Discovering, Creating and Experiencing Notions of Theatricality in Musical Performance

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This submission comprises of a folio of creative work.
It includes one DVD, one CD and a written commentary.

Abstract

This thesis consists of a portfolio of musical compositions and a written commentary. The submitted works creatively challenge the form of a conventional concert by exploring methods of bringing to the fore the theatrical side of musical performance: its inherited or implemented conceptual and visual aspects.

The portfolio is divided into three main categories. The first comprises a series of pieces that balance between music theatre and conventional concert practices. The second category includes works that reform many aspects of the traditional concert presentation, without breaking away from it. The third category includes works that experiment within the territory determined by the previous categories.

The written commentary presents theoretically the compositional approach used throughout the portfolio and provides a brief philosophical background, such as is necessary to explain the underlying concepts, ideas, preoccupations and concerns. It also contains a comprehensive analysis of the submitted works, their aims, contextual links, applied methodologies, associations with other composers' works and interconnections between them.

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- To Myrto: for being everything I wished for; for sharing her strength, vision, love and hope; for being next to me in every single moment.

- To my family, those who are still here, and those who left earlier: for providing everything I needed in order to pursue my dream. Their courage, support, love, kindness, ethics and principles have permanently flooded my life. This work is dedicated to them.

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Chapter 1: Prologue

This commentary relates to a selection of ten works composed between 2007 and 2011, submitted in the accompanying portfolio. It focuses specifically on notions of theatricality inherent or implemented in the musical performance, and their use as a tool to challenge creatively the form of the conventional concert, in order to invite the audience to experience all of its aspects – acoustical and visual – and thus engage with it.

The commentary is divided into four main chapters. Chapter 1 examines my compositional approach and analyses the reasons behind it. Chapter 2 clarifies the chosen research field and explores the philosophical background of the underlying concepts, ideas, preoccupations and concerns. Chapter 3 explores the division of the submitted works into categories, followed by the actual commentaries on the compositions submitted. Chapter 4 consists of a conclusion about the works of this period as a complete set.

1.1   Personal Imprint

In this chapter are explained the reasons behind my current approach to composition, as they were consciously and unconsciously formulated before and during the period of elaboration of my thesis (March 2007 to August 2011). Firstly, I will present and define this approach, based on my instincts and beliefs, and then with the use of parallels drawn from a different field of musical research make clearer the aims and objectives of the submitted portfolio.

In order to explain my current compositional approach, I discern two different levels of application: conceptual and practical. Conceptually (i.e. non-musically), my approach may be described as the process of zooming in on an existing living system (e.g. a human society), focusing on a matter of minor importance (e.g. a particular human behaviour observed), isolating it (e.g. removing any relevant information that would link it to its causes or consequences) and then examining its characteristics and function within a consciously altered system (e.g. creating the circumstances that may promote it to a major factor). Practically for each composition, this approach takes place through a number of decisions made consciously and subconsciously when challenging – philosophically and imaginatively – certain parameters of music performance; always within what is always conceived of as the living and realistic setting of our world:

- Some of those decisions are 'forced' by the realistic needs and provisions of a project/performance. These are usually treated as given and unchangeable conditions.

- Some others are made in accordance with the 'rules' a composer creates and applies to him/herself for the sake of his own working progress and the achievement of his/her goals. In certain cases these rules are accumulated in relation to the focal point, and are often transformed in order to be applied to a musical context.

- Finally, a few other decisions are generated (automatically) and implied, based on previous life and work experiences as a composer or performer, or indeed various personal experiences as an audience member. These are also appropriately transformed in order to become applicable.

Although more or less subconscious, those decisions included in the last category could (for a period of time at least) potentially become a composer's ground-breaking rules; they, in combination with a number of other decisions made or implied, could serve as the underground foundations for the construction of numerous works. The subliminal mechanism here could resemble that of archetypes, the dynamic substratum of unconscious experience that will be discussed later.

As a sort of personal imprint of the above, I believe I have developed a 'humanistic' approach – in contrast to what I often consider a dogmatically artistic approach – towards music creation and performance. In my experience, regardless of how fascinating the techniques of a composition are, it is often the actual overriding aims of the work and the sterilised form of the conventional concert that do not allow the audience to 'experience' the work: the role of the auditor – his/her existence and function as the recipient of the work – is completely overlooked (my view on the audience's role and perception is further analysed later in this chapter). This realisation led me repeatedly to ask myself: is that an unavoidable loss, in order for the artistic aims of a work to be fulfilled?

As a natural reaction to this question, I became more and more absorbed and fascinated by performances that placed a central focus on their ritualistic aspects (such as John Cage's *Theatre Piece,* Jani Christou's *Praxis for 12* or Mauricio Kagel's *Staatstheater*), as well as on the actual performers as irreplaceable human beings[1] (such as George Aperghis's *Recitations* or

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[1] My view regarding the importance of the every performer's personal characteristics and qualities in relation to each work's performance and the audience's perception is explained later in this chapter.

Luciano Berio's *Sequenza*s); in other words, what I would consider the main factors that would allow the audience to engage with a work. It was the same factors that directed me to focus on the actual performance itself and appreciate its different dimensions; not only its isolated acoustic qualities (as present in all forms of its audio documentation), but also its inherent conceptual and visual aspects. As a result, the act of performance (with all possible musical and non-musical meanings included in this term) became the starting point of my musical thinking.

That quickly led me to the integration of what could (also) be regarded as additional, extra-musical or theatrical elements in my works. As Janet Halfyard mentions in regards to the theatrical nature of Luciano Berio's *Sequenza*s, 'this generally occurs in three different means: the use of some form of dramatic scenario or linear narrative; the symbolic presence of specific individuals as 'characters' within the text of the composition; and the inclusion of behaviours beyond the usual actions of playing an instrument.'[2]

From my point of view, all these different 'modes of theatricality'[3] suggest a supplementary but critically important dimension to what is usually considered musical performance. The underlying dramatic plot, the participating roles and the non-musical actions contribute a theatrical touch, which is used to present figures and behaviours that the audience may associate with already existing life experiences, and thus attempt to engage with the work presented. This happens because theatre – as director Peter Brook states – 'always asserts itself in the present. This is what can make it more real than the normal stream of consciousness. This also is what can make it so disturbing.'[4]

The realisation of the above made the connection with theatre become more and more apparent, and led to further consideration of the differences between a theatrical and musical presentation, as well as the audience's role and function in each. Furthermore, it led to the expansion of the above 'modes of theatricality'[5]: the inclusion of theatrical (non-musical) actions into a musical performance prompted the exploration of the theatrical function of the (clearly) musical actions themselves and their purpose as stand-alone actions. Moreover, the existence of a scenario and some sort of theatrical roles initiated the

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[2] Halfyard (2007), p. 99.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Brooks (2008), p. 111.
[5] I am later on referring to them as 'expanded modes of theatricality'.

need for specific stage designing, lighting directions and in some cases the use of non-musical objects.

It is obvious that most of these aspects relate to the conceptual background of the presented works and the visual parameters of musical performance. Matters that seemed to be losing their importance – and in certain cases were being ignored or mistreated by composers, as well as conventional concert organisers and performers – in comparison to other, more musical ones, including the stylistic stability of the creator, the compositional and performing techniques used and developed, and the competency of the performers.

As in the process described earlier, these 'minor' aspects became the selected focal points of my thinking. They were then isolated and their function was tested inside different systems. The final aim was for them to become part of the core of the new works, to be reclaimed and restored to an equality with all other matters (such as the 'more musical ones' mentioned above). In fact, my goal was to repossess all those decisions that I considered formed a dogmatically artistic approach by looking at them from a different viewpoint: setting them inside a theatrical context, and using them as powerful tools of my own.

This resulted in the need to control several other parameters, in addition to the clearly musical ones, concerning the otherwise 'empty space' inherent in the very act of musical performance. By occasionally using theatre 'like a magnifying glass and also a reducing lens',[6] the visual aspects of specific musical points (sounding or silent) are defined in order to underline and magnify their meaning, while also unfolding the drama.

A similar approach to the above treatment of a composition's technical details (the composer's tools instead of the piece's aim), is mentioned by William Fetterman in his book *John Cage's Theatre Pieces: Notations and Performances*. With regard to the selected notations and their connection with the final outcome of the performance, he explains that 'Cage's theatre pieces, in the use of chance, innovative notations, structure, and use of time, are works which focus upon process rather than object. Particularly with the indeterminately notated works, there can not be said to be any final, fixed version. Instead, a performance is based upon a notation, and it is the performance itself, rather than the

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[6] Brooks (2008), p. 110.

score, which becomes of crucial interest.'[7] Except of the performance's importance (instead of the score or any other technical details) made clear in Fetterman's words, it is the 'inexistence' of a final/fixed version that needs to be underlined here and will be discussed later on.

1.2 'Ritual Dream'[8]

My participation in contemporary music performances – as a composer, performer or member of the audience – has made me repeatedly ponder the settings, purposes and accomplishments of such forms of presentation. Regardless of my subjective assessment of their outcome, the experience of repeatedly adapting to the needs of my role (composer, performer or auditor) made me generate the following anthropocentric – and perhaps simplistic – analogy that could offer an initial justification of the basic principles behind my compositional approach:

For an average member of our current society, attending a 'contemporary music' concert might be compared to the role and function of an ethnomusicologist on a mission to observe (and later on possibly explore and research at a deeper level) the musical life of a human tribe, somewhere far away from his original home. In the most exaggerated examples of the above resemblance, I could imagine each member of an audience – regardless of his/her educational and cultural background – 'parachuting' into a 'musical presentation', as, for example, a Western European ethnomusicologist would visit an African tribe.

If we extend the above case, the role of the ethnomusicologist becomes significant: the dual role of a musician (with relevant education, knowledge, experience, etc.) and observer (unable to participate in the musical action). To different extents, the researcher's function could be compared to the two sides on which I focus in this chapter: those of today's composers and audiences.

The ethnomusicologist's role is to act (for a period of time) as the external, impassive observer of any musical activities that take place during his stay. Then, depending on his/her aims and which school's practice is being followed, he/she is expected to retain

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[7] Fetterman (1996), p. 228.
[8] From Jani Christou's autographical note, dated March 1967. Quoted in: Lucciano (1987), p. 177.

strictly the role of the external observer or gradually become involved with the tribe and 'experience' the inner side of their culture.

An effort towards the realisation of the second of the above practices led the ethnomusicologist Steven Fled to transform the term ethno-music-ology into echo-muse-ecology,[9] in order to signify the strong connections between music and nature as a 'tool' for the audience's engagement. Such an example is presented in his research with the Kaluli people of Bosavi in Papua New Guinea.

> My focus was on ritualized vocal expression, principally Kaluli women's funerary sung weeping and Kaluli men's ceremonial poetic songs that brought audience members to tears.[10]

By experiencing the symbolism of weeping and singing that 'evoke the presence of spirits',[11] Fled was taught their connections with nature and its sounds: for the Kaluli, the rainforest birds 'are spirits, and spirit voices – from talk to cries to song – are reflected in bird sounds'.[12] Furthermore, their poetry is also connected with natural and environmental phenomena. All of them, embodied in the rituals, made 'listeners cry like birds, completing' in this way 'a symbolic and emotional circle'.[13]

Fled's analysis demonstrates clearly the ritualistic character of music in those ceremonies, as well as the durable and unbreakable links between human beings, nature and the supernatural. Apart from the ceremonial character's importance, as well as that of the ritual itself (discussed further in the next chapter), Fled's example is particularly important as we observe the researchers' process in order to get involved with his/her focus point.

> We jump off that cliff to study how human experiential patterns and practices construct the habits, systems of belief, knowledge, and action we call culture. And we study it everywhere and anywhere we can. […] their experiential worlds, their voices, their humanity. […] the challenge of getting close or at least closer, of glimpsing, hearing, touching other realities, is thoroughly compelling to us […] and we celebrate and document it all, from beauty and hope to horror and despair. In fact we tend to do this in far more detail and with far more obsession than the general public cares to know about.[14]

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[9] Fled (1994), p. 9.
[10] Ibid., p. 10.
[11] Ibid.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.

It becomes clear to me that although music would normally be the starting point or at least the core of each plan of actions, on several occasions the researcher's observations will not be limited to musical aspects. Several other facts have to be documented: some might be more or less related to the musical action (dancing, participation of performers/audience, etc.); some others might not have any direct connection with it (language, place of action, scenery, clothing, placement of the musicians/audience, non-musical objects involved, etc.). It could be argued, that – as with the automatically generated or implied decisions mentioned in Section 1.1 – most of the latter facts above (those not instantly connected with music) should be considered as tremendously important, in order for the ritualistic character of each action to retain its energy and project it to the participants and attendees.

This is exactly the point of the next chapter: exploration of the ceremonies' ritualistic character, its origins and the function of music in it, as well as its connection with the musical and theatrical live performance of our days. All the above are explored and presented in an imaginary circle that feeds back to my personal creative process.

1.3   Creative Process – The Audience's Perception

As discussed earlier, a particular compositional approach has been explored in the submitted works in order to achieve my final goal: each of the compositions to craft its way towards a direction that will be inviting and possibly challenging the audience to engage with it. The precise methods followed and targets aimed for in each individual composition will be discussed separately in later chapters. It is important however, to describe the basic stages of the creative process along with explaining some of my beliefs, in order to clarify my attitude towards the audience's perception; that will explain to a further extent the reasons behind some of my creative decisions and the strategies used, summarise my expectations prior to performance, as well as justify the absence of comments in regards to the performances' outcome in this commentary.

It seems obvious to me, that there is not a single compositional approach, nor a unique presentation form, which would always fully succeed in transmitting the composer's intentions and ideas to any given audience. This testimony – which I am repeatedly referring to below – led me to a number of thoughts and later on decisions, which are explained here in their natural order of occurrence (composition – performance – perception).

My ideas (as the creator of those pieces) have been initiated by phenomena that seem to relate strongly with the existence (actions, behaviours) of human beings. In this sense, the background concepts and foreground intentions of each composition are of a very concrete nature. However, their conception, apprehension and later transformation (to a presentable form) are based on my own personal experiences, qualities and skills. To my understanding, that means that even if it was somehow possible to transmit my exact intentions and ideas to an audience, that would not necessarily lead to the type of (an audience's) engagement I am aiming for: each unique (with its own personal experience, qualities and skills) auditor would approach the presented work as a group of strict, solid and unbending ideas that are either completely irrelevant to him/her and thus would reject them, or fittingly appropriate to accept them. None of these cases, however, could be really considered as engaging for an audience; on the contrary, what is only implied in the above hypothesis, is a type of 'perfect' performance that manages to transmit with great accuracy the composer's exact viewpoints. As will be discussed below, this type of rigid performance is not amongst my goals.

Quite the reverse: one of my major creative concerns for each composition is to isolate some selected information – of those my theoretical and philosophical contemplation is based on –, code it appropriately, and finally build a structure around it. The methods of choosing the appropriate information and building a structure around it could vary immensely between pieces; the most consistent point of the compositional stage, however, is the coding of the selected information. Based on my understanding of the archetype's[15] (collective, instinctive data, functioning unconsciously in all individuals) function, I attempt to create a code that will not be effortlessly accessible (hence, will require a deeper exploration), nevertheless will declare its flexibility (it can be approached differently by each auditor), invite some attentiveness through the *mise-en-scène*[16] (the visual and theatrical elements, apparent even before the beginning of the actual performance), and potentially transmit some incentives to the audience's members. Yet, the transmission (the actual performance) involves the participation of one or more external human beings. Thus, the code and its surrounding structure that are finally experienced by each audience member are already filtered by the performer's personal experiences, qualities and skills.

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[15] Archetypes and their particular connection with rituals, music and performance are explained in detail in the next chapter.
[16] *Mise-en-scène* is explained in detail in the next chapter.

And that is the reason perfect performance is not what I am aiming for; I consider the term highly problematic, and to a certain extent an impossible concept. By developing the testimony above, I came to believe that any chance of perfection (if any) disappears the moment a work is completed and given to the performer; this is not to imply that each and every composition is perfect by default or that all performers are inadequate. It is only to explain that – as it was earlier mentioned in regards to Cage's works, and in my opinion stands for any other composition – a unique, fixed and, thus, perfect performance and outcome of any work, could only exist in the composer's imagination (or not even there); the reason behind that however, is not the indeterminate notation alone. My belief is mainly based on the fact that each – otherwise completed – composition requiring the employment of anyone else than the creator of the work for its performance, only begins to evolve when a performer starts to work on it. This is what I consider as the most beneficiary stage of the whole process: the moment another human being steps in the composer's territory and begins to become part of it; the moment that any sense of perfection dissolves and the piece begins to advance.

Hence in my case and in order for each composition's evolution to begin, the performer is provided with as much information as possible, initially through the score (including the programme notes) and later on verbally while rehearsing the piece. The purpose here is not to create clones of myself by replicating characteristics; it is only to clarify and rationalize about my aims and objectives, especially those relating to *metapraxis[17]* (the non/extra-musical elements of a composition). It is important to note, that it is not always expected that the performer will have previous experience of handling non/extra-musical elements; this is actually one of the major reasons different levels of the non-musical material's involvement have been explored in the submitted pieces. Hence – and in accordance with each performer's personal characteristics, qualities and needs –, an adaptive process of basic or extensive clarification and rationalization about the concepts and the reasons behind my compositional approach is being developed. It is my belief that this gradual process brings the performer to the centre of the composition, while at the same time the composition evolves and transforms, based on the performer's interpretation. This is the reason for the unfeasibility of neither a fully successful, nor a totally unsuccessful performance; all performances that have followed the described progression would reflect the performer's characteristic, grafted in the composer's thoughts and ideas.

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[17] *Metapraxis* is explained in detail in the next chapter.

In fact, it has been proved repeatedly to me, that because of the nature of the particular compositional approach (mainly the use of non/extra-musical elements and the unusual involvement of the performers), the same performance has been described as enormously effective by some of the auditors, while others found it less comprehensible. I have also noted, that in certain cases a second or third attendance of a work's performance by the same auditor, have developed his/her appreciation to a much greater extent. Ultimately, it all ends (and without concealing the composer's responsibility) to the impact each performer has (or not) to each of the auditors when attempting to transmit the code and the incentives included in it. It is important to underline that the incentives' appreciation and possible utilization could take place during the performance or at any other moment in the future, after existing for some time as an unconscious memory/experience. This particular aspect suggests two tremendously remarkable connections that lead to the audiences' engagement I am aiming for: the connection between conscious and unconscious experiences, passed on or acquired deep in the past, recent past, present, and their possible association with future.

That is the point where I see the ritualistic aspects meeting with my personal creative process and my focus on the actual human being (as the initial point of inspiration, the realization through the performer(s) and the auditor as the final destination). The targeted function of each composition could be partly described through Fled's words in regards to Bosavi's music:

> the important thing in Bosavi wasn't 'pieces' or 'forms' of music in isolation, but rather the constant interplay of inspiration, imitation, and incorporation that linked the flow of natural and human sound expressions.[18]

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[18] Ibid., p. 11.

Chapter 2: Background

The predominant role played in my musical thinking by the ceremonies' ritualistic character will by now be evident. In order to understand and examine it to a greater extent, one must look back to the strong connections between rituals and human origins, and their function in benefitting the human societies of each period. In this chapter I will attempt to give the philosophical and theoretical background necessary for the understanding of those principles, and combine them with the works of selected artists.

2.1   Proto-performances, Archetypes and Archetypal Music

'As never before perhaps, we are all in the grips of the LUNAR EXPERIENCE, and there simply does not seem to be much we can do about it, except perhaps to take refuge in fantasy (myth's poor relation, or substitute). Fantasies about ideal societies and technological paradises.'
(Christou, 1968)

When some of Jani Christou's works were first introduced to me by young fellow musicians, they had an immediate and at the same time inexplicable impact on my musical appreciation. Soon enough, I came to realise that it was not only his music that I was 'admiring', but also its philosophical background; further research on him as a human being and composer, as well as on his work and writings came only as a natural and strongly desired step.

One of Christou's main concepts relating directly to the sought ceremonial character is described in his text *The Lunar Experience* (1968). The term 'proto-performance' is used here to refer to the rituals of renewal, as performed by prehistoric people.

> The early archetypal point of view did not know history. […] it looked upon all of these as repetitions of some aspect of a numinous original, an archetypal pattern – or MASTER-PATTERN, even to the point of identification.
> Under such circumstances nothing had any meaning, or any proper existence, unless it could be considered as a repetition of the master-pattern, or as a component of such a pattern; of a master-pattern being and action existing both in time and in the centre of every moment in time. This certainly is not what history is about. But it is what myth was about.
> And it is also what rituals of renewal were about. These were PROTO-PERFORMANCES – re-enactments of the original proto-pattern – the master-

pattern; […] Because the pattern simply had to keep on renewing itself, if man and nature were to do the same. […][19]

What Christou manages to do here is introduce a mythical dimension to those 'performances': a durable connection to something unintelligible that refreshed their originality by referring back to something supernatural. Similarly to the Kalulis' symbolic and emotional circle of rainforest birds, Christou focuses on 'the moon's monthly performance',[20] the lunar pattern, as the first pattern of renewal to draw the attention of prehistoric people.

Figure 1: The Lunar Pattern (Christou, 1968a).

The most important point of this cycle comes, however, from the irregularity and unexpectedness of its interruption: the eclipse, the detail that differentiates this pattern from the endless cyclic renewal of Christou's earlier concept, the phoenix principle.[21] The eclipse is a phenomenon that, according to Christou, 'could have caused much terror, even panic'[22] to early man, and thus 'forces' Christou to the conceit of the meta-actions[23]; the metaphysical actions (of the lunar pattern) that oppose the usual actions (of the phoenix principle).

It is of critical importance to underline two important ideas relevant to the above concepts that occur repeatedly in the submitted compositions. The first one is the interruption of any (musical or not) pattern and/or its permutations. This idea, connected with the Jungian theory of opposites, which alternates regularity and irregularity and as a result the expectedness or unexpectedness of every action, can be identified in the treatment of the musical material, the function and purpose of the non-musical/theatrical actions, and the structural design of many compositions. The second idea (to which I only make reference here and will explain later in this chapter) is the connection of the meta-actions with the

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[19] Christou (1968a).
[20] Ibid.
[21] The phoenix principle represents the regularity of life/events, and their continuous repetition without stop. It is based on the phoenix, a mythical bird that towards the end of its life builds a nest in which it ignites. According to the myth, a new phoenix is reborn from its own ashes to live again and repeat the same cycle.
[22] Christou (1968a).
[23] Actions and meta-actions are explained in detail later in this chapter.

third of the 'modes of theatricality' that Halfyard finds in Berio: the inclusion of behaviours beyond the usual actions of playing an instrument.

2.1.1 Archetypes

The association of Christou's text with the Jungian theory of archetypes becomes apparent here, especially since it is known that Christou was well acquainted with Jungian philosophy and that it has had a significant impact on his work. According to J.G. Papaioanou,[24] it was Evi Christou, his brother and 'mentor to those worlds', who drove Jani to Jung, when Evi was studying psychoanalysis with Jung himself at the Jung Institute in Zurich. According to Andriana Minou in her doctoral research *Sibyl's Leaves: Understanding Musical Performance Issues in Jani Christou's Anaparastasis III and Epicycle*,[25] it appears that many of Jani Christou's concepts (such as those discussed later in this chapter), as well as some of his works (such as *Enantiodromia* and the lost opera *Gilgamesh*) were deeply connected with Evi Christou's work on psychoanalysis.

According to Jung, 'archetype is an element of our psychic structure and thus a vital and necessary component in our psychic economy. It represents or personifies certain instinctive data of the dark, primitive psyche, the real but invisible roots of consciousness.'[26] That may be better understood if presented in parallel with another Jungian term of analytical psychology, the collective unconscious. The collective unconscious differs from the personal unconscious in that it is not a container of personal experiences unique to each individual; on the contrary it is considered as a 'psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals'.[27] Thus it is inherited and cannot be developed individually. In that sense, the archetypes are in fact the pre-existent forms of which the collective unconscious consists.

Although one of Jung's students, Evi Christou seems to have moved forward from the above belief. As Minou mentions, Evi Christou believed '– unlike Jung – that archetypes do not need further explanation; on the contrary he suggests that "an archetype is itself the best explanation we can give of the experiences we are dealing with." Departing from this point, he speaks of the possibility of conditioning the archetypes, of controlling the

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[24] Emfietzis, (2004): p. 4.
[25] Minou (2010).
[26] Jung (1981): p. 160.
[27] Ibid., p. 43.

archetypal patterns that occur in our everyday lives consciously, and therefore gaining a different quality of control over our lives.'[28] This point (Evi Christou's approach) needs to be underlined, as it explains the way I personally consider the attempted links to the archetypes I make in the commentary.

Having explained the theory of archetypes, we can revisit the excerpt from the text *The Lunar Experience*. It becomes obvious that Jani Christou refers to the prehistoric period: a mythical era when the archetypes didn't yet exist but were unconsciously formed through experience and perception. Hence they have come to exist since as an underlying layer of empirical facts, common to all humanity, that emerge as representations of unconscious experience and upon which each individual develops his own psychological characteristics. This makes Christou believe that the character, function and purpose of the proto-performances are not lost, but exist around us. Based on that, we can then follow the suggestion of Bettina Knapp, in her book *Music, Archetype and the Writer: a Jungian view*, that the archetypes 'are present in dreams, legends, fairy tales, myths, religious and cultural notions, and modes of behaviour the world over.'[29]

This is a first attempt to connect Christou's notion of the proto-performances with the archetypes, their mythological dimension and the identification with figures, without yet discussing the role of music. However, it could be argued that the existence and function of the archetypes as presented above already justifies – to a certain extent – the necessity and purpose of Berio's 'modes of theatricality' as described in the previous chapter. I refer especially to the first two of these: the use of some form of dramatic scenario or linear narrative, and the symbolic presence of specific individuals as 'characters' – a clear connection with the dreams, legends, fairy tales, myths, etc. and their figures, in which the archetypes are still alive.

2.1.2 Archetypal music

Knapp begins her book with a quotation from Jung that explains perfectly the function of music in regard to psychoanalysis: 'Music should be an essential part of every analysis', it 'reaches deep archetypal material that we can only sometimes reach in our analytical work

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[28] Minou (2010), p. 18.
[29] Knapp (1988), p. 2.

with patients.'[30] It is my belief that this quotation can be regarded as a very effective and effortless description of the reasons behind my search for the ritualistic character of a musical work and/or a musical performance.

However, how might we define a music that is strongly connected to the archetypes, and what would be its characteristics? Based on the above principles, Knapp moves a step forward and introduces the term 'archetypal music':

> Archetypal music arises from the collective unconscious [of the artist] – the deepest of subliminal levels within the psyche, which is for the most part inaccessible to the conscious mind.[31]

> Archetypal music may be looked upon as a data processor – a way of coding and decoding what exists inchoate in a space-time continuum, or the fourth dimension, which is the collective unconscious. The writer, like the data processor, transforms the sound waves leaping up from within his collective unconscious into words endowed with their own auditory, rhythmical, and sensory motifs. If music is archetypal for the author, it is manifested as a complex of opposites: it is both concrete and abstract, causal and acausal, linear and mythical, visual and audible, alive in an eternal present, the now, the future and an inherited past.

> Archetypal music reveals 'inherited possibilities of presentation' while also exploring certain predispositions, potentials and prefigurations […]. It embodies not only such figures such as the Wise Old Man, the Child, the Great Mother, the Animus/Anima, the Shadow and the Ego but situations as well: sacrifices, initiation, ascent, descent, contest, heroism, rites of passage, and so forth. [32]

Knapp's ideas seem to feed back to my initial quest for the exploration of a performance's ceremonial character. To a certain extent, Knapp broadly defines the conceptual parameters of musical creation, and their function within such occasions as the rituals of our primordial ancestors or the Kaluli people (as described through Fled's research).

Special attention should be given to the following notions, since they seem to connect directly with many of the concepts that are used in my works (and will be discussed further in the next chapter): the 'inherited possibilities of presentation' (which conflicts with the conventional concert form), the embodiment of 'figures' and 'situations' (or the roles and the contextual shots of the examined pieces), and the continuum[33] (as one of the most crucial constructing materials of my compositions). All are introduced in an 'eternal

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[30] Ibid., p. 1.
[31] Ibid., p. 1.
[32] Ibid., p. 4.
[33] Explained in details later in this chapter.

present' (or what is on all occasions conceived of as a living and realistic setting of our world).

Exceptional focus needs to be given to the complex of opposites,[34] especially the antithesis between the concrete, linear and audible, and the abstract, mythical and visual. This continuous conflict is particularly helpful to understanding the intended function of the philosophical, social and other metaphorical or realistic background scenarios and roles used in the creation of the submitted pieces. They are used mainly for the benefit of my own working process, and the communication of particular points to the performers that are useful for the apprehension of my aims. It doesn't however necessarily require (although it also does not forbid) the transmission of the same content from the performers, and even more its reception by the audience. As explained earlier with reference to archetypes, the complex of opposites can be perceived and apprehended differently by each individual performer, before being re-transmitted and then perceived and apprehended by each member of the audience.

To sum up, Knapp's position seems to connect strongly with my views regarding the compositional approach that I followed in the submitted works. Although I was not aware of it at the time, it seems that it supports my major concerns and decisions, especially the subconscious ones described earlier. In a way, it offers a theoretical background to my instinctively formed compositional approach and research interests.

2.2 Live Performance

Music has also been a scenic event for a long time. In the nineteenth century people still enjoyed music also with their eyes, with all their senses. Only with the increasing dominance of the mechanical reproduction of music, through broadcasting and records, was this reduced to the purely acoustic dimension. That's why my music is a direct, exaggerated protest against the mechanical reproduction of music. My goal: a re-humanisation of music-making! (Kagel, 1970)

That someone like Mauricio Kagel should make such a statement is not surprising. Audio documentation alone would tragically fail to capture so much of what is taking place on stage during the playing of his music. If the listener didn't at least have some basic knowledge of the conceptual background of the pieces he/she could easily miss in even the

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[34] Already referred to in regard to the regularity/irregularity and the expectedness/unexpectedness of the lunar pattern's interruption.

most impeccable recorded performance the music's essential questioning of so many of the conventions that are usually taken for granted. A good example is the work *Match* (for two cellists and a percussionist). As well as the cellists' placement on either side at the edge of the stage as if they were playing tennis, with the percussionist in the centre as the umpire, all three performers 'have double identities since two different structures and rule systems are mapped onto one another':[35] the athletes/umpire and the musicians. Thus the performers don't step out of their usual field of actions; however, it would be impossible for a listener of a recording to perceive their roles and functions.

I first experienced the above when I came to know Christou's music. My first – somewhat distressing – experience with Christou's work (*Anaparastasis* I and *Anaparastasis* III) was at quite a young age, during a music festival in Greece. Many years later (as described above), I was re-introduced to his work, mainly through CD recordings and later through some of his scores. Due to the lack of video documentation of earlier presentations and the rare performances of his works, it took me some time actually to experience a proper realisation of those pieces. It was only then that I realised what I was missing, no matter how 'truthfully' I had been envisioning them.

It becomes obvious – and so too from Kagel's words – that a live performance was not, and still is not, a solely sonic event. It naturally provides visual information to the audience as well, which is evidently absent from any audio recording format. And although Kagel, like Christou, extensively explored the employment of non-musical actions in his work, this statement also remains applicable to musical pieces that do not consciously employ any visual elements; it is only the visual component of expressiveness (expressive performances) that is being confronted here.

Towards the end of the twentieth century similar points became a significant area of focus and were researched in a systematic way. According to Mary C. Broughton, several studies have attempted to examine expressive body movement 'using technology that quantifies the temporal and spatial aspects of bodily movements. […] While increased quantity of movement has been shown to lead to judgments of a more expressive performance, the quality of movement is also an important indicator of expression as moments of little

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[35] Heile (2006), p. 38.

movement, or stillness, can also be expressive.'[36] Excepting the obvious interest in proving scientifically what is – more or less – proven and widely accepted artistically (as stated by Kagel above), there is one more important point for my research made here.

The performers' actions or conscious non-actions, or in general any decisions taken – consciously or unconsciously (that is, occurring as a result of the performance itself) – regarding the visual aspects of music performance, are shown in the research cited by Broughton to have a function on the transmission of expressive and/or emotional content, and thus with the audience's engagement. Similar conceptions of my own made me wonder about the possible realizations of the opposite process: to compose the visual aspects of an otherwise conventional music performance within the actual piece of music, instead of considering them as a secondary level of undefined importance. The outcome of this experimentation will be discussed in the second group of pieces, included in the next chapter.

2.3 Mise-en-scène and Theatricality

a line is a noise, a movement is like music, and the gesture
that emerges from a noise is like a word, precise as a phrase
(Artaud, 1963)

The above analysis of the proto-performances and the parameters of live performance has underscored an imperative dynamic: the internal necessity for a work of art (in our case a musical composition) to engage with its audience as spectators. This direction gradually leads us into the imaginary frame I have set around the submitted portfolio and the conceptual thinking behind it.

2.3.1   Mise-en-scène

As will be discussed in detail in the next chapter, the intended setting for all the pieces included in the portfolio is a conventional concert hall. In most instances of musical presentation, such a statement would automatically define the vast majority of the performance parameters. As discussed earlier, however, in my case it became a necessity for several other factors, such as the arrangement of the performers in units or groups, their placement on and off stage, their directions of facing and moving, the suggested lighting, and so on to be defined in order to build the *mise-en-scène*: the visual and theatrical

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[36] Broughton (2007): p. 5.

paths that present some (or in rare occasions all) aspects of the still-veiled (that is, before the actual performance takes place) 'story'.

This point becomes particularly important if we consider the complex of opposites that 'manifests' the archetypal music. The *mise-en-scène* cannot 'tell the (whole) story' anyway, since the story does not exist in such a precise form (this idea was also implied by Fetterman with regard to Cage's theatre works).[37] It can, however, carve certain paths from which each individual auditor might choose. It is, then, the various gestures (or bodily movements referred to earlier) of the agents (in this case performers following the composer's instructions) that will complete the *mise-en-scène*, allowing each auditor to engage with the work by constructing his/her own version of the 'story'.

2.3.2   Theatricality

It was exactly the pursuit of the nature of the *mise-en-scène* and the gestures that complete it, combined with the discussed theory of the archetypes, that directed me to Antonin Artaud, another important figure for my research, this time from the field of theatre. Milton Loayza's *Strobe Light Consciousness and Body Technology in the Theatre of Antonin Artaud* introduces us to the role and the varying form of the gestures in the Artaudian *mise-en-scène*, and associates them with Artaudian theatricality:

> '[The Artaudian *mise-en-scène*] produces gestures, and whether they emerge in the form of words, noise, movement or music, it is a matter of interrupting, through a body technology, the continuity of space. True sentiments may be evoked once the theatricality of liminal time has been produced. […] The theatricality of a gesture is its objective quality, its temporal precision, and is equivalent here, to the theatricality of a consciousness.'[38]

Comparing Knapp's definition of archetypal music, we immediately become aware of the strong connections between the archetypes and the Artaudian approach to theatrical performance. Nevertheless it was Artaud himself who described his theatrical practice as one of an 'archetypal, primitive theatre'.[39] Aside from the gestures' nature, we can easily identify in the above quotation the preserved importance of the space–time continuum (discussed later in this chapter), as well as the quest for originality – two of the main values of the works submitted in the portfolio. And it is the Artaudian theatricality of gestures that

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[37] See 1.1.
[38] Loayza (2000).
[39] Minou (2010), p. 101.

takes care of both; it is its qualities that transform reality (any everyday action, in our case musical or extra-musical) into something metaphysical (a meta-action, an action provided with an additional meaning and dimension, thus function and purpose) and as a result changes its existence in space and time.

Further research on the theoretical concept of the term theatricality itself seems to lead to a very wide and often controversial range of meanings, especially when not considered in relation to the work of an artist (such as Artaud earlier): 'It is a sign empty of meaning; it is the meaning of all signs'.[40] The theory of opposites is obvious here, as it is in the term theatricality itself: two opposing strategies of perception co-exist in it and both are used in the submitted pieces. A practical explanation of these strategies is given in the following example.

According to the first of those strategies, a person seen on stage holding an instrument is almost immediately perceived as an instrumentalist; this term carries several preconceptions and expectations (such as the way the instrumentalist moves, their placement on stage, their bodily posture, the variety of available gestures, and so on). In this sense, the person and the instrument are unified in one piece: the more the instrumentalist acts as expected, the stronger is the focus on this bond. According to Halfyard, when an instrumentalist starts acting differently (e.g. making 'unexpected' or oddly treated musical gestures or employing extra-musical actions), it is probable that the focus will switch to the performer as a person, independently of his instrument (second strategy). 'These actions surprise us, taking on a life of their own within the piece, and although they may have a musical origin or result, they are nonetheless always also theatrical at some level.'[41] And that is where theatricality is developed. The person/performer (and not the instrumentalist anymore) becomes some sort of a 'character', a symbolic figure who develops a personality and gradually devises a story (dramatic scenario) behind the performance.

This is exactly the way in which the term theatricality is used in this commentary, and is identified through the extended 'modes of theatricality' described earlier. This term includes all kind of opposing concepts (the real and meta-physical, the musical and extra-musical, the actions and gestures, etc.) that can be at any time considered as theatrical or not, depending (only) on the underlying linear narrative and its characters.

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[40] Postlewait and Davis (2003), p. 1.
[41] Halfyard (2007), p. 111.

2.4 Metapraxis and the Continuum

Any living art keeps generating an overall logic fed by a collectivity of characteristic actions. Whenever an action is purposefully performed to conform with the current overall logic characteristic of the art, that action is a 'praxis', or a purposeful and characteristic action. But whenever an action is purposefully performed so as to go beyond the current overall logic characteristic of the art, that action is a 'metapraxis', or a purposeful non-characteristic action: a 'meta-action'. (Christou, 1968)

The metaphysical aspect discussed above leads us right to the centre of this brief presentation of the basic concepts that have been involved in my creative process. The order was chosen to narrow gradually from broader ideas and concepts towards the actual compositional practices; an extended model of my usual compositional process: from a theoretical idea/concept to actual music making.

2.4.1 Metapraxis

Going deeper into the notion of theatricality, we experience the transformation of actions (*praxis*) into meta-actions (*metapraxis*). Although from a practical point of view the two concepts – theatricality and metapraxis – seem to complement and overlap with each other, I have decided to use the term theatricality also as a broader philosophical term overlaying (as explained above) and thus including metapraxis. This is also because – according to Artaud's definition of theatricality as 'the conflict of gestures, of words, of movements or noises'[42] – all those actions that might then be considered as either praxis or metapraxis under any given circumstances would anyway be classified under the term theatricality. Hence the title of my research is based on the term theatricality, in order to include a wider perspective of the musical and non-musical elements involved in my compositions.

The term metapraxis, on the other hand, is approached from a more practical basis, while at the same time including a much more adaptable notion. Yet it is exactly that – the elusive nature of metapraxis, its flexibility and aim to provoke the existing frame of the music performance on any given day by challenging several of its parameters – that makes it so important for my research. At a first level Christou states:

> A metapraxis is an implosion, a tension under the surface of a single medium which threatens that medium's meaning barrier. An assault on the logic of the performer's relationship to his own particular medium. A violation within a single order of

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[42] Loayza (2000).

things. Or, a subtle pressure against the barrier of meaning which any system generates for its own preservation.[43]

This definition seems to me very relevant, even complementary, to Artaud's view on theatricality. The following part of Christou's text, however, which refers to the elusive nature of metapraxis, adds an extra level, which, to my understanding, makes it less defined but certainly more realistic and tangible, and thus more closer to the 'humanistic' approach to which I referred in Section 1.1:

> The implication is, of course, that as the logic of the medium keeps changing in sympathy with the dynamics of the worldwide parameters of history, the manners in which metapraxis could be expressed must be constantly readjusted.[44]

In this sense, what might be regarded as praxis under certain circumstances could easily be converted to metapraxis with the change of several conditions. Hence, if a simple and otherwise usual action (praxis) could challenge the existing limits for that period of time of a given art form, then that would be enough to transform this action into a meta-action (metapraxis). The complex of opposites becomes apparent once more; it is what makes metapraxis the exceptional element that exists – in different forms – in all the works included in my portfolio.

2.4.2 Continuum

In the final section of this chapter, I attempt a connection between the continuum's theoretical value and its practical nature in the compositions of Jani Christou. This process is considered of crucial importance, since the continuum is one of the most important construction materials of my compositions and the term is used repeatedly in the commentary.

We first encountered the space–time continuum in our analysis of archetypes and in particular of archetypal music. The following citation from Jani Christou's *Credo for Music* might be of some help in making a connection with Knapp's definition of archetypal music:

> Transformations in music do just that. Absence of transforming powers keeps the acoustical events on one level, thus catering only to our sense of decoration. Art

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[43] Christou (1968b).
[44] Ibid.

which does not rise above this level may be craftful, but is no longer meaningful. [I think there is a much greater interest] in art that is of a liberative nature than in art which is of a decorative nature; liberative in the sense of liberating us from the common space-time continuum, pointing to other areas of experience.[45]

To my understanding, the above refers to the transformational function of metapraxis within a proto-performance. In such a context (as in Christou's *Epicycle*[46]) the various actions take place on top of an autonomous element, which 'represents the neutral ground on which a system and an anti-system that opposes the system, confront one another'.[47] This autonomous element is what Christou calls the continuum. Its function 'seems to reinforce the actions of the performers, but ultimately proves to remain uninfluenced by the actions performed on stage'.[48]

To summarise, the continuum is in practice a continuous sound that exists eternally whether audible or not (and that is how the term is used in the commentary). Its symbolic character however, expands to any everyday action (as too did theatricality): actions 'like breathing, eating, sleeping etc., that are repeated indefinitely at regular intervals'.[49] As a result, the continuum is identified with every aspect of human life and is thus considered one of the main conceptual and formal materials of my compositions.

Furthermore, because of its nature – especially the autonomy of existence that opposes all other actions that may be taking place at the same time, as well as its form of existence (continuous presence whether audible or not) – the continuum is highly connected with the conscious decision of composing in sections; most of the following works have adopted this type of structural approach. This is done in order to underscore the overriding importance and function of the continuum: to present an underlying and unifying common ground (musical, theatrical or theoretical) that opposes the nature of all other actions; at the same time it somehow supports their existence and purpose, while – most of the time – it seems to function with complete independence and without being affected by anything else. A very clear example of the continuum's function and some possible consequences of its disappearance can be seen in *DIY 1*, the first of the works presented.

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[45] Emfietzis (2004), p. 24.
[46] A work conceived as a number of autonomous events (e.g. the concerts of a festival) taking place during a not predefined period of time and in different places, while the continuum (tape) runs throughout the duration of the piece, in varying dynamic levels, inviting the participation of the audience.
[47] Lucciano (2000), p. 113.
[48] Minou (2010), p. 59.
[49] Lucciano (2000), p. 110.

Chapter 3: Portfolio of Compositions

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I describe the musical outcomes of my artistic, social, philosophical and political concerns as they are inscribed in the works included in the portfolio. The main focus here is on the presentation of the conceptual elements and their integration into the musical compositions. In order to do that, special emphasis is given to the levels and materials of construction, the development of processes of elaboration – sometimes through the pieces themselves, the transformation of theoretical concepts into musical ones, the amalgamation of visual or other extra-musical elements in the musical works and finally the ideas – and their methods of application – that are involved in the non-conventional treatment of a concert setting.

The technical (compositional) details are purposefully kept to a minimum when they do not relate to any of the above categories. Although this decision might lead one to conclude a lack of technical skills or even a tendency towards conceptual art, neither of these was ever my aim. It is my hope instead that this process will prove that the submitted works stand up to the aims and standards described in the first chapter: the use, invention and development of compositional systems themselves are only tools that serve specific ends, and not the ends themselves.

3.1.1 Framework: The Architectural Design

In order to make the exposition of the works easier to follow, the submitted compositions have been separated into three groups (I, II, III). The reasons behind this categorisation, and the exact content of each group are examined later on in this chapter.

In an attempt to frame this division visually, the following presentation could be imagined as a capital letter H. Groups I and II form the vertical lines, the main routes. Each follows a distinctive – and in several ways antithetical – route of development, based on a number of specified and predefined rules and compositional decisions, as well as the rules' progression through time. However, as the two groups run in parallel, important conceptual and constructive principles are shared between them; some of these principles are developed, while others remain the same but are examined in different frameworks in order for their functionality to be tested.

Finally, following the presentation of groups I and II, a third route is explored. This may be thought of as the horizontal line of the letter H: it attempts to connect the previously discussed routes, or at least use/share/reshape some of the ideas, concepts and compositional techniques used in them, in order to propose something that may be placed between the two earlier presented branches.

It is decided for the sake of this presentation that each route shall be explored separately and not in parallel with each other, even if this type of exposition overrides the actual timeline of the work's creation. As a result, the line exposing developments between pieces on the same path is not disturbed.
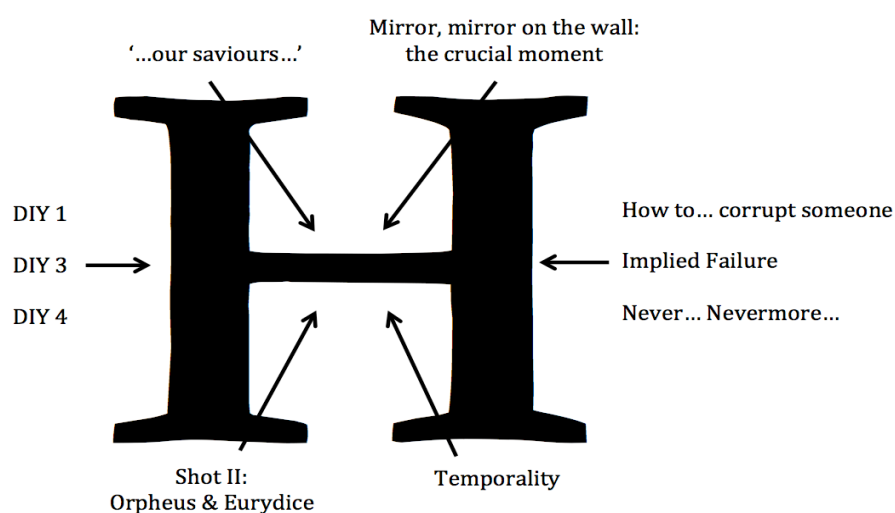
Figure 2: The shape of the presentation of the compositions.

3.1.2   Basement: The Fundamental Concept

Each work included in the portfolio, based on the concepts explained in Chapter 2, explores inherited and creates additional notions of theatricality, in the form of dramatic ideas, as seen through a number of different lenses (theatrical or not) yet always conceived to be realised within the conditions of a conventional concert venue.

Kagel is one of the composers previously mentioned whose work is thought to be occupied with similar concerns. In comparing two of the composer's earliest instrumental theatre pieces, *Sonant* and *Sur scène*, the following, very distinctive compositional directions appear. Heile describes the two pieces as follows: '[they] were composed practically simultaneously, start from opposite poles, the former [*Sonant*] transforming the playing of

musical instruments into theatrical action and the latter [*Sur scène*], conversely, presenting musical performance within a quasi-theatrical context'.[50]

Using Kagel's approach as an initiation point to my own compositional preoccupation during the period of my studies, I have divided (as discussed in 3.2) the submitted works into two main paths (the vertical lines of the H structure) and a third (the horizontal line of the H structure) that is defined loosely by the previous two. Here is a brief description of the main paths:

- The left-hand path comprises the works included in the *DIY* series, wherein the praxis – in our case the musical actions – becomes part of some sort of theatrical performance (implemented theatricality), often combined with the metapraxis – in our case the non-musical, theatrical actions. Thus musical performance in its original form becomes part of a dramatic scenario, while the performers become figures with specific personal characteristics.

- The right-hand path comprises a collection of works that focuses on the inherent theatricality of the music performance itself, or (as defined earlier) the musical gestures that include both visual and acoustical components as an integral part of the actual musical performance. The visual component is reclaimed creatively and becomes both the core of the music creation and often the controller of the musical and theatrical development of the works.

There is then the middle path, a looser selection of works that comes to explore the middle ground, and to make the transition from the pieces with a stronger theoretical background (of the previous two groups) to some freer compositions. It must be mentioned that an overall *decrescendo* of the theoretical concepts is attempted throughout the commentary.

It becomes obvious that many of the pieces would benefit from presentation in a non-conventional concert hall and it is my aim in the future to explore those possibilities. However, those options are not among the aims of the current research. As I have suggested earlier in my introduction, my aspirations at the current stage are to explore the potential of a differently approached music performance within a more or less conventional frame.

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[50] Heile (2006) p. 35.

3.2 Group I / Left Path – The *DIY* series

The *DIY* series currently consists of four pieces (one of them not included in the portfolio), all of them composed for the same quartet of musicians: mezzo-soprano, violin, cello and piano. Their common and main characteristic is the attempt to re-contextualise the music performance by presenting it as part of a dramatic concept.

In addition to the instruments themselves, a non-musical object always participates (discussed below), in that way making the connection with music theatre more obvious. As well as the existing pieces, several others have been planned but not yet realised. Some of these are included in the list below (marked in a smaller font), in order to demonstrate the developing process of the principles used. The non-musical objects to be used in these pieces are not yet known, and so have not been listed here.

The first of those principles to be used in the series is the arithmetic progression of the number of performers. Up to *DIY* $3^{1/2}$ each successive piece requires an additional performer to the one(s) already used. As can be seen below, the opposite process (of removing performers using the same arithmetic progression) begins with *DIY 4* (included in the portfolio).

$$
\begin{aligned}
&1 \;\; : \text{Pianist} && \text{(+ lamp)} \\
&2 \;\; : \text{Pianist + Vocalist} && \text{(+ video-text)} \\
&3 \;\; : \text{Pianist + Vocalist + Violinist} && \text{(+ video-text)} \\
&3^{1/2} : \text{Pianist} \;+\; \text{Vocalist} \;+\; \text{Violinist} \;+\; \text{Cellist} \\
&4 \;\; : \qquad\quad\; \text{Vocalist + Violinist + Cellist} && \text{(+ lamp)} \\
&4^{1/3} : \qquad\qquad\qquad\quad \text{Violinist} \;+\; \text{Cellist} \\
&4^{2/3} : \qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\;\; \text{Cellist}
\end{aligned}
$$

In addition to the above rule of casting, a hierarchy of theatrical roles – already discussed under archetypal music and theatricality – is also introduced. Beginning with a solo piece (*DIY 1*), where the leading role (LR) is given to the pianist, each newly added performer is given a leading role, while the supporting roles (SR) of the other performers become gradually downgraded to become minor roles (MR).

$$
\begin{aligned}
&1 \;\; : \text{Pianist} \;\; (LR_1) \\
&2 \;\; : \text{Vocalist} \; (LR_1) \; + \text{Pianist} \;\; (SR_1) \\
&3 \;\; : \text{Violinist} \,(LR_1) \; + \text{Vocalist} \,(SR_1) \; + \text{Pianist} \;\; (SR_2) \\
&3^{1/2}: \;\text{Cellist} \quad (LR_1) \; + \;\text{Violinist} \;\, (SR_1) \;\; + \;\text{Vocalist} \quad (SR_2) \;\; + \text{Pianist}\,(SR_3) \\
&4 \;\; : \text{Cellist} \quad (LR_2) \; + \text{Violinist}\,(MR_1) + \text{Vocalist}\,(MR_2) \\
&4^{1/3}: \;\text{Cellist} \quad (LR_3) \;\; + \;\text{Violinist} \quad (MR_1) \\
&4^{2/3}: \;\text{Cellist} \quad (LR_4)
\end{aligned}
$$

Obviously, the process develops differently after reaching the maximum available forces in *DIY 3^{1/2}*. At this point, all the possibilities for a unique independent leading role (LR_1) have been extinct. As a result, the lack of a single strong leader generates the need for a number of weaker leaders (LR_2, LR_3, etc.) and minor roles: the hierarchy remains the same (as in *DIY 3^{1/2}*), while one by one the minor roles disappear and the leading ones become less and less important.

Having completed the analysis of the different roles and their function, it is important to reveal an as-yet unrealised notion that might offer some clues as to the strategy of construction followed by all the *DIY* works. Although the several roles exist – and are likewise distributed among the performers – it is clear that each piece refers to one specific performer: the one who holds the leading role. Each piece is constructed in such a way that it may be performed by a single, multi-tasking performer. In such a case, a single performer realises praxis and metapraxis simultaneously.

Last but not least, one more conscious decision was made over the outcome of the above-introduced rules in combination with the quasi-theatrical concept of the series. The selection of specific compositional styles/languages (especially prior to the composition of a work) was never among my aims.[51] In order for the research to be well composed, however, as well as for several ideas to be tested in different contexts, it was considered that the specific selection of styles would be of a great value on this occasion.

Thus, it was decided that each of the pieces would be written using a different compositional style.[52] As will be discussed briefly in reference to each piece separately, the compositional style is either applied to all participating role(s)/musician(s), or to the leading role only. In this last case, a very contradictory approach is adopted for the supporting role(s) in order for the musical and dramatic effects to be maximised.

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[51] Christou seems to agree with such an approach: 'today we no longer have real myths and on each one of us depends the re-discovery of our soul's natural language, our myths. For this purpose we have to "undo" all the other "languages", and all the other forms of communication we have inherited and this is beyond any dispute. In art, perhaps for some people, this means that we need to escape absolutely from history and return to the circumstances of PROTOPERFORMANCE – where the luxury of aesthetics or the wrap do not matter, but what matters is the content with the urgent (symbolic) re-enactments of the master-pattern of experience, in an attempt to relate to these experiences in depth.' See Christou (1968a).

[52] The judgment of the stylistic compositional approaches' characteristics, is only based on the writer's subjective understanding and not on an objective justified research.

3.2.1 DIY 1: the pianist & the lamp

The starting point of the analysis of the works is *DIY 1: the pianist and the lamp*. As the portfolio's oldest piece (September 2007), it holds a distinctive position in the commentary because several of its basic ideas are later separately explored by pieces from all three groups. The piece is composed for a solo pianist and a remotely controlled table lamp and was commissioned by pianist Lorenda Ramou; since then it has received numerous performances from different performers.[53] As the title describes, the piece is based on the interaction between the pianist and a lamp, and their developing conflict.

External attractor I: the lamp

In addition to the obvious leading role of the pianist and the previously discussed common characteristics of the works included in the *DIY* series, the idea of the 'external attractor'[54] (in this case a table lamp) is introduced in this piece. The term is used to describe a non-musical and always remotely controlled object (discussed below) that has an almost supernatural power to intervene and either control the development of a work or reveal a hidden dimension of it. The lamp in this particular piece exemplifies the controlling role through the following two theoretical concepts, and is also involved in several musical and dramatic applications.

In order of importance, the lamp first and mainly carries a socio-political message: the human race against the machines (or the continuous fight of men in order not to be replaced by machines in their professional and social life). Conceptually approached in a similar way to Fritz Lang's silent film *Metropolis*[55], the 'contextual shot' of the piece (i.e. the background meaning of the work, which is usually manifested through sounds, gestures or words, based on the complex of opposites) considers the lamp as an 'archetype' of (all) the machines (i.e. capitalism). In parallel with the film, the struggle between the two characters (pianist, lamp) is used 'to explore the social crisis between workers [human beings] and owners in capitalism [who control the machines]'.[56] However, a twist in the music's plot (compared to that of the film, where the conflict between the owners and the workers is

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[53] In the submitted video recording, the first set of verbal instructions (before section A) regarding the entrance of the performer onto the stage has been omitted, because of a different type of connection used in the specific performance.

[54] Most of the time considered as part of the *mise-en-scène* – see 1.3.1.

[55] A German expressionist film in the science-fiction genre, directed by Fritz Lang. Produced in Germany (1927) *Metropolis* is set in a futuristic urban dystopia and makes use of this context to explore the social crisis between workers and owners inherent in capitalism, as expressed by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

[56] See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Metropolis_(film).

resolved) takes place with the indicated 'concluding gesture' in section E (another reoccurring concept – in this case: 'rest head on left hand's fist, play section E with right hand', as seen in Figure 3): showing the desperation of the pianist, when (s)he actually manages to regain his/her freedom from all artificially made compulsions, stipulations and temptations.

Figure 3: *DIY 1*'s concluding gesture.

In an attempt to adopt Kagel's satirical mode, the lamp is secondarily used to make a statement regarding the high noise levels of mechanical equipment, which often occur in concert halls without most of us noticing. The lamp disrupts the performance until it is finally switched off. The 'irritating noise' can be identified musically in the piece with the use of the 'continuum' (in this case the continuous tremolo in the left hand). After interrupting the performance a few times and going through a process that is agonising for both sides, the noise loses its voice (i.e. the lamp is switched off). Hence the piece's last section (E) uses previously presented material, 'cleansed' of the striking presence of the continuum. What I call the 'causation action'[57] of switching the lamp off (end of section D), is the key factor in resolving the conflict in this case.

Apart from the theoretical concepts the nature and function of the lamp initiate several musical and/or dramatic practices. The first is based on the consideration of the lamp as a 'musical instrument', although a muted one. This is an 'antidote' to the effect generated by the use of electronics, where often sounds are projected on stage without any visual presence (no movement is triggering the speakers, neither is the duration of or changes in the sound related to any visually recognizable action) – an invisible 'instrument' with voice

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[57] A musical gesture – praxis – or a dramatic (re)action – metapraxis – that causes a previous action to end and a new one to start, or an unexpected deed that interrupts the repeating circle of the archetypal pattern.

and no body. The lamp, on the contrary, has a substantial visual presence on stage (although its actions are also controlled remotely – there is no connection with specific actions visible to the audience) but no voice. Furthermore, silence acquires a 'face' that can be repossessed theatrically. In contrast to the usual case, in which rests equal inaction, silence is now an action that disrupts sound and causes moments of emptiness.

The 'baptism' of the lamp as an instrument tempted me to experiment with the adaptation of some of the most typical musical terms and practices. One of those attempts was the transformation of the traditional 'call-and-response' compositional technique between the lamp and the pianist. The lamp holds the leading role up to section D, at which point the pianist takes control to 'play' with the lamp. Although by the end the pianist seems to dominate, it is crucial that the piece's climax happens during a completely silent scene (which is one of the lamp's main characteristics, as well as its main aim throughout this piece – to make the pianist stop playing). The 'real' outcome of their fight becomes obvious only in the final section, where a desperate pianist tries to 'revive' some of the earlier moments by repeating already played material; now, however, they sound out of context.

The combined outcome of the two points made above is to convert the lamp's actions into the dramatic reason for the piece's separation into five sections. This is again a theatrically repossessed borrowing of the silent – and sometimes awkward – moments between sections/movements, as tends to happen in conventional presentations of large-scale classical works (e.g. symphonies). Apart from the actual dramatic value of this awkwardness in *DIY 1*, the existence of distinctive sections – and in general the conscious decision to compose in sections – is a point that is highly connected with most of the works in the portfolio and will be discussed to a further extent later.

Musical content and language: Dramatic plot

The actual conflict between the human and the machine, the artificial compulsions and their subsequent resolution, is transmitted to the performer through variations in the amount of indeterminacy incorporated in the musical notation.

In sections A–C, the settings describe a more or less contemporary society where a degree of 'freedom' and 'choice' is given to each person, although they have to be fitted within some pre-established conditions and needs: musically this is translated into some fully

notated music fragments without, however, a precise definition of their exact time of occurrence; the performer chooses their moment of happening and their exact duration only by their visual relation to the previous and following segments. Furthermore, in several cases pre-existing/established fragments override other newly introduced ones (making it impossible for a single performer to play all of them – indicated in the score with a curvy line). In those cases, the performer is given the 'freedom' to stop the existing action for a moment and return to it as soon as he/she can.
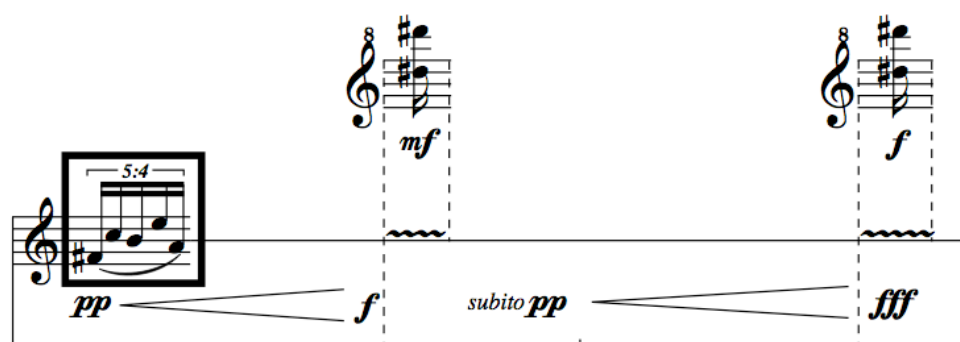

Figure 4: Example of overriding fragments.

In section E, on the other hand, only the order and some relevant dynamic indications are given, since the pianist has earned his freedom and choice by switching off the lamp. The musical material remains much the same, however: it actually identifies the unique personal characteristics of a human being (based on archetypes and while remaining the same in different environments).

Moving a step forward, into the actual musical content, the stylistic approach of the musical material tends towards the post-romantic. The continuum gives the stable sense of a tonic centre, while some of the other fragments also have the feeling of leading to a tonic.
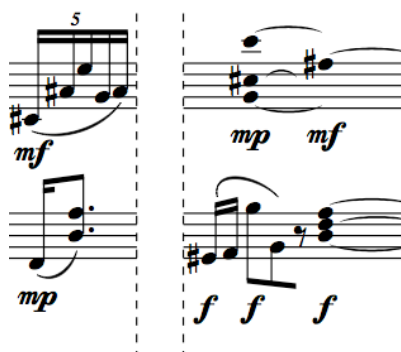

Figure 5: End of section B.

An analysis of the basic components of the piece (even in the way they are scattered in the four staves of the score) will reveal three different levels of construction. The first is the continuum (left hand/bottom stave). Extending the meaning of the musical practice, the use of the continuum musically and dramatically supports the coherence of the work (although it is broken into several sections). This relates back to the space–time continuum mentioned in the definition of archetypal music. Apart from the practical/musical meaning of the 'continuum' (the continuous sound that exists or is implied to exist throughout a section or a whole piece), the term is transformed to stress the performance's time and space, into which the audience is gradually being sucked as they engage with the work.

In close relation to the above, it is expected that the piece's dynamic range will differentiate between its different sections: the continuum's *fff* and *pp* in section A are not expected to match, neither in volume nor intensity, those of section C. It is also anticipated that because of the continuum's dynamic differentiations, the other fragments' dynamic range will also consequently expand, depending on each section's dynamic balance and most importantly the amount of energy required for each fragment to get 'stimulated'. This type of 'internal adaptability of dynamics' (either between the musical material of a single performer or between a number of performers as will be seen later) is another concept explored in many of the pieces included in the portfolio.

Leaving aside the left hand's continuum, it is important to note that all the other material may be organised into three general groups:

- The repeated fragments (second level of construction):
  Always placed on the top stave, in a range of rhythmical variations and dynamics, they are very distinctive (high pitched), frequently repeated fragments. Apart from the obvious similarity with the repetition of Christou's archetypal or master pattern, an analogy of their function would be the use of lighthouses in the ocean: to help the ships (or in a society, human beings) avoid known obstacles, as well as to keep them on their path (or in a society, to not let them lose hope).

Figure 6: Examples of the repeated fragments.

- The uniquely presented fragments (third level of construction):

  The materials placed in the middle two staves mostly appear once and are all located in the middle register. An exception to this is the low, not-precisely-specified cluster. This is a distinctive repeated fragment that only exists as an 'antiphon' to the repeated fragments of the top stave.
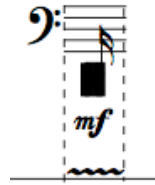

Figure 7: The exception of the uniquely presented figures.

- The long-repeating boxes:

  Both the boxes are used in section C, the section leading to the pianist's explosion (end of C) and the following silent section where the conflict reaches its highest point (D). They are both used to maximise the dramatic development of the piece. An effort is also made here to discover the growth of anxiety an acoustical event can cause (that may be compared with Christou's consideration of the eclipse's effect on primordial people). The first box – with its gradual ascending direction – adds an extra level to those that already exist, working mainly in the direction of a pending event (expected to happen any time).

Figure 8: The first long-repeating box.

The latter – clearly ascending and repeated fewer times – is the last drop that will cause the pianist's reaction. It is also thought that its existence will increase the audience's level of anxiety to such an extent that the switching on of the lamp is in a way the fulfilment of their desire (i.e. an identification of the audience with the external attractor).
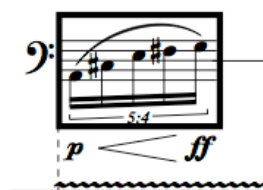

Figure 9: The second long-repeating box.

3.2.2 DIY 3: growing (against) the violinist's ego

This piece was composed for the Metapraxis Ensemble[58] and was completed in September 2009. It is scored for three instruments (violin, voice, piano) and video-text.[59]

The supporting roles: Continuum

In the third piece of the series, the pianist's role is reduced to a second supporting role;[60] he/she now hardly touches the keys or the strings. With the help of two E-bows – an underlying reminder of the conflict with mechanical equipment addressed in *DIY 1* – the pianist relies almost solely on the piano pedals in order to trigger the strings, which are covered with aluminium foil. The resulting timbre – single pitched notes distorted by the aluminium foil – creates a direct connection with the violinist's material (throughout the rest of the piece but especially with the timbral differentiations that occur during the monotones in sections A, B and C).

The vocalist's role is also downgraded to the first supporting role (as is the pianist in *DIY 2*); the most usual of her performing actions, singing, is banned. She instead uses the same medium, her voice, to read a short text/poem (or a selected section of it) in a language unfamiliar to the given audience. Reading is always asked for in the natural range and at a natural pace for the vocalist, but in different ways (whispering, murmuring, normally, silently-shouting), imitating the often incomprehensible use of content in religious rites. The aim here is to generate recognisable 'melodic' lines through repeating parts of an unrecognisable text (thus a ceremonial character, by which the audience may get a grasp of the text's function and not the meaning, as would happen in a ritual). The whistling sound (also asked from the singer) is only added in section D, in order to break the continuity of the text reading and to underline its function as a timbre and not a meaningful narration.

Considering and combining the musical material of the pianist and vocalist as described above, it is clear that the importance and function of the continuum remain the same as in *DIY 1*. In this case, however, a different type of continuum is developed: it is not as

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[58] See http://www.metapraxisensemble.com/.

[59] The submitted recording is from a transposed version of the piece, where a viola plays the violin part.

[60] The pianist's role was previously reduced to a first supporting role in *DIY 2* (which is not included in the portfolio), while the singer held the leading role there. In *DIY 2*, the most usual of the pianist's actions – pressing the keys in order to produce sounds – is banned. Instead, the pianist only plucks the strings, and thus still uses the same medium of piano/strings to create some kind of melodic line, but not in the conventional way.

independent and (musically) continuous as in *DIY 1*, nor is it the first level of construction of the whole piece. The following list shows its treatment through the work's sections:

- **A**, **B** & **C**: Continuous in the piano part, dependent on the violin part (second level of construction)
- **D**: Continuous in piano part, independent throughout the section (first level of construction); an additional interrupted part is dependent on the vocal part (third level of construction)
- **E**: Non-existent
- **F**: Interrupted, dependent on the violin part (second level of construction)
- **G**: Independent throughout the section (first level of construction)

The piece is built in five sections (considering A, B and C as one). Their ends are quite distinctive (in terms of changing instrumentation), but not always followed by silent moments as in *DIY 1*. In one of those cases, the concept of the causation action reappears: the end of section D comes with the violinist's unexpected reaction (pizzicato at the beginning of section E) to the projected text ('I collapsed' – see text below).

Considering the above division of the piece into five sections, the use of vocals (as analysed earlier) takes place in just the second (changing reading styles), fourth (normal reading) and fifth (fade out) sections. The reality is, however, that the vocal part also exists in the third section, only in a different way. In fact, this is the section where the unrecognisable text's function becomes clearer (to the audience) and also where each member of the audience becomes part of the piece.

External attractor II: the video-text

The revealing of the text's hidden dimension is made through the use of the external attractor[61], which in this case is a video-text: white coloured words or phrases projected onto a black canvas at different speeds and in different sizes. Although the video-text shares some basic principles/characteristics with the previous external attractor, the lamp (mechanically produced light, remotely controlled, muted (theoretically at least), etc.), it adds two crucial functions:

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[61] In contrast to its role in *DIY 1*, the external attractor in this case uses its power to intervene and reveal a hidden dimension of the piece (see 3.4.1).

- It can 'speak' the same language as the audience (while the lamp's (re)actions could be possibly 'translated' but might be easier to misinterpret).

- Each member of the audience – most of the times – will 'hear' his own – or a very 'familiar' – voice reading/narrating the text (identification of the audience with the external attractor).

Both of the above points are used in *DIY 3* when the blurred projected text (of the video-text) clears out (as seen in Figures 10 and 11) to disclose the following hidden clues with regard to the dramatic plot of the piece:

> [...] ...trying to listen to... myself... [...] The unfamiliar voice gave rise to a certain amount of confusion. [...]
> [...] Impromptu conversations would break out inside my brain as I tried to guess who the voice belonged to. [...] the ambiguous announcement was made by the same unfamiliar voice... [...] I collapsed... [...]

The value of the second function noted above can be hardly underestimated. As with all the external attractors, the video-text manages to focus the attention of the audience and redirect it to the directions the composer desires. In addition, it is a unique way in which to achieve the audience's participation and engagement and to place the audience's voice at the centre of the work.
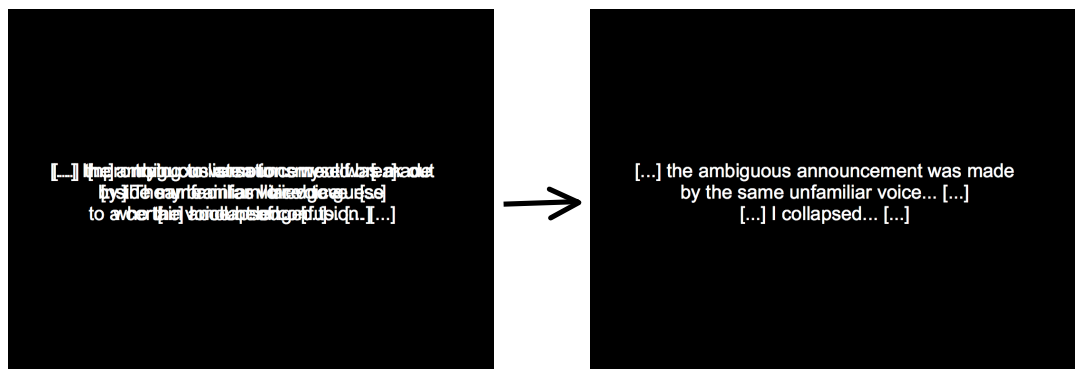
Figures 10 and 11: Video-text becoming clear.

The leading role

Lastly, the leading role is given to the violinist. The violin part explores numerous timbral variations in great detail (tending towards a spectral approach to sound). This is done by combining the expanded pitch material (microtonal intervals on scordatura tuning) with the control of different parameters of expressiveness: bow pressure (five defined levels), bow speed (three defined levels) and exact starting point of each bowing and dynamics.
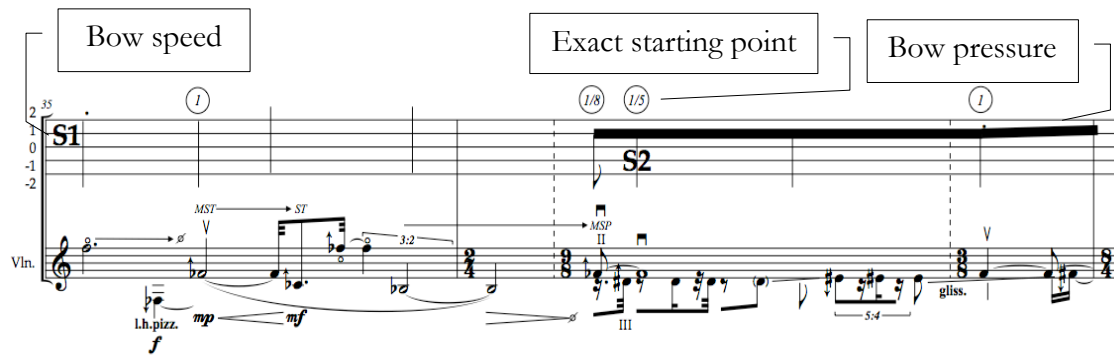
37

Figure 12: Example of controlling parameters of expressiveness.

At any given time, a maximum of two out of the three parameters are being controlled (pressure and speed, pressure and dynamics, etc.); thus the performer is left with one option by which to balance the requested acoustic result and the possibilities of the given instrument. The conflict thus created recalls the Artaudian theatricality ('the conflict of gestures, of words, of movements or noises'),[62] relates to the contextual shot of the piece (discussed below) and to a certain extend justifies the piece's obscure title.

Taking advantage of the increased energy projected by the acoustic result, *DIY 3* was thought to be the ideal choice for the most static and less visually notable of the *DIY* works. Besides, the lack of visual dramatic action in *DIY 3* is used as an advantage in exploring the disconnection between what would be the evidently connected visual and acoustic parts of the work.

In addition to the acoustic quality of the piece, a decision concerning the placement of the performers was taken: the leading role is visually absent. In connection with the contextual shot of *DIY 3*, a violinist – such a leading figure in most musical activities – is treated in a non-conventional way (that imaginarily affects his developing ego). In contrast with usual practice and also all the other pieces of the *DIY* series, a distinction between the leading role and the visible actions takes place, since the violinist is not present on stage but is performing behind the audience.

Besides his/her visual absence, the violinist holds the controlling role for the larger part of the piece. In contrast to *DIY 1* it is the leading role that begins and ends the grouped supporting roles. The concluding gesture – again placed at the end of the last but one

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[62] Loayza (2000).

section – is in agreement with this. The violinist actually withdraws him/herself, leaving his/her inner side (the supporting roles) to fade out as well: an identical approach to the other *DIY*s, although the format of the piece (the placement of the performers, etc.) transforms the concept into a completely acoustic, rather than partly visual, one.

To sum up: in contrast to *DIY 1* – where all dramatic roles (human 'victim', machine/controller) are on stage – the described placement of the performers in *DIY 3* – where the leading role is only audible – serves the aim of allowing the audience to watch/listen/read only the leading role's inner thoughts (ego). It should by now be obvious that a gradual dramatic and musical switch is taking place in the course of moving from *DIY 1* to *DIY 4* from clearly extrovert roles to more introvert ones.

Intentions for DIY 3$^{1/2}$

Before moving on to the analysis of *DIY 4*, it is important for the overall conceptual framework of the series to explain my intentions for *DIY 3$^{1/2}$*. This piece will be the last in the series to follow the initial expanding hierarchy of the various roles.[63] The cellist will take the leading role, while the violinist will be limited to a supporting role (SR$_1$), mainly plucking the strings, thus still using the same medium to create a kind of melody, but not in the conventional way. The vocalist (SR$_2$) will be amplified, and will thus use a mechanical device, as did the pianist in *DIY 3*. Finally, the pianist (SR$_3$) will introduce an almost silent role. Reaching the extreme opposite end of the spectrum from the leading role, the pianist will become mainly an actor. Jani Christou's concept of 'metapraxis' will be explored to a further extent in this piece.

3.2.3   DIY 4: stimulating the cellist's melatonin

The last of the currently existing *DIY* works was also composed for the Metapraxis Ensemble (completed in September 2010), and is scored for cello, violin, voice and lamp. The piece is constructed with the cellist in the most important of the existing roles (LR$_2$), but without there being a true leading role. *DIY 4* is the first of the pieces to follow the decomposition route; this takes place in terms of cancelling both the previous hierarchy – LR, SR$_1$, SR$_2$, etc. – and the patterns regarding the downgrading process of the musical/dramatic roles, construction materials (continuum etc.), and so on.

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[63] See 3.4.

The piece is constructed in four very distinctive sections, and a cinematic *mise-en-scène* approach adapted to the needs of the work is used: *wide shot* – placement on stage (foreground and background before the beginning of the piece); *medium shot* – focus on the cellist and the lamp [section A]; *close up* – on the lamp (with a bit of background) [section B]; *cutaway* – shift around to see the action (cellist) [sections C1 and C2]; *medium shot* – focus on the cellist and the lamp [section D].

In comparison to the previous works in the *DIY* series, there is an even greater shift of focus towards the internal links of the different roles, making *DIY 4* even more introvert. The lamp is used again as the external attractor; however, it is not its aim to object to or control the cellist (as it did the pianist in *DIY 1*). The lamp's role has changed completely and it now identifies with the cellist's inner world (revealing a hidden aspect of the piece as in *DIY 3*).

In sections A and D, the lamp may be partly considered a psychological monitor of the performer. The musical transformation of this is explained below; however, it is based on consideration of the lamp as a musical instrument and develops its musical function by escaping from the simplistic call-and-response method of *DIY 1*.[64] In that sense, the cellist neither follows/reacts to, nor ignores the lamp; the two of them share a role and complement each other (thus the lamp must be placed next to the cellist and not in front of him/her, hence visual contact between them is not direct, but is possible).

While it is the cellist – as any other human being – who regulates his/her expressed feelings, thoughts and so on, it is the lamp that reveals what is kept hidden. As a result, the lamp becomes inactive (because there isn't anything unseen or unheard), when the cellist frees him/herself (section A, bars 5–10) and becomes more active (musically); in contrast the lamp becomes active later on (while the cellist's material are reduced to a minimum), when it actually justifies – to a certain extent – the cellist's causation actions (e.g. sudden fingering – section A, bar 13/section D, bars 50, 52). These specific actions could be seen as sudden and violent externalizations of the cellist's (inner up to that point) thoughts. Those actions also bring about the end of both sections A and D. In fact, the sudden fingering action in section D also causes the concluding gesture (the cellist's disappearance), which signifies the end of the piece.

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[64] See 3.4.1.

The middle two sections are used to distinguish those two sides – the visible and the hidden – and explore them separately in an imaginary setting. In section B, for example, the cellist's inner self is completely isolated and attracts the main focus. It is now the voiceless lamp in the coordinating role, and the partially hidden singer (human voice) and violinist (another string instrument) in the background that broadcast a few moments of the cellist's internal condition; this moment links back to the concept of the archetypes, as an underlying level of experiences existing in each human being. The singer and violinist, who have been inactive up to this point, are placed behind the cellist and the lamp, in order to create a visual representation of them as being somewhere in the background of the main performers.

Section B is the only one in which the singer and violinist become involved. Their minor roles are limited to a minimum, both in terms of duration and material, in order for the main focus to remain on the cellist and the lamp. Nevertheless, a slight shift of focus is accomplished in this section, as the lamp is the only participating part placed to the foreground of the stage. This section's limited and repeated musical materials are also thought to work as a preparation for the 'ritual' that follows (functioning in a similar way to the long-repeating boxes in *DIY 1*).

In section C, on the other hand, the focus returns to the cellist. In a section almost entirely based on the physical gestures – or the theatricality – of cello performance, a peculiar hide-and-seek type of game takes place between the cellist's arms. In C1 (the cellist is positioned in such a way that the audience can see mainly his/her right arm), the bow slides down the (detuned) C string with great difficulty, as if someone was very carefully climbing down a steep mountainside. At the same time, the left hand is 'secretly' (without really being seen) tuning the string up. In C2 (the cellist is now looking to the other side, the audience can mainly see his/her left arm), the string is now tuned and the bow has arrived in its normal position. The hunter (right hand/bow) is chasing the left hand: moving, in big or small steps (longer/shorter notes on the bow), stopping to listen for any noise made by the left hand, looking around (as seen in Figure 7 – square-head notes indicate that the bow stays on the string or moving across strings without producing any sound), and waiting for the left hand's movements. Both subsections (C1, C2) end neither by reaching an obvious conclusion, nor because of a causation action. This is to underline their imaginary character.

Figure 13: Bow moving across the strings.

As becomes clear, *DIY 4*'s contextual shot is the internal relation between 1) the outer human being, 2) the inner psychological world and 3) the body's function. Similar to the critical importance of darkness for the production of melatonin and its subsequent impact on human psychology and bodily function, is the interrelation between the cellist, the lamp and the other two performers as they each represent one of the above roles.

3.2.4   Group I: Short Summary

Looking through the pieces of this group, it becomes evident – in addition to the points already made – that the musical material used in the *DIY* series gradually becomes more and more limited, while the theatrical actions' importance and necessity of existence develops to a much greater extent. In connection with the theoretical background presented in Chapter 1, the non-musical actions (metapraxis) are added as a necessity to extend the functionality of an otherwise sterile music performance.

The principal area explored by the pieces of this group, however, is the differentiation of the context of the conventional music performance: the praxis. Although it seems that most of the time the performers are doing what they usually do (playing their instruments), the context of their actions differs completely because of the (quasi-)theatrical frame in which they are placed. It is not that those actions escape or change their meaning; they are still the same actions used to produce (musical) sounds, and that is exactly what they are used for. It is in fact an additional level of meaning, added on top of their existing musical scope, that might be perceived separately or in conjunction with the musical one. However, in these cases is left to each auditor to decide; it is 'forced' by the inexistence of a different level. In this way, each praxis has a dual meaning: a musical/artistic one and a theatrical/realistic one. It is my hope that this approach offers additional ways of engaging the audience by creating some of the conditions that rituals used to have.

This is also the reason for a far less precise structural planning before the compositional stage of these works, in comparison to the works of the following group. A general plan does always exist beforehand, of course, but it is not as precise for the *DIY* series as in the

works discussed below, and is certainly not applied as strictly. Its main function is to make sure that the musical and theatrical dramatization of the work develops in a pre-determined direction.

3.3 Group II / Right Path

As mentioned earlier, the second group of pieces (Group II) consists of three works that pay attention to specific parts of music performance and 'highlight' them to become the fundamentals of a music composition. It is also important to mention an attempt to 'translate' various of my socio-political or other concerns – which would be normally expressed through the dramatic/visual aspects as in the *DIY* series – into the actual music-creating process (as rules, progressions, etc.). Lastly, there is a special focus on the performers' functions as members of an ensemble: the internal adaptability of dynamics and coordination functions are discussed in detail below.

More precisely, these works exploit creatively 'expanded modes of theatricality'[65] as part of the musical performance: the performers' musical gestures have an acoustic as well as a visual effect, to a certain extent replacing part of the function of the external attractors in the *DIY* series. As described in 2.1.2, it has been scientifically proven that conscious and unconscious movements/gestures (including staticness) can transmit essential expressive information to an audience. This may also be connected with the intended ritualistic character of the ceremonies (where several actions carry a specific function and meaning); similarly to that, the selected gestures in the following pieces are treated as a unique point of focus for the audience, carrying an obvious function (to produce the sound) and a hidden meaning (usually revealed with the concluding gesture).

Based on that, the experimentation of this group of works follows an unusual route: the construction of pieces based on actual expressive gestures. Hence, what is happening here is the minimisation of the metapraxis (usually up to the concluding gesture of each piece), while extra focus is given to the usual musical actions.[66] As a result, those gestures become an integral part of each work, instead of existing as the uncontrolled visual outcome of an otherwise solely acoustic event, equally planned and correspondingly as important as any other part of the composition.

In the following pieces, the gestures take one or more of the following roles:

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[65] See 1.1.

[66] This is true as a generalization. Based on the elusive nature of metapraxis, by escaping from the macrocosmic point of view of the pattern praxis=musical actions and metapraxis=non-musical actions, we could – to a certain extent – consider a microcosmic differentiation of the above pattern as follows: praxis=musical gestures that take place as a result of the requested acoustic result and metapraxis= designed/planned musical gestures that take place as a result of the requested visual outcome.

- the basis of the works' conception;
- the core material during the compositional stage;
- (one of) the controllers of the piece's development (during the performance).

In a continuation of the ascending number of performers involved in the four works included in the *DIY* series (solo, duo, trio), the works of this group involve larger ensembles (with five or more members). In contrast to the *DIY* series, however, these works are composed for different ensembles/instruments and performing occasions. Nevertheless, they share the following basic principles:

- Leading performer/Soloist:

  In a similar approach to that of the *DIY* series regarding the treatment of the performers' roles, a leading/soloistic role exists in all pieces. In this case, however, and because of the lack of a clear dramatic background, the leading role is treated more as the soloist of a concertino (short concerto, freer in form), instead of as the leading dramatic role in a plot. The works are to a certain extent built around the soloist, who somehow controls the rest of the ensemble with his movements (musically or theatrically).

- Sound curtain/Concertino:

  Apart from the soloist, the pieces in this group include at least one small group of instrumentalists. In accordance with the soloist's role (as in a concertino composition), the sound curtain group is associated with the concertino group of a concerto grosso. Operating partly as a soloistic group and partly as the accompaniment, they often act as a sound curtain around the soloist; their function differs between the pieces and will be discussed separately.

The above play an important role for the preservation of the ritualistic character in this group of pieces. The function and placement of the leading performer and the sound curtain on stage refers to the idea of the circular shapes created by the participants of various rituals (such as worships, celebrations or lamentations); in these cases, they tend to move around the recipient(s) of honours (or the altar) in circular motion, in order to contain and concentrate the energy they raise during the ritual. In the following pieces, the movement has been removed due to the immobility of some instruments and the limited space for movement. The circular notion of the performers' placement is retained, however, and presented in two different ways: either in full (leading performer in the

middle of a circular sound curtain), or by slicing the circular shape in two and focusing on one of the halves in order to be able to observe all active parts (from the core/leading performer to the outer layers/sound curtain).
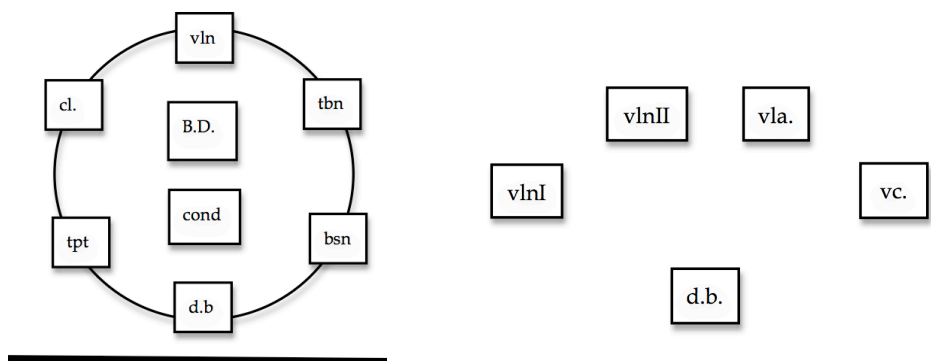
Figures 14 and 15: Placement in a circle or semicircle.

Apart from the different placements of musicians on and off stage (depending on the available forces and the needs of the piece), some basic lighting directions are included as well as general theatrical directions (such as, for example, the function of body posture, facing directions, etc.) in order to fulfil the above-described character.

Last but not least, an important difference in the compositional process must be underlined. Although the distinctiveness of the sections is still obvious and is explored to a further extent, the structural design and the development of certain other musical parameters (discussed separately with regard to each piece) in relation to the total duration takes place before the actual composition of the works in detail. The 'anchor points' of each composition are designed first; mainly based on the targeted visual and acoustic functions of the leading performer, and secondly on the potential of the rest of the ensemble (as individual instruments or instrumental groups). It is then that the positioning of the anchor points in the piece are determined, and the process of the gradually developing sections that connect the anchor points are developed with the use of arithmetic progressions. Hence – and in contrast to the process followed in the *DIY* series – the pieces are fully predesigned (structure, function of music gestures, music material/other parameters); what actually happens during the 'compositional' stage is the musical realisation of the predesigned plan.

3.3.1 How to… corrupt someone

Initially composed for the Okeanos Ensemble[67] (completed in October 2008), the harpist in this piece holds the soloistic part (seated at the front of the stage), and a small ensemble consisting of viola, cello, English horn and bass clarinet form the sound curtain (seated in a semicircle behind the harpist). This work explores the limits of audibility and the 'eruption' of hidden energy that occurs when a strict limitation is applied to all music parameters (material, range, dynamics, duration, etc.), followed by a sudden release and extreme expansion of some of them.

Although the composition process (described below) is not entirely different from that followed in the *DIY* series, the audience's perception process is expected to be significantly different. By choosing a theme, and building a text on it, the piece develops an internal dramatic plot and structure (from the composer's point of view), which is also from where the general compositional directions are derived. This process is neither expected nor aims to be a bidirectional path, however. Although the text is provided in the programme notes, the connection between it and the acoustic result is not meant to be clear, and definitely would not support any sort of dramatic scenario (as it might do in the *DIY* series). As explained earlier,[68] it might only form the beginning of one or more 'suggested' paths that will then be adapted by each member of the audience.

Structure and Internal Function

Arguably, the whole piece – as all the pieces of this group – might parallel the concept of a multi-part drone (or an extension of it), consisting as it does of several different 'continuum' parts – at the first level of construction – that appear and disappear at predefined moments.

The piece is constructed in six main sections (rehearsal letter/subsections C and D coexist in the third section, as do G and H in the sixth section), and is designed to last exactly ten minutes. As can be seen below, a mathematical pattern governs the number of bars (and thus the duration) of each of the subsections A–F.

A – 12, B – 10, C – 11

D – 8 , E – 6 , F – 7

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[67] See http://www.okeanos.co.uk/.
[68] See Archetypal Music: the complex of opposites – 2.1.1.

Subsection G (and its extension H) is also built on an arithmetic progression with a common difference of 3: 3 bars, 6 beats in each bar, repeated 9 times

All sections end with an empty bar of varying duration, following each of the harpist's indicated gestures (bold barline). In this case the empty bar ('filled' with complete silence and stasis from the sound curtain group – a feature previously discussed in reference to *DIY 1*) functions as the moment of zooming in on a living system and focusing on a specific 'minor' aspect of it (in this case the harpist's gestures, which dominate the rest of the ensemble). Thus, in these cases the harpist's gestures (e.g. damping the strings in bars 12 and 22) cause the sound curtain to freeze; the rest of the harpist's movements (e.g. a slow relaxation of the player's arms in bars 13, 23 and 42) take place against a completely static canvas.

The above point introduces another of the main focus points of this series. The need for an internal adaptability of dynamics has already been discussed in reference to *DIY 1*.[69] This time it appears to be necessary in order to preserve the fragility of the piece. None of the indicated dynamics can be regarded as absolute; a constant need to listen to the other performers in order to re-adjust dynamics is implied, including the relative dynamics (dynamic indications in double quotation marks), the dynamic indications that relate to actions instead of the acoustic result (e.g. the dynamics for the strings' fingering trill in sections A and B) and further indications that clarify the balance between the instruments (e.g. boxes with verbal instructions in section D).

Apart from the dynamics' adaptability, more general 'internal coordination functions' between the members of the ensemble are explored. In this piece, all the parts are fully notated; thus the emphasis remains on the dynamic balance and the performers' coordination with the gestures indicated in the score. In other words, it is requested of the performers that they extend their peripheral hearing and vision, and on certain occasions ignore their part's indications, their own counting of rhythm, etc. This is an extremely important concept in order – such as at the end of sections A and B – for the members of the sound curtain to be exclusively and realistically 'stopped' by the harpist's gesture of damping the strings and not because of reaching the end of their last note (even if that

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[69] See 3.4.1 - Musical content and language: Dramatic plot.

means that they will have to cut short their last note or extend it depending on the timing of the harpist's actions). This is something that is not always the case in contemporary music performances, where performers are often solely engaged with their own score. In my view, and in close relation to the attempt to engage with the audience, the developing outcome of a composition through rehearsal should not only refer to the accurate execution of the performing parts, it should also, and mainly, aim for the realisation of the piece's internal concept, even if that means less accuracy in execution.

The above can be more broadly explained through the following quotation regarding the works of John Cage: 'In Cage's work, the process involved in performance can only be critically viewed in terms of the relative faithfulness to or ignorance of the score. In *Theatre Piece*, for example, one might easily term David Tudor's performance to be the most exacting, and Nam June Paik's performance to be the least exacting in accordance with Cage's score. Yet, neither are finally what one could call "definitive, end-all" performances of the specific work in question; and both were, apparently, very engaging and rewarding experiences for the audiences in attendance'.[70]

Context

By reviewing the constructive process in parallel with the text (quoted below in parts following the musical structure), the strong connection between the contextual shot of the piece/text, the chosen music material and their manipulation becomes obvious. The text refers vaguely to a human being (H.B.), supposedly living in one of the societies of the modern world. Thus, it is the human being's function as a complete living body/system that is explored through the constantly changing relationships between the members of the ensemble.

Sections A, B and C:

> 'Take him from his 'golden mediocrity' and challenge/support him to stretch himself until the very end... where he can enjoy everything he was missing before.'

Starting with section A, the 'golden mediocrity' is disclosed as the long, imperfect and very quiet bass clarinet tone – balancing uncomfortably between a clear pitch and incidental breath sounds (adding a human touch) – and the strings' limited variations of the also quiet fingering trills. When the drone is established, a single bright chord of harmonics from the

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[70] Fetterman (1996), p. 229.

harp – the first challenge for H.B. – leads to the end of the action for section A (before any reaction from the other performers is expressed). The harpist smoothly damps the strings (causation action) and by doing so 'damps' the whole ensemble.

Section B is 2 bars shorter but begins in the very same way as section A. The drone (bass clarinet, viola, cello) is joined much sooner this time by the harp's shiny and, in comparison to the other instrument's material, widely varied harmonic chords (challenging H.B. to a greater extent). The English horn joins to support the clarinet's airy sound before the harpist again damps the strings and the ensemble.

Section C (11 bars) is where the 'stretching' takes place. Seeming to start in the same way as sections A and B, it is now the English horn that reaches the top of its range in order to start a very different drone. All the instruments gradually join in – with an extended variety of music material – to create an artificial 'nirvana' moment, while the strings have already begun its decomposition.

Sections D, E and F:

> 'Then... just withdraw your support gradually. Let him fall until the very end...
> where he can appreciate everything he had before.'

Following the decomposition that began in section C, a sudden demolition of what was earlier built occurs in section D. This leads to the following two sections, in which the harpist becomes the centre of the composition. He/she starts showing his/her despair (by using extended techniques such as knocking on the harp's soundboard, and so on); damping the strings/ensemble (as the causation action) is also replaced with an aggressive striking of the strings. Those actions will gradually un-'stretch' the 'body' parts (i.e. the ensemble members) and manage to unify them (at the end of section F) for the first time since the beginning of the piece.

Sections G and H:

> 'Keep pushing him down...until he breaks down... until he is sick with himself, full
> of desperation... Then... he is ready... just let him explode.'

In certain extents section G functions in the same way as the long-repeating boxes in *DIY 1*, gradually developing a feeling of anxiety and awkwardness. In this case, however, there is an added point: the harpist's uncomfortable playing position (as seen in Figure 16). All of the above leads to the final section, in which one by one the body/system parts stop (i.e.

abandon their efforts to continue/support the harpist). Following this, the harpist also gives up and 'explodes' – the concluding gesture and end of the piece.
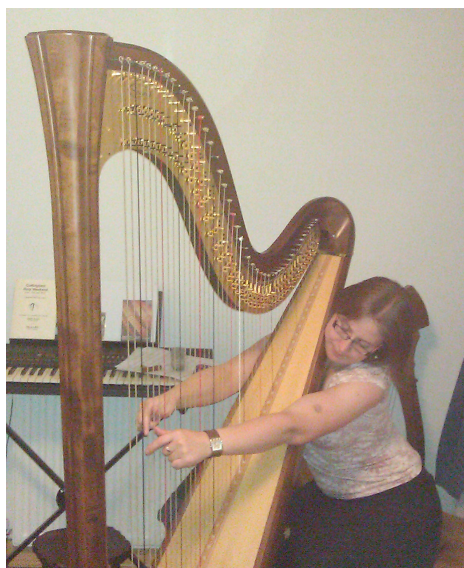

Figure 16: The harpist's uncomfortable position in section G.

3.3.2 Implied Failure

This piece was commissioned by the Greek Contemporary Music Ensemble[71] (completed in October 2009) to be performed in a concert dedicated to the American composer Lukas Foss, and is scored for seven instruments: bass flute, bass clarinet, two violins, viola, cello and double bass. I decided to imply only a conceptual connection to Foss's work. Hence, using some keywords from Foss's work titles, I constructed a text referring to human beings and their role/function in modern societies.

In this case the double bass player is the soloist and a string quartet acts as the sound curtain around him/her; the placement on stage is the same as in the work *How to… corrupt someone*. It must be mentioned that the double bass part is deliberately kept at a quite simplistic level compared to the harp part in *How to… corrupt someone*, and is also partly improvised (as will be discussed below) in order for the performer to be able memorize it. This offers the option of not using a music stand, which maximizes the visual impact of the double bassist's performance. In addition to the soloist and the string quartet, a second group of instruments – in this case a woodwind duo (bass flute and bass clarinet) – is used, placed behind the sound curtain, at the back of the stage.

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[71] See http://www.gcu.org.gr/essm_m.asp/.

The compositional approach of this piece, as well as the concepts involved, is similar to that used for *How to… corrupt someone.* Considering this an opportunity for a change in the way the works are presented in the portfolio, the analysis of this work focuses more on the technical side of the piece's construction and function; special attention is given to the presentation of the developing concepts and procedures (such as, for example, the advanced function of the musical gestures) in order to show the gradual progress of my practical and theoretical thinking.

The concept of the arithmetic progression as a dominant pattern that can be encountered anywhere in our world is even more apparent here, affecting the sections' structure, as well as many other of the musical parameters. The work is composed in five distinct sections (A, B, C, D, E, F) and several subsections, all of them performed without a break and lasting in total ten minutes.

The internal equivalence of dynamic markings becomes even more important in this piece. Instead of using separate dynamic indications for each instrument, a specific plan of the whole piece's dynamic progress was designed at a pre-compositional stage. Then verbal instructions for the whole or specified groups of the ensemble were created and placed at the beginning of each section or subsection.

The above step is considered necessary for the (further) development of the internal coordination functions between the members of any ensemble, as explained before. Each of the performers is required to listen to the dynamic levels of the rest of the ensemble and adjust his/hers accordingly, instead of translating a dynamic indication according to his/her technical abilities and/or the instrument's characteristics. Furthermore, several of the parts are improvised. In most of these cases, the improvisation is based on a call-and-response pattern, where the call is a visual and/or acoustic incident.

Sections A, C and E

Sections A (A1, A2, A3), C (C1, C2) and E are fully notated, and develop to a further extent some of the ideas explored in *How to… corrupt someone.* The instruments are treated as a unified group, within which several subgroups gradually grow. Although it is not a rhythmic unison, the acoustic result may be compared to a solid multi-part drone. As suggested by the text ('Clear glass falls down and breaks in such a slow motion that you can follow the process of breaking…'), bits and pieces of a previously solid and perfect-

sounding chord (in terms of the harmonic series that is used), played by the full ensemble, begin to break.

The most important conceptual development here is connected again with the space–time continuum (which exist inside the drone, similarly to that explained with regard to *How to… corrupt someone*). Similar to the survival abilities of the mythological creature Lernaean Hydra,[72] the continuum does not immediately dissolve into million pieces, and neither does it disappear when a piece is broken. On the contrary, the initial continuum keeps functioning as before (although slightly weakened), while the broken piece develops into an independent continuum (the breaking process is explained below – subsection A1). To a certain extent this is thought to relate strongly to the unstoppable qualities of archetypal music and its effects on human beings.

All the above seem to be observed from some distance (i.e. zoomed out), by an apathetic bystander. That changes dramatically in the remaining sections.

What follows is a detailed description of all the technical processes that occur while the breaking takes place in section A, followed by a table showing the progressions through section A, C and E:

Subsection A1:

i.	For 20" – 1 group [7]	{all instruments}
ii.	For 14" – 2 groups [1+6]	{[d.b.]+rest}
iii.	For 9" – 3 groups [1+(2+4)]	{d.b.+[b. fl.+b. cl.]+rest}
iv.	For 5" – 4 groups [1+2+(1+3)]	{d.b.+b. fl.+b. cl.+[vc]+rest}
v.	For 2" – 5 groups [1+2+1+(1+2)]	{d.b.+b. fl.+b. cl.+vc+[vla]+rest}

The duration of each sub-subsection in the above table (i, ii, iii, iv, v) is generated by a descending arithmetic sequence. In parallel to that, the number of instrumental (sub)groups/roles that become 'independent' (by 'breaking away' from the harmonic series limitation) grows in arithmetic progression with a common difference of 1. The newly made piece(s) or instrumental part(s) that break from the main chord each start a new sub-subsection with a strong accent (*sfz*).

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[72] In Greek mythology, the Lernaean Hydra was an ancient nameless serpent-like chthonic water beast that possessed many heads, and for each head cut off it grew two more.

All instrumental parts are initially based on the same pattern: a repeated five-beat-long note, starting with a 'soft' accent (>) slightly earlier or later than the double bass (in the following order):

vlnI (-3♪) - b. cl. (-2♪) – vlnII (-1♪) – d.b. – vla (+1♪) – b. fl. (+2♪) – vc (+3♪)

Whenever a piece of the continuum breaks, the following changes to the pattern occur:

- The parts that remain on the same pitch are lengthened by 1.125 beats (9 x ♪)

- The parts that change to a new pitch are shortened by 2.25 beats (18 x ♪)

Subsection A2 and A3:

In connection with the programme notes ([…] in such a slow motion that you can follow the process of breaking…), subsections A2 and A3 are produced as duplicates of subsection A1, but increasingly reduced by a gradually growing number of sub-subsections. Thus, A2 starts from sub-subsection ii (missing i), and A3 starts from sub-subsection iii (missing i and ii). This process is considered to work as a series of 'replays' of the moments in focus, while zooming in on certain details of them.

Sections C and E work are constructed in a very similar way, while the following changes gradually take place:

(Sub)Sections:	A1	A2	A3	C1	C2	E
Duration	←————— 96" —————→			←——— 78" ——→		40"
Dynamics	lowest possible ————————————→				expected to be much higher due to the winds' technical difficulties	
Accents	*sfz* ————————————————————————→					*sfffz*
Blending	balanced and perfectly blended outcome ————————→				unsuccessful blending and rough outcome	

Sections B, D and F

Sections B, D (D1, D2) and F (F1, F2, F3) involve fully notated parts for the sound curtain/string quartet only; the rest of the performers 'improvise' based on given instructions. The dramaturgy of the piece is built in these sections, through the uncertainty created by the lack of precise music material and the state of solitude created for the different instrumental subgroups evolving in the ensemble.

As can be seen in the text below (a section of the text created for this piece and used as programme notes), the observer is now physically involved with the process. This makes the relationships between the continuum parts and the actual shape of the drone change constantly, as if an interior battle was taking place between the various parts of the drone.

> 'Moving through the pieces though... while exploring the uniqueness of each one of them... you realize the value of their individuality... the importance and joy of existing –in many different layers – even after... the end.'

The soloist is given a set of verbal instructions in relation to various musical performing parameters (pitch range, rhythm, articulation, bow pressure and position), which will create certain types of acoustic and visual material; my particular focus in this case was on the bow movements. This is because those movements then come to control what the woodwind duo is being asked to improvise (via its own set of verbal instructions). Placed between the two woodwind instruments, the string quartet plays from a fully notated part, although there is still some space left for personal decisions (the notated musical materials describe the continuous and gradual process of change between pitches, types of articulation, vibrato, etc.).

Obviously the above decisions aim to develop the internal coordination functions of the ensemble. However, they also affect the visual impact of the performance. It becomes obvious even from the placement of the musicians (*mise-en-scène*), that the double bass player holds a role to which the composer seeks to give attention. The other performers' placement may also potentially give some clues as to the relationships between the members of the ensemble.

The structure of sections B, D and F also functions in the same direction: to gradually isolate the different groups and subgroups of instruments and finally end with the soloist. The following table combines an attempt to translate the requested dynamic levels into conventional musical terms with the structure of the sections and their duration.

(Sub)Sections:	B (90') -->	D1 (60') -->	D2 (92') -->	F1 (30') -->	F2 (60') -->	F3 (90')
D.B.$_{solo}$	*pppp*	*ppp*	*pp-p*	*pp*	*p-mp*	*mp-f*
WWind$_{duo}$	*pp*	*p-mp*	*mp-mf*	*mp-mf*	*mf-ff*	
String$_{quartet}$	*mp*	*mf-ff*	-	*ff-fff*	-	-

Apart from the developing processes described in the above table, similar progressions are also used to determine pitch and rhythmic material, as well as articulation. In the most important of these (in terms of the current research), the double bass player starts playing at the top of the lower string (sections A/B – long bows, no accents) and ends trying to play at the lowest part of that string (subsection F3 – end of fingerboard, complex and erratic rhythms, strong accents, etc.). In this case, even the determination of the pitches to be played is represented visually.

If not any earlier, this is the section where his/her playing clearly becomes something more than just a musically soloistic part. His/her struggle (Figure 17), and ultimate failure (the concluding gesture – Figure 18) to reach the bridge area with both hands discloses the connection with the last part of text: 'You can now start feeling the difference... feeling the liveness, the unhappiness, the instability, the unending struggle, the retreat.'

Figures 17 and 18: Struggle and failure in section F3.

Further development: One-way Implications

Before moving to the latest piece of Group II, it is worth mentioning briefly that an extended version of *Implied Failure* (with more than one interdependent instrumental subgroups) was composed and performed in 2010 by the London Contemporary Orchestra. Composed for ten musicians, the accordionist has the soloistic role, while a string quartet creates the sound curtain and a woodwind duo (oboe, clarinet) is the second group (this time placed behind the audience, adding a new dimension by placing the audience in the middle of the acoustic process). A third group is added (piano, percussion, electric guitar), placed behind the strings.

What is treated slightly differently is the soloist's part, which is entirely improvised, based on verbal instructions (and thus not requiring a music stand). This role becomes even more 'theatrical' with the use of simple directing instructions, while the performer is still only asked to play his/her instrument in the conventional manner (the right hand/bow movement in *Implied Failure* is replaced by the hands/bellows movements). The strings' material and role remain the same as in *Implied Failure*, while the woodwind duo is triggered by the accordionist's hand/bellows movements and the third instrumental group acts as feedback to the winds. In contrast to *Implied Failure*, it is the third group that remains active until the end, even after the accordionist's collapse.

As becomes obvious from the title (and above description), the above interconnections between the various subgroups are all one-way. This piece was conceived as the first in a series of similarly targeted pieces, where the interconnections between instruments/subgroups become gradually bi-directional.

3.3.3   Never… Nevermore…

Commissioned by the Lithuanian Ensemble In Spe[73] and completed in April 2010, this piece is scored for seven musicians (clarinet, bassoon, trumpet, trombone, bass drum, violin, double bass) and a conductor (although not in the conventional sense).

Never… Nevermore… moves a few more steps away from a typical concert piece (mainly in terms of the performers' placement). Always in accordance with the previous pieces' aim to explore the theatricality of a clearly musical performance in terms of the actions requested from the performers and their presentation in a concert situation, this piece pushes the previously discussed process of reducing the notated parts to its extreme end. Designed in an 'open' form the score is essentially a time map that includes several events.[74] All of them are described verbally with specific instructions for specified performers or groups of instruments. The performers are expected to memorize the score and create a realisation of it, possibly different each time, by following the conductor's indications.

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[73] Unfortunately the recording of the performance has not been made available yet, thus it cannot be submitted with the portfolio.
[74] According to the compositional procedure described in the last paragraph of 3.5 (a predesigned plan that is realised later on musically by creating the score), this piece doesn't reach the final compositional stage; at least not in the same way as the previous pieces. The final score is similar to the design plan that was made initially and includes details about the musical parameters.

Context – Roles

As for all the pieces of this group, *Never… Nevermore…* is based on a text. This time the text is an adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Raven* (fifth stanza).

Deep into the darkness peering, long I stood there, wondering, fearing
Doubting, [...];
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, '...?',
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, '...!'
Merely this, and nothing more.

It is obvious from the text that silence – including the concept of 'saying' an unspoken word/phrase – predominates. Thus, one of my main concerns was to construct differently conceived types of silence.

In relation to this, it was thought that the usually 'silent' – but nonetheless active and conventionally musical – role of the conductor would be ideal as the 'soloist' in this context ('saying' an unspoken word). Hence, he/she becomes the actual controller of the piece: his/her gestures indicate the beginning and end of each event.

Although the work seems to be constructed precisely in sections (described below), the conductor is asked not to use any type of stopwatch for monitoring the duration of each 'action'[75]/(sub)section. He/she is asked to 'trust' his/her own sense of time and also check the functionality of each section; thus the 'openness' of the piece, as well as the element of surprise for the performers, would remain alive.

In contrast to the other two works of this group, the presentation of this piece doesn't follow the pattern of slicing an imaginary circular-shaped system in two and focusing on one of the halves in order to be able to observe all the active parts (from the core to the outer layers). Instead of placing the 'soloist' at the front of the stage and the sound curtain around him/her in a semicircle, the whole circular curtain is now on stage (all standing), around the silent, and more or less invisible soloist (seated, along with the percussionist, who nevertheless is to be regarded as part of the curtain). In addition, the curtain's

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[75] Quotation marks are used to identify the words (actions, drone) with the homonymous parts of the score.

performers are asked to remain completely static and in their playing position throughout the whole piece (even when they are not performing).

All the above is meant to create a ritualistic environment and disclose the ceremonial character of each action or inaction. As well as for the performers (as discussed above), the element of surprise is preserved for the audience, who are not being able to see the preparation of each 'action'. Also important is the mysticism (as far as it is possible) about the 'ingredients' (type of material, source) of each action. Although it could be argued that these instructions 'remove' a certain amount of the performance's theatricality,[76] it is expected that they will lead to the achievement of the desired ritualistic character, wherein several visual aspects of a music performance are kept hidden on purpose.

Returning to the contextual shot of the piece and the construction of silence, it is worth mentioning that the 'drone' parts in this piece (and in contrast with previous pieces, where the term has been used to describe certain sections) are considered as at least partially independent parts because their role is to present the background sound environment of different occasions of our everyday lives. This may obviously vary from almost nothing humanly audible to any other sound/noise that people cannot control, and thus tend to ignore as much as possible. In certain ways, this is also related to what in reference to *DIY 1* was referred to as the 'high noise levels of mechanical equipment' that often occur in performing venues.

Hence, in this piece, whenever a drone is performed it is regarded as an environmental sound. Thus, if nothing else is occurring at the same time, this/these section(s) is/are also considered silent. According to this rule the following plan has been designed (non-silent sections are marked by hyphens):

```
A1  --  --  |  B1  --  --
C1  --  --  |  D1  D2  --
E1  --  --  |  --  --  F3
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Structure – Dynamics

The piece is constructed in six sections (A, B, C, D, E, F), all of them – in theory at least – lasting the same amount of time and ending with a strong bass drum hit (this may also be

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[76] Similarly to the decision of 'hiding' the soloist in *DIY 3.*

compared to the role of the lamp in *DIY 1*). Although the piece is not notated precisely, a proportional connection between the duration of the various sections and subsections exists.[77]

In terms of the requested dynamics, a similar approach has been adopted to that in *Implied Failure* and *One-way Implications*. Although separate indications are usually given for each action/instrumentalist (thus those instrumentalists can already adapt their dynamics to the rest of the performers participating in the same or other action), the score includes a general dynamic plan. It is the conductor's responsibility to realise this always in accordance with the dynamically independent drone that might (or might not) be taking place at the same time.

As will be obvious, a combination of the two different systems of dynamic indications used in the previous pieces of this group is attempted here. The aim in *Never… Nevermore…* was to retain the independence of some parts ('drone'), and indicate relative dynamics for other parts ('actions'[78]) that are at the same time checked by the conductor (soloist).

3.3.4 Group II: Short Summary

The process of removing as many of the notated parts as possible and replacing them with semi-improvised parts based on verbal instructions gradually became the dominant objective of this group of works. It is my belief that this process leads to performances that take advantage of several usually neglected aspects of musical presentation, while 1) the performances can still be programmed to take place inside conventional concerts and halls and 2) the musicians are not asked to step away from what they are usually trained to do and are used to doing (playing their instrument conventionally, performing actions instead of meta-actions). In that sense, these works seek the audience's attention in several different ways, and as a result offer the composer a range of ways with which to direct an audience's attention in each work.

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[77] Each of the sections is separated into three subsections (A1, A2, A3, B1, B2, B3, etc.). All subsections marked with the number 1 (A1, B1, C1, D1, E1 and F1) are meant to last a similar amount of time (a suggested indication is 12"–20". Based on this, all subsections marked with the number 2 (A2, B2, C2, etc.) are then designed to be twice as long as those marked with the number 1. Similarly, subsections marked with the number 3 should be three times as long as those marked with the number 1. As a result all sections are expected to have roughly the same duration, although always dependent on the conductor's sense.

This process led to an opening towards improvisation, an approach I have neglected for some time. It is obvious that a huge area for the creative exploration of the theatrical concepts combined with the function of semi or fully improvised music is thus unwrapped.

Finally, it is essential to underline the developing importance of the internal dynamic equivalence and coordination functions. The artistic aim of having players engage with a musical work on a different level than just acquiring the technical skills to cope with their parts can hardly be underestimated. Not only for the success of a work's outcome, which would probably help the audience to engage with it, but for the development of the musical skills of the performers themselves and the ensembles with which they are involved.

3.4 Group III / Middle Path

The third group of works included in my portfolio – described in Section 2.1 as including those works that attempt to connect the previously discussed left and right paths – is in reality a collection of pieces that do not fit in the other two groups. The four pieces included here share several common thoughts and certainly explore the middle ground between the basic two dimensions presented earlier. However, they weren't conceived as a developing group of works (as the previous series were) and thus a slightly different approach for their presentation has been adopted.

These pieces are also differentiated from those of the previous groups by the absence of any pre-defined rules, forms or even concepts. The ideas discussed in Chapter 2 and then applied (in varying forms) in the previous works finally lead to and are now fused with the theatrical practice as it is defined and dominated by them. Hence the works of this group gradually approach and in certain cases even imitate theatre, especially as defined through the values of Knapp's archetypal music. At first the direction seems somewhat different, but it is in fact the personal realisation and amalgamation of all the philosophical, theoretical, artistic and, later, socio-political concerns I have discussed up to this point.

Thus the presentation of these works focuses fully on these parameters: the presentational possibilities, the roles and occasions, the consistency of time and space, and the contextualisation with the contemporary world.

3.4.1 '…our saviours…'

This composition, the least provocative in terms of stage placement, was written for the Dutch Orkest de Ereprijs [79] (completed in January 2011). It is scored for fourteen instruments and three female voices, and lasts in total three minutes. Evidently, the size of the available forces (the biggest in my portfolio) and the requested duration (the shortest in my portfolio) made this a very particular challenge.

Due to the number of performers and the technical difficulties of changing their positioning, it was agreed with the conductor that the instrumentalists would remain in their original positions (sitting more or less as a wind orchestra), and the singers would be placed on a platform that would allow them to be 'in' the orchestra (as if they were the

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[79] See http://www.ereprijs.nl/.

puppets and the orchestra the background of a puppet-theatre production). This decision allowed the singers' physical presence to project and to become the main visual focus point, without them outshining the rest of the orchestra (as would happen if they were placed at the front of the orchestra, as in, e.g. a symphonic work).

The programme notes are based on selected statements/comments made during what has been described as the 'pan-European campaign supported by individuals all over Europe, who believe the Lisbon Treaty should be rejected, to make way for a better, more democratic European Union'.[80] Most of these statements challenged the Irish population (as they were the only ones who were given the chance to speak their mind) to vote against the Lisbon Treaty.

Hence, in close relation to its contextual shot (revealed in the programme notes), the piece is built on a scenario that is hidden from the audience: It involves the transformation of several facts that usually occur on different occasions of political crisis all over the world into musical 'actions' (actions that have an acoustic result, as introduced in the context of *Never… Nevermore…*). The following is a generic categorisation of these sounds:

- Common sounds such as fire (or other) alarms, electric equipment failures (especially broadcasting machinery), ambulances speeding and tooting, etc.
- Transformations of phenomena such as people rioting, gathering in public spaces, shouting, being beaten and suppressed, etc.
- Human reactions such as commenting, running/panting, shouting out of despair, grief, etc.

The above 'actions' (or at least some of them) become the characters of this piece. As might be expected, many of them are carried by the singers. Their parts are notated on a three-line stave, indicating low, middle and high vocal registers. This choice was made to support the realism of a human character, even though an incomprehensible language (similarly to *DIY 3*) is being used. In this case, however (and contrary to *DIY 3*), a made-up language has been invented that aims towards: 1) the expression of the requested emotions through the acoustic result, and/or 2) the visual representation that those emotions require (facial expressions, etc.).

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[80] See http://www.europesaysno.org/.

The instrumentalists perform the remaining roles and realise many of the above 'mechanical' sounds by playing their instruments. In a couple of cases one word of text is also passed to the saxophonists: this is the word 'no', which obviously has an important symbolic function in this piece. It must be mentioned that 'no' is never included in the singers' text, although some of their (re)actions may suggest it.

The above elements are presented in a kind of dream situation, in which things can overlap, be lengthened and/or shortened independently of their real existence, not presented in their original order, and so on. This becomes particularly true in the middle section (B), where a number of 'actions' (alarm on piccolos and piano; crowd on clarinet, horn and tuba; vehicles speeding, tooting, etc. on trumpet and trombones; violently interrupted shouts on saxophones) take place at the same time, although almost completely independent of each other. In the other two sections on the other hand (A and C), the human voices dominate, hence the rest of the 'actions' either exist independently in the background, or are elaborated alongside the vocal parts.

Finally, a different type of concluding gesture is used here, with the tubular bell in the last bar of the piece. In addition to a possible connection with the dispersed and unhappy sound of bells during a funeral/burial service, it was also considered a very distinctive gesture for a moment during which everyone else on stage is expected to be completely static, waiting for the sound to fade out.

3.4.2 Shot II: Orpheus & Eurydice

This piece is the only one in this group that was not composed during the last year of my studies (it was last revised in May 2009). It is scored for mezzo soprano and five instruments (violin, cello, clarinet, piano, bass drum – percussionist also playing inside the piano) and began as a clearly musical idea: to generate a 'natural' crescendo by using a gradually decreasing distance between the singer and the stage. Based on this, the myth of Orpheus was thought to be of some relevance. An adaptation was requested from singer and writer Myrto Loulaki, who was also given a plan of the sections, as well as the phenomenon of distant sound on which I was working.

On the one hand, the piece was conceived as a short opera, or part of a bigger operatic work (an approach that has not been explored in the previous works): the theme, the libretto and the function of the singer (Eurydice) tend clearly towards this direction. On the

other hand, several other parameters have been set in accordance with the left and right paths that were analysed earlier: the placement on stage (slightly altered, mainly because of the piano and the percussion), the 'empty' stage (no scenery), the use of the instrumentalists (especially the pianist and the percussionist) and the structure/division into sections.

The structuring strategy is very much based on that used to plan the works in Group II. As in *Never… Nevermore…*, each of the eleven distinctive sections (A to K) ends with a bass drum hit. Initially, each following section's duration was reduced according to a specific formula. After the first performance of the piece, however, I made some revisions; some of the sections were extended and others were slightly reduced. Thus, the existence of the formula is no longer recognizable, but the general strategy of making each section shorter than the previous one still exists, up to the second bar of section K. This is the scene where Eurydice leaves Orpheus (and the stage – the concluding gesture) because her time is over. After this moment, time starts to count differently, and the bass drum hits become more and more distanced (the end of the piece).

Each of the instrumental sections A, C and E get shorter, but at the same time gradually become much more active and make use of more extreme dynamics and articulations. The climax actually takes place in section G (as Eurydice comes on stage), where the clarinet is also used, for the first time, to add an extra level of intensity. In between sections A, C, E and G, the singer's 'natural' crescendo (as discussed above) takes place against a $B\flat_3$ produced by the E-bow in the piano (sections B, D and F). Eurydice is supposed to be coming to earth from the underworld; in a reversal of this, her main singing area moves from around E_5 on B, to G_4 on D and finally around $B\flat_3$ on F (creating a conflict with the E-bow). Following the same steps, her singing is required to become gradually less 'operatic' (in terms of the amount of vibrato used) and more human, ending with *sprechgesang* (on F).

Following the climax after Eurydice's appearance on stage (section G), it is Orpheus's turn to reply (section H); this is the only time that the pianist plays conventionally on the piano. Regarding this section's music material, a trace can be found that leads back to *DIY 1*.[81]

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[81] Some of the segments have been taken from *DIY 1's* section B.

A not so obvious, but certainly important point, which might possibly relate to all the aforementioned associations between human beings/societies and the transformation of their functions into musical 'actions' in previous pieces, is the role of Orpheus. Instead of another singer, the leading role is given to the pianist as part of a 'system' that includes both the piano and the percussionist playing in it, as well as the bass drum that resonates inside the piano.

A voiceless Orpheus uses his 'lyre' (silently pressing some of the piano keys while the percussionist is plucking the strings) in order to project his emotional condition. The piano, turned in an unusual position, is placed at the front of the stage so that it hides the percussionist, as well as the rest of the ensemble. The drama between the main characters takes place in front of the piano; thus the rest of the ensemble stays completely untouched. What is accomplished here, however, is a 'defined' dialogue (beyond the traditional meaning of the word) between a talking human being and the sounds of a musical instrument. This is thought to link back to the ritualistic character of music, and the function of the proto-performances: the communication between humans and the supernatural.

Because of the instrumentalists' placement on stage and the significant visual aspects of the work, *Shot II: Orpheus & Eurydice* is considered to move gradually away from the performers' usual settled stage positions towards a freer, and in certain ways more theatrical use of the stage.

3.4.3 Temporality

This is one of the latest additions to this portfolio (composed May 2011). It was commissioned by the New York based duo NOISE-BRIDGE[82] and is scored for soprano and clarinet/bass clarinet.

Temporality moves away even further from a conventional concert piece (or even the unconventional but still static placement of the musicians in the works of Group II), and tends – as far as possible, given the limitations already discussed[83] – towards theatre.

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[82] See http://christiefinn.com/noise-bridge/.
[83] See 3.3.

The programme notes are this time only conceptually connected with the piece; they don't have any obvious connection with the (again) hidden scenario (explained below). They are still thought to give certain directions in terms of the audience's expectations.

Built in three sections (or acts), *Temporality* appears to present three short video shots of a situation taking place within a psychiatric clinic. The stage – with a deliberately minimalistic scenery (similar to those of the *DIY* series) – is separated into two halves by an imaginary wall: a dark locked room with the patient (clarinettist (male), a melancholic/schizophrenic character), and the corridor just outside the room where the visitor (soprano (female), a very close relative, possibly the only one who cares about the patient) waits, hoping for the sign of a cure, not knowing really what to expect or do. Although it seems as if the two characters cannot communicate with each other, they can certainly feel each other's psychological condition. In my personal version of the story (which, as described earlier, doesn't need to be shared by either the performers or the audience):

- Section A is a monologue for the singer, based on an adapted version of the beginning section of *…our saviours…*; the singer fights with herself: talking, shouting, getting irritated with herself. It is important here to underline that although she was not conceived as a mentally ill person, she doesn't speak in an obviously comprehensible language in order to show her confusion. The clarinettist at this point acts as part of her inner self, indicating her developing anger and subsequent breakdown. (This internal monitor function is similar to that of the lamp in *DIY 4*.) It is only at the very end of the section that he actually externalizes a reaction. The end of the first shot is indicated by the fading out of the lights.

- The lights fade in for the second shot, to find the clarinettist in a different position, while the singer moves as close as possible to the clarinettist's position in section A. Very different in character, the second section presents the two characters as having some type of communication with each other, although each of them acts independently. It is also not clear if the clarinettist favours the communication and/or presence of the singer in the clinic. He continues playing (although it seems he becomes frustrated at times), up to the moment the singer realises that her presence is making things worse, and she stops.

- This leads to the third section (played without a break), in which the clarinettist gradually fills with despair (end of the piece).

The language used for the vocal part is an experiment based on the one used for *…our saviours…*. The general idea remains the same, as well as some of the syllables, while others are replaced and some new approaches are explored. In Section B, a completely different approach/language is used; it is now much more similar to the clarinet's acoustic result. This is to make clear the difference between the miscommunications that take place in section A (and presumably earlier as well, in the characters' lives before this scene), and the much more effective interactions in Section B. What is also implied here is that the adaptation of the singer to the needs of the clarinettist has resulted in a positive development. It might also be comprehended that the clarinettist is reacting badly to this change at some points (e.g. bar 16 – as seen in Figure 19) just because of his mental condition; unfortunately the singer is later affected by that fact and thus abandons her efforts. Obviously that leads to the clarinettist's concluding gesture (Section C).
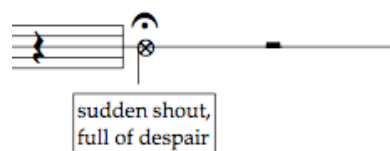

Figure 19: The clarinettist's reaction.

3.4.4 Mirror, mirror on the wall: the crucial moment

The Warehouse Ensemble commissioned this piece, the most recent of those included in this portfolio (composed July 2011). It is composed for a female singer, piano, cello and percussion (playing on the strings inside the piano).

The given concept, which I tried to adapt to my approach as much as possible, was for a short, six word opera, up to three minutes long. It was my decision – as a continuation of the works *…our saviours…* and *Temporality* – not to use meaningful text as part of the developing story. Thus the required six words were chosen only to give a hint of the underlying concept (a fairy tale, as is also implied in the title): *Once upon a time* and *The End*. It is worth mentioning that the programme notes are again somehow relevant to the contextual shot of the piece, but are not really intended to be necessary in supporting the dramatic actions.

The pianist and singer are mainly treated as actors; there is some movement involved as well as combined musical and non-musical actions. The pianist is partly an outsider, the

narrator (narrating a not-meant-to-be-written story; thus there are only six words). He experiences the anxiety of living a – more or less – familiar moment (story telling) under some unexpected and inappropriate conditions (there is no story to tell). At the same time another story (that the pianist also becomes part of) is being developed: the singer plays a role in conflict with the 'mirror' (based on the well known fairy tale *Snow White*); she doesn't properly talk to 'him', but her acting and vocalisms (exclamations) transfer the message of her actions to the audience.

In fact the whole score is made in the form of a theatre play. Thus, the clearly notated fragments (similarly to those in *DIY 1*) are limited to their minimum, while most of the time the directions are provided verbally (sometimes not even in a precisely musical way – the actual details are left to the performers to decide). This relates closely to the approach taken in *Never… Nevermore…*, where no musical notation is involved in the score either; there are common goals behind these decisions: scores are not supposed to be used in the performance.

The piano is placed in the same way as in *Shot II: Orpheus & Eurydice*; this time the open lid is considered to be the mirror (one of the play's characters). The mirror remains dumb most of the time; its voice (the percussionist playing on the piano strings) is only used towards the end of the piece, to build up the drama. Finally, the cellist is only playing the cello: this would normally be considered a musical action, hence praxis. This is done, however, as part of the theatrical performance (although the cellist deliberately doesn't hold any obvious role), thus those actions, although clearly musical, seem to become in this specific context completely theatrical (and hence metapraxis).

3.4.5 Group III: Short Summary

In comparing the four pieces of this category, a very important common characteristic becomes apparent (which was not set as a rule for this group of works at the beginning): the use of the human voice. It could be argued that this perhaps becomes a necessity, as these works try to move away from the musical concert situation in their exploration of possible theatrical connections.

As a result, the examination of different types of text immediately became a very important matter of consideration in composition. In *Shot II: Orpheus & Eurydice*, an almost Wagnerian approach is adopted: the music and text are treated equally, in order for both to serve the

drama: the realism of human nature. As Dahlhaus states, 'The text, the poem, is – just like the music – understood by Wagner as a means of the drama, not as its essence'.[84] Following and developing the same concept, in two of the pieces the text used is not based on an existing language, but is invented specifically for the occasion. This links back to *DIY 3*, where a language unfamiliar to the audience is used. Further development of this approach leads to the use of no words at all (not even made-up ones) in the progress of the main part of the story, as in *Mirror, mirror on the wall: the crucial moment*.

As an overview of the works included in the third category, it might be argued that they manage to combine the theatrical aspects explored in Group I with the notion of musical gestures and actions explored in Group II and the generality (non-specificity) that music carries as a medium.

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[84] Dahlhaus (1985): p. 267.

Conclusion

The compositions presented explore the involvement of different types and degrees of theatricality in musical performance. The term 'theatricality' is used quite broadly and so a categorisation of the works has been made in order to highlight the differences between the various uses of the term. The order of the categories' presentation in the commentary was constructed according to the chronological order in which they occurred to me during four and a half years of doctoral studies.

I began from the area I had been exploring in my earlier studies and in which I thus felt more comfortable. This area tended towards music theatre, where instrumental and vocal performance – considered in their more or less traditional form – become part of a theatrical presentation. This idea was introduced in *DIY 1* and gradually developed in the progression towards *DIY 4*, where the concept became gradually twisted; some of the cello sections in this piece are designed as especially isolated musical gestures engaged within a theatrical event. This is an indication of the new approach that I have been investigating for some time.

I became fully aware of the creative possibilities that musical gestures have on their own when I was asked to write *How to… corrupt someone* for the Okeanos Ensemble. It was specifically the use of the harp that unlocked creative ideas that I had not had the chance to explore before. Thus this piece revealed a whole new artistically interesting and up to that point unexplored territory. It also seemed to be considered by many performers and promoters much closer to a conventional concert work, and was thus thought much more approachable for all sides involved in a concert (programmers, performers, audience). The gradual turn towards improvisation (or at least not precisely notated scores) cancelled this last advantage, but it did develop the concept of the pieces to a great extent.

Towards the last 18 months of my studies, I felt the need to tear down the frames I was setting myself; in their place I tried a selective combination of both approaches already taken with some possibly new ideas. A first step had been already made earlier with the work *Shot II: Orpheus & Eurydice*. The short duration of the pieces requested during this period gave me the chance to complete many totally different draft plans for each, and thus develop my ideas in different ways. In addition, the limitations I sometimes experienced

(from performing ensembles or venues) pushed me towards new directions that were realized in the works of the third group.

Through the process of writing this commentary I had to step away from the work of this period and realise that there are many more aspects of musical performance available for further experimentation and on which creative work may be based. Although this is the end of an important period of my life, it seems that those works included in the current portfolio – as well as many others that have not been included or are not referred to anywhere in the commentary – could be the basis for my future explorations. My only hope is that the existing ideas and works will stay alive and keep evolving in order for new concepts and approaches to be created.

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