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Doctoral thesis

MUSICIANS IN SPACE

An investigation into a spatialized approach to the performance of free improvised music and the exploration of a heterarchical musicking process.

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for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
from the*

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Abstract

Musicians in space (MiS) is a practice-based research project investigating the impact of spatialization on the performance of free improvised music (FiM). It draws heavily on Christopher Small's idea of musicking to contextualize the argument that in the fifty year history of FiM, improvisers have failed to fully explore possible alternatives to the formal separation and static positioning of the audience and performer. While the conventional performance situation is seen as being integral to the pageantry of the performative experience, I argue that the fixity of the spatial and social arrangement has done little to support the all-encompassing and heterarchical aspirations that had once been a noted rallying cry of the free improviser.

The thesis traces a journey through a series of live performances involving experienced free improvisers, on the UK and European improvised music scene, and incorporates the voices of over 70 participants. The thesis establishes a separation between hierarchical and heterarchical forms of musicking, where the former emphasizes the convergence of more unifying and fixed ideals associated with the construction and organisation of a musical process, while the later celebrates a more decentralized, polysemic, and self-organizing musicking practice. This categorization is used throughout this research to support a greater degree of understanding of the particular characteristics of FiM within the broader context of music-making.

MiS, in essence, simply invites all the participants the option to modify their spatial relationship to the musicking process in order to expand their listening and playing experiences. It was found that this single change, in the approach to

performance, greatly influenced many aspects of the FiM process, providing new insights into ways of engaging and listening for both the improviser and the listener. It afforded the improviser new opportunities to connect musically with the ensemble, while elevating the profile of the audience member from a focused listener to a visible participant and active collaborator in the process.

This document attempts to establish a clear impression of what was uncovered by this research, while also celebrating the impossibility of capturing in words the complexity of an improvisation experience. It does this by incorporating a range of different forms of writing and a collection of personal depictions of a number of performances and improvising participants.

This document also includes links to multi-perspective audio and visual footage of all the performances. This can be found at

http://www.dafmusic.com/Musicians_in_Space/mis_projectbrief.html .

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Declaration of Authorship

I, David Leahy, declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own.

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Introduction

You arrive to a performance of improvised music expecting to see an ordered array of chairs orientated towards one end of the room. Instead you enter a room where the chairs are disorderly positioned around with a vague orientation towards the middle of the space. The instruments, rather than being localized in one place, can be found in various corners of the room: on tables, resting on stands, or on the floor ready for their owners to pick them up. You wonder if you have arrived too early, with the organizers yet to set things out properly. But as more people arrive your feeling of uncertainty increases as nothing seems to be changing. Eventually, the reasons for the disordered spatial arrangement is explained.

As well as an introduction of the musicians, it is explained that they will be moving around the space while they are playing. The audience are also invited to move around during the performance, changing seats and perspective on the process, in response to what they find interesting. The suggestion that the performance could be approached like a sound installation, where an array of speakers are positioned throughout the space each offering a different sound to discover, provides a not-entirely foreign perspective in which to begin to understand what is about to take place. Only in this sound installation, the loud speakers have all been replaced with live musicians that have a mind of their own and will be moving around.

What is described above is the scene that met the audience members who attended the performances associated with this practice-based research, *Musicians in Space*, which is looking at the spatialization of the performance of free improvised music (FiM).

Musicians in Space (MiS) asks the question, why the improvising musicians, throughout the fifty-five year history of the music, have not pursued a more spatially and physically fluid relationship to performance? It argues that, by not doing so, the improvisers have upheld a hierarchical relationship between themselves and the audience. The spatially static nature of their performance has

also meant that the improvisers have limited the extent to which they can physically engage with the different spatial and acoustic features of the performance space. This brings into question the widely held belief that FiM emerges out of a combination of all the “atmospheric conditions in effect at the time the music” (Parker, 1975, p12–13) is created. This thesis aims to explore what happens when the performance of improvised music becomes spatially fluid, when the invisible fourth wall is removed and the participants are invited to explore the music making process spatially.

Having been a free improviser for nearly thirty years, I am acutely aware of how my practice as an improviser has gone beyond my music-making to inform and shape every aspect of my daily life. Improvisation is not an obsession, it is the way that ‘I am’. An underlying mistrust of authority has undoubtedly fuelled my interest in the music, as FiM is widely recognized as a practice that subverts musical traditions (Titlestad, 2000, p13–23: 22). In hindsight, I can see that I was looking for ways ‘around’ and ‘past’ the accepted path, before I knew what I was doing and long before I first encountered free improvisation. In stating this, I am hoping to communicate something of how this thesis has emerged and how I have tried to illustrate and celebrate the all-encompassing nature of improvisation. At the same time, I recognise my limitations in trying to do justice to such a richly diverse and individualized practice, where words can never convey the full spectrum of the process.

Throughout this process, I have felt like I am trying to conquer a mountain equipped with just a set of used double bass strings, a tent peg, a tooth brush, and a vague idea of what way is up. But most importantly, I held onto an intuitive belief that I would be able to ‘make-do’ with the things that I would find on the

way. This is how this research into spatialized musical improvising emerged: as a pragmatic process of sensing and responding to whatever happened, much in the same way that an improvisation would take shape. Beginning with the argument that the formal separation and the static positioning of the audience and the performers does little to support the free improvised music process. At the same time, I questioned the extent that improvised music could be built on the close interrelationship of all the elements present in the 'musicking' (Small, 1998) environment. This is given that the performers, by not moving, would most likely fail to respond to the aspects of the environment not afforded to them and in the immediate vicinity of the performance area.

I have chosen to draw on Christopher Small's *Musicking* (1998) as a framework for contextualizing my observations, but with the added dimension of making a differentiation between hierarchical and heterarchical forms of musicking. Where the former emphasizes centralized, fixed, set, and composed approaches to musicking, the latter is built on more decentralized and self-organizing processes where different approaches and understandings of what the music is and can mean are allowed to co-exist. It is not my intention, however, to establish a binary struggle between hierarchy and heterarchy. Instead, I am attempting to emphasize the importance of balancing the two co-present aspects of the musicking process. Like Small, I have favoured heterarchic musicking over its dominant counterpart, primarily because of the association that I see it has with improvisation. It is therefore part of my mission to address the imbalance and highlight the inherent emphasis that exists towards hierarchical forms of musicking.

MiS exists as a qualitative-based research utilizing a combination of an improvisation-based pragmatic approach with elements of the heuristic research method (Moustakas, 1990). It has involved the presentation of a series of live improvised music performances that have taken place over the past four years, with data being collected in both post-performance discussions and a series of interviews. Two research questions helped to guide the process and to ensure that what I was discovering remained relevant to the practice of FiM. These were:

To what extent do free improvising musicians draw on the spatial characteristics of a performative environment – And to what extent can, could, or should they?

And

How would the performance of free improvised music within a spatialized context look, feel and sound?

My practice as both an improvising musician and dancer has always been at the centre of the process. By continually returning to my practice, I have reinforced the connection between the research and the improvisative process. My playing has been ever-present: from the performances themselves, then through my personal and professional music practice it has been a crucial ingredient in the analysis process, where it has acted as a way of thinking through, or rather playing through, ideas. By continually returning to my instrument, a form of self-dialogue has been established that continually returns the research back to my practice and my body.

My writing style has tried to remain true to my journey up the improvised mountain also. Recognising that to attempt to pin such a polysemic and subjective practice down to absolutes would be like walking into the wind in a white-out snow storm with my double bass on my back catching the wind and

taking me back to where I began. The thesis is not one that offers the reader nice shortcuts, with clear summaries that the reader can turn to to understand the entire document. Instead, I have tried to allow the writing to flow from one theme to the next just as if I were freely improvising on my double bass.

So as to capture something of the illusive nature of the practice, I have incorporated a four-line verse, or 'Koan', into the thesis, along with a longer and more free flowing writing, which I have labelled 'depictions', a term used by Moustakas in his research method. These try to encapsulate something of the improvisation spirit with linear flows of associations that jump from felt sensation, to references and quotes, to descriptions of past experiences. They should be read with a feeling of trying to capture the essence of an entire improvisation within a single instant. They are deliberately ambiguous so as to avoid imposing too much of my experience on the reader, who is invited to fill in any gaps they find with their own past experiences and thoughts.

The trouble with believing in the all-encompassing nature of the practice of improvisation, is that it has been difficult to limit what has gone into my contextual review. Additionally, while many free improvisers have engaged in spatially dynamic performance making in the past, very little documentary evidence exists that points toward any concerted study related to how or to what extent improvising musicians consider the spatial element of their performative process. This has been a further reason why the scope of this study has been spread so wide.

An underlying thread to the entire research is ecology. This is visible through the language that I have used, with words like: diversity, flows of energy, feedback

loops, complexity, tolerance, and flexibility continually pointing towards an understanding of the experience of improvisation based on ecology. The rationale behind this is just as much to do with my own personal ethical beliefs as it has to do with the synonymous relationship that I see exist between heterarchic musicking and ecology.

What emerged out of the MiS performances was just as all-encompassing, with the range of insights into FiM, relating to the musical, social, and spatial nature of the practice. Briefly, MiS identified numerous ways that the incorporation of varying spatial location and movement contributed to the quality, clarity, and diversity of the listening and communicative experience. MiS effectively eliminated the hierarchical separation between the performers and audience members, meaning that everyone became valued contributors in the improvised musicking process. MiS also illuminated how my personal approach to music has been informed by my combined improvisation practice as both a free improviser and a contact improvising dancer, with numerous insights into the physically embodied nature of the process becoming evident.

Document structure

Following this introduction, Chapter one provides a review of literature which touches on many elements that contribute to the practice of improvisation. I begin with a brief outline of FiM itself which is then built on throughout the document. Then in section 1 of Chapter 1, I introduce Small's *musicking* and go on to define the field that this thesis inhabits. To establish a broad foundation for the thesis while not leaving one aspect neglected while my focus is elsewhere, I alternate

the sections between aspects of musicking with themes connected to space and the listening experience. In section 1.2. I focus primarily on how space has been used in music and how it has been used to structure social participation in music. This continues in section 1.3 where the emphasis is on establishing an understanding of the inherent social nature of music and how improvisation operates within a multi-layered environment that involves biological, cognitive, physical, social, cultural, and environmental factors. Finally in 1.4, I reflect on how my experience in dance has contributed to my musicking practice and how this has informed my understanding of the embodied nature of music making.

Chapter two briefly outlines the methodological and research design that were employed in this research. It details the steps taken throughout the research, the performances, and the interviews. It finishes by providing further details regarding my approach to writing this document.

Chapter three provides information on how participants responded to their expanded degree of spatial and social freedom within the MiS performances. It explores the sense of permission that the MiS process seemed to offer the participants and how it supported a heightened connection to the space and the practice of listening. I continually refer to existing research to support my observations and provide numerous hyperlinks to performance footage which is stored on both my personal website and Youtube.

Chapter four consists of two collections of depictions. The first provides a series of six depictions connected to performances that occurred in 2017 and 2018. This

is followed by four depictions of improvisers that all participated in this research.

The depictions contain:

- a four line verse, based on the Japanese Zen 'Koan',
- a descriptive prose accumulated from reflective documents, interviews, and observations taken from watching the footage,
- a depiction verse, which attempts to capture the essence of the event or individual.

In chapter five, Heterarchical musicking – Musicians in Space, I return to musicking to reflect on where I have gone on this journey. The chapter is divided into two sections with the first section focusing on social inclusivity. In alternating subsections, it looks at the performative experiences and concerns of the audience and the performers. The second section comes to terms with the sense of clarity that emerged out of the MiS process which paradoxically existed in what was clearly a musicking environment that seemed to exist within far greater levels of complexity and diversity.

In the final summarising chapter, I briefly review some of the salient aspects of the research before offering a final statement related to my personal journey through the research process.

Contribution to knowledge

This study has resulted in:

- A considerable contribution to knowledge related to the performance of free improvised music, with specific attention placed on the improviser's embodied engagement with the spatial environment and the important contribution that the audience member makes to the performance experience.
- A wider acknowledgement of the inherently corporeal nature of a musical practice, which will hopefully prompt further academic study of music as a generative, embodied and inter-relational practice,
- The establishment of a new and innovative way of presenting improvised performances that breaks down the separation between performer and audience, that can be adopted by other improvising musicians.

Associated media

All of the performances mentioned in this thesis were filmed and recorded with it being free to view either through Youtube

(https://www.youtube.com/feed/my_videos) or on my own website

(http://www.dafmusic.com/Musicians_in_Space/mis_projectbrief.html)

The footage, when viewed on my website, is set up to allow you to switch in real time between different camera angles and sound mixes. But as up to 5 layers of footage are placed on top of each other, it is sometimes slow to appear. You may need to refresh the page a few times to enable all the films to load.

Abbreviations and spelling conventions

Free improvised music – FiM

Contact improvisation – Ci

Musicians in Space – MiS

Music-based Underscore – MbUS

Spelling

This thesis endeavours to adhere to Oxford English Dictionary spelling and grammar rules. Direct quotes, however, will maintain the author's original spelling.

Improviser – with the 'e' rather than 'o'.

1

Musicking

1.0.1 Introduction - A living process

Ebalab¹, the sound not ceasing, but continuing on.

Even when the water has flowed
beyond your perception.

It is still beginning

Beginning to face ambiguity
Positively responding by balancing
a gentle trickle, lifted up over
what could be a car crash.

In this first chapter, I will survey previous literature related to the intersection of Free improvisation, Musicking and the utilization of the physical space in live performance. I look at the myriad of interconnecting threads that come together to make a musical experience happen. I will highlight the interconnectivity that exists amongst all the participants, the physical environment where the performance takes place, the embodied and physical nature of the process, and the social and cultural aspects of the musicking process.

¹ A term from the Kaluli people of Papua New Guinea referring to the ongoing nature of water that continues to flow long after it is out of sight. (Feld, 1981, p22–47: 36)

Following this overview, I will briefly introducing the practice of free improvisation (FiM). Then:

In section 1.1., *Musicking* and the physical nature of the listening experience is introduced, with these two concerns being addressed alternately. I define the participative roles that exist in the research and offer a summary of how space is used and interpreted within FiM. Using the terms *hierarchical* and *heterarchical*, I outline my differentiation of two possible musicking experiences: from those steeped in layers of control and structure, to the forms of practice that remain more free and self-organizing. I will stress the importance of not viewing these two musicking aspects as opposing binaries, but rather terms that refer to alternative versions of the same experience.

In section 1.2, *Space music* examines various practices associated with music spatialization and compositional process that exist which emphasize the spatiality of the musicking experience. The Music-based Underscore is introduced which provided the inspiration for this research and I look at some of the ways that free improvisers have expanded the participative aspect of the process in the past.

In section 1.3, *Improvising a musicking ecology*, elaborates on what constitutes heterarchical musicking and explore its similarity to ecology. Along the way, I emphasize the bio-physical origins of music, the inherent social nature of music making, and the way that we establish meaning to the music we play and how this informs how we operate within a group-based musicking activity.

Then finally, in section 1.4., *Musicking bodies in Space* focuses on the most important feature of a musicking process – the physical body. I reflect on how my own practice as a musician/ dancer has influenced my understanding of what free improvised music is and what I imagine it could be.

1.0.2 Free improvisers start to play

A - When did this begin?

B - Oh, A long time ago. It is surely “the oldest form of music” (Bailey, 1993).

A - But it is not really a genre, is it? Like, no one is leading us and we are not following a score, or keeping time, or using our instruments normally.

B – True. And I would say that the nature of what we do is only ever established “by the sonic-musical identity” of each player (Bailey, 1993: 83).

C - I agree, it works deeper than just playing the right notes. It is “something that structures who we are and how we move about in the world” (Iyer and Miller, 2013: 227).

D - Yes, “it straddles genres” (Hargreaves et al., 2011: 5) as if it takes no notice of musical boundaries.

E - In fact, if you could image all music as existing in “a perpetually evolving artistic frontier” (Morris, 2012: 49), then improvised music is always two steps ahead of that frontier, venturing “onward, remaining out of reach” (Titlestad, 2000, p13–23: 22).

- Silence -

A - Shall we play?

E - Yes, where shall we begin?

C - A good question, since it has already begun.

F - What? Do you mean like, we are continuing a 50 year old tradition?

C - No. I mean we need to keep responding to what is already there (Peters, 2017: 25). Making sense of it for ourselves and hopefully tying "other people into the meaning we create" (Attali, 1985: 135).

A – What is going on here?

B – Well, if we considered our free improvised discourse within the context of Mikhail Bakhtin. We can see that everything is shaped by the 'already spoken' and the 'not yet spoken' (Morson and Emerson, 1990: 137).

A – So, "The beginning is not the start of the work but the choice of a way into that which has certainly already started" (Peters, 2017: 25).

Free improvised music (FiM) emerged during the mid-1960s as a means of returning a level of autonomy and ownership back to the musicians. It offered the musicians a level of creative freedom regularly denied to the instrumentalist usually wedded to the written manuscript. Many musicians were inspired by similar departures, across the Atlantic, from the most predominant form of improvised music at the time, jazz (Morris, 2012: 24). Others were inspired by experimental and indeterminate composers, while others emerged from a background of 'make-do' and home-made music making, slap-stick comedy, visual arts, and skiffle bands (Toop, 2016, p252).

A leaderless music where the musicians balance the responsibilities of soloing and supporting each other through an emergent music making process that avoids the use of musical frames, forms, and referents (Pressing, 1999, p714). With no unified rhythmic pulse, free improvisation aims to appropriate or

subvert any “emotional, acoustic, psychological and other less tangible atmospheric conditions in effect at the time the music is played” (Parker, 1975, p12–13). Using home-made instruments, alongside conventional ones, extended techniques, and a non-idiomatic approach to playing, free improvisers have learnt to negotiate the many differences in technical ability and musical background to make musical connections happen. Toop reiterates this by saying:

Improvisation can have as many forms as there are participants, each of them working from within their own field of references and progenitors, their way of living, their relationship to instrument, body, space and listener. (Toop, 2016, p30-31)

Violinist, Philipp Wachsmann states that his playing process stems from his:

training, technical ability, overt and covert experience, likes and dislikes, habits, interests of the time, health, physical and emotional stance, receptiveness, commitment, focus, awareness, relationship to the space and environment and audience, personality, knowledge of the characteristics of the other players, stage presence, body language, the way in which musical experience is regarded and so on. (Wachsmann, 2012, p16–25: 20)

Gary Peters suggests that “a whole life might be seen as an improvisation” (Peters, 2017: 19), where everyone and everything is implicated and tied into the journey. The music does not just retell the story, it asks for suggestions and works with what emerges. “All musicking happens in the space between rules and personal freedom” (Cobussen, 2014, p15–29: 22), but within free improvisation the guidelines are set by each individual involved.

1.1

Musicking

This section introduces both musicking and the ways that space and listening are dealt with in musical performance. I dovetail these theme throughout this section, so as to signify the interrelatedness of these themes. I signal the different themes by spatially aligning them differently on the page: musicking to the left, space and listening to the right. I define the roles of the various participants of a musical performance and introduce the terms *hierarchical* and *heterarchical* to differentiate between the carefully controlled and heavily structured, presentational musicking experience and the more open and unknown musicking process that is more diverse in terms of participation and experience.

1.1.1 Defining musicking

Musicking, a term used to re-affirm the inherent ‘doing’ and interactive nature of music making was introduced in a book of the same name, authored by Christopher Small in 1998. It highlights how the music we engage in re-affirms a particular set of beliefs related to how we exist in society. Small reclaims the notion of music as an activity using the word *musicking* to refer to the act of making music, as distinct to the western society’s habit of referring to the scores, pieces, recordings and other music related products as ‘music’. Small states that:

the place to start thinking about the meaning of music and its function in human life is not with musical works at all, but with performing and listening. (1999, p9–22: 12)

With musicking, he proposes that we celebrate the communal and collective action of making music, irrespective of the role that one may take in the event:

To music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance. That means not only to perform but also to listen, to provide material for performance, to prepare for a performance, or to take part in any activity that can affect the nature of that style of human encounter which is a musical performance. (1999, p12)

Small describes how the musical practices associated with the most respected Western cultural institutions regularly left the audience serving as the polite bystanders to the music making process. This is exemplified through: what is accepted as appropriate performance etiquette, attire, behaviour, notions of an 'authentic' musical work, the role of the composer, the conductor, the soloist, the orchestral musicians, the promoters, the way music organizations are structured, the musical priorities that are established within the conservatoire-based educational institutions that preserve the musical traditions, and finally, the design of the concert halls that exist around the world that Small sees as symbols of each society's coming of age. Small claims that all of these aspects highlight a process that has as much to do with hierarchical control and the division of labour as it does about the making of music together. It therefore reinforces the Cartesian duality that has remained the basis to much of the value systems within Western society.

To negate this Cartesian split, Small proposes that we view musicking as a ritualized means of bringing new ideas of society into being. He argues that our relationships define us and musicking allows us to explore, affirm and celebrate

'who we are', which is always based on our connectedness to others (Small, 1998: 142). He states:

Through the relationships that are established in the course of the performance we are empowered not only to learn about the pattern and our relation to it but actually to experience it in all its complexities, in a way that words never allow us to do, for as long as the performance lasts. (Small, 1998: 141–142)

Another factor that led Small to this perspective, were the developments in the natural sciences that led to a more integrated and network-based understanding of living systems. Where music had been considered, over-simplistically, as a linear progression of causal experiences, residing in an insulated virtual musical space, music was becoming seen as part of a vast web of interactivity that links it to other living and non-living systems and aspects of human existence on multiple layers. Dylan Van der Schyff suggests that, music can be seen as a fundamental participatory sense-making activity, and as one of the ways that:

we reach out to, and orient ourselves relationally in the world as dynamic, self-making creatures who span physical, biological, emotional, cultural and rational modes of being. (van der Schyff, 2015: 3)

Like others, Small argues that the meaning of the musicking event encompasses the relationships that each of us have with the people, objects, and environment around us. This reflects the perspective offered by James Gibson's *ecological psychology*, and his notion of 'affordances' (Gibson, 1979), that sees us acting with, and in response to, what is in our physical environment. Small outlines the two-way nature of this process, saying that "by bringing into existence relationships that are thought of as desirable a musical performance not only reflects those relationships but also shapes them" (1998: 183). Small emphasizes the crucial

involvement of the body, saying that like all artistic activities “we think with our bodies” (1998: 140). He also acknowledges the embedded nature of a musicking process outlining the significance of the location of the musicking event, remarking that:

The act of *musicking* establishes in the place where it is happening a set of relationships, and it is in those relationships that the meaning of the act lies. (Small, 1998: 13).

By prompting the reader to scrutinize the behavioural and cultural conventions that are largely accepted without hesitation, or that remain hidden from our awareness, Small reveals the extent to which a music performance is a carefully choreographed spectacle. Musicking has now become “a rallying cry for contemporary music scholars interested in highlighting the dynamic, complex, and intrinsically social nature of their subject” (Borgo, 2007, p92–107: 92).

1.1.2 Listening

“What secret is at stake when one truly listens, that is, when one tries to capture or surprise the sonority rather than the message?” (Nancy, 2007: 5). Within Jean Luc Nancy’s question, a dimensionality to the act of listening is hinted at which suggests that, out of a world we do not know, we can uncover new information through being open to the sounds around us. Hearing sounds that fill our environments is unavoidable, but listening implies an intentional act of focusing on sound to gain additional forms of information: either to locate, recognize, discern, or appreciate (Blessner and Salter, 2009). Cage writes:

Wherever we are, what we hear is mostly noise. When we ignore it, it disturbs us. When we listen to it, we find it fascinating. (Cage, 1973: 54)

Listening communicates a desire to make connections with either a physical or social aspect of the world around us. Composer Augustino Di Scipio states that “engaging in listening implies caring for and engaging with” (2015, p278–289: 285) the sound itself, with others, and the environment. The act of listening is the starting point of any musicking practice. It demonstrates a generosity and willingness, on the part of the participants, to engage with and foster the creation of relationships that emphasize a process of binding and coming together rather than separation and division.

1.1.3 Musicking distinctions

In his description of *Musicking*, Small establishes the fact that any musical activity is an act of musicking. But within that, different musicking activities emerge involving very different combinations of musical and social variables. These range from centralized and hierarchical approaches to performance and musical structure, and more socially distributed and shared musicking. Thomas Turino (2008) provides a clear distinction between these forms of practice which exist along a continuum of experience ranging from participatory to presentational (Turino, 2008). The emphasis of participatory music is placed on the active involvement of all the participants, with little or no separation between those playing, and dancing, and those who choose to merely listen to the music. The

music is regularly structured using small musical elements that enable more people to participate as it is less reliant on the individual possessing a high level of skill and specialized knowledge. By contrast, presentational music limits active involvement to just the performers with the audience expected to simply listen to the performance. By incorporating intricate and complicated passages built on less straight forward musical forms, presentational music is regularly composed to test the virtuosic skills of the performers. This further reinforces the separation between the highly skilled performers and the listening public that are expected to only show their appreciation once the music has ended.

While Small promotes a more socially participatory model of musicking, one that he points out can be seen within the more shared and social practices of non-western musical traditions, he views less favourably the Western classical music tradition that relies on greater degrees of social separation and hierarchical control. But Small fails to offer any Western performance practices that uphold his positive ideals of musicking. But he had previously alluded to the possibility that free improvisation², with its emphasis on the freedom of the improvisers to respond to any aspect of the environment within a more egalitarian musicking process, could represent an alternative to the carefully controlled musical spectacle.

² This appeared in his introduction to 'Search and Reflect' (Stevens et al., 1985)

I, therefore, make the distinction between musical experiences that emerge out of predetermined, heavily directed, and scored musicking processes and those that are either leaderless or where the direction of the process is shared equally between the participants. For consistency, I will refer to these different approaches as 'heterarchical' and 'hierarchical' forms of musicking. Where the *hierarchical* process regularly stresses the assimilation of many voices into one message, as in the case of the symphony orchestra with the conductor directing the wishes of a composer, *heterarchical* musicking emphasizes the incorporation of many voices that can remain independently significant, as can be seen in the practice of free improvisation.

It can be argued that this distinction demonstrates two possible approaches to making music that correspond to two separate musical outcomes. But what is of interest here are the implications of each style of musicking and what each process reinforces by way of social structure, ownership, governance, and creative freedom. For instance, if you are wanting to achieve a concise and specific result or product, a degree of direction and control is required. But this implies a level of compliance on the part of those involved, which needs to be attained and managed somehow. By contrast, *heterarchical* musicking is built on voluntary participation and aims to incorporate the input of anyone motivated to join. *Heterarchical* musicking explores the nature of the behavioural patterns which connect us, but in the absence of dogma. With this approach, however, the prospect of achieving a specific outcome becomes a remote possibility. This distinction

uncovers an important difference between the two, with hierarchy naturally tending to exclude all dissent, while heterarchy by its nature is more inclined to embrace dissenters and conformers alike by celebrating our ability to coexist and collaborate. An apt differentiation between the two could be 'Live and let live' for heterarchy and 'Either you or me' for hierarchy (Naess, 1973, p95–100: 96)³.

The position of FiM on the continuum between these two extremes remains paradoxical. While FiM possesses many of the characteristics of *heterarchical* or participatory musicking, and attempts to subvert many of the recognized mainstays of hierarchical musicking, it works with a seemingly complex musical language and upholds the spatially separate and fixed performative arrangement that suggests a presentational musicking process. Additionally, the elevated status of presentational forms of musicking and the potential for greater financial and professional security for the artist, has led many improvisers to, either consciously or unconsciously, emphasize the presentational aspects of their musicking process. On this point, Scott Currie suggests that the present practice of free improvisation merely reinforces or, at least, does little to question the structures of creative commodification and consumption that exist. FiM merely privileges invention over variation and innovation over tradition. He states that:

From staged separation between actively engaged artists
and silent, immobile, passive listeners, to underlying

³ Originally used in a discussion outlining the 7 principles of deep ecology.

economic relations of wage-labour production and commodified leisure consumption, complex power asymmetries and cultural displacements ensure that such musical exchanges take place upon slippery-sloped terrains and follow courses that cannot but trace the contours inscribed by economic and symbolic capital. (Currie, 2017: 3)

I need to stress, however, that my distinctions of *hierarchy* and *heterarchy* are not meant to be interpreted as oppositionally absolute, where I am favouring one at the expense of the other. Instead, they should be viewed as co-present aspects of the same thing, musicking. I do acknowledge that throughout this thesis, I am guilty of highlighting and promoting the heterarchical realm of musicking, but this is for reasons of wishing to redress the obvious imbalance that exists within Western society towards the hierarchical modes of behaviour. It remains my belief that a healthy combination of both is necessary, but for that to exist a greater emphasis needs to be placed on heterarchical musicking practices, such as FiM. One important reason for promoting heterarchical rather than hierarchical processes in music lies in the greater degree of ethical capital that exists in the former, as Yves Citton suggests when he states that improvisers:

represent the intellectual vanguard in the effort to understand the ethical and socio-political implications of the improvisational activities that compose, day in and day out, the very fabric of our common social and political life (Citton, 2016, p160–181: 160).

The profundity of the ethical dimension is also addressed by Fischlin, Heble, and Lipsitz who state:

Improvisation is an important social, musical, and ethical practice for understanding and generating the potential forms of cocreation - deeply relational, profoundly contingent - without which our collective relation to each

other and to all things would be unthinkable. (Fischlin et al., 2013: xi–xii)

This research, therefore, is attempting to address the supremacy and tacit acceptance of the conventions associated with *hierarchical* forms of musicking. By challenging the one aspect of the improviser's practice that they have forgotten to question, which is their spatially and socially separate relationship to their audience. By doing so, I hope to remove the remnants of a performative tradition that does little to support the egalitarian and inclusive aspirations of the free improviser.

1.1.4 Space in music

Our relationship to the word 'space' is very indexical, reflecting the multiplicity and richness of human experience. Space can refer to: a period of time, a distance or interval, a void or area of emptiness, or an area occupied by an entity, body, or object. Dancer Steve Paxton, in attempting to define space, highlights our connection to the material objects that surround us that we regularly refer to in a spatial context.

He says:

I'm emptying it of everything I'm taking all the air out, and moving the walls, and taking away all the things that define space, because they're not space, but they do define it. And then trying to ... look at nothing. Realizing that if it weren't for nothing then something couldn't exist, that it requires a certain amount of nothing as fundamental to all the stuff that occupies space. (Paxton cited in De Spain, 2014)

In music, space is used to refer to the relationship between different sonic elements, such as pitches or the silences between them, as often

as it is used in reference to a particular environment used for musical performance. "Space is lived in, travelled through, measured, shaped and contemplated" (Harley, 1994: 20). As sound can be defined as the movement of oscillating waves emitted from a given sound source and music can be viewed as a systematic ordering of sound, the inseparability of space and music attests to Henry Brant's assertion that "all music is space music" (Brant and Oteri, 2006). Additionally, as the music or sound travels away from its source, it loses intensity, gets defused by bouncing off hard surfaces, or gets absorbed by softer furnishings. These interactions, with the spatial and physical characteristics of the space, colour the sound as it travels, meaning that the sound that eventually reaches the listener conveys far more information than just what was emitted from the original sound source. The quality of the music or sound now provides numerous additional insights into the space-ness of the environment.

Attempts to harness the spatial dimension of a musical performance have existed possibly as long as music itself. Traces of antiphonal music, where spatially separated ensembles or choirs engage in a dialogue of call and response, have been "found in the chanting psalms of Jews in biblical times" (Blessner and Salter, 2009: 168). Giovanni Gabrieli (1554 – 1612) was noted for extending the tradition of 'cori spezzati', taking full advantage of the acoustics and architecture of Saint Mark's Cathedral in Venice, which featured two organs and choirs on opposite sides of the vast space (Harley, 1993: 123). Countless composers since then took advantage of on-, off-, and back-stage instrumentalists, spatially separate ensembles and choirs

for dramatic affect. But during the twentieth century many composers extended the spatial scope of instrumental music into an area of performance practice known as 'spatialization'. These composers included: Luciano Berio, Pierre Boulez (static and mobile distribution), Henry Brant (Total Antiphony), John Cage (Co-presence of Dissimilarities), Henryk Mikolaj Gorecki (the use of geometric sound shapes), Ton de Leeuw, Bruno Maderna, Peter Maxwell Davies, Krzysztof Penderecki, R. Murray Schafer (soundscape composition), Karlheinz Stockhausen (Serialisation of direction), John Tavener and Iannis Xenakis (the use of Vector space) (Harley, 1993, p123–144).

Returning to Paxton's thought experiment, if we were to remove everything from around us, we would quickly find that, stripped of all the cultural and spatial associations, our understanding and relationship to any music played would feel very different. It is this open and judgement-free relationship to space that this thesis is focusing on. I aim to consider the performance spaces as an additional actor in the musicking process that like any other actor, or participant, brings something significant to the process which others are then free to be inspired by or not. In saying this though, it is recognized the inherent difficulty in removing all of our preconceptions and judgements pertaining to the performance spaces that we find ourselves in, but like the improvisers quest for freedom, we can see that such a relationship to the performance space remains an important ideal, even if an unattainable one.

1.1.5 The role of the performer

“What is it that makes a musician important?” starts Christopher Small in the foreword to ‘Search and reflect’ (Stevens et al., 1985). While Small focuses on the orchestra and the classical music world in *Musicking* (1998), in his introduction to this book of workshop exercises, Small stresses the responsibility of the musicians to use “his or her gifts, skills and experience to awaken and to guide the dormant musicality of those whose music has been taken from them” (Stevens et al., 1985: iv). Free improvisation remains susceptible to the social pressures that has helped to shape it as an identifiable musicking process, be it one that possibly remains most easily defined by what it is not. But if, as Richard Scott suggests, “the role of the improviser is to defend the space from fixity, keeping the perimeter permeable and undefined, permitting the free trade of materials” (2014: 11), then a return to performance practices that engage the audience more actively, and in a less prescriptive fashion, must support the egalitarian aspirations of the improviser.

In *Musicking*, Small tries to avoid being seen to criticise the classical music establishment, but his assault on *hierarchical* forms of musicking is clearly visible. He avoids comparing these musical activities with musicking practices that reflect a more *heterarchical* engagement. Jacques Attali, on the other hand, with his claim that everyone should have “the right to compose their own relationship with the world around them through sound” (Attali, 1985), offers a utopian vision of

how we could respond to this crisis. He points towards improvised music, specifically the work of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), as one example of how individuals have taken ownership of the sounds around them with little regard for external concerns and judgement.

While Attali urges everyone to participate, which possibly undermines the position of the musician, the role of the artist continues to be important. This is because they are able to extend the physical and fanciful activities of everyone, taking things further and more single-mindedly than by those whose main preoccupations remain elsewhere (Miller, 1975, p20–21). The musicians are regularly more experienced and committed to the process of making music, and so remain the torch bearers for others to follow. This is suggested here by Windsor and de Bezenac:

Music-makers help furnish us with affordances for interpretative action; they do not merely provide sounds which we process in a passive internal fashion. (Windsor and de Bézenac, 2012, p102–120: 115)

In the case of the improviser, this is something that Borgo suggests may be more to do with an individual's propensity to risk taking than anything else. He states that:

It may be that those most interested in identifying themselves as "improvisers," regardless of their particular passions or lot in life, are simply by disposition those most willing to engage with — and rely upon — the complexity and unpredictability of brain, body and world integration. The feeling of extending one's mind and consciousness across the sonic, social and material environment that can

emerge from the improvised encounter can be transformative (Borgo, 2007, p92–107: 104).

The strength of Borgo's assessment is that it avoids the usual trap of viewing those with the most talent and skill as possessing a gift of some description. Instead it reinforces the fact that exceptional talent is something that emerges in those that demonstrate the greatest degree of tenacity of spirit, single mindedness, and commitment to the creative task. This is something that psychologist and musician Jeff Pressing explains, stating that:

Substantial evidence now exists that it is primarily intensive practice of the right kind ("deliberate practice") that is linked with expert status, and that the sources of expertise might well be sought in the factors that predispose individuals towards such intensive practice. (Pressing, 1998, p47–67: 48)

1.1.6 Music vs noise and performance spaces

Any sound can be interpreted as either a pleasant sonic background or an unwanted disturbance or, at worst, 'noise pollution'. (Schafer, 1993). Hollerweger (2011) suggests that the noise pollution debate has focused too heavily on the issue of noise in contrast to silence. It oversimplifies and masks the reality which is that all activity, human or otherwise, creates sound, and that annoyance remains subjective. Blesser and Salter believe that:

enclosed performance spaces may have arisen from the need to create an acoustic boundary between a smaller private and the larger public acoustic arena. (Blesser and Salter, 2007: 191)

As time has passed, the physical environments that we normally associate with musical performance have increasingly become more protected spaces, which has also rarefied the listening experience.

All lived-in environments exist on a continuum running from public to private (Hillier and Netto, 2002, p181–203). The private or residential space restricts co-presence and establishes a conservative model of restrained social interaction. While at the opposite end of the spectrum, the public or micro-economic environment promotes social interaction and maximises co-presence potential. Within a musical context, the same spectrum of possible spatial environments are represented in where music is performed. From the purpose-built auditoriums that are designed to preserve the private listening experience, where we “leave our sociability behind at the auditorium doors” (Small, 1998: 27), to the music festivals where people “share not just a musical, but a total social experience” (1998: 45). Inversely, all spaces influence the nature of the musical interactions that take place inside them. Small states that:

Buildings dramatize and make visible certain types of relationships, isolating those within from the world outside, creating hierarchies through condoning or limiting communication. Created by human beings these relationships model or enact ideal human relationships as those taking part imagine them to be. (Small, 1998: 27)

The raised stage, the separate entrances for performer and audience, the spacious foyers designed to promote social interaction which contrasts with the fixed rows of seating facing towards the stage that

emphasizes the importance of focused listening, the acoustic engineering that reinforces what is taking place on the stage, down to the interior design, lighting, colour and quality of furnishings. They all combine to sensorially heighten and excite the listener while communicating something of the seriousness of the occasion. Small saw all of these features as carefully crafted elements to a complete package, a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, designed to reinforce the set of cultural beliefs and promote the kinds of relationships that those responsible for its construction believed to be ideal. Reflecting on the experience of a performance in a purpose-built auditorium, Small remarks that:

Whatever the event may be celebrating, it does not seem to be unity, unanimity or intimacy, but rather the separation of those who produce from those who consume and the impersonal relationships of a society whose dominant mode of relating is through the passing of money. (Small, 1998: 74)

Small saw the purpose of such classical music performances as nothing to do with sharing a celebration of community, but rather to provide an opportunity for the listener to engage in a private listening experience, which paradoxically remains something experienced surrounded by strangers. But the design of music venues have contributed to the prevailing assumption in Western society that music is primarily a “private and asocial activity” (Blessner and Salter, 2009: 191).

1.1.7 The role of the audience member

Small makes the point that if we were to present “a flowchart of communication during a performance” (Small, 1998: 6), arrows would be pointing away from the composer towards performers and then outwards to every listener present, but it would not show any arrows “pointing in the reverse direction, indicating feedback” (1998: 6), or between the different listeners. So much of our understanding of a musical performance relies on the idea that music is a one way communicative process, and despite the claims by free improvisers that the music is co-created with the audience, few signs of this collaborative process are visible to an observer.

This thesis, however, aims to challenge this situation by blurring the boundaries between performer and observer. It is argued that by removing the spatial separation between the two sets of participants, the roles can become less important than the degree of engagement that each individual exhibits. Rather than basing the performative experience on the roles an individual may play within it, the emphasis is being directed towards recognising that the most important activity that all of the participants are sharing is the act of listening. If freedom is an ideal, sought by the free improviser, it will remain unattainable unless all the social constraints are removed. By emphasising the role of listening in the musicking act, the responsibility for the 'sounding actions' is shared amongst all the participants (Di Scipio, 2015, p278–289: 284). This removes the hierarchical notions of the performer being the sole instigator of the communicative act and attempts to build

capacity for shared understandings and a tolerance of difference. Simon Waters takes this further questioning the relevance of such terms as performer, audience and environment. He suggests that by using these terms you confirm their separation and belittle the complex and interconnected relationship between the corporeality “of the first, the goal-orientedness of the second, and the otherness of the third” (Waters, 2007: 2).

By proposing that we consider the performers and audience members simply as ‘musicking participants’, the distance between the different roles is greatly reduced, along with much of the hierarchical connotations associated with the division of labour. As the two roles are regularly occupied by one person in the same performance, the separation of performer and audience is not emphasized within this thesis: instead, the word ‘participant’ is used. This celebrates the shared commitment to the act of listening, which sustains and drives the musicking process, irrespective of whether the participant is holding an instrument or not.

1.1.8 Acoustic blending and fusion

Traditionally, the design of an auditorium has focused on ensuring that the music arrives to the listener “pure and disembodied” (Ihde, 1976: 76). Numerous attempts are made to unify the sounds coming from the stage, through the utilization of hard surfaces to bounce and deflect sounds and soft furnishings that act as sound baffles which are designed to absorb or mask certain frequencies. This emphasis on

fusing and blending of sound sources, or ‘spatial spreading’ (Blesser and Salter, 2008: 5) leads to spatially disparate sound objects combining so as to embed the listener in an immersive experience. Additionally, the reverberation or quality of ‘temporal spreading’ (2008: 5), which is used to identify “the space-ness” of a given environment (Nelson, 2015, p323–330: 325), is another crucial factor in auditorium design.

The prominence and prestige associated with the concert hall leads to the general assumption that these expensive public spaces represent the pinnacle of listening experiences. This not only strengthens the exalted status of the auditorium over other musicking and everyday listening environments, but also influences the perceptions, aspirations, actions, and behaviours of everyone engaged in music making whether they perform in concert halls or not. The idea that music needs protecting from the outside world, which has led to the existence of auditoriums, also strengthens the dualistic mindset that music exists in a separate spatial realm positioned inside the physical or real space. By “excluding mundane noises from the elevated, spiritual realm of music” (Harley, 1994: 75), the romantic idealization of music is perpetuated, which leads to decisions as to who is entitled to perform and who is not. The auditorium also reinforces the spatial fixity of a performance process requiring the performers to remain where the sound can best be projected, while also resulting in the existence of listening sweet spots in certain locations.

Chris Atton (2012, p427–441) identifies the precarious relationship that exists between performance environments and improvised music. He highlights the various ways that the performance of improvised music continues to be challenged by both the musicians themselves and external parties that feel hostile or excluded by the musical activity. He points out that most improvised performances take place in inexpensive venues, which are often not suited for focused listening experiences, and regularly need to be shared by other public groups not associated with the music. Atton writes:

The consequent reterritorializing of the concert space is contingent on temporary reinterpretation of the space as an instrument in its own right. After the performance, the space reverts to its former, unmusicalized state. (Atton, 2012, p427–441: 437)

In relation to this study, the most important implication of the supposed supremacy of the ideal listening experience that the auditorium represents, is the separation and fixity of the performance experience that the FiM community have adopted as the norm. As Small points out, the audience respects the spatial separation that is implied by the raised stage and the restrictions to their freedom resulting from the fixed seating. Even in the absence of these spatial constraints the moment the music begins in the back room of a pub the same spatial conventions come into play, reinforcing the same hierarchical separation. They do this even when all the musicking participants know each other, as is invariably the case. After socializing with their musical peers, everyone upholds the performance convention and take their seats. It is this that I am addressing with this thesis, as I attempt to offer an alternative to the

spatially static and separated performance experience which continues to be seen as the only viable approach to musical performance. This is despite the fact that the musicking landscape no longer focuses just on the fusion and blending of the sound in the listening experience.

1.2

Space music

In this section, I will examine various practices associated with music performance and compositional processes that emphasize the spatiality of the musicking experience. Particular attention will be drawn to examples of composition practices that emerge directly from the real and physical characteristics of the performative space. I will dedicate some time to outline the contribution made by Henry Brant who remains the most prolific composer of spatialized music. The Music-based Underscore (MbUS) will be introduced which is an important antecedent to this thesis, followed by a look at a few strands of FiM practice that failed to survive.

1.2.1 Temporality, pitch, and now spatiality.

Music has always provided us with the opportunity to be transported from the physical time and space into the virtual or the imaginary, and for many, this remains one of the most magical aspects of music. Rolf Inge Godøy (2010, p54–62) explains that the ability to hear sounds in our head, like we would imagine a picture or scene, is an almost universal ability. He states that:

Regardless of levels of musical training, most people seem to have memory images of music, and also seem to be able to give verbal accounts of these images, of what we in our context call sonic images. (Godøy, 2010, p54–62: 54)

As pointed out by DeNora (2000: 7), the metaphor of being 'transported' by the music is very common. Music can transport us from one emotional state to another, as well as into different time and spatial realities.

As outlined in section 1.1.4, composers have factored in the spatial reality of where the music is being played. From Gregorian chant singing that would allow the singer to naturally work with the resonant frequencies of the chapel, to for instance the off-stage trumpets in Beethoven's *Leonore No. 3 Overture, Op. 72b* (1806), space has always been an aspect that composers have played with. But during the 20th century, advances in recording and later sound editing technology coupled with the ingenuity of composers saw the spatial dimension to music go beyond simply the imaginary and memory-based experience, to being a compositional quality that could be manipulated just like the traditional dimensions of pitch and temporality. Composers had already begun to disregard the importance of sound fusion and blending, but the development of digital musical workstations led to a seismic shift in the way that music was both experienced and produced (Di Scipio, 2014; Harley, 1993, p123–144). Software and hardware innovations ranging from: spatially specific sound designs, looping technology, the use of found sound and field recordings, resampling, DJ-ing, virtual computer-based instruments and site-specific sound installations, along with a renewed interest in physical, bespoke instrument design, have all exceeded well beyond the dreams of such visionaries as Edgar Varese, and are seen by Simon Waters as “part of a socially. self-regulatory, negative feedback process returning us to a ‘joined-up’ situation of music as practice” (Waters, 2007: 2).

These compositional and technical innovations also led to music beginning to be thought of as layers of sound. This corresponded to the shifts towards network and ecology-based perspectives on life that sees us existing within a multi-layered web of connectivity (Capra, 1996). One advantage of this is that “layered musical elements retain more of their perceptual identity when not fused” (Blessner and Salter, 2009: 169). This means that sounds coming from different locations, continue to exist as separate sounds locatable in space. This development has shifted audience expectations which have had to adapt to a wider array of performative experiences, with Blessner and Salter stating that:

The rule that requires musicians to perform in a tight cluster on the stage and listeners in predefined seats in the audience area is readily broken, as is the rule that requires both musicians and listeners to maintain a static geometric relationship throughout the performance. (Blessner and Salter, 2009: 166)

1.2.2 Acoustic Ecology

During the 1970s, composer R. Murray Schafer and others from the Sonic Research Studio, Simon Fraser University, began to study man’s acoustic ecology. Schafer established the World soundscape project which aimed to emphasize both the creative and political implications of the acoustic environments, regarding nuisance sound as sound pollution. Blessner and Salter point out as we progressed through the 20th century, it became harder to “ignore the cacophony of a society now embracing mechanization as the religion of progress” (Blessner and Salter, 2007: 108).

Schafer compared the soundscapes of nature and wildlife, which he termed ‘hi fi’, to the sounds of the built up, urban environment, which he referred to as ‘lo

fi', soundscapes. Schafer inspired a generation of composers and musicians dedicated to exploring 'found sounds' in composition and using the listening to everyday sounds as a way to re-connect with the environment. The aim of soundscape music is to incorporate all the sounds of life into a musical / acoustic process. "By moving a performance into a natural space, soundscape music elevates the role of acoustics in conveying a spatial experience" (Blessner and Salter, 2007: 176). But the evaluation of sounds being either hi-fi or lo-fi has widely been criticized as being nostalgic and prejudicial against manmade sounds and the soundscapes of urban environments (Di Scipio, 2014). Further, criticisms have come from some authors (Ingold, 2007, p10–13; Kelman, 2010, p212–234) who feel that the compositional aspirations of Soundscape music, amounts to little more than "sonic tourism" (Di Scipio, 2014: 4).

1.2.3 The space-ness in music

An area of electroacoustic music of particular interest, spatially, is the idea of a performance ecosystem which first appeared in the early 2000s. It involves the establishment of a microphone / speaker feedback system, where the music emerges out of nothing but the environment. Whatever sound happens to be in the space is collected, filtered, and returned back into the space, where it then returns into the system. By additionally, placing microphones in other parts of the room on different surfaces, different aspects of the environment became prominent in the composition. Similar systems of looping sampling/filtering/playback have been used by many composers (Bowers, 2002; Davis, 2011, p120–124; Di Scipio, 2003; 2011, p97–108; 2015, p278–289; Green, 2011, p134–144; Nelson, 2015, p323–330; Waters, 2007) and continue to bring an awareness to the spaces where the performances occur. Augustino Di Scipio

suggests that:

What we hear as sound and in sound is the dynamics of an ecology of situated and mediated actions, as a process that binds together (1) human beings (practitioners and listeners, their auditory inclinations), (2) technical agencies (the domain where means and ends are dialectically negotiated as practitioners strive to achieve a certain freedom in action across the public space of technological mediations and delegations) and (3) the environment (the physical and cultural context where sound-making and listening practices take place). (Di Scipio, 2015, p278–289: 278)

Similar to performance ecosystems, Alvin Lucier looks for things “outside of music that would inspire” him compositionally (2012: 84). As a member of the Sonic Arts Union, he explored the use of homemade electronic circuitry as a means of investigating the area between performance and acoustic perceptual awareness. This fascination led one reviewer to remark that you could never tell, when going to a performance of Lucier’s work, whether you were going to a concert or “an experiment in acoustical physics” (Noyes, 1978, p28: 28).

In, *I am sitting in a room* (1970), where a spoken message is repeatedly replayed and recording, the reverberation of the room becomes the active constituent in the composition and the listening experience (2012: 90). As the work progresses, particular frequencies are reinforced by the dimensions of the room, while others get increasingly masked. This continues until the original spoken text is not audible at all. In its place is a slow rhythmic throb that reflects the resonant frequencies of the room.

Both of these examples, illustrate how the composer has tried to get “the room to do the work” (Lucier, 2012: 90) by bringing our attention to the “acoustic signature of the room” (2012: 87).

1.2.4 Sound in a black box

Electroacoustic music, it has been argued, has invested far more into spatialization than any other area of composed music (Smalley, 1997, p107–126: 122). This is because it has allowed the composer to “juxtapose and rupture spaces” (1997, p107–126: 122). By placing sounds with completely different acoustic signatures next to each other in a composition, the composer can create unique acoustic topographies that would be impossible in reality to experience. This means that listeners can now “experience music without a listening space” (Blessner and Salter, 2009: 130) and it has made spatiality “a condition *sine qua non*” for electroacoustic music (Harley, 1993, p123–144: 130).

Denis Smalley built much of his understanding of how composers approach listening and his concept of Spectromorphology (Smalley, 1997, p107–126) on the four categories of listening identified by Pierre Schaeffer (1966), where the first two exist within a wider listening realm and the following two are more focused on music. Smalley explains that “musical space is not empty and cannot be separated from its sounding content” (1996, p77–107: 91). But he notes that space within electroacoustic music is usually regarded conceptually at the expense of the actual physical sounding environment. Smalley states that the structure of the spatial content is one where the composed space, which possesses an ‘acoustic topology’, is enclosed within the listening space. This implies that musical space is always a superimposed space within the wider realm of

listening. This then produces a conflict between the composition and the spatial diffusion of the “unpredictable listening space” (1996, p77–107: 91).

While the attraction of transporting the listener into different sound worlds remains attractive to the composer, the emphasis within FiM is on bringing the participant firmly into a connection with the moment and whatever exists in the real and lived in, *unpredictable listening space*. Small states that whereas composed music usually describes a journey taken by the composer, relived in the performance of the musicians or in a sound studio, the audience have the opportunity to join the musicians on the journey itself when they listen to improvised music (Small, 1977: 176).

But outside the sound lab studios, many other composers have made electroacoustic music for specific physical environments and have tried to connect with the real lived space. For example, world fair pavilions were regularly the sites for spatially immersive compositions (Grueneisen, 2003: 32). In these instances, the music was either composed for the space, or the space was designed specifically for the music. Alongside these high profile developments has been the expansion of sound art into gallery spaces in the form of sound installations.

In these situations, the involvement of the public, according to Guy Harries (2013, p3–13), becomes a crucial aspect of the composition. He states that the interactivity of the work and the social context in which it is presented become important considerations in the compositional process (2013, p3–13: 12). All musicking experiences require a level of active participation on the part of the listener. This can range from simply being an 'active interpreter' (2013, p3–13: 3)

through to the sound installation requiring the audience to cocreate the work. The nature of the participation can also vary from purely navigational, where the listener is invited to choose where in the space they go, through to collaborative creations where the music is co-authored. Harris proposes the title 'Ecologies of engagement' for the sound installations that require a high level of interactivity to be realized. He explains how the job of the composer in these instances shifts to establishing the parameters in which such a participation can successfully take place. Harries points out that a common aspect of sound installations is the emphasis the work places on the 'discovery of possibilities' (2013, p3–13: 7). He states that:

The audience gradually familiarises itself with the ecology of the work including its affordances and limitations. The creator of a work is therefore the designer not only of the ecology itself, but also of all the potential processes that the audience can experience. (Harries, 2013, p3–13: 7)

This is relevant to this research as it considers the way that the participants can discover their own role within the musicking process. Only within MiS, the responsibility for the uncovering of these potentials is distributed to everyone involved, bypassing the composer. This sharing of the responsibility, I believe, has a significant bearing on the degree to which co-authorship can be realistically considered.

The other significant difference between sound installations and MiS, is the inclusion of live performers instead of loud speakers. This has some very obvious implications related to the flexibility of the spatial locations and the ability of the musicians to perhaps move during the performance. But additionally, as the

improvisers and listeners continually make decisions based on what has happened and what interests them now, the space effectively comes alive through the musicking process.

Additionally, "the visual link between the performer's sound-producing actions and the resulting aural stimulus" remains very significant (Andean, 2011, p125–133: 129). This is a very important aspect of any live performance (Bowman, 2002, p55–63; Cox, 2016). But in the absence of a live performer the listener, after searching for the sound sources, is drawn into how the space is impacting on the sounds (Andean, 2011, p125–133: 129). How the room is affecting the sound is not focused on by the audience of a live performance to the same extent. But the degree to which the MiS participants choose to engage and attend to the spatial nature of their listening experience remains a possible area that could be enhanced through this research.

So, while musical space has been opened up and explored by sound designers and composers; and technological advances have greatly democratised and assisted the diversification of the means of music-making, ideas pertaining to listening environments have failed to ignite the imagination of all but the most dedicated sound artists. The design criteria for the auditorium has remained focused on the blending and spatial spreading of the sound. The rowed seating continues to reinforce the idea that music is a spectacle best viewed from a distance and not something that you can spatially discover. Blesser and Salter feel that the listener of recorded music, in most instances, has remained unable or not interested "in hearing a musical space as a space" (2009: 148). Changing people's minds of how they can experience live music, however, requires a

process of re-education away from deeply engrained, habituated conventions, fears, and logistical constraints that regularly deter the instrumentalist from moving from the one space. In the next section, I review the most significant figure in spatialized music, Henry Brant.

1.2.5 Henry Brant

One of the most committed advocates for instrumental spatialization was American composer Henry Brant. The inspiration for his approach to composition is offered here by Brant himself, who states that:

By 1950, I came to feel that single-style music, no matter how experimental or full of variety, could no longer evoke the new stresses, layered insanities and multi-directional assaults of contemporary life on the spirit. Perhaps if the music itself were many-layered, multi-directional and hammered together out of irreconcilable elements, it could speak more expressively of the human predicament. (Brant, 1970)

Brant liked, and composed, complicated music: where dissimilar material and instruments would remain spatially separate. He states that “I’ve never been a great fan of the simpler, cut down music with fewer things. ... It just isn’t true in ordinary life” (Brant and Oteri, 2006: 194). Brant saw a close connection between his approach to composition and everyday life. He acknowledged that every lived experience contained countless things happening all at once. Some things we would be aware of while other things would remain unknown. He felt that music should not be different to this. He asked himself, “why should music cut itself off from the experience of the most ordinary kind of life?” (Brant and Oteri, 2006: 194). Eventually, he concluded that:

All music is space music. ... Space is a convention. It's set up in such a way that the performing part is over here and the listening part is over there, but it's just as much space music as anything else. (Brant and Oteri, 2006: 195)

Brant recognized his debt to Giovanni Gabrieli, Hector Berlioz, and in particular Charles Ives for his approach to 'spatial music'. Extending the compositional characteristics of Ives, Brant used a similar approach to multi-layered polyphony, but not within a conventional orchestra concert arrangement. Instead, Brant chose to expand on the sonic effects through the specific placement of musicians around the performance space.

His work *December* (1954) was the first contemporary multi-spatial work performed in Carnegie Hall, New York. This came after his first spatial work for orchestra, *Antiphony 1*, first performed in 1953 that saw the orchestra split into five separate ensembles. This predates the premiere of Stockhausen's *Gruppen* (1957) which the composer had claimed was the first spatialized composition to use multiple orchestras. Published nine years after Brant had begun working with space in composition, Stockhausen's article 'Musik im Raum' (1959, p67–72) outlines his theory of spatialization which dismisses the possibility that space can be considered a manipulatable feature of music, whereas direction can be. Stockhausen believed that "by establishing exact proportions, analogous to durational ratios, between various positions on the circle" (Harley, 1997, p70–92: 74), a surrealistic scale of positional properties can be identified similar to other scales such as pitch and duration. Brant saw no sense in such a complicated concept, choosing instead to focus on the dissimilarity of the various musical entities in the space. For instance, to counteract the detrimental aspect of spatialization in attaining rhythmic coordination he chose to combat this by removing the necessity of the conductors to fully synchronize their material. He

specified that the ensembles should be positioned as far apart as possible and ideally on different levels. He formed symmetrical pairings of starkly contrasting ensembles across the space, both in instrumentation and the stylistic material played. He writes:

I try to avoid relationships between the elements. I not only have them contrasted in tone colour and position, but I try to avoid any musical relationship as much as I can. I think that this is what kills all music: there are so many things that are related that people are not listening to anything past the first minute because it all sounds the same and there are so many repetitions that it is not possible to keep track of it. I try to counter that in every way possible. (Harley, 1998, p147–166: 151)

His approach to composition also utilized improvisation, although usually well within recognizable idiomatic constraints or with defined limitations on what could be played, involving specific registers or ways of playing.

Most of Brant's repertoire left the audience seated in traditional seating arrangements with the performers not moving throughout the performance. His first piece to require the musicians to move was *Hieroglyphics 1* (1957). But Brant found the inability of moving the sound physically, without compromising the performers playing ability, his main compositional hurdle (1979: 3). Harley states that:

The seemingly infinite wealth of possibilities opened up here is limited by the theatrical character of the performer's movement in music. When the importance of the musicians' actions overshadows that of the sonorous results of these actions, music becomes theatre. (Harley, 1993: 129)

In 1967, having been composing spatialized works for over 17 years, Brant summarized his observations into four points. These are paraphrased, by Harley, as follows:

1. Spatial separation clarifies the texture: if the music consists of several

layers "each with its own distinctive sonority scheme, over the same octave range," the presence of casually-occurring unisons should be avoided by distributing the performers into widely separated positions in the hall.

2. Separated groups are difficult to coordinate: exact rhythmic simultaneities are impossible because of the distances between the musicians.

3. Spatial separation is equivalent to the separation of textures in pitch space (if performers are together on stage): separation allows for the differentiation of musical strands "with no collision or crossing of textures" and permits a greater complexity in the music.

4. Spatial arrangements must be planned exactly, but allow adjustments of details: there is no one optimum position of the listeners or the performers in the hall, each situation is different. (Harley, 1994: 134)

These observations coupled with listening to Brant's compositions have contributed greatly to a basis in which to begin to understand what may occur within the MiS performances.

1.2.6 Spatial location and The Music-based Underscore (MbUS)

The Music-based Underscore (MbUS), is my music-based adaptation, developed as part of my Master's degree (2014), of a framework for improvising dancers devised by dancer Nancy Stark Smith. The 'Underscore' (Koteen et al., 2008), Stark Smith explains, is a practice which exists in the middle ground between description and prescription. It is both "a personal research tool and a framework for the practice of contact improvisation" (Barrios Solano, 2013) and takes the dancer through a range of commonly occurring states of bodily awareness. The MbUS replicates the Underscore with both practices beginning with the improvisers, focusing on an internally felt and imagined space before gradually

expanding the focus and level of activity outwards to incorporate ever larger realms of space, until finally arrive to an unstructured free improvisation.

The structure of the practice provided a clear set of spatial anchors which the musician could focus on. This meant that the prospect of engaging with space, having not done so before, was not so daunting. The research showed that the musicians appreciated the opportunity to actively engage with the physical and acoustic properties of their performative environments. What I had perceived as a reluctance on the part of the musicians to move was found to be the result of a blind spot in their awareness of what they considered permissible when they played. They felt they had no permission to simply explore their improvisation process spatially. One improviser stated in reference to the spatially fluid nature of the process that, “it leaves me wondering why we don’t do this all the time” (respondant cited in Leahy, 2014).

A striking aspect of the MbUS for many of the improvisers was the degree to which they listened more and in different ways. Personally, the MbUS offered me an understanding of how dancers listen somatically, by listening through a felt, haptic relationship to sound just as much as they listen with their ears. This multisensorial dimensionality to listening was something that I was keen to explore within a purely musical context. Consequently, I was able to define a range of spatially-engaged approaches to listening, from Skinespheric (internal listening) which combines the possibility of mental rehearsal and sonic imagery (Godøy, 2010, p54–62), through kinespheric listening that selectively excludes the sounds produced by others in the space while factoring in the haptic connection the musicians have with their instruments. To finally arriving at a more global sense of listening, which I associate with Steven Feld’s concept of ‘Dulugu

Ganalan' or 'Lifted-up-over-sound' (1988, p74–113), which respects the attentional nature of the listening experience and how we choose to listen to certain features of a soundscape at the expense of others and that this has a dimensionality to it ranging from very narrow to wide enough to take in the entire space.

It is expected that the added sense of musical freedom and connectedness, experienced by the musicians in the MbUS, will be repeated and built on within MiS. However, what remains uncertain is the impact that the performative experience, involving an audience, will have on the actions of the musicians, and what effect the removal of the Underscore framework will have on the process. This is of particular interest as many of the musicians felt that, while the MbUS framework provided a clear sense of shared purpose and helped to contextualize the spatial element of the process, it also created an unrealistic environment that most could not imagine existing within a performative context.

1.2.7 Aspiring for a free group music

Free improvised music began with no specific intention or plan in relation to how the performer's would relate to the audience. The emphasis was on the creation of a musical outlet emphasizing the freedom and autonomy of the musicians. But, over time, an increasingly *presentational* (Turino, 2008) perspective became the norm within FiM, much to the disappointment of some of the musicians.

The performance environments used by the early free improvisers, from: the Little Theatre Club used by Spontaneous Music Ensemble, the rooms that AMM

used in the London School of Economics, and the Royal College of Art, all offered a different experience for the traditional music audiences of the late 1960s (Scott, 1991: 59). Stevens suggested ways that the audience could get involved in his improvisations (Bailey, 1993: 119), while Edwin Prévost explains how AMM looked for venues where they didn't have "a kind of normal musician/audience relationship" (1991: 295), preferring instead a more blurred informal performative experience similar to Allan Kaprow's, New York 'happenings' (Kaprow, 1967). Toop adds that, Prévost used to arrange his drums in different parts of the room and then run from one part of his kit to the next (Toop, 2016: 216). This all contributed to a re-examination of the performative experience that seemed to reflect the other aspects of the free improviser's practice.

Possibly the most anarchic example of a group exploring the participative boundaries during this period was *The People band*. Formed in 1965, as the 'Contemporary music ensemble', the People band was composed around a core of nine musicians, but featured a floating line up of musicians, painters, dancers, and the occasional poet. Long residencies in North London at both the Starting Gate pub and the Wood Green Arts Centre helped to consolidate the identity of the band, with the Saturday performances at the arts centre lasting all day, with friends, partners, and audience members regularly augmenting the group to over twenty people playing at one time.

Percussionist, Terry Day recalls how they would play "non-stop music" (Day, 1989, 7'30") with players free to drop out and "wander about" (1989) leaving other musicians to play. This was made easier by the fact that the band invariably featured two players of most instruments. The informal atmosphere which they cultivated meant that a culture of acceptance of everyone's voice and contribution

was fostered in performance which undermined the growing tendency towards emphasizing an individual's instrumental mastery and virtuosity. Band member, Paul Jolly remarked that the band “ate ego, it devoured audiences, until one couldn't be sure if you came to play with a band or to watch it” (Beresford and Jolly, 1978: 16). The band communicated a sense of integrity and sincerity to their mission of delivering a music without borders. Paraphrasing the collective voice of the band members, Sheila Rowbotham writes:

In order to communicate what is happening we have to change how we see and how we say it. Otherwise it'll be one big belly flop into the dustbins of history and we'll change nothing. (Beresford and Rowbotham, 1977, p16–17: 16)

In a response to the political and social chaos of the day, the People Band showed a way beyond the conventional approach to musical performance. “All boundaries inside and outside [were] liable to continuous transformation” (Beresford and Rowbotham, 1977, p16–17: 16). The People band with their osmotic relationship to the audience, attempted to explore a degree of freedom rarely seen, that contrasted with the perception that organized structures are a necessity within music and contemporary society (Toynbee, 2017: 41).

The People Band can be seen to utilize the most open and decentralized form of collective control that has existed in FiM. But with the demise of the People Band the emphasis on challenging and blurring the boundaries between the audience and performer waned also. “If people want[ed] a revolution in music they had it then and let it slip unnoticed back to the shadows” (Beresford and Jolly, 1978: 17). Speaking in 1989, Day reflected on the gradual shift in the improvised music

scene in London, saying that the 70s were very dry and very formal. He goes on to say:

If you get a style and a structure and you stay with it ... fine. You will make it, and everybody can recognise it. Because people want to come and know what they are going to hear. But the side of improvisers that I represent, it is a one off, and you keep developing, and you keep changing, and you express as many bits of you as you can. (Day, 1989)

Richard Scott states that free improvisation, having begun as a practice that questioned everything, gradually moved away from the “radical collectivist and spiritual implications of free improvisation” (Scott, 2014, p95–109: 104) that people like John Stevens had believed to exist. Toop explains how:

Stevens would sit in his back garden, looking at the willow tree and the grass, and imagine how much closer to nature people could be if music were pure interaction rather than statements. (Toop, 2016: 243)

Toop goes on to say that, Stevens received a degree of ridicule, throughout his life, by many of his fellow musicians for daring to contemplate such ideas (2016: 243). The term *Egoless music* “was used as a put down” (Scott, 1987) by musicians who felt threatened by what he and Trevor Watts were doing. This led Stevens to dedicate his energies, away from many of his peers, and towards those in the audience. Stevens explains:

I turned more towards people who were actually getting off on the music but not necessarily playing it. People who were excited by the fact that there was a group of people who were struggling towards some sort of group experience within a free improvisation. (Bailey, 1993: 119)

Stevens established the *Spontaneous Music Workshops* at Ealing College in 1971, which proved to be the first point of exposure and a training ground for countless

individuals on the free improvised music scene. But despite his work, as an educator, an organiser, and his profile on the free improvisation scene, Stevens felt that:

by the late 1980s the collective principles of free group playing had been largely brushed aside in favour of an increasing emphasis on greater individualism, personal instrumental virtuosity and musical elitism which he thought were to the detriment of the more profound musical, spiritual and political implications of free group music. (Scott, 2014, p95–109: 104)

Terry Day sympathizes with this sentiment saying that a purest streak runs through the music today which represses disparate voices and points towards a consensus of approaches and practice. He feels that “ All the musics are squared off” (Regina, 2018: 15’45”), with musicians playing the same music that they played forty years ago. Compounding this, are the “books that are heralding the purest element in English improvising” (2018), that have contributed to a more collective identify to the improvisation scene with fewer improvisers working across different musicking disciplines.

Having played with Day for many years, I empathise with his thoughts related to a tendency within FiM to conform and rely on respected and habituated practice. By creating the distinction between heterarchical and hierarchical musicking, I aim to highlight how FiM has shifted away from an inherently socializing and community building activity to one that resembles a commercial transaction. Small explains that “what we accept as the norm is, in fact, the exception” (Small, 1998: 39) in relation to how we experience music and relate to each other through the process. Following the political theme that began in the discussion about the People Band, Oli Mould points out that:

The creativity as preached by capitalism enacts a 'slow violence' that grinds down any other forms of societal organisation, to the chorus of 'there is no alternative'. (Mould, 2018: 201)

In the next section, I turn my attention to establishing an understanding of the importance of the shared and social nature of FiM and musicking more generally.

1.3

Improvising a musicking ecology

The aim of this section is to provide a firm grounding upon which to view the social implications associated with the introduction of spatialization to improvised music. Reverberating through this section, is Small's sentiment that all music binds us to our lived reality. It connects us to ourselves, to aspects of the world around us, and to others that we feel we share an affinity with. Music provides us with the means in which to recognize what is important to us, in terms of the way that we choose to relate to each other and to the world.

This section outlines the socializing characteristics of heterarchical musicking, which I align to a musicking philosophy built around ecology. This is exemplified clearly in the way that music has emerged out of the most instinctual behaviours based on our survival and communication. Music continues to exist as an important means of maintaining social bonds and a sense of the collective. The experience of musicking provides the individual with an important means of making sense of the world around us.

1.3.1 The emergence of music

All music emerges from an active engagement with the world around us and "scarcely a single musical technique or form of composition" could have come into existence had it not first emerged from an improvisative act (Bailey, 1993: ix-x). Carl Ellenberger suggests that we began experimenting with sound at

around the same time as the concept of culture emerged, after which our biological and genetic evolution co-evolved (2018: 17). He states that:

The part of the brain called the neocortex has not only expanded during human evolution but become infinitely more complex under the influence of our culture, especially in the regions linked to innovation, imitation, tool use, and language. And what is music but an example of innovation, imitation, tool use, and language? (Ellenberger, 2018: 3)

This perspective points towards an understanding of music that is not seen as separate to any other lived experience. But rather, as an example of how music has emerged out of the everyday practices and activities that sees us utilizing our knowledge and understandings of what is around us, to create a connection using sound with some aspect of our lived experience. Small stresses this by highlighting the ritualized nature of musicking (1998: 94–109), where participants share intersecting frames and points of reference, both musical and social. The effectiveness of music in bringing people together has led it to becoming a crucial ingredient in social situations that contain a degree of risk, unfamiliarity, or not-knowing (Cross, 2009, p179–200). This is because music entrains and synchronizes the emotional and physical states of individuals, while at the same time connecting the individual to significant memories of past experiences that confirm an aspect of their sense of identity. Emphasizing these features, DeNora states that:

Music supports the modification of mood and energy levels to either reach, enhance, or maintain a desired state, or to match what an external situation is perceived to dictate. (DeNora, 2000: 53)

While Cross explains that:

unlike in speech, music is not made to be mutually explicit and universally understood, but rather musical meaning can be arrived at by each individual entirely idiosyncratically, while not resulting in any outward conflict with the experiences of others. (Cross, 2014, p809–819: 814)

Rather than social interests being an extramusical concern, Wayne Bowman states that, "musical experience serves the communal, participatory, and communicative interests of a social human animal" (Bowman, 2002, p55–63: 60). Implicit in FiM, is a clear acknowledgement of the interconnectedness and interdependence of all the participants to one another. This is manifest in the way that the roles of supporting and soloing are constantly being shared between the participants. FiM disarms some of the underlying cultural and socially prescribed approaches linked to hierarchical forms of musicking. This happens by returning the musicking authority back to each participant who can self-organize and direct their own practice with the use of extended techniques, homemade instruments, etc. This "determination of the free music musician to define his or her own criteria is the most unifying factor" of the music (Morris, 2012: 24).

1.3.2 A solo or group process

In FiM, the musicking process is regularly viewed as a group-based activity, where the music emerges from a dialogical process involving all of the improvisers that coalesce around the shared purpose of making a piece of music together. While this impression remains true, the individual dimension of the musicking process, that focuses on how each participant contributes to the whole based on their particular cache of memories, perceptions, and skills, is less emphasized. Gary Peters, highlights the importance of this individual component to the improvisation process, suggesting that the actions of the

individual are part of a process of self-certainty (2013: 4). He states that the actions of each individual must make sense. He adds:

It is not necessary that they make sense to anyone else, except for the improviser of course, and even the improviser might not see any sense in his or her improvisations in 'aftertime,' but at the time, here and now, they must. (Peters, 2013: 5)

The fact that most improvisers choose to work, not as solo artists, but within established or ad-hoc groups does not diminish this claim. Instead, it highlights the desire of each individual to challenge themselves by entering into environments where their personal control is always held in check by the unpredictability and unknowingness of the playing experience given the personal motivations and interpretations of each individual involved.

1.3.3 Not knowing

Peter Ralston suggests that “the state of not knowing is the mother of openness, questioning, authenticity, and freedom” (Ralston, 2010: 49). This reflects the words of Keats and his idea of ‘negative capability’, which refers to the creative benefits that can emerge when someone is able to remain surrounded by “uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after facts & reason” (Keats, 2002: 41).

Within a therapeutic context, Peter Rober (2005, p477–495) outlines two qualities of not knowing, Receptive and reflective, that can easily be translated to an improvised music process. Being receptive to not knowing refers to the need to remain open to whatever may emerge. While the reflective quality of not-knowing, provides the improviser with a way of keeping the immediate situation

alive through an ongoing internal dialogue that keeps questioning what to do next. Rober states that:

The essential and unavoidable question for the practicing therapist [improviser], then, is, how to use his or her inner voices in a responsible way as a starting point for dialogue, mutual exploration, and joint understanding. (Rober, 2005, p477–495: 492)

Such a dialogical process paradoxically implies a degree of knowingness which makes possible an openness to uncertainty and not knowing, while also fostering a degree of humility and empathy. But in relation to not knowing and FiM, Peters suggests that “if you want uncertainty then stay away from improvisation” (Peters, 2017: 24). Instead, he recommends going to performances of composed and directed work, where composers commit themselves to a set structure or form and then need to bend what naturally exists to fit the imposed construct (2017: 24). Meanwhile, Bailey feels that hierarchical musicking traditions seem obsessed with protecting music from formlessness, stating that:

a great deal of ingenuity is exercised in finding something upon which the music can be 'based'. This over-complication of what naturally exists can be contrasted by the approach of the free improviser, that seems to prefer the music to dictate its own form. (Bailey, 1993: 111)

Therefore, a degree of certainty exists in FiM as the interactions have a direct connection to the performance space and the musicians involved. This means that the improvisers draw on ecologically-based processes of collective co-creation and collaboration. But a level of uncertainty and unknowingness happily exists also as the process draws on the immense complexity associated with what is existing out of everything that could possibly exist. Peters states that “the beginning must keep beginning if the improvisation is not to deteriorate into the certainty of the ‘work’ ” (2017: 25). This sense that the music already exists and is dictating its own emergence has also left Borgo growing fond of the idea

that a successful group improvisation “should have a feeling of an *improbable inevitability*” (2014, p33–51: 45)

1.3.4 Prediction-based sense making embedded in the world

Underlying this naturally occurring sense of inevitability is a mechanism that allows us to successfully function in a timely fashion. Andy Clark (2015) sets out the idea that rather than our lives being orientated to what has just happened, our cognitive processing system is constantly attempting to predict what is about to happen. Clark argues that this allows for a cognitively frugal and efficient method of coping with a constantly changing environment. He states that:

The distribution of problem-solving load across the brain, the active body, and the manipulatable structures of the local environment, allows for an economic way of utilizing the whole embodied, environmentally situated system in the solving of problems. (Clark, 2015: 248)

What this means is that raw sensory experience goes through a process of being matched to stored knowledge of past experience in a downward cascade, with only mismatches being progressed forwards until they too are matched to the nearest available explanation of what is existing. This effectively screens out all aspects of the world that remain unchanged or recognised, so that what is as-yet-unexplained, unusual, moving, or new can be prioritised (Clark, 2015: 37–38).

Linked to this, Adam Linson and Eric Clarke (2017, p52–69) explain the importance of an attentional network system, that provides a coordinating function for the cognitive, perceptual, and motor networks. With the close coupling of perception and action, attention leads to certain responses to the immediate environment that are seen as appropriate and sense-making to the

individual concerned. Focal attention has a tendency of increasing the significance of particular familiar or unfamiliar aspects of the environment, while everything else is given only peripheral attention. They suggest that the attentional network “provides a way to understand how subjective differences” (2017, p52–69) emerge from the interactions between attention, perception, cognition, and action.

Built into this process of knowingly engaging in the world, is a natural propensity to sometimes challenge what the predictions are telling. From the cellular level upwards, we sometimes “avoid monotonous environments and actively explore in order to seek novel and stimulating inputs” (Clark, 2015: 265). This enables us to remain resilient and responsive to uncertainties and unpredictable situations in something that Clark sees as a process of culturally-mediated lifetime learning (2015: 265). This is something that I believe is very relevant within an improvisational context, with many of our actions regularly intended to either confirm or test our understanding of a situation.

Dancer, Susan Leigh Foster explains that “the improvising dancer tacks back and forth between the known and the unknown, between the familiar/reliable and the unanticipated/unpredictable” (Foster, 2003, p3–12: 5). This is reflected in the words of Peter Cusack who warns of the danger of relying too heavily on learnt responses from past experiences. He states:

Any improvisation will consist of new ideas and reactions spontaneously discovered during that improvisation mixed with preconceived ideas and old reactions from previous occasions. Almost all improvising contains a higher proportions of the latter, but to be alive and stimulating it must strive for the greatest amount of the former. (Cusack, 1976, p3–5: 3)

All conscious understanding is preceded by tacit knowledge that has the potential, through hunches and intuitive feelings, to guide action even at the autonomic level (Polanyi, 1966). Whether something is consciously acknowledged or not, “what we do depends upon what we perceive, and what we perceive is constantly conditioned by what we do” (Clark, 2015: 176). As can be seen in improvised music, an improviser usually has a degree of understanding of what is happening and what they are doing, even if only on this tacit and unconscious level. But an experienced improviser will regularly choose to disregard what is known in favour of jumping into the unknown.

1.3.5 Evaluative loop

Graeme Wilson and Raymond MacDonald (2016, p1029–1043) explain how the improvisers employ a hierarchy of options when evaluating what action to take. The choices made by the improvisers suggest a focus on larger structural aspects of the emerging music, with the first thing that is attended to being the rate of change within the improvisation. The option to maintain what is being played in order to allow for a period of “stasis in pitch, rhythm or harmony” (2016, p1029–1043: 1039) remains an option, which is different to a jazz improvisation where the soloist is expected to maintain a constant flow of melodic invention.

Embedded within this decision making process, is a sensitivity towards what the improviser believes would be acceptable to their fellow improvisers. They state that the improvisers “choose to play or sing material that they view as consistent with fellow improvisers’ musical tastes and objectives” (2016, p1029–1043: 1040). This reflects Small’s balance between *affirming* the connections that they have

with their musicking partners, *celebrating* the ideals of the music tradition, and also *exploring* the boundaries of the musicking process (1998: 141–142).

1.3.6 Improvisation in the wider context – A big box of variables

An important question that Small asks of the musician is “what does it mean when this performance takes place at this time, in this place, with these participants?” (1998: 3). This question goes beyond FiM and recommends that all musicians consider the implications of their actions in reinforcing a particular set of relationships in their community. But with no score to follow and everyone free to respond to any aspect of the performative experience, free improvisers may find it easier to respond to this question than musicians based in more *hierarchical* musicking traditions. Evan Parker alludes to this possibility stating that:

The Improviser always has the edge in situations where the performance concerns itself with what can be, rather than what ought to be. (Schroeder and Ó hAodha, 2014: 6)

All musicking experiences possess their own combination of performative variables which can be seen to reside on a series of continua ranging from fixity to fluidity. As with any process based on establishing a group identity, a few aspects are picked out in order to reinforce, for political or social ends, common goals and traits that can help to identify the group. Thomas Turino refers to this process as “strategic essentialism” (2008: 104), with the resulting combination of variables and dominant traits defining where the musical practice resides on a series of continua of co-present polarities.

Some of the social and communicative aspects that can be either set or allowed to remain fluid in a musicking process may include: the division of performative roles (soloing - accompanying), the division of labour (presentational – participatory), the distribution of creative freedoms (collective – composer/conductor), the balance between playing and listening, and the relationship between the performers and their audience (separate – immersive). Musically, the set of variables may include the use and emphasis on: melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic material, the requirement for thematic or rhythmic entrainment, the openness to new instrumental techniques, the balance between fixity and fluidity and the size of the ensemble. These are mere examples of the inexhaustible list of variables that can either be set and defined or left open within a musicking process.

Like Peters (2017: 3–5), I find myself regularly working with pairs of contrasting concepts similar to the ones above. A way I tend to visualize all the possible variables is by imagining a series of sliders on a mixing desk.

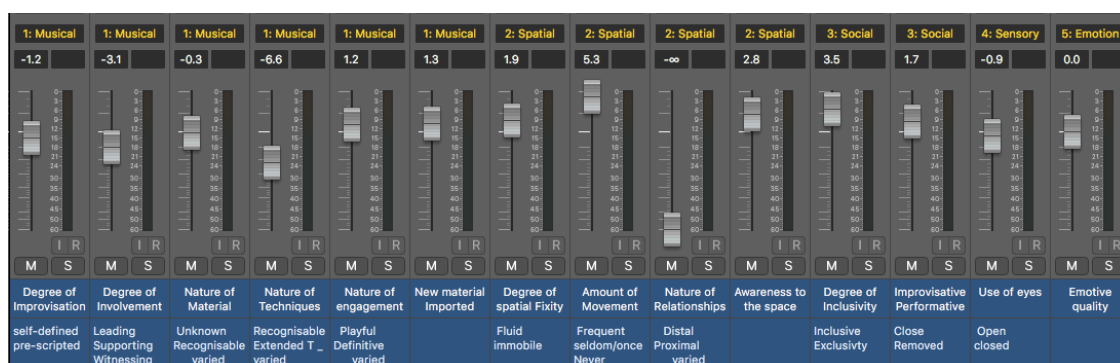


Figure 1. Analogy of possible parameters that can be attended to within a musicking process.

Within the very fluid and subjective environment of free improvisation, this image of a mixing desk can only be used as an individual reflection tool, as to compare one participants reflection with another would result in two completely different impressions of the performative proceedings. But the mixing desk

remains useful as a means of providing a visual indication of personal trends and habits that, once recognized, can be subverted or challenged in subsequent improvisations.

1.3.7 Ecological musicking

Ecology, as a discrete area of scientific endeavour, was first coined by Ernst Haeckel in his book *Generelle Morphologie der Organismen* ((1866) cited in Odum, 1959) and refers to the study of living systems. It focuses on the relationship between an organism and its environment, emphasizing the importance of adaptation and evolution for the creation of a sustainable ecosystem, while also acknowledging the inseparability of all biotic and abiotic elements of the ecosystem. Ecology is characterised by a number of features which include: *interdependence, cyclical flows of resources, feedback systems, co-operation and collaboration, flexibility, diversity, and an interest in building mutually meaningful interactions and partnerships.*

In Musicking, Small draws on ecology through Gregory Bateson (1968), a key figure in the move towards a more holistic and ecological perspective of human existence. Bateson believed that the increase in the level of scientific arrogance during the Industrial revolution was possibly the most important disaster to befall us. He said that, “occidental man saw himself as an autocrat with complete power over a universe which was made of physics and chemistry” (Bateson, 1968: 47). Bateson believed that our supposed progress had upset the balances of the body, of society, and of the biological world around us. But he saw the arts, dreaming, and some areas of religion, all as activities that involved the whole individual, and could be harnessed to foster a renewed sense of humility.

Since the late 1960s, when Bateson was writing, ecological theory has greatly supported the shift away from many anthropocentric assumptions across all aspects of human existence and led to many rethinks as to how musical activity can be analysed and experienced. Various aspects of ecological theory have been applied to music numerous times during this period, including: Acoustic ecology (Schafer, 1977; 1993), Performance ecosystems (Di Scipio, 2003; 2011, p97–108; 2015, p278–289), Ecologies of engagement (Harries, 2013, p3–13), Acoustemology (Feld, 2015, p13–28), and by other researchers (Clarke, 2005; Clarke et al., 2009; Clarke and Doffman, 2017; Cobussen, 2014, p15–29; Cross, 2009, p179–200; Linson and Clarke, 2017, p52–69; Reybrouck, 2005, p229–266; 2014, p1–26). A number of research centres have also been established including: Sonic Arts Research Centre (SARC) at Queens University, Belfast, The Centre for research on sound space and urban environment (CRESSON) (Augoyard and Torgue, 2014), The World Forum for Acoustic Ecology (World Forum for Acoustic Ecology (WFAE), no date).

Returning to Small and his attention on challenging the assumptions and practices associated with the overly hierarchical musicking practices in the West. We can see that the principles of an ecological system and those of a heterarchical musicking process are synonymous with each other. Both exist within a decentralized, self-organizing, web of stigmergic interactions, that operate across multiple layers in a complex interconnected network system. Composer and improviser, Mike Vargas, sums this up by saying:

We are working in a physical and metaphorical ecology. Everybody's actions and ideas impact everybody else's. It's a complex environment full of ambiguous, unlabelled experiences. We seek a healthy tension between order and disorder. We are cultivating our sensitivity, to know where to focus our attention and to select an appropriate response. We dance between our old and new brain. (Vargas, 2013, p24–27)

Both ecology and heterarchy are immensely complex systems that imply a constantly changing process that naturally self-organises itself to accommodate everything rather than picking and choosing, or singling out certain aspects over others. Any attempt to fix any aspect, through selection or segregation only results in a complicated, not complex, system; full of rules, guidelines and hierarchical concerns.

Ecology broadens a musicking experience beyond the sounds created so as to incorporate any number of socio-political and environmental factors that may also exist in the moment of performance. It brings to the foreground our relationship to the sonic nature of our lived experience, with many experiences of music and dance having their origins in ritualised processes designed to celebrate our connection to the natural world (Blacking, 1974; Small, 1998; Wachsmann, 1982, p197–215). Borgo agrees, stating that:

In music, the practice of free improvisation is perhaps closest to this ideal of a self-organizing system. Its bottom-up style emphasizes possibilities for adaptation and emergence: it accentuates creativity-in-time and the dynamics of internal change. (Borgo, 2006, p1–24: 14)

When placed within an ecological perspective, we can see that FiM emerges out of the interconnectedness of everything. Anything that occurs in and around an improvisation can potentially emerge as a significant feature of the process. Therefore, there is the possibility of an immense number of active elements operating together in a complex process. To operate effectively, and to arrive at a mutually beneficial outcome, in such a complex and unknowable environment requires not only an ability to adapt and respond flexibly to whatever may happen, but also a high degree of tolerance and respect for others with different interpretations of what is emerging through the process.

But the continued spatial separation and fixity of the participants within FiM performances exposes an area of the improvisers practice that fails to respect the desires of its originators, for an egalitarian musicking process, and breaks with the organic and emergent nature of the musicking process. This is because it has left the freedom of the musical process restricted to the musicians, while expecting the audience to politely listen and not interrupt the proceedings. This is an important omission, because I believe that “the experience of space is of little consequence when the issue of who should control the acoustic arena dominates” (Blessner and Salter, 2009: 191), But this discrepancy can be rectified by extending the improviser’s practice outwards so as to incorporate the spatial dimension and by allowing the audience the same freedom to shape their own experience. This will remove the fourth wall that divides the two groups of musicking participants and will aid the re-configuration of the spatial politics of the performative experience.

1.3.8 Section summary

Free improvisation offers the greatest degree of diversity of any musicking process. We can see that through the maintenance of a diverse playing environment, an increased level of flexibility on the part of the participants is required which supports the development of greater levels of tolerance and acceptance to difference. The extent that music supports our understanding of the world around us and provides us with a safe means of fostering social connectivity is something that many writers have addressed (Attali, 1985; Borgo, 2006, p1–24; Clarke, 2005; Clarke et al., 2009; Cobussen, 2014, p15–29; Cross, 2009, p179–200; 2018; DeNora, 2000; Small, 1998). Like Small, Fischlin and Heble (2004) sees making music together as a continual process of bringing people together

with the objective of finding a way through life using sound. DeNora believes that “music provides a potential map for making sense of the thing(s) to which it is attached” (2000: 26).

Heterarchical musicking and an ecological approach to music both emphasize the active doing nature of making music. They emphasize a reduction in the hierarchical structures that regularly divide the music making experience into a series of binary roles in favour of a more open and holistic acceptance of the complexity that exists in any human activity. While musicking brings the artist and the listener together, emphasizing the social and embedded ritualistic nature of a music-making process, ecology emphasizes the relational nature of the process which supports the emergence of an ethical dimension to musicking. This informs the open and constantly evolving loop of perception and action, where the interconnections between participants, their abilities and affordances, and the environment make us all responsible for the maintenance of the system.

1.4

Musicking bodies in space.

The previous sections have: outlined the work of Christopher Small, introduced the difference between hierarchical and heterarchical forms of musicking, the fact that all musical activity emerges out of improvisation, that music is inherently social, ecological, and connected to the environments that we inhabit, that music involves a complex meeting of biological, cultural, and environmental factors that all combine to guide perception and action, and that musical meaning exists on both a personal and collective level simultaneously.

This final section of the chapter, focuses on the unifying factor from where all understandings, perceptions, and actions, emerge from which is our physical embodiment. My combined practice involving both music and dance is outlined with an attention drawn on certain aspects of my dancing practice that has informed my practice as a musician. The aspect of our bodies, and more specifically a musician's awareness to his/her physicality, is seen as important and addressed here because, by opening up the performance space to movement, MiS will be incorporating a greater emphasis on spatial location, motor-coordination, proprioception and kinespheric awareness.

1.4.1 Starting with the body

FiM is a process of engagement where the individual draws from everything that is part of the performative environment, including: space, light, weather and temperature, audience, body, temperament, past, present, and future experiences, memories, etc., so as to shape the possibilities of the moment. Kent De Spain suggests that an optimal position for an improviser is to “commingle with the elements of the moment” (2014: 29) so that where ideas and actions originate is no longer of consequence. Instead, it is acknowledged that the improvisational process includes “things that we do, things that are happening that we feel we are part of, and things that feel like they happen to us” (De Spain, 2012, p25–42: 29). This implies that when we improvise we become embedded in the process and “how we experience the unfolding of existence is reflected in our bodies” (Aldridge, 1996, p105–112: 110).

Music can be understood as the sound of the human body in motion and to listen is to perceive the actions of bodies moving. “Music is born of our actions - its ingredients are the sounds of bodies in motion - and therefore music cognition begins as action understanding” (Iyer, 2016, p74–90: 87). Vijay Iyer’s words reflect those of John Martin, written eighty years earlier:

So far as I can discover there has never been a sound made in the universe that was not made by movement. Musical sound, especially, is traceable to movement, and even more than that, to muscular movement, to bodily movement. It makes no difference whether it is the sound produced by forcing wind through the vocal chords and resonance chambers of the body or of especially made pipes, or whether it is sound produced by the scraping or plucking of strings, or by striking resounding surfaces of one sort or another. (John Martin (1932) in, Goldman, 2010: 72)

However, while Martin's presentation in 1932 was scornfully received, with the perception that it debased the musical experience, discussions related to embodiment and the idea that our behaviour emerges from an embedded relationship to the environment are now widely accepted (Anderson, 2003, p91–130; Clark, 2015; Cox, 2016; Crossley, 2015, p471–492; Iyer, 2002, p387–414; Küpers, 2014; Lakoff and Johnson, 1999; Reybrouck, 2005; Thompson, 2007). But as a musician's focus remains on sound, the act and art of listening remains integral, as it guides the other senses towards an embodied connection to our lived experience.

1.4.2 Kinesthesia and proprioception

In contrast to a musician's approach to listening, a dancer is more likely to consider listening both aurally and physically or somatically (Greenhead and Habron, 2015, p93–112; Sheets-Johnstone, 1981, p399–407). This form of listening resembles Pauline Oliveros's 'Deep listening' (2005) which recognizes that a holistic sense of listening involving other sensory processes within the body. This somatic listening or heightened bodily awareness is largely related to two modes of sensory perception: Kinesthesia and Proprioception.

Kinesthesia is the ability of locating the body in space, both in a static, spatial location and in a dynamic sense when the individual is moving (Batson and Wilson, 2014: 91). Kinesthesia, while very reliant on seeing and hearing, is in fact an incredibly nuanced approach to perceptual awareness, involving all the senses. In connection to listening, we use our understanding of resonance to aid our knowledge of an environment. Blesser and Salter refers to this aspect of auditory spatial awareness as 'navigational spatiality' (2009: 12).

Closely associated to kinesthesia is proprioception which refers to localised muscular sensations in the body (Batson and Wilson, 2014: 91). The brain renders sensory information as sensed muscular effort, bodily position and joint motion. This information is then processed on three levels: non-conscious, subcortical, and conscious kinesthetic awareness (2014: 91). Scientific studies looking at motor control recognize that both proprioception and kinesthesia are “vital neuromuscular processes underlying body orientation” (2014: 91). DeNora adds that:

The notion of how one locates or tunes in to environmental properties and how this may have consequences for embodied agency is crucial to any understanding of how music works as an organizing device of the body, how it facilitates 'embodied awareness'. (DeNora, 2000: 84)

Proprioception is crucially important for a musician's understanding of their connection to their instrument and their ability to effectively produce specific musical sounds and timbres. However, much of the awareness of the spatial nature of the performative experience remains largely unconscious with the feedback associated with the instrument sound, being directed towards responding to how best to optimise sound production given the specific spatial circumstances. While musicians use proprioception to connect with their instruments, the need to invest heavily in proprioceptive and kinaesthetic awareness while they play in traditional, static, performance settings are imagined to be less emphasized. This is exemplified by Pressing's omission of the two aspects within his list of things that the improviser needs to cognitively attend to when improvising⁴ (Pressing, 1998, p47–67). But, within the MiS

⁴ The improviser must effect real-time sensory and perceptual coding, optimal attention allocation, event interpretation, decision-making, prediction (of the actions of others), memory storage and recall, error correction, and movement control, and further, must integrate these processes into an optimally seamless set of musical statements that reflect both a personal perspective on musical organization and a capacity to affect listeners. (Pressing, 1998, p47–67: 51)

performances, it is expected that this may change as “space and body are intertwined through proprioception” (Nelson, 2015, p323–330: 330).

1.4.3 Combined practice – Music-dance, Dance-music

Percussionist, Edwin Prévost provides two analytical propositions which he believes are needed to ensure that ideas emerging in an improvisation do not fade out of sight. These are Heuristic-dialogue and Dialogical-heurism (Prévost, 1995: 3). Heuristic-dialogue reflects the way that improvisers share new personal insights with the group, while Dialogical-heurism refers to the way that new personal insights emerge out of the exchanges with others. In both instances, the practice supports its own development with the ideas emerging and being shared in multiple directions. My personal experience is that this same creative exchange occurs between different creative disciplines also.

While some musicians warn against adding music to other forms of creative expression, saying that it “may lead to a dilution, a deflection or even a deformation of the musician's ideas” (Prévost, 1995: 34). Many others, such as Peter Cusack and myself, see the ability of free improvisation to transcend artistic boundaries is, by far, one of its greatest strengths (Cusack, 1976, p3–5). Having worked with dancers for many years, as both a composer and as a dance musician, I began dancing myself in 2000. After trying a range of different contemporary dance styles, I soon discovered Contact improvisation and found that it resonated with my existing practice as a free improviser.

Contact improvisation (Ci) emerged in the United States at the beginning of the 1970s. Stemming from the work of former Merce Cunningham dancer, Steve

Paxton. Ci continued the fifty year tradition of somatic movement practices that had left behind the need for the movement to closely follow a narrative progression, a set movement vocabulary, and a strict conformity and alignment to musical or rhythmic structures. Instead, Ci focused on the fluid exchange of weight between dancing partners, that playfully explores the physical laws that connect us to the earth, namely: gravity, friction, and momentum (Koteen et al., 2008). Beginning with a simple touch, the dance progresses through a continual shifting of giving and taking weight, with dynamic cyclical flows of energy that take the dancers up into the air, 'flying', and back down to ground.

Contact improvisation is unique amongst dance practices in that it deals very directly with touch and allowing others to enter your personal space. Paxton explains how the process of contact improvisation, while it doesn't remove the idea of personal space, blends it and expands it outwards to include "the architectural enclosure, becoming larger, softer, easily penetrated, or easily encompassing others' personal space" (Paxton, 1972, p128–134: 134). Paxton believes that, by relinquishing habituated practices linked to protecting ourselves from the possibility of physical contact, a greater sensitivity to the lived experience can be achieved (1972, p128–134: 134). He also points out that allowing the body to respond instinctively to the reality that it senses also requires trust in the knowingness of the body (Paxton, 1972, p128–134: 134). This trust in the body is one aspect of my dancing which has had a profound impact on my music practice. This realization is reflected by Pauline Oliveros who explains that over the course of her career she was aware of a gradual release of cognitive control and an increasing willingness to trust the body to respond (Oliveros, 2016, p75–90: 75).

In one of the few articles looking at the role of the dance musician within a contemporary dance class, John Toenjes argues that “an empathic sensibility towards kinaesthetic processes” (2009, p221–238: 232) is an important attribute that needs to be developed, if the musician wants to successfully fulfil the functional, performative, and ritualistic roles associated with playing for a dance class. My personal experience accords with this observation. For instance, a specific process that I employ when playing for an improvised dance class, regularly begins with an attempt to sense what I call the ‘rhythmic temperature’ of the room. This involves me relaxing my aural listening and visual gaze in order to open up my sense of listening through my whole body. I find I need to actively suppress my need to ‘find out’ or cognitively ‘understand’ what is going on in the room, to allow my body to sense and physically reflect the essence of the movement quality and tempo of the room. I am dancing as I watch and as I hold my double bass. Once I sense this movement in my body it is usually very clear how I should respond musically. While this sounds a very deliberated process, allowing my body to interpret what is happening around me has proven to be both faster and more reliable than conscious and cognitive reasoning.

The way that I embody and empathise what I am seeing in a class, I believe, is an inverse of what Arne Cox explains happens with the link between the body and music. He states that our ability to comprehend music is supported by our ability to empathise and imitate the performer’s sounding actions, either physically – Mimetic motor action (MMA), or in our imagination – Mimetic motor imagery (MMI) (Cox, 2016). This illustrates how proprioception is closely related to the complex processing of empathy and other emotions, which undoubtedly is an important foundation to the universal appeal of music (Nelson, 2015, p323–330: 325). Batson and Wilson reiterate this saying that “Movement readily is felt,

empathized with, mimicked, intuited and re-enacted, even when we merely observe another's actions" (2014: 91). Since I devised the MbUS practice, I have found that I regularly use the same 'deep listening' or 'rhythmic temperature' sensing process within FiM performance and I am expecting that this will continue to occur during MiS also.

1.4.4 Section summary.

This research continues the free improviser's challenge of the perceived wisdom, that every aspect of the performative experience needs to be fixed and choreographed. By removing the fixed spatial aspect of the process, the blurring of the division between audience and performer can be achieved. This potentially will result in MiS aligning more closely to a *heterarchical* musicking process. It is hoped that the interweaving of participants will effectively remove the supposed separateness that is taken for granted in most musical experiences. Building on FiM's emphasis on process over product, MiS may require a more embodied understanding of musical engagement given the introduction of the spatial aspect to the practice. This may offer the participant permission to defy cultural conventions in favour of being inquisitive, authentic, and playful with all the possible connections that can be made in the space.

MiS is likely to bring more attention to the physicality of a musical performance and the interconnectedness of perception and action as the improvisers are required to attend to motor and movement coordination in ways that Pressing (1998, p47–67) did not envisage, when he outlined the cognitive processing activity associated with improvising. Additionally, the process will extend the emphasis commonly associated with FiM of drawing inspiration from every day

experience and mundane sounds, with the musicians invited to treat the inclusion of the space no differently to how they approach any other variable within the musicking process. MiS further problematizes the performative experience by increasing the level of complexity that the improvisers need to negotiate. This, I argue, will increase what is considered possible within performance, while also making the retention of unconsciously habituated practice less likely, which within a music that prides itself on creating unique experiences can only be considered advantageous.

In the next chapter, I will briefly outline my approach to this research along with information related to the ethical, logistical, and practical considerations that were taken into account through the research process.

2

Research method and design

Introduction

This chapter will offer a brief overview of the methodological and practical considerations that were taken into account during this research. Beginning with the methodological basis to the research process, then details related to the performances, the interviews, and the analytical process are discussed before returning to issues associated with the presentation of the document which was touched on in the introduction.

2.1

Researching improvisation

2.1.1 Researching improvisation

This practice-based research looking at the application of a spatialized approach to FiM, aims to explore the extent that a musicking event can be considered heterarchical and inclusive, both in terms of participation and the use of the spatial environment. My research aim is to expand the practice of FIM out into space in order to better aligned it with the idea of a heterarchical approach to musicking.

The gap between the practice of improvisation and what is written about improvisation remains a disputed area (Scott, 2014: 12), with improvisers fearful of any assumed threat to their musicking freedom. I, therefore, considered very carefully how I should approach my participating musicians so that they would not feel hostile to improvising spatially. This led me to framing the offer to move as an invitation which they could choose to take advantage of or completely ignore. For many, it was only after a short play together that they fully realized that performing spatially was likely to have no adverse consequences to their ability to engage in their musicking process. Then my attention turned to the audience and how I could break them out of their equally conditioned set of performative behaviours.

A common approach to musicological research, even within improvisation, is the reduction of possible variables so as to achieve some mark of definitive results. This regularly involves reducing the number of participants to two, or three in the case of Wilson and MacDonald's research⁵ (2016, p1029–1043). The reasons for this are explained here by Cross, who states that:

In a symmetrical dyadic context, the number of possible parameters and variables that we may wish either to control (so as to exclude them from consideration within the experimental context) or to manipulate (as independent variables in the experiment) are more manageable than in asymmetrical or ensemble contexts, where the number of potential variables is likely to be combinatorially explosive and unmanageable. (Cross, 2014, p809–819: 816)

Just as an improvisational process is focused on a continual process of problem finding and the unearthing of more lines of questioning, this research prioritises the generation of new avenues of enquiry over the definitive answering of

⁵ Wilson and MacDonald claim that their research is the first one to incorporate three participants, which they all interviewed separately after their improvisation.

specific questions. For instance, one of the many question to arise during this research is, what happens to the practice of free improvisation when you increase the complexity of the process, by inviting the audience to engage actively in the process? This question highlights the complexity of the situation and the challenges associated with capturing the essence of what takes place. Particularly, as any attempt to reduce the degree of complexity and diversity of the performance process would effectively lead the research in the opposite direction to where it should go. This hopefully conveys the conundrum that I have found myself in, having ventured towards the creation of an unwieldy beast that opened doors to more questions than I could ever possibly close with definitive answers. But two questions can be seen to have remained pivotal in guiding the research process. They are:

To what extent do free improvising musicians draw on the spatial characteristics of a performative environment – And to what extent can, could, or should they?

And

How would the performance of free improvised music within a spatialized context look, feel and sound?

The first question has been crucial in the maintenance of an open research process which has allowed the process to dictate how to proceed. Had I not continually returned to this question, throughout the process, I could have easily fallen prey to exploring a performative process with little relevance and applicability to an improvised musicking practice. The second question helped to guide the presentation of the research, so as to encompass as many voices as possible. This was seen as important given the subjective nature of improvisation where there

can be as many ideas of what the process involves and means as there are practitioners (Bailey, 1993; Toop, 2010: 31).

2.1.2 Methodological foundation.

The research method adopted emulates my practice as an improviser, which remains very pragmatic in style and approach. Pragmatism, as a philosophical tradition, asserts that the inherent truth of an idea can be confirmed by its applicability in real world situations. It is focused on the discovery and understanding of the phenomenon, process, or activity while emphasizing the importance of returning theory to practice. Pragmatism is therefore “an experience-centred philosophy that emphasizes change” (Savin-Baden and Major, 2013: 60). References to the link between improvisation and pragmatics include: Yves Citton (2016, p160–181: 161), Kent De Spain (2012, p25–42), and Richard Scott (2014: 10).

Additionally, I drew on the Heuristic research method (Moustakas, 1990) for a number of strategies and methodological approaches that supported an open, but thorough, examination of the phenomenon. Like other forms of phenomenology, the heuristic research method, focuses on the first-person perspective and seeks to describe the features and structure of an experience, or phenomena, as it appears or is perceived within the consciousness of the participants. But the heuristic research uniquely permits the researcher to step inside the process and explore the phenomenon from the perspective of an active participant. Moustakas argues that this enables the researcher to make full use of the researchers first-hand experience and wealth of knowledge that lies hidden in layers of tacit and unconscious experience. He states that:

Only the experiencing persons – by looking at their own experiences in perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and sense – can validly provide portrayals of the experience. (Moustakas, 1990: 26)

Both phenomenology and pragmatism draw the individual, others, and the environment together in a constantly emerging reality. The experientially-based epistemology of the two philosophical traditions both emphasize an embodied and situated understanding of the world built on every day and mundane experience (Kupers, 2011: 107). They both highlight the coupling of perception and action and are considered complimentary methodological constructs (Kupers, 2011; Patton, 1990; Savin-Baden and Major, 2013). Kupers also advocates the use of improvisation as the best means to bring a pheno-pragmatic research process alive. He states that:

By creating descriptions and interpretations of actual experiences pheno-pragmatic organizational researchers can develop a much-needed a-causal, non-reductionistic and non-reifying approach towards a post-Cartesian understanding of the underlying intertwining. (Kupers, 2011: 121)

Previous doctoral research into improvised music that have used similar improvisational methodologies and designs, include Harold Stenström's (2009) study looking at his practice as a free improviser, and Owen Green's (2013) research into the use of electronics within composition and improvisation. The heuristic method has been used in studies of improvised music before including a self-study on the intricacies of a personal improvisational process (Schenstead, 2012) and Brisola and Cury's research investigating experiences of singing (2016, p95–105).

2.1.3 Practice-based element of the research

An integral part of the entire research process has been my improvisation practice, as a musician and dancer, which I have continually returned to during this research process. As well as performing publicly as part of this practice-based research, I have used my personal playing practice to support the analytical process. This has offered me a means of seeing the research process from different perspectives, one where I literally *play* with, and through, the particular themes and aspects that I am working on. This has repeatedly allowed for the emergence of new insights while also ensuring that the research process remains closely tied to my musicking practice.

2.2

Performances

2.2.1 Performance details

Following an initial series of performances in 2016, which provided valuable insights into how I could successfully record the events, I arranged five performances for the Spring of 2017. These five performances took place in Canterbury (12th May), London (21st May), Liverpool (27th May), London (11th June), and Oxford (20th June).

To reflect the diverse make-up of the improvised music community, pre-existing groups of free improvisers were approached to allow for a level of randomness and participant self-selection. In two instances, I made open invitations to the members of large improvising ensembles that I had existing affiliations with, namely: The London Improvisers Orchestra, and the 'Free Range' collective of improvisers based in Kent. The invitation was also made on my behalf to the members of the Oxford improvisers and the Merseyside improvisers orchestra (MIO). The collaboration with established ensembles resulted in a broad range of ages, gender, instrumentation, and experience and skill being represented, while also ensuring that the participants understood the basic tenets of free improvisation and the modes of self-organisation that exists within a large group improvisation. This selection process also meant that not all the musicians were known to me prior to the performances. A fifth performance was arranged in London, featuring improvisers from the wider improvised music community.

This featured individuals who had all previously expressed an interest in taking part in the research.

A total of 49 improvisers took part, with two performing three times and two more performing twice during the series. The first three performances incorporated a number of small group improvisations alongside the tutti improvisations. This proved to be a positive strategy as it allowed the musicians to participate as audience members also, which had the added advantage of increasing the audience population markedly, as can be seen in figure 2. This also proved valuable for the research as many improvisers spoke of their experiences as being listeners as well as performers within the spatialized process. All of these performances also featured an open discussion that all the participants were invited to remain for.

Venue date	Canterbury 12/5/2017	London LIO 21/5/2017	Liverpool MIO 27/5/2017	London 7tet 11/6/2017	Oxford 20/6/2017
Participants (players/total)	(10 / 28)	(14 / 26)	(15 / 20)	(7 / 17)	(9 /15)
Pieces (subgroup) total	(2) 3	(3) 5	(4) 5	3	2

Figure 2. Table of demographics from 2017 MiS performances

While I had originally limited the research to the five performances, the referencing of additional performances led to the inclusion of other MiS performances into the research process, although the original five performances remained the only ones to feature a post-performance discussion.

Venue date	London 28/6/2016	London 26/7/2016	Canterbury 11/5/2017	Madrid Ofoco 17/6/2018	Amsterdam 28/8/2019
Participants (players/total)	(5 / 32)	(4 / 12)	(2 / 20)	(22/150)	(4 /28)
Pieces (subgroup/total)	(2)	(3)	(4 / 5)	(3)	(2)

Figure 3. Additional MiS performances referred to in this documentation.

The post-performance discussion, or harvest, was modelled on the sharing process that concludes Stark-Smith's Underscore practices (Koteen et al., 2008). I did not provide any parameters regarding what people could say. Instead, I invited them to speak about any aspect of the process that resonated with them personally. I pointed out that I was not looking for consensus amongst the responses and if their experience contradicted that of someone else's this was still acceptable. This method of collecting immediate responses was chosen primarily because of my familiarity with the process, having found it an effective method for collecting a wide array of responses from the participants. I have also found it a successful way of avoiding the discussions being monopolized by a few individuals that feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts.

Over the course of the five performances, a total of 40 hours of recorded material was edited down and placed in a performance archive on my website⁶. The material on the website includes footage from all five performances along with additional footage from other MiS performances. When viewed through the website, rather than via Youtube, the viewer is able to switch in real time between different camera angles in order to view the same performance from different

⁶ http://www.dafimusic.com/Musicians_in_Space/mis_perf_archive.html - As multiple youtube videos are superimposed on top of each other, you may need to press refresh a couple times to make the viewer play.

vantage points. This was made possible by using multiple camera and binaural microphone configurations (as seen in figure 4.) that were time-code matched in editing to ensure the synchronisation of each stem in playback. This approach was adopted in an attempt to recreate something of the polysemic nature of the spatialized performative



Figure 4. Binaural microphone and camera arrangement. Photo. Paloma Carrasco Lopez.

experience, while also offering the listener a level of freedom in how they can engage with the recorded artefact. The ability to listen and review events in the improvisations from different perspectives proved invaluable during the reflection and analysis process. Regarding this, Wachsmann stated:

I was quite shocked, stunned by the totally different experience of looking at the video from a different part of the room. I didn't expect that to look or to even feel so different in terms of interpreting what the sound was from, just the visual aspect. (Wachsmann, 2017)

2.2.2 Ethical considerations

Due to the filming and recording of the performances, ethical consent was sought from all the participants, along with an appropriate application to the ethical standards committee within the University of Westminster. This permission was granted with no need of amendment. All improvisers were asked to provide signed consent prior to the performances to show that: they agreed to take part in the study with the understanding that their participation was voluntary, that they could withdraw at any time, and that they were happy for the performance and the post-show discussion to be recorded and used in the research. All quotes were anonymized except in the case of the performers who were interviewed,

who subsequently gave consent for their names to appear. The audience members were similarly advised of the research environment that they were entering, both in the programme notes and in the introduction, with their remaining presence representing informed consent.

2.3

Interviews, analysis, and reflection

2.3.1 Immersion

Following the performances an initial period of analysis took place. This involved the transcription of all the discussion material which was analysed to identify recurring themes. I then used this, in conjunction with personal reflections of each performance, to support the reviewing of all the filmed footage of the improvisations. Time sheets were used to record my observations of each performance. This detailed: what was observed, at what time, location, and with which camera perspective. Of particular interest were moments of: physical, social, spatial, or musical interactions and behaviour, occurring between: musicians, musicians and audience, or participants and the space.

Analysis of the musical content specifically was seen as less important than the nature of the social interactions and how the musicians engaged with the spatialized process. Initial summaries, of each improvisation, were created while at the same time ideas pertaining to what the research was uncovering began to emerge. This was then built upon with a series of interviews of some of the participants who had been present at more than one of the performances.

2.3.2 Interviews

In the Autumn of 2017, I interviewed four improvisers who had all participated in multiple MiS performances. The interviews provided me with an opportunity

to discuss more specific aspects and themes related to the musicking process that myself and each interviewee had shared. The interviews were based on a 'thinking aloud' process similar to that used by MacDonald and MacGlone's research into how musical choices are formed in a group improvisation (2017, p278–294: 1040). I began with a number of open questions aimed at uncovering how the experience of improvising spatially had been and if there had been any lasting repercussions on their practice generally. They were then invited to choose improvisations to watch together so that they could point out salient aspects of the improvisations from their perspective. They could talk-over, stop, start, or replay the footage, or change the camera perspective, as they wished. All of the interviewees chose at least two improvisations to review.

The interviews were then transcribed and used, in conjunction with all of the other data collected, to create a personal depiction of each individual's experience of the process. I then chose to replicate this process to create a series of depictions based on some of the performances also. In the next section, I will offer a description of the depictions and the final synthesis of the research.



Figure 5. London improvisers Orchestra, London 21 May 2017. Photo Séverine Bailleux.

2.4

Presentation

2.4.1 Ways of writing

The most attractive aspect of an improvisation practice for many improvisers lies in the ephemeral nature of the process, that means that once it has happened, nothing, as Omar Khayyám wrote, “Shall lure it back to cancel half a line” (Fitzgerald, 2012: 45). Each improvisation brought to life, one dialogical string of musical and social interactions from an infinite number of possible threads. This means that the prospect of revisiting past experiences is of little interest to many improvisers. Similarly, the presentation of what happened in one improvising situation has limited relevance to an ongoing practice of improvisation. I have therefore questioned, as Albright and Gere do, if there are:

ways to write about improvisation that establish its significance and impact without leaching from it the wonderment and critical awareness that its unexpectedness produces? (Albright and Gere, 2003: 6)

This has been a continual conundrum for me throughout this research, as I have struggled to both capture and define the nature of spatialized improvisation, while also maintaining the essence of the ambiguity and polysemic freedom that lies at the heart of FiM. My first instinct was to adopt a Koan-based writing practice that I regularly use as part of my dance practice. Having maintained a writing practice for thirty five years, I feel at home working with language where the meaning is intentionally ambiguous to the reader. I relate to it as I do improvising on my instrument or with my body. Writing concise, academically

acceptable, prose, however, returns me to more of a compositional mindset, where I labour over every single word and ultimately never feel satisfied with what I produce.

I eventually resolved to try and bring both forms of writing together. Starting with a carefully composed assemblage of contextual material taken from other authors and practitioners, before incorporating more improvised forms of writing. Two books have been inspiring in this regard. Firstly, Gary Peters' *Improvising improvisations* (2017), and David Grubbs' *Now that the audience is assembled* (2018). The beauty of this structure is that it replicates the continuum between two co-existing aspects of the same phenomenon, music, with this multiple perspective remaining a theme throughout the thesis.

Up to this point, I have aimed to present a broad foundation to the study of improvisation, emphasizing how the practice has the tendency to mimetically incorporate any aspect of the lived experience that it comes into contact with. So as to not confuse the reader, I have delayed the inclusion of the many short verses that I have written throughout this process. But the sections that follow will begin to incorporate a more open and interpretative style of writing alongside the prose that I have already established.

2.4.2 Description of additional forms of writing.

The forms of verse writing incorporated into this thesis include: a four line 'Koan' and a depiction verse that I have tried to reflect something of my thought processes when I improvise.

The Koan, translated as *Ko* - meaning public and *An* – meaning record, took shape in the Song period (between 960–1279) and were used as an aid towards enlightenment within the practice of Zen Buddhism. The koan presents the reader, or the student of Zen, with a challenge. Using paradoxical words to outline strange deeds, koans are intended to confound while at the same time requiring the reader to arrive at some form of response or solution. Heinrich Dumoulin states that “the essence of the koan is to be rationally unresolvable and thus point to what is arational” (Kirchner, 2006: 17). I identify a connection here to the ambiguity and the idea of problem finding that exists within FiM. He goes on to say:

The koan urges us to abandon our rational thought structures and step beyond our usual state of consciousness in order to press into new and unknown dimensions. This is the common purpose of all koan, no matter how much they may differ in content or literary form. (Kirchner, 2006: 17)

While I confess to having read both the Hekiganroku and Mumonkan collections (Sekida and Grimstone, 1977) numerous times, I acknowledge that the four-line structure used within this research possibly embodies little relationship to the zen koans, compiled by Zen masters 1000 years ago. Instead, what is presented here is a reflective writing process, cultivated over many years, that I use to encapsulate something of the essence of my performative experiences. The limitation to four lines produces an ambiguity that leads me to look beyond the words, to something felt or understood more tacitly.

The depictions draw on the same tacit responses to the experiences, but within a more linear sense of progression. They are an attempt to communicate, in words, something of the essence of an improvisation. As if it is following my interest and attention as it jumps from something felt and internal to something happening

on the other side of the room: the writing freely meanders through time, jumping from an experience in one improvisation to something that I have read. From qualities of sound to the physical characteristics of the environment, anything and everything is possible. The depictions require the reader to step back from trying to identify a single meaning. Instead, they exist as if multiple voices are all contributing to a shared experience.

Each depiction, emerged slowly over time, after many hours of reading and re-reading transcripts and watching the recorded footage. They are the description of the journey (Small, 1977: 176), conveying my experiences and those of the others of the performances. The personal depictions were all shared with the subjects of the depictions prior to their inclusion in this document.

In the following three chapters, I present what was observed and experienced during the spatialized improvisations. Chapter 3, addresses the first of my research questions and includes an extensive review of how the improvisers incorporated the spatial dimension of the process. In Chapter 4, I respond to the second research question in the form of a series of depictions of the performances and of some of the participants. Then in chapter 5, I return to Small to assess both the impact of this thesis on Musicking and the practice of FiM.

3

Musicians in Space – Improvising topographies

I am free. Am I?

Free to respond to anything outside.

Open the door and see what the rain brings in?

I am getting cold now – is that the only outcome?

3.0.1 Introduction

While it continued to be seen as free improvisation, MiS demonstrated a clear departure from the strict behavioural constraints that normally exist in a FiM performance. MiS gave the participants permission to self-organise and position themselves in the physical environment so as to align their spatial location with their listening focus. The unifying thread throughout all the performances was a ceaseless emphasis on listening. No matter where an individual chose to position themselves, they did so in large part because of the specific listening experience that that position afforded them. Then, as their listening focus shifted, they too were inclined to readjust their position to the performative action.

In this chapter, I explore the sense of permission that emerged as a central theme within the performances. I discuss various aspects of FiM that the spatialization process impacted upon before providing an extensive summary of how the participants engaged with the space, the music, and one another during the performances. I finish the chapter by addressing my first research question which

was to what extent free improvisers can, could, or should they utilize the spatial dimension of a performance?

This section incorporates numerous links back to the literature review and additional contextual information while numerous links to the online footage provide clear examples of what is being discussed. These links are offered as footnotes in order to avoid the disruption to the visual flow of the text. For the same reason, I have omitted the referencing citation following the first reference of each improvisation as all the footage is from the same source.

3.0.2 Preparing the room - the first improvisation in each space.

Improvisation running, I stand
sensing the room's future.
Inhabitants seated all around.
These chairs don't match ... Great!

Recognizing the profound impact that the seating arrangement has on the performance, meant that the overall topography of the room needed to be noticeably different. If I wanted the participants to act differently, to how they would in an ordinary performance, I would need to pay special attention to the spatial composition of the room. The preparation of the room, therefore, invariably became the first improvisation of the evening and would involve me walking around, adjusting the positions of the seats, while I imagined an improvisation taking place around me.

Dancer, Ruth Zaporah says the first thing that she does when she enters a performance space is walk around so as to identify the particular nature of the

space. She states that it is very useful to 'feel' out the "spatial container that [the] improvisation is going to live inside of" (De Spain, 2014: 109). She speaks of the existence of 'power spots', where actions assume greater prominence than in other places. What makes a certain position in the room more or less favourable can be put down to a mixture of factors, regarding: favourable sight-lines, certain acoustic or reverberant anomalies that mask or reinforce certain frequencies, the quality or lack of light, whether noise is leaking in from outside, or if an unpleasant draft or smell is present. Consideration of these factors helped me order the seating arrangement. Not simply to avoid the adverse positions in the room, but to ensure that the greatest diversity of listening experiences remained available.

Providing opportunities for people to hide was just as important as celebrating the places where one could take centre stage. A balance had to be found between space to move and places to linger and listen. I found myself thinking about how to set up each room so that, while it was not too intimidating to enter, the participants were provoked into reconsidering how they approached the performative process. Staying seated, in the same position for the entire performance needed to be seen as just one of many options available to the participants. Like an inverted game of musical chairs there always needed to be more seats available than participants, to ensure that people always had somewhere to go to get a different perspective on the performance. While seats nearer the centre of the room and away from the walls were possibly positioned more with performers or adventurous listeners in mind, the seats around the edge of the room afforded more positions to witness the performance from a safe distance.

The task of arranging the room was seen as an important part of my personal preparation for the performances, similar to Yoshi Oida's enthusiasm for sweeping the floor in preparation for a performance (Oida and Marshall, 2013). Progressively, I became aware of my fascination in perfecting the imperfection of the task, as if I was engaging in a Wabi-Sabi ritual. The seats needed to look like they were positioned in a seemingly random fashion. I would place similar chairs together in some places, while intentionally placing chairs of different colour, design, or height together in other places. Seats were placed at slightly different angles, although invariably they implied a subtle orientation towards the centre of the room. I also avoided placing more than 3 seats together, in any one location, to ensure that the room did not start to look too ordered. This also stopped the audience choosing to remain safely grouped together, but instead provoked them into taking more responsibility of their listening experience.

Then, once it felt right, this setting-up improvisation would end, the room would begin to fill up with others, and the seats would be free to be moved and repositioned to satisfy the interests of those seated in them. This means that my arrangement was only ever going to be a starting point, be it an important one, in establishing an openness for what was to follow.

3.1

Spatial locations

3.1.1 Giving permission

What does it mean to offer a free improviser permission to do something? Surely, free improvisers do not need any encouragement to break with convention and head off in search of an uncharted musical landscape. But, as I pointed out throughout chapter one, FiM has established a number of practices that mark it out as a musicking process with clear evolutionary, adaptive, “trans-cultural and trans-national” (Rose, 2017: 211) roots, which therefore implies the existence of certain definable characteristics that are either physically impossible to avoid or have been *strategically essentialized* over time.

In terms of exploring the physical space and fostering an egalitarian relationship with the audience, FiM gradually slipped into line with the accepted approaches to ‘art music’. This is despite, as I pointed out in section 1.2.7, there being a number of different avenues explored during the early years of the practice. So while the musicians are supposedly free to take the music wherever it needed to go, in practice, this seems to mean only to the edge of the stage and not beyond. One participant explained how after not engaging with the performative space for forty years, finding the impetus to move and go against all of the assumptions associated with not moving proved difficult. He went on to say there is both “a novelty and also the resistance to it. I’m a musician, I should be playing music, why should I be bloody moving?” (Oxford Improvisers, 2017: 41).

One could say, therefore, that free improvisers have been overly conservative when relating to space in performance, as they have focused primarily on what will support the musicking process without any unnecessary stress or pageantry. This is possibly why free improvisers have not considered spatialization as a performative strategy, despite it offering them a clear break with the hierarchical musicking establishment which they have chosen to work against and subvert in every other way. Prior to the MiS performances some musicians had expressed their reservations about the idea of moving in performance. They feared that spatialization would adversely affect the fusion of the sounds and the connectivity between the players and audience. But in the event, MiS demonstrated that such concerns were not only unfounded but the opposite was true in that the ability to move afforded more opportunities to connect with the other participants both musically and physically.

Finally, returning to the musician who had experienced both resistance and a sense of novelty to the idea of moving. He explained that he started to realize that while the static performance model existed as one approach to performance, other approaches existed that provided “a way of tapping into other dimensions” and that that in itself was “really interesting and worthwhile” (Oxford Improvisers, 2017: 41). This conclusion was arrived at by many of the participants with many also expressing the profundity of this realization on how they viewed performance.

3.1.2 Quashing perceived threats

Despite initial concerns that the spatialization of FiM could result in an irreconcilable break with the performative tradition, leaving the improvisers not

knowing how to approach the performance, this fear led to my invitation to the participants being purposely vague. This was to maintain a degree of paradoxy (Corbett, 1995, p217–240: 236)⁷ pertaining to the desire to challenge the current practice of FiM while at the same time remaining within the recognized confines of the practice. This consciously made decision to accept ambiguity, I believe, contributed to the overall success of MiS. I base this assessment on a combination of factors that can be summarised as being:

1. The open process that maintained the autonomy of the individual to shape their personal involvement in the process.
2. The adaptive abilities and confidences of the participants that saw them draw on past experiences to shape their connections to the sound, the space, and to the other participants.
3. The natural characteristics of sound and our highly attuned ability to connect with the spatiality of sonic material. This meant that the performative process enriched the listeners ability to understand and connect with what was happening.
4. MiS made it easier to make meaningful connections with others which reinforced the fundamental social tenets of musicking.

As explained above, the way that I set up my invitation to the MiS participants, and the way that I arranged the performance space prior to people arriving, were carefully considered and aimed at ensuring that everyone understood the sincerity that lay behind what I was expecting them to participate in. The modelling of a shared and heterarchical process in my own actions, I now realise was of vital importance. Had I decided simply to set up the performances and

⁷ The orthodoxed use of paradox

not participate as a performer myself, I am convinced, would have led some musicians to not enter into the spirit of the process, while others would have over-compensated by overtly embracing the chance to move. A slight hint of this existed in Liverpool where I sensed a little reservation amongst some of the musicians while others happily put their instruments down and danced. My many years of improvising allowed me to remain receptive to this possibility and ensured the autonomy of each individual's voice in the process. The onus was then on each individual to draw on their existing knowledge and improvising experience to do what they would normally: which is to respond resourcefully to the emerging situation, utilizing all the biological, physiological, environmental, social and cultural affordances that they saw as being malleable.

The most important environmental aspect within this multi-layered web of musicking is of course our connection to sound. But with much of our behaviour and understanding of the sounds around us based on sensory information that arrives to us only on the autonomic and unconscious levels, we tend to take a lot of our relationship to sound for granted. This is compounded by our tendency to orientate our conscious focus and attention away from our body and out into the world (van der Schyff, 2015: 5). But within MiS, much more of the physicality of sound and the listening experience was able to be understood and recognised because of the greater degree of spatial spreading and the reduction in sonic blending and fusion (Blessner and Salter, 2009). This accords with observations previously identified by composers such as Henry Brant (Brant, 1979; Brant and Oteri, 2006; Harley, 1993, p123–144; 1994; 1997, p70–92). But away from the constraints of performing set material, MiS took on an added significance as it clearly put on show the creative decision making of each individual involved. This resonates with Keith Sawyer's belief that improvisation remains the ideal

location to observe creativity in action (Sawyer, 1992, p253–263; 2000, p180–185; 2001; 2003).

Finally, as musicking is about relations and it is within these relationships that the meaning of the process exists (Small, 1998: 142), MiS allowed for the establishment of social connections to occur with less regard for performative conventions. Rather than expecting an ensemble to operate as a single entity, MiS allowed for the whole group to not only break apart at times and follow different interests in different parts of the space, but it also enabled a greater involvement by the audience. All of these issues will be further investigated as we continue through the following chapters. But for now I will focus on how the improvisers responded to the opportunity to expand their practice out into the performance space.

3.2

Spatial locations

Distance learning, a far cry,
Responding swiftly to the sound approaching.
You come to me, to get things going.
Bringing everyone on board, you cheat.

The ways that the musicians and listeners responded to the invitation to move in space during performance remained very varied and specific to whatever was unfolding in the process at the time. Most movement was motivated by a desire to listen or relate, to some aspect of the musicking process, in a particular way. While some musicians chose to remain in the same place, or moved just once during an improvisation, others embraced the idea of engaging with the ensemble from different locations. But irrespective of how much an individual chose to move, the shifting topography of the performance space provided numerous new performative choices that the participants could choose to engage in.

Despite an increased sense that every improvisation was a unique set of co-mingling factors, it is possible to identify a range of listening and spatially related possibilities that commonly occurred during the improvisations. I will now focus on each one and provide a number of examples from the footage.

3.2.1 Starting together

During this research, the improvisations began in one of two possible ways, either with everyone grouped together or with all the musicians distributed in a vague circle, facing inwards towards each other. I chose not to promote any particular starting point, as I was interested to see what would happen when no set instruction was offered. As with many free improvised



Figure 6. Default playing position.

performances, each improvisation comprised of improvisers who had not necessarily played in that exact configuration of personnel before, meaning that establishing something of an understanding of their collective voice before they started to explore their relationships spatially was possibly advantageous. It would have provided a reassuring nod towards an existing performance tradition while also serving as a reminder that the invitation to move should be seen as an extension to their practice and a more fixed approach to playing remained a possibility. Those with less experience tended to start together, while the more experienced improvisers were just as likely to start from a more open spatial arrangement. Where the latter occurred, I interpreted the actions of the musicians as an attempt to return to a more informal playing situation, where the idea of needing to present something to an audience was ignored. It is therefore significant that this occurred when more experienced improvisers were playing. But even in these instances, the coming together of the musicians, into something that resembles the conventional spatial approach to performance, continued to happen. But as this regularly did not involve all of the performers and as the audience were no longer positioned together in a unified block, the MiS

musicking experience continued to defy and undermine the safety associated with such a fixed performative perspective.

3.2.2 Listening and responding distally

The ability to move away and engage distally with the ensemble proved very popular to players and listeners alike. It was seen as an advantageous strategy to: establish a clearer impression of the entire ensemble (figure 8.), to hear and establish one's own sound separate to everything else, to get away from something you did not like, or to provide a clear spatial division between different musical material happening simultaneously. It effectively afforded the listener the opportunity to mix their own listening experience, as expressed here:

That notion that you could listen to something, or you could just get away from someone, if they were playing too loud. You know, you could change your balance. (P18, London Improvisers Orchestra, 2017)

I regularly found that I would remove myself, early in an improvisation, in order to gain an impression of the entire ensemble⁸. I would then pick out particular material or individuals that interested me, to respond to from across the space. The spatial location and positioning of the individual had a profound impact on their experience of the performance. From the intensity of being in the midst of the musical process to the more relaxed, spatially distanced perspective, every participant had the option to self-organize themselves in the performance process. This is highlighted here by an audience member who clearly defined the

⁸ Distal relationship as a way of opening up the space - <https://youtu.be/Kjhn3r0ZZIo?t=1017> (Leahy, 2017e)

difference between the immersive, and proximal, versus the relaxed, and distal, listening perspectives. He writes:

The option to detach a little by going to the outer edge of the space, made it quite relaxing, equally there was a choice to enter into the space a little more and in doing so, it felt like I was having a more active influence on the performers. (A12, London Improvisers Orchestra, 2017)

This same range of affordances is also discussed here:

Sometimes I would maybe latch onto a sound that was coming from across the room and work closely with that and regard it as a sort of counterpoint to everything else. And sometimes it was very useful to be able to go there and hear it better and in order to give the other, by moving in the space and putting myself next to whoever it was, that I was kind of playing with, as opposed to against. It gave the others more space to do what they were doing in another space. So, it was kind of useful both ways. (P17, London Improvisers Orchestra, 2017)



Figure 7. Zooming out. distancing oneself from the ensemble.

3.2.3 Listening and responding proximally

As well as transcending the spatial norms distally, the participants regularly defied performative rules and chose to engage proximally. This involved entering into, what Stark Smith (Koteen et al., 2008) refers to as, the ‘Kinespheric bubbles’ of other performers. This afforded them the opportunity to either: listen more closely to the sound of another instrumentalist⁹, or if they chose then to focus on the group more globally, to enter into the listening realm of the other person so as to better understand the performative choices of that person given what they were hearing¹⁰. Musicians with quieter instruments also came together when the music grew in intensity, with this possibly being interpreted as an act of defiance or solidarity against a common adversary¹¹.



*Figure 8. a/ listening closely to another person's instrument.
b/ Listening from another person's perspective.*

For example, in a performance in Amsterdam, to counteract the boominess of the room, I chose to sit directly in front of the bass drum with my face level to the top of the bass drum roughly 20 cm away. Facing into the drumkit at such a close range, I found that the room's effect on the bass drum was greatly reduced and I was able to really sense the multiple voices of the drum kit as one entity. I then

⁹ Listening closely to another instrumentalists instrument – <https://youtu.be/dtjFanyfrEE?t=224> (Leahy, 2017h)

Audience members moving closely to listen to an instrumentalists sound - <https://youtu.be/rmLbg82eLP8?t=485> (Leahy, 2017j)

¹⁰ Listening to the ensemble from another person's perspective – https://youtu.be/ii_0OqlitP8?t=129 (Leahy, 2017i)

¹¹ String players coming together to support each other – <https://youtu.be/bX9UnUckLcI?t=392> (Leahy, 2017d)

swivelled around to watch the clarinet player, remaining directly in front of the drums. From this vantage point, I started to understand the decisions of the drummer given his relationship to his duetting partner: the volume that he was playing, and the fluid stream of sounds produced as he used his fingers to manipulate the various objects on the skins of the snare and floor tom, while the bass drum and high-hat offered frequent punctuations. From this close proximity, I could clearly sense the logic of the drummer's responses to the long notes played by the clarinet player on the other side of the room. Similarly, these two comments reflect the many positive responses to this aspect of the MiS process as expressed by participants:

I found it particularly interesting as a listener ...It was just a really different way of listening Because ... you could, sort of, enter the world of each player individually, and you could hear the whole thing from that person's perspective, simply from being in, right there next to them. It just made a whole lot of difference from hearing it as a four piece group in front of me. That kind of thing, it was just really different. It was very, very interesting. It kind of just opens up another dimension ... as a listener (P17, London Improvisers Orchestra, 2017)

And:

There's detail that you can only get when you are extremely close, cause that is something that is completely And there are a lot of things that are fantastically quiet and you've just got to have a chance to hear it. In fact, we did play unusually quiet, a lot of the time. (P36, Oxford Improvisers, 2017)

The aspect 'telescoping awareness' in Stark-Smith's Underscore (Koteen et al., 2008: 96)¹², corresponds to this ability to shift our attentional focus (Linson and Clarke, 2017, p52–69: 55)¹³ while remaining in the same spatial location. The concept of *telescoping awareness* can also be useful in making conscious an

¹² Introduced in section 1.2.6

¹³ Introduced in Section 1.3.4

individual's regularly occurring patterns of behaviour and personal habits. The improviser can then choose to subvert or challenge what they have identified in their playing so as to afford new avenues of improvising.

3.2.4 Musicians in a circle

As pointed out previously, the musicians regularly formed an inward facing, playing circle¹⁴. This naturally emerged whether the improvisers began in this formation or not and can be seen to have provided an optimal spatial configuration for aural and visual communication amongst all the participants. This relates directly to research by Healey, Leach, and Bryan-Kinns (2005) which identifies that

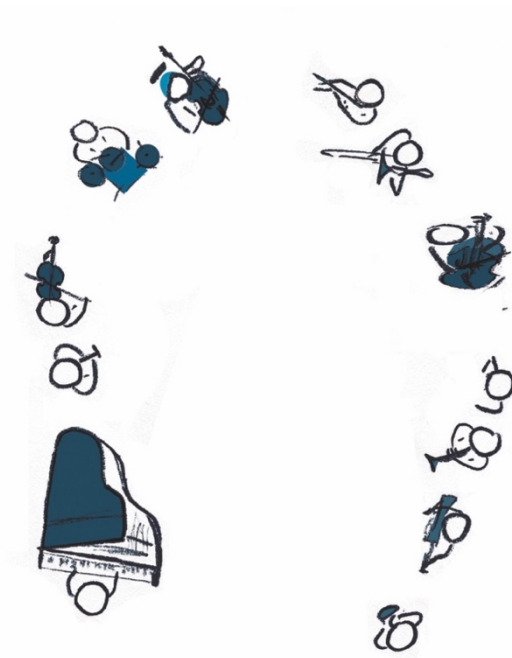


Figure 9. Playing in the round to optimise aural and visual communication.

improvising musicians, in a non-performance setting, naturally orientate themselves into a circle so as to support a cooperative ethos where all the participants maintain equal 'speaking rights' (Healey et al., 2005: 2).

This research clearly demonstrated that, once the expectation that the performance requires a static and separate spatial arrangement was removed, the musicians naturally resorted to the same circular configuration as it afforded the most favourable conditions for interaction and communication. If at any point one person chose to move the group would naturally reconfigure to balance any spatial discrepancies. Audience members also supported the balancing of the

¹⁴ Playing in the round – <https://youtu.be/BCjFMv3ZQfw?t=295>

space, choosing to move to newly unoccupied seats, but usually after the musicians had arranged themselves¹⁵. The way that the participants naturally arranged themselves when a gap appeared in the playing circle is a clear example of the group self-organizing to continually optimise their performative experience (Cobussen, 2014, p15–29).

As explained in section 1.3.5, the rate of change within the improvisation is of central concern to the improviser. The same attention was observed within these performances, but also in the way that they organised themselves spatially. This meant that while playing in the round had become the default configuration, the participants regularly subverted this arrangement to ensure a healthy balance of stasis and novelty. One way of doing this was to position oneself between different groups of performers, listening to multiple streams of material simultaneously. This proved to be popular for improvisers and listeners alike¹⁶.

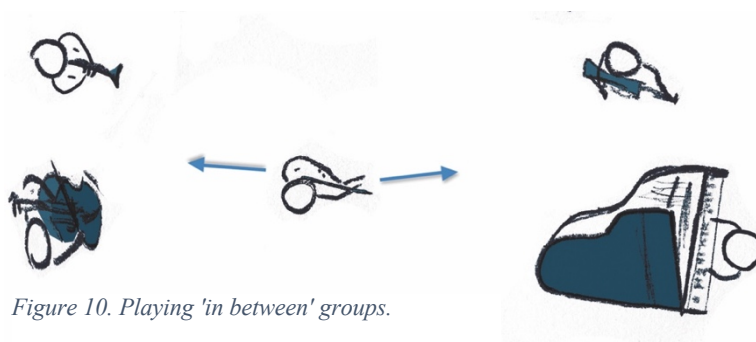


Figure 10. Playing 'in between' groups.

Another instance occurred in the final improvisation of LIO¹⁷, when the trumpeter Loz Speyer moved decisively to the centre of the room where he began to circle on the spot playing a quiet long tone. When asked about this Speyer remarked that:

Perhaps I was thinking of it as a sort of focus of the room, like the centre point of the room. And the trumpet just being able to revolve like on

¹⁵ Participants rearranging themselves - <https://youtu.be/DesXc03VFXU?t=80> (Leahy, 2017f)

¹⁶ Going into the middle of the space to listen immersively - https://youtu.be/_AQ5Uhb08Ew?t=271 (Leahy, 2017b)

¹⁷ Speyer moving to the “focus of the room” - <https://youtu.be/QvtyJ57Tilo?t=583>

the point, on the centre point ... I had a feeling of gathering together, I think. And playing really low, quietly, just semitones and long notes. And moving in semitone quite a lot. (Speyer, 2017)



Figure 11. Audience participant listening in between players. Photo Séverine Bailleux

3.2.5 Subgroups of the whole

Due to the distances between different parts of the ensemble, smaller localized subgroupings regularly emerged. Whether these groupings appeared in response to how the music naturally unfolded or if the music was a response to the specific spatial relationships existing in the moment is unclear. One participant felt that the distance between players had a correlation to the degree that one may feel connected to the group. He stated that:

outside that critical distance you become a separate group and you either felt left out, or you start doing your own thing, or you feel like you need to join with the main group. (P32, Oxford Improvisers, 2017)

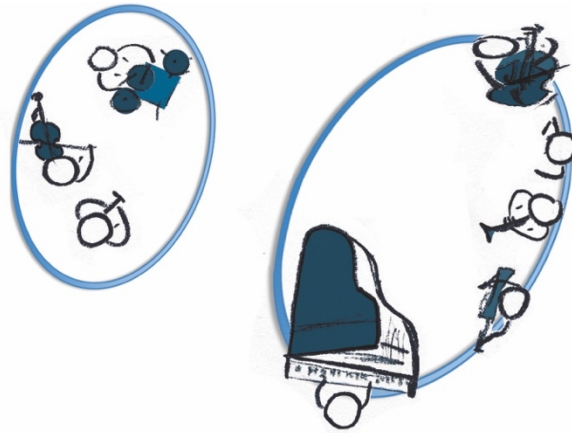


Figure 12. Subgroupings of the ensemble

I would argue that whether the group fractured into two or not was dependant on the specific combination of various contributing factors, with distance being one. But it also involved each participants attentional focus (Linson and Clarke, 2017, p52–69), their impression of the balance of the many variables that exist within the space which related to the rate of change (Wilson and MacDonald, 2016, p1029–1043), the balances of energy and novelty (Clark, 2015). This is alluded to by this participant, who states that:

What you normally do is have ... a few small groups, and then a big group. And infact ... that's automatically happening all the time isn't it. We are kind of regrouping, I think, that's a huge thing really. (P36, Oxford Improvisers, 2017)

There is, however, a limit to how removed you can be, while still attempting to maintain a connection with others positioned elsewhere. As Bailey found out, when he ventured outside the I'Klectik¹⁸, the new sonic environment quickly takes over. As Bailey describes here:

I didn't know how much you could hear me at all. So, I was kind of playing for myself ... I think I started to engage with the sound world outside, I started to engage with the traffic and the trees. And started to play a little bit with that. (Bailey, 2017)

¹⁸ Playing outside - <https://youtu.be/DesXc03VFXU?t=368>

As already discussed, when the distance expands to the point that aural or visual contact is lost, one tendency is to establish a subgroup of the ensemble that continues the process but is localized, responding just to the immediate environment.

3.3

Spatial engagement

Listening and waiting ... questioning ... what and when?
Jumping in, an instant ... inviting an exchange ... aligned.
Even with actions that are not focused on sound,
We support the whole with spatially-informed performative choices.

3.3.1 Interactions, intentions, and intrusions

Throughout all the MiS performances, the music seemed less crowded with more musical space existing in the improvisations. Intense and loud events continued to happen, but there seemed to be more intentionality and consideration of what the musicians played. Initially, it was suggested that the reason for this was that the players felt slightly apprehensive of the new playing situation, or that they felt compelled to play in an “overly polite” (Wachsmann, 2017) way. But on further reflection it was seen that the greater spatial diversity had led to the participants simply needing more time to gather a complete impression of what was happening in the space. Wachsmann felt that MiS “definitely changed the timing of when people play” (2017). He qualified this suggesting that it was not like inexperienced improvisers trying to find something significant to play, but rather a result of people becoming overtly aware of the environmental nature of the music. MiS slowed down the overall rate of the interactions, with there being less compulsion to push ahead with new musical ideas. The music was given the space to exist through the greater utilization of the physical space.

Additionally, Musicians and listeners readily took advantage of small breaks in the music to change places in the room. This regularly resulted in the improvisations exhibiting an episodic quality, with bouts of music being punctuated by flurries of movement. One improviser explained, what many had also felt, that after moving it was “like you move to a different piece” (P41, Oxford Improvisers, 2017). As most of the musicians tended to stop playing when they moved places, the moving also offered the improvisers a chance to just listen. This can be seen throughout the footage with musicians regularly pausing and taking longer breaks from playing to just listen. For some, however, the prospect of moving involved the collecting up an array of instruments and questions as to whether to take everything or not.

Although, improvisers performing together in a spatially unified and conventional setting, undoubtedly change focus and interact with different members of the group over the course of an improvisation, the MiS performances made these adjustments more visible. The attention to the space provided a greater sense of clarity of intention, as if everyone was considering more what actions were needed for the maintenance of the music. Bailey (2017) suggested that this amounted to a drop in the level of redundant musical material being put into the space. This also led to questions related to how the listener should orientate themselves, as pointed out here:

There was a duo over there, and a trio over there. ... were you listening to it as ... a duo over there, or am I listening to it, as a whole thing? And ... you can play around with that, but I thought that the moving around created that dynamic. Because, it technically could happen if you were all sitting in a line as well, and it probably does. I suppose spatially it becomes noticeable. (A17, Oxford Improvisers, 2017)

As the musician's process expanded outwards to incorporate a more spatially diverse process, a greater degree of proprioceptive, kinesthetic, and somatic-based awareness must have been implicated. This claim is further reinforced by the obvious need for additional proprioceptive awareness connected to motor coordination use to navigate around the space. This greater emphasis on the physical embodiment of the musicking process undoubtedly contributed to a difference in the mimetic feedback that supports our music comprehension (Cox, 2016). This additional focus on the multi-sensorial and spatial dimension to the listening experience could have also been responsible for the change in the pace of the MiS improvisations.

3.3.2 Spatial significance.

The MiS musicians continued the performative tradition of collectively self-organizing and sharing the roles associated with the musicking process. But now their spatial location could reinforce musically significant actions. For example, while the musicians kept returning to playing 'in the round', the act of stepping into the circle regularly afforded greater importance¹⁹, to the point that it could drastically change the direction of the music or lead to the improvisation ending²⁰.

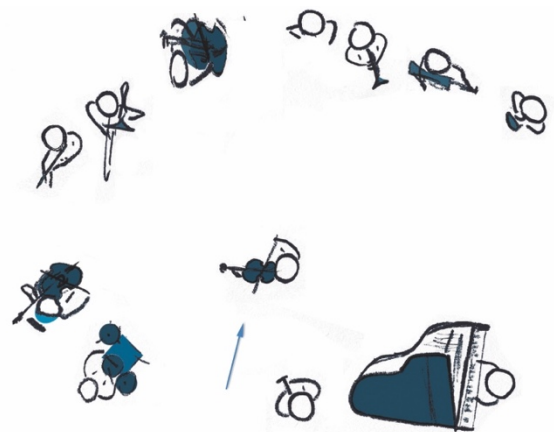


Figure 13. Stepping into the circle to take the lead.

¹⁹ Entering into the space leading to a change in dynamics in the improvisation - <https://youtu.be/qgpt1lhdOY8?t=357>

²⁰ Entering into the space led to others dropping out and the eventual end of the improvisation - <https://youtu.be/p3eGT9UoxGs?t=865>.

Another way that the spatial aspect of the MiS process expanded the existing FiM practice occurred when improvisers chose to elongate an existing musical relationship, by adopting a spatial position in relation to what already existed. In the footnoted example²¹, Wachsmann effectively opened up the physical and musical space by replicating my distance from the cellist.

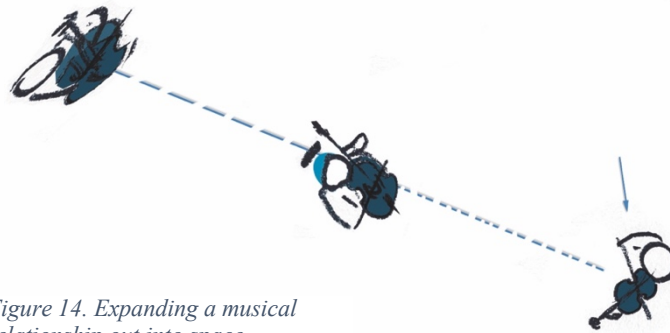


Figure 14. Expanding a musical relationship out into space.

The MiS participants, who had previous experience of some form of spatially embedded practice, seemed to identify more quickly the new possibilities afforded to them within the MiS performative process. Their positioning and movement quality seemed to be less inhibited and more intentional. This is not to say that they stepped into a *performative* (Butler, 2011) or staged, theatrical role, but rather the movement easily became integrated into their musicking process with little evidence of additional effort on their part. This heightened awareness to the spatial aspect of musical improvising is very noticeable in the quartet that Carrasco Lopez and I are both part of which also features Jed Barry and Loz Speyer²². Everyone in the quartet seems aware of the spatial composition and what impact their movement has on the musicking process²³. Similarly, Wachsmann with his wealth of experience and existing interest in the intersection

²¹ Wachsmann extending the line of performers - <https://youtu.be/BCjFMv3ZQfw?t=1210>

²² It is possibly worth noting that Speyer also has a long standing movement practice as an experienced Chi gong practitioner and instructor.

²³ Barry, Carrasco-Lopez, Leahy and Speyer quartet improvisations I'klektik 26 July 2016 - http://www.dafmusic.com/Musicians_in_Space/mis_260716_viewer.html, Improvisation 1, MIO performance, 27 May 2017 - http://www.dafmusic.com/Musicians_in_Space/mis_27052017_imp1_viewer.html.

between music and physical gesture easily integrated movement and spatial location into his improvisation practice, using his movement as another compositional tool in which to balance the dynamic and textural nature of the performances²⁴.

Like myself, Carrasco-Lopez's saw a clear association between her experience as a dancer and the process of improvising within this spatialized environment. She explained how what she was playing at times stemmed directly out of what she was seeing in the space in terms of symmetries of bodies and the physical actions of others. These occurrences inspired her to either sonify the movement she was seeing, or replicate the physical movement while allowing the subsequent movement to make a sound on her cello. In this way she emphasized the movement not the sound while still contributing to the sonic texture²⁵. She explains:

Yesterday in the orchestra with one of the dancers on my right. I was playing and she moved closer to me and then entering my space, my view. And then perceiving her movement and then beginning to change and modify my music because of her movements, like following her movements. And she was following me as well of course. So, this is something that is modifying my way of playing improvised music, especially spatially. (Carrasco-Lopez, 2018)

This resembles the experiences of dancer Kent De Spain, who recommends finding other aspects of the activity to focus on, and to work with, so that the movement is the result of another process. He argues that this is a useful strategy to employ to ensure that the improviser does not get distracted, even from

²⁴ Philipp Wachsmann engaging physically with a touch of the Spring Sonata - <https://youtu.be/qqpt1lhdOY8?t=1135>

²⁵ Carrasco Lopez inspired by looking at the synchronization of the bows - <https://youtu.be/dtjFanyfrEE?t=653>

themselves, which can happen when the focus is solely on the practice itself (De Spain, 2014: 101). These examples, I believe, can be used to indicate how a well-developed spatialized improvisation practice can possibly look, feel, and sound like.

3.3.3 Gestures of friendship

While much of this chapter has focused on how the participants used the space to further their listening experience, the actions of the improvisers and listeners were just as influenced by a motivation to further connect with other participants of the musicking process. Just as the inwardly-orientated playing *in the round*, exemplified the inherent social nature of the process, optimising both the aural and visual connectivity of everyone in the space, MiS afforded the participants the opportunity to establish specific connections with others in the space. Loz Speyer repeatedly referred to this as gestures of either listening or friendship. He felt that the ability to go up to someone else reinforced trust and clearly displayed an interest and openness in what the other could offer to the group²⁶. He stated that:

It is kind of like a gesture of friendship to do that, isn't it? It's kind of ... there is this dynamic going on amongst the group and you can change something by moving, which normally you are not allowed to do. There is this tacit assumption that you are not allowed to move, so it leaves something stuck, whereas a bit of movement, a gesture of listening can mean a lot to somebody. It can bring a kind of closeness, a warmth. (Speyer, 2017)

²⁶ Musicians coming together in a gesture of listening and willingness to engage; 1 2nd small group with LIO - <https://youtu.be/dXZ9jpDwB6U?t=280>, 1st improvisation in Canterbury - https://youtu.be/iZrh75ax_aY?t=304.

This sentiment reinforces the participative, collaborative, and socializing nature of the process, which has profound implications related to the participants collective sense of trust and connectedness. One participant in Oxford explained how having the ability to move changed her decision making process. She reflected that:

being able to explore my fellow musicians from different distances and from different angles changed my decisions. Like for example, the first time that I played in front of (P40) it totally changed what I was getting from the bass clarinet. Or, like playing from your right and moving to your left. (P42, Oxford Improvisers, 2017)

3.3.4 Inclusive vs Exclusive

A very telling illustration of the socially-constructive nature of FiM, was the tendency for everyone to play inclusively rather than exclusively. This refers to the musicians choosing to orientate themselves physically towards the wider group, despite perhaps being engaged musically with someone right next to them. This meant that other participants continued to feel included and that their contribution would be welcomed. The improvisers only appeared to resort to more *exclusive* approaches to playing when they got lost in an intense musical exchange that caused them to lose sight of the wider space.



Figure 15. Different proximal playing relationships. a/ (Inclusive) oriented outwards, b/ (Exclusive) playing to each other.

An example of exclusive playing occurred in the third small group improvisation, in the London improvisers Orchestra performance²⁷. The improvisation featured a quartet of two mobile and two static improvisers, which led to the two duos being in different parts of the room. The two violinists became engaged in a close exchange positioned proximally exclusive to the other two, despite the small distant accompaniment being offered by the pianist. Then Adam Bohman, on objects, re-entered which alerted the violinists' to the rest of the space. They then open up their spatial relationship to the others. But the strength of the change in awareness led the group to end the improvisation there. This is also a good example of where a drastic shift in focus can lead to a rupture in the musicking process.



Figure 16. Duetting violins facing inwards.

²⁷ Example 1. of exclusive playing - <https://youtu.be/sZayo6R2Yzk?t=680> (Leahy, 2017c)

3.4

Seeing with increased clarity

Eyes open, eyes closed

The way forward can't be seen.

The night sky is dotted with stars.

Tell me, what can you see from where you are?

And how much do you use your eyes to listen?

3.4.1 Eyes open

While it is possible to navigate around a space using just the aural information available to you (Blessner and Salter, 2009), the listening competency required to navigate around an environment full of people, chairs, and musical instruments is likely to exceed most people's aural and proprioceptive competency. This then necessitated the participants opening their eyes to the MiS process, despite many admitting to usually playing with their eyes closed. The added emphasis on the visual element of the performance process remained the most profound aspect of MiS for many participants, as expressed here:

I tended to, ... often, play with my eyes shut. And I found it very illuminating in this environment to be encouraged to use my sight. And that also led me to different kinds of relationships with the other musicians. (P5, Canterbury Free Range improvisers, 2017)

Participants cited a variety of reasons why they opened their eyes. These included: to navigate around the space, to help in the prediction of other people's actions, to confirm perceptual information coming from other sensory sources, to identify salient aspects of the performative environment that could be incorporated into the process, and to signal or make visible one's intentions to other participants.

Seeing the space contributed to the participants receiving a different and more varied combination of sensory stimuli. This undoubtedly informed the largely pre-conscious perception, prediction, action process loop (Clark, 2015) which supported the subsequent improvisational choices of each individual. This means that the MiS process was different even if it was only felt to be on an intuitive level.

But where observations did enter into more conscious awareness, MiS revealed to some improvisers a litter of unconscious, habituated behaviours related to how they regularly enter an improvisation process. This means that the improvisations were arguably less likely to slip into habituated forms of response, as the individuals were better able to mutually subvert (Bailey, 1993) their own actions and the actions of others, as suggested here:

I had loads of thoughts, like when CR got off the drums, I was thinking of sitting down, so you couldn't come back. But ... it was all playful, but it was interesting and I started thinking about what that, in turn, means? (P13, London Improvisers Orchestra, 2017)

Further to this, seeing provided a means to clarify or confirm perceptions of what was existing in the space that may have emerged from other sensorial avenues. This links to the assertion that we regularly use new sensory information to either confirm or test our perceived understanding of a particular situation (Clark, 2015: 175). The musicians regularly used a visual survey of the space to confirm the locations of others and the musical relationships that they were hearing. For instance:

I found that I was ... not looking too much. But then there were phases when my visual sense was much more important, so I would be triggered by a sound, and then I would have to make that connection across the space. (P8, Canterbury Free Range improvisers, 2017)

But the participant's sensitivity to sensory information was extended well beyond the eyes to incorporate a far greater array of sensory information. This expanded the sense of physical and somatic engagement with the musicking process for some participants. For instance, "I had a real sense of the space that people were in, and how everyone was hearing things differently" (P5, Canterbury Free Range improvisers, 2017).

Seeing opened the process up to the possibility of non-aurally based aspects of the space that would have otherwise been overlooked. As the participants had the possibility of identifying physical aspects of the environment that they could work with as they moved throughout the improvisation. For instance, Carrasco-Lopez remarked that:

The space itself and how we move in the space. I was feeling like all this was getting together, in a way, one behind the other. It was like one more element of composing with us. (Carrasco-Lopez, 2018)

Interestingly, the two musicians who found it difficult to play as freely as they would usually, because of the movement of the people and because they liked to close their eyes when they play, both played the trombone²⁸. Their pre-occupation with the safety of their instrument and of the people around them can be seen as significant and also not too surprising given the physical nature of the instrument.

I spend a lot of my time with my eyes closed when I improvise, because I am more interested in the sounds as they hits me. And ... And I think that making eye contact with people, I find quite difficult in an improvising situation. Because a lot of the people I usually improvise with, if you make eye contact with them, they'll wonder 'what's up?' (P6, Canterbury Free Range improvisers, 2017)

These experiences, however, were far outweighed by the large majority of people who remained enthusiastic about the added affordances that emerged out of the moving topography of the MiS process. This is encapsulated by Wachsmann's who states that:

²⁸ Example taken from LIO performance. Attention can be focused on the trombone player in the centre of the image. <https://youtu.be/7FXNR8LjwyE?t=379>

the aspect of sight and being able to move ... was really exciting because I felt that I could explore the geography of the acoustics of the space. You know – ‘What’s it like to be there and what’s it like to be there?’ Rather than just being there with my eyes shut and listening to reflections and trying to suss out where my sound was going and where it was coming back from. [I could] actually explore the geography. (Wachsmann, 2017)

3.4.2 Eyes closed

Just listen ... without distraction
Movements are felt and heard ... colouring.
A journey inside a time lords box.
The key is to close your eyes



Closing the eyes remained a useful strategy when the amount of visual information increased, when too many people were moving in the space, as can be seen in the final improvisation with LIO²⁹. Undoubtedly, there is a difference between playing with the eyes open and eyes closed, as this participant explains:

I think for me, a kind of a threshold is there, that you enter into another space, both aural and spatial, and that influences the way that you play. Ah... So again when you close your eyes, you are immersed in the purely aural side of it. And that, for me, influenced the way that I responded to the music that was happening. (P34, London septet, 2017)

For me, having the eyes closed can support a better spatial positioning of the sound, based on the sound being perceived in an internally positioned, physical and emotionally imagined space. While looking to identify the source of a sound in the room, established the sound source as an empirical fact and as something that is existing in reality. The greater utilization of seeing in the improvisation undoubtedly influenced what happened in the improvisations. But whether an individual chose to open or close their eyes, during the improvisations, remained entirely up to the individual. The question that remains was voiced by one regular listener who said:

It's that whole thing of – do you need to see improvised musicians playing? If you close your eyes or if you are playing in the dark? Would it be just as good or better? (Fletcher, 2019)

²⁹ Closing eyes to create personal space - <https://youtu.be/QvtyJ57Tilo?t=232>.

3.5

Improvisers and spatialization

Before offering a summary of this section, I will review some of the significant aspects of MiS in relation to the existing body of understanding related to music spatialization. As pointed out in the introduction, MiS represents the first study of spatialization within FiM, but as explored in section 1.2 it exists within a long tradition of spatialized music practice. While I regularly offered the audience the analogy of MiS being like a sound installation that they could step into and interact with, the most significant contribution of MiS to spatialization exists with the self-organizing and heterarchical nature of the process that did away with the commanding role of the composer or sound designer. Effectively everyone became their own sound designer.

Through the facilitation of this change a number of issues that have regularly been identified as hampering the progression of spatialization into live performance were bypassed. I will focus this discussion on three issues, which includes: the limitations on the musicians playing ability resulting from the musicians movement, the distraction away from the music caused by an added theatrical quality to the process, and lastly the potentially adverse audible consequences of audience movement.

3.5.1 Playing and moving

Where changing spatial location while playing can clearly be seen to compromise the player's technical ability, within a FiM practice where the improvisers are experienced in appropriating conventional techniques, the incorporation of movement was not seen as much of a concern. The overall tendency was to stop playing, move and then commence playing again. It wasn't seen as a distraction but rather simply a means to an end, as expressed in this exchange:

P39

I was very conscious of the sound of people moving, which I thought was quite a big part of it, actually. I mean partly because of the wooden floor. ... when we were playing quietly, the sound of people moving was at a level with what else was going on, and that inevitably became part of what was the performance and it influenced things.

A2

Was it distracting?

P39

I don't think anything is distracting, really, it's just different. You know.

P37

It would be quite nice if you had a Startrek thing where you could dematerialize from one spot and reappear instantly over there. Because, like you said, you are lumbering across and thinking 'I want to be there already'. (chuckles) it can be quite an operation. (Oxford Improvisers, 2017)

The question of how to efficiently carry an assemblage of instruments across the room was seen as a problem leading to questions of whether to take everything or leave things behind. But different musicians arrived at various strategies to promote a degree of spatial exploration while having instruments ready to play on arrival. For instance, pianist, Sam Bailey, chose to place his various instruments in different parts of the space, to force himself to move away from the piano (see fig18). Philipp Wachsmann did not face these dilemmas playing

the violin, but instead resorted to testing the space by repeating a musical phrase in different spatial locations. He likened his actions to a curator repositioning works of art around a gallery space to find the optimal position of each work. On reflection, “I think, I would definitely not have done it that way if it hadn’t been for the spatial element” (Wachsmann, 2017, 1.06’28”).



Figure 17. Toy piano, harmoniums and piano configuration forcing Bailey to move.

Having worked as a moving musician for nearly twenty years, I have cultivated both an ease in moving and playing, as well as an understanding of what I can and cannot physically achieve. Other musicians, watching me in a recent workshop in Norway described my practice as having two layers to it, with another set of affordances becoming available in the different circumstances. This was an insight that had not occurred to me before they mentioned it, but it stands to illustrate how any playing constraints can over time be neutralized with experience.

3.5.2 Exiting the stage left

While Harley saw the “seemingly infinite wealth of possibilities” (1993, p123–144: 129) of live instrumental spatialization being limited by “the theatrical character of the performer's movement” (1993, p123–144: 129), this proved of little concern within MIS as the movement never existed as something separate to the music itself. As the movement arose out of very pedestrian concerns regarding the wish to listen from a different perspective, the movement avoided becoming a staged, mechanical activity, with musicians unconsciously communicating just their situated awkwardness to the audience. The freedom to approach the process on your own terms became a crucial aspect with no one being compelled to move. This meant that the participants had just as much permission to remain seated in one position as they had to move around all the time. The profundity of this self-autonomy was succinctly explained by a musician in Canterbury. She said:

I really don't like moving. And I think one of the reasons why I don't like it is because, I sometimes sing in another group that uses movement, mainly in kind of concert hall situations. And I feel like they aim for a particularly stylised form of moving around, that isn't to do with the music. So what I quite liked about this was that, I felt a lot of the moving was part of the music and not just a kind of extra thing that people were doing. And also, that I didn't feel like I was being encouraged just to move around for the sake of seeing that I was moving. (P9, Canterbury Free Range improvisers, 2017)

The dynamic combination of being free to move, while still existing in a performative context with an audience meant that many MiS participants found themselves scrutinizing their own motivations to move. One example of this occurred when two improvisers chose to lie down on the floor in a move that

could be described as anti-moving³⁰. One of the improvisers justified her actions by saying that:

When I went on to the floor, it was actually because I didn't want to just walk around, in a circle. And then I saw that all the children were on the floor. So I thought, 'Oh well, let's just do that.' (P9, Canterbury Free Range improvisers, 2017)



Figure 18. Lying down, an 'anti-moving' strategy.

While lying on the floor can possibly be seen as both an act of theatricality and something that would unnecessarily inhibit the playing ability of the performer, the actions of these improvisers were clearly interpreted and accepted as their genuine response to the musicking process and not something that detracted from the performance. Further to this, having done similar things myself, I can clearly recognize how physical limitations like this can provide a fertile basis in which to explore new avenues of practice, precisely because your normal approaches to playing have been compromised.

³⁰ Improvisers lying on the floor - <https://youtu.be/kYqPuYxJOE0?t=234>

The fact that the participants did not lose themselves in the possible “ha-ha” (Bailey, 2017, 1.09’40”) theatricality of the process, demonstrates that the musicking process did not get consumed by the novelty of the event. The nearest that any group came to this was in Oxford, at the rehearsal the day prior to the performance. This took place upstairs in an open vestibule in the Richard Hamilton Building at Oxford Brookes University, as described here:

I think there was a slight element of theatre, last night, where we were ... ‘Getting inside the toy box’ ... with the novelty of it. I mean we had a performance area, where there was a lift and so people were coming out of the lift, And the stairs, It was a little theatrical. It was actually quite funny. (P37, Oxford Improvisers, 2017)

But I would argue that even in this situation the music was the result of what was in the environment and that the features of the space led to a collective effort to see what could be possible. For instance, I recall going up in the lift while continuing to work with the musical ideas initiated with people on the ground floor only to continue the connection from upstairs but now with their sound floating up the stairs.

3.5.3 Embracing a noisy world

Whereas sounds emanating from sources other than the musicians is regularly considered to cause an unnecessary distraction, with Harley dismissing the idea of allowing the audience to move as it can result in a ‘noisy informality’ (1993, p123–144: 129), MiS proved to be more accepting of anything that happened to enter into the performative realm. Rather than external sounds being seen as distracting the music regularly seemed to emerge out of the space and fade back into it. For instance: the opening to the third improvisation at Sydney Cooper

Gallery where the flutist duets with the birds on the roof³¹, and the opening of the first improvisation of the septet at I'Klectik where the sound of the ambulance siren is left to mark the beginning³², or the numerous instances within the Oxford improvisers performance where the musicians worked with the reverberant floor boards³³, or in response to the sounds from down on the street³⁴.

All these instances point towards an overall emphasis on the connection of the music to the wider spatial environment. The participants accepted that the space and the music could be seen to emerge together, which reflects Blesser and Salter's suggestion that the optimal form of spatialized music exists when the process allows the musician to be influenced by the specific spatiality of the performance environment (2008: 5). This also contributed to an increased heterarchical performance dynamic that does not delineate between permitted sounds and unwanted noise. This reflects Di Scipio's impression that a performance ecosystem self-organises itself around what is present in the space with no judgement. The musical actions "cannot be isolated from the external world, and cannot achieve their own autonomous function except in close conjunction with a source of information (or energy)" (Di Scipio, 2003: 271). This sense of interconnectedness to the space clearly became a constituent part of the process, with many extraneous sounds being taken up and used by the improvisers.

³¹ Duet with birds - <https://youtu.be/Cf4G6DyWXro?t=21> (Leahy, 2017a)

³² Ambulance siren - <https://youtu.be/QomIjAQ09HE>

³³ Playing with floor boards - <https://youtu.be/rmLbg82eLP8?t=615>, <https://youtu.be/rmLbg82eLP8?t=840>, <https://youtu.be/rmLbg82eLP8?t=1262>, and <https://youtu.be/BGFWfelpWY0?t=1911>

³⁴ Playing in response to the street - <https://youtu.be/zqzc6nRCqA0?t=578>.

3.5.4 Decentralized spatialization

Where most of Brant's compositional choices were made based on his commitment to respecting the integrity of each instrument, or group of instruments, musical individuality, the MiS participants consciously and unconsciously arrived at a similar balancing of the aural topography by using spatial separation. Using their freedom to explore the space the MiS participants emphasized their own sense-making process which continued to focus on listening to balance of performative roles and contrasting musical material. What emerged from the MiS performances supports Brant's argument that spatialized approaches to performance are the most appropriate means of presentation, when "the objective is extreme polyphonic density with utmost contrast between the linear constituents" (Brant, 1979: 2).

What the MiS performances demonstrated was that the decentralized nature of the process effectively remained impervious to the many limitations regularly associated with the use of spatialization in live performance. This was because the difficulties, outlined in the last 3 sections, all emerged from the perspective of the composer, the centralized authority that had, by virtue of their role had aimed to prescribe and dictate the actions of the musicians. I began MiS from a starting point of not prescribing any set course of action to the participants. I neither had a set goal or a particular experience that I wanted to recreate. Instead, I simply wanted to provide an environment where the music could emerge freely with the onus on each participant to interpret the invitation to move in their own way. As a result, MiS clearly demonstrated that issues regarding performers moving in performance had little to do with the movement itself, but rather the dynamics of the situations where the complex web of possible actions are

constrained by over-complicating compositional parameters. My interest was simply on providing an environment where things could happen as Borgo succinctly sums up, saying that “simple decentralized activities can produce dramatic, self-organizing behaviors” (Borgo, 2006, p1–24: 5).

3.5.5 Chapter summary

This chapter has attempted to offer the reader with a clear impression of what characterised the MiS performances. We can see that the opportunity to move to different parts of the room during the performance afforded the improvisers a chance to expand their focus on a particular aspect or interest of the improvisational process by being able to modify their spatial orientation to offer themselves the best perspective in which to engage. Whether this meant: moving away to understand the macro, or to move closer to zoom in on an easily lost detail, most musicians quickly recognized the benefits of engaging spatially to strengthen their existing listening practice.

Equally important, but until now seldom reflected on by free improvisers, was the ability to signify a social connection with another participant of the process. An individual was able to demonstrate a gesture of interest, inclusion, solidarity, and friendship simply by approaching another player or gesturing physically or musically of their connection. This was seen as a profound expansion on the gestures of interactivity within a static performance, where the convention remains that the social bond between the musicking participants is demonstrated primarily through the music. Both of these sets of motivations resulted in a greater reliance on seeing the performance space, both for navigational purposes

but to also recognize the shifting acoustic and social dynamics present within the process.

While the individual attended to what interested them personally within the process, they balanced these desires, usually unconsciously, with an attention to the spatial needs of the entire group. This regularly resulted in the improvisers performing in an open ring, that afforded optimal visual and aural inclusion. The degree to which the individuals were able to recognize the overall spatial composition varied noticeably, with the improvisers who had previous experience of working in spatially dynamic environments demonstrating an ability beyond the tacit to the point that they could modify their relationship to the entire group, consciously varying their presence from a place of prominence to near invisibility. Finally, the nature of the improvisation process continued to maintain an integrity to the ideals of free improvisation, only now the number of variables had increased considerably.

3.5.6 Can, could, or should improvisers ...

Can the three headed beast, whisper ?

Or could it, make the tea?

Roaring all day, I should rest my voice.

Can anyone afford not to?

In response to the first research question, which was:

To what extent do free improvising musicians draw on the spatial characteristics of a performative environment – and to what extent can, could, or should they?

I am confident that this chapter has provided a wealth of insights into how the improvisers approached the spatial environment. But I will now focus briefly on the second part of the question and how I am interpreting the differentiation of the three words *can*, *could*, and *should*.

Can relates to what is afforded to the individual within the performative environment. It points to the agency that each individual has, in terms of instrumental technique, past experiences, temperaments, health, etc., and in terms of MiS it also includes the opportunity to move in space. *Can* refers to what can be done irrespective of any cultural or social constraints. It is what is humanly possible in relation to what can be explored through sound.

Where *can* conveys a sense of permission to explore the spatial aspect of MiS, *could* points towards a suggestive possibility built on the balancing of factors. It implies a degree of consideration of the possibilities and affordances of the situation with a respect for past experiences and the traditions associated with the endeavour. *Could*, therefore, requires a balancing of what *can* be done with the affirmation of the traditions associated with the practice. It is through this balancing process that a sense and feeling of being part of a musicking community is established.

The *should* strikes at the heart of the improviser's tradition which is the freedom of each individual to craft their own experiences, picking and choosing from the countless possible variables in order to make sense of the process for themselves. It is therefore a question that cannot be answered by anyone other than each individual themselves.

Based on these three definitions, I believe MiS has contributed greatly to what is considered possible within a free improvisation. MiS has successfully balanced the tradition with freedom. It has invited the participants into an expanded world of possibilities while reminding everyone of their shared responsibility for the maintenance of the music. MiS has been successful in this negotiative process by ensuring that each individual is the sole arbiter of their own actions.

Depiction

Can we explore the sounds?
Proximal whispers bowed so only you can hear.
I give you permission to dance between choirs,
Suspended over rafters like bar lines dividing the space.

Could this make sense?
Embroided in past adaptations.
Affirming the felt sensations of a raucous connection,
With primitive gestures balancing distal listening.

Should we celebrate?
Playing in the round as looks confirm.
Attention touches the idea of equality,
It's your choice, as the subgroups reassemble into one.

4

Performance and performer depictions

How would the performance of free improvised music, within a spatialized context, look, feel, and sound like? In reality, this question may remain impossible to definitively answer as each individual will experience the same performance differently given their previous life experiences. But the answering of the question is not as important as asking it, as to do so ensures an openness to the experiences of others. The question sustains a generosity and humility that reflects the characteristics of the 'Improvisative' (McMullen, 2016).

This chapter contains two sets of depictions. The first set provides an insight into six MiS performances, five from 2017 and a final one from Madrid in 2018. The second set aim to convey the essence of the experience of four participants of the MiS performances, all of whom participated more than once.



Figure 19. MIO 3rd Improvisation.

4.1

Performance depictions

4.1.1 Free Range Improvisers – 12 May 2017

Venue – Sydney Cooper Gallery, Canterbury

Koan

A deep rooted bond from music that moves
beyond sound, barriers fading.
With children sitting on the floor.
Permission is granted to set fire to everything

Discussion.

The first performance involving a sharing circle at the conclusion of the performance took place on the 12th of May, 2017, at the Sidney Cooper Gallery, in Canterbury. The gallery, operated and run by Christ Church Canterbury University, was empty in preparation for the graduate exhibition. This meant that the large rectangular space had no work to navigate around or adorning the bright, white walls. Set off the main street of Canterbury, the gallery occupies a former commercial space with the exposed steel frames and zig-zagging roof structure a tell-tale indicator of this past life. The lack of insulation and the glass skylights in the roof contributed to the bright, reverberant acoustic which reflected the brightness of the room. But at the same time, it offered little protection to outside sounds, namely the birds that began to settle as the performance continued and the sporadic turning on and off of the air

conditioning unit of the restaurant next door. The gallery was entered into along a corridor from the reception area, where the staff of the gallery were serving wine and orange juice. This led to a steady trickle of traffic through the double doors that stuck together slightly and had the potential to bang if people were not careful as they passed through them.

A small ante-room, where the chairs were stored, provided space for instrument cases. As the performance was in a gallery and a visual artist was joining the musicians in the performance, I took advantage of an activities trolley and spread out some paper, pens, and pencils in one part of the room. The artist created a work area at the far end of the room with a camera pointing on her working area, which was used to project the work on to the far wall.

Reflection cards, with the outline of the space printed on it, accompanied the programme notes as an additional form of feedback. The cards, in practice, were little used with some being filled in by the children. One was touchingly presented directly to a musician, at the end of the performance, in response to his playing.

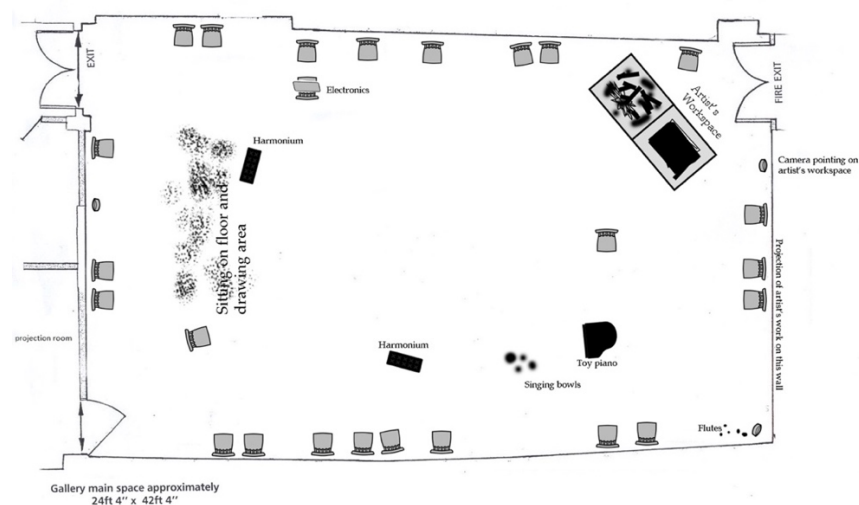


Figure 20. Sidney Cooper Gallery performance, 12th May 2017

The performance featured nine musicians along with the visual artist. The range of ability stretched from very experience with over forty years of playing experience in one instance, to a qualified music therapist that confessed to having little performance experience of improvised music outside a therapeutic context. Attempts were made to present a performance with equal gender representation, but in the event, four of the ten participants were female. Of the performers, one improviser using electronics remained anchored to one spot, while everyone else was able to move throughout the space. A microphone under the work surface of the visual artist also allowed her to contribute sonically to the performance, with this proving to be a powerful addition to the performance. The performance consisted of three improvisations, two featuring half the group each, finishing with one improvisation with everyone playing.



Figure 21. Still image from the first improvisation at SCG.

The first improvisation featured the artist and a quartet of instrumentalists: double bass (myself), a violinist, a clarinettist, and one on electronics. An interesting dynamic and distinction quickly emerged between the improvisers,

with the two string players more engaged spatially and the physicality of their playing clearly contributing to a very gestural quality to their playing. But while the strings were occupied with intricate and busy gestural material, the basset-clarinet and the electronics preferred to creep up on the musical proceedings with long crescendos that would divert the energy of the space towards new musical spaces. The artist fitted in nicely between these two groups, regularly punctuating and disturbing the momentary cadential pauses with percussive rasping's, rapping's and bangs. This, in combination with the occasional sonic interjections unintentionally made by the children, did not feel distracting or alien to the music, but rather were commented on by the participants as being welcome additions to the performance. With two of the participants remaining in one place an anti-clockwise rotation of the room emerged almost straight away as the three mobile performers circulated around the room, dwelling and engaging with the artist and electronics improviser, or otherwise balancing the space. Although, the artist's work was projected on the way, it was felt that a conscious effort to include her was made by all the improvisers who chose to play next to the artist as she worked.

The second improvisation featured the remaining five musicians who chose to begin in the centre of the room facing into each other. This improvisation seemed to suffer more from the diversity of experience present within the group, possibly due to a reluctance on the part of an experienced member to enter into the process with an open mind. The improviser in question, who missed the short improvisation and explanation prior to the performance, also admitted being sceptical of the idea of incorporating movement into performance. This attitude seemed to inhibit the improvisers involvement, who seemed to miss a number of

musical invitations offered by the other musicians. This attitude also encroached on the flow of musical ideas and left the group being pulled in two directions.

This situation left me considering, if the issue was the concept of spatial improvisation itself or an isolated issue associated with one individual. On further reflection and following many other spatialized improvisations, I have concluded that this, and the one other instance when something similar occurred, was the result of the individual's reluctance to engage fully with what was emerging in the moment. On both occasions, the individuals concerned had arrived late and despite having the process explained to them, maintained the idea that they were being asked to do something specific (to move and play) which they felt uncomfortable in doing. This left them reluctant or unable to engage fully in the process, that with the added spatial dimension seems to require a more open and generous approach to the collaborative process.

The audience attending numbered roughly 20, 6 were aged under 10. They ranged from experienced listeners to some completely new to improvised music. Their involvement in the process and the degree to which they took up the opportunity to move varied with most choosing to regularly change seats but generally remain seated, while the children remained seated on the floor for most of the performance. The impact of the presence of the children featured heavily during the discussion, with many reflecting on the industrious *doing* atmosphere that they seemed to bring to the space, none of which was considered a negative addition to the performance. One performer, with less performance experience acknowledged feeling initially "a bit intimidated by the idea of performing improvising" (P8, Canterbury Free Range improvisers, 2017), but felt that the

children, the MiS approach, and the inclusion of the artist helped to break down these feelings.

Out of the post-show sharing, the main theme to surface centred around the idea of blurred boundaries and the way that this approach to performance offered a greater degree of inclusivity in terms of both participation and what could be incorporated into the music making process. Instead of the movement being an additional aspect placed on top of the performance, the moving was felt to be part of the music.

In the sharing, one musician recounted that prior to being a musician he had studied visual art. But frustrated that he couldn't draw what he saw, he ended up setting fire to his year's work and then left for Morocco. It was on his return that he was given an instrument and he began his professional life with music. In response to the performance and the greater connection to the space that he experienced when improvising, he commented that:

Today, it was like the justification for setting fire to that artwork, and now I can play what I saw. And that there is a validity in it. So it is as much art as music. (P7, Canterbury Free Range improvisers, 2017)

This resonates with my perception that this approach to improvisation remains more open and porous, accepting any communicative gesture irrespective of how it is communicated.

Performance Depiction

*It's alive ... reflecting the white walls ... the sound ... exposing
the rustle of papers and activity from artists at both ends of the room.*

Grazing ... making contacts ... anti-clockwise circling the room.

*Two static, but not in spirit ... dancing off the walls
swinging from the rafters the sound grows ... consonant ... warm
a jagged change ... stomping feet converging ... in a space broken.*

*A central circle ... hiding difference ... roles assumed
supported ... flown over... sitting on the floor
low and continuous ... to yourself ... is aloud
an ego ... elephant ... blasting a different chord coming
together should be the theme ... It is OK to stay.*

*Birds heard ... all in ... lying down on the job reluctant to move ... why
in an episodic garden party ... sweet nice-ities slam dunked by footwear
up against crumpled tinfoil responding ... in reverse ... quietly
moving back ... unintentioned central figures ... a voyeuristic appetite
moves a trill ... celebrating a Trump-etting ... with a closing sigh.*

4.1.2 London improvisers orchestra – 21 May 2017

Venue – I'klectik Arts Lab, London.

Koan

An immersive experience overwhelms
a gravitational pull towards a sky full of stars.
Two birds building a nest on a sea of magma get lost in valleys of sound,
Tell me, How do you deal with such a lack of space?

Discussion

The performance by members of the London Improvisers Orchestra, featured the largest ensemble of the MiS series with 14 improvisers and an equal number of audience members. The venue, the I'klectik, with its high ceiling of exposed rafters, wooden floor, and big sash windows affords a nice and clear acoustic, which has led to it becoming an important hub for improvised music in London. Consisting of five improvisations, with the first and last involving everyone, the performance was described as having a “youthful enthusiasm” (Speyer, 2017) with an audience made up of mostly new faces. Despite this, or possibly because of this, the listeners happily explored the possibilities of the space, freely moving around the space, sitting on the floor, and taking the opportunity to move close to the performers to both see what was happening or adjust their listening experience.

The first improvisation involved all the performers with all but 4 of the musicians choosing to change position. The movement remained measured and slow, and I sensed a careful attention to the listening process as people adjusted to playing

in the fluid spatial environment for the first time. On three occasions groups of similar instruments converged, choosing to play together against the rest of the ensemble before moving apart. But the opposite situation occurred with the two trumpet players who skirted around the room effectively maintaining the maximum distance away from each other.



Figure 22. LIO Improvisation 1 showing musicians spread around the edges of the room.

The only instruments to enter into the middle of the space where the strings and a soprano saxophonist who played quietly, while everyone else established and maintained a cyclical flow around the edges of the room. This seems to suggest a spatial hierarchy of movement options for the improvisers, where the maintenance of visual contact and aural separation along with the retention of a degree of security offered by the proximity of one of the walls, was favoured over the more exposed central area of the room. Except for two individuals, the audience decided to remain settled and seated for this first improvisation.

The second improvisation featured myself in a quintet along with a trumpeter, trombonist, Soprano saxophonist, and a guitarist. This was undoubtedly, the closest thing to an established group as all but the guitarist had been long

standing LIO members and worked together had in various combinations for many years. This connection was exemplified in a comment by Loz Speyer who said, “I was very connected to (RJ), right from the beginning, because we are both brass and we both started with the same idea” (Speyer, 2017). This level of mutual trust and familiarity afforded this small ensemble an added degree of confidence with the players comfortably distancing themselves from each other only to repeatedly come back together again in differing combinations³⁵. Speyer stated that there were “clearly people doing things together and then not doing things together” (2017).

The third improvisation was made up of mostly new faces to LIO. Attracted by the bow scraping of the cellist, the percussionist chose to relocate onto the floor offering an example of a shift in spatial location designed to support the playing of a specific individual. This situation arose following a period of relatively loud interplays by the other players which possibly left the quieter cellist overlooked by the others, which the percussionist chose to rectify³⁶.

The fourth improvisation featured two violinists, Adam Bohman playing objects, and Steve Beresford on piano. The combination of two static improvisers and two mobile string players afforded a striking demonstration of the potential diversity of this approach to performance. The movement of the audience, by this stage, had become a very dynamic aspect of the improvisation. Most strikingly, the attentional choices of the audience became very visible, with listeners choosing to focus on and approach individual players, or move to the edge of the room so as to take in everything at once, or to position themselves in-between what for

³⁵ Improvisation 2. Quintet - large spatial separation (7'39") - <https://youtu.be/Hehp6KIqxII?t=459>

³⁶ Improvisation 3. Quintet percussionist sits on the floor - <https://youtu.be/wS1TWKvWFeY?t=298>

some time a spatial split with the two violins at the opposite side of the room to the other performers³⁷.



Figure 23. Listeners choosing to focus on strings (Susanna Ferrar and Pei Ann Yeoh) or piano and objects (Steve Beresford and Adam Bohman)

Now confident to move, the audience and musicians in the final improvisation seemed to collectively arrive at a new amorphous musical quality. Working gradually towards a loud climax, the music featured little in the way of significant, solo material but rather progressed to establish a leaderless, collective sonic wash. Everybody was “walking around a bit like zombies”, remarked Speyer (2017), who qualified this action suggesting that it must have been the kind of affect that everyone was after in that improvisation³⁸. In contrast, to the tentative first tutti improvisation, this improvisation saw improvisers accumulating in the centre of the space as if there had been a breakdown of the playing ‘in the round’ configuration. This undoubtedly influenced the nature of the improvisation³⁹.

The debate regarding playing with eyes open or closed gained momentum during this performance. Opinions ranged from: feeling inhibited because of the

³⁷ Improvisation 4. Quartet - violin duo vs piano and objects - <https://youtu.be/sZayo6R2Yzk?t=660>.

³⁸ Speyer stepping into the centre near the end of the last improvisation - <https://youtu.be/QvtyJ57Tilo?t=581>.

³⁹ String players coming together in solidarity - <https://youtu.be/bX9UnUckLcl?t=399>

need to remain vigilant to what was happening, to suggestions that it would be nice to perform spatially in total darkness. Similarly, while some audience members found being in the middle of the ensemble overwhelming and intense, others found it relaxing, wonderfully immersive, and “like being inside a big instrument” (A13, London Improvisers Orchestra, 2017).

Knowing this group, having playing in the LIO for twenty years, I was interested to reflect on this performance compared to previous ones. As others also noted, I sensed people played less giving space to more listening. Because of the numbers involved, the LIO performance felt like a celebration of participation, where the complexity that can exist within MiS was celebrated. The comments from the listeners also demonstrated the possible appeal of MiS to those new to FiM. But it also led to questioning, if there is an optimal capacity for a MiS performance process and what happens when things get too crowded?

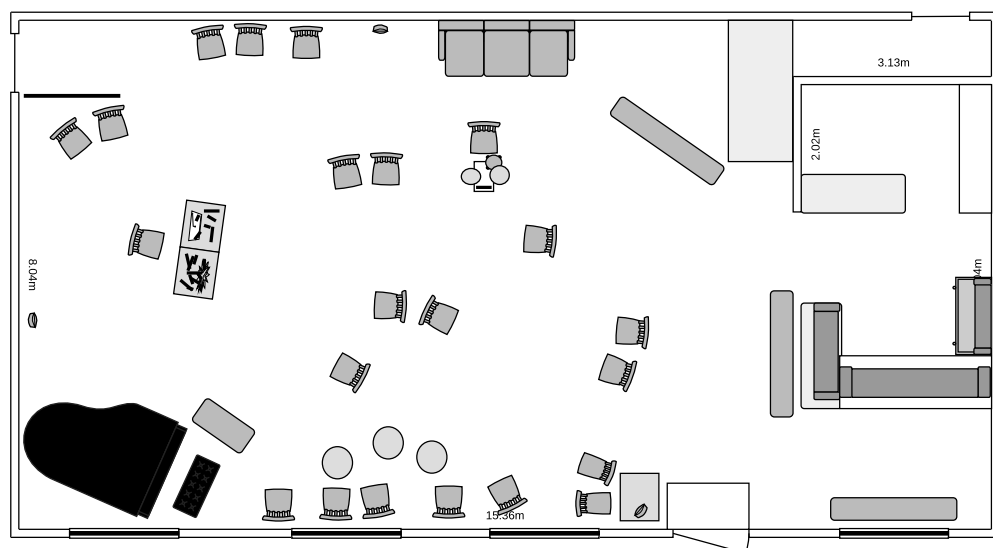


Figure 24. Starting floor plan for LIO MiS performance, 21 May 2017.

Depiction

*A five line public record ... tutti to start
shy ... enthusiasm ... a youthful not knowing,
blasting ... veterans ... full of stars.*

*First five ... a reunion ... of sorts
favoured opening ... of strong brass ... moving
illusive strings ... not perfunctory ... inviting wayward musings.*

*Converging ... a classic ... company
concocting hitting tones ... into the wall and scraped off the floor
in front of the cello ... two woodwind rally round for some support.*

*Keeping a distance ... static ... losing oneself
in sound ... intriguing ... a closer look is needed
holding patterns ... solidarity ... voting with glances to end.*

*Amorphous soup ... sounds ... foot stepping
around bold statements ... slow to appear ... A maelstrom
growing around clustered strings ... receding ... with a trumpet whisper.*

4.1.3 Merseyside Improvisers Orchestra – 27 May 2017

Venue – Merseyside Dance Initiative, Liverpool.

Koan

The split emerges along the sound barrier
kills the lights and provides a rift among responses.
Do I join in, break away, subvert, or wait?
The starting gun is drowned out by all the listening.

Discussion

The Merseyside Improvisers Orchestra performance was characterised by a very diverse range of improvising talents and backgrounds. Some had a long history of improvising while others were very new to large group improvisation. This diversity goes some way to explain the wide range of responses shared at the end, with some favouring the small group improvisations over the loud amorphous final tutti, while others found the slow, leaderless crescendo towards a wall of sound as exhilarating as sticking your head out of a speeding car.

Members of the group were noticeably open to the idea of responding physically to the music when they were part of the audience. Whether this was because the space was clearly used for dance or that a dancer was participating is unclear, but on numerous occasions listeners lay on the floor, crawled, or danced while the music was performed.

There is no doubt that the final tutti divided the group participatorily. Over the course of the 35 minutes, apart from a jazzy interlude⁴⁰ inspired by a dancer, the group avoided centring on any significant thematic material. Instead, the amorphous sustain rose and fell, reminiscent of Ives, *Central park in the dark* (1906) with the momentum growing even when the lights were turned off ⁴¹.

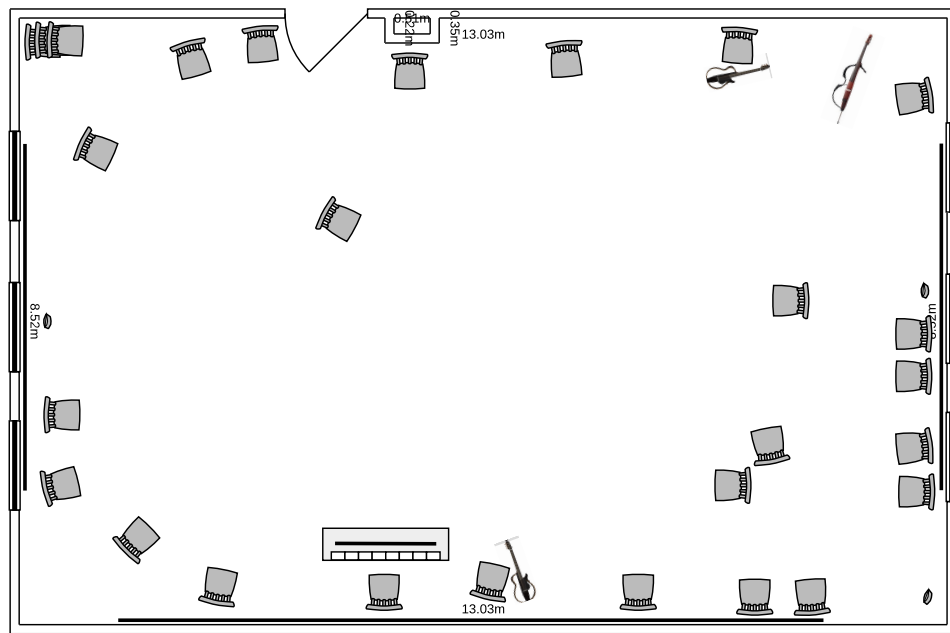


Figure 25. Venue layout for the Merseyside Improvisers Orchestra performance, 27 May 2017.

Depiction

*Are we grand standing Starting?
 Nobody knows ... testing the groups
 listening closely on the floor we gather to lift you off the ground*

*How do you hear it?
 I forgot as opposing stations battle it out as they always do.
 New faces amongst the old ... a celebration
 Dancing in the spaces remaining between*

⁴⁰ Jazzy interlude <https://youtu.be/HNWqXRnrAv0?t=878>

⁴¹ <https://youtu.be/HNWqXRnrAv0?t=1680>

*Cabinet reverberation symbolizes a separation static fingering disjunct
A move in front of myself and responding physically
brings me closer to the group, we arrive
Jazzy refrains sooth as long tones show we have settled in our skin.*

*Static instruments, the biggest is most mobile. Who is accompanying
Lying in between ... audience provocations triangulated slap
Striking a chord E on the bass slipping away*

*Two cellos saw ... a seated meeting opportunity
Strings exploding out from a wash of sustain
Restrain ... to move in closing the space
I turn my back to the wall ... not hearing any more the literal plonk
as the cellos keep standing when everyone else has fallen.*

*Ah. sustain the arrival of everyone
We are all looking in ... how can this be?
A saxophone upwards multi-tone strikes
A baroque trio caught in greying clouds.*

*A storm is on its way, find safe cover
A space to sit it out or be blown
Of course, there is still space
you can move if you are drowned
twinkling, nights in the park ...
Does anyone know the way out?
Amorphous, lying down amplified going out nothing has changed
A binding of traditional voices goes so far ... what is left?
Slam ... signalling a return of the voices*

*Is this a place we don't usually let ourselves go to?
It takes time and multiple attempts to say nothing
Because that is what is important. It opens us up to outside.*

4.1.4 London septet – 11th June 2017

Venue – I'klectik Arts Lab, London.

Koan

Moving shows that sounds travel differently, but was it tentative or not?
I don't know, but I listened more to each individual's space and location.
With my eyes shuffling towards an invisible car crash
I had to wonder, should this ambiguity be condoned or encouraged?

Discussion

This improvisation highlights the degree of choice that everyone in the performance had in balancing their own experience. One musician suggested that the quiet beginning may have left the audience feeling timid and unwilling to move. But the lack of movement reflected the intensity of the listening experience as everyone was very focused on establishing a clear dialogical connection between themselves and the environment. This seemed important on this occasion as the space seemed slightly unsettled. This was for a number of reasons including: the absence of the venue owner, the small audience, someone getting stuck in the toilet just before the performance started, one of the improvisers who was not a regular on the London scene feeling slightly nervous, and the trace of a previous misunderstanding between some of the players. But the empathy and focus carried in the playing and a few words in the break smoothed things out. All of this did leave a slightly more serious atmosphere in the music of this group of very experienced improvisers.

Despite a clear introduction to the audience a little confusion lingered for one audience member as to how to relate to this performative process. When asked

for clarity, after the first piece, I encouraged her to continue responding to the process as she had in the first piece in response to what interested her. This encouragement failed to satisfy her as she later explained in the post-show discussion.

The opportunity to play with the same group over the course of three improvisations proved a welcome change to the larger groups I had been working with previously and it allowed the musical relationships to grow and also required it to reinvent itself. Although I did not see this, Bailey felt that the septet had two distinct groupings, the three string players and Speyer on Trumpet who played intricate flurries and melodic material, and himself on piano and the guitarist and electronics tended to provide provocations and imposed large structural elements to the musicking process. While I can empathise with his interpretation, I feel that the split in the personnel, that did exist along the same lines, was more to do with the ability to move in space, with the second group moving much less. Bailey with his spread of instruments across the space very successfully challenged the static tendencies of a pianist, actively sabotaging his own ability to play at times. This left those who hadn't played with him before possibly wondering what was going on, which is always a good thing in my mind.



Figure 26. A line involving the double bass, cello, and electronics.

Spatially, I really appreciated the lines of symmetry that emerged across the space. They extended the musical connections and made the music visible in geometric form across the space. Two prominent lines ran diagonally through the space, one from the door to the far corner (fig. 27) and the other was marked by the placement of Bailey's instruments running from the piano to the opposite corner behind the bar (fig. 28). These lines did not detract from the tendency to play 'in the round', but rather seemed to exist on top of this spatial default.

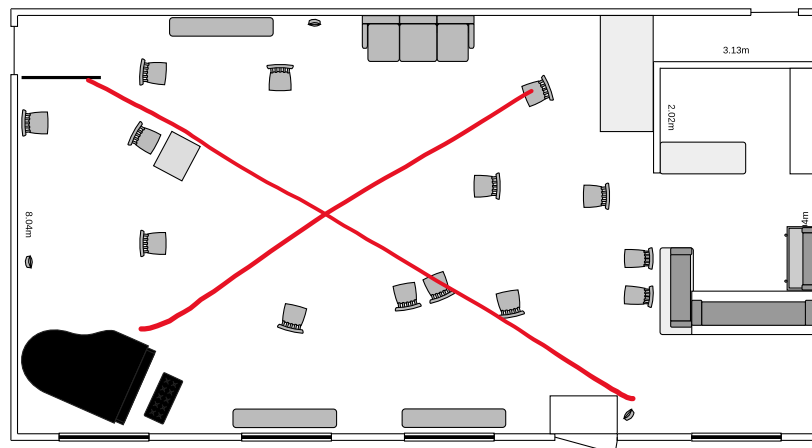


Figure 27. The I'Klectik with the prominent lines of activity.

Depiction

Stuck individual delays ... the blasting of sound into a baffle

Flinging the sound ... out the small audience.

Decisively showing a divisive split ... between known and unknown quantities.

Of softened tones from a central space figured on ... punctuating stabs of sound

As some wander about distracting ... others with their necessary participations.

It is quiet, some might say reserved.

Listening closely to the incorporation ... of in and out,

Under and over lines of sound and space ... roles illusive to touch and hard to locate.

Carrying intention around the room like pot plants ... offering different colours.

A black cloth draped over keys, misses the point ... an austere contemplation

As different approaches ... what does and does not exist.

Outside ... A tonic for the birds and traffic as we end complete ...

You can come in now.

4.1.5 Oxford improvisers – 20 June 2017

Venue – The Fire Station Arts Centre, Oxford.

Koan

Inside and out, the playing continues
Beyond the four corners of the room.
The moving environment greatly impacts on the music
Just as a hot, noisy summer stokes the fire.

Description

The *Oxford improvisers* have been meeting regularly, once a month, on a Monday night for a rehearsal, followed by a performance the following night for over ten years. The group consists of some very experienced improvisers who have cultivated a strong group identity. They are always open to testing the edges of the practice and have welcomed the opportunity to perform in a wide and varied array of spaces in and around Oxford.

The rehearsal at Oxford Brookes University on the Monday night saw the group very enthusiastically explore the potential of this varied space. The fact that they set up in an upstairs foyer area which had a 1970s open-plan feel to it with: hard concrete surfaces, two walls of windows, a lift, and a sweeping staircase, possibly inspired an improvisation that had few constraints or barriers. From playing in the lift, on various floors, and in and out of smaller rooms that ran off two long corridors. I recall meeting one musician in one of the smaller rooms where the lights were off. We proceeded to improvise in the complete darkness for a number of minutes. But like most instances during the rehearsal, the not-knowing connected to what was happening elsewhere in the space tended to

curtail the length of the engagements almost to the point that it resembled the *Grazing* stage in the Underscore (Koteen et al., 2008), where everyone engages in fleeting musical connections with each other.

The musical engagements seemed to be secondary to the exploration of the space, which in an effort not to judge it, can be seen as exactly what both the space made possible and what the musicians needed to do. In the discussion afterwards, these circumstances were recognized with everyone accepting that had an audience been present the dynamics of the process would have been very different, with it being more musically focused and more spatially confined. But given their long playing history, it could be argued that the rehearsal reflected an appropriate use of the time, as playing together was not what they needed to explore, but rather how their musical relationships could continue to exist within a spatial context. This was possibly confirmed by comments, following the performance, that the chance to 'play in the toy box' had given them clear insights into how they could work spatially.

The space for the performance, on the Tuesday, could not have been any different. The performance took place in a small room overlooking the busy street below, upstairs in a restaurant/bar/theatre space. We played to a small audience with the windows open to the noisy street, on what was one of the hottest days of the year. But the relatively small size of the room helped to focus the process with the background noise easily becoming an accepted part of the process. The size of the room limited the seating arrangement to a few seats in the middle to balance the majority of the seats that were dotted around the edges of the space.

Possibly in an attempt to get away from the street, upwards of four musicians, on a number of occasions disappeared outside the space to play in the corridor and landing area. This effectively doubled the performance space and provided an interesting dialogical counterpoint at times.

A prominent feature of the performances was the resonant wooden floor which was both the source of unplanned sounds and also played intentionally. The floor amplified the movement of the chairs to the point that it became a prominent part of the process (at 14'00"– 15'53"; 15'09"; 21'43"; 33'38"). Additionally, the floor was played regularly (2'00"; 10'25"; 14'09"; 21'20"– 22'50", 31'30"– 35'50"; 36'37"– 38'20") along with a squeaky floor board (1'12").

Having improvised for roughly 40 minutes, the group decided that they wanted to hold the discussion in the break before they played again. This meant that the second improvisation felt like an afterthought and I personally found it difficult to settle into the process again.

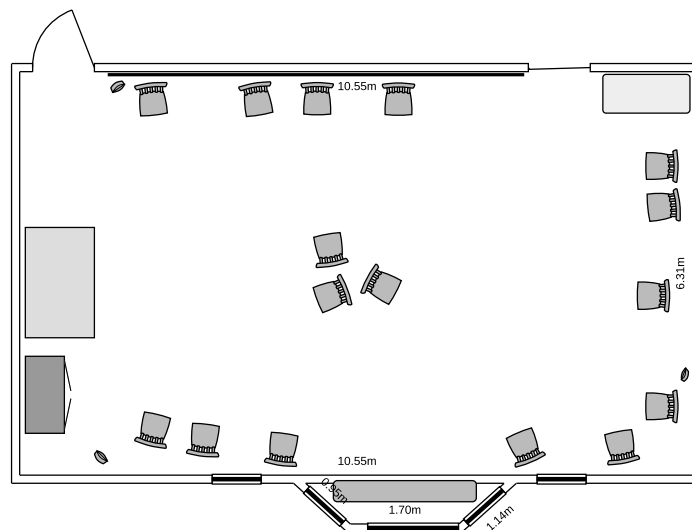


Figure 28. Oxford improvisers performance venue

Depiction

*Hot atmosphere ... vented windows and door
Fanning the sounds from outside ... melting
Plastic chairs on a wooden floor ... percussive
A lucky dip for a string trio provoking... structure-borne soundings
Spirals into the distance as the outside invites ... a separate experience
Coming up close ... with little sounds.*

*Punctuated by changing places ... Downstairs,
The knowing smile of a listener ... remains part of the menagerie
As the trumpet plays out the window ... despite the heat and noise
Our focus closed in on small exchanges ... around the central seats,
A long time taken to dissolve ... the habits of a lifetime.
Carried bare foot backwards ... to listen inside.*

*There is space for everyone, in this little room ... emerging
Carrying connections across the space ... on a toy piano
generous new ideas ... plonked on the keys
With a trumpet mute making its way ... across the floor
We all stop to listen ... walking backwards into a duet
The permeable window of a toy box ...
So quiet*

4.1.6 Orquestra Foco - 17 June 2018

Venue – La casa encendida, Madrid.

Koan

Farewell, bash creeping in the back

Stories hold a political subtext.

Taking control, by lying down on the stage.

Oh no! what have I done?

Discussion

In June 2018, after a number of years of increasing difficulties in maintaining the momentum on the organizational front, the decision was made to arrange one final concert for the Madrid-based, Orquestra Foco. I was honoured to be invited to conduct and lead this very experienced group of improvisers for what would be my third time. Initially, I hadn't seen this as an opportunity to link my MiS research to the performance as I was aware that the performance would be taking place in an auditorium with fixed seating and a stage. But on arrival in Madrid and on finding out the freedom that they were willing to grant me I saw an opportunity to bring together a celebration of what the orchestra had achieved in its more than 20 years of existence and my spatialized approach to performance.

The expectation was that I would use the conduction signals based on the ones established by Butch Morris, which Yves Citton defines as “a vocabulary of ideographic signs and gestures activated to modify or construct a real-time musical arrangement or composition” (2016, p160–181: 170), As I had done in the

past, I attempted to use the leadership role to empower the performers. I believe that by not usurping their responsibility as listeners or their authority as experienced improvisers, I am more able to subvert and undermine the hierarchical authority of the conductor. A common thread that I have sensed within orchestras in Europe, in contrast with my experiences of the London Improvisers Orchestra, is that they are more willing to accept what the conductor requires of them. This has led me, in the past to make a point of passing on the baton to willing members of the orchestra. But on this occasion, I saw that the incorporation of free movement into the performance could empower not just the few, but the entire musicking ensemble, audience included. The concert began with all the musicians filtering in from the back of the auditorium. The music effectively surrounded the audience as the musicians gradually made their way to the stage. Once there, I conducted everyone and eventually arrived at an ending. The idea for the second piece consisted of an invitation for the audience to explore their listening experience, by allowing them all to move anywhere that they liked in the auditorium. The job of the orchestra was for everyone to arrive at a personal strategy for responding musically to the movement of the audience. This piece began without delay and progressed from complete chaos to a clearly unified response from the orchestra to one audience member stepping across and then jumping off the stage which marked the end. With this piece the audience were now very much part of the ensemble. Two focused pieces conducted by members of the orchestra followed, before I returned to conduct both the orchestra and the audience. This was followed by the orchestra improvising in response to the actions of the four dancers that were present. Then finally, the opening arrival was reversed with the band gradually leaving the stage to reassemble in the darkened foyer with the audience.

Returning to Citton, who interprets Morris' motivations within conductions and the vertical hierarchy of the conductor as being something that is meant to improve each participants "singularity as well as the consistency and potency of the collective" (2016, p160–181: 171). I can now see that the expansion of the improvisers process into such a spatially conforming environment, went a long way towards realizing what Citton recognises as the challenge faced by conduction processes, which is to:

devise collective forms of agency that articulate the outstanding power of the participating singularities with the principle of equal respect necessary to find non-oppressive strength in numbers. (Citton, 2016, p160–181: 171)



Figure 29. Orquestra Foco, Madrid.

Finally, the following is an extended section of the interview with Paloma Carrasco-Lopez in which she recounts the exchange that she had with a work colleague who had attended the performance. In the discussion, the teacher clearly expresses the profundity and openness of the experience from her perspective. For me it offers, a confirmatory assessment of what is the potential of this sort of approach to improvised music, to reach out and engage with new audiences to FiM. Carrasco-Lopez said:

This colleague, that came on Sunday to the Foco Orquestra concert, she was saying that it was the first time for her to listen to this type of music. And she was trying to find me the whole day from the very

beginning in the morning, she was saying 'when you have a moment to talk, I would like to ...now?' And she came to me and said ...

She was so excited by the concert and said it was an amazing experience. 'I really enjoyed it, it was fun, it was really touching me.' And she said ... 'You know, I wouldn't have understood anything from this type of music and dance, it was so strange everything, so great, if it was to have happened in a classical musical venue like the Auditorio Nacional de Música de Madrid. But the way that you did it, thanks to this involvement of the audience, the way that you were catching our attention and making us part of this, was making me understand like ... I was part of that. And that's ... what's going on, I cannot tell you in words.' She was telling me. 'But, I felt that I was part of that.' And I think that that is the key aspect of what she was saying and it was really nice to listen to her. (Carrasco-Lopez, 2018. 14'05" - 15'26")

Depiction

*Entering slowly ... unexpected,
Running ... looking ... sounding across. Approaching
like a storm front ... heavy over-head,
over chairs ... the brass herald a rain of pitched glances.*

*Assembled ... now ... does this mean we can start?
Or are we continuing? ... conducting a light touch,
not afraid to step away ... stepping downwards ...
Ending ... generosity ... starting,*

*A standing ovation ... not yet ... chaos
we are all in charge of the mayhem ... not really,
order forming ... stygmergic attentions ... defying order
who knows as voices meet, intermingling, never ending
An old man conducting ... lying down ... Can it end?
a life of its own stomping off stage ... yes.
Such clarity from an unknown friend.*

*Are we ready? Repeating ... no claims on ownership,
a gift of raucous mutterings making way ... crackle box
Are we ready? Yes, it has already started ... a listening ...
hushed, intense. We are all ready to hear
The small beating heart of the concert.*

*Now featuring foreign four moving amongst us ... moving,
music makers need to look ... what can be done? Amongst
chairs and gestures ... conducting low string translations ...
recognizable ... Sculptural shapes of sound.*

*Standing again ... farewell ... last one out
Turning the light off... a history carried out into the dark,
Together ... Unknown mingling ... not dead ... assembling,
as sounds fade into murmurs ... A lone voice, sings of friendship.*

4.2

Personal depictions

4.2.1 Sam Bailey - piano

Koan

Integrating multiple Sam's, balanced precariously on a slab.
Continuing, eyes closed, in a trance, with objects
committing us to move, away from 'Ha ha' theatre.
An invisible agent supporting engagement.

Discussion

Discussions regarding precise musical content: what people played, what techniques were used, what instrumental combinations appeared, for instance remained secondary to much of the reflections, discussions, and interviews. One exception to this rule was pianist, Sam Bailey, who used the interview as an opportunity to reflect on his musical progression over the previous 5 years. How he had been working to integrate the many aspects of his musical past: punk, classical, jazz, improvisation, and teaching all into one performative whole. He also spoke of the musical material he used during these performances, that now became visible to him on revisiting the performances as part of the interview. Keeping in mind that a particular characteristic of Sam's performance practice is that he goes into a trance and spends most of the performance with his eyes closed. This means that much of what we looked at he could not recall from his experience of the performance itself. He states that:

I go into a bit of a trance, which is, in some ways, hermetic and sealed off in a bubble. But I must be aware of other people, because I do things in relation to them. So, it's just a different type of listening I think. (Bailey, 2017. 17'19")

Alongside his overall focus on integrating his different musical personalities is his perception that improvisation involves a willingness to experience vulnerability. This has ended up, he says, with a tendency to do too much and to try too hard. He reflects: "I will put things out there, sometimes that shouldn't be out there. But I learn from that, so that is fine" (Bailey, 2017, 24'43")

Borne out of an improvisation practice that consists primarily of playing solo piano, rather than playing in ensembles, this could be seen as both a novel and risky strategy for group improvisation. But this courageous commitment to explore playing boundaries, perhaps at the expense of a group identity, can also be seen to provide a fresh perspective on the group process. Particularly, given the sincerity of intention with these actions emerging out of what has become a very embedded approach to playing.

With his eyes closed or his visual gaze focused downwards, Sam was regularly responsible for drastic redirections in the music. Believing that he could not compete with the strings ability to cross the "fluid boundary between unpitched and pitched noise" (Bailey, 2017, 45'53"), he resorted to playing "massive slabs of sound" (46'45"). He identified that his contribution to the improvisations regularly focused on more structural interventions rather than small refined musical details.

Sam's approach to improvisation is idiosyncratic and unpredictable which, I sensed, proved a little unsettling for some of the seasoned improvisers involved in the sessions. "I seem to go from being totally self-effacing to being like in

charge" (Bailey, 2017, 39'22"). He was just as likely to climb under the piano, or stuff the inside of the piano with nearby curtains, as he would sit somewhere away from the keyboard just listening. "I'm aware of the tendency to creep in and do little bits and then disappear" (51'23"). Disappearing, literally, outside the venue at one point. At another moment, sensing a need for a continuous, drone-like element to the music, he would choose to sing or play a long trill. These long notes regularly became a rallying cry which others chose to follow or use as a background for something new. The act of distributing his instruments around the space, so as to force himself to move away from the piano, demonstrated a wonderfully inspired response to the fixity of the piano. Sam provided a rich lode of structural interjections that challenged and led to a deeper questioning of the boundary of the form.

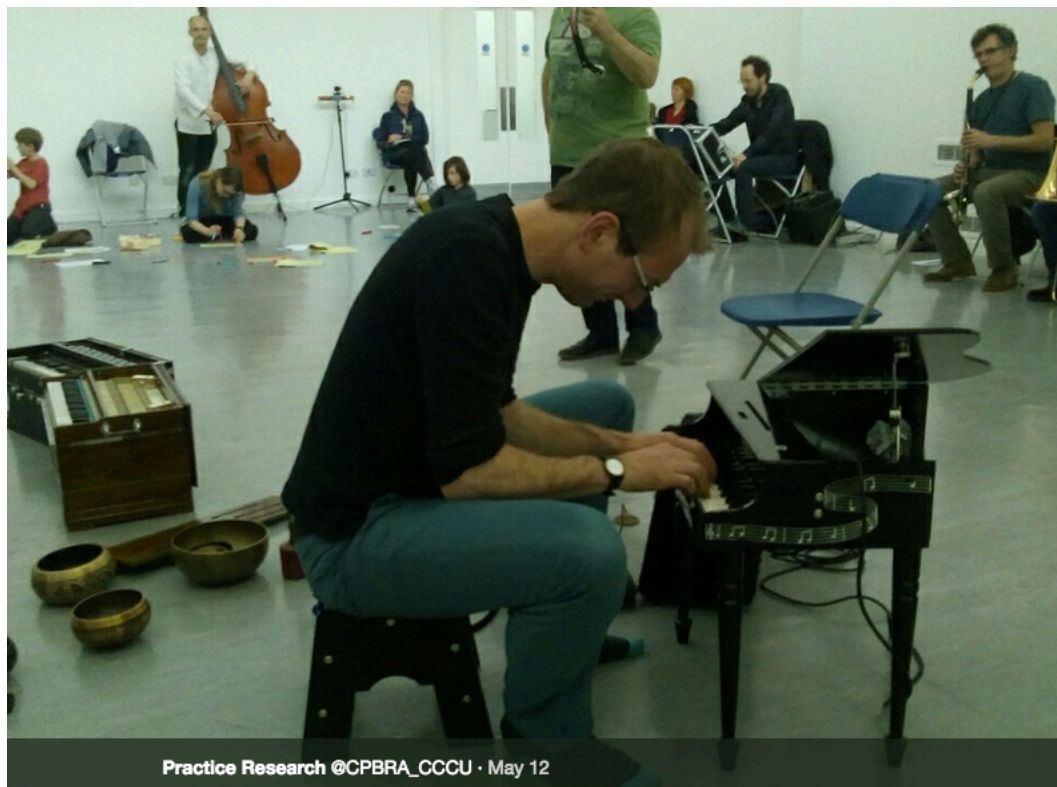


Figure 30. Sam Bailey performing in Canterbury.

Depiction

Starting, eyes down focused but not seeing, with hands on knees.

Still ... listening ... the music starts.

You are seated away from your pianos and objects, reclusive, hidden.

*Their combined presence in the space - two harmoniums, singing bowls, a toy piano
parodying the regal figure on the other side of the room*

Whispering something of your absence.

Musical exchanges happening in a space visible to all but you.

*You are still, not seeing, eyes closed, filtering sounds and waiting ... listening ...
waiting.*

The music has arrived, it has found a direction forward.

The frenetic tastes of sonic comments coming together to form a whole.

Something to work against, sensing a lack, a need to change direction.

A signpost perhaps pointing a way ahead.

Contrasting delicate ricochets between pitch and noise, giant slabs of sound.

Octaves fortissimo, ahead of a response. From invisible to centre stage.

We did not even see you move, you grab us, shake us, bring us together.

Not through conceit or deceit, but as an agent willing to risk everything.

Standing naked, over-playing, silence ... All or nothing.

Standing outside ... engaging with the world.

The storm front passes revealing new buds of Putting things out there.

A listening to the space, with shoes off.

A pebble drop rippling outwards, Shuffle, slide, shake - What is possible?

waiting for a reverberant response to hit an upturned singing bowl.

*A 'crazy' paradox, of distancing oneself while nurturing the group with a moving
trill, you make a bed for everyone to jump on.*

A noisy, spacious feedback to vulnerability.

4.2.2 Loz Speyer – trumpet / flugelhorn

Koan

How much can you listen,
Can you get inside another's sound?
Let me bring you to the ground
Where listening's youthful kindnesses abound.

Discussion

Adding movement to performance has the effect of shifting one's perception of FiM to reveal new dimensions of an otherwise familiar process. This revelation was clearly recognised and acted upon by trumpeter, Loz Speyer, who embraced the opportunity to integrate more fully an intuitive, tacit understanding of listening that was supported by a greater attention to both proprioceptive and kinaesthetic forms of awareness. This was undoubtedly assisted by his well-established Qigong practice, with Loz identifying connections between his music and movement practice. For example:

... bending [down] like that when you are blowing an instrument. It's like, going into the earth and drawing the strength from the earth. It's kind of rooting you. ... There is also a lot of low positions in Qigong where you are drawing energy up from the earth. (Speyer, 2017, 23'20")

The inclusion of a moving element to the FiM performance provided Loz with a means of tapping into a deeper listening practice. Loz regularly went right up to other players, bending down in front of them, in order to afford a greater understanding of the sound and listening experience of the other musician. He remarked:

It was just a really different way of listening ... You could enter the world of each player individually, you could hear the whole thing from that person's perspective, simply from being right there next to them. [You are] able to make sense of what they were playing, in relation to what they heard from where they were. (London Improvisers Orchestra, 2017. 11'18")



Figure 31. Loz Speyer choosing to play inside the trio, mutually leaning on an audience member.

Through playing with and observing Loz, it led me to reflect on many of the more profound implications of MiS. For instance, the connection between the physical and proprioceptive literacy of the individual and their ability to utilize existing bodies of knowledge related to movement to reinforce connections and foster new musical relationships.

Loz repeatedly used movement and spatial location to open up the space and provide more freedom to other players. One demonstration of this involved playing into a sound baffle in the corner of the room, so as to offer more separation from the strings that were improvising on a theme from Beethoven's, Spring sonata, around the piano at the time. He recalls:

I was doing a sort of bebop approach to it, over in the corner. And I was keeping my distance deliberately, so [the other improvisers] could hear each other. I was really going for it, behind that screen, and really enjoying having that as a backdrop. (Speyer, 2017, 8'32")

Loz demonstrated how MiS could make explicit the inclusion of other instrumentalists through what he referred to as a 'gesture of listening'. He stated that:

Just because you are standing away from someone doesn't mean that you are not [connected]... I was very connected to P18, right from the beginning, ... And so, to go across to P13 was to try and include P13 more in my awareness, and express that without losing my connect with anyone else. (Speyer, 2017, 6'26")

The sense and logic that he saw in expanding the improviser's tool kit and the added affordances that emerged for him through the ability to engage spatially provided some evidence for the potential of spatialization within improvised music. His repeated appearances within this research also showed how a MiS practice can easily be embedded into an improvisers musicking process.



Figure 32. Loz Speyer dropping down to listen.

Depiction

*Standing Bonding, prepared to play, to the earth,
Listening open ... valves move. The trumpet held ready.
We start ... dropping ... a line signifies presence.
Force isn't needed as clarity exists ...
A well-grounded response to the emerging texture.*

*Decisive move ... new thoughts,
new chances to meet ... playing into the piano with sounds from below.
Trusting a quartet with upward flourishes ... Gestures
toward a connection ... that meet stabs of saxophone and bass. ...
Listening to give space to everyone*

*Low pedal tones ... spiral.
Offering a melodic compliment to a low filtered violin,
bowing ... as you come close to hear more ... Gestures
of friendship ... you trust and acknowledge the sense in action.
Another move, logical in this space ... circling.*

*A quiet slow moving tone serving as a fulcrum
to an amorphous texture ... gathering together to restore balance ... changing
Instruments give access to others in the group ... grounded in a
rhythmic tradition, a laid back ... soloing over a bed of strings
allows for an opening up of the space to the audience.*

*Walking and playing ... distantial intent focused on warm, decisive
playing ... positioning notes and body ... giving symmetry
Opposites balance needs as an awareness to breathy runs return to
earth with no need to say anything more.*

4.2.3 Paloma Carrasco Lopez – cello / piano

Koan

A pianist is freed by a cello,
lifted high making the music fly.
Sound moves by sounding moves.
We all watch as the sound front approaches.

Discussion

Originally, a pianist, Paloma took up the cello in order to engage more with free improvisers in her native Spain. Subsequently, she was introduced to contact improvisation and, like me, she found similarities between the two practice of CI and FiM. She explains that “the thing of contrasting ideas in sound, of contrasting, or supporting, or following ideas. It’s the same in dancing” (Carrasco-Lopez, 2018).

The strength of Paloma’s grasp of both music- and dance-based improvisation, allowed her to clearly articulated the affect that dance can have on improvised music, in supporting an increased awareness to the spatial and visual impact of a spatialized music practice. Her embodied approach to playing the cello led her to seeing connections beyond sound that provided her points of departure within the improvisations. For instance, Paloma explained how the movement of my bow arm at the moment of the captured image, had inspired a particular musical response that led to her matching her bow movements with mine. She remarks that:

It’s like finding our bows are casually in parallel or like this (crossed).
When you are doing the music, but at some moment it comes to you

that 'Oh, look at this, and what happens if I am now not focused on the music that I was doing, but what happens with this parallelism of the bows?' (Carrasco-Lopez, 2018)



Figure 33. Paloma focusing on the movement of the bows.

This approach to musical improvisation possibly reaches its logical conclusion with the work that Paloma and I do in our *Nunc* duet. Here we relax the emphasis on music to allow for a very fluid exchange to take place between the two disciplines. Within *Nunc* we regularly sense a continuation of the musical into movement, and an attention to movement being communicated through the sounds that we choose to play⁴². While this naturally happens in every musical performance, it is seldom that the movement of the musicians is placed at the

⁴² *Nunc* duo at Cruce gallery, Madrid. Movement communicating both gesture and sound - https://youtu.be/d72TUYZpk_M?t=236

centre of the process. One example of this occurring elsewhere is with the work of Jonathan Burrows and Matteo Fargion, with their pieces like the *Both Sitting Duet* (2002). But in this instance, they are working with a carefully choreographed score, while we are working purely with improvisation.

Depiction

*Bows moving ... symmetry ... aligned
Sound ... seeing proximity ... mismatching
Volume ... an obstructive opportunity,
amongst friends the strings vibrate on their own.*

*Expanding the reach of an outstretched arm
into a long double-stopped chord.
A dancer moves ... a sound response,
To a naturally found... affinity.*

*Taking the energy, not only with ears,
hears the space, seeing something new.
A quarternity faced inwards ... towards one.
lying down, centre stage, brings focus.*

*A jumping pizzicato grows ... a tutti,
changes weight from one foot to the other.
With back turned the cello flies.
The music is coming.*

4.2.4 Philipp Wachsmann - violin

Koan

Swinging a violin through incense, balancing
a preoccupation with sound, space, gesture, and seeing
Potted plants move and stretch sound
As a gentle clarity is unmasked

Discussion

While he would never consider himself to be one, Philipp Wachsmann is a dancer. He dances with his violin in hand, pushing and pulling at the space, testing the resilience and resonance of the performative experience. The complete embodiment of delicate touches of sound that bounce off the strings and off the walls is clear, as the decays return with rich, spacious readings ready to be reformed in time.

The movement, once the novelty of its inclusion into the process had waned, results in an added sense of purpose to the music making. The movement of sound and the sound of movement. Gestures connect and mingle. Aligning the space with something perhaps from outside. The music across space is forced into new areas, where the interdependence of opposites is striking. A tiny gesture with the violin disrupts the space without a sound. How can the occupation of a new space be so significant?

The presence of every musician's listening is not lost on Philipp, as measured interventions balance a quality of listening that leads to a cohesion of intent. Something that he generously supports along. A meeting of bodies and instruments, of sound and space, a coherence emerging out of the space with a

common sense of purpose. Everyone can now follow the music as they are on the edge of their seats looking.

But where hasn't the music been yet? To answer that Philipp's eyes need to open to see such a detail. The difference between local and 'geo' activity triggers a happening, a coming together in a movement space synonymous with sound. From the other side of the room, comes an action demanding a visual response, balancing pot plants in precarious positions to afford something provocative.

Now let's see how the space responds as the care and respect for the space is shown. Heard through a displaced speaker that, like the space itself, emerges just as easily as it fades away. Into and out of nothing but the wish to connect with something important, something that means something, while all the time Philipp is dancing.

But Philipp does no pirouettes. Nothing so obvious. Instead, each movement defies language, transcending discipline while telling the story of how sound travels with an open mind. What the music wants is to take control of its own destiny. It doesn't want to be told what to do, it just wants to emerge off and out of the walls. When Philipp plays, the music is granted its wish, as he leads a ritual of returning the room back to its own spirit.



Figure 34. Philipp Wachsmann at Trinity Laban performing with dance and music students. Feb. 2020.

Depiction

*The first utterance ... brittle ... intention
dropped as the music turns ... eyes closed ... moving closer
the listening has a presence ... a delicate interjection ... across four strings,
Long steady bowed notes ... stepping away ... making space in sound.*

*Signalling a symmetry ... a line continuing ... across the room
shifting plant pots ... through players ... tasting different sites
moved towards a clarity ... of tones ... purposely pitch shifted,
Mapping inner space ... through 'geo' space ... a deeper knowledge of sound in
space.*

*On multiple levels ... simultaneously ... deliberated
Gestures ... near travelling, far ... plucked strings
swinging upwards ... taking control ... respectfully,
Interplaying towards ... significance ... a cohesive movement of sound.*

*Tracking faster ... ideas ... slowly embodying
an absence of framing ... forming bowed double stops ... more importantly
now ... a pre-emptive pizzicato ... masking expectations,
Space ... imposes a common thread ... a universe of immutable flutterings.*

4.3

Composite depiction

4.3.1 Looking, feeling, sounding

Can you see

*The beginning ... a sound dropped into a puddle
Unflinching tones rippling ... meeting on opposites sides
A duetting pair skirting ... bow sounds ... dripping
down walls of sound conducting ... hushed ... Brantian style
A oneness ... of disassociated flows of ideas.*

What do you feel when ...

*placed in space ... between islands meeting
it moves a tundra of waving blasts ... balancing roles
left hanging ... elemental responses open
ongoing questions ... participating as invisible listeners, soloists
accompanying intention ... a dynamic collision of sounds
makes anywhere proximal or far ... a gesture felt*

Can you hear ...

*ideas ... open ... a space
balancing ... duets and trios ... desires
surprising ... happy accidents forced from hiding
never outstaying a welcome ... without framing ... space
by many ... a hint of an ending brushed aside
with an acceptance of what is remaining ... important
bringing together ... leaning against ... learning to push
a time for soundless exchanges ... glancing around at the pause
created to last ... long enough
an episodic shift.*

5

Heterarchical musicking – Musicians in Space



Figure 35. Musicians in Space performance in Ambika3, March 2019. Photo Ng Chor Guan.

5.0.1 Musicians in Space – Returning to Musicking

This multi-headed beast has many names
Given where you come from I can't imagine what you call it.
The wind rushes in, causing me to move away, while you stay behind.
So, what right have I to shut the door?

In his article 'What the music wants', Borgo suggests that:

to hear what the music wants is to be able to direct one's own attention and actions to the evolving soundscape and unfolding shape of the music, to prioritise musical over personal imperatives (Borgo, 2014, p33–51).

This corresponds to the words of Mike Vargas (2013, p24–27) with his idea that improvisers engage in a process of negotiation that sees their attention focused on what is needed rather than any personally desired outcome. The focus on the space within the MiS performances provided more scope for the participants to lose themselves in what they were doing, to become more 'authentic', which is a word regularly associated with somatic movement practices.

The purpose of this final chapter is to celebrate the sense of inclusivity that emerged out of the diversity of the MiS process. I return to the idea of a heterarchical musicking practice in an attempt to offer a more holistic impression of how the MiS performance practice impacted on improvised music. Having spent most of the thesis addressing the improvisers and audience members jointly as 'participants', I begin this chapter with alternating sections looking specifically at the experiences of the listener and the improviser. These two groups will gradually come together again into a unified collection of individual participants who all co-exist and co-create within an improvised, spatially-dynamic musicking ecology. The alternating discussion will once again, as it was in section 1.1, be signified by the slight change in the alignment on the page. Then once the two groups of participants have been reunited, I will bring this document to a close focusing on the unifying feature of the MiS process, which is our shared embeddedness in a physical sounding environment.

5.1

To-ing and Fro-ing with inclusivity

5.1.1 From the audience perspective 1.

Where is the audience?
Give it a few more minutes
With such a timeless practice,
How can we have a set starting point?

When we make *music* together we *explore* the nature of the relationships that exist between the music and those taking part, *we affirm* the nature of the relationships that we perceive, and we *celebrate* our connection to these relationships (Small, 1998: 141–142). Small emphasized no separation between players and listeners with his concept of musicking. Everyone contributes to making the music happen. At the LIO performance, one participant explained that the MiS experience:

felt like I imagine a family Christmas to have been like in some other nicer world. Where everyone's playing along, like playing an instrument, you know, like maybe in Ireland, I don't know. I've never experienced it, but like a musical sort of family and ... some members aren't really involved, but they are sort of enjoying it. But just different people all over the room. It was nice, I loved it, thank you. (P14, London Improvisers Orchestra, 2017)

Within the context of heterarchical musicking the nature of the relationships that one *explores* embraces the broadest possible range of participation and activity within the one collective experience. But

while the audience can focus on each instrumentalist, mimetically empathizing with something of what they imagine the musician is experiencing (Cox, 2016), the musician is seldom expected to do the same. They instead see the sea of faces in front of them as one collective being. But within MiS, this dynamic was broken down. Rather than simply playing to a centralized body of listeners, the improvisers now needed to respect each individual as a separate actor within the process. The simple act of an audience member coming close to see what the musician was doing, had the potential to generate an entirely new set of possibilities related to whether or not to respond directly or indirectly to the listeners actions. This predicament was raised by a number of participants who all had varying reactions to this additional factor. For example:

it's a very different experience, isn't it. Because you are always so used to having like, a bubble of ... here we are and there they are. And suddenly, a non-musician approaches you, and you go, well ... 'what am I doing? Should I move, or should we look at each other? ... Should there be a reaction? or should I just stay put like an artefact in a museum? ... Can I react and how can I react to them? [These were the] things that were sort of going through my mind.

In this setting you are able to really explore more and, I think, have a more ... truly social ... experience in this making. (P12, London Improvisers Orchestra, 2017)

Another person, responding to someone else's discomfort in the proximity to the audience, reveals the diversity of the connection experience, saying:

It's funny, what you were saying, that you were uncomfortable when people came around you. I felt the opposite actually, it made me feel more comfortable when

someone came and sat near. (P14, London Improvisers Orchestra, 2017)

Wachsmann explained how he prefers playing when he can see the faces of the audience (2017). On a number of occasions in our interview he raised the topic of lighting, explaining how it can be used to great effect to frame a performance, but it can also be used to segregate and alienate. He concluded that the openness of the lighting contributed greatly to the reading of the MiS process.

5.1.2 From the improviser's perspective 1.

Touch, go on affirm, a togetherness
Coming from knowing the tradition.
I feel the breath of a low bass rumble.
Now, could we balance all this on our backs?

Heterarchical musicking is built on the openness and generosity of the participants. It *affirms* and accepts both dissent and conformity knowing that both greatly contribute to the balancing of the process. It *celebrates* the idea that 'live and let live' is a more powerful approach to co-existence than 'either you or me' (Naess, 1973, p95–100: 96). While the listener became aware of how their presence could impact on the performance process and the dialogical exchange between the musicians, the musicians spoke of acknowledging more of the role of the listener in the performance process.

As the MiS musicians sensed a greater parity with their listening partners, the feeling that they needed to present something to the audience lessened. They were now free to simply play in the way that Attali describes the ‘composing’ musician plays. “*Composition* does not prohibit communication. It changes the rules. It makes it a collective creation, rather than an exchange of coded messages” (Attali, 1985: 143).

Tracy McMullen explains that, while a musician can get sucked into thinking and making judgements aimed at ‘second guessing’ what the audience is expecting, the *improvisative* emphasizes remaining true to the process itself (McMullen, 2016). It is a process where there is no space for unnecessary thinking or judgements, no space for ego, but rather a space where the individual is totally absorbed in maintaining the ‘flow’ (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) and connection to the present moment. This singularity of focus allows the individual to enter into the musicking process with a generosity and humility that comes when nothing is expected in return for what you have offered.

In the MiS performances, the generosity to connect sonically with the listener also led some improvisers to break with the convention of needing to be heard by everyone in the space. Instead, they intentionally played and responded to what was going on at such a low level that it could only be heard by those in the immediate vicinity. For instance:

there were things where I was playing quite quietly, and maybe the other musicians couldn’t hear and they were

doing something loud. It didn't matter, because the people, the audience near me could hear me. Or someone would come over and listen to me. That is something that you can do differently, as a musician, in this kind of concept, because you don't need everyone to hear you. Whereas normally you would, or you would expect them to come down when you are playing quietly, but that's not necessarily required. (P13, London septet, 2017)

5.1.3 From the audience perspective 2.

Fritrof Capra states that, "the more variables are kept fluctuating, the more dynamic is the system, the greater is its flexibility: the greater its ability to adapt to changing conditions." (Capra, 1996: 294). MiS is not a radical departure from the practice of free improvisation, as Speyer pointed out, "The only thing that I am aware of that has changed is the ability to move" (Speyer, 2017). But this one change had a profound impact, particularly on the relationship between the improviser and the audience.

While most audience members were hesitant to move initially, it only took one person to copy the musicians lead before the behaviours of a lifetime began to soften. For instance:

I think it was interesting in a space like this, how you still bring social conventions and anxieties into this space. There's a point where, you kind of think, I'd quite like to stand in the middle and all that, but I'm not quite sure whether that's ... grandstanding too much or I'd like to follow that round, but does that seem creepy and storkery (laughter) I kind of enjoy that kind of ... ambiguous socially anxious thing. I think that's quite an interesting aspect to the performance. (A7, Canterbury Free Range improvisers, 2017)

Rather than diluting the listeners experience with the removal of a defined focal point of reference, the broader palette of sensory experience, provided a stronger musical experience for the listener. One in which they could engage with more easily as they now felt part of the process, even if slightly reluctantly as this improviser speaking as an audience member expressed:

I felt like I was being a little bit intrusive sometimes and I had to force myself out of my chair ... It felt a like I was intruding. Because, I suppose, you change the dynamics and you're not supposed to be one of the performers. But, just by being there and by moving around you become one of the performers, and you kind of feel that 'am I doing this?' I felt a little bit uncomfortable doing this. (P27, Merseyside Improvisers Orchestra, 2017)

As the audiences progressively freed themselves of their self-imposed behavioural constraints and began to investigate the space alongside the musicians, the complexity of the process increased with the audience now becoming a very visible participant in the improvisation process. As this participant explains:

this dynamic, where by, as a listener during the quintets and things, I was ... actively moving around the space and positioning myself in the space, made me feel ... more included as a listener. I think that's good. (P26, Merseyside Improvisers Orchestra, 2017)

A personal account

Introducing the concept of MiS to a new audience, invariably means that they looked to me to make the first move within the performance. But in all instances during the research, I began as a performer, so the audience had to

fend for themselves. But in a performance in Amsterdam in August 2019, I experienced the pressure of having to make the first move as an audience member for the first time.

As I had just introduced the musicians who were playing I had, without thinking, chosen to sit down where I was. This was just next to the clarinet player. Sensing that I may be too close I moved the chair, only to find that the clarinettist moved in response to keep the close connection. I sensed people watching me to, what felt like, the same degree that they watched the musicians. I found I needed confidence to stay focused on the listening. The feeling that I was intruding and getting in the way of the performance, thankfully faded once I restored my focus on listening and then others began to move as well after a few minutes. Then feeling free enough I moved to listen from the edge of the room. I then watched as others began to position themselves where I had been previously, listening to the duo from the perspective of either of the performers.

5.1.4 From the improviser's perspective 2.

Across all the performances, performers and listeners felt that the greater spatial engagement had produced a heightened awareness of their surroundings, their physicality, and the quality of everyone's listening. The MiS performances were noticeably quieter with the musicians more likely to stop playing to listen. Carrasco-Lopez felt that by "opening up the space and making us move around it made us listen to each other more" (2018). The heightened nature of the listening experience was echoed by many participants. For example:

I think, I listened more ... than before. Because I was aware that people would be moving around, so I was more aware. ... Obviously, if someone comes to play right next to you, you are very aware of what they are doing. [But] because people were moving around the space, I was a lot more aware of where people were. It was like I could hear where the cello was for example. (P13, London septet, 2017)

The opportunity to draw more directly from the spatial environment established a 3-dimensionality to the listening experience. With sounds prone to arrive from any direction, the increased use of the eyes to confirm the location of sound sources provided everyone with a way of coping with the added complexity of the situation. From the perspective of the musician, it became easier to see what the audience was focusing on. One striking example of this was in the fourth improvisation with the London Improvisers Orchestra⁴³, when just after the two violinist move together, the audience literally vote with their feet as to which duet they want to focus on.



Figure 36. Split audience focus.

The importance of the physical nature of the process was pointed out by Bailey, who said that MiS allowed for the performance “to be read

⁴³ Two duets split the audience focus. <https://youtu.be/5-nLMsAT40g?t=655>

through movement, and for the audience to engage with the musicians as agents” (Bailey, 2017). He goes on to say:

Because there is a physical side to what they are doing as well. I think that helps. It helps to open up the process to a wider audience, and it helps them engage and read the process more, easily and more meaningfully. (Bailey, 2017)

Just as the improvisers reinforced their musical connections by physically orientating themselves towards what they were engaged with, the audience did also. Which in a spatialized context provided a very clear indication of how the attentional energy was flowing in the space.

5.1.5 From the audience perspective 3. Barging in

In a short entry in a Musics magazine from 1978, Steve Beresford vents his incredulity that members of the public feel that they have the right to ‘barge in’ on an improvisation and start playing in the middle of an improvisation (Beresford, 1978, p15). I feared that with the fourth wall lifted between the audience and the improvisers something similar may occur during this research. But at no time did an audience member actively sabotage the MiS process.

We did have one audience member contribute with the jingling of keys and shuffling across the space in one performance, but this was not seen as something destructive, it was accepted as just another offering into the space. Similarly, with six children at the Canterbury performance, rather than their presence being a distraction they were

seen as a very positive addition to the event⁴⁴, with one improviser stating that:

And there was that wonderful moment, right at the end, when there was that boy ... It was wonderful. And ... but there was a little bit of ... he obviously thought it had come to the end, and there was this sigh. (laughter) I don't know if it was audible on the thing, but it was a beautiful sigh, like (long sigh) (laughter). I just thought that was really special. (A3, Canterbury Free Range improvisers, 2017)⁴⁵

Without the clear spatial division of the different musicking participants, the listening experience became the feature that united everyone, rather than the emphasis being on whether someone was a performer or not. MiS did not eliminate performative roles, but it did undermine the elevated profile of the performer.

The opportunity for everyone to move and engage spatially with the performance process allowed for a democratizing of the performative space. The role of listener was never seen as a less important role in the process. This contrasts with the approach of the People Band who shared the performer role with the audience. In MiS, it was easier to acknowledge that everyone was primarily engaged as a listener, with some of these listeners simply having musical instruments in their hands, as expressed here:

I would say that I am not sure the only thing that makes me not a pure audience is the ability to play, but I felt like an audience a lot of the time ... and there were times when I just wanted to move around and just listen to the sound, in fact, at the end I did just do that. (P37, Oxford Improvisers, 2017)

⁴⁴ For a fuller account of the impact of the children's presence in Canterbury, see Appendix 1.

⁴⁵ The sigh to end the improvisation in Canterbury - <https://youtu.be/kYqPuYxJOE0?t=1601>

Small explains that when we *music*, we come together to share with like-minded individuals in the creation of “a set of ideal relations that we want to see exist, if only for the duration of the performance” (Small, 1998: 141). Because the actions of the audience are guided towards the creative construction of the music, I am left believing that they have little interest in actively sabotaging the proceedings. Unless, as Atton suggests, the disruption itself is intended as a ‘constitutive element in the social construction and cultural politics of the music’ (2012, p427–441: 440).

5.1.6 From the improviser’s perspective 3. Bargaining out

The MiS performances demonstrated an acceptance that everyone was on the same listening journey and irrespective of what role they happened to be in at the time, it was their responsibility to position themselves where they needed to be, to get the most out of the experience. In this way, the spatial and social aspect of the MiS performances self-organised itself with the musicking process simply making space for any eventuality. This observation reflects the feeling of Maggie Nichols who believes that “if you’re truly authentic, I do believe that sooner or later it [FiM] creates a space for everybody” (Rose, 2017: 179). An example of this occurred when Speyer moved into the corner of the room to blast trumpet high notes into a sound baffle while a delicate string engagement around the piano co-existed in the room⁴⁶. It is my belief that the incorporation of the spatial

⁴⁶ Trumpet in the corner against Spring sonata, I’klectik 11 June 3rd improvisation - <https://youtu.be/Hr2tf82q58Y?t=1025>

dimension in MiS allowed for this natural self-organizing process to happen more easily.

MiS gave the participants the option to listen and respond to a greater diversity of sounding events, including sounds from outside the performative process. These instances demonstrated a broader focusing of the attentional network system (Linson and Clarke, 2017, p52–69), as discussed in section 1.3.4. But I also see this as analogous to Dulugu Ganalan, or Lifted-up-over-sound, (Feld, 1988, p74–113) and how the sound that you choose to attend to can ‘lift up’ over everything else in your consciousness.

MiS clearly brought more attention to the spatial environment which resulted in the improvisers connecting with more sounds emanating from sources other than the other musicians. The musicians chose to explore the spaces playing into walls, under the piano⁴⁷, behind furniture, or into the floor. This even stretched to several instances where improvisers chose to step outside the performance space entirely⁴⁸. Bailey, who was one of the people that did choose to play outside, stated:

I just wanted to say that I normally play piano which is steeped in all sorts of conventions and ties you on the spot. And has all sorts of expectations, from listeners. And ... I just want to thank you for taking me out of my comfort zone. (Bailey, Canterbury Free Range improvisers, 2017)

⁴⁷ Playing under the piano – 1. London Septet <https://youtu.be/DesXc03VFXU?t=12>, 2. London June 2016 <https://youtu.be/a940SnmbaAA> (Leahy, 2016a)

⁴⁸ Playing outside the performance space – 1. London Septet <https://youtu.be/DesXc03VFXU?t=367>, 2. Oxford improvisers <https://youtu.be/BGFWfel1pWY0?t=1156>

Therefore, far from the audience *barging in* and posing a threat to the musical process, the musicians could be seen to be *barging out* of their self-imposed performative and musical conventions. The sense of permission to play for themselves (Attali, 1985) had led them to extend their practice even further than they normally would, possibly beyond what Day had referred to as the squared off nature of the music (Regina, 2018)⁴⁹. The music was allowed to go where it needed to go, with this being aided by an audience who were engaged in their own personal sense-making process (Peters, 2013; 2017). Much of this was expressed by the very first audience member to speak. He remarked that:

Well, there is a lot of stuff that I think I could say but ... this space, which is reverberant and not echoey ... definitely did have an impact here. I guess, I've seen freely improvised hundreds of times, if not thousands, but it has always been in a space where there is, a kind of, an implied proscenium arch. The musicians are there and the audience is there. And very rarely with this mingling together, and indeed, there were moments when, perhaps, there was a, kind of, blurring of boundaries between player and audience.

At one point, there was a relatively quiet moment when I suddenly heard this voice 'I don't know', and I didn't know if that was one of the players (laughter) who was trying to respond verbally towards the others, or whether it was somebody else. ... but, at that particular moment, it was an interesting interjection.

I enjoyed the moving through space and also about the, way that you, kind of get rid of, or perceive the different types of dynamics that were going on. Either between the players, which were mental dynamics or which were quite notable things that a single player was doing. I enjoyed that very much, because it is a different kind of listening, I think that takes place. You kind of hone in on one player and you can, kind of like, listen to what they are doing or what kind of detail that they are bringing to the thing that they are playing. And you can go away and go to the woodwind or the electronics, or what Sam was doing and you can come in and out.

⁴⁹ See section 1.2.7

So, it was kind of against that textural, listening to the whole thing, but I um ... So I was enjoying that, and I was enjoying the differences that were happening in the place as well. (A1, Canterbury Free Range improvisers, 2017)



Figure 37. String players coming together. LIO, 21st May 2017. Photo Séverine Bailleux

5.1.7 Active doing by all

With the invitation for the audience to actively engage in the musicking process and take responsibility for their personal listening experience, MiS offered a constructive route into “what can be quite an impenetrable sounding thing” (Bailey, 2017). MiS established a means of entry into improvised music through the granting of permission for the audience to actively engage with the music. From people drawing, dancing, lying on the floor, the various individuals using a camera to capture what interested them in the improvisations, others using camera phones to take photos to put on social media, and the inexhaustible supply of examples of listeners simply taking advantage of the invitation to move, to go towards, in between, or away from the musicians to afford a

particular listening experience. All these examples can easily be seen to support Small's central objective of returning music making back to an active 'doing' (1998).



Figure 38. Audience responses from June 2016.

Just as Waters (2007: 2) recognizes a host of new ways that musicians now engage in the act of *composing* (Attali, 1985), I argue that MiS provides all the participants the opportunity to engage in the musicking process in a way that is meaningful to them. For instance, this audience member appreciated the freedom to respond physically to the music as she explains here:

I didn't really know what to expect, which was nice. ... And I guess it also has to do with fact that I do a lot of dancing, but in the moment that I stepped into the space, and I was told that I could move around a little bit, there was like this freedom. Immediately, by the sounds that were being emitted and the energy that was being constructed from almost everybody, I was immediately, (click of fingers) kind of, triggered to start dancing, and to start moving. Maybe not necessarily like ... (gesture) but like start to actually allowing my body to express itself. Which is something that I hadn't really felt in a lot of spaces, so that was great.

And it was really nice to see how there was this organic, kind of, conversation happening that was generating a topography of sound around the space. So, we could, you know, you could go into certain

valleys and around ... allow yourself to get lost within those valleys. And then some of the ... you could break away from that, and just go into a conversation and be a part of that conversation, or really listen to the details of that conversation. ... And it made ... the music, and the playfulness of the music, really ... characterize the space that it was occupying.

So, It's an incredible experience. I think it's a very, very powerful experience, and I think it could really activate something within the ear. So, I thank you for that. (A14, London Improvisers Orchestra, 2017)

In his interview, Bailey (2017) saw the next logical step in the evolution of MiS as being the inclusion of other creative disciplines. This is something I remain receptive to with, for instance: the two 2016 MiS performances (Leahy, 2016a; 2016b) where I invited dancers to join the musicians for the final sets, my collaboration with Carrasco-Lopez (2018), and numerous other music and dance collaborative projects.

The added visibility of the audience's engagement contributed to a greater recognition of their valuable input into the process. Bailey reflected on both his impression of the impact audience participation had on MiS and also a previous project that involved him improvising to a restaurant of diners eating a meal specifically created to go with the music. He writes:

The listeners become like really essential co-collaborators. And what's happening when those listeners are eating sound, they hear the music and they put the food in their mouth. All the meaning is created by them. They are the people that bring the thing to life. Just the fact that they are eating, that kind of made their listening more active. So, they kind of realised it a bit more.

But it happens in all gigs. So, if you could somehow, bring alive the active nature of listening through them either videoing, or doing drawings, or doing paintings, or whatever. Then I think everyone Basically, the listeners who are already great creative collaborators, just to be listening with understanding and not to be getting up and walking out. Yeah, I think that might be a good way forward to empower the audience. (Bailey, 2017)

It is undeniable that the diversity of the doing within the MiS space has the potential to be developed further. But this also produces challenges to the practice of focused and reduced listening with extraneous noises and visual disturbances being caused by people moving around. But, I would argue that within FiM, where we have long prided ourselves on our ability to work with anyone and everyone, even if the result is a car crash (Toop, 2016: 31), we should have acquired enough resilience to not see a diverse 'doing' space as a distraction but rather an opportunity. I am reminded of the many nights playing at the Klinker, where Hugh Metcalfe would provide a pot of soup and enough paints and canvases for everyone to use so as to contribute creatively to the night's performance. If MiS performances can become a similar actor working against the formal separation of performer and observer, then I will be satisfied.

5.2

Clarity through the space

MiS successfully blurred the lines between the musicians and listeners to the point that, at times, a second glance was required to see if the person approaching you was holding an instrument or not. Instead of the music getting lost in the MiS process, new opportunities were made available in terms of social and musical interactions by the spatial diversity. But with the added complexity of the process came an increased level of clarity of the musicking process also meaning that the participants gained a deeper understanding of the intentions of the other participants. What contributed to this increased clarity included: the physical orientation of the participants invariably corresponded to what they were engaged with, the increased importance of other sensory information most notably sight, and the way that movement regularly punctuated the musical process. In this final section, I celebrate the way that the complexity of the process avoided becoming a complicated system simply through the actions of the participants responded to what the space afforded.

5.2.1 Stages of the improvisations

Within every performance a number of stages seemed to exist. The first improvisation went through a period of searching and introducing oneself to the group. Then at some point, as sense of arriving to the collective process seemed to occur, where the improvisers coalesced around a single event that acted as a creative catalyst. Following this, the movement of the participants became less forced, self-conscious and formal. Shifting position simply became a matter of

going from one place to another. Wachsmann explained that “once you became inducted into the behaviour ... it becomes more acceptable and you begin to read it as for what it is.” (Wachsmann, 2017, 16’42”).

These moments of arriving, or trigger points that Bailey, Speyer, and Wachsmann all noted in their interviews, can be characterised by a feeling of no longer needing to perform or to exert your mark on the proceedings. Instead you are content to exist within an ‘egoless’ (Wachsmann, 2017) musicking environment that promotes an openness to new experiences. It is without expectations, in a space that enables empathy, humility, and generosity to grow, which reflects an ‘Improvisative’ spirit (McMullen, 2016). It is devoid of the need to compose music for anyone else but yourself, safe in the knowledge that “the outcome has to come from the interaction” (Wachsmann, 2017). A coherence to the musicking process therefore emerged out of this shared realisation and sense of common purpose.

5.2.2 Balancing known and the unknown and avoiding habituation

In the MiS performances, it was apparent that the tendency, even an unconscious one, to rely heavily on habituated practices became difficult. This was because the set of circumstances and relationships in the space became more diverse. This confounded expectations and led each individual to scrutinize their actions more, meaning that the likelihood of simply being swept away and responding in ways that you normally would to the actions of others became less likely. This was particularly significant when an improviser had been playing with the same ensemble for a long time, as was the case for this participant:

What interested me was how, I seemed to make, unconsciously, a kind of map of the ensemble. Because I have been playing with the London

Improvisers Orchestra since it started ... and without thinking about it, I think you start identifying, 'Oh so and so is over there and so and so is over there and ... this kind of sound is going to come from here.' So obviously, what was surprising to me was that, the sounds kept ... not coming from where I expected. Although I didn't know that I was expecting anything until they stopped doing that, if you see what I mean. So, the confounding of the expectations was interesting for me, so it was a surprise to ... get the trumpet in my left ear when I thought all the trumpets were on my right. But I didn't know I thought that until it happened. (P10, London Improvisers Orchestra, 2017)

The spatial novelty meant that even when someone responded to a colleague, that they had worked with in the past, the added variables that existed in the space meant that a greater degree of uniqueness in the moment existed. This added complexity and uncertainty also led to the participants needing to trust one another more. This increased connectivity between the participants was raised in some of the interviews (Speyer, 2017; Wachsmann, 2017) as well as by this participant who stated that:

the bond that creating sound in this way gives us, because we are listening from here [signalled the heart] is ... gives us a bond together which is so rare, but instant, and it is very strong. (P7, Canterbury Free Range improvisers, 2017)

This links to the added sensitivity to the lived experience that Paxton saw following the dancers relinquishing their habituated responses to the possibility of physical contact (1972, p128–134: 134)⁵⁰. This afforded the MiS participants scope to experience a deeper felt connection to the musicking process, expanding the reach of the spatialized process inwards as well as outwards.

Meanwhile, the mutual subversion and problem finding strategies, that have traditionally been used to keep the music original and free of habituated practices were able to be better employed. This is possibly counter-intuitive given that, out

⁵⁰ See section 1.4.3

of the complexity, an added clarity to the improvisation process emerged which could have led the participants to more predictable responses. But as the tendency of the improviser is just as likely to work against what is happening as they are to work with it, we can speculate that MiS simply led to more informed playing choices, be it to accompany and support or to mutually subvert.

5.2.3 Making sense of the musicking space

To see the world as you,
hearing the decisions behind your thoughts.
Why should I move?
Quickly! Come and look at this spider scurrying from the corner.

Following a lifetime of stepping up and opening up to where the first sound of an improvisation can come from, the musicians were seen to be well equipped in assessing a way through, and into the spatialized performance experience. They naturally positioned themselves cognitively, and therefore spatially, in a place that they felt best facilitated the most advantageous and interesting vantage point for the ensuing sense-making process. This was regularly based on factors concerning listening and social connectivity. With this connection to their established practice of FiM, the improvisers were able to easily incorporate the spatial element into their process. This meant that the same evaluative criteria of basing ones decisions on structurally balancing contrasting variables, as explained by MacDonald and Wilson (2016, p1029–1043)⁵¹, was employed to manage the spatial variables just as they would any other variable in front of them.

⁵¹ Introduced in section 1.3.5

This appropriation of established cognitive processes reflects what Clark explains are cognitively frugal practices based on utilizing an established and economical distribution of labour between brain, body and world (Clark, 2015: 244). This brought the practice back to a somatically-felt knowingness which can be seen to make visible improvisation's primitive link to our evolutionary past (Bailey, 1993; Ellenberger, 2018). But it also allowed the movement to become embedded in the practice, evolving with the music and not as an additional factor that needed to be attended to. The movements were simply appropriate responses to the musicking process which now incorporated a spatial dimension.

For some, the homogeny between the music making experience and their physicality was greatly illuminated by MiS to the point where, as Carrasco Lopez mentioned, you had a sense that "the movements were the sounds" (Carrasco-Lopez, 2018). Wachsmann also remarked that he "had a real sense of the space that people were in, and everyone was hearing things differently" (Wachsmann, London septet, 2017).

5.2.4 Four walls for framing freedom

With everyone free to follow their own interest and shape their own listening experience, the question as to whether this remains a performance or becomes perhaps a 'Happening', is a valid question to ask. Kaprow (1993) identified four key aspects to a Happening: context, no scripted plot, the use of chance, and finally their impermanence. If these four aspects are used to define what happened in a MiS performance it is true that the line between performance and a happening is very blurred. But I would be hesitant to leave the performance arena just yet for a number of reasons. Firstly, Kaprow explains that a Happening

aimed to return the practice “from the specialized zones ... towards the particular places and occasions of everyday life” (1993: xii). MiS was established specifically to challenge the perceptions of the performative experience. So to step outside this realm would therefore defeat such a purpose. This would also lead to advocates of the traditional performative experience, possibly correctly, associating the MiS with either site-specific or street theatre. Secondly, in a presentation on ‘how to make a happening’, Kaprow’s first point is to “forget all standard art forms” (1966: 1). Although he qualifies this later by saying “do not compose music” (1966: 1), I fear that the way that the improvising musicians view what they do would still point FiM towards an established practice, be it a non-idiomatic one. On reflection, therefore, I believe that MiS continued to exist as a performance, but one that offered a striking departure from the established spectacle, which is one area of similarity with the work of Kaprow.

This striking departure from the recognisable performance, with the way that it blurred the lines between the participants but continued to operate with a separation of musicians and audience, continued to perplex me for a long time following the original set of performances. In one way, the process was still improvised music as I had grown to accept it, but somehow everything had changed. It took a while to arrive at a response to this paradoxical situation, which eventually emerged through a conversation with Wachsmann. We began to recognize the importance of the physical, performance space, and how it seemed to provide a frame in which things could happen. Wachsmann suggested that:

I know that a number of things are happening, but if the process is common, whatever you do with that process is going to have a coherence. (Wachsmann, 2017)

In other words, as the listening experience was far more immersive the space-ness of the performance environment became the aspect that connected everyone together irrespective of their role, interests, and spatial location. If something was possible within the space, given the abilities and agency of those involved and given the affordances of the space, then space would be made for that action or thing to exist. And most importantly, because it was able to take place, it was accepted as something that was part of the process. The space, therefore, provided a sense of coherence to whatever happened. This is how everybody was able to accept the occurrence of: two musicians lying down on the floor and Bailey smashing his singing bowls with his shoe in Canterbury (Leahy, 2017a); the audience member deciding to turn the light out in the last improvisation in Liverpool (Leahy, 2017i); Wachsmann playing a bit of Beethoven's Spring sonata in London (Leahy, 2017g); or the old man in the hat choosing to conduct the orchestra in Madrid (Orquesta Foco, 2018).

By having the firm foundation of the musicking process emanating from the four walls, it meant that the process of exploring the space, and its acoustic and physical properties, established the sense of coherence to the musicking experience. This meant that while every individual could continue to have their own ideas and opinions as to what the music could or should contain or involve, they remained united within the same processional and physical boundaries.

5.2.5 Amorphous - Heterarchical musicking

The social interaction within the MiS performances seemed to take on a more profound dimension, which emphasized the generosity of the performative action. It brought people together and invited them to co-create. As the

participants grew more comfortable with their new freedom they began to explore more avenues of listening, feeling absorbed and invested in the process. MiS established a space where things could happen, but this also respected the possibility that nothing could happen also.

On three instances, the performances culminated in improvisations that, on first reflection, seemed to have very little happen. The music seemed devoid of leadership, with the music lacking significant moments. People described these improvisations as having an amorphous sonic quality, gradually growing in intensity, with an associated movement quality that saw everybody “walking around aimlessly, like zombies” (Speyer, 2017)⁵². But on further reflection, it was revealed that these improvisations possibly represented an arrival to a musicking experience that is the specific result of each individual arriving at a balance with the collective. Where the individual accepts the complexity of the process to the extent that it no longer seems necessary to overtly introduce anything that doesn’t already belong. Wachsmann changed his opinion of what he felt about the last improvisation of the LIO performance after considering the result as being rather homogenous considering that the band featured so many new and visiting players who didn’t know each other. He remarked that:

I have changed a lot all through the years and I like to play with other people for that reason. But to actually accept a situation where there are not obvious knife edge events takes a lot of courage, because you are then being invited to participate in an exploration of the unknown. (Wachsmann 2017, 33.25d)

With this admission by Wachsmann, I am left wondering if the removal of the spatial and social constraints pushed the practice of FiM into an unknown realm

⁵² Amorphous improvising in the last improvisation with LIO - http://www.dafimusic.com/Musicians_in_Space/mis_21052017_imp5_viewer.html

that even the seasoned free improvisers rarely tread? One where the “improbable inevitability” (Borgo, 2014, p33–51) of the improvisation process possibly encroaches on a truly heterarchical musicking experience. One where the only form of defence for the participant is to fully embrace the not knowingness of the moment and to trust that a coherence to the process already exists and does not need to be found.

After initially dismissing these improvisations, as lacking focus or them being “just what the group needed to do at that time” (Speyer, 2017), I now interpret these moments of *amorphous improvising* as representing an arrival to a truly heterarchical musicking experience. Where anything is possible and nothing is required, in a space where everyone involved is clearly seen as being responsible for the creation of the music. A musicking space where everyone is led, but with no one doing the leading. Where a freedom from the constraints of the separated performance experience exists, which both liberates the individual and compels them to consider more carefully their role in the process.

When these amorphous moments happened during this research, I feel I failed to fully recognize their significance and so missed the opportunity to celebrate what the collective had achieved through their openness. But with this knowledge that, given the right conditions, a heterarchical musicking environment can be created, I am now looking forward to the next time that this degree of not-knowing occurs. Because when it does, I will be able to accept it for what it is and will savour what a group of independent and creative minds can achieve, when allowed to ‘just be’ in a truly heterarchical musicking space.

6

Musicians in Space - Summary

6.1 Summary

Diverse, responsive engagements

We are balancing responses to all demands

Pushed through the letter box before the rains come.

Operating an open door policy

Shunryu Suzuki explains that the best way to control your sheep or cow is to give them “a large, spacious meadow” (Suzuki, 1999: 32). This is effectively what I gave to the musicians and audience members of this practice-based research, Musicians in Space (MiS). I began by asking why, in the fifty-five year history of free improvised music, the musicians had not fully explored a more spatially diverse and socially inclusive approach to performance? Particularly, as the musicians were meant to be free to draw on any acoustic, physical, psychological, emotional, social, or “other less tangible atmospheric conditions in effect at the time the music” (Parker, 1975, p12–13) was being played. I failed to see how this was possible given the spatially separate and static nature of the performative process. This led me to invite all the performance participants the opportunity to move during the improvisation process, in order to afford new insights into the process.

The research used Christopher Small’s notion of *Musicking* as a framework, which I added to by establishing the distinction between hierarchical and heterarchical musicking. This distinguished musicking experiences that emerged

from centralized, predominantly fixed approaches to music making with the more self-organised approaches to musicking that left more compositional and performative variables in flux. This distinction supported the identification of various significant characteristics of the MiS practice and how it compared, not only to the existing practice of FiM, but to other forms of spatialized music as well.

Two research questions helped to ensure that the research remained relevant and applicable to the practice of FiM. These questions were:

To what extent do free improvising musicians draw on the spatial characteristics of a performative environment – And to what extent can, could, or should they?

And

How would the performance of free improvised music within a spatialized context look, feel and sound?

As a result, the musicians and audience members discovered that by modifying their spatial perspective of the improvisation process, a host of new ways of listening and engaging in the improvisative process emerged. The MiS participants appreciated having the opportunity to shape their own listening and took advantage of the possibility of either entering into the midst of the activity or skirting around the edges. The visual element of MiS was seen overwhelmingly as a positive development producing new ways to experience the process and contributing to a sense of increased clarity of the improvisation process. It also highlighted the centrality of listening to any musicking process. The spatial dispersal that ensued, which was based on what interested each individual, produced an immensely diverse musicking topography which was

seen as a noticeable expansion of what was considered possible within a FiM performance.

By having all the participants free to engage in the musicking process on their own terms, MiS effectively stripped away multiple layers of hierarchical disparity that the spatial separation usually made visible and reinforced. Having everyone free to move and intermingle in the space, established a more egalitarian environment where everyone was recognized as a contributor to the musicking process and where everyone was responsible for their own listening experience. MiS essentially established a musicking environment that existed with fewer constraints, limitations, assumptions, and expectations, both projected outwards and inwardly self-imposed. This was achieved by the group self-organizing themselves and collectively arriving at a delicate balance where all the diverse interests and attentions could co-exist. MiS offered a context in which the musicking process could be sustained with all the participants working with the common objective of cocreating a sonic response to the moment, while not stipulating the particular path that each individual should take in achieving this common objective.

While this research was guided by two questions, as noted above, the importance placed on concluding this journey with definitive responses to both questions has been avoided. This was a very intentional act, as to have done so would have belittled the immense complexity of the process of improvisation. Additionally, any conclusion that I may have arrived at on a Monday would undoubtedly be different to the one arrived at on Tuesday. Let alone any conclusion that you the reader or any of my participants would discover. The research questions, therefore, like the process of improvisation itself remained

just a place to begin from.

6.2 Final thoughts

Listening to movement, moves my listening.
We come together to share.
A simple truth - there is no listening sweet spot.
So, let's just go for a walk.

This research, more than anything else, has been a personal journey that has aimed to uncover my musicking process. Along the way, I have tied others into my process and shared something of myself with them. In return they have opened themselves up to the process and willingly explored the idea of Musicians in Space. Even after four years, I still feel that this journey is only beginning with new realizations appearing every time that I perform. It is true that I now find it intriguing to perform where I am expected to remain spatially separate and static. I now have the confidence to subvert this expectation, and I readily do. But even when I don't, my questioning of the boundaries that such an environment quietly reinforces undoubtedly colours my performative process.

One aspect that I feel destined to pursue further is the area of ecology in a musicking process. This has been a profound area of study personally which emerged out of this study. I fear I will be working on how best to respond musically to this theme for some time to come. I am continuing to work with MiS, as spatialization is now my native approach to FiM. I will of course continue to use it to undermine the overly hierarchical musicking practices that I see around me. By doing so, I hope I will be able to contribute to a shift in musicking experiences back towards nature and the world around us, as imagined by John

Stevens, when he sat in his back garden and considered the importance of playing free group music (Toop, 2016: 243).

Appendix

1

A1.1 Child's play

The following is a discussion about the influence that the presence of children had on the process at the first MiS performance. It is positioned here as an Appendix as it explores an isolated situation that while it was interesting it was not representative in any of the other settings.

Taking it in, sitting on the floor
drawing, listening, naturally.
Honest examples to the liberated.
We are all learning to play here.

In the first MiS performance in 2017 at the Sidney Cooper Gallery in Canterbury, a number of people brought their children to the performance. As the venue had a large trolley full of drawing supplies, I chose to bring some out into the space. The children immediately set up on the floor in an active process of *doing* themselves. Their immersive engagement ended up inspiring some of the musicians to challenge their own actions, with two improvisers deciding to lie on the floor. For an experienced music therapist with less experience of improvising in public, the presence of the children also provided a sense of grounding. She stated that:

I was feeling a bit intimidated by the idea of performing improvising. ... But, quite soon, I think the children helped, but also this set up, and the listening. I soon felt it was a part of just responding and the barriers were broken down. (P3, Canterbury Free Range improvisers, 2017)

Reflecting on his own practice in the performances, Sam Bailey likened the intense sense of listening, that he found he lost himself in, to the way that his children play a game to the extent that “they can’t really see anything outside the game” (Bailey, 2017, 17’59”). The idea of play, in relation to an improvisers approach to music, is seen as an appropriate comparison with Hargreaves et al., also drawing on the example of a child investigation of an instrument, which they describe as a process based on a “a quest for newness” (2011: 6). Chelsea Green considers play to be at the heart of music’s communicative force, with little meaning being transmitted without it (Green, 2010: 3).

Returning to the theme of permission, another improviser reflected that we seemed to be inspired by the quality of engagement exhibited by the children. She remarked:

It’s interesting that quite a lot of us have said, ‘Oh, because all the children were there.’ Seeing that all of us adults, and basically free improvising musicians, ... need children to kind of give us permission to do stuff. (P9, Canterbury Free Range improvisers, 2017)

Because some of the improvisers were new to performing to children, some feared that the children would be either disruptive or not like what we were doing. But in the event the children not only remained totally accepting of the improvised music emerging literally all around them, but many of the musicians felt that they contributed “a lot of youthfulness and enthusiasm to the whole

thing” (A3, Canterbury Free Range improvisers, 2017). Wachsmann highlighted this in his interview also, stating that:

I think the influence, particularly of the children in Canterbury was marvellous. The fact that there were things going on, on the floor. And the freedom that came from the innocence, if you like. ... That was a big influence. (Wachsmann, 2017)

Additionally, a shared sense of responsibility and care seemed to emerge with the children present. This quality of empathy, generosity, and heightened awareness to what we were cocreating seemed to pervade through the music. This reminded me of Evan Parker’s idea, that when we play it is with the hope that:

somehow the benevolent wish, to be in a good place with your fellow human being, will somehow also be conveyed in addition to these sounds or extended techniques. (Evan Parker interview on, Hopkins, 2009, 44’09”)

Just as the musicking partners seemed to be more accepting of sounds entering into the performance space from outside, the sounds of the children were also easily consumed into the process. For example, two moments from the Canterbury performance can be used to demonstrate where the sonic contributions of a child seemed to be incorporated into the process. Firstly, where a little girls runs back to her drawing⁵³. Her rhythmic stamping not only continues the musical material that had just climaxed 20 seconds earlier, but they seem to accompany the cadential chords that had just been arrived at. The second example⁵⁴, from the third improvisation at 26’58”, is explained here by an audience member:

And there was that wonderful moment, right at the end, when there was that boy ... It was wonderful. And ... but there was a little bit of ... he obviously thought it had come to the end, and there was this sigh. (laughter) I don’t know if it was audible on the thing, but it was a

⁵³ Acceptance of child sounds, Canterbury - <https://youtu.be/BxS8w8gZFNo?t=350>

⁵⁴ The last sound of the improvisation - *a sigh*, Canterbury - <https://youtu.be/kYqPuYxJOE0?t=1600>

beautiful sigh, like (long sigh) (laughter). I just thought that was really special. (A3, Canterbury Free Range improvisers, 2017)

The consensus was that the children had a profound impact on the nature of the performance and that they helped to free up inhibitions and blur boundaries between the audience and the performers (Bailey, 2017). Having been at FiM performances where children were present in the past, and sensing not only the lack of connection to the process by the children, but also the mild annoyance of some of the audience members and the total lack of awareness of the musicians to the children, I am left encouraged by the responses of the participants and at the prospect of MiS being considered an appropriate environment in which to invite children to. So, I am encouraged by the thought that the MiS can nurture an inclusive and co-creative environment that even children can be part of.

Appendix

2

Redefining virtuosity

Small was particularly scathing of the importance of the ‘authority’ and the division between the various individuals involved in Western music production, from the rank and file, or supporting artist, up to the elevated stature of the soloist and virtuosi. While I agree with Justin Yang who states that ideas of virtuosity, that are based on ideas of mastery and the unrivalled skills of the soloist, remain largely irrelevant within FiM (Yang, 2014), I would argue that it continues to exert some influence over the improviser’s performative process. This is through a combination of factors including: levels of formal musical training, whether you are an ‘original player’ (Scott, 1987), and the social expectations and presumptions that are associated with what constitutes a musical performance. This assertion is supported by Atton who found that the primary focuses of improvisers centred on the potentially conflicting themes of technical virtuosity and a more collective approach to music (1988, p13–17).

The MiS performances brought together the performer and listener in a way that demonstrated an approach to shared co-creation, seldom seen within the predominantly *presentational* performing arts landscape. MiS highlighted the egalitarian potential of FiM, where everyone involved was invited to exercise their personal responsibility in making the music happen. This was done possibly at the expense of an overt display of the virtuosic abilities of the individual. But it did not diminish the importance of the experienced artist

continuing to work at the height of his/her ability. This is a point made clear by Blacking, who states that:

Anyone who troubles to perfect his technique is considered to do so because he is deeply committed to music as a means of sharing some experience with his fellows. (Blacking, 1974: 46)

This sentiment implies an intrinsic motivation far removed from ego, with the artist aiming to use the music to reach places that, reasoned and conscious thought conveyed through language cannot get to. This is expressed by Wachsmann, who states that:

I do this music because I want to get into all the real areas that cannot be substantiated by science or knowledge. ... it is about one's experience to go out beyond language, and beyond the known, and not in a stupid way. (Wachsmann, 2017)

Just as Anderson and Goolishian (1992, p25–39) point to the expertise of the therapist resting in their ability to foster an environment of creative dialogue, the same can be said of the experienced improviser. The notion of musical virtuosity within a heterarchical context, is therefore, less related to the ability of the individual to exhibit exceptional technical skill and more to do with the ability of the individual to support the facilitation of an environment where the collective musicking experience is as true to life as possible. This implies a completely different form of virtuosity, one which Sylvia Hallett correctly suggests points inwards to a “virtuoso of the mind - having good ears and good ideas, and being able to think and feel music intelligently” (Atton, 1988, p13–17: 14). This also connects to Maggie Nichols’ idea of a shared, ‘Social virtuosity’ (Rose, 2017: 180–181), which celebrates the particular power of a group of individuals, with varying levels of ability, who choose to play together. She states that “there is something phenomenal about a group of different experiences, making a really

strong performance in music” (2017: 181). All these points, lead to an understanding of the word *virtuoso* which is different within FiM than in many forms of Western musicking. I, therefore, suggest replacing the existing definition of *virtuosity*, when used in connection to FiM, to emphasize an individual’s ability to care for the musicking process and their ability to raise the collective gain of all those involved, including the audience members. This is possibly better outlined here by Richard Scott, who writes:

The skill or talent of the improviser is not necessarily to be judged by any expression of individual genius or by the expert technique with which he spontaneously weaves a tangible world into existence upon the stage, but perhaps rather by how completely he can become a channel for those other forces and patterns that are already unfolding and how completely he can allow himself to be carried along by their flows and trajectories without simply becoming submerged and negated by them. He doesn’t inhabit or dominate space so much as he expresses his negotiation of it: he collaborates with it, and his authority on the stage is always plural, shared, co-determined. (Scott, 2014, p 10)

I believe this would allow us to once again see the “profound musical, spiritual and political implications” of the music (Scott, 2014, p95–109: 104), which Stevens had previously mourned the faded recognition of amongst the improvising community. In conclusion, as MiS bought this alternative *virtuosic* quality out of many of the musicians that participated, I would argue that MiS could act as an appropriate vehicle to support the redefining of the word, as it has already demonstrated a departure from the established performative convention that FiM, have in the main, continued to fall prey to.

Appendix

3

Transcriptions

A3.1

MiS Canterbury Transcription

Venue – Sidney Cooper Gallery – 12 May 2017

P1

Well I would like to say that since about the year 2000 this has been a brilliant and very amazing part of my art practice which is a bit different normally. But now I can clock up a number of performances, and relating to musicians in a number of ways. But before this I got very nervous, because it was about a year since I was ... sort of, been out there. And I wrote this. And I ended with a little question.

And I wish I could see ? – I wish I could ... that's not written – I wish I had my glasses with me. The funny thing is that I don't need them when I'm painting. It's really weird. But I need them in life. Anyway. ...

'I think my ears as an artist today will focus on sounds that the other musicians make. My listening will affect my art, and in a way, I will also engage, absorbing. Listening and responding to other musical sounds I will hear today. Am I also part of the audience as well as an art practitioner?'

I'm asking this ...

P2

What I really liked was the blurred boundaries between many different aspects. One of which ... Catherine has already spoken about, the blurred boundary between being participant, and listener. And the kids I think helped to ... blur that boundary pretty clearly, at the beginning and freed up inhibitions, I think. ... So, Fertile conditions for blurred boundaries, thank you.

P1

That was answering.

P2

Oh was it? OK

P1

I think so.

P2
OK

P3
Do you want to go back?

P1
No!

P3
I was feeling a bit intimidated by the idea of performing improvising. Because I usually do it, in a room, with one or a few children. But, quite soon, I think the children helped, but just ... this set up, and the listening, and having Catherine, ... just, yer, I soon felt it was a part of just responding ... and the barriers were broken down. And that was all I was going to say.

P4
... I was really ... taken by the sensitivity of everyone's listening. And the fact that we could ... really hone to each other and play very, very quietly, very quietly, and still keep a kind of intensity to what was happening, with such space. Personally, I found that very engaging.

P5
I tended to, ... often, play with my eyes shut. And I found it very illuminating in this environment to be encouraged to use my sight. And that also led me to different kinds of relationships with the other musicians.

And the ability to move around also. But ... the aspect of sight and being able to move, I thought, was really exciting because I felt that I could explore the geography of the acoustics of the space.

You know – 'What's it like to be there and what's it like to be there?' Rather than just being there with my eyes shut and listening to reflections and trying to suss out where my sound was going and where it was coming back from. But to actually explore the geography. So thank you for that.

And, other things of course that, (laugh) other things that have been mentioned, and I am sure will be mentioned.

P6
Are you sure?

P5
Yip.

P6
... I'll be honest that I spend most of my time trying to control the sound, and not moving around, because there's too much to think about, ... with a trombone. Because it's a very loud ... it can be a very loud instrument. And even when it's quiet, it gets ... it requires a lot of control.

So moving around, a lot, would have probably distracted me from just trying to control the sound. ...

And also, I don't mind moving around, but it takes a lot of energy and playing in the way that I do, is quite tiring. So I thought about ... it wasn't my responsibility to move around. And then basically, what is my responsibility in this situation? It was to play the trombone, so I thought just play the trombone.

But also I thought, well ... I'm a bit like Phil, I spend a lot of my time with my eyes closed when I improvise, because I am more interested in the sounds as they hits me. And ... And I think that making eye contact with people, I find quite difficult in an improvising situation. Because a lot of the people I usually improvise with, if you make eye contact with them, they'll wonder 'what's up?' (laughter)

Because they'll think like, you know ... 'I'm bored now.'

And as I know a lot of the people I play with very well. Eye contact with them has more meaning than just, kind of, looking. You know. I can look at ... some of the people that I play with, when they are not looking at me, But if I catch their eye, then there is the possibility that ... So I am not used to catching people's eyes or seeking out eye contact.

I just tend to go ... And I don't know a lot of people here. So, I just kind of allowing ... I know some, but not all.

So I am just ... In order to treat everyone equally, in my kind of perception, It was just best not to look at anyone.

Also, I didn't want to walk around, because I didn't want to stand on a child. (laughter) That is the sort of thing that I do. Not for fun. (laughter)

But just because I realise that the trombone is a bit unwieldy, so there's, you know, God there's a lot to think about. (laugh) There you go.

P1

Can I just add a little to that

P6

Quick

P1

Just a little tiny 'NB' is that what you say. Because, what you said was ... Curiously today, I expect some of you noticed that I used some drawings that I had made actually yesterday. But today I did a, kind of, live drawing while another group was playing. And ... I'd just got going on you (directed at SGB) and your trombone, and you moved right up to me. (laugh) And um ... I couldn't abandon you, because I was just getting into you. So, that was a bit of an extraordinary movement in my ... well I tried to capture it in my drawing. So, you moved and the artist had to adapt.

P7

Strangely enough, I did a foundation course in art when I ... Somerset college of art years ago. And, the story is ... that I found that I couldn't do what, ... I couldn't paint, and draw and do all the rest of it, that I saw.

So, after 18 months I set it all in the quadrangle and set fire to everything. And then ended up in Morocco. (laughs)

When I got back somebody gave me a flute, and it was like ... this is coming home. And, literally, I just know that this was what I was going to do.

Today, it was like the justification for setting fire to that artwork, and ... now I can play what I saw. And that there is a validity in it. So it is as much art as music. So, it's crossing ...

So it stands up as both art and music.

Like John Cage, you know, the piano piece that does perfectly stand up as art and music at the same time, philosophically as well.

So ... And I feel so much more arrived at that confidence, that what we are doing is as much art as it is music.

P8

... For me, it was quite episodic, because I was ... pretty much anchored to ... the machine. Having to be plugged in and couldn't really be too portable. And the little portable thing that I had, the batteries were a bit low, so it was ... I mean it was quite quiet in the overall acoustic, so I was ... anchored to that position.

And I found that I was ... not looking too much. But then there were phases when my visual sense was much more important, so I would be triggered by a sound, and then I would have to make that connection across the space.

And sometimes it would be a sound from Catherine's microphone that would ... sort of bridge that gap for me, as I couldn't get to.

I found that a combination of other people moving and with the visual elements, just gave it something else that I hadn't really ... It hasn't really cropped up before, I suppose, in my playing.

But it was still ... I was very conscious ... more conscious of the sound but with these punctuations of the other senses coming through.

P9

I really don't like moving. and I think one of the reasons, why I don't like it, is because I sometimes sing in another group that uses movement. Mainly in kind of concert hall situations and ... I think I feel like they aim for a particularly stylised form of moving around, that isn't to the music. So what I quite liked about this, actually, was that ... That I felt a lot of the moving was part of the music and not just a kind of ... extra thing that people were doing.

And also ... that I didn't feel like I was being encouraged just to move around, for the sake of seeing that I was moving. And so that made me think about what ... why would I want to move? Maybe it was to listen in some different ways.

And ... When I went on to the floor, it was actually because I didn't want to just walk around, in a circle. And then, I saw that all the children were on the floor. So I thought, Oh well let's just do that!

It's interesting that quite a lot of us have said, ' Oh, because all the children were there, seeing that, all of us adults and basically free improvising musicians, but we need children to kind of give us permission to do stuff.

But I think that was quite nice, that there was permission to do but also not do, which I think was quite helpful.

P2

Sorry could you say that again, permission to do what sorry?

P9

Permission to not move.

DL

Asking for final points

P2

I just wanted to say that I normally play piano which is steeped in all sorts of conventions and ties you on the spot. And has all sorts of expectations, from listeners. And ... I just want to thank you for taking me out of my comfort zone.

P7

I was just going to say that the bond between us, because I don't think that some of us have met. Some of us have, but a few of us haven't. But the bond that creating sound in this way ... give us. Because we are listening from here as well as here, is ... gives us a bond together, which is so rare, but instant. And it's very strong. It's that to this thing that we are creating together. It's quite an extraordinary.

P2

Can I say something in connection to that. The fact that the acoustics are so reverberant, meant that I found it quite hard to tell which instrument was playing, quite a lot of the time. And I think that helped to cohere ... the cohesion, acoustically a bit. (accord)

P5

The playing on the floor is ofcourse is ... a kind of movement. Because the up and down of us marks. something like that.

P6

Can I just say that I hate the phrase 'comfort zone'. Can I say that I can't stand the phrase 'comfort zone'.

P2

You don't like it?

P6

Not at all. No. It's funny , I don't know, there is something about the phrase comfort zone which makes me tense. I don't know.

P2

How about Habit – is that better?

P6

I don't know, are we ever in our comfort zone when we are playing? I mean, because to take you out of your comfort zone when you are playing

You seemed very comfortable, and infact you seemed more comfortable than most of us moving around. So, I challenge that you, with the bag, that you were out of your comfort zone.

P7

Use habitat

P6

I don't know, because, I mean ...

P2

I have a less familiar repertoire of stuff that I can do.

P6

Yer, I know, I just ... I don't know if I am every comfortable when I play. Are we ever comfortable when you play, even when we know what we are doing? (aimed at the other musicians collectively).

P2

I suppose that the ideal is to be uncomfortable.

P6

Do you think so? Do you think, I don't know ... No I am not saying never use that phrase, but I'm just interested in the use of the phrase of 'comfort zone' when it comes to playing. Because comfort is never something that I think of when I am playing.

P5

I think it's a linguistic thing.

DL

We are getting into a conversation.

- introduces the wordpress as a means to continue the conversation.
- passes it onto the audience.

A1

Ah ... Well, there is a lot of stuff that I think I could say but, one of them is about ... How this space, which is reverberant and not echoy and ... many other positive aspects, as a space in which to play, or indeed to hear the results of it whatever.

It definitely did have an impact here. I guess, I've seen freely improvised hundreds of times, if not thousands, but it has always been in a space where there is, a kind of, an implied proscenium arch. The musicians are there and the audience is there. And very rarely with this mingling together, and indeed, there were moments when, perhaps, there was a, kind of, blurring of boundaries between player and audience.

At one point, there was a relatively quiet moment when I suddenly heard this voice 'I don't know', and I didn't know if that was one of the players (laughter)

who was trying to respond verbally towards the others, or whether it was somebody else. ... I think I figured it out afterwards, but, at that particular moment, it was an interesting interjection.

I thought it was interesting how, because of the size of the space and some of the time how you are playing that it wasn't clear, whether the group interaction was more important than the small ... smaller group interaction. I mean for example, Lauren and Nadia lying on the floor, very close together and presumably couldn't hear the other people so well and were responding to each other. And there were other smaller group things within the bigger group.

I felt more comfortable about the moving in space with the large group playing in here, than I did yesterday when David and Phil were playing. When I wasn't quite sure about, I was worrying all the time about whether the movement in space was a kind of extraneous element rather than part of the playing experience.

And the last thing that I wanted to say is ... I was very struck by what Sam did when he was belting his singing bowls with his shoe (laughter) and rolling them around the floor. And I couldn't decide whether that was just an expression of aggression or whether there was something performative about it, and what role it played for everybody else.

(Comic gesture . pretends to play moves and plays again – laughter) What more could I say to that?

I enjoyed the moving through space and also about the, way that you, kind of ... get rid of ... or perceive the different types of dynamics that were going on. Either between the players, which were mental dynamics or which were quite notable things that a single player was doing. ... I enjoyed that very much, because it is a different kind of listening, I think that takes place. ... You kind of hone in on one player and you can, kind of like, listen to what they are doing or what kind of detail that they are bringing to the thing that they are playing. And you can go away and go to the woodwind or the electronics, or what Sam was doing and you can come in and out.

So, it was kind of against that textural, listening to the whole thing, but I um ... So I was enjoying that, and I was enjoying the differences that were happening in the place as well.

... You were talking about comfort zone ... I don't know what comfort zone means in a realm of performance which doesn't have the same level of tradition and convention that a conventional concert would have.

OK, obviously free jazz has a whole load of conventions. In free improvised music you have a whole load of conventions, I'm sure. But the idea is that, I think, to be able to transgress them. To get out of those conventions or to place them in question.

And I am thinking – Comfort zone? Yes, that's an interesting phrase for somebody who starts, kind of, moving.

Yer, You are all, in your whole great way that you were playing, moving around saying – Yer, screw the traditions, screw the conventions. We're moving around the space, this isn't a conventional concert space whatsoever.

And so ... I think it is an interesting thing to say. But I wouldn't call it comfort zone. Maybe you could call it something else.

P6

(Blowing into her trombone mouth piece)

Sorry, I'm just warming my chops down, I'm not being rude.

A2

Sorry?

P6

I was just warming my chops down, I'm not going (she blows) at you.

(Laughter)

A2

I wouldn't care if you were.

P2

I'm going to speak without the bag. OK. (ohh!)

DL

Breaks the dialogue.

A3

... I'd like to say, thank you very much. It was a wonderful, kind of, wash of sounds, beautiful shifting ... (cut off)

A2

The first person to say thanks. (laughter)

A3

No really, it was really ... I mean, I like this room, I've been to so many events in this room and I find it really, sort of, Chapel like. It's like an art chapel or something, and sometimes is like a religious experience, although I am not particularly religious. but then, thank you very much, because I really loved all the playing and the artwork and the electronics and ... It was just great.

I ... wondered ... (aimed at the electronics player) At first, I wondered whether you felt left out? Or whether you felt left out by being with the electronics? and just because you couldn't really move, even like you were sort of locked to there. And then I saw you suddenly moving around with another gadget and thought 'wow, this is fantastic, he's sort of broken out of that space that lock in space and I did wondered about that. But then I ... (aiming at the artist) because you were sort of celebrated on the wall here, then I worried that you weren't being celebrated in the same way, except through your speaker. (sympathy) It was slightly different for you, I suppose that is all I am saying really.

And ... the chairs. I was thinking about the chairs and how they were kind of ... Although the musicians, some of the musicians were moving about. I thought, slightly self-consciously. But maybe that was just me. Whereas the audience, I

thought, were more had there bum in a chair. And I did wonder about the comfort zone thing of the chair, and it being the comfort zone, it's sort of ... it's OK. Because I felt a bit like that, because I was wandering about with a camera. And the idea ... I was really getting on the camera, because I am used to cameras and um ... and then occasionally I would find a chair and I would go 'Oh, that's good, I can sit down on that instead of moving about.

But I ... I wondered how the chairs affected ... and whether it would be a nicer situation ... without the chairs? You know I notice the children and over here were without chairs, and they were very happy without chairs. And I just wondered if everybody have been better without any chairs at all? (synchronized 'No' – laughter)

It was just a thought, just a thought.

I suppose I'm kind of ... because, I'm a musicians as well, I'm sort of drawn to what notes people are choosing and, kind of, whether they're trying to avoid any kind of diatonic, kind of, consonance.

Whether they're going - Oh I better not do that, because it is not really arty enough. Or whether they are thinking, actually, that just sounds great. I'm just going to play that.

I'm imaging that is what everybody is doing.

But occasionally there was ... like the, kind of, symphonic ending, the kind of, it was, kind of, classical. It was like that trill was like an open, such a great bold movement when you suddenly picked up the piano. It was triumphant, wasn't it.

I really, really loved that the ... and then the way that everything swelled and like it was like the big ending. It was ... 'showboating' as Donald Trump would say

So I ... But I really loved all of that, and I guess I was slightly ... I was slightly concerned about the children. There was a, kind of, slight child concern. Because I know what it is like to have a young child thing, then... but there was a ... they brought such a lot of ... youthfulness and enthusiasm to the whole thing.

And there was that wonderful moment right at the end when there was that boy, I don't know I think his parents have left. It doesn't matter. It was wonderful. And ... but there was a little bit of ... he obviously thought it had come to the end, and there was this sigh. (laughter) I don't know if it was audible on the thing, but it was a beautiful sigh, like (long sigh) (laughter). I just thought that was really special.

DL

Mentions that he will note down the questions so that people can respond to it on the blog page.

A4

I'm sorry I missed the first part, so I missed all the beautiful-ness of having a big group of children in the room moving around. but I felt, I mean, I have been to quite a few improv sessions and ... Well, taking into account that I am not a

musician, I have quite an educated ear when it comes to ... experimental and improvisation music. And I must say that very often, my problem with free impro, especially, or with experimental music is that I am a very visual person, and if I can see the musicians, it also happens that in classical concerts, that if I can see the musicians I can't hear the music. I can't hear the sounds, I'm just too focused on the ... And that's one part, and very often, if I really want to experience this music, I'll just close my eyes and it will all sink.

On the other hand, I have done experiments in the past, because I am also an artist. So every now and then I will go, 'OK, so I will take some [materials] and do some drawings when other people play', similar to what you do. or when listening to music. And this is something that, in that situation I have a completely different relationship with the sounds that are being performed, and they sort of become alive in the process of drawing and ... it's not just scribbling on the paper. And I think that ... from the experience that I had in the last hour, it was very ... very relaxed, very relaxed atmosphere, very open, and I felt that could make sounds with you without necessarily being part of the musicians.

A5

It was, for me, a really different way of listening, because usually when I'm listening to dynamic changes it is through headphones. So it was completely alien and I had to really work and think about the way that sound was dynamic. It was quite strange for me. It was good but I think that it was something that I've, sort of just, ... This really sort of musical space I haven't really experienced before. Like I have experienced concerts where you do have that fourth wall, but ... that bit it was really, really, fascinating to hear. And ... I just think that improvisation is quite necessary for spiritual survival really. That art of playing and that we, do tend to lose that. That sense of wonder and happiness as we, sort of, pass along in life. And that's too often lost.

A6

I just wanted to say, actually, I was fascinated by the some of the sounds that you got out of that trombone. It sounded like an elephant on LSD (laughter).

P6

An elephant on LSD, I find that disturbing, but thank you. And I know what you mean.

A7

I think it was interesting in a space like this, how you still bring social conventions and anxieties into this space. There's a point where, you kind of think, I'd quite like to stand in the middle and all that, but I'm not quite sure whether that's ... grandstanding too much or I'd like to follow that round, but does that seem creepy and storkery (laughter) I kind of enjoy that kind of ... ambiguous kind of ... socially anxious thing. I think that's quite an interesting aspect to the performance.

P6

Oh, I really wish you had.

P2

David, can I ask Katie, you know this place pretty well now. Can I ask if you have any feedback about how this space was used in any different way to that, tonight?

A8 (Curator)

There is a performance artist, (Deloe Conty) who just passed away had a quote, which is a bit ironic when you think about her previous work. ... But, she describes anyone who is walking into a gallery as being victimized, because they're not usual open spaces, you do have to feel, you know you are restricted from light, and air, and you don't know how to behave. So actually, one of the things, I always encourage the staff and people who work in the galleries to think of, is the fact that people enter these spaces as victims. (laughter) We survived!

I come from a sculpture background, fine art background. I know exceedingly little about music, but I thought it was wonderful and I just love it when the space is used in a variety of unexpected and different ways. So for me, an evening like this just kind of fulfills the mandate that I want this room to have. So yer ... great.

A3.2

London Improvisers Orchestra.

Venue - I'klectik Arts Space, London - 21 May 2017

P10

What interested me was how, I seemed to make, unconsciously, a kind of map of the ensemble. Because I have been playing with the London Improvisers Orchestra since it started ... and without thinking about it, I think you start identifying 'Oh so and so is over there and so and so is over there and ... this kind of sound is going to come from here and then So obviously, what was surprising to me was that, the sounds kept ... not coming from where I expected. Although I didn't know that I was expecting anything until they stopped doing that, if you see what I mean.

So, the confounding of the expectations was interesting for me, so it was a surprise to ... get the trumpet in my left ear when I thought all the trumpets were on my right. But I didn't know I thought that until it happened, if you see what I am saying.

That's all I want to say.

You don't want to say anything? Go on ...

P11

There's lots of things really ... so I will try and get it into some form of English. ... Firstly, with, I was briefly talking to David ... in the break about, ... being able to be a bit more playful, I think, with dynamics. ... So as a trumpet player ... well obviously, any sort of player can be loud and quiet, but ... not being frightened to play too loudly. ... When I'm playing sort of more formal ... concepts, I'm quite conscious of, perhaps, playing into somebody's ear in front of me, or, you know, ... something in that formal setup. So that was ... yer, really interesting, the whole dynamics.

Is this making any sense, David? (yip)

So, yer, and then being able to play ... , how can I put it, like playing into the space. So I'm ... you know, I found myself playing into the wall and, ... But, I was still aware. So it was sort of OK, that I had my back to everybody else. ... Which felt quite unusual and I felt, a little bit, rude, because that's just not good and you don't ... , even though ... It's funny now I think ... that I am talking out loud. When I'm sitting in the orchestra, cause I do have my people, ... my back is facing the people behind me. But it's just that thing, isn't it, that ... when you are onstage, it's rude to turn your back to the audience, and things like that, but that's ... does that make sense?

So there was that, and I had my back to ... the other musicians that I hope ... I could hear that I was still listening. But that kind of ... formality, I suppose that, when we're on stage, we sort of, aware perhaps of how we should present ourselves and hold ourselves, and all of that, because there wasn't that really ... that was really interesting. To, ... to not have to worry about that, you know. And that made all the I was playing on the floor ... that was cool, that was good.

... There was something I was going to mention. ... probably come to think of it in a bit.

So yer, I'm struggling to try and make it ... put it into words, David, but it was really good. A really interesting experience, right.

Anybody else?

P12

... I think I am going to be quite brief about what I think. (CK 'It's OK, I wasn't laugh)

I liked the blurring of the boundaries between the, so-called, performer and then the audience. And I realized that there was actually ... the roles here were actually very, very much merged, you know. You can't tell who's a real performer here, because, I mean, the audience is coming, you know, right next to you.

It's kind of ... it's a very different experience, isn't it. Because you are always so used to having like, a bubble of like ... here we are and here they are. And suddenly it's ... you know, a non-musician approaching you, and you go like, well ... 'what am I doing? Should I move, or should we look at each other? I mean ... Should there be a reaction is also and everything? or should I just stay put like an artefact in a museum? ... Can I react and how can I react to them? Sort of ... things that were sort of going through my mind. ...

Yer, and I liked the ... ability to just to move, especially, particularly, as well, to get to move ... between different check points, so to speak, and you get a micro ensemble growing up ... there ... which is, ... ah really different doing. Like in a large ensemble, where you kind of go, I can't actually hear what is happening on the other side of the room. But it might be interesting, but you almost couldn't explore it, because you, sort of, had to stay put in the ensemble. But in this setting you are able to ... yer ... really explore more and have, I think, a more ... a truly social ... experience in this making.

P13

I'll take it, but I am all the way over here (laughter). Just kind of carrying on with similar things that CK said about ... of it being very much about the ... of the audience. I became aware immediately of ... kind of the meaning of what I was doing. So if I went and sat right next to somebody in the audience, and I started doing some really high pitched sound. I'd think 'maybe that's not great' like ... kind of aggressive. I don't know. But I had loads of thoughts, like ... when CR got off the drums, I was thinking of sitting down, so you couldn't come back. (laughter) But yer. ... you know, it's ... it was all playful but ... It was interesting, I started thinking about that and what that, in turn, means? What it does to the music and what it does for the audience. I don't know if I actually said anything.

P14

Yer, it's quite interesting that antagonism. I also was tempted to sort of ... take it out on other people, but I didn't. But it's funny, what you were saying, ... I felt that you were uncomfortable when people came around you. I felt the opposite actually, it made me feel more comfortable when someone came and sat near. It felt like ... I felt like it ... felt like I imagine a family Christmas to have been like, in some other nicer world where Like where everyone's playing along, like

playing an instrument, you know, like maybe in Ireland, I don't know. I've never experienced it, but like ... you know, a musical sort of family and everyone, I don't know some members aren't really involved, but they are sort of enjoying it. But just different people all over the room, just ... It was nice, is it. I loved it, thank you.

P15

Um, yer, ... My experience was more ... what was I going to say, ...like ... really like the stars at night in the sky. There's lots of different sounds, spreading around. You know, when you look at the sky and you see lots of stars, they're all just like ... Imagine they are all spread around aren't they, you know. Whereas normally, you are playing in a band there is just one sound. So that was really ... my experience. It was more of a darkened ... because I'm honestly a night person? . It was a darkened area with a lot of space really. I think. You know. I mean, obviously, there is a lot more space and you can't wait for the sound. But I perceived it like that, with lots of little lights.

P16

Well, I just like the experience, I know, I've played quite a lot of times with the London Improvisers Orchestra. But this is very different playing in a large ensemble, where everybody was ... like, spatially in a different place. They were all spread out and you had members of the audience ... And it was a totally different situation than played in a more formal setting, where it would be like there would be a trio or that. I enjoyed it a lot and it seemed appropriate not to play, for fairly long periods of time. Because there was so much happening. But I never thought that it became over complicated, over dense. People were leaving a lot of ... I think, a lot of people felt the same. If you are playing in a large ensemble, you can't play, kind of, full on all the time. I mean that's an exaggeration, most people do that anyway. But it was nice that I saw people stop playing, and there's all these different relationships forming. That's the thing that I found very positive about it.

A10

One thing, from my point of view is, as a sound recordist. It was very interesting ... I was recording this afternoon with two of the guys, here ... in a trio. In much more as you say a formal setting. And the difference there, was I had three musicians ... on a stage, at that point, and a single microphone. So, I was taking a long time to think of exactly where to put the microphone. Thinking how were they going to sound. Know that they were going to be exactly static, staying exactly there, playing for a relatively short length of time. There was a lot of time just getting the microphone down, getting the level right. Once that's done, in a way, it happened. Whereas here, of course, things were changing all the time. So, the movement was different, ... the sounds were completely different. It's absolutely impossible to do, what I was trying to do this afternoon, which was to get a perfect balance of three instruments. But here it would be completely impossible, because everything is changing all of the time.

So, it is much more of a process here. It is much more improvising. The recording is improvising as well as the improvised music. Which is absolutely, completely different to how it normally is, So that was very interesting.

P17

I found it particularly interesting as a listener, in the last one before the big group, the quartet after the interval. It was just a really different way of listening Because, first of all, I was right up over there. You could, sort of, enter the world

of each player individually, and you could hear the whole thing from that person's perspective, simply from being in, right there next to them. And I went from being right next to Steve, to being right next to the two violin players. So ... just ... really, able to make sense of what they were playing in relation to what they heard from where they were. It just made a whole lot of difference from hearing it as a four piece group in front of me. That kind of thing, it was just really different. It was very, very interesting. It kind of just opens up another dimension which ... as a listener, you know.

And then ... I guess it is the same thing for a player, because a lot of it is about listening. So ... The other thing that started to happen was the movement moved from just simply moving to becoming more theatrical movement. ... Like making a statement about how you move or when you move, or what you play when you move, or something. And that got really interesting in a couple of the pieces. I think more in the big groups. Oh, and in our little group just at the end. ... And I felt that kind of gravitated to doing something physically, that went with what I was playing that seemed to add to what I was playing. But it's a kind of liberation of the actual, instead of being just stuck with sound. Not that that is really limiting, but ... And again, it's about adding another dimension and it really works. As well as playing with that listening thing, with where you are and what you are hearing.

P18

... I think I enjoyed it as an audience member ... That notion that you could ... you could listen to something, or you could just get away from someone if they were playing too loud. (laughs) You know, you could change the balance. So I have problems in gigs all the time because I think things are too loud, which is ironical as a trombone player, I admit. (laughs) But ... then, I'm behind the trombone, you see. ... So, I thought that that was an interesting and maybe it's a niche for those gigs where you do have less numbers in the audience and in the band. Because if we had 60 people in tonight, we couldn't have all crowded around what ... what, for example, Steve was doing on the piano. And then someone at the front says, 'excuse me' - Because, you know, at one point ... When people became more confident with the moving. And then it became sort of all about the movement. ... That got in the way, in the sense that I couldn't play, because there were people going backwards or forwards. Or I didn't know where they were so. ... It was interesting that, and I've got a little bit ... sort of a ... I thought, well I better not play eyes closed here, it's getting a little bit crowded. You know. Which is a tool I use. So ... So, I think this ... It brings up interesting conundrums to do with the space and the number of musicians, the number of the audience, and how safe the space is.

A11

These are notes from some of the audience that have left. (laughter)

A12

Firstly. Sorry it's a bit hard to read. 'I felt, I had some nice encounters with people through the performance, both musicians and audience. Little things noticed at the same time, choices made or ... instances or influences on position.

I felt that this was more effective when the ratio of players to observers was relatively even. The option to detach a little by going to the outer edge of the space, made it quite relaxing, equally there was a choice to enter into the space a

little more and in doing so, it felt like I was being ... I was have a more active influence on the performers.'

A13

'When I was in the centre of the room I felt like being inside a big instrument producing many sounds. I felt also, sometimes, overwhelmed when being very close to an instrument when making strident sound. ...

I think it is a nicer experience where, as a member of the audience, you can move freely ... I think this switching (possibly) should be clearer or go further than changing the chair.' There is no explanation as to what other thing might be ... this could be.

'Also, it would be interesting to see the experience in a different place, and see how it responds to the site.'

DL

Open it up now to ...

P19

It was very nice to see Adam stand up for a change, I have never, ever seen him - (laughter) . A question from someone in the laughter (he normally stands up?) No no, It really is there was one particular sound it's just really ... And I agree with Loz, when I walked around, it was so lovely to hear the intimacy of what people were individually playing. Sometimes that can get ... the sort of, textures of people's sounds. Or when I walked past what Steve was playing and I actually could ... I wouldn't have heard it unless I'd ... Because, when I ... I sort of heard it right inside the piano, and it was ... Even though, I didn't react to it, I have to say that I felt uncomfortable playing tonight. When I was, as well, walking around. I don't know if that's to do with particularly ... I don't know. I just found it quite hard as well.

A14

Well as a complete audience member and I also arrived in the middle of a piece so that was kind of like (sound) and I didn't really know what to expect, which was nice. ... And I guess it also has to do with fact that I do a lot of dancing, but in the moment that I stepped into the space, and I was told that I could move around a little bit, there was like this freedom. Immediately, by the sounds that were being emitted and the energy that was being constructed from almost everybody, I was immediately, (click of fingers) kind of, triggered to start dancing, and to start moving. Maybe not necessarily like ... (gesture) but like start to actually allowing my body to express itself. Which is something that I hadn't really felt in a lot of spaces, so that was great.

And it was really nice to see how there was this organic, kind of, conversation happening that was generating a topography of sound around the space. So, we could, you know, you could go into certain valleys and around ... allow yourself to get lost within those valleys. And then some of the ... you could break away from that, and just go into a conversation and be a part of that conversation, or really listen to the details of that conversation. ... And it made ... the music, and the playfulness of the music, really ... characterize the space that it was occupying.

So, yer, it was like ... It's an incredible experience. I think it's a very, very powerful experience, and I think it could really activate something within the ... within the ear. So I thank you for that.

P20

I don't speak English very well. I try.

For me, it was a psychosonic experience, somewhat. And I would like to close my eyes and trust ... It was interesting because when I move, I keep the sound in my head, of course. I listen to the other musician. Also, I listen to my shoe (slides foot) on the floor, you know. A lot of other things happened, and it's a struggle. It's not psychedelic so much, it's a space struggle. And what's ... for me, was interesting, it was the ... the way you ... your ear, keep the acoustic inside you. So when I move, I can hear that someone there and I play there. Like if I should say (you form the row?) and just be behind you and you have a some musician is playing, he's trying to ... and you try to keep, always, the contact with your other ... To make things happen together.

And, the public was there, it was ... against the ... , excuse me, the play. I don't know the word. And ah, no.

For me it was interesting, which, I think ... that I should do this before the lights. Maybe in a dark room, somewhere, it is impossible. You get problem. But, I can imagine it would be very interesting. Because before the lights, only the suns everywhere moving from where the energy is coming, and listen to Steve or Matthieu I think it would ... Crystabel also

...

For me it was a psychosonic experience.

A4

Yer, I also wanted to say, thank you for this special experience. And I agree with that idea of a, like, map or topography that ... it's really enjoyable and I enjoyed, like, closing the eyes and locating the sounds. And following the moving and also in switching the focus. And ... only the situation is very rich for information for enjoying.

And maybe for this reason I felt, sometimes it felt ... too much dense for me. Dense, like density it was ... too rich that I ... I felt like ... I enjoyed, sometimes I really felt the lack of space. Like ... I cannot enjoy it, as I would like to, because there is too much happening, and I cannot locate it.

But that destroy it. I am free to focus and I really enjoyed that freedom, but ... My question would be, like : How to ... If I had this ... freedom of the space, so how to deal with situation, when I feel the lack of the space, ... for the sound?

And, so like it was striking me that ... Yer, like for me, there was so much aspects that I can follow that I ... for that reason, it was too dense for me.

But thank you.

DL

Time check

P21

My wish was that ah ... JJ I am sure that you would solo.

Yes, it was very interesting, I really liked the ... possibility to break the frontier between the musicians and the public.

And ... I just had a good feeling in the last part of it. ... When it was very loud, with the cello it is a bit difficult.

I felt like a little bird, with a thousand big birds making the noise and stuff. But I was, at that moment, I was really looking for another little bird. So, at that moment it was really simple, that we were getting really closer to build something together in this sort of magma.

It was very interesting, so thank you.

P22

Slightly paradoxical thing for me was that ... when I'm improvising, I ... like to get completely lost and then find my way out of it again. But in this space, I couldn't get lost, because I had to be aware of the space (laugh), you know, on a physical level, as opposed to a, kind of, sonic realm.

Anyway, I really loved this evening, thank you.

And I felt a lot of contact with people, audience and players, which was ... very nice.

DL

Closing thank you to the musicians etc.

A3.3

Merseyside Improvisers Orchestra

Venue - MDI, Liverpool - 27 May 2017

P23

When I joined the group I had only done free improv before that, in a smaller group, and I was a bit weary about, I mean ... conceptions and things. But actually, I think tonight explains why ... Why it is quite useful to have someone in charge. Because particularly in a big group full of people with ... noisy instruments ... It gets really, quite competitive. ... Nobody wants to, everybody wants to, I don't know ... be the loudest and the noisiest to ... Um ... play the last note, or whatever.

Having said that, I think the small groups were much more interesting ... I found ... and when we first started, I felt, peculiarly detached, I don't know what was going on ... I don't know if that's any use to you.

Who wants this ?

A16

Do you want to roll that to me.

P24

Now J you felt detached when you started the smaller group ... (Noise)

P23

I don't know it was like I was just spectating, which was quite nice.

P24

And afterwards, the smaller group, from the beginning or?

P23

The beginning thing, yer. (Noise on the 'passing tin')

A16

I'm just doing a bit of improvisation on the side (laughter). I didn't mean to speak
I was just improvising

P24

Where's your bin?

A16

I thought. Ah?

P24

Where's your bin?

A16

Ah, I forgot me bin tonight.

P24

Rob plays the bin very well.

A16

You know where I've 'bin' then, don't you. (groans) I thought that, an alternative argument, ... that the noisier it was and the more people the better. I thought it was great when it was going off.

And I think this idea of space. I thought that the smaller groups. The space thing wasn't really ... It was alright but it was just like listening to an improvised group. But with the more people ... there were like having to find the space. It was like people in a lift ... having to move.

And it was great, cause you were finding it ... the space within this cacophony. It was like a Jackson Pollock picture. It was amazing!

So, I thought it was, so ofcourse as it went on, I thought it got better. You know. I really did. ... Yer, and also I wrote ... I came with hives, I had an allergic reaction, and the nice jazz made it go away. (laughter and cheers) Some nice jazz ... yer, so that's me, so does anybody want the tin?

P25

Who is responsible for the 'nice jazz'

A16

Sorry to bring up nice Jazz P. but ... someone had to.

P26

I just wanted say ... as far as my musical interest, my research interests ... in my PhD are about ... (sigh) the roles of composers, performers and listeners in creating musical value of being ... and challenging the traditional concert setting where the listener is the passive receiver of a fixed musical message, which is created by somebody who composed it for somebody else. And this dynamic, where by, as a listener during the quintets and things, I was ... actively moving around the space and positioning myself in the space, made me feel ... more included as a listener. I think that's good ... I think I also felt that after the emails and playing, how much performing only part of the performance, which I think is a good thing. And another good reason why ... ah I can think of other reasons, but that is ... (Noise) (Laughter)

P27

Yes, just after that comment ... um ... as a member of the audience, just wandering around. I found myself in front of players and in between players. I ... don't know if it is because ... they'd normally do this as an audience member or I felt like I was being a little bit intrusive ... sometimes ... and I had to force myself out of my chair ... you know ... and I would have to get out of my chair and try this ... try this moving around thing. It felt a like I was intruding. Because, I suppose, you change the dynamic, you change the dynamics and you're not supposed to be ... one of the performers. But, just by being there and by moving around you become one of the performers, and you kind of feel that 'am I doing this?' I felt a little bit uncomfortable doing this. You know, um. ... I don't know it was just a slight feeling of, um ... feeling of, um ...

P25

Transgressive

Pardon?

P25

Transgressive

Yer. Transgressive, a little bit. ... But at other times it was OK.

P28

Ah ... because, I couldn't move with my instrument ... so I was feeling like, because I was always in the same place, but everybody I was playing in the same piece, was moving. So I was feeling like ... a bit, of having a full piece that was changing ... formation all the time. So you have a trio there, and but then you have a duo there ... then you have another kind of ... and I was just there in the middle trying to ... maybe listen ... to that group there, or do something with them. Because like having ... I was thinking like you have this palate of this formation, or this, this. And which one should I take now. Because I was feeling a bit like this because of my situation with my instrument.

And also when we were playing the small group, the quintet, I was feeling, I was only one moment ... You know, I was in the middle the concert, and the audience and everything. I am quite shy so I was feeling a like ... you know ... it was thinking, that wasn't my character sort of thing. I was a bit embarrassed. But it's fine.

P29

I agree with J. ... I've done a lot of ... ah ... a lot of improvised music with a lot of different types of groups. As well as tour a lot soloing, just playing all by myself. And I ... through the duration of the process, you know, I was experiencing all these different types of ensembles and situations, ... I gravitated more towards smaller more intimate groupings, because you actually can hear everything that's going on and the interactions are much more focused. As opposed to large groups, where ... it is a matter of finding your place, and that's kind of ... you know, ... like the comparison to the ... the chosen, very ... focused, I said before, interaction. It's really kind of like ... fighting for space and creating space as opposed to interacting musically, and that's a big, big difference. ...

Now this group tonight, was one of the many, ... or maybe few, ... really musical groups. I mean, people were like really listening. You know, there was interaction, ... very musical interaction, even in ... when it was really dense, you know, it was still much more musical than some situations I have been in over the years. You know when it's just like a wall of noise and ... nothing more. And you, like, we were on a gig last week, that was literally that just a wall of noise. And it was just like 'what am I doing here?' (laughter) ... You know. ...

So ... yer ... the more intimate, the more musical, the more ... there is a word that I'm looking for that really nails it. But it's really about ... you know ... focus and conscious interaction between musicians trying to respond to each other musically. And to be able to do it with clarity and ... and communication. As opposed to, you know, a fucking brawl. Fighting your way of the bar, you know. So yer, that's my two and a half sentences.

P17

I don't want to turn this into an argument about whether the small groups or whether the big groups were better or not. But ('but' – laughter) ... It was just very different and I agree with him over there, sorry I don't know your name. ... I thought that ... well, I liked the small groups for all the reasons you've said ...

and they were very focused and you could hear everything and that was Because there was more audience in the small groups, there was more interaction between the players and the audience. I think that it was good that the players were in the minority. And we missed that in the big group, we needed an audience to move among us. But the big group, I thought ... I thought it started badly actually. But I thought it got better as it went along. (JB comment – how did it get going?) *P17 replies* It was real shit. No ... I don't know, I don't know how it started actually, but in general the part of it, I didn't enjoy much and then it ... it started to get to this exstatic thing that you can only get with a big group, where everyone is ... just ... the sound was really open, and I thought that there was a load of listening going on. In the texture of the sound. And obviously some people had quieter instruments or voices, which can't compete with trumpets but ... I thought that the texture was very, very open you know, ... and everyone had their place in it, I felt.

I can't speak for you, I mean, I can certainly hear you and feel that bass sound, you know, it's body rises and it's a lot quieter. But it has a presence. And there was space in that big sound, for everyone, I thought. ... Which I think came from a lot of the listening that happened in the small ... it's really nice a lot of small groups where you are getting to hear each person play, and then do a big group. I think that is a really good sequence, I've done that before. ... in other sessions, with very small audiences. One time I had a zero audience actually, yer, anyway.

P30

I did enjoy the small groups, I felt the ... at least, there was real concentration, real bouncing off each other, and really ... the benefiting from the smaller material, and quite controlled sounds.

On the other hand, I found the very big group, particularly the last one, very freeing and tremendously enjoyable. (laugh)

And I felt perfectly comfortable just lying on the floor and blocking my ears, but even ... Sorry I said that, I felt perfectly comfortable just lying on the floor and blocking my ears. At one stage, because it was a bit too much. ... But the whole thing was very freeing. ...

And there were moments of ... almost intimacy with one instrument and another working together, and other times when the sound was, ... if not completely lost, it was certainly less distinguishable, with, within the group sound. But all together I felt that, there was a lot of energy and it was great to get that energy out, and to have it in the room. There were different types of energy, there was movement energy, there was ... dynamic energy, there was pitch energy. There was a lot of different energies and I found that was very, very stimulating.

P31

... I got a real sense of loads and loads of layers, like this really ... large spectrum of ... of stuff to witness and to hear. So ... I think ... when the groups first started, I was kind of putting myself right on the outside edge, so even though I was ... audience. I kind of took a role of being watching audience. ... And then, audience could participate, and like Stewart said then ... players or audience could be, also within the players and then the players ... so there was this really multi-layered ... interesting ... thing ... to watch and listen to. ... And ... in that role, I saw ... the audience, like yourselves had come to choose and maybe take a place.

It was a little bit, like I was in a Japanese garden, where the ... people moving around the space were creating structures, and these structures would give the players something ... to move towards, or ... yer, play with. But always sort of disrupting or interrupting the space, I suppose.

So compositionally, I found it really interesting to watch from the outside. ... And then I played with that as ... Always did ... just changing the space, choosing to go low to the floor, choosing to be close to a particular player. ... And that was ... you know ... quite interesting and I thought 'OK, like ... ' and watching that, I thought, gosh, now those players can choose to play for that person that sat or lay down close to them as well. ... And then ... in another play, I just felt ... when I chose to do that, I could get inside the sound rather than outside the sound. That's the difference it made for me. I think changing that space and choosing where to go.

The magic tin roles.

P32

Yer ... Just a couple things about being played to. You mentioned being played to. I don't know if I was being played to, but I felt like I was being, well, ... one of the ... pieces I felt like I was like to being played to, by a group of people that were around me, and that kind of felt a little bit unbearable. Like I should be, ... like I should be ... It was ... um ... It was good, but also a little bit intense, I suppose. Yer, Intense that was the word I was looking for. And I ... well. think I will leave it there. It just felt very intense and ... One other thing that I noticed as well, about space is that ... There seemed to be a kind of distance, I know it was a small thing, but within a certain distance you can't easily be part of what's going on, and you get a bit.... And outside that critical distance you become a separate group. And you either feel left out or you start doing your own thing or you feel like you need to join with the main group or the other group. So felt that on ... on one of the pieces we were playing ... There was a distance and we kind of split into two separate groups at a certain point. It was to do with the space, ... or the distance.

DL

I enjoyed the lights going off. I enjoyed the slam. I saw some amazing things ... I think I was tired and I ... there was almost a point when I was going to join in with the rejoice, this sound, it was getting louder and I had been sort of working against it for a while, and I'm going with it, and then I went 'actually I am really enjoying ... listening. And then I

went to the camera, and was using just the microphone on the camera.

And I had a lovely moment ...with the recorder. It was like this ... craziness, and this little recorder blowing air in my ear.

And then seeing Los playing into the floor. And then going out there. I didn't think I have had enough, no please and for the record, I went outside because I thought 'what's it like outside?' So um ... it was great.

P33

I think I enjoyed very much, everything. And the last part with all the sound, was like ... I don't think if I am ready for that. And I went just, OK, I will observe and slowly enter. Then I realised that my cello was being played by everybody (laughter) with the vibrations and all.

Everything was like (sound of things shuddering). And it was like 'OK, nothing to do.' ... So really ... enjoyable.

In general, I missed a bit of the silence to be in the space, as well. With the resonance of the ... room That's my point ... but very nice. Thank you very much.

P24

Yer, I think it was great where we got to in the end. ... And ah ... Yer, it felt like a real release, like we had been building up to that. (laughter and accord) But I felt like I got completely lost in it. It was like, ' Oh yer, ' it was fantastic. ...

The small groups worked really well, and as Los said. I would really agree with him, that it really helped you, then play in the larger formation. I think also conduction helps, with that as well, doing ... conducted pieces, and then playing as an ensemble. ... It made me think ... more compositionally if you're ... being conducted in the larger ensemble, and when you improvise you take that with you. ...

I think that I also agree with what Paloma said, in that if we had more silence in the beginning, and I think that was what you were asking for David, like 5 or 10 minutes before, of walking around the space, feeling the space, before actually started to make any sound. We were making sound, I think ... for me, it felt like ... after about 2 or 3 minutes, we had already started.

But, yer, really enjoyable evening. A very positive evening and it's great that we've got this orchestra here and it's great that we've got some new recruits as well. (laughter). And I think that it's great that Paloma has come over from Spain, I think that is fantastic, David from Kent, Los from London, Herve from Sheffield, um ... is there anyone else that I have missed out?

P25

You wouldn't want to come from Kent. (laughter)

P24

Um ... I think it's ... it's really. I'm really happy, like we've been going for a year and a half. Um ... I'm really happy with where we have got as an ensemble. And I think it's a fantastic thing for Liverpool and it's what Merseyside needs, is for us to be doing this each month, you know. (laughter)

P26

They don't know that they need it yet. (laughter) (repeated by JB - They don't know that they need it yet.)

P17

Yer, they didn't know they needed the Beatles once. (joking scourn)

P24

Yer, so ... thank you everyone.

Thank you (clapping)

A17

I noticed at the top of the sheet it asks ' how do you feel'. I notice a journalist said, you never, as a journalist, ask anyone how they feel. Ah that's ... off topic.

"how do you feel? – tired, restrained, and then I went into 'flip and try'. Which is the camera, so I just flip and just use the camera to go into the action. It's just a device really.

Move out of posture – was a feeling I thought of ... kind of ... don't be rigid.

Musicians are mainly rigid. Chiropractors make loads of money out of musicians, because they are rigid. And I've made efforts to do dance work, so when I play as a musician, I'm not rigid. ...

Moving around the room, you can get into the idea of photographs, so you just line-up against someone, so you present to the room a kind of photograph.

It was kind of deliberate, I'll sit next to the piano player. She might not be used to that. She might just think ... the piano was a solo thing.

Ah, in small groups there was subsets, so there was ... five ... there was this bit caught up, which I think was directly because of the moving around. I think this wouldn't have happened if you were lined up as a five piece. But because you were moving around you got that fact of subsets of music. There was a duo over there, and a trio over there. Which was kind of then interesting as well as for the listener. As you were listening to it as ... a duo over there, or am I listening to it, as a whole thing? And ... you can play around with that, but I thought that the moving around created that dynamic. Because, it technically could happen if you were all sitting in a line as well, and it probably does. I suppose spatially it becomes noticeable. So, that's kind of subsets.

Um ... At some point, I thought what we need is structure-borne sound. You know, ah ... cause you get to shake up a room if you get into structured-borne sound.

I was very disappointed that 'Lights off' created the affect. I thought switch the lights on and they will stop. So, I switched the lights on, and you stopped. (questioned) basically.

It would have been nice, to whip that?

P17

We didn't stop immediately.

?

No, I thought that we carried on.

A17

You are just getting into denial now.

By stopped, I don't mean the cutting of the tape, but it wound down.

(general agreement) It wound down, yer.

A17

It definitely changed, what you were doing.

P24

There were no back doors in the provs was there (?) (laughter)

DL

Explains the wordpress as a way of sharing any additional thoughts.' so it doesn't stop here, unless you want it to'

A18

That's highly interesting that you should say that, actually, in a way. Because what I ... that you will continue after this moment. So what I felt was this moment, like this is the moment. I would not be aware of these people around me But ... wow. I have been in this room with you guys and every single one of you has something to offer. And it's really interesting to sit and think, OK so. ... 'Who do I want to hear? Who's story do I want to hear? Like how do I want to explore who I'm going to follow?' ... You know then there is the sirens, the sirens are the beautiful, gorgeous voices. 'Oh, my god, there is a mythical creature in the room.' And um, you know, it's just like. So the wall of sound was really interesting, it was just like, I was thinking of it as individual soundscape right. So my auditory perception wanted to hear the individual, so like I actively, consciously want to hear that. And then I let myself ... lessen that. But because it is a different brain wave frequency, if I understand, that you kind of go into a wider auditory perspective, if that's the right wording. And then to kind of feel like the movement in the room. You know.

And yer, so I am really curious that you would say, 'Oh we can re do this.' It's like, No! my response to that is, No. it was this! And this was fantastic, and like will never be repeated. And all that kind of thing. And so I'm really curious that you should say that actually.

Just saying that.

P23

He's got a PhD to write though. (laughter)

A18

Because the essence is like ... this very moment for me.

DL

I am not about to dispute that.

A18

OK, Thank you

P30

I think one of the main things that really took me for ... probably the first things that comes out of this kind of work is ... um ...much sharper listening skills. Um ... and probably quite unconsciously, but just ... it was ... right ... when it was the saxophone quartet, as it were, there was something that really came together, and when the strings entered this counter-passage as well. And I think that this sort of work just will alert us, ... much more to what we are worth. Whether we are teaching, whether we're creating, whether we are rehearsing. It brings us much closer to the possibilities of the sound and the changes texture and timbre and the rest of it.

DL

(Responds to A3 point.)

How does this experience unfold over time. So that when you are teaching there may be resonances from this experience that you might hold ... a month or two down the line. That is what I am really excited about and what I would like to hear about.

But this experience is very much ... something in the passage of time.

A18

Maybe I was just excusing myself, to some extent, in that giving of feedback at a later point.

DL

If you choose not to.

A18

No no no. I am just saying, as a loyalty to the participation of the moment in that I am guessing I am not putting myself down, I just feel that I don't think that I have anything to offer, other than at this moment.

If you see what I mean.

DL

Thank you Jed for being my 'go between' and getting me up here, and thank you to everybody. (claps)

A3.4

London Septet.

Venue – I'Klectik, London – 11 June 2017

DL

I'd just like to start by saying ... it's been an absolute pleasure playing with these people tonight so thank you very much. It's been wonderful.

P2

Slightly taken aback.

For me, there is quite a difference between playing in this environment, in this space, and like a gallery, as opposed to a stage type of space. That's all I want to say.

(Hubbub and laughter about sharing the bag)

P1

I don't know what to say but it was just that in that context, the context that you just mentioned of not, you know, being on stage, and so on, you said to me that you normally didn't ... um ... play under the piano, and the only other place that you'd played under the piano was here, the first time.

P2

I have only played here twice

P1

And on both times, for some reason, you felt a freedom to do that.

P2

Yer, I mean it's partly to do with Eduard, where ever he is, because it is a really creative space, I think.

A10

Um, I was just going to say that, from the point of view of videoing it. I really felt the consciousness this time that, when the music was just starting and ... quite tentative, of videoing slower. Of almost speeding up and slowing with the music. Ah, which I didn't get the last time I was doing it, which is interesting.

Um ... whether that was just being more conscious of it, because last time I think you just basically gave me the video two minutes before I was going to do it, and just said video it. Which was very much more spontaneous, interestingly enough. But today, almost instinctively I felt ... more about filming, and also it was interesting, with the thing running out nearer the end of the first piece, um, the video, so I didn't video. But the idea of ... I could hear the music better when I wasn't videoing it. And partially because I was often conscious of where everybody was in the room, and I didn't need to be conscious of that. And also, very much the idea of framing people when videoing and trying to get several musicians all in, which means, that won't necessarily be correlating to what those people are together necessarily or um ... a musical category, I was looking at it more visually, which I think means you don't listen so much.

P1

Taking up other people's points, in a way, but I was using a camera too, and um ...I don't know your name but I noticed because I was rather aware of the audience, and I noticed that you were often over there but, towards the end you sort of got much more freer, and you sat in a different way. ... Um. It was really love to see.

Last time, when I was actually part of the group ... um ... I, you know, there was dance in a way going on. But it struck me today that the movement of the musicians and the audience ... um, we had a wonderful performance (M – points out an audience member), you know that there was dance here. I'd just like to say that.

A19

I don't quite understand what you want, because you see all the musicians are there, and the public is here. So, we are going back to the same thing, that you are static. So it sounds very interesting to me.

And also, the public didn't participate very much, because we are timid for moving around and so on, And also I didn't quite get it, if we could do noises or whatever you know. If the public could participate a bit more than we did. I did it because I felt well I am silly and you know that I can do (action) (laughter). But then I don't quite understand what your premise is. Is that because it has always been like that, the musicians here and the public there like we are now? Or what is it that you are studying? It's a – I don't quite get it.

DL

I am wondering whether I should respond to that now or wait? I am going to hold on to that now and I may respond at the end if that is OK.

A19

OK

A20

Yer, I guess to add to that point, that there is potential some ... a ... degree of cautious, cautiousness with the audience ...um ... As you are invited to move ... um ... but it's shaking off the idea that you're not supposed to, (laugh) and it takes some time to do that. Um ... And I guess that the longer it goes on and we talk about it, It will become ... I guess it could be potentially encouraged more if that's the aim of the group. You know if you want the barrier to disintegrate between the performer and the audience then maybe it need to be sort of ... And as you know as you say, the participation from the audience ... um ... kind of, not just, ah sort of like passively condoned but, just, you know, actively encouraged ... um if that's what you want. Because, yer, there is uncertainty around that. Because obviously, what you were doing before, in a regular show you'd be quiet until you applaud, and then you'd be quiet again. Where as so , yer ... it takes a while to get out of that argument.

A21

It was sort of very theatrical, um, and you are not sure if you should participate in the theatre option. Um ... And also, because of the limited spaces, you feel as though you may be taking someone's space, where actually you need a prop in the theatre of your performance.

I've never been to an improvisation, maybe once before, but I'm not really that familiar with it. But I enjoyed all the sounds and the way you ...um ... deconstruct like the guitar, I've never seen that before. Um ... and I also like the lyricism of the violin at times. And it, there was a lot of different sounds and every so often you would get ... and you mentioned Chagall earlier. And you were the Chagall of the performers tonight, so thank you for that.

Yer. I enjoyed it very much.

But again, you mentioned before about the distraction of you filming it, um ... and you are meant to be listening and that is a bit of a problem because I felt, in the last piece, um ... I wanted to listen more, but I was quite distracted by what was going to happen next as far as the theatre of it goes. So it's about getting the balance right.

P5

Um. Well I've almost forgotten what I was going to say now. The very nice thing about this situation, maybe not to respond, you know, not to enter into a crossed out area... But what I, um, I found ... I was handling that to some extent by closing my eyes. Um, because the space was amazing, but when I actually stopped to move without playing, I really got a flavour of an amazing experience. Um, So I mean, I wonder what would happen if everybody was choreographing moving around a lot?

A10

Or if everyone had their eyes closed. ... Including the people videoing (laughter).

P5

Yer. I mean, The eyes can be very distracting, but they also allow you to see the space which I've known before times I know.

For me, it was a great experience and I really enjoyed all the musicians, ah ... To extend that, if they haven't before, it would be marvellous. and ah ... and also ... um ... it was marvellous to ... I didn't really feel that when I went close to somebody who was listening that I was playing for them or anything, but um, it sort of ... I had a real sense of the space that people were in, and everyone was hearing things differently.

I could go on for a long time.

P13

I think, something I found was that, I think I listened more ... because people were moving around, than before. Because I was aware that people would be moving around, so I was more aware. I'm not sure how to explain that, but ... obviously if someone comes to play right next to you, you are very aware of what they are doing. I don't know, because people were moving around the space, I was a lot more aware of where people were. It was like I could hear where the cello was, for example and ah.

Yer, I don't know. It was easier to focus on particular people, for example.

A21

It was nice your little group over there in that corner ...

P34

The thing about closing your eyes, in that situation, is quite revealing actually. Because you become aware of just the soundscape that you're involved in. And not really the actual spatial ... Ah ... position of where you are standing. So, you have related to the sounds in a totally aural way, and you are not really positioning yourself in the room. But when you move around, obviously, you open your eyes, and immediately that brings you back into the visual, spatial ... ah... dimension of the performance area. And you are aware of the audience, you are aware of the room, the four walls. And ... there's some kind of, I think for me, a kind of a threshold there, that you enter into another space, both aural and spatial, and that influences the way that you play. Ah... So again when you close your eyes, you are immersed in the purely aural side of it. Um ... And that, for me, influenced that way that I responded to the music that was happening.

But the moving around, was interesting because it showed another perspective of the space itself and the sounds around you. ... The problem is, speaking from a purely musical, performance point of view, if that is a positive or a negative thing, you know, ... in terms of the actual performance. Anyway ...

DL

Can I just mention on that point. ... Of the performers, how many of you found that you closed your eyes at some point, and (Hands up = all except PD)

P13

I do that anyway.

P17

Not very much, a little bit.

DL

And to what extent? Half the time (numerous 'no's)

P5

I found I was doing it more than half the time and that irritated me a bit. (laughter)

P2

Yer, half the time atleast.

P1

I ofcourse didn't close my eyes, but ... I do have to say that my ears were out on stalks, because ... the sound ... you know ... that the next kind of ... what I can ... felt ... felt was a sort of important little bit going on, made me move, made me turn.

P2

Well ... You were talking about the theatre of it, you were talking about the boundaries and the bord... of the boundaries set up. And it is true if you remove the conventional boundaries, you wonder what is left. And you wonder who is going to be a participant, or a musician, or whether it's theatre or it's dance, or whether it is music even.

And I am wondering whether you are deliberately removing the boundaries, in order to reconfigure them in some way, that you have got in mind already. Or whether you are removing boundaries and seeing what happens?

DL

That is a question, and a very good one. (Laughter)

... It's the later.

And it seems like an opportune time to respond to your question.

- - Philosophical perspective = an ecological system
- - We naturally work towards balancing the environment that we are working in.
 - o It gets loud for a while, but then we will balance the space by getting very quiet.
 - o A natural progression that doesn't need to be policed
- We are fighting a lot of traditions
 - o FIM is a wonderful opportunity to experience all possible aspects of the space
- I think it is nice to just see what is going to happen.

P17

I don't know what I am going to say, there's a few things I want to say. ...

There is only one boundary that was changed, out of all the other boundaries that have already gone, but one more was to actually be free to move, as far I am understanding. But I don't know how it was introduced, because I missed the very beginning. ... So I don't know if that was clear ... but, to me, it's not important about the seeing or ... whether you see or not as well as the listening. We are listening all the time, anyway. ... Sometimes I would make a ... maybe latch onto a sound that was coming from across the room and ... work closely with that and regard it as a sort of counterpoint to everything else. And sometimes it was very useful to be able to go there and hear it better. In order to give the other ... By moving in the space and putting myself next to ... whoever it was, that I was kind of playing with, as opposed to against. It gave the others more space to do what they were doing in another space. So, it was kind of useful both ways, like that.

Another thing, I thought it was very ... maybe it was a bit restrained at the beginning, in that the sounds were so quiet at the beginning. And I felt that, maybe, affected the audience ... feeling of freedom, or not, to move. It was a very ... tiny thing that we were ... that the sound ... And it took a while to free up. Not just in terms of volume but ... that feeling of restraint. ...

P2

But we hadn't played together, not that that's important, but most of us hadn't played together.

A23

That's amazing.

P17

Pardon?

P2

Most of us hadn't played together so, I think, that was what I was hearing at the beginning

P17

Tentative, someone said, yer.

We have played most of us together but sometimes ...

A10

Tentative could be a good thing

P35

I think it would have been actually, interesting if we had carried on with that volume, whether ... whether the audience would have ... 'Oh, so this is what it is.' They're not just warming up. ... And then felt freedom to move.

I mean the thing is we didn't hold it on for ages and ages.

P17

No, no.

P35

But if we had, then it might have been the case, in terms of what you were saying before, in terms of the audience being too scared to move or what.

A19

Yer, the audience was scared to upset the musicians, as it were. You know, you make something and (whispered voice) 'Hey, be quiet!'. Which is the way it's against ... It's against everything that... that he wants, I do not know. That's your idea whatever, I don't know.

But I felt that people very ... musicians were very tight, all of you. it's always that way ... you know, very quiet. With people don't be ... people were everything was so quiet. And I thought that it was very sad, And ... people walked a bit more. You also walked a bit more and you played a bit more together even in my opinion. You know, maybe it needs more time, for you and for us, I think.

P17

When I said that it was partly just comparing it, because I've done this twice before with David recently and it wasn't like that.

A19

Ah, OK.

P17

And it wasn't like that, there wasn't that feeling of restraint about movement, even at the start.

A19

Was there dancers?

P17

No, it was the same, it was just audience and musicians ... (A19 – repeats question about whether there were dancers) Sorry, I'm just trying to explain myself... No, there weren't dancers, it was the same situation.

P5

I think that ... general, I like that idea that, anyone could go on longer to be more definite about it. But for me, this is just feedback, the beginning wasn't hesitant at all, I was really enjoying it, because it . But it can feel that way, I mean , I've come across that before, that one might ... if anyone has expectations they might think that they're just warming up. So that is why I want to give it back to you because I think that (trails off as he gives LM the bag)

A21

Well. I just, I didn't think that it was restrained at the beginning. I just thought that you were all just getting into just listening to each other and getting the conversation. That's what I really liked about it, because it did seem like you were talking to one another and there was ... and picking up this dialogue that was going on and so ... yer. I didn't feel any restraint at all, it was great.

P17

I enjoyed it too, I have to say, I just wondered if it had a restraining affect because it was ... constrained in terms of sound. Not as a ... emotional thing, it was a ... I didn't actually think that it was tentative, but someone used that word, but ... it could still have, because it was quiet, it thought might have ... also people might have felt that they needed, they wanted to be still. That's kind of what I meant.

DL

The ... I'm just going to remind you that , for me, what is really nice is that we ... It's almost irrelevant, ... if we haven't experience that. ... (ie.) This may have been the case. We don't have to have a discussion about it. Because it's the rhetorical questions that are just left up in the air ... let's keep it open.

Did you want to say something.

P5

The thing I enjoyed very much is about, I mean, even at someone at my age. There's sound, we know that ones ears change as you get older. From about 20 onwards. But um... roughly. But ... what I enjoy is the way in which different sounds travel, and I was very aware of that. You know, you can have a loud sound that seems to drop into the floor, you can have one that seems to really be heard at the far end. It's the difference between a ... certain violin and a Strad' violin can be very soft, and can be heard miles away ... even when it's very soft.

So there are all kinds of things that are going on with ... the different aspects of a sound, without going into the physics of it, as to whether it travels or not. And I really enjoyed that fluid or dynamic variation of the space.

A10

I think a lot of that has to do with how good this space is, for this type of music. I was thinking that it was very interesting, I was talking about this before ...if it was performed outside. It would be changed massively ... massively, particularly with the dynamics of the instruments. ... Because, potentially where

there's movement, it would be more freeing. ... But for certain, some acoustic instruments it would be a real problem.

Also you would have to deal with a completely different management.

P2

Over the last five years I've done, several projects which have really brought home to me ... how creative listening is, as an act, in this kind of music.

And in the last time that we did this David, there were lots of kids drawing on the floor. And Catherine was also drawing. And today, Tim and Catherine, you were both taking videos.

So, it seems to me, ... that that was a kind of an externalisation of the creative process which is going on in every ... inter discipline. Both musicians and non-musicians, and one possible way forward would just have everyone creating in some form, just to externalise that, the act of listening. Um ... I don't know if that's ... But what your experiments seem to bring back to the surface for me.

DL

The ... That's the reason why I had those cards so as to ... just ... offer that opportunity.

A2

So, going on from that. Definitely, since the ... regularly the audience doesn't have a voice in a performance, really. Unless you are giving the audience a voice through movement, I suppose. So, there was a dialogue going on, like we were talking about at whether everybody was scared at the start. Like, you wouldn't ... If you played the same thing to a static audience, you wouldn't notice that, because they're expected to send ... to stay in the same place for the whole time, But just because people are expected to move around that you ... notice that ... people aren't. You know, so there is dialogue going on from the very start, between the musicians and the audience. Which is interesting. So I guess that, yer, there is expression through the movement and that's kind of mirrored in the more the ... movement the ... musicians make and move around, I felt it was more likely that the audience was moving around at the same time. Because space was freeing up and the ... kind of ... people had to improvise space.

P2

Yer, you said space was freeing up, there were invisible barriers and as you move through them you break all the bubbles.

P34

It would be interesting a way to record this, is to have several mics ... Oh you've got it, Ah! (Laughter)

Then to see how the actual ... movement of a ...

DL

So shall I do my little pitch for the website.

- Explanation of how the multi-layered filming archive works.

P34

I did a workshop in Malaga once, it was in a very old building and there was this festival and they had several rooms in this old building. And the workshop had different groups of musicians in each room, And then one musicians would leave one room and go into another and so that the whole thing would go round. And different combinations.

And there was one recording and videoing it in one direction. And another guy videoing it in another direction. And they combined the videos and it came out quite interesting, you know, the ... not just the sound but the visuals as well. Which again, a spatial thing, because the ... the music was changing by have different musicians moving along from. Because the rooms were actually ...one room led to another, it's a very old building, very nice building and quite derelict actually, ... But you just open a door and you're into another room, you know, it's just kind of one like a ... like a circle really.

P17

You couldn't hear from one room to the next?

P34

Yes, you could, but not very much. There was a door. But you could if you were playing quietly then you would ... especially the loudest instruments, that there quite a few. But it was interesting the way that people in the workshop reacted to the music changing spatially. And the video came out quite nice as well. This is about 4 years ago. JV organized it.

A10

You used to do that at the old Stoke Newington festival that whole thing of a relay (Multiple accord)

DL

That was the last time that I played with P35 actually.

P34

The relay was actually the idea that you would move from one venue to another, but you still had to walk from one venue to another, so it wasn't a continuous playing situation. Which it was in this workshop.

P35

This relay has been done in different venues, not just in Stoke Newington. There have been situations where it's been closer.

P34

Yer.

A22

The latest thing is 360 video as well, recording something like this would look amazing actually. It would look very cool.

DL

The Ambiosonic ... I had considered that, but it's much more expensive.

P17

But the nice thing about this is that you can hear all of it all at once, but you ... It doesn't matter whether you are audience or playing, you can choose, ... where

you put yourself in that soundscape. So, you suddenly, instead of it being flat in front of you, you got a 3 dimensional one that you can go into. And that is a huge change, I think for surely ... in the previous ones, there have been pieces where some of us were just listeners. So, we were audience. And whether you were a listener or a musician. That was a very big shift, to be able to choose where you put yourself ... in the sound available. Because it is local as well as overall.

DL

We have got about another 5 -10 minutes

P5

Just quickly, there was a performance in the Whitechapel gallery of Thomas Tallis' what is it 48 parts (40 part) Spem in Alium.And on each loud speaker they had a different part of the choir. And it was marvellous to watch, particularly, At that time of the day because a lot of mothers were coming in with children and prams and things. And they were having an absolutely, marvellous time going around and listening to different voices in the park.

Anyway, that would be an interesting thing to do. (Apology)

P1

Well, it does sort of a ... connect with a thought that I have. ... You know if you are holding a camera, it gave an opportunity which was very different to being part of it. And I had the fun of, a kind of, getting glimpses of musicians in, you know, focus in, in deep focus because... . For instance, I could come up on you. I could see, I mean, I've been aware before of lights flashing (referring to PD electronics), but to actually see how you are doing it. I mean, I couldn't possibly describe it, but to see it, because I am not a musician. But that was absolutely amazing.

And the guitarist with that little green, I don't know what it was (P13 – a fan) but it was rubbing against, or something your strings ... (P13 and P34 – a fan).

A fan. I did notice it was a fan actually but I just forgot. All that kind of thing um was absolutely amazing. So I don't know whether, one way to get an audience to move is to give them a camera. Because, you know, you are very attracted to how people are doing it. And I ... actually, when I was in it, I took a moment out of it, to draw myself, not myself, but to draw people. Um ... and then I used it in the last piece that I made as an artist. But that, the sort of ... listening, but engaging visually and getting very close is a ... you know ... you simply can't have that experience in an audience, can you, in a formal audience.

DL

Last couple

P5

Getting to be more and more like we are at home. (laughter)

So one of the ... It was just that ... taking that even further, that if I were to come right up to you and was very close, I'm, actually, this is a John Berger thing. I would actually be experiencing more how you were hearing everyone else.

P13

Another thing that I noticed ... last time, but not so much this time, because well, anyway, last time, there were things where I was playing quite quietly, and maybe the other musicians couldn't hear and they were doing something loud. It didn't matter, because the people, the audience near me could hear me. Or someone would come over and listen to me. That is something that you can do differently, as a musician, in this kind of concept, because you don't need everyone to hear you. Whereas normally you would, or you would expect them to come down when you are playing quietly, but that's not necessarily required.

P17

It was also nice for musicians with louder instruments that you can go right up to someone who is got a quieter instrument and, sort of, hear it from there point of view, and tune into that. Even against the sound of your own instrument or ... the whole sound.

P5

I think the experience of the camera holder is extremely interesting and how one listens.

DL

Feel free to email me. ...

For me personally, I was quite moved to ... with regards to how we were ... the sense of episodic nature of tonight was possibly more pronounced than it has been. Because we were able to ... very much sit with the idea of ... I understand how the ensemble is working now and my movement was more profound in a way, because I could actually, select through my movement to play with different people. And that was something that hadn't happened in the past. So I may well be throwing you some questions about that to you all.

Final introductions and thank you very much.

A3.5

Oxford Improvisers

Venue – The old Fire Station, Oxford - June 17 2017

A23

There is a big silence (laughter)

I am very pleased to come here tonight, I haven't actually read that much about what was going on. ... It's quite interesting as audience, there are probably only how many of us three of us. To be in the middle of this mix of improvised music ... It's quite an interesting .. change in the dynamics, from just walking around, having you walking around, having the street, that was quite interesting, standing at the window there and hearing this ... sort of division of what's going (on) out there and what's going on in here.

Very difficult not to participate. Very difficult not to act the ... want to do something, because it's a ... and I understand that's not the remit of the performance. It is not to actually .. that's a different animal, that's a different area.

But yeah, very pleased I came. And I've listened to improvised music probably in the 70s and through into the 90's, I did a jazz show in Amsterdam which did a lot of this stuff. And its like washing out my ears again.

DL

Can I ask how you found out about this tonight?

A23

I had to actually come to Oxford today and so I said, alright I will make an event of it, and where ever I go, I just google music ... And I happened to google improvised jazz and ... the event ... and somebody's doing their promotion well (laughter)

A24

On a Tuesday night.

A23

And the event came up and I went 'ah bingo!'

I didn't actually look that much at it., I saw that it was project of improvised music, and I just told (name A24) that we are going somewhere, I'm not telling you where we're going. (laughter)

So.. yes it makes me feel quite relaxed to be here, 'cause it's like something that I really like it's in there for a long while.

We're up in Cambridge and we don't get very much improvised music up there. So yep, I ... hope that we are actually adding something to this research.

DL. You are

A23

But like I say, it is very difficult not to bang something. So that is one of the bits of feedback, is ... I mean it's a different ... ah ... different research project even. But it's certainly very very interesting to hear the sonic dynamic differences of just the instruments, getting that close, (gestures proximity) getting ... which you would never get as a normal audience, normally you would be sat there, you would have the orchestra up here

You would go to a concert hall, and there's the piano, the keyboards and all the rest, and what you are getting now is the ability, if somebody proposes something you can move to them and hear that, relative to bass, or to the horns, so it's an endless sonic experience. Great!

P36

We talked about that, like, a little bit last night, but infact there's detail yeah. There's detail that you can only get when you are extremely close, cause that is something that is completely Unless you are doing something that's closely mic'ed which is a different experience. (Accord) But ofcourse then it is usually closely mic'ed and nothing else.

A23

You can't choose then.

P36

You can't choose

A23

I mean now you can choose between .. it's an endless choice between moving with all the ... between all these musicians and even going out the door, or putting your head out the window, just to hear and turn your head around that difference of experience, because you are not in the sound stage. Very stimulating!

P36

And there are a lot of things that are fantastically quiet and you've just got to have a chance to hear it.

Infact, we did play unusually quiet, a lot of the time.

I wonder if that was because ... Yeah ... because we could, probably self-consciously we thought, 'yer well' (missed – talked over)

A23

We were talking about the repetition, and that the practice was very different from the performance. How do you feel about that, was it actually changed when you come and see three audience. Does that change the way you react to things.

P37

I suppose that ... we were just talking downstairs, but I would say that I am not sure the only thing that makes me not a pure audience is the ability to play, but I felt like an audience a lot of the time.

A24

While you were performing? You felt like that ?

P37

Yer, and there were times when I just wanted to move around and just listen to the sound, infact, at the end I did just do that. Um ..

P36

Did you feel more like an audience tonight than lastnight in the rehearsal?

P37

Um ... yer I think there was a slight element of theatre, lastnight. Where we were What was it that you were saying to me, what was that thing you said about the toy box (aimed at DG)?

DL Getting inside the toy box

P37

Getting inside the toy box ... the novelty of it. Yer I mean we had a performance area, where there was a lift and so people were coming out of the lift... And the stairs – It was a little theatrical. It was funny. It was actually quite funny and I am not sure that

P36

It was distracting –

P37

It was distracting and we got over that.

A24

So, was it distracting having the audience moving around?

P36

No

P37

No, I didn't even notice where you were. Sometimes I looked up and noticed a completely different spread.

A24

And are you always in your own little world anyway?

- NO

Would you notice the audience anyway?

P37

I think if you hadn't moved throughout then I would have noticed that you hadn't moved, in a sense of participating

P5

In a normal classical concert situation, um, I'm very uncomfortable if they have very bright lights on the stage and you can't see anybody in the audience. I really like to be able to see, ah .. to feel that the audience is there, I think that is really significant.

And actually there were two people who didn't come back for the discussion, so there was actually quite an interesting group of audience and um I'm just thinking that the Deca ... the traditional Deca way of recording which was to try and record in the way that the audience hear ... to try and capture the way that the audience hear it. Whereas ... um ... musicians tend to like close mic recordings when they're listening back.

A23

Ping pong back ?

P5

And ah ... and so it's kind of a very interesting take on it.

A23

It's never been better put ? Never.

P38 (12.36)

I found that .. one challenge was that ... you know .. when you are playing you want to allow ... play you think of something to do and ... or something occurs and you may do you may not do it, you may do it ... something in relation to it.

But then you have this, once you put the space into it, you think 'I could be over there', and then ... but there's a whole operation involved in being over there. And it's not just about physically getting there. But then you are actually then You know you're sort of conscious of moving through the space and amongst the people.

A24

It's the social, and so for me and my fellow audience and am I here to purely tune my listening interest into that's the interesting brief. And it's like 'hang on! There are other audience members and I've got a social connection. Do I go and stand with them and join together? So what you are saying .. yeah ..

A23

You did notice that sometimes it went rather peripheral, and then settle for a little bit and then people would start moving again.

P36

I felt sometimes that I didn't want to disturb the music by walking.

P39

One thing that I was going to say was that I was very conscious of the sound of people moving, which I thought was quite a big part of it, actually. I mean partly because of the wooden floor. It was ... when we were playing quietly, the sound of people moving was ... you know ... at a level with what else was going on, and that kind of was ... it inevitably became part of what was, the performance and influence things.

Which I was ... which is... you know one element in which I suppose the audience are influencing things as well.

A2

Was it distracting or?

P39

I don't think anything is distracting, really, it's just different. You know.

P37

It would be quite nice if you had ... um ... a mixture of Startrek thing where you could de-materialize from one spot and reappear instantly over there. But hey! 'cause, like you said, you are lumbering across and thinking 'I want to be there already'. (chuckles) it can be quite an operation.

P38

Yer

P40

But then finding a musical strategy that will get you from here to there, if possible. It's not always possible but ... But, I did notice that at the beginning we were all sitting in particular seats, and most people got up quite quickly and started moving about. So, there was a, sort of, a sense of exploration atleast. But then after about 20 minutes, maybe, I found myself back in the same seat, and I noticed that there had become a circle again. And there was a settledness about it for quite a while ... and then a movement again.

Yer so there was a second wave of realization that we could move. And that was different from the first one, because it was much more considered perhaps. ... You know ... I could do this, or that, rather than, 'Oh well lets do that because we are allowed to do this.'

P38

And again also you were kind of ... maybe or my sense of what happened, we did what we normally do which ... is we normally concentrate on this thing that we are playing. And so, you forget about moving because it is not what you do ... you know it's ... it's normally you would be sat or you're stood. You are listening all the time, and you are playing, and you don't think of moving 'cause that's like a distraction from doing those two things which are more than enough to do in the first place.

So, it would take a lot of practice, I think, to get to, kind of, really integrate today in the practice.

P37

I think that's ... so I had a different experience to you, because of the instrument. So, I think for me because of the nature of those things ... um ... it extended the way the I would normally play them ...Um. ... Whereas I can see that with a closed instrument whether you walk around or not is ... it will make a huge difference, maybe.

P36

You can only take one thing with you at a time.

P37

I was sort of struggling with ... whether to leave things dotted about, or take the whole lot with me ... you know. Um, because then I have to scurry back ... 'Oh I need that', you know.

But it was changing the way that I interact with my instrument.

A24

So how long did it take, as performers, to get over the self-consciousness of moving.

P36

Well we had a rehearsal yesterday so we had ... Most of us would probably do a little bit if we had to, but with the rehearsal last night

P38

I don't think that self-conscious is the issue, so much as the kind of ... just the practical thing of how you then incorporate that with, what you are thinking.

A23

Do you find that more difficult to do it?

P41

It is finding the impetus to do it

And the way

P38

Yer, cause it's not naturally there

P41

Finding the impetus to do it because it's since as such became after all you know ... kind of whatever forty years of musical practice ... without, which actually makes you all your assumptions that one doesn't Ah then you know . It's not that the sort of completely, this is actually, in a way, the territory which we know about.

It might be, it might be like... I mean what I felt after David's was ... open to his ... let's put this ... offering, yesterday ... that it made me feel that, maybe, ... yer, it looks like what we have been doing is a special case of something which is like it's just has other dimensions to it. And it's actually a kind of way of tapping into these other dimensions. But while doing that from, a history of not having done it ... so as ... so it's ... and that will, ofcourse, affect the way that we actually are approaching it. And that will include the slight resistance or like some people have said, I think, of ...ah ... of why ...

P38

There is a kind of novelty ,

P41

A novelty and also the resistance to it.

I'm a musician, I should be playing music, why should I be bloody moving? And ah ... But that's really interesting and worthwhile.

DL

Could I actually ask, how many of you, like Chris, it offered, it afforded new ways of playing? It extended, gave you an opportunity to extend how you would use your instrument?

P38

Oh, definitely.

P37

So, my exclusion of your instrument was mistaken.

P38

It was mistaken.

P37

I'm sorry

P38

And I played into the room more, into the corner of the room, or to leave the room, or to ...

A23

Do you find it more difficult then sonically to actually ... play as you normally would? Because obviously, when you sit in one spot, you've got, you're listening to what you are playing in that spot. You are getting more of a sonic feedback. When you are moving about, you are changing the characteristic, which is giving you new boundaries. ...

P41

It is like a new piece suddenly (Yer – accord) It is like you move to a different piece. That is what I felt

A23

Different when it's in a corner or when it is out there. It is quite different

P40

There are different levels of decision that are being made. Because sometime you might decide to make a move, which includes playing ...Ah ... without reference necessarily to what is going on around you, because you are making an intervention. But then you might arrive at a certain place and find yourself actually involved in a trio, which is over there. Which is a totally different experience, which wouldn't be available if you were staying where (taxi noise outside)

P36

Going back to something somebody said about ten minutes ago. I think it's a huge difference from, I realise now, from lastnight, because we had a much bigger space, we've got corridors, the lift, the stairway, the lower floor. And here, basically you have the option of sitting on the side or sitting in the middle. (multiple accord)

P41

Yer, I felt that.

P36

And that is why ... tiny bit ... I mean ...

A24

It would be great to be outside

P36

So then actually I think that's ... so that's the thing we either played on the outside or we play grouped in the middle or ...

A24

Because that's what you would do in a room

P5

I think one can focus on ... when you play in a fixed position you can focus on different players, different acoustics. But, this allows one to do, much more actively, because you can actually change the balance of what you are doing.

P40

Yer, that's right if you are sitting in a fixed position you get used to the where people are, and you start to come with certain expectations.

P36

Actually what you normally do is have ... a few small groups, and then a big group. And infact ... that's automatically happening all the time isn't it. We are kind of regrouping, I think, that's a huge thing really.

DL

With that in mind.

P36

You've got subgroups haven't you

DL

With that in mind, how did you guys experience your inter-relationships, did you feel that you were playing to someone very close to you, or across the room? What sort of experiences did you have?

Multiple

Both

A24

Initially in the audience, I sort of gravitated towards my, you know, favourite instruments.

P36

The French horn, right?
(laughter)

A24

Fill this space ... that's fine

DL

The toy piano.

42

Something that changed for me is the ... 'cause we are like, when we are improvising together and possibly interacting, making decisions about playing by yourself or being interventional to other people, ... and ... so but like ... being able to explore like my fellow musicians from different distance, from different

angles. It changed my decision, like for example, for the first time that I played in front of Paul, and that totally changed like the (signal) I was getting from the bass clarinet. Or like playing from your right and moving to your left. So ... totally like amazing. But, totally, the things new, like my decision making of like making music at that ... in those moments.

Laughter

- Portuguese

DL

To wrap up this conversation. If you have anything else to say. Or have you got any seeds or ideas of things that you might sort of be looking for in the next improvisation. If there is anything that you can think of ... of interest, that you might, sort of, be looking out for?

And ofcourse, by saying that, throwing that into the mix, it usually means that, that it will never happen.

But it's ... um ... I'm just thinking that as we have had this discussion now before we are going to play again, but then in hindsight, and I'm going to record this and it is going to be online, and you are going to be able to hear. It would be interesting to see if there is something that ... I might focus on exploring this, or we can see what happens. Or if there is something that we didn't do this time that maybe, by saying it now, it might happen next time.

P5

Do you think that the interaction was slowed down by ... there being so spaced, being so far apart at times? ... um ... I think the nature of the room and the noise from outside, slowed me down, ... ah ... probably the heat as well.

A23 and others

Yer.

P5

Do you think the interaction was slowed down?

DL

That's a good question

A25 (Translated)

She is the only one that doesn't speak English.

She loved it

It is a wonderful idea

I like this kind of art

My congratulations to all the musicians

And carry on this project

I loved it

Congratulations

She will come back

P38

You are not leaving

(laughter)

Your moving here.

Brilliant
We didn't answer your question

DL
That's alright we will play the answer, it will come out in the music.

A24
I do have one question
How are you going to frame the research
What is the box and I know it is a crazy box and you have to have the box because otherwise it is just paste.

DL
Explains the research method

P5
On your website you can see some of the recordings I was quite shocked, stunned by the totally different experience of looking at the video from a different part of the room. I didn't expect that to look so seeing different or to even feel in terms of interpreting what the sound was from just the visual aspect. Ofcourse there is the change in where the camera is and where the mic is as well.

DL
Right shall we play?

Appendix

4

Performer interviews - Transcriptions

A4.1

Interview Transcription – Sam Bailey (SB)

Interview date 5 / 12 / 2017

DL - Recap on experiences

SB - The performances felt a bit different to other conventional gigs the only ones I have done that were comparable was with Evan Parker trio, sitting in with people at Free Range and the MbUS which was of course your thing also.

The only comparable thing to this that I have done is the Underscore.

DL - How does it vary from your experience as a listener?

SB - There is something quite distinct about a performance when it is being convened for the purposes of a PhD, and for it not being a gig in the formal sense and it to be more about the playing I suppose than about presenting anything. and for that to be in spaces which were kind of neutral-ish to me. You know they weren't kind of spaces charged with musical convention as they were both galleries.

I played at I'Klectik once before I think, with you. So ... It doesn't really feel like work doing stuff with you. It feels like play and experimentation with you, which is nice. And it is also, quite often I find that I am in the position of being the prime organizer. And so, what is really lovely is to be a sideman if you like. As someone who is participating, and not heading it up, so I really enjoyed that aspect of it.

It was nice to get out of my Canterbury bubble as well as I am a little stuck in this city and you have all these connections nationally and internationally, and it is nice to take advantage of that.

DL - With regards to the two performances, In Sidney Cooper and I'Klectik, can you characterize any specific changes or differences between the two?

SB - Well my memories of things a quite hazy. But the first difference that come to mind is that there is a piano at I'Klectik, so I have a vocabulary now, without the piano, thanks largely to you. But, at the I'Klectik, I was able to play the piano as well which is my main thing, so I had a wider palate I suppose, and also my comfort blanket, but also my area of expertise.

And at the SCG my kids were there and my wife there. So that was another different feeling. And there was a lot of people from Canterbury there, so there was more of a kind of home match you know. ... I'm really glad that we did the SCG before the I'Klectik because for me it was a way of me meeting Phil and his wife, and some of the players and just getting a feel for it, before then going to a new place.

DL – Prompt meeting Philipp prior and not knowing the other musicians for the London gig.

PW – His reputation preceded him He denies this but I saw him in Whitstable playing with Evan Parker and Alan Skokowski. That was when I first saw him.

And when you see someone just playing free improvised music and you don't speak to them. They can appear quite forbidding. (laugh) because there are no smiles ... normally. And, I think in the warm up, in the sound check, the chat, before the SCG, he was talking about his ... having studied with Nadia Boulanger's sister, and my wife's named after Nadia Boulanger, so there is a connection there. But also, that bit of information, sort of makes you realise that he is pretty high league in terms of his musical pedigree and training. And that was really ... I think that made me concentrate, and you know I really wanted to hear what he was going to bring to a situation like that. And he brought the Spring sonata.

And Nadia knowing that, that really affect Nadia's playing also, knowing that there was a serious classical violinist on board. But it was really interesting for her, because her improvising is a therapeutic tool, it's not something that she brings to the public. And so having Phil there, it was weird because, she plays orchestral gigs and she improvises for clients, but that was a weird kind of way of mixing everything together. And by the end of the gig I think she loved it. And remember she was lying on the floor next to Lauren, just jamming.

DL - That's something to be done again actually. The gender mix on that gig was quite special as well.

SB - Yeah and having the kids there, I think that does change things when you've got kids about.

9'40"

DL - Shall we watch something. 2nd improvisation at I'Klectik. - What was your experience.

SB - Do you mind I With this one I go straight under the piano, so I think I must have been thinking about that earlier, so I was wondering why. Do you mind if have a look at the end of the previous one?

2nd improvisation at I'Klectik 11/6/2017

++ (Time passes as music is playing)

SB - I'm just going to flick through this one.

++

SB - That's nice.

++

SB - OK, I'm going to stop this one.

===

(back to 2nd improvisation)

SB - That was a nice invitation, (DL is standing next to the piano and invites SB the room to get to the keyboard, but SB decides to go under the piano instead) I declined. There is something irreverent about Phil's opening, and that throwing of that little ...

Do you know what, I cracked my singing bowls, they're not even my singing bowls, I borrowed them from somebody, but I cracked one or two of them at these gigs. I realise that that is not a workable playtime thing to do.

++

SB - It's hard to tell where the sounds are coming from, the percussive sounds.

Who is this guy again on the electronics?

DL – responds PD

++

SB - There is something ritualistic about walking around like a priest with the incense. (Commenting on P5 plucking violin and swinging it)

++ (laugh)

P2 - And there is something liberating for the audience watching this as well, as the Mexican lady demonstrates.

Oh that's me.

Sometimes, there is something ... I find lacking about the stop/starty nature of, what might be called the, traditional British free improvisation and that is the existence of continuous things, and the kind of platform that they can provide for other people to do stuff.

It's quite, you know, ... I've just re-ordered Karyobin album, Karyobin has just been re-issued - the Spontaneous music ensemble and what I love about that recording is that it's kind of, it's pointillist, isn't it? Because sometimes I like to have somethings going on for a long, long time. And that's just an example of it. There was all this positivistic stuff, and I think I felt the need for something continuous because that would enable and free up something else in the music. Do you see what I mean?

DL – There is that quality to your playing, in response to what is going on and that does actually happen a number of times.

SB - It's partly because, when I am not with the piano, so for example at the RICHMIX and SCG and the other places where we have done stuff. I have only had drony types of instruments - the two harmoniums, ... and I used to have, like, little contact mics, with an in and out -. That kind of thing is quite drony, And so that is, in some ways, that could have been my role, historically, in this kind of ensemble. But with the piano, I'm just doing that with the piano, just there. But also, doing that, it gives energy, it doesn't specify pitch and it provides a platform for other stuff to happen. You know.

DL – How aware spatially were you of the other players? Were you aware of LS right above you? What were you listening to?

SB - Well, I think that I had quite a different experience, to you, in this capacity. Because I think I go into a sort of trance. And I don't in the same kind of focused way as when I am an audience member.

So, what is strange is that I feel like I suddenly lose my analytical capacities. I'm not engaging them. You know I am not thinking 'oh this is happening, and this is happening, and that is happening over there'. I go into a bit of a trance, which is, in some ways, hermetic and sealed off in a bubble. But I must be aware of other people, because I do things in relation to them. So, it's just a different type of listening I think, where I am perhaps more present so that the analytical aspect of judging and making decisions based on information is cut off.

DL – Yeah, so would you say that it is more intuitive then, of a felt sort of listening response?

SB - Without romanticising it, it does remind me of when my kids are playing, they can't really see anything outside the game. So, I was possibly aware that Loz was a little bit louder, but I wouldn't have thought that' oh he has walked across the room, and is standing by me, or something like that.

DL - So you were focused specifically on the underside of the piano

SB - Well my eyes are probably shut. My eyes are almost always shut.

DL – OK so you spend most of your time with your eyes shut. So, you would have been under the piano at that point with your eyes shut

SB - I'll carry on.

+++

SB - Everything suddenly stopped. I just want to see that moment. That's interesting that that 'dit, dit, dit' created silence.

++ playback rewind ++

SB - What's that ? (JM playing guitar)

DL – PW is on electronics as well now.

SB - Who is that? Is that me?

+++

SB - What is that

DL - Electronics and also JM

SB - It's a big flugal horn

DL - You are singing at this point

SB - OK Yeah.

Again, I think my contribution there was to do one simple thing for a long time, in the hope that it would facilitate other people doing stuff.

DL - The singing aspect – you mentioned that you have been cultivating that, and you say that there is a sense of continuity with what you are doing

SB - Well, a lot of what I have developed has come about through doing solo sets at Free Range. There's been two things which have gradually kind of moved toward there. One is Integration. Because for a lot of my life I have felt a bit like a musical schizophrenic. And so one of the functions in my playing at Free Range, in the last 5 years, has been to integrate

the punk cabaret things that I used to do, and the classical concertos that I used to do, and the piano teaching that I do, and the composition that I do, and the free improvisation. Do you know what I mean? Trying and get them to fit together in some way. And so the speaking, when I am playing, is partly to do with the teaching, because I am always talking about music and I see that as a creative practice in its own right. Why shouldn't it be happening at the same time. And so, the singing, and the other movement ... There's integration and there's kind of like vulnerability, trying to open yourself up. And there's perhaps a slightly masochistic side to that. But at the same time I ... it's ... But I think that creativity is a natural move towards that anyway.

SB - One of the things which I ... one of my kind of like ... not a fault, but it's just like a character trait, which I have had since I was little, is trying hard. And that is something that I have done since I was about 3, I think 2 or 3. And, often I try too hard. But, I think, so, I think, part of me realizes that, 'Oh yeah, this improvisation thing is partly to do with vulnerability. And so, then I try extra hard and do stupid things like sing or whistle, when I can't really sing or whistle particularly well. And I'll do it in public repeatedly (laugh) until I am told not to or something like that. Do you see what I mean? I will put things out there, sometimes that shouldn't be out there. But I learn from that, so that is fine.

When I listen back to the whistling that I used to do at Free Range. Whistling is really hard to get it bang on. When you are whistling with drones, then you can tell when it is bang on. ... And then ... Yeah, anyway, so that is where that comes from I think, ... Deliberately, I'm not deliberately going out of my comfort zone, I perhaps trying a bit too hard and it kind of ends up ... It becomes what I do.

DL - And is there a value judgement or a sense that 'this is not working?

SB - No, when I am doing it. It's just like ... 'I think there should be a long note here. No one else can play one, I can't do one on the piano. I'll just sing it.'

technical break with computer (26'09" - 38") searching for where the track had stopped.

DL – So you are seeing this from not really seeing it, because you were under the table (piano)

SB - Yes. I didn't see this, no.

DL – So the sense of recall that this video can offer

SB - Well that bit where Phil is walking about spreading the incense around the room. I didn't see any of that. I didn't know what the others were doing in the room.

For me. Because my instruments are largely stationary. Spreading them about in the room is a way of ... planning to move through the space. Do you know what I mean? By putting my instrument over there, I am committing myself to do some movement.

+++

SB - That's nice (crescendo with singing)

++

SB - Ah OK

Who's picking that up, the trumpet? (trumpet arrives at the same pitch of SB voice)

DL – Yeah he is picked you up.

SB - And the singing came directly out of the strings / electronics bloom. See that's not the cello but it sounds like the cello. It's the electronics

DL – it's the violin, it's PW

SB - Is it? No. Oh with his electronics. Oh, OK. I keep on not seeing that. Yeah

DL - He put the speaker on the other side of the room next to you, next to LS is now.

SB - OK Which has drawn us LS over there right now. And there is that lady doing that thing with the cymbal. It is very interesting she does a little thing and then disappears off. Like she is not quite sure if she is allowed to do that.

DL - If you recall, that was very much the case, in the sharing as well.

SB - Is that her? That's her, isn't it. Doing some shaking in the background.

Is that a singing bowl?

I think I like to hide as well.

+++

SB - It is a very varied palette that you ... that the group is working with, isn't it.

+++

SB - I think ...

DL – Have you gone outside already?

SB - No I don't think so

DL - I think you have gone outside.

SB - Have I? I didn't notice. Oh, yes, that's the melodia

DL - I missed you going outside.

+ (Re scowling footage back) +

SB - How did I miss that, I've been ... I'm still not under the piano. (laugh)

OK so I am under the piano there I can not see... Isn't that funny that I can slip out unnoticed like that. Ok I am moving there.

I appear to be ...

DL - You sit up for a moment.

SB - I think I am still there, but just hiding in the corner.

It's that hiding thing again.

Yeah, there I am. I have been ... because I remember curling up in the corner for a little bit

32'53"

SB - We can go back to the other videos for a bit.

Well you see, when I am curled up in the back there, hugging my knees. That is something which I often do when I am listening as well, at Free Range.

+++

DL - It is about here that you seep into my consciousness.

SB - Walking by the window do you see. (laugh)

This kind of thing, I think is inspired by you, because I remember, at one time doing a rehearsal at Trinity, in one of the dance studios, and you disappeared and a minute or two later you turned up in a window on the first floor, overlooking the studio, playing.

DL - it's very alienating though. How did you find being outside?

SB - It does certainly take you out, and I didn't know how much you could hear me at all. So, I was kind of playing for myself. For some reason, I have a memory of playing around F minor out there. I don't know why I would have played ...

DL - You see there is still the legacy of what you were playing outside. it is still there.

SB - How many people do you think realized what was happening?

It kind of bought the piece to a close, didn't it, a sort of coda.

So, I guess I came in because I knew that it had finished.

But it marks the end of the piece, doesn't it? I didn't intend that.

+ (clapping starts) +

DL – Do you think that it marked the end or ... you had stopped ... you had initiated something outside. Unknowingly, not being in the room. And watching you go along the window you don't look in to the window as you are going.

SB - No. I think I started to engage with the sound world outside, I started to engage with the traffic and the trees. And started to play a little bit with that.

DL - Could you hear us, outside?

SB - A little bit, but when you get really quiet at the end of it, yeah, I couldn't really hear that.

Looking back at that, it was interesting that my contributions were more structural than detail, it seems. At least in that one.

DL- Would you like to look at another one?

38'59"

--- 3rd improvisation at I'Klectik 11/6/2017.

SB - It's funny I go from like, being outside the space to sitting right in the middle. Because in the last one I was curled up right behind the piano, totally out of sight.

DL – You initiated things there (responding to actions in the improvisation), there was a ... like ...

SB - Yeah,

DL – There is a quality of provocation in your playing quite a lot.

(laugh)

SB - I seem to go from being totally self-effacing to being like 'in charge'

DL (responding to the rolling of the cymbal that spirals under the toy piano without hitting the piano legs) that was captivating, do you remember that.

SB - Yeah.

DL – It went around but didn't, actually, hit the legs of the piano.

(laugh)

SB - I am conscious, sometimes, of quite deliberately just throwing a pebble in to a pool and just letting the ripples go and standing back.

DL - With a judgement or expectation that you want to change things, or is just to see what happens?

SB - Often, I think if you do one bold thing it can free other people up to do stuff. In my .. teaching improvisation, at the Uni, and the list of marking criteria - the assessment is next week – And in the list of marking criteria there is a whole bunch of things ... one of which is, at various points in the improvisation you

must exercise boldness, and you must exercise restraint. And it is great to have in the marking criteria, where you can say to the students, you need to be bold here, you need to be in the fore ground and you need to do something bold. And then you need to step right back. Because normally people are kind of one or the other.

DL – There is a continuity to the ensemble there. And you are very much placing just individual notes, punctuating it.

SB - I can't really hear what I am doing.

I was surprised that when I sat down at the piano, I didn't just go 'dut, dut, dut' and contribute to the quaver type thing, that was happening.

+++

SB - The players are so sensitive, as soon as I sat down to that thing, the space was made for me.

(Comes to stillness SB up turns the TP)

SB - Wow, what was that?

DL – That was you.

SB - Can I see that again

It is really interesting that we see this woman filming it, but we never get to see it from her perspective.

Yeah, (laugh) It can't be good for the piano (laugh)

I think, sometimes, I get into these little ostinato where I try to incorporate the pitches that I can hear around me, into something continuous. yet encompasses them.

(PW violin theme)

I didn't see PW move. It is interesting that he moved away from the piano, facing it.

+++

SB - I think I remember sensing now that you guys could do detail much better than I could. Because of the fluid boundary between unpitched and pitched noise with the stringed instruments and the trumpet. And the sense of gesture that you can get.

(SB starts the bashing chords on the piano)

+++

SB - And I'm deliberately using double octaves, I think, because it was ... they are like big slabs of sound. I can't deal with, I can't do those tiny little tweets and shifts that you guys can do, so what can I contribute here? And on the piano here, the kind of ... So if I can't contribute in a tiny micro gesture way, maybe I'll do these massive slabs. (laugh)

It's very much a classical piano sound the double octave, and ...

Yes, it is interesting that with me it is very much like an off and on switch, isn't it. Turn it on for a couple minutes and then just see where the music is. I was just doing John Zorn's Cobra with the students yesterday, and he treats improvisers like on/off switches in that. But what ... the core of the group which is you, Philipp, Marcio, and LS ... is a much more continuous, amorphous thing.

DL – Clarity of personal.

SB - No, I mean cellist, violinist, trumpet player and yourself. That's what I consider to be the core element of the group, because they ... you can hear one of those instruments playing all the time.

DL – That's interesting.

SB - Whereas, I think, guitar, electronics, and myself are like outsiders if you know what I mean.

+++

SB - Remember, one thing that I think I have spoken about, which I seem to recall you took an exception to, was the idea of redundancy and ... (DL – Clarity)
I can't remember what context this was, but I remember saying that one of my aims as an improviser was to try and reduce the redundancy to a minimum. That it would always exist. And I think you took an exception to it ... because the value judgement that redundancy was a bad thing. But at least in my contribution to the improvisations that I have watched today, I can see that borne out as an approach. Like I am either going to be making a real difference here or I am not going to play at all.

DL – I can't remember why I would have taken offence to that I'll reflect on that.

SB - Well, it's slightly a puritanical approach ...

DL – but the clarity that results from that sense of ... It is very evident to me the level of listening and the level of ... that line of questioning that seems to be happening, occurring within most of the players. That idea of 'what can I contribute to this?' and that very much came through in the Music-based Underscores as well, as something that was very ... that sense of economy. I've always thought of it as economy.

SB - I think also, I'm aware of the tendency to creep in and do little bits and then disappear. And I tend to deliberately try and reject that and do the opposite of that. Do you see what I mean?

Shall we carry on?

>+++

SB - Some of this sounds great, David.

These things remind me of like 4'33", these bits where you shut the piano lid, that kind of structurally dividing music up somehow, with the physicality of it.

DL - where you close the lid?

SB - Mmm ... Or when someone moves from one space to another, you know.

DL – Structurally, I think they do punctuate the improvisation.
Did you have something over the keyboard at that stage?

SB - I think I had closed the lid to trap a black cloth into the ... But the thing is that I can still see the keyboard. ... Oh, no the black cloth was inside, so it was muting the strings. And that was interesting, because I can't remember whether... this pizzicato and the guitar player's contribution, is a result of me doing that, or whether I did that in response to that. Do you see what I mean?

But the band is just great, because that sort of thing just seems to happen quite organically.

I'll skip forward in a second

Sometimes I just find myself just smiling

+++

SB - OK

+++

SB - mmm

+++<

SB - When I was ... younger, I used to find it so hard to listen to orchestral recordings, because there was so much information, and I didn't know what to listen to. And I found it much easier to listen to string quartet or piano. This is when I was into classical music. And the same thing happened when I got into free improvisation. I would be slightly overwhelmed and almost a little bit upset by the amount of information that was in like an Evan Parker trio recording. There was more information than I could ever possibly take in. And it took me a long time to realise that you just do your best (laugh), and just take in as much as you can, but there is no way that you can take in everything. And I used to think that that was kind of, there was some kind of redundancy in that. And in some ways, that is why I kind of liked the AMM approach and the reductionist approach in that. I didn't really like the energy in it, because I loved the energy in like the free jazz playing. But at the same time I wanted .. There was just too much information. And there was a lot of information wasted, I felt.

DL – A lot thrown out there.

SB - Yeah. Because it wasn't absorbable, so some of it was redundant. And there was a form of redundant information, when there is just too much. Like McCoy Tyner's stuff and Elvin Jones' stuff on Love supreme. I mean it's amazing. And

now I realise that it is a composite thing and it all creates one energy. But I used to have problems listening to it all.

>+++

SB - Wow

+++

SB - This is like one of the first times where everyone's is really been going for it, at the same time.

Who creates that?

That's PW on his electronics, No he is sitting down.

+++

SB - MM is moving.

+++ (Music calming down)

1.00'00"

+++ (just piano, now)

+++

SB - I didn't realise that everyone was gathering around the piano

+++ (laugh)

SB - Spring sonata

+++

SB - And there it is me trying to find it on the piano with the cloth on. It was almost like Phil had given me a challenge.

And you have got a wild glint in your eye there David as you look over to us.

Where is LS?

Oh, he is behind the thing (in the corner of the room)

+++ (piano trill)

SB - I don't think the trill would have happened without PW quoting Beethoven. And he makes sense of it.

DL – is this another example of you a sense of continuity?

SB - I guess so, yeah.

+++

SB - And here, it is not there for nothing because it grew out of something.

+++

SB - It is like Beethoven is melting.

+++

DL – That's nice

+++

SB - Is that MM?

DL – It is mostly PD.

+++

SB - LS is circular breathing.

+++

SB - Somehow, the specter of F major is still hanging in the air.

+++

SB - Who is that, is that PD? (JM ... and PD)
Because it could have ended there, it's an interesting coda.

+++

SB - Nice ending.

+++> (laugh)

DL – The clarity of the ending, it didn't die away.

SB - Was that JM finishing that with that ding,ding?

DL – I do have some additional questions, stemming from that.

It was lovely to hear it back. David. it is really nice.

DL – How important was the visual do you think?

SB - Well I didn't see it the first time around. So ... how important is it? Yeah it is interesting. What is interesting is the ... PW walking around waving the incenser, at the beginning marks a thing., and when I get up and walk over to the Toy piano it marks a thing. Even when I am opening and closing lids on the piano it seems to mark a thing.

And when MM goes over and sits opposite PD, it marks a separate trio part of the music as well. So, they are ... Yeah, they do mark a thing. And when I do, put

that black cloth in the piano, then there is ... What is interesting about that, is that in another context it could have been kind of 'ha ha theatre' but in this, it's a ... I don't know, it seems to ... It doesn't seem to stick out.

DL – No, absolutely. When we got loud, just before we got onto the Beethoven, where you aware of, do you draw on qualities of rhythm?

SB - Yeah, that particular bit with the waves. I think ... I had to leave gaps, so I could hear other people, but also ... because it is quite a loud instrument, an open piano, playing octaves down the bottom.

I wonder how much ... that metaphor of dropping a pebble in, is quite accurate through a lot of my improvising. So, I will do a little thing and then listen and see how it has gone down, and then play another little thing, and listen. I perhaps find it hard to listen whilst I am playing, so I don't know.

You are right that was a really nice point where everyone was playing, pretty full on. It was the only real tutti in the whole gig, I think.

DL – there were a couple in the first bit I think..

SB - But that was quite sustained, for a good three minutes, I think.

1.11.21

DL – The blurred boundaries. You mentioned actually at the end of this one. 'What is left when you take the conventional boundaries away, who is going to be in the position of the performer and the listener? And whether it is actually going to be theatre.' you just touched on the discipline of theatre. Is there anything that you want to add, in terms of a sense of blurred boundaries within this process that you think contributes to the musical process, and actually contributes to the work of the ensemble?

SB - Can you say that again?

DL – This idea of blurred boundaries, the audience member joining us there. You say that you have got your eyes closed, a lot of the time. What is your take, six months on, your idea of the blurred boundaries, and the breaking of the conventional mould of performance.

What is the benefit of this, for the performer ... and possibly as a listener, and even as a promoter, as an organizer of performances. What do you see as the benefit of a model like this? if there is one that is.

SB - I think it allows for what can be quite an impenetrable sounding thing, to be read through movement, and for the audience to engage with the musicians as agents. Because there is a physical side to what they are doing as well. I think that helps. It helps to open it up the process to a wider audience, and helps them engage and read the process. It helps them engage and read the process more, easily and more meaningfully. ... But it has to be musicians like the good team you have picked. It couldn't be just any old musicians.

DL – So what are the specific qualities that you would say are needed for this sort of work to flourish?

SB - What qualities are needed?

I think it would be interested to experiment with more interdisciplinary ensembles. That would be really useful. It would be really interesting, I think. It would open up further.

DL – As in different musical genres being represented or ?

SB - No, dancers, poets, you know. Different types of performance artists, basically

DL – So, that comes back to a point that you made with regards to the sense of externalisation of the listening process. Which was following that performance and you said that we had two video cameras. In the previous one where we had Catherine and we had the children drawing and we had a sense of inclusivity.

SB - Yeah, well the people like TF, well like on the Whitstable gig where everybody had a pad of paper, it was an Evan Parker solo gig, and they made that into a film. I think But basically, I have done these kinds of gigs, like for example 'People eating sound that we did, and I did it in London 6 times. The listeners become like really essential co-collaborators. And what's happening when those listeners are eating sound, they hear the music and the put the food in their mouth. All the meaning is created by them. They are the people that bring the thing to life. Just the fact that they are eating, that kind of made their listening more active. So, they kind of realised it a bit more. But it happens in all gigs. So, if you could somehow, bring alive the active nature of listening through them either videoing, or doing drawings, or doing paintings, or whatever. Then I think everyone Basically, the listeners are already great creative collaborators, just to be listening with understanding and not to be getting up and walking out. Yeah, I think that might be a good way forward to empower the audience. You know they have started doing that, there is a lot of drawing happening in these type of things, isn't there? But it is normally just one individual artist. But the long-term nature of that, you could create like, with Free Range or like Loom, or the Bloom collective in Bristol, you can kind of get a community of people together, who are musicians and they would be listeners occasionally and then sometimes they would ... And like the Smugglers collective.

One other things you have got a big ensemble like that so that. Most of the people don't play all the time. Which means that for half the time, half the ensemble are audience. And in that situation, it's often not much difference between the audience and the musicians.

DL – No and that was something that was a feature of a number of the performances where the musicians did And they spoke from that perspective as well.

SB - I wonder if you could Evan Parker's large ensemble, because they are the only comparable ensembles in my mind. That I have experienced. And I wonder what would happen if they were in a similar situation, and whether they would play differently?

DL – Yes, well, we did this with the orchestra as well, the LIO. Yes, that is what they did. It was also pleasing to hear that ... it was still recognizable as the LIO. So, it is in some way it was the same. but musicians are just drawing on what is available, and of course the palate is slightly larger. ... It is pleasing actually that it hasn't become a drastically different thing. Which I think is really good.

DL - Recap

SB - Sorry. I keep going off in tangents. We have both read the Jacques Attali book, and in it at the end he says that in the future music might become ... No, it was Marcel Cobusson who says that 'Music is like ... modelling ways of societies and ways of being.

DL - Attali says that as well, that music fore-tells as much as it represents the society, the past and present, it also foretells the future.

SB - Yeah, Because I think we are doing things before we think them. And this is, I think engaging for the audience and therapeutic for the musicians. And causes us to perhaps reconsider what we do or like experience what we do in a different light. Because something about the social hierarchies are redistributed.

DL - A sense of not knowing --- a sense of collectively - You have already touched on it with the throwing of the pebble in. Is there anything that you can add with regards to a sense of not knowing and the scope for the individual to grow. Is there anything that you can comment on a sense of uncertainty.

SB - When you say that I am thinking of the classroom because I am a teacher, I'm quite used to people being a bit reticent and trying various strategies in order to free up the energy in the room or with the students. And I think that impacts what I am doing there.

So, you might do something quite outlandish to free up the students. So that they feel a little less shy. I wish I could do it more socially.

DL - Could you just say something about the sense of redundancy, so that I am clear as to what you mean by redundancy.

SB - Well, my views of that have changed from doing many of the Search and reflect pieces with students over the years. So, there is a particular piece in that called the Triangle, where you sit yourself down in a triangle and you aim for the line between each of the other musicians. And you're playing in that context is ... just giving out a signal so that other people can hear you. It does not matter what you do, it's just scribbling is what John Stevens thinks. It's scribbling. And, so the purpose of the playing is just so that other people can hear you by. And so I realised that when we were all jamming then, there was no way that we can process all the information that is happening and ... meaningfully respond having processed it all. That is just not going to happen. But, in a sense, what we are doing is giving out signals so that we kind of know that each other is present, and we can take what we can from those signals and process it back in.

So, that process of redundancy partly comes out of being a slightly control freakish solo player most of the time. Where it does matter then, because you can play stuff which could be edit- ... It comes out of a process of editing. Because my first album is made out of about three or four years-worth of live recordings which I just edited down. So, for me in that respect, redundancy is just stuff that I can edit out, that doesn't need to be in the final recording. It's a process of composing using live improvisation as your basic material. And then that feeds into my work as an improviser. I self-edit on the hoof. So, I think it is less relevant in a concert in that context.

DL – So you are not structural when you play solo.

SB - Yeah.

DL- As opposed to ...within this ensemble you said that... because in some way that contradicts the notion that you were saying that you shut my eyes and you are not really thinking about structures, when you are within an ensembles like that. You are much more sort of reactive to what is going on.

SB - I think ... structure is just as intuitive as detail. Really, like you think 'I'm bored now, it feels like there is a pregnant pause, or it feels like this is a big climax.' So, all of those things would cause for playing that would have a structural purpose but they are intuitively felt.

DL – Is there anything else you want to add? We have covered a lot actually.

SB - No. it has been a real pleasure to revisit and I look forward to doing some more in the future

A4.2

Interview Transcription – Loz Speyer (LS)

Date recorded 5/12/2017

DL - instructions about interview process 00'45"
01'31"

DL - How did you feel about your involvement in the performances and can you sum up your experiences of the MiS performances.

LS - Yeah sure, I really enjoyed doing it. I did three gigs, right? I enjoyed all of them ... The last one I found a bit challenging but enjoyed it very much as well. 02'08"

I really enjoyed having this movement element thrown into it. Into an otherwise familiar thing. It just opened up another whole new dimension to improvisation for me, and it made perfect sense with what we were doing. And of course being a trumpet player it is fairly easy to move ... either between playing, or when I am playing as well, to some extent.

02'40"

Yeah, so basically it was a very positive experience. The only thing I didn't like, and this was pretty much the same feeling in every gig, was that business of verbal feedback immediately after the gig. And I found that jarring every time. It didn't really matter whether it involved the audience or just the band. Usually it involved both as it turned out. But I felt that for both parties it might destroyed the magic of the gig in a way. Because particularly for improvised music, well probably for any music, you don't want to be pinned down, or be discussing it, or hearing other peoples verbalised opinions about it, straight after, because everyone has got their own experience of what happened, which is beyond words. So, I felt that was a bad time to do that, even if it had been in the interval, perhaps one could have coped with it. But straight after a performance it's hard to do that. And I have noticed that if one says anything to other musicians who have just been playing, in anyway negative, people can be very, very sensitive to what is said. And I have noticed that in myself, when people have said something, or like a chance remark from someone in the audience. You are actually processing what you have just done, and you are in a vulnerable state, and you had to have a sort of understanding that it was part of a whole thing, which takes a little while to accommodate in your mind. If people are immediately putting it into rationalised views of things, it kind of breaks it up and breaks up that process.

04'32"

So, I didn't like that aspect of it. I realised that you needed to get some kind of feedback, but I thought there were other ways to do it.

- Loz explains a previous experience with another PhD student.

That was the one thing that jarred with me.

05'12"

But the actual performances were great, you know.

DL - You mentioned that the last one was a bit difficult.

LS - I think I made an obstacle for myself, before the gig, and I said something which was really unnecessary. Because I was kind of, on the way to the gig, I was acutely aware that I was the only horn player, and by far the loudest instrument potentially. Because I knew that PD was on electronics, and that could have been anything. But I know what he is like from years back. It was probably something from years back, because I used to go to PW workshop, and that is where I know him from.

5'46"

And there would be this aesthetic of extreme quietness which I found quite oppressive. And me and a couple of saxophone players also found it obviously. But I was in my twenties, and so I was still trying to work things out. And I saw him as a part of that. But actually, I've played in plenty of settings like the LIO where there is a lot of quietness going on and it is really interesting to cope with. I just sort of wished I hadn't said anything about it before the gig to the other musicians now. As it sort of raised an obstacle that didn't need to be there. And it was in my own mind as well. So, at the end of the first half, I was in a bit of a mood. I think PW noticed and he came over and said some really nice things about what I was doing, about that night and generally. And I was touched by it, especially as this feeling came from his workshop. I think he saw that I needed a bit of smoothing over.

DL - He is the most incredibly empathic man

LS - Yeah, it was incredible how he did that, because people don't normally do that. And I realised that I had been rather silly. So, it was all kind of in my own head really, this thing. Because, actually, it was a really great group to play with.

7'03"

LS - Listening and watching the video of that gig ... It's not such attractive music or melodic. The other gig was more melodic, the other I'Klectik gig that I played on. That one was more austere and kind of weird. But there was some brilliant stuff going on, and I found some great spaces to play in. And that thing about playing with string players ... There were some really beautiful string trio stuff going on in the last piece between the three of you.

7'35"

DL - In the last one there is a really lovely tutti that come together, and it is very noticeable that you are actually the quietest person there. It's so beautiful. Your playing is sublime I thought it was wonderful.

LS - The bit in the last piece, that I enjoyed particularly, was when I went behind that screen. And the strings you were all in a huddle by the piano, playing something really sweet. It sounded like it was Mozart ...

DL - Beethoven. Spring sonata

LS - Oh, was it? It actually was? You were playing something from memory were you?

DL - It came from Philipp.

LS - Really. And you all picked up on it, and knew the parts?

DL - It's a trio so it doesn't have a double bass in it.

LS - And then I was doing a sort of bebop approach to it, over in the corner. And I was keeping my distance deliberately, so you could hear each other. And I saw, on the film, that some of the audience moved over towards the strings, because I was really going for it, behind that screen, and really enjoying having that as a backdrop.

8'32"

I was treating it as a backdrop, but I was really enjoying what I was hearing. You know.

So, that was an interesting dynamic. And I noticed on the video that um ... Oh what's his name? ... JM moved right over to the opposite corner from me (laugh), because he is extremely quiet. I mean I do find him hard to play with, because I can never hear him.

DL - He's very subversive. He chooses to isolate himself. But he is not the quietest person.

LS - No, he's not. And part of it is that you can't identify which sound is his, because ... he has a range of sounds, and you don't know what he is going to do next. Like he's got some high scrapey sounds and that thing with the fan. And yeah, I was aware of what he was doing a bit.

9'30"

DL - You performed on three separate occasions, can you say something about the differences between the three of them. Between the LIO gig, the MIO, and the Septet.

10'02"

LS - Well the first one was the LIO one, at the I'Klectik, and um ... There was a great sort of feeling of enthusiasm about that one. I think there were some younger players there. I remember CR, who I hadn't met before, just coming in beaming with excitement at what we were going to do. And I thought, wow, what a great attitude. And then the playing was ... It was not just her, it was other people and older people as well who were kind of involved. And there was this enthusiasm about it. And there were a lot of players so you broke us down a bit into smaller groups. And a lot of variety. And the music was similarly, kind of, quite kind of joyful and melodic, as I said before. And there was more variety in it, possibly. because of the different groups. I think

In the last one at I'Klectik, I don't think you split us into groups, because we were a smaller group to start with, and we all played together all of the time. In that one, they were more experienced, they were very experienced improvisers. We were all kind of veterans of the music, whatever ages that they were. And that was a more ... they were more kind of dour about it, if that's the word. And less movement.

11'27"

The first one, with the LIO, that first group there were a lot of people using the movement a lot, including the audience were too. There were more audience, so it was kind of ... more lively. And the second I'Klectik gig there was a very small audience and less movement also from the musicians ... and more of this austere aesthetic, ... and maybe more tension in the music, I felt. There was some real kind of prolonged periods of concentration. There were two quite long pieces weren't there. The first one and the last one, and the middle one. There were only those three, weren't there?

Whereas in the first one there were a lot of shorter pieces.

So, those two compare because they were at the same venue and ... And then the MIO one, it was very different. Mind you I was feeling, really quite ill at that gig, so ... as you know (laugh) I was sneezing all the way up in the car. But the worst bit was all the hanging around, as I was feeling really kind of lousy. I'm not really sure what to make of that gig. I don't remember. I really loved what we did, as a quartet. And the rest of it, I haven't listened to it recently. I'm not sure what to make of that group of people. Both playing to them and listening to them. And it was a long gig, there was some different things going on, you know. At different times. There were quite a few different groups again weren't there.

At first it felt a bit awkward. Were we the first thing that played at all?

DL - We had done a little play before, once we had arrived.

LS - Oh yeah, just as a warm-up. But we were the first part of the performance, so you didn't open it up to the whole group until later. ... Yeah, and then there was a long set, where everyone played at the end. So, there was just one time when everyone played?

DL - Yeah, with a 45 minute tutti at the end.

13'53"

LS - With some of it in the dark, because one of the audience people turned off the lights. ... Well, I'm trying to ... They are such a bunch of individuals that group in Liverpool, and characters, you know, and every one of them seems to come from a different personality and different experience of improvised music. And, I realise that some of them are quite experienced in the music and some of them not at all. So, it is a funny group to work with. Because you can't just treat them as a workshop group, because some of them are really experienced, and you can't just treat them as a professional group, because some of them really are not. I had a similar thing when I did this project with them before, when we composed stuff. I felt that some people didn't have much understanding of the basics of free improvisation, like there was one woman that just dominated everything with her keyboard, which kind of got in the way. But there was some really ... I was particularly aware of that in the big group at the end. And I remember going over there and using my movement and my playing to try and break it up in a way.

15'17"

There was also a thing of being able to weave between people, and I think the movement was very useful in that. It seemed at first people were a bit shy, during our set, we moved a lot but the audience didn't. And they were like 'what the fuck is this?' Excuse my language. I thought that some of them might be wondering and thinking 'Ha! why are these guys, being set up to start this thing?'

You know, like they were not liking the elitist thing about it, but hey. If there was one, which I don't think there was.

DL - That is something that I hadn't considered (about the elitism).

LS - Well, I am a bit paranoid about what they might think. Because I went and presented a workshops up there, and I wasn't sure how they felt about it. But I was feeling pretty ill as well. But I think people warmed into the movement thing, and then some people kind of ... It was just harder to pull the thing together. Some people were really going for it with the movement, to what seemed to quite an extreme kind of way. But, you know, that's how they felt it. But then other people were quite restrained about it. Some of it seemed to be quite ridiculous. ... But I remember towards the end of the really big group one, the very last piece, there was some really beautiful ... It got into this massive sound. Very, very loud, and really prolonged and, to me, it was really quite ecstatic that thing. It was like a late Coltrane type blast of high energy. And there was something quite spiritual about it. And it was beautiful, I thought it was beautiful. And then in the feedback session, the lady singer, went and complained about it. She had the opposite view of that, that it was all sort of ego. And I really felt that it was beyond that, and that was when we had gone beyond that. By making that much volume and noise, that you got beyond yourself. And she didn't obviously feel it that way. And whether she just found herself restricted because she was a vocalist or ... That is one example about how I didn't like the feedback. But there were some really good moments. I don't remember the rest of the gig so well. Sorry that wasn't very succinct at all.

DL - No, that was really clear, thank you.

17'52"

LS - But it was interesting how the Liverpool gig ... yeah there was a lot of movement in the end and ... I just think it was less cohesive than the other two gigs as a whole.

18'20"

David invites Los to start watching.

19'31"

MIO - Improvisation 1 - Los Speyer, Paloma Carasco Lopez, Ged Barry, David Leahy.

20'22"

LS - There's a kind of symmetry of where we started.

21'17"

Because we have done this before, the four of us, I feel like there is a lot of awareness about positioning, in relation to what we are playing from all of us. It's really good. Of course, you and Paloma have done a lot of it, with the movement.

It went from symmetry to three against one, to being fragmented. Now it's three against another one. ... (Cadential stillness in music) But course, being two strings and two horns there is kind of pairing going on which is basic.

22'22"

\\

23'01"

DL - Why did you go right down?

LS - To listen, right close to her strings to where she is making the sound. And also, as a gesture of listening. Perhaps I was having trouble hearing her. I mean, bending like that when you are blowing an instrument. It's like, going into the earth and drawing the strength from the earth. It's kind of rooting you. But it is also maintaining the blowing while you are bending is a particular thing. There is also a lot of low positions in Chi Gong where you are drawing energy up from the earth. Or connecting into the earth, I should say.

24'24"

LS - So now we have gone to a low string and a lower horn, to a higher string and a higher horn pair, pairs. And now, it has changed again. The audience seems to be up for it, actually. I like the way that that guy has stuck himself right in the middle (referring to an audience member seated in between the four musicians).

26'20"

LS - Is that you making that really high sound?

DL - Yes

26'52"

It's got into a really nice space now. It's like really sparse and quiet, but there is a real feeling of moving forward in it.

And I think the movement has helped us get there. Like we have become more still. And we have kind of gathered up the audience over the first seven minutes.

27'58"

LS - There is something like a slow blues in this. And I was playing like minor thirds in this: Keeping it really simple.

We are kind of wailing aren't we.

28'51"

DL - Were you aware of the spacing - how we balanced out the space?

LS - Yeah, constantly.

DL - I mean when we were doing it.

LS - Yeah, I think I was. I think we all were.

Oh yeah, this bit, audience engagement. Use him as a backrest (laugh)

(Loz sits down and leans back on an audience member)

Well, it had that kind of feeling in the music. Lying back in this beautiful kind of slow moving blues wail. And so, if you could lean back on somebody, it would be just like perfect. And, also I was knackered. And then of course it moves. He gets even more laid back (audience member moves to lie on the floor between the four musicians).

30'01"

DL - My back is to you and Paloma there, did you have a sense that I was blocking you out?

LS - I don't remember. ... No, it didn't feel like that. ... I mean you were relating to the guy lying on the floor, right, and the audience, so you could do what you needed to do. Even if I didn't know why. And even if I can't hear you, it doesn't matter, I trust that you are doing something that needs to be done (laugh). But that is something about being in a group, that there is a trust that builds up.

DL - Trust is a good word for this group, actually.

LS - Well I would imagine that it is part of any group that you kind of learn to trust each other's playing, even if you can't understand why someone is doing what they are doing. You accept what it is.

31'04"

It feels to me watching, that the audience is with us. That, you know, they are not hostile at all. We have brought them in and it was a good start to the whole evening.

31'40" (music ends)

LS - Yeah, lovely. I like the way it goes to something so ... it's very lively at the beginning and then it goes down to something really silent, without any need to round it off with anything big. It's a good way into the space for the whole evening, I imagine.

DL - The room was quite problematic. Did you find that room was quite live?

LS - Yeah it was very bright wasn't it, and especially with a trumpet it is kind of tricky. But it is nice playing in a bright acoustic it is just that you have to keep it under control. But it is easier to produce, you don't struggle to produce sound as you would in a dead space.

33'00"

Discussion as to what to watch next.

Recording two

LIO Final Tutti improvisation.

First 4 minutes of watching was not recorded. Notes from discussion that were written down. ---- Loz felt that the opening felt restrained and wondered if the number of musicians and audience members moving was distracting.

1'32"

LS - Everyone is wandering around looking a bit lost. But perhaps that is OK, maybe that is what this one was.

2'01"

Yeah, it seems like the movement has given us more equality with the audience. And then the musicians are not ... no one is coming forward to make a musical statement, but everyone is playing background. So, it has got this kind of amorphous texture, which is a nice thing. It's kind of strong musically. And it is slowly, slowly building, no one is ... well someone is giving it a bit now, but ... five minutes in and it is still doing that, you know. And everybody, the audience and band are moving equally, which didn't happen so much in the others.

DL - And the musicians are moving and not playing.

LS - Yeah, listening. Well it was such a big group wasn't it.

4'21"

LS - You get a lot of scrapping down this end.

5'34"

LS - Wow (commenting on the sound and experience from the view inside the piano)

DL - Where are you?

LS - He's really homing in on the piano.

7'20"

DL - Do you recall any idea about what motivated you to move to different spaces or stay where you were?

LS - Not particularly.

DL - See you are in the centre of the room there.

LS - Maybe that was my solo. It seems to be.

DL - You are playing very quietly.

LS - Oh, is CK doing the more soloist trumpet things? and I am playing a long note and sort of rotating around the room. Yeah, no I thought it was me but it was her. So, I am kind of doing the opposite to a solo.

DL - That's you.

8'50" (Music ends)

DL - what was interesting about watching that one with you is that, with you being at the LIO in the weekend, is there anything with regards to that group you could say? You mentioned that that was quite a young and vibrant lively ensemble.

LS - Yeah, I didn't like this piece as much as the earlier ones.

DL - This one was a little bit more of a ...

LS - But, it has its own thing, it has got its own integrity about it. Everybody walking around bit like zombies. Maybe it's a bit painful to watch it. It's like a load of sleep walkers. But I think that was kind of the affect that everyone was after in a way. It is what they chose to do in that piece, in a way. And it might have been quite a bit different from the other pieces. I can't remember so much. But the one I remember and the one that I watched recently, was the one that I was in a small group. But that bit at the end when I went into the middle. Perhaps I was thinking of it as a sort of focus of the room, like the centre point of the room. And the trumpet just being able to revolve like on the point, on the centre point ... Like the centre of the circle and revolving around and radiating the same thing out around. I had a feeling of gathering together, I think. And playing really low,

quietly, just semitones and long notes. And moving in semitone quite a lot. Maybe it was like that.

DL - It came after the quartet with the two violinists, and I think that was the first time you had really gone right up to musicians to listen. And you commented, in the sharing, how you appreciated that idea that you could listen from across the space, and also from the perspective of the other musician if you went really close.

LS - Well, it was different from that one, because it was so sort of amorphous.

DL - You mentioned something about the quartet we watched from Liverpool, ... and the very measured sense of connection between the movement and the sound. And it actually becoming the movement matching the playing and adding to what you were doing musically.

LS - Yeah, well it seemed to be working particularly in that piece anyway.

DL - And the movement going from very pedestrian to a sense of theatricality.

LS - Oh yeah.

DL - Do you want to say anything about that?

LS - I'd forgotten about that point. I think that came out of this gig, or maybe it came out of the one we did the year before, when it got really theatrical, at I'Klectik remember?

DL - When we had dancers also, yeah.

LS - That got amazing ... I seem to remember saying something about that in the feedback of this gig.

DL - You did.

LS - I wonder if I felt that was happening at that time? Because it didn't come across to me now. Except that bit where I said everyone was looking like zombies, this kind of sleep walking. Maybe we were all playing out a part. Like a theatrical part in a movement piece. Yeah, I think I did feel that, at the time, in that piece particularly. And there was that woman there who was particularly into movement already, the young dancer woman who spoke up at the end. And she spoke of something like that, I remember. And as you said, some of the musicians were moving while not playing.

13'45"

DL - Another point that you made was the weight of listening as the performer, as a listener. That seemed to be a recurring theme. This way of engaging spatially and musically, offering you a different way of listening. I would be interested to know if ... has there been a sense of a legacy of that in your playing since these performances?

LS - I haven't been doing a lot of improv gigs since then, although I have done two LIO gigs.

And the one the other day, yeah, I was thinking. I was looking around because I was right on the end of this long line. There was this sort of double line of players right across the room ... and two drummers, one at each end. A couple strong bass instruments near me and two double basses on the far side. A tuba and a contrabass flute behind me next to one of the drummers. An incredible thing, I have never seen such a thing. He was a bit over amplified unfortunately, but some amazing sounds. But yeah, I was kind of straining to look around and not ashamed of moving my body to get a better perspective of who was doing what. And wanting to move, but not being allowed to, because that was the set up, that nobody moved. So, I was aware of a comparison between what we had been doing earlier in the year. But at the same time, I think it worked really well, that gig, on Sunday just gone. Because in the second half, Phil came over to our side, away from the rest of the violins. So, there were two or three violins over there and him next to the tuba player, in this five-piece brass section. So, I was kind of listening out for him and also looking out and listening out for the other violins across the room, who I could sometimes hardly hear, but I could hear them. And I was thinking about Caroline's game of scanning the whole room for sounds, scanning through the whole band, each player in turn, trying to see if you could hear everybody, at various times. And there was some great stuff in the free improvisations I thought. There were some good conceptions too. Anyway, yeah perhaps, there was stuff. ... Because I have always found that exercise of Caroline's very difficult, but I was mentally walking around the band, in order to do that thing of listening to the quieter players across the room. I mean because there were these three trombone players right next to me, between me and the rest of the band. Who, fortunately, weren't playing all together all the time, but when they were, they were loud.

17'01"

DL - The idea of being able to see the music (referring to the website and multiple perspective recordings). How important is it or do you think it is, and do you think that this is a useful tool?

LS - Sometimes. It is very different, you know, ... Sometimes it is very nice to watch a video. I didn't particularly enjoy watching that last one, on the video. But I seem to remember, now you mention it, enjoying it very much at the time for the theatrical quality. Seeing it at the time and being part of that was great. I didn't like the split screen thing it was too busy. Perhaps it was that. But some of them work really well on the video, maybe it's the smaller groups. And I, particularly, when I watched them first, like in the summer. I found myself going with the moving camera and enjoying the very subjective, you know, you can only get one point of view at a time and where ever they happen to be going and you would not know what was coming next. But I enjoyed that, and I used that point of view more, because you have got the choice.

DL - And your connection to the audience. You mentioned, in that last one, that there was a sense of equality between ...

LS - Yeah.

DL - Is there anything else that you can say, in regards to anything at the time or any subsequent thoughts about our relationship to audience, and how you value it.

LS - What in general?

DL - Yes.

LS - Well, It suddenly sprung into mind, that gig that we did in August, in that sort of function situation, where we were able to grab the audience by moving among them. So, it had a theatrical element, which they could relate to even if they weren't into improvised music. And that was a sort of extreme example of using movement like that. And I think it has that affect, potentially not always. ... It seemed to work very much in this one that we just watched that the audience were very much in tune with what we were ... with your idea of movement. Some of them were movers anyway themselves, or one of them was.

DL - I didn't know her.

LS - Whereas the second gig at I'Klectik with the seven piece group. I found them ... well like MM's wife, got up and started making sounds which was completely off the track really. It just didn't seem to make sense with what was going on. And it was just her experimenting with taking part in it. But it seemed like there was less intuitive understandings of what the possibilities were.

DL - As you recall, she had said she didn't know what she was meant to be doing, and I did talk to her in the interval after doing the introduction. But she still couldn't grasp it.

LS - That is funny, because she is someone who has heard a lot of improvised music and she's often at gigs that MM is doing. But I felt that that older group, the musicians didn't quite get it either. In the way that the younger group got it. Although they are not necessarily younger, they are just a different group. I don't know if they were younger really (laugh), on average, we had some veterans in there too. But it seemed like the second group was more stuffy about it and they didn't want to move much. Which suited the music and it kind of went with the music. So, I don't know which one came first really - the chicken of the egg.

DL - In the 'Klectik one, in the second improvisation, we've got Sam under the piano banging the bottom, and you actually go over and play into the piano.

LS - Yeah, I was wondering when that happened. OK, it was that one. Well, some of us moved quite a lot. And some of us didn't. Whereas in the first one, there was more movement generally.

DL - JM generally only moves once in the improvisations. And it is usually from here to there or back to there again. He has his own spots that he tends to go to. Quite often, someone will come to him and he will move.

LS - Oh. Yeah, I remember going close to him during this gig. Or was it the other gig? At some point because I just needed to hear what he was doing, and he didn't move away, I don't think. It was good to do that. It is kind of like a gesture of friendship to do that, isn't it? It's kind of ... there is this dynamic going on among the group and you can change something by moving, which normally you are not allowed to do. There is this tacit assumption that you are not allowed to move, so it leaves something stuck, whereas a bit of movement, a gesture of listening can mean a lot to somebody. It can bring a kind of closeness, a warmth.

DL – Like that ‘gesture of listening’ that you mentioned with Paloma. That is a very nice way of putting it.

LS – Well, it was real listening too, because my ear was right close to the sound holes of her cello, you know. Where she is producing the sound. But yeah, it was one of those times when I didn’t mind it being visible.

DL - So, would I be right in saying that there is a sense that I have permission to do that in this environment?

LS - Yeah, but some people it seems that they don’t see it that way. Or it hasn’t occurred to them, or they feel too restrained to do that. I think in our group, in our quartet, we have got an understanding between us, that we are all doing that in our own different ways. We are all being quite ... I mean JB is more static than some of us, but he is still doing that. There is no feeling of him being inhibited or anything. Whereas in the other groups, that are just thrown together, there is not necessarily a common understand about what it is about, you know. And also, some people are on fixed instruments, whereas we are not. I think that movement thing, that we have in that quartet, has a lot of potential. It’s a lovely group.

Recording 3

Talking about the beginning of the first piece at the I’Klectik with the septet.

LS - I remember PD saying, he was right after me, that he would have enjoyed it if that very quiet opening had gone on for longer. That it could have gone on for longer. Which was kind of like the opposite of what I was saying. I thought he was right actually, you know, I agreed with him.

DL - Yes absolutely, but other people had taken it, unfortunately, that you had said that it was very, very quiet, and the audience had been affected by it.

LS - And they took that as a negative thing. Well I had stuck my neck out at the beginning by saying, ‘I hope you are all not going to force me to play really quietly. And that turned out to be a bad thing to do to myself and possibly to the group. It made it a difficult evening for me, to have said that, and to have thought of it that way.

DL - I didn’t read in to it, in that way.

Recording 4

LIO small group 1. Loz Speyer, Robert Jarvis, Adrian Northover, James Malony, and David Leahy

DL - Have you played that much with RJ in LIO

LS - Yeah, we are often next to each other. Not that many times. I enjoy playing with him. I enjoyed it the other night. Of the three trombones I could relate best to him, I think. I think we have quite a similar approach to the instruments.

DL - It exemplifies it the way that you both came in that way.

LS - Yeah.

Yeah, this one was interesting, because it's got ... Because AN comes in, at the beginning, with something quite different from us two and then later on the pairing changes. Because I watched this one, the other night. I find myself still trying to work out what JM was doing. I heard some high stuff at the beginning. Oh yeah. I would have been happier if there had been a drummer in there.

DL - It is almost a trio with JM on the side.
There are very clear connections in this one.

LS - Yeah, there is clearly people doing things together and then not doing things together. And the pairings changing. I really like this piece of music actually it has got a lot in it.

DL - Is there anything with regards to your positioning. Do you have anything to say about how your listening changes, by positioning yourself away from, or near people?

LS - Well, I think this is that moment that I was talking about, when I went close to JM to try and hear him. But just because you are standing away from someone doesn't mean that you are not ... I was very connected to RJ, right from the beginning, because we are both brass and we both started with the same idea. And so, to go across to JM was to try and include JM more in my awareness, and express that without losing my connect with anyone else. But yeah, I think in this one, we were playing with our positions quite consciously, like we said about the quartet in Liverpool, that people were being sort of ... well the four of us that were moving, we quickly made a common understanding about it, of some sort.
6'37"

Is this where I switched to the flugal?

DL - You did.

LS - Yeah, and I went over to you. I was consciously being a sort of a rhythm section player. And I can feel better playing in the lower register on the flugal and I can relate better to what you are doing. And it has got a softer sound so it can work as a backing instrument in a way that the trumpet finds very difficult. The trumpet always stands out.

DL - So that was a conscious decision to come near me?

LS - Yeah, yeah. And to switch. Yeah I just wanted to join the other half of the band. And that is why I switched to flugal, as well.

DL - And again we are coming towards JM. Something that I have come up with is the idea of solidarity.

LS - Yeah.

DL - Because the other two have become exclusive and so we have come together to balance it.

LS - Yeah, they have haven't they. They've got their backs to us. It's all part of the affect. I think they are serenading CR. And she has walked off. (Laugh)

I like the way this piece goes right down to nothing at times, repeatedly. Maybe that is JM's influence.

7.38"

DL - I see AN heading off to the bar.

LS - And RJ in the opposite direction.

Yeah, it's kind of interesting, It's like a game of chess this piece. Isn't it?

DL - Very measured movements.

LS - Yeah, and statements. Who are you next to. Who's seat are you going to take.
8'10"

LS - That was a bit of Stratus Funk by George Russell on trombone.

DL - Testing the space, seeing how loud he can play.

LS - I think JM is testing us all seeing how quietly we can play (laugh).

No, but it has got a good affect. Now we are sort of evenly spaced, but he is right across.

09'38"

LS - I am wondering if the fact of having movement makes it go from something loud to something quiet. Because this is what the quartet piece in Liverpool did. I don't know how this one ends, but we have gone from something very busy to something very sparse. Mind you the ensemble piece, from here, went the other way, didn't it, from very quiet to quite full.

DL - It comes together as a trio in a moment.

10'23"

LS - (laugh)

DL - AN is way over in the corner

LS - Oh yeah, it's waking up again isn't it.

DL - JM has stopped.

LS - You are using a lot of movement, just in your body. We are really doing the jazz thing now, aren't we.

11'08" music ends

LS - Ah, there you go.
Nice.

DL - Short but sweet.

LS - Yeah. I like that one.

DL - Thank you, Loz.

A4.3

Transcription – Paloma Carrasco Lopez (PCL)

Interview date 18/6/2018

Recording 1.

DL - Asks to outline her background and how she got involved in free improvisation

PCL - Paloma explains how from a classical piano background, she returned to music after a number of years break through a series of workshops with Chefa Alonso. These were focused on improvised music which led Paloma to pick up the cello in order to be more mobile. Giving here the ability to enter into small ensembles with other improvisers associated with Musical Libre, an association established in 1996 for the promotion of free improvisation in Madrid.

We first met when I conducted the Madrid based orchestra, Orquesta Foco, in 2006. Since that time, Paloma had been to the UK where she had been a guest with the London Improvisers Orchestra and the Merseyside Orchestra. Her first experience of MiS was in 2016 when she performed with myself, Ricardo Tejero (saxophone), and Roland Ramanan (trumpet). The other members of the quartet featured in MIO were Loz Speyer (trumpet) and Ged Barry (saxophone) that both have a link to Spain with Ged living in Madrid for a number of years and Ged and Loz knowing each other from years before that in London.

4'47"

DL - Could you say something about your connection to dance?

PCL - I'm new in dance. And it began in 2012, it was casual, I was going with one friend to a workshop for a week of different things, it was in the holidays. Different things in this workshop and one of these things was Contact Improvisation. So, I found a curiosity about this. And then when I returned to Madrid I was trying to find jams to have a look and to participate. And then I decided to take some lessons, because I got a knee injury. And then I began to get really involved. I had this programme here in Estudio tres, and the most important thing is that I was finding ...

5'47"

The interest for me was that I was feeling, while I was dancing contact improvisation, the same processes that I was feeling when I was playing my instrument and concerning my relationship with others. So, I found a strong connection.

6'25"

PCL - And in fact my final course project for this programme in the school was oriented to trying something that is similar to what is now the Round-jam-Robin, for musicians and dancers. Exploring the way to make a common space for dancers and musicians to go through these same dynamics and ways to interact.

DL - It's possibly a hard thing to put into words - this connection that we have between music and movement. I think I am still struggling with that myself. But I agree with you that these are the same processes that are involved. Is there anything that you want to add. How do you sum that up? Intuitive processes or do you have another way of looking at it?

PCL - For example, what we call momentum in contact improvisation - taking something that is coming to you and taking it to another place. In music, also receiving a sound, or sonic idea, that takes you out of where you were, but taking this energy to create something new. Together with these other improvisers Very simple, the thing of contrasting ideas in sound, of contrasting, or supporting, or following ideas. It's the same in dancing. You can establish with your body, 'Here, I am to contrast your idea. Or to do something that is opposing what you are proposing. Or following you.

DL - But that sense of continuity of practice, that sense that you are sharing the space with others. It's a social practice and you are sharing process and you are co-creating process. And we are all together on the idea that we don't know what is going to happen next. I think all of those things are all quite pertinent, and shared between those two disciplines.

I have been focused on the idea of different kinds and aspects of listening. That's one aspect, I am sure there are many others.

How would you consider the practice of bringing this movement aspect back into music. What are some of the most attractive aspects of MiS for other musicians? Maybe we can come back to this question when we have finished listening.

10.56

- MIO improvisation 1.
(music starts)

12.30

DL - If I recall, Ged has just started towards us, I had suggested that we start together. This was the first performance.

PCL - Yeah, I remember you suggested we start as a group. A classical ensemble playing from only one position.

DL - So as to be a sort of example for everybody else. So ...

PCL - I feel it was too quick. (to move from the one place)

DL - Even in coming now?

PCL - No?

DL - I don't know, I just felt that my concern was that, I was wondering if I or we ... Was I imposing something? So, I question where we would have started otherwise. You know, right in front of the door is possibly not the best idea. And in a line, we didn't ... that was the only time that we didn't have clear eye contact with each other.

PCL - I didn't feel that it was an imposition, not much. I guess we just had to start the thing, to start the play. And it was interesting to start with this contrast, doing this thing as classically and then moving outwards.

DL - I mean if we go back, we were all very focused in on the listening. Because visually we were not engaged in what we were doing together, but Ged is slightly further away, but the three of us were all heads down focused on listening. We were very open to the sounds but not our visual (/spatial) connection.

PCL - That's true, which is the classical approach to playing, of musicians in general.

DL - this isn't so visible in the other improvisations that I have watched.

PCL - In my practice, with beginning to move and everything. This is one of the things, that I realised, I have changed totally. This thing of using my eyes, to see the space. It is not only my ears. I used to play for myself, just looking at the bridge of my instrument, you know. Being really open with my listening, but totally closed with my eyes. And this is something new for me. This is something that has changed since dancing. Since the dancing and since playing after becoming a dancer, I think. Not only playing in this type of situation but also playing impro with musicians only and no dancers, but having more awareness of the eyes.

DL - When you were playing with musicians, did you use to play with eyes closed or was it just focused on the bridge?

PCL - Yeah, now I think it is slightly changing. Yes, and more awareness about the room as well. Even if I am not moving. For example, yesterday with the orchestra, we had all this space and breaking the barriers between the audience and us. And in many moments, not only when the audience was conducting us but, I was feeling the energy of the space in a different way.

16'04"

And also, taking my sight from one musician to another, to the audience here, to you moving on the stage conducting us - once here, once there. A total perception ... a different way of perceiving.

DL - Do you think you play less because of your incorporation of information coming from your eyes?

PCL - Could be. It takes me to ... Yes, it takes me to not to be too much in sound. So, I am much more in space. Yeah, maybe, I haven't thought about that.

DL - I am just thinking of you yesterday, when we were coming into the auditorium. You were actually walking in with the cello above your head through the seats. Not the ideal position to be playing, but visually you were contributing quite considerably to the scene, to the experience.

PCL - Yes, I am having the feeling of that movement also sounding. Only having the movement of the cello, on top of me, over the audience as well, it was like - 'here is the sound coming'

DL - Yes, so even if you are not making a sound, it is a continuation of the music.

PCL - Yes, just the movement for me now, is like sound. Maybe, in a way.

DL - Beautifully said. Shall we carry on.

18'00 (music restarts)

DL - So that was just like an introduction that first minute or so.

PCL - Here it begins

DL - I had never seen that before. (the view from the handheld camera of the bows)

18'21"

OK, So, we are very together there.

PCL - yeah.

18.40 (change of view)

DL - So, you come behind me there. Now you go to Ged is that because I am not responding to you.?

20'23"

PCL - As I was observing that and before with the bows. We are like this, we are like this. It's like

DL - It's like counterpoint from each other.

PCL - I like in these situations, because I am also perceiving this as composition, not only sound but the way that we are ... like composing figures in the space, or like architecture. Or I don't know how to say.

DL - No that makes sense. So, it is like choreographic. You are focused on that?

PCL - Sometimes, it's like finding out bows are casually in parallel or like this (crossed). When you are doing the music, but at some moment it comes to you that 'Oh look at this, and what happens if I am now not focused on the music that I was doing, but what happens with this parallelism of the bows?'

DL - The physical geography

PCL - Yes. It came to me, in my mind now, that that happens quite often. Yesterday in the orchestra for example, with one of the dancers Carmen. On my right. I was playing and whatever and she moved closer to me a little bit, and then entering my eyes, my space, my view. And then perceiving her movement and then beginning to change and modify my music because of her movements, like following her movements. And she was following me as well of course. So, this is something that is modifying my way of playing improvised music, especially spatially.

DL - That is something that I consider in performance, the geographic aspect of the process. I have to be honest and say that ... as this was the first improvisation of the night and most of the people in the room were not known to me. I felt the clarity and the sense of inclusion possibly masked that idea of focusing on the idea of geography between us. And I have to apologise, and hope you didn't feel this, but there are a few instances when you come towards me and sort of go 'I don't want to have this exclusive connection right now, and maybe Paloma is thinking that I am excluding her from connecting.

PCL - I didn't feel that at any moment.

DL - For instance, when we had Richard on the floor in front of us, and you come over to me to do something, and I am going, 'actually no, I want to open up the

space again'. So, I have already made the decision for me to open the space. And then there is another opportunity where I chose not to drop my intention for the sake of keeping an open connection to the audience.

PCL - That's totally fine and I didn't feel that at all. I didn't feel that there was something closed.

24'12"

PCL - Sometimes, I think about these types of things, when I am with another musician, you know. Like for example, when I start provoking a musician that isn't listening to me: 'Am I being too imposing, just for a response?'

DL - Let me know if you see yourself doing that.

PCL - I don't think it happened here.

24'38" (music starts again)

25'49"

DL - See I am working with Ged, but I am not facing him. I suppose that is an example of what I was saying. I think the level of trust between the four of us, I felt I could do that. I could trust you that you wouldn't read it [wrongly] ... but I just wanted to make sure.

\\

27'04"

DL - Did I mark the end by moving or had it already ended?

PCL - He had ended it.

\\

29'45"

DL - We have come down a long way (volume).

Now I have positioned myself behind the cellist, or actually beside him, but because there are two of them (sitting in the middle of the quartet) I go behind them.

So my movement is impacted by their positioning, but what I am doing musically is very much impacted by what we are doing and where we are going. And those two things are not opposed, those two agendas.

\\

32'10"

DL - There is a nice sense of continuation with this quartet. We are quite content to stay with things for a long time and develop them. Do you sense that?

PCL - Yeah.

Look at this moment.

DL - This is what I was talking about. 'Ah look, Paloma is coming to me'

PCL - (laugh) 'Get out'

DL - I'm sorry.

PCL - I didn't feel that.

DL - It's like what is the stronger emphasis, in a way. They are all possibles.

\ /

33'54"

DL - Ged had stopped playing there, hadn't he?

PCL - Yeah.

What I feel of ... having all these spatial architectures is like having one more musician in a way. Like giving us the ... because every modification in the space and our relationship with the space, in this sculpture or whatever, are bringing new music. It is like one more musician, one more actor, in the performance. The space itself and how we move in the space. I was feeling like all this was getting together, a way, one behind the other. It was like one more element of composing with us.

DL - Yes, and you know we haven't played that much together as a quartet, but that is something that naturally clicks with the four of us. With Loz's connection to Tai Chi and his movement practice, your connection to movement, my connection to movement, and then Ged as well, because he has been interested in space for a long time.

But it is a very evolving and balanced group. We are constantly balancing the space.

PCL - To see, and not only to listen.

DL - And the trust as well. One can go away but the others will carry on.

Interview date 19/6/2018

Recording 2.

Listening to improvisation No. 3 at MIO.

1'24"

DL - Your focus here is primarily on S?

PCL - Yes.

2'41"

DL - Both of you have successfully bought the attention back in to the whole room.

PCL - I think I was thinking about ... close to her (referring to the pianist), I was not feeling her listening so I was to go away, to try and get her to awaken her listening.

\\

And how to open up the space, was included then.

DL – Yes, you opened it up nicely.

And you went to the middle for the audience lady (talking about the audience member who was crawling around the group).

PCL - I think she was coming to me, more than me.

And then focusing, when I discovered that.

I don't remember in fact, but I think that she came to me.

(View changes)

DL - I can see what you were looking at now

5'05"

This is when you all gravitate towards the piano. If you can't beat them, join them.

PCL - Bringing the audience also to. ...

DL - That's interesting actually isn't it.

I think this is the only video where the space actually gets smaller.

You're either listening to it, or you are excluded. Now there is still some people outside. ...

6'18"

PCL - I feel like the music fell into a hole.

DL – The openness of your listening and of Stuart seemed to carry this improvisation.

7'30"

PCL - I was feeling a kind of overload in the space and in this hall. And I wanted to find something intimate with someone, close.

DL - That idea, actually it's so loud

That is very clearly what you are doing.

And I can't remember her name (the vocalist) she dropped her voice just to work with you.

PCL - I'm joining back with the group now that he leaves. (referring to an audience member who had sat with the pianist)

9'37"

DL - There are some nice connections there.

PCL - I can't remember that.

DL - There we go. (music ends)

It was good to see that actually

10'10"

PCL - It reminds me of in some of the Round Robins when sometimes there are musicians who are coming who are playing (lalallala~) ... Imitating a continuous

stream of notes), and only when they stop, it seems that everyone is stopping. The dancers are stopping. I felt a little bit like that with the piano here. I was (aradaradara ~) OK, we finish when the piano does.
So ...

DL - The listening was only going one way.

PCL - And I have tried these actions also, I didn't like it but, giving my back to the musician that is not listening. Now I see this is a bit impolite, but I don't know.

DL - Yeah, this is what I was saying to you as well, but I think it is because we are sensitive to it, but I don't think she noticed.

PCL - Yeah but, I think it is also a kind of a way to make the thing change in any sense.

DL - Yeah, try and find some strategy that might work. I could definitely see that in your playing.

Going down, not fighting it, opening the space, there were a whole lot of ways that you tried to change the dynamic.

Where as the others perhaps because of their level of experience tended to go with her. Unfortunately, (the pianist) hadn't been to the introduction and I think that was an issue.

PCL - I can't remember.

DL - No, she came in afterwards, and I think that meant that she, she just wasn't on the same page.

PCL - Yip!

The musician, I was thinking about in the Round-jam-Robin, it happened the same, he didn't come to the introduction.

DL - That says something about the preparation of coming together and starting together.

PCL - Yeah, from the very beginning.

12'30"

DL - But it is interesting how, what I see ... you tried to use some spatial strategies to try and change the dynamic. It had the promises of something very nice at the beginning just with the two cellos, and you had established something about ... very open. But you never went back to that really. Which was a shame.

(Laugh)

13'03"

DL - I have a couple questions, which have as much to do with what we have been through over the last few days.

What impact would you say the participation of the audience, the active participation of the audience, has on both the performers and on the audience themselves?

PCL - For the listeners, I think it is key.

Because I received these comments from a colleague.

This colleague, that came on Sunday to the Foco Orquesta concert, she was saying that it was the first time for her to listen to this type of music. And she was trying to find me the whole day from the very beginning in the morning, she was saying "when you have a moment to talk I would like to ...now?" And eventually she met me at lunch.

The teacher said she had been looking for me all morning and had to say, firstly, sorry for running away straight after the concert, she had to get the train. But she was so excited by the concert, and said it was an amazing experience. "I really enjoyed it, it was fun, it was really touching me." And she said ... "You know, I wouldn't have understood anything from this type of music and dance, it was so strange everything, so great, if it was to have happened in a classical musical venue like the Auditorio Nacional de Música de Madrid. But the way that you did it, thanks to this involvement of the audience, the way that you were catching our attention and making us part of this, was making me understand like ... I was part of that. And that's ... what's going on, I cannot tell you in words." She was telling me. "But, I felt that I was part of that." And I think that that is the key aspect of what she was saying and it was really nice to listen to her.

15'26"

DL - And from the perspective of a performer, and the other members of the orchestra, how do you think the orchestra responded to this openness to the audience? What do you think was the result?

PCL - I think, yesterday, the audience was participating actively, the orchestra was more... their listening was opened much more, or in a different way. I don't know whether to say more or in a different way than when we are only the musicians playing for us. The space ... opening up the space and making us move around is making us listen to each other more, as well. Or at least wake up this curiosity of what happens if this happens, and that calls my attention. I leave my attention on this person on the other side of the room.

And about the audience ... about the musicians, and the dancers. And for the dancers, I think it is great.

DL - It provides them a way in, possibly. The musicians meeting them on their ground by moving in. So, moving into the auditorium from the back, in along the sides, do you have anything that you want to say about that?

PCL - Yeah, it was very interesting these meeting that happen, very casually with someone that is on your way, or someone that goes faster than you, or in the same way. Or someone that wakes up your curiosity and then you go closer. Or you do something small there with this person and then taking decisions to 'OK I'm changing' ... So, moving is sounding.

Just walking around the room is changing perception. And it is also composing.

17'30"

DL - So we had the beginning, and we also had ... Initially with the beginning I had sort of suggested that we all had a solo. It didn't actually happen that way. it was more just like an improvisation, we defaulted back to what we knew. I don't think that was a problem, in fact, in many ways I think that the process of trying something meant that we started to open ourselves up to a way of listening. Because the first time that we came in it was quite different. But it did feel like we were just improvising, it was still Orquesta Foco in a way.

PCL - I think the relationships were different, very different from the first time that we did it to the time we did it in the concert. But, anyway different, we were exploring, our interactions a lot of us.

DL - Was it clearer to hear different members?

PCL - Yeah, for example, this colleague that was watching, she said about that, that she really enjoyed the way that we entered from behind. But not only because ... She said "this is original, how nice. I've never had this idea of having the musicians from the back entering." But also, she mentioned "I could understand how each instrument sounded." So, she said something like this. I think it was clear enough that we were ... or maybe also because of the proximity that you have to the audience. As they are sitting and you are receiving, as you walk past. But I don't remember, but I don't think that all of us were sounding through the whole time. Some of us were just entering and then playing.

DL - Yes, some people moved without playing much. I moved to the front quite quickly and got onto the stage, and then responded to people. Sort of highlighted and emphasised people that I heard.
With Orquesta Foco is there a tendency of some people taking a little more prominence than others?

PCL - Yeah, It tends to be with the winds, the saxophones, but this isn't because of the instruments, I think it is because of the personalities behind, you know.

DL - That wasn't so clear in that case.

20'22"

PCL - Yeah, I think it was more balanced, in between all of the members. I felt that, especially in this Foco performance and that was great.

DL - So we had another experiment with the audience, inviting them to move, and some of them came up onto the stage. What was your experience of that?

PCL - It was great. I really enjoyed that much that I wanted one more piece please. I was impressed by how the audience responded totally doing it from the very beginning. I was expecting a kind of a silence until everyone ... 'who is going to be the first or something.' But it was just, I was just finishing explaining the invitation to everyone and I hadn't had time to sit down, and they were already moving around.

DL - Yeah, half the auditorium immediately stood up.

PCL - So it was amazing. It was very interesting how you begin to read all this information, you are a little out of listening to the orchestra. You are a little bit more focused on that and reading this. And it was also very nice to try to trust just your input and to improvise. You are not improvising with other musicians and with the listening that much. I was feeling a something like (ffffffur~) 'This is my input'. So, this is my input.

DL - Did you find that as it went on, it went on for about 5-7 minutes, did you find you worked out strategies of how to work with this?

PCL - I was experimenting, I didn't know how to do that. At the beginning it was like, 'wow, I am not set up and they are moving. OK.' We had to create this chaos that is here now in the room. So, collaborating for that. And then I began to test different, for example, I'm going to not focus on anybody, and try to see the whole space, from what I feel. And then another time I was like - I am focusing on this corner of the auditorium, and see what happens here with this group of people. Now something has come across from this point and my view, and then I focus on what is crossing closer to me. So, I was playing with this, like focusing on different parts of the room, or just one person. And when that man came on to the stage and lay down, and just looking at him and imagining that I was transmitting vibrations to him, through cello to the floor and the floor to him. So, I was trying to find different strategies to interact with such a lot of information, because it was crazy.

DL - It was quite chaotic, yes.
(Laugh)

23'20"

PCL - So, it was a nice experiment to try different strategies, for 'how do I read this? What do I do with this?

DL - Do you think that it had quite an important impact on the relationship between the musicians and the audience? A levelling of that relationship?

PCL - Yeah. Well the relationship was needed for doing this piece, and from this moment, I think, it was much more open, this connection. I was feeling the audience much more afterwards, in a way.

DL - I was very taken by Eva's conduction after that. We had Gregorio and then we had Eva. And it was quite incredible the level of concentration [in the room]. It would have been interesting to have, well I don't think that Eva would have responded in the way that she did and conducted that way, if we hadn't had that (experiment with the audience). But I also think at the same time, how much of the audience would have gone with her to such an extent. Because that was an intense listening experience.

PCL - Yeah. For all of us, for the audience as well.

24'31"

DL - I suppose the other thing was the leaving as well. Is there anything you want to say about that?

PCL - Well, the first memory that comes to me is already outside the room at the very end. How magic that moment was with all the audience coming out with us. We all mixed in a silent and dying way. It was just the confirmation that we were all doing this concert, with the audience. Because they were just walking around and mixing with us and listening. So, you were walking around as well, putting a sound here and there, little by little. It was beautiful.

DL - Yeah, I totally agree.

PCL - And the process before, I don't remember the walk.

DL - Did you have any particular connections that you remember?

PCL - I don't remember my way from the stage.

DL - You can watch it on the video.

PCL - I remember the opening with the cello but I don't remember the leaving.

DL - I have another question. Would you say that the movement of the musicians contributed to the enhanced emphasis on the aspect of play? This stems from a comment from Wade that a dancer's connection to play seems to be able to be read a lot clearer than a musician's focus on play?

PCL - Can you repeat the question

DL - So would you say that by allowing the musicians to move, do you think that enhances an aspect or a quality of play?

PCL - I think so, we were incorporating a different way of listening, and that makes you play in a different way. So, you are playing also with the space, as another musician. And I think this was noticed in the orchestra like moving around and playing not that much and trying to open the listening.

27'38"

DL - Did you feel in the last piece, did you feel that you played less than you would have otherwise within an improvisation with the orchestra.

PCL - Maybe yes.

DL - There was more of an attention to the listening?

PCL - Yes, totally. And mostly thinking about the last part outside the room. It was so nice just walking around listening to the audience walking they were coming out, and having a look, and with no light. So, the movements were the sounds.

DL - And that was something very striking last night as well with our duet. And coming from your comment that you made that was the idea of physical geographies contrasting. And there were a number of times, we set up a physical relationship, and then I played. And I played with the idea of shifting my orientation to you. And we had the 'El toro' event, which again was getting into a physical theatre realm in a way.

28'45"

Compared to the last time that we played at 'Cruce', I think we had more of a feeling of continuation of the music this time. I don't know what your perception of that was?

PCL - The musical sound.

DL - Yeah, there was more of a continuation of the sound

PCL - Could be the other one was much more episodes of only dancing and including even the sound that was continuing also in the movement, in a way. Much more than in the other.

DL - Yeah, maybe it is just a perception, because the dynamics of sound, like there was one point earlier on where you were lying on the ground, and I was swishing the bow, making very punctuated movements which I was using as sounds.

PCL - I think we use these types of resources much more than in the other.

DL - Which I think is really nice in bridging that gap between the sonic and the physical.

Is there anything else that you would like to add?

Thank you

A4.4

Transcription – Philipp Wachsmann (PW)

Interview date 17/12/2017

DL – How are these performances different to your past experiences of performing Free improvisation. Are there any new affordances, how did you approach this model of performance?

PW – I tried to have an open mind. I have a great deal of respect for looking at how people feel without [imposing expectations]. It has been a lifetime crusade, if you like, to try and see how one feels without, first of all, imposing expectations. Am I allowed to diverge? So for example, I remember as a student in Paris reading 'on the road', and for me coming from my background, it was a total shock to find that you can look at, and evaluate, and appreciate something without having the intellectual equipment to do so. And you could just say 'yes', and that saying 'yes' was valid. So, that is the sort of way that I tried to approach it.

And I have been very involved with, a long time ago, a marvellous Tai-chi based dancer who created gestures that simulated the music very closely. And so, I was very interested in the relationship between, something that I am not particularly good at, the relationship between gesture [and] the visual impact. And that the visual impact is very often more powerful than oral.

DL – Do you think that is something specific to free improvisation or in musical performance in general?

PW – I think in general, yes.

Personally, I get a very different experience if I have my eyes shut. And I know when I have done mixed media shows that the ... I have always been a little disappointed to see that the audience are not really following the music closely, but they are on the edge of their seat looking. (laugh) But of course the music influences the look. So, I would have a general question of ... my feeling is that, it is not really a question of whether I am right or not, but the sense is, with the eyes are more the way that humans are now. [They] are more developed than and more active than ears.

DL – I think there is research that is looking specifically at that.

PW – So, in general terms, I am very aware, in my background in the way the sound travels, and the differences between the hearing of musicians in an improvising, or any group actually, and how they hear each other, and what things like masking ... and the problems of placing microphones, or even placing yourself on the stage or even that you have foldback or not, and what that does to the playing. And I, of course, absolutely detest this new in-ear monitoring, because you are at the will of somebody who is not necessarily a musician, or a participant as a musician, and so on.

So, the way in which sound travels and decays, for me, is a spatial thing. And for me, there is also a visual, I like to think visually sometimes when I think musically. Having been involved a lot with graphic scores. So, that excited me. I think I had problems with distraction, like when somebody is walking without a

.... Without involvement ... across a space. What does it mean? Does it distract me from what is going on?

So out of that arises the whole question of whether one is making a performance, or whether one is 'being' in a context. And that comes up in my notes on things that I have read of course, and so ...

DL – Is that with the audience or more generally, your perception of them walking without the engagement?

PW – I think, inevitably, having looked recently at the material, actually last night largely. I am sort of full of what I saw then. There seems to be quite a difference between the first play and the last play of a particular evening. And that one of the characteristics is that it was terribly, it didn't feel polite, in an embarrassing way that in the beginning, very little happening. But there would be things that happened that suddenly, like a sculptural thing, which suddenly focused and changed the tension of the space and created the space. So, a question is ... Does the participation create the space, or does the space create the participation? And that's something that would be really interesting to ... see if one could go further with that.

8.32

And when, once that tension is achieved, but then it's no longer open, because it's ... everything has a moment. Sometimes you can see that the members of the audience have got involved with that tension, and that their movement has a purpose, or has a function, rather than being 'what's going on?'.

On the other hand, I like very much the parameter in improvised music when you go from the total lack of 'what's going on?' to focusing where now ... it's now happening, it's developing. And I don't think you can force that, It's a bit like a happening.

I am nonetheless sometimes embarrassed, in normal improvisation situations, by a sort of, inability, by a group I'm watching - listening to - for example, to actually ... get down to saying something. Where If it becomes a cliché then improvisation is a start of people finding their way. That is something that is easily avoided with skill and experience, without it prejudging and forcing ... the outcome. Because the outcome has to come from the interaction.

09.47

DL – I can totally agree with, and understand, what you are saying. The idea that you come together and 'I have never met you,' but we are going to meet through playing. The first improvisation is taken up, a lot, by that sense of arriving. Arriving to the group, and making introductions and finding a connection to each of the other players. That's part of the excitement, I suppose, that music allows that to happen.

PW – In a way, I am going through all the things in my mind, rather than answering a particular question.

DL – That's fine, The actual performances themselves ... the invitation to engage in the space, to ask that question – 'What would my sound be like if I continued my relationship that I have just established with you, and I then go over there. How did you find engaging with that, the possibility to move in the space? And

was the arrival... it sounds like it was visualized in a way. That sense of we are trying to find a common ground ... Am I right in saying that, with the ability to move and walk, you were possibly distracted by seeing, not just experiencing, you were able to see people trying to find their way?

PW – Yes, even in the audience. And once the tension ... once the thing became more of a performance, it was interesting to see that the meaning of the people walking, suddenly became very natural.

DL – Did you find it a good way of performing or did you find it awkward?

PW – I think the moments at the beginning, sensing the space, is slightly ... I could in retrospect link it to some of John Stevens' exercises. For example: sighting in, meditating, and being open to everything. And I didn't find that felt amateurish, or .. people trying to think of something to do ... It wasn't embarrassing, in what I described as when you hear an improvising group and you have this endless sort of trying to find ... somewhere.

But, I really loved a lot of the by-products, of being sensitive to the acoustics of the space. And some things that I have covered already in discussions in the past. That, you feel you hear yourself better. You can also find yourself an acoustic space, because actually In my notes, I started using the word 'oral' or 'geo', meaning geographical. So, the 'geo' aspect, had a lot of, is a reality, but the ability to move around allowed you to, create your own space, to project in a way [what] you wanted to project, and to hear the way that you wanted to hear. Sometimes, I ... my involvement, certainly not intended to be subversive but, there were one or two things I ... , in good faith thought, to do, which I think were quite influential from my point of view. For example, in Oxford at the beginning. I made a point of moving right at the beginning ...

DL – to me.

PW – Towards you. Just to basically get things ... get past the beginning stage. But I realise that that might have been exactly what you didn't want. Because it prejudiced the reaction of the others. For me, it speeded things up a bit, like Kesia moving to the piano. And she was fantastic, I thought.

DL – Yes, I agree.

15.32

DL – There is quite a lot of writing about the subversiveness of the practice. Is that something that you found you drew on in this practice?

PW – Well, I think, if I get ... It is not because I got bored in this case.

DL – You didn't have time to be bored, did you? (laugh)

PW – Well ... You have seen some of the conductions that I do, and they are about the idea of unpicking what the conductor does largely. That is my main point because I have a distrust, I mean for me, the idea of improvising and being told what to do doesn't mix too well. It's alright to try it or to do it. Butch Morris achieved a lot trying it, or by doing it, his way. But it is not ... , for me, it under values my life aims.

DL – Yes, I agree. You are subverting the position of the conductor in those instances?

PW – Yeah and also, if you like to use words that you use, inviting the players to be the main active ingredient and to take responsibility. And also, there is a beauty in people feeling free, I think, you get things – you get more from people – when you let them be, than by telling them what to do. So, there is always a cost in being subversive, or imposing something. Another example, is when I played the spring sonata (laugh)... For me, that in a way ... but it is totally, It had quite a polarizing affect. I think it made some people stop playing possibly, and it created ... it was an imported ... I went to lectures, a long time ago in the 60s, with people like _____ ? talking about Boulez and so on. He made a distinction between imported musical ideas and musical ideas that were happening at the moment. So, what came from, say, in a composition, what is within the composition and what is an imported view of it. And that is probably quite significant, for me, about all this looking at the videos.

It's quite nice in French, it's 'La ron der ...' I can't remember. It's 'the things that come from outside and the things that are within', but we will have to do with English. [les choses qui viennent de l'extérieur et les choses qui sont dedans]

18.56

DL – I'm just trying to think of other times that I have played with you, that is not a common occurrence, you drawing on classical repertoire.

PW – No, in a trio with Bruno and Dominic Lash, that we did a cd of, a long time ago, we had quite a few references to moments in Bartok or Beethoven string quartets, although it was a string trio. So, that happened naturally, but for me if you want to ... in the past, I have always felt that if you want to import something from outside, like a quote, it's got to have a function that's unique to the moment. And sometimes there is an element of great risk in doing it. And I find that you can only do it - it's the same as when you decide to do something tonal - you can only do it if you can trust the way the other people will respond. That they won't respond in a banal way.

DL – That a good point.

PW – But coming back to the acoustic point, it's this idea that when you make a sound it travels, but it is a 'geo' thing, it doesn't pervade the whole room, it travels in a certain way. And so, it's architectural as well. That's what I am very excited by, in the way it happened ... the way that you set it up, shall we say. What you created was a situation where the movement of sound waves was architectural.

21.08 – preparation – 22.30 Watching

PW – There are some general points about lighting and what struck me was comparing the camera viewpoints. The space / silence / stillness struck me in I'klectik 1. That was marvellous, I thought. The difference between the different camera's. How it reads, I found that was strikingly different in this particular case.

PW – I was quite affected by the visual as well, but, then ... maybe you should read that little bit before we start.

DL – Is there anything that you want to say about the impact of the room and the contrast of the different rooms and what affect they had on the improvisations?

PW – The first problem is that the way in which the cameras represented, is different in each case. Partly because of lighting and size and distance. I thought the space in Canterbury was marvellous for feeling it, for feeling the whole thing. I thought the I klectik seemed to me a bit cluttered, and I found a greater difference between which camera was showing, which might indicate where you were in the room could be quite different, and I think that is the case, actually. I thought the Oxford performance, the players were very coherent, I thought, and the space worked. But that was because it was contained in a focused area that one could appreciate, so it was almost like a stage performance. Possibly because it was so contained, or going towards that.

The ... I was ... the great advantage ... Can I mention Madrid?

DL – Yes.

28.00

PW – The thing that was interesting in the Madrid thing, which occurs throughout all the pieces is that. As a viewer, and I have to make a distinction between what I remember there, and as a viewer of the video. Because the video does ask questions about it all. When, in the Madrid thing, when you start and when the camera broadens it is much more coherent. I can be much more involved, because I wasn't there, but when I am looking.

DL – {I had zoomed in a little at the start, to focus on the two performers, when we were further away. This meant that the viewer could not see the audience in the foreground.]

But, for me, the great relief of getting into it came from two things, one was where you were very sculptural with the cello and the bass, and you could see them without them being like that. But actually, it was the way in which you could see the audience and they had gone to the alcove at the back. And I thought that was fantastic. The feeling that seeing the audience made such a difference to understanding the space. And I think that is true in a number of places. And in the Oxford performance the audience is fantastic. You know, right at the beginning, somebody is whispering to Kesia's mother, to translate something, and that was not intrusive it was so involved. And I thought, for me, it was all really happening. And there are other moments when ... I think, for example, in the I klectik when the whole event tightens, then there was some walking that made sense. I found Catherine walking and Tim very disturbing to begin with. Because they were doing something else, they were not present.

DL - This format, the presentation of it, do you think it contributes, that visual, it adds to the whole idea of listening to the music. Do you feel that marries the visual successfully? How could it be improved?

PW – We mentioned in the car, how a recording, in music actually even, but in video, the video has a very specific view. It allows certain things to be seen and felt but doesn't convey other things. In the Conversely, to what I have said about other things. The camera that looked across the width of the building worked well at I'klectik. The ones on the end didn't communicate very well. It's partly to do with compression and depth that video can't do well. But it is also

somehow that things were in front of each other, whereas when it was from the side you had this wide expanse where you could see everyone, even if they have got their back to you.

So, here we are talking about two things, one is filming and the other is what happened. And I think that is something that I felt had to ... , and I didn't do it very well, but I felt it was always an issue, in my observations.

30.30

There is an example where, I think I marked it - 15 minutes in ... There is a point at which you moved quite strongly across camera and played, and at that point it got ... it tightened for some reason.

DL – I use the word arriving, would you say that is when we came together?

PW – Possibly, yeah.

>>++ (track 1 from I'klectik begins) ++

PW – I remember Derek [Bailey] talking about, he did a solo where he wanted nobody to know when he had started or ended, because of framing. So, I think framing is a very important thing about presentation. And it seems to me that the important thing about this is not to frame it, because you can't frame a building that you are in already. You have got to bring it alive, or something. The building is there before you get there, so you can't It's a bit like Derek's thing, where you don't know when it's started and I think that's quite an interesting, quite a positive thing.

+ *Adjusting image – playing*

As a viewer, it got much more exciting later on, as we discussed earlier. I felt that when I couldn't see his movement. I would rather see his movements because he is quite quiet. Generally speaking, I was, I knew it was a very bad thing to do, to have my loud speaker so far away from me. But, whereas in Canterbury, for some reason, it worked a bit better, probably because of the way I did it. I also had a bit of thinking about fixed objects, I felt, well they are wrong because they don't move. But actually, the fixed objects have presence in this space, even if they are not, and particularly if they are not being played perhaps.

+

I am getting more into it this time, the second time around.

+

I quite liked that, when I moved the violin around in a circle, before playing. It's like when what you are doing.

DL – There are some other examples of you doing that.

PW – It is building up in a really, nice way. ...

+ (perspective changes)

You get a better feeling of the space there, but when I saw it from the end on it is more coherent as a performance, on a stage. Is that to do with my peripheral vision ability?

DL – No, this is wide screen whereas the other one is narrow.

PW – In a way, I am getting more spatial information from the sound, even on these [speakers]

DL – (Responding to a possible connection between JM and PW). Do you remember what you were listening to there?

PW – No, but it sounds to me like we are linking.

So, the question then, arising from what you are saying is, does the link depend on a visual acknowledgement. Because that is something that happened in the LJCO was that the, when I did this stupid ... flanging, Barry wanted this new percussionist who was there, Dieter, to play with cymbals and things, but he wanted to use brushes. But nobody could hear brushes. Anyway, so I suggested that we have a dialogue, ... we can stop it.

++<

37.42

A dialogue, and basically that was a solution, which worked very well. Which was that I was doing this and then I would look at him, and he would do (arrgh!!). And then, I arranged that I would play a bit, and he would play a bit, so we were conversing and because that was visual as well, people could pick it up. Whether it was a cheap trick or not, is another matter. But ... So, there is question about 'aural' acknowledgement or 'geo' acknowledgement, shall we say. 38.31

DL – That also links into the, well I have been using the terminology, proximal and distal, but then it also relates to what you were saying in regards to whether you have got your eyes open or not. So, how much of those visual connections ... how relevant is that and how possible is it to really rely on them, in any way, shape, or form?

PW – From an artistic, performance art, point of view, if you want it to be significant, you make it significant. And if you want people to just hear the sound, you don't make the visual ... element. So, that is the axis that you can play with.

DL – Do you think a lot of those ... the intentionality ... of making visual visible, do you think that's done intuitively, pre-consciously, or do you think there is much more of a conscious intentionality? Or do you think there is a bit of a mix of the whole set of possibilities along the continuum?

PW – Well, I mean. – Are you saying what it should be?

DL – No, I am just saying, from your perspective, what do you think is going on?

PW – In the past, I tended to focus on the sound totally, and not to link. But, over the last couple years, I have sometimes used visual things. It is partly because, when you work with someone who is pulling all the visual ... strings, then you might as well walk off the stage, unless you grab a bit of movement, as well,

(laugh) even reluctantly. I could mention who it is, that I have in mind, but it is not relevant.

But there is an element in Dutch playing, going back twenty years or so, where, generally speaking, the Dutch performers, like Hann Bennink and so on, were very much about musical, visual tricks. And personality was terribly important and you had to see personalities on stage. And, at that time, I didn't like that at all. Because they were always trying to out-stage what I was doing. There was something competitive about it that I didn't like. On the other hand, that personality game it is not the same as when you move, for example, because I don't feel that that is competitive. It might be contrapuntal, but ...

DL – Yes, I understand and I have had those experiences, and I understand the game idea ... with some German players actually. But they seem to be a little bit more spatially engaged than I think the English. The English are more sort 'we don't do that sort of thing here'. But this sometimes involves ego, as you say.

PW – Well, it's my background to be an internal ear musician in the past, going back a long way. Does that cover a bit of ground on that?

>+ (Music resumed)

I know when I have performed with electronics people haven't been able to relate the electronics to the violin, as personality. ... I did something for radio in Brussels and the producer didn't like the electronics, he said it didn't look good, so I had to hide it under a piano. And then we started playing and he came out and said well nobody will know what you are doing, you have got to bring it out. (laugh) It was for television.

+

Well, as I said, I think the ... ++++ It is interesting how you have pulled the event together. it is very clear. Infact you are moving as well.

DL – The vantage point, from your perspective, for me, I find my position right now (away from the group) afforded me an ability to really hear the separation of the players. And I am just wondering if you were aware of the spatial configuration and how that impacted on what you were doing and how you could listen?

PW – I mean there is definitely an architecture going on. Like a, ... I think, I was aware of like a triangle... I mean not specifically, but a ... and sometimes looking to go for a space where it was empty or was emptier. So, that that was definitely sort of magnetic lines, that you could move towards or away from. But it takes two, I mean, if you move towards somebody you don't always get something back. If you go close to somebody, sometimes they don't respond. And, so I don't think it is the only tool, is moving towards. I think you have to attract attention.

+

I think, for me, it's about finding the 'geo-space' all the time. You know, if you are not being heard, move away. Or if you want to play something very independently, move away. Maybe, subconsciously, one is also looking at some kind of quite minimal masking going on.

++

I will just change the view point (46.40 – to Camera angle 3 from C angle 2) +
I find that I can get most from that viewpoint that we just had. Something wrong
with this viewpoint is lighting.

DL – Yes, I agree. I tend to not use this one as much.

PW – And, of course we went, the moment, when you walked right across,
depends on which camera you were looking at.

DL – The one I just did at 10 minutes? Is that the one when you said that we had
arrived?

PW – It may have been, unless it happens again.

++

Yes, I think the loud speaker, so far away from me, was, I am not sure quite why,
but it was very dysfunctional in a way.

DL – It is quite clearly a trio there isn't it.

++

Is Marcio playing? Can I look back?

PW – Yes. Go ahead

DL – No, he is not.

++

PW – Actually, it is interesting that I can hear the violin from, not from there, but
from where the speaker was, I think. Or was I not. No, I wasn't connected
probably. No. Strange.

DL – Your speaker was under here.

PW – But I wasn't (playing) into the mic.

++

49.10

PW – Yes, I think that's very disturbing.

More aware of the space than with the other one. +++

Another element is that, being spread out like this, there is probably more choice
about where you focus your hearing. I'm not sure about that, but, I mean, that
was the bit about the Spring, was that it used, irrelevant power to politicise an
event. (laugh) But it did emphasize the quartet, I think, wasn't it really.

+ audience member shuffles across the space +

In a way, M____ didn't get it, but she was trying to find her ... a role, perhaps.

++

DL – I appreciated what she was doing,

PW – I mean, by the time, of the last piece, I found the music more rewarding to listen to.

Does the space encourage ... I was going to say, a lack of direction, or a different sort of direction to what happens musically?

++

There's always a question of what you do when you are not playing. Should you be totally still and static and unexpressive, or.

DL – Did you find yourself feeling self-conscious of that?

PW – No, not in this. That's an interesting point. Not in this context.

DL – Did you find that you played more or less in this context? Was there more listening and not playing?

PW – Less, I think.

DL – There was a less playing

PW – Yes.

DL – That was quite noticeable in this improvisation particularly I think. The first improvisation.

++

PW – So, if you want architecture, then you don't really want other types of musical forms. because they distract from the broad environmental feel.

DL – They impose, as you said before. There is something from outside.

PW – But on a milder level ... Yes, I mean, the idea is to play, but are you an emanation of the space, or is the space a ... or you create the space?

So, I think that is an axis, a parameter, where you have a choice, in terms of performance, to ... I mean ... I think more and more about the idea of a 'happening'. So, If you try to do something then you kill the happening. But you set up a situation where the happening can happen.

DL – A beautiful paradox.

PW – So, there is a question of, do you want the audience, whoever they are, to know what you, ... to learn what you, are saying?

DL – There is a sense of hierarchy, an empowerment, an engagement issue there.

PW – Or are you dictating an experience, or creating a participation? In some of the writing that you have sent me, they are talking about the action, the activity.

+

That's really nice, the two of you, far apart, really working close together.

+ (Commenting on the relationship between Marcio and myself)

DL – He has is back to me.

PW – Who? Oh, he has.

DL – And can you see your position there? (When PW extends the line of MM and DL) That is something that I noticed. You began playing ... were you aware of where you positioned yourself there?

PW – Yes, very definitely, I saw that angle, and I wanted to be atleast as far away again to create a line. And, in a way, there is a communication there, it's like chewing gum, like a thread and I wanted to pull the thread away, away further.

+

DL - Just looking at it now, maybe that was one of the reasons why I moved. Because, can you see how I then corresponded, and created that same line to you, from your perspective. I hadn't noticed that before. I'd definitely seen that line.

PW – So, maybe I was bringing it closer, the three strings, then thinking, OK lets ... it's a ballet.

++

58.14

I like the way it brings it down to floor level, around him.
There is always that, as well as ...

DL – the verticality.

PW – So, Marcio is sort of recognizing the end of something there, moving to a new spot.

Oh, I hadn't gone to that one. (referring to the handheld perspective)

DL – Do you view from Tim's view at all.

PW – No, I think I missed this.

DL – Let's go back to when he took over the seat from Marcio. Let's have a look.

>++ Oh wow.

DL – He is on the floor

PW – I had missed that totally.

Yes, I mean, Marcio had started to moving when the music seemed to be reaching a cadence, so to speak.

++

Tim is responding to the floor there. That is great.
Yes, I was wondering what had happened to the moving mic.

DL – It is normally up in the corner

+

PW – Nice music.
How was that done, did you mix that?

DL – It was so that it didn't go back to black. (when that particular camera footage ended)

PW – So, you wouldn't expect, in this environment, for the music to end with a bang. Would you? I mean, I am just observing that it implies something about how the music was made, respect for the space.

DL – there is a very rich connection to the space in this one. It is almost like there's the 7 of us but there is also an 8th performer which is the room itself.

PW – Although I would always .. you know, the room is always an extension of the instrument. Always.

DL – A resonating cavity.

PW – Yes.

++< Improvisation one ends

Well, was that helpful?

Compared to the other two improvisation, this one has a far more brittle quality. So, in terms of a happening it's the sort of thing that is quite hard to recreate, in a way. Because the second time the group plays and the third time it's bound to go in these other directions.

DL – But that said there is a quality similar to that that finishes the night. In the 3rd improvisation. We return to that quality.

PW – For me, I was more impressed by the greater musical coherence, in a more conventional sense, in the others.

>+++ (Last few minutes of the third improvisation – beginning with brief reprise of the Spring sonata by PW)

PW – Oh, dear.

DL – Not at all. For me, what is interesting about this is the reiteration of the Spring Sonata from different parts of the room. You were almost like, testing the ... you mentioned trust before.

PW – But also, I think, the idea that it was an imported, like a pot of flowers, and you move it somewhere else and see what is it like here. (laugh)

I saw a fantastic exhibition in St Ives by an artist, and people who set it up talked about how she moved everything around, inches, for days, and how difficult it was because it was all so heavy. Until she got all her sculptures in absolutely the right place for this enormous hall.

With this, I was sure I was thinking let's place this sound here. It's got a disturbing element that is, non, an irrelevant element and what will it, you know, put it somewhere else. I think, I would have definitely not have done it that way if it hadn't been for the spatial element. I wouldn't have done then either at that moment.

So, in other words, we have got a collision of 'moment' and 'geo'.

I love those suspensions of sound.

Oh I ... (laugh)

DL – You come into the centre now. Quite clearly you are very much engaged in hearing the 'geo', with everything around you. You are testing, tasting the space.

++

PW – So, moving back, away, does that have an influence and to what extent does dance influence the perception or the playing when there is dance?

++

1.09.15

It's like removing one level and what you are left with is the sounds of the grass.

++<

So, did I influence it? Inevitably intended or unintended, it appears to be irrelevant ...

DL – in the?

PW – By moving in to the sound and then going out of it?

DL – I hadn't interpreted that The potential for you to ... you had the freedom to move into that space and experience everything. It was very clear what you were doing. That is what you were doing?

PW – Yeah.

DL - And the sense that you had permission that you felt that you could just do that, I thought, that was the important thing, for as far as I was aware.

PW – For me, it articulated ..., I think, I may well have felt this is good, this is, you know, let's finish on this. And moved out.

DL – I didn't take it from that. I felt that we had already begun the ending before that, actually. Because we didn't stray from that, we just allowed it, we just dismantled it more as we went along. I didn't feel like we needed a marking at all, and I certainly didn't interpret your movement into the space as a 'come on guys, wrap it up.'

PW – It's a beautiful ending, isn't it.

DL – It's a very beautiful ending.

PW – There is a question, for myself, in that ... with repeated listenings, your understanding, your experiences of the performance, inevitably end up with interpretations and readings of what is seen. But, in the moment, how intentional is that and how conscious, how pre-conscious is that?

It's very difficult that whole thing of memory. It's so fragile. There was an experiment with a murdering. I saw it in an exhibition in Bergen, an exhibition about memory. There was something about somebody who had committed murder and was in prison. I will cut out all the details, but it was really weird. And after several years in prison, they made a film of the murder and the film was different to what actually happened in certain respects. Then after that, a year or two later, he was interviewed and his memory of what had happened was entirely what had happened in the film and not what actually happened. Here we are changing our perception. But, actually, I thought that was very engaging that ending.

DL – It's hard to step in at a late point, because the whole piece is quite special, but my point was that, it returned back to whence we became.

PW – We have touched on, what I call those physical pronouncements, for instance, seeing Marcio and I in a line and you squaring that line, and becoming ... putting yourself in a position so that the three of us are in a line. There is another moment in this third improvisation, when Sam picks up the toy piano and moves it across to the real piano. And then he plays very strident octaves on the piano. After a while, you stop playing and you reposition yourself here. In some way, you answered that question with regards to that whole idea of ... finding the 'geo' space.

He has quite drastically changed the geo-space for you, so I find that this is quite an interesting moment, you first remove yourself and then you go. OK, where is there a space in the room where I can actually reposition myself.

>++ (laugh) Quite quick, I had obviously thought about it.

DL – But also what you do +++ you find yourself. You sort of went 'enough of that' and Loz responds by coming to you. So, you reconfigure the power.

PW – That movement was quite damaging to some of the other players, what they were doing. Damaging in the sense it stopped them perhaps, But

DL – It stopped them but it moved things on. So, there is a sense of a subversion, a destruction that is a positive as well. It's not rated as being a destructive thing at all.

PW – I hope so.

In my mind, A question, I am asking myself is that, I don't think I would have played like that if I had remained there (next to the piano), I think that's significant.

DL – Yes

PW – In fact, I am sure I wouldn't have.

That's a good example, isn't it of a moment when movement, the geo had a really ... (strong impact)

DL – Following on with this 'geo' idea. Now, there is a connection here (pointing to Philipp moving towards the guitarist), I feel, I mean I am interpreting things. You are coming closer to James, in a form of, I suppose a sort of solidarity, against this loud onslaught.

PW – Well, it's, not only, it could also be that, if something is loud there, then, and something is soft here, then, yeah, it is a kind of solidarity but it is also easier to hear what he's doing when he is not close to them.

DL – So the freedom to do that, makes the reading of the music very clear.

PW – Which I think is beneficial, and it moves things on. I know the guitar is playing, but it is a triangle again. So, there is a choreography of role playing isn't there. Quiet in the underneath, and a triangle in the solo, kind of thing.

DL – Sam did point out the strength of the strings. He saw that as a sort of a core ensemble.
Your decision to go to electronics ?

+++ But then you chose not to, straight away.

Is that you?

PW – No, it is Phillip, I think an oscillator.

DL – now that is you.

+++

PW – I don't know

++

PW – Yes, that was definitely me, that.

++

Recording two

First minute not recorded, discussion included

- (Questions regarding Camera angles and positioning of the cameras was identified as a completely different area of investigation, that was not the focus of the discussion.)

- (PW had clear positive memories of the first improvisation at SCG, although he hadn't reviewed it)

PW - Somehow she (talking about the projection of Catherine's work) managed to be part of the architecture, and that was not, I had feared that it would not be like that. Because of placement, I feared that everybody would be looking at the screen, but it didn't work like that.

DL - It could have completely overpowered it, I agree, but it didn't.

Recording three

With Catherine Hope Jones who also participated in the performance.

CHJ - I really did like that space

PW - I think it was the best space. It was a lovely space

DL - Because it was so bright, I felt that it helped the music stand out in a way.

PW - I find it hard through all these years of playing with so many different people, I'm very affected by light, but I notice some musicians I work with, are totally not affected as far as one can see. You know, if I can't see the audience. if the audience is completely blacked out, I hate that. But if I'm on the stage and I've got strong light on me, I don't function as well.

DL - Likewise. The gig on Tuesday was exactly like that. It's very alienating.

PW - And I tend to want to wear a cap like this, but of course that doesn't look right with that sort of music. A baseball cap or a beret but that is worse. Shall we start it?

>+ Canterbury first improvisation.

DL - Your swinging of the violin, is that something that you do in normal situations?

PW - Yes, I wouldn't do it so obviously at the beginning, and it could be that I am playing with somebody who is dominating visually, and I think it's unfair, so I ... (laugh) I think, 'that's OK, but what about me?' But also, I do that because it is about the sound. One of the things I love to do is ringing with the electronics like (verbalizes Doppler-like sound) like a pendulum.

DL - So, in some way, your electronics work has informed your way of using your violin?

PW - Yes. +++

There is a lot of movement in the sound. +++

Seen like this, it's got a feeling of a ... action. It's the activity that is the music.

DL - In a positive?

PW - Yip. +++

Such an essential part of improvisation in a way, it's the activity of doing it, the process of doing it. Perhaps.

CHJ – I quite like the way that my shadow blocks things out and reveals things. I mean I had no idea that was going on. It's a kind of a visual improvisation that I didn't expect at all. It's like peeling layers.

DL – I have a question for you Philipp, with regards to our motion. Quite consistently, we go anti-clockwise around the room. It is a question that I ask myself, how did we arrive at that?

PW – Maybe it is something about which side of the equator we are on. (laugh)

CHJ – I was going to say is it something to do with the tides and moons?

PW ++ That was nice.

I hadn't noticed that about, anti-clockwise. And it is quite consistently?

+++ Is it to do with anybody being fixed? Any of the fixed players that can't move.

DL – No, because the fixity of the certain players like Catherine and Sean. We acknowledge the fact that they are stuck and that's it.

+++

You have just started something which is really nice, you are coming down from there.

+++

Do you think we are still fishing for a beginning?

PW – It doesn't seem quite as extreme as the I'klectik one from before

DL – Did you notice this? (Sean action with small device)

PW – What is he doing?

DL – He is just going behind the children and offering them a personal sonic experience.

CHJ – Even the child is anti-clockwise

PW – The children are creating a feeling of doing. Is that haptic?

DL - Yes

++

8.39

PW – I think, this is open to any observations Catherine, I think there is a dislocation between your actual actions, when we look at you, and the painting. Because, I am used to the movement of the bow on the violin producing a sound, but ... why should [it] be, unless you know how the violin works.

CHJ – I liked the stamping. I mean that's the only thing I can say, the sonic quality of what I am doing isn't very evident in this.

+++ *rewound to 5.34* ++

DL – This bit?

CHJ – Yes, that's the only moment where I am aware of making a sound. Whereas I felt that ...

PW – It is complicating the observation, isn't it, of what is going on, with the inclusion of visuals, because of the way that I am responding to it then, for example. If I hadn't been responding to the visual thing, then, it was sort of like, going ... It upsets the balance of everyone in the space the way I responded rather than

DL – I think there is a care amongst all of us to include Catherine.

PW – I think it is a difficult one that, the ... Well, it illuminates the fact that there are other people ... Are some people very affected by the mechanics of movement of playing? When I am playing. When you are playing there always seems to be a gesture, a coherence of the movement and the sound.

DL – I remember the last time that I was here, we talked about your apprehension to watch yourself on the video, because of your movement. And I have never seen anything out of place with the way that you moved. And I remember SGB commenting at this performance about how some musicians looked more comfortable than others with the movement. For me, it is more of a matter of, you get from one place to another, and you just happen to have an instrument in your hand. (A simple pedestrian movement)

PW – I use two words informality and formality, I have definitions in my notes. In a way, the informality is when things happen naturally that are not intended to have meaning, they just happen, like walking. Formality, in a sense, that it has some kind of purpose, or structure, or function, or reason. They are the wrong words, but ...

DL- No. It is like, trying to get a dancer to walk across the stage normally. There is always a performative [quality] ... a perception that this is how you are meant to walk on stage. I see a parallel between the dance work of Steve Paxton in the 60s and 70s, and the free improvisers who wanted to break down that idea of a separation between the everyday and performance. Misha Mengelberg talks about this.

PW – Pina Bausch also.

DL – There is something about it being very matter of fact

PW - And in the end, partly seeing it once again, once you become inducted into the behaviour of the whole thing. It becomes more acceptable and you begin to read it as for what it is.

DL – So it comes back to your idea that the space provides us with the agency and affordance to behave and relate in a particular way but also we are relating

and draw from the space, and we impose on the space. It's again, a very inseparable and symbiotic situation.

PW – So, by creating a very delicate, balanced situation, you are allowing quite a lot of things to happen. That depend on subtlety.

DL – By not confining things.

>+++

16.50

PW – That worked nicely I thought.

DL – Wonderful

PW - that behaviour has been picked up

CHJ – This is an interesting view because you don't see the visual.

DL – Will came to join you, very specifically. (10 minutes on improvisation)

CHJ – I know that was wonderful.

DL – He brings a lovely consonance to the space, and we pick it up very quickly.

PW – If I shut my eyes, just with the stereo here, there is an extraordinary sense of space in the playing, it's not just the acoustic. It's the acoustics that leads to the playing.

++

19.00

DL – You mentioned before that these static objects had quite a presence and this is another instance of that.

PW – Yes, It is like a Japanese garden. +++
It is like in the article about risk or chance.

+++

DL – I don't know whether I could actually hear you from where I was. I find that interesting.

PW – We're tempting, a different kind of event, isn't it in the sense that it's a burst and then silence or, in a sense, silence between the bursts. +++
In retrospect, that's the sort of thing that I would have preferred not to have done, I think. +++
Yeah, here the balance is uneven, it is very uneven.
Which I put down to the position of the mics. Shall I try another? (Camera position)

>+++

PW – I like that your visuals are sometimes very static. It fits in with the behaviour of the ...

DL – Coming up to the close, there is a particular change in your activity. Do you have anything to say about it?

+++<

24.40

PW – I think I was quite often fighting against whether to try certain things out. And I have to say partly in my mind, was what would enhance the project. If I do something like the Spring Sonata or whatever, which is in a sense bringing in from outside something, and essentially something that's a bit dishonest. I'm not sure if I was trying to do that then, I think for me the music is often about variable behaviour. And that's where a lot of that sort of thing would come from, from me. You know, what would happen if we change the nature of the relationship in the room.

DL – That particular moment is quite striking for me, because we do break that convention of going around the room.

PW – Ah. It is no longer clockwise.

DL – We initiated [something] and it is interesting to see that everyone else effectively dropped out. I don't think it was our intention to come to an ending ...

PW – Yes, it does feel like that wasn't our intention.

DL – But it had become such a strong statement, that we had broken with our own behaviours, that it was something that disturbed the balance.

CHJ – It was the most dramatic movement.

DL – It comes back to what you said about how the piece couldn't finish with a big bang,

PW - but it did.

DL – It did in this one.

CHJ – I don't think it was a big bang, I think it was a really dramatic, unusual movement that you both engaged in.

DL – Yeh, At the exclusion of the others, which I think was not our intention.

PW – To barge in on everybody. No I don't think it was our intention.

DL – I don't think it is in our nature.

CHJ – No. But, on the whole, I thought from the beginning that the movement was on two sides more than going around. And Then it got into this anticlockwise movement largely. And then, I mean, I thought, it wasn't so much the sound. It was curious, it was, a visual ... for me, the ending was a sort of dramatic visual

line and movement and if you are going around in a circle and you see that, you would look and stop wouldn't you.

DL – There are other examples. of that

CHJ – What was dramatic is that your both engaged in it.

29.00

DL – A sense of attraction

PW – I think I probably felt that it is probably time for a more overt interaction somewhere.

DL – It also happened the day before in our duet.

CHJ – That was beautiful, I remember that. You came very close together but you didn't quite touch. That was amazing.

PW – I would, have the feeling that this was quite an honest, not necessarily at the end, but I would throw that in as well, but the whole performance was quite honest and real. You know, people being really what they were.

DL – That brings me to question that I have here – Is there a specific quality of musician that this practice would attract, or that it is particularly appropriate for?

PW – May I make a comment about somebody else, and say that I thought that SGB didn't get into it. I felt she was not quite part of it at all.

DL – She built some walls, that's what I would say, which is why I am asking this.

PW – So in answer to your question. I think there's a, this might be a slight criticism, (31'14") that there is a tendency ... , it didn't happen that people were careful, but there is a tendency for politeness, to the space, if you like. But, it didn't concern me. It didn't spoil it in anyway. But there could be, that's it – there could be, a tendency to politeness. And it could be that the players that are most sensitive to, what I call, environmental sound, or minimal sound, are more likely to behave in that way. But on the other hand, that also is partly the perception of when you look at it, because everyone is relating to the space. It's bound to happen, isn't it. And there are certain players who will never be environmental players really, like Marcio. And yet, whatever he does, even if it's actually a very marked statements, they fit in as if they were part of the architecture. So, again I am sorry, I am answering it in two directions, one is that the space makes it, and the other is that ... But, the person who stood out for me, for not knowing what was going on was SGB. I had a feeling that she came in with a bit of ego, like I'll show them, a bit.

DL – (agreement) I feel that some musicians may feel that they are the guardians of a tradition, and it comes back to your thought about entering into a space with an expectation and it possibly gets in the way.

PW – It's why, sometimes I haven't gone to the Monday jam at the Oxford people because several times they have done something very atmospheric and minimal,

and I have just tried, I have thought – ‘OK, lets get a few more overt statements going. And then there have been remarks afterwards. (laughter)

DL – That’s not how we do it here.

PW - Pretty much (laughter), yer, if you read in between the lines.
And in a way, I sort of wish I could get that group to be more into making statements.
That is happening now and then, from different people.

DL – Have you watched any of the LIO performances?

PW – No, I haven’t.

DL – It would be interesting to know your thoughts as you are familiar with the ensemble.

CHJ – When I look at the image, one down from the middle. That looks like almost a stage set, even though it is frozen. What really struck me through the whole thing was that the movement, walking around and playing. It is not something that you normally see, so for me it had a sort of a dance, not quite a dance, something just before dance.
It looked quite orchestrated, the movement, because they had to do something else, you know, they were playing an instrument. I mean, it’s not easy to walk around playing an instrument, or they played and then walked. And the thing, for me, was that it was almost like a contemporary dance piece. 38.04

PW – While you are talking I am just looking at that image. It is fabulously placed.

CHJ – I know

PW – It’s sculptural.

DL – *Speaks about the research of P. Healey and the spatial formulation of free improvisers.*

CHJ – When somebody stops to play, do you think the people avoid that person in their movement. When they stopped, and played was the movement affected? Did people give space to that person?

DL – It depends on where they position themselves in relation to the others.

CHJ – It really made a difference, because of where the cameras were, seeing the space with a bit of art going on and seeing it without. I thought that was really interesting. In a way, with things on walls, most people, they might look for a second but they don’t really look at all.

DL – In this instance?

CHJ – Well generally, to get people to look at something static. I mean, it’s better when you are making it, because there is movement in that. But people weren’t walking by and looking because they were engaged with something else. So just as a recorded thing, I was a little disappointed that you couldn’t hear the

little tiny soft things that I doing. But I could. It was obviously to do with the sound recording.

DL – There was also the sound recording from the camera that was looking down at your work, but we didn't look at that, this time.

PW – I thought this idea that there is always a space. It's disturbing, in a sense, because there has been this analysis of when two people are walking on a pavement. How did they decide which side they were going to walk on? There has been quite a bit of research on that. It's rather difficult to come up with a conclusion if I can remember. But I was just wondering about that.

But, the idea of a horseshoe. It is quite good for music (referring to what I raised regarding P. Healey et al. research), because it has something to do with the reflection from the back baffle, or reflector. And the way one hears, it helps with hearing each other. And there is also eye contact, and as soon as you have someone here. (indicates) their relationship is outside that baffle effect in the hall. So, I am just wondering if there is something else going on.

DL – I think that idea of having all - and one, is not something that is so visible. It is much more about an equal relationship.

PW – So that's a really good point.

DL – Yes and again, for me, it is interesting in so far as that it doesn't actually happen in performance.

PW – But also, that is an element of the whole context is that you don't have a common baffle, which is about mixing ... acoustically what that does is it mixes the sound.

DL – And brings it to one [point – the room's sweet spot]..

PW – Yes, so that everybody hears the same thing in the audience and the musicians have an idea of the mix of their own playing. So, that mix is removed from this kind of layout. That way of mixing the sound.

DL – True.

PW – Which allows the space to happen.

DL – And the live fluctuation of the mixing of the sound

PW – But that is phenomenal, that layout.

I was telling David about the Sculptress in St Ives. And how she had so much time taken by everyone to get everything just in the right place, in the enormous room.

CHJ – It's quite a space that.

DL – Whereabouts in St Ives?

CHJ – The new one. They have had French architect that has bitten into the old building and it goes into the rock.

DL – We haven't spoken about eyes closed, [but] you have spoken in the past though.

PW – In listening, with the video running, I find I close my eyes sometimes and find I am often influenced spatially more by the sound than by what I am seeing. Which is not quite the same, in reality, in playing. Because it is more confusing, in the room, there is more work to be done, where are people and ... maybe to do with my hearing.

DL – If I were to put one of these recordings on a cd, so that you didn't have the visuals at all. What do you think your experience would be?

PW – Can I answer obliquely? Which is that my experience of working with dance is that, I have sometimes been very pleased with the sound, and I have always felt there is something going on.

DL – You have heard the movement in the sound?

PW – The way the sound is. It's not to do with the feet moving or rustling or breathing or whatever. I have felt there is a 'deus ex-machina' going around behind the music. And that links to Keith Tippett's idea, that I have never forgotten him saying, which is that 'the music is not in the notes, it's behind the notes.'

DL – What did you say there? Dais ?

PW – It's the god behind the machinery. The idea that there is something manipulating the ways things function. It's hard to tell in this case, because I am, at the moment, very close to looking at it. But you could try.

DL – I have tried and I was happy to find that I was able to listen with my eyes closed that [it remained musically coherent]

PW – When I only listen to the sound, I can't imagine such a marvellous spatial layout. You know, having spent hours and hours on trying to mix a quartet and get all the spaces and everyone is present but they are in the right part of an image. Which I don't always do, as I allow things to move a bit. I mean, it is very striking, when I shut my eyes, how placed everything is, in a way, that you could never have happened in a normal performance. But you haven't yet tried this with a free jazz group?
Except let's look at the LIO.

CHJ – Can I ask you a question?

You said ... In asking people to move, you didn't want people to inhibit or detrimentally affect the music. But what if it takes on the life that I saw, which is When people are arranged in ranks, in an orchestra or something. In a way, you see the sight and then you forget it. It's a bit like the thing on the wall. You know, you know it's there. You have looked at it, and then you don't need to bother about it again, because then you start to listen. Because, I suppose people, in an orchestra, they look at people playing. But here it was very much, it was dominated by sound and music. But, for me, it took on an almost balletic quality. Is that a bother to you?

DL – Not at all. I think there is a sense of authenticity to the movement and we are not performing. We had a little touch of that in the rehearsal for the Oxford improvisers. We just played, and the balance between the focus on the music and the playing possibly worked towards the playing a little bit more. But in the performance it didn't. I am indebted to all the musicians across all the performances, as they didn't get bogged down and so excited with the possibility to move, that they lost themselves and lost sight of the music. There was a sense of integrity to what they were doing, throughout.

PW – The space was terrible for the rehearsal obviously, I think, wasn't it? There were just a few obvious things to do, like go to another room. (laugh)

DL – Or go down the lift.

CHJ – So, you are saying, the sort of natural movement.

DL – The sense of the everyday, the mundane, that there is nothing special about the movement. It comes back to the dance movements of the 60s and 70s that tried to remove that idea that you need to have a movement vocabulary. It's coming from a sensibility from American modern dance and somatic dance practices.

PW – When I sort of moved across at the end of that, that was sort of out of place in some ways. Because I was imposing a question, a movement that was ... outside

DL – Did you do that intentionally? Did you go 'Here I am going to upstage everybody?'

PW – No. But that's about ego. But that was out of style, perhaps, do you think?

Interview rec 3

1hr06

DL – I do not see it as a style, I am trying not to make those judgements. I'm seeing Philipp more animated, at that point, and it is something engaging and I was attracted to that, and it was like immediately we were coming together. I don't think either of us decided on that but it happened. So, while it was exclusive with regards to our body language, it also provided a greater degree of clarity for the others also.

PW – Then there is an element of counterpoint that people should, or can, do that. That you have one thing happening and another layer happening. They don't relate or somebody could have done the same, somewhere else.

DL – I think that strikes at the heart of free improvisation, in so far as, if we had been playing like that the whole time, the others would have been thinking 'well, what's the point?'. Maybe they would have become more animated themselves.

PW – Well that is the trusting thing, where I was saying that if I had done something tonal. I have to trust that people aren't going to say, 'Oh, he is tonal, let's all go tonal.' So, you can't have counterpoint.

DL – So, the sensitivity of everybody to the whole and the integrity at that moment doesn't detract from the whole. It doesn't feel premeditated and I haven't seen any premeditated actions in any of the videos.

PW – I must say I am very struck by this still (image on website)

CHJ – It would be quite interesting to just stop it, you know. If I just said stop and you stopped the video, what it looks like?

DL – (Story boarding explained – how I have been noting down observations from the footage).

DL – As you know the musicians, of the LIO, It could be interesting to hear your impression of these performances that you didn't play in.

++ (LIO – Final tutti improvisation)

PW – This camera angle seems to make the room look squarer doesn't it.

++

PW – With eyes shut it is very spatial, the group sound, you know, it's placed.

++

PW – This angle is more meaningful for me, this camera.

++

DL – It requires you to resign to the fact that you are not seeing everything.

++

PW – Let's try a different angle.
It feels very anarchic to me.

DL – this was the last improvisation and everyone had become very comfortable with the idea of moving around.

++

PW – Good old Steve (responding to piano)

DL – But when placed in the context of an end of gig improvisation, ++ how do you think this improvisation compares to other LIO improvisations?

++

CHJ – They are moving faster.

++

PW – It sort of coalesces after a while.
The movement got slower as the music got less active.

DL – I watched it with my eyes closed, thinking about what it would be like at the end of a LIO gig.

PW – I got into it musically after you said that and with shutting my eyes. But, partly the camera angle, but there was a lot of movement that didn't seem to relate to the project, the space.

DL – Something that RJ mentioned, that perhaps this approach doesn't work so well once you get to a certain number of people in the room. There has to be some space to occupy.

PW – Maybe, also the roof structure has an effect on there being less variability of acoustic response in the different parts of the room. Because there is all this cross reflection from the angle of the roof.

DL – There is a lot of musicians there, 13 – 14 and there is bit of an acknowledgement that everyone has the right to say a little bit in the collective. Some respond very loudly and others ... I am always struck by how quietly Loz can play ... he seems to bring a stillness to the room by playing a long quiet note, very much like Barre Phillips does.

+++<

PW – Was that the last one?

DL – That was the final improvisation of the night, so it had a bit of a feeling, like in a LIO gig, 'who hasn't played much in the conductions today?'

CHJ – I think the movement didn't reflect the space at all, I mean if you are in a jam you might hold up your hands or jump so you could see. I mean you would know as a dancer, don't you think, that if it is a marvellous space and it is tall, you might lie down and look up.

DL – (Explains the experiences of the tall audience member who felt liberated to move. And how this was unlike any other performance experience, which resulted in her feeling compelled to move.

CHJ – For me, that space. First of all, there are places where you could hide. Secondly, the outside is present in that space. Although, last time, I think we noticed there were curtains. A joy for me is that you see these moving trees outside.

PW – Well, in LIO you have got people playing outside haven't you. I think on reflection, If I think about what a large group of that kind of, if you like the miscellaneous, well, a group that has come together in an unusual way. Then it had a positive result that they weren't all sitting in straight lines. I think it really did function.

DL – The visual pollution, because there is just so much going on, someone did acknowledge the fact that you can ... I can just shut my eyes to it. And that is a way of mixing out the visual.

PW – If I think of LIO the other day, with the three trombones and Alan Tomlinson who moves around quite a lot from where he is standing. I think it could be a lot nicer if the people had been moving around. But the difficulty of

moving around is what impact that has, and why you are moving around, and whether it is distracting or not.

CHJ – I thought, from that point of view, the brass gets together and they are going to blast at some point, you know that is going to happen. But it didn't really happen in this, because they were scattered.

It's like this choir business they are having to listen in a different way, because they are not in there comfortable arrangement. And you can almost see it, they look at each other, you know, that that is going to (happen), ... what else is going on, they are going to blast into it. But it didn't happen here, that is what I thought. Equally, from a musical point of view, you didn't get the strings playing, being allowed to play as a group. For me it was like a series of solo performances.

DL – There is a sense of predictability when it comes to the LIO final improvisations. In so far as it starts and the people who have felt like they haven't played enough play, and it does go into a big rousing brass chorale. And in response to that the strings come in at the end.

PW – The strings are waiting for a quiet moment (laugh).

DL – And it usually tails off to the strings at the end. So, you could say that that is quite a predictable format. Does that hold true to your perception of it?

PW – Yer, I mean, not quite in that order sometimes, but, and the problem is that when the strings get a chance to play and it is a totally free improvisation, then somebody might recover their breath to come in after that (laugh). 1.17.30

DL – They have had a respite, yes.

PW – On a good day, if I play very softly, people wonder what is happening and quieten down. But on a good day (laugh).

CHJ – Because people are moving they are not in their groups, and that is what I thought and it could have been strings, it could have been wind, or brass.

DL – So, it does challenge the ... even the free improvisers notion of – 'this s what we do', which possibly comes back to what we were talking about SGB who had an expectation of what it was and miss-red it.

PW – Because she arrived, which is a disastrous thing in this sort of project, to arrive late in the proceedings, so she wouldn't have been able to pick up a flavour of it beforehand.

DL – Was she there for the introduction? Because we did do a little sound check didn't we?

PW – No. I had a feeling from her body language, that she had a feeling that she was supposed to be doing something, and that it therefore wasn't open.

DL – Yes, but the invitation was always to take it as you like. And we have static players and you can be static if you like. Everything around you is shifting, it's OK. In fact, 'stay still, it is good.' (laugh)

CHJ – Very interesting.

DL – Thank you for your points.

Additional questions

DL – Is there a particular sort of player that this may be attracted to?

PW – Well, in a way, this last piece provides a perspective on that.

DL + PW – discuss the beginning arrangements and how I explained the process to the musicians

DL – (Recounts the experiences of Steve Beresford and the confounding of expectations).

PW – Well, the other day, when I moved the other side from the strings (in LIO), that did throw him a bit. Because he was thinking of giving the strings something to do and I was on the wrong side, and there was a string over there. And so, I think he was thinking of a blend, which is an issue for strings, isn't it? Whether somebody is going to treat you like a section or as individuals.

DL – I think that strikes at the heart of large group ensembles, as to whether we should be sectional or not, and we should question that.

Spatial quality

DL – Expectations – do you try to clear your mind of them, and do you try to lose yourself in a sense of not knowing? For instance, like I have never heard the LIO before, even though I have played with them for many years?

PW – Yeah. What interests me if we are talking about LIO is what is the nature of this band? So, for me it is essential to hear the warm up even if not everyone is there. And it can sound so different every time. And I thought that Steve did a very good thing with it the last week, where, I mentioned that I didn't like about this oscillator and so on, but he accepted the way it was, And I thought that was great and allowed it to happen. So, in a way it is always like that, isn't it. It is always trying to work with what is there, but to facilitate.

So, as far as expectations go, I don't like I often think of Derek's example, which is that you have an intention How do you start? You have to have an intention, maybe? Probably. It is best to, perhaps. And then you have to be prepared to drop it in a split second, depending on what is actually happening. And actually, Boulez said exactly the same thing, that it's a dialogue and he can have his own expectations until he is blue in his face. But it is all about relating to what they give back, because what the orchestra gives back tells you what they are hearing. What they are getting from you. And then you have to work with that interchange constantly.

Audience

DL - There is one area we haven't talked about, and that is the relationship to the audience. Were you aware of the audience? How did you feel that their engagement to this affected you playing?

PW – Well, one has an active mind which goes around with lots of things whether you want it or not. And, on the one hand, it would be nice to get the audience involved, and on the other I don't want to produce what I think people might want. And it is an artificial, manipulative thing to then feel that you have got to do something to make the audience move or get them emotionally involved. So, it is quite a difficult one that. In the Oxford one, I thought the audience, a few people in the audience, made a great, even at the time not just looking back at it, but that they really integrated. Partly to do with the space.

Sorry to come back to it, but in the Madrid thing. As a viewer, who didn't know the space or the acoustics and the sound was not as spatial, for me a great moment was when suddenly you saw the wider angle and you saw the people sitting inside that alcove. I thought that was terrific. So, I think the presence of, the impact of the moving audience, once you can get them to move, is really important.

So, I wonder if there is more to say about that?

Well, personally, I think that the audience is very important whether they respond or not. Just their very presence and an easy question would be, what would it be like if they weren't there. So, even at the beginning of one of the pieces where no one is moving, I think, it is very important that the audience is there.

But what I think, what I consciously avoided was to go up to someone and grin at them, like a gypsy violin player at a dinner. One doesn't want to be manipulative, but whether or not, it is this kind of project situation, audiences are terribly important.

DL – Do you think, as a performative experience, this approach is of benefit to, and more engaging for, the audience?

1.30.15

PW – I think one could split this up into all kinds of categories. For example, the orchestra, where they move around (Aurora)

DL – When they are playing they don't move around.

PW – I think if you have never seen it before and you see musicians moving around that has a big impact.

I think, Sorry, that is a very complex question, because it is all about how one listens, how people respond, what their habits have been beforehand.

DL – *Mentions that I have responses from audience members and musicians who sat out of improvisations at other performances. I mention that SF enjoyed the listening more than the playing in the performances she took part in.*

PW – I think I can see that happening, for example, in Oxford. I know if I am playing in ... I did a gig at I'klectik with some other players ... and I could sense that the audience liked music that was continuous. Continuity was their priority. And the ones that didn't like the way that I broke things up, although for me that is like cubism, it's also continuous in some way. But I could sense that the audience didn't like that and I don't think they gave any body language, it was something about the vibes in the room. There is a lot of evidence for how the audience affect players. It's like, for example, the way that you walk on to the

stage, is really important in terms of your relationship with the audience because it sets up their expectation. Unless it is part of your repertoire to walk on in a shoddy way, you could lose an audience. In fact, I might try and do that if I am fed up with the expectations from tail coats and bow ties from that type of posh audience.

DL – Another form of subversion of expectations.

PW – Yer, well you are creating a context and you have got to lie in the bed you have made. (laugh) Otherwise, it's a flop and it could be dangerous. The question is - are the audience giving any active feedback? And in Oxford, I loved it, that aspect. In Madrid, it was really important once I saw the people. It also made sense of the sculpture of the space and what you were doing. And without them being visible, I couldn't sense the viewer in the space.

DL – That puts the idea of live recordings and the issue of too much background noise into question.

PW – Was it Gearson, I believe, who invented the soundcraft microphone with four microphones (Ambiosonic) ... What he wanted, what I gather, is a stereo pair on the band, but he would always have a mic pointing towards the audience. Because he said if you didn't sense the presence of the audience ... What do you think about the role of the audience in these events, and whether it is enhanced?

DL – For 50 year free improvisers have entertained the idea that the music is very inclusive, but it is rather paradoxical in that we have ignored, or only given lip-service to the role of the audience member. We never really challenged the accepted point of view.

PW – When I was a child, my sister and I had to sit still when our parents played. My father played violin and my mother sang lieder, and we had to be very quiet and sit still, and I think that was quite damaging and I hated that. I remember playing in the Bimhaus when people moved in and out when they felt like it. And I played in the Pompedeau centre in a gallery where they had seats out, and people who were walking to look at pictures, could stumble into a room where we were playing. And there were seats if they wanted, and they could sit if they wanted and then move on. And I really loved that. But it was quite new, at that time, to me, a long time ago. I think the influence, particularly of the children in Canterbury was marvellous. The fact that there were things going on, on the floor. And the freedom that came from the innocence, if you like. So, that was a big influence. ... And ... I think that ... Let's look at it another way, if the audience were sitting in a block. It wouldn't have been the same at all. So, by deduction, they are having a big influence by having to move, or to be able to move. I do feel it was more exciting when some of them did move. But that is probably the nearest I can get to a clear answer, which is – If they were in a block it would not have happened this way and the experience would have been different. And also, it excites their ears to the acoustic. A lot of people have no idea, most people in the audience have no idea about how sound travels.

DL - The spatiality of the sound is taken for granted and the sweetest spot in the room is taken up by the sound desk or composer or the person in charge.

PW – And the trouble with mixing for Stockhausen, type of music, was to get the sound moving around. But then there is the other thing, when you have a tape

that I want to project. How do you project the sound so that the people on the left are hearing enough of the whole thing, for the people on the right? Where Stockhausen is right is that you have to make a mix for every space. So, he wanted everything to be a live mix, which he did. Because you don't know where or how far away the speakers are from people, how much reflection there is.

DL – There is a political aspect to this and I suppose I will be happy if I achieve a heterarchical approach to music, where people consider the audience where they wouldn't have otherwise done.

PW – I always try to, that's my mission.

DL – But with this (approach) you can't avoid it and I think that's a big positive. You can't hide from the fact that the audience are there and they are engaging.

PW – I suppose an outcome of this practice is as with the Sega computer attempt, and as with Space travel, there are a lot of by-products of valuable information that come out of it. So, don't lose sight of it, of by-products that are not necessarily only about the project. But as to whether the pattern. I think the pattern is invaluable and I think it should be developed. But development will involve going further than you want to, in terms of the open mindedness. It's a question of you becoming the director, and saying that you now want to do a performance with dancers and musicians, in which, you know like Pina Bausch would have done. Where they are going to crawl about the audience and ... even the way that they crawled around the audience was stylized wasn't it. In a way, there are lots of artistic projects, how do you enhance the experience? And of course, the more you enhance it, the less sensitive and the less ... as with rock music, the better you get at it, there is less protest involved. (laugh).

You know that. So, in other words, it may be impossible to develop it. I think the space is really important, the architecture. Not inevitably, not exclusively I mean because all the events worked in different ways. So, a good question could be, what was the worst location and how would that have been or what could one have done about it to adapt the project? That might lead to some observations. I think quite often lighting is quite an important aspect. And to possibly go against the grain, instead of lighting the I'klectik so that you only see some aspects of it or to neutralize it. Sometimes it can be very effective to have a few angle poises on the floor. So, that you are creating an artificial space.

DL:- To frame it with lighting

PW - It's still a space. A fake space (laugh)

DL – Thank you, that is a lot of food for thought. The worst space was Liverpool. ...

PW - But the observations are already by-products.

Recording 4

Liverpool recording

DL – Provides a bit of background about the performance.
Experience level (mixed), the lights going off, the volume, the involvement.

PW – But you found that a really, useful event and you had some positive things to say about it.

DL – Yes, but the venue was slightly problematic, acoustically and it was very bright.

>++ PW starts recording of first improvisation.

++

PW – I'm liking this so far.

++

PW – In the I'klektik that you just showed me with the big band. I have to be quite honest, it wasn't my favourite kind of music. It was too ... It was like a big group, but not everyone had the right skills I am afraid. Whereas this feels more honest to me, more vibrant. It also helps that it is more spaced out, visually.

DL – That same criticism can be directed to this event also when in the last improvisation everyone is playing. It lacked the audience just to keep that relationship.

PW – So, that's quite a useful observation isn't it. I mean quite often we learn more from imagining the removal of something, than we do by having ... subtracting.

DL – Yes.

PW – I mean, I played a lot with Fred Van Hove, in the past, and the thing that he would always want to talk about was honesty and in the moment as well. And one of those articles goes into 'in the moment' in quite a lot of detail, whatever that may mean.

++

Is Paloma a cellist, essentially?

DL – A pianist first

PW – No, some memorable things, I mean, beautiful, sculptural playing with the cello and bass. But also, when you hung from the girder was very effective, at one point, at the end. But, the video didn't capture some of it.

++

No, lovely, I envy such responsive strings, the lower strings can respond more than the violin, which doesn't. if you pluck it doesn't last long.

Yer – I mean, if we think, were the audience not there. The way that you are playing would be kind of pointless. That's a subtractive observation. Would you agree?

DL – Absolutely.

PW – And you wouldn't play that way?

DL – The quartet played in August, just in the studio. By ourselves, I will go back and listen and try and sense how it is different. I may ask Loz as well.

PW – There was some response that ... There was a certain moment when she released tension and moved her arm. Maybe even being unsure, that communicates? That's not what I saw when she was moving around. So, there is a question – does movement of the audience, does that create a different response?

DL – With their positioning, definitely. I was giving them an experience playing behind them.

PW – It affected you.

DL – My choices changed. There is a lovely moment with Loz coming up.

++

PW – We haven't talked about it, but timing. It definitely changes the timing of when people play.

DL – We have spoken about people playing less.

PW – But Loz might have come in much more quickly, if he hadn't decided to move and sit down.

DL – The time, it was unhurried, it was very placed. But, again, there was an integrity to it. Again, the way that I am playing, I am actually playing with my back to Paloma. Poor old Paloma comes to me and then I put my back to her. There is a trust within our relationship, as a quartet, that can afford that. My focus was very much on the audience there.

PW – So by changing your focus there's a moment when ... that communicates a moment for everyone to, I mean, it can do. So body language of movement can have extra affects, extra results.

DL – That is something that I have sensed in all the performances.

PW – A new tense has been introduced to the space

DL – A clarity of intention

PW – A sense, you know like, subjunctive or interrogatory. Lovely, you have got everyone listening.

So the fact,

++< improvisation ends

13.47

Lovely – Beautiful.

So, the fact that they are there has an influence. So as with organology it is much easier to agree that the Ugandan harp has 5 strings, you can agree on that, it is much easier to agree to that than the meaning of what they are playing. So, in this case, it is easier to agree that something has happened, that the audience is listening to ... than I have lost my train of thought.

DL – It comes back to 'not knowing, for me. I don't feel I have to lift up every stone to find out what is going on. I am happy to stop at some point and acknowledge that there is a limit to what I can know in each moment. And that keeps the integrity of the improvisation because it suddenly becomes something that isn't free improvisation when you analyse it so far.

PW – It is quite useful to identify what we don't know. To go as far as we can.

DL – But to acknowledge that what I don't know is different to when you don't know.

-- Conversation continues to talk about Aurora orchestra performance and the movement of the musicians.

PW – The thing about what you don't know and what you do know. In one of the academic articles that you gave me, which I found so fascinating, was that, there was one thing, a point in which I thought, - 'Come on get to the point.' These rules do not apply. It is about something else it is about going to a new place that politically, the music is about. And it is pointless just trying to judge it by the old place.

DL – Is that the Gary Peters article.

PW – It might be, I would need to check.

It is just that in improvisation, what is happening is so radically different. It's not trying to be about what the original music, you know the classical music, was about.

DL – This approach to performance offers us a way to move away from the expectations that the audience. If we continue to perform under a quasi-proscenium arch with a separation between the audience and the musicians, we will always be compared to a musical situation where certain expectations, from outside the music, exist.

PW – But the proscenium arch thing, just to be a devil's advocate. So, someone like Han Bennink could be in a proscenium arch, but he might, imitate music hall or he might have a fish which he chucks into a guitar and gets his dog to chase. So, you can work against the space as well.

DL – I think the adaptability of an improviser, generally, is sorely overlooked. We look at the music and we construct meaning from what is happening, but what we don't tend to look at is the musician and the skill of the improviser to adapt to his/her environment and what is going on. In essence, what is happening is that we are responding to what is available and what is happening at that moment. It is like a mixing desk and I can focus on the space, I can focus on Philipp, I can focus on the acoustics, or on the lighting. Which one shall I focus on now? Whether we are mixing this from a static position, in the usual way or do I use another slider which allows me to mix my spatial relationship to others, and I can move a lot or I can stay where I am.

PW – You ought to have a list of options like just what you are saying right now. It would be a marvellous illustration, like you might have a picture or a menu.

DL – A picture of a mixing desk

PW – I would be happy just with a list. And it goes back to Chaucer and lists.

DL – In some sorts of music the musicians are thinking they can only go between zero and one on the sliders. While the free improvisers are doing away with rhythm, for instance, so that slider is down.

PW – What if we chucked, totally, technique away?

DL – Do away with the idea of ... and I think that sense of subversion of the technology as well, the subversion of traditional instruments. Or the understanding of this is how you play a violin or double bass. So many more variables, we are playing with variables, and we [as improvisers,] have become very adept at exploring those...

PW – And it possibly has its roots in negative behaviour, In Schoenberg and his attempt to, the 12-tone thing, to try and get away from, and then finding that he can't get away from it. The attempts by Cage, in some ways Boulez, to not have control of certain things. Boulez did it through maths which created a lot of series, pitch, hardness and so on.

DL – And Cage did it with indeterminacy.

PW – That's been an attempt to chuck things. To find out what else there is, and I feel that quite often in improvising. How can I chuck, you know, I don't want to have repetitiveness. I don't want to have continuity, which is not popular still these days. (laugh). I don't want to have ...

DL – There is a lot of continuity in these ones.

24.20

PW- Oh, absolutely. I'm not against it. But it's part of the continuum of the room, in a way.

DL – There is possibly more continuum in these improvisations than in the improvisations that I used to do previously with Benedict and Tom. Very much of the London set in a way, of throwing a lot of information out, there is a lot of things going on at the same time. A lot of things co-existing. But this is far more co-creative.

PW- For me, some of that sounds like a bit of a hangover from the free jazz. But anyway.

DL – I think there is a ... a lot of things in the closet.

PW – Yer, OK.

DL – A lot of things that people have listened to, from a lot of different places. And we are very, very tolerant, to bring these things forward and let them co-

exist. And this is what we need to celebrate within the free improvising community is the fact that we are incredibly adaptive to what is going on. We play with two people who just work on noise and feedback. OK, I can deal with that. The first improvisation, that sense of arriving and asking how can I work with this? We arrive and we find a language that allows me to talk in my language and it seems to transcend your dialect.

PW – Yer, like Derek's idea of putting together two incomparables. But as uncompromising as possible. And ofcourse, it is nature that the listener will eventually hear the two relating.

DL – Yer, so that is leaving the responsibility to the listener, to actually find those connections.

PW _ Yes, because it is human nature to look for common denominators.

DL – But it is because of the divisiveness of the two performers perhaps to actually not merge, that it is left to the third party, to find the meaning, to find the connection themselves. Which is possibly a very liberating thing for an audience, to actually have to work that hard.

PW – Is it a paradigm for this project, that the more you try to be opposite the closer you get? I wonder?

DL – I keep on coming back to the idea of ecology and a sense of balance.

PW – Well, a happening needs balance doesn't it or nothing will happen. So, is it creating a fertile environment?

DL – Cultivating a fertile environment to Co-exist?

PW – Yer.

DL – The sense of co-existence that I thought was really, really important.

DL – Discussion about the MbUS talk I did in Madrid.

PW – That was a lovely talk about yourself that you did.

>++ Madrid

PW – That's a quote. Yer, Lovely, and actually now, in retrospect, having seen it again, I am thinking of the quasi-LIO, I'klektik improvisation that you showed me, that I couldn't get into terribly. In a way, there appeared to be more of that context going on. Partly, because it was so crowded?

DL – Yer, and there was a sense of a ... you know, this biosphere idea, the idea that there is a self-organizing nature to everything that we do. So, it might seem chaotic now, but it will all work its way around. And we need to be tolerant to ... the trombones going crazy for a bit. The volume will come down and there will be time for everybody. It is just matter of allowing things to happen, and allowing them to take their course. And then, there will be time.

PW – I think, I feel very stretched by all this, because it takes courage to move sometimes. To go into unknown areas. And I think I have changed a lot, all of the time. That solo album is very minimal, in some ways, and there is more stuff. I have changed a lot all through the years and I like to play with other people for that reason. But to actually accept a situation where there are not obvious knife edge events takes a lot of courage, because you are then being invited to participate in an exploration of the unknown.

DL – It takes very brave people. Courage is crucial.

33.30

PW – So that is the whole thing about playing a piece where there is hardly any change and no emotion, for example. Rule out anything which is imported, it can be difficult.

DL – You would have to put your violin down in that case.

PW - I did a piece for a French LP, someone in Martio records wanted to put out an anthology of homages to Eric Sartie. And of course, it went down very well, it sold very well because everyone thought they were buying Sartie. After the copyright went.

And anyway, what I did was, everyone had to do a short piece.

I think Steve may have done a piece as well. My piece was called 'the memoires of an amnesiac' because he wrote a book called that, which was hilarious. A short book where he says 'My father was born in so and so, I forget what he did.' (laugh) 'but he smoked a pipe'. And it went on, in that vein, all the time. So, I thought OK I will play for 7 minutes, and at every moment I will try to forget what I have just done. And the result was unbelievable continuity. (laugh) So, in other words, I know that a number of things are happening, but - If the process is common, whatever you do with that process is going to have a coherence.

DL – You could say the same thing that if the process is uncommon, but you are using conventional means then you get to the same ... You have got to be very courageous and dismantle what you are doing from all perspectives.

PW – And electroacoustic music, I think I have learned a lot from that, in the sense that you can, it doesn't matter what you do. ... you can achieve coherence by making sure that all the sources ... that everything comes from one or a group of sources that are coherent. Even if the results don't sound that way, but there will be coherence as a result. Or it can be by process. And then of course there is the problem that if you have a certain layout of electronics that, in itself, is a process and it can very quickly get boring. So, given that [with the] equipment, you then have to have a radical change, at some point, where the process changes otherwise it will be boring and predictable.

DL – It is incredible how much on a tacit level, on an unconscious level, people identify the system, the process. Even something as complex as that, they understand what is going on. They might not be able to put it into words, but they understand the game plan that the musician is using with the configuration of the equipment. I don't need to know what is plugged into what but I can understand the cause and effect process which is taking place.

PW – I mean reading those articles that you sent me. It is really interesting about, it's exciting to think... and it crops up for me about ... that actually, I do this music because I want to get into all the real areas that cannot be substantiated by

science or knowledge. Or that, it is about one's experience to go out beyond language, and beyond the known, and not in a stupid way.

DL – No, in a meaningful and rigorous way, I agree. It is the enigmatic nature of music that remains outside our linguistic means which is the illusive thing that we keep on going back to.

PW - Well, that's an argument, isn't it, for your preface. That you can't ... If you had set up certain rules you wouldn't have transcended into .

DL – I knew, I needed to embrace the complexity of the process.

PW – That's a bit of a slap in the eye for academics, isn't it?

DL – Yer, but I think that it is fundamental to what I have been going on about.

PW – It is quite interesting to throw a bit of science, philosophy, which I don't know, it is way beyond me, but the idea that you can't ever prove anything, you can only disprove. So, what is there? What is it then that we are in? What is our space?

DL – Gary Peters talks about the improvising process as it being a sense making process, but on a very personal level. And it can only ever be personal. And that also the sense-making doesn't have to transcend time, it needs to make sense, at the moment, but not necessarily afterwards.

There has to be a reason that I can justify to myself, why I am doing this right now.

PW – Well, you have to question what you are doing all of the time or what you're going to get. The background for me is that one of the big problems, again going back to commonality, if that is the right word for it, is that up until now, generally thinking has been, not for everyone because there are lots of examples in those articles ... The idea is that there is a thing that we all have in common. The angle now days in all kinds of aspects of science is a realization – autism and so on, the spectrum of Baron Kowan – That all the concern now days seems to be that there actually isn't, that we have been wrong to think that there is a common thing. And as far as the unknown goes, it is the question 'what is the human condition?' and then me know that we are limited.

DL – You can only ever go so far

PW – But it is the nature of the human beings to try and find out. And that is how things are discovered – By-products.

DL – So it is not to negate the importance of looking for new knowledge, but it is to negate the importance of the quest to look for a definitive finding, statement, or conclusion related to the world around us. As that reflects the transitory nature of knowing and we should take pleasure in that, and the unfolding nature of life.

PW – Well, it is the interaction of so many different things. ... In biology, even DNA is not a fixed thing because there are other factors that depend on what becomes important. And so whatever you find out there are too many ... so many different aspects that are linked to faults, habits, and weaknesses – in biology and in people - are essential for the survival of ... or the progress, or the continuation

of the human beings. So, it is getting down to Quantum Physics isn't it. That we are not used to thinking about change and change is essentially what we are exploring in music.

DL – And yes, we come face to face with it, and we can't hide from it, but we still try to mask the changes in music and protect ourselves from the inevitable.

PW – What happens if we decide we aren't going to define something? What's left, in the experience?

Does change have a role in your music in space?

DL – The aspect of change – I would argue that, if four of us sat together and decided to perform and here is our audience sitting there and we are going to set up here. It is like the butterfly effect and if one of us changes our spatial relationship to the rest of the ensemble or the audience, it changes for everybody.

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PW – And we have to acknowledge that everyone is having a different experience.

DL – And we can't place a value or define an ideal performative experience. I feel we have got to a stage where we believe that there a right way of performing and we have got so fixed. And that results in us getting a very closed view of what we can listen to and it impacts our worldview also, and John Cage said that. That the hours spent training a musician impacts very specifically on their worldview and the way that they approach their instrument and the way that they approach everything. P10 Silence.

So, I believe that we need to subvert this negative relationship to change amongst musicians.

PW – Nothing is achieved by this sort of playing and listening. And our ears are in perfect condition.

DL – Jacques Attali would say that the way that we engage in music foretells our wider worldview and how we engage in the world. And so, you can see parallels in the way that we try to fix our music, and the very separate way of viewing the world – the right and wrong – The segregation which is happening within political thought in the world right now. It could very much do with a little more subversive, improvisational thinking. And that is what he arrives at in this article. But the whole thing about the diversity of an ecosystem is not actually seen as an adversity, but rather one of its strengths. And I think that comes out in improvised playing.

We don't have to come from the same school of thought as to what improvisation is. And that is why I think a lot of improvisers find it very difficult, or are reluctant, to talk about what we do.

PW – Yes, language is a very different experience.

DL – It is far too easy to get into a fixed context, of this is what I said so that is what I believe. But in 5 minutes time I will totally contradict what I just said. We are happy to live with contradiction.

PW – Derek Bailey was very good on that, saying that good is boring and bad is interesting. You know, if it is good it means that it is relying on criteria that are not boring but you will get more out of a bad example than a good one. Glass of wine, I think.

DL – Thank you Philipp.

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