UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES

School of Law, Arts & Social Sciences

Composition Portfolio & Written Commentary

by

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ABSTRACT

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Interpreting a scored musical composition entails the composer's relinquishing some control over the piece to the performer. In 'open' scores the composer relinquishes most control and in effect allows the performer to collaborate in the compositional process; in traditional scores the composer specifies as much as possible in order to leave little to no room for the performer to use personal judgment regarding interpretation. The principal focus of this portfolio will be to examine, through different scores and compositional techniques, a possible available spectrum between these two types of scores and to define more clearly different options presenting varying degrees of control over a score. The initial stimulus for this research stems from a fascination with alternative compositional scenarios that consequentially aid the creation of incidental musical materials that are not specified or scored. These moments resemble an improvisation in their immediacy of execution and erratic sound characteristics. Hence, it is this quality that many of the 'open' elements in these portfolio pieces try to extract, but not exclusively so. The thesis will also dwell on elements of performance psychology in attempts to better define the mechanisms at work in different interpretation/improvisation scenarios, as well as refer to non-classical musical traditions as an example of alternative didactic systems leading towards a non-score based, quasi-improvisational practice. Finally, each portfolio composition will be described in detail with a particular emphasis on its erratic sound-qualities, its 'open' element, or both.

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2. *Unisons* – Jonathan Hazan, soprano saxophone; Omri Blau, percussion
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6. *Datura* – Ensemble Meitar

DECLARATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Ophir Ilzetzki declare that the thesis entitled Composition Portfolio & Written Commentary and the work presented in the thesis are both my own, and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research. I confirm that:

- this work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
- where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
- where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
- where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
- I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
- where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
- none of this work has been published before submission.

Signed: ……..

Date:…….

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Chapter 1

Introduction

I still clearly recall the first time I listened to avant-garde music written after 1945. I can also clearly recall my reaction to it: I didn't care for it, not one bit! I remember thinking that the music featured on that CD, loaned to me by a good friend, was merely romantic music, in which functional harmony was forsaken. However, the form; the dramatic build-up; the composition of melodic lines, and the orchestration didn't seem new to me, or even to relate to the actual notes. I felt confused and cheated, and was happy to quickly discard this experience as meaningless.

I was roughly 16, and the music I enjoyed listening to and playing on the piano, was romantic music. I was a true fan of Brahms's work; Chopin was no stranger to my fingers, and I knew all of Mahler's symphonies by heart. I was just starting to acquire a taste for the delicacies of classical times (mostly Beethoven and Mozart; Haydn would come much later), and was of course familiar with Bach's keyboard works, as well as his cello suites and the more famous orchestral works, which I thought were nothing short of divine!

I was also proud to present myself as an avid consumer of contemporary music, but as far as I was concerned, this music began roughly with Debussy and Scriabin, and ended with the early 20th century Russians, whom I adored. There were other, later composers whose music I was fond of, but they could all be categorized as composers who hadn't altogether forsaken functional harmony and tonality. Amongst them were composers such as the Americans, Roy Harris and Copland, as well as someone such as the Finn, Rautavaara, to mention a few. Mostly, however, contemporary music to me was all about rock (mainly British progressive rock of the 1970's), and Jazz. My father was a true Jazz fan, and our house afforded plentiful opportunities to listen to great recordings, from Dixieland, through Monk and Coltrane, and up to early Miles Davis.

It would be relevant to add that I was sufficiently happy with my musical arsenal. I really (and naively) didn't think I would ever stop enjoying the music I did, or even enjoy it differently. I truly didn't see a need to challenge myself with new stimulations such as presented by the avant-garde, as this music was devoid of any meaning as far as I was concerned. There was something missing for me in the latter that invalidated it from the start. You see, with the music I loved listening to, regardless of piece or style, I would always close my eyes, and go on imaginary voyages. I actually remember the first classical record my father ever played me – it was the Rhapsody in Blue by Gershwin, and it completely blew me away! For a better part of a year I would come home from school, immediately put on that record, close my eyes, and have wonderful visions of castles, dragons and what not (well, I was eight). This auto-suggestive journey would then occur in different shapes and forms respective of the music I was listening

to and my age, but the basic experience remained – I was taken on a journey, and away from the mundane here and now. The few occasions in which I attempted to listen to post 1945 avant-garde, never managed to take me on that journey. In fact, those attempts, if anything, managed to do the exact opposite – they highlighted the here and now, they accented an acute feeling of restlessness and discomfort that I was all too familiar with, and if anything, was trying to escape through music. I recall the comment I later made to that same friend when thanklessly returning that CD; it was something along the lines of: 'I really don't see the point in this music, if I later need to listen to other music in order to calm myself down'.

I would like, however, to make an exception to the 'rule' I have set above, and I think that a weighty exception it might prove to be as the reader progresses through this commentary: My father also owned a recording from a composer, which managed to intrigue me at first only due to his location, and timing in history. I am referring to the American, Charles Ives. The recording in question was of his seminal work, *Three Places in New England*. My first hearing of this piece was an experience I remember, mainly due to the fact that I was not sure what to make of it. On one hand, I was truly drawn to some of the sounds and evocative harmonies presented, on the other, it seemed that the composer was rushing through styles and ideas in such a manner that didn't allow me to clearly decide whether he was being serious or not. But mainly, I remember being especially drawn to those moments that Ives has become famous for, namely moments where several medias are super-imposed on each other, creating those unique cacophonic thunders. For once, and perhaps for the first time, I felt something quite different. I did not manage to envision images in my mind, or even feel that sought-after repose, but rather exhilaration of a kind I didn't know beforehand. My heart was racing, and it felt as if for a brief moment I connected, through this messy sound world, to something deep inside me that had not been given a name or full recognition until that time. I would then occasionally return to that recording with a feeling of expectation, as if to see whether that same exhilaration could repeat itself, or whether perhaps that feeling was a one-off. I was happy to realize that I was as susceptible to each new encounter as if it were the first, and even though I could make more sense of the inner dealings of that cacophony, I was in no way less fond of it!

There were very few instances of this sort throughout my teenage years. Most of the music I was acquainted with, I could immediately compartmentalize, make some sense of, and hence know how to react towards. I realize now as I write these lines that this need to categorize was an inherent quest to make sense of a vast array of music I was being confronted with every day. This could also be the reason why I reacted so poorly to those first sounds from the European avant-garde; finally, I was just only coming to grips with Richard Strauss and Shostakovitch, so how could I have known what sense to make of Stockhausen and Boulez?

Having said that, it was around the same time when I first heard Luciano Berio's wonderful piece, *Laborintus II*, and I clearly recall reacting to it positively with a striking immediacy. In fact, they were the same elements that attracted me to this work as did to Ives'. Here too there was a messiness, an organized disorganization and recklessness that related, in my mind, more to Jazz than it did to well mannered

classical music. I was not even sure I liked it as such, but I was certainly drawn to it. Yet, what was it about this music that made listening to it an utterly different experience? Why did I perceive these sounds, as a-tonal and harsh, differently from the a-tonality expressed by other contemporary composers? For the time being, this remained an unanswered question.

1.1 Arie Shapira & Preliminary Answers

The most significant musical turning point for me in the proceeding years had to do with a chance occurrence. I was serving my mandatory service in the Israeli Defence Force, unhappy with the lot dealt me in life, and mainly frustrated for not being able to do that which I most wanted to do – study music professionally. It was precisely this feeling that prompted an aggressive search for private tuition, which funnily enough, lead to one of my most productive periods in life to date. This avidity sent me studying Palestrina style counterpoint with one of Israel's leading authorities on the subject, as well as ear training and harmony with another, and trumpet as a second instrument with a third. I was still nowhere closer to composing, or unravelling my complicated relationship with contemporary music, but I was at least buying my rightful place in the serious world of classical musicians, as I saw it.

At one point, I was suggested by one of my tutors to go seek the help of one Arie Shapira, a composer of contemporary music that was luckily living in the same city as I. The meeting was set, and I marched into Shapira's studio well prepared to be examined and knowing exactly what I would be interested in learning from him (orchestration). Shapira examined me silently, and asked: 'are you familiar with my work?' I had to admit that I was not. He then went on to play me his only orchestral piece, *Missa Viva*. This was harsh avant-garde if I'd ever heard it before, but here too, there was something that compelled me to the work even though I was quite sure I didn't managed to take it all in at first.

Shapira accepted me as a student, and I was soon undergoing a comprehensive weekly study with him that comprised topics in harmony, counterpoint, ear training, rhythm, melody writing and analysis (yet, no orchestration). Shapira would refer to these sessions as composition lessons even though we seldom discussed music written after Beethoven, and mostly stuck to that of Bach. But inadvertently, and perhaps most importantly, I now had an insight into the thought-process of a composer of experimental music who created the exact contemporary music I was drawn to. There was something about his music, which I was slowly getting acquainted with, that was very similar to those moments in Ives and Berio I was attracted to several years before.

Shapira had a complete philosophy surrounding his music. He would refer to it as Israeli music, or desert music. He would term it dry music, and take pride in it not sounding similar to any central European music of its time. I was not too interested in his philosophy, but had still to agree that his, was a unique style and more so, a vibrant music that answered many of the open questions formed during my teenage years.

I started realizing that these pulsating, messy and disorganized sounds in Shapira's works appealed to me mainly because they sounded partially improvised, yet at the same time were poured into forms that sounded through-composed. It was as if Shapira's scores were made up of elements that were not fully notated, as to create an immediacy of execution during performance, yet his arc forms still maintained that highly important ideal of conveying a narrative; a narrative that he had thought through in advance, and that was entirely and recognizably his own. Was this not the same element that drew me towards those moments in Ives and Berio?

Looking through Shapira's scores, I realized that my instincts were spot on. Indeed, Shapira employed a myriad of techniques in order to achieve that erratic, quasi-improvised sound. Some of the techniques were borrowed from other composers, some were entirely his own, but at least now I knew that what I was hearing was part of the composer's plan. I soon searched for the score of *Three Places in New England* by Ives, and later even found the score for Berio's *Laborintus II*. You can imagine my shock when I realized that these latter scores present through-composed, and mostly traditionally notated music! But this didn't matter; I knew much better now how to define that which I was searching for, and mainly, what contemporary music I was truly intrigued by.

1.2 The Hague & Finding my Voice

I had spent four years studying with Arie Shpira, and it was during this time that I became quite enamoured with the idea of composing original music. Shapira would constantly prompt me to do so, and I myself started feeling that I would like to try and express deeper emotions that seldom found any outlet in my ongoing work. During my last year of studies with Shapira I had managed to compose four pieces: A brass quintet with tape; a string quartet with tape; a saxophone quartet with live electronics, and a solo tape piece. One could clearly tell that I was also becoming exceedingly interested in electronic media and the possibilities it offers. I am quite positive now that all these primary attempts at composition were premature and exploratory, but it was this small portfolio that allowed me to be considered, and later accepted for the BA course in composition at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague.

My years in The Hague would prove absolutely crucial in allowing me to find my own voice and better my writing technique, but also aided me in better defining what it was that I was truly attracted to in contemporary music.

1.2.1 Chance Procedures

Through my work with Gilius van Bergeijk, my main composition teacher and experimental composer himself, I was offered an invaluable insight into improvisation and the use of chance in written works. Van Bergeijk was himself for many years an improviser, a member of several improvising ensembles

throughout his career, and had even improvised with some notable names in the field, such as the British Evan Parker.

Bergeijk, who realized that I was trying to unravel a mystery regarding improvised or erratic moments within set forms, sent me off to explore the music of John Cage and Earle Brown, two composers he had himself studied extensively. I was naturally drawn to their works involving chance, and was immediately awe-struck by the vast freedom they allowed themselves and their performers in such works. I was also quite happy to discover that there was a complete spectrum of control in their works, ranging from the composer's absolute control over the material, to an utter relinquishing of any sense of control.

However, I soon realized that I was much more drawn to the ethos behind chance-composition, than I was to most of the works these techniques allowed to produce. It would seem that the end of the most extreme chance compositions was to explore philosophical aspects of music and sound. Earle Brown even went as far as presenting an almost blank page to the performers in his piece *December 1952*, and it would seem that his object in doing so was to investigate performance procedures (Bailey, 1980).

I realized that these extreme attempts, as fascinating as they were, lacked a sense of control that is crucial if the composer was indeed looking for a more specified sound, as I was. Finally, those same moments in Ives, Berio and Shapira, which I was seeking to unravel, could have not been achieved had those respective composers not gone to extreme lengths in detailed specification. What more, almost none of the music I was exposed to from Cage or Brown contained that same vibrant immediacy in sound characteristics I was after. True, many of their most interesting compositions entailed on the spot decision-making, but something about the form and the density in many of those pieces provided a wonderful spaciousness. This spaciousness was needed in order for the listener to truly appreciate the innate quality of the sounds produced, but also presented a sound world that I was not entirely interested in.

I was however grateful for having researched this exciting music all the same, as I was one step closer to defining that elusive sound I was looking for. I realized that much of my attraction with those early examples in Ives and Berio, and indeed with most of Shapira's works, had to do with their aggressive nature. What more, I realized that it wasn't sufficient for me that the music was improvised on the spot according to some gamut, I actually wanted it to sound as if it was! It's as if I was actually searching for a less determined sound, an almost insecure or unrehearsed sound – something closer to a mistake or incidental sound than to a composed one.

1.2.2 Incidental Erratic Sounds

It would be interesting to note that during this period I came across a work by Morton Feldman, which managed to strike that special chord with me, and went a long way in helping me further crystallize my definition. The piece in question is *The King of Denmark* for solo percussion. When I looked through its

score, I realized that it too was highly influenced by the ethos of chance operations. The score contains a diagram specifying three options for pitch height, a density chart on a timeline and almost no orchestration whatsoever. I heard several performances of the piece, which had obviously disclosed different approaches to its interpretation, but all of the performances shared a common attribute: they all seemed to be dense. This density was of course controlled by the composer, and must have been one of the basic compositional ideas at the source of the work. This was the most noticeably unchangeable element of the piece, but more so, allowed for a performance dynamic that was crucial to its sound. This performance dynamic I refer to, is a result of having to move quickly, too quickly in fact, between registers, and hence instruments. It facilitates a performance difficulty that could not be easily avoided unless the performer was to fully notate a score according to the diagram provided by Feldman. It is my assumption that very few performers have actually taken the time to do so, and hence all of the performances I have heard or witnessed of this piece achieve a sound characteristic that is very close to the ideal I was in search for. These performances featured many messy transitions, unplanned mistakes and simply incidental sounds, not intended by the performer or 'notated' in the score. These 'mistakes' were a simple consequence of the task handed down to the performer by the composer, yet they were eventually presented as an integral part of the finished piece. It is crucial to note that Feldman did not necessarily plan these moments, and perhaps he didn't even care for them much when he realized they exist, but their consequential appearance was most important to me; it was the first time I realized that some musical results could be obtained through alternative means of notation.

In fact, this example took me back to Shapira and to compositional techniques he tended to employ in some of his works. Shapira would set specific performance dynamics as a method for creating incidental erratic sounds that were not written in the score. He would simply notate unplayable passages, or ask performers to adhere to quasi-impossible cues as a means of achieving a reckless or agitated sound. These were micro-details in his works, yet all the same, these elements were heard and especially felt by the listener. I remember even thinking at first that some of these moments might be a consequence of highly specified extended-techniques. How surprised I was when I realized that most of these moments were a consequence of chance, pre-determined chance that was planted in the score by the composer. They were precisely examples such as these that reminded me of Feldman's (1973) quote: 'Where in life we do everything we can to avoid anxiety, in art we must pursue it'. Shapira not only pursued this anxious feeling in his works, but also created a situation in which every different performer would react to these elements in a different manner according to that performer's innate capabilities. This facet I found especially exciting – if a sound is to be erratic, by all means, every new performance of it should be erratic in a slightly different manner!

I was ever closer to my definition, and yet I felt that there was so much more music out there, which adhered to that that I was trying to define, but did not share any of the characteristics with the works of Feldman and Shapira described above. One piece of this sort that I had explored in detail was Cage's piece from 1950, *String Quartet in Four Parts*. This work too presents the performer with a gamut of aggregates, a set of pre-determined rules that the performer is asked to adhere to in real-time

performance. In this particular piece, the 'rules', or gamut asked the performer to attempt specific notes on specific strings throughout the piece, this in order to achieve a certain sound-quality. The gamut, however, did not take into consideration the fact that in order to attempt these pitches as specified the performer must use the instrument in a highly unidiomatic fashion. This new use, precisely because it requires the performer to use the instrument in a new and somewhat cumbersome fashion, aids in the creation of incidental materials that are a direct consequence of the gamut, yet in no way notated in the score. It was precisely this tension between the notated and the chance element, the pre-conceived arc form and the incidental 'noises' arising in performance, which made this piece so exciting in my eyes regardless of the fact that it contained none of the erratic elements I was so fond of. So what was it that drew me in to such music all the same? Was it the fact that there would always be a discrepancy between the written score and the audible result? Or perhaps it was the fact that there would be an added value to each and every score that contained some indeterminate elements no matter how elaborate or minute these elements are? These answers, as true as they rang, could still not aptly explain why I was drawn to this specific Cage piece more than most of his others. This question would in many ways be answered through my next important chance meeting with a composer that has since become one of the largest influences on my work – Robert Ashley.

1.3 Meeting Ashley

The composition department at the Royal Conservatory in The Hague celebrates a wonderful tradition: Every year, the department dedicates a week long festival to an established composer. The composer's most interesting works are rehearsed and performed on several concerts during that week, and the composer is also invited to prepare unique lectures and master-classes for the entire department. The composition department had always had a tendency to invite composers who are more extreme or experimental in nature, mainly in order to expose the younger generation to voices they might never come across in their professional careers. It was my personal honour to co-produce the 2006 festival featuring none other than my former teacher, Arie Shapira. However it was the 2005 festival that would leave its strongest mark on me, as it featured the American composer Robert Ashley and his work.

I was not familiar with Ashley's work or even with his name before the festival began. When the department prepared for the festival, student volunteers were sought as performers for some of Ashley's text pieces. I was chosen as an ensemble-member for the interpretation of *Fancy Free or It's There*, Ashley's 1970 piece for speaker and four cassette machines. When I first went through the score of the piece, I couldn't realize how the process specified on page could actually eventuate in a pleasing whole, but as rehearsals began I slowly realized there was more to this piece than met the eye at first.

It's There sets a simple performance task: four cassette machine operators are recording a repetitive text that is being spoken live by the narrator. Every time the latter makes a mistake (according to a set of rules), the performer is asked to stop her/his tape from recording, and rewind the tape. The first performer

would rewind the tape back to the length of one syllable; the second – the length of one word; the third – one sentence, and the last – one entire paragraph. The performer is then asked to play the section back. Once finished, the performer is asked to continue recording and act according to the given task until a common decision is made to end the piece.

This simple task, which on page seemed to me at first almost too simple and perhaps even simplistic, proved to contain almost all of the elements I was searching for in my own works! Erratic impromptu moments were heard in abundance in the form of cassette machine sounds when being activated or stopped. The erratic nature of things was then only enhanced as the piece advanced: Each new tape was also picking up the ambient sounds created by other tapes, recording them, playing them back and allowing their own play-back sounds to be recorded by other tapes. This task allowed for a huge cloud of musical material to unfold roughly 20 minutes into the piece. The resulting sound comprised not only the many layers of the narrator's voice stacked-up on top of each other, but also and mainly the many incidental sounds that were picked up along the way. These incidental sounds included the aforementioned cassette machine sounds, but could also incorporate any ambient sound that was being picked up by the microphone. As in Shapira and Feldman's works mentioned before, here too the ambient sounds would obviously differ from performance to performance, would never be notated, and would eventually form an integral part of the resulting whole presented to a listener. It was at this point that I started noticing the formation of a rule.

1.3.1 The Theatrical Element

Attending another concert featuring works by Ashley, I realized that almost all of the pieces there contained something of the playful element. Some of the compositions from the 60's were actually elaborate chance procedures acted out through a game of cards; another piece featured a process revolving a static metre played by several performers on gongs, and the constant diminishing of their respective tempi; a third piece involved a unified ensemble divided into pairs that were facing each other, and a task that bound these pairs in terms of material and cues.

I was especially taken by this last piece for two reasons: The first would be the same elements that I have already elaborated upon, namely the incidental creation of erratic sounds as a consequence of a given task; the second would have to do with a visual element. This piece had specified a task for no more than two instruments, yet still required an entire ensemble to interpret it. In fact, the task for duo was merely duplicated and handed out to all pairs created within the ensemble. These pairs would then adhere to the task, completely disregarding all the other duos on stage. However, we, the audience, were obviously reacting to the collective sound created. This scenario likened in my eyes to the removal of an outer, protective layer of a machine in order to witness its true inner function. I was not only impressed by the fact that the sounds created carried a weight of immediacy, or that the form as a whole seemed to be completely through-composed, but mainly by the fact that I, the unknowing audience member was allowed in some way into the process itself. True, I was not given enough information in order to

completely understand the task, or to participate myself, yet I was given a glimpse into a secret language; a language I could feel or get a sense of, rather than a true understanding that I could integrate into unified meaning.

I was especially awe-struck when I realized that all of Ashley's pieces I'd heard on that specific concert contained this pseudo theatrical element (especially the card-game pieces, which felt like the witnessing of a secret rite). It was the first time I felt that I, the audience member, was not only being presented with beautiful sounds that I am to have a subjective, fleeting relationship with, but was in fact given a glimpse into the compositional process itself. I then also finally realized that this is exactly what drew me towards the Cage quartet regardless of it containing none of the sound elements I was interested in. True, the task in that specific quartet was left unknown to the audience and was exclusively devised by the composer for his performers. On the other hand, once I, the learned listener who had already analyzed the score, was confronted with the piece, I could easily tell which elements were scored and which ones were impromptu decisions made as a consequence of the gamut. More importantly, I could tell the difference in sound characteristics between the notated and improvised parts of the score, and the difference between these two sound-qualities created a wonderful tension for me.

This experience, more than any other before, clarified to me that what I was looking for was not only music containing erratic or incidental characteristics, but also music that was aware of this facet – music that in some way paraded this element; music that made it exceedingly clear to performer and audience alike that the act transpiring on stage was of a dynamic entirely different than that found in traditional classical, and indeed most contemporary music; a music that could declare: if the sounds I contain are different, clearly, the means of achieving these sounds cannot be traditional, nor can their presentation for that matter.

1.3.2 ATM & Beyond

In a lecture to the entire composition department, Ashley revealed that one of the most interesting research aspects for him was in trying to create a minimal specification in a score, which would always result in the same recognizable piece. He recounted his life-long effort of trying to simplify every new score when compared to the one he'd written before. Finally, he was trying to see whether he could create a task as simple and sparse as possible, which would still result in a highly elaborate and mostly, recognizable piece.

This ideal would prove to be the stimulus for the final piece I ventured upon in The Hague – *ATM*. The ATM in question is not the acronym for the Automatic Teller Machine spewing out cash in the United States, but rather a reference to Moshe Feldenkrais' somatic exercises entitled Awareness Through Movement. I had for years been practicing the Feldenkrais method, and it was through this meeting with Ashley that I first imagined how some of its ideas could be transferred into the realm of sound.

Feldenkrais (1972) discusses in his writings the constant influence of self-image on our posture. He relates every minute movement one executes to the entire whole (the body), which is dictated primarily by that same self-image. He goes on to show how every movement pattern is a consequence of our innate (i.e. instinctive) and acquired learning, combined with social encounters and their affect, which tend to shape our psyche.

Most interestingly for my purposes, Feldenkrais explains how each movement is connected to the entire organism creating it. He claims that there is no part of the body that isn't participating in even the tiniest of its movements. It was this element that I chose to transpose into music, and I did so combining three ensembles and live electronics. All of these ensembles and the computer were intended to interact with each other in real time. These interactions would indeed change the manner in which personal decisions were made, yet the piece as a whole was governed by a time-line that I, the composer, had set-up in advance, as well as a clear A-B-A' structure.

I was not aware of this as I was composing the piece, but the visual element that was so striking to me in Ashley's work was present in ATM as well. Regardless of whether ATM as a musical attempt resonated in the listener or not, most people responded to the mass of speakers, cables and electronic gadgets available on stage, as well as the focused gazing transpiring between different performers as a consequence of their task. This likened the experience to a sort of happening, yet an abstract one, to which there is no concrete end other than the sounds created. Mostly, members of the audience claimed to be transfixed by this abstract happening that immediately disclosed the existence of a process, regardless of whether it was made clear.

It is no surprise that the visual element of ATM surfaced quite unknowingly. When I try to remember the period in which ATM was composed, I come up with very few details. It's as if this work was written almost instinctively as a consequence of all the ideas I had collected since that first acquaintance with Ives. But I was proud of my attempt, as it proved to me that I was able to create the sort of music I was most interested with.

It was at this point that I relocated to London and started the MMus composition course at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. There I would experiment with further approaches relating to this initial stimulus, and in some ways attempt to perfect my style in a more aware, and less instinctive manner.

Chapter 2

Still Life with Riots & Initial Research

Still Life with Riots (2007) is the main modular composition I had written during my MMus studies. In this piece I managed to encapsulate the many interests I've described in the previous chapter, as well as come up with a method for creating incidental erratic sound-qualities. In the following chapter I would like to describe the mechanisms at work in *Still Life with Riots*, as well as discuss the afterthoughts that the finished composition and its different performances prompted. These same thoughts paved the initial path leading towards the question at the basis of this PhD portfolio.

2.1 Still Life...[1]

Imagine the following scenario: a group of performers (any number, playing any instrument), one of which is given a traditionally notated part (i.e. notes and metered timeline). This last part dictates the timeline for the entire group, and for illustration purposes, is played on the harp. The other instrumentalists are seated so that they are facing the audience, and with their backs towards the harpist. Again, for illustration purposes, they shall be recognized as: double bass, accordion, violin, horn and trombone; hence, the quintet.

The members of the quintet are given a set musical material that they are expected to perform throughout the piece (barring one consequential occurrence that I shall soon describe). The initiating cue for the whole piece is given by the harp, which signals the quintet to commence. The quintet start playing their material, which is characterized by a soft and rhythmic (or completely stagnant) attempt of one note, whose pitch and tempo can be altered at the players' discretion throughout the whole piece; henceforth, Material 1.

Every member of the quintet is seated facing an audience-member, and that same audience-member is numbered: The one facing the double bass player is numbered 1; the one facing the accordion player is numbered 2; the one facing the violin player is numbered 3; and so on up to the audience-member numbered 5, who is facing the trombone player. All members of the quintet are aware of this fore-mentioned numbering; the audience, however, is completely oblivious of the fact.

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[1] Translated and edited by the author from the Hebrew original. Published as: Ilzetzki, O. N. (2007). Refreshingly Incomplete. *Tav+* 9 (Autumn), 24-8.

The one occurrence in which a member of the quintet would stop performing Material 1, which I was describing just a moment ago, would be only if and when the audience-member facing that player, is blinking. In such a scenario, the player will choose from a pool of 5-7 short motifs, which have been memorized in advance; perform that motif, making the fastest transition possible between Material 1 and the chosen motif; then return with similar swiftness to Material 1, and continue until cued again by another blink. This second material we shall refer to as Material 2. Material 2 is characterized by a rough, powerful and a-rhythmic performance of all its short motifs, and so immediately distinguishes itself from the contained and static characteristic of Material 1.

During the entire piece the harp player will give a set amount of cues - the 1st initiates the piece, the last closes it - and they are all ca. 10-15 seconds apart. The quintet starts its performance so that each of its members is gazing for blinks at the eyes of the audience-member facing them. On each new harp cue, however, the quintet members are asked to shift their gaze towards one of the other audience-members. This order would be given each performer in advance, and in fact constitutes the score situated in front of each performer.

The score consists of several boxes - one for each harp cue. Each box could contain a number from 1-5, representing a specific audience-member to gaze at for blinks; an X, signifying a tacet until the next harp cue; the letter A, signifying the performer is allowed to look at any audience-member for blinks; an O, signifying the performance of Material 1 only until the next harp cue; or the number of an audience-member coupled with the caption ‘Only 2’, signifying the performance of Material 2 only until the next harp cue.

Those able to envisage the possible combined result of such a score might also realize that the density of the piece can be changed on each harp cue. For instance, after one cue all quintet members might be gazing towards the one and the same audience-member; after another, two members might be gazing at the same audience-member whilst the remaining three could be gazing at another; after yet another cue, 2 members might be silent, 2 could be playing only Material 1, whilst the last plays only Material 2; in fact, whatever might take the composer’s fancy.

It is important to note that the gazing scheme for the members of the quintet is the most important compositional facet of the entire piece. The density of the piece is thus controlled, and Materials 1 & 2 that I have described above could be made analogous to clay of distinct color, form and texture, carefully chosen by an artist, but which have yet to be transformed into a real sculpture. That supposed sculpture comes into being only with the changing density of each new cue, dictated by whoever the performers might be looking at for blinks. However, for the mere purpose of controlling density, such a blinking game could have been replaced with a through-composed and controlled scenario. What then is the true purpose of the blinking game?

2.1.1 ...With Riots, or Planned Performance Mistakes

Before the composition of the piece I came to realize that a blink allows such a sudden cue for a performer, to the point that the latter is almost disabled from using it as an effective one (i.e. the cue is so sudden that the immediate transition between materials is usually messy and incomplete, to say the least). This then became the aim of the piece: handicapping a through-composed and unchanging musical material by imposing on it an almost impossible to adhere to, extra-musical cue - the blink. This cuing mechanism would facilitate the creation of an unwritten and indeed erratic meta-material that the performer, trying to attempt the piece as written, can seldom control.

To me, this is the most exciting musical material of the whole piece, and also its reasoning. Indeed this meta-material, with all its squeaks, cracks and diversions from the written motifs is the incidental phenomenon that serves as validation for the entire blinking game. In creating this game, with which the performers are completely consumed, I allow for a new performance dynamic and musical texture to arise unnoticed.

One could argue that I might have tried to notate such acoustic phenomena and call them by their more commonly used name - extended techniques. But it would be my immediate retort that by doing so I would have created a completely different and predetermined, easy to rehearse, and mostly relaxed sound world devoid of its erratic character stemming from an anxious anticipation of a pending cue. More so, a through-composed effort utilizing existing, or even newly found extended techniques, would always be no more than an exploration of those same techniques. In *Still Life with Riots*, however, the techniques arising as a consequence of the blinking game are innumerous, and ever changing. They truly stop acting as musical materials, or even found ones, and reach closer to the true definition of what we refer to as performance mistakes.

2.1.2 The Interpreter

These same mistakes, however, render the piece quite a difficult 'sell' to performers at first. Suddenly, and perhaps for the first time in their careers, these players are asked not only to execute, but also to embrace very unclean musical results dotted with incidental sounds that are not written in the score. In fact, in order to truly enjoy performing it, I believe performers must realize that they can express themselves with such a piece to no lesser an extent than they would have through a delicate and precise performance of a through-composed composition. After all, the executer's performance abilities should already exist, and with a piece of this sort there is no real possibility of being at fault, as that is the very aim from the start, so actually, could a performance be any more liberating?

And indeed, in most cases the rehearsal process allowed most performers to relax, and in some ways embrace the uncertainty. It is finally this same uncertainty – this open space within the score that allows

performers, if they so choose, to lightly improvise on the given structure and themes. In this manner, the performers become interpreters in the truest sense possible.

2.1.3 The Aftermath

Still Life with Riots was performed twice in the first year of its composition. The two performances presented the piece with a slightly different line-up, as well as with a different duration, which was almost doubled for the 2nd performance. Through these performances I began to realize that what I'd created was in fact a truly modular piece that could be 'tampered' with at will, yet would still maintain the important characteristics of being recognizable and clearly narrative regardless of the changeable elements.

The spaciousness of the score, indeed the element opening-up the entire process for possible improvisation, was very much in the forefront of each performance. The players were not looking at their scores, but rather at their audience-members. The constant shift from one audience-member to the other also made the performances into a theatrical event of sorts. Here too, there was a hint at a process transpiring without ever having disclosed its inner dealings.

The sound character of the piece was abrupt and messy as notated, yet the most important sonic element transpired inadvertently. This element was truly close to the dynamic I was searching for – that same music that not only sounded improvised, but also through the many repetitions of erratic sounds made a statement of self-awareness. The initial utterances of erratic sounds might have caught an audience member 'off guard', but two minutes into the process most listeners learned how to incorporate these 'messy' sounds into the blueprint of the piece, or indeed it's design.

Finally, but perhaps most importantly, those first performances presented me with the opportunity to try the piece out with different 'types' of performers. The premiere was given by students of the GSMD coupled with students of the Paris Conservatoire. I was a tad disheartened having heard the first performance, as I realized that the players were apprehensive about taking any real risks or lashing out uncontrollably as the piece requires. The second performance, which included a group of hand picked GSMD students, was already much closer to the ideal I had in mind. This latter group acted towards the score with a true recklessness, which made for a gripping performance.

A telling difference between the two groups was this: for the premiere, I had provided the players with notated elements as an outline for materials 1 and 2. For the 2nd performance, I conveyed the musical materials verbally, describing them to the performers and 'tweaking' them during rehearsals. The lack of a notated score for the 2nd (and thereafter every consequent) performance allowed the players a true freedom to treat the piece as if it were their own. The written notes presented during the first performance were possibly a constant reminder, a heavy stone laid on the backs of the performers telling them that there is an absolute right and wrong, and that the gospel can be referred to in prosecution, if necessary.

Listening to recordings of *Still Life* some time later, I realized that both performances were in fact valid and true to the score. Indeed, one was more to my liking, but this fact should not detract from the validity of other performances. *Still Life* had since been performed thrice more, and each of these performances presented the piece in a slightly different manner, yet all performances managed to convey the same idea, the same formal structure, the same dramatic narrative, and obviously various incidental sounds. This was the initial intent in mind, and in that sense, a success.

However, letting go of the original notated part of the score as a means to create a more 'relaxed' rehearsal and performance scenario made me realize that not only this facet, but perhaps also the many aspects unfolding to me could be further researched and perhaps even made into a rule. I was very hopeful that this was indeed the case, as I was wondering whether I could find other inadvertent ways of extracting erratic, incidental and improvisatory qualities from a composed scenario. This meant taking *Still Life* apart and realizing in a more knowing fashion what exactly I had done. What was I asking the performers to do, and what did this entail of them on a psychological level? Could these elements be recreated, or were they unique to the specific dynamic outlined in *Still Life*?

2.2 Performance Psychology

The one instinct with which I approached the writing of the score for *Still Life with Riots* was simple: I knew that I was intending for the formal structure, and not the musical material, to take the forefront as far as the performer is concerned. By doing so I was hoping to point to the centrality of the form and blinking 'game', rendering the musical material peripheral. It was only later, through my PhD research, that I realized that this instinct was well founded and indeed the subject of prior investigation in the field of performance psychology.

2.2.1 Informed by Form

Research undertaken by Clarke (1988) clearly shows how performance properties such as dynamics, articulation and speed are immediately informed by an ingrained understanding of a larger formal structure. Clarke goes further in showing how this is true for both through-composed, as well as improvised efforts. Therefore, by eliminating the notated part of the score for *Sill Life*, leaving performers only with the boxed cue-scheme, I was in fact allowing them a better understanding of the concept. Now, with no notated element, I was aurally conveying to the players the static and subdued material 1 as well as the reckless and lashing material 2. Combined with the blinking game, the deterministic direction, and density of the narrative, this information proved to be sufficient in providing for an informed performance. In fact, it would seem that even the presence of a notated element was an over-specification for my purposes.

I was not surprised to discover that Clarke (1982) had started his research with the analysis of tempo changes (i.e. *rubato*) as a manifestation of structural awareness. Todd (1985) related to this research and managed to show how the same occurs on the micro-structural level (i.e. bar unit). Clarke in response made an assumption claiming that this combined research might explain the over-taxation of contemporary music scores. In many such scores the formal structure is obscure and hence there is an inherent need to over-specify expressional elements in comparison with more traditional scores. Indeed, I too have always felt that formal clarity is of the essence when conveying a piece to a performer or audience. I always found some scores to be over-specified in a manner that might be misleading, and which I was trying to avoid: a small detail might be elaborated upon to such an extent that a performer might assume its centrality. For my purposes I wanted the hierarchy to be entirely clear – the most important elements required the most detailed specification and work; the peripheral ones could be less specified and hence organically presented as more 'open' materials. In this manner, the incidental sounds are left unmentioned altogether. Indeed, any specification of this material would have highlighted it in a fashion that could change the inner division of the formal structure and obscure the direction of the piece at large.

2.2.2 Analytical Memory vs. Muscle Memory

When researching the blink as a possible cuing mechanism for *Still Life*, I again was acting quite instinctively. I was merely examining my own test results with different subjects, trying to figure out how many blinks a person executes in a given time whilst presented with different psychological stimuli. I was mainly hoping that using a blink as a cuing mechanism would prove discombobulating enough to a performer so as to allow the occurrence of random incidental elements.

Extensive research had been undertaken in correspondence with these issues whilst addressing the question of musical memory and more specifically, learning a piece by heart. Gruson (1988) relies heavily on the prior research undertaken by Sloboda (1974, 1977), Schiffrin & Schneider (1977), Shaffer (1980), and Neves & Anderson (1981). Gruson's initial assumption was that learning a piece by heart entails more than cognitively reducing it to its smallest forms (periods or phrases), but also a firm adherence to given cues on a timeline that repeat identically in every performance. Gruson claims that the element in play here relates to muscle memory more than analytical memory, and her own experiments exemplify this best: A professional performer was asked to learn a piece of music by heart. The performer, given a structural template that is only slightly different from the original was then asked to play the piece from memory. In most cases the performers failed to play the piece continuously or smoothly.

Were these not the exact same elements that were in play during the blinking game? In *Still Life* the performers were aware of their musical materials and had in fact learned them by heart. The structure of the piece was presented clearly in their scores, and even the specific audience-members from which they were to take their cues was a recurring and stable element. The one thing the performers never knew was

when exactly a specific audience-member might blink. This element alone was sufficient to obstruct the smooth transition between materials and enabled incidental materials to surface.

I was slowly acquiring a new taste as far as scoring and performance dynamics were concerned. I was reminded of ancient and less advanced methods of notation and felt closer to the manner in which Trietler (2003) describes them: '…provid[ing] a system of symbols or cues that do not directly instruct the performer in detail, but that put him on course in his own process of decision making about the performance'. This indeed was the informed performer I was searching for, and I was wrestling with the idea of finding the right way to score music for that 'ideal' performer. However, I almost instinctively knew that answers were not to be sought in ancient music, in the same manner that I was starting to realize that this ideal performer might very well not be a classically trained one.

2.3 Music in Indigenous Cultures

As a student at the Haifa University, I had the rare opportunity to study a semester-long course with the noted ethnomusicologist, Simha Arom. Through his course I was acquainted for the first time with traditions of music making in indigenous African societies, specifically North African and Sub-Saharan. The culture of music making within these societies is as structured and meticulous as our own classical tradition. It contains music that features very complex rhythmic and melodic structures, as well as long, sometimes non-proportionate forms. One striking difference, however, is the lack of any notated element in these musical practices. The tuition and performance of music is done entirely from memory and as such, present us with a performance dynamic that is completely different to the one we are acquainted with.

The ideal I was personally hoping to establish was a score that manages to inadvertently take away the focus from less important details, and stress the formal or rather, abstract nature of the piece. Not an accumulation of small details that finally clarifies the form, but rather a clear diminution of formal and conceptual elements into a scheme so as to allow a freer and immediate approach towards the lower-level materials. The latter describes quite accurately how musical material is learned and later executed within indigenous cultures, and the writing on the matter provides much revealing evidence.

2.3.1 Improvisation

'In this sort of personal instruction, artistic training precedes the technical. The pupil is in constant contact with the work of art in its most developed form and he is conscious of the goal [that] he should eventually attain: the content of the music is never separated from its form'

This quote from noted musicologist, Alain Daniélou (1971), regarding the traditional method of tuition in South East Asia most readily describes the 'mood' required in a musical culture that sets the artwork, rather than its execution at the forefront. But it still doesn't manage to say much regarding how this

learning can aid with improvising on a set form. Arom (1993) clarifies this aspect for us by describing pygmy musical practices in the Central African Republic: Within strict forms grows a heterophony that leads a 'foreign' listener to believe that freedom reigns supreme. However, there is in fact a rigorous organization that is based on training and instincts – the instincts that were perfected through years of repetitive contact with the same materials. In such a manner each member of the community knows, in accordance with the function of each section and the form at large, perfectly when and to what extent to improvise. Therefore, what seems at first like an unstructured approach turns out to be a highly structured practice merely allowing some freedom with its lower-level details.

The acclaimed Indian musician, Viram Jasani, describes in conversation with Derek Bailey (1980) improvisational practices in more detail. Improvisation, according to Jasani, is never taught to a student directly. The teacher does not, at first, even dwell on theoretical matters. The teacher merely presents the pupil with a *raga*, repeating it in different forms and permutations, and asks the student to imitate. It is only through an extensive repetition of this practice that the student slowly realizes where, when and how much to improvise on the set materials. Jasani continues and claims that it is very difficult to pinpoint the exact moment at which a pupil starts improvising, as the student is exposed to fixed as well as improvised materials from the very first acquaintance with a new piece. The improvised sections are as integral to the structure as are the fixed elements, and removing any of them from the eventual piece will render it incomplete.

2.3.2 Natural & Artificial Grammar

This description of indigenous musical practices, when compared to our own tradition, presents us with two systems that are strikingly similar to each other. The attitude with which the respective musicians approach these two systems, however, is entirely different. The classical tradition is first and foremost self-conscious, a fact made evident by music notation. The piece, composer, and audience are separate entities set within a strict hierarchy. The composition is an ideal object and its scoring prompts unanimity coupled with a clear goal oriented approach. Indigenous musical practices, on the other hand, contain almost none of these elements. The music is not notated and very unaware of itself. The entire community, whether actively partaking in the musical activity or not, is a participant and certainly not excluded from singing along or dancing. The pieces performed are traditional and the composer is unknown. The 'professional' performers are not 'celebrities', but mere service-providers. Hence, their success is never measured based on musical factors, but rather larger societal ones.

Lerdahl (1988) refers to the difference between these two musical grammars as a 'natural' vs. 'artificial' grammar. A natural grammar arises spontaneously in a musical culture; an artificial grammar is an invention of an individual or group within a culture. Lerdahl crystallizes this definition even further by adding that improvisation and communal participation will be the attributes of a natural musical culture, whereas the artificial one will mostly be highly specified and hence, exclusive.

By narrowing down the differences between these two musical practices to a set formula, I was able to realize and better define what I was hoping to achieve through my compositions and their performance. I was nonetheless very aware of the fact that my own forays into indigenous music were as arrogant as the attempts by the first explorers of these musical cultures. I was, finally, coming from a well-established classical tradition and training, and only through years of attempting to perfect my trait did I come full circle in realizing that I could actually benefit with different approaches. Mostly, I was aware of the complexity of my own music and how this fact related to the classical tradition at large – if it were not for the very self-conscious specification and archiving of past works, very few of them would have made it to modern times. Regardless, I was sure there were ways to incorporate the ethos of indigenous music-making into my own scores, and I was even aware of the division I was looking for – I wanted to maintain the complexity, the self-awareness and in some ways, exclusivity of my own music. However, I still wanted to involve the performer in the creative process to a larger extent, or perhaps soften the borders of the exclusive relationship between composer, performer and audience.

2.4 Leading Towards a Question

My intention was not merely to redefine this relationship between composer, performer and possibly audience for its own sake, but mainly to redefine it in order to achieve musical gestures and dynamics that have not yet been fully explored. *Still Life with Riots* was intended to create incidental erratic elements, but could other scores, specified differently, create different elements that were not thought up by the composer? Could the performer, allowed to take playful liberties with a score, disclose new materials that are in complete consonance with the mood of the piece? Could a piece present itself as an invitation to improvise on a given structure or theme, allowing a certain type of performer a larger participation in its creation?

These then became the main questions I set myself for this PhD portfolio. I decided to write several pieces, in each of which I would attempt to create a slightly alternative performance dynamic. In retrospect, I am aware that not all of these attempts were entirely successful. Indeed, some lead to surprising compositional results whereas others managed to disclose fascinating research, yet proved insufficient as finished compositions. In the next chapter I shall discuss each of these pieces in detail and lay out the initial ideas prompting their composition, the research involved, and afterthoughts.

Chapter 3

PhD Portfolio & Analysis

The unifying aspect for all pieces in this portfolio is their attempt in redefining a performance dynamic for an intended end. In most of these portfolio pieces the end is similar to that presented in *Still Life with Riots*, namely the incidental creation of erratic materials. One must bear in mind, however, that a delicate balance exists between the erratic elements created incidentally and the overall erratic quality of some of the pieces presented (such as with *Long Live the Gathering*). More so, the reader should realize that in some instances the creation of erratic elements is neglected altogether in turn for an alternative performance dynamic that attempts to explore different territories (such as with *Violin & Piano,* and to some extent with the main piece of this portfolio, *Datura*).

3.1 *Concerto*

The initial idea for *concerto* came to me after attending a Proms concert featuring the Vienna Philharmonic. In their performance, the orchestra executed what seemed to me to be a true *piano* dynamic, a dynamic that I was never too satisfied with in live concerts. I think I owe my ongoing disappointment with soft orchestral dynamics when attempted in live concert to the fact that I was acquainted with most symphonic music through CD recordings. It is no secret that these recordings are digitally manipulated and mastered so that their dynamics seem more extreme than as performed. In this specific Proms concert, however, the orchestra was directed to play so softly to an extent that sometimes the individual sections were at risk of fading out, and indeed sometimes for a fracture of a second, they did. I imagined in my mind the conductor rehearsing the ensemble in preparation for the concert, and instructing it not to fear this possible fading out of sound; if it were to occur, the players were to continue playing, constantly adjusting their individual volume according to the section.

I then thought: what if I was to ask just that of a group of players? In fact, I had been commissioned to compose a piece for a trio of Baroque instruments (traverso, viola da gamba and harpsichord) as part of a Handel House project. These instruments were naturally soft when compared to their modern equivalents, and I started imagining them in a game of sorts – fighting over which one of them could play the softest dynamic.

I realized that I would have to clarify one very important point to the performers: the dynamic I was expecting them to execute was not a relative *piano*, or even the softest *piano* allowing the audibility of the written notes. I was expecting an absolute *piano* – a *piano* that would in fact render the written notes

irrelevant or gestural at most, as what I was expecting to hear was an attempt at sound. For the traverso this meant an airy gesture attempted using different embouchures according to the notated material; for the gamba this meant a constant floating in and out between different types of *flautando* gestures, and most interestingly, for the harpsichord this meant an attack so soft as to not successfully activate the plucking mechanism of the instrument. In effect, the sounds emitted by the harpsichord would be those of the inner mechanism at work and not pitched ones.

In theory this idea could have succeeded, but from this point in the construction of the piece I went on to amass various elements on the formal structure, disabling the piece from ever being successfully performed. I was in retrospect reminded of the words of the Italian composer Agostino Di Scipio regarding some of his own work[2]. Di Scipio has tried several approaches towards an organic feedback scenario where the sounds of a live instrument are recorded through various microphones set in the listening space. These ambient recordings are then fed back into a computer, are manipulated, and projected anew into the same listening space coupled with the ongoing sounds from the live instrument. The new media is recorded again in the same manner and the whole process repeats itself until the end of the piece. Seeing this is a delicate, erratic, and somewhat uncontrollable procedure, Di Scipio has recognized the need not only for various means of dealing with unexpected feedback, but also with the complete collapse of the process and hence, the integration of this latter aspect into the overall aesthetics of the piece. Di Scipio repeatedly refers to the 'breaking down' of the piece and the leverage he believes a composer must allow the process if indeed that process entails the insertion of erratic elements into the real-time manipulation of a score.

The game I had constructed revolving the silent dynamics I was hoping to achieve, had managed to overlook this same 'breaking down' that Di Scipio refers to, and in many ways explains the failure of *Concerto* from ever being performed to a satisfying extent. I realized through this experience that with an elaborate game such as presented in *Concerto*, one requires not only a lengthy rehearsal period, but also and mainly a specific type of performer that can manage the psychological difficulties that arise with the unfolding of such a process. The safeguards against any possible failure were altogether non-existent in the piece and the 'breaking down' of the process was an option that was not even taken into consideration.

3.1.1 The Game & Incidental Materials

This element of soft playing constituted only one section (the A-part and its reprise) in an A-B-C-A' form. The B-part keeps some slight and inconsequential remnants of this element as played by the traverso and gamba, whilst the harpsichord is asked to play an unspecified pitched element. The C-part

[2] Retrieved from: Anderson, C. (2005). Dynamic Networks of Sonic Interaction: an interview with Agostino di Scipio. *Computer Music Journal* 29, (3), 11-28.

explores a different material altogether, namely unspecified triadic chords chosen at the performers' discretion, and the final reprise of the A-part returns to the initial dynamic with slight changes to the game and the harpsichord part.

The game in question constitutes a contest of sorts in which the three players act simultaneously as performers and judges of their counterparts' performances. The performers are asked to play their materials *piano possible*, yet every time a performer is playing too softly for a pitched sound to be audible to the other performers (something that should happen quite frequently), the other performers are allowed to 'steal' the stage, as it were, and start playing their own materials. The three performers trying to reach the end of the A-section are hence in a perpetual race against each other. This element, quite erratic in its own accord, was coupled by the least appropriate notated gestures for the indicated dynamic of absolute *piano possible*. Both the traverso and the gamba feature highly technical, fast and complicated gestures that could prove difficult in a normal dynamic, let alone in an extremely soft one. The harpsichord features a comparatively slow and calm writing, but bearing in mind that the player is expected to attempt these notated elements as softly as possible set this part in a similar situation to the rest.

As one can immediately tell from a review of the score, the game specified in the first section of the piece is elaborated upon in the space of a complete A4 page. This is due to the many possibilities and consequences that I realized could arise when following the simple task I had specified above. As an example, I felt I must elaborate on an instance where two performers try to 'steal' simultaneously. In this case, 'war' occurs. 'War' would be a situation where two players fight over the domination of the 'stage', and is also the only instance during the entire A-part where the players are asked to play at a dynamic other than *piano possibile*. And this is just one consequential example out of many that the performers were asked to learn by heart and integrate before ever having performed the piece together.

The combination of this elaborate scheme and the highly technical writing for the instrument, I thought, could eventuate in a plethora of incidental erratic elements. I assumed that the difference between this section, filled to the brim with erratic elements, would then prove an interesting contrast to the following sections. The B and C-parts would consequently present us with more specific writing, and mainly a sudden shift to an extreme loud dynamic during the C-part. I saw these 'clear' parts as a necessary contrast to the erratic, inaudible and opaque nature of the A-part. Yet, I had not taken into consideration the fact that the average performer, trying to adhere to all of these 'rules' whilst having to deal with their technically demanding part, coupled with an acute attention to the playing of its counterparts, would forget something quite crucial to the entire piece: mainly, to play softly!

In fact, the first 2-hour rehearsal (out of three) that I had been allocated with the performers was spent explaining the complicated game. The second and third were almost entirely dedicated to reminding the performers that the soft playing was of the essence and that in fact the whole process would be rendered useless if that element weren't brought into clear focus from the onset of the piece. Needless to say, the performers felt disgruntled at being asked to adhere to an almost impossible task, which in its current form also made very little musical sense.

3.1.2 A Performer

I realized quite soon that it would be impossible to try and convey the meaning of the piece to the specific performers chosen for this project. They were, after all, run of the mill performers who were expecting a fully notated score that carries a clear message of its intent regardless of its level of difficulty. And was that not the exact opposite of what I was hoping to achieve? I was hoping to create a score that would set-up the basis for collaboration between the performers and myself; a score that would prompt the player to investigate its boundaries and present as many final outcomes as there were performances of it. But I was to receive a harsh wakeup call that in many ways clarified to me how I should go about writing such music, or more accurately, for whom.

In retrospect, *Still Life with Riots* seemed like a true act of serendipity. I was not aware when writing its score that it was specified to the exact degree for the piece to be picked up by almost any type of player and to be easily learned and performed. True, different types of performers had proven to present *Still Life* in an entirely different manner, but none of the performances were less detailed, less accurate or had diminished from the score in any way. Beyond the possible compositional failures (that were never fully examined), *Concerto* presents a score that a very specific type of performer should or even can approach. It requires the performer to have an experimenting spirit as large as the composer's, if not larger, and a unified ensemble that is willing to take the time to discover what the piece and process entail. I am sure that if that were the case, *Concerto* could have at least proven to be an interesting effort.

I was, however, not disheartened from this experience, but assumed it to be an important lesson. I was quite positive that from now on I would make sure I knew whom it was I was writing for, and also try to tailor the piece more specifically to the sensibilities of those specific performers. Indeed, if a score prompts a collaborative effort between composer and performer, then the composer should make sure that that same performer is up for the task. In many ways, it was this experience that immediately led to the creation of the next portfolio piece, *Unisons*, which was crafted and tweaked with a clear vision of its performers in mind.

3.2 *Unisons*

Unisons was commissioned by two good friends who'd studied with me at the Guildhall. The piece, however, was written during my stay in Berlin and had, even before its completion, secured a performance by two members of the KNM, Theo Nabicht and Alexandre Babel. It was in collaboration with the latter two that *Unisons* was written, and it was in many ways written with their specific capabilities in mind. The Guildhall duo that premiered the piece, presented a version that stuck to the score quite literally. The Berlin duo, on the other hand, really managed to make the score their own and took some important improvisatory freedoms with the piece such as I had hoped to achieve with the specific directions given. The most noticeable difference between the two duos was the fact that the

Guildhall duo was a classically trained pair of performers; the Berlin duo were also classically trained, but had also worked extensively as free-improvisers. Hence the latter were much more able and open to treat the score as a mere suggestion, an invitation if you will, to discover the many possibilities it contained. It is, hence, this performance that I shall mainly refer to in my description.

3.2.1 The Idea & Instrumentation

The main, and quite simple compositional idea behind *Unisons* is disclosed with its name: The piece explores, in five separate sections, several options of rhythmic unison between a percussive element and a soprano saxophone. However, from this starting point I had also intended to add some elements of incidental erratic sound – some achieved through fully composed scenarios, some achieved inadvertently through alternative notation and improvisation. There is also one important 'open' element to the score, and that is the free choice of percussion instruments for the entire piece up to the coda, where, for dramatic purposes, I felt the need to be more specific. I had also inserted into the score a minimal stipulation for percussion instrumentation and use of beaters in case a performer would be at a loss confronted with too many options. It was this minimal stipulation that the Guildhall duo used, partially because it made the piece clearer, and partially because my own stipulation is economical and hence much easier to transport. The Berlin duo had decided to take a maximalist approach, and presented the piece with a complete percussion setup that included a drum-kit, gongs and more.

3.2.2 Incidental Material 1

The elements of incidental material I was referring to earlier can be found most clearly in the first section of the piece, the transition between the first section and the second (the long saxophone *glissando*), and the last section of the piece. The final two are traditionally notated, but present incidental materials arising as a consequence of the difficulty of their execution. The first section is non-pitch notated and presents the incidental material by vaguely specifying an improvisation on the given rhythmic stimulus.

The last section stipulates a *legato* line that begins at the lowest octave of the saxophone and reaches its highest octave by the end of the piece. This fact on its own presents no real difficulty had it not been for the dynamics asked for and the breathing instructions I had given. The dynamics begin at a comfortable *forte* in the first register and reach a quadruple *piano* at the end of the piece. It is obvious that playing these extremely high notes at such a dynamic is close to impossible, and indeed, in none of the three performances I have heard of *Unisons* was the saxophone player able to reach these notes without presenting an abundance of breathing sounds, kicks and unintentional noises. I had also specified that the player should not breath before the attack of a new note, as is customary, but rather mid-way a held note. In itself this is not difficult to execute, but by requesting this of the player, I had taken away the one anchor they might still have. In this manner, the player was not allowed to even slightly tongue a new note, and by doing so control to some extent the dynamic of the phrase. Every new note, which was also a

higher note, had to be continued seamlessly from the dynamic and wind direction of the preceding note, and in that sense every new, higher note, was truly felt as a higher note by the player.

A similar approach is taken in the transition between sections one and two, where the saxophone is asked to play a very long (ca. 35 seconds) *glissando* from the lowest to the (textbook) highest note of the instrument. In this case, the dynamics are actually approachable, as the beginning of the phrase starts from *niente* and grows to a quadruple *forte* at its end. However, many erratic materials come to the forefront when attempting such a long *glissando*, as even if the saxophone can theoretically allow *glissandi* in its various registers, it can by no means allow a continuous *glissando* throughout the entire range of the instrument. And here too, on each of the three performances the player seemed to struggle with this specific passage and on no occasion managed to avoid the many incidental materials that appeared as a consequence of this difficult specification.

3.2.3 Incidental Material 2

The first section of the piece presents a different method of achieving a similar result. In this case the incidental materials comes into play by a combination of two elements: The first is twofold and consists of the strict rhythmic unison combined with extremely demanding rhythms, and the juxtaposition between musical time (as presented in the rhythmic writing) and absolute time (as presented in the rests). I have yet to hear the first section performed in strict unison, but rather always as a sort of heterophony. For clarity's sake, I have made sure to welcome this heterophony in the directions to the players. I have also yet to hear a performance of this section in which both performers managed to return to the musical time, after a rest given in absolute time, without fumbling the initial notes to an extent. I have always been fond of these micro-mistakes, even within music in which this sort of mistake was completely out of context. In fact, such an example could serve a good illustration to the minuteness of the specific erratic nature I am seeking in my own music.

The second element has to do specifically with the saxophone playing. In the score, I direct the saxophonist thus: 'Aggressive but careless playing (i.e. more haphazard sound than pitch, as if spontaneously improvising)'. I had deliberately chosen to keep these directions vague, so as not to prompt the player in a specific direction, but rather allow each player to discover this first section in their own manner through rehearsals. The three performances of *Unisons* have presented three separate approaches to this material and have obviously differed from each other as much as the players did. However, it was with the Berlin duo that the most interesting results had occurred.

Being improvisers themselves, Nabicht and Babel had attempted many approaches towards this first section. Indeed these were the kind of performers I had most avidly hoped to work with, as they truly wanted to discover the many possibilities the score could present, not for its own sake and not even in order to gratify the composer's curiosity. They truly wanted to see whether there was an option that they could single out, which in their eyes brought out the true essence of the score. When I finally attended a

rehearsal with the players I was surprised to discover that the two started off the piece with an improvisation of their own. They claimed that they found it helpful 'putting themselves in the mood' by improvising short passages of cued heterophony, and then, on cue, to seamlessly enter into *Unisons*. When the performers actually started playing the score, I was amazed at what I heard. They were reckless and aggressive; the saxophone exhibited a wide array of incidental sounds that truly sounded like a consequence of immediacy and not pre-conceived techniques, but most importantly, the players were in fact adhering to the written score of *Unisons* quite strictly. This was possibly the best example to why I believed this sort of writing required a very specific type of performer.

3.2.4 Afterthoughts

Now that the reader has probably managed to acquire a more acute sensibility to the detail I am interested in exploring when referring to incidental erratic material, it is also important for me to reiterate my intention in exploring writing in the manner I did in *Unisons*. I have no interest in testing the patience, or alternatively stretching the abilities of a performer. When presenting a performer with writing such as can be found in *Unisons*, it should be clear that my only intent is to extract incidental material from a score through various means. However, there is an inherent problem with fore mentioned musical passages that I just now described. If I, the composer, specify little to nothing next to these passages, a performer whom I have no access to might assume this to be bad or cruel writing. If, on the other hand, I were to specify that the sought after result is a lack of cleanliness leading to a possible creation of incidental materials, the same performer might disregard the written materials and try to attempt a version of erratic sounds. Hence, it is only by attempting these passages as written with the intent of hearing them cleanly, that those same incidental materials can arise. The effort in trying to attempt the written material is the method allowing the incidental materials to surface. In fact, the more effort is put into such attempts of the score, the more erratic will the quality of the incidental materials be.

This paradigm presented me with an insoluble problem. On the one hand, I was trying to achieve an exciting musical material. On the other, my method of achieving this same material included taking a performer who is not an improviser or experimenter through some dark regions. True, my experiences with *Unisons* were generally positive, and the sections that I refer to are not long nor do they constitute the entire piece. However, I must note to have experienced discomfort at noticing the strife and effort of the performers and hence immediately wondered whether I could try a different approach in my next piece?

3.3 *Long Live the Gathering*

On arrival in London, I found myself engaged as pianist in its varied free-improvisation scene. I started regularly attending musical gatherings through which a whole new vista of music making was opening-up to me. Yet, as I was becoming more proficient in this style of impromptu music making, it also became

quite evident to me that only a handful of these attempts resulted in an outcome that I could personally call interesting music.

I would record most of the sessions that I took part in. I would later listen to these recordings at home, and was always surprised to discover that the music, which I was so exhilarated to partake in the creation of as a performer, was actually quite boring to listen to in the aftermath. Attending improvisation concerts as an audience-member deepened this perception even further and led me to believe that there was a hitch at the core of this whole practice. I realized that the element most absent for me in free-improvisation was that of a 'head' - an all seeing 'father-figure' who could gather up disconnected moments of brilliance and fit them into a coherent structure.

However, this latter approach is in complete negation to the whole ethos of free-improvisation, which wears on its sleeve the freedom, and especially equality of all its participants. The improvisers are all at the same time composers, players and listeners, partaking in a group experience with music serving simultaneously as its means and end.

In my piece *Long Live the Gathering* I proposed to invert this paradigm and took on the role of this so-called 'father-figure'. The sound sworld was 'borrowed', to a large extent, from improvised music and free jazz. I then scored these motifs into the piece using space notation, an external timeline and unspecified pitches, as well as some total improvisation. Using these elements, I have attempted to recreate the unrehearsed and somewhat immediate decision-making process executed by performers whilst improvising. I hope that in this manner I have managed to capture a marriage of some agitated, erratic and indeterminate sound worlds coupled with a consequent direction, pointing most strongly towards a through-composed form.

3.3.1 Form and Incidental Material

The formal structure for *Long Live the Gathering* is very clear. It presents a contrasting A-B form where A is the part most readily exploring elements of incidental material. The B-part presents an *ostinato* developed through repetition, and in fact serves as a prolonged *coda* to the piece. Throughout the piece, which is scored for quintet, there is a tape part that acts as the rhythm-section backdrop to this supposed 'jazz-band'. The tape was created using numerous historical jazz recordings, which were then algorithmically manipulated in order to create the final result that is heard. This tape part also acts as the external timeline for the entire piece, and it is this timeline that the performers mostly adhere to rather than the musical time. I say mostly, due to the fact that the score presents some short strict elements of musical time that require the performers to briefly shift from a five second bar to a 10/4 bar in 120 BPM. True, the overall length of these differently timed bars is identical, but the shift between these methods of timing is one element that aids the creation of an 'improvisatory' attitude towards the score at large. Indeed, by shifting briefly into musical time, a sense of rigidity is imposed on the score. This rigidity

immediately dissipates when the score goes back into absolute time, which allows the relative space-notated cues to seem freer.

The other very important facet aiding this attitude was in making a distinction between three types of notated materials. The first are the traditionally notated notes, which are to be treated traditionally and are always pronounced. The second are the small triangular notes, or non-pitched notes. These are described in the opening of the score thus: 'short, haphazard, incidental sounds; played casually and always soft; when grouped – play as fast as possible, not precise, casually! These notes may include effects and techniques, but not exclusively.' Clearly, this was an attempt at simply specifying elements of erratic sound, or casual sounds when compared to the strict traditionally notated notes. Finally, there were the open boxes, sometimes specified with a text, sometimes left completely open to the interpretation of the performer. These boxes are described in the opening of the score thus: 'a free-form improvisation for a given duration, in style, always quasi solistic, pronounced, dense.'

When writing the piece I could only hope that the chaotic part writing and the openness of the score coupled with the combined effect of the fore mentioned notation would set-up a 'mood' for exploration. And indeed, the performers immediately realized that they could tweak, invent and elaborate on existing materials as well as simply treat the score in a relaxed manner. The score was clearly not written precisely and cues were almost impossible to adhere to in a traditional fashion. Hence as soon as the performers realized that this element could be embraced, the real magic of the piece surfaced.

The score was then not only a recipe for creating incidental sounds, or even pre-conceived ones. It had managed to truly resemble an impromptu improvisation, where the performers made, or sounded as if they were making on the spot decisions such as one would in a real free improvisation scenario. In fact the cuing, which was aided only by space notation (on a strict 5 second grid) and the fact that each performer was playing the piece from a score and not a part, was the main element leading towards this erratic and nervous quality of immediacy. I was taken back to the work of Shaffer (1980) that I had referred to in my analysis of *Still Life with Riots.* Shaffer describes a cuing mechanism as '(an) hierarchically organized series of plans… leading towards (the) motor program that provides the goal and the overall structure of the performance'. By lightly obstructing this hierarchy, I had also obstructed the 'motor program', and again like in *Still Life*, I had presented the performer with the material, but never its exact placement within the piece. In this manner, the separate motifs could be learned by heart, but their exact placement within the piece could only be rehearsed during a *tutti* performance, leading to a somewhat erratic quality.

This simple combination of elements had actually done much more than merely preset the listener with an unrehearsed, or immediate sound quality. It had opened up a vista for improvisation on a given theme, making each performance sound different even if performed by the same ensemble, and most importantly for me, allowed for the piece to never lose its recognizable essence. These were, after all, the combined

effects of *Still Life with Riots*, which were achieved here through completely different means, and that was exactly what I set out to do.

It is quite telling to note, however, that my first impression of the piece was not a good one. The ensemble chosen by the commissioners to perform the piece was treating it too loosely for my taste, disregarding important elements of the score and simply not performing the piece as I had expected them to. Although that same ensemble was to record the piece, I still felt the need to flag my discontent to the producers, and was surprisingly given cache to search for new performers whom I though could better interpret the score in the month leading up to the performance. I would like in the following section to elaborate on this experience, as I believe that it presents an important turning point in my attitude towards this kind of score writing and the results I, the composer, can expect of it.

3.3.2 A Journey Through Two Performances

Long Live the Gathering was the piece that convinced me, more than any piece before, that I as composer must learn how to 'give in' to the process that I have myself created. I couldn't help but notice that I was asking the performers to do just that – namely to give in to the process and allow themselves to discover the possibilities that the score and piece could disclose. However, through the turn of events that took place during the rehearsal period, I realized that I myself was not accepting to do the same. I was still very much trying to control the piece and more so, it's musical outcomes. I was not accepting musical results that were not intended or to my liking, deeming them 'mistakes', whereas I was trying to prompt the players to accept the elements that I was in fact searching for.

The rehearsals for the piece started off with a fiasco as far as I was concerned. The performers chosen to interpret the score were again, run of the mill classically trained musicians. Their initial reaction to the score was to take it lightly. They assumed that seeing so many elements were left to chance or unspecified, the score could be treated loosely and with what I saw as an unhealthy disregard to detail. In fact, it was very clear to me that the performers had arrived to the initial rehearsal having not even looked at the piece, which I had sent them 2 months prior to that same rehearsal. I was obviously offended and annoyed and could not help but notice that the ensemble's overall approach, albeit sticking to the written score, was missing out on the 'idea'. Their performance seemed to lack direction and more so, a sensitivity to detail.

At a loss, I asked a composer friend of mine to attend the next rehearsal so as to get a second opinion. I had asked my friend to learn the score, and to examine during that rehearsal whether I was right to be so disappointed. I was amazed to discover that my friend not only didn't think the piece was a failure, but rather that the ensemble was adhering to the score quite in the fashion I was expecting them to. I was not sure what to make of this advice, but the fact remained that I was quite unsatisfied with the results and it was then that I had approached the production committee with a request to locate other performers for the concert.

The production committee, realizing the alternative nature of this piece, surprisingly allowed me to change the lineup, and so I did! I chose classically trained improvisers whom I had been in contact with and set them underway with scores in hands, expressing my wish for them to learn the score and more so, try and understand its 'mood'. The latter was the element I felt most lacking in the first recorded performance. The piece was then rehearsed extensively with the new ensemble and besides the joy of exploring it I really did believe we had manage to extract the most interesting results from the score. We then recorded two versions of the piece albeit not as good as the professional recording initially provided by the festival, and went on to perform the piece in concert. I was satisfied.

3.3.3 The Aftermath

Listening to the two separate performances of *Long Live the Gathering* in the aftermath, I noticed something quite interesting. I realized that a very similar thing to what had initially occurred with *Still Life with Riots* had managed to happen again. As a reminder, with *Still Life* I was presented a premiere performance that I was not too satisfied with. It was only after the second performance of the piece, featuring performers that I myself had chosen for its interpretation, that I realized that the first performance was not in anyway lacking. And this is exactly what had occurred, and even to a more extreme extent with *Long Live the Gathering*.

Indeed, the second performance had extracted the elements I was most avidly searching for when composing the piece. Again, this was a spirit of recklessness and freedom that cannot be imitated. It is either achieved through a true fusion with the materials or not at all. However, the timid, more subdued and cautious approach towards the score that was presented in the initial performance was in no way a misinterpretation, but merely an alternative one. Listening to the recording now, I realize that the first performance contains many elements that the second does not, mainly a timelessness, a floating quality that presents the piece in a manner that I was not even able to imagine. Funnily, the latter result was achieved by merely adhering to the minimum specification elaborated upon in the score. That was, after all, the classical approach I could expect one to have towards a score such as this, and my lesson from the entire experience was again the issue of anticipating or perhaps specifying what type of performers I believe should approach such a piece. Having said that, it is quite clear to me that the improviser would immediately be more drawn to such a score than the traditionally inclined, classically trained performer. And more so, I realized that by making such a specification in advance I might be limiting the spectrum of performers I could hope to attract to such a piece, and hence also limit the possible outcomes of its performances.

I then immediately understood the hypocrisy of my own approach. On one hand, I was writing these lightly specified procedures; these open scores, and presenting them to an ensemble to be explored and truly interpreted. I was after all trying in some way to soften the boundaries of the hierarchical relationship between composer and performer through a score, which traditionally, binds them both. This

liberation, as I saw it, had a social implication that was much larger than the musical one we were attempting to practice.

In Anderson's (2005) aforementioned interview with composer Agostino Di Scipio, the composer claims that there is an important social implication in allowing a pre-conceived process to 'break down'. Indeed, if the specified process contains that possibility, then that possibility should be allowed to play-out and be given its respectful place in the design of the composition rather than trying to eliminate or disregard it. I believe that, at least theoretically, Di Scipio makes a valid point: Both in musical realms as well as societal ones, those calling for change should present as many safeguards against the process leading to a 'breaking down' or to results that were not intended. But in setting up a musical process that could lead to these new realms, one must also know how to accept them, examine the result always with new and fresh ears, and admit that this might not be the destination that was being steered towards, but also that this new destination is not a bad place to be.

The noted improviser, Evan Parker calls a musical score 'a recipe for possible music making' (Bailey, 1980). I think that through the initial performances of *Long Live the Gathering* I had truly learned how to accept, and in later pieces even enjoy the many possibilities that an open score can present. If Parker's words hold some truth and indeed a score is merely a recipe, then we, who have but already learned how to cook, should be allowed to tamper with that recipe and make the dish truly our own.

3.3.4 A New Look at Interpretation

In early 2013 I was informed that *Long Live the Gathering* was selected for performance at the 2014 ISCM (International Society of Contemporary Music) in Poland. Including *Long Live the Gathering* on an official selection in what is considered by many to be the leading international festival for contemporary music was an indication to me that the piece has an objective value exclusive of my own judgments. Of course, the latter can be said to be true for any composition, but in this case I felt the selection held a stronger value than usual: This to me was an affirmation of the fact that despite *Long Live the Gathering* being an open score, and hence immediately seeming less concrete in its intent, it was not only viewed as concrete enough by an international jury, but pleasing enough to publics (or to a potential audience) regardless of its construct.

This prompted me to tweak and revise the score, as well as attempt to perform it again in order to provide the ISCM with the most definitive documentation, aiding its informed performance in the festival. The opportunity to perform the piece again presented itself in my workplace, the University of East Anglia, where I formed a student ensemble that rehearsed the piece on a weekly basis for 12 weeks! The process was exhilarating and informative for the students as well as myself. Whereas they learned how to come to terms with a very particular type of open score, I learned better who my potential performers could be.

3.3.4.1 Less is More

The student ensemble featured performers with varying levels of musicianship, yet there was still one clear commonality between them – none of them had ever before performed such a score. Hence, the process began with myself slowly breaking down the various elements in the score for the students so that it would at least be approachable for them to study. This is of course a procedure that I was not required to follow with the professional ensembles who performed *Long Live the Gathering*, as most of the performers there, even if not acquainted with this type of score, could easily make sense of it on their own.

It was in fact the approachability of the score that allowed the first performance of the piece to seem so lacking in my eyes. I recall a conversation I had with the pianist of that same ensemble at a moment of clear dismay. He approached me asking whether there was anything in the score that they, the ensemble, were not performing properly. I had to admit to him that the written elements of the score were being performed as written – it was the mood that was lacking! Their performance simply didn't manage to convey the feeling of recklessness I was looking for. It also didn't seem to manage to veer away from the many clichéd choices the ensemble was making. This did not sound like an improvisation, or a structured one; or like jazz, or free jazz for that matter. It sounded like a bunch of classically trained musicians trying to imitate what they assumed jazz, improvisation or free jazz to be. Those performers, although demonstrating no clear footing in the world of jazz, free jazz or improvisation, were all the same attempting their own, sometimes ill-informed impressions of that sound world. It is this moment that convinced me that an informed performance must by definition include performers that are acquainted with the style at hand. This is why I felt adamant enough to approach the commissioners with a request to locate other, more suitable performers.

However, performing the piece at UEA with a student ensemble that can in no way seem to adhere to this criteria (i.e. acquaintance with the style) was an experience that changed my view-point altogether and in some ways vindicated my entire work and approach towards open scores. This same student ensemble approached *Long Live the Gathering* tabula rasa, as it were. They had no preconceived notions as to what the piece was about, nor what it might be attempting to achieve – they simply had not encountered this type of score before. In rehearsal we mainly worked on purely technical issues such as adherence to the written material, dynamics (and listening as an immediate consequence), and mostly – how to follow an external timeline, as required in the piece. We rarely stopped to discuss elements of style or attitude, as there were pressing technical issues at hand that required prior attention.

Regardless, entering the 3rd month of rehearsals I couldn't help but notice that the piece was gaining a noticeable shape as well as clear direction, this without ever having dwelled on these issues with the performers. This informed performance was the consequence of an ingrained understating of the score: At this point in the process the students were so well acquainted with the material to an extent that the leverages and freedoms that they were allowed to take with the score did not need to be dwelled upon;

they simply figured it out through a familiarity with the written text! This example immediately called to mind the words of Viram Jasani (Bailey, 1980), who claimed that a student of Indian music is never taught how to improvise on a given form. It is, rather, a close and lengthy acquaintance with (read: repetition of) the material that in itself clarifies the boundaries of the style. What more, I had to admit that the improvisatory choices the students made were not in any way clichéd choices – in fact, it was their complete obliviousness to the style that allowed them to bring in elements to the piece that would have been deemed completely out of context with jazz and free improvisation styles, as well as not imagined even by myself, the composer. However, these materials were still in complete unison with the mood of the piece and in this particular case were informed only by the contents of the score.

This to me, then, became a vindicating experience. Not only did it prove that there was a valid reason for the 'openness' of this score (and perhaps others in this portfolio), but it also proved that this particular score manages to convey to a potential performer its intention and direction. Whereas at first I assumed that *Long Live the Gathering* required a knowing performer, I now believed that it required the exact opposite – namely a performer who is either an 'empty vessel', or one who is honest enough to approach each new score with the openness of a young person. This revelation prompted the important question of whether a performance can ever really be informed if the process or score are not given the time to seep-in and slowly become evident? Having said that, in our fast-paced world, where pieces are written to looming and usually short deadlines, and as a general rule performed in a rushed or ill-rehearsed manner, it is almost utopic, not to mention idealistic to assume that one's performer could be anything more than a technician.

3.4 *Violin & Piano*

The point of departure for this piece and indeed the reasoning for its somewhat unimaginative title lay at its inherent history. The violin and piano duo has been used, starting off from classical tradition and up to the 20th century, as a staple orchestration for composers along side other naturally balanced ensembles such as the piano trio, string quartet, etc. This tradition simultaneously presents a curse and blessing – the blessing in the form of a well shaped orchestration that needs very little intervention on behalf of the composer in order to sound balanced; a curse in the form of an ensemble that has had so many pieces written for it that it almost becomes an all too familiar historic sound. This fact leaves any composer at the onset of the 21st century with the uncomfortable question of whether something of value can be added to the already overflowing mass of pieces written for this duo?

Subjectively, I had related this problem to tonality and specifically to a motif that underlies any tonal system – the scale. The scale to me seems to carry the emotional value of tonality, and at the same time also of etudes, which are in fact a training system in tonal playing. Hence, I had decided that as a commentary on the collective history of this ensemble, I would have the whole piece dedicated to scales – downward pouring scales as a metaphor to the inevitable falling out of this tonal system and

instrumentation. I had also decided to explore more deeply the objective and statistical sound world of scales by opening the first part of the score to pitch choices made at the discretion of the performers. However, I decided to close the piece in a through-composed manner with my own tastes imposed on the same materials. I believe that these two approaches allow a glimpse onto how one material, considered almost mundane, could still carry immense musical value if treated appropriately.

3.4.1 Structuring the Score

In *Violin & Piano* the open character of the score attempts to explore an alternative performance dynamic. However, unlike all portfolio pieces presented so far, this piece does not attempt to create incidental materials per se, explore erratic sound qualities, or engage the performer in a real-time interpretation of the score. The open character of this specific piece explores subjects on a deeper, more philosophical level that in many ways relate to the personal realizations I made when composing the piece.

The initial idea for the piece, as stated in the introductory paragraph, was to exclusively explore downward pouring scales. I at first thought that the entire piece would be through-composed, as I saw no real merit in leaving notated elements of this specific score open. Noting that the note choices will be made quite arbitrarily and according to my own tastes, I decided to leave this aspect to the final stages of composition. At this point I went on to define the overall structure of the piece, which would run through various shades of fast harmonic rhythm at the start, only to end up at a relatively slow rhythm at the end of the piece. I then defined the specific rhythms of each bar, and also chose the starting point (i.e. the specific pitches) of each new violin and piano bar. This latter element also defined quite clearly the transition to the B-part of the form (*poco più mosso*), as in this section the initial starting pitches are maintained throughout a succession of more than 1 bar. It is also important to note that by allocating the starting pitches to each new bar I had in many ways defined the overall sound of the piece. First, these same pitches defined a momentary harmonic quality that was more pronounced only due to the fact they were always accented, and indeed the highest notes of every bar. But these starting pitches, and more so their location within the respective instrument's range, defined the sound of the bar to a larger extent than the actual scales.

Now, with a completed blueprint of the score, I had only the actual pitches of each scale remaining. I started with the slow *coda*, as I deliberately took a less rigorous approach to its structuring and knew in advance how I wanted it to sound. Going back to the beginning of the piece, however, I realized that the different scales I experimented with presented me with a problem. Regardless of the scales I chose, the only true recognizable character I could ascertain to each bar was indeed with the starting notes that I had already allocated in advance. In fact changing the scales, for violin and piano independently or together, would result in little to no difference to the overall sound of the bar. After a few notes, all that was truly recognizable were the specific jagged rhythms, the overall speed of the downward pouring (usually in reference to the preceding bar), and the relative location of this particular scale within the range of the instruments. It was after a few more days of experimenting in this manner that I started getting used to the blueprint that I was working with as a finalized version of the score.

3.4.2 The Open Element

My rule of thumb when 'composing' the scales was to stick to an inherent stepwise motion. I was not concerned whether the scales were modal, pentatonic, octatonic or in some instances even invented. The only aspect I was keen to bring forward was that each bar presented a different scale. But I soon realized that regardless of the specific choices I was making, the overall sound was a statistical one, making those same specific choices much more difficult to attempt. If it made no difference which particular scale I specified, why choose any specific scale over the other? Indeed, I realized that the only way to avoid this conundrum was by repeating the same scale bar after bar. But this approach led to an overtly specific sound world, and to my personal taste, a very mundane one.

Hence it was at this point that I decided that the blueprint would maintain its current form and act as the finished score for the piece. I did have to make some additions in the form of directions to the players regarding pitch/scale choice. I even realized that a skilled performer could get away with only learning the rhythms of the piece and improvise the scales in a *tutti* rehearsal or concert. In fact, I was starting to appreciate this openness more and more, as it seemed to convey the idea of a statistical score in a more honest manner than had I attempted to choose scales at random. Choosing the scales at random and enforcing them on the piece by written commitment would have highlighted the same scales and the incidental harmonies created with a value or importance they do not deserve. The avid performer or analyst would have taken the time to define the harmonic significance of each, or key vertical meeting points, and by doing so completely obscure the direction of the piece, which really should not be explored further than its downward pouring of scales.

In attempt to recognize the psychoacoustic reasons behind this odd occurrence allowing all scales to sound similar in this specific construct, I started researching the matter. My first realization was that due to the juxtaposing rhythms created by combining the violin and piano parts, there were only a few instances in which vertical meeting points were actually created. For the sake of research, I rewrote several sections of the piece, this time allocating the same rhythms to violin and piano in each bar, but soon discovered that even when there was a vertical meeting point on each note, still, the individual horizontal lines were much easier to perceive than the vertical harmonies.

I was soon referred by a friend researching elements in psychoacoustics to the work of Wolf. In his research regarding perception and cognition of functional harmonies vis-à-vis harmonic rhythm, Wolf (1976) discovered that a listener's perception of the functionality of harmony is hindered, and in some cases completely obstructed when the harmonic rhythm exceeds a certain speed. It would seem that the harmonic rhythm of the first two sections of *Violin & Piano* was fast enough to obliterate the functionality of the incidental harmonies created in each bar past that initial first note. What the listener was then left with was only the downward pouring gesture, the general placement within the respective instrument's range and of course, the individual lines constantly moving in stepwise motion.

In quite serendipitous fashion, this also presented a good reasoning for the final *coda* to be through-composed. In the *coda,* the harmonic rhythm is not only relatively slow to the rest of the piece, but also clearly slow enough in order for all vertical meeting points to be clearly perceived. Hence in retrospect it made much sense to specify the pitches for this last section and in some ways present a befitting dramatic, as well as conceptual ending to the piece – from a statistical sound, to a specified sound; from a removed historical gesture, to its subjective definition by an individual.

3.5 *Political Science 101*

Political Science 101 was a commission by Ensemble Zwischentöne & the 35 Megaphones of Otto Beck's Orchester für Direkte Demokratie. The idea behind this project was to commission pieces for the unusual instrumentation of a megaphone ensemble. As the entire concert series, which took place each Sunday for 5 weeks in the center of Berlin, was staged as a sort of protest or rally, many composers were tempted to present political pieces. *Political Science 101* is also a political satire of sorts, but deliberately a very abstract and obscure one.

3.5.1 Political Pieces

I was not intending to write an overt political piece for two main reasons: The first being that I have not yet encountered a direct criticism in music that was not to some extent embarrassing. When thinking of political pieces, especially by Israeli composers whose views I shared, I realized that my favorites were pieces in which the criticism was presented in a less direct manner. More so, if the criticism was in some ways sublimated from the realm of text into musical syntax, I was even more impressed. I again could not help but think of the political works of Arie Shapira. Mainly his fantastic *Left-Right,* taking a stab at the 1982 Lebanon war: *Gustl in Theresienstadt* – a stark imaginary voyage depicting an old and partially insane Gustav Mahler living into NAZI times; and of course *Upon Thy Ruins Ofra* – a polemic piece that had gone so far in upsetting political figures due to its criticism of illegal settlement activities, to the point that it was banned from performance on Israeli national radio.

All of the above-mentioned pieces will undoubtedly be perceived as purely aesthetical ventures by the unknowing listener: *Left-Right* uses Hebrew texts and hence chooses its audience quite deliberately. In order to fully understand *Gustl in Theresienstadt* one must be versed in the history of NAZI culture as well as particulars from Mahler's own life. *Upon Thy Ruins Ofra* is based on songs taken from Zionist national folklore before the 1948 UN partition. If one doesn't know these songs, one is not able to understand the piece. Shapira was asked whether this aspect does not bother him, and his reply was very telling: 'for those who are not directly involved in Israeli politics this is a work of pure aesthetics, and so it should be. I have no intention of gratifying people outside this country (i.e. Israel) with false ideals that they are so keen to uphold; this aspect of the piece is not for them. An Israeli of my generation, on the

other hand, can and should understand the political criticism even if the aesthetic drama is completely lost on that person. It is for these people (i.e. Shapira's generation) that the criticism is intended' (Halas Radio, 2009). I was to discover first hand that Shapira was in no way mistaken in his analysis. My mother, who is not a musician, but indeed of that same generation, heard *Upon Thy Ruins Ofra* for the first time and immediately realized what Shapira was trying to do. This element deeply impressed me and in many ways served as stimulus for my own approach. I really wanted to create a critique that only a select few could truly understand.

3.5.2 The Eroica Effect

The second, and perhaps more important reason for my apprehension with political pieces was what I like to refer to as the Eroica Effect. I am of course alluding to Beethoven's 3rd symphony and the title that he initially gave to the piece when he assumed Napoleon Bonaparte to be the great liberator of his time. It would soon become clear that Napoleon was nothing but a tyrant, and Beethoven would have to change the piece title from the initial *Bonaparte Symphony*, to *Eroica* (Grove). This is a mishap that I was in no way willing to undergo with my own music, and in many ways also sought to criticize through my own work. I was of course not only thinking of composers and their political (or musical) views, but also societies at large. My own experience was that regardless of one's political views, politicians are not to be trusted. Whether if directly chosen by an individual or not, one (at least in my lifetime) was almost always presented with candidates who acted either incompetently or with a great deal of fear, or both. It reminded me of the short E. E. Cummings poem from his 1944 collection, *1x1* (One Times One): 'a politician is an arse upon which everyone has sat except a man'. This sad truth has made me very careful of assumptions on a political level and generally quite emotionally removed from my own convictions. Having come to Europe from Israel, I soon realized that the politics and history of my own country are always a hot topic for debate. Seeing myself as versed on the topic, I was never embarrassed to enter these kinds of conversations. However, I was embarrassed to discover that most whom I entered these conversations with would usually demonstrate severe ignorance of the facts or a thought-process that could use some scrutiny, to say the least. I soon noticed that most people assumed that local news, coupled with a general affiliation with the notions of their local political peer group provided a case strong enough for them to demonstrate a heated stand on the matter, usually a stand more heated than my own. I discarded these instances as meaningless until I realized that the same, or similar people, demonstrated a similar lack of rigor coupled with extremely strong opinions regarding other political issues, sometimes even local ones transpiring in their own countries.

Berlin, where *Political Science* was composed, is a city that manages to attract many politically oriented individuals. The first of May is always a huge street party that usually ends with anti-police violence. Protests and rallies are a daily affair, and political discussions are always rife. Yet here too, the *mode d'être* was a ridiculous combination of unsurpassed adamancy coupled with little to no knowledge regarding any given topic. At one point, I had even chanced upon a meeting with a group of young 'activists' whose activities consisted of traveling incessantly from country to country inside Europe,

attending different rallies on different topics. After a short inquiry I realized that these emotional youths did not know the ins and outs of most issues they were protesting, and barely knew what they were about to protest next. However, they all made sure to strictly collect their unemployment benefits from the respective countries that they would regularly criticize. I decided that I must tackle this issue in some way, and that was the moment *Political Science 101* was born.

3.5.3 *Political Science 101* in Detail

The title of *Political Science 101* relates to an imaginary course that could be attended by an avid freshman. However, the piece itself does not attempt to 'teach' a thing. In fact it is quite the contrary – the piece presents 30 (more or less) narrators whispering a pre-chosen political text regarding any topic into megaphones. The idea is that slowly, key words from the different texts start repeating and create a subconscious set of affiliations or barriers within the listener. Again, this same listener does not and cannot know what the actual texts refer to, and in fact, the texts might refer to anything, even a cause and its immediate opposite. The performers are situated in a complete circle, facing inwards so as to give a theatrical feeling of an act transpiring for its own sake, or for the benefit of its participants alone. This placement presented as a stark contrast to the universality of topics at hand and the general outgoing quality of a demonstration.

On the musical front, I attempted a criticism that was quite similar. The initial texture of the piece is one of whispers. This is, in a contemporary music context, a recognizable material. However, this texture goes through a very slow metamorphosis into my own sound worlds of direct, harsh and erratic materials that completely take over the piece in a carpet of sound. On one hand, the supposedly comprehensible text has in this new texture turned into gibberish. The social commentary there should be clear. But at the same time, out of this gibberish arises a musical or sonic material that I actually find to be interesting. This to me was a subtle friction, which I was most curious to test with an ensemble and live audience.

3.5.4 The Task Score & Erratic Elements

Ever since my initial acquaintance with Robert Ashley, and specifically his piece *Fancy Free or It's There*, I have tried to think of ideas for a task-score that would succinctly convey a process leading to an interesting musical development. I was at the Guildhall introduced with the works of Cornelius Cardew and was glad to discover in his oeuvre processes that were as elaborate as Ashley's, but in many ways even more succinctly specified. It was specifically with *Paragraph 7* from *The Great Learning* that I entered the thinking process for *Political Science 101*. I wanted very much to recreate a similar effect to the whispering texture in Cardew's piece, which I found very fresh, and also to manage to prolong a process to those kinds of extreme lengths without risking boredom. Hence the task specified in *Political Science* is in many ways a recreation, on my terms, of *Pargraph 7.* In the score, I direct the performers to continue the process to an indefinite length. Indeed, the erratic texture can be elaborated upon quite extensively before it completely takes over, at which point the performers are at liberty to end the piece.

The erratic texture comes into play not only by my own design, but also due to the process, nature of materials and the way in which they are specified. The performer is not expected to be a trained musician or even rehearse the score. That performer can simply pick up a text, mark the allocated phoneme and commence the process. In this kind of scenario it would be very difficult to control the incidental materials arising. The performer's inaccuracy can sometimes lead to interesting and new results, but mainly I've noticed performers taking a much-appreciated liberty with the score and simply presenting a version of their own to my pre-specified directions. This is exactly the practice I would hope to continue prompting with such a score. After all, the piece is so loosely specified and the process is so clear that there is no reason why performers should not feel comfortable to tamper with the given, and make it their own.

3.5.5 Repetition

The premiere performance of *Political Science 101* was a festive event. It took place in the famous Scloßplatz in the center of Berlin, a contested area in itself, as this is the ground on which the official palace of the German Kaisers used to stand. Torn down by the communists when the area was taken over by the GDR, the Kremlin led government decided to locate its main government building, the Palast der Republik in the exact same spot, only for that building to be torn down in return by the reunited German government in 2003. The local Berlin government is now considering rebuilding the old Germanic palace as a tourist attraction, an expense that is still being highly debated in concerned circles.

I recall standing on the grassy patch that now occupies this space on one of the coldest days of a Berlin winter. Standing with me was the current musical director of Ensemble Zwischentöne, Bill Dietz. Together we tried to make sense of the many pieces featured, their political meaning or impact, and mainly the diversity of output presented. When *Political Science 101* commenced, an unfamiliar silence took over the audience. The piece was in stark contrast to the previous ones by the mere fact that it presented no text or immediately recognizable criticisms. Ironically enough, it was this abstractness that managed to bring people to attention rather than the many clear views that were presented beforehand. However, the sound world created in the process of the piece was too harsh for the untrained audience. Soon one could notice a variety of perturbed faces looking at each other for validation of their own confusion. However, 10 minutes into the process and it seemed that the audience was completely transfixed, as in a sort of a trance.

I related this transition in audience attitude to the constant repetition in the piece. It seemed as if a material, no matter how rough or obscure, would always be perceived more knowingly after being heard a few times. I was later to discover that this was true by referring to the work of Zajonc. In his tests Zajonc (1968) proves that repeated exposure to a stimulus, even if entirely abstract, adds to the understanding of a material and consequently one's attitude towards it.

It appears, hence, that if at first a material sounds like a blunder, its repetition will allow the mind to make an abstraction of that material. It is then no longer a misunderstood sound, but rather a formal part of a structure that can for all purposes be given a name and thus, definition. This assumption is made evident through the work of Reber *at al.* Using Zajonc's conclusions, Reber *at al.* (2004) show how understanding can go past a 100% point, where the test subject not only identifies a material due to its repetition, but can already make abstractions regarding the larger form based only on the mental compartmentalization of that same material.

Conversing with Bill Dietz in that same square, it suddenly seemed to me that this sort of repetition is well befitting an idea such as the one I was trying to convey. I shall attempt here to paraphrase from memory my words to Dietz at that moment: 'look at this square. Every regime in the history of this geographical area wanted a part of it, and now this current regime wants to glorify that same sordid past. Mankind does not only repeat the same mistakes, but it repeats the same ideas at large, only in different forms. We are bound, as a collective, to go through a slow transition, but it will entail so much repetition so as to deem the transition seamless. We will never notice the direction despite the many clues we have all around us. To us these clues are currently nothing but noise and we try to disregard them. Yet, in retrospect we will build monuments to those same past clues and deride the societies that were so aloof to ignore them and that, of course, will be a mistake too'. Dietz simply replied: 'Isn't that a perfect description of your piece?'

3.6 *Datura*

The main piece of this portfolio is my ensemble piece *Datura*. The initiating process that would lead to the creation of *Datura* started early in 2010, but entailed research for a different piece that I never managed to finish called *Small Lies*. Hence this following chapter will be dedicated to the almost yearlong research process revolving *Small Lies*, and how its resulting ideas led to the creation of *Datura*.

3.6.1 *Small Lies*

The idea for *Small Lies* was a simple one: two speakers face two trombone players. The speakers shoot out a narrated text that is pitch-notated to some degree in the performers' scores. The performers are then asked to follow the narrated text in unison, or the closest proximity possible. The text is designed like a conversation between two people. Each person's voice in this conversation is played from a different speaker throughout the piece. Each trombone is asked to 'follow' the voice emanating from its allocated speaker. Hence the conversation that takes place on tape is being transformed into a sort of dialogue between the two instruments on stage. This is the basic idea for *Small Lies*, and of course I had an artistic intention to elaborate upon this basic notion throughout the piece in order for it not to be deemed merely technical or conceptual.

It is clear that even this initial idea contains a sufficient possibility for the creation of incidental materials, and that was indeed the element that drew me towards the idea in the first place. I had also deliberated quite a while on the choice of instruments. At first I thought to leave the score open to any instruments within the given range. Soon, however, I realized that some instruments might fit the concept more than others. For instance a saxophone, which is quite an agile instrument, could perhaps allow a performer to tackle the score more easily. This was a scenario I was hoping to avoid, as without the difficulty of playing and the player's hysterical 'race' with the voice on tape, much of the erratic qualities of the piece might have been lost. Hence I immediately knew that I should specify the instrumentation for trombone, euphonium, tuba, baritone or French horn – namely, instruments with a relatively slow attack time. The aforementioned instruments would also fit the pitch-range quite well, as the text was read in my own voice, which resides comfortably in the bass-baritone range.

But then came the most complicated aspect of the piece's composition, which was to decide how exactly to notate the scored component so as to achieve the desired result. I knew that I should not try to transcribe the text in exactitude of rhythm and pitch, as this would lead to quite a sterile performance where the performer simply learns the score in a traditional manner and then rehearses that same part with the tape component. My intention was entirely different – I was hoping to create a specification in the score that would give the performer enough information regarding the form as a whole and the technical process, but would not allow the same performer to attempt the piece, even in rehearsal, without the tape. I wanted the performer to literally 'follow' the tape's lead, or in other words for the tape to act as a cuing mechanism for the performer. Hence, I started exploring with different types of notation and would soon try these differently notated approaches with a live trombone player.

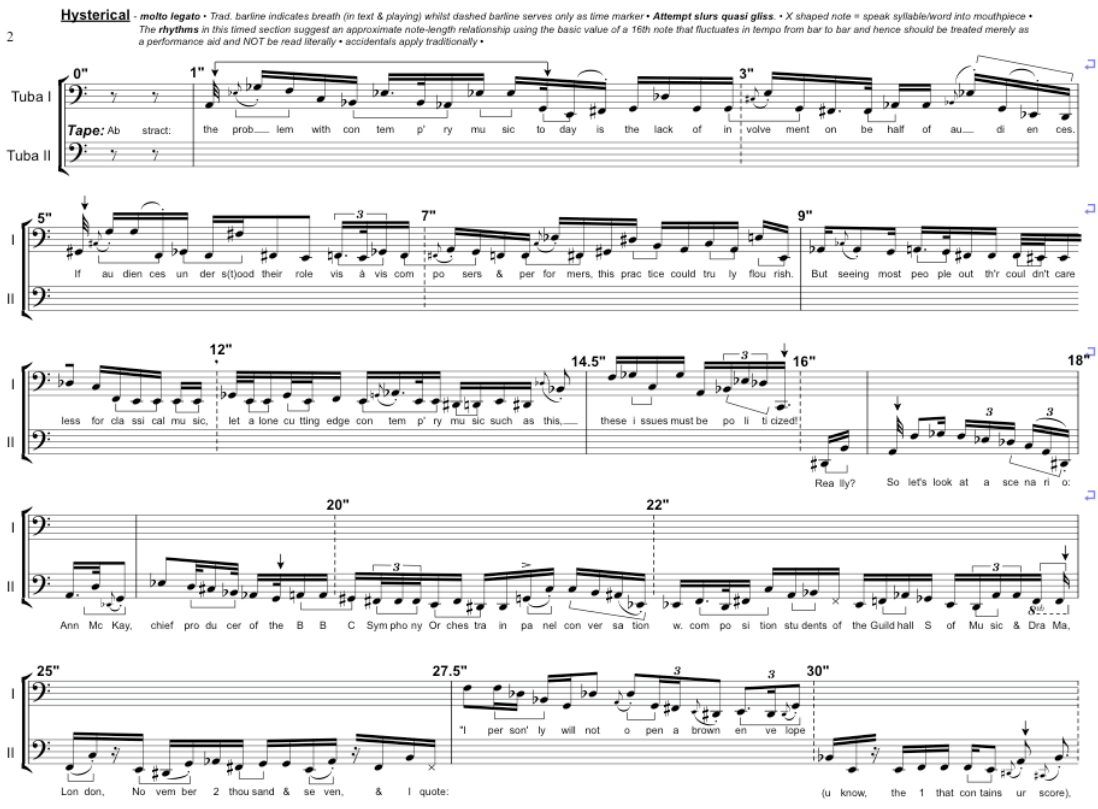
3.6.1.1 Two Generations of a Score

The first generation of *Small Lies* set-up some elements that would stay put throughout all future generations of the score. The first would be to tie a specific pitch to each syllable on tape through a simple transcribing of the tape part. Then there was the division of the text into unequal bars, so as to aid the performer by creating some divisions within the score. Although I tried to keep the bars similar in length, I realized that I couldn't adhere to a strict division of the time line as this sort of division would sometimes cut right through a sentence or word. Hence I decided to divide the piece according to the natural division of the texts achieved through breathing. This element is presented by a traditional bar-line in the score. However, I soon realized that this division was not sufficient and led to the creation of huge bars. I had to find a way to divide these initial bars even further, and that is when I combined the traditional bar-line with a dotted one. The latter was simply inserted into opportune places within the large bars, denoting the timeline (in seconds) at that particular moment in the piece. To all of the above I also added a connecting line between the text and notes, denoting the division of one word into syllables.

The most important element, and indeed the element that would change on the next generation of the score was the rhythmic transcription. At this stage, the score consisted of pitched syllables and a sub-

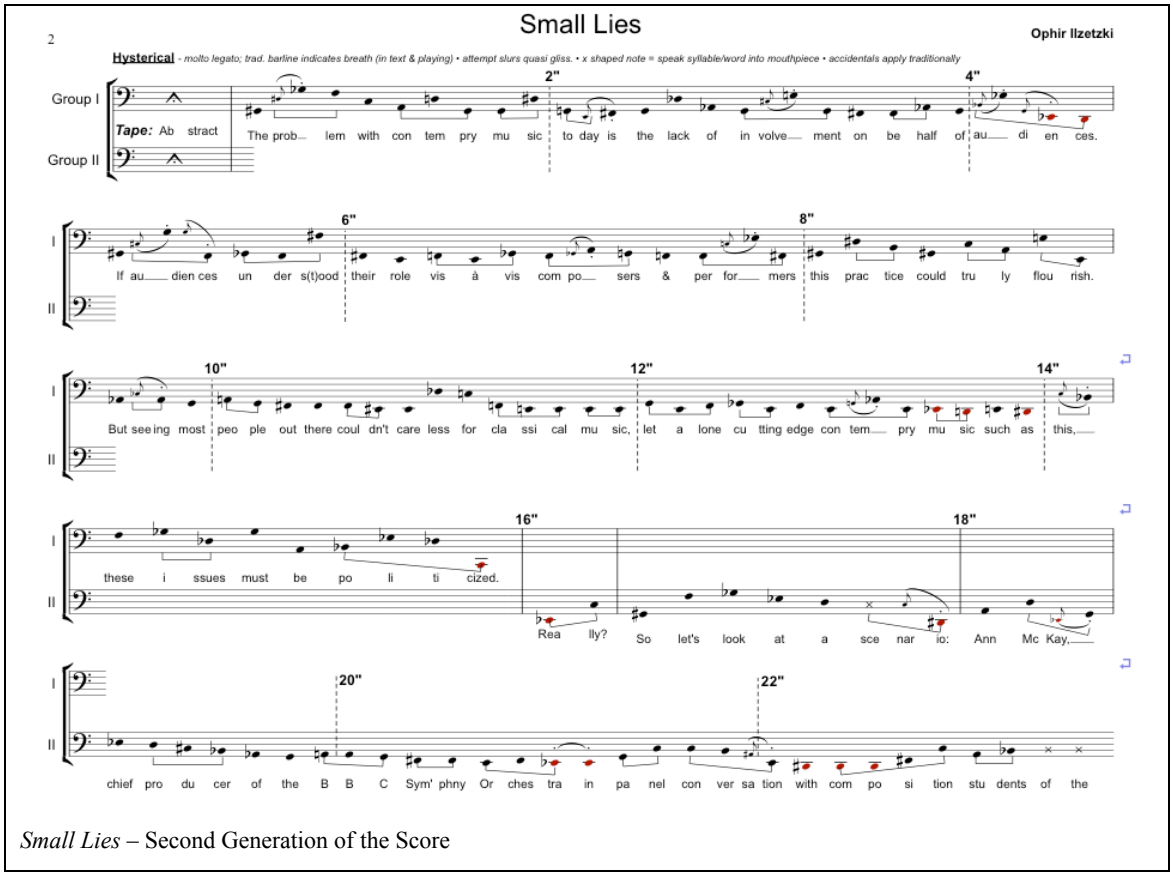
divided timeline. However, the most helpful characteristic as far as following the spoken text is concerned was in specifying some rhythmic outline. I was not entirely sure how to approach this matter, not only because I didn't know exactly to what extent I should hope to specify the rhythms in order to obtain the desired result, but in fact to what extent I could specify them at all. A quick attempt at transcribing the rhythms brought to my attention that the tempo of the spoken text was in constant flux. I could somehow quantize this fluctuating tempo to adhere to a basic value of a 16th note. However I soon noticed that this same 16th note would change in tempo from bar to bar. In fact the changes were so delicate and minute that specifying a new tempo in each bar would have been completely superfluous, and seem like a conceptual add-on to the score, as it would have in no way aided the player in performance. After quite a deliberation I decided that the best approach would be to use that same 16th note basic value serving as a point of reference. I added to it a direction to the performer stating that the same 16th note basic value tends to fluctuate quite rapidly in tempo from bar to bar, hence the rhythms specified are to be read relatively, and treated merely as a performance aid that should not be approached literally.

I was then very eager to try-out this first generation of the score with a performer. I invited my good friend and trombone player, Hilary Belsey, to try-out the score with me. We soon realized that the score was completely over-specified. The transcribed rhythms added no helpful element to the performance at large. They took Hilary's attention away from the pitches and merely added an element of clutter to the score. What more, the use of two types of bar-lines proved confusing and finally did to the subdivision that which I was trying to avoid, namely subdivide the score in a completely unequal manner.



Small Lies – First Generation of the Score

Taking all of these lessons into account, I immediately embarked on the creation of the second generation of the score. I removed completely the rhythmic element from the pitched one, keeping only the latter. I decided to use the dotted bar-line more strictly – denoting every 2 seconds of tape time. I then kept the traditional bar-lines for breaths in the text that were lengthy and clear (hence the shorter breaths were discarded in notation). This 'cleaning-up' of the score immediately resulted in a leaner looking and easier to read score. I was almost positive that this generation of the score would be the final one.



Small Lies – Second Generation of the Score

Again, I invited Hilary to come over and try the new score out for size. I was disheartened to realize that there was little difference in Hilary's approach towards the new score. She seemed to think that there still was an element of over-specification: Indeed, the timeline was necessary. The pitched element was also helpful to a degree, but in Hilary's mind quite over-specified. Hilary then suggested a solution that I thought quite ingenious. She asked me to take the current format of the score, but leave in it only pivotal pitched moments. The missing notes would be replaced by a line that would stem from that first pitched note and end on the next, continuing thus till the end of the piece. The line would adhere exactly to the placement of the 'missing' notes on the stave, but more than specify pitches, it would specify the direction. I very much liked this idea, as it pinpointed the basic idea even more clearly than my own attempts. I was hoping to eventually hear a heterophony of sorts between instrument and voice on tape whilst constantly allowing for the creation of incidental materials as a consequence of the task. What

better way to achieve this result than by specifying as lightly as possible the direction of the line, without actually giving too much specific information about it? Hilary then tried several attempts at a makeshift score of that sort that I quickly put together. Indeed, even at this unrehearsed state I was achieving results closer to the ones I was hoping for. Funnily enough, here again I saw the magic of under specification in play. The same performer on the same day managed to play the piece more proficiently not by me adding on elements to the score, but rather taking some away.

Unfortunately, it was around this time that I started realizing that I am not entirely sure how to develop the initial, technical idea, into a more gripping dramatic narrative. I toyed around with some notions, the best of which I thought was to write out the same idea using different notations. In this manner I would be able to explore the different interactions of performer with tape/score, and present a multitude of results elaborating on the initial stimulus. Seeing I was writing for two performers, I could also mix different notations between the two and create another dramatic layer through the interplay created between them. However, these ideas still rang as quite technical in my mind and I was not satisfied with them beyond their research-like quality. As one does, I then waited patiently for a comprehensive holistic idea that would tie all loose ends together, but that idea refused to come. In the meanwhile, I had already started thinking of my next piece, *Datura*, and some of the unused ideas for *Small Lies* found their way quite naturally into the new score.

3.6.2 *Datura*

Datura was commissioned by the Meitar Ensemble for a concert that was dedicated to the memory of my close friend, Danny Cohen. Danny was a talented young clarinetists and composer who took his own life at the young age of 20. This was a huge shock for us his friends, and especially his family, some of which are musicians as well. Danny's mother, Michal, a long-time broadcaster on Kol Hamusika, Israel's classical-music radio channel, had set up a fund commissioning young composers for a yearly concert in Danny's memory. The commissioned composers are usually people that knew Danny intimately, such as his friends, colleagues or teachers. The stimulus for the commissioned compositions is always lightly based on Danny's own works, his writing, events from his life, or his spirit.

I decided to write a programmatic piece, my first ever, which would describe a particular event in Danny's life that left a lasting impression on me. The event in question was Danny's hospitalization at 17 after having taken an overdose of pollen from a Datura flower. The Datura is a genus of nine species of vespertine flowering plants belonging to the family Solanaceae. It is mostly known due to its toxicity and its ability to act as a hallucinogen if taken in small amounts. The Datura is commonly found in the wild in Israel, and hence several death cases relating to its misuse are published every year. Danny's night could have ended as one of those cases, but luckily medical attention was quickly sought and Danny was saved.

I remember that night vividly, although not in attendance, as I heard the whole story first hand in retrospect: Danny and a group of his friends had cooked the flower, unknowing of the dangerous amount

they were using and they all drank some of the brew, Danny probably more than the rest. The friends then sat down and started a conversation. Soon however, the conversation began mixing up with the hallucinations that Danny was experiencing and reality was slowly becoming blurred. Danny mentioned this feeling deepening ever more as time passed, to a point that reality and dream were mixed to an equal degree. Then, through a spiraling whirlwind, Danny was transported into a different reality, one that no longer took his actual surroundings into account, and in which he was entirely alone. This 'state of mind' seemed to go on indefinitely and in fact never ended, as the next time Danny gained consciousness was already when he was in the hospital. That short story managed to stick with me for years to come, and perhaps became even more poignant due to Danny's premature death. To me, it was a manifestation of how willing he was to live his life on the edge, and how little fear he had of dying.

3.6.3 Composing *Datura*

To Michal's dismay, I decided that this moment in Danny's life would be the moment I describe musically, and I did so in a 3-part form: The first part of the piece relied quite heavily on the speaking dynamic that I was working with on *Small Lies.* Instead of using this dynamic in a sort of game between player and tape/score, I decided to painstakingly transcribe three spoken texts to traditional notation, and allocated these three layers to three separate sections of the ensemble: the winds (alto flute, bass clarinet and bassoon), the strings (violin, viola and cello) and the piano. The texts that were read in my own voice also determined to a large extent the low register of the piece and its use of some lower-range instruments within the wind section. I was immediately attracted to this color and decided to stay true to this aspect of the composition throughout the first section.

The connection between sections A and B happens quite seamlessly when certain voices of the speech pattern start getting 'stuck' and linger a while to create chords. This idea is elaborated upon until a complete collapse of the speech texture into that of dark dissonant chords. In my programmatic approach this change signified the slow transition from reality, portraying a conversation between three participants, to a quasi-hallucinatory state that still kept some remnants of reality.

Section B begins when the speech patterns collapse completely and give in to the deep chords. Through a transitional part we are brought into a new dynamic that maintains the rhythmic element taken from speech patterns, but explores these same rhythms vertically rather than horizontally as in section A. Whereas in section A the pitched material is derived directly from the spoken words of texts, in section B the harmonic material was based on a succession of 64 chords with a jazz touch to them that I had invented especially for this section. The use of extended jazz-like harmony for this section was no chance occurrence. Amongst his many musical activities, Danny was also a gifted jazz clarinetist. He had also written quite a few jazz tunes that I personally thought showed more promise than his classical works. His jazz compositions, confined within functional harmony, were more innovative than many works from established composers in the genre, I thought, and hence I knew that I would have to relate in some way to this facet of his musical personality.

I knew even during the initial drafting of the piece that sections A and B would be connected through the rhythmic aspect of speech. I also knew in advance that these rhythms would speed up throughout the two sections, leading towards the whirlwind ushering in Danny's succumbing to the toxin and the hallucinations it imposed. Technically, I achieved this goal by simply speeding up the spoken text on tape, gradually reaching a playing rate 60% faster at the end of the text, but this without ever changing the pitched element. In effect the imposition of the fore mentioned collection of 64 chords on the constantly speeding up text ushered a very interesting result.

When I started sketching the chords for section B, I was not sure where to stop. 64 chords was quite an arbitrary number that I thought might be sufficient for my purposes. In effect, 64 chords provided for roughly half a page of music out of an eventual 4.5 pages of rhythms. Hence I knew that if the repetition of the chords sounded too clear, I would have to compose more chords. However, a serendipitous element came into play whilst I was composing section B when I realized that the speeding up rhythms and in fact the allocation of the same chords to different rhythmic patterns obscured them completely and made them sounds like new chords rather than the same collection of chords repeated. This joyous discovery was another proof for the results already achieved by Wolf (1976), whose work I mentioned in relation with my piece *Violin & Piano*. This too was a prime example of how relatively fast harmonic rhythm can obstruct the listener from perceiving the harmonies in functional relation to each other, or in this specific case from perceiving them as repetitions rather than new material.

The third and final section presented an interesting journey between two contrasting endings for the piece. As a reminder, this section of the piece was intended to depict Danny's fall into an oblivious hallucination, one that he will only awake from in the hospital bed the morning after. I knew that I wanted this section to have the feeling of an elegy, a sort of repeating choral, each time in different intensity, leading to a climactic ending that feels as if it was stopped mid-way. I then started jotting this section down using 16 out of the 64 chords from the previous section. I finished writing section C quite quickly and sent the piece off to the performers.

It was two weeks later when I looked through the score again and realized that I had completely sinned against my own idea. I was hoping to create a dark ending, something that would portray the ominous feeling tied to the complete loss of control and Danny's falling into a repetitive hallucination. In reality, I had created an uplifting and in my eyes, somewhat cathartically Christian choral that sounded more than anything like the metaphor of a spirit leaving a person's body towards the heavens. In short, I disliked it, and I was embarrassed of sending the piece in this format to the ensemble.

I then almost instantly came up with the new harmonic material for section C. This time it was dark and ominous as I had imagined it, and in fact lead to the creation of three further sub-sections that were not planned, including a transitional section between parts B and C utilizing bells. I felt that the unprepared use of desk-bells could serve as a fitting metaphor for the transition between a world that holds on to

reality and a world that is completely a consequence of the hallucination. The bells also turned out to be the highest pitched material in the entire piece and I was quite happy with this effect, as it added to the overall fantastic spirit of the piece.

Section C was complete. The general idea for this section was kept in tact, namely the use of a repeating choral-like elegy and cutting it off at the end, supposedly in mid air. The three intermittent sections that were inserted created a contrast to the flow of the chorale's motion and in some way aided the idea of this section portraying a dream-like scenario, where logic does not reign supreme. Each one of these intermittent sections ends with a passage for solo instrument. The second one is in fact a direct quote from section A, and the last one uses 8 chords of the same choral that I used in the first version of section C.

3.6.4 Afterthoughts and Conclusion

The reader has probably noticed that *Datura* is a through-composed piece that stands in stark contrast to the oeuvre presented in this portfolio. Indeed, the first two sections of the piece sound quite erratic and I relate this to the substantial research I had undertaken regarding speech patterns in my work on *Small Lies*. My personal feelings regarding having written a through-composed piece after almost 3 years in which I had shunned this approach were mixed. On one hand, I presented a piece that conveyed an extremely clear dramatic narrative, and this has always been my utmost goal when composing music. Further more, it is only through the substantial research revolving speech patters for *Small Lies* that *Datura* could have come into existence. On the other hand, by the time the piece was performed in concert I was already completely bored of it. It seemed to me to contain no life beyond the page, and the traditional nuances of interpretation simply didn't seem potent enough to carry the weight of the piece further. I am aware that this is merely a subjective feeling, but it does stem from a more general approach favoring open compositions, which I hope has found its way into this commentary.

The American composer and improviser, George Lewis (2000), describes *Voyager*, his virtual 'improvising orchestra', as a computer program that analyses a human improviser's performance in real time, using that analysis to guide an automatic composition that generates both responses to the musician's playing, as well as independent behavior arising from its internal processes. This means that *Voyager* really and truly reacts differently to every new improviser that interacts with it according to that specific improviser's style. However, Lewis also mentions that many users of the *Voyager* interface have noted that the 'instrument' has a distinct feel to it, and more specifically an African-American/ Jazz feel that stems from the abundant and generally erratic quality of its reactions. When I think of my ultimate goal in relation to open compositions or scores, I imagine an apparatus very similar to *Voyager*. In my mind, a composition or score can be handed down to a performer who then breathes a distinct and unique stylistic life into that somewhat empty vessel. Regardless, the initial specification I would have set down on paper, like *Voyager*, already contains the grain; the sufficient detail for this artwork to be distinct, recognizable and still very much my own.

More so, when I wander further in my reflections regarding the endless possibilities that an open composition can afford, I imagine an almost totally abstract scenario: Sonic ideas, orchestrations, ensembles and textures are turned on and off spontaneously, like a light switch, all as a consequence of an elaborate specification. When that same specification left the composer's writing desk it was merely a dormant cell; a possibility, which then returns to life in a unique fashion during every new performance.

Hence, this type of musical score becomes more than merely a detailed specification; it becomes an almost transcendental object containing a musical genome that can be reproduced at will. To quote the philosopher Karl Popper (1983), who originally refers to a Mozart score: '[the score is] a real ideal object… whose existence is the potentiality of it being reinterpreted by human minds'. This notion is of course true for all scores past and present, but with open scores the idea of reinterpretation is given entirely new meaning. Where a through-composed piece entices one to assume a specific goal in the form of the composer's intentions, the open score declares that the process, and more so, the performer's innate qualities and ideas are the essence of the journey, and its goal.

Chapter 4

Closing Remarks & Future Work

Looking back at the work I'd undertaken in the last three years, I can certainly attest to have gone through a transformational process. My intention was to try and explore different possibilities of open scores and their implication on the creation of incidental non-scripted materials. I believe it is interesting to have gone through different variations of 'open sections' only to reach the end process with a through-composed piece that was only made possible due to the research preceding it. It has never been my practice to consciously re-use old materials for new pieces; I truly believe that new ideas should be sought for every new composition and that every new piece should explore slightly different materials and musical ideas. Having said that, I am quite aware that I have already ingrained some of the musical results of pieces such as *Still Life with Riots* and have learned how to incorporate them in larger forms. Like with the example of how the research regarding *Small Lies* has lead to *Datura*, the processes created in some of these portfolio pieces can now be transformed into sections of different, more substantial pieces perhaps, and become yet another instrument; another color in my growing pallet of compositional tools. If I could hope for anything as a result of the last three years of work it would be just that: namely, to be able to take some of the better or more pleasing musical results that I had naively arrived at, and knowingly insert them into future pieces. In this manner the technical idea (or concept, or subject of research) will cease to be the main idea elaborated upon or explored, but simply one method out of many aiding the creation of drama in a truly dynamic and hopefully rich composition.

4.1 Future Work

There are two compositions and/or compositional ideas that I feel that I did not manage to complete or fully explore in this portfolio. The first was the idea to write a piece that entirely explores soft dynamics, as was my attempt with *Concerto.* The second was the main idea for *Small Lies* entailing a process between tape/narrated element and its imposition on the score for a live instrument.

Having gone back in this thesis to the ideas and work revolving *Small Lies,* I am filled with a conviction to find the dramatic narrative that could encompass the technical idea that the piece entails. I am given this opportunity in the form of a commission from a young London based ensemble next year comprised of many of my former colleagues at the Guildhall. I am quite aware that with a task such as this, one must not only find the suitable dramatic narrative, but mainly the right performer – a performer that would be excited to research with the composer a completely alternative method of performing. Interestingly

enough, I now believe that the main dramatic idea for *Small Lies* might arise more casually by simply neglecting the technical aspect of the piece and assuming it merely to be a method for creating a result, in this case a specific erratic material. Once this technical idea is deemed merely another composition tool and not the main idea of the piece it is less obstructive, as it can be used or removed at will and be treated with a lack of reverence, as should be the case with any compositional tool.

My good friends, the bassist Ilya Ziblat Shay and his wife, the soprano Elisenda Pujals are hoping to perform a new piece of mine in concert in Berlin next year. Initially I was not excited by this orchestration due to Elisenda's highly trained classical voice, which I am personally not sure how to incorporate seamlessly into my own sound world. However, I immediately realized that this problematic situation could be turned on its head and made into an advantage. By writing a score that asks the duo to play only in extremely soft dynamics, perhaps with the use of amplification, I might be able to avoid Elisenda's idiomatic use of her voice and extract from it a quality more to my liking. This is currently the only idea I have regarding the composition of that piece, and as we know all too well these ideas could change radically before they are put on paper. However, here too the tactical approach is quite similar to the one I have expressed regarding *Small Lies*. I would like to treat what was considered the main idea of one piece as a peripheral compositional idea in another. By doing so I am no longer exploring the spectrum of possibilities arising from that idea, but simply using it as a tool; a part of a pallet used for a larger and more substantial work.

Appendix A

Sublimation in Art

The topic of sublimation in art is one that has always personally intrigued me. I refer mainly to the journey from the original stimulus for a work – the idea, or concept, to the presented work in its final stages. The latter usually entails the transformation of the idea into a subtler, more abstract, yet more open and hence possibly universal work. This can be said to be true for most musical artworks, as these, by default, are abstract works and hence beg a semantic interpretation. One could claim, for instance, that the famous notes at the opening of Beethoven's 5th represent destiny wrapping at the door. Others could claim that it is death. I cannot, however, imagine a listener who would interpret these notes as anything but ominous. Beethoven's 9th invokes a humanistic ideal that is tied to the text of its 4th movement. But imagine the same work devoid of Schiller's text and you still have a musical journey from a somber and dramatic D-minor to a lyrical a then joyous D-major. I am quite positive that most listeners would be susceptible to the effect of this change in the piece, yet it also goes without saying that every listener could have a personal interpretation of this journey: For one listener this could portray a religious journey from darkness to light; for another it might entail a journey from captivity to freedom. In fact, the many meanings that could be given to this musical journey are as various as the listeners captivated by the work. But whereas the interpretation of the work's meaning can vary, the general outline of its intent and direction are hardly up for debate - most will agree that the work tries to affirm rather than negate.

These examples have always led me to believe that most works of art are in fact conceptual. I do not attach the 20th century artistic definition to this term when referring to works of earlier periods, but simply denote with this term the fact that most, if not all, works of art stem from an idea – a seed that presents the reasoning for the journey, as well as the basis for all other ideas leading to the creation of the finished work. This seed can be widely referred to in the finished work, as well as left in complete obscurity. The former can be exemplified with a piece such as Beethoven's 6th, where the idea of nature and the seasons is not only depicted musically, but disclosed to the listener with the names of the contrasting movements. The latter is much more common, of course, and can be exemplified by many pieces, but in order to contrast the last example with a piece from roughly the same period let us choose a work such as Mozart's 40th symphony. A wide discussion could ensue a performance of such a piece as to its true meaning, however in order for such a discussion to take place one must assume that the direction of the piece is blatantly clear.

When I reflect on this idea of artistic sublimation vis-à-vis conceptual artworks of the 20th century, I must admit to be a bit distraught. Referring as a mere example to works such as Cage's famous *4'33"*, or a work such as Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain*, it is clear that the notion of sublimation has been forgone

almost completely by these respective artists in these works. The finished artworks are presented as almost ideal objects that are the embodiment of their concept in the most immediate form. This is made evident by the mere fact that one could as easily describe works such as *Fountain*, or *4'33"* without the real necessity of experiencing the work itself. In fact, these works prompt such deep philosophical questions to the extent that they beg this writer to ask whether the works were conceived in order for their audiences to feel something, or rather understand something.
For the sake of clarity, I should again state that I do not deem such efforts in anyway as irrelevant or unsuccessful, but only as personally dissatisfying. I am very aware of the questions at hand regarding silence that Cage is trying to evoke with a piece such as *4'33"*, as well as those presented by Duchamp regarding the confines of art with a piece such as *Fountain*. I must ask, though, whether these ideas do not have a longer lasting effect on me personally when they are presented as stimulus for works that sublimate the underlying concept? Is the effect of a notion that has been sublimated not stronger than that that has been stated upfront? Hence, is the ambiguity of an artwork necessarily a negative attribute? I can only answer this in the most subjective manner and admit that for me, it isn't.

The reader will have noticed by now that I have a flirtatious relationship with ambiguity in works of art. I have an ingrained attraction to works that veer away from the ideal and attempt to portray the mundane. But I also very much appreciate a deliberate ambiguity in works of art. This ideal can be taken further than its mere application to open scoring, or indeterminate pieces. I believe that there is an intrinsic strength to portraying a notion ambiguously and hence immediately in the realm of feeling, rather than directly and thus very much in the realm of ideas. I have personally always found the topic of silence to be much better addressed in the many Cage pieces that feature composed sounds alongside prolonged tacets. The same is true for ideas exploring the confines of art in the many wonderful works of Duchamp. A piece such as *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even* seemed always to pose the same questions posed by pieces such as *Fountain* and *Bicycle Wheel*, and this without ever having posed the actual questions. I believe that it is the abstract and sublimated nature of *The Bride…* that allows these questions to surface, as well as leave room for questions that were never intended by the artist when creating the work.

I would like now to relate this very personal topic to several non-musical artworks that have, notably due to their abstract nature and ambiguous meaning, informed my work at large and specifically the work leading towards the completion of this portfolio.

Bergman's *Fanny och Alexander*

Those acquainted with the work of Swedish cinema and stage director, Ingmar Bergman, will have surely noted amongst his many outstanding works the TV series from 1982 (in 1984 edited and distributed as feature film) *Fanny & Alexander*. The series follows the chronicles of the Ekdahl family through the eyes of its youngest members, the siblings Fanny and Alexander Ekdahl. From the onset, the story makes a clear reference to the Shakespearian play, Hamlet, as it begins with the sudden death of the head of the

family, Oscar, and portrays how this event shapes the life of his widowed wife, Emilie, who is soon to remarry the strict and austere bishop, Edvard. Bergman also makes sure to mark his unique signature from the onset by superimposing the 'real-life' death of Oscar, who is an actor, on his rehearsal of an ominous scene from Hamlet, namely Hamlet's first meeting with his father's ghost. This scene will replicate itself after Oscar passes, when Alexander suddenly notices the mute figure of his late father, dressed in white, gazing at him sadly.
This scene, taking place during the prologue, already invites the viewer into the fantastic world of Bergman's writing. The viewer, who has already been given a glimpse into Alexander's imaginary world in previous scenes (Alexander's role-play and the moving statue; the 'laterna magica' scene), is faced with the question whether Alexander is actually witnessing the ghost of his father in reality, or is it a figment of his overactive imagination? Perhaps life is strangely imitating art? At this point still an open question.

Bergman slowly but deliberately obscures the boundaries between reality and dream, a concept that culminates in the rescue sequence. Emilie Ekdhal has now relocated her family and according to the wishes of her new husband, the bishop Edvard, has uprooted her children from their lively and colorful home, to his dungeon-like abode, adhering to Edvard's wish that they relocate with nothing but the clothes on their backs. Edvard is a strict paterfamilias and on occasion abuses the children, who are not used to his ways. Slowly, Emilie realizes the mistake she has made by agreeing to marry and indeed relocate her family, and makes a heart-wrenching admission of the fact to Helena (Oscar's mother), her only confidant. Unknown to the viewer is the plan being concocted to rescue the children, later executed by Isak Jacobi, a Jewish merchant and Helena's male companion. As the children are cunningly removed from Edvard's home and taken to safety under Isak's hospice, the film takes a turn towards the occult and features one of its most intriguing sequences.

The Jacobi household is setup like a puppetry workshop that most readily resembles the backstage of a theater. The many eerie puppets featured in this sequence are deliberately portrayed as half living and half inanimate. Again, it is not clear whether they are truly so, or only seen as such through Alexander's childish point of view, which is the viewers point of view as well. In this Jewish household live two other characters, Aron and Ismael. Aron is depicted as a normative character (although sleeping with wide open eyes), whereas Ismael is depicted as a dangerous menace that never sleeps, and is kept in a cage. Ismael is also played by a woman, which again leads to a feeling of ambiguousness.

One versed in the old-testament narrative will surely recall that the names Aaron, Isaac and Ishmael evoke a very particular story, namely that of Aaron and his two sons. The first, Isaac, born to Aaron's wife Sarah, is the protagonist of the famous sacrifice story. Ishmael is Aaron's son from his concubine, Hagar, who according to Sarah's wishes is sent out into the wilderness to die, and is perceived in Jewish culture to be the Semite branch from which the Arab peoples originate. Bergman never makes an immediate connection between his story and the biblical one, but allows us, the viewers, to create these

connections in our own minds. Once again the viewer is prompted to ask whether these stories relate, or whether the connection is fleeting and subjective.

This sequence ends with an interesting meeting between Ismael and Alexander, where the relationship between the two is portrayed in a disturbingly erotic fashion. Although Ismael is depicted as dangerous, he treats Alexander with tender care whilst telling him a story that is supposedly fictitious. We, the viewers, are allowed to realize that the story told by Ismael is in fact transpiring in exact detail in the bishop's house (i.e. the bishop's sister accidentally lighting herself with her bedside paraffin lamp, and consequently the entire house and her sleeping brother). Is Ismael clairvoyant, or is he actually controlling the occurrences transpiring in the bishop's home? Is there a relation between this strange world of puppets and make-believe to reality? In fact, is reality real, or is this bizarre world our first glimpse into reality, whereas all we thought was real was but a dream?

The viewer is by now used to this unique point of view, which is in fact Alexander's. Bergman does not clarify to us whether we are partaking in events in reality, or whether we are in effect viewing the imaginary world of Alexander. We are sharing, through Bergman's camera, Alexander's reality and we understand it no better than him. This is a world that does not try to explain itself, yet deliberately keeps a distance in order to maintain its mysterious (theatrical perhaps) character. Bergman portrays a family story where life and stage are one, and the audience, for a limited time, is given a glimpse into this fantastic reality.

One of the final scenes of the series takes place after Fanny and Alexander's return to Helena's home. Things seem to have gone back to their rightful place and all is well again. Yet in a solitary moment, Alexander encounters not only the ghost of his father again, but that of the dead bishop too. Just as we assume that the fantastic world we were invited into was a consequence of the hardship the children have gone through and hence would logically disappear now that they have returned to their former lives, Bergman again deliberately confuses us. We are confused as to what is real and what is not and are never given definitive answers. Is Bergman trying to make a statement about art and particularly that art must imitate life and visa-versa? Perhaps Bergman is trying to say that an artist must have the imagination of a child? Maybe he is asking whether adults view reality at all? And why are the Jewish characters the only ones in the story who have a connection with the occult? Bergman doesn't answer these questions, but simply allows us, the viewers, to formalize answers and perhaps more questions on our own. All of these questions and answers are valid and they seamlessly propel the story forwards, perhaps into realms that Bergman himself did not ever imagine.

Kieslowski's *Dekalog V*

Krzystof Kieslowski's *Dekalog* is a series of ten TV films created for Polish TV in 1988. Each of its episodes is dedicated to one of the Ten Commandments and more specifically to a moralistic yet

subjective view at that particular commandment. *Dekalog V*, entitled A Short Film About Killing, is dedicated to the 5th commandment – Thou Shalt Not Kill.

Kieslowski's version of this commandment begins with a murder. We trace the steps of a seemingly bored and slightly cruel young man (Jacek) as he enters the back seat of a taxi. Shortly into the journey Jacek strangles the cabbie to death with the use of a coil. The scene is as gruesome as it is opaque and we are filled with a feeling of disgust towards Jacek. Jacek is later incarcerated for his crime and the duration of the film henceforth is dedicated to the relationship between Jacek and his defense attorney, Piotr, a young and idealistic lawyer in his first ever case after having finished his legal studies. The Polish state deems murder a capital crime and the prosecution in the case is demanding the execution of Jacek. Although Piotr makes a convincing case in the defense of Jacek, his efforts are not successful and Jacek is found guilty of his crime, punishable by death by hanging.

From this point on the film follows the relationship between Jacek and Piotr. Whereas at first we believed wholeheartedly that Jacek represents evil incarnate, we slowly start sympathizing with his character and understand how and why he was able to reach the state he did. When Jacek is finally hanged at the end of the film, his execution seems almost as gruesome as his own attempt at murder. Having learned more about his unfortunate life, the viewer cannot help but sympathize with Jacek and is now in a strange position of hoping the murderer will be absolved of his crime somehow. But this of course does not happen and the clean and cold execution of Jacek is followed by a spine-shivering scene where Piotr, the lawyer, is seen crying in a field as he repeats the words: 'I hate' over and over again.

The ambiguity of our feeling towards Jacek is at the core of this story. Kieslowski cleverly leads us with his camera through a spectrum of feelings, and questions whether one murder is more right than another. Is a murder in retribution more humane or just than a cold-blooded killing? Are the executioners on behalf of the state murderers to a lesser degree than Jacek, who is clearly a victim of his own circumstances? Whereas at the onset of the film these questions are almost too easy to answer, the ending leaves us with a feeling of disgust at ever having judged Jacek in the first place. As Jacek sits placidly through his trial, all one can recall is the inanimate and bleeding face of the taxi driver, and how Jacek simply stares at it coldly, devoid of any feeling. At the end, as Jacek hysterically cries during the process of his own cold and effective execution, we cannot help but feel that he is the victim rather than the culprit. It is this ambiguity that is at the core of Kieslowski's story, which creates the strong and long-lasting effect the film has. The viewer is led to have a specific relationship with the character (read: material) on screen only in order for this affinity (or lack thereof) to be used against the viewer by the time the film ends.

It is moments such these that remind me again that an artist must never assume the objectivity of materials. Materials are not ideal statements, but rather could be arranged so as to create a plethora of ambiguous reactions within the perceiver. This approach immediately embeds the concept of sublimation, as devoid of this element one cannot 'lead the perceiver on'. Indeed, the act of sublimation could be

likened to a preconceived lie that the artist plants in the minds of the perceiver, only to then play with the expectation that these notions have created.

The Bat-Sheva Dance Company, Ohad Naharin, and *Gaga*

Contemporary dance has long been acknowledged to be one of Israel's finest artistic exports. The first Israeli dance troupe to have hit the international scene with acclaim was the Bat-Sheva Dance Company, under their long-standing artistic director – Ohad Naharin. Above and beyond Naharin's plentiful talent and ideas, it is his unique dance language that has brought his company and indeed his various pieces to the forefront of the international scene. This unique language, practiced informally within the Bat-Sheva Company since the beginning of Naharin's tenure, has through the years become so popular with international audiences and dancers alike, to the extent that it has now been formalized and is taught throughout the world as *Gaga*.

The defining aspect of *Gaga* is a combination between rigorous agility and toning exercises (as expected from any dance-technique class), and a vocabulary, which in contrast, follows the natural and organic movement of the body rather than forcing the body into unnatural shapes. Those acquainted with commonly practiced contemporary-dance techniques (such as Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham, etc.) would also be well aware that these techniques, modeled after classical ballet, try to force the body into given and subjectively beautiful shapes. Like the world of classical ballet, here too the ideal is the ability to hold the body in static (and uncomfortable) positions that require strength, agility and mainly practice from a dancer, but also imperviousness to pain. The latter topic is possibly the most heatedly debated topic amongst dance practitioners, as whether enjoying them or not, all agree that technique classes are brutally painful and challenging.

However, it was not pain that Ohad Naharin was trying to obliterate with his invention of *Gaga*, rather it was the language of his own choreography that prompted a technique class different to the ones that were commonly practiced. I assume that Naharin slowly noticed that the strong tonus required from dancers in available technique classes (even in supposedly delicate movements) was not harmonious with the language of his own choreography. This fact must have prompted him to devise a method that could satisfy his dancer's particular needs, as well as their more objective needs as practitioners.

I recall the moment when I personally realized the necessity for *Gaga* in Naharin's work. I was living in The Hague, attending to my bachelor degree in composition, and as an avid follower of contemporary dance was very enthusiastic to share my temporary home with the local dance-troupe, The NDT (Nederlands Dans Theater), one of the leading dance companies in the world. One versed in contemporary dance could immediately tell that the level of expertise of the NDT dancers was much higher than those of Bat-Sheva. Yet, in a performance of a piece by Naharin, which I had had the chance to attend earlier in Israel with the original company, I noticed a different disparity between the two companies: The NDT dancers were proficiently and beautifully adhering to the tasks set by Naharin's

choreography, yet their movements lacked the abandon of the original company. The NDT dancers were treating each movement as if it were sacred, and almost ideal, performing it with utmost intent and more so, with a feeling of self-awareness. However, I couldn't help but recall that the aspect that made the original performance, and indeed many of Naharin's choreographies, so interesting was the careless and reckless interpretation of the movements – as if these not only lacked importance, but were to some extent improvised. What the NDT dancers were in fact lacking was not an understating of Naharin's particular language, but rather its meaning; a meaning that could have been conveyed to them quite easily through the practice of *Gaga*.

The reader will have hopefully noticed the immediate connection between the conclusion at this last paragraph and the ideal that this writer attempts to bring into many of his own works. It was this same NDT performance that opened my eyes to this reality; a reality in which a language can strive to be dirty rather than clean, incomplete and haphazard in nature, and mainly, filled with incidental moments that are a consequence of a familiarity with material, coupled with a sense of abandon in their execution. It is this moment, poignantly enough occurring abroad, that clarified to me that there is indeed a recognizable Israeli artistic language. As with the works of Arie Shapira, here too was a language that chose the mundane and supposedly ugly over the ideal and supposedly beautiful.

The Yasmeen Godder Dance Company

A newer addition the thriving Israeli dance-scene is the Yasmeen Godder Dance Company. Yasmeen Godder, a dancer and choreographer, is of my own generation and hence, like myself, was brought-up on the performances of Ohad Naharin's Bat-Sheva. An almost exclusive commonality shared by all younger-generation choreographers in Israel is the way in which they have all ingrained in their own works this sense of abandon featured in the many works of Naharin. This sense of reckless abandon, as practiced through *Gaga*, will have its recognizable mark on almost all companies working in the current Israeli scene, regardless of the style of their dance. However, this facet manifests in a unique and interesting fashion within the works of Yasmeen Godder, who creates pieces that are a true crossover between dance and theater.

One must realize that the works of Yasmeen Godder are by all means dance-based. However, there is an added element to her particular language that informs the audience of a character – a mood or setting that is conveyed to the audience by the dancer, or in many instances by the paring-up of several dancers and their contrasting attitudes. One almost gets a feeling that the dancers were given an actor's brief to their character alongside the traditional choreography. Another element that highlights the theatrical aspect of Godder's work is the apparent violence of her vocabulary. Hers is a juxtaposition between extreme tenderness and brutal viciousness (sometimes actual physical violence) superimposed on almost exclusive pair-work (i.e. non-solo work).

This juxtaposition between extremes is another element that to me relates to Israeli characteristics. Israel, as one might realize, is a violent culture. I am not referring to actual physical violence, although this too can be experienced in abundance in connection with its ongoing war with the Palestinians. Rather, there is a culture of immediacy, directness and urgency to almost all aspects of life in Israel (even the weather), which can be seen as a blessing as well as a curse. The blessing is made apparent in the liveliness of Israeli society, its strong culture of debate, its ability to contain (both intellectually and spiritually) one of the largest cultural spectra in the world. On the other hand it is an extremely fast-paced society, usually ruthless and rude (publically as well as privately), which does not (as a general rule) respect personal space.

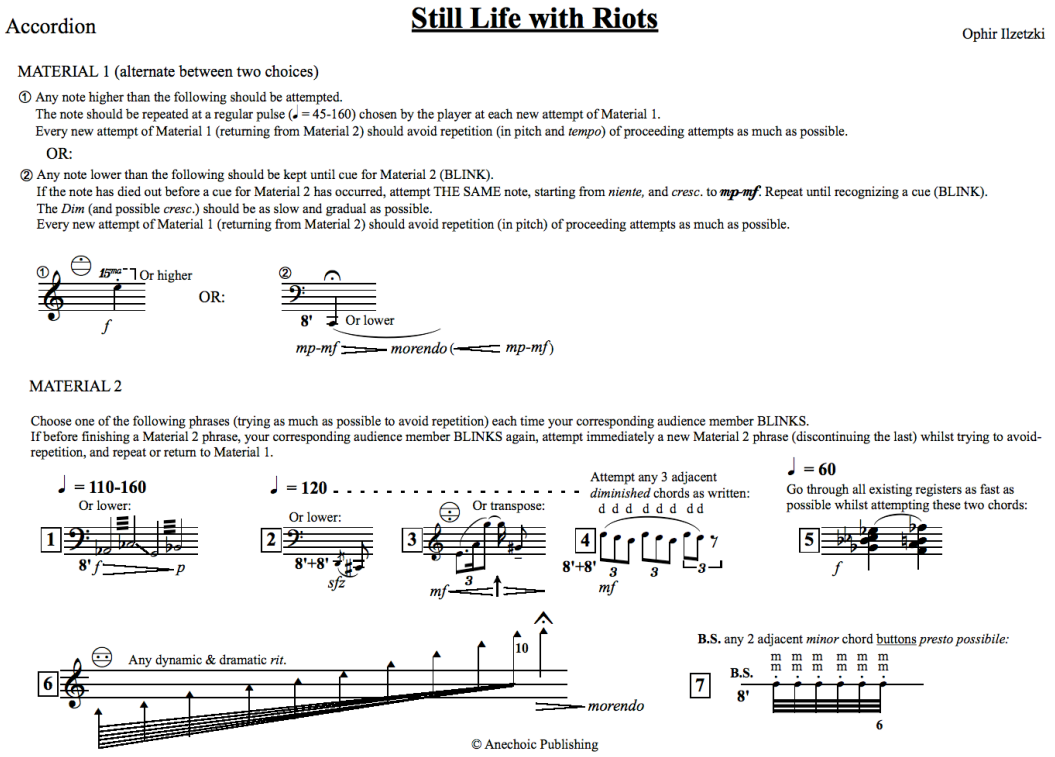
Whereas many artists today still adhere to the ideal of art as a means of repose – an escape from the confines of reality and day-to-day drudgery, I have hopefully already shown my intent to connect to the exact opposite with my own work. I am much more interested in the negativistic aspect of art – that which attempts to slap its audience harshly, rather than embrace it, and confront it with truths that are sometimes difficult to come to terms with. This to me seems to have an added value if one is, as indeed I am, an Israeli artist. A very conscious choice must be made as to whether an Israeli artist chooses to side with beautification, and thus, one could argue, with complacency, or rather side with realism and a feeling of revolt, and hence point at a great stink that could potentially be transpiring under our very noses (and I shall allow myself to keep this notion deliberately opaque).

The audience at a Yasmeen Godder dance performance can feel many different feelings, but calm is certainly not one of them. At a performance I attended of one of her pieces in the South Bank in London, some audience members were seen leaving midway, as well as others who at particularly gruesome instances deliberately gazed away from stage, as the actions momentarily transpiring there were too much for them to stomach. Having said that, Yasmeen Godder has already obtained her rightful place amongst the influential voices of her generation, and is now acclaimed worldwide for her unique works. When I think of the combination of depth and effect of artworks that I model my own works after, the name Yasmeen Godder is without doubt first in line.

Appendix B

Still Life with Riots – Score

The following is the latest scored version of my modular piece, *Still Life with Riots*. This particular version was revised for the French ensemble, *Aleph*, in accordance with their particular lineup. The most significant difference of this version from the original score that was discussed in chapter 2 is in the reworking of the traditionally notated part, written originally for harp, here reworked for percussion. The other parts, although revised for this particular instrumentation, have predominantly kept to the original specification and presentation of the score. The reader is reminded that *Still Life with Riots* is not presented as a *tutti* score, but rather in parts. Each separate part (instrument) is presented as a three-page score.



Accordion

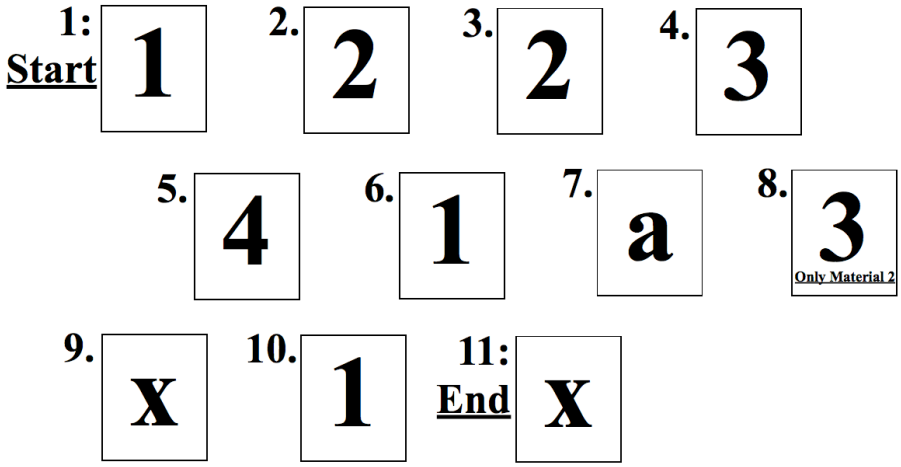
Still Life with Riots

Ophir Ilzetzki

This following chart serves as performance score for the Accordion.
Each box includes the audience member that you are supposed to be looking at for BLINKS on every percussion cue, and all related performance information. Hence, musical materials 1 & 2 should be learned by heart beforehand and you should have ready command of both.

[1] - *The boxed number refers to your current corresponding audience member.* [x] - *Do not play material 1 or 2 until next percussion cue.*

[a] - *Look at ANY audience member for BLINKS* **Only Material 2** - *Play only material 2 (i.e. only on BLINKS)*



Accordion

Still Life with Riots

Ophir Ilzetzki

Seating:

Hall: FIRST ROW AUDIENCE MEMBERS (numbered): 1 2 3 4 5 6

Stage (Directly opposite first row audience members): Accordion Trumpet Violin Soprano Clarinet Cello

Percussion

Material:
-The piece is constructed of two Materials (called 1 & 2). Material 1 is played as a constant throughout the piece (unless otherwise indicated) whilst Material 2 is cued unknowingly by your corresponding audience member every time she/he BLINKS.
-Transition between Material 1, 2 and vise-versa should be immediate.
-On cue, the chosen phrase from Material 2 should be played once only (unless otherwise indicated) followed by an immediate return to Material 1.

Cues:
-The percussion serves as a cueing instrument for changes of your corresponding audience member throughout the piece (according to the list bellow & seating arrangement above).
-The Gong attack at the end of each insert bar (as departure from the ongoing soft rhythmic pulse in the Glsp/Wood Block), serves as cue for change of your corresponding audience member (percussion also starts and ends the piece with 2 similar cues).

Cue 1 (Start): Look at audience member 1 for BLINKS
Cue 2: Look at audience member 2 for BLINKS
Cue 3: Look at audience member 2 for BLINKS
Cue 4: Look at audience member 3 for BLINKS
Cue 5: Look at audience member 4 for BLINKS
Cue 6: Look at audience member 1 for BLINKS
Cue 7: Look at ANY Audience member for BLINKS
Cue 8: Look at audience member 3 for BLINKS. Play Material 2 only (i.e. Play only on BLINKS/ No Material 1)
Cue 9: DO NOT PLAY (no Material 1 or 2 until next percussion cue)
Cue 10: Look at audience member 1 for BLINKS
Cue 11: End!

Still Life with Riots

Ophir Ilzetzki

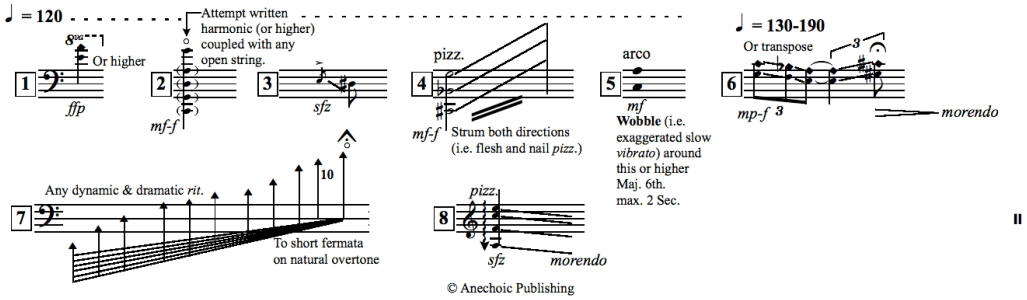
Cello

MATERIAL 1

Any note higher than the following should be attacked *col legno battuto* OR *pizz.* on each new attempt of Material 1. It is left to the players discretion to chose between a Flesh OR Nail *pizz*, but never both on the same attempt of Material 1. The player should also avoid attempting *col legno* and *pizz.* on the same attempt of Material 1.
The note should be repeated at a regular pulse (♩ = 45-160) chosen by the player at each new attempt of Material 1.
Every new attempt of Material 1 (returning from Material 2) should avoid repetition (in pitch and *tempo*) of proceeding attempts as much as possible.

MATERIAL 2

Choose from the following phrases (trying as much as possible to avoid repetition) each time your corresponding audience member BLINKS.
If before finishing a Material 2 phrase, your corresponding audience member BLINKS again, attempt immediately a new Material 2 phrase (discontinuing the last) whilst trying to avoid-repetition, and repeat or return to Material 1.



Cello

Still Life with Riots

Ophir Ilzetzki

This following chart serves as performance score for the Cello.
Each box includes the audience member that you are supposed to be looking at for BLINKS on every percussion cue, and all related performance information. Hence, musical materials 1 & 2 should be learned by heart beforehand and you should have ready command of both.

1 - *The boxed number refers to your current corresponding audience member.* x - *Do not play material 1 or 2 until next percussion cue.*

a - *Look at ANY audience member for BLINKS* **Only Material 2** - *Play only material 2 (i.e. only on BLINKS)*

1: Start 6	2. 5	3. 5	4. 4	
5. 4	6. 6	7. a	8. 3 Only Material 2	
9. x	10. 6	11: End x		

Cello

Still Life with Riots

Ophir Ilzetzki

Seating:

Hall:	**FIRST ROW AUDIENCE MEMBERS (numbered):**					
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
Stage (Directly opposite first row audience members):	**Accordion**	**Trumpet**	**Violin**	**Soprano**	**Clarinet**	**Cello**
			Percussion			

Material:
-The piece is constructed of two Materials (called 1 & 2). Material 1 is played as a constant throughout the piece (unless otherwise indicated) whilst Material 2 is cued unknowingly by your corresponding audience member every time she/he BLINKS.
-Transition between Material 1, 2 and vise-versa should be immediate.
-On cue, the chosen phrase from Material 2 should be played once only (unless otherwise indicated) followed by an immediate return to Material 1.

Cues:
-The percussion serves as a cueing instrument for changes of your corresponding audience member throughout the piece (according to the list bellow & seating arrangement above).
-The Gong attack at the end of each insert bar (as departure from the ongoing soft rhythmic pulse in the Glsp/Wood Block), serves as cue for change of your corresponding audience member (percussion also starts and ends the piece with 2 similar cues).

Cue 1 (Start): Look at audience member 6 for BLINKS
Cue 2: Look at audience member 5 for BLINKS
Cue 3: Look at audience member 5 for BLINKS
Cue 4: Look at audience member 4 for BLINKS
Cue 5: Look at audience member 4 for BLINKS
Cue 6: Look at audience member 6 for BLINKS
Cue 7: Look at ANY Audience member for BLINKS
Cue 8: Look at audience member 3 for BLINKS. Play Material 2 only (i.e. Play only on BLINKS/ No Material 1)
Cue 9: DO NOT PLAY (no Material 1 or 2 until next percussion cue)
Cue 10: Look at audience member 6 for BLINKS
Cue 11: End!

Clarinet Bb (transposing score)

Still Life with Riots

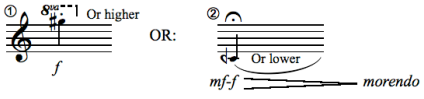
Ophir Ilzetzki

MATERIAL 1 (alternate between two choices)

① Any note higher than the following should be attempted.
The note should be repeated at a regular pulse (♩ = 45-160) chosen by the player at each new attempt of Material 1.
Every new attempt of Material 1 (returning from Material 2) should avoid repetition (in pitch and *tempo*) from proceeding attempts as much as possible.

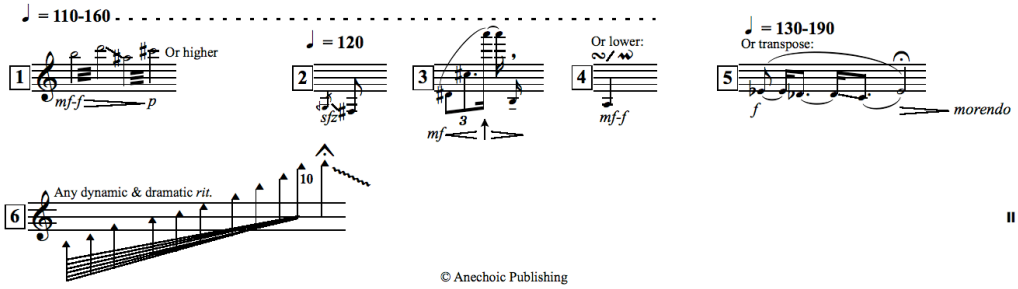
OR:

② Any note lower than the following should be kept until cue for Material 2 (BLINK) or lack of air occur.
When out of air, attempt a new note until recognizing a cue (BLINK).
The *Dim* should be as slow and gradual as possible.
Every new attempt of Material 1 (returning from Material 2) should avoid repetition (in pitch) of proceeding attempts as much as possible.



MATERIAL 2

Choose from the following phrases (trying as much as possible to avoid repetition) each time your corresponding audience member BLINKS.
If before finishing a Material 2 phrase, your corresponding audience member BLINKS again, attempt immediately a new Material 2 phrase (discontinuing the last) whilst trying to avoid-repetition, and repeat or return to Material 1.



Clarinet Bb

Still Life with Riots

Ophir Ilzetzki

This following chart serves as performance score for the Clarinet.
Each box includes the audience member that you are supposed to be looking at for BLINKS on every percussion cue, and all related performance information. Hence, musical materials 1 & 2 should be learned by heart beforehand and you should have ready command of both.

[1] - *The boxed number refers to your current corresponding audience member.* [x] - *Do not play material 1 or 2 until next percussion cue.*

[a] - *Look at ANY audience member for BLINKS* **Only Material 2** - *Play only material 2 (i.e. only on BLINKS)*

1: Start [5]	2. [5]	3. [4]	4. [4]	
5. [4]	6. [x]	7. [a]	8. [3] Only Material 2	
9. [x]	10. [5]	11: End [x]		

Clarinet Bb

Still Life with Riots

Ophir Ilzetzki

Seating:

Hall: FIRST ROW AUDIENCE MEMBERS (numbered): 1 2 3 4 5 6

Stage (Directly opposite first row audience members): Accordion Trumpet Violin Soprano Clarinet Cello

Percussion

Material:
-The piece is constructed of two Materials (called 1 & 2). Material 1 is played as a constant throughout the piece (unless otherwise indicated) whilst Material 2 is cued unknowingly by your corresponding audience member every time she/he BLINKS.
-Transition between Material 1, 2 and vise-versa should be immediate.
-On cue, the chosen phrase from Material 2 should be played once only (unless otherwise indicated) followed by an immediate return to Material 1.

Cues:
-The percussion serves as a cueing instrument for changes of your corresponding audience member throughout the piece (according to the list bellow & seating arrangement above).
-The Gong attack at the end of each insert bar (as departure from the ongoing soft rhythmic pulse in the Glsp/Wood Block), serves as cue for change of your corresponding audience member (percussion also starts and ends the piece with 2 similar cues).

Cue 1 (Start): Look at audience member 5 for BLINKS
Cue 2: Look at audience member 5 for BLINKS
Cue 3: Look at audience member 4 for BLINKS
Cue 4: Look at audience member 4 for BLINKS
Cue 5: Look at audience member 4 for BLINKS
Cue 6: DO NOT PLAY (no Material 1 or 2 until next percussion cue)
Cue 7: Look at ANY Audience member for BLINKS
Cue 8: Look at audience member 3 for BLINKS. Play Material 2 only (i.e. Play only on BLINKS/ No Material 1)
Cue 9: DO NOT PLAY (no Material 1 or 2 until next percussion cue)
Cue 10: Look at audience member 5 for BLINKS
Cue 11: End!

Trumpet Bb - Cup Mute obbligato (transposing score)

Still Life with Riots

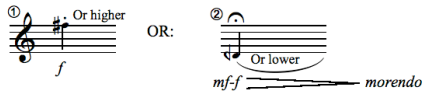
Ophir Ilzetzki

MATERIAL 1 (alternate between two choices)

① Any note higher than the following should be attempted.
The note should be repeated at a regular pulse (♩= 45-160) chosen by the player at each new attempt of Material 1.
Every new attempt of Material 1 (returning from Material 2) should avoid repetition (in pitch and *tempo*) of proceeding attempts as much as possible.

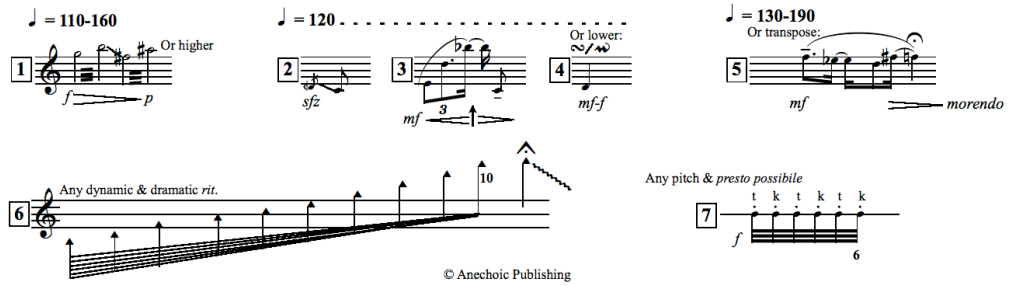
OR:

② Any note lower than the following should be kept until cue for Material 2 (BLINK) or lack of air occur.
When out of air, attempt a new note until recognizing a cue (BLINK).
The *Dim* should be as slow and gradual as possible.
Every new attempt of Material 1 (returning from Material 2) should avoid repetition (in pitch) of proceeding attempts as much as possible.



MATERIAL 2

Choose one of the following phrases (trying as much as possible to avoid repetition) each time your corresponding audience member BLINKS.
If before finishing a Material 2 phrase, your corresponding audience member BLINKS again, attempt immediately a new Material 2 phrase (discontinuing the last) whilst trying to avoid-repetition, and repeat or return to Material 1.



Trumpet Bb - Cup Mute obbligato

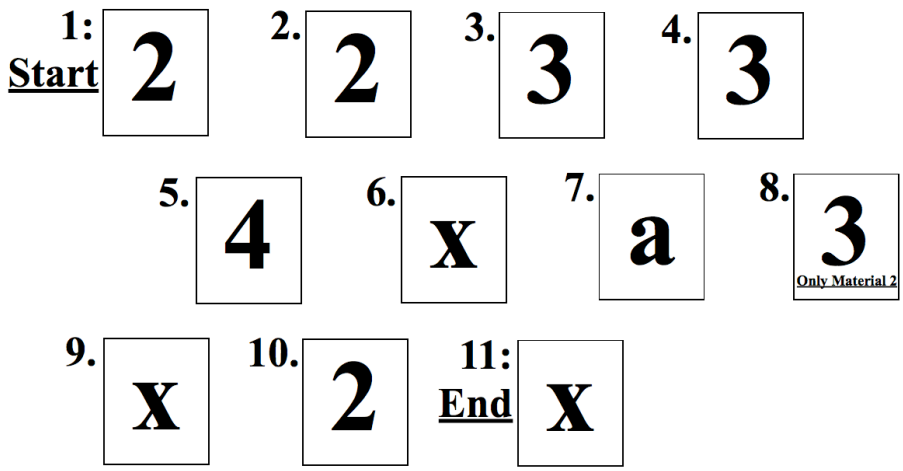
Still Life with Riots

Ophir Ilzetzki

This following chart serves as performance score for the Trumpet.
Each box includes the audience member that you are supposed to be looking at for BLINKS on every percussion cue, and all related performance information. Hence, musical materials 1 & 2 should be learned by heart beforehand and you should have ready command of both.

1 - *The boxed number refers to your current corresponding audience member.* x - *Do not play material 1 or 2 until next percussion cue.*

a - *Look at ANY audience member for BLINKS* **Only Material 2** - *Play only material 2 (i.e. only on BLINKS)*



Trumpet Bb - Cup Mute obbligato

Still Life with Riots

Ophir Ilzetzki

Seating:

Hall:	**FIRST ROW AUDIENCE MEMBERS (numbered):**					
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
Stage (Directly opposite first row audience members):	**Accordion**	**Trumpet**	**Violin**	**Soprano**	**Clarinet**	**Cello**
	Percussion					

Material:
-The piece is constructed of two Materials (called 1 & 2). Material 1 is played as a constant throughout the piece (unless otherwise indicated) whilst Material 2 is cued unknowingly by your corresponding audience member every time she/he BLINKS.
-Transition between Material 1, 2 and vise-versa should be immediate.
-On cue, the chosen phrase from Material 2 should be played once only (unless otherwise indicated) followed by an immediate return to Material 1.

Cues:
-The percussion serves as a cueing instrument for changes of your corresponding audience member throughout the piece (according to the list bellow & seating arrangement above).
-The Gong attack at the end of each insert bar (as departure from the ongoing soft rhythmic pulse in the Glsp/Wood Block), serves as cue for change of your corresponding audience member (percussion also starts and ends the piece with 2 similar cues).

Cue 1 (Start): Look at audience member 2 for BLINKS
Cue 2: Look at audience member 2 for BLINKS
Cue 3: Look at audience member 3 for BLINKS
Cue 4: Look at audience member 3 for BLINKS
Cue 5: Look at audience member 4 for BLINKS
Cue 6: DO NOT PLAY (no Material 1 or 2 until next percussion cue)
Cue 7: Look at ANY Audience member for BLINKS
Cue 8: Look at audience member 3 for BLINKS. Play Material 2 only (i.e. Play only on BLINKS/ No Material 1)
Cue 9: DO NOT PLAY (no Material 1 or 2 until next percussion cue)
Cue 10: Look at audience member 2 for BLINKS
Cue 11: End!

VIOLIN

Still Life with Riots

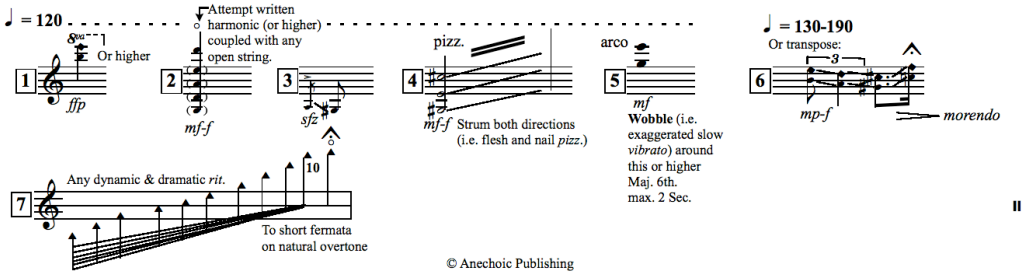
Ophir Ilzetzki

MATERIAL 1

Any note higher than the following should be attacked *pizz*. (varies at the players discretion between a Flesh OR Nail *pizz*, but never both on the same attempt of Material 1).
The note should be repeated at a regular pulse (♩ = 45-160) chosen by the player at each new attempt of Material 1.
Every new attempt of Material 1 (returning from Material 2 or proceeding a Harp cue) should avoid repetition (in pitch and *tempo*) of proceeding attempts as much as possible.

MATERIAL 2

Choose from the following phrases (trying as much as possible to avoid repetition) each time your corresponding audience member BLINKS.
If before finishing a Material 2 phrase, your corresponding audience member BLINKS again, attempt immediately a new Material 2 phrase (discontinuing the last) whilst trying to avoid-repetition, and repeat or return to Material 1.



Violin

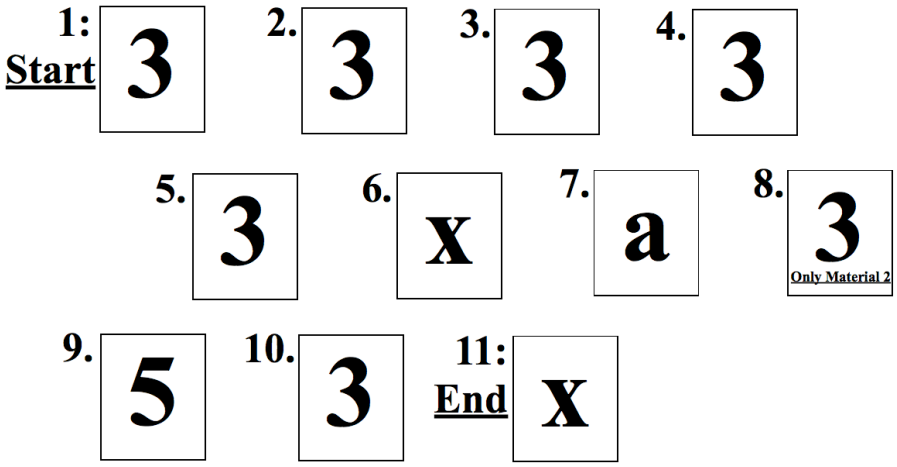
Still Life with Riots

Ophir Ilzetzki

This following chart serves as performance score for the Violin.
Each box includes the audience member that you are supposed to be looking at for BLINKS on every percussion cue, and all related performance information. Hence, musical materials 1 & 2 should be learned by heart beforehand and you should have ready command of both.

[1] - *The boxed number refers to your current corresponding audience member.* [x] - *Do not play material 1 or 2 until next percussion cue.*

[a] - *Look at ANY audience member for BLINKS* **Only Material 2** - *Play only material 2 (i.e. only on BLINKS)*



Violin

Still Life with Riots

Ophir Ilzetzki

Seating:

Hall:	**FIRST ROW AUDIENCE MEMBERS (numbered):**					
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**
Stage (Directly opposite first row audience members):	**Accordion**	**Trumpet**	**Violin**	**Soprano**	**Clarinet**	**Cello**
	Percussion					

Material:
-The piece is constructed of two Materials (called 1 & 2). Material 1 is played as a constant throughout the piece (unless otherwise indicated) whilst Material 2 is cued unknowingly by your corresponding audience member every time she/he BLINKS.
-Transition between Material 1, 2 and vise-versa should be immediate.
-On cue, the chosen phrase from Material 2 should be played once only (unless otherwise indicated) followed by an immediate return to Material 1.

Cues:
-The percussion serves as a cueing instrument for changes of your corresponding audience member throughout the piece (according to the list bellow & seating arrangement above).
-The Gong attack at the end of each insert bar (as departure from the ongoing soft rhythmic pulse in the Glsp/Wood Block), serves as cue for change of your corresponding audience member (percussion also starts and ends the piece with 2 similar cues).

Cue 1 (Start): Look at audience member 3 for BLINKS
Cue 2: Look at audience member 3 for BLINKS
Cue 3: Look at audience member 3 for BLINKS
Cue 4: Look at audience member 3 for BLINKS
Cue 5: Look at audience member 3 for BLINKS
Cue 6: DO NOT PLAY (no Material 1 or 2 until next percussion cue)
Cue 7: Look at ANY Audience member for BLINKS
Cue 8: Look at audience member 3 for BLINKS. Play Material 2 only (i.e. Play only on BLINKS/ No Material 1)
Cue 9: Look at audience member 5 for BLINKS
Cue 10: Look at audience member 3 for BLINKS
Cue 11: End!

Voice

Still Life with Riots

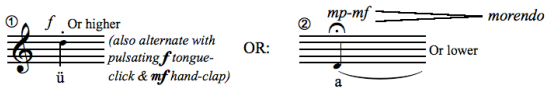
Ophir Ilzetzki

MATERIAL 1 (alternate between two choices)

① Three techniques: Any note higher than the following should be attempted, OR a ***f*** tongue-click, OR a ***mf*** sharp hand-clap (4 fingers of one hand slapping the palm of the other).
The note/tongue-click/hand-clap should be repeated at a regular pulse (♩ = 45-160) chosen by the singer at each new attempt of Material 1.
Every new attempt of Material 1 (returning from Material 2) should avoid repetition (in pitch and *tempo*) from proceeding attempts as much as possible.

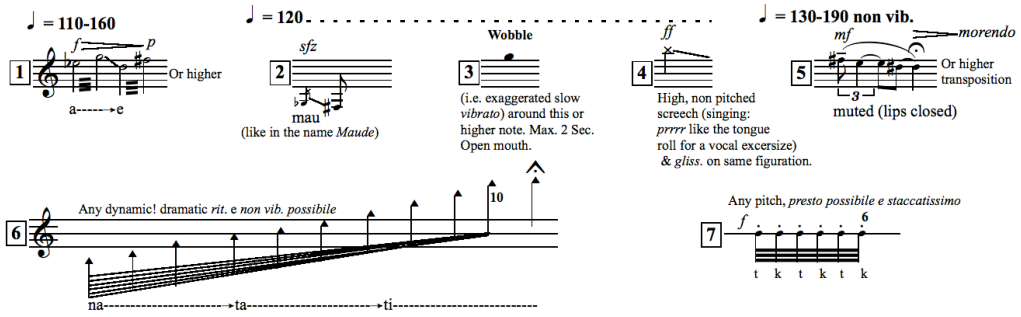
OR:

② Any note lower than the following should be kept until cue for Material 2 (BLINK) or lack of air occur.
When out of air, attempt a new note until recognizing a cue (BLINK).
The *Dim* should be as slow and gradual as possible.
Every new attempt of Material 1 (returning from Material 2) should avoid repetition (in pitch) of proceeding attempts as much as possible.



MATERIAL 2

Choose one of the following phrases (trying as much as possible to avoid repetition) each time your corresponding audience member BLINKS.
If before finishing a Material 2 phrase, your corresponding audience member BLINKS again, attempt immediately a new Material 2 phrase (discontinuing the last) whilst trying to avoid-repetition, and repeat or return to Material 1.



Voice

Still Life with Riots

Ophir Ilzetzki

This following chart serves as performance score for the Soprano.
Each box includes the audience member that you are supposed to be looking at for BLINKS on every percussion cue, and all related performance information. Hence, musical materials 1 & 2 should be learned by heart beforehand and you should have ready command of both.

1 - *The boxed number refers to your current corresponding audience member.* 0 - *Play only material 1 (i.e. do not respond to BLINKS)*

a - *Look at ANY audience member for BLINKS* **Only Material 2** - *Play only material 2 (i.e. only on BLINKS)* x - *Do not play material 1 or 2 (tacet)*

1: Start 4	2. 4	3. 4	4. 4	
5. 4	6. 0	7. a	8. 3 Only Material 2	
9. 5 Only Material 2	10. 4	11: End x		

Voice

Still Life with Riots

Ophir Ilzetzki

Seating:

Hall: FIRST ROW AUDIENCE MEMBERS (numbered): 1 2 3 4 5 6

Stage (Directly opposite first row audience members): Accordion Trumpet Violin Soprano Clarinet Cello

Percussion

Material:
-The piece is constructed of two Materials (called 1 & 2). Material 1 is attempted as a constant throughout the piece (unless otherwise indicated) whilst Material 2 is cued unknowingly by your corresponding audience member every time she/he BLINKS.
-Transition between Material 1, 2 and vise-versa should be immediate.
-On cue, the chosen phrase from Material 2 should be executed once only (unless otherwise indicated) followed by an immediate return to Material 1.

Cues:
-The percussion serves as a cueing instrument for changes of your corresponding audience member throughout the piece (according to the list bellow & seating arrangement above).
-The Gong attack at the end of each insert bar (as departure from the ongoing soft rhythmic pulse in the Glsp/Wood Block), serves as cue for change of your corresponding audience member (percussion also starts and ends the piece with 2 similar cues).

Cue 1 (Start): Look at audience member 4 for BLINKS
Cue 2: Look at audience member 4 for BLINKS
Cue 3: Look at audience member 4 for BLINKS
Cue 4: Look at audience member 4 for BLINKS
Cue 5: Look at audience member 4 for BLINKS
Cue 6: Attempt Material 1 only (i.e. do not respond to BLINKS)
Cue 7: Look at ANY Audience member for BLINKS
Cue 8: Look at audience member 3 for BLINKS. Attempt Material 2 only (i.e. sing only on BLINKS/ No Material 1)
Cue 9: Look at audience member 5 for BLINKS. Attempt Material 2 only (i.e. sing only on BLINKS/ No Material 1)
Cue 10: Look at audience member 4 for BLINKS
Cue 11: End!

Still Life with Riots

Ophir Ilzetzki

Percussion

Seating:

Hall: FIRST ROW AUDIENCE MEMBERS (numbered): 1 2 3 4 5 6

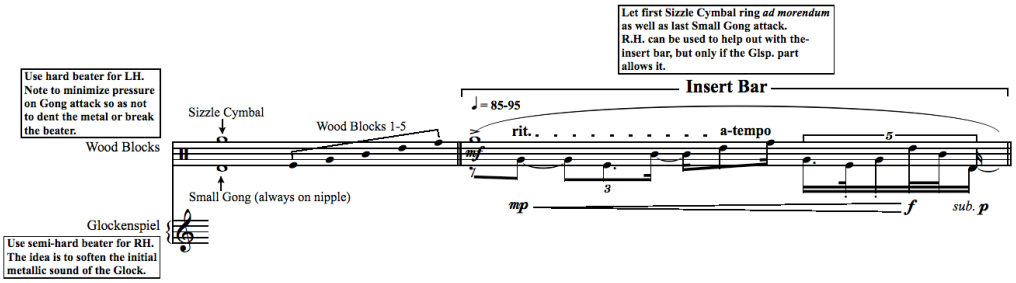
Stage (Directly opposite first row audience members): Accordion Trumpet Violin Soprano Clarinet Cello

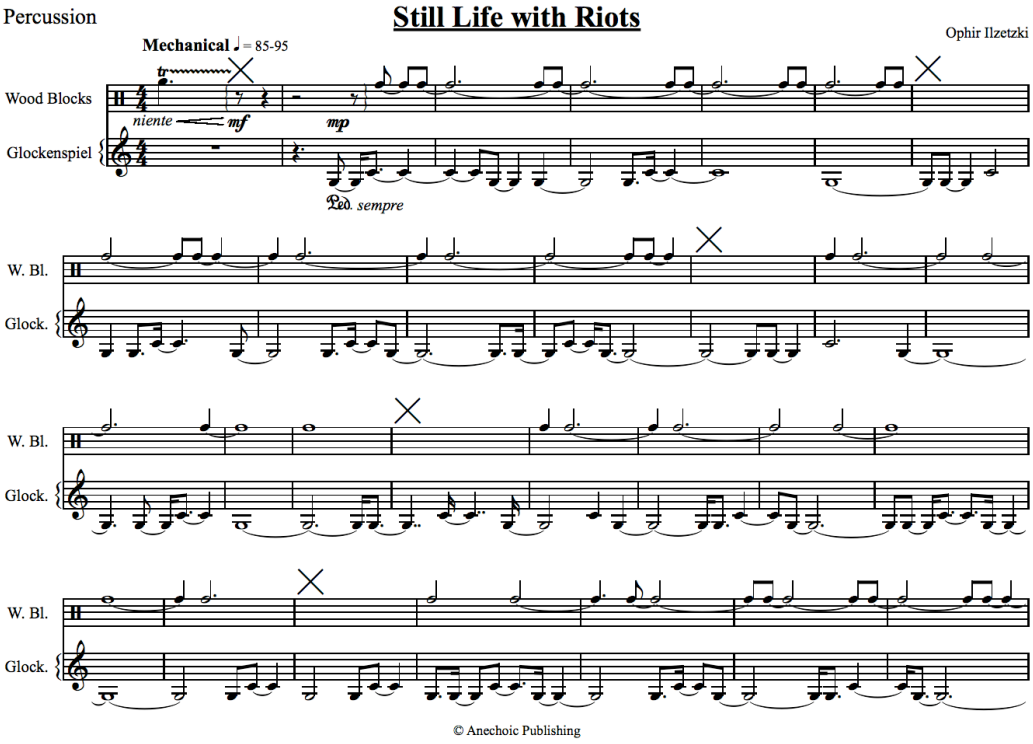
Percussion (on stage)
(Directly behind & between Violin and Soprano):
I see this as a suitable positioning of instruments, but player may alter it at his/her own discretion

WB Glsp
Percussion

- The Percussion serves as cuing instrument throughout the piece, hence the **insert bar** is the cue to initiate playing at the beginning of the piece and also cue to stop playing at the end of the piece. The ensuing **insert bars** are all similar cues (refer to other parts for information). This part should thus be treated as soloist and insert bars should be executed with clarity, noting its dynamics should never exceed that of any instrument in the ensemble or at any time cover the ensemble as a whole.
The dynamics specified for the insert bar are supposed to facilitate the latter, but in a case this does not occur, please attenuate as necessary.

Indicates playing the **insert bar**. When attempted, the insert bar should be played as written, or in a slightly different manner on every attempt (i.e. *ad-lib*). When playing the insert bar *ad-lib,* the percussionist should make sure to keep the structure of the bar in tact (i.e. always starting with **only one *mf* Sizzle Cymbal hit**, and always ending with **only one *mp* Small-Gong hit** (on the nipple, letting ring). The Wood Block section can be improvised so long the element of rhythmic *accl.* leading to the Gong hit is kept in tact).




Percussion
Still Life with Riots
Ophir Ilzetzki
Mechanical ♩= 85-95
Wood Blocks
Glockenspiel
niente
mf
mp
Ped. sempre
W. Bl.
Glock.
W. Bl.
Glock.
W. Bl.
Glock.
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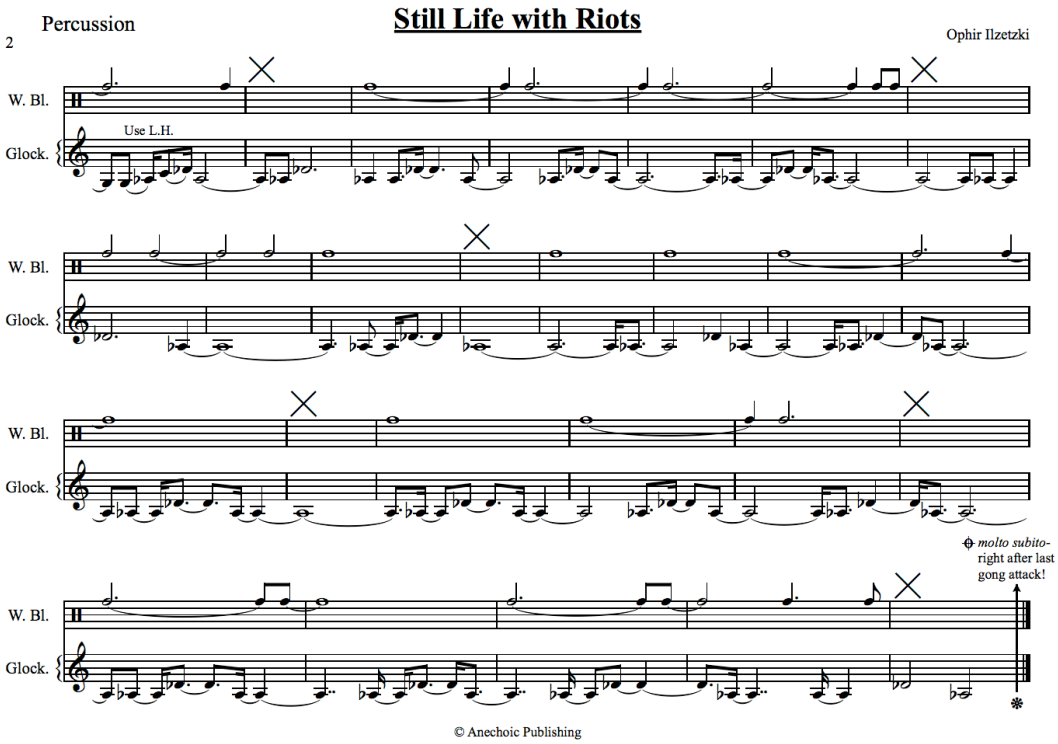
Percussion
2
Still Life with Riots
Ophir Ilzetzki
W. Bl.
Glock.
Use L.H.
W. Bl.
Glock.
W. Bl.
Glock.
molto subito-
right after last
gong attack!
W. Bl.
Glock.
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