releasing them is noisy and requires time and the use of both hands.

The musical fantasy of the performer has to work hand in hand with his mind, which must be orientated towards finding practical solutions. The speed of reaction with which the musician responds to accidents caused by components wearing out determines to what degree he can push the musical build-up. That is why there's no need to prevent these accidents from happening by, for example, gluing the tissues.

## The pianist-writer.

The first action that 'le pianiste démécanisé' undertakes is exquisitely nostalgic. He comes up with an album on vinyl and rejects all the modern editing and recording techniques, thus projecting his music in a future from which it returns as a boomerang, and equally securing his place in piano history.

Vinyl, in comparison to CD, offers more graphical possibilities to materialise music and ideas. It traditionally has two covers. The hard outer one protects and enables the visualisation of music, also making room for explanatory text. The thin cover provides extra protection against dust and scratching. This principle is reversed when introducing the external cover in the inner one and display-

ing all the text on the above mentioned inner cover. Consequently, intuitive music is protected by a cover consisting of this very text. Following the tradition of classical recordings, it is the pianist who provides the necessary description of the music pieces:



## Side A

1.  
'Réanimation forcée' is the forced reanimation of the piano wreck, a somewhat overloaded opening meant to display a wide spectrum of playing techniques and leading dynamics in a pulsating rhythmicity.
2.  
The fulfilled, intimate feel of 'amour éternelle' voices the unity between instrument and musician, necessary for the concept. The low, dark basses create a resounding universe in which the pianist can daringly prove his love for the strings and resonance with almost painful glissandi. There is a third layer of harp-like sounds which are, in between glissandi and basses, reminiscent of classical piano playing and which act as an intermediary between the two antagonists.
3.  
The pianist explores, in the 'toccata cardiaque', the physical borders of his rediscovered instrument, consequently alluding to virtuosos toccata tradition from piano literature. He touches the resonating heart of the piano with three crescendos played on different spots of the frame until the strings or the keys with which he drums on the frame may start to give out and therefore sound overmodulated (by touching neighboring strings). That disturbance is a victory since that is normally not possible on modern pianos that have a hammer mechanism. At this point the instrument and the player meet in a transcendental space where the trilling of the strings overpowers the preprogrammed self-protectiveness of the instrument.

## Side B

1.  
The grotesque 'poil palliatif' ritual marks the beginning of the battle with death with scratching noises, odd drum-rolls, hard knocks and beastly cries. The action takes place on the wrinkled skin of the wooden frame where the keys scrape off the varnish and in the cruel strikes on pieces of key that are squeezed in between bass strings. This is no soft treatment but a barbaric plan to bring scrap material back to the purpose of making sound.
2.  
'Gonflammation' is the very ritual of burning; in the melting sound deformities, old piano techniques rise to the surface and immediately disappear in the swelling clouds of sound. Recognisable piano notes still spark out here and there from the glowing sound embers. The frame is prepared for burial: measurements are taken using a black key instead of a ruler, a key that is grindingly pushed onto the strings and that creates a dry 'tock' whenever it hits the side.
3.  
The remaining piano carcass is yet again forced to play an entertaining role in the hysterical dance of 'animation geriatrique'. The latter is mercilessly restrained with pizzicatos that have more structure than body in their sound.
4.  
'Pour le piano' was recorded against all rules using an external sound source that plays a piece of nostalgic piano music in the vicinity of the strings and the microphones. The pianist accompanies the classical sounding music gently touching the strings with his fingers, evoking the sea or the wind that in their turn allude to romantic sanctuaries to which the classical piano music takes us.



***The Postman Always Rings ABC: Matthew Shlomowitz's Letter Pieces***

*Letter Pieces* is an ongoing series of short performance pieces that I began composing in 2007. To date there are eight Letter Pieces, seven of which are duos. Each Letter Piece has a score, positioning a small number of physical actions and sound objects - which the players invent - in a fixed order. I have called them Letter Pieces because the scores use letters to represent these sounds and actions. To put it simply, I've created the structure and the players create the content; two enactments of the same piece may look and sound entirely different. In what follows I will say something about myself and how I came to work in this area, outline the ideas behind the pieces, show how the scores work, and discuss performance issues.

I was born in 1975 and grew up in Adelaide, Australia. I did a first degree in Sydney and then studied composition privately with Michael Finnissy in England, followed by a doctorate at Stanford University working with Brian Ferneyhough. Although my Letter Pieces share little in common with either of my teacher's work, their critical attitude to composition, and in particular Finnissy's iconoclastic stance, frames the way I think. I moved to London in 2002 and since then have become interested in interdisciplinary work. The main catalyst for this was my experience in co-directing Rational Rec, an organisation that put on monthly inter-arts events in East London for three years.<sup>1</sup>

In 2004 I began working with video artist Rees Archibald. Over the next four years we made three pieces together. The first two of these pieces, *Six Aspects of the Body in Image and Sound* and *Train Travel*, combine video with notated instrumental music that is performed live. The third, *A Documentary Saga of the OuLiPo* (with a text by Andrew Infanti), is a video work with no live component.<sup>2</sup> In *Six Aspects and Train Travel* Rees and I explored two main formal ideas. Firstly, we set up different degrees of synchronisation between the video and the music; some visuals were co-ordinated with the music, some weren't, and others were somewhere in between. Secondly, we played with the idea of taking a short visual sequence that is repeated several times in combination with different musical sequences, and vice versa (i.e. coupling and decoupling audio/visual pairs).

I learnt a lot from thinking through these kinds of issues with Rees, and got turned on to exploring interdisciplinary issues, however, I came to the conclusion that video+music was not the right medium for me. My problem was that pre-recorded video was combined with live music, creating a strange, asymmetrical situation where the two media cannot react to one another in performance. Furthermore, the musicians performed in near darkness so as not to distract attention away from the video, which gave the works a disembodied quality that I didn't like. I like seeing people perform and I like to see the way people perform together and react to one another. I get a thrill from performance virtuosity and I like the heat and dangers of the live performance scenario. I came to the conclusion that with this medium audiences prioritise the visual dimension, regarding the audio as a kind of soundtrack - aside from some musicians who prioritise the music! Few think of the two media as equal let alone consider the kind of relationships Rees and I thought these pieces were about. For me, this gap between intention and result left things open in a rather uninteresting

kind of way.

In the Letter Pieces I've pursued these ideas in a context where the visual and musical dimensions are both performed live, as can be seen in the photo of Shila Anaraki and Tomma Wessel below:

I also wanted to strip my ideas down, in terms of both the nature and quantity of material. That is, to use just a small number of very short (e.g. one second) physical-actions and sound-objects in any given piece. I wanted the pieces to have an elemental and reduced quality so that the shifting relationships would be clear.

Each of the first four Letter Pieces is for a visual performer and a musician. The performer part may be enacted using any visual language, and by someone from any background: dance, puppetry, mime, etc. Musicians have also enacted the visual part, sometimes using physical-actions associated with playing their instruments. The only factor essential to the performer part



is that it is focussed on the visual medium, as exploring audio-visual relationships is key. The music part is equally open, and any instrumentalist may perform it using conventional or non-conventional instrument(s).

The first four Letter Pieces have similar titles, each made up of five words beginning with the letters A, B, C, D and E. In these pieces each player creates a set of five events: the performer creates five physical-actions and the musician creates five sound-objects. Each event is always one beat long; as each piece has a different tempo a beat may range from half a second to two seconds in length. The five respective events are labelled A, B, C, D and E in the score. For both players an event may be a single visual action/sound, or a complex of actions/sounds that form a gestalt. For instance, a sound-object could be a single note or it could be a gesture that is made up of a bunch of notes perceived as a single event. Each event should be distinct, discrete and performed exactly the same way each time without variation (unless instructed otherwise). The symbol "+" denotes a one beat rest, indicating to the performer to hold still in a neutral position or to the musician to be silent. A passage of score looks like this:

**Shila Anarki,  
Tomma Wessel,  
*Letter Piece XXX*  
2008**

***Dear New Music,***

***we are here, because the weather is amazingly friendly and because we all have something to do with new music.***

***We are an example of the randomness and the subjectivity of the concept New Music and: we are full of lust to turn this into an optimistic message.***

***New music is the practice of new music.***

---

***New music is a social concept as well as an individual experience.***

***New music is, what each of us calls new music.***

***New music is what we make of it.***

***We are new music!***

<b>PERFORMER</b>	<b>A</b>	+	<b>B</b>	+	+	<b>A</b>	+	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>MUSICIAN</b>	<b>A</b>	+	<b>B</b>	+	<b>A</b>	+	<b>B</b>	+	<b>C</b>

<b>PERFORMER</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	+	<b>B</b>	<b>A</b>	+	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>
<b>MUSICIAN</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	+	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	+	<b>B</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>C</b>

*Letter Piece 1: Arsenal, Bahrain, Chihuahua, Darjeeling and Eisenhower*, was written for David Helbich and Mark Knoop. In this piece the visual performer is asked to construct a narrative sequence in five actions; **A**, **B**, **C**, **D** and **E**. Here are three possible narratives:

	<b>EXAMPLE 1</b>	<b>EXAMPLE 2</b>	<b>EXAMPLE 3</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>Getting on a bicycle</b>	<b>Opening fridge</b>	<b>Walking</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>Riding along</b>	<b>Taking drink out</b>	<b>Ducking</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Looking terrified</b>	<b>Pouring drink</b>	<b>Looking above</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Evading something</b>	<b>Drinking</b>	<b>Aggressive gesture</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>Falling off</b>	<b>Wiping mouth</b>	<b>Running away</b>

The narrative David created for the first performance, shown below, was more elaborate in two ways. Firstly, his narrative implied an alternation between two people. Secondly, he constructed his narrative in reverse order. I like it when performers take such creative licence as it extends the possibilities and potential meanings of the pieces in ways that I could not have imagined.

<b>E</b>	<b>(person 1)</b>	<b>asking for a cigarette lighter</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>(person 2)</b>	<b>rejecting the request</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>(person 1)</b>	<b>what's the problem?</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>(person 2)</b>	<b>punch</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>(person 1)</b>	<b>being hit</b>

I have provided one more example of a five-step narrative at the end of this text with photos of dancer Shila Anaraki illustrating the actions she created in her performance of this piece with Tomma Wessel, the two performers who have worked most extensively on these pieces. In the York performance, Mark performed on a synthesizer with a kitschy electric piano sound. He created five distinct sound-objects that were unrelated to one another (other than “sounding good” together), and which did not obviously relate to the physical-actions. In other Letter Piece performances, musicians have formed mimetic relationships between the actions and sounds. For instance, the visual action of knocking on a door matched with a knocking sound, or a raising-of-eyebrows matched with an ascending musical figure. From my perspective both approaches are valid. One of the interesting things is that when an action and a sound are performed together, we perceptually couple them even if they share no material relationship. A central idea of all the pieces is shifting these relationships. For instance, in the following example visual **A** is initially coupled with sonic **A**, and then coupled with sonic **C**.

<b>PERFORMER</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>MUSICIAN</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>

Similarly, players may enact the same letter pattern one after the other as can be seen in the first line below, followed by getting it “wrong” as can be seen in the second.

<b>PERFORMER</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	+	+	+	+	+
<b>MUSICIAN</b>	+	+	+	+	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	+

<b>PERFORMER</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	+	+	+	+	+
<b>MUSICIAN</b>	+	+	+	+	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>C</b>	+

In the final part of this text I will discuss a variety of distinct issues. There are passages in various Letter Pieces where the players stop performing actions/sounds and instead speak the letter names themselves (maintaining the strict pulse). My intention in these instances is to nakedly reveal the structure. One friend told me that these passages destroyed the “magic” of the pieces. That is exactly my intention! I think such moments are akin to Brecht’s “distancing effect” (although without Brecht’s political agenda). Brecht utilised techniques, such as having an actor directly address the audience, to prevent the audience from losing itself passively in the character portrayed by the actor. Similarly, my hope is that these speaking passages suggest a different and critical way of thinking about the work. Although all of the Letter Pieces each share similar ideas, each piece also has a specific concept. Here are two examples. In *Letter Piece 2*:

Assam, Buchanan, Chelsea, Dalmatian and Egypt, there is an additional symbol in the score that indicates micro-variation. That is, the performers are instructed to modify aspects of a given event in such a way that the identity of the original event remains recognisable. Throughout the piece there are sections that focus on this feature by presenting a series of variations on a single event. The distinct quality of *Letter Piece 5: Northern Cities* is that both players produce actions, sounds and speak words. For the first half of the piece the two players each create a set of three related actions and a set of three related sound-objects that are not related to the other performer's sets. In the table below these relationships can be seen vertically:

Actions		Sounds	
	PLAYER 1	PLAYER 2	
A	Sign for "wind"	Smile	Strike box
B	Sign for "rain"	Yawn	Strike tin
C	Sign for "sun"	Wink	Strike pot

For the second half the players create new sets of actions and sounds where the relationships are between the A, B and C of each player. In the table below these relationships can be seen horizontally:

Actions		Sounds	
	PLAYER 1	PLAYER 2	
A	Yelling motion	Covering ears	Tear paper
B	Punch	Being hit	Sing "do"
C	Reading	Turning page	Single clap

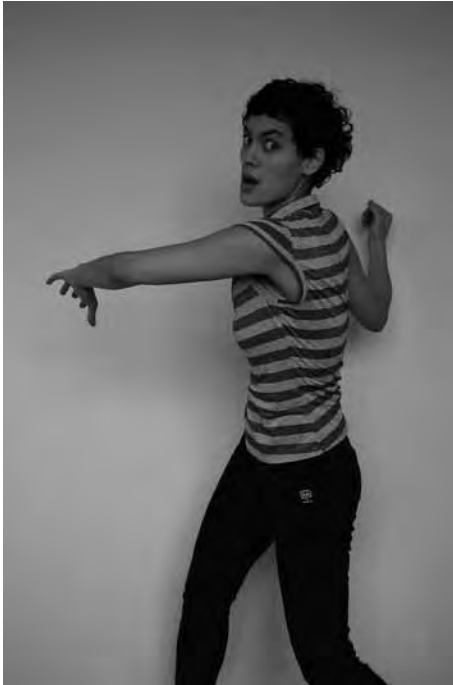
To my delight, performances of these pieces often receive laughter and I like to think the pieces can be both conceptually rich as well as light and funny. Some players perform the pieces in a deadpan manner and don't choose obviously funny sounds/actions. When humour results in these instances it is unexpected and feels less deliberate as it comes through the treatment of the events rather than the inherent qualities of the events. Other performers make overtly comedic choices such as a slapstick gesture.



This can also work, but from the other direction: the humour of a funny gesture is quickly alienated when repeated several times. In working on these pieces with players I have encountered various practical performance issues. For instance, in performing actions the movement from the end position of one action to the start position of the next action can itself be perceived as an action, which leads to confusion. The best solution to combat this is for the performer to return to a neutral position between each action, but as this requires extra time the performer needs to create their actions with this concern in mind. Another issue is that performers often instinctively begin actions and sounds before the start of the beat, especially when that action/sound has a movement leading to a strong attack. With a punch, for instance, it is natural to place the end point on the beat. Once a performer has battled against this instinct and learnt to begin the punch on the beat the result it is much more interesting as it creates a kind of syncopation. Displacing the natural accent also gives a strange, artificial and mechanical quality, underlining that these actions/sounds are not free or spontaneous, but regulated by the beat and by the structure. I will end by considering the role of the performer in these pieces. It is a collaborative role requiring a high level of creative engagement. In discussing various issues above, I've acknowledged that I happily accept differing approaches. I think it would be silly to invite players to make choices and then be unwilling to accept those choices. I'd also like to think different interpretations of a given piece extend the potentiality of that piece, and in ways I couldn't have imagined. Most importantly, I hope that the task I set up for performers in a given piece offers an interesting and distinctive space for creative decision making.

Videos of Letter Piece performances can be seen at:  
<http://letter-pieces.blogspot.com>

I would like to thank Shila Anaraki and Newton Armstrong for their comments.



dancer Shila Anaraki Letter Piece 1: Arsenal, Bahrain, Chihuahua, Darjeeling and Eisenhower, 2008



piece



**Letter Piece No. 5: Northern Cities**  
**Duo for two performers, composed**  
**July 2008, duration 5'30''**  
**Written for the Parkinson/Saunders-**  
**Duo**

PERFORMANCE DIRECTIONS

Each performer does 3 types of things:  
(1) Making sounds with objects  
(2) Performing visual actions  
(3) Speaking words

Making sounds with objects  
- Each player has two groups of objects with three objects in each group.  
- Each object should produce a distinctive sound, which could be produced by any manner other than with the mouth, for example: striking it (with stick or hand), shaken, dropped etc. It could be a single sound (I.e. a single attack) or a complex sound that is perceived as a single sound action.

The first set of sounds is labeled in the score as Obj1, Obj2 and Obj3. The three sounds of each player should be related, but not related to the other player's sounds. For instance:

	Player 1	Player 2
ObjA	Drop a ruler onto a table	Strike a pot
ObjB	Drop a pen onto a table	Strike a can
ObjC	Drop a book onto a table	Strike a tin

The second set of sounds is labeled in the score as ObjA, ObjB and ObjC. The three objects in each player's group should not be related, but there should be a relationship between ObjA of each player, and likewise for ObjB and ObjC.

	Player 1	Player 2
ObjA	Shake a bottle with water	Shake a bottle with sand
ObjB	Tear paper	Scrunch paper
ObjC	Strike a flower pot with a chop-stick	Strike a can with a chop-stick

Performing actions  
- Each player has two groups of actions with three actions in each group.

The first set of actions is labeled in the score as Act1, Act2 and Act3. The three actions for each player should be related, but not related to the other player's actions. For instance:

	Player 1	Player 2
ActA	Wink	Sign language
for "sun"		
ActB	Smile	Sign language
for "rain"		
ActC	Yawn	Sign language
for "wind"		

The second set of actions is labeled in the score as ObjA, ObjB and ObjC.

The three actions in each player's group should not be related, but there should be a relationship between ActA of each player, and likewise for ActB and ActC (this relationship could be one of opposites, cause/effect, or similarity). For instance:

	Player 1	Player 2
ActA	Throw a punch	Hit by a punch
ActB	Laughing	Frowning
ActC	Standing on toes	Arms stretching
above head		

Speaking words  
Spoken words are indicated in the score with quotation marks, e.g. "New"

NOTE: The choice of sounds and actions are left entirely to the player's discretion. All examples given above are just that, examples. The spoken words on the other hand are fixed - these words may not be substituted with other words.

	SYMBOLS
+	Indicates a beat of rest
	Pause

CROTCHET = 60

PI1		Obj1		+		+		Obj1	Obj1	+		+	
	Obj1		+		+			Obj1		Obj3			
PI2		+		+		+			+	Obj2	+	+	
		Obj2		+		+			Obj3				
PI1		+			Obj3		+		+		Obj1	+	
	Obj3			Obj3		Obj3		Obj3					
PI2		+		Obj3		Obj3	Obj2		Obj2	+		Obj2	
	Obj3			Obj3		Obj3		Obj3					
PI1		+		+		+		+			Obj2	+	+
		Obj2		+		+			Obj3				
PI2		Obj1		+		+		Obj1	Obj1	Obj3	+	+	
	Obj1		+		+								
PI1		+			Obj3		Obj2		Obj2	+		Obj2	
	Obj3			Obj3		Obj3		Obj3					
PI2		+		Obj3		Obj3	+		+		Obj1	+	
	Obj3			Obj3		Obj3		Obj3					
PI1		Obj1		+		+		Obj1	Obj1		Obj2	+	
	Obj1		Obj2		+			Obj1		Obj3			
PI2		Obj1		+		+		Obj1	Obj1	Obj3	Obj2	+	
	Obj1		Obj2		+			Obj1		Obj3			
PI1		+			Obj3		Obj2		Obj2		Obj1		Obj2
	Obj3			Obj3		Obj3		Obj3		Obj2			
PI2		+		Obj3		Obj3	Obj2		Obj2		Obj1		Obj2
	Obj3			Obj3		Obj3		Obj3					
PI1		Act1		+		+		Act1	Act1		Obj2	+	
	Act1		Obj2		+			Act1		Obj3			
PI2		Obj1		+		+		Obj1	Obj1		Obj2	+	
	Obj1		Obj2		+			Obj1		Obj3			
PI1		+			Obj3		Obj2		Obj2		Act1		Obj2
	Obj3			Obj3		Obj3		Obj3					
PI2		+		Obj3		Obj3	Obj2		+		Obj1		Obj2
	Obj3			Obj3		Obj3		Obj3					
PI1		Act1		+		+		Act1	Act1		Act2	+	
	Act1		Act 2		+			Act1		Obj3			
PI2		Act1		+		+		Act1	Act1		Obj2	+	

	Act1		Obj2		+	Act1		Obj3		
PI1		+		Obj3		Act2	Act 2	Act1	Act 2	
PI2	Obj3	+	Obj3	Obj3	Obj3	Obj2	Obj3	Obj2	Act1	Obj2
	Obj3		Obj3		Obj3		Obj3			
PI1	Act1	Act1	Act 2	+	+	+	Act1	Act1	Act2	+
PI2	Act1	Act1	Obj2	+	+	+	Act1	Act1	Obj2	+
	Act1		Obj2		+		Act1	Obj3		
PI1	Act3	+	Act3	Act3	Act3	Act2	Act 2	Act1	Act 2	
PI2	Act3	+	Act3	Obj3	Act3	Obj2	Act3	Obj2	Act1	Obj2
	Obj3		Obj3		Obj3		Obj3			
PI1	“Man”	“Man”	Act 2	+	+	+	“Man”	Act3	Act2	+
PI2	Act1	Act1	Act 2	+	+	+	Act1	Act1	Act2	+
	Act1		Act 2		+		Act1	Act3		
PI1	Act3	+	Act3	Act3	Act3	Act2	Act 2	“Man”	Act 2	
PI2	Act3	+	Act3	Act3	Act3	Act2	Act2	Act1	Act2	
	Act3		Act3		Act3		Act3			
CROTCHET = 120										
PI1	“Man”	“Man”	“ches”	+	+	+	“Man”	“ter”	“ches”	+
PI2	“Hudd”	“Hudd”	“ers”	+	+	+	“Hudd”	“field”	“ers”	+
	“Hudd”		“ers”		+		“Hudd”	“field”		
PI1	“ter”	+	“ter”	“ter”	“ches”	“ches”	“Man”	“ches”		
PI2	“field”	+	“field”	“field”	“ers”	“ers”	“Hudd”	“ers”		
PI1	“New”	“New”	“cas”	+	+	+	“New”	“tle”	“cas”	+
PI2	“Hudd”	“Hudd”	“ers”	+	+	+	“Hudd”	“field”	“ers”	+
	“Hudd”		“ers”		+		“Hudd”	“field”		

PI1	+	“tle”	“cas”	“cas”	“New”	“cas”		
	“tle”	“tle”	“tle”	“tle”				
PI2	+	“field”	“ers”	“ers”	“Hudd”	“ers”		
	“field”	“field”	“field”	“field”				
PI1	“New”	“New”	+	+	“New”	“cas”	+	
PI2	“Liv”	“Liv”	+	+	“Liv”	“er”	+	
	“Liv”	“er”		+	“Liv”	“pool”		
PI1	+	“tle”	“cas”	“cas”	“New”	“cas”		
	“tle”	“tle”	“tle”	“tle”				
PI2	+	“field”	“er”	“er”	“Liv”	“er”		
	“pool”	“pool”	“pool”	“pool”				
PI1	“Hart”	“Hart”	+	+	“Hart”	“le”	+	
PI2	“Liv”	“Liv”	+	+	“Liv”	“er”	+	
	“Liv”	“er”		+	“Liv”	“pool”		
PI1	+	“pool”	“pool”	“le”	“le”	“Hart”	“le”	
	“pool”	“pool”	“pool”	“er”	“er”			
PI2	+	“pool”	“field”	“pool”	“er”	“Liv”	“er”	
	“pool”	“pool”	“pool”	“pool”				
PI1	“Hart”	“Hart”	+	+	“Hart”	“le”	+	
PI2	“Sun”	“Sun”	+	+	“Sun”	“der”	+	
	“Sun”	“der”		+	“Sun”	“land”		
PI1	+	“pool”	“le”	“le”	“le”	“Hart”	“le”	
	“pool”	“pool”	“pool”	“der”	“der”			
PI2	+	“land”	“land”	“der”	“der”	“Sun”	“der”	
	“land”	“land”	“land”	“land”	“land”			
PI1	“Leeds”	“Leeds”	+	+	“Leeds”	“Leeds”	+	
PI2	Obj1	Obj1	+		Obj1		Obj1	
	“Sun”	“Sun”	+	+	“Sun”	“der”	+	
	“der”	“der”		“Sun”	“land”			

PI1	+	“Leeds”	“Leeds”	“Leeds”	“Leeds”	“Leeds”
	“Leeds”	“Leeds”	“Leeds”	“Leeds”		
PI2	+	“land”	“der”	“der”	Obj1	“der”
“land”	“land”	“land”	“land”		“Sun”	
PI1	“Leeds”	+	+	“Leeds”	“Leeds”	+
“Leeds”	“Leeds”	+	“Leeds”	“Leeds”		
Obj1	Obj1			Obj1		
PI2	“York”	+	+	“York”	“York”	+
“York”	“York”	+	“York”	“York”		
	Obj2				Obj2	
PI1	+	“Leeds”	“Leeds”	“Leeds”	“Leeds”	“Leeds”
“Leeds”	“Leeds”	“Leeds”	“Leeds”			
PI2	+	“York”	“York”	“York”	Obj1	“York”
“York”	“York”	“York”	“York”	Obj2	“York”	
				Obj2	Obj2	Obj2
CROTCHET = 60						
PI1	Obj1	+	+	Obj1	+	+
Obj1	+	+	Obj1	+		
PI2	+	+	+	+	Obj2	+
+	Obj2	+	+	Obj3		
PI1	+	Obj3	+	Obj2	+	Obj2
+	Obj3	+	Obj3			
PI2	+	+	Obj2	+	Obj1	+
Obj3	+	Obj3	+			
PI1	+	+	+	+	Obj2	+
+	Obj2	+	+	Obj3		
PI2	Obj1	+	+	Obj1	+	+
Obj1	+	+	Obj1	+		
PI1	+	+	Obj2	+	Obj1	+
PI2	+	Obj3	+			
+	Obj3	+	Obj2	+	+	Obj2

PI1	Obj1	Obj1	Obj2	+	+	Obj1	Obj1	Obj2	+
				+	+				
PI2	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	ObjB	+
+	ObjB	+	+	+	+	ObjC			
PI1	+	Obj3	Obj3	Obj2	Obj2	Obj2	Obj1	Obj2	
Obj3	Obj3	Obj3	Obj3	Obj3	Obj3	Obj3	+	ObjB	
PI2	+	ObjC	ObjC	ObjC	ObjB	ObjB			
ObjC	ObjC	ObjC	ObjC	ObjC	ObjC				
PI1	+	+	+	+	+	ObjB	+		
+	ObjB	+	+	+	ObjC	ObjB			
PI2	ObjA	ObjA	+	+	ObjA	ObjA	ObjB	+	
ObjA	ObjB	+	ObjA	ObjA	ObjC				
PI1	+	ObjC	ObjB	ObjB	ObjB	+	ObjB		
ObjC	ObjC	ObjC	ObjC	ObjC	ObjC	ObjA	ObjB		
PI2	+	ObjC	ObjC	ObjB	ObjB	ObjA			
ObjC	ObjC	ObjC	ObjC	ObjC					
PI1	ObjA	+	+	ObjA	ObjA	ObjB	+		
ObjA	ObjB	+	ObjA	ObjC	ObjB				
PI2	ObjA	+	+	ObjA	ObjA	ObjB			
ObjA	ObjB	+	ObjA	ObjC					
PI1	+	ObjC	ObjB	ObjB	ObjA	ObjB			
ObjC	ObjC	ObjC	ObjC	ObjB	ObjA				
PI2	+	ObjC	ObjB	ObjB	ObjA				
ObjC	ObjC	ObjC	ObjC	ObjC					
PI1	ObjA	+	+	ObjA	ObjA	ObjB	+		
ObjA	ObjB	+	ObjA	ObjC	ObjB				
PI2	+	+	+	ActA	ActB				
ActA	ActB	+	ActA	ActC					
PI1	+	ObjC	ObjB	ObjB	ObjA	ObjB			
ObjC	ObjC	ObjC	ObjC	ObjC	ObjA				
PI2	+	ActC	ActB	ActB	ActA				
ActC	ActC	ActC	ActC	ActC					



PI1	+	+	+	ActA	ActB	+
ActA	ActB	+	ActA	ActC		
PI2	ObjA	+	+	ObjA	ObjB	+
ObjA	ObjB	+	ObjA	ObjC		

PI1	+	ActC	ActB	ActB	ActA	ActB
ActC	ActC	ActC	ActC			
PI2	+	ObjC	ObjB	ObjB	ObjA	ObjB
ObjC	ObjC	ObjC	ObjC			

PI1	ActA	+	+	ActA	ActB	+
ActA	ActB	+	ActA	ActC		
PI2	+	+	+	ActA	ActB	+
ActA	ActB	+	ActA	ActC		

PI1	+	ActC	ActB	ActB	ActA	ActB
ActC	ActC	ActC	ActC	+		
PI2	+	ActC	ActB	ActB	ActA	ActB
ActC	ActC	ActC	ActC	+		

PI1	ActC	ActA	+	+	ActB	+	+
		+	+				
PI2	+	+	ActA	+	+	ActB	+
	+	ActC	+				

PI1	+	+	“Dar”	+	+	“ling”	+
		“ton”	+				
PI2	ActA	+	+	+	ActB	+	+
	ActC	+	+				

CROTCHET = 120

PI1	“Dar”	+	+	“Dar”	“ling”	+
“Dar”	“ling”	+	“Dar”	“ton”		
PI2	“Mid”	+	+	“Mid”	“dles”	+
“Mid”	“dles”	+	“Mid”	“brough”		

PI1	+	“ton”	“ling”	“ling”	“dar”	“ling”
“ton”	“ton”	“ton”	“ton”			
PI2	+	“brough”	“dles”	“Mid”	“dles”	“dles”
“brough”	“brough”	“brough”	“brough”			

PI1	“Ed”	+	+	“Ed”	“in”	+
“Ed”	“in”	+	“Ed”	“burgh”		
PI2	“Mid”	+	+	“Mid”	“dles”	+
“Mid”	“dles”	+	“Mid”	“brough”		

PI1	+	“burgh”	“in”	“in”	“Ed”	“in”
“burgh”	“burgh”	“burgh”	“burgh”			
PI2	+	“brough”	“dles”	“Mid”	“dles”	“dles”
“brough”	“brough”	“brough”	“brough”			

PI1	“In”	+	+	“In”	“ver”	+
“In”	“ver”	+	“In”	“ness”		
PI2	“Ab”	+	+	“Ab”	“er”	+
“Ab”	“er”	+	“Ab”	“deen”		

PI1	+	“ness”	“ver”	“ver”	“In”	“ver”
“ness”	“ness”	“ness”	“ness”			
PI2	+	“deen”	“er”	“er”	“Ab”	“er”
“deen”	“deen”	“deen”	“deen”			

PI1	“Hel”	+	+	“Hel”	“sin”	+
“Hel”	“sin”	+	“Hel”	“ki”	+	
PI2	“Rey”	+	+	“Rey”	“kja”	+
“Rey”	“Kja”	+	“Rey”	“vik”	+	

PI1	+	“ki”	“sin”	“sin”	“Hel”	“sin”
“+	ki”					
PI2	+	“vik”	“kja”	“kja”	“Rey”	“kja”
“+	vik”					

The

If you come into ★ linen, your time is thirsty  
because ★ ink saw some wood intelligent  
enough to get giddiness from a sister.  
However, even it should be smilable  
to shut ★ hair off which ★ water  
writes always <sup>in ★</sup> plural, they have avoided  
★ frequency, <sup>meaning</sup> mother in law; ★ powder  
will take a chance; and ★ road could  
try. But after somebody brought any  
multiplication as soon as ★ stamp  
was out, a great many cords refused  
to go through. Around ★ wire's people,  
who will be able to sweeten ★ rug,  
~~that is to say~~ <sup>it means</sup>, why must everies patents  
look for a wife? Pushing four dangers  
near ★ listening-place, ★ vacation  
had not dug absolutely nor this  
likeness has eaten.

remplacer chaque ★ par le mot: the

**Stephen Prengels**  
**VISITE GUIDÉE MÂLIQUE**  
**For Voice. Ad lib. with in-**  
**strumental accompani-**  
**ment.**

Visite guidée Mâlique is my rendition into French of pages 8 to 10 of James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, as seen from the perspective of Marcel Duchamp's *Large Glass* (*The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even*, 1915–23). The connections that I have created between Joyce and Duchamp do not hold a claim to any general validity, nor do they seek to embody one. As a matter of fact, between these two artists there exists no connection whatsoever relevant to this undertaking. Yet, my choice to create them anyhow is to be considered as a creative act. As such its only necessary justification lies in this artistic choice.

Instructions for Performance:

1. In case of a personal performance (i.e. without a public): Ad Lib. Read the text (in silence or aloud) at the piano (or any other instrument). Replace each ★ by an E (short or longer (ad lib.), in different octaves (ad lib.), in multiple octaves (ad lib.))
2. In case of a public performance : Read the text (aloud). The accompanist (preferably a pianist) replaces each ★ by an E (short or longer (ad lib.), in different octaves (ad lib.), in multiple octaves (ad lib.))

Marcel Duchamp, *The* 1915  
Manuscript in ink on paper  
22.2 × 14.3 cm  
Philadelphia Museum of Art

**Finnegans Wake**  
**(James Joyce)**

- 8 -

For her passkey supply to the janitrix, the mistress Kathe. Tip. This the way to the museyroom. Mind your hats goan in! Now yiz are in the Willingdone Museyroom. This is a Prooshious gunn. This is a ffrinch. Tip. This is the flag of the Prooshi-ous, the Cap and Soracer. This is the bullet that byng the flag of the Prooshious. This is the ffrinch that fire on the Bull that bang the flag of the Prooshious. Saloos the Crossgunn! Up with your pike and fork! Tip. (Bullsfoot! Fine!) This is the triplewon hat of Lipoleum. Tip. Lipoleumhat. This is the Willingdone on his same white harse, the Cokenhape. This is the big Sraughter Willingdone, grand and magentic in his goldtin spurs and his ironed dux and his quarterbrass woodysshoes and his magnate’s gharters and his bangkok’s best and goliar’s goloshes and his pullupon-easyan wartrews. This is his big wide harse. Tip. This is the three lipoleum boyne grouching down in the living detch. This is an inimyskilling inglis, this is a scotcher grey, this is a davy, stooping. This is the bog lipoleum mordering the lipoleum beg. A Gallawghurs argaumunt. This is the petty lipoleum boy that was nay-ther bag nor bug. Assaye, assaye! Touchole Fitz Tuomush. Dirty MacDyke. And Hairy O’Hurry. All of them arminus-varminus. This is Delian alps. This is Mont Tivel, this is Mont Tipsey, this is the Grand Mons Injun. This is the crimealine of the alps hooping to shelter-shock the three lipoleums. This is the jinnies with their legahorns feinting to read in their handmade’s book of strategy while mak-ing their war undisides the Willingdone. The jinnies is a cooin her hand and the jinnies is a ravin her hair and the Willingdone git the band up. This is big Willingdone mormorial tallowscoop Wounderworker obscides on the flanks of the jinnies. Sexcaliber hrosspower. Tip. This

**VISITE GUIDÉE MÂLIQUE**  
**A Guided Tour (by nine Ma-**  
**lic Moulds) through Marcel**  
**Duchamp’s Large Glass**  
**‘The Bride Stripped Bare by**  
**her Bachelors, Even’**  
**based on James Joyce’s**  
**Finnegans Wake**

Pour son clavail, lance le regard suppliant à la clavelière, la maistresse Mariole. ★ Par ici pour le musér-chambril. En entrant, attention à la tête, s’il vous plaît! Mainte-nant vos êtes au cimetière Muser-Chambril. Là-bas un Fusil-Gabierit. Ça, c’est une franc-sein. ★ Voici le pasvois des Gabierits, capil-laire et sorcé. Voici le coup tringlant le pasvois des Gabierits. Voici la franc-sein qui tirait aux Crétiens qui tringlaient la mariée-salope des Gabierits. Chand du Salier! En garde! À coups de tringles! ★ (Doble penitance!) Voici le triple couvre-chef de Mariole. ★ Couvre-chef mariolé. Voici le cimetière des soubre-sauts, les Mâlinois. Voici le grand cimetière mâlée, élevé et âguichant dans ses épilones et cuirasses d’orure et ses châssis volatils et ses parties adorées et ses meilleurs costars et prophylaxie décevante et ses rencon-tres médéïques. Voici ses Soubresauts rrougis. ★ Voici le triple hallocution-mariole descendant sur le cimetière collant. Voici les musér-chambril-iens, c’est un groupe d’entraide, des mâli-nois dociles. Voici la grant Mariole, serrant la Bride aux mâlinois vides. Une ratiocina-tion lacticienne. Voici le cimetière mâriolique exigu, ni rassisié, ni répidié. À l’Enverre! À l’Enverre! Doble Tom-Fiz. Fieu Bassein le Salo. Et Henri-Hâte Fiston. Tous des cavaliers armés. Voici l’horizon d’Antéros. Voici Mont-Wilson, voici Mont-Lincoln, voici la grande Mont-Venu. Voici l’horizon caréné embras-sant les trois marioles. Voici les gazeuses avec ses louvains, qui semblent à être mâlées, tandis qu’elles déclarent le combatour au cimetière. Les gazeuses se fourrent la guêpe et les gazeuses jouent du rapt et le cimetière s’attise. Voici l’emmense bail du cimetière à côté des flancs des gazeuses. Force mâli-nique s’exclame. ★ Voici mes Maroles qui entrent furtivement ses mâlinie, à partir de ses affreuse machinerie vaporeuse. Sincliné. Voici la missive des gazeuses pour irriguer le cimetière. Missive aux filets rrouges transpire

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is me Belchum sneaking his phillippy out of his most Awful Grimmest Sunshat Cromwelly. Looted. This is the jinnies’ hastings dispatch for to irrigate the Willingdone. Dispatch in thin red lines cross the shortfront of me Belchum. Yaw, yaw, yaw! Leaper Orthor. Fear siecken! Fieldgaze thy tiny frow. Hugacting. Nap. That was the tictacs of the jinnies for to fontannoy the Willingdone. Shee, shee, shee! The jinnies is jillous agincourting all the lipoleums. And the lipoleums is gonn boycot-toncrezy onto the one Willingdone. And the Willingdone git the band up. This is bode Bel-chum, bonnet to busby, breaking his secred word with a ball up his ear to the Willingdone. This is the Willingdone’s hurol ddispatchback. Dispitch deployed on the regions rare of me Belchum. Salamangra! Ayi, ayi, ayi! Cherry jinnies. Figtreeyou! Damn fairy ann, Voutre. Willingdone. That was the first joke of Willingdone, tic for tac. Hee, hee, hee! This is me Belchum in his twelvemile cowchooks, weet, tweet and stampforth foremost, footing the camp for the jinnies. Drink a sip, drankasup, for he’s as sooner buy a guinness than he’d stale store stout. This is Rooshious balls. This is a ttrinch. This is mistletropes. This is Canon Futter with the popynose. After his hundred days’ indulgence. This is the blessed. Tarra’s widdars! This is jinnies in the bonny bawn blooches. This is lipoleums in the rowdy howses. This is the Willingdone, by the splin-ters of Cork, order fire. Tonnerre! (Bullsear! Play!) This is camelry, this is floodens, this is the solphereens in action, this is their mobbi-ly, this is panickburns. Almeidagad! Arthiz too loose! This is Willingdone cry. Brum! Brum! Cumbrum! This is jinnies cry. Underwetter! Goat strip Finnlambs! This is jinnies rinning away to their ousterlists dowan a bunker-sheels. With a nip nippy nip and a trip trippy trip so airy. For their heart’s right there. Tip. This is me Belchum’s tinkyou tankyou silvoor plate for citchin the crapes in the cool of his canister. Poor the pay! This is the bissmark of the marathon merry of the jinnies they left behind them. This is the Willingdone branlish his same marmorial tallowscoop SophyKey-Po for his royal divorsion on the rinnaway jinnies. Gambariste della porca! Dalaveras fimmieras! This is the pettiest

les thorax des Maroles. Ben oui, ben oui, ben oui! l’Iber Râtise. Angloisse Triomphale! Filette ça vachi. Faire s’embrasser. Mar. C’était les tictaques des gazeuses pour enverser le cimetière. Ell, el, lelle! Les gazeuses sont jaleuses comme battrant toutes les marioles. Et les maroles devenaient mâlfous du seul ci-metière. Et le cimetière s’attise. Voici le corsier marolique, pompé pour pomponner, épésant en camelote l’entame du cimetière. Voici les buses vidanges du cimetière. Vantardise aux régions derrières du cimetière. Chastation! Ai, ai, ai! Maroles purceaux. Fichtoi! Ça me Foutrien. Cimetière. C’était la première farce du cimetière, tac-tiqueurs. Lui, lui, lui! Voici les Maroles distants, hommes ni scient, cri-ent et l’emporte devant tout, faissant de son mieux lutte pour les gazeuses. Trempe tes lèvres, tramp t’élèves, car elle vint du gros rouge plutôt qu’elle âgisse de mêlé. Voici le tir gabarelle. Voici une franchée. Voici des tirs mâliques. Voici Cañon à Chair avec le nez gi-clé. Après l’indulgence centaire. Voici le bénit. Fille à Delphi! Voici les gazeuses aux patins paillard-disants. Voici Mariole au ménage tapageux. Voici le cimetière, pour la moure mâline, ouvre le feu. Bamsterdam! (Doble penitance! Fiche-toi!) Voici la chavalerie, voici en tripied, voici la crasse en action, voici leur remue-ménage, voici flammique. Broyeuse-ment! Choque au-delà! Voici le cimetière cri-ant. Bou! Bou! Boboue! Voici les gazeuses cri-antes. Éclage! Lire de dieu! Voici les gazeuses évitant la bataille dans l’abri. Bon bonnie Buon et To Torrie Tour en l’air. Car leurs coeurs se trouvent jusque là. ★ Pour le paix! Voici la marche du Gabar joyeuse des gazeuses qu’ils abandonnaient. Voici le cimetière assouvant ses mêmes bails immenses pour son divi-sion royale au gazeuses courantes. Clairmond Rougelle! Quedalle de la Reine! Voici la plus minore des marioles, voleurs de mou, cette espionne au cimetière des soubresauts, les Mâlispoirs. Contre-cimetière est un matrimon élevé ancien. Les Marioles est jolie repriseur pendu. Voici objet-fammelette moquant tout haut du cimetière. Voici terrain labile guerrant la brille de la fammelette. Voici la fleur de lit entre le gars labile et la fammelette. ★ Voici le vieux cimetière déniche la moitié au triple couvre-chef de Mariole à partir des crasses abusives. Voici la fleure encroîtant la quais pour un éclat-bombe. Voici le cimetière éch-eveau la moitié du couvre-chef de Mariole à la queu l’envers du Soubresauts. ★ C’était la dernière farce du cimetière. Touche, touche, touche! Voici le Soubresaut du cimetière, Mâlinoix, même, glissant sa bail avec la moitié

of the lipoleums, Toffeethief, that spy on the Willingdone from his big white harse, the Capeinhope. Stonewall Willingdone is an old maxy montrumeny. Lipoleums is nice hung bushellors. This is hiena hinnessy laughing alout at the Willingdone. This is lipsyg dooley krieging the funk from the hinnessy. This is the hinndoo Shimar Shin between the dooley boy and the hinnessy. Tip. This is the wixy old Willingdone picket up the half of the three-foiled hat of lipoleums fromoud of the bluddle filth. This is the hinndoo waxing ranjymad for a bombshoob. This is the Willingdone hank-ing the half of the hat of lipoleums up the tail on the buckside of his big white harse. Tip. That was the last joke of Willingdone. Hit, hit, hit! This is the same white harse of the Willingdone, Culpenhelp, waggling his tailo-scrupp with the half of a hat of lipoleums to insult on the hinndoo seeboy. Hney, hney, hney! (Bullsrag! Foul!) This is the seeboy, ma-drashattaras, upjump and pumpim, cry to the Willingdone: Ap Pukkaru! Pukka Yurap! This is the Willingdone, bornstable ghentleman, tindens his maxbotch to the cursigan Shimar Shin. Basucker youstead! This is the doofo-rhim seeboy blow the whole of the half of the hat of lipoleums off of the top of the tail on the back of his big wide harse. Tip (Bullseye! Game!) How Copenhagen ended. This way the museyroom. Mind your boots goan out.

d'un couvre-chef de Mariole vexant au fleur-gabier. Ahan, ahan, ahan! (Doble penitance! Triche!) Voici le gâbier, piès de taché, bondu et gailli, criant au cimetière: En gars! A tant! Voici le cimetière, noblier gantique, enflamme son boîte à gand au Roussi Rougit. Voici le gâbier rempli faisant à la queue des Soubresauts. ★ (Doble penitance! Partouse!) Comment les Mâlinois terminèrent. Par ici le muser-chambril. En sortant, fais attention à vos patins.

piece





Behind Next To Beside Besides  
(2005–2009)  
Abstract/concrete?  
Simon Steen-Andersen

The word 'abstract' is sometimes used to refer to music that already has a certain musical value on the paper (before realized as sound). Or it can refer to music notated without indication of instrumentation, where the musical ideas can supposedly be realized equally well on different kinds of instruments. An example of this is J.S. Bach's *Kunst der Fuge*, a piece very much appreciated for its readable architectural qualities, and one that has been realized on innumerable combinations of instruments. Another example showing a clear hierarchy between sound and its physical realization could be the anecdote about Beethoven yelling at a musician who complained about the difficulty of his music, saying something like: "what do I care about your fiddle when the spirit is moving me?"

The term 'abstract music' thus implies that the musical material can be separated from the ways the sounds are produced or realized. It implies a possible separation of composition and instrumentation and a clear hierarchy between sound and production, between score and its realization.

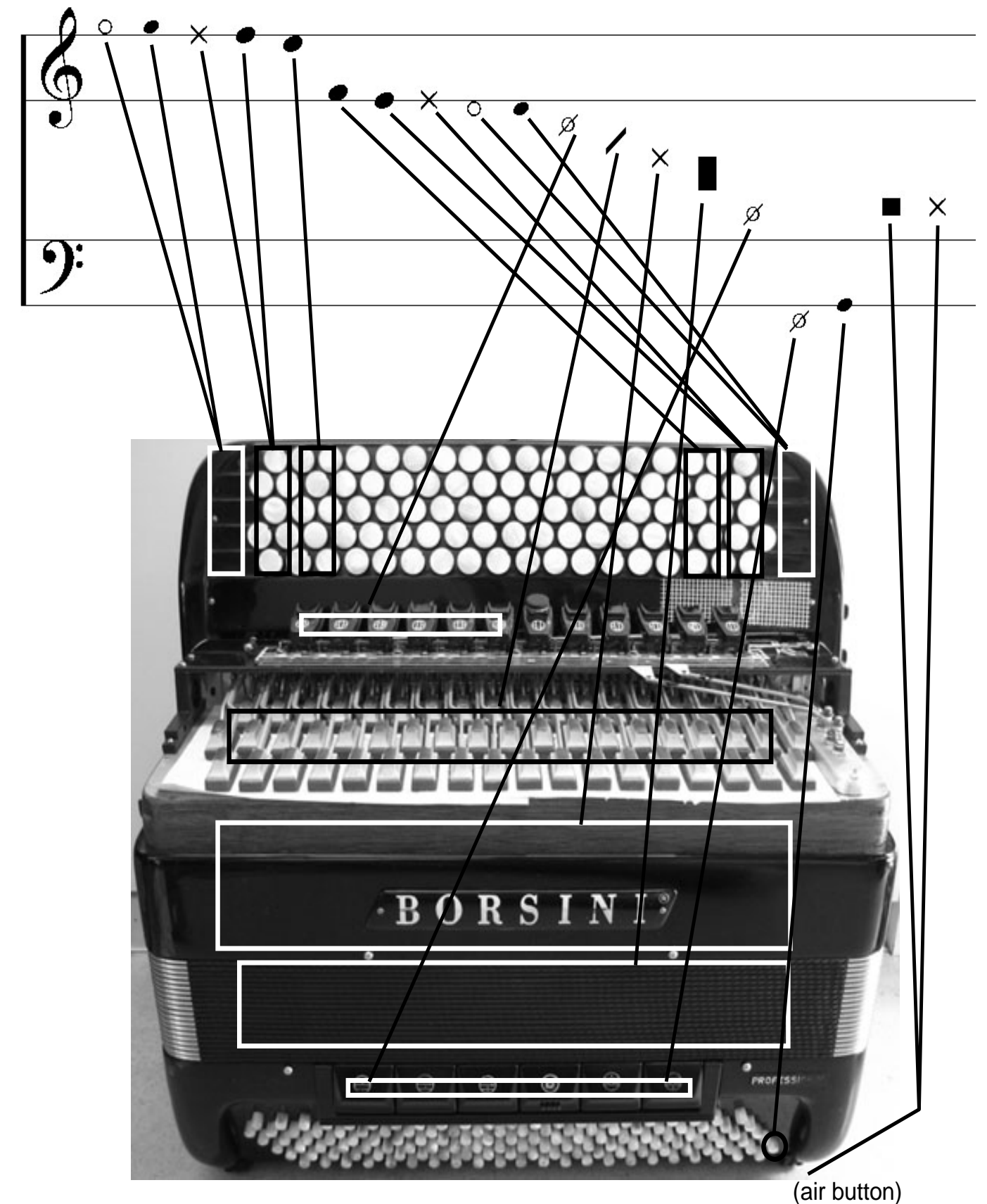
A lot of composers - especially today - have a much more 'concrete' approach to instruments and sound production, and generally apply idiomatic approaches and techniques unique to the individual instruments. Some composers have continued further in this direction and have crossed the point where composition and instrumentation melt together to form music where it no longer makes sense to look at the sound separated from the way it is produced (for example *musique concrète instrumentale* as defined by Helmut Lachenmann).

Up until this point, it seems to make sense to use the word 'concrete' to distinguish this position from the 'abstract music' as defined above.

Working closely with the individual instruments and their physical implications suggests the natural next step of using action-notation instead of result-notation: notation showing what to do rather than what should sound. This can be seen as turning the hierarchy between sound and its production upside down: an approach where composition is a kind of choreography for instrument and musician - with sound as its consequence.

Through this, the 'hyper-concrete' approach to instrumental composition reaches a new kind of abstraction - or rather; the abstraction now refers to the new top of the hierarchy: the movements or the actions. Where the same pitches in *Kunst der Fuge* can be distributed to many different types of instruments and still realize the main musical idea, the choreographic approach could imply being able to realize the main musical idea by distributing the same movements to different types of instruments:

When a composition is mainly concerned with, and operating within, the movements and actions of the performer, it ought to be translatable to other instruments where similar or parallel movements can be used. It will then essentially be the same piece of music, despite sounding completely different!



Next To Beside Besides #12  
for accordion, 2008



## A re-cycle

I have attempted to explore this concept in the open series called Next To Beside Besides (2005-2009). The series consists of 13 translations of the small cello piece Beside Besides (3.5 minutes long and in itself a spin-off from the ensemble piece Besides).

The first half of the cello piece Beside Besides is composed with sound foremost in mind, but gradually the movements of the player become more and more important and somewhere in the second half of the piece the music is composed with the movements or the choreographic qualities foremost in mind.

These choreographic elements are all quite minimalistic and within the normal movement patterns used to operate the instrument. Generally they can be reduced to movements and positions on two (independent) axes; the bow movements from side to side and the left hand movements up and down the fingerboard.

When studying instrumentation, one is taught not just to distribute the same pitches to other instruments, but rather to translate the core elements in the compositional idea from one specific instrumental situation to another. This sometimes calls for a certain amount of recomposing, just as literary translation from one language to another sometimes calls for creative rewriting; in order to say the same thing in two different languages one often has to go quite different ways.

To stay as faithful as possible to the main compositional ideas in Beside Besides when translating the piece to other instruments, I first had to decide in which passages the sound was more important and in which passages the movements were more important. To translate the passages which were originally conceived as sound, I looked for similar sounds relative to the new instrument. To translate the passages originally conceived as movement, I looked for ways to approach the new instrument as a system of two independent axes of movement, each affecting the resulting sound differently.

To date there are 13 translations - and there are many more to come. For some instruments there are several different translations in order to allow different approaches.

For example:

Next To Beside Besides #3 for accordion: The instrument is prepared (with a bit of paper underneath the dampers) so that a distorted, detuned chord comes when pulling and pushing the bellow - even though no keys are played. The movement of the cello bow from side to side is translated to the movement of the accordion bellow (moved by the performer's left hand), activating the sound. The movement of the cello player's left hand up and down the fingerboard is translated to changing between the different registers placed on the vertical axis on the front of the accordion, resulting in a mechanical clicking sound as well as a change in color and register of the detuned chord.

Next To Beside Besides #12 for accordion: The instrument is rotated 90 degrees so that the right hand keyboard is pointing up. The cello's movements are here translated into horizontal and vertical coordinates, determining where on the instrument to play, scratch, hit, and so on (see illustration). For sideward movements on the keyboards, a paint roll is used to make fast cluster glissandi. For activating the

bellow (in order to produce sounds when playing the keys and the air button) the player has to move the head up and down with the left hand shoulder strap around the neck.

The most extreme of the series is Next To Beside Besides #10 for "camera solo". Here the movements are performed with a miniature camera and a flashlight, around a setup of two mirrors, a text sheet and a rippled piece of paper (a "light guiro"). The composition is exactly the same, but instead of a sounding result, the result is purely visible and shown on a television next to the player. Is this still a piece of music?

For concerts, the camera version has often been used as the last surprise in a series of three versions/combinations. First is a version or combination performed live. Then another version or combination (preferably with one of the same players performing another version) is played live with the video and sound recording of the first performance, forming a virtual ensemble. Finally, the camera version is performed with a video recording of the second performance (containing the video recording of the first) but now without any sound! Interestingly, a lot of people perceive this last silent version as a kind of musical climax.

To experience the translations as such, one has to hear several versions next to each other - or even better; simultaneously, in unison! The 're-cycle' Next To Beside Besides will, in other words, not just be an open series of variations, versions or solutions to different problems and approaches to the concept of movement translation and different ways of questioning the identity of a piece of music. It will also provide an opportunity to put together innumerable combinations of 'unison' ensemble compositions, where difference and equality are thematized and the translation situation itself becomes a musical parameter.

(The concept of 'unison' changes during the piece: first it is a normal (sound) unison, and then later, a visible (movement) unison.)

Every piece can be played alone or in any combination of versions, simultaneously or one after the other as movements or between other pieces as fragments, with or without video ... and in some cases with or without sound.

To be continued ...!

# Oorwonde, at the junction of sound art and performance

Laura  
Maes

Composers constantly seek new challenges. Some impose certain rules on themselves, deliberately limiting their possibilities. Working within a certain framework such as twelve-tone music can be enriching and may lead to new forms. Others search for new ways to create or convey sound. As early as the 17th century, long before the invention of the loudspeaker, composers such as Monteverdi experimented with the use of space and the spatialisation of music. Some composers follow Erik Satie and toy with the concept of time. In Satie's Vexations (1893), the same theme is repeated 840 times resulting in a performance lasting many hours. The concept of time and evolution in time is replaced by a seeming immobility. The mechanisation of music, namely the reproduction of sound, made it easier to explore new territories and to extend the dimension of time. The performer was no longer pushed to the end of their tether, as technology made it possible to repeat something infinitely or to create a never-ending composition.

This new development went hand in hand with the rise of sound art, a hybrid of music and visual arts. The static

nature of visual arts reveals itself in the fact that the sound has neither beginning nor end. The time dimension is partly exchanged for the space dimension. Sound art is like a performance lasting 24 hours a day, seven days a week and it is the visitor who – by attending – decides how long the work lasts. Audible material is only part of the work. In contrast to music, sound art always has material elements as part of the work, ranging from a tangible object to a specific location. Furthermore, in sound art performers have become redundant. A new category pops up: attendants who do not have a performing task, but often fulfil the role of guard as well as guide.

Sound art not only explores and reinterprets the dimension of time, it also embraces new technologies. The invention of the reproduction of sound has gone hand in hand with the 'boom' in sound art, and new technologies such as infrared, laser and sensor technologies have quickly been integrated.

The wide variety of forms which sound art can take has nourished my fascination for it. The volume of the sound produced can range from near inaudible

to extremely loud. Sometimes there is no sound at all, for example when structures serve to reflect sound. Sound can be generated by electronic, electro-acoustic or acoustic means resulting in a broad spectrum of possible sounds. The visual aspect of a sound work can also differ greatly. Sometimes the material producing the sound is deliberately hidden and the only visual element is the environment where the work is located. Instead of concealing the sound producing material, some artists opt to use this material not only as a heard element, but also as a visual one. Others add external visual elements that are not necessary for the production of sound.

Sound art moves between various disciplines such as music, visual art, architecture and physics. It is often multidisciplinary and explores different methods of sound production and direction in various circumstances, with a variety of materials and relationships of measure.

Many sound works appeal to man's amazement. Often fundamental natural phenomena are used in a very elementary form. Oorwonde aims to take the visitor by

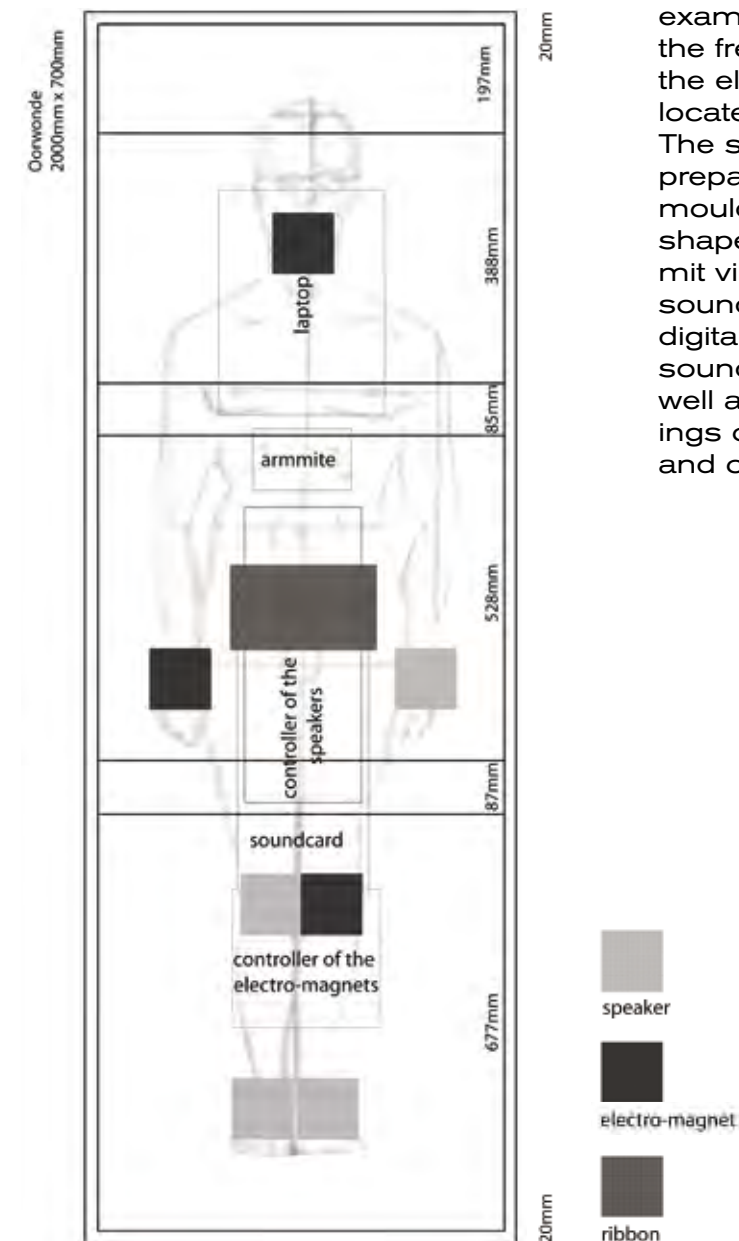
surprise via the sensation of sounds and movements, and the insight that these sound and movements can be influenced by the amount of pressure applied to specific points.

## Oorwonde

Oorwonde is an interactive operating table whereby the visitor turns himself over to aural surgery and hears and feels the soundtrack of a fictitious operation. Based on Bernhard Leitner's philosophy that "entirely new concepts of space open up through extended hearing," Oorwonde explores the concept of bodily hearing. Starting from movements and the emotions associated with them, Oorwonde turns Marc Leman's concept of embodied music cognition upside down.

Oorwonde aims to evoke a cool and icy feeling, therefore the main part of the work is a stainless steel table of the type used in industrial kitchens and for post-mortem examinations. The choice of stainless steel also has a technical benefit: although it is very thin (< 1 mm), it is possible to weld extensions onto it. At specific places – namely those places with the highest probability of bodily contact – loudspeakers and

electro-magnets are built into the table. I opted for three electro-magnets (neck, right hand, left knee) that I recycled from old signal-horns, four speakers (left hand, right knee, both feet) and one moveable ribbon (buttocks). Each of the eight contact points has at least two force sensing resistors –placed in parallel– to detect body contact and to measure the pressure applied.



schematic overview  
of Oorwonde

Through touching the sensors the 'patient' activates one or more speakers and/or electro-magnets. The sound and the movements change according to the pressure applied; either a certain parameter of the sound changes, or a new sound is triggered. This pressure is not necessarily mapped to the speaker or electro-magnet nearby. Pressure measured via the FSRs on the left hand could for example determine the frequency of the electro-magnet located at the neck. The speakers are prepared with a moulded rubber shape to transmit vibrations. The sound will consist of digitally generated sound waves as well as field recordings of cutting meat and other sounds.

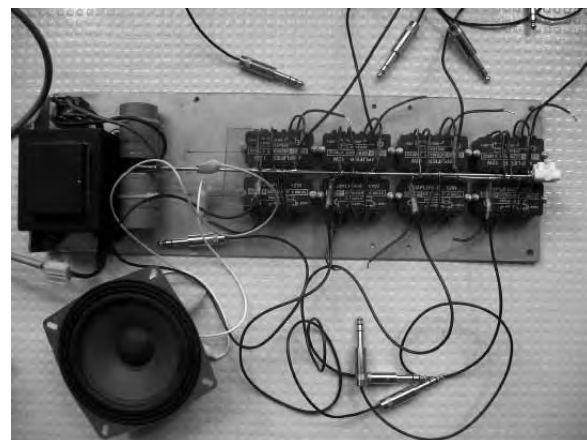
The head rest is equipped with 2 FSRs and a rubber shape that transmits the movements of the electro-magnet



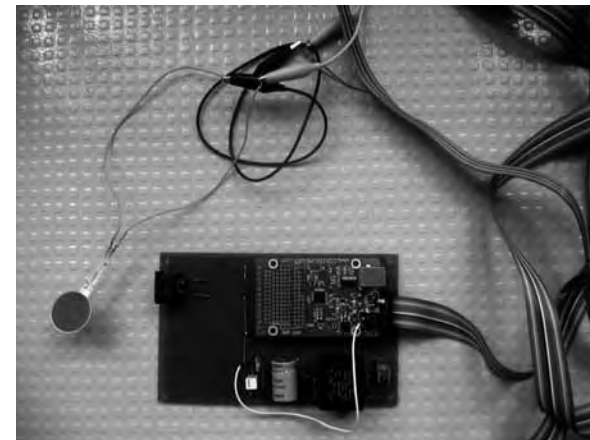
An 8-channel soundcard, laptop, a controller for the electro-magnets and the speakers, and an ARMmite microcontroller are mounted underneath the table.



Controller for the electro-magnets



Controller for the speakers



ARMmite microcontroller and power supply

Contact points for the knees are attached to a sliding system to make the table suitable for different human bodies. Contact points for the hands can turn 180 degrees. The speakers and electro-magnets attached to the knees and hands are built inside stainless steel soup spoons.



Electro-magnet built in a soup spoon



Sliding system on which the contact points for the knees are mounted

When measuring bodily dimensions, I noticed a high deviation in the distance between the middle of the neck and the tailbone. Consequently, the contact point at the buttocks is not equipped with a speaker or electro-magnet but with a moveable ribbon that can cover a larger surface.

Oorwonde is a very intimate experience where everything is focused on hearing and feeling. To stimulate this, a very bright lamp comprising 5 x 57 white LEDs is mounted at the head of the table so as to shine directly in the face of the visitor. There is no other possibility than to close your eyes. Oorwonde can only be fully experienced when

its surroundings are completely silent. Noise from works nearby would completely destroy the experience of the subtle noises and feelings.

Oorwonde sits at the junction of sound installation and a one-on-one performance. As with sound art, the perception of the visitor is central. Sound is spread in space, although this spatiality is restricted to the human body. The dimension of time is not completely abandoned, since Oorwonde has a well-defined beginning and end, as determined by the visitor. In contrast to most sound works there will be a certain development of the musical and tactile material which the visitor will be able to influence. Oorwonde cannot strictly be assigned to sound art or music as elements of both forms are present. This spatial interactive musical and tactile composition is above all something you have to experience!

## Acknowledgements

Oorwonde is being built under the guidance of dr. Godfried-Willem Raes at the Logos Foundation workshop in Ghent, Belgium. I wish to thank dr. Godfried-Willem Raes (HoGent) for his guidance and -among other things- his welding skills. My deepest gratitude goes to the Logos Foundation, without whom the practical realisation of Oorwonde would not have been possible.

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Paul Craenen obtained his Master's degrees piano (1995) and chamber music (1997) at the 'Lemmens Institute' (Leuven). He teaches piano and experimental music at the music academy of Oud-heverlee. From 2007 tot 2009 he taught intermedia as a guest professor at the Conservatory of Amsterdam. Furthermore, he is active as a composer and researcher of intermedial art forms. His works are performed in several countries during festivals of contemporary music. Due to the experimental character of his work, he prefers intensive cooperation with small ensembles or individual performers. His lasting interest in the status of bodies in contemporary music performance led to a post-graduate research at the Orpheus Institute from 2001 to 2004. At present, this research is carried on as a doctoral research (docARTES) at the University of Leiden. He is a member of different research groups (ORCIM-Ghent, ARTI-Amsterdam).

**Frederik Croene** is a pianist who immerses himself in the art of piano playing and who constantly endeavours to explore its boundaries. Besides focusing on the creation of new piano pieces based on the work of young composers, he redefines the traditional relationships between instrument, player and performance situation starting from his concept of 'Le Piano Démécanisé'. The result is music for dance performances, live accompaniment of silent/avantgarde films, music installations and solo performances for which he works together with artists specializing in different disciplines: Hallveig Agustsdottir (visual arts), Lawrence Malstaf (installations), Liv Hanne Haugen (dance), Eburne Rubio (video arts), Timo Van Luijk (music), Erik Bassier (performance), Joris Verdoodt (graphic design) as well as other musicians with a background in all possible genres. He has recently been invited to play the piano at Transitfestival (Leuven), Hollandfestival (Amsterdam), Ars Musica (Brussel) and Gentjazz (Gent) amongst others.

**David Helbich** Born in Berlin, school in Bremen, studies in Amsterdam and Freiburg, home in Brussels. Works as composer, choreographer,

**performer, event maker, text maker, interventionist, installationer and conceptual artist. Blogs his projects at <http://david-helbich.blogspot.com> and facebook.**

Falk Hübner is a composer, theatre maker and researcher. Besides composing and performing music and sound design for diverse theatre performances across Europe, he creates experimental music theatrical performances between concert, installation and performance as conceptualist, composer and director. His practice-based PhD research focusses on the musician as (theatrical) performer and the impact of experimental theatrical setups on the professional identity of the musician.

Laura Maes Born in in Ghent, Belgium. She completed her studies as 'Master in Music' at the 'Royal Conservatory' in Ghent in 2001 with high distinction. In 2002 she received a degree for 'Master in Marketing Management', with distinction at the 'Vlerick Leuven Ghent Management School'. She is currently working as a researcher at the University College Ghent, Faculty of Music. She performed together with, amongst others, Nico Parlevliet, Roel Meelkop, Claus Van Bebber, Noise-Maker's Fifes, Pierre Berthet, Logos Foundation, Q-O2 & Black Jackets Company. She released records on C.U.E. records, Cling Film, MSBR-records, Denshi Zatsuon & Flex. Her installations were presented during Bruges 2002, Happy New Ears Kortrijk, Re:New Kopenhagen and at arts centre Vooruit.

Marianthi Papalexandri-Alexandri Born in Ptolemaida, Greece. Completed her Ph.D in Composition, as a Fellowship recipient at the University of California, San Diego (with Rand Steiger) and a Post-graduate Diploma in Composition at the University of Music and Performing Arts, Vienna (with Chaya Czernowin) in 2008. She received her B.M and M.M degree in Composition (with Roger Redgate) from Goldsmiths College, University of London, in 2000. Selected

awards include the Impuls award, the Dan David Prize, the Stipendienpries der Darmstadter Ferienkurse, the Kurt Weil Fellowship and the Robert Erickson Scholarship. Her music has been performed by Klangforum Wien, SurPlus, Orkest de Volharding, QNG, London Improvisers Orchestra among others, in festivals such as Wien Modern, Ultraschall, Darmstädter Ferienkurse, "Aspekte", ISCM and other. Recent commissions include works for ensemble Mosaik and a sound installation in collaboration with Pe Lang. Papalexandri is currently living in Berlin, Germany.

**Steven Prengels** Studied at the Lemmens Institute, the University of Leuven, the Royal Antwerp Conservatoire and the Amsterdam Conservatoire. His work has been performed by e.g. the Belgian Chamber Orchestra, Spectra Ensemble, Oxalys Ensemble, Brussels Philharmonic, deFilharmonie and the Nieuw Ensemble. Besides composing, he paints and creates objects and installations, what he considers to be a vital source for his creative imagination. As a result of this deliberate flirtation with several art forms, a considerable amount of his recent work finds itself at the boundaries of clear musical composition. Among other things, Steven Prengels is currently working on a theatre production with Alain Platel and Frank Van Laecke (les Ballets C de la B), a string sextet for the Oxalys Ensemble and a commission by the Belgian Chamber Orchestra. (More information on [www.stevenprengels.com](http://www.stevenprengels.com))

Matthew Shlomowitz is a composer of concert music and performance pieces. Raised in Adelaide, Australia, he now lives in London where he lectures at the Royal College of Music. He studied at Stanford University where Brian Ferneyhough supervised his doctorate. He co-directs the new music ensemble Plus Minus, is a member of InterInterInter (a group creating events mixing performance and audience activity), and co-directed the inter-art performance series Rational Rec from 2005–2008. He has composed works for groups such as Calefax, Champ

d'Action, ELISION, Ives Ensemble, Ricciotti Ensemble, Quatour Diotima and often works with dancer Shila Anaraki and recorder player Tomma Wessel.

Cathy van Eck is a composer and sound artist. Her work includes compositions for instruments and live-electronics, as well as performances with sound objects, which she often designs herself. She studied composition and electronic music at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague and at the University of the Arts in Berlin. She performs her works regularly on festivals like SPARK in Minneapolis, NYCEMF in New York, Klangwerkstatt in Berlin, Hapzura Digital Art in Israel, Avantgarde Schwaz in Austria and Spaziomusica in Italy. She is currently doing a doctoral degree at the Orpheusinstitute in Ghent and University of Leiden in the DocARTES Program, her dissertation subject is Loudspeakers and Microphones as Musical Instruments. Her supervising professors are Richard Barrett and Frans de Ruiter. Since March 2007 she has a teaching position at the department for music and media arts of the University of the Arts in Bern, Switzerland.

Simon Steen-Andersen  
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Colophon

RTRSRCH is a publication of the ARTI (Artistic Research, Theory and Innovation) research group at the Amsterdam School of the Arts. The journal aims to provide a complementary/parasitic dissemination forum for themes linked to international external event structures (festivals, conferences, exhibitions, projects, etc.), contributing alternative, interdisciplinary perspectives.

RTRSRCH reflects the interests and problematising strategies of the ARTI research group concerning current discourse in practice-based research in the arts, exploring and facilitating processes for creating, sharing and distributing emerging knowledge(s). The presentation of content will vary from issue to issue, dependent on the topic and stylistic concerns of the guest editor. RTRSRCH is published three times a year.

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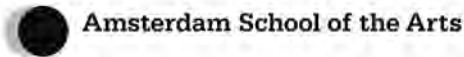
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R = right ear



