

# Reflection

## My Initial Motivation

(thinking about this now, that this is a natural intro. What was I thinking before I started - the driving force. Something about this, even though it's mentioned in the project description)

### Reminiscence of origins

There is no denying that I have always been sensitive to sound.

I used to separate myself as a pianist from my childhood experiences and interests, thinking that they were completely separate, but through this project and through meeting various collaborators, I was reminded that I am a pianist all in all.

My fascination with sound began during my childhood when I secretly listened to MTV through my father's TV screen in an era without internet, memorizing songs by ear and I sang what I learnt by ear in CD shops to find out which song it was, or, watching USA for Africa's "We Are The World" video over and over until it was worn out, and learn the voice characteristics of almost all the singers by ear. Singers and artists that I like have a certain distinctive voice, and so on.

In contrast, playing piano did not evoke such passion; rather, it focused on avoiding mistakes and accurately performing what was written in sheet music. As a result, I struggled to understand how to express myself meaningfully through piano. This period felt aimless because practicing for competitions meant simply repeating pieces without understanding their purpose.

This all changed dramatically after attending the Darmstadt International Summer Course for New Music for the first time. Among the many concerts, lessons and lectures, they were running a test of 'Darmstadt Radio', a kind of pioneering podcast, in which a 'Darmstadt Quiz' was held every day with a different guest, and the guest that day was a teacher from the piano class, so the whole piano class was to all listen to it in the listening room. The point was to play a piece of contemporary music for a few seconds and the guest had to guess the name of the piece, but those few seconds changed my life.

For a few seconds, my consciousness was transported to a very colourful, wide-open place that I had never experienced before, just like in a comic book or a film. I fell in love with the sound of the piano for the first time.

This was my first encounter with the **Vortex Temporum** (it was the beginning of the second movement that was played for a few seconds).

From there, I went on a wild goose chase and did whatever it took to play this piece. I also learnt how to tune the four microtones from a tuner I knew very well so that I could tune them myself.

In fact, I have had this kind of impactful experience before:

When I was only about nine years old, I came across a song called **'Shima Uta'**, by a band **'THE BOOM'**. It was a song about the Battle of **Okinawa** at the end of the Second World War, and both the subject matter and the music itself had quite an impact on me at the time, so I begged my parents to take me to Okinawa whenever I could. It was only on our honeymoon that this came true, and we went to Himeyuri Tower on the same day we landed. After that, I went to Okinawa whenever I could, and saw the scars of history both on the main island and on the remote islands, and at the same time was moved by the way the people there were involved with music. Especially on the remote islands, when the sun began to set, the sound of **sanshin** could be heard from everywhere, and someone was singing a song. It is the same music, but there are two kinds of music: the kind that is meant to be shown off, and the kind that is simply played as if to let out one's heart.

I had no idea that even these experiences would be indirectly involved in this project, but my encounter with 'Shima Uta' and the band 'THE BOOM' resulted in my later encounter with **gamelan** music as well.