The background of the entire cover is a complex musical score. It features multiple staves with various musical notations, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings. There are several annotations in white boxes and text: "[depress silently]", "PI.", "Secure with 7th", "Legato! use touch", and "arco". The score is partially obscured by the text and color blocks.

the same

but differently

Imogen Eve

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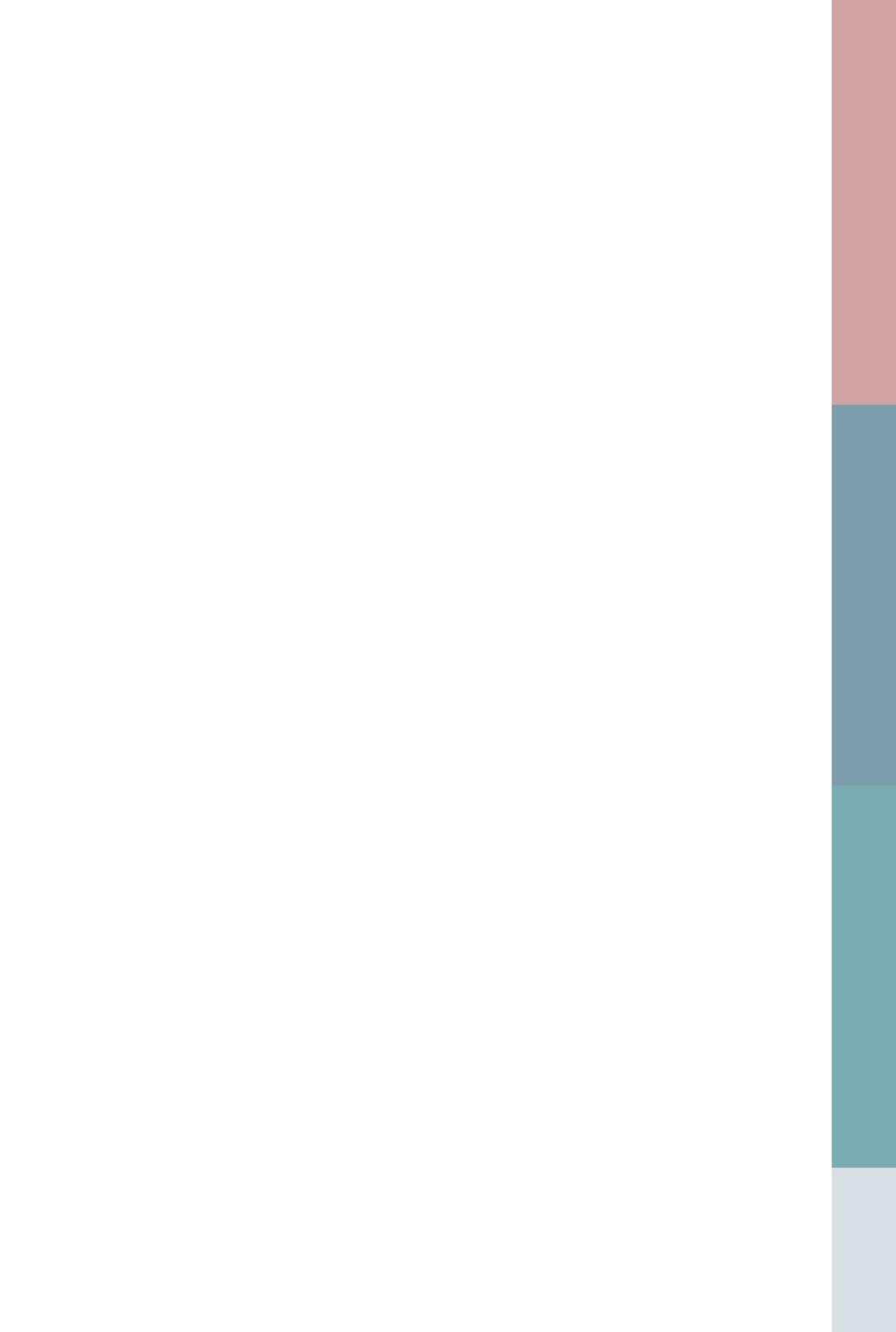


**ZU  
YD**



the same  
but differently

Imogen Eve







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I'm sitting  
in 0.14.

It's the best lit and best decorated room in the whole of the Fine Arts Academy and the Conservatorium Maastricht combined, from what I've seen so far. A corner of well-filled comfy brown bookcases, a dark cane rocking chair complete with marine blue cushion and the odd here-and-there potted plant including my own contribution of some unknown genus of dried purple flower. All housed under the warm white of 60watt bulbs, at least when we don't have the LEDs on.

I like this space.

Ruth is talking to me, it's not that I'm not paying attention, I just like room design. We're discussing my output for the end of my research term with the Artful Participation project which is part of MCICM, the Maastricht Centre for the Innovation of Classical Music. Ruth Benschop is my supervisor here at Zuyd University, where 0.14 makes its home.

'A learning model,' she says.

'A learning model?' I say.

'Yes, what do you think.'

‘Well - you mean a model where you learn things or a model that teaches you how to learn?’

‘Both, ideally.’

‘Hmmm.’ I sit back and think in silence for a moment.

Ruth is looking at me. ‘The focus should be on the conservatory, confronting the issue of innovation in classical music and the practices of musicians. So drawing content from both your work at the conservatory and also your work with the philharmonie throughout the Artful Participation project. Essentially pulling together the anecdotes and central questions that you’ve gathered over these last two years and asking: how can we learn from that?’

I nod, ‘Okay.’

We pause for a bit. We both seem to be taking in the space, Ruth likes it here too. She made it, really.

‘I think it should be for the students,’ I say.

Ruth nods, ‘Good. And the form is up to you. You can spend some time thinking about it -’

‘I think it should be a book. A booklet. Something that might be nice to read, but informative too. Maybe with stories here and there, like portraits, to kind of make an illustration of a topic... Anyway. I like writing, I like books.’

*A book is like a room you can design.*

She smiles at me.



What  
does  
*Classical*  
mean?

What does 'classical music' mean? Is it simply defined as all the music that would be categorised as such on Spotify? Or are only the works from the classical period 'classical'? Or is it instrumental music? But then what about opera and Mahler songs...and is Piazzolla's instrumental music 'classical'? What about with playing - is 'classical' defined better perhaps by instrumentation: violins, clarinets, trombones, cellos, a timpani? Perhaps it's defined by a style of playing ie. refinement, intonation, posture and balance. Though what about the wild sounds of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, where 'refined' might be a stretch too far, is it still 'classical'? Is perhaps complexity or changeability of harmony the key point of definition? Or length of piece - but what about Ligeti's *The Devil's Staircase*. Or maybe resonance of sound such as you would hear from Tchaikovsky to Korngold? What about orchestral music in film?

Or maybe this:

Classical Music is the strong heart-beating resonance and piercing-sweet clarity of sound, whether rough or refined, that sweeping through the senses of melodic and harmonic progression is brought forth on one or more acoustic voices for an indefinite period of time -

I thought I was getting close but then the thought of acoustic Dylan threw me off. Maybe classical music is just Mozart, but I don't know where *L'escalier du Diable* fits into that picture.

*Classical Music (noun): music written in a Western musical tradition, usually using an established form (for example a symphony). Classical music is generally considered to be serious and to have a lasting value.*

On February 4, 2020, I googled: definition of classical music. I was offered a link to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, the definition is above, I figured I was advanced enough to use it.

Though this definition is clear, especially with the idea of 'established form' – it is still, in a way, somewhat ambiguous. Do all its constituent elements, key words, refer only to classical music?

For instance, when I'm in the car with my friend, with the radio blaring her favourite top 40, I find the frequency of 3.5 minute verse-chorus-verse-chorus-bridge-chorus-chorus pop songs admits of established form. In fact, when I begin to think about it, I am hard pressed to find any existing genre of music that doesn't establish some kind of form during its production or conception. I suppose I consider human beings to be terrible at producing at random, but feel free to prove me wrong on this account.

Anyway, back to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary.

It's the second part of this definition that's particularly interesting: 'Classical music is generally considered to be serious and to have a lasting value.' I find 'lasting' a difficult word. Is classical music, in general, 'lasting'? Long lasting? Is the definition implying that it *should* last long?

If classical music has lasting value, then does that mean its value should be preserved? Within the industry, as I've experienced it, this seems to be the conclusion. But what then of the music should be preserved, in order to be 'lasting'? The way it is performed, which we can never be sure of anyway? Or the scores as they were written, many of which never had one definitive and authorised version? I think we have to define better what it is that we are wanting to preserve.

The questions on the previous page aren't just to be coy or sarcastic. They are meant seriously (classical music is generally considered to be serious). For how you define things very much alters the way you think about them and the actions you go on to make. This is an exercise in challenging preconceived notions, to wonder, and then to choose. At least to choose in each different instance or performance you might make. For innovation isn't just about making new things, it can also be to approach things differently. And this book intends to address the topic of innovation in classical music.

According to research of the past two decades or so, research that will be explored here in this book, if we want to rejuvenate and evolve the classical music industry in the 21<sup>st</sup> century then we need to create new rituals, new events. New events that are designed to engage the perception of more diverse audience groups; events that explore different fusions of music; events that challenge and broaden our skills as performers; and events that revitalise the beauty and relevance of the social situation and performance art of classical music.

But for these events to be made and formed, we need to innovate. And I don't mean 'innovate' by just making something new, I mean 'innovate' in the sense of thinking and doing a little differently. We need to innovate by being reflective and flexible music practitioners. We need to reconsider why it is that we do things, where we place our values and how our practice corresponds to those values. This is why asking the question 'What is Classical Music' is an essential starting point of reflection.

This book is not a defined curriculum, but it seeks to address students and practitioners of classical music, though it is by no means closed to musicians and artists (or anyone) outside this sphere. This text seeks to explore and offer some *different perspectives* and *different skills* that hope to lead practitioners in music and the performing arts into a future of new and *richly diverse music rituals*. Without building a foundation of reflexivity and flexibility, innovation can have no true meaning, as to simply create something new without reflection and without the ability to define our values, is, I believe, just empty experimentation.

There is so much that is beautiful and expressive about the classical music art form and there is hope for a bright future - one that can be built on the rich history that this music tradition has fostered. But we need to look to our present and to each other, and build a future together based on how best we can live, reflect, change, practice, and orient ourselves, now.

Much has been said about the innovation of classical music, about new performances. And though it will be discussed, I mainly want to use these pages to explore what it might be like to see, hear, move and think differently. I want to think of innovation as a mindset, a mindset of approaching things differently. To see through different lenses, to perform with different actions, to consider and create from new angles. What might it mean to see and work differently? What meanings in music might be made when we perform from a different angle?

*To music the same, but differently.*

# Lesson in Progress

I

He sits down and smiles at the table where he places his hands. But as he begins to talk, his hands move, articulating the air like natural shadows of his words.

‘Well I have a plan. A kind of research topic. But I already think that it won’t be possible.’

‘Okay, what do you mean?’

‘Well,’ and he breathes in sharply, his brow furrows a bit behind his glasses, one eyebrow is pierced. ‘I want to combine politics and music, well yes and no, I want to see if I can approach political activism through music.’

‘Fantastic, great topic!’

He looks at me, then smiles down.

‘Yes well, I don’t know. I haven’t even started and I already think it isn’t really possible.’

He taps his pen against his notebook. It lies open on the big grey desk which cuts against the white grey of the room.

‘Why not?’ I ask.

# Innovating Fidelity

Is classical music in a state of crisis?

In Nicholas Cook's book *Music: A Very Short Introduction*, he dedicates a whole chapter to this question and he makes valid points. In many ways, the classical industry is not dying. Through recordings, films and greater social equality, classical music and especially symphonic works are heard on a daily basis (Cook, 1998). But these music events (or music phenomena perhaps in the case of film and tv) generally occur without a direct awareness of them, without an intentional perception or choosing of them. So yes, the role and attitude towards classical music has quite evidently shifted over the past 150 years (Kramer, 2007). And while the film industry and love of Lord of the Rings soundtracks may be booming, it is the ritual of the live classical concert event that has lost the interest of the general public and yes, audiences are, in general, declining (Sloboda & Ford, 2012).

So how can live classical music concerts be innovated to generate interest amongst audiences in the 21<sup>st</sup> century? Many theorists, artists and producers have been considering this question.

One example can be seen in the book *Present! Rethinking Live Classical Music* (2012) where Johan Idema argues for the necessity of better presented and designed experiences for classical concerts. On page 183, he writes: '*Presenting music involves considering all the ingredients that determine*

22 *how audiences experience music: the physical location, the setting (or general atmosphere), the program (and its actual relevance and urgency), the overarching message or theme (and how this is communicated), the performers (and how they present themselves) and even the audience's engagement (how to involve them).'*

*'There was a time when composers and performers were big stars and the classical repertoire was widely known. Those days are long over. The world has changed radically and we along with it.'* (Idema, 2012, p.182)

Another approach to innovation can be seen in the 2010 study by Melissa Dobson which sheds some light on the issue. Through analyzing the responses and reactions of regular arts event attendees (in the 25-34 year old age bracket) to classical concerts, her findings revealed that inclusion, participation and informal settings were the key elements that engaged the interest of attendees and that ensured a positive experience.

In following the trajectory of these studies, the Maastricht Centre for the Innovation of Classical Music (MCICM) launched a research project that specifically focused on approaching symphonic performance through the lense of audience engagement and audience experience. The project (of which I was a part) was adequately titled *Artful Participation* and its research sought *'to further innovate the practice of symphonic classical music by asking what it means to participate in it as an audience [...] we develop artistic research that experiments with new forms of audience*

*participation - in order to revitalize the practice of orchestral music by artistically inventing new ways of making symphonic performances.'* (MCICM Artful Participation Research Proposal, 2017)

But as great as all of these angles and projects are, they require approaching classical music differently and for many musicians, approaching the tradition differently can pose problems. But what problems, and why?

Throughout my years as a performer, director and teacher, I've found that there are a few particular perspectives regarding innovation that classical musicians seem to struggle with. Firstly, that being a soloist or a chamber musician is the height of achievement and that any 'non-performance' tasks are signs of failure, as seen in the quote on the next page. Secondly, that fidelity to the score (or *Werktreue*) is considered essential and that too personal of an interpretation, or even too individual a performance, is frowned upon as the aim of the practice is to transmit and replicate the original piece of music. This creates a culture where, particularly in orchestral settings, the goal is to reach a uniform standard and thereby for the performer to be considered as both interchangeable and replaceable (Small, 1998). Thirdly, that concerts are valuable only when performed in a concert hall to an attentive silent audience (Cook, 1998; Small, 1998). All these perspectives become problematic when beginning to approach innovation. And I feel there is a strong argument that all these perspectives stem from *Werktreue*.

*'I am a musician. As a child, being a musician meant being a performer: a soloist, or (failing that) a member of a string quartet, orchestra or chamber ensemble. Teaching was a second-rate option upon which one would embark only if performance opportunities were insufficient. This meant that one's attention should focus on the acquisition of an elite level of technical skill and a repertoire that could be played from memory at a minute's notice... I came to realize that the hierarchy of music careers inhibits today's new graduates just as it did my own generation. The hierarchy contributes much of the angst experienced by intending performers who feel an agonizing sense of failure when non-performance roles are required to keep the bread on the table or to meet the responsibilities of having a family.'*

(Bennett, 2008, p. 1)

The canon of classical music comprises of the ‘great’ works and the ‘great’ composers that have been set since the 19<sup>th</sup> century to define the genre of ‘Classical Music’ and its constituent values of respect, reverence, awe and genius (Cook, 1998). These characteristics have been maintained through the institutionalisation of classical music, thereby integrating these doctrines into a classical musician’s education.

Lydia Goehr (1992) explores these ideas deeply in *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works* which analyses the history, ideology and philosophy behind the notion of the ‘musical work’ or the ‘work concept’ and how it has affected the way we think about, create and perform music. She outlines how the work concept was established within the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a glorification of an imagined golden age of instrumental music. The preface of the book commences with an excerpt from E.T.A. Hoffmann, a critic and novelist, on the plight of classical composers and musicians who had to sell their artistry and work mundane jobs.

*‘To counter the abuse he thought music generally so subject to, and to terminate the public humiliation of musicians ‘in service’, Hoffman issues an alternative prescription for musical practice. Composition, performance, reception, and evaluation should no more be guided solely by extra-musical considerations of a religious, social, or scientific sort [...] These activities should now be guided by the musical works themselves. To legitimate this assertion Hoffmann gave currency to the notion of being true or faithful to a work (what later came to be called Werk-*

treue). He gave to this notion a prominence within the language of musical thought it had never before had. "The genius artist," he wrote, "lives only for the work, which he understands as the composer understood it and which he now performs. He does not make his personality count in any way. All his thoughts and actions are directed towards bringing into being all the wonderful, enchanting pictures and impressions the composer sealed in his work with magical power."

The ideology of *Werktreue* can be summarised as: true faithfulness to the work as a spiritual creation, thereby necessitating a musician's compliance to the creator's will. As Goehr states, this mentality is still prevalent today and greatly impacts the expectations classical musicians have towards their status and their performance environment (*ibid.* p.2). The classical musician's relationship to the traditions in their music can be understood more clearly with this background outlined.

The legacy of *Werktreue* commands complete compliance to the will of the creator and a subservient and faithful musician who will act as transmitter of the absolute divine music to a congregated audience. This relationship is most obviously seen in how classical musicians regard Beethoven, even towards an idolisation; a Cult of Beethoven.

"The Beethoven cult, then, whose origins lie early in the nineteenth century but which shows little sign of abating as it enters the new millennium, is a (perhaps the) central pillar in the culture of classical music. Not surpris-

ingly, then, many of the ideas most deeply embedded in our thinking about music today can be traced back to the ferment of ideas that surrounded the reception of Beethoven's music...The concept of music being a kind of commodity naturally gives the composer a position of centrality, as the generator of the core product. But the idea which developed during the early reception of Beethoven's music, that to listen to it was in some sense to be in direct communion with the composer himself... the role of the composer as author or originator of the music. This is the source of the authority that attaches to the composer, for example when performers like Roger Norrington claim that their interpretations represent Beethoven's real intentions, or when editors claim the same for their authoritative editions. And finally, this authority can easily turn into authoritarianism, an attribute perhaps most notoriously seen in the relationship between conductors and orchestral musicians, but arguably built into our thinking about performance in general.' (Cook, 1998, p.24 - 25)

So how can we get past *Werktreue*? Where can we place the value of classical music if not on faithful-transmission-of-the-score?

*'In common conception, the work of art is often identified with the building, book, painting, or statue in its existence apart from human experience. Since the actual work of art is what the product does with and in experience, the result is not favorable to understanding. In addition,*

*the very perfection of some of these products, the prestige they possess because of a long history of unquestioned admiration, creates conventions that get in the way of fresh insight. When an art product once attains classic status, it somehow becomes isolated from the human conditions under which it was brought into being and from the human consequences it engenders in actual life-experience.'* (Dewey, 1934)

My answer has always been to place the value on the event, on the experience, as beautifully expressed above by John Dewey. I like to see art and music as an event, or as 'Musicking' as Christopher Small would say. Therefore, the way you perform and interpret the music of that event all depends on what that event means. Who is there? Where is it? Why are you performing for these people in this space? What is the experience? Maybe, when we ask these questions, we may begin to change or adapt the way we perform; we may take a new approach to music - and music differently.

*Innovation, noun*

*The introduction of new things, ideas,  
or ways of doing something*

(Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, 2020)



Mahler am Tisch  
19 november 2011

# An inter- vention by Peter Peters

Project Leader,  
Artful Participation

### *Unfinished Symphonies*

Why do we perform music from the past? Why do we want to do that over and over again? Why are we never finished with playing Bach's music, to mention just one example that is very dear to me? Philosophers, musicians and music critics in the nineteenth century gave a clear answer to these questions. They created a canon of composed music that they considered to be great. For them, the works of Bach, Mozart and Beethoven reflected the genius that enabled them to write music that, in its timeless quality, transcended the contingencies of the everyday life in which it was created. With this conviction came aesthetic criteria such as authenticity and autonomy: *a musical performance is good if it is true to the composer's intentions and the written score.*

The German philosopher Hans Georg Gadamer criticized this romantic musical aesthetics. For him, the greatness of the works in the musical canon is not a given, as an unalienable and eternal property of the individual musical works. Instead, he argued, this greatness has to be realized time and again in our own encounters with these works. According to Gadamer, we play Bach because the music says something to us. The task of interpreting it, is to see what new possible meanings it can have by mediating it in our own situation. Our encounter with music, and art in general, comes with a responsibility. If we want it to exist, we have to hand it over to the future by playing it.

Art exists in the same way as games like chess exist. When we play them, we do not go back to some original version of the game to reproduce it. On the contrary, every game is new, yet follows the rules of the game we call chess. In all its variations the game retains its identity. Just like games, art works have to be played again and again. This results in what Gadamer calls a 'tradition', a history of earlier performances to which every new performance has to relate.

Presenting artworks from the past requires what Gadamer calls a *hermeneutical situation*. In this situation we are conscious of the fact that, as interpreters, we are affected by history. We are not separated from the past, but connected to it through tradition. In everyday language, the word *tradition* might suggest something that lies behind us, or that is repeated without reflection. For Gadamer, it means that the past is actively handed over in our situated understandings and applications of it. It requires active questioning and self-reflection. Gadamer's conception of tradition is dialogical: rather than a form of antiquarianism, it is a continuing debate on questions, problems and issues to which we ourselves contribute.

When we play works of art, we revisit the tradition that handed them down to us. Presenting them in our hermeneutical situation will add new meanings, that will in turn expand the tradition. This is why playing musical works is fundamentally unfinished: their meaning is never exhausted as long as we continue to play them in *new situations*.



# A Sym- phony of Five

let's experiment.

if we place the value of music on its experience,

if that experience of music is in a rustic bar in Maas-  
tricht,

if that music is symphonic repertoire,

if we arrange melodies from the symphony to be  
played by small ensembles, and if those melodies are from  
a symphony written by Mahler,

is it still a symphony?

is it still classical music?

is it still Mahler?

What does it mean for something to be 'symphonic'? Is 'symphonic' only a symphony work itself, for instance, Shostakovitch's *Symphony no. 10*? Or is 'symphonic' a symphony orchestra with the required number of musicians and instruments? Or is it, perhaps, how individual voices are supported by many other individual voices, the combination of which leads to an overwhelming bath of sound? Is it volume? Is it grandeur? How is nature 'symphonic'? What are the limits of the symphony?

In the Artful Participation performance project, *Mahler am Tisch*, a small group of brass players arranged and performed melodies from Mahler's symphonies that

36 were originally inspired by folk tunes. This brass quintet was one of three groups of different instrumentations who performed in The Tribunal, a bar in Maastricht, on a Saturday night in November 2019. As they clustered in a wooden peanut-shell-strewn corner of the bar, surrounded by an audience of local beer drinkers and fellow musicians, the resonance of their harmonies breathed the room into life. These five brass voices, in the push and pull of balance and harmony, pressed the breath of their sound against the frost-bitten and christmas-wreathed windows. This was folk music gone symphonic gone folk again - but this resonating lung-expanding balance of sound was classical. It was how we defined classical in that moment: a rustic and warming classical, which in that wooden-scuffed and laughter-embraced space, worked.

So what is 'classical', and what is 'symphonic'?

Where does this experience stand in the 'long-lastingness' of classical music? An open question.

So if we're seeking to explore new perspectives about new rituals and events for classical music, we need to reflect a bit more on some of the *elements of events*.

We have looked a little into how classical music might be performed differently, according to the performance event context (such as with the *Mahler am Tisch* project on the previous page) but what are the fundamental elements that frame and define these contexts?

Though this is a bit of an abstract question, and perhaps somewhat unanswerable, I believe there are some fundamental elements that can give us an insight into

the bigger picture of how a total performance experience might be perceived. And understanding these elements, and how we perceive them, is essential to our inquiry.

*Firstly, location - space.*

Without a location or a space (even an online platform is a location) there can be no actual time-and-space event. So if we're making new experiences, new events, then we should have a look at space and the meanings within space. What does this space mean? How is it perceived? How does a performance relate to its space and location?

*Secondly, the people - the crowd - the audience!*

Though we don't always need an audience to enjoy musicking, an essential element of a performance event is the people who take part in it. Who are they? Why are they there? Would they come to this space to hear this music? How do they perceive of this event?

*Thirdly, of course, the content of the event - the performance itself - the music.*

What is being performed and how? What are we trying to say about performing, what is our intention behind it? And how does this intention and this performance relate to the space and the people?

The following chapters will look a little into these *elements of the event* and take a closer look at how we conceive of them, how we value them and therefore, how we can maybe work with them differently.

# Lesson in Progress

II

He laughs.

‘Well, it’s just -’ he exhales. ‘I want to change so much in the world, but I still love my music. I want some way to combine them, music and politics, but I don’t think I can.’

‘Do you mean politically? Things you want to change politically?’

‘Yes, yes.’ He looks around the room but it’s as if he can’t see anything there, as if the room is empty for him. ‘There are so many problems and I just keep thinking about them over and over but then I go back to the practice room and - but what can I do?’

# An Inner City Side Street

It's a Saturday night and you were out with friends but then, somehow, you've wound up alone. You realise the temperature has dropped at least two degrees. You dig your hands deeper into your coat pockets and search your memory. A flash of your friend's geeky laughter, him collapsing in giggles over a bag of unopened chips under the glare of cornerstore LED light, you're waiting at the counter, 'Come on Nick' you're saying, while you feel the shop attendant's fixed stare of practiced tolerance on the back of your neck.

But Nick's not here now.

You look around and discover you're on some inner city side street where the buildings seem too tall for the width of the space; empty but for the echoes of drunken laughter that seem to be coming from behind a solitary door which is placed without a sign in the centre of the gold-lit stone that stretches off to a distance you can't see the end of. The door is lit by red light, the source of which can't be seen. Even in your state of possible inebriation, you feel a sense of caution or danger, excitement or mystery.

Maybe the desire for illicit excess.

This door with the red light at 2am on an inner city side street says a lot. A fusion of comfort or discomfort, according to your character. And you don't need program notes to gather that much. Though maybe it was once the lair of a visiting Soviet artist and that might be cool to know about.

Space tells stories.

What does this space mean? What does any space mean? I would argue that spaces, locations, from a bar to a concert hall to your friend's house, are never implication free. A space always means something. A space always has implicit connotations. A space is never a neutral zone and according to what cultural, social and personal narrative you yourself have lived, certain spaces will have a different shades of meaning.

So what about the concert hall?

What might the space of a particular concert hall mean? How might someone perceive a modern concert hall, for example?

*SHE* finds it cold and modern and hard to navigate. The staff all wear black and have name tags and say, 'Can I help you?' and 'Can I take your coat madam?' and but 'No you cannot thank you very much.'

The carpeted floor oozes vacuum cleaner and she has to climb four flights of concrete and grey fuzzed stairs before a light is shone in her face by a ticket attendant who demands proof of her right to be there, in digital or analog format. Once beeped in she pushes through to her allocated seat which is identical to the other 52 beige and tan numbers around her. And yes, she thinks, I feel a little uncomfortable and I wish Sally had come with me, except she said 'It wasn't her thing'.

She buries her face in the program, without reading, until the music starts. Enescu's *Second Violin Sonata*. A favourite. And as it begins, her eyes blinker in to the sound. Darkness walks over her and she can sink into the beautiful now, the shadow of sound and anonymity this space provides that lets her be free to forget herself for even one moment, which, she thinks, is a greater gift than most consider it to be. As the music increases dynamic she begins to sway as the violinist sways and she feels herself mimic his swells and peaks as the music presses its way through her. Quite involuntarily but avidly still - she moves with the music.

But the blinkers unshutter and open as she becomes aware of the two frangipani smelling ladies on either side of her. Donned in powdered blacks and look this one's wearing gloves and her swaying upsets them she can tell. And

44 so she stops. But so does the rapture. And even the focused stage lights can't bring her back to that blinked love now as she is nudged by grey-haired sideways glances into adopting the physical posture of the page turner. Straight and still and moving only at the right moments, which seems farcical an activity in conjunction with the mountainous range of Enescu.

Oh well, she thinks, the chair was squeaky anyway.

Okay I'll admit I went off on a bit of a tangent there. But I wanted to draw a picture of how a concert hall might be seen, might be felt. What meanings and sensations and behaviours come from and with it.

Every space has meaning.

Discussions about the meanings of spaces happen often with my students too. They approach me, each of them proposing fantastic performance ideas. But when I ask, 'Cool so where will you do it?' They so consistently say, 'I don't know, somewhere free... maybe a church?'

No, no, no, no, no.

Well yes, sometimes too. But in general, no.

I do understand the importance of trying a performance out and that paying for a venue can be a huge waste of resources, especially when you're a student and want to focus solely on creating and experimenting instead of selling. I really do get that. But depending on your idea, is a church really the best space? A church is by far not an implication-free-zone. It is literally a space where every

pore of its atomic materiality has been injected with religious meaning. It has an economic and social history that is both complex and uncompromisable. And why should it be compromisable? I'll argue that you can make a night club out of a concert hall, with the right lights you can do wonders, but making a nightclub out of a church? An active church mind you - a previously converted church is another story but a previously converted church is unlikely to be free.

I have personally watched the 'new performance in a church' format be done *ad infinitum* and I think it's time we moved on. But it really depends on your project.

If you have a project, it might be an idea to see how the style of your performance or the music itself, might link to the space. (Or not link! If that's what you're going for.) But certain music may be more compatible with certain spaces. For instance, free jazz, for me, evokes the chaotic swill of downtown bars in New York. So though it may be supplanted into a different space (a church for example) I might find the juxtaposition disconcerting. Or interesting perhaps. It all depends on how you frame it.

To take another example. In the *Mahler am Tisch* project, playing the rough and rustic 'folk side' of Mahler in a rough and rustic bar, worked. And in it's own way, it pulled people towards Mahler who were more comfortable in that kind of setting - people who move to music and squeak in their chairs perhaps. But then again, the music and space do not always have to match. It's just worth thinking about.

Space is personality and culture, character and intention. Space is behaviour, it defines how we move and breathe. From an echoing lavish church to a soundless basement and from a screaming park to the comfort of your bedroom where you can still smell the roast cauliflower you ate for dinner drifting from the kitchen.

Space matters. It changes us.

There have been quite a few studies that write about classical music being performed in bars and alternative spaces. Many of these texts come to a similar conclusion: that there is potential to reach a new (or different) audience in alternate spaces, but that many classical performers struggle to adjust to the new dynamic and atmosphere. Why?

Well on the one hand, the traditional concert hall or recital space, where classical musicians usually perform, values a separation between the performers and the audience as well as a reverent, attentive and silent mode of listening (Small, 1998). This concert format is valued more by classical musicians and by audience groups who associate with traditional classical music culture, but is often perceived by those outside this sphere as elitist and exclusionary (Dobson, 2008).

On the other hand, the converted club/bar concert format values integration between the performers and the audience and a casual, distracted and often noisy mode of listening (Robinson, 2013). This concert format is generally valued more by jazz, folk and pop musicians and younger audience groups who associate with contemporary culture.

From my experience, there has always been a stark contrast between the construct of the classical concert and that of the other engagements that musicians undertake. The major complaints that I often hear from musicians who perform outside traditional concert settings is that ‘no one cares’, ‘no one was listening’, ‘they just talk the entire time over us’. These comments have also been echoed throughout research on the subject.

In a study from 2013, Sarah Robinson analysed a series of chamber music concerts that were performed in alternative venues. One of the major issues she found was that many musicians complained about the noisy atmosphere and the lack of audience attention. However, some of the venue staff and musicians that were interviewed talked about how musicians needed to change their expectations. One violinist said, *'Sometimes there's noise. If you want your piece to be very serious and very quiet, then you have your option. You can go play in a church.'* (p.102)

In a similar study on the integration of classical music into non-traditional spaces, Binowski (2015) states that, *'Although ensembles cited success with many of these endeavors [...] Not all spaces were equipped to handle the needs of musicians, including appropriate acoustics and technical capabilities. One problem that was consistent in the bar and cafe venues was the background noise and lack of attentive listening.'* (p.10)

Classical musicians, as opposed to musicians in other genres, are used to a high level of attention and engagement from the audience. This value is fostered through the way music is spoken about, the reverence given to the score as well as the concert etiquette that the average classical musician has experienced on both sides of the stage. Most importantly, this attentiveness and reverence is made manifest in the performance itself through the ritual and status of the concert hall. The concert hall has even been compared to a cathedral where the architectural atmosphere can deliver an experience such as a 'rite of passage' (Cook, 2000, p.10) that separates the outside world from the cloister within. An experience which can be dazzling or intimidating, according to each individual.

The concert hall has become the accustomed venue for classical performance and is an important symbol for the performer. It is understandable that, as classical musicians spend the majority of their time practicing in solitude towards performance events, they would desire attention and appreciation towards their work, which the design and acoustics of the concert hall provides. From my experience, to have played in great concert halls was to cement your reputation as a professional. Whereas performing in alternate venues, even if playing the same repertoire to a large audience, was still seen as of less value. But this is changing! And it does need to, as many studies have shown that the concert hall can be quite a big barrier to both diversifying audiences and creating new events and rituals.

Christopher Small dedicated a chapter of his book *Musicking* (1998) to analysing the meanings within the concert hall space; *'It is indeed an auditorium, a place for hearing. The word itself tells us that hearing is the primary activity that takes place in it, and here indeed it is assumed that performing takes place only in order to make hearing possible. The modern concert hall is built on the assumption that a musical performance is a system of one-way communication, from composer to listener through the medium of performers.'* (p. 26)

Small continues to describe how the 'grandeur of this building' sends loud social signals of wealth, importance and exclusive ceremony (*Ibid.* p. 21). These significations can create a feeling of 'otherness' in those who are unaccustomed to the rituals of the classical world.

Following these thoughts, Lewis Kaye, in his article *The Silenced Listener*, expands on how the concert hall

is architecturally and acoustically designed for attentive reception (Kaye, 2012).

Kaye explores how this architecture gives power to the auditorium; power drawn from the ability to arrest the perception, and thereby engage the attention, of the spectator. He argues that the ritual of *secular* classical performance in the concert hall adopted a *religious* demand for reverent attentiveness (*Ibid.*). This attentiveness is supposed to be directed towards the musician, and the performance space serves to recognise a separation and in many ways these conditions 'silence' the listener (*Ibid.*).

These are the conditions which many classical musicians are accustomed, and despite the social implications of this acoustic architecture there are good reasons why it is valuable. These spaces are literally designed solely for classical instruments and symphonic sounds, for their specific frequencies and timbre, as well as for projecting these particular sounds onto listeners. Within the auditorium the perception of the audience is also taken into great consideration and not just in a negative sense of repression. The auditorium, just like the proscenium theatre, is structured with fixed seating to give uninterrupted sightlines and to ensure a high quality visual experience. However the fixed seating implies that the communication is only one directional and that any conversation between audience members is practically impossible (Small, 1998; Whitmore, 1994). As an audience member in a classical concert, you are also expected to remain restrained and not outwardly evoke emotion or engage with other audience members near you. You are required to concentrate on the event (Sloboda & Ford,

2012). And though some people may prefer this kind of concert, many audience members have said that they would prefer more casual concert settings.

In a study by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation (2002), the majority of concertgoers interviewed stated that they would appreciate having more ambient and social settings. This includes greetings from the performers on stage, introductions to pieces, longer intervals for socialising, freedom to come and go and more casual clothes for musicians - as well as thematic lighting and decoration. And that though program notes are nice, they did not enhance the experience of more casual listeners (p. 15).

Due to these kinds of studies, there have been some positive moves where classical music, particularly chamber music, has succeeded in performing in alternative spaces such as festivals. In her 2005 study regarding audience experience of the chamber music festival *Music in the Round*, Stephanie Pitts discovered that many enjoyed the overlapping effects of social engagement and music experience. This echoes the previously stated comment by Idema, regarding the need for diverse performance experiences of classical music. These projects and ideas can be used as inspirational examples for future music rituals and events.

It isn't necessary for all classical music to suddenly move into the local pub, but I think we should learn to be more flexible in order to diversify our performance practice. But to do so, we need to understand and recognise our values as musicians, and that includes thinking about attentive listening.

Most classical musicians are culturally geared to believe that only attentive concerts are of value, yet many are not comfortable with individual acknowledgement from the public. This is due to the fact that musicians are mostly used to valuing their practice based on the opinions of teachers, conductors and audition panels - and collectively the value of a performance (due to *Werktreue*) is then predominantly placed on a musician's ability to recreate the 'original composition' as a kind of interpreter/transmitter.

This value system is what makes coordinating nontraditional concerts very difficult, as from my experience and research, many classical musicians are still uncomfortable with inclusive, integrated or participatory environments. So how can we work with this value of attentive listening? Perhaps we could find value in other areas, or conceive of attentive listening differently? Such as, by valuing the total experience created between performers and audience?

*'As we watch, the musicians file onto the stage. All are wearing black, the men in tuxedos with white shirts and bow ties and the women in black ankle- or floor-length dresses. Those whose instruments are portable are carrying them, in the way musicians do the world over, as if they were extensions of themselves and of their bodies. Their demeanor is restrained but casual, and they talk together as they enter and move to their allotted seats. Their entry is understated, quiet; there is none of the razzmatazz, the explosion of flashpots and the flashing of colored lights, the expansive gestures, the display of outrageous clothing, that marks the arrival on stage of many popular artists. Nor does the audience react to their arrival. Not even a round of applause greets their appearance, while they in turn behave as if unaware that some two thousand people are watching them. They seem in fact to inhabit a separate world from the audience, which watches them as from a distance and will in a few minutes listen to them as if through a visually and acoustically transparent but socially opaque screen at the edge of the platform.'* (Small, 1998, p.26)

# Lesson in Progress

III

‘What do you want to do?’ I ask.

He sighs and looks straight ahead at nothing.

‘I wish I could send out a message. To tell them, to invite people - I don’t want to preach. But I want to make change happen. But through music?’

He looks intently at me.

His passion for the topic is too strong for the weakness of the room. So we sit in silence for a bit. The tap in the sink behind him drips a little. I don’t know why there is a sink in this classroom; everyone’s too scared to even use it.

‘Hmmm,’ I say. ‘Well maybe let’s backtrack a little. What political issue do you want to focus on?’

He stays still for a moment, then breathes in, ‘Gender equality. The issue of gender, of inequality regarding women - particularly in the history of music. Maybe, if we can work on our empathy with gender, we can improve it with others. With the other.’

‘So, a performance project about gender equality?’

‘Yes.. Maybe. Something like that.’

‘Well then,’ I lean back and look at him. ‘Let’s try and find a way to see from the perspective of the other, or at least, from a different perspective.’

# Attention and Per- ception

So how can we take a new perspective towards, not only the music score and the performance space, but also the audience? Can we do all this whilst still maintaining the beautiful subtleties of the music craft? I believe so. Creating new awareness and new practices does not have to radically alter the whole discipline of music practice, but it can give us another lense and meaning to the way we prepare and perform.

So what about attentive listening?

Putting aside the *Werktreue* concept of fidelity to the score, for the moment at least, it is understandable that any craftsman who dedicates hours every day, for many years of their life, to one practice, might feel dissatisfaction if their work is unrealised by others.

And though I hope we, as musicians, might learn to value the simple beauty of just playing music with each other, it is important to perform for others, as the issue of audiences is the main motivation for innovation! However, I do think it is essential to reflect on our attitudes towards attentive listening, as I believe attentive listening can be both argued for, and argued against.

On the one hand, it would be good if the legacy of *Werktreue* fades a little and allows musicians to integrate more into diverse (and perhaps, less attentive) performance settings which will increase their comfort with

more casual concerts - this move is already on its way. But on the other hand, perhaps it is also possible to employ the 'architecture of attention' - as explored in the previous chapter - into settings that include different audiences. Attention as a phenomenon does not only have negative implications, it has roots outside of nineteenth-century romanticism as it exists in many rituals of storytelling and cultural engagement.

*'Rituals integrate music, dance and theatre. They use colourful and evocative masks and costumes. The processions, circumambulations, singing, dancing, storytelling, foodsharing, fire-burning, incensing, drumming, and bell-ringing along with the body heat and active participation of the crowd create an overwhelming synaesthetic environment and experience. At the same time, rituals embody values that instruct and mobilize participants. These embodied values are rhythmic and cognitive, spatial and conceptual, sensuous and ideological. In terms of brain function, ritual excites both the right and left hemispheres of the cerebral cortex, releasing pleasure-giving endorphins into the blood'* - Schechner, *Ritual and Performance*, 1994

The idea of attention does not have to be restricted to romantic-nineteenth-century- *Werktreue* ideology, the phenomenon of attention has roots much deeper, in that of performative rituals and storytelling. The text *Ritual and Performance* by Richard Schechner explores how performativity requires a speaker and a receiver - but it is in

the context of ritual, where each party has their own role and function to play, that the meaning is made manifest.

The arts have always served as the language of ritual, the gesture of the arts (in particular of music) have a quality that can override the restrictions of spoken language and communicate on a 'meta-level' (Small, 1999). This kind of communication functions through the crafting of gestures and the reception of these gestures, but these gestures only impart meaning when they are perceived and transformed within the context of their creation: without context there is no meaning (Bateson, 1979, p.28).

Both Schechner and Small (1994; 1998) compare the 'performer' in both music and the arts, to the figure of the shaman; a performative figure that offers a story (or rite) in a setting where all eyes are upon him. The ritual exists as a transmission or communication between two parties. One party of gesture, sound, movement, expression, representation; and the other of openness, response, observation, reception, intervention, interaction.

In this way, 'attention' is given to be 'fully present' in a circumstance where what is being communicated is being perceived and *vica versa*. The performer receives the responses and inclinations of the audience which shapes the contours of the whole performative landscape. Attention can in fact be considered as a sense of tension, suspension, fixation, wonder or contemplation and not just as immobility (Crary, 1999).

So, attention as tension and suspension; attention as engaging perception. Can we perhaps craft the performance and the performance context in order to engage the perception of the audience? Can we engage perception (as opposed to demand attention) towards the music through a context that evokes the atmosphere of a communal, shared experience?

If so, this kind of perspective (attention vs perception) might help to open access to building different performance and listening experiences; different 'Adequate Modes of Listening' where the performer values the total perception of the audience and not just their attention.

This phrase 'Adequate Mode of Listening' comes from a 1997 article by music theorist Ola Stockfelt who describes how the act of listening to classical music has become heavy with the expectation that the listener must be educated, 'more intellectual' or 'culturally superior' to engage with it. Stockfelt states that music is always conditioned by the situation in which it is encountered and therefore, to foster more appreciation of classical music, the mode of listening needs to be considered. He describes 'Adequate Modes of Listening' as a contextual coherence between the medium of the performance (such as the space!), the content of the performance (the music itself) as well as the listener (who is the audience?). This mode of listening functions as a situation in which the listener is able to, as Stockfelt writes, 'understand the context of the music and what is relevant about it.'

Therefore, in many ways attentiveness can be argued for, but I believe it must be understood as a request and not as a demand. To request attention to speak musically, to perform and to tell a story, is to invite the audience to perceive and experience the event as opposed to just passively receiving it. To request means to understand the nature of the listener's perception as a subject in their own right and in their own context and to offer a music performance event as a tailored mode of listening, understanding and feeling.

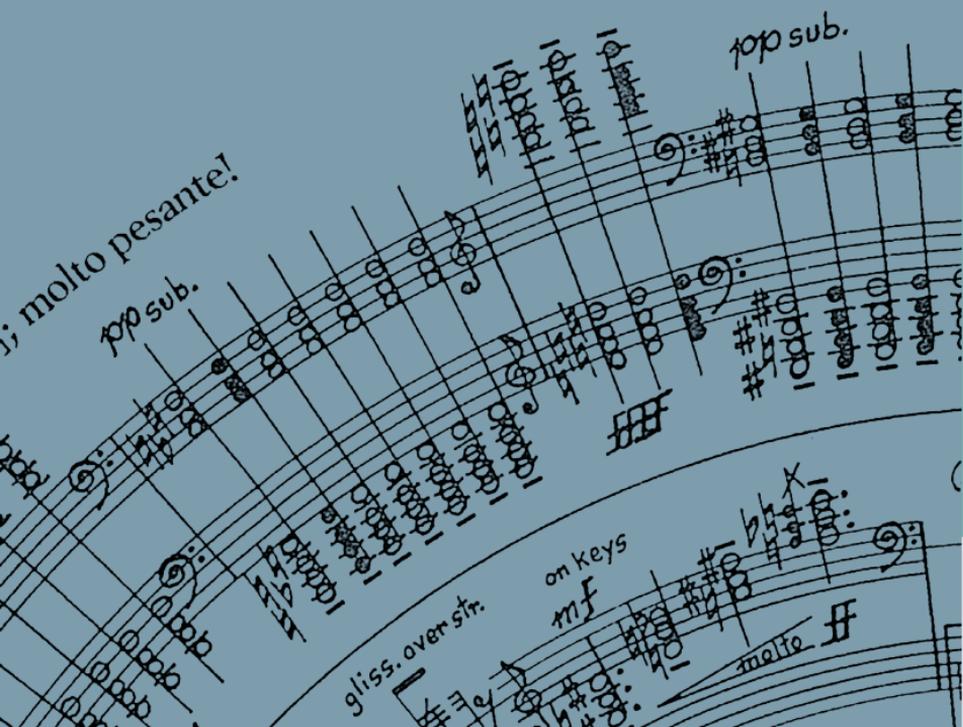
To transform the tradition of attentive listening from reception to perception, there needs to be an explicit realisation of the importance of the listener's perception that does not deny the musician's inherent need and value of attention. This realisation can only be made manifest by *actively crafting and tailoring the context of the performance* to these needs; by considering the space and crowd alongside the performance itself.

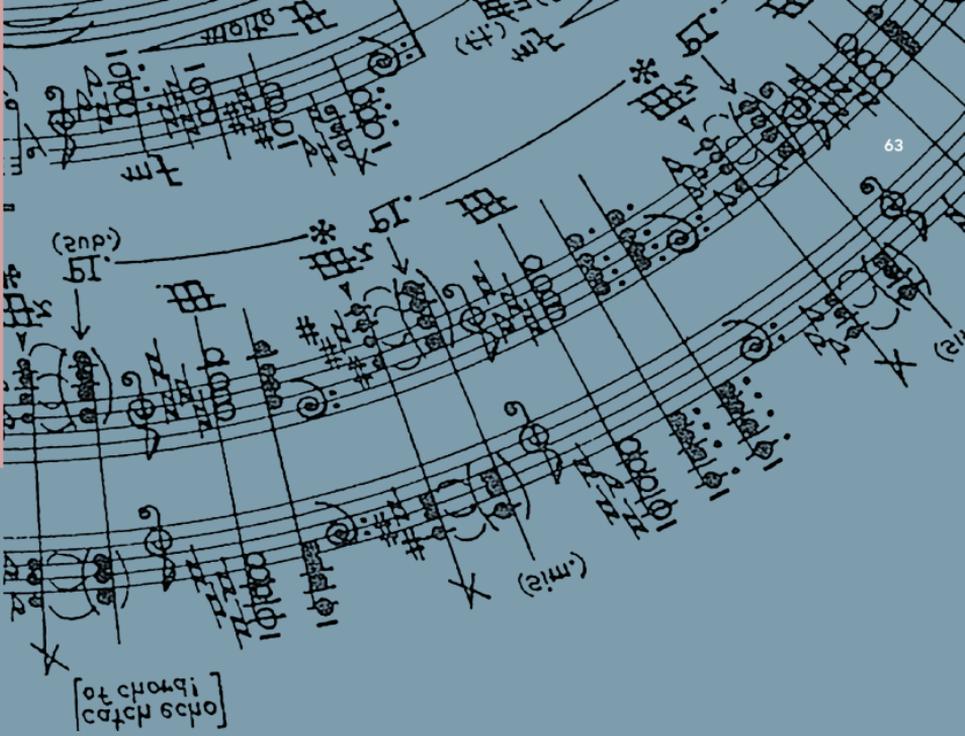
**Attention**

noun

Notice taken of someone or something;  
the regarding of someone or something as  
interesting or important.

The action of dealing with or taking special  
care of someone or something.





## **Perception**

noun

*The ability to see, hear, or become aware of something through the senses. The way in which something is regarded, understood, or interpreted.*

(Oxford Dictionaries, 2018)

# An inter- vention by Ruth Benschop

Project Leader,  
Artful Participation

### *All Idiots*

I can't remember exactly when it was. We had just started the Artful Participation project and I was sitting in the audience awaiting a concert of philharmonie zuidnederland to start. I had just heard about the Wolfgang app, and thought I would try it. On the website, the app is introduced like this:

*“Wolfgang is a smartphone app for live classical music. While the orchestra is playing, Wolfgang tells you what is happening - at the very moment - in the music. Wolfgang lets you experience the richness of classical music like never before.”* (www.wolfgangapp.nl)

Well, that sounded promising. It also related to the project we had just begun. The app appeared to be a device that might give audiences a way into the classical music they would be hearing. It might work to enhance their experience of engagement with the music. So, instead of reading the program in my lap, or chatting to Peter Peters (heading the project together with Stefan Rosu and me) who was sitting next to me, I fiddled with my phone. My face lighting up from below in the dark of the concert hall as the orchestra started to play. It didn't take me long, however, to turn my phone off, feeling confused and torn by my divided attention. The sounds inviting my ears on the one

66 hand, and the letters on the screen inviting my eyes on the other. My willingness to engage with what was happening around and also in me, competing with the words on the screen that called to my “reading head” ready to process information.

What I felt was something that you come across again and again, not only in listeners but also in musicians. I wanted to give myself over to the ritual that I know, the situation that I feel comfortable in, the world and the experience that I value. I wanted to listen to the music. As musicians (as well as music lovers (cf. Hennion 2001) more generally) want to rehearse and play the music. The app felt intrusive, uncomfortable, inappropriate, jarring, weird.

In the Artful Participation project, we try to innovate classical music by experimenting with participation. If not by the same means as this app, our experiments give rise to exactly these kinds of experiences. They often feel intrusive, uncomfortable, inappropriate, jarring, weird. Within the project we have two very serious responses to this experience. They seem opposite, but we still insist on holding on to both, even if we cannot. And we also learnt something else along the way.

First, we try to take the experience of loving and valuing classical music extremely seriously. The artistic value of classical music and the traditions and practices that go with it are not, we think, to be taken lightly. Classical music requires dedication and skill and offers meaning in unexpected ways that cannot be overestimated. Such things can and do break and we don't want to do that. This requires care and attentiveness. Secondly, however, if we

want to care for classical music, we have to ask what such care entails. Should we be content to water the plants and tend to what is, or could we also try to take classical music along to other listeners, to different listening habits and situations? And how should we do that? Besides care, this also requires courage. Courage from those new listeners, from the researchers in the project, and from the orchestra itself.

What we learnt during our attempts to balance care and risk, attentiveness and courage, is to pay special attention to those moments when the tilt from the one to the other occurs. Maybe like the moment I described above. The intrusive, uncomfortable, inappropriate, jarring, weird moments. These kinds of moments are caught in the figure of the idiot (see Stengers 2005, p.994 - 997 and Michael 2013, p.535):

*‘For Stengers (2005), the idiot—a figure she adapts from Deleuze—is a “conceptual character” who “resists the consensual way in which the situation is presented and in which emergencies mobilize thought or action”. The idiot has this effect not because it directly challenges the reality or truth of those emergences “but because “there is something more important”’. However, the idiot cannot explain why this is the case since “the idiot can neither reply nor discuss the issue ... (the idiot) does not know ... the idiot demands that we slow down, that we don’t consider ourselves authorized to believe we possess the meaning of what we know”. This figure is linked to what Stengers calls the cosmopolitical proposal that is con-*

*cerned with the “passing fright that scares self-assurance, however justified”. The task becomes one of how “we bestow efficacy upon the murmurings of the idiot, the ‘there is something more important’ that is so easy to forget because it ‘cannot be taken into account’, because the idiot neither objects nor proposes anything that ‘counts’”.*

The Wolfgang app in the concert hall made me feel a bit like such an idiot, I might think, having read the above quote. It created a situation in which I didn't know what to do or how to act. And it made me aware of and start to try to question the kinds of things my experience was made from. And as such it may suggest a criterion to use to evaluate the experiments we are doing in the Artful Participation project. Instead of asking of them: Have they been careful of the love of classical music?, or: have they been courageous enough to change classical music?, we might ask: Have they been able to make idiots out of us all?



# Listening, again



‘So this is what you heard?’

He shuffles a bit, ‘Yeah.’

‘Very nice.’

He smiles, ‘It’s amazing how new everything seems, I had no idea.’ He seems dazed, looking at the table.

‘I felt I could be there for hours in a way, just listening. But it’s hard to believe that it could be so new when it was so, you know, familiar.’

He exhales sharply but the tension has gone from his shoulders which is nice to see.

‘Do you ever wonder,’ I ask, ‘how new classical music must sound to people who have never heard it before?’

He cocks his head slightly to one side.

‘What I mean is, at least from what I’ve experienced, when you hear a piece, any piece, for the first time - especially world music if you’re not used to it - your senses are so heightened. It’s like you’re absorbing everything and almost surprised at everything. Every little thing. Where

72 you can't imagine the whole or what comes next because the music is so new. Don't you think?'

He is nodding, slowly. His eyes, brightly.

'Yeah, well. Yeah. That could be true. I hadn't thought about that before.' He shakes his head, smiling. 'Yeah maybe, to some, classical music might sound as different and new as the foyer downstairs did for me, the one I did the exercise about.'

I lean back in my chair, 'Well, maybe. I shouldn't jump to conclusions, we can't know of course. How can you compare the experience of listening to something for the first time? But it's cool to think about.' I look again at the sheet of handwritten notes, scrawled out in a hurry on unlined paper. 'Anyway, the exercise is more about attending to something for the first time; listening to something with an attention and awareness that you usually wouldn't, or hadn't before. But the comparison of this exercise to *listening to music newly* is interesting, I think.'

He spreads his hands out on the table, smiling to himself.

There are two faint hums, a high one, like an air conditioner, maybe it is. And a low one. Deeper, more located. Downstairs maybe, it's more like a washing machine or dishwasher.

Nothing but this, except now the scratching of my pencil and the sliding of my hand across the paper. Two blended hums.

No, one stopped - the dishwasherwashingmachine.

A rattle now - clattering of ceramic - and rolling. Which sounds like a low rhythmic pulse, scraping along the floor. Footsteps too. Yes it's a trolley from the canteen, the lady who works there is coming past with it.

But I'm not supposed to write what I see, right?

I hear the rolling-scraping-footstepping away.

Something clicked just now, like the building itself.

Flushing. The bathrooms are on the next level but I can hear flushing, like it's all going through one massive drainpipe of the building. Huge sound.

There is another hum I hadn't noticed before, the lights I think. It's higher than the other ones - the main hums from before this one.

A clunk - deep in the walls - now dripping. I think it's the heating pipes.

Now nothing, just the twin hums of light bulbs and air.

Laughter! Female. Almost screeching, but nice. A nice loud laugh. Talking now.

Her, I guess, and another voice. Another woman. Deeper voice.

Keys, unlocking nearby. Well the scrape and click of metal, rustling of clumsy keys and a door opens and shuts, the metal clasp I can hear when the door shuts.

Now I hear nothing.

Not even the buzzing hums. Just the echo of the shutting door.

But now it opens again. I can't describe it. It's like click - air pressure + squeak- scrape. It opens. Maybe someone was collecting something. Footsteps. Male, dress shoes I think. Fast walk, he must be in the corridor to the left. I can hear the sounds from there. Don't know how I didn't hear him before.

Alla Turca ringtone. I have to stop myself from laughing. Alla Turca?!

'Shit.'

It's a guy. His footsteps stop. Alla Turca stops.

'Hello?'

'Yeah?'

'Yeah.'

Footsteps start again.

'Yeah but we can't make that deadline.'

'No.'

Footsteps stop.

'No - well, tell him.'

'Uh huh.'

'Uh huh.'

Like three footsteps.

'It's not possible to have it ready by then.'

'Yes this work takes time.'

'Uh huh.'

'Yeah well you tell him.'

'Okay that's clear.'

'Okay get back to me later.'

'No after twelve, I have a meeting til half past.'

'Uh huh, yeah one is fine.'

'Okay talk to you later.'

'Sure, you too.'

A sigh.

Beeping descending - from his phone I guess. Maybe he's turning his ringtone sound down. Now the rhythmic tapping scrape again: his footsteps going away from me. A click of metal a scrape squeak and something like an implosion of air and a click. The door closed I guess.

Maybe he was in a meeting.

Back to just me in the foyer with the buzzing.

But then I hear it again - the two voices of the women.

Footsteps now, heels and sneakers I think. The laugh again, her laugh. But I was expecting it this time. I can hear my heart racing a bit from her laughter. They are getting closer. They are coming past, behind me, on the right. Heels, heeled boots I think and sneakers yes, sneakers from the other. Their voices lower and the laughter sounds more controlled and yet, sweeter. They pass me. The sound of their sneaker- heels gets louder as they pass and move beyond me and then they burst into laughter and there it is again, her huge almost screeching laugh. A good laugh. And I can see them now, I can see her.

But I will not record what I see.

I. 1. i.  $\text{♩} = 48$

Extremely nervous, but insistent

Fingerboard

Left Hand

Cello

Right Hand

Body

Loop-tape 1: Record. Volume 0

\*pizzicato\* with right h  
fixing required pitch (w/  
another plucking strk)



# Exercise

## Listening again

*Go to a space, somewhere that you know, but a place without music. Try and attend to listening, try and hear everything*

---

*Stay for 5 -10 minutes*

---

*Try and do nothing but listen and record what you hear*

---

*Use this exercise as a way to attend to listening, with a new kind of engagement*

*How will you record what you hear?*

---

*Finding a language to express sound is a difficult thing, but you can try with written language or even with images, sketches, symbols, drawings or graphs*

---

*Experiment a little!*

In 2019, I attended a seminar about field notes, which was hosted by the research centre for Arts, Autonomy and the Public Sphere (AOK) at Zuyd University; the lectoraat where my research for the MCICM Artful Participation project was centred.

At the seminar, my colleague Veerle Spronck presented about 'Ethnographic Listening' and gave everyone present this exercise. She was exploring what it means to research about classical music when she herself was not a professionally trained musician, and how researching music was shedding new light on the way she listened. Throughout her discussion, she also brought up the issues that arise when we try to record and represent what we hear, which is a hugely complex topic in itself!

I was fascinated by this exercise Veerle presented, and I have asked many of my students to try it. I think it's particularly interesting for musicians as we are so used to using our ears, and perhaps we forget to take the time to listen to everyday life with a new attention. Perhaps one way to open ourselves up to being reflexive is to reconsider what it is that we take for granted; to re-attend to what we already know. But you can try, and see what you think.

# Performing Partici- pation

What is participation?

What is audience engagement?

At a conservatory lecture in 2018, I defined three approaches to participation in Western Classical Music. Now, there are not necessarily three approaches to participation, but given the divergence of opinions on the subject, I collated what I had studied and could see three distinct patterns. There are artists and theorists who argue for a particular definition of participation, some of whom I will explore briefly here, and these definitions consider participation on a variety of different levels. At present, I am just going to refer to participation in the performing arts, as that is what we're addressing here. In the interest of innovating classical music, and addressing the issue of declining audiences, many are turning to participation as a way to bring new audiences. But let's first take a closer look at participation.

Some say that for a performance to be participatory, the audience needs to actively form or *co-create* part of the content or material of the performance. Claire Bishop seems to be a good example of this, as she works around a definition of participation in which the audience constitute the central artistic medium and material. In regard to artists in participatory projects, she states in her text *Artificial Hells* (2014):

*'The artist is conceived less as an individual producer of discrete objects than as a collaborator and producer of situations; the work of art as a finite, portable, commodifiable product is reconceived as an ongoing or long-term project with an unclear beginning and end; while the audience, previously conceived as a 'viewer' or 'beholder', is now responsible as a co-producer or participant'* (p.2).

Co-creative performances can stem from community projects that are built between artists and participants from the ground up, to performances where the audience suddenly is asked to join in a performance, sometimes without being aware beforehand! I would argue that Marina Abramovic's 2010 MoMA installation *The Artist is Present* is a co-creative artwork, as without an audience member sitting with her at the table, there is no artwork. However, it is important to remember that no matter what co-creative performance project an artist might plan, the act of participating is always up to the audience. It is up to them - it is their choice - to participate actively or not (Bouko, 2014).

At the opposite end of the participatory spectrum, there is the angle of participation as *recognition*. Some artists and makers have stated that there is a need to recognise and consider who the audience is, and that participation is simply planning a performance while keeping the audience in mind. This is done by imagining how they will perceive the performance and perhaps by even targeting or focusing on a particular audience group or demographic.

This more broad approach to participation is described by theatre-maker Chris Goode in a 2014 article from the Guardian, *'We consistently undervalue the work that an audience does in being present and aware of its own presence, in paying attention, in reading and re-reading what it sees and hears, in helping to hold the piece in common.'* For Goode, the participatory nature of theatre depends not on how an audience sits or stands but *'how successfully and how seductively a stage piece asks for their active engagement.'*

Perhaps this approach is about placing more importance on the role of the listener, recognising the listening. The Pianist Glenn Gould actually wrote about the 'Participatory Listener' in his 1966 essay *The Prospects of Recording*.

*'At the center of the technological debate, then, is a new kind of listener - a listener more participant in the musical experience. The emergence of this mid-twentieth century phenomenon is the greatest achievement of the record industry. For this listener is no longer passively analytical; he is an associate whose tastes, preferences, and inclination even now alter peripherally the experiences to which he gives his attention, and upon whose fully participation the future of the art of music waits.'*

Between these two points of *co-creation* and *recognition*, there is a more mild approach: where participation is when the performers/artists *interact* with the audience, but the audience does not necessarily change or alter the content or material of the performance production. Examples of this *interaction* include immersive theatre, such as Punchdrunk theatre company's production of the *Duchess of Malfi*. Or when the conductor of a performance talks directly, and comfortably, to the audience, such as the *Night Shift* concert Dobson's 2010 article describes.

As I began to find this variety of definitions, it became clear that participation is a difficult thing to characterise. Therefore, I defined three approaches which loosely cover the three arguments just stated above.

Participation as *Co-Creation*, where the audience form or create part of the material/ content of the performance.

Participation as *Interaction*, where the performers/artists interact directly with the audience but the audience do not impact the material/content of the performance.

Participation as *Recognition*, where the performers/artists intentionally recognise and consider the importance and specificity of the audience, design their performance for this specific audience, but the audience do not affect the material of the performance.

These distinctions are loose, but I presented this theory in my 2018 lecture (and now here in this chapter) with the intention of opening up a discussion with conservatory students about the nature of participation and what it might mean for them. I discovered when talking and work-

ing with music students, that they generally considered participation to be ‘co-creation’ but they found it interesting and useful when I illustrated other forms of participation and the elements that define them.

But why does participation, as a subject of study for classical music, matter?

The reason participation matters is because the audience matters. As has been discussed, there has been a decline in audiences of live classical music, and much of this is because the rituals and values that are predominant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, for 21<sup>st</sup> century audiences, have not been taken much into account by those who practice classical music. The audience matters because without an audience, who will we perform to? But this does not mean that we should just blindly throw ourselves into participatory performances.

My key intention, in bringing up the topic of participation, is to raise awareness about the role of the audience. To approach participation, not only as a style and genre of performance, but as a mindset towards the audience. In this regard, I am very much in favour of the ‘recognition’ approach to audience engagement. This is due to the fact that, if you see audience engagement solely as ‘co-creation’, you may not be considering who the specific audience is, and can the risk of assuming that every audience member wants to be creatively involved in a performance. Instead of this, I want to encourage musicians to consider participation and audience engagement as a way to think about the audience as well as considering the social impact of their work. This doesn’t mean that I am against interac-

tive or co-creative projects! I simply believe that fostering a broader and more comprehensive understanding of the audience is integral to becoming reflexive practitioners and artists.

So. Who is coming to your performance, and in what way is your performance related to them? And if you are considering co-creation perhaps ask yourself: in what way is co-creation relevant for this project and for the audience's experience of it?

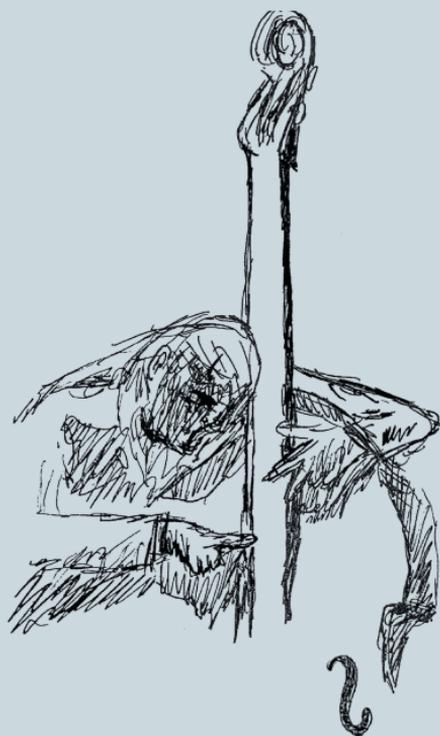
From September 2018 to June 2020, I led a master research circle at the Conservatorium Maastricht, with students who were focusing on the innovation of classical music through audience engagement and participation. Each of them developed an artistic research project that experimented with new forms of engaging with the audience whilst considering both the theoretical background of this approach and the artistic relevance. Here are some of their thoughts about their projects and about the audience itself.

*'I don't always invite the same people or the same friends [...] I always think of what kinds of people would want to be there and I think about who I know who might have an interest in the kind of music of the performance, sacred or opera or choir. So for me, I always think of the audience in relation to the kind of concert it is. I've always been like this. I don't want to force my friends or people to come to my concert, I always make sure to see if they like the type of music first. If I'm not sure I'll always ask.'* - Student 1

*'When you're on stage in traditional opera, all you hear is silence, you know. And sometimes you're wondering if they actually like it or if they are still awake. But when I performed [in my interactive concert], there were so many strong reactions from the audience and it really helped me, and the other performers, to perform! Because finally, we heard that the audience were enjoying it and it was such a nice feeling to have! It's nice to see emotions on the faces of people in the audience...it's like a shared emotional experience.'* - Student 2

*'Two years ago [before my project], I was thinking...that the audience is not educated, and that they just can't understand as much as people who are more educated about classical music. That they can't understand, for instance, more difficult repertoire. But actually, through this project I've realised... No, the audience - they are smart. You really don't have to speak down to them in order for them to understand a piece. Even if it's a piece that is difficult to understand, the problem is not the piece, it's the way it's brought to the public. Yes, of course, maybe some contemporary piece that is really abstract, musically, needs something more concrete - visually maybe - to be brought in the right way and to be understood better. And so yes, my perspective towards the audience and repertoire too, has changed a lot. I'm really conscious, now, about the fact that the audience is really smart, and if you just guide them, then they will realise that they can understand...you don't have to educate them, they are educated themselves, with all that they have lived and, as an artist, you just have to work with the things we all have in common - like emotions and senses. If you work with these things, they will see what the music is about, for them. But this is just my vision.'* - Student 3

*'I felt I grew up with the idea that the audience matters a lot less than the rest of the process - that the music itself and the perfection and accuracy of the performance was the most important thing. But the project I did has had a life-changing impact on my life and now... now I see the audience like one actor... one subject in a two-way communication process. And because they, the audience, forms one of these two subjects, they have a very very big role.'* - Student 4



# An inter- vention by Ties van de Werff

Postdoctoral Researcher,  
Artful Participation

### *Assuming Audience Participation(s)*

It's the concert evening. I'm strolling through a former factory hall, the AINSI theatre in Maastricht. It's the break between two parts of the concert. We organised this evening, called *The People's Salon*, together with philharmonie zuidnederland and some of their best 'friends' (donors and subscribers).

Over the past months, I closely worked with these friends and regular audiences of the orchestra, with the goal to come up with a program for the evening. Through interviews and focus groups, I asked these friends of the orchestra to share their memories, stories and experiences of their favourite classical musical works. This brought me to visit people in their homes, talking for hours about their passion for classical music, and the role music plays in their lives. It was touching to hear how passionately they could talk about music, it showed me how significant music can be for people.

Through these focus groups, the friends decided together upon a program for the concert evening of *The People's Salon*, based on their own stories. The friends became co-programmers, and including their voices in the programming felt like a meaningful way of doing participation.

How different is the kind of participation I now witness, during the break of the concert! We had hoped that the concert program – which included small ensembles

and short interviews with friends about their personal stories and memories – would trigger conversation among the audiences present, about classical music. To encourage audiences to talk about classical music, I had put little cards on the table, with some questions that could start a conversation. But now, when strolling around the foyer during the interval, I hear that people are talking about a lot of things, but not about classical music.

This makes me question the desirability of audience participation on different levels. The flat and maybe dumb one I was aiming for with the talking cards, versus the meaningful one of the friends sharing their stories and creating a program together. It makes me realise that audience participation not only comes with an emancipation of the musician (to literally tune-in to the audience when performing), but maybe also comes with an emancipation of the audience who seem also stuck (and happy) in traditional concert routines.

The case of *The People's Salon* shows how including audiences (in this case the 'friends') as co-creators of a concert can really open up the concert routine, and that sharing artistic responsibility with audiences can instil a sense of ownership for the music and the orchestra as well. But it also shows that you cannot assume how the audiences will participate beforehand – you cannot really predict how and if they will participate in the way you planned. You have to be open to what participation can mean.

Designing such a participatory concert therefore needs to be open enough to allow for both desirable *and undesirable* forms of participation to emerge.

*‘Music acts upon human beings, on their nervous systems and their vital processes... This power— which poems and colors possess occasionally and indirectly— is in the case of music particularly immediate, drastic, and indiscreet: “it penetrates to the center of the soul,” Plato says, “and gains possession of the soul in the most energetic fashion,” ...by means of massive irruptions, music takes up residence in our intimate self and seemingly elects to make its home there.’*

(Jankelevitch, 2003, p.1)

# On Stage

We've gathered on the stage and the atmosphere is set. It's the dress rehearsal for Artful Participation's project *The People's Salon*. The lights grow dim.

He sits there in gold, a diameter in gold, in a soft golden ray that streams from the ceiling like an unfamiliar sun, a spotlight in sepia: the pianist. All the rest of the stage is in shadow as he plays.

And like a moment pulled from time, a golden lense, a structured spherical 1.5 x 1.5 vignette, he is cut out from another age. A memory. A story that we are forming from remembrance. Pre-War. Post-War. Mid-War. *The nuns at the nursery school had a music box, melodies from Mozart, it was beautiful* and fusing with yellowed keys, this living music box turns phrases, unlocking synaptic movements, tracing tarnished mechanical cogs like - wrong in the left hand.

'I'm sorry, I'm not sure I can do this.'

The yellow light fizzes as the pianist swivels around, blinking apologetic yellow at me.

'This light is so weird, I mean,' and he laughs, 'I'm looking at my hands but everything is just blurring together.'

I move over towards him and look at the keyboard. Golden brown hands on golden white teeth. My eyes hurt.

‘You’re right. Like trying to read in the dark.’

‘Or underwater,’ he laughs.

I sigh.

He swivels back around and shrugs, smiles, smiles sideways at me. ‘But does it look how you want it?’

I nod, rubbing the back of my neck. ‘Yeah. Really beautiful. Really.’

He breathes out and stretches. I can hear the bones in his fingers crack. Then he places his hands on the piano again.

‘Well then,’ he says. ‘Let’s give it another go.’

As classical music performances begin to experiment and evolve, these theatre-cross- music scenarios, like *The People’s Salon*, are becoming more common and musicians are beginning to need theatre skills (Idema, 2012; Hübner, 2013) and theatre experience. The combination of stage design or theatre performance with music is quite a natural one as, throughout history, many of the other disciplines in the performing arts (such as theatre and dance) use music in their productions. Music compliments storytelling, it gives us emotion and atmosphere; music gives us context, on top of the context that space and the audience also bring. This interdisciplinarity is part of the move to create new events, as we have been discussing.

However, unlike our performing arts counterparts, classical musicians have rarely ever had stage performance training, they are mostly trained to be ‘artists of sound.’ If anything, they are taught to emote as little as possible and they are generally not used to breaking the ‘fourth wall’ or interacting with the audience - the ‘fourth wall’ being the invisible barrier between the stage and the audience that separates the two.

But things are changing, and the musicians that were part of *The People’s Salon* project were being asked for more. How should they perform on stage in this setting? What skills might be useful for musicians in these new events?

The following chapters will address this question by exploring four themes.

- 1 *dress rehearsals*
- 2 *stage presence*
- 3 *playing by ear*
- 4 *body language on stage*

This is not a comprehensive list, but these four themes illustrate some of the main skills that I feel are relevant in order for musicians to become more flexible performers. Because if we are making new rituals and different performance events, then it makes sense that the way we perform might need to be new and different too. We can’t just alter the external elements of a performance, such as the space and the audience, we must also consider our performance practice - the way we perform.

# Rehearsing Scene V

They are lying on the black tamped floor, half in a semicircle.

She stretches out one leg and breathes in. Right leg out, left leg in, half butterfly, right arm extends to foot, left arm reaches over to meet right foot and right hand. She breathes out. The pull through her left side itches a little, sinking in.

She was late to rehearsal. Not sure if there's time to do much more, she releases the hold and swaps over, reaching out to the other side. On the other side of the studio, Lisbeth and Lars are sharing lazy butterflies, bouncing legs, knees hitting each other.

She moves to a forward fold and from the shadow of her knees she can hear the director's sneakers come on stage.

'Hi guys, I hope you had an early night because we're running scene five from the top, with lights.'

Some scattered groans which the director applauds through to get them moving.

She rolls up and moves to the theatre wings, taking her water bottle from the table side stage. As she drinks, the theatre is plunged into darkness, like an implosion, and her ears take time to adjust to the secret giggles trickling through the fog of dust-tamped black, stage left.

'Will you shut up please!' that's the director. She screws the cap back on the water bottle. 'CUE LIGHTS!'

A blue wash like frozen night descends over luminous gold lanterns, scattering like a dream, falling on the set of disjointed barren staircases which rise and fall into nothing like moving echoes of Escher.

Gabriel, naked from the waist up, moves on. Wading through blue. He takes each choreographed step like treading through water, balancing himself in the space.

But he stops.

And looking downstage, sighs, his hand rubbing the back of his shaved head.

'What the - Ashley. Ashley!' the director. 'Did you leave your pink sweater on stage? I know it's yours because you had it on this morning when you were lining up for your oh-so-typical doubleshot latte. Can you clear it the hell off stage? Unless you think your fashion appendages relevant to scene five.'

Running feet padding barefoot like awkward chalk squeaking exercises on blackboard.

'Sorry! Super super sorry!' Ashley's echo sounds out through the theatre.

'Anyone else with laundry on stage? Remove it now.'

Michela and Ethan scramble up from the stalls to check. 'Yes? Done? Good. Now clear off.' She can almost hear the clicking-double-clicking of his pen. 'We've got three hours to check the lights and do a full run so can we not waste more time please? Great. Scene five from the top!'

She knows she hasn't left anything on stage.

Everything is in a duffel bag down in the dressing rooms.

Gabriel's back on stage again, moving through blue - she sighs as she begins to hear it.

From downstairs slowly streams the crescendo of vocal warmup exercises of Lei and Willem and now as well -

A roar from the stalls, 'Is that a guitar? That better not be a \_\_\_ing guitar!'

She can hear the director's sneakers on stage again, they squeak through the wings to where she is still, leaning against the table, running her fingernail along the ribbed pattern of the water bottle cap. He stands there with his white shoes bright against the scratchy dark of side stage.

Everyone is gathered in the wings now.

'Okay guys,' he is breathing very fast. 'From the director to the cast, the rules are simple. Unless you are supposed to be on stage doing the best performance of your life, then shut the hell up and keep your shit to yourself. Because if you want the audience to hear your warmup exercises and see your dirty laundry then you obviously don't want them to see the best performance of your life.'

Even in the dim light, she can see he is pulling at parts of his hair.

'And look, Darren, it's sweet you made everyone tea, but can you just wait til after the rehearsal?'

Darren stands with the dripping tray stage right of the commotion, big wet kisses of darjeeling scattering the floor.

This little vignette shows how a cranky director might work through a dress rehearsal for, in this case, an interdisciplinary theatre performance. And though it doesn't focus only on music, I wanted to use it as a funny example of how important it is for the 'cast' of a production to take responsibility for the performance. This is an essential element in the performing arts, such as for theatre or dance, but in some aspects is a little new to musicians.

Dress and technical rehearsals are an integral part of performance productions, especially if that performance is new and hasn't been staged before. Even if you're working on an old production, it might be being performed with a new design or in a new space, so doing a 'tech and dress run' - sometimes multiple runs that can go for hours each - is essential in order to check the lights, the sound and the transitions between performance scenes.

When you think about it, the format of performing orchestral music in a concert hall doesn't really vary that much between performances. At least in my day, when I was a violinist in an orchestra, we would rehearse the week before a Saturday night performance, then on Saturday we'd have a 'general' rehearsal in the concert hall (which is a dress rehearsal of sorts) and then we'd play that evening. And every time I performed, even with different orchestras and with totally different repertoire, this week-long rehearsal and general/dress rehearsal structure was exactly the same. It makes sense though, each time we were performing on a similar-ish stage with the same stage design, same lighting, and there were very few changes between pieces, except when soloists or the conductor came out. If

there was a big change of orchestral set-up, like a smaller orchestra with a soloist for the first half of the concert and a bigger orchestra for the second half, then all the changes were made by the stage crew during the interval.

It's all very routine, which is fine!

But when you're doing a performance that is NOT routine, then things become more uncertain. More exciting too! If you are part of a production that is not in a concert hall (halls which usually have pre-programmed lights and a pre-programmed stage design) then it takes time to position the lights and prepare the stage, according to the new production. And if the design of the concert doesn't have the audience in the stalls and the musicians on the stage (like you usually would have in a traditional classical concert) but instead both groups are all laid out together - for instance in a big warehouse - then you can see how it would take time to position the musicians in the warehouse and make sure that the audience could still see and hear them well.

So you need to make time to rehearse both new stage designs, like where you will sit on stage - as well as the transitions, like when you come on and when you leave. Because depending on the show, all this might suddenly be far more important than it has been before.

It does take more effort to make something new, and you may be asking yourself, why bother? But as I mentioned earlier, there has been a lot of research into the importance of performance design when trying to encourage new audiences, and as a previous chapter also illustrated, space conveys a lot of meaning.

Taking the time to design a performance space can be a truly beautiful process as you are crafting a new experience for both the audience, and for yourselves as performers. It may take work, but it really can be worth it.

Having said all this, a lot of classical musicians aren't used to doing extensive dress rehearsals, and from my experience they can often be frustrated with it. When you're doing a new production with a new stage design and a totally different atmosphere, you need to take on a different kind of responsibility. You have to reflect upon your role in this concert and try and see the whole picture and how you fit into it. It's exciting really, it gives a new kind of agency and a new kind of meaning to who you are as a performer.

It is understandable that some classical musicians may be frustrated with this, as change can be a difficult thing when you have already trained a certain way within a specific field. But that is why this book is hoping to encourage reflexivity and flexibility, alongside, and not in negation of, the musicianship that binds the classical music tradition.

This handwritten musical score is divided into three systems. The first system features a treble clef and includes the instruction "slide back sounding board" with a corresponding diagram of a guitar body. It contains various dynamic markings such as *mf*, *p*, *mp*, and *pp*, along with performance directions like "PT" and "T". Chord diagrams are shown above the staff, with notes like  $A^\#$ ,  $E^\#$ ,  $C^\#$ , and  $G^\#$ . The second system continues with similar notation, including a *ff* marking and a *mf* marking. The third system begins with a boxed measure number "50" and includes a *fff* marking. It features a *mf* marking and the instruction "finger on". Chord diagrams for  $E^\#$ ,  $A^\#$ ,  $A^\flat$ ,  $E^\flat$ ,  $G^\flat$ ,  $F^\flat$ , and  $E^\flat$  are present. The score concludes with a final chord diagram for  $E^\#$ ,  $C^\#$ .

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# Exercise

The Dress Rehearsal



It may be different to take on the kind of agency necessary in theatrical or alternatively designed productions. It can take a bit of practice if you're not used to it, but it's quite simple really. Just keep a tab on where you have to be during the performance, what is happening on stage at what time and what you need to do/have before, after and during your part. The best thing you can do in a dress or technical rehearsal is to be patient and to know what you need to do in the performance and to take responsibility for it. And also, be sure to listen out for notes from the director/managers!

Here is an exercise for thinking through a performance, as a preparation for being ready and organised in a dress or technical rehearsal.

*1 Pick a concert you are part of*

---

*2 Make a rough sketch of the stage design of the concert*

---

*3 Mark where you will be and where others will be*

---

*4 Mark out the route you will take from backstage to your place on stage*

*What do you need?*

---

*How will you carry what you need?*

---

*Can things be pre-set on stage or  
side of the stage, for easy access?*

---

*Are you performing with or without music?*

---

*If you're performing with music,  
will you use a music stand?*

---

*Is the music stand already on stage, if so how?*

---

*If not, how will the music stand get on stage?*

---

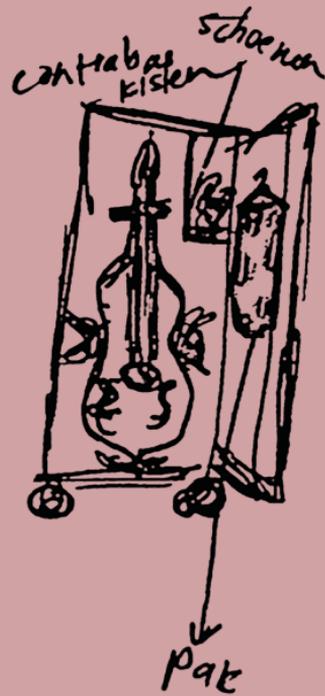
*What will you be wearing for the performance?*

---

*Will you be able to move and perform  
in what you will wear?*

---

*Will the audience see you walk on stage?  
If so, how will you walk?*



*In general, technical rehearsals for productions can be particularly tedious and slow, so just be patient and maybe get to know some of the technical staff. They are there to create the space and to help the show go smoothly, so it's nice to get to know them!*

# The Noh Walk

In 2019, when I was coaching students for a conservatory project, I noticed that a lot of them had a big interest in acting. They wanted to explore characterisation and storytelling in their performances, however many of them displayed an awkwardness on stage. Their hands would wander or grasp at sleeves; they would furtively glance around the room with strained eyebrows; they would pace the stage randomly in their enthusiasm to render their chosen character. Unfortunately these actions mostly came across as anxiety and confusion, and at worst, as amateur performance.

But these music students were not amateurs, nor did they intend to be. They simply did not know how to present or perform themselves on stage.

From my experience, one of the best stage skills for a musician to learn is groundedness. Groundedness is a kind of self-possession and stillness, and from this stillness, chosen movements then seem direct, intentional and meaningful. It may seem unlikely, but the ability to be still, controlled and direct on stage, shows far greater performance mastery than what are often unnecessary movements.

Therefore, I wanted to offer the students I was coaching a short workshop in the Noh Walk, a technique in Japanese Noh Theatre. At first the other teachers seemed

somewhat reticent about the idea. I think they feared I was going to coach the students in pantomime, but they were pleasantly surprised.

‘They are doing so little!’

‘They look so focused!’

‘It’s not bad acting!’

Yes. Many musicians are bad actors. Many actors are bad actors too! What makes a bad actor? Well it’s hard to say, but as I was alluding to, self consciousness and unintentional movements or expressions are some of the key characteristics. But being *grounded and still* gives you self-possession.

So what can a musician do when they are entering the world of theatre or alternative music performance? I would say, try the Noh Walk first.



# Exercise

## The Noh Walk

find a quiet space  
a practice room could work quite well  
go to one end of the room, you need a few  
meters clear space

now stand still  
feet together  
bend your knees slightly

feel your centre of gravity through your  
abdominal muscles, support it with  
lengthening the small of your back

keep breathing, in a relaxed  
but regular way

imagine an invisible thread is lifting the  
crown of your head to the ceiling,  
let your chin drop a little as the back of  
your neck lengthens then let your  
shoulders drop a little



keep your hands by your side  
do your fingers feel restless?  
then imagine holding a small 5c coin  
between your thumb and middle finger,  
on both hands

now imagine two invisible threads are  
lifting your collarbones up, lifting up  
towards the ceiling,  
let your shoulders relax back  
let your shoulder blades flatten a little

so  
feet together  
knees bent  
supported, straight but relaxed posture  
steady breathing

This is the preparatory position known  
as *kamae*

Once you have prepared this position,  
we can begin the walk or *suri-ashi* as it is  
really called

from the standing position, move your weight into your right foot  
keep your eyes facing forward, try not to look at your feet

lift your left foot a few millimeters off the ground, *but do not let your foot really leave the floor!*

count eight slow beats as you slide your left foot along the ground  
after eight beats,  
the heel of your left foot should be aligned with the toe of your right foot

*are your knees still bent? posture still supported and straight? find your centre - centredness, groundedness*

now move your weight into your left foot again, lift the right foot slightly, slide it for 8 counts along beside your left foot, until the heel meets the toe

*your height should remain completely the same for this, try practicing in a mirror.*

keep breathing and slowly shifting forward

at the count of 8 for each movement  
*transition between feet as smoothly as possible* stop - when you reach the other end of the room

# Bonus Exercise

## Noh Walking Duo

After trying the Noh Walk alone, try it with a friend!

stand at opposite ends of the room  
set up the posture and begin to move forward  
as you move, stare with a neutral face, hardly blinking  
stare straight into the eyes of the other person

I dare you not to laugh!

Though this duo exercise can be hilarious fun, if you can manage to do it, without laughing and with control, it will greatly improve your ability to control your facial expressions on stage. Working on this skill will also help you to interact with others in a performance, both fellow performers and the audience, without fear.

Overall, the Noh Walk can help to improve physical control and posture as well as controlling nervous energy on stage. This improvement of posture and breathing is a great plus for musicians!

*As you work on this practice, both alone and with others, try to keep the flow between the changes of feet, and transitions of weight, as smooth as possible. Always remember to keep breathing and to maintain a steady and supported posture.*

# Playing by Ear

‘So the idea is to play the music from memory, a few short pieces at least.’

I breathe out and look at the two of them.

His eyebrows are raised up at me and the other unfolds a tissue and blows his nose.

I breathe in, ‘Let me explain. I want to ask you guys, as classical musicians in this thing, to approach some of the repertoire like folk musicians. This *Mahler am Tisch* project is about getting back to the folk roots in his music so I think it makes sense here. In fact, what I really want is for you all to learn a few pieces, a few melodies from pieces, by ear.’

The light is buzzing.

‘Hmmm. Perhaps I’m not being very clear.’

He snorts a laugh at me and the other one scratches his ear.

‘Well, see, learning music by ear really changes the way we absorb it, the way we absorb music. And consequently the way we play it, alters. Especially when you learn by ear as a group. Through this process, you build the music from within you and you also rely on, and trust, the others in the group more to support you. The connection and trust builds. Given that this project is about performing the folk music in Mahler through a folk-style performance setting, it seems a good approach to try.’

He sighs and crosses his arms.

‘I know it’s a different approach and you may not all have time to commit to this kind of exercise, but I believe this will really make a big difference. You will be playing in a bar, with a somewhat rowdy audience which we want to engage with - learning by ear and playing by heart really pushes you to absorb and play music in a way that helps you to be more flexible in such a setting.’

I look at them both, ‘So what do you think?’

He unfolds his arms and exhales. The other one scratches his ear again.

Playing by ear is a performance skill, just like any other, and it is the skill that defined music making for centuries before written notation (Woody & Lehmann, 2010). Though playing by ear may be more time consuming for those who are accustomed to reading from the score, it is a very useful skill to develop.

Research has shown that it boosts the cognitive mechanism that retains the aural representation of music in our minds (*ibid.*). Furthermore, this skill improves even the most foundational performance skills such as the ability to sight-read, improvise, play from memory, and perform rehearsed music (McPherson & Parncutt, 2002). Though some musicians and teachers have expressed fear about learning by ear, in thinking that it may hamper reading skills, there is no evidence to suggest that this is the case, in fact the opposite is true (Musco, 2010).

Ear playing works the cognitive skill of representing musical sound mentally; meaning it works on aural representation. Singing by ear is easier at first to achieve, as you don't need to connect the mind's aural representation to motor skills, just to the voice. But the next step is to connect the music heard in the mind to the motor activity of instrumental playing, if that is your field of study. Often, for classical musicians, it is the connection between the heard music and the instrument that causes the moment of uncertainty, so start by replicating through voice and then work from voice to instrument.

Though the ability to play by ear may just naturally develop over time, it is worth actively pursuing as it helps foster flexibility in classical musicians, without even extending into fields such as improvisation. As useful and fascinating as improvisation can be, playing by ear will contribute to a musician's ownership of their performance and, therefore, improve their overall flexibility. It is also a fundamental step for those who do wish to expand their performance into the world of improvisation.

During the *Mahler am Tisch* project, the string group played an arrangement of a waltz from Mahler's first symphony. It was transcribed for them quite roughly and therefore the musicians relied often on their ears to fill in the parts and extend the depth of the arrangement. This kind of half written/half aurally-memorised arrangement made a huge difference to the kind of ownership they had towards the piece. It also helped them to be able to perform with more spirit, to move with the music, as the context of the event required of them.

# Exercise

Playing by Ear

try this

my recommendation is *The Peat Dance*  
from the album *Wood Works* by the  
Danish String Quartet... it's on Spotify

listen to this

listen like 10 times

*do you like it? if you don't like  
it, it won't work so well. but  
you can just find anything you  
like really. ideally something  
that's got a melody about 8  
bars long or something.*

now

hear it in your head

sing it

if you already know how to  
do this then good for you

listen again and sing along  
and keep going until you can sing it  
without the recording

now hear it in your head and imagine  
playing it on your instrument  
pick any starting note

just give it a go

# An inter- vention by Veerle Spronck

PhD Candidate,  
Artful Participation

### *Playing by Heart / Music as Open Dialogue*

My job is a curious one: I spent the entire 2018/2019 season observing the everyday practices of Dutch symphony orchestras. Each and every one of them is trying to find out how to reach new audiences and relate to their existing audiences in new ways. In my research, I am figuring out what it actually means for the orchestras themselves to ‘innovate’, to do audience participation differently. In May 2019, I started observing and interviewing the members of the collective Pynarello.

Pynarello is not a ‘regular’ symphonic music practice. In 2017, violinist Lonneke van Straalen founded Pynarello because she missed contact with her audience during and after concerts in her work as an orchestral musician. Van Straalen brought together a group of professional musicians from various backgrounds (orchestral musicians like herself, but also soloists and jazz musicians) to experiment with how symphonic concerts could be done differently and how the contact with the audience could be intensified. Before I met with the collective, I read in Pynarello’s business plan that their aim is to bring symphonic music as an ‘open dialogue’. I was curious to explore what this meant. How do the ways in which they play symphonic repertoire relate to the aim of changing the relationship with the audience?

The Pynarello musicians organise concerts in which they play traditional symphonic music repertoire. One of the projects in their first season focused on Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, and they have since played other symphonic works from, amongst others, Mozart, Haydn, and Dvořák. When I attended their rehearsals, they were playing Beethoven again – this time his Fourth Symphony. What all of these projects have in common is how the music is performed. Orchestral routines are not blindly copied. The musicians play without conductor and without sheet music. This is not an *end in itself*, but a way to put their aim of 'symphonic music as open dialogue' into practice. Why play with a score if it is not absolutely necessary? I could not help but wonder: what does playing by heart have to do with 'openness'?

The first and most literal way in which playing by heart establishes openness I had already experienced as an audience member: you take away elements that physically stand in between the audience and the musicians, such as the music stand and the conductor. Before my research even started, I was in Pynarello's audience and noticed I could suddenly see how the musicians on stage shared looks and were working together. In turn, they could see me too. In the encore, the musicians walked amongst us, allowing me to relate to the music (Mozart in this case) in new ways, to listen in new ways. I felt as if I was made part of a collective experience. I was acknowledged – I was there too.

When I shared these experiences with one of the musicians later, she assured me that playing by heart does not only have consequences for the audience: “It is going out of the routine for everyone!”

These routines are important to attend to. The music stand with sheet music is not only a material object, it also functions as an organising principle in orchestral practices: the score defines how musicians work together, often with the help of a conductor who decides on the overall interpretation. The score is deeply embedded in these routine ways of working, so taking it away has consequences. It is scary to move out of the routine, difficult to play by heart. It means that the musicians have to play together in new, and more open, ways.

This process starts long before the concerts take place: during the individual preparations at home. Playing by heart is more than cramming notes.

The ‘Pynarelli’ I interviewed shared how they had to move away from the meticulous focus on the notes of their own parts, and instead listen around themselves, sensitizing themselves to the context in which they were playing. To be able to play without conductor and score, they have to be aware of what everyone around them is doing. What I found is that the score and the conductor normally function as a safety net: something to fall back on. In Pynarello, it is the collective responsibility of the group to bring the concert together. Focusing on the parts of colleagues and the symphony as a whole becomes *a new safety net*.

Paradoxically, playing by heart does not mean the score is less important. Quite the contrary. Playing by heart is artistic work. It becomes vital that the musicians are attentive to the openness of the score and the potential interpretations of it. Playing by heart is not a gimmick for the audience, nor is it just a material element that is removed from the concert, it is a decision with artistic consequences.

What I observed in the practice of Pynarello is that the musicians tried not to start from a preconceived singular interpretation of Beethoven's Fourth Symphony that was thought of beforehand and then executed. Instead, they had an open dialogue *with* and *through* the symphony. The focus was on the *process* of learning, analysing, rehearsing, performing, enjoying and listening to Beethoven. To enable open dialogues throughout the process (first amongst musicians, later also including audience members), interpretation becomes something different. Not something before the fact, but something that emerges through the process and is part of all these activities.

This page contains a handwritten musical score for guitar, featuring several systems of music with various annotations and chord diagrams. The score includes:

- System 1:** A complex arrangement of notes and chords with a dense texture. Annotations include "slide back sounding board" and "PT" (pick attack) markings. Chord diagrams are shown above the staff, including one for  $F/C-D/Eb$ .
- System 2:** Continues the musical piece with dynamic markings such as  $ff$ ,  $f$ ,  $mp$ ,  $p$ ,  $mf$ ,  $f$ ,  $mp$ , and  $pp$ . It includes a chord diagram for  $E\# C\#$  and a note "doh" with a downward arrow.
- System 3:** Features a series of chords and notes, with a chord diagram for  $E\# A\#$  and another for  $A\# C\# E\#$ .
- System 4:** Includes a section with the handwritten note "Lingers on" and a chord diagram for  $E\# A\#$ .
- System 5:** Shows a sequence of chords and notes, with a chord diagram for  $A\# C\# E\#$ .

The score is heavily annotated with dynamics, articulation, and specific guitar techniques, providing a detailed guide for performance.

U.E. 14207L

# Butlers and Bars

Even if musicians do perform in alternative spaces, or even if we remain in concert halls which have more ideal acoustic conditions, we still need to think more about the way we perform as it seems that many audience groups find classical concerts highly predictable and impersonal (Sloboda & Ford, 2012). This relates not just to interaction and personal engagement between performers and audience, but also to a kind of projection *that the performers themselves display* - meaning the 'projection of emotional and other qualities through such things as body movement, facial expressions, or vocalisations' (ibid. p.3).

Many audiences find the body language of classical musicians to be restrained or overly-dramatic. Where the performers are either trying to be neutral and invisible, or, as in the case of some well-known soloists, are using exaggerated gestures, which are often highly similar across different performances (ibid. p.5).

Though many musicians think about gestures and body movements in relation to the sounds they produce (Hübner, 2013), the kind of gesture and body language I'm talking about is more related to presence. By presence, I mean the way you stand and speak, how you look around the room, and how the way you perform relates to the performance as a whole.

Learning a piece, or part of a piece, by ear may be a way of approaching how you perform differently too, as you learn it away from the physical confines of the music stand. But even so, classical musicians (in general) tend to follow the same trend of body language when it comes to performance, regardless of what they are playing, where they are playing and who they are playing for. The Noh Walk can help with stage presence, particularly in the moments when you're not playing an instrument or singing. But what about when you are playing or singing?

How does your body language relate to the music and the performance context itself? What about in the case of the *Mahler am Tisch* project?

I'm at the bar with Anna, I feel released. Like I've given up. The klezmer band will do their thing. They will all do their thing, it's the last night.

The beautiful rough-wood floors are scattered with peanut shells. The ceiling houses broken instruments, I see a euphonium and some horns, and the wall behind the band sports a bright red car. Strange, I like it. We'd moved the tables back from that corner to make space for the musicians, which looked like a tough job at first, what with the huge crowd that's here tonight.

The klezmer band is up first.

Anna and I laugh a bit about the singer, Tia, who somehow seems too enthusiastic for the shuffle and squeak of the group's tightly packed spot by the windows.

But it's going okay.

After the first few pieces they get to the one I really like. The arrangement of the opening of Mahler One. I played it when I was 12 years old. It was my first big symphony piece and I remember trying so hard to get the opening high harmonic note that the violins had to play. The accordion covers that bit now. It's supposed to be like dawn, with these sustained early morning chords and the 'Cuckoo' of a bird - now a little clarinet bit done by Tim.

I find Tim a bit dull to watch.

He just seems a little stiff beside the somewhat forced vibrance of Tia's performative singing style, if I might label it as such. She reminds me of a yiddish cabaret singer with

this half-spoken/half-sung style. I can't say that I'm crazy about it. Shame though, she looks like she's having fun. I feel bad to be inwardly denying her right to that. She certainly has more spirit than I'm able to muster this evening, I'll give her that.

Tim sounds good though.

I realise how picky I am. I want the exact right degree of stage openness with high quality musicianship and engagingly beautiful music as well. I've landed myself in the best and worst of both worlds: the ears of a classical musician and the eyes of a theatre director. Or something like that.

Zoe is amazing though. She's the double bassist. When she performs, she gives her whole body to the gesture of sound and her face becomes the character of the piece. Even if she's stressed or pissed off, she performs like a vibrant and fully engaged character straight out of the *Mahler am Tisch* fairytale. She wanted to leave the project only a few weeks ago, yet she performs with greater commitment to the concept of the project than many of the others. She really *performs*. I don't think she realises how much I admire her, how grateful I am.

*'Thank you so much Zoe, really you are just amazing to watch. I really appreciate it!'*

*'Yes. But we are simple beings, musicians. We just want to play. We want things to be organised so that we can just play.'*

*'I know, I understand.'*

*But her face says that I do not. Apparently only 4 years in a professional orchestra isn't enough to qualify me. In fact at a previous rehearsal she literally told me 'You haven't been in an orchestra for 20 years.' And it's true I don't 100% understand. Sure, I lived that world for 19 years. The classical world of practice, perseverance, self-denial, primadonna subordination; the training and the profession. But I lived other arts worlds as well. Perhaps to fully understand Zoe and classical music means to not understand other musics or other worlds. I cannot rid myself of my flexible understanding. But still. Her comment annoys me a bit. I know I piss her off though, I feel a bit down about it sometimes.*

So I've tapped out this evening. I'm just here at the bar with Anna, happily, in a way, letting the evening ride it's course. This evening we put together. There's nothing more we can do now. I can tell Anna is more relaxed, maybe more honest with me. I'm more honest with her too.

The klezmer band finish up, with vague applause.

I see Jose and Eva moving through the crowd, holding their violins over their heads, pushing through the lines

of the newly-arrived-by-the-door and the newly- awaiting-drinks-at-the-bar. It's nice to see their faces and instruments move through the crowd, moving to the space by the windows. String quartet...hmmm...how nice. No, Really. I do mean that. Though my gut is clenching with anxiety for them. I take a sip of my water. The other two-of-the-four arrive and I watch them setting up. *This stand goes there, here's the music, no make more space, should we tune now? hang on let them through, wait a sec, good thing we're not outside or else we'd need pegs.* This is how I imagine them. Or else I imagine them burning with frustration or embarrassment or ambivalence. I never imagine excitement. Not for these four.

They start playing and I internally groan.

The ladies behind me are talking very loudly. There's a man with them in a three piece suit, he has ordered two beers. They sit on the bar beside me. Two little beers, golden warm and sticky cold, and he draws one of the lady's attention to it. She, who is talking loudly, is very well put together with red lipstick and what seems a 40s style pin-on hat. Her hand reaches out for a beer which is quickly polished off as, with manicured powdered fingers on her friend's shoulder, she emphatically tells her *all about it*. Or so it seems.

Meanwhile the strings are glistening through a very prim version of an Austrian country dance.

The lady's first beer glass is plonked on the bar beside me before she snatches up the second one which I realise I've been unconsciously guarding. Her conversation and

shrieks of laughter and the whistles of the bar are like a haze through which I can see the careful coordinated bowing of the now mute quartet.

This is absurd.

The strings attempt a small swell of sound, the lady gulps back her beer.

This is a disaster.

I ask Anna if she wants to move closer to the music. I feel like I'm responsible for them - for all of them. An unwanted mother of musicians, nagging away. They probably wished I'd stayed home instead of supervising their party. But here I am, and I feel obliged to supervise. No, it's not obligation, it feels like a need.

We weave our way through the crowd. I spot two high chairs right beside the strings and we work our way through to them. Anna takes the corner and I the one beside. I perch up and look around.

It's not a disaster. Apparently.

And though I'm still reeling in cynicism, it's abating a little.

It's a totally different world here. Here on the other side of the bar, there are different rules.

Unknown to me from my previous corner at the toilet end of the bar (no kidding), this little window corner is now fenced by a line of chairs with people and kids and a few rows thick of audience behind them. To the left are the high tables where Anna and I are and on the right is a low

table, where Tia sits surrounded by people, I assume it's her klezmer possé.

By our physical proximity, we have built a stage for the strings. A different world.

They begin to play again and now I can't stop smiling.

Look at them.

Maybe no one can tell.

Look at how they move!

Their bodies are angled out to the audience - they direct the sounds strongly now, stronger than before. Their faces smile and are open - they invite the audience in. They look both a little shy but also like they're having a good time, as banal as that sounds, a better time. They are letting themselves be. Like an embracing of the space and the people. They are riding their natural awkwardness well and their body language shows that.

The quartet are playing and I just let them go. We're a week into the project, we have time, but I still find the music too 'prim' - too careful. The articulation is light and refined, like the filigree at Versailles. Like Gold Leaf on the edge of a whisper...on the tip of a butterfly's wing...discreet and covered by brocade and imported rose water.

Okay enough.

There is a place for this style of playing but it's not here, not in this project. Why do I think this? Am I just being a control freak?

Admit it. Part of the reason you wanted to do this project is because it's what YOU value - where YOU want to play if you could - how YOU think music should be. But it's not about you.

It's not about me.

I keep watching them play. The two violinists are sorting out their bowings, shuffling through sheet music.

But is it just my ego? Don't I have an argument, 'a case' for my opinion?

In the context of both the bar and the repertoire, I know I can 'dramaturgically justify' the need to play with strength and dynamic character. And contrary to popular opinion, there are heavier and rougher types of classical music. The world of Mahler is strong and dark and sweeping and dramatic just as much as it is refined and playful. It isn't all only refinement. Actually these tunes that they are currently 'refining' are in fact Austrian country dances

- and I hardly think that their original state was prim. So in this case, they are not 'maintaining fidelity to the composer' by performing Austrian country dances with classical refinement. And I really feel that the more they play like 18<sup>th</sup> century court musicians, the more they harden the barrier between themselves and the audience...the more bizarre it seems for them to perform in a 21<sup>st</sup> century bar in Maastricht. But how can I ask them? Would it bother them if I ask?

I want to say: 'It's country music! Think Shostakovich and Piazzolla!'

Bad examples maybe...but I'm trying to get an idea across.

Why this idea?

Well, what is classical music? Refinement? Instrumentation? Repertoire? The Canon? A style of playing? A venue? An audience?

It is, I think, whatever we say it is. What we teach it is. What we subconsciously signify it to be: a set of practices with corresponding values, open to interpretation and misunderstanding like everything else...So then, I suppose, the idea is to realign or mix-up some of those practices and values. I've been thinking that people associate 'classical music' with a way of playing just as much, and if not more, than with a venue or repertoire or instrumentation. What is classical - in this current brainstorm - is that refinement and distance that is portrayed in the faces and body language of classical musician performers. They make themselves up like condescending butlers in *Downton Abbey*.

I'm thinking that this is the problem.

We are in fact, taught to play as such. You know... one must not exert one's own personality over the glory, and in fact, duty, of being a vessel of transmission for the great musical voice-from-beyond. Though this is getting better these days.

But anyway, this is why I think Nigel Kennedy kicking a ball off stage before he plays Vivaldi, and TwoSet Eddy and Brett being nerdy social media heads, are seen so utterly differently. Their body language says: I am one of you.

I don't want to go on about the history of this butler-esque playing approach, but from being in the classical world for a long time, with my face turned outwards, I have noticed this difference. The body language of different genres of performers...Anyway.

That's why this night is now so special.

The quartet are *playing out*, and we are responding. We are creating this.

I am beyond happy.

They finish their set and the crowd goes wild for them. We are becoming, I think, a bit of a family. I chat with Anna while the next group sets up; the brass band. As we chat, I notice Bram. We smile at each other.

Only this morning I hopped on the bus at Weert and there he was with his tuba in the front seat. I panicked momentarily, as I always do when I see someone I know out in public. *Shit*, I thought, *small-talk for a whole hour on the bus*. I reluctantly took my headphones off, and sans-sonic-protection, sat in the seat opposite him.

‘Oh hey! You’re on the bus too,’ I said.

‘Yeah I live here in Weert.’

‘Oh really? It seems a really nice place. All the stops around here that I’ve seen seem very beautiful.’

This is small-talk right?

‘Yes we are currently in a part of the country...’

I was in luck. Within 2 minutes Bram was telling me about the history of Limburg and he had no idea how happy I was about this. Not just for the sake of my being useless at small-talk, but because I am also fascinated by history and culture. The hour went by smoothly as we moved from the Roman occupation of the Netherlands (they hated the marshes) to William (the III) of Orange’s invasion of London and finally to discussing the genetic roots of red hair. All this plus a few of my typically tangential interruptions about, say, the Picts and the methods the Vikings used to transport longboats over land (smelly fish).

By the time we were on the regional train from Sittard to Maastricht we’d begun to discuss the Mahler project and he told me about the close family that is built in the brass and wind communities, how he grew up with that. I sat and listened and thought about the messy crew of brass players

I used to hang out with in my student days. I explained to him how I had wanted this project, in a way, to build that kind of family-like feeling within each group and within the space. No matter how hard, even impossible, that can be to create.

But tonight, things are loosening up.

The brass are playing now.

I'm standing here and I can't stop glowing.

I'm beaming.

The sound of these five horns swells through my heart, balancing me in the space.

The room is vibrating with it.

Outside it's cold.

The cool slight frosted-saturday cobblestones can be seen past the lights of the winter wreaths that encase each window of what feels like my new home. This Tribunal. Wooden laid and toppled with glasses and echoes of laughter as I stand there, resonating with sound.

It's been a long time since I've felt this - this fusion of music and company like this. And not just any music, but the pure chest-expanding pull-and-pushing resonance that these harmonies and instruments build together and build in me. And though I'm sober I feel almost drunk, standing, beaming - and the people around me can see I'm beaming and I see them beam for me. I believe they beam for me and I'm not even astonished at my belief, as I once would have been, as even a few hours ago I would have found it unfathomable.

I feel safe in these sounds.

I can see some people outside, looking in and laughing, trying to dance along. We smile at them. Now it's us inside and them outside. It's no longer those making the music and those of the audience watching. We are now a We, making this together, watching the other outside. It's a nice moment. I'm such a cynic with the word 'transcendental' and yet that is what this is. I feel utterly embedded yet beyond myself. I'm sure some of the others feel it too.

There is a little blonde girl sitting on her mother's lap, right in front, she has her fingers in her ears and a stout expression of defiance. I love it. The brass move through chorales and romping country songs and still her little fingers stay firmly stuck. Each of us can respond to this in any way we want.

The singer Lotte stands up to sing. She stands up too early and Marc (the first trumpet) jokingly gestures to sit down. I join in too as she is sitting right in front of me. We are all now joining in this joke 'Too early, Too early! Down you get. So eager!' But she doesn't seem to be enjoying it. I say this to Anna and she smiles and shrugs. It's not a big deal. We're all part of this big game now.

When Lotte does eventually stand to sing, I become more aware of the men outside. They are smoking in the courtyard and the double-swinging doors are open to them. They seem to be of the raucous minority that have delegated themselves to this little area. I recognize the type.

After Lotte's introduction, she begins singing and the guys outside start to sing out and along. They are mocking

her - playing on the border between humour and anarchy. I decide it's time for them to shut up. So I go over and with a great display of mock bravado, close the doors on their parade. They take it with good humour and I hope that my 'playing the butler' in irony has helped with that. I enjoyed it anyway. The barriers have really broken down now. We all own this place.

Lotte goes on to sing *Urlicht* and the place really has given itself up. The deep resonance of her voice with the horns is tinged with bittersweet understanding as the continuous lines meld into us, forming us like architecture in the sound. We are embraced by it. Something clutches in me and my cheekbones hurt from smiling.

After the silence of the final notes, the room explodes.

I'm wondering if Marc is having a good time now - if he has come to enjoy it. He seems to have a shy, consciously-unconscious smile on his face. Though I don't know if I'm painting it on him. I know not everyone will be feeling as I do, but I don't think anyone can deny that this whole space has transformed. The band start a romping number and I laugh. Bas smiles at me. I can see Jose at the bar and he smiles at me. Eva is swaying with her friends at the low table by the frosting windows. Nearby them I can see Tim bobbing his head along. Anna is beside me, beaming, her face is bright. Tia and Lotte have their arms around each other half-leaning against the bar, they are swaying and clapping along. They are always the ones to start the clapping.

I don't like clapping along.

I don't think Anna does either.

But I still feel like I'm a part of it. Even as I laugh at the clapping's inevitable stuttering fail, as those who participate wonder when to stop and hope to not be the last clapper to have clapped.

The clap's on you.

I feel a bit like crying really. I feel warm and whole. I feel safe. There is a different layer in the room now, a different understanding, a different rhythm of breath. We are all with them as they play. We all have our roles; the rowdy ones, the quiet and smiling, the half-listen-half-laughers, the apologetic talkatives, the wry humorous crew, the playful responders, the sentimental cynics like me. This interconnectedness that comes from the non-lingual bond that music makes. The unspoken sounds of our bonding.

We have given in. And I think we love it.

Ze spelen al veel langere stukken door.  
Naast me bekijk E. van dichtbij zijn  
'riet'?

↳ heet dat zo  
bij een fagot?



ook dit  
is Eiken closely  
soort intieme  
knowledge

# A New Approach

This book has explored how new and different performance events are needed for classical music to evolve and how, in order to build this, musicians need to develop different perspectives and skills.

Different perspectives about the values in the classical music tradition need to be fostered, so that musicians can become more reflexive artists that are able to engage in diverse music events. And different skills are needed in order to improve a musician's flexibility and adaptability in new performance situations.

On the whole, this book takes the position that the value and emphasis of a performance should be placed on the total event; by considering the importance of the space and the audience, as well as the music. This means that even the way you perform and interpret music should be considered by the context of the event itself, such as in the case of the *Mahler am Tisch* project and the pianist from *The People's Salon*.

But it all depends on how you define classical music and what values you hold in relation to it. In reflecting on this, and opening ourselves up to musicking differently, I believe we will have more strength to confront the future.

So what defines classical music for you? Are there any pieces that you wish you could perform for an audience, perhaps in a new space? How might you go about doing that? How would you take the space and audience of the performance into account?

# Exercise

Music in context



write down a piece

- use some non-music adjectives to describe it:
- what colours might define it for you?
- what images might define it for you?

*bohemian, light, refined, minimalist,  
day-dream, magical, heavy,  
construction, spanish, red, grey etc.*

write down a location to perform the piece

- use some adjectives to describe it:
- what is the atmosphere of the space?
- what kind of lights? what furniture?
- what colours? what kind of walls or windows?

*industrial, sparkling and modern, gloomy old  
church, comfy rustic farmhouse, messy student  
apartment, efficient, clean, reverent, chaotic etc.*

write down your ideal audience for this performance

- describe who they are:
- any specific age or characteristics?
- what kind of energy do they have?
- what kinds of things do they like?
- how do you they behave? talk? stand?

*twenties to forties, jeans and sneakers and cool hats,  
fun but casual, wine and beers, laughing with friends,  
chatting a little, relaxed, leaning against the bar etc.*

152 now contextualise your chosen piece

how does this piece relate to the space and the people?

are there similarities? differences?

how might you interpret this piece within this context?

would you consider arranging or altering this piece?

are you playing solo or with others?

would you play from memory or with the score?

in what way would you perform?

body language?

gestures?

what would you wear?

how would you present yourself (or yourselves)?

what about the meaning of the piece?

does it change in this context?

*just some questions to think about...  
to initiate a contextual perspective  
towards performance!*

Aside from the more practical utility of considering new performance situations, this exercise seeks to explore and implement many of the concepts that this book has discussed. It seeks to open up the ways we think about performance, about the nature of a performance from both an individual and big-picture perspective. It's about trying to put music into context, a new context, a new situation. As every performance of a piece of music *is a new situation*, as Peter explores (p. 16 - 17).

This exercise is also about opening up how we think about the audience, how we assume they feel and behave and how they might participate - just as Ties talks about (p. 50-51). And it also invites us to question the way we perform instrumentally and what it means to make contact, to be open, echoing Veerle (p. 76- 78).

Lastly, doing this exercise, or any of the exercises in this book, and questioning and reflecting on the practice of music performance, of classical music performance in particular, can sometimes make us feel like idiots (as Ruth explains, p. 37-39). After spending years training, or even just being part of the ritual of music performance, we feel like experts in our fields. We like to feel the assurance that the way we approach our practice and performance is set firmly and securely within a tradition that grounds us in our daily lives. But life is more uncertain than that. New developments and new experiences are always around the corner; new ways of doing things that can make us feel like fools. But that's okay. It's okay to feel foolish. Because feeling foolish means that you're exploring something new and it also means you care. Allowing yourself to feel like

an idiot is about opening yourself up to change, to development, and to discomfort. Just like how idiotic I felt, and yet how rewarding it was, when I first began to learn the violin. It's okay, and it's worth it. It is a practice in humility, in reconsidering what it means to know what we think we know. It's a necessary step in finding ways to do the same, but differently. And it's a step towards building new perspectives, new skills and new rituals in the increasingly beautiful and complex world of (classical) music performance.

# Felix and Eliot

He stands at the other side of the piano, up against the wall by the window. Grey rain, nearly green, makes the chipboard browngrey of the conservatory walls seem earthy. He can smell the rain.

The door opens, Felix pokes his head in.

‘Hi.’

‘Yeah, hey.’

Felix sniffs and wiggles the door handle, ‘You know, this is the shittiest room in the whole building.’

Eliot turns back to the window while Felix leads his long body head first into the room, swinging his clarinet case. The soundproofed grey door closes, imploding the room back into early morning green.

Eliot can hear the shuffle and click of Felix’s case. Straighten, unlock, zip, that taught bouncing sound when the case opens against its restraining bands.

The opening of Debussy’s violin sonata strays again into Eliot’s mind. He works through what he can hear of those opening passages, they weave through his mind without control, he struggles to stop the flow and rhythm of the phrases in trying to get to the core elements. But his mind can’t find them. He can only hear it again and again, over and over.

The green rain of the room is broken by a descending clarinet scale which punctuates the air. Eliot exhales and turns to the piano where he's left his violin.

He tunes. Slowly moving into slower breaths of bow. From heel to point, parallel to the bridge; watch the string spin through push and pull, and tucking the right hand, *pinky up*, the string moves through the length of the down *down bow*; right elbow leading out, straightening up, gentle pressure into the index finger for balance, balance, *past balance point* to the point, the tip of the bow - the hair flattens - consistence strains the consistence of sound before that final connection of breath, that *half-circle-tilt-shift*, for a smooth bow change - and control and speed and spin and push it back up up *bow*.

'Hey Eliot, you good to go?' He stops mid bow, 'yeah sure.' They look at each other.

Felix smiles by sucking his teeth, 'So what's the gig?'

'Project.'

'Project, right. So what's the project?'

Eliot sighs and violin tucked under arm, runs his left hand through his hair. He looks down at the photocopied and highlighted score strewn out on top of the piano.

'Anytime this century,' Felix leans back and starts up his scales again, bouncing freckled fingers over silver keys.

Eliot keeps looking at the piano, 'What do you think of Debussy?'

Felix slides into the melody of *Prelude to the Afternoon* of a Fawn - moving over fine lines and subtleties and breaking off with a squeak, 'Yeah nice stuff.'

He laughs.

Eliot looks at him and nods, 'Sounds good.'

'Thanks.'

Eliot taps his fingers on the piano, frowning. 'There's a gallery in the city. Small place. But old and sparse, but nice. They're looking for some live music for an evening they're doing.'

'Like background reception drinks kinda thing?'

'No,' shaking his head slowly, 'An actual performance. Sort of pop-up thing, but not flashy or anything, but not too long either. Maybe 15 mins. And you know - for a small art gallery kind-of crowd. I know a few of them, cool people.'

'Hmm, okay.' Felix picks up his clarinet to start playing again before realising, he stops with the reed half in his mouth. 'So why me?'

Eliot breathes out, 'Well you seem cool and from what I've heard, sound good too.' He looks at him, 'You can play by ear.'

'Yeah - a bit. But not so flash.'

'Doesn't need to be flash, just need - I just need someone keen and you know,' he laughs and runs his hand through his hair again, 'Flexible.'

Felix laughs, 'Sounds kinda shady.'

Eliot smiles sideways, 'Well asking someone you met once at a bar after a concert to do a flexible gig for €200 is pretty shady, sure.'

'€200? Not bad.' Felix starts tapping the silver keys again. 'So tell me, Flexible Debussy is it?'

'Kinda yeah.'

Eliot looks at the score on the piano and then coughs a bit into the back of his hand, 'Okay, so. I've learned and been playing Debussy's violin sonata for ages now, and apart from some recitals for a panel of judges, I've never played it for an audience. And sure, for this gallery gig, I could just whip up any old easy gig music. But they want something more, something different, and I'm sick of playing the same shitty gig music anyway. So, I figured, why not play something I know and that's good and that I actually like?'

He turns to look at Felix.

Felix breathes in through his nose, 'So that would be Debussy's violin sonata?'

'Well, why not?'

Felix shrugs, 'Well, you could do. But you need a piano.'

'I don't know any pianists. I only moved to this city a month ago - and anyway, the gallery doesn't have a piano.'

Felix doesn't say anything.

Eliot looks at the piano again, 'Which is why I thought, you know, if I want to play this stuff, I have to make it work with what I've got.'

'Hmm.'

'So like - make an arrangement.' He looks at him, 'I know the piece really well, and I've marked out parts and lines already, but I'm no theory nut, just doing it by ear you know - piecing the score together.'

Felix clears his throat, 'And given that I'm here, I guess you mean - doing all this arrangement thing with me?'

Eliot smiles, 'Well, yeah. If you're up for it.'

He sinks a little against the piano as the room brightens away from green with the ceasing rain. Felix leans back, his fingers reading over the language of his instrument, reaching through silver keys, elbows tucked in, spine straight - but relaxed, like killing time.

The sound of birds can be heard as the now pink clay sun spirals the window through the room.

'So what do you think?' Eliot asks.

Felix breathes a scale up, 'Yeah we can give it a go. Show me what you've got.'

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# Epilogue

I push out of the double swinging doors and into the foyer. It's an emptyish kind of meeting and milling space by the café of the conservatorium.

A few students sit huddled over phones on lime green plastic chairs that arrange themselves around grey angular tables, littered with two-day-old pastry flakes. Seeing the students makes me think of silvery finger grooves and tender tight jawbones; when you've been in the practice room too long. It's like an afterglow. Like sweat.

The rest of the audience is spilling out around me.

It's late. I check my phone.

I need to catch my train but I want to congratulate him before I go. I move over to a grey pillar and watch the threads of conversation weave through the air - like another kind of art, like another kind of music.

'Hey you could make it!'

He gives me a hug. I'm a lot shorter than him.

'Yeah, of course!' I smile. 'Well done! How do you feel?' He's beaming and flustered, makes me remember my own post-first-production-opening-night-elation.

He smiles and shakes his head, 'Great, really great.'

I nod and laugh a bit. His breathing is all over the place. 'It wasn't perfect of course,' he says. 'But it went well, really well. Better than expected.'

'Your spoken word storytelling - with the music - that was really fantastic.'

'Really?'

His eyes brighten, 'Oh great. I'm happy to hear that.' He looks down at his hands, then at the floor.

I look around the room, 'It's nice no? Storytelling.'

'Absolutely, absolutely.' I can see him nodding out of the corner of my eye. 'I really felt the connection with the audience - when I moved from playing to then this spoken word...with the bits of Virginia Woolf and the stories of these female composers.'

'And the whole design of the place -'

'Totally, totally.'

I look at him, 'It really worked. The circle format - the lighting.'

'Really? Oh good, good.'

We stand there for a bit. Awkward, but smiling.

I really am happy for him.

'I'm really glad you chose storytelling over just a lecture type of thing,' I say. 'I think that kind of text, that kind of language, can really reach people. It has a music of its own - prose and storytelling.'

‘Yes,’ he smiles at the floor. ‘I’m really super happy that we could work on it together.’ He laughs, ‘It really does take some work.’

‘Ha yep! For sure,’ I breathe out and look around the room again. ‘Storytelling has its own beauty and rhythm, its own pace and space too. It has its own music, its own design.’ I smile.

We say goodbye and I head to the train.

It’s cold. February. But fresh and beautiful.

As I walk I think about what we talked about.

*Storytelling has its own music, its own design.*

*Its own space too.*

The cobblestones clatter cold against the heels of my boots.

# Acknowledgements

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*The Same but Differently* started out as a way to explore how research knowledge could be communicated in a different way, with the particular aim of bringing knowledge about classical music innovation to conservatory music students. Though my writing was initially experimental, the support from my colleagues led me to collate this short text as part of my research output.

This text seeks to learn from the knowledge I gained through both ethnographic research done at the Conservatorium Maastricht as well as artistic (and ethnographic) research undertaken through the projects with the philharmonie zuidnederland (such as *Mahler am Tisch* and *The People's Salon*). In exploring ways to communicate my findings, I experimented with how ethnographic fieldnotes could fuse with creative writing, with how tiny 'flash fictions' might be used to illustrate certain points. Not all of

the vignettes in this text are drawn directly from my experiences during the past two years of research, but they are all examples of the kinds of topics and issues I uncovered.

As said above, this book seeks to *learn* from what was researched, and therefore the excerpts about the performance projects (such as *Mahler am Tisch*) focus on learning moments. Instead of hiding the working processes and just evaluating the concerts themselves, I have chosen to highlight what was sometimes difficult and messy in the stages of preparation. Though these projects were valuable and positive experiences, things did go wrong, or slightly askew (as they always do) and thankfully too as it was due to these issues that we were able to learn. The important thing was that we tried (and succeeded) to do different things with classical music (as was the specific intention of the Artful Participation project) and in trying different things we were able to learn what it means to go through that explorative process.

This book seeks to communicate what we learned, what I learned, in the hope that readers (particularly musicians in training) can find ways to learn for themselves as they challenge themselves to try new, and different, things.

*thank you for reading*

*i. eve*



## **AP**

'Artful Participation combines strategic research into reasons for the declining interest in symphonic music with artistic research to innovate this practice in an artistically relevant way. This artistic research takes place in three experiments with new forms of audience participation. In the current symphonic practice, audiences are performed as listener, consumer or amateur. The project will experiment with the new roles of maker, citizen and expert, thus actively involving audiences in programming, making and assessing symphonic music. The reflection on these experiments will result in a Learning model that will help to innovate the classical music practice.'

<https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/research/institutes/mcicm-maastricht-centre-innovation-classical-music/projects>

## **MCICM**

'Maastricht University (UM), The South Netherlands Philharmonic (philharmonie zuidnederland) and Zuyd University for Applied Sciences (Zuyd) aspire to support innovation through the establishment of the Maastricht Centre for the Innovation of Classical Music (MCICM). The centre aims to study the dynamics behind changing classical music practices and their societal contexts and to actively shape classical music futures. To do so, the MCICM will combine academic research on innovation of performance practices with artistic research to renew classical music practices and music education in artistically relevant ways.'

<https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/research/mcicm-maastricht-centre-innovation-classical-music>

## **AOK**

'How does art become relevant? And what does it mean to claim that artists create knowledge? Engagement and artistic research are the themes of the Research Centre for Arts, Autonomy and the Public Sphere. We develop artistic research as an experimental, intimate ethnography in which systematic sensitivity for the world is fundamental. We stimulate work that explores the riches hidden between opposing clichés about art, society, politics, academia and research.'

The centre is connected to all the arts schools at Zuyd University.  
<http://lectoraataok.nl/english/>

## **CM**

‘At Conservatorium Maastricht, very international in its composition and mindset, we believe in collectivity, in the will to challenge each other and excel ourselves. To add value, in and with music. With talented students, inspiring teachers, our audience, challenging venues, educational institutions, cultural organisations, businesses and municipal and provincial authorities. We like to take the lead in new developments. We aim to inspire, and are always looking for innovation within creation, transfer and performance to stimulate young talent, students and alumni to become excellent and all-round musicians whose energy and creativity offer a valuable contribution to the international world of music and to society.’  
*<https://www.conservatoriummaastricht.nl/en/about-us/conservatorium-maastricht>*

## **PHZN**

‘The philharmonie zuidnederland, (under the direction of director Stefan Rosu), is an orchestra for everyone. The enthusiastic members of the orchestra deliver custom work at the highest artistic level. From large symphonic concerts with beloved repertoire pieces in the concert halls, to new concert formulas at unexpected locations. From age-old masterpieces to exciting world premieres, challenging crossovers and educational projects., the philharmonie zuidnederland an organization with a clear vision of innovation, an orchestra that is constantly pushing its limits.’  
*<https://www.philharmoniezuidnederland.nl/pQWr6IL/ontmoet/over-philharmonie-zuidnederland>*

