Watch the sound – listen to the gesture

Exploring embodied musical interpretation in staged performance

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Abstract

This artistic PhD project is based on the author's practice as a recorder player and chamber musician in contemporary Western art music. Through an initial study of the embodied and tacit knowledge of chamber musicians and how it is articulated through gestural interaction during performance, the perspective of the thesis widens to explore how such qualities can be used as a creative resource in interdisciplinary collaboration. At its core, the PhD work has explored long-term collaborative processes in projects where a series of chamber music works have been brought to a staged context, but always keeping the qualities of chamber music at its centre. The research questions that emerge from these conceptual and artistic aims are:

– How can I understand and transfer the communicative and embodied qualities inherent in chamber music playing to staged interdisciplinary contexts?
– How can the concept of the gestural-sonic object, and the multimodal understanding of human perception which it implies, constitute both an analytical tool and a source for artistic experimentation?
– How can musical interpretation be applied in the creation of staged interdisciplinary performances?

The method and design of the project builds on collaborations with artists from the fields of composition, choreography, dance, theatre and visual arts. In the projects, the participating artists have aimed to explore and develop collaborative methods and staged formats where the artforms at the same time have been considered as autonomous and as part of a compound whole. The results of the artistic work are published online in the Research Catalogue.

The project findings suggest that interdisciplinary approaches, such as experimental music theatre, composed theatre and choreomusical practices, may enable the liberation from traditional roles, hierarchies and predetermined formats and can lead to what can be described as a radical interpretation of the original score. Through a study of musical gesture – building on a theoretical framework grounded in embodied cognition and phenomenology – the thesis presents examples, both artistic and theoretical, of processes through which boundaries between artistic disciplines have been consciously blurred, thereby providing novel creative opportunities for the classical music performer.

Acknowledgements

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The structure of the thesis

This PhD thesis has two main components: (1) the printed book and (2) the Research Catalogue exposition Watch the sound – listen to the gesture which also includes a link to a publication in the online journal RUUKKU. Representations of artistic processes and outcomes are found in these online sources.

The printed book is divided into four main parts, each with two chapters: PART I contains an introduction to the PhD project as a whole, including aims, research questions and a brief summary of the artistic projects (Chapter I), as well as key concepts, theories and methods (Chapter II). In PART II I discuss two projects undertaken by the Lipparella ensemble: *Champs d'étoiles* (Chapter III) and *What is the Word* (Chapter IV). PART III deals with two projects based on solo recorder works: *Fragmente²* (Chapter V) and *The Conference of the Birds* (Chapter VI). PART IV includes the final discussion (Chapter VII) as well as conclusions and outlook (Chapter VIII).

Each of the chapters I–VII begins with a quote from the medieval Persian poet Farid-ud Din Attar's epic poem *Manteq ot-teyr*.[1] Although the title means "the speech of the birds" the work is better known as *The Conference of the Birds* in English translation. This world-renowned text is about human struggle, both physical and spiritual. The form, beauty and existential tone of the poem not only became an important source of inspiration for the creation of the final and most comprehensive artistic project of the thesis, but also a companion along my own journey of artistic practice and doctoral studies, a path through which I have gradually discovered and developed an expanded field of creativity.

Link to the Research Catalogue exposition:
https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2522756/2522757

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[1] The references to the Attar quotations at the beginning of chapters I–VII can be found in the Appendix.

PART I

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When I started this artistic PhD project, I knew it would address the musical body through my practice as a professional recorder player. However, the project design and methodology were undefined, and the final goals of the project were unclear. My wish was to avoid superimposing a conceptual or theoretical perspective, seeking instead to allow aims and methods to emerge from an exploration of my practices as a soloist and chamber musician. I wanted to start out from an essential building block in my practice: how chamber musicians move when playing. This core – the musical gesture – became the fundamental unit that binds together the different artistic works in the thesis.[2]

The boundary between music and movement may seem obvious, but the closer one looks at this relationship, the more the concepts dissolve and the categories can be questioned. In the practice developed through the thesis, the boundaries do not manifest themselves as sharp. In this way, the project paints a new picture of what it can mean to be a musician. Indirectly, my research study has therefore opened up and addressed larger questions such as: What is music? What is it to be a musician?

Artistic research is a type of enquiry in which the research questions can only be answered through the artistic practice; the project and its various parts are both results and objects of study. My doctoral project has followed an exploratory and intuitive path where one decision has led to another. Further, new knowledge has been drawn through iterative collaborative processes, in which artistic practices have been informed and challenged through a theoretical and philosophical framework.

This first part contains two chapters that place the overall project in context. Chapter I contains an introduction to the research project and topic, the aims and research questions of the dissertation, and a short description of each of the four main artistic projects. In Chapter II, I present the theoretical framework, key concepts and their methodological applications.

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[2] In the initial stage of this thesis, the concept of musical gesture was mainly conceived as body movements – as a visual aspect of musical performance. However, the project led to a deeper understanding and consideration of musical gesture in all its different guises – physical, acoustic, composed, imagined – and as such has served as a primary artistic tool for the interdisciplinary exploration in the various artistic projects presented within the thesis.

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Chapter I Introduction

You need patience in this quest
Not everyone is a patient seeker

Not until the quest appears inside you
Will you know the scent of longing in your blood

Performance as research

This artistic research project builds on my practice as a recorder player and chamber musician in Western contemporary art music and explores musical interpretation and performance from a range of perspectives, from the embodied experience of performing to individual agency, interactivity and interdisciplinarity. Fundamentally, the PhD work has centred on long-term collaborative processes in projects where chamber music performance of contemporary music has been brought to a staged context.

My initial study focused on the chamber musician's embodied knowledge articulated through musical gestures and interactions between performers. This study became the basis for my later expansion of the research project where such qualities from the chamber music context were applied in a series of interdisciplinary staged works. In collaboration with artists from the fields of composition, choreography, dance, theatre, and visual arts, the different artistic projects presented have led to an experimentation with my individual artistic practice, as well as with the collaborative and performative roles within the ensemble.

To me, the PhD project has initiated a transformative and deeply rewarding journey, which has demanded undertaking complex and challenging tasks. While the artistic practices explored in the PhD project have been at once a precondition for the research project and the object of study, the research perspectives have added new dimensions to the artistic work. The practices have, as I see it, nourished each other but, rather than providing answers, opened up questions.

As in all artistic development, there is no end point; what emerges is rather an understanding and awareness of an area that is open to further exploration.

As a recorder player with a base in the Western musical tradition, my repertoire includes various traditions and styles of early music as well as contemporary works, often created in close collaboration with composers, seeking new sonorities in the period instruments I play. I decided early on to limit the research project to contemporary music and, in addition to solo repertoire, have involved one of the ensembles of which I am a member, Lipparella. Despite its composition of four baroque instruments (recorder, baroque violin, viola da gamba and lute/theorbo) and a countertenor, Lipparella is focused solely on contemporary music (see further Chapters III and IV).

The recorder, gamba and lute were all successively replaced in the middle of the 18th century by instruments better suited to the musical ideals of the time and fell in almost complete oblivion for more than 150 years. In parallel with the development of the historically informed performance method (HIP) and the revival of early music, the 20th and 21st centuries have also provided many examples of the revival of old instruments in new compositions, a practice that Lipparella thus embodies. Unlike other baroque instruments, the recorder in its modern context is undergoing extensive development. In parallell with the instrument's quickly growing contemporary solo and ensemble repertoire, close collaborations between composers, performers and recorder makers have resulted in several modern recorder types that differ radically from the historical instruments both in terms of internal and external design, affecting the sound characteristics and the possibility of variation, dynamic possibilities, pitch range, and technique.[3]

Although I have to some extent also participated in this development, I have always found the historical recorder, with its inherent limitations and special characteristics, interesting and challenging in the context of contemporary music. In ensemble Lipparella, it has been natural to use more traditional recorder types, given the group's baroque setting.[4]

Over the years, I have also been drawn to interdisciplinary collaborations and various staged projects. Already during my years as student at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm, and the years that followed immediately after, I performed in a series of theatre performances such as two Strindberg plays, *Mäster Olof* (1993, 1998) and *Himmelrikets nycklar* (1996), both directed by Mathias Lafolie. In the historical drama *Mäster Olof* performed in Stockholm Cathedral, we

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[3] These new recorder types give rise to new works that enrich the contemporary repertoire for recorder and expand the performance practice. Two of the most established new recorder types are the Paetzold contrabass recorder and the Helder tenor recorder (Fröhlich, 2020; Blackburn, 2023).

[4] The different recorders I use for the repertoire presented in this thesis (including the solo works) are modernised copies of baroque instruments. Apart from the modern pitch they differ from historical instruments in terms of a generally more open voicing which is achieved through adjustments of the internal dimensions of the instrument's head and body. The alto recorder I use in *The Conference of the Birds* is made entirely of transparent acrylic in addition to a wooden block.

were a small group of musicians playing Renaissance music. The music contributed to the historical setting of the play and was also useful in guiding the audience to different locations in the church's magnificent interior, used as backdrops for the different scenes.

Written in 1892, Strindberg's *Himmelrikets nycklar* (The Keys of Heaven) is a fairy-tale play where a blacksmith joins a magical doctor and Saint Peter, who has lost the key to heaven, on a surreal journey. The three of them set out on a quest through imaginative landscapes where they meet various mythological, fairy-tale and literary characters. In the performance at Strindberg's Intima Teatern in Stockholm, I was the only musician among the three performers and the 11 roles in the play were divided between us. I remember it as a playful agreement with the audience where we, three figures dressed in white, with simple means such as a symbol, a different body language, a different music – made instantaneous shifts in time, space and characters. Being relatively new to the world of theatre, I was impressed by how my fellow actors approached the material and trusted the experimental concept which the reviewer Pia Huss described as "slimmed down, sharp and interesting". A version through which the play is "made visible in the light and minimised so that codes and symbols stand out. In addition, the play teases the spectator with interesting questions and makes us laugh when pompous symbols are placed on platters or hung on a fishing rope. The young trio on stage brings concentration and moves fervor in a circle. [...] It is like following Strindberg through a purification bath" (Huss, 1996, my translation).

The Swedish National Theatre's production of *Bön för Tjernobyl* (Prayer for Chernobyl, 1999), based on the author Svetlana Alexievich's collected testimonies from survivors of the nuclear reactor accident in Chernobyl in April 1986, was a large production with many participants. I was one of the three musicians in the production, whom together with two dancers, director Åsa Kalmér wanted to be present on stage most of the time and, like the others, represent the survivors of the disaster. New music was composed directly for the play by composer and cellist Chrichan Larson in the unconventional line-up of recorder, cello and trombone, a music that I will always associate with memories of the theatre performance and the deep impression it made on me. This was the start of the trio Das Orchester, which has continued to collaborate on commissioned works ever since.[5]

So, early in my career I established a natural oscillation between concert performances and theatre projects. The role of music in all these performances was significant and they were all important experiences from which I learnt a lot. But there was never any incentive in these projects for an experimental approach to the encounter between music and the other artforms. This, I now realise, has been a contributing factor in making me feel more like a temporary visitor in various theatre and dance contexts. However, interdisciplinary collaborations inherently

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[5] Larson's work *Chernobyl Consorts* (1999–2000) was later performed in many different venues and also recorded on the CD *Consorts* – Das Orchester (2015) Blue music group.

involve a focus on performers' gestures and actions and thus constitute a potential basis for the development of new knowledge and practices. But achieving deep creative experimentation with collaborative strategies and methods across disciplines requires from the participating artists to look beyond familiar boundaries and develop and challenge their way of working.

Nevertheless, such exploratory work was undertaken in another project that involved the trio Das Orchester, a singer and a choreographer–dancer, *A une raison* (2011), performed at MDT in Stockholm.[6] For this project, Chrichan Larson developed a kind of template to create a work on a more experimental basis in collaboration with choreographer and dancer Anna Källblad. The template served as a concrete tool to allow music and dance to develop in a mutual exploration and on equal terms. The development of the work was described as follows:

> This performance does not tell a story. It exists in the gap between the structure of simplification and the chaos of reality. The cast have given themselves a mathematically created template of boundaries. The music has become a movement in the choreography and the dance an instrument in a chamber music ensemble. The prerequisites for the work method is that choreographer/dancers and composer/musicians give up control over their function in the creative process and let themselves be directed by the template and by each other. (MDT, 2012)

Although the methods differ, there are conceptual similarities between *A une raison* and the type of enquiry built into my own research project. It was an attempt to go beyond familiar working strategies and to give the artforms equal weight in an intertwined new whole. But of course, my own role was different; in *A une raison* I was more of an observer of this inquiry. In recent years, artistic research on musical interpretation and performance has enabled in-depth experimentation and development of interdisciplinary methods and theatre formats. One such example is cellist and artistic researcher Sara Hubrich, who explores embodied creative performance using theatrical and choreographic elements and techniques. She believes that performances of music in the Western classical tradition are often associated with prior knowledge and performance conventions and are therefore, as she puts it, "bound to certain possible restrictive expectations" (Hubrich, 2016, p. 338). She further argues that standard concerts therefore often do not reflect the artist's individual search and bodily experience, which she identifies as potential factors for the development of a more dynamic and creative performance.

Interest in the physical aspect of music performance was highlighted not least by the *Instrumental music theatre*, developed in the 1960s and 70s by avant-garde composers such as Mauricio Kagel, a genre that has continued to develop since then (see Chapter II). As Hubrich

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[6] The performance at MDT was realised in collaboration between the trio Das Orchester, soprano Annette Taranto and choreographer-dancer Anna Källblad. *A une raison* (2011) was later recorded on the CD *Le Nouvel Amour* (2018) – Das Orchester & Alexandra Büchel.

also notes however, only a few of these experiments have been initiated by the performers themselves. It is generally the creators such as composers and directors, rather than the performers, "who have experimented with extended formats and for whom it has appeared to be acceptable to do so" (Hubrich, 2016, p. 342). Likewise, in the aforementioned artistic project *A une raison,* it was mainly in the roles of composer and choreographer that Larson's and Källblad's experimental collaboration took place.

My PhD project is an artistic exploration of the embodied aspect of performance and encounter between music, dance, choreography, theatre, poetry and visual arts, including an investigation of performative forms and interdisciplinary methods. In the artistic works presented, traditional roles have been partially blurred, not as a result of a pre-determined premise, but as a result of open and intuitive collaborative processes.

As a practice-based research project, the inquiry has involved a form of knowledge building – exploring a "know-how" akin to what Donald Schön (1983/1991) calls "knowledge-in-practice" which incorporates experiential, performative, tacit and embodied knowledge. As such, it has also been concerned with developing methodologies and strategies to frame and communicate that knowledge. As Schön states, "When a practitioner becomes a researcher into his own practice, he engages in a continuing process of self-education [...] when he functions as a researcher-in-practice, the practice itself is a source of renewal" (Schön, 1983/1991, p. 299). In this way, the knowledge building for the overall project has developed gradually, both for me personally and collectively with the participating artists in the different projects.

In his paper (2012), the theatre director Mark Fleishman, discusses Performance as Research, which he finds to be based on ways of knowing that are different from traditional text-based research. The performative mode of knowing, he argues is "intimate, active, immediate, moving, embodied, sensual, fluid, interactive and emotionally engaged" (p. 30). Fleishman describes Performance as Research as "a series of unexpected and often accidental explosions that in turn lead to further explosions. It expresses itself through a repeated, though flexible and open-ended, process of ontogenesis" (Fleishman, 2012, p. 34). It is not about building towards an end point, he argues, nor is it mechanistic as if we knew what we were looking for in advance. "It is a way of acting on the world 'probing more deeply into it and discovering the significance that lies there'" (Fleishman, 2012, p. 30). Performance as Research thus rests on an intuitive, experiential and performative foundation, which is reflected in the design of the artistic explorations driving this PhD project.

Through its various artistic productions, this thesis develops an understanding of performers' embodied practice and exemplifies how it can be transferred and applied in a broader context. At the same time, in parts of the project, my role as a performer has also been challenged by designing sections in which I recite text or perform choreography without my instrument.

Nevertheless, I have never during this PhD project had the feeling of being a temporary visitor in another domain, rather the opposite: I have taken an active part in developing an expanded practice that embraces my previous experiences and areas of interest while at the same time opening up a whole new artistic landscape. Hereby, each artistic production has contributed to strengthening my individual agency. But none of this would have been possible without the commitment of the participating artists, the joint preparations, the many exciting discussions and the collective efforts where everyone involved was open to letting "unexpected and accidental explosions" pave the way for new artistic directions. It is my hope that the project can also contribute to inspiring other practitioners of art music to explore their creativity, improve musical skills and exploit the potential of what performances can convey.

Aims and research questions

The aim of the research project is to explore the communicative qualities and their artistic and embodied manifestations, inherent in chamber music performance and to create a series of staged performances based on these qualities. The research questions that emerge from these conceptual and artistic aims are:

– How can I understand and transfer the communicative and embodied qualities inherent in chamber music playing to staged interdisciplinary contexts?

– How can the concept of the gestural-sonic object, and the multimodal understanding of human perception which it implies, constitute both an analytical tool and a source for artistic experimentation?

– How can musical interpretation be applied in the creation of staged interdisciplinary performances?

This research project is centred around four chamber music works and has been carried out through my practice as a soloist and as a member of the ensemble Lipparella. After having carried out an analysis of ensemble Lipparella's musical gestures and interactions in performing Kent Olofsson's *Champs d'étoiles*, the last three works have been realised as through-composed intermedia performances, seeking to bring musical, theatrical, choreographic and visual art together. In two of the projects, I have collaborated with choreographer and dancer Åsa Unander-Scharin. Our common interest was to explore the encounter between music and dance and how the artforms can be combined without one dominating the other.

The artistic productions

The four main artistic productions are all independent artistic projects in their own right. In the thesis, however, they constitute the central objects of research and simultaneously constitute the main results of the project. They have also influenced each other, and knowledge from one project has been brought into the next. The research is thus not driven by a predetermined hypothesis but has been conducted as an intuitive and experimental study where new questions and perspectives on the underlying issues in the project have been opened up along the way. In this way, the central issues have cut across the various productions and sometimes led to unexpected paths. Below I give a brief description of each artistic production and will then discuss their interrelationships as they are presented in PART II and PART III and in particular in the two concluding chapters of PART IV.

Champs d'étoiles (2008–2016) is a large-scale chamber work by Swedish composer Kent Olofsson, composed for the Lipparella ensemble, which also became the starting point for my entire research project. What initially interested me was the corporeal aspect of musical performance; the communication between the performers and the role of musical gestures in the musical shaping and the interaction between the performers. The study resulted in a detailed mapping of how musical gestures correspond to musical structure at both individual and collective levels. It also revealed the ensemble's general strategies for performing complex music without the need of a conductor.

As one of the ensemble's first commissioned works and through the many concert performances that followed, *Champs d'étoiles* became a hallmark of the group and a particularly important work in terms of how the ensemble came to develop its own voice. *Champs d'étoiles* also constituted the basis for two staged performances: *Okända rum* (Unknown rooms, 2014) and *I skuggorna* (In the shadows, 2016), that Lipparella carried out in collaboration with the Malmö-based performing arts collective, Teatr Weimar.[7] Since then, Lipparella has initiated and been involved in a number of collaborative projects that explore the relationship between music, text and space, some of which became part of the present PhD project.

A complete CD recording of *Champs d'étoiles* was released in 2017 (dB Productions). The CD, excerpts of a video documentation of *Okända rum*, excerpts from the score and other related materials can be found in the Research Catalogue.[8]

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[7] Although *Okända rum* (2014) and *I skuggorna* (2016) have been informative for the following stagings, they were not part of my research project as such.
[8] https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/2522756/2522757

What is the Word (2019) is the title of a staged performance carried out in collaboration between Lipparella, composer Christer Lindwall and director Karl Dunér, performed in the Liljevalch's exhibition hall (and also in other venues, such as the performance space "3:e våningen", Gothenburg). The first part of the performance (before the interval), which I focus on here, consisted of two works by Samuel Beckett, the wordless play *Quad* (1981) and the poem *What is the Word* (1989) as well as a new piece by Lindwall, *What is the Word* (2019) based on the same text.[9]

A starting point for the project was to deepen our understanding of and relationship to Beckett's poem which was integrated into Lindwall's composition in that fragments of the text are to be recited by all members of the ensemble. Karl Dunér, a director known as a Beckett specialist who has worked on many of Beckett's plays, also introduced us to the choreographic work *Quad* that Beckett originally created for television. *Quad* was the first act of the performance. Dressed in robes – a garment used by Beckett in several of his plays to mask the age, gender and origin of the actor – we walked as four anonymous players, in a perpetual pattern across the "playing field" marked on the floor as an illuminated square. There is an embedded musical quality and presence in Beckett's work which made us experience in both the play and the poem the same kind of quality and ensemble interaction as in chamber music – but without instruments and sounding notes.

The staged performance *What is the Word,* and its work process also became the incentive for the creation of the documentary film *Vad heter det* (What is the word, 2023), realised in collaboration between filmmaker Tomas Boman and myself. The idea of making a film about the project emerged both as a reaction to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the ensemble's limited opportunities to meet an audience, and as a reflective research method inspired by Merleau-Ponty's understanding of perception and corporeal sensibility.

Lindwall's work was recorded in 2021 on the CD *Hidden voices* (Blue music group) together with other Swedish works premiered by the ensemble. The film, the CD recording, and other related materials can be found in the Research Catalogue exposition.

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Fragmente² (2021) is a choreomusical duo created and performed by the dancer and choreographer, Åsa Unander-Scharin and myself. *Fragmente²* is the most recent of three different works we have created together based on one and the same piece of music; the Japanese composer Makoto Shinohara's, solo for tenor recorder *Fragmente*, composed in 1968.

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[9] After the interval, we performed Lisa Streich's composition *Fikonträdet* (The Fig Tree, 2015–2016) based on Inger Christensen's poem *Alfabet* (2014).

The conceptual idea and starting point for our collaboration was to intertwine music and dance in a non-hierarchical manner, a goal that *Fragmente²* (Fragmente squared) embodies. In *Fragmente²* we are both fully choreographed and interact within a large circle on the floor. Unander-Scharin's choreographic material was initially developed completely independently of the music while my choreographic material, on the other hand, was created based on the premises of the musical performance itself. With deepened knowledge of each other's material, we have achieved the same kind of attuned interaction that can occur in a chamber music context.

A filmed version of *Fragmente²* was shot by the film makers Patrik Eriksson and Vanja Sandell Billström at Färgfabriken, Stockholm, in 2021 and is presented as part of Unander-Scharin's and my jointly created exposition in the online journal RUUKKU.

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The Conference of the Birds (2022) is a staged performance based on the Persian medieval poet Farid ud-Din Attar's poem *Manteq-ot-teyr* and the Swedish-French composer Madeleine Isaksson's solo for recorder *Les septs vallées* (2006), a work based on the same poem.

The creative process of *The Conference of the Birds* started as a continuation of Åsa Unander-Scharin's and my work with *Fragmente²* but came eventually to expand to a larger staged work and collaboration between several artists: Lene Juhl (video art), Kent Olofsson (electroacoustic music and sound spatialisation) Katarina Eriksson (dancer), Ingibjörg Jara Sigurðardóttir (costume design), and Magnus Grönvall (lighting design).

During the creative process we shifted focus; instead of staging the musical work, which was the original idea, we worked towards a staging of Attar's poem. This shift created new creative conditions for the artistic work, not least musically. The expanded form and new interpretation of Attar's poem led to a reworking and reconceptualisation of Isaksson's composition. A new musical work was developed for recorder and electronics by me and Kent Olofsson, based on, but separate from *Les sept vallées* – tailor-made for the staging.

The Conference of the Birds was premiered at the concert hall Studio Acusticum in Piteå in September 2022. A video documentation of this performance, shot by Kråkkullen Produktion/ Anders Westergren and edited by Creative Motion/Helene Berg (2023), can be found in Research Catalogue exposition together with a CD recording of *Les sept vallées* (Naxos/Daphne) and other related materials.

Chapter II Key concepts, theories and methods

Here, knowledge splits
Into unnumbered insights

If mysteries excite you,
Then each moment will bloom

The paradigm of Embodied Cognition and its basis in phenomenology

In recent years, music research has often described our engagement with music as multimodal. Sound is not merely "heard", but is also perceived through multiple embodied processes, such as movement. Body movement may shape many different experiences of music, ranging from an embodied understanding of the effort demanded to play a certain instrument, to more general understandings of dynamic shapes. Furthermore, researchers in the field of Embodied Music Cognition emphasise the role of the body and argue that the body acts as a mediator between the external environment and our subjective feelings and experiences (Coorevits et al., 2015). Bodily engagement is thus considered crucial to human interaction with music and shapes how we perceive, feel, experience and understand music (Leman et al., 2016).

The paradigm of Embodied Music Cognition builds on the wider field of research known as Embodied Cognition (EC), encompassing areas such as psychology, neuroscience, ethology and language, which over the last decades have contributed to new ways of understanding the mind (Shapiro & Spaulding, 2024). The multifaceted field of Embodied Cognition is usually portrayed as a challenge to the classic Cartesian and cognitivist accounts. This so called first generation of cognitive science represents an assumption that cognitive processes occur inside the head of the thinking organism in which the body plays no essential role. One of the most influential attempts

to define the field of EC and its many approaches, is the idea of 4E Cognition (4EC) arguing that cognition is also *embodied, embedded, extended* and *enacted*. As a whole, the 4E approach helps "to shift the ground away from orthodox cognitive science. In general terms, it's not just the brain but the brain-body-environment that is agentive in cognition" (Gallagher, 2023, p. 4). EC is thus about the relationship between mind, body and world.

The artistic quest of transforming a series of musical works into performance in staged interdisciplinary contexts, has in turn demanded an engagement with a variety of theories and empirical research that all fall within the scope of 4EC, to enable an understanding of the interplay between the artists involved. The creative processes have affected physical, temporal and spatial parameters, opening up new aspects of musical organisation and meaning that have manifested themselves in different ways in my consciousness, imagination and senses. Below I briefly present each of the four dimensions of 4E-cognition, and identify how they have guided an analytical understanding of my artistic practice, and sometimes also inspired the artistic work:

The interdisciplinary nature of my PhD project, in which a series of musical works have been moved into staged interdisciplinary context, has demanded an engagement with a variety of theories and empirical research that all fall within the scope of 4EC. The creative processes have affected physical, temporal and spatial parameters and opened up new aspects of musical organisation and meaning that have manifested themselves in different ways in my consciousness, imagination and senses. Below I briefly present each of the four dimensions of 4E-cognition, and identify the areas where they have influenced my work:

Embodied. Some parts of the knowledge which resides in the musical body can be described as *tacit knowledge,* a notion first introduced by the Hungarian philosopher, Michael Polanyi (1958). Tacit knowledge can be defined as skills, ideas, and experiences that people have but which may be difficult to transfer to another person, since they are not verbalised, and sometimes resist a translation to the verbal domain. This phenomenon has been described as "knowing-how" in opposition to "knowing-that" (Ryle, 1949) and can be of either a more intellectual or a more practical nature – or a combination of the two, such as can be seen in much musical performance, for instance when engaging in the multimodal activity of playing the recorder, while also processing an interpretation of a score. Another aspect of embodiment is captured in George Lakoff and Mark Johnson's theory of *conceptual metaphor* (1980) which bridges embodied experience and conceptual thinking. Metaphors are built on basic and recurring "image-schemas" such as up–down, front–back, inside–outside*,* pushing, pulling, supporting, balance, and so on, which are grounded in embodied experiences in the environment (Johnson, 1987, p. 23).

Embedded. The embodied mind cannot be conceived of in isolation from its environment; it is always already embedded in a context. Through an ecological approach to visual perception,

psychologist James J. Gibson (1986) stressed the importance of the *environment*, arguing for a *direct relationship* between subject and the surrounding environment. To better describe the relationship that exists between organisms and their environments, Gibson introduced the concept of *affordances*. The environment *affords* different things for different species, water for example stops the pedestrian, but different animals can wade, or float or even skitter over the surface if they are insects. Water does afford respiration for some organisms but not to terrestrial animals with lungs. Water thus has many different kinds of meaning. Hence, water, fire and objects, all offer different affordances for different animals "the *affordances* of the environment are what it *offers* the animal, what it *provides* or *furnishes*, either for good or ill. [...] It implies the complementarity of the animal and the environment" (Gibson, 1986 p. 127). In a musical context, the notion of affordances has to do with performers' perceived opportunities for action and the reciprocal relationship between performer and the environment e.g. co-performers, instruments, space and score.

Extended. Cognitive processes can extend beyond the brain and body to include objects we interact with in our environment. A typical example is how the blind person's stick becomes transparent. A person who is not used to walking with a stick perceives the stick in the hand and the characteristics of the ground through it, but, as the person gets accustomed to using it, the environment is instead perceived directly, and the stick is no longer sensed by itself. When using tools such as a hammer or scissors, they withdraw and become part of the body, our familiarity with the tool allows us to focus on the work itself. Gibson argues that this situation blurs the boundaries between subject and object "More generally it suggests that the absolute duality of 'objective' and 'subjective' is false. When we consider the affordances of things, we escape this philosophical dichotomy" (Gibson, 1986, p. 41). Following this approach, musical instruments are elevated from a previously inanimate object to a tool "involved in a multifaceted and reciprocal relationship with the musician" (Tullberg, 2021, p. 39). A musical instrument affords different possibilities to every performer: In the hands of a skilful musician, a guitar affords the performance of an advanced piece of music, while for the beginner the same guitar affords no more than a few chords. Through years of practice and explorations of an instrument's affordances, the intimate and tactile relationship between the professional performer and the instrument has to some extent become an embedded part of the individual performer's way of playing and forms the performer's habitus. Gorton and Östersjö (2019) describe habitus as "a concept that can be broadly understood to encompass combined prior knowledge, muscle memory, and habits that influence and shape decision-making and live response" (Gorton & Östersjö, 2019, p. 43). In combination with other interactions, such as with composers, musical scores and contextual practices, the performer–instrument relation has also been identified as central to developing the performer's artistic "voice" (Cumming, 2000; Gorton & Östersjö, 2019).

Enacted. The concept of enactment has been defined as "the instance of acting something out" (Leman et al., 2017, p. 12). In musical contexts, musical gestures provide a basis for enactment, both for a performer and a listener. "The coupling of actions and perceived sensations forms a mechanism that guides our understanding of music, which makes these gestures a vehicle for the construction of musical meaning" (Coorevits et al., 2015, p. 168). Expression can further be transferred from gesture to music or from music to gesture. "Gesturing can be seen as an encoding and decoding of expressive affordances, or opportunities for action, to be put into the sound, or to be taken from the sound" (Leman et al., 2017, p. 14). From an enacted point of view, perception of e.g. gestures is not a process of passively receiving stimuli from the environment, but rather a process of exploring the possibilities for action, based on one's embodied skills (Tanaka, 2015).

Phenomenology is one of the many disciplines that have contributed to the notion of embodied cognition. Already in the early works of Edmund Husserl, considered the founder of the modern phenomenology, an analysis of embodied aspects of cognition and perception is presented (Gallagher & Zahavi, 2008). Husserl stressed the intentional structure of perception and his notion "I can" came to be further developed by Gibson's concept of affordances (Gallagher, 2023). According to George Lakoff and Mark Johnsson (1999), some phenomenologists, such as Husserl and Dreyfus, insisted that the phenomenological analysis of lived experience constitutes the ultimate level of explanation when it comes to the human experience of phenomena such as language, memory and attention. Others, in turn, favour the unconscious or neural levels. Lakoff and Johnson, for their part, emphasise the value of a diversity of perspectives: phenomenological analysis, cognitive unconscious and neural levels. Because of the many different levels of our embodiment, they argue, there is no *one* correct description, but in fact there can be many correct descriptions. Each of these different understandings provides a commitment to what is real about that situation (Lakoff & Johnson, 1999).

Of all phenomenologists, Merleau-Ponty, is the one that stresses the embodied perspective the most. Known in our days as the philosopher of the body, he studied psychology and neurology, continuing in Husserl's paths, although he also was influenced by Heidegger. In his *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962/1978), Merleau-Ponty proposes a dichotomy between a *concrete* and an *abstract* approach to our body movements. While the concrete movement refers to the movement that one performs in an actual, real situation with an end point, the abstract movement is not directed at any actual situation; it is constructed and perceived as a number of sub-movements. Merleau-Ponty's contribution to the phenomenology of movement has often served as an inspiration and basis for artistic creation. For instance, the choreographer Åsa Unander-Scharin has explored the possibilities of abstract and concrete approaches to movement when developing choreographic material that includes robots, virtual and non-human dancers as well as creating movements for her own body and other human dancers:

> Using an abstract approach to movements, I can consciously calculate and more directly control the body parts separately. The image of the concrete movement makes the body more indirectly execute the coordination without my being conscious of all movements. The concrete movement I perceive as one movement, while the abstract movement is perceived as a number of movements. The abstract movement can be divided into an infinite number of body parts or movements. (Unander-Scharin, 2009, p. 177)

The paired concepts of *body schema* and *body image* captures another dimension of the multi-layered body. While the body schema is related to action involving "a system of motor capacities, abilities and habits" that are often unintentional or subconscious in nature, the body image may be thought of as the explicit perception and understanding we have of our own bodies (Gallagher & Cole, 1995, p. 371). De Preester (2007) describes body image as an intentional state made up of several modalities: conceptual understandings of the body in general; and emotional attitudes towards one's own body. These perspectives have contributed to defining how, in the study of embodied artistic practice in this PhD project, an introspective and reflexive perspective is useful when approaching the level of the body image. In addition, I also draw on Merleau-Ponty's concept of *intercorporeality* as a way of understanding the relationship between my own body and the body of the other.

Intercorporeality, such as put forth by Merleau-Ponty, proposes an understanding of social cognition as grounded in a perception-action loop between the self and the other: the action that I perceive prompts the same action in my own body (such as yawning) or the possibility of action, and a similar loop of perception and action takes place in the other's body (Tanaka, 2015). By this concept, Tanaka argues, Merleau-Ponty aimed to describe intersubjectivity as a communication and enactment that takes place not between two Cartesian minds, but between two minded-bodies (Tanaka, 2015). Following Merleau-Ponty, a chamber music performance can be seen as a shared context based on a mutual understanding of each other's intentions and actions. Already to perceive the environment and its possible musical and social affordances is a sort of implicit and practical, and often, tacit, knowledge (Tanaka, 2015). In music performance, such tacit knowing is set in action. While Chapter III will examine such interactive processes in a chamber music context, in Chapters V and VI, I will describe the affordances of this kind of intercorporeality in the interplay between a musician and a dancer.

Musical gestures

In music research, based on the paradigm of embodied cognition, body movements involved in activities such as performing, conducting and dancing have been related to the concept of *gesture*. Unlike *movement*, which involves a general displacement in space, the gesture is a carrier of meaning and thus imbues movement with meaning. In the introductory chapter of their

influential book *Musical gestures, sound, movement and meaning* (2010) Leman and Godøy write: "under the label of 'embodied cognition,' we can now better understand the integration of gesture with perception and with thinking in general, including insights on how body movement is both a response to whatever we perceive and an active contribution to our perception of the world" (2010, p. 4).

Leman and Godøy propose the aforementioned concepts of body schema and body image as a possible way to understand gestures as *patterns of embodiment*. As argued above, in performing, trained musicians performing do not need to think about each individual movement but focus instead on the musical shaping and their interaction with co-performers. Both body schema and body image are part of the process by which musicians build up a repertoire of goal-directed units of action (gestures) that provides a basis for the enactment of music. In performance the musician translates musical patterns (which can sometimes contain very complex and dense information) into components (chunks of gestures) driven by action goals. This dynamic relationship between subject (musician) and environment (e.g. score, co-performers, instrument) results in what is called an *action-oriented ontology* (Coorevits et al., 2015; Leman, 2007).

Musical gestures include both *extension*, the physical movements of a musician's body, and their *intention*. Intention, however, is a more subjective aspect and also more context-dependent; a gesture may be conceived as having a meaning for someone in one particular context, while the same gesture will for someone else in another context have another or no meaning. (Jensenius et al., 2010, pp. 23–24) distinguish between the following gestures made by musicians while performing:

- Sound-producing; actions that effectively produce sound. A sound-producing gesture is surrounded by a prefix and a suffix, together forming different co-articulation patterns. The sound-producing gesture can be seen as consisting of an *excitation phase* (where there is contact with the instrument) combined with a *prefix* (a movement trajectory to the point of contact) and a *suffix* (a movement trajectory from the point of contact).

- Communicative; gestures mainly intended for communication with others: performer–performer or performer–perceiver.

- Sound-facilitating or ancillary; gestures that support the sound-producing gestures in various ways e.g. tapping with a foot during playing or marking the pulse with head and upper body.

- Sound-accompanying gestures; actions that are not involved in the sound-production itself but follow the music.

While such an analytical framework is useful, it can never capture the full experience of musical performance. Gestures often have multiple functions and can therefore belong to several

categories at the same time; a sound-producing gesture often intentionally carries communicative information in terms of timing, character and phrasing, and furthermore, several different types of gestures, with different purposes, can be performed simultaneously by the same musician. As Jensenius et al., (2010, p. 25) point out, all movements in the context of performance can be considered a type of communication. Therefore, it is important to consider not only explicitly communicative gestures, but also how those gestures obtain communicative meaning which emerges spontaneously and may often be carried out subconsciously.

McCaleb (2014) proposes a more detailed understanding of the ecology that underlies such performer interaction, introducing the concept of *inter-reaction* (p. 100). It consists of the three primary stages of *transmitting, inferring* and *attuning*, and provides a more profound and dynamic understanding of the performance situation, than do notions such as "communication" or "reaction". Inter-reaction captures how every action in performance begets another, "creating a socio-musical context that constantly adapts to the constituent members' musical interpretations" (p. 101). Thus, McCaleb argues, inter-reaction is shaped not only by the interpretations of individual musicians, but also by their performances.

Based on the performers' perspective, the multi-layered system of musical gestures can be described in terms of concentric circles. The inner circle refers to the immanent gestures: gestures internal to the composition and the score itself such as the overall intention and direction of the music and the sound-producing gestures. To carry out the performance, musicians need another kind of gestures. Additional gestures might be added specifically to communicate with the audience. But all gestures within this system are in fact related to interpretation and communication, and function as a flexible interaction system where these categories of gestures are at work at the same time. Observing these multiple spatial dimensions activated in performance, Denis Smalley (2007) proposes a taxonomy of different enacted *space forms* that are divided into spatial zones, where *gestural space* represents the reachable space of the performer and the interaction with the instrument while, *ensemble space* reaches beyond the individual players and their instruments, nesting and overlapping the gestural spaces together and thus creating a collective performed space. *Arena space* encompasses the whole performance space inhabited by both the performers and audiences (see further below, p. 96).

<u>Methodological applications</u>
The first case study in this PhD project concerned a qualitative analysis of ensemble Lipparella's gestures and interaction during rehearsals and performances of Kent Olofsson's *Champs d'étoiles* between 2016–2017. Since the work was performed without a conductor, I was particularly interested in how the musical shaping was driven by the performers' shared responsibility to provide impulses. By employing the analytical procedure of open coding (Benaquisto, 2008; Östersjö et al. 2023) in my study of gesture as captured on video in rehearsals and concert performances, my method was kept simple and intuitive. It was carried out from my subjective

perspective as co-performer and consisted of three steps: 1) Coding all visual actions of each performer; 2) Mapping how the gestures may be related to the structural and expressive features in the score; 3) Studying how the gestures relate to the interplay between the performers. The choice of using the method of open coding was related to a wish to engage in the analysis through my perspective as a co-performer. However, as can be seen in the code list in the Research Catalogue, the coding was eventually also informed by the categories proposed by Jensenius et al. (2010). For a more detailed description of the procedure, see further below, p. 55.

While some gestures could easily be placed into one of Jensenius and Godøy's four gesture categories, I often found the gestures to be multifaceted. For instance, in a chamber music context where the performers share responsibility for also leading the music, sound-producing gestures are also inherently communicative, first and foremost within the ensemble, but potentially also in the perception of the audience. Overall, the study gave me a deeper insight into embodied perspectives on our collective interpretation and the role that shared responsibilities plays in the artistic aesthetics and of how the ensemble members developed a *shared voice* (see below page 60). Although I am part of the ensemble, the study had a character of an observational study, applying a top-down perspective, as I was looking *into* the ensemble from the outside. After this first study, the PhD project turned towards a more exploratory methodology, directly linked to artistic creation – a bottom-up perspective. From then on, I focused on an exploration of interdisciplinary practices, but the concept of musical gesture and the special quality embedded in chamber music performance (exemplified by the first study) would still prove to be a guiding principle throughout the thesis.

In the next section, I discuss theories on the perception of musical sounds and the research of the French composer Pierre Schaeffer on musical objects, which, as will be seen below, was also of great importance for my project.

Theories on perception and musical objects

The development within contemporary music during the years following the Second World War was highly characterised by technological achievements. In France, composer and theorist Pierre Schaeffer was a front figure and founder of *Groupe de Recherches Musicales* (GRM) established in 1951. With its unique variety of electronic instruments, GRM had a strong artistic influence and was a center for musical and technological experimentation.

In their research, Schaeffer and his co-workers at GRM focused on the perception of musical sound. The music was divided into sound fragments or units, so-called *sonic objects*. A sonic object was defined as a perceptual unit, typically within the range of 0.5–5 seconds. It may

consist of a single tone, a complex chord, a glissando or a rapidly played group of notes; the principle was that an object could be perceived holistically and as a coherent and meaningful unit (Schaeffer, 2017). The main method of this research was that sonic objects were identified and described through repeated listening. The method was developed to focus the listening on the sonorous features of sonic objects such as dynamic shape and pitch contour, rather than on the sound source, an approach which Schaeffer labelled *acousmatic* or *reduced listening*, referring to a sound that one hears without seeing the causes behind it (Schaeffer, 2017).

Guided by the "seemingly simple" method of repeated listening to sound fragments and depicting what is heard, Schaeffer's research is today considered as ahead of its time and represents, as Godøy puts it, "a remarkable development in music theory" (Godøy, 2021, p. 1). Through its point of departure in perceived sound instead of Western notation, the method is applicable to all kinds of music: Western, non-Western as well as electroacoustic music. Schaeffer and his team applied a top-down approach, starting with any sonic object within any genre and proceeding downwards to differentiate its various features. Largely influenced by phenomenologists such as Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, their research was phenomenological in that they were focusing on the individual subject's perception and experience.[10]

Rolf-Inge Godøy's more recent research on sonic objects is an extension of Schaeffer's work in which he emphasises the multimodal perspective on perception. The features of sonic objects often evolve or have different characteristics, and such an object could therefore, Godøy suggests, rather be conceived of as a *gestural-sonic object*.[11] According to Godøy, all areas of human perception are related to images of movement, and he describes the visual aspect of musical perception as inner imagined images of sound fragments (2006). What we actually do when perceiving or imagining music is to "recode musical sound into multimodal gestural-sonorous images" based on what we imagine that our bodies can do (Godøy, 2006, p. 149). This phenomenon can for example be observed when people play "air" instruments when listening to music. The idea of this kind of motormimetic cognition "implies that there is a mental simulation of sound-producing gestures going on when we perceive and/or imagine music".

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[10] Brian Kane (2014) argues that Schaeffer's theory of objects presented in *Traité des objets musicaux* was intended to show a congruence with the phenomenological theory of objects. The phenomenological conception of objects is, according to Husserl something that comes into being only when it is apprehended by a subject. However, an object must not necessarily be presented directly to a subject but can be perceived in different modes such as desires, memory, fantasy or imagination. "The transcendence of objects, whether ideal or perceptual, is demonstrated by the fact that the subject can refer to them again and again, in various modes of presentation and at different times. The objectivity of an object depends on this kind of repeatable reference" (Kane, 2014, p. 21). Kane uses the classic example of a melody which, though transposed in different keys, is still recognisable as "the same". The *object* in these cases is identical.

[11] In his 2006 paper Godøy used the term *gestural-sonorous* objects; later, however, he modified it to *gestural-sonic* objects.

Godøy further argues that the process is conceived of as bidirectional and hence, that "motor imagery may actually be considered a component of musical imagery" (Godøy, 2006, p. 155).

In line with Godøy's reasoning, Jonathan De Souza (2017) also considers the cognitive process of musical experience to be of a more ecological nature than Schaeffer.[12] De Souza argues that "a sound is never absolutely free of its source, yet never totally bound to it, because audition is never absolutely free of other corporeal powers, yet never reducible to them" (p. 167). In listening to music, De Souza argues, we oscillate between several types of listening based on personal experiences and cultural environment. Again, it is only through the *lived body* we can experience the world (here, experience the music). Hence, both Godøy's and De Souza's argumentations come to the point that Schaeffer's concept of acousmatic music and reduced listening is an impossible paradox. We cannot fully isolate or reduce parts of our perception, we always perceive the world with an immanent nature of multimodality.

Methodological applications

In Chapter V, I discuss how these theories of the perception of musical objects informed Åsa Unander-Scharin's and my creative work in developing the duo work *Fragmente²*. The starting point for our collaboration was the recorder solo *Fragmente* (1968) by Makoto Shinohara. Although *Fragmente* is an acoustic work, its musical language is reminiscent of musique concrète and electroacoustic music, two traditions in which Shinohara was firmly rooted in at the time.

The musical language in *Fragmente* was easily thought of and divided into gestural-sonic objects and in accordance with Godøy's and De Souza's arguments, Åsa Unander-Scharin and I perceived the music intuitively in terms of inner images of bodily gestures. In the creative process we associated our work with our individual inner images and built through them a world of common concrete references, such as Charlie Chaplin's body language in the film *Modern Times* (1936) and *The Great Dictator* (1940). By extending the concept of objects also to the choreographed material, (referred to in our work as choreographic objects), we developed a method (referred to as the *object-method*) for combining sound material and choreographic material into an intertwined whole and for creating the work's contrapuntal structure (see also the *Fragmente²*-exposition in RUUKKU).

Åsa Unander-Scharin's and my collaboration with *Fragmente²* was from the beginning strongly driven by our common interest in developing a work where music and dance exist on equal terms. This way of actively working with (artistically) or studying (scientifically) the relationship between music and dance is today often referred to as having a *choreomusical* approach or perspective. Although this thesis deals with interrelations between music and dance and musician

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[12] *Ecological* in this context refers to how our actions is related to our environment. This reasoning goes back to James Gibson's Ecological Perception Theory and his notion *affordances*.

and dancer from an artistic point of view, in the next section I will briefly contextualise the emergence of choreomusical studies or choreomusicology as the scholarly discipline is also called.

Choreomusical approaches

First coined by Paul Hodgins (1992), the term "choreomusicology" is an amalgamation of the words "choreology" and "musicology". It is a field of study concerned with the variable relationships between music and dance, sound and movement in diverse performance arts. As a discipline, choreomusicology grew out of the Euro-American performance tradition in which music and dance are considered as separable and independent artforms (Mason, 2012). Although music and dance are often closely linked, there are also differences in terminology that complicate the analysis of their interaction. With only a few training systems able to offer both music theory and movement analysis, the dialogue between practitioners and scholars in dance and music is rare (McMains & Thomas, 2013). In her article, "Choreomusical Conversations: Facing a Double Challenge" (2011), dance and music scholar Stephanie Jordan provides a historical background to analyses of music and dance and outlines the developments that paved the way for choreomusicology as a scholarly discipline.

For most of the 20th century, Western musical analysis has been equated with formal "close reading" and analysis of scores (extending from the smallest unit – a note – to complete works), a methodological approach which, according to Jordan, leaves limited room for hermeneutics. This type of analysis (e.g. Heinrich Schenker's theory of tonal music 1935/1979) entails the development of a considerable typology. The focus of the analysis is mainly on temporally-based form and pitch-based structures and less on parameters such as rhythm and timbre (Jordan, 2011, p. 44). However, from around 1985, the broadening of the "musicological agenda" led to a questioning of the assumptions on which musical analysis had been based for many years.[13] Influenced by disciplines such as literary theory, social science and ethnomusicology, the movement of New Musicology had begun, proposing a pluralistic approach involving a range of tools and methods which led to the recognition of music's ability to convey emotion and meaning (Jordan, 2011, p. 44). In parallel with the development of New Musicology, the field was also increasingly influenced by cognitive science, including music psychology, which paved the way for an understanding of music based on issues of perception and performance rather than musical scores. The introduction of schemas related to embodied experiences, has led today's musicologists to be more ready to recognise the central role that our bodies play in understanding music and to allow music to be perceived as a visceral experience (pp. 45–46).

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[13] One example is Joseph Kerman's *Contemplating Music* (1985), in which he argues for a broader perspective on music analysis. However, Leonard B. Meyer's influential book *Emotion and Meaning in Music* was published as early as 1956.

In comparison to music analysis, there are relatively few dance analyses and "surprisingly little formal analysis (detailed research into the operations of dances as structures within space and across time) and even less to compare with the equivalent in music" (Jordan, 2011, p. 46). This, Jordan argues, may have to do with the fact that dance – being a younger and smaller field with a less developed typology – has never been driven by scores and recordings in the same way as music.[14] As in music, however, there has been a theoretical and methodological shift in dance research since the latter half of the 1980s. Influenced by cognitive science, dance scholars became interested in how we process visual and auditory information. In parallel with this development, technological advances opened up a range of possibilities for both artistic and scientific exploration, enabling the emergence of the discipline of choreomusicology that provides further opportunities to observe commonalities between the two art forms.[15]

In the 19th and 20th centuries, the concepts of *visualisation* and *counterpoint* have been central to Western theatre dance discourse.[16] Pure visualisation of music in dance works has not, among a majority of artists and critics, been considered as an aesthetically desirable goal. McMains & Thomas (2013) note how this dualism of similarity versus difference, has become the key issue not only in how artists approach choreomusical relationships, but also in terms of the focus of choreomusical analysis. For example: musicologist Nicholas Cook (1998) has developed an analytical model for how music relates to other media such as film, television, commercials and dance. By applying tests of similarity and difference, he groups the results into the categories of "coherence", "complementarity" and "competition" (McMains & Thomas, 2013, p. 199). Damsholt (1999), suggests that dance and music relate to each other on a scale of "binary opposition" in which visualisation and counterpoint represent the two nodes of extrems. A third example cited by McMains & Thomas is the open question "Unity or Interdependence?" which was used in a call for papers for a conference on music and dance held at McGill University in

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[14] Some of the most interesting formal analyses of dance, according to Jordan (2011), were made by scholars applying musical methods in choreomusical studies of various 20th century choreographic works, including Damsholt (1999, 2006), Duerden (2003, 2007, 2008), Hodgins (1992) Jordan (2000, 2007) and Joseph (2002). However, a significant amount of work has also been done in dance ethnography and in studies of the forms of Baroque and early 19th century dance.

[15] The development of interactive technology has also opened up new possibilities where dancers' gestures and movements digitally create sounds and shape the music (Schacher & Neff 2016; Siegel, 2012; Unander-Scharin, 2011).

[16] Dance scholar Damsholt (1999) describes how the relationship between dance and music in the 19th century has been characterised by distinct parallel parameters. She quotes for example Edwin Evans (1948) who states that "for every pattern, large or small, in the texture of music there is potentially a choreographic counterpart" and refers to Emile Jaques-Dalcroze's "list of common elements for music and moving plastics" in a chapter of *Rhythm, Music and Education* (1919). Here, for example, "pitch" in music is equivalent to "position and direction of gestures in space" in moving plastics, "intensity of sound" in music to "muscular dynamics" in moving plastics, and "colour of sound" to "diversity of bodily forms". Some parameters are so similar that they are also given the same name on both sides of the table, such as "rhythm". "Moving plastic" is an artistic extension of "Eurhythmics" a training system developed by Jaques-Dalcroze in order for musicians to acquire bodily understanding of music. However, Damsholt notes that, "in the canon of dance history, the impact of Jaques-Dalcroze is highlighted in the development of modern dance as well as ballet" (Damsholt, 1999, pp. 61–62).

2011. (McMains & Thomas, 2013, p. 199). Such binaries, however, McMains & Thomas argue, are false dichotomies:

> Music and dance work in unity and independence. They relate to each other through coherence and contestation, mimicry and counterpoint, similarity and difference. Just as great music or dance is produced through informed manipulation of tension and release, meaningful music–dance relationships are created through conscious manipulation of alignment and opposition of the two arts. (McMains & Thomas 2013, p. 199)

One way of understanding why the discussion of similarity and difference has become so central in the Western theatre dance discourse has to do with the fact that the relationship between music and dance in choreographed works has traditionally been characterised by a "music first" dictum (Dreyer, 2020). Consequently, many dance artists have been committed to separating dance from what they perceived as the "tyranny of music" (Jordan, 2012). Modern avant-garde choreographers such as Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey and Mary Wigman treated dance as an independent and autonomous art form; they created dance works in silence, to mere percussion sounds or to music composed after the dance (Jordan, 2012). Later, John Cage and Merce Cunningham's collaboration led to the further liberation of dance from music, as they simply allowed music and dance to coexist simultaneously during the performance. On the other hand, the well-documented collaborative process between Cage and Cunningham shows that they did not necessarily try to separate the dance from the music, but rather searched for new relationships that would emerge from their random alignment (McMains & Thomas, 2013). As Jordan puts it "we need to bear in mind that relationships of opposition are relationships too, as much as relationships of equivalence or conformity. [...] there is never, in any case, one without the other" (2012, p. 13). The major trend throughout the 20th century, however, was for dance to gradually separate from music and define itself as an independent art form (Mason, 2012; Damsholt, 2006). In recent decades, however, Jordan argues, a more "easy pluralism" has been established among practitioners. Jordan refers to the composer-theorist Barbara White (2006) who breaks down the hard binary, suggesting a more fluid and multimodal model. White also goes deeper into the question of how the concept of visualisation is thought of today. She provides examples of how both composers and choreographers reject any form of close coordination between art forms, and argues:

> there are numerous practical and aesthetic reasons why composers and choreographers may avoid music visualization, one of which is the very real language barrier between the ways we conceive, create, and communicate. Another is that the collaborative process rarely affords the sort of close interactive work that leads to genuine interdependence. (White, 2006, p. 66)

In addition, White argues, the high degree of stimulation that the encounter between music and movement engenders "may foster an understandable dread at the prospect of sorting out the impact of one on the other" (White, 2006, p. 66). However, rather, than a having a resistance to

the other art form *per se*, a disavowal can be a defence against the kind of intensity we experience when sound and movement is combined "in glorious excess" (p. 66). White continues: "If we are to understand more fully what happens when music and dance meet, we must examine these reflexes and reinvigorate our understanding of interdisciplinary signification" (p. 67). Both White and McMains & Thomas (2013) regard language as being one of the key barriers when crossing disciplines. McMains & Thomas (2013) propose a chart to apply to choreomusical analysis which, by suggesting possible points of analogy between music and dance, serves as a development of previous models such as by Jaques-Dalcroze and Hodgins. However, unlike previous models, they have made an attempt to consider both perspectives more equally by making their diagram of analogies go in two directions: from music to dance and from dance to music.[17]

The most common situation for Western dance performances today, however, is that dancers perform live to music played from a fixed recorded medium, which, White argues, may also cause difficulties. One the one hand, the assortment of music for a choreographer to use is immense, but on the other hand, learning music from recordings rather than from live performance "may anesthetize the choreographer's response to the material, for there is no breathing musical body present to embody the sound, to play faster and slower, even to make an error" (White, 2006, p. 70). A fixed sound recording may additionally seem to dominate more than one might aim for; as White puts it, the sounds are perceived as "frozen", "unyielding" and "inhuman". As have been shown in this section, power relationships between music and dance have been and still are a recurrent topic, among practitioners as well as critics and scholars. A genuine encounter between music and dance, musicians and dancers, must be grounded in reciprocity, collaboration and dialogue and requires both time and effort.

Methodological applications

Åsa Unander Scharin's and my long-standing collaboration was very much based on a curiosity about the other art form and began with a specific aim to explore possible relationships between two distinct artforms on equal terms. We came to develop a choreomusical practice embracing different methods of working and communicating across disciplinary boundaries, many of which were intuitive, and others inspired by different theoretical frameworks, such as the object-method (see p. 94). By considering musical and choreographic material at the object level, we were able to achieve a state of inter-reaction between musician and dancer, similar to that in chamber music playing. Another essential factor in creating *Fragmente[2]* was our intuitive and frequent use of metaphors – a perspective which is further discussed in the next section – which contributed to creating the necessary conditions for us to develop a shared voice.

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[17] McMains & Thomas (2013) have also extended the scope of choreomusical analysis by including non-Western and popular music and dance genres.

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Music is architecture – Metaphors and image schemas

Since the beginning of recorded history, metaphors have served as a means for communication, for the benefit of both the speaker and the listener. The speaker was trying to convey an idea, and the listener tried to understand the idea (McCann, 2010). The Western scientific tradition, rooted in Aristotle's thinking, has come to encourage the use of unambiguous language. It has been assumed that Aristotle's systematic methodology rejects literary explanations of reality and considers poetic descriptions unsuitable for scientific discourse. Aristotle's system of scientific explanations builds on what he terms *definition* "an expression signifying the essence of things" (Driscoll, 2012, p. 21). While the concept of definition in science is concerned with "reaching a single, unambiguous meaning", metaphor on the other hand "may admit a multiplicity of meaning" (Driscoll, 2012, p. 21).

Although Aristotle himself in some cases criticises the use of metaphor for scientific discourse, Driscoll (2012) argues that the scientific tradition has misjudged Aristotle's comments regarding metaphors. As most writers, Driscoll points to how Aristotle employs metaphors himself to explain scientific phenomena – especially the difficult ones. One such example is how Aristotle describes the soul: "suppose that eye were an animal – sight would have been its soul" (*De Anima* 413a 19 quoted in Driscoll, 2012, p. 22). Interestingly, Aristotle uses several bodily metaphors to help his readers come to an understanding of the essence of the soul, because it is so difficult to grasp, and Aristotle's own description of metaphors in *Rhetoric* is that they have the effect of "making your hearers *see* things" (Rhetoric 1411b 24 quoted in Driscoll, 2012, p. 28). Hence, rather than rejecting metaphors, Driscoll argues, Aristotle aims by his criticism to ensure an appropriate use of metaphors seeking "to achieve something much greater in scope than mere rhetorical wordplay" (p. 26). Aristotle explicitly recognises the cognitive function of metaphor claiming that "good metaphor implies an intuitive perception of the similarity in dissimilars" (1459a 9 quoted in Driscoll, 2012, p. 28). Metaphor thus, argues Driscoll, "requires us to actively interpret the observed world" (p. 28). This is also how Paul Ricœur reads Aristotle, whose text Driscoll quotes:

> metaphor is more than a simple substitution of putting a [metaphorical] word in the place of a literal word which a comprehensive paraphrase would be capable of reconstituting in the same place. The algebraic sum of these two operations of substitution by the speaker and of restitution by the author or by the reader is equal to zero. No new meaning emerges and we learn nothing. (Ricœur, 1972, p. 101 quoted in Driscoll, 2012, p. 24)

But as Driscoll points out, we *do* learn and we do make constant use of metaphors as they have a unique function in disclosing truth; by stretching language rhetorically, metaphors uncover meaning. Metaphor thus, as Driscoll sees it, comes for Aristotle prior to the concept of definition,

since "it underlines the procedures upon which scientific knowledge is based, metaphor is a foundational necessity for essential knowledge" (Driscoll, 2012, p. 29).

While the concept of metaphor has a limited role – or none at all – in classical science, thinkers within twentieth-century Continental philosophy, like Paul Ricœur, Martin Heidegger and Jacques Derrida, contribute to adding a similar linguistically creative dimension to cognition. During the last decades, the embodied cognitive sciences have continued to explore the role of metaphor, arguing that metaphors are shaped by the shared nature of our bodies and how we function in a shared world. The influential book *Metaphors we live by* (1980), by linguists and philosophers George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, was the beginning of the *Conceptual Metaphor* theory (CMT).[18] It revolutionised the way we understand language and how we relate our experiences to the world around us. Metaphors, they argue, are not just a linguistic decoration but something deeply embedded in human thought and how we function in a shared world. A common feature of metaphors is that they are cross-domain based; we understand and experience things of one *source domain* in terms of another *target domain.* The source domains represent something we can feel and experience intuitively with our senses and the target domains are more abstract.

A *conceptual metaphor* is a systematic set of *correspondences* or *mappings* between two domains of experience. For example, we understand EMOTIONAL STATES in terms of TEMPERATURES (How could you be so *cold*? He loves her with a *burning* passion). In the same way, KNOWLEDGE IS VISION (I *see* what you mean. His instructions were not *clear*. They kept me in *the dark*) and RELATIONSHIPS ARE JOURNEYS (We *went our separate ways*. Look *how far* we've *come*. We are *at a crossroads*). In the same way we often describe music in terms of architecture. Larson and Johnson (2003) argue that the correspondence of MUSIC and ARCHITECTURE is essential not only in our talking about music but also in creating as well as listening to music. In the MUSIC IS ARCHITECTURE metaphor, we use our experience and knowledge of architectural structures as a source domain to conceptualising musical form (the target domain) as a specific type of physical structure. It includes mappings such as:

Table 1. Examples of the metaphorical mapping of MUSIC IS ARCHITECTURE.

Source domain (Architecture)	Target domain (Music)
structure/buildings	piece of music
vertical spatial dimension	interval size
horizontal spatial dimension	temporal duration
horizontal spacing	rhythm
structure vs. ornament	structure vs. ornament
pillars	pillars of harmony

The table is a modification of a table in Jandausch (2012, p. 4).

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[18] The notion of CMT has subsequently been developed in a number of works including those by Mark Turner, Raymond Gibbs, and Lakoff and Johnson (1999).

Conceptual metaphors are often based on *image schemas*, which Johnson describes as dynamic structures that we use to organise our experience and understanding of the world. Unlike a concrete image, the schema contains "structural features common to many different objects, events, activities, and body movements" and is flexible enough to function in a variety of situations (1987, p. 24). Image schemas, Johnson argues "operate at a level of mental organization that falls between abstract propositional structures, on the one side, and particular concrete images, on the other" (Johnson, 1987, p. 29). To take some examples: CONTAINMENT in which for example the body is a container that can be filled with air, water and food and walk *in and out* of rooms and spaces. SOURCE-PATH-GOAL that defines an object's path from an initial location to a final location. VERTICALITY that involves "up" and "down" relations such as standing upright, climbing stairs, watching water rise in a bathtub etc. General concepts that are structured by LINEARITY include age (young to old) or speed (slow to fast), but also e.g. gradual changes in pitch/tempo or in spatial location. FORCE STRUCTURES are experienced through interaction and include e.g. *compulsion* (the experience of being moved by external forces), *blockage* (obstacles that block or resist our force), *attraction* (magnet forces, gravity).

Methodological applications

The *Fragmente*-project was largely built around collectively developed metaphorical scenes that laid the ground for the choreomusical interaction in each of the work's 17 fragments. Containment schemas and force structures were further applied to structure how we entered and exited imagined and physical spaces: who was moved by whom or by what and so forth. The method opened up our senses for perceiving the similarity in differences and created the necessary tension and creative base for developing the work's content and meaning. As an overall metaphoric concept for *Fragmente²* we saw ourselves – two black-clothed acting figures that moved in a white performance space – as black notes on white sheet music. Through this metaphorical image, the figures' gestures and movements can be seen as a volatile ink-graphic that dissolves as it is written.

The staged work *The Conference of the Birds*, based on Attar's famous allegorical poem (imbued with metaphor) and Madeleine Isaksson's solo composition for recorder *Les sept vallées* (built on the same poem) came to involve several artists as well as electroacoustic music, choreography, visual images, lighting, props and costumes. The adaption of Isaksson's score to this extended form required of me to (re)interpret Attar's text, a translation process from text content to music. Here, metaphors served both as inspiration for the compositional process, as well as for the musical interpretation.[19] Both the choreography and the costume design were based on the

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[19] For example: "the barren landscape" was linked to different types of extended techniques where the recorder is muted in various ways. "Knowledge that splits" was already in Isaksson's original score metaphorically linked to the technique of multiphonics, where several notes sound at the same time. The theme of detachment served as a metaphor for a compositional method where the original score was cut in pieces and transformed into a new form including new materials. The theme of unity functioned very

metaphoric link between the journey and a life cycle, and the mainly abstract video scenography also relied on various metaphorical interpretations of the text.

Metaphor also had an important role in the creation of *What is the word*, in which the members of Lipparella, under the guidance of Beckett specialist and director Karl Dunér, had the privilege of approaching two of Beckett's works, the play *Quad* (1981) and the poem *What is the word* (1989). Based on repetitive patterns presented in a balancing act between the voluntary and the involuntary, each work represents an underlying metaphor of existential dimension. Throughout his metaphorically grounded production, Beckett seems to convey precisely this balance between minimalism and existentialism. Irish actor, director and writer Lisa Dwan, known for her interpretations of Beckett's plays writes:

> Beckett's miracle, for me, is his ability to strip away all meaning and still somehow convey a deep, empathetic, specific view of humanity. As he famously wrote, "When you're up to your neck in shit, there's nothing left to do but sing." Beckett dares to make the metaphor literal. The danger in extrapolating meaning from his metaphors is that the metaphors themselves are the entire point of the work. Like a Cézanne still life, where the fruit draws us in so close we can see the paint itself, or the eighth note rest that begins Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, Beckett's desiccated landscapes and overt silences make the act of performance visible, palpable, alive, and therefore analogous to our own experiences, both in the theater and in life. We experience existence. (Dwan, 2016, n.p)

Interdisciplinary performing arts inevitably raise questions about what the shared physical space offers, including opportunities, challenges and limitations. In the next section, I provide a historical perspective on how practitioners of music, theatre and visual arts from the mid-20th century onwards began to experiment with new methods of artistic creation and to explore the possibilities of creating new scenic forms and works that transcended traditional artistic boundaries.

The development of Experimental Music Theatre

A prerequisite for discussing interdisciplinary work and exploring relationships between artforms is that they are seen as separate and independent of each other. However, while it is customary to view music, dance and poetry as the distinct disciplines,[20] in ancient Greece they all came together under the same term, *mousike*. In its most common form, for the Greeks *mousike* represented "a seamless complex of instrumental music, poetic word, and co-ordinated physical

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much as a metaphorical concept upon which we created a complete intertwined relationship between all elements of the performance.
[20] See also the section "Choreomusical approaches".

movement" (Murray & Wilson, 2004, p. 1). Although the artforms were separated in the second half of the 18th century, words, music and dance continued to work together in genres such as song, opera, ballet and musical theatre, but one was usually subordinate to the other and the work was often divided between composer, librettist and choreographer (McGrath, 2018; Mason, 2012).

For Richard Wagner the ancient Greek dramas embodied the perfect and harmonious combination and coexistence of music, dance and poetry. With his concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk* (total work of art) he had the vision to reunite the different artforms on equal terms. Wagner's ambitions to create a fully immersive audience experience extended to the construction of his own theatre, the Bayreuth Festspielhaus (opened in 1876). The acoustically sophisticated theatre also incorporated the latest innovations in stage machinery and was designed to eliminate the visual distractions found in traditional 19th-century theatres, such as pillars, balconies and gilding. Also, the orchestra pit was (and still is) hidden and terraced in steep steps under the stage to separate the different instruments (Dixon, 2007).

Experimental music theatre (music theatre, or instrumental theatre, the latter term used by Kagel) developed in the 1960s and 70s by avant-garde composers such as John Cage, Mauricio Kagel and Georges Aperghis, represents another attempt to overcome the strict boundaries between the artforms and encourage a more holistic perception. The term music theatre has since the 1980's come to include some of the earlier works that paved the way for its development. As examples of works in which composers combine theatrical and musical elements in new ways, Björn Heile (2016) mentions Arnold Schoenberg's *Pierrot lunaire* (1912) and Igor Stravinsky's *L'histoire du soldat* (1918). Heile further points out that experimental music theatre derives from instrumental playing (as explicitly expressed in Kagel's notion of instrumental theatre); unlike more conventional genres such as opera and musical theatre, where music accompanies theatrical acts, experimental music theatre is characterised by the physical and gestural actions involved in music-making. The different elements of such a performance, such as sound, movement and light, can be independent of each other and even contradict each other. In sharp contrast to Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk*, there is also no (actual or virtual) separation between stage and instrumental ensemble (Heile, 2016).

In parallel with music becoming more theatrical, theatre has questioned the logocentric foundation of traditional drama, instead emphasising both visual and (non-linguistic) sonic elements (Heile, 2016).[21] In his book *Musicality in Theatre: Music as Model, Method and Metaphor in Theatre-Making* (2014) David Roesner describes the musicalisation of theatre as a whole spectrum of aspects and approaches, which he argues can be understood as an "aesthetic

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[21] Heile examples this aesthetic direction with Dada, Italian Futurism, Russian Suprematism, the theatre practitioners of the Weimar Republic, Artaud's Théâtre de la cruauté, the Theatre of the Absurd and The Living Theatre, "that all stove in different ways for a form of what is often called 'total' or 'post-dramatic' theatre' (Heile, 2016, p. 34).

dispositif" in relation to both process and performance (p. 11). This includes, for example, musicality as a perceptual, embodied as well as cognitive and communicative quality. However, rather than trying to establish various categorisations of relationships between music and theatre and their strategic function in the *dispositif*, Roesner is more interested in "what it is", and cites the German musicologist Carl Dalhaus: "Essential to musical comparison is, however, not the answer that it gives – an answer, which tends to be vague and intangible – but the question, that it demarcates. The metaphor fulfils an unlocking role, a first approach to a problem" (Dahlhaus cited in Roesner, 2014, p. 20).

In the visual arts, avant-garde artists were exploring kinesis, dynamic processes and single unreproducible events as opposed to the more time-consuming painting and sculpture, leading to new scenic artforms such as action painting, the happening and performance art. It was not least through his close involvement in the bustling art scene in Buenos Aires that Mauricio Kagel first encountered these developments. He was also highly inspired by Fluxus and John Cage and his performance of *Water Walk* in 1958 in Cologne is said to have been crucial for how Kagel came to develop *instrumental theatre*. Heile describes how Kagel's two earliest instrumental theatre pieces from 1960, *Sonant* and *Sur scène*, were composed more or less simultaneously from opposite poles:

> ...the former transforming the playing of musical instruments into theatrical action and the latter, conversely, presenting musical performance within a quasi theatrical context. The significance of this can hardly be overemphasized as it demonstrates how Kagel reacts to both the musicalization of experimental theatre (in the case of *Sur scène*) and the dramatization of musical performance in the tradition of music theatre (in *Sonant*). (Heile, 2016, p. 35)

As a result of paying attention to the inherent theatrical aspect of musical performance or, as described above, the musical aspect of theatre performance, the focus also came to be on the performers. Kagel's long-term close collaboration with the skilled and dedicated musicians of the Kölner Ensemble für Neue Musik, played a major role for his works. The development of electronic music, argues Heile, may also have acted as an important catalyst for the revaluation of the physical aspect of performance "elevating it from a barely tolerated irritation to an indispensable element of the work itself" (2016, p. 34) and he concludes:

> In many ways, then, Kagel's instrumental theatre strives to rediscover what has been lost in Western classical music: the visual and kinetic nature of performance, the physicality of music making, the bodily presence of performers, the three-dimensional space of stage, the spectacle of the events. (Heile, 2016, p. 37)

The interest in the musicality of theatrical performance and the theatricality of musical performance has paved the way for a wide range of forms. It is a field of practice situated *in between* conventional conceptions and institutions. In 2009, two conferences entitled *Processes of*

Devising Composed Theatre were organised at the universities of Exeter and Hildesheim, to which scholars and practitioners in the field such as Heiner Goebbels, Michael Hirsch, Cathie Boyd, Demetris Zavros and many others also contributed. The aim was to introduce and propose Composed Theatre as a term for the whole field. The conferences and later writings on the subject, such as the book *Composed Theatre: Aesthetics, Practices, Processes,* further aimed to provide "terminological consideration and frameworks for analysis, all of which have not been widely used before and have not received in-depth academic attention" (Roesner, 2013, p. 9). When it comes to the term Composed Theatre, Matthias Rebstock points out that "composed" should be understood in its *musical* sense, and not in its more general meaning as the Latin *componere* (place together) suggests. This is due to the nature of the field being characterised by the use of compositional strategies, techniques and mindsets, and furthermore no longer using only musical material but also "movement, speech, actions, lighting or whatever you have in the realm of theatre" (Rebstock, 2013, p. 20).

Another characteristic of Composed Theatre is that it is non-hierarchical, and therefore "no element should so dominate that the others would be reduced to illustrating, underpinning or reinforcing the first" (Rebstock, 2013, p. 20). Further, it is not the result but rather the collective approach and working process that characterise Composed Theatre "leaving more space for each individual to bring in their own competences and personality than there is in traditional theatre work" (p. 21). The concept of polyphony is further identified as a compositional principle: "a simultaneity of voices that allows an independence of its parts while providing a structural linkage" (Roesner, 2013, p. 332). Therefore, it is not the score itself that can be said to represent the work or piece, but the work is something that develops during the performance where all the different elements come together. Despite its many components, Composed Theatre often tends to be perceived as a kind of "mono medium" (Tsangaris) that synthesises the diversity into a coherent whole (Roesner, 2013, p. 333). However, argues Roesner, just as polyphony in music allows the viewer/listener to concentrate on the harmony and common links between voices or focus on one voice at a time, intermedial polyphony affords the audience similar perceptual and experiential choices.

The broad label Composed Theatre can be applied to all the staged productions presented in my PhD project (*Okända rum, I skuggorna, What is the word, Fragmente[2], The Conference of the Birds*). Although the term was used specifically only in the collaboration with Teatr Weimar, the principles and strategies of all projects resonate with the concept of Composed Theatre. As in Kagel's instrumental theatre, there has been a wish to go beyond the boundaries of traditional roles and to explore "the visual and kinetic nature of performance, the physicality of music-making, the bodily presence of the performers, the three-dimensional space of the stage, the spectacle of events", as Heile puts it in the quote above (2016, p. 37). To summarise, experimental music theatre has to a great extent been built on interdisciplinary artistic

collaboration, which has enabled the merging of practices in ways that have been uncommon in Western performing arts.

In the next section, I will present some important theoretical work on artistic collaboration. I will also give examples of artistic research projects that, like my own, engage in an experimental and laboratory field and deal with artists' embodied knowledge, roles, interdisciplinary collaborations and shared creativity.

Artistic research and distributed creativity

The American sociologist Howard Becker argues, in his book *Art Worlds* (1982), that art is a collective practice. The creation of a performance, a visual or literary work, or other art events, is always dependent on the co-operation of multiple actors. An art world, as defined by Becker, includes activities and tools used by people at all levels of the process, as well as infrastructure in the form of institutions and other forces in society. Becker's analysis is thus not limited to the artwork as an isolated object or event, but instead examines the whole process through which it comes into being. Many of the activities which are part of this process lie outside the specifically artistic practices.

Becker divides the production of a work of art into several steps that relate to art in different ways: The "originators" provide the idea, which, once conceived, must be realised by the executors, whose work often requires training, skill and judgement. The production of artworks also requires the manufacture and distribution of materials such as musical instruments, dancers' shoes, costumes, paints and canvas. Other activities are of a more supporting nature, such as copying, editing, technical work, etc. (Becker, 1982, pp. 2–3). A key part is also the level of public distribution e.g. publishers, art galleries, concert venues and CD labels. Furthermore, the contribution of the audience is crucial: "Audiences select what will occur as an art work by giving or withholding their participation in an event or their attention to an object, and by attending selectively to what they do attend to" (Becker, 1982, p. 214). Although this description is a short summary, it gives an idea of the cooperative network of agents that makes up an art world.

Claims of interdependence, such as Becker's, run counter to the idea of the solitary thinker that has otherwise dominated Western culture in the 20th century. Hungarian-American educational physiologist Vera John-Steiner (2000) also challenges the Western belief in individualism. Heavily influenced by the work of Lev Vygotsky, John-Steiner develops a theoretical framework for creative collaboration within art and science arguing in favour of situated, contextual and integrated thinking.

An individual learns, creates, and achieves mastery in and through his or her relationships with other individuals. Ideas, tools, and processes that emerge from joint activity are appropriated, or internalized, by the individual and become the basis of the individual's subsequent development. (John-Steiner, 2000, p. 5)

John-Steiner exemplifies a wide range of collaborative practices but makes a classification of four different main patterns of collaborative work based on roles, values and working methods: *Distributed, Complementary, Family* and *Integrative Collaboration*. However, these collaborative patterns should not be regarded as static but can often be observed to be combined in different ways over time. The first pattern, *distributed collaboration* takes place in both casual and more organised contexts. The group participants are often linked by similar interests and their collaboration is characterised by exchanges of information and explorations of thoughts and opinions. The second pattern, *complementary collaboration*, is the most widespread form and is particularly common in scientific partnerships where the different competences, skills, and mindsets of the participants lead to the creation of new knowledge. An example of this is the collaboration between George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, which Lakoff himself described with the metaphor "We lived in each other's minds" (John-Steiner, 2000, p. 198). Their collaborative work on metaphors is described above on page 30.

Another example of how complementary collaboration may generate such a mutual understanding, and a powerful combination of different competencies, can be found in the work of Igor Stravinsky and George Balanchine. Their collaboration started when Balanchine, as a young choreographer, joined the Ballet Russes company. It was through the work with Stravinsky's music that Balanchine made some of his most important technical and artistic discoveries. Stravinsky observed how Balanchine's dance pieces have "a life of their own yet are always subtly linked with the musical phrases" (John-Steiner, 2000, p. 94). According to psychologist Howard Gardner, the success of their 40-year collaboration was rooted in their shared artistic heritage and a unique insight into the connections between music and dance. When Stravinsky, in *Themes and Episodes* (1966),[22] reflected on their collaboration in *Movements* (1963), he commented on their artistic interdependence:

To see Balanchine's choreography of the *Movements* is to hear the music with one's eyes; and this visual hearing has been a greater revelation to me, I think, than to anyone else. The choreography emphasizes relationships of which I had hardly been aware – in the same way–and the performance was like a tour of a building for which I have drawn the plans but never explored the result. (John-Steiner 2000, p. 94)

Thus, by seeing his music danced, Stravinsky experienced his own music and its relationship with the dance in new ways and on a deeper level. The visual hearing that Stravinsky articulates

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[22] Stravinsky wrote the book *Themes and Episodes* (1966) together with Robert Craft.

captures the concept of mutual appropriation which John-Steiner identifies as central to her cultural-historic analysis of collaboration.

The third pattern *family collaboration* is a mode of interaction characterised by roles that are flexible, and which also can change over time. It does not only refer to collaboration between actual family members but also in artistic collectives that develop a sense of belonging. The fourth pattern, *integrative collaboration* is the one John-Steiner considers to be the most typical of artistic collaborations. It represents a long-term and committed partnership where the collaborators are thriving on dialogue, shared risk-taking and a common vision. The collaborators are motivated to transform existing knowledge, mindsets or artistic practices into new visions. A well-documented illustration of *integrative collaboration* was the partnership of Picasso and Braque who together were the creators of Cubism, a new twentieth-century approach to painting focusing on the interrelation of objects.[23] Their relationship, argues John-Steiner, illustrates how crucial the joint exploration of ideas is to construct a new paradigm in art or science.

Artistic research in contemporary music performance and performing arts is often also about developing and exploring forms of collaboration between multiple actors. In the various collaborations carried out within the framework of my own PhD project, I can see how a certain type of collaboration tends to dominate in some projects, but also how patterns of collaboration, as a result of changing roles and ways of working, have overlapped, evolved and also shifted over time. Below I will describe some related doctoral projects that have developed collaborative approaches which in most cases challenge the traditional hierarchies in the Western classical music tradition, whereas the final example is rooted in a different culture and more related to gendered gesture.

Drawing on her own performance practice, violinist Barbara Lüneburg (2013) conducted a comprehensive, empirically and theoretically grounded PhD project, in which she examines the entire process from the conceptualisation and commissioning of a work to the actual performance situation. Her investigation spans collaborations between composer and performer(s), performer and music promoter, as well as how to build a "concert aura" and "charismatic bond with the audience" (p. 6). However, rather than attempting to offer universal formulae for the "perfect concert" or for the "ideal collaboration", Lüneburg examines performance – not as an absolute artform – but as something that is permeated and shaped by social relations and society. By including multiple perspectives on creative acts in this way, Lüneburg broadens the perspective on performer creativity to include not only instrumental playing, but also the performers' artistic agency in a wider context.

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[23] Other artists who contributed to shaping Cubism included painters Fernand Léger and Juan Gris, and poets such as Guillaume Apollinaire (John-Steiner 2020, pp. 64–65).

A concert situation, Lüneburg (2013) argues, can be seen as a *Gesamtkunstwerk* given the performer's contribution to "a unique, potentially novel event in its specific context of time, space, audience, performer's personality, vision, charisma and music" (p. 14). She also applies the term *Gesamtkunstwerk* in the literal sense referring to the whole creative process including commissioning compositions, programming, collaborating, practising, developing a concert setting and finally performing. In line with Becker's reasoning above, Lüneburg thus introduces an expanded view of the activities involved in art making, emphasising in particular the contribution of the artist, in collaboration with other actors.

However, one of the conclusions Lüneburg draws from her project is that collaborations between performers and composers in contemporary classical music usually are carried out at a superficial level. On the other hand, at its best, the interactive dynamic between collaborators "inspires problem-creating questions that lead to unexpected solutions and drive creativity in each domain – in this case performing and composition – to innovation" (p. 31). A fundamental parameter characterising and structuring true collaboration, according to Lüneburg, is "the autonomy of all partners, the interactivity of the process and the use of shared rules, norms and structures in relation to actions or decisions related to the problem domain" (p. 31). Shared creativity on equal terms is thus far from being a given. My own experience of mutually beneficial in-depth co-operation has often been based on collaborations where roles and methods have been jointly developed, often over multi-year processes.

The composer Falk Hübner's thesis (2013) contains examples of collaborative strategies that, from my perspective, do not seem to have been equally rewarding for all participants. Drawing on the various practices within Composed Theatre, Hübner explores the embodied aspect of performance through a series of staged works in which he deals with "the idea of making specific elements of the musician's profession *absent*, rather than extending it" (Hübner, 2013, p. 5). He directs his attention to the possible roles and functions of a musician – apart from music – and how performers' practice can merge with and reach into other artforms, such as theatre or dance.

In contrast to many of the projects within the realms of performing arts, where musicians' practice often tends to expand with extra-musical or novel performative elements, Hübner applies a "reductive approach". For instance, in *Thespian Play* (2009) for a saxophone player, the haptic feedback of the performer–instrument interaction is removed. Without his instrument, the performer instead mimics the musical gestures to a pre-recorded material, as pure choreographic or theatrical actions. In *almost equal/meistens gleich* (2010) for conductor and trombone player, Hübner pushes the concept further, excluding not only the instrument but also the reference to sound. His *almost equal/meistens gleich* relies on the movements of the two performers as choreographic material, emphasising the visual rhythms. Through this reductive approach, the performers' actions and appearance are transformed in a way so that musical utterances "become open for additional meanings other than the musical" (Hübner, 2013, p. 7).

It is a kind of inverted form of action notation, that requires considerable effort on the part of the performer, but drastically limits the performer's own possibilities for creative exploration and thereby, as I see it, reduces her artistic agency.[24]

Cellist Tanja Orning's PhD project *The Polyphonic Performer* (2014) is a study of performance practice from a performer's perspective. Through a selection of cello works, composed between 1950–2011, she explores her own practice and experience of performing contemporary music, a role she argues requires new types of skills, knowledge and principles linked to action and performance. Her inquiry centres on notation, fidelity to the work (*Werktreue*), idiomaticism and the body (the physical relationship between musician and instrument). Close collaborations between performers and composers in the contemporary repertoire, she argues

> have generated a significant body of knowledge, both tacit and explicit. This complex and accumulated knowledge – a synthesis of the composers' and the performers' knowledge – is embedded as potential in the works themselves, and it is released when the works are practiced or performed anew. Only by investigating the works from inside the practice will they divulge a knowledge that cannot be accessed from outside the work itself. (Orning, 2014, pp. 4–5)

One of the works Orning discusses is Helmut Lachenmann's solo cello work *Pression* (1969), in which he uses his own invented notations of sounds, most of which are not established in instrumental practice, carefully developed in collaboration with a handful of devoted performers and ensembles. With the many precise ideas of details marked in the score, a performance of *Pression* is for the performer more about following technical instructions than interpretation. In some respects, however, Orning argues, there is still room for personal interpretation: "The work's rich supply of timbre and phrasing-constellations opens up for ambiguity and divergent readings. The physicality of the individual instrument and body and their implications in performance is an important layer added to this" (p. 290). Orning's comment highlights an important aspect of a performer's embodied practice and the tacit knowledge that can only be explored through access to subjective and lived experience.

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[24] Hübner's approach in these works brings to mind choreographer Xavier Le Roy's *Salut für Caudwell* (2005) which also is one of the works referenced in his thesis. *Salut für Caudwell* is based on a guitar duo by Helmut Lachenmann that includes a great amount of extended playing techniques. Le Roy's *Salut für Caudwell* features four performers instead of the original work's two guitarists and deconstructs the usual identification between the visible and the audible. The two guitarists are out of sight of the audience, while the other two on stage perform the work without instruments. Towards the end of the work, however, the relationship dissolves; the music sounds without gestures and the gestures are performed without music. Compared to Hübner's concept, I think Le Roy's work offers a more dynamic and insightful perspective on the multimodal aspect of musical performance; when the music stops you begin instead to listen to the gesture. Like a multi-stable image, *Salut für Caudwell* plays with these shifts in perspective; it reveals in a pithy way the fundamental and intertwined relationship between sound and movement and at the same time, the embodied knowledge that resides in the bodies of the performers.

Orning (2014) notes that Lachenmann gives great importance to listening, describing it as "the core of musical activity" (p. 291). The performer is involved in a work of listening, interpreting, playing, and performing, a process that on every level is intellectual, emotional, and physical. Through listening and reflecting upon their playing, performers become engaged "in a self-reflecting practice: nothing is taking place on the surface, every action has a meaning and a seriousness, which in turn engenders new layers of meaning" (Orning, 2014, p. 291). Practising musicians are thus accustomed to this deep experience of musical engagement, and a true change, shift or addition to it is therefore, as many artistic collaborations and research projects exemplify, often a slow, extensive and multi-layered process.

Nguyễn Thanh Thủy enters the domain of artistic research and extended practise from a different starting point. With her background as a performer of the traditional Vietnamese zither, đàn tranh, Nguyễn (2019) explores the social meaning of movement in traditional Vietnamese music. Her project draws on a gender analysis of female musicians in TV shows. This analysis of gesture becomes the foundation for an autoethnographic investigation, but also a source for artistic experimentation which seeks to challenge traditional gender roles through intercultural collaboration. Nguyễn develops a practice similar to mine, using the concept of the gestural-sonic object (Godøy, 2006) as a basis for artistically exploring the possibilities of understanding musical perception.[25] As discussed above on pages 23–24, Godøy points to the close links between perception and motor elements of our neurocognitive apparatus. From an artistic point of view, Nguyễn regards Godøy's propositions as an implicit challenge that opens up for a re-conceptualisation of musical composition.

Another perspective Nguyễn addresses in her thesis is identifying and developing ways to counter colonialist power structures, a work she has carried out through the intercultural group The Six Tones. The group started out exploring a concept of mutual learning, seeking to create a flat structure, to move away from the otherwise typical dominance of Western art music, and its top-down relation between composer, score and performer. From this wish for mutual learning grew further "an interest in better understanding the function of listening" (p. 47). Nguyễn refers to a previously co-written paper by Östersjö and Nguyễn (2017) where, drawing on the work of Pierre Schaeffer (2017), they argue

> that *musicianly* listening has a central role in intercultural collaboration, and constitutes the ground from which new ways of listening can be established, beyond the current aesthetic regimes. In essence, the pair of musical and *musicianly* listening can be a way of understanding how a musician can actively engage and disengage with musical traditions,

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[25] In 2006, Godøy used the term *gestural-sonorous object,* but in later writings has come to use the term gestural-sonic objects, which is also the term use in my work.

and thereby challenge and resist the cultural capital that defines the *habitus* in a particular social field. (Nguyễn, 2019, p. 48)[26]

Returning to how Stravinsky found new depths in his own music when listening "with his eyes", as it were. I believe that a multimodal conception of a musician's listening can play a central role in interdisciplinary collaboration. It provides a broader way of conceptualising gesture, which places the musician's embodied and performative practice at the heart of artistic experimentation, across all phases from initial conceptualisation to performance. As clearly expressed in "Embodying Expression, Gender and Charisma – Breaking Boundaries" – an ongoing artistic research project, headed by Lüneburg (2023), which explores performers' embodied techniques and bodily routines – the role of the body can only fully be understood from its socio-cultural context. Lüneburg's research team combines methods and theories from both artistic research and sociological practices, including Lüneburg's method of "Re-enacting Embodiment", which is based on a process of musically and physically re-enacting another person's interpretation, with the aim of breaking and reflecting on habitual routines. "By systematically addressing issues of embodiment in comparison or perhaps even confrontation with the physicality of other performers, instrumentalists simultaneously expand their personal repertoire of embodiment techniques, develop an awareness of value systems in their performance, and critically question their long-standing individual routines and artistic practices" (Lüneburg, 2023, p. 26).

I have, in this section, provided a range of examples of different perspectives on distributed creativity; from Becker's sociological conception of Art Worlds and John-Steiner's extensive study of different modes of collaboration in science and art, through the specific challenges and possibilities that characterise collaborations between composers and performers, to various staged projects involving multiple artforms, extended methods and strategies. The concept of the gestural-sonic object lays the ground for the interdisciplinary collaborations in my PhD project. Its potential for reconceptualising musical composition and performance through a multimodal and embodied understanding of music as performed is explored by bringing artists from different fields together, seeking to make our practices combine in ways that are fruitful in a joint search for new knowledge and artistic possibilities. In the next section I provide an overview of how methods for artistic collaboration have been developed in my PhD project, and how artistic methods have been combined with methodological approaches in other research disciplines.

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[26] Schaeffer (2017) makes a distinction between musical and *musicianly* listening. While the former is characterised by structuring sonic material by reference to tradition, *musicianly* listening and creation instead move away from traditional listening. Typically, it entails reduced listening and is not limited to "the objects of a culture" (Schaeffer, 2017, p. 273). The two forms have been further developed by Michel Chion, who argues that these two modes of listening are not really opposed to each other, but rather should be seen as modalities that complement each other. "By going backwards and forwards, by successive approximations between these two approaches, it might be possible to discover and establish values for a new music" (Chion, 2009, 39).

Interdisciplinary method development

Each of the stagings *Okända rum*, *I skuggorna,* (both based on *Champs d'étoiles*)*, What is the word, Fragmente²* and *The Conference of the Birds* has required its own set of methods and strategies. The small-scale formats and long-term creative processes, some of which are rooted in previous projects, have enabled in-depth collaborations where accumulated knowledge and mutual exchange between the participating artists have sometimes led the projects in unpredictable directions. The research has also involved exploring methods for reflecting on and communicating these processes. Here the phenomenological concepts of "lived experience" and perspective variation have been important tools. A distinctive feature of a phenomenological study is that it not only examines the perceived object or phenomenon, but also considers how it is perceived. The different perspectives allow us to see divergent aspects and qualities of a phenomenon. By changing perspectives, we can observe, analyse and describe the world and phenomena in a variety of ways. It is precisely this multiplicity of perspectives that Don Ihde's experimental phenomenology emphasises – the multistability of reality that makes people, and the world appear to us in different ways (2012). Like many other phenomenologists, Ihde points to the close relationship between phenomenology and art and argues that artistic explorations can be seen as exercises in variety. "There is a playfulness in art deeply related to phenomenological playfulness, and it is possible to see the practice of the artist as latently phenomenological from the outset" (Ihde, 2012, p. 108).

In developing *Fragmente²*, Åsa Unander-Scharin and I worked with iterative cycles of analysis, composition, staging and performing. Also, within each phase, we constantly shifted our attention between different perspectives. The methodology we came to practice can be seen as *practice possibility explorations*, profoundly related to phenomenology (Ihde, 2012). However, it was only after some time that we observed the natural alignment with phenomenological perspective variation and, as we already had established this methodology, it was easy to continue to elaborate variations (see the graphical model on page 109). Although *Fragmente²* is a thoroughly composed contrapuntal choreomusical composition, from the different perspectives we discovered that certain interactive structures had fallen into place without being consciously composed. The method also revealed how, in parallel with the intertwined whole, we also acted independently and in relation to separate reference worlds, based on previous embodied experiences.

With a singer in the group, Lipparella's repertoire, usually composed directly for the ensemble, has always been based on texts. Over the years, the ensemble has experimented with different forms to emphasise the text and its content. The collaboration with Teatr Weimar and Kent Olofsson had also opened up spatial perspectives and with the project *What is the word*, the ensemble took further steps in a scenic exploration and interdisciplinary encounter. In a jointly

written presentation in an early phase of the project, the ensemble claims: "It is not primarily about movements in an external event added to a finished work, but here the scenic idea concerns every step from idea to finished work. Each part of the work has a kind of inner choreography or backbone, the expression of which is not limited to the 'sound' of the instruments but affects the entire being of the musicians on stage" (Lipparella, internal communication, 2019). The project was a transformative experience where we, apart from working with Lindwall's new composition, became interpreters of two of Samuel Beckett's works. The work on the different parts of the performance – the poem, the play and the music – went on in parallel over a fairly long period of time. The more we familiarised ourselves with Beckett's works, the more we found associations with musical works and musical interaction that we could draw on. This knowledge and experience helped to shape the dramaturgy of the whole performance, bringing the material together into a coherent whole.

The documentary film *Vad heter det* (2023) based on the performance *What is the word* (2019) in Liljevalchs is an attempt to capture our experience, and to communicate it as part of my PhD project. Together with filmmaker Tomas Boman, it became an exploratory methodological development where we chose to base the film on individual interviews with each of the participants. Working with the film – entering each person's perspective – functioned as a kind of phenomenological perspective variation; it became a way to let something new emerge, to explore the intercorporeality of the performance practice and the spaces between the participating artists. The film thus reveals dimensions that the performance cannot, and vice versa.

As will be shown in the following chapters, the two musical compositions of the Lipparella projects kept their original form, even in their staged versions, while the creation of the two choreomusical works *Fragmente²* and *The Conference of the Birds* involved "radical" changes to the original scores. Here, it becomes particularly clear that the "work" is not synonymous with the score. Instead, the works – which have also been given titles other than the original musical scores – are manifested through the performance itself in an intermedial polyphony, with all their added expressions and interactions. Also, unlike the two Lipparella productions, the composers of the original works did not participate in the staging processes. This, in turn, opened up a whole new space of creativity and responsibility for me as solo musician. It created an unusual situation in relation to the classical (and contemporary) music tradition, where the hierarchical relationship between composer and performer and the latter's expected fidelity to the score are taken for granted. In *The Conference of the Birds*, the original solo composition, Madeleine Isaksson's *Les sept vallées* was adapted, expanded and recomposed in parallel with the choreomusical explorations and the staging process involving all participating artists.

The issue of performers' creativity and freedom to challenge conventional interpretations of well-known musical pieces has been discussed in academic discourse and described as *radical*

interpretation. The pianist and artist-researcher Mine Doğantan-Dack's research on this topic formed part of a multi-year project with Professor Daniel Leech-Wilkinson that aimed to encourage classical performers' creativity.[27] However, the term has also been used in the context of staged experimental projects, such as when Stefan Östersjö (2016, 2020) describes a process through which a composition for solo guitar by German composer Rolf Riehm, *Toccata Orpheus* (1990), became the source of a radical interpretation.

When Östersjö first studied the piece with the composer, he realised that the composer strived to emphasise the theatrical quality in the music; for Riehm, the physical gesture was even more important than the sonic result. The work being based on the myth of Orfeus, the composer's intention was that the performance should in some way represent an embodiment of the person of Orpheus, an aesthetic concept which, Östersjö argues, *per se* situates the piece outside the conventions of Western concert hall music. A first version of the piece, worked out in collaboration with the choreographer Claudine Ulrich, was presented as part of a multimedia installation including an interactive video and sound installation. The conceptual idea of *Toccata Orpheus* was eventually incorporated into a new inter-media performance entitled *Go to Hell*, which was realised as part of the international research project "Music in Movement" (2012–2015) that investigated the creation of music at the intersection of choreography and musical composition. Here, the gestural content of *Toccata Orpheus* became the source for a series of new artistic works in collaboration with, among others, choreographer Marie Fahlin and the musicians of The Six Tones, including works in which the instruments were removed and thus also the musicians' tactile and sonic feedback from the instrument. In retrospect, Östersjö states that a crucial factor in the process was time: four years had passed from the first rehearsal with Riehm to the first installation, and the process of developing the entire multimedia performance had taken eleven years (Östersjö, 2020).

The different projects included in my PhD project are similarly based on long-term artistic investigations where experiences and acquired knowledge have been utilised and further developed into new projects. In this way, the works are never finished but are part of a path of exploration. For me, this path has also meant developing my artistic role and agency. I have gradually taken greater artistic responsibility through the different phases of the process from conceptualisation, composition, staging to performance.

In his thesis, Kent Olofsson (2018) outlines a possible model for interdisciplinary artistic practices in staged performance art that I find resonates with how the works I present in this

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[27] By, among other things, ignoring the composers' indications of tempi, dynamic and character and instead following their own creativity and musicality, they have adopted a more radical approach to classical scores. Their findings show that while students have been positive and open to radical interpretations, the tendency is for audiences to evaluate the results more negatively in the case of the most well-known pieces, while there has been a much more favourable attitude towards the interpretation of lesser-known pieces which they have not been able to compare with standard interpretations with which they are familiar (Dogantan-Dack, 2015).

thesis have naturally evolved. Olofsson's proposed model is structured around three phases in the creative process, see Figure 1. The first phase, *Conceptual framing* involves building the "world" of the work, including initial ideas and concepts such as materials, participants and space. *Macroform* is the phase in which the materials develop into a structured coherent work with interaction and dramaturgy. The *Mesostructure* phase represents the act of performance where all elements interact in a "here and now". Drawing on Frisk & Karlsson's (2011) scale ranging from "Out-of-time" (referring to activities that are not bound to temporal aspects), via "Over-time", (referring to larger form structures) to "In-time" (the actual moment of performance), the model also indicates temporal perspectives. The kind of non-linear working process structure where the participating artists constant oscillate between elements, sections and time levels of the work enables a mutual exchange between the collaborating artists throughout the process.
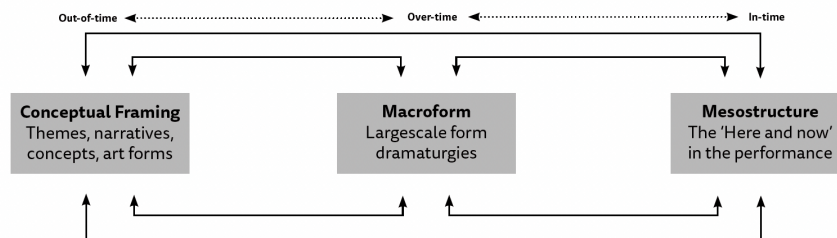
Figure 1. Olofsson's model of the creative process in interdisciplinary collaboration, which, he emphasises, should not be seen as something fixed or finished, but rather as "a foundation for further explorations" (2018, p. 196).

Olofsson's model captures the idea of interdisciplinary collaboration, which, according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, means an activity "pertaining to two or more disciplines or branches of learning; contributing to or benefiting from two or more disciplines" (*OED*, 2024). As opposed to simply putting two or more artistic forms together, interdisciplinary work thus involves combining several different areas of knowledge and creating something by thinking across boundaries. Being part of the whole process, with all its implications in terms of exchange of knowledge and methods, is for me the most important key to enable creative processes that take into account all kinds of competences. A fundamental condition is openness to the idea that anything can happen in this room and that nothing is a foregone conclusion.

PART II

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The second part of this thesis consists of two chapters, each of which deals with an artistic project realised by ensemble Lipparella in collaboration with other artists.

In Chapter III, I examine the ensemble's performance of Olofsson's large-scale work *Champs d'étoiles* (2008–2016) showing examples of the close and intimate interaction of the ensemble members as well as the interaction between musician–instrument–score. The musical gesture and its inherent meaning, expression and function are central to the study and subsequently served as the conceptual basis for the entire research project.

Chapter IV deals with a staged performance of Lipparella which was centered around two works by the Irish writer Samuel Beckett and a new composition by the Swedish composer Christer Lindwall. In describing the embodied processes of creating this performance, I have drawn inspiration from Merleau-Ponty's concept of corporeality and lived experience. The outcome of this work took the form of the text *Encounter with Beckett – a phenomenological essay*, presented here in the written thesis, and the documentary film *Vad heter det* (2023), featured in its full length in the Research Catalogue exposition.

Chapter III Champs d'étoiles – interaction between performers

If you can't find the Beloved,

that Beauty is not lost,

it's you who don't know where to seek.

Introduction

Small chamber music ensembles have been described as "an unusual kind of social group whose mode of interaction involves a degree of intimacy and subtlety possibly not equaled by any other kind of group" (Young & Colman, 1979, pp. 12–13). Other recent studies show that mutual trust, empathy, attunement and creativity are essential for successful chamber ensemble work (Myers & White, 2012; Waddington-Jones, 2013, 2014; McCaleb, 2014; King & Waddington, 2017). Studying performers' interpersonal dynamics, Creech and Hallam state that groups are "characterized by shared and accepted perceptions of within-group social norms relating to roles and power relationships, as well as by interdependent and interactive within-groups relationships" (Creech & Hallam, 2017, p. 57). This kind of interdependence, interaction and reciprocity, according to the authors, is what underpins the creative potential of small chamber music groups. "At the highest level of 'intersubjective engagement', groups adopt each other's perspectives and are open to spontaneous musical variation and unpredictability in performance" (Creech & Hallam, 2017, p. 58). In my experience, these skills are particularly developed in groups that have been working together for a long time.

In his book chapter Developing Trust in Others; or, How to Empathise Like a Performer (2017), the musicologist Anthony Gritten raises the question of what kind of value ensemble interaction embodies. Given that trust and empathy are core concepts not only in musical activity but are relevant in fact across all domains of human activity, it is easy to see how the values created

through music practice and performing arts might contribute more widely both inside and outside music.

> The most fundamental movement in empathy is a division of the subject's attention. The subject becomes aware simultaneously of herself and of the other, and directs her energy and attention inwards and outwards towards both subjects, viewing the world from both perspectives. She finds that she experiences similarity between her feelings and the other's feelings, and yet she can differentiate between experiencing (affectively) and recognising (cognitively) the dynamics of the other's experience. (Gritten, 2017, p. 251)

Gritten further notes that "trust is a theory of what performance 'is', while empathy is a theory of what performing 'does'" (p. 252). Caroline Waddington-Jones (2013) identifies three main components of co-performer empathy: a *shared approach* to interpretation and the collaborative work, an *intentional awareness* of musical and practical levels and a *special connection* between players, which her research shows also enabled *spontaneous and interpretative flexibility* in performance (p. 333). But while trust, empathy and shared creativity are themes familiar to music practitioners, they are by no means a given.

In guitarist Jessica Kaiser's doctoral research, musical togetherness is defined by both the aesthetic and intersubjective experience of music performance, an emergence of a "we" where the ensemble can be seen a "microcosm for social interaction" and a practice through which we also aesthetically explore and experiment with these relational qualities (Kaiser, 2023a, p. 2). The potential for genuine encounter and profound interaction goes, as Kaiser puts it, "beyond technical coordination, perfect synchronization or alignment of musical parameters" (2023a, pp. 1–2). Christopher Small, with his concept of *musicking*, emphasises the communal nature of musical action: "The fundamental nature and meaning of music lie not in objects, not in musical works at all, but in action, in what people do" (Small, 1998, p. 8). It is thus clear that musical processes generate a special kind of knowledge and social practices that have precedence over objects and ontology.

In this chapter I present a case study based on one of the ensembles of which I am a member, Lipparella. The five members are Mikael Bellini, countertenor, Anna Lindal, baroque violin; Louise Agnani, viola da gamba; Peter Söderberg playing theorbo; and myself, recorders. Despite the baroque instrument setting, the group has been committed to contemporary music since it was founded in 2008 and has built up a considerable repertory in close collaboration with many composers. Our collaboration with the Swedish composer Kent Olofsson, which I will describe in the next section, was one of the first, and the most long-lasting, resulting in the large-scale work *Champs d'étoiles* (Star fields, 2008–2016)*,* a truly defining work for the ensemble.

Ensemble–composer collaboration, sources of inspiration

Many composers today create music for a specific performer or ensemble and thus develop works that this particular ensemble/musician and his or her instrument(s) can offer. This is what characterises much of Kent Olofsson's (hereinafter referred to as Kent) production, and *Champs d'étoiles* can definitely fall under this category. What began as a commission for a work with an approximate length of 10–15 minutes resulted in a collaboration that spanned over a decade and a musical suite of 19 movements in various settings, including solos, duos, trios, quartets and quintets with a total duration of just over 70 minutes.

The musical material in *Champs d'étoiles* is closely linked to the selected texts (see below) and is with regard to meaning and prosody, often structurally based on the text's phrases and rhythms. Further, Renaissance and Baroque music has always been a source of inspiration for Kent, which in this work can be seen not only through the lineup, but also through the musical structure and material. References to early music can be traced throughout the piece via tonal sequences sometimes easily perceived by the listener, such as tonal scales and figures with one or several appoggiaturas. Sometimes however, the tonal and baroque-related structures are intertwined with atonal or harmonically colouring material. The music is experimental, often virtuosic, and explores the sonic possibilities of baroque instruments. Kent's deep knowledge of our respective instruments and their affordances comes in part from his experience of composing solo pieces for each of the instruments in the ensemble. Some of these are included in *Champs d'étoiles*, such as the solo pieces for theorbo and viola da gamba, but I also refer to earlier works such as *Il sogno di Tartini* for violin and electronics (1999–2000), *Vocations* – suite for gamba (2015), *Treccia for violin* (1989), and *Treccia for recorder* (2000–01). All these works were created in close co-operation with the musicians for whom they were written. Kent's and my collaboration started with *Treccia for recorder*, an extremely challenging piece for the instrument.

The new playing techniques Kent developed for the theorbo together with Peter Söderberg in *Champs d'étoiles*, (e.g. to play with several fingers on the low bass strings) generated an evocative tone and sound world that permeates the entire work.[28] Using the compositional method of merging different epochs and interweaving styles and techniques from modern, contemporary music as well as from older church and instrumental music, lends the music a character of being harsh and beautiful at the same time. In connection with Kent's receiving the prestigious composition award, the Swedish Järnåker Prize 2017 for *Champs d'étoiles*, a radio documentary was broadcast in 2017 in which Peter comments on the collaboration: "Yes, there has been an exchange of ideas that has shaped the music to a great extent. What has been stimulating not only

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[28] Equipped with extra frets, enabling the frequent use of quartertones, the theorbo offers a rich sound profiting from both the resonating open strings and the more damped flageolets.

for me but for the entire ensemble is that we have worked with Kent for such a long time. There has been a continuity in the work between musicians and composers that is quite unusual – that it is ongoing and continues for so many years" (Ärlemyr, 2017, my translation). In his doctoral thesis *Composing the Performance: On Composition as a Dramaturgical Strategy in Intermedial Theatres* (2018), Kent describes the collaborative process as follows:

> The work was composed especially for the musicians in the ensemble Lipparella. Writing for the highly specialised musicians, their skills and personalities and the special dynamic of the ensemble was influential and most decisive for the composition. Although the creative process was characterised by a traditional way of writing and performing chamber music, there was also a strong collaborative aspect. The work would have been very different without our close connection and most likely, the work would not have been composed at all. (Olofsson, 2018, p. 254)

Both Peter's and Kent's comments confirm John-Steiner's (2000) theories on the importance of collaboration in artistic creation, and as Kent himself comments, for the work to come into being at all. The basic approach of collaboration between the members of the ensemble can best be described in terms of "family collaboration" mode, with a strong sense of belonging and common aesthetic understanding. The "complementary" collaborative approach that characterises many of the ensemble's composer collaborations, as well as Kent's collaborations with the musicians he composes for, generates a body of knowledge: "a synthesis of the composers' and the performers' knowledge" as Orning (2014) puts it (see page 40). A clear example of such a co-constructed work is the special playing techniques on the theorbo that Peter and Kent developed and that very much characterises the composition.
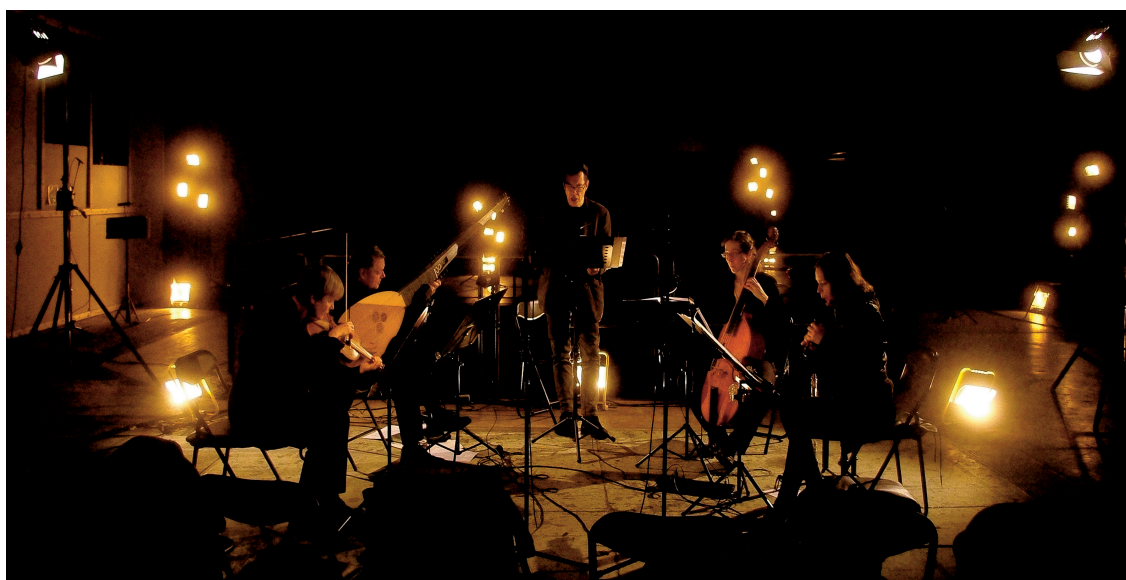
Figure 2. Lipparella: Anna Lindal, baroque violin; Peter Söderberg, theorbo; Mikael Bellini, countertenor; Louise Agnani, viola da gamba; and Kerstin Frödin, recorder; performing *Champs d'étoiles* in the staged concert performance *Okända rum* (Unknown rooms), at R1, Stockholm. Photo: Simon Söderberg

In the radio documentary, Kent explains that the premiere of the first movements coincided with the death of his father. While composing these first movements, Kent realised how the intertwined eras of the work were also linked to his own life, his childhood and the era that was coming to an end due to his father's condition. The strophe Kent has used for one of the trios, taken from German poet Rainer Maria Rilke's *Das Stunden-Buch; Das Buch von der Pilgerschaft* (1901/2008), in which the subject leaves something familiar and moves on to something new but still unknown, somehow became an image of his situation and the work he was about to create.[29]

Der Sommer war so wie dein Haus,
drin weißt du alles stehn –
jetzt mußt du in dein Herz hinaus
wie in die Ebene gehn.
Die große Einsamkeit beginnt,
die Tage werden taub,
aus deinen Sinnen nimmt der Wind
die Welt wie welkes Laub.

(Rilke, 1901/2008)

Pilgrimage is a recurring theme in the work's collage of texts by authors such as Rainer Maria Rilke, Arthur Rimbaud and Dag Hammarskjöld. Kent Olofsson regards *Champs d'étoiles* as a work that reflects "thoughts on the pilgrimage as a quest for deeper insights into the timeless mystery of being human" (Olofsson, 2017, np). In addition to the CD release of *Champs d'étoiles* in 2017, the work's rich material and creation process, along with Kent's own artistic expansion and development in the field of contemporary theatre, paved the way for realising this work in two staged performances: *Okända rum* (Unknown rooms, 2014) performed in "R1", Stockholm (KTH) which is a gigantic old reactor hall in Stockholm, situated 25 meters underground; and *I skuggorna* (In the shadows, 2016) performed at Inter Arts Center, Malmö. These performances, which will be described further below, constitute part of Kent's extensive production of collaborative works carried out together with the playwriter and director Jörgen Dahlqvist and the Malmö-based artistic collective Teatr Weimar between 2009–2016. Although the creation of *Okända rum* and *I skuggorna* provided little space for closer collaboration between Lipparella and the members of Teatr Weimar, both productions sparked an interest in further work with staged concepts.

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[29] The English translation of Rilke's poem is available in the Research Catalogue exposition.

Performer interaction

Musical performance in small groups is characterised by the performers' individual perception and immediate adaptation to the situation from moment to moment. When performing without conductor, this adaptability becomes particularly crucial: while being active and contributing, one is ready to reconsider the goal depending on the action and interactions of the co-performers. Meaning-making in such an intersubjective process is achieved, not only through sound, but also through the dynamic interplay of bodies in action. In 2006, psychologist and educator Keith Sawyer introduces the concept of "group flow" as the key to creative collaboration.[30] To facilitate flow and achieve a state where barriers between individual intention and collective intention disappear, Sawyer identifies factors such as defining a common mission, developing the ability to listen closely and "blending the egos" (Gaggioli et al., 2011).

Similar observations have been made by McCaleb, claiming that such experiences of inter-reaction (see also Chapter II, p. 21) in chamber music performance may engender a feeling for the performers of being part of "something greater than their individual musical intentions and acting as a unified whole" (McCaleb, 2014, p. 101). Such involvement in performance creates a balance of creative input and adaption, generating a "seemingly magical performative state" and a sense of cognitive freedom and flexibility (McCaleb, 2014, p. 101).

Hence, group flow and inter-reaction, similarly to co-performer empathy, requires a shift of focus away from the personal to the interpersonal, from the individual performer to the collective body of the ensemble. *Emergence* is also a notion that figures in this discourse, not only in the sense of being embedded in all ensemble playing – several performers can create a chord where a different meaning emerges than when the notes are played separately – but also in the sense of a concept closely related to flow: In musical interaction emergence occurs at the peak of performances and "when a group performs in a way that cannot be attributed to one individual contributor" (Bishop, 2018, p. 9). I refer to emergence in this latter meaning that I believe lies at the heart of chamber music performance as an artform. In their study of a string quartet, Schiavio and Høffding (2015) describe such a process:

> While playing together in a string quartet, each musician *brings forth* a domain of meaning, co-creating the sound environment in which he or she is embedded. In a sense, as a quartet-member, a cellist is not separated from the others. His experience, intentions, and emotion (his/her world) are 'enacted' while playing. But, at the same time, the condition of being immersed in the musical dynamicity of the quartet forces him to self-regulate the same domain of meanings that he enacts, giving rise to circular interplay between music,

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[30] The feeling of peak performance can be associated with the concept of flow, first introduced and studied at the individual level by Csíkszentmihályi (1990).

subjects, and embodied actions: an interactive and self-generative system that sustains itself through the interplay of its sub-networks. (p. 5)

In performance, therefore, as De Preester (2007) emphasises, it is never our objective body that we move, "but always our 'phenomenological' body, i.e. our body as a potentiality for engagement with the world"– which in the first place is rather an "I can", and not an "I think that" (p. 355). As discussed in Chapter II, one possible way to understand gestures in performance is as patterns of embodiment (Leman and Godøy, 2010) – a repertoire of goal-directed units or chunks of actions that are activated on both a conscious (body image) and an unconscious level (body schema). This dynamic relationship between the performer and the environment, which encompasses co-performers, instruments, score, spatial properties and so on, forms the basis of such an action-oriented ontology (Coorevits et al., 2015). It thus constitutes the very foundation of the musician's practice.

The embodied, embedded and enactive perspectives implied by the interactive nature of chamber music performance also evolve over time, both at macro (events, group dynamics, aesthetics) and micro levels (musical phrasing, intonation, timing, etc.). What initially interested me in making *Champs d'étoiles* part of my PhD study was the ensemble's bodily engagement during performance, which I felt was so closely connected to the musical expression and also to the ensemble's aesthetic exploration in its first years. In the radio documentary, Kent comments on what happens when a work is played multiple times: "When a work like this is played so much over so many years, the musicians get to know the work better than me". As a composer, he continues, "you come to a point when the work is finished and you are happy about the result, but the ensemble will continue their interpretation and process which will emphasise these ideas further" (Ärlemyr, 2017, my translation). Being a piece that had "lived" with the ensemble during a considerable time, *Champs d'étoiles* constitutes therefore an interesting example not only of how embodied knowledge and intercommunication can take shape over time, but also of the emergence of a *shared voice* (see below,).

Analytical perspectives and methods

In my analysis, the research of Rolf-Inge Godøy and Alexander Refsum Jensenius on musical gestures has provided a theoretical basis and I use their suggestion to classify musical gestures into four analytical categories: sound-producing, communicative, sound-facilitating and sound-accompanying (Jensenius et al., 2010, pp. 23–24, see also Chapter II, p 20). Following Jensenius et al., (2010), the sound-producing gesture may be seen as having an excitation phase (the sound-producing action), surrounded by a prefix (a movement trajectory to the point of sound-producing action) and a suffix (a movement trajectory away from that action). I apply Smalley's (2007) proposal to divide the performed space into the dimensions of gestural space, ensemble

space and arena space (see Chapter II, p. 21). In the analysis, I also draw on my own embodied understanding of the musical material and my experience of being part of the ensemble. Thus, I bring in a phenomenological perspective in the sense that I interpret how the musical material and the gestures and bodily communication speak to me, as a performer and co-performer.

The qualitative data analysis presented in this chapter and the Research Catalogue exposition was carried out in an analytical procedure of open coding (Benaquisto, 2008; Östersjö et al, 2023) using the qualitative analysis software HyperRESEARCH. It is based on Lipparella's performance of *Champs d'étoiles* in Milsteinsalen, Royal College of Music, Stockholm, in 2017 and highlights, through a number of examples, the ensemble's and the individual performer's approach to interaction and gestures. The selection of movements displays different line-ups of the ensemble: "Des Sommers Wochen" (voice recorder, theorbo), "A une raison" (voice, recorder, violin, gamba) and "Single form" (voice, theorbo, gamba).

The analysis was carried out in three steps:
1) I began by coding all visual actions of each performer directly in the score. As earlier research confirms, musical performance involves a limited amount of gestures, a repertoire of goal-directed units and actions, such as nods, swaying gestures, head and shoulder movements, as well as a number of expressive gestures. In my study, the same gesture-type has been coded with upper- and lower-case letters depending on how they are carried out in gestural space. For example, "nod", which is a frequent recurring gesture of all performers, is marked with "N" if I perceive it as big and "n" if I perceive it as a smaller gesture.

2) My next step was to study how the gestures relate to the score by mapping them to the musical structure: what musical structures generate what kind of gestures and actions? For example, a rest on an upbeat to a strong beat often generates an impulse in the form of a breath or a head or arm movement, whereas a rest on a strong beat often generates an impulse, a nod or some other gesture in the performer's body, as a replacement of sound. A steady pulse with marked beats often generates rocking gestures in the performer's body. How the gestures relate to the musical structure is closely related to the next analytical step, namely:

3) to study how the gestures relate to the interplay between the performers. *Champs d'étoiles* is performed with a shared responsibility for coordinating the performance; we constantly shift the roles of leading and following depending on the structure of the score. This strategy builds on developing a functional cue system and learning not only one's own part, but the full score. What comes with this shared approach is also an intentional awareness and capability to predict each other's actions and intentions.

Analysis of musical gesture, its relation to musical structure and the interplay

I recommend that this section be read in parallel with the RC exposition where the annotated scores and the video clips on which the examples below are based can be found. Here you will also find the complete CD recording of *Champs d'étoiles*, extracts from the video documentation of the performance *Okända rum* in R1, the full score and other related material.

Shifting roles and phrasing

The trio "Des Sommers Wochen" begins with a duet for voice and theorbo. The video excerpt presented in the RC exposition demonstrates how the shifting of roles between leading and accompanying is reflected in the performers' gestures and their actions in the gestural and ensemble spaces (Smalley, 2007). The first bar, a slow falling arpeggio in the theorbo establishes the harmonic frame, an Ab-minor/major-tonality. In the end of the first bar, the voice enters with a quarter-tone-coloured vocal line whereas the theorbo part changes to an accompanying role. When the voice, in bar 3, stays on a long g, the theorbo continues with a responding rising embellished phrase.

Peter, the theorbist starts with a very small but distinct nod (n) on the accented first note, followed by another on the attack of the little slur in the first embellished figuration. The next nod in the same bar is clearly of another kind; it is deeper and seems to be carried out more consciously. The deeper nod leads to a more obvious release when he resumes an upright position. In bar two, he nods twice: on the first beat and on the last note of the bar. Then follows a sequence with a series of co-articulated gestures, including nods. They are carried out in slightly different ways, all of them increasing in size following the increasing suspension of the phrase. In contrast to the first two nods as well as the nods in the second bar, which have a local character, the nods incorporated in the chunk of co-articulated gestures seem phrase- and harmony-related. Peter also changes his facial expression along with the harmonic change of the phrase. The nod on the third beat in the first bar seems to be carried out consciously to facilitate the start for Mikael, the singer.

Peter's gestures have two general functions here and are also carried out in two different space forms. All of the gestures except one are of the ancillary type as they seem to serve and support his phrasing and sound production. They are carried out within the gestural space, whereas the nod on the third beat is a direct communicative gesture and therefore belongs to ensemble space.

In the first bar, Mikael follows the embellishments of the theorbo part with empathetic gestures (emp) in gestural space.[31] To begin with, Mikael carries out an impulse gesture (I) with a breath, followed directly by expressive gestures of the hand (Eh) and the head (EH) in the melodic second bar. On the long-sustained g with diminuendo, he instead keeps very still (S). Worth noting here is that in this very place, Mikael sings the word "still". This is an example of how Kent has used the meaning of the text and the phrasing of the poem, as leading parameters for the vocal part and the overall musical structure. In the beginning of bar 7, Mikael lifts his whole body and at the same time makes a hand gesture; together these gestures result in a particularly expressive moment in his interpretation. This seems to be mainly related to the meaning of the text but also underlines the unaccented ending of the musical phrase.

The gestures of Mikael and Peter have several functions. They reflect the rhythmical and harmonic structure and convey musical meaning. The way the gestures are carried out is also a result of their shift of roles. Going into further details, this example illustrates how the performers' interpretation of their respective parts is supported by mainly ancillary gestures. Their inter-reaction can here be spotted at places such as the entrance of Mikael in bars 1 and 6 and the rhythmical structure of bar 7. There is also a high level of attuning as can be seen in the empathetic gestures and the blending of sound and timing in both parts.

Embodied dialogue

The excerpt from the trio "Single Form" has an impulse-response character between the theorbo and the viola da gamba, developing from simple, arpeggiated minor chords towards a denser polyphonic structure that the countertenor eventually enters. Here, however, I focus solely on Louise's (gamba) and Peter's (theorbo) actions within the gestural and ensemble space forms, which here are tightly intertwined.

Throughout this sequence (bars 21–40), Louise is playing pizzicato on the gamba and the theorbo part consists mainly of harmonics. These playing techniques not only produce a sonic similarity between the two instruments but also result in similarities in the bodily movements, even though the performers' individual playing styles differ. Both are following the contours and harmonic evolvement of the music, which starts out with open minor chords that gradually are coloured by dissonant notes. Within the gestural space, Louise uses mainly large movements in her right arm and upper body, expressive gestures that can be seen as visual extensions of the rich sounding chords. Peter keeps his right hand and arm tight to the instrument but makes frequent use of nods and changes in facial expression.

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[31] "Empathetic gestures" is my own term. In Godøy's and Jensenius' categorisation of gesture-types, an empathetic gesture would go under the label sound-accompanying gesture. However, I perceive Mikael's gestures here as strongly related to the empathy that often develops between performers (Gritten, 2017).

In bar 26, Louise carries out a slow arpeggio, nodding (n) and making expressive hand/arm gesture (Eh) with a following suffix (marked with a red line in the annotated score) with her right hand within the gestural space. She is then sitting very still (S) until Peter plays his first accented note. Louise reacts to Peter's accent with a small (empathetic) nod (n), but the nod also functions as an impulse to her next chord in bar 27. This chord is performed with a short suffix gesture. From Peter's chord in bar 28, the denser structure is reflected by larger nods by both of them. Throughout the sequence, there is a clear interaction (ensemble space) between Louise and Peter which is reinforced by their body movements (arena space).

This passage is an example of how Kent profits from the affordances and the rich sonic possibilities of the instruments, interpreted by Louise and Peter as an embodied dialogue. The visual aspect is already embedded in the score; as Godøy states, the score in Western notation can be considered as partially a gestural script (2004). In the radio interview (Ärlemyr, 2017), Kent states that the actual playing and how musicians move is a material to work with and something he includes as part of the compositional work.

Coordinating strategies

The quartet "A une raison" is quite austere in form and structure, with strong accents, and what Kent refers to as "exploded melody line sections" and mechanical bell-like figurations.[32] Due to this musical structure and the increased number of musicians, this movement requires more directed visual communication than "Des Sommers Wochen" and "Single Form". The ensemble communicates through a complex web of gestures, making frequent use of coordinating gestures such as impulse gestures, eye contact and pulse-indicating gestures. Communicative and coordinating gestures are made at all crucial passages in the instrumental parts. They are sometimes clearly directed to the co-performers, as in the first bar and in the *meno mosso* (bar 7), where the tempi need to be settled. But the impulses can also be of a more ancillary character such as the much smaller gestures carried out in bars 7–9. Expressive swaying gestures emerge in all parts as soon as the structure of the music becomes more linear (bars 5–6).

An analysis of this passage has to be done by looking at the higher-level phrasing patterns, since the music is composed on the basis of phrases. The two first phrases are both striving forward; in the second phrase, an embellished variation of the first, the voice rises to a higher pitch. Louise starts the second phrase with a trill (bar 4). The visual expression of the change of character is striking: from being very rhythmical and precise in her gestures, she changes to a more free-manner expressive swaying in upper body and head. By contrast, both Anna and I are more directed towards the accent in bar 6 after which Anna gives an impulse gesture to the tempo transition in bar 7 in her upper body. The last phrase, bars 7–9, closes the first section of the

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[32] "Exploded melody lines" refers to sections where a melody line is divided between several parts.

piece. It is an instrumental section with short trills and overlapping embellished notes. Here the gestures are carried out in a more individual manner using ancillary impulse gestures.

Although this passage contains a number of coordinated gestures, they are naturally integrated into each performer's embodied interpretation. My general observation is that each performer helps to drive and coordinate the performance without any of us dominating.

As we have seen, the different movements in *Champs d'étoiles* generate a variety of strategies for coordinating performance and there is clearly a direct relationship between the performers' gestures and internal communication and the musical structure. In general, we aim to minimise pure conducting gestures and instead use a combination of auditory and visual impulses based on the function and role of each voice, taking into account each performer's individual style and embodied interpretation. Considering the ensemble, in the words of Kaiser (2023a, p. 2) a "microcosm of social interaction", means that not only conventional aspects or values of interpretation such as sonority, timing and phrasing play a role, but also involve a relational level and shared experiences. In the next section, I will point to aspects of Lipparella's practice that I believe have contributed to a certain aesthetic outcome and the emergence of a shared voice.

The emergence of a shared voice

For a group like Lipparella – characterised by a long-term collaboration between its members – gestures, intercommunication and the overall interpersonal dynamics become part of the ensemble's hallmark. In the early years of the ensemble, we almost always included a premiere of a new movement of *Champs d'étoiles* in our programmes. Kent's complex yet idiomatic music became a springboard for developing a collective embodied knowledge and experimenting with our internal communication and coordination, as presented above.

The characteristics and techniques of baroque instruments are naturally reflected in our gestures and thus also contribute to the overall expression. One of our more recent composer collaborations was with the German composer Walter Zimmermann. In an interview, on the occasion of one of our concerts, he told us that he sees a general difference between modern instrumentalists and baroque musicians: "I always tell the musicians I work with to think as if they were playing baroque instruments rather than modern instruments. There is a certain attitude that comes with it, a more natural style that I like very much" (Zimmermann, 2023).[33]

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[33] Interview during the release concert for the CD "Chantbook for Lipparella" at the Goethe Institute in Stockholm on 23 February 2023. The CD production is a portrait of Walter Zimmermann's music. World edition, Köln, 2023.

His comment highlights the musician–instrument interaction and how actions in gestural space are reflected, also from an audience perspective, in both ensemble space and arena space.

Zimmermann's commentary also demonstrates how a "composer's voice" emerges from the inner listening in the situation of composing a work, through the identification of a particular attitude or of particular ways of shaping the music that have a bearing on the form and physical character of music performance. The negotiation between a composer's voice and a performer's voice is something that has been explored by composer David Gorton and guitarist Stefan Östersjö (2016, 2019, 2020). Drawing on their decade-long artistic collaboration and joint research they have made the observation that their collaborative processes, in the creation of works such as *Forlorn Hope* (2017) for solo guitar and *Cerro Rico* (2018) for charango and violin, have led to what they refer to as a "discursive voice" (Gorton & Östersjö 2020, p. 55). The discursive voice, they argue, can be conceived not simply as a combination of the composer's and the performer's voices, but emerges from a pairing of their individual personalities and identities in a process of collaboration. "What emerges is a negotiation; a coming together of the two voices through the exploration of a situation in the present" (Gorton & Östersjö, 2016, p. 593). Although we have seen several examples of such negotiations of voice between Kent and members of the ensemble, my focus, with regard to the work of Lipparella, is how such a negotiation process can take shape within the ensemble, the outcome of which is what I refer to as a shared voice. In later chapters, the perspective will widen to the development of a shared voice in cross-disciplinary collaboration.

As discussed above, empathy is regarded as a fundamental parameter for creating a relational bond in musical performance; it emerges not only between performers but also between performers and audience. However, Deniz Peters (2015) argues for the existence of an empathy towards the music itself. He differentiates between *social empathy* (that would be the type described above) and *musical empathy* (Peters, 2015, p. 10). Musical empathy is co-constructed Peters argues, it "proceeds through the lived body and involves a bodily hermeneutics" (p. 11). Musical empathy enables a mediation of expressiveness in musical performance that is different from the actual feelings of the performer, and also from the feelings that arise when empathising with the performer or composer. What is created in shared musical experience and genuine musical empathy can, according to Peters, be described as the *musical other* which arises through a combination of self-involvement and self-effacement (Peters, 2015, p. 2). Conceiving musical empathy as empathy with the musical other offers a refined view of the emergence of the musical persona. Moreover, understanding the persona as co-constituted sheds light on how body and mind, perception and imagination are united in the musical experience, as well as in the deep psychological and social interaction in music (Peters, 2015, p. 11). Such a co-constituted musical persona, as I see it, is closely related to what is here called a shared voice.

In her doctoral thesis on instrumental duo performance, Kaiser (2023b) discusses the prerequisites for developing a shared voice in dyadic constellations. Provided that the duo partners interact as equals, the following properties are characteristic:

> The conception of uniqueness, which includes that the members are non-replaceable; the conception of intimacy as a result of the culture of relationship they created together; the conception of commitment as well as feeling equally responsible for the relationship; the conception of consistent mutuality; and the conception of mortality, meaning the dyad ceases to exist as soon as one of the two members resigns. (Kaiser, 2023b, p. 2)

Consequently, Kaiser argues, a duo performance is an interweaving of the individual contributions of the two artists, creating a whole that cannot be reduced to its parts. Although a duo performance is completely dependent on the participation and commitment of both performers, Kaiser continues, this co-dependence also implies, in a positive sense "the resonance of two creative forces, in which different perspectives constructively shape and enrich each other as well as their shared voice" (Kaiser, 2023b, p. 3). A duo represents the most obvious example of ensemble setting where the members are non-replaceable. If one member would resign in a group such as Lipparella, it would not cease to exist, but the resignation would definitely entail a major change in the inner workings of the group, and introduce the development of a different shared voice.

The long-term collaboration within Lipparella involves a number of factors: the contribution of each individual performer in terms of both involvement and effacement, our interactive strategies of divided roles, our common aesthetic understanding and interests, our combination of instruments and style, the overall multimodal experience of our performances, and finally the empathy and trust that are the result of all these factors. I propose that the collaboration has shaped a shared voice, emerging from a process of blending all these aspects. However, this shared voice is not a fixed entity; rather, it is constantly changing and being re-negotiated. As the above analysis shows, the five members display individual styles and approaches to gestures, and perhaps this is part of the diversity that characterises the ensemble at so many levels and allows moments of added value and emergence; a value that includes both unity and diversity.

Staged Performances

As mentioned above, in addition to a large number of concerts, *Champs d'étoiles* was also the basis for two stage performances, realised in collaboration with Teatr Weimar and director Jörgen Dahlqvist. The first, *Okända rum* (2014), which also involved video artist Maria Norrman, consisted of music, filmed material, projected poems and light. The conceptual idea for this first staging evolved from the pilgrimage theme of Rilke's and Rimbaud's texts and the

old tales of pilgrims navigating their journeys with the help of the stars. The R1 hall was filled with small lights, creating a field of stars, *Champs d'étoiles*. For this occasion, Kent composed additional movements for the suite, "Our Lady Showed Us Sea of Fire", "Éclat/Appel" and "Day", taking advantage of the acoustic and spatial conditions in R1. In his thesis, Kent discusses these new works, which were composed

> not only in relation to the overall dramaturgical ideas we had but also in the relation to the special space. Most of the new compositions were composed with special placement of the musicians in the hall. In one part the five musicians were placed far apart, creating a spatialized music that travelled in the huge space. (Olofsson, 2018, p. 255)

Peter, the theorbo player in Lipparella, later told me that he had the feeling that the body of the ensemble became more part of the whole space (arena space) and that the individual part and the personal relationship with the instrument (gestural space) were at the same time more prominent. The scattered positions thus had a major impact on the relationship between the three space forms and how we listened, communicated, and responded to the music. The experience of performing *Champs d'étoiles* in R1 thus sharpened our perception within all three space forms. The inherent flexibility of the work also had an impact on our later concerts; it triggered our creativity, and we began to employ the spatial parameter as a natural part of the work. Moreover, it laid the ground, both for the ensemble and for me as an artistic researcher, to our exploration of the field of shared creativity and cross-disciplinary collaborations.

Two years later, in 2016, a second staged version of *Champs d'étoiles, I skuggorna*, was realised at the Inter Ars Center in Malmö. This time it was Kent himself who took the stage and read his own autobiographical texts. However, pilgrims and their navigation by the stars was still a central theme, now, however, autobiographically related to the composer's loss of his father, which became a novel narrative in the staged composition. The sound of a pulsating star recorded by an astronomer was used in the performance and incorporated into a new and final movement. Thereby, the long process of composition with all its building blocks was completed and all the pieces fell into place. Kent describes how he built up the conceptual idea for the final movement: "the sounds [of the pulsating star] of the start were transformed to the sounds of someone's walking, connecting the immense lifetime of the stars with our human lives" (Olofsson, 2018, p. 255).

Okända rum and *I skuggorna* were part of Kent's long-term collaboration with Jörgen Dahlqvist and Teatr Weimar between 2009 and 2016. In his dissertation, Kent reflects on the series of staged works they created together during that period and the joint working processes as a context in which he composed larger pieces with ease because the music was part of its own "conceptual universe" which Kent describes as "a specific weave of musical material and traditions, theatre methods, narratives, texts and relation to performance situation…" (Olofsson, 2018, p. 254). In this highly creative environment, it is not a big step to also start blurring the traditional artistic

roles, as Kent did by contributing not only as a composer but also as a co-author of parts of the text material and participating as a narrator on stage.

My own experience of loosening up the traditional roles is that it tends to generate creative opportunities that would not otherwise have occurred. From the perspective of the ensemble, we immediately felt an artistic freedom in that Kent, after composing the first movements of *Champs d'étoiles*, left it to us as an ensemble to build sets of suites from the existing movements for our concerts. This became a way for us to play with the material and the relations between the different movements. Furthermore, the spatial freedom we experienced in the R1 performance also influenced our subsequent concerts, in that we began to experiment with playing positions that were different from what we were used to. Alongside a couple of other theatre projects the ensemble undertook, the collaboration with Teatr Weimar was the start of exploring new ways of performing our repertoire and an incentive to start working more consciously with spatial and bodily perspectives of performance.

A new turn towards an expanded practice

As described in Chapter II, Becker (1982) emphasises the collaborative aspects of artistic creation describing the *Art world* as constituted of cooperative network structures. For example: a symphony orchestra concert requires that instruments have been invented, manufactured and maintained, that a system of notation has been developed, that music has been composed, and that people have learnt to play and read the music. Furthermore, times and places for rehearsals must have been determined, advertisements must have been placed, tickets must have been sold, an audience must have been recruited, and someone must have had an idea from the beginning of what is to be produced (1982, p. 2). The list can be made long. In a later paper he refers to these kinds of structures, which are similar for all performing arts, as "connected 'packages' of practices and relationships" (Becker, 1995, p. 301). Such a "package" is, according to Becker, a simple solution because they create a stability that fulfils certain needs. By choosing such a package you ensure that certain necessary functions will be performed, making it enormously easy to take everything that comes with that choice and difficult to make any substitutions (Becker, 1995, p. 304). Although innovation is possible and does occur, our conventional ways of making and listening to music, Becker argues, exerts the hegemony that contains an inertial force in the art world: "The theoretical problem is to understand how narrow our choices of how to make music are when there are so many possibilities" (1995, p. 302). Although the "classical" world is in many respects permeated by conventions established early in the education system and that shape the way classical music is presented and interpreted, there will always be those willing to do something different, as exemplified in Becker's writings.

Below I will present some recent cases of artists in the classical music tradition exploring in different ways the possibilities of going beyond the expected conventions. The artistic productions that form part of my PhD project have also partly developed outside the packages described by Becker. Not only by having been produced outside traditional music institutions, but also from an artistic discovery-orientated and open-ended perspective.

Percussionist Jennifer Torrence sees her artistic research work as an attempt "to mutate a practice from the inside to the outside" (Torrence, 2019, n.p. A metamorphosis). In a series of long-standing collaborations with a variety of composers, her research is based on the question of how far an instrumental/percussion theatre and its performers can move away from the concert tradition of classical music and towards other performance media while retaining the integrity and sensitivity of the classically trained musician. Rooted in the instrumental theatre practice of composers such as Kagel, Cage, and Aperghis – a tradition that continues with today's composers such as Carola Bauckholt and Manos Tsangaris –Torrence and her collaborators use, apart from instrumental techniques, theatre and movement-based performance techniques to develop new works. The processes also encourage the performer to engage in the development and practice of extra-musical skills.

> In my own practice I have experienced this shift towards a collaborative practice as a fundamental shift in how I view myself as an artist. My skills as a percussionist are just one part of the full picture of my approach to music making. My philosophy and practice of collaboration has taken more and more presence and emphasis within my daily work. The negotiation between artistic subjects and the collective nurturing of an artistic idea moves to the foreground, and the instrument becomes a method of working rather than the artistic aim. (Torrence, 2019, n.p. Flattening hierarchies)

In this practice she notices how the collaborative work builds on a blending of the skills associated with making and doing where she also contributes to the conceptual frames that build a work, alongside the composers. As she herself puts it: "a mutation is occurring on both sides of the old dichotomy of performer and composer. We are both in a moment of flux and our practices are no longer singular. We are troubling the old definitions of musician and composer" (Torrence, 2019, n.p. Flattening hierarchies). Torrence describes the incremental changes she has undergone over the course of the project as taking place at a "cellular level" and resulting in a completely different form over time; the artist has undergone a metamorphosis.

Flautist Marina Pereira Cyrino's PhD project (2019) is also an artistic response and reaction to the dominant characteristic of Western classical music practice, which she describes as "a fragmented specialisation or a specialised fragmentation" (p. 68). Her project is based on the exploration of co-creation – encounters – where roles are blurred and where new performative spaces and tools are explored and mixed with the more traditional ones. The places can be a concert hall, an art gallery as well as an underground cistern, a backyard or a mountain, her flute

sounds can be mixed with other objects such as bottles, tubes and balloons, scores can also take the form of drawings or gardens. Like Torrence, Cyrino is concerned with metamorphosis, which for her entailed "a taste for a certain practice [...] It stirred a mixture-experimentation flavour that was already inside, but constrained, paralysed by an ancient matter that could be named here: *the question of specialised fragmentation*" (Cyrino, 2019, p. 17). Both Torrence and Cyrino, like myself, are exploring spaces within and between the traditional roles of Western classical music practice, searching for an expanded and more holistic approach in their artistic endeavours.

In his online publication, *Challenging Performance: Classical Music Performance Norms and How to Escape Them* composer, harpsichordist and organist, Daniel Leech-Wilkinson investigates the ways in which beliefs about the correct performance of classical music limit the creativity of performers. He examines how norms are maintained, challenges the ideology that justifies their maintenance and works to encourage artists to develop new ways of performing canonical scores. Leech-Wilkinson argues that the conservatory and the classical music industry cultivate only a limited mode of interpretation and aims with his book "to broaden thinking around that tip of the spectrum currently occupied by respectable classical performance" (Leech-Wilkinson, 2020, n.p. Introduction and examples). By freeing ourselves from rules and restrictions, Leech-Wilkinson argues, we can experience many more opportunities there than we currently realise, and be more free to explore them. In his publication, Leech-Wilkinson presents a variety of musician interviews and recordings, all of which in different ways highlight an exploratory attitude to the role of the musician, musician–instrument relationships, interpretations and scores.[34]

As a classically trained string player and artist researcher, Sara Hubrich (2016) argues that musicians in the Western classical tradition are often bound to restrictive expectations and tend to consider it their duty to interpret somebody else's creative ideas (as in, the composer or conductor), and do not necessarily refer to themselves as artists with creative and embodied identity. Instead, their role as musicians is strongly associated with conventions and restrictive expectations. However, recent developments in the performing arts have paved the way for an increasing number of performers to challenge current conventions. A major source of inspiration for Hubrich has been to focus on the corporal aspects of performance, which as she writes "become explicitly apparent when combining classical music with other arts" (p. 338). Collaborations with artists from other genres, such as dance, theatre, literature and mixed media, she notes, enable "a shift of perception" and embrace the possibilities for shared creativity (p. 337). Like Hubrich, I see collaboration across artistic boundaries as an an artistic method for exploring the creative potential of music performance, beyond the package of Western classical music, and this became the important new turn and focus of my PhD project. From initially wanting to deepen my understanding of bodily aspects of ensemble playing, my research now took a different turn. Bringing the physical perspective and the musical gesture into a broader

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[34] Such as violinist, Patricia Kopatchinskaja; pianist, Mine Doğantan-Dack and flutist Abigail Dolan.

context, I continued to explore the performative body and shared creativity through interdisciplinary projects.

In the next chapter – which took the form of an essay and a documentary film – I present the staged performance *What is the word* and its creative process; a project through which my co-members in Lipparella and I went outside our comfort zone to explore new perspectives of performance and interdisciplinary collaboration. As will be shown in Chapters V and VI, interdisciplinary collaboration also became a platform from which I developed projects based on solo compositions for recorder, leading to a release of creativity and an unpredictable expansion of my own artistic practice.

Chapter IV

Expect and don't expect silent seeker;

Abandon greed for work, yet keep on task.

Don't pay attention to how

you're doing it; instead expand the work,

Don't value what you do,

Yet increase the doing of it

Introduction

Lipparella's staged performance *What is the word* (2019) was carried out in collaboration with director Karl Dunér and composer Christer Lindwall. The first half of the performance, which I focus on here, was based on two works by Samuel Beckett (1906–1989): the wordless play *Quad* (1981), which was originally created for the television, and poem *What is the word* (1989),[35] which was also the starting point for composer Christer Lindwall's new work of the same title.

The choice we made to centre the performance around Samuel Beckett proved to open new perspectives and insights. Beckett's production is intensely embodied and considered, as Pierre Chabert (1982) puts it, with "minute attention" (p. 23). Approaching the body in the same way that a painter or sculptor modifies, shapes and distorts his raw material, Beckett explores all possible relationships between body–movement–space–light and words. The bodies of Beckett's characters are always in a state of lack or negativity, unable to see, move, hear, etc., defects which, Chabert argues, Beckett uses to give the body its existence and dramatic power. "One must understand it as a deliberate and intense effort to make the body come to light, to give the body its full weight, dimension, and its physical presence" (Chabert 1982, pp. 23–24). The two works *Quad* and the short poem *What is the word* are no exceptions. They both contain Beckett's characteristic structures of repeated patterns and challenged us, in their different ways, to work

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[35] Beckett's *What is the word* (1989) was originally written in French with the title *Comment dire* (1988).

with physicality, interaction, spatiality and musicality in new ways. Even if we did not perform music, the notion of musical gesture as an interactive entity played a central role, whether physical, imagined or transmitted through language and silence. In this way, one could say that we were making music without the music itself and that – through the musical context in which we performed – we were also revealing otherwise hidden perspectives of music as an artform, and of what it means to be a musician.

Besides the discussion of the musicality of Beckett's work (which is a well-established approach), several scholars have pointed to how they can be linked to the phenomenological tradition, in particular Merleau-Ponty. In *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962/1978), Merleau-Ponty explores the body and how, through perception, the subject opens up to the world, others and itself. It is the "lived body" that Merleau-Ponty regards as the subject through which the world is perceived. Amanda M. Dennis notes, in her thesis *Refiguring the Wordscape: Merleau-Ponty, Beckett and the Body* (2011), how a reading of Beckett with and against Merleau-Ponty "reveals a convergence between the body and language – a convergence that supports aesthetic alternatives to semantic meaning and reconfigurations (of language and experience) achievable by experimental literary practices such as Beckett's" (p. 2). Garner (1993) further notes that Beckett, like Merleau-Ponty and many other phenomenologists, is drawn to dysfunction – especially neurological disorders – and argues that Merleau-Ponty's "accounts of breakdown in the subject–body–world relationship can read like a commentary on Beckettian world" (Garner, 1993, p. 453).

The idea of portraying the lived experience of Lipparella's performance also became the incentive for the film *Vad heter det* (2023), which I made in collaboration with the filmmaker Tomas Boman. Our joint work on the film included planning, interviewing all participants in the project, compiling, selecting and finally editing the material. The continuation of this chapter is presented in the form of an essay, and the reader is recommended to also view the film, which is presented in the Research Catalogue exposition.

Encounter with Beckett – a phenomenological essay

We are in the world through our body
Merleau-Ponty

I am the first of us to walk the square. I'm responsible for setting the tempo, thereby starting the whole performance. The projector that we had trouble installing finally came into place and now projects in real time the empty square on a screen behind my back. The empty square that in just a few seconds I will enter, just me, just my body. I stand in the dark in my

designated position, exactly two dragged steps from the corner I need to count from as I follow the first side of the quadrangle; six dragging steps along each side and ten across the diagonal. Now the square spreads out before me, warmly lit. There is an almost tangible anticipation in the large darkened hallway. I focus on feeling the right tempo. Even though I'm completely focused on the tempo, I'm not sure my body will obey the moment I start walking. My forward-leaning posture makes it difficult to predict the tactile feedback and balance of the steps. The weight shift in the step itself in this position is not as distinct as when I walk upright, and the fabric of the robe gets easily tangled in my legs. The dark stone floor has a slippery surface and I am afraid of losing my balance, the weight shift of each step is unnaturally smooth and slightly stiff. I can feel my heartbeats and under the warm robe I hold my arms tightly together on my belly. I have to walk a round of my own. I do my best to feel the weight in my body and concentrate on my tempo. Keeping my upper body slightly bent forward, making the dragging steps sound, listening, keeping my balance as I turn into the diagonal, constantly counting the steps – all this requires my full concentration. I am fully present in the moment, in my body and in the room. My lonely walk around the quadrangle feels like an eternity in the dark universe of Liljevalchs. It's such a relief when Louise, Player 2, enters at the right point and I can hear her dragging steps tally with my own. The sound of our synchronised movements fills me with confidence. The hood of my robe droops so I can only see a tiny area ahead of me. The audience are seated just outside the square and sometimes I can see their feet. The synchronised steps along the sides and diagonals of the square mark the playing field. Our minimalist walk in a changing pattern of eternity leads nowhere. Our bodies move in time and space.

This essay is based on my first-person perspective of ensemble Lipparella's performance *What is the word* and the artistic process that led to the performances we gave in autumn 2019. In addition to performing *Quad* – a work that Beckett himself refers to as a "mime" –we also recited Beckett's poem in Swedish translation as a separate piece in the performance, as a prelude to the musical work that ended the first half of the performance. Through Beckett's two works, the ensemble's communication and expression were challenged in new ways; an encounter with ourselves without instruments. It was a transformative project which I shared with my colleagues in the ensemble and which was different from most of what we had done before. Although the very essence of a musician's life is to constantly create something that is as ephemeral as a breeze, with this text I want to capture some of what was there at the moment, through reflection on this experience. Capturing the experience of the performance could not be done simply by documenting it on film and recording the music on CD.[36] I needed more tools to go deeper; here I explore the written essay as a method to describe and reflect further on the project. I seek both to "bring it down to a level of doing", but also to articulate what the interdisciplinary perspective added, in the moment and as an experience.

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[36] Lindwall's *What is the word* is recorded by Lipparella on the CD *Hidden voices* (2021), Blue Music Group.

The body has been central throughout my artistic research project: in the musician–instrument relationship, as a communicative and artistic means of expression in musical and choreographic works, and as a recipient and interpreter of texts. In my research practice, I have taken inspiration from phenomenology in describing the processes of the artistic projects carried out as part of my thesis work. In this essay, I mainly draw inspiration from Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, which is based on lived experience. The essay reaches out towards a number of quotes taken from various texts by Merleau-Ponty on how we understand the world around us through our perception.[37] I have used these quotes freely in relation to the different parts of the project and written them into the text as individual sentences with italics and dashes.

Merleau-Ponty argues that the subject is in the world through the lived body and that our perception is inseparable from our senses. There is no "interior"; it is through the world and our activity in it that we know ourselves. – *I am conscious of the world through the medium of my body* – With a phenomenological approach as a basis, I aim here to address the lived experience of a specific performance and the creative work process that preceded it. In both the essay and the film, I refer not only to my own subjective experience, but also, to some extent, to the perspectives, thoughts and experiences of the other participating artists. The "performance-now", which I and the other participants mention in these reflections, refers to the performance we made at Liljevalchs art gallery on 15 November 2019.

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A quintet is a group large enough to create a sense of a collective body of sound, yet small enough to emphasise each individual's character and voice. – *The body is our general medium for having a world* – It is above all to chamber music that I have turned in recent years, a form of music-making in which I so clearly feel that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Gorton and Östersjö (2019) argue that the individual "musician's 'voice' is continually defined through interaction with technological and psychological tools, such as scores and musical instruments or compositional and notational systems" (p. 38). In the chamber music ensemble, each individual voice is distinct, but over time and through shared experiences of interactions, the group also develops a shared voice (see p. 60). During the more than fifteen years that Lipparella has been active as an ensemble, we have developed an interest in the semi-staged performance as a form which, as we use the concept, lies somewhere between a traditional concert and a more scenic work and where the relationship between text, music and space is central. We have explored the semi-staged performance primarily through various collaborations with composers, directors and

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[37] The Merleau-Ponty quotations in the essay are taken from *Phenomenology of Perception* (1962); "Eye and Mind", *The Primacy of Perception* (1964), chapter "Eye and Mind", and *The Visible and the Invisible* (1968), chapter "The Intertwining – The Chiasm", see further the Appendix.

others. These experiences have left a clear impression and have resonated in the ensemble's common DNA.

In 2014, Lipparella worked on *Klätterbaronens sångbok*, a musical drama based on Italo Calvino's novel *The Baron in the Trees* (1959) in collaboration with Alice kollektiv.[38] The novel is set in 18th century Italy, where the boy Cosimo rebels against the customs of his aristocratic family and decides to live the rest of his life in the trees. Cosimo is true to his word and subsequently lives a rich life in harmony with nature, separated from yet united with the people he often helps in various ways. With our singer Mikael Bellini (Cosimo) perched in the treetops (on a tall ladder) throughout the performance, one of the things we learnt from the project was how to deal with the physical distance between us. It took some time to get used to it, but through the experience of the distance, the conditions of the interaction, how auditory and visual information interact, emerged more clearly than usual. When I return to Calvino's text, an oft-quoted passage from the book comes to mind: "that anyone who wants to see the earth properly must keep himself at a necessary distance from it" (Calvino, 1959, p. 144). I think of the outside view; to write, to create a work, is to have access to both an external and an internal perspective and to be able to switch between them.

In 2016, the ensemble realised the semi-staged performance *Ska alla tecken låta?* (Should all signs be sounded? 2016), which was Lipparella's first collaboration with Karl Dunér. Among the three newly written works we performed at these concerts was Lisa Streich's *Fikonträdet* (The Fig Tree, 2016) based on Inger Christensen's poem *Alfabet* (1981). In Streich's work, a series of movements for arms and hands is composed for the singer; not a single word of Christensen's text is pronounced, instead the singer expresses a linguistic inability throughout the work as he repeatedly covers his own mouth. Only occasional syllables, air sounds emerge through this consistently semaphore-like notated choreographic instruction, a soundscape that was also reflected in the instrumental parts. Streich's approach of composing physical gestures into the score thus has a double function: the expression is visual and choreographic, but the movements also influence the sonic result.[39] The intertwining of choreographed movement and musical expression made a strong impression on me. *Ska alla tecken låta*? was performed on four occasions in widely different locations around Stockholm (a mansion, a modernist stair hall, an antiquarian bookshop, and an art gallery) provided important insights into the function and meaning of space. The four spaces enclosed and created the very conditions for the encounter between the music, us musicians, our instruments and the audience. The differences between these places were of course something that only those of us who had experienced all the rooms would recognise. But it was obvious on every occasion that it was not only the ensemble and the

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[38] Participating from the Alice collective in this production were, among others, Ivo Nilsson, composer; Johan Petri, director; Wolfgang Lehman, film projections. The performance took place at Medelhavsmuseet, Stockholm.

[39] Since the lack of language in Streich's work *Fikonträdet* had clear implications for the theme of Beckett's *What is the Word*, we performed *Fikonträdet* in the second half of the performance.

audience that were active, but that there was also an interaction with the spaces. The spaces emerged and contributed to the performance through their own agency beyond the obvious, such as acoustics, visibility, choice of tempi and placement of musicians and audience.

These previous experiences formed a common ground for the ensemble when we started the working process with *What is the word*. The process stretched like a long arc, from learning the individual parts in Christer Lindwall's work, via the ensemble's joint work with the music, text and choreography, to our performances in the autumn of 2019. Soon after, the COVID-19 pandemic broke out and as a direct consequence, the idea of making a film about the project arose, partly because we were prevented from playing in front of an audience and partly because I was attracted to the idea of filmmaking as a reflective research method. During this long period, I have, in a kind of organic growth process, moved towards an increasingly expanded area with my own musical practice at the core. The starting point for both the film and the essay has been to pick fragments from this process and to describe them as accurately as possible. – *The real has to be described, not constructed or formed* – at the same time, both the writing and the work on the film revealed an inevitable interpretation, a selection filtered through preconditions, interests, intentions and memories.

<p style="text-align:center">…</p>

In Torsten Ekbom's book *Samuel Beckett* (1991), Beckett's artistic development is likened to Beethoven's three stylistic phases: the independent but promising youthful production, the mature, daring and pioneering phase of middle age, and finally the laboured, spiritual production of the later years, an inward-looking, serious – sometimes almost sacred – atmosphere. Ekbom writes "In the late Beckett, everything is stripped down and minimised. The format is generally short, a few pages of text, a few lines or just silence, not because new large-scale projects have failed as in the earlier fragments, but because concentration has now acquired its own aesthetic" (pp. 223–224, my translation). "Less is more", Beckett noted in the margin of one of his manuscripts, a condensate of the simplicity, sparseness, purity and concentration he sought in his later work.

The play *Quad* (1981) is one of the few works Beckett wrote for television. The subtitle of the first printed edition of *Quad* – "a piece for four actors, lights and percussion" – makes it clear that Beckett was focusing on parameters other than text (Beckett, 1984). The four players, dressed in hooded robes, move with a certain time lag around the sides and diagonals of a square, but always avoid its centre. In this canonical structure, Beckett also applies a permutation technique in which all possibilities for the paths between the four corners of the square are exploited, first by a single actor and then successively by all four, who then one by one drop out of the defined playing ground. This rotating pattern can then be repeated endlessly.

Robes of the kind used in *Quad* can be found in several of Beckett's works. The original inspiration for this came after a trip to Algeria where he saw a woman in a djellaba squatting at a bus stop (Ekbom, 1991). But Dante's characters in *Divina Commedia* sitting in robes and waiting are also echoed in Beckett's plays. He was drawn to the idea of the anonymous, to the reduction of the body. When I interviewed the project's stage director Karl Dunér, he described how Beckett experienced a gap between voice, words and thought. As the words take shape in the throat, they are distorted and transformed, and coloured by different things. Beckett also distanced himself from language itself, and therefore increasingly sought to portray "pure" consciousness, beyond linguistic form. *Quad* represents perhaps Beckett's most radical break with language as the text is replaced by the sounds of percussion instruments.

The original version of *Quad*, which was written, produced and broadcast by a German TV channel as *Quad I* and *Quad II*, was staged by Beckett himself. The two successive versions were performed by students at a ballet school in Stuttgart. In *Quad I*, the players, each accompanied by a percussion instrument, move at a fast pace. Their robes are coloured in white, red, blue and yellow, like pieces in a dice game. During the recording, Beckett accidentally saw a black and white TV screen playing the work at a slower pace and exclaimed "My God, it's a hundred thousand years later!", which is the background to the creation of *Quad II* (Esslin, 1987, p. 44). In this future dystopian *Quad*, the players walk at a much slower pace and in silence except for the sound of the shuffling steps, and their robes are grey. In both versions, like Dante's characters, the players are trapped in their own movements, unable to break this pattern (Butler & Davis, 1990, p. 12). Karl explains that the same type of impossible perpetual patterns is found in several of Beckett's works such as *Act Without Words* and many of his plays have this type of mime sequence or routine. The most famous is the hat-swapping scene in *Waiting for Godot*. These repeated patterns have been interpreted as a depiction of humanity's relentless search for meaning.
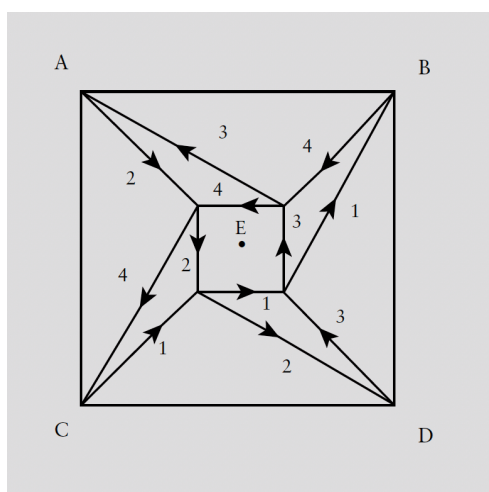

Figure 3. Players' walking pattern in Beckett's *Quad* (Murphet, 2022, p. 171).

According to Beckett himself, *Quad* was never intended to be performed on stage but has nevertheless been staged several times. It was Karl who introduced the idea that we should perform *Quad*. He realised even before we started rehearsing that we as musicians would do it well, but also that, unlike a version performed by a group of professional dancers, there would be a tangible and perceptible struggle and tension in the room. Nothing would be self-evident in the realisation – it could simply go wrong. Karl, who has worked with Beckett's plays for decades, believes *Quad* would be difficult to perform in the theatre. "Most actors find it painful not to act out, to just portray a body, which is required in Beckett's plays. It would take a lot of work to get actors to refrain from doing different things along the way". In retrospect, he stated that we actually achieved the quality he was looking for: a combination of simplicity and vulnerability. At the same time, there is a clear element of absurdity and comedy in the work.

In our performance, the sides of the square were marked with light only. We also used a film projector that projected our walk in real time from an oblique top view onto a large screen behind us. In this way, the audience, which was positioned close to three sides of the square, had simultaneous access to a more distant image, a perspective from which the pattern of movement could be more easily perceived and from which our bodies appeared more like pieces on a game table. – *my body is at once phenomenal body and objective body* – Our version, played in silence, is closest to *Quad II*, in which Beckett thus distances himself even further from language, the shuffling steps being all that remains. The shuffling itself, we discovered, was crucial to synchronising our steps. In all its simplicity, *Quad* requires a great deal of focus and interaction. – *It is through my body that I understand other people* – With the body as the only instrument, our interaction depended on the sound of the dragging steps, the counting of the steps, maintaining the same feeling in the body weight and the slight forward bend, keeping the balance of the turns within the strict limits of the square.

There was a particular tension every time we approached the inner centre of the square that appeared as a kind of forbidden area, which was most evident when all four players were inside the square at the same time. But, as Karl pointed out, "It must have been created out of sheer necessity, otherwise the players would practically crash into each other" – *space is the evidence of "where"* – But nevertheless, this charged centre has been seen by various Beckett interpreters as carrying strong symbolism: as representing the "self" that Beckett so often shunned. When choreographer Cecilia Roos dropped by during a rehearsal, it was precisely in this sudden shift away from the square's charged centre that she helped us gain precision in. I eventually found a sense of mechanical shift in the body. Like rotating gears, we were guided by something bigger, beyond ourselves.

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In parallel with our work with *Quad*, we rehearsed Christer Lindwall's music, a composition based on the English translation of *What is the word*. In Christer's piece, it is not only the singer, but also the instrumentalists who convey the text, which through the piece appears sometimes as individual syllables, sometimes as rhythmic recitative. Through the preparatory work we did with the text together with Karl and Christer, we gained a closeness to and a common understanding of the text. The text in a composed form often risks being overshadowed by the music, and we felt there and then that we also wanted to give the audience an opportunity to absorb the text in its pure form. In the performance we therefore included a reading of the Swedish translation, dividing the fifty-three stanzas between us. Our reading served as a prologue to Christer's piece, which followed immediately. Dividing the reading between different voices representing one and the same subject corresponds to a characteristic of many of Beckett's texts; that one and the same person splits into different personalities.

What is the word (1989) was Samuel Beckett's last published work. Originally written in French, it poetically depicts the absence of language and the inability to express oneself. The English translation was dedicated to the American director and playwright Joseph Chaikin (1935–2003) who had worked on Beckett's plays for many years and who suffered from aphasia after heart surgery in 1984. Samuel Beckett himself had a great deal of knowledge and interest in different types of brain-related diseases and conditions. He also had his own experience of temporary aphasia after a fall in his own home in 1988. It was while Beckett was still in the Pasteur Hospital in Paris, slowly regaining his ability to speak and write, that he began writing *Comment dire*.

folie –
folie que de –
que de
comment dire –

(Beckett, 2002, cited in Salisbury, 2008)

Filled with stuttering and compulsive repetition, the text balances between the voluntary and the involuntary. In her article "What Is the Word: Beckett's Aphasic Modernism" (2008), Laura Salisbury, British professor of modern literature, argues that the poem can be seen as both a representation and an exploration of Beckett's own aphasia. However, despite the obvious connection between the creation of *Comment dire* and aphasia, critics, then and now, have not described the text as an expression of a disabled writer. The explanation for this, according to Salisbury, is that in terms of language and style it does not represent a break with Beckett's aesthetic. The apathetic search for words is a recurring feature of Beckett's work and therefore, Salisbury continues, the poem is experienced as a kind of culmination and end point. Even earlier, Beckett himself had expressed a feeling that the limitations of age and illness also open up wider possibilities for expression. Salisbury's article includes a quote from a letter Beckett wrote

to his friend Lawrence Shainberg, a writer who has researched and written extensively on neurosurgery:

> It's a paradox, but with old age, the more the possibilities diminish, the better chance you have. With diminished concentration, loss of memory, obscured intelligence – what you, for example, might call 'brain-damage' – the more chance there is for saying something closest to what one really is. Even though everything seems inexpressible, there remains the need to express. A child needs to make a sand castle even though it makes no sense. In old age, with few grains of sand, one has the greatest possibility. (Salisbury, 2008, p. 84)

In her article, Salisbury describes how Beckett avoids clearly linking the fruitless search for words to a speaking subject. She points both to the text's rhythmic repetition of a few words and to a consistent lack of personal pronouns, where we are led away from both the possibility of a clearly perceived subject and a definable object. In the first lines of the poem we read "folly / folly for to / for to" and not "folly for [me,] to", "folly for [him] to" or "folly for [us] to" (Salisbury, 2008, p. 81). Nevertheless, there remains some form of presence from which the object gradually distances itself. – *Is not to see always to see from somewhere?* –For Beckett's biographer, James Knowlson, *What is the word* is moving, not only because the text is the result of a writer's struggle to work with limited tools; ironically, he also argues, the poem embodies a way of being that was present in Beckett's writing almost from the very beginning. Both the French original *Comment dire* and the English translation *What is the word* are included in *The Collected Poems of Samuel Beckett* (Lawlor & Pilling, eds., 2014). The publishers were able to tell us that Beckett wrote "Keep! for end", as if to ensure that *What is the word* would be his last words (Craig et al. 2016, p. 709).

During a rehearsal at Mäster Olofsgården in the Stockholm Old Town, we discuss the text and compare the English version and Magnus Hedlund's Swedish translation. In *What is the word*, Beckett uses the word "folly" repeatedly ("folie" in French) which Hedlund translates as "vanvett". We taste the alternatives "galenskap" and "dårskap"... The word "vanvett" feels right Karl says, but can risk being a bit heavy depending on the emphasis.

> Karl: — Without being an Englishman, I have the feeling that "folly" is a little lighter; "jolly and folly" there is a kinship there.
> Christer: — Yes, it is not pathologising as a stronger expression could be. It is an acceptable folly, a folly that everyone can still understand.
> Karl: — Exactly, and then I mean that it leads one to not interpret "vanvett" too heavily.
> Anna: — Maybe it's a bit closer to the Norwegian "fra vettet" which is said all the time without being so dramatic.

What is the word is not based on an emotional mood but more on a practical premise. Despite the inherent darkness of the text, Karl made sure that the words were pronounced with ease.

Karl: —The text has a kind of lightness in its form that also corresponds to the music. The lighter the worse it gets. There is the ambition to try to formulate what doesn't really exist, which ultimately makes it comical. Lightness and humor are at the heart of almost everything Beckett writes.

vanvett –
vanvett att från –
att från –
vad heter det –
vanvett från detta –
allt detta –
vanvett från allt detta –
givet –
vanvett givet allt detta –
att se –
vanvett att se allt detta –
detta –
vad heter det –

(Beckett, 2001, pp. 115–116)

One way to reach the lightness was to approach the text by a searching, rather mundane, reasoning – *Forgetfulness is therefore an act. I keep the memory at arm's length* – To keep the line of thought and not doubt for a second what we were doing.

Karl: —There is a place, a state that one seeks but cannot articulate. What is it called? What is the name of that point, that place, that state?

vanvett att behöva tro sig skymta vad var –
var –
vad heter det –
där –
där borta –
långt där borta –
i fjärran –
långt där borta i fjärran –
knappt –
långt där borta i fjärran knappt vad –
vad –
vad heter det –

(Beckett, 2001, pp. 115–116)

Already as we go in and out of the stage to set up chairs and music stands, the text finds its way into my consciousness; without settling down, I fast-wind my own lines in my mind. And so we are ready at our positions, without instruments: instead of our usual playing positions facing each other, we now face straight out into the spacious sculpture hall. The strong contrast between our position in the light and the dark room, where the presence of the audience is tangible, reinforces the silence. Peter, standing diagonally behind me, begins, Anna and Mikael continue. Through the shifts, a sense of interplay quickly emerges. The short lines and the gaps in between evoke inner images of movement like musical phrases. My first line is after Louise's. She has a somewhat inquiring tone, the words resonate in the room a while before I hear my own voice, in a tone that appears more urging, reasoning further in Beckett's logic. I'm concentrating on listening. I forget my body, yet I'm fully present. Our different voices reveal additional layers to the text; a rhythmic variation, micro-dynamics and tonal shifts; it's a solo, moving through different bodies.

...

Beckett's experiments at the intersection of music and literature have been described as among the most unique and interesting of their kind. In his book *Samuel Beckett, Repetition and Modern Music* (2018), Irish guitarist and author John McGrath describes how the relationship between literary and musical expression has changed throughout history. The development process he describes as starting in ancient Greece, a time when different performing practices such as literature, poetry, music (and dance) were closely linked and referred to by the common term "mousike". During the Enlightenment, McGrath argues, the forms slowly began to evolve into the separate disciplines they are today. Although words and music continued to interact in songs, opera, musical theatre, one was often subordinate to the other. In the creation of such works, the roles became more specialised and separated into librettist and composer (and choreographer). In the nineteenth century, movements such as Romanticism and, later, Symbolism began to recognise the expressiveness and potential of music. Influenced by, among others, the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, art circles began to view music as the highest of artforms "believing it expressed what could not be articulated in words; that it enabled a higher, and purer, form of engagement with the intangible" (McGrath, 2018, p. 1). Many writers, poets and visual artists drew inspiration from musical forms and means of expression in their works. Throughout the twentieth century, the boundaries between the artforms were further challenged, as ideas developed in certain disciplines were applied to other artforms. In this type of intermedia work, the artforms could no longer be separated; removing any part would reduce the whole to an incomplete fragment.

Beckett wrote to his friend Lawrence Shainberg that he saw music as "the highest artform" because he believed "it's never condemned to explicitness" (Bryden, 1998, p. 31). According to McGrath, Beckett arguably went further than any other writer in incorporating his musical ideas into his work. Frustrated by the inability of words to adequately express depth and inevitability, Beckett created a language that was strongly rooted in music both in its creation and in its finished form. Beckett's favourite composers, Franz Schubert and Ludwig van Beethoven, whose music is represented in several of his plays, made a strong impression on him. Although Beckett lived most of his life in France, he remained part of the Irish tradition, a tradition in which music has always had a strong influence on the written word (McGrath, 2018). Moreover, Beckett had been close to music from an early age; his cousin John Beckett was a professional pianist and composer and Beckett himself played the piano as a young man.

At a structural level, text can approach music in several ways through the use of techniques associated with music, such as the repetition of words and phrases, the intertwining of themes, the use of subjects – voices as recurring motifs in certain guises – and the use of silence. *What is the word* also contains other musical means of expression, such as diminuendo, where the word or the specific state of being is perceived as more and more distant. At the same time, Beckett creates a parallel crescendo in the structure of the text by successively adding words.

there –
over there –
away over there –
afar –
afar away over there –
afaint –
afaint afar away over there what

(Beckett, 2012, pp. 228–229)

The most striking aspect of *What is the word* is how Beckett varies the text and perspectives by repeating a few words. Repetition, McGrath argues, is always coloured by our previous encounter with the material and activates our capacities of memory both consciously and unconsciously. – *I have my actual present seen as the future of that past* – Although repetition is common in literature as well, Beckett's use of repetition is more closely linked to musical forms; music allows more repetition before it becomes absurd. McGrath exemplifies this with George Bernard Shaw's observation that Wagner could musically repeat the word "Tristan" many times without difficulty while Shakespeare could not similarly repeat "Romeo". In the absence of music, an audience requires a more varied language. He further introduces the concept of

"semantic fluidity" as a way to describe Beckett's use of extreme repetition to create texts that function and feel more like music.

Beckett not only reached out to music as a tool for his literary creation, he also engaged with music as a philosophical idea. In particular, like the earlier symbolists, he took inspiration from Schopenhauer's philosophy of music: "The inexpressible depth of all music, by virtue of which it floats past us a paradise quite familiar and yet eternally remote, and is so easy to understand and yet so inexplicable, is due to the fact that it reproduces all the emotions of our innermost being, but entirely without reality and remote from its pain" (Pilling, 1998, p. 177). McGrath argues that what he refers to as "semantic fluidity" creates an artform that does not allow for a definitive interpretation. In this way, Beckett was able to create a language that was both intelligible and inexplicable, enabling a universal world open to individual interpretation.

Our work on the text with Karl and Christer opened up to reading not only with the eyes but also with the body, a tactile reading around silence, rhythm and presence. Steven Connor writes "As many have observed, Beckett's theatre displays a deep and continuous concentration on the physical in all its senses. In its rigorous attention to spacing, movement and position, Beckett's theatre seems to emphasise the irreducible physicality of human bodies in the spaces that actually inhabit" (Connor, 1990, p. 8). – *this primary here from which all the there's will come* – The deep affinity between text and music in Beckett's work has inspired many musicians and composers to create music based on his texts, ranging from free jazz to notated art music.

In contemporary art music, composers such as Philip Glass and Luciano Berio have engaged with Beckett's work, but one of the few composers who collaborated directly with Beckett was Morton Feldman, who composed several works directly based on Beckett's philosophy and texts. But the strong presence, movement and spatiality exemplified by Beckett's texts can actually be transferred to all music; what is the violinist looking for in the winding passages of the Bach sonata? – *A second visibility* – It is something that can only be sensed, somewhere far away, but which can never be fully grasped.

...

When Karl Dunér suggested Beckett as a starting point for a new collaboration, it was immediately clear to us which composer we should work with. Christer Lindwall has a long-standing, deep interest in Beckett's work as well as a genuine commitment to interdisciplinary work. When writing this essay, several years after our project, I e-mailed Christer to find out what interdisciplinary and text-based works preceded *What is the word* and followed our collaboration. Christer wanted to clarify his understanding of the concept "interdisciplinary", which he described as "a work with 'auditory events' that is not defined by a purely musical

reality and materiality. In other words, an art that can be structured according to completely different principles than what can be considered its paradigmatic definition" (my translation). He lists a series of works, which he composed between 2012 and 2023, that he sees as interdisciplinary. These works are based on texts and theories by writers and philosophers such as Johan Jönson, Walter Benjamin, Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari, Catherine Malabou, Yuk Hui and Mehdi Belhaj Kacem. *What is the word* (2018–19) is part of a series of pieces composed around Samuel Beckett's texts along with *Sometimes standing in the void*, *sometimes shivering in the open.* (septet; 2020–21) and *Ombres sur ombres* (octet; 2021–22).

In *What is the word*, Christer has created a work in which musical events – or as he writes "auditory events" – are juxtaposed with material based on philosophy, phenomenology and aphasia. The music does not interpret the text, nor is it semantic or symbolic; instead, the music creates an openness to the ability and inability of consciousness (or language itself) to express itself – here, as in Beckett's text, silence becomes central. – *It is this ek-stase of experience which causes all perception to be perception of something* – The silence in Christer's *What is the word* is time placed completely outside of a musical reality, not rests as we know them in musical contexts, but rather holes through which the subject's perception of a distanced object is undressed. – *the visible in the tangible and the tangible in the visible* –The poem's contrasts between stuttering utterances and holes are visually reflected in the handwritten score. It conveys something beyond the musical. Brief gestures and attempted formulations in black calligraphy appear as lonely islands in a vast space. On closer inspection, I realise that this visual contrast allows the space to emerge as original and eternal. From here, Christer says, anything is possible, anything can happen regardless of cause and effect. The fragility that permeates Beckett's text is also reflected in the more fragile sound world of the baroque instruments, designed to mimic and support the multifaceted colour palette of the human voice.

A few months after the commission for the new work was accepted, the entire work *What is the word* was completed and printed on paper in Christer's beautiful hand. Then the work of the ensemble began, first individually, then collectively. Studying a new piece is a work that begins with the body, through "the embodied mind" and in the interaction between body and instrument (Östersjö, 2016, p. 478). Like many other professionals, musicians develop a knowledge that is to a great extent embodied, taking the form of "tacit knowledge" (Polanyi, 1966). "Tacit" because it is a type of knowledge that cannot be immediately described in words. The body owns the knowledge. A musician's embodied knowledge is based on years of practice and is constantly evolving through interaction with the instrument and with other musicians and performers during rehearsals and performances. – *Every technique is a "technique of the body"* – Precisely because this kind of knowledge is based on years of practice, the musician can perform complex combinations of movements while remaining open to influences from what is happening in the moment, in the room, an inner image, metaphor or other impulse. – *The body is to be compared, not to a physical object, but rather to a work of art; it is a nexus of living*

meanings – Consciousness is always directed towards something, towards what phenomenology refers to as intentionality, be it a person, a musical phrase, an image, a memory or something else.

When I play, I am both inside and outside; at the same time as I play my instrument with physical gestures, I sing the note within me, I also listen, adapting to the room's response to my playing. In the best moments, I experience the flute as an extension of my body, like Merleau-Ponty's often quoted comparison of the relationship between a blind person and his cane. In contact with the instrument, I direct my awareness beyond the technique, beyond the compromises of the instrument. – *I detach myself from my experience and pass to the idea* –The recorder is then only a means by which I express myself, but it could just as well be another instrument. But as in a multi-stable image, my consciousness sometimes shifts and the focus ends up on something else, outside the musical ecosystem. Here it happens that the body intrudes when I least want it to, makes itself known, not as a force but as a silent obstacle. It is an acrobatic balancing act to simultaneously pay attention to my body, my instrument and the environment, the other musicians and what we create together. My body – the instrument – the ensemble body – the room – the audience – all these parameters interact to form an intertwined whole.

> *The phrases fall softly into each other. It's virtuosic and complex yet the flute is there, clear and distinct, the leaps reside in my fingers. The recorder sound is so close to the voice that I sometimes hear them as one and the same. Everything in the spacious dark hall focuses on us. We are positioned as we usually are. I sit at the far end on one side and have contact with the entire ensemble. Anna, sitting opposite, launches into a stream of glittering notes, a glittering based on a gentle rocking. I see Louise's bow in the corner of my eye, feel her breathing before she starts. The energy of the movement reverberates through the meeting of the thin bow with the string and spreads throughout the ensemble. The gamba together with the low vibrating notes of the theorbo that soon follow are the foundation on which we temporarily rest. Here other laws prevail, a stuttering gesture passes into silence and then again, the stuttering. Step by step, we have worked to give body to what began as a score hard to read but which divulged a marvellous work. The work is now ours, each opening of the 50-odd-page score fills me with joy. Despite its being so close to the text, the music is of a different nature; an extension of time, an augmented now. The text sometimes appears, plain to see, even in the holes of the score, which are established immediately at the very beginning of the work: a single soft "t" followed by silence. The holes soon appear in my part as well, they are difficult to hold, difficult to sustain. Is it the body or the music that pushes forward? Yet the gaps, those spaces between the black-inked notes, constitute something of their own, offering a different relationship between sound and silence.*

Musical performance activates different layers of bodily activity, body schema, body image, a "thinking and doing" mode (Maharaj, 2005, p. 1). While the body schema operates largely on an unconscious level, the body image is instead something we constantly form. Slowly I have

worked out a movement pattern where airflow, body and instrument interact. The score, which in the end only serves as a support, has been my silent guide through this thicket of expressive possibilities. In the moment of playing, the body activates a generated memory of a repeated gesture like a choreography where my consciousness is directed towards a limited focus. While holding on to my own intention, in the moment of playing I have to be constantly open to re-evaluate everything, depending on what happens in the interaction. Lipparella has always strived for a divided responsibility for impulse-giving in the works we play, and *What is the word* was no exception. In the ever-changing musical structure, we all alternate between giving and following impulses, creating the combination of attentiveness and drive that is at the heart of chamber music. There was also the element new to us, of alternating between playing and speaking. The text passages needed a specific energy and form; we needed to be reminded to phrase, direct and treat the text in the same way as we treat the music – to activate the same presence in shaping the text as in playing the music.

...

During the rehearsal process, we felt a connection between Beckett's two works: *Quad*, in which the four players keep moving away from the charged centre of the square, and *What is the word*, a text in which the stuttering subject tirelessly struggles to articulate something very specific, but the words slip away.

Our basic idea of the project was to link Beckett's two works with Christer's new musical work and integrate them into a scenic whole. In our context, performing *Quad* and the poem as individual units would not have worked without Christer's composition; conversely, through Beckett's works, Christer's music was given a context that opened up more perspectives in the performance. The works elevate each other. But the works are realised and bound together by us, by our commitment and our presence. As a contemporary music ensemble, Lipparella operates in a tradition where the roles are normally given: the composer composes, the instrumentalists play, the singer sings, full stop. With just a slight shift, the delicate meshwork that always emerges in such interactions can encompass a larger picture directed towards a more holistic approach where we move more freely in relation to the expected. – *I think that the painter must be penetrated by the universe and not want to penetrate it.... I expect to be inwardly submerged, buried. Perhaps I paint to break out –*

The free, broad approach can also ultimately provide something deeper – deepening one's own practice and looking at it from a different perspective. Louise, who plays viola da gamba in the group, says during the interview that "reciting the text was like making music with text ... yet it clarified what music-making is when we did it with text. Maybe, since we're so used to working with music, we tend to switch on the autopilot" (my translation). Her reflection makes me think

again of Calvino's paradox that "anyone who wants to see the earth properly must keep himself at a necessary distance from it" (Calvino, 1959, p. 144). Observing the world from a distance, Calvino's Cosimo sees something the rest of us do not, while Beckett's characters, on the other hand, speak so clearly of experiences embedded in the body and in the present. By working with both of these perspectives, we can open the door slightly to greater freedom. A process of artistic development, individually or as a group, can be likened to a slowly growing tree that is constantly reaching out to the world through new branches –*Intentionality* – In that stream of experience, certain stages will leave particular imprints. –*The world is what we perceive* – Annual rings are more evident in trees growing in temperate regions than in trees growing in the tropics or the desert. It is only in a varying climate that the dark rings in the structure of the tree appear and reveal periods of different experience.

In working on the film, Tomas and I saw the search for an inside perspective as a prerequisite, an approach through which we wanted to dissolve the perception rather than explain it further. The film became a method to see the collaborative work and the perception of it from constantly changing angles, a kind of phenomenological variation. Early on, it was clear that in working on the film we needed to focus on two centres: one that is about the here and now and one that reflects. Although I did not apply a fixed form for my interviews with the project's participants, they revolved around the same question of searching into the memory of a here and now of the performance, but the conversations developed in very different ways. In Beckett's musical poetry, which is also reflected in Christer's music and the gaps in the score, there is the subjective experience of time and movement. – *I live in it from the inside; I am immersed in it* – In the work on the film, the relative nature of time was made visible again and again. My perceived time in preparing to walk in *Quad* and my actual first solitary round reflects in no way the actual time it took to do so, nor can it be reproduced on film. All this also relates to Polanyi's notion of tacit knowledge. A bodily knowledge, a lived experience cannot be fully captured in words.

As an artistic PhD candidate, I am constantly faced with the difficulty that artistic processes and bodily experiences are also expected to be described through text. The formulations slip away. But you can create a relationship with the question itself, you can deepen the understanding that these elements exist. The film, entitled *Vad heter det*, and the project as a whole, push the boundaries and open up questions. What is music? You have to play to get an answer. Or perhaps it is the question that is the answer – and perhaps it is the act of asking the question, of engaging with the question, that is the conclusion. As Beckett shows us in his poem, the answer is unutterable. Where the words end, the music begins.

...

PART III

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The third part of this thesis addresses two longitudinal projects through which I have continued an exploratory path as solo musician in collaboration with others. My collaboration with dancer and choreographer Åsa Unander-Scharin began with a mutual interest in developing a work in which music and dance could interact on equal terms. In Chapter V, I discuss our work with the Japanese composer Makoto Shinohara's composition for solo recorder *Fragmente* (1968) that resulted in the choreomusical duet *Fragmente²* (2021). The central working tool in the process was the concept of gesture as object, which could take many forms: musical, choreographic, imaginary, as a memory or metaphor. The methodology we developed in the project allowed us to work and interact across disciplines in an equal way. The chapter may be read in parallel with Åsa Unander-Scharin's and my co-written exposition in the online journal on artistic research, RUUKKU, which provides a complementary insight into the collaborative process and presents layers of interaction and analytical perspectives along with a full video presentation of *Fragmente²*.

The *Fragmente*-project laid the ground for the final artistic work of this thesis presented in Chapter VI, *The Conference of the Birds* (2022), a staged work based on the poem *Manteq ot-teyr* by the Persian poet Farid-ud-Din-Attar, and the musical composition *Les sept vallées* (2006) for solo recorder by the Swedish-French composer Madeleine Isaksson, which also drew its inspiration from the same poem. The staged work *The Conference of the Birds* including instrumental and electroacoustic music, dance, video projections, sound design, light and costume was the result of a long-lasting collaboration between the participating artists, a process that also paved the way for a significant expansion of my own artistic practice. *The Conference of the Birds* was premiered in Studio Acusticum's Black Box studio, Piteå, in November 2022. A filmed documentation of the performance is presented in its full length in the RC, along with a display of related materials.

Chapter V Fragmente^2 – Composing Choreomusical Interaction

Since all is one, there is no two

There is no me apart from you

Introduction

In autumn 2016, I started planning a joint project with dancer and choreographer Åsa Unander-Scharin. An artist and researcher herself, Åsa Unander-Scharin (hereafter referred to as Åsa) works at the intersection of opera, dance, digital music technology and robotics. We had collaborated many years before in a duo entitled *Bird sketches* (2001),[40] based on Makoto Shinohara's *Fragmente*. Now we were both tempted to return to the duo format and to further refine a work that we knew already had great potential for creating a dialogue between music and dance. A mutual interest in the encounter between the artforms was the basis of our conceptual idea: to explore how music and dance could interact on equal terms.

Our collaboration based on *Fragmente* resulted in no less than three different duo works, *Bird sketches* (2001), *Fragmente* (2017) and *Fragmente^2* (2021). The second version, *Fragmente*, in which I played, reading the music from the score on the music stand, was performed in several different venues between 2017 and 2019.[41] Until then, our collaboration had largely revolved around the development of the dancer's choreography and its relationship to the music. Now, with two complete "scores",[42] my focus turned instead towards how the interplay between Åsa and me as performers was displayed in the work; it appeared undefined. Having followed a dancer–choreographer's practice closely for a long time, I was keen to develop a more intertwined

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[40] *Bird sketches* (2001) is a duo work developed and performed by Åsa Unander-Scharin and me. It was performed at Pusteviksteatern (Gothenburg) in 2001 and at Dansmuseet (Stockholm) in 2002.

[41] During 2017–2019 we performed *Fragmente* at Studio Acusticum, Piteå; Musikforskning i dag, Uppsala; and Inter Arts Center, Malmö.

[42] The dancer's choreography is not written down as a score. It has been shaped in the dancer's body and is only documented through her own notes, annotations and sketches, as well as through video recordings.

relationship where I would also perform a choreography. We agreed to work on yet another version, *Fragmente²* (Fragmente squared), which is the work I focus on in this chapter.

As will be shown below, our continued work with *Fragmente²* led to an overlapping of our artistic practices and brought new perspectives on cognitive, emotional and interactive dimensions to our process. This opened up for a deepened understanding of the multimodality of our materials and the relations between music and dance and eventually we came to define the creative process as based on *choreomusical interaction*.

All musical examples in this chapter as well as in the RUUKKU-exposition are collected from © 1974 Schott Music, London, and are reproduced with kind permission of Schott Music, Mainz, Germany. All still photos from the *Fragmente²* performance are taken from the video presentation made by the film makers Vanja Sandell Billström and Patrik Eriksson that can be found in the same exposition.

Fragmente and Fragmente²

Makoto Shinohara (1931–2024) belongs to the first generation of Japanese composers who engaged with the European avant-garde movement, with particular interest in electronic music and musique concrète. In Europe, Shinohara studied with among others Pierre Schaeffer and Olivier Messiaen in Paris and went on to study in Cologne where he studied with Gottfried Michael Koening and Karlheinz Stockhausen who also engaged Shinohara as his assistant between 1964–1966. Shinohara also worked at the Siemens studio in Munich and at the Institute of Sonology in Utrecht.

His *Fragmente* is an open form composition consisting of 14 short fragments with a total duration of about eight minutes. Although it is an acoustic work, Shinohara structures the music in ways that can be related to the structuring of sound in electronic music. The use of *extended techniques*[43] is central and allows for structures built on the transformation of sound, rather than on pitch. Apart from a few limitations set up by the composer, it is up to the performer to arrange the 14 fragments as desired (in advance to or while playing). In that way, each performance offers new aspects of the piece.[44] *Fragmente* was composed for the influential

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[43] The term "extended techniques" refers to non-traditional or unconventional playing techniques through which new sounds are produced such as multiphonic sounds, microtones, flutter-tonguing, glissando and finger slaps. Some extended techniques evoke bodily movements and expressions of the performer that transcend traditional playing practice implying a kind of extended choreography through the performing gestures.

[44] Other examples of pieces that can take different forms are Stockhausen's *Klavierstück* XI (1956) which comprises nineteen sections performed and repeated in the performer's desired order, though with variations in tempo and octave transpositions according to certain instructions by the composer, and Luciano Berio's *Epifanie* (1959–1961, rev. 1965) for voice and large orchestra. Berio's work consists of two

recorder player Frans Brüggen and is an early contribution to a series of Japanese recorder solo pieces that together constitute a prominent part of the classical recorder repertory of the twentieth century.[45]

The choreomusical duet *Fragmente²* (2021) is not a completely separate work from our earlier duo *Fragmente* (2017). In fact, much of Åsa's choreography, and thereby most of the already established relationships between music and dance, have been kept and further developed, while my choreography has been added. However, sharing the artistic space in this more concrete way meant a need to develop common methods and strategies for developing the work together. Two important methods were to divide the musical and choreographic material into objects and to develop a common metaphorical basis for the different fragments (described more below). Moreover, to work out my choreography, we considered firstly, what movements were at all possible to execute while playing and secondly, how the compositional content could be further enhanced by adding choreographed movement to the musician's part. In this process, some fragments were completely altered also in the dancer's part. Along the creative process choreographic details have been successively added to both parts, often emerging as spontaneous responses to the other performer's actions.

Compared to *Fragmente* (2017), *Fragmente²* took a more theatrical approach; we became *two acting figures* rather than representing our traditional roles of musician and dancer. We decided to emphasise our more equal relation in the work by wearing similar black short-sleeved shirts, similar notehead-like caps and performing barefoot. We liked the overarching metaphor of regarding the two black performing figures as musical notes moving across a white sheet of paper but as shown below, metaphors have also been used for elaborating a range of other spatial and relational concepts. The "2" in the work title *Fragmente²* (Fragmente squared) was added to underline the work's temporal and spatial character which we have intended to work out more clearly through this version.

We have imagined the piece to be performed in an open white space such as an entrance hall to a museum or a big exhibition hall with a natural light and with an acoustic that fits the solo recorder without need of amplification. Although the work has not yet been performed publicly in such an ideal space, the *Fragmente²*-film presented in the RUUKKU-exposition was recorded in such a space, the main hall of the contemporary art exhibition venue Färgfabriken in

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"cycles", the orchestral and the vocal, that can be performed in different combinations of sequences. Such "open forms" had rarely occurred in music before the avant-garde and might derive from the visual arts. During the 1950's painters, sculptors and architects elaborated on what has always existed as a factor of the visual art, namely that a piece of art varies in appearance depending on from which angle it is seen. A visual work of art can take several forms and yet remain the same. Other analogies of such formal indeterminacy are "mobil" art that can be set up in various forms, and architectural forms based on pre-fabricated modules (Smith Brindle, 1975, pp. 71–72).

[45] Other pieces are composed by e.g., Maki Ishii (1976), Ryohei Hirose (1975, 1979, 1995, 2005) and Kikuko Masumoto (2010).

Stockholm. The *Fragmente²* performance itself takes place within a wide circle with the audience ideally positioned around the circle or as an option, with the audience positioned at a higher level from where the graphical pattern of the two performers' choreographed paths can be experienced clearly. However, a closer position implies qualities and details such as breaths and gazes. Similarly, the natural sound of the tenor recorder, performed from different positions of the room as the musician moves, brings a dynamic and spatial variation individual for each person in the audience.

The creative process

The content and form of *Fragmente²* thus developed gradually in a multi-year process of collaboration carried out with the aim of a jointly formulated artistic goal. What I see as the main collaborative pattern in Åsa's and my realisation of *Fragmente²*, in addition to the complementarity of our individual skills, personalities and practices, was the conceptual complementarity of the project itself: music–dance, musician–dancer, intertwined in a new contrapuntal whole. It was a process through which a collective knowledge and aesthetic emerged, and for me personally, an expansion of practice.

An important tool for refining the interaction and expression of the work was to record and jointly assess rehearsals and performances. The graphic model in Figure 4 describes the different stages of *analysis*, *composition*, *staging* and *performing* in the creation of the work. These steps should not be understood as a one-way, linear process, but rather characterised by cycles of interaction and oscillation between these modalities and methods. Our main focus was to create a work with a dense *choreomusical interaction*, marked as the inner circle in Figure 4. The outer circle represents *metaphors* that served as a framework and a way to communicate and develop material.

OBJECT ANALYSIS
Musical and choreographic
annotations in the score

COMPOSING
Score,
choreographic descriptions
/instructions,
annotated score

METAPHORS

CHOREOMUSICAL
INTERACTION

STAGING
Choreomusical spatial
elaborations,
video

PERFORMING
Embodied knowledge
choreomusical spatial elaborations,
video

(K. Frödin & Å. Unander-Scharin, 2023)
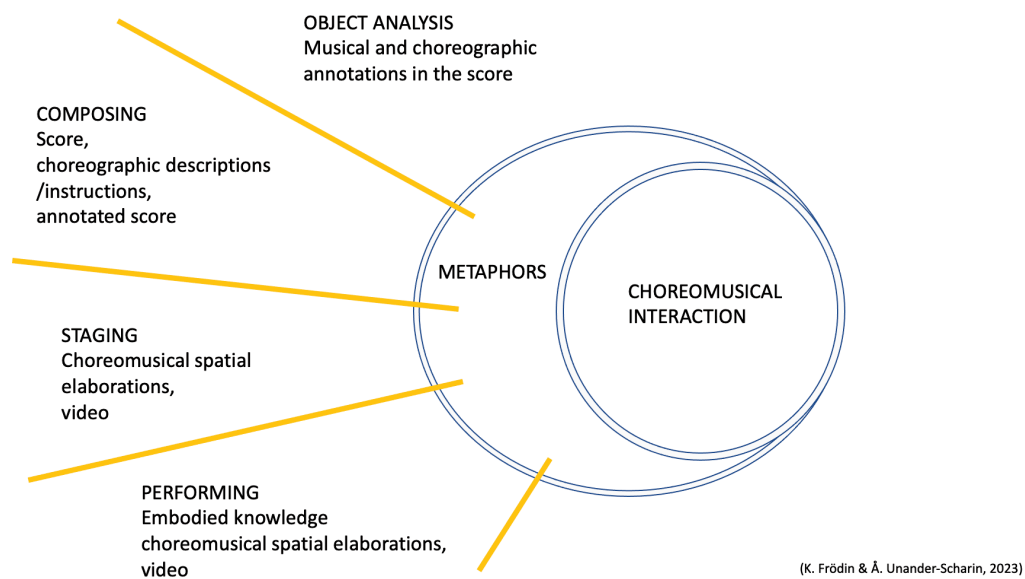
Figure 4. Graphical model of the different stages of the creative process in *Fragmente²*.

Well after having established our working methods, Åsa and I could observe that our process aligned with Don Ihde's experimental phenomenology (Ihde, 2012). What we actually did when exploring the interrelations between motions – auditive, spatial and bodily – and performative dimensions was to seek a variety of perspectives on choreomusical interaction, a process that can be considered as phenomenology in practice. Ihde (2012) emphasises the subjective experience in his concept of experimental phenomenology and argues that there is a deep connection between artistic processes and phenomenological investigations. "There is a playfulness in art deeply related to phenomenological playfulness, and it is possible to see the practice of the artist as latently phenomenological from the outset" (p. 108). Through this method, we have developed and experienced a variety of approaches to choreomusical interaction that are similar to what phenomenologists refer to as *phenomenological perspective variations,* which I discuss in more detail at the end of this chapter.

Layers of choreomusical interaction

The initial idea of exploring how music and dance could interact on equal terms relied on an overall contrapuntal relationship between the parts. Åsa's choreography in *Fragmente* (2017) was therefore initially created *separately* from the music and was, just as the music, structured as fragments. Eventually the music and dance were merged together in a joint process where we could adjust to each other's timing and phrasing (see further the RUUKKU-exposition).

A first layer of choreomusical interaction in *Fragmente²* is represented by the musical and choreographic fragments; one musical fragment corresponds in general to one choreographic fragment of the dancer. The choreography and the spatial perspective of the two performers' moving bodies impose certain limitations of the combination of fragments which is obviously decided on beforehand. In both *Fragmente* (2017) and *Fragmente²* the musical fragments, numbered in Shinohara's score from 1–14 are arranged in the following way: 1 – 5 – 8 – 2 – 6 – 11 – 9 – 12 – 3 – 13 – 10 – 4 – 7 – 14. However, in *Fragmente²* we have added three movement-based fragments to this series, carried out in silence apart from the sound of the moving bodies (FX, FY, FZ). Similarly to Shinohara's fragments, they vary in length, execution and expression and are distributed in the following way in the sequence: X – 1 – 5 – 8 – 2 – 6 – 11 – 9 – 12 – 3 – 13 – Y – 10 – 4 – 7 – 14 – Z. Fragment X, in which the two performers enter the stage walking in a big circle in canon, was added to avoid a conventional entrance and establishes also the performative space. Together Fragment X and Fragment Z serve as a way to frame the performance in its choreomusical context.

A second layer of choreomusical interaction takes place at the *object-level*. The idea of working with objects was inspired by Godøy's concept of the gestural-sonic object (2006), a development of Schaeffer's sonic object[46] (2017) that emphasises a multimodal understanding of musical perception. In his 2006 article, Godøy also points to the bidirectional process between sound and gesture (see Chapter II, p. 23). In our work, *musical objects* together with *choreographic objects* became fundamental building blocks in the development of the choreomusical composition. For example, we considered the sounds coming from our moving bodies such as claps, steps, breaths etc. as musical object-contributions to the choreomusical work. This is of course a reduction of the multimodal character of the object itself, but it was a way of considering not only the musician, but also the dancer a choreomusical performer.

Figure 5. The dancer's fall that connects Fragment X and Fragment 1 results in a musical object produced by the hands hitting the floor.

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[46] The notion of the *sonic object* became a fundamental building block of musique concrète, developed by Pierre Schaeffer and the development of electroacoustic music; two compositional techniques that are aesthetically closely related to Shinohara's *Fragmente,* composed in 1968.

Through this fruitful methodological framework, we have developed a choreomusical contrapuntal structure in which small gaps, accents, stretches and short sequences of gestural and sounding materials together form an interactive web. The *object-maps* in Figures 6 and 7 indicate how objects are gesturally and temporally related in a particular fragment.
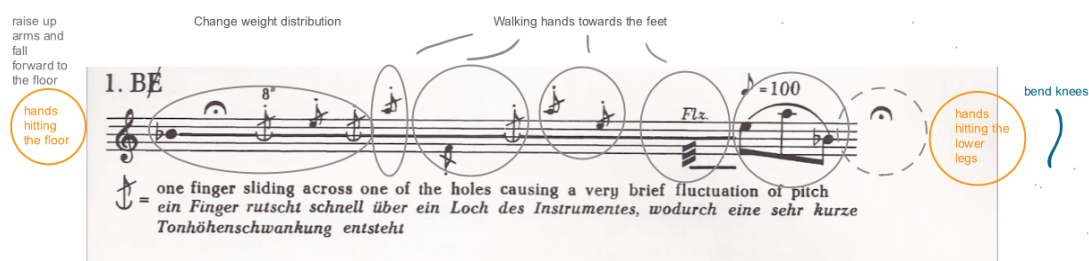
Figure 6. Object-map of Fragment 1 including its related transitions. The musician's musical objects are marked with grey circles (dashed circles represent silence), the choreographic objects carried out by the musician are marked in dark blue. The choreographic objects of the dancer are indicated only with grey text, the dancer's musical objects are marked in orange text and circles.
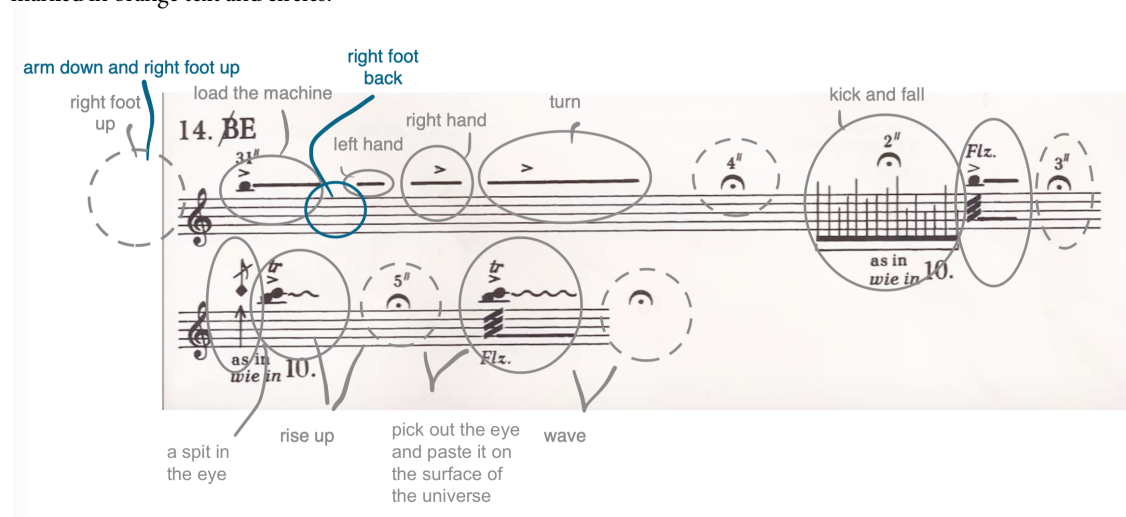
Figure 7. Object-map of Fragment 14. The musician's musical objects are marked with grey circles (dashed circles represent silence), the choreographic objects carried out by the musician are marked in dark blue whereas the choreographic objects of the dancer are indicated only with grey text.

As can be seen in Figure 7, Fragment 14 begins with choreographic objects in both parts, preceding the first sound. They are carried out as synchronised movements; both performers lift their right foot (and put it on the left lower leg). The musician's first musical object is followed by a choreographic object wherein her right foot returns to the floor. This leads straight into the next three musical objects (repeats of the first note), each of them synchronised with choreographic objects in the dancer's part. In the second line of Fragment 14, the interaction is different, starting out as cause-and-effect-like relations. The high short note at the beginning of the second line in the recorder part is directly responded to in the choreography with a gesture towards the dancer's eye, (as if she got a spit in it) and leads to a more contrapuntal structure in the final objects.

In this fragment, the form is derived from an interpretation of the original score, and the choreography both reflects and enhances these structures. Hence, while the second line activates a contrapuntal relation, the choreography still follows the original phrasing of the music. The relation between the original score and *Fragmente²* is different across fragments, and therefore not always as closely related to the original piece, but sometimes seeking novel possibilities in how the different objects can be related and combined. In the object-maps, the dancer's objects are at times marked according to the specific action carried out, such as "turn", or after the (main) body part in action, such as "left hand". At times, however, these objects are instead expressed by a metaphorical image, such as "spit-in-the-eye" or "pick out the eye and paste it on the surface of the universe". As will be shown below, many of these metaphorical images were developed collectively by the performers and have thereby also affected the musical interpretation. The metaphors (discussed further below), connect the performers on a different level and represent thereby a third layer of choreomusical interaction.

Space forms

A work like *Fragmente²* requires an attunement between the musician and the dancer that is similar to the interaction between musicians in a chamber music performance. The model below – structured around Smalley's (2007) space forms: *gestural, ensemble* and *arena space* – attempts to visualise the different layers of choreomusical interaction that are at work in *Fragmente²*. These space forms are distinct from each other but should also be viewed holistically as they are always nested together both audibly and visually.

LAYERS OF CHOREOMUSICAL INTERACTION
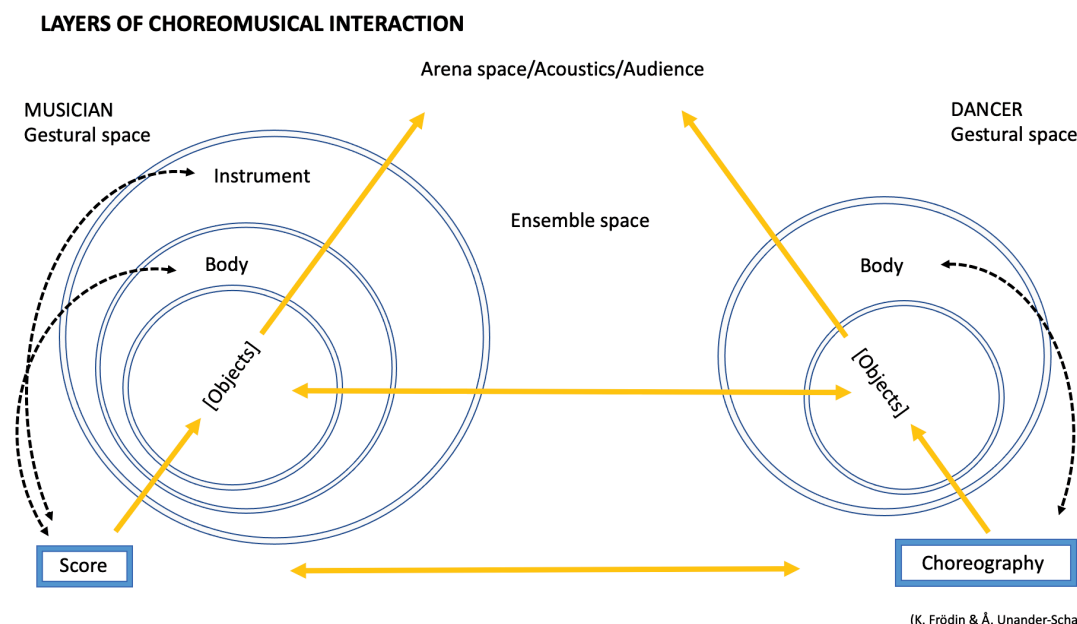
(K. Frödin & Å. Unander-Scharin, 2023)

Figure 8. Layers of choreomusical interaction in *Fragmente²*. Once the dancer's choreography was developed, we considered it as being on an equal source level to Shinohara's score. However, there is no written-out choreographic score; the dancer's choreography has been shaped and memorised in her body.

The *gestural space* is the intimate space, the reachable distance of each performer. For the musician it involves also the constant interaction between body and instrument. As a recorder player, I am entwined with my instrument and the sound-producing movements can be seen as a small-scale choreography immanent to the work. In musical performance, some of the actions that take place in gestural space reach out to the co-performers and the audience whereas some aspects are experienced only by me as performer. Being choreographed throughout this work has obviously a great impact on the body–instrument interaction; my choreography is therefore as mentioned above anchored to the performance of the music and to the physical gestures of playing. However, the gestural space does not exist in isolation, it is nested with the other space forms, the *ensemble space* as with the *arena space*.

The *ensemble space* comprises both the individual and the collective performed space revealed both visually and aurally. The gestural spaces of the two performers are bound together in ensemble space. Our intention with this work is to make the audience perceive the continuously shifting dynamic and flexible quality in the relation between the two figures, despite a sometimes considerable physical distance. In the work, we underline and play with an ecological understanding of the situation by composing a *cause–effect* relation between a certain gestural or sonic action and an estimated activation of the space, and thereby also its temporal enactment. Hence, the timing of a response from the co-performer which can be anyone of us, is directed by the imagined time that an object would need to move physically through the space between us.

The *arena space* includes the performers, the instrument and the environment i.e., the entire performance space and the audience. In the dimension of arena space, musicians engaged in chamber music performance jointly experience the response of room acoustics and adjust their performance to these characteristics of the space. Dancers, on the other hand, may experience the affordances of the space for movement, and position themselves in relation to these affordances and in relation to their interactions in ensemble space. In the graphical model of Figure 8, the circles are shaped in an onion form to indicate the direction of the very action of getting impulses from the score and the composed choreography, transmitting them from gestural and ensemble space and further to be perceived by an audience in arena space. The performance environment affects the work in different ways such as milieu, light and acoustical conditions, the distance between the performers and the audience's position.

Even though all the three space forms are continuously activated, there is often one space form that dominates. However, throughout the work, there is a constant shift between the space forms activated by each performer. Just like Shinohara's music, *Fragmente*[2] is a very information-dense work holding a fragmentary character in which actions constantly change direction and content. By again taking Fragment 14 as an example, we can see how the space forms are nested to each other.
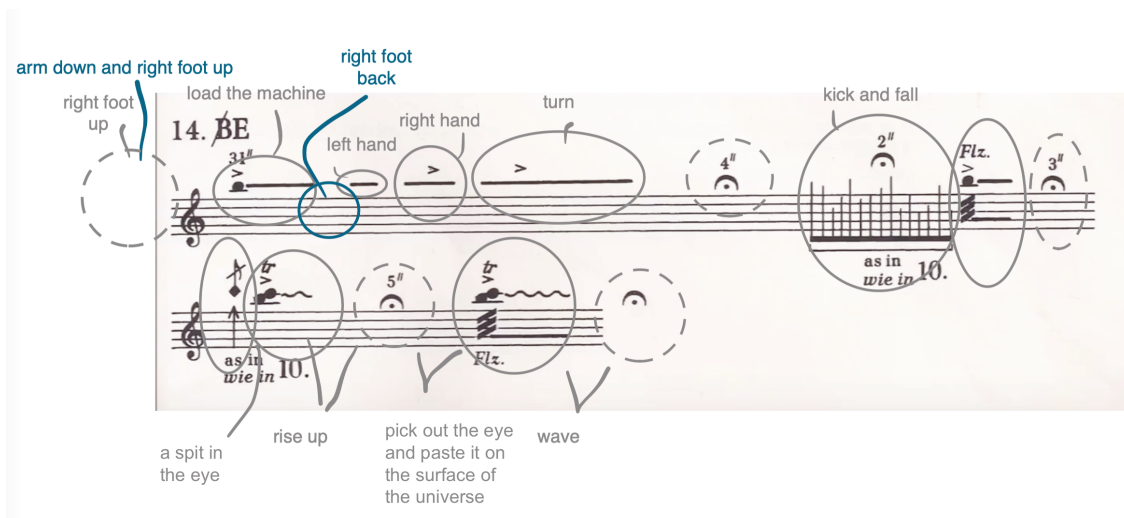
Figure 9. Object-map of Fragment 14.

Figure 10. Beginning of Fragment 14: both performers lift up their right foot and put it on the left lower leg in a synchronised choreographic object.

The very first choreographic object carried out simultaneously by both of us (the dashed circle), is taking place in *ensemble space;* neither of us is leading the other, we are fully attentive to each other. In this very moment the *gestural space* involves a moment of balancing act for both performers which requires their particular attention and control. This specific moment of synchronised movements between the performers also creates a certain visual effect (see Figure 10) which is projected towards the *arena space*. The fragment further contains changes of playing technique and choreographic action for both the dancer and the musician that take place in *gestural space*. The performers are constantly adjusting the timing to each other. Passages clearly taking place in *ensemble space* are the explosion, the kick and fall and in the high "spit-in-the-eye"-tone (beginning of the second line). Fragment 14 is filled with choreographic actions and indirect communication between us that is transferred out in the *arena space,* of course open to interpret

in all possible ways for an audience. In the next section, I will discuss how we have based the choreomusical content on various interaction concepts and metaphors.

Co-composing and staging the performance

The process of developing *Fragmente²* was characterised by working cycles of composing and staging and eventually also performing, through which the work's content and form evolved progressively. We strived for a natural and fluid choreography for both performers and developed ideas that came to us intuitively, often in response to, or mirroring something in the performance of the other. The abstract and gesture-based musical style of Shinohara's *Fragmente* proved suitable for playing with a theatrical coupling between action and sound.

On a more fundamental level, we have worked with the material in terms of metaphoric scenes, a methodology that has served to connect musical and physical gestures and to develop the performers' intercorporeal relationships. We have been influenced by metaphorical mappings, mediated by Mark Johnson's image schemas and structures of force (see Chapter II), that in turn affected how we organised the materials and the interplay between us. A number of conceptual metaphors can be traced in *Fragmente²* such as MUSICAL TEMPO IS SPEED OF PHYSICAL MOVEMENT, PITCH IS VERTICAL SPACE and THE WORK IS A JOURNEY.[47] However, the cross-domain correspondences we have applied are not necessarily the same type of metaphors that are used in everyday language and thought, as they are created to function and create meaning in this particular context.

In the beginning of Fragment 5, the dancer's choreography embodies the dualistic character of the music; the long trembling note that constitutes the foundation of the musical fragment is embodied by the dancer as a slowly rising movement in her full body whereas the quick small notes in the musical score are embodied as quick running fingers *on* the dancer's body (see Figures 11 and 12). Hence, music and movement are here tightly coupled objects, either synchronised (the long trembling note in musician's part and the dancer's rising body) or separated in time (the musician's groups of rapid notes constantly foreshadowing the dancer's finger movements).

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[47] Conceptual metaphors are by tradition written in capital letters.

Figure 11. Object-map of Fragment 5.

Figure 12. Fragment 5. The dancer is mirroring the two-part musical structure through her quick hand movements and rising body. Both performers' movements are developed from a common metaphorical concept, that shapes the intercorporeal relation.

To develop this scene, we used cockroaches as a metaphoric concept; we act as we were two big cockroaches that are hunting each other. Cockroaches are also embodied in a smaller scale by the dancer's running fingers, and they use her body as a stage. At the beginning of this fragment, I stand a few metres behind Åsa, slowly approaching her from behind with knees slightly bent. At a certain point, when I have come very close to Åsa, it is instead *she* who starts hunting me. We are then both moving backwards at a successively quicker pace. This is an example of how we have developed choreomusical relationships, by connecting and embodying auditory, visual and spatial perspectives on a metaphorical basis.

A similar metaphoric base is developed throughout the work. An important aspect of the metaphors is the spatial properties of the various imagined spaces, and the interrelationships of

the acting figures. We have imagined the cockroaches described above interacting in a corridor, other scenes take place inside of a cube, in connection with the universe, in a garden, in a park, in an operating theatre, balancing on a rope, in a jungle and in a mechanical doll workshop, to take a few examples. These imaginary spaces, that most often have been created during the joint creative process, give the performance a theatrical character. A recurrent source of inspiration for coupling sound and body gestures has been Charlie Chaplin, and films like *Modern Times* (1936) and *The Great Dictator* (1940). The "Barber Shop Scene" from *The Great Dictator* in which Chaplin, while performing the shaving of his customer in a way that embodies the musical structure of Brahms' *Hungarian Dance no. 5*, is an example of a kind of direct visualisation of sound.[48]

Figure 13. The "Barber Shop Scene" from *The Great Dictator* (1940), in which Chaplin's choreographic acting while shaving a client embodies the musical structure of Brahms' *Hungarian Dance no.5*.

Fragment 8, which follows directly after Fragment 5, constitutes the only example in which we have applied this kind of fully implemented visualisation of the music. Here, the dancer's hand gestures (still as cockroaches) follow the musical flash-like structure, first by letting them climb quickly on her upper body and finally, on the last high note, by throwing them up in the air. When Fragment 8 ends, the dancer's arms are fully raised, and she keeps her gaze directed upwards. The musician also lifts the instrument and her gaze when finishing the last high note so that both performers reach the fermata at the same time (see Figure 14). Apart from Fragment 8, we have strived for an overall contrapuntal relation between music and movements.

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[48] This kind of direct relationship between music and movement is sometimes referred to as "Mickey-Mousing". The term derives from the film technique frequently used in the Walt Disney films in the 1930s and 1940s, which synchronises the accompanying music with the action on the screen (Damsholt, 1999, p. 77), see further the section "Choreomusical approaches" in Chapter II.

Figure 14. During the creative process, we sometimes had to invent terminology for things we considered important to the work; for example, a what we call a "zero-point" occurs when one of the performers is in balance between two objects. At the end of Fragment 8, both performers reach a joint zero-point and can thereby stretch out the timing of the fermata together before going on to next fragment.

Figure 15. Object-map of Fragment 8. The rapid passage in the flute constitutes a single musical object. The dancer moves her hands in a kind of flash-like hand-walk on the body. The dancer throws both hands into the air as the musician reaches the highest note.

Fragment 12, a scene we refer to as the "surgeon series", also displays a unique kind of choreomusical relationship in the work. When we first tried to put the musical and the choreographic materials together, an uncontrolled contrapuntal relationship arose that became different each time. We decided to keep it in that uncontrolled state. Successively, however, a common choreomusical groove emerged in which we could relate to each other to some extent.

Moreover, the scenes in *Fragmente²* all revolve around geometrical forms that we both constantly relate to, such as the large circle within which the performance takes place. We play with the subjective and intercorporal sensation of these forms, such as standing in the middle of a circle, walking into the circle, balancing on a line, standing at the foot of a line, bouncing body parts inside of a cube, or glancing across the diagonal. We relate constantly to the intercorporal perspective, approaching each other, distancing ourselves from each other, acting in parallel, acting at steady positions and so forth. As has been shown, the choreomusical relationships are highly informed by metaphors which hence constitute the ground for how we relate to and

compose the physical space itself – including kinaesthetic locomotion, how musical and choreographic objects are physically connected and how bodies can act and inter-react.

Performing

Since the recorder is a lightweight instrument it affords many possibilities when developing a choreomusical design of a performance, allowing the performer to move with relative ease in the space. On the other hand, the lack of resistance and the rather large and open finger holes make the instrument very sensitive to fluctuations in airflow. Nevertheless, I play while lying on the floor, directly after rising, and while walking; these kinds of challenges were often paired with passages of extended techniques that allow a more flexible body approach (e.g., trembling tones, short finger glissandi, or the explosive outburst of unsynchronised and fast changes of dynamics, finger movements and air pressure, referred to as "the peak" in the RUUKKU-exposition). In other passages such as long extended notes, series of multiphonics, or other passages that are technically demanding, I stay completely still. Moreover, choreographic actions such as knee bends, turns, foot lifts, hand gestures and so on are often placed between musical gestures or entire fragments to avoid interference with the musical performance.

However, the aim was not to move as much as possible but to create a natural choreography that allowed me to interact, also physically, with the dancer. The instrument itself constitutes a crucial component in the work. Imagine *Fragmente*[2] performed on guitar or saxophone; another instrument would radically affect not only the sound of Shinohara's composition, but also have a drastic impact on the choreomusical whole. As described above, Shinohara's fragments inspired us to develop the metaphoric scenes. They further served as the basis for the development of my choreography and the choreomusical interaction between the two figures. This in turn had an impact on the musical interpretation. There is thus a reciprocal relationship between the musical interpretation and the metaphors which, I would say, forms the core of the work.

So far, this chapter has described the intertwined choreomusical relationship through written text, object-maps, graphical models, photos, etc. However, the subjective feeling of performing is more difficult to communicate. When I tried to write it down, it took the form of short poetic reflections instead of a coherent text. My subjective performer perspective represents a layer of the performance completely hidden from my co-performer, as well as from the audience. In writing these poetic reflections, I was surprised to discover how much I relate to the metaphoric scenes in the performance situation. It is striking how crucial the metaphors have been, not only in the process of composing and staging, but also in supporting the mental processes involved during

performance. My reflections on performing *Fragmente*[2] are intuitively also linked to the experience of performing *Fragmente* as a solo work.

Figure 16. The sequence F4 – F7 – F14 – FZ.

The sequence F4 – F7 – F14 – FZ concluding the work can illustrate how the metaphors have contributed to a multimodal experience of the music. The poetic reflections entitled *The Garden* (F4), *The Park* (F7), *Before the outer space* (F14), and *Outer Space* (F7), show how the spatial perspectives and the intercorporeal relations change character through this series of fragments.

<u>The garden</u> (F4)
I stand at the edge of the circle
Bent tones follow each other like thin stitches
Each its own gesture
its own voice
Sometimes I see the tones in front of me
shaping the short series
I'm within the changing sound
the response from the room
Fingers go their familiar way

Choreographic impulses
make themselves known
in between and parallel
Arms busy

We play in a garden
We plant and study what grows
A flower burst into blossom
a quiet twist in my body
the stem bends softly
The glissando descends towards the trill
We follow the last, growing far above our heads
The flute ascends with the stitch

The park (F7)
We rise in a parallel countermovement
I walk on a path by tall trees
The garden was a park
The tones take big steps
finding their way upwards in the octave
retiring and then up again
My gaze seeks tones, footholds, during the quiet walk

Then I stop in a multiphonic
Looking towards the periphery of the circle
Seeing her back, arms in movement and then a twist towards me
There's a straight line between us
I listen to the sound
seeking my way back

New impulses connect to my phrase
a fingerpoint
The energy is spreading
my arm reaches straight up to the flute's signal

Before the outer space (F14)
Stand still
shift weight to left leg
affix the right foot a bit down on the shin
Parallel movements

We have tried a few times only
to keep the balance
to feel the simultaneity

Then at short intervals, follow
the narrow vowels of the signals
explosion
fall
eye
the fading tone
We are prepared

<u>Outer space</u> (FZ)
Completely still
an impulse shoots up
Bend your back!
Bend your neck!
Far up, a movement
We're still here

(English translation Magnus Jacobsson)

The hidden spatial movement that I perceive passes from the small, intimate care of flowers (F4) to the experience of the larger park (F7), and further to the reunion with the dancer (F14) before opening towards the outer space (FZ). This kind of movement originates primarily in the musical interpretation of Shinohara's score but has in this staged context been emphasised through metaphors and the staging process, thus having an unforeseen impact on the musical performance. Some further poetic reflections are presented in the RUUKKU-exposition.

A choreomusical shared voice

The process of jointly composing and staging *Fragmente²* has led us to develop a common aesthetic and chamber music-like form of inter-reaction in performance. In the case of Lipparella, I have already observed how shared voice can be developed in the context of chamber music performance. Here, I argue that a similar process has taken place in the long-term collaboration leading up to the creation of *Fragmente²*.

As discussed in Chapter III, in musical collaboration, a shared voice may develop through performance, but also through parameters and processes that take place outside of the very performance situation. The balance of power structures is also a crucial parameter. Åsa's and my joint work began as what John-Steiner (2000) refers to as a complementary type of collaboration, resulting in *Fragmente* (2017), but the continuation of this work and development of *Fragmente²* manifests itself as more of an integrative type of collaboration, involving an increased level of risk-taking. I argue that several factors played a role in reaching what I call a *choreomusical shared voice*: our object-method allowed all materials to have equal weight, our jointly developed metaphors enabled a cross-disciplinary dialogue, both performers' in-depth knowledge of the other's part enabled attunement and a continuous inter-reaction to each other in the moment of performance. With these tools and methods, we found a way to coexist and even cross disciplinary roles, in an integrative choreomusical dialogue.

A multimodal study

In a final stage of the *Fragmente*-project, a separate study, combining qualitative and quantitative analysis of gesture was carried out in collaboration with the GEMM (Gesture, Embodiment and Machines in Music) research cluster at Luleå University of Technology. The study builds on a previous study (Visi et al. 2020) in which a method for multimodal data collection and music performance analysis was developed. One aspect of the design is the use of stimulated recall analysis, using audio and video data, a method which enables phenomenological perspective variation through repeated listening, thereby allowing the listener to approach the listening situation from a first- or third-person perspective (Ihde, 2012; Stefánsdóttir & Östersjö, 2022). In this previous study, it was argued that methods for combining qualitative and quantitative approaches are needed in order to fully understand expressive musical performance.

The focus of the joint study of the *Fragmente*-project, conducted by Professor Stefan Östersjö, Professor Ulrik Röijezon, the two postdoctoral researchers Federico Visi and Rodrigo Schramm, Professor Åsa Unander-Scharin and myself, was to further develop the machine analysis in the research design. The study sought to establish which features of a multimodal dataset are good predictors of basic qualities of gestural audio objects using the Random Forests algorithm and to develop a supervised learning method for automated spotting, designed to assist human annotators. Combining qualitative and quantitative data from a multimodal recording of *Fragmente²*, the study was designed to obtain synchronised audio, video, motion and electromyogram (EMG) data describing the performers' body movements. To this, we added annotations on gestural-sonic objects through specific qualitative analysis sessions.

So far, we have focused on collecting data and annotations from my part of the performance and although the study is not yet finalised, it offers a promising methodological development of using supervised learning and automating the annotation of gestural-sonic objects. The study and its results are presented in our jointly written book chapter "Empirical Analysis of Gestural Sonic Objects Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methods" (Visi et al., 2024). Our findings so far can inform future work and "lead to a system that helps annotators and saves them hours of work when manually annotating gestural sonic objects" (Visi et al., 2024, p. 21). In a broader perspective, the work carried out within the GEMM study was also an example of how the combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis and phenomenological perspective variation can enable more dynamic working methods for interdisciplinary collaboration:

> We believe that developing multimodal methods for artistic research may be particularly useful in choremusical practices. We are especially interested in the potential of methods that also engage in how the intentionality of audio and video technologies can be addressed through phenomenological variation. This entails an engagement with different modalities

of listening and a design that allows for embodied, multimodal and performative approaches to the experience of sound. (Visi et al., 2024, p. 21)

For my own dissertation work, the GEMM study offered additional phenomenological perspective variation to the *Fragmente*-project, which I discuss more in the next section. The qualitative analysis we did was also of great importance for Åsa's and my further artistic work presented in our *Fragmente²* -exposition in the RUUKKU-journal.

Phenomenological perspective variation

In the creation of *Fragmente²*, as mentioned earlier, we have worked in iterative phases of *analysis, composition, staging* and *performing*. In a phenomenological context, these perspectives can be understood as *intentional dimensions* of choreomusical interaction, and each fragment can be described from each of these perspectives. As Åsa and I started our work, we were focused on the idea of creating a work in which music and dance could interact without one dominating the other, but we did not yet know what the path would look like. In the course of the work, however, we have noticed, for example, how metaphors came to play an important role, how a common terminology developed, how the concept of objects became a tool for choreomusical composition and performance as well as for the GEMM-study analysis. These are phenomena that have emerged to us, and through the process we have learnt to see and to relate to them in a common way. One could say that we began this work in a kind of obscurity, similar to what Don Ihde (2012) describes as *essential obscurity*; an initial state in which one observes a phenomenon without having a fixed vocabulary or set of already established concepts. He writes:

> [Phenomenology] overturns many presuppositions ordinarily taken for granted and seeks to establish a new perspective from which to view things. [...] If a method is genuinely radical and new, then its new concepts and methods will in some degree be unfamiliar and strange –at least at first. The very displacement of the familiar is such that an initial obscurity will result. [...] I shall call this "essential obscurity" and shall try to show that such "essential obscurity" is temporary. It belongs to a certain stage of learning. (p. 6)

The artistic process has been driven by a continuous refinement of the different choreomusical and interactive levels. However, we will never achieve a final version of *Fragmente²*; rather, we have built up a set of possibilities within the work's conceptual universe that can always be further developed and refined. In addition to the artistic work, we have also explored different ways of analysing the work e.g, through Smalley's space forms, annotated object-maps, the GEMM analysis, and through poetic reflections. In the RUUKKU-exposition, the dancer's score and instructions are also presented in various ways, e.g. as a voice-over instruction during the video recording. In short, our study of choreomusical interaction has been approached through

what can be described as a set of phenomenological perspective variations of first, second and third person perspectives (Ihde, 2012).
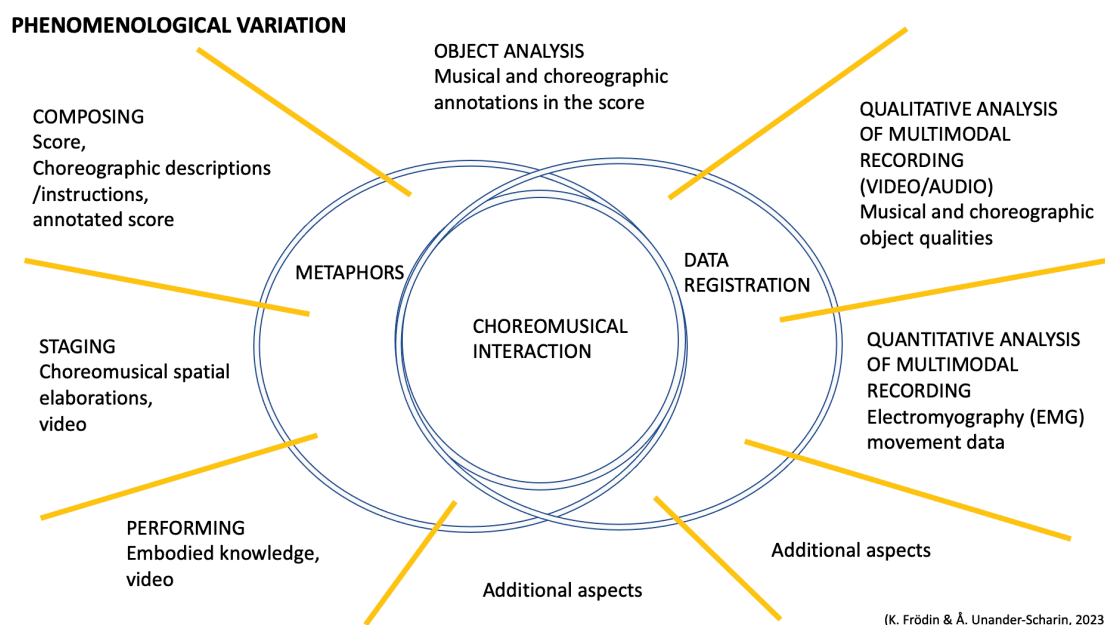
Figure 17. Model of phenomenological perspective variation.

The model presented at the beginning of this chapter has been adjusted in Figure 17 to give a more complete representation of the different steps in our process. As has been shown, each of these areas offers further variations. The spaces marked "additional aspects" indicate that the possible number of variations are infinite. Nevertheless, we have carried out several empirical investigations through the artistic and analytical process to get a picture of the choreomusical interaction in *Fragmente²*. A phenomenological analysis, according to Ihde "is more than a mere analysis. It is a probing for what is genuinely discoverable and potentially there, but not often seen" (2012, p. 13). This is also our experience of the *Fragmente²*-project, which revealed layers of interaction and interpretation that we would not otherwise have reached.

A model for collaborative work

As mentioned in Chapter II (p. 46), I find Olofsson's model for interdisciplinary collaborative processes helpful for discussing the working process in *Fragmente²* on a more overarching level. The *Conceptual Framing* of *Fragmente²* involved decisions such as playing without amplification of the recorder, developing a choreography also for myself, temporally structuring choreographic fragments in relation to musical fragments, linking each choreomusical fragment to a metaphorical scene and making the performance revolve around geometrical forms. Gradually,

we added more and more details to the *Conceptual Framing*, which shaped the overall character of the work, e.g., adding different interaction concepts, using Charlie Chaplin films and other artistic references (see the RUUKKU-exposition), linking the visual graphic black and white expression to the metaphor of musical notes on a sheet of white paper. Several of these decisions emerged as a result of the process of staging. In the *Macroform* phase, which lasted for a longer period of time, a more detailed interaction between the two figures was developed. The work process resulted in a familiarity with each other's part with frequent occurring trigger-points that allowed a certain flexibility in the interplay of the performers during performance, the *Mesostructure*.

Although each performer is fairly independent we have a number of trigger points that structure what Olofsson calls the vertical dramaturgy (2018): how we react, respond and trigger each other's actions. The pendulum movement between the three creative stages Conceptual Framing, Macroform and Mesostructure was an efficient way to connect the different ideas into a coherent work. In this chapter, I have also created representations of my subjective experience of the performance situation, through the poetic reflections. The GEMM study provides yet another phenomenological perspective variation through its detailed revelation of choreomusical interaction schemata.

The time aspect has been crucial for this multi-phased process that to a large degree has revolved around the development of methodologies for the different stages. Common to these methods is that we have observed phenomena as they have emerged, such as the concept of objects, the metaphoric images and various types of interactions. The same approach in the GEMM-study implicated an openness towards observed phenomena and the interpretation of quantitative and qualitative data from the multimodal recording.

The knowledge gained through the *Fragmente*-study was brought into the project that followed, *The Conference of the Birds*. In this final artistic project of my thesis, I ask the question how a choreomusical practice can be a tool for the creation of a larger staged work. The point of departure for this project was Madeleine Isaksson's solo piece *Les septs vallées* and the medieval Persian poem *The Conference of the Birds*. This music and artistic sphere, radically different from Shinohara's *Fragmente,* implied for Åsa and me a possibility to further deepen and develop the choreomusical practice we had initiated. *The Conference of the Birds* was a project that involved several artists and artforms and led to a further and unforeseen broadening of my own artistic praxis beyond the musician's role.

Chapter VI The Conference of the Birds

If you arrive as a drop, you will join and become the Ocean.

Introduction

This chapter addresses the fourth and most extensive artistic project of this thesis, *The Conference of the Birds*. The long and open-ended process began as a continuation of the choreomusical work *Fragmente²* (see Chapter V) carried out together with Åsa Unander-Scharin, but evolved along the way into a large-scale staged work involving several participating artists, where music, electroacoustic music, dance, video projections, sound, light, and costume form a unified whole. On stage, I perform together with the dancer Katarina Eriksson.

The title *The Conference of the Birds* refers to the medieval poet Farid-ud-Din-Attar's poem with the same name (original *Manteq-ot-teyr*). Attar's poem was also the source of inspiration for Madeleine Isaksson's work for solo recorder *Les sept vallées* composed in 2006, a piece that constitutes the foundation for the musical material of the performance. Here, however, *Les sept vallées* has been reinterpreted and adapted and become a new musical work for recorder and electroacoustics, tailor-made for the performance. *The Conference of the Birds* has been realised through a multi-phased process in which the music has been transformed and expanded according to the needs of the stage, the interdisciplinary collaboration and my own interpretation of the poem.

The chapter focuses on the project's multilayered and multidisciplinary character and further, how the creative working process led to unexpected ways of expanding my own artistic practice.

Attar and The Conference of the Birds

Farid - ud - Din Attar (ca. 1145–1221) is one of Persia's earliest poets and considered as the father of Persian mystic poetry.[49] The younger poet Rumi (1207–1273), who is today the most famous Sufi poet in the world, saw Attar as one of his main sources of inspiration. Poetic works that have been attributed to Attar by modern scholars include *Diwan* (a collection of poems), *Asrar-nameh* (Book of Secrets) and *Muktar-namna* (The Choice Book) but his best known work is the epic poem *Manteq ot-teyr*.[50] It is regarded as a classic work within Sufi poetry and in Persian literature in general. *Manteq-ot-teyr* is written in a poetic form called *Masnavi*; rhymed couplets with eleven or occasionally ten syllables per line. Although the poem is written in Persian, the title is an Arabic expression and literally means "the speech of the birds". However, the poem is commonly known as *The Conference of the Birds* which is also how I will refer to it in this chapter.

The Conference of the Birds metaphorically describes the different stages of the spiritual path according to Sufism; from turning away from the desires of the self to finally encountering the union with the divine itself through the annihilation of the self. The story is told as a fable in which birds are going on a long journey. At the beginning of the poem, all the birds of the world gather for a conference to discuss who is to become their sovereign as they have none. Hoopoe,[51] the wisest of them all, suggests the great and legendary bird Simorgh who dwells at Mount Qaf and says they need to go there to meet their true sovereign.[52] Hoopoe knows the way and the birds accept her as their guide. The journey is long and perilous, filled with trials and tests. Both

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[49] Farid - ud - Din Attar (ca. 1145–1221) was born in the city of Nishapur in present-day northeastern Iran and died probably in connection with the Mongols' conquest of the city. He took his author's name after his profession; Attar means perfumer. He was a seller of perfumes and drugs as medicine and had his own drugstore.

[50] *Manteq-ot-teyr* has a clear reference to King Solomon and the Quran: "And Solomon was David's heir, and he said, 'Men, we have been taught the speech of the birds, and we have been given of everything; surely this is the manifest bounty'" (Quran 27:16, translation by Arberry). Solomon is known as the sagest king of the united Israel who also knew the language of the birds. Basically, Attar's text describes the way to the divine love, just like *The Songs of Songs*, a collection of love poems (Bible and the Quran) which was according to the tradition, written by Solomon.

[51] Möller (2021) writes about how the Hoopoe occupies a special place in the world of birds; as beautiful, rare, mythical and mysterious, and how it has left a large imprint on art, literature and religion. "In some cases its status is unilaterally mythical and literary (Plato, Aristophanes, Ovid, the Qur'an, Attar, and in some cases it is the subject of natural history observations combined with mythical knowledge (Aristotle, Pliny the Elder, Aelian)" (p. 14, my translation). In the historical narratives of the Quran, Hoopoe plays the role of messenger between the Queen of Sheba (Bilqis) and the Prophet Solomon (Fazlhashemi, 2020).

[52] The mythological bird Simorgh appears already in the old sources of the Iranian language Avestan of the Zoroastrian era (a language that applies genders), in which it is described as a feminine and motherlike figure. The iranologue and French translator Leili Anvar explains further that "God" in Avestan language is the only word that can be either feminine or masculine. Hence, there is a duality linked to the word "God". In Persian, which is a gender-neutral language, Simorgh obviously lost her gender and in most translations from Persian, Simorgh has become a male figure. However, in her translation *Le Cantique des Oiseaux*, Anvar returns to the concept of Simorgh as the visible manifestation of the divine of female gender. She is "La Simorgh" and at the same time "Le Roi", the king (God) of the world (Elkabbach, 2012).

before they set off and during the journey, the birds are fearful and hesitant. To encourage them, Hoopoe tells them stories – parables that help them through the difficulties.

When the thirty birds that finally remain confront Simorgh, they see Simorgh but at the same time they see themselves reflected. They understand then that they have travelled in themselves and through themselves and that they together are Simorgh. Simorgh tells them to throw themselves into her fire, which within the Sufi tradition represents the ultimate state of direct and personal experience of divine love. Attar concludes by saying that there are no words to describe what happened to them there.[53]

Attar's poem speaks about existential questions and of our spiritual destiny, universal themes that never cease to engage humanity. It has been loved and admired within the Sufi tradition ever since the Middle Ages. More recently, it has also become known in the Western world, much thanks to Peter Brook and Jean Claude Carrière's theatre play *La conférence des oiseaux*, performed by Bouffes du Nord at the Avignon Festival in 1979.[54] Since then, the poem has inspired a large number of artists in all kinds of genres – plays, music, dance and theatre performances.

Les sept vallées

In 2005, Madeleine Isaksson[55] had come across Henri Gougaud's (himself one of the visitors at Bouffes du Nord's performance at the Avignon Festival in 1979) adaptation of Attar's poem *La Conférence des Oiseaux* (2002). Inspired by the text and the richly illustrated edition, Madeleine suggested that she compose a solo piece for recorder based on the poem. In 2005–2006 we met

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[53] The birds encounter with Simorgh means that they have reach the state of *Fanaa*, which in Sufism is the "passing away" or "annihilation" . Throwing themselves into Simorgh's fire represents the next stage the *Baqaa*, where the seeker finally reaches the highest state of the path by being able to retain self-awareness while being fully aware of divine presence at the same time (Murata, 2018; Attar, 2014, p. 312).

[54] During a travel to Iran, Brook became interested in Persian literature and philosophy and began planning a performance of Attar's poem *The Conference of the Birds*. His theatre group spent three and a half months in Africa learning about and developing the actors' relationship with the audience – an audience that, in this case, neither spoke their language nor had experienced anything like theatre. This experience was the starting point for the company's three years of work preparing *La conférence des oiseaux* (Croyden, 2003).

[55] Madeleine Isaksson has been based in Paris for 30 years and works in the European art music tradition. She has been influenced by composers such as Brian Ferneyhough, Louis Andriessen, Iannis Xenakis, Morton Feldman, Emmanuel Nunes, Giacinto Scelsi and Helmut Lachenmann. Her music has been described as "highly concentrated, characterized by a wealth of detail and considerable variation in the treatment of phrases, sonorities and well-integrated processes that are held together by an almost physical movement in fluctuating meters (Isaksson, 2024, n.p. Biography). Isaksson's list of works includes pieces in a variety of settings, including chamber music, vocal and orchestra. Apart from *Les sept vallées*, I have also premiered *Failles* (2003) as member of the trio Das Orchester (recorder, cello and trombone) and the quintet *Hemligheten* (2013) composed for the ensemble Lipparella.

several times and tried different techniques on the recorders; we also went to see a small theatre group performing a play based on *The Conference of the Birds* in Paris. I premiered *Les sept vallées* at the Musée de la Photographie in Nice in 2006.[56] In 2012, Madeleine received the prestigious *Järnåker Prize* for the piece from the Royal Swedish Academy of Music.

Les sept vallées was commissioned by Svenska Rikskonserter (Concerts Sweden), has a duration of just over twenty minutes. It is structured in seven movements and uses the recorders tenor, alto, soprano and sopranino. One of the main features of the piece is the use of extended techniques such as multiphonics, vocal sounds, percussive sound effects, various blowing techniques and microtonality. The title *Les sept vallées* (The seven valleys) represents the seven steps of the birds' journey towards Simorgh (see above).

With its personal, refined and variated musical language, based on such a masterly written poem, Isaksson's *Les sept vallées* contributes greatly, in an international perspective, to the contemporary solo recorder repertoire. It is a rich work that explores the many qualities of the instrument and which I have had the privilege of performing on several occasions and also recording on CD.[57] *Les sept vallées* is a work that has meant a lot to me not only musically but it has also guided me through a significant phase of my research study through which I developed a deeper connection with the work. The close relation between music and poetry in *Les sept vallées* has been a basis and inspiration for exploring new musical, artistic and interpretative perspectives in my artistic practice and research.

Initial phase

In the initial phase of the project, Åsa Unander-Scharin (hereinafter referred to as Åsa) and I focused on developing the choreographic material and exploring different concepts of choreomusical interaction (see Chapter II, Chapter V and the RUUKKU-exposition). As in the *Fragmente*-project, we applied metaphors as a method for creating material, but unlike when working with Shinohara's abstract composition *Fragmente*, the metaphors here were linked to the content of the poem and Attar's description of the birds' path through the seven valleys. Our methods in developing a high resolution of choreomusical interaction were also, as in *Fragmente²*, carried out with a multimodal approach to sound and gesture (the methods are described in relation to how each valley is structured later in this chapter). By autumn 2019, we had produced rough sketches of five of the seven valleys. The first, third and fifth valleys seemed

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[56] This performance was followed by further performances at venues such as the Nordic Music Days (2007) and Södra teatern in Stockholm – a performance carried out in collaboration with the Finnish-Swedish actress Stina Ekblad citing sequences of the poem (2011) – and at the Kalv Contemporary Music Festival (2013).

[57] Isaksson, M. (composer) (2022). *Les sept vallées* [K. Frödin]. Naxos/Daphne records.

to develop into dense choreomusical compositions that we wanted to combine with parts and sections holding less complex choreomusical interaction.

However, we were still searching for a way to create something that clearly distinguished this work from *Fragmente*[2]. This led us to questions like: How closely should we follow the poem? How can we convey and transform the meaning of the poem into a choreomusical work? How can we create variations in the material and the different valleys? For us, Attar's poem required a rich visual context with strong contrasts between the various parts of the work. Åsa came up with the idea to use video scenography as a way to emphasise the characters of the different valleys and to situate the performance space. She proposed a collaboration with Danish video artist Lene Juhl, with whom she had collaborated with in the earlier dance-video project *Artificial Body Voices* (2011). Lene Juhl has a background as both an opera singer and an actor. As video artist, Lene Juhl (hereinafter referred to as Lene) has primarily created large-scale works for opera, theatre and symphonic concert halls.

Spatial change – Video and costume

When we met Lene for the first time in January 2020 in Piteå, the project took a new and important turn. Just as we had hoped, after some explorations it was clear that Lene's strong and colourful images would be efficient in changing the character of the performative space. During the first days of working together, we also filmed short sequences of choreographic and musical gestures that Åsa and I performed, and that Lene herself continued to work with.

It now became important to define what kind of space we would choose for the performance. Lene's and Åsa's previous collaboration *Artificial Body Voices,* performed in Studio Acusticum's Black Box studio, was a good reference, but we also discussed the possibility of designing the performance for a white box, such as an art gallery or museum. Another solution would be to create a portable and flexible combination of several small projection screens suitable for a more traditional concert venue. However, we eventually decided that a black box studio would give the best effect for the video projections. Moreover, in a space like Studio Acusticum's Black Box studio, much of the necessary infrastructure was already in place. This was a decision that scaled up the size of the work and confirmed the need for amplification of the recorders.

The video projections would not only project on screens but also on other possible surfaces, floor and props. We decided to make use of long transparent pieces of cloth hanging from the ceiling (also used in *Artificial Body Voices*). As we, due to the pandemic and travel restrictions, had few opportunities to work on site in Studio Acusticum, Lene's and Åsa's earlier experience facilitated the planning of how to place the projectors, the projection screens and the hanging cloths.

Depending on how the staged light was designed, the hanging cloths could appear as transparent or as surfaces to hide behind, facilitating the use of the depth of the performance space. The Icelandic costume designer Ingibjørg Jara Sigurðardóttir (hereinafter Jara) joined the project in August 2020. It was her idea that also the costumes would serve as possible projection surfaces.

Framing the artistic goal

The artistic framework of the performance now began to take shape; the performance would take place in a big space embedded with colourful projections. These circumstances changed the conditions for me as musician and for the function of the music in the project. In a traditional concert context, *Les sept vallées* is a large-scale work. But side by side with large video screens, it would appear small. I realised that the music needed to be better balanced with the other artforms, and that the solution might not be as simple as just amplifying the recorders. It was not only a question of how the music would sound in the room, but also a question of giving the music enough space in the time flow. As I was also interested in exploring further the bidirectional connection between sound and gesture and in combining my playing with choreography, I also felt the need to expand the musical form, adapting the music to the needs that arose along the way. Electroacoustic ambiences and bridges between the valleys would create temporal spaces in the work and allow us to experiment with choreographic elements and locomotions on stage. An added electroacoustic part would contribute an auditory scenography and also strengthen the overall musical presence, thus making the music as a whole better suited to the spatial conditions. Consequently, *Les sept vallées* would need to be adapted and partly recomposed accordingly.

I asked the composer Kent Olofsson, who has long experience of similar collaborative staged projects, to realise the electroacoustic part.[58] But first, of course, we needed Isaksson's permission to make necessary adaptions to her work. With a detailed background knowledge of how our process had developed so far, she gave me the confidence and the full artistic responsibility to adapt *Les sept vallées* to the staged performance. We agreed that it would be considered a new work, separate from *Les sept vallées,* and that all three of us Madeleine Isaksson, Kent Olofsson and myself, would be named as composers/authors of the new musical work. But as a whole, the staged work *The Conference of the Birds* is the result of the joint work of all the participating artists.

This new condition brought an important shift in the collaboration; our common source and fixed reference became the poem instead of *Les sept vallées*. Instead of staging a musical work, *Les*

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[58] Kent's and my collaboration includes the solo work *Treccia for recorder* (2001) and *Champs d'étoiles* (2008–2016), see Chapter III.

sept vallées, we now worked towards a staging of Attar's *The Conference of the Birds*. Eventually, the upscaled size of the project also had an impact on Åsa's double role as dancer and choreographer which became difficult to manage. The dancer Katarina Eriksson (hereinafter Katarina) joined the project in February 2021, whereafter Åsa could focus solely on the choreography.[59] The team was finally completed when Magnus Grönberg, light and video technician, joined the project in September that year. As will be described below, the creative process led to more substantial adaptions of *Les sept vallées* than I first expected before it reached its final form.

Structure, content and form

<u>Performance structure</u>

The performance is based on the seven valleys as they are structured in the poem. However, in the poem, the story begins with a long passage in which the different birds, divided into species, each representing different human qualities, give different excuses as to why they cannot go and Hoopoe's response to the birds' objections. There is also a passage in the poem dealing with the encounter with Simorgh, which takes place beyond the seventh valley. As a consequence of our choice to stage Attar's poem instead of *Les sept vallées*, our performance also includes a Prologue and an Epilogue. These parts thus represent Attar's description of the background of the journey and what happens to the birds when they are finally confronted with Simorgh.

<u>Choreomusical relation</u>

The choreomusical interaction holds a high density throughout the work and has been developed jointly throughout the creative process. Like the musical material, the dancer's choreography has a clear progression through the seven valleys, from the metaphoric image of a little bird's egg to an increasingly more complex material. In the valleys 2, 4, and 6 (first half), I am positioned in the middle and front of the stage, reading the music whereas the valleys 1, 3, 5, 6 (second half), 7, and the Epilogue, are formed as choreomusical scenes, with choreographed interplay between Katarina and me on the stage. Alternating between being fully choreographed and standing at the music stand was also a way of creating a dynamic and varied staging.

In the second valley, Katarina is not present on the stage. However, the video scenography contains choreography based on the shooting of Åsa's dance that Lene carried out in an early phase of the project. The choreomusical interaction in the second valley thus takes place between the musician and the video. Further, in the fifth valley, the electroacoustic music is replaced by the amplified sounds of the dancer's moving body, clapping, breathings and her rustling with a

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[59] Both Åsa and I had collaborated with Katarina in previous projects, I first met Katarina in Riksteatern's production *Bön för Tjernobyl* (Prayer for Chernobyl) 1999.

bird wing. Katarina's sounding choreography creates a duet with the flute and unlike any of the other movements, this valley includes an improvisational section between us.

Performers' characters

In the performance, both the sound of the recorder and the musician represent Hoopoe – the guide of the journey, whereas the dancer represents all the other birds, the Wayfarers. As the most experienced of all the birds, Hoopoe knows the way to Simorgh and even if she is a Wayfarer herself, her situation is more controlled. In the performance, Katarina sometimes interprets only one of the Wayfarers (e.g. the first valley) in other valleys she interprets different birds by constantly shifting character (e.g. the third valley). The different characters of the performers are not something that is necessarily perceived by an audience, especially if one is not familiar with the text, but they played a major role in structuring the relationships between Katarina and me.

The many Wayfarers also appear through the video projections in various ways, as shadow plays or as patterns created by a countless mass of birds. In the poem, Hoopoe continuously encourages the other birds to continue the journey by telling them stories. In the performance, this encouragement takes place through the music and through Hoopoe's presence and choreography. Throughout the journey, we have let Hoopoe be the one that gives impulses and pushes the other birds to continue. However, in the very last part of the performance, the Epilogue, this hierarchic relation between the birds is completely repealed. All the thirty birds that remain have become one with what Attar refer to as the Great Ocean and move along with its currents in a synchronised performed choreography.

Video and stage

The video scenography is displayed through three projectors and screens: one big backdrop screen, and two smaller screens one white and the other black, at the respective sides of the stage. Five cloths are hanging down from the ceiling and, depending on the lighting, can appear as either transparent or fixed surfaces. Other surfaces such as the performers' costumes, props and the floor, are also used for projecting the video.

The choreomusical interplay of the performance also encompasses the video scenography in that it is always present and has its own embedded movement and choreography. Built on a colourful and rather abstract visual material, the video scenography, as described by Lene, is a representation of the inner journey of the birds.

With our rather complex set up, it was only on site in Studio Acusticum's Black Box that we could experience how the interaction between the artforms would actually take shape. Especially the video scenography was dependent on how it would be experienced in the performance space. Similarly to the electroacoustic music, the video scenography is created as shorter pre-recorded

files managed by a technician during performance. With minimal time to rehears at place in the Black Box, it was an advantage that we decided on a stage set-up similar to the one created in Lene and Åsa's earlier collaboration *Artificial Body Voices.* The similar stage set-up implied a pre-understanding of the interplay among performers, technique and space and how we could work with light, shadows and props.

Another advantage in Studio Acusticum was that we could make use of their media server Hippotizer, a technique which allows a very fast rendering of files. Lene and the technician Magnus Grönberg created the final design and timing of the video material and the light in relation to how the collaborative process continued in the Black Box and the performers' precise positions on stage.

Musical structure

The musical structure consists of the seven valleys for recorder and electroacoustic music, in which I have always kept Isaksson's original choice of recorders for the different parts. Further, a Prologue and an Epilogue with only electroacoustic music frame the seven valleys. As can be seen below, some of the valleys' titles differ between *Les sept vallées* and my own score of *The Conference of the Birds* as I have chosen to follow a more recently published edition of the poem, *Le Cantique des Oiseaux* (2014) in translation by the Iranian-French translator and specialist in Persian poetry, Leili Anvar. The partly different titles underline that the new work is separate from Isaksson's *Les sept vallées*. The structure of the two works is as follows:

LES SEPT VALLÉES (2006)	THE CONFERENCE OF THE BIRDS (2021-2022)
MADELEINE ISAKSSON	ISAKSSON–FRÖDIN–OLOFSSON
	Prologue
1. La vallée de la Quête	1. La vallée du Désir
2. La vallée de l'Amour	2. La vallée de l'Amour
3. La vallée de la Connaissance	3. La vallée de la Connaissance
4. La vallée de la Liberté solitaire	4. La vallée de la Plénitude
5. La vallée de l'Unité	5. La vallée de l'Unicité
6. La vallée de la Perplexité	6. La vallée de la Perplexité
7. La vallée de l'Épuisement	7. La vallée de Dénuement et de l'Anéantissement
	Epilogue

Figure 18. The formal structure of *Les sept vallées* and the expanded form of *The Conference of the Birds.*

<u>The electroacoustic part</u>

The first electroacoustic sketches were almost exclusively based on recordings of *Les sept vallées*. It was a concept that felt as the most natural way to start but also generated new harmonic relations between the flute and the electroacoustic music. We realised soon that we had to be careful with how much of new tonality the material could take before the electroacoustic music would dominate the sound image. We decided instead to work towards a mix of the standardised sound material found in the original score and a new material based on concrete sounds such as wind, water, wood, bird calls and flapping bird wings. Nevertheless, it took us some time to find the "voice" of the electroacoustic music and to find the right balance between the sound materials, in fact each of the valleys required a different approach. Apart from the Prologue and the Epilogue that contain only electroacoustic music and manipulated recorded voices, the electroacoustic music is interwoven in six of the seven valleys: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 7. At times, the electroacoustic music also creates musical bridges between the valleys, enabling locomotions on stage and changes of instruments. Each valley contains a number of short electroacoustic Q lab-files managed by a technician. It is the musician who pretty much everywhere controls the musical timing and flow. The electroacoustic music often has the function of a tail to the flute's phrases which generates a flexibility in the choreomusical timing. In Studio Acusticum's Black Box, Kent worked out the spatialisation of the electroacoustic music, distributed through twelve surrounding loudspeakers on the stage and around the audience.

<u>Texts</u>

In September 2020, I got in touch with the Iranian-Swedish poet Jila Mossaed and asked her to record some parts of the poem in Persian as I wanted to get a sense of how it sounded in the original language.[60] Mossaed's recording touched me, her voice conveyed her strong relationship with the poem, and I found the Persian language very expressive. In addition to my two different English editions, the Darbandi and Davis translation written in rhyme, and Wolpé's edition written in prose, I eventually got hold of Anvar's French translation in prose. Gradually, I began to engage more deeply with the textual material and eventually felt that it needed to be integrated into the work. In addition, I decided to use one of Mossaed's poems in Swedish *Min mor är öknen* (My mother is the desert, Mossaed, 2020). In fact, her short poem is a kind of freely interpreted and poetic summary of Attar's poem.[61] So, I now had texts in Persian, English, French and Swedish without knowing exactly how to use them. I asked native speakers of the different languages to record selected parts from them. The voice recordings are made by Katt

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[60] As recipients of the Bernadotte Grant Program 2020, a scholarship which encourages cross-disciplinary collaborations, our project *The Conference of the Birds* had the academy members Jila Mossaed, Swedish Academy, Håkan Möller, The Royal Swedish Academy of Letters, History and Antiquities and Pia Bygdéus (Royal Swedish Academy of Music) as mentors during 2020–2021.

[61] Attar's *Manteq ot-teyr* has been translated into Swedish by Eric Hermelin *Fåglarnas samtal* (Persian anthology, 1929). Parts of his translation are available in a new edition published by Karneval förlag, (Ekerwald, 2024). However, I chose to let the Swedish language be represented solely by Jila Mossaed's poem, which for me contributes a denser layer of text that blends well with the other parts of the work.

Hernandez (English), Sophie Jeanelle (French), Nina Jeppsson (Swedish) and Jila Mossaed (Persian).

The recordings provided a rich material to work with. Persian, as the original language of the poem, has a special role and tension. Since I don't understand Persian, I focused instead on the melodic qualities of the language and on Mossaed's expressive reading. Hence, it was not only the meaning but also the specific melody of a language that influenced my selection. For instance, a particular strophe that I found useful in English had not necessarily the same effect in French and vice versa.

After my broad selection of texts from the selected editions, Kent in turn had a rather comprehensive recorded material to choose from when he worked out the electroacoustic part (which will be described further below). The mixture of languages and the different female voices created an interesting web of sound qualities and melodies that blended well with the recorders and the concrete sound material. In the work, they first appear in the fourth valley and then from the sixth valley onwards. In the sections where the voices are mixed, such as in the sixth valley, Kent explains that his intention was that the voices should sound independent from each other and that they talk past each other. "There is a feeling that they are distributed randomly and don't listen to each other in a kind of polyphony, but they are anyway placed in such a way that you can hear almost everything they say and that creates a dialogue character" (recorded conversation, 2022). Further Kent's work was not only about what they say but also how they speak; e.g., Katt Hernandez reads fast with a lot of energy whereas Nina Jeppsson reads more slowly, so Kent continues: "it was a compositional work to balance between the different expressions" (recorded conversation, 2022). In addition to the recorded voices, fragments of Attar's text are also included in the work through Katarina's and my voices spoken live on stage in French and English.

Breathing

There is a long tradition within Sufism to use breathing as a spiritual practice to connect deeper to the unconscious parts of the mind. Throughout the poem, Attar frequently refers to breathing which, according to the Sufi tradition, marks not only the beginning and end of life but also represents the prerequisite for the world's very creation. *His breathing made the world's bright lights appear* (Attar, 2011, p. 19). Breathing is of course central also to flute playing and became a recurring and expressive feature of the work. Both visual and auditive, breathing can be seen as a choreomusical action *per se*. Depending on where in the performance they appear, the breathings are coloured and shaped in close relation to the text as will be described below.

Developing the musical materials

With Isaksson's consent to the musical adaptation, I began to work through each part of the music. My interpretation of the poem greatly influenced how the musical material took shape. However, the creative process had to be described from a holistic perspective since the different artforms constantly influenced each other. As will be further described below, the creative process led to more substantial adaptions of *Les sept vallées* than was first planned. Also, my methods for reworking the recorder part sometimes took a more experimental turn than I had first envisaged. It was important to me that the new material would blend well with Isaksson's music and at the same time contribute something new. I often strived for a darker tone, a kind of resistance in the music, which was based on my interpretation of the text.

In terms of methods and basis for change, I have approached all valleys in *Les sept vallées* in different ways. As a result, some of the valleys in my new score have remained closer in form to Isaksson's score than others. A recurring method I used to adapt the recorder part was to improvise on *Les sept vallées*, often with a particular idea or concept as a base, such as maintaining the rhythmic structure, extending phrases, or focusing on a mental image from reading the poem. I always had the choreomusical perspective in mind, and also worked from movement to sound to create new material; the multimodal approach was well anchored in me since the *Fragmente*-project and generated several combinations of extended playing techniques and choreographic gestures to the new material.

Furthermore, all kinds of bird sounds and movements were used as a source of inspiration. I recorded the improvisations and wrote down ideas that I found interesting. I continued to develop the music until it reached an organic form. The improvisations were also highly influenced by my experience of performing *Les sept vallées*, my embodied knowledge as a musician, and the affordances of my instruments. In short, the new version of the score, while based on the original composition, transformed the notated structures into a different music that emerged from my immediate interaction with the affordances of the recorders. Although improvisation proved to be an effective way to create new material, all seven movements are, with one exception (see the fifth valley), fully composed and notated.

As soon as I had finished one valley, Kent and I started working on the electroacoustic part. Kent was most of the time unable to join the rehearsals, instead we communicated ideas and concepts via e-mail, zoom or phone. In the same way that I approached the recorder part, the work of developing the electroacoustic part of the valleys required different methods. At times it came to be a process of reducing and carving out material from an initially rich first electroacoustic sketch and sometimes it was more about building further on and adding more layers to the material. Electroacoustic sketches were sent back and forth several times between us and were also affected by the ongoing choreomuscial rehearsals. As the work progressed, I could provide Kent with

more and more detailed ideas and concepts for the electroacoustic music. Unlike the typical complementary collaboration between a musician and a composer, here, our roles were reversed in that I provided the scores, which Kent in turn interpreted in creating electroacoustic sketches, which we continued to work on together. This kind of discursive dialogue, and more integrative way of working together, meant that we developed not only new collaborative methods and approaches, leading to the creation of the final score, but also the formation of a shared voice.

All in all, the concept for the electroacoustic part changed from a kind of musical scenography to become a throughout composed material representing its own voice in the choreomusical interaction and in the work as a whole. On site in Studio Acusticum's Black Box, Kent worked out the final timing of the electroacoustic part of the entire work and formed its spatialisation.

The creation of the musical material has included a combination of transformation, expansion and composition, but also a continuous choreomusical interaction between music – dance – image – sound – space. The overall procedure had an immediate connection to Godøy's proposed bidirectional connection between motor imagery and musical imagery (see Chapter II, p. 23). The idea of gestural-sonic objects thus constituted the very premise of the choreomusical composition. This rather complex artistic process went on in parallel with the reading and interpretation of the multifaceted text that could not be conveyed in a simple way; its rich content requires a multitude of layers. The overarching composition and balance between the artistic expressions was something we worked on throughout the creative process but our periods of joint rehearsals at place in Studio Acusticum were crucial to move forward in the working process.

The seven valleys and their framing

Below follows a presentation of the work's different parts; their relation to the poem, and how they have been created musically, interdisciplinary, and scenically. As far as possible, I have tried to follow a chronologic development of the creative process, viewed from my perspective. In this section, *Les sept vallées* is referred to as "LSV" and the new score as "CTB". A video documentation of the full performance is presented in the Research Catalogue.

Prologue

When the various birds in the poem realise how difficult the task is, as mentioned above, they come up with various excuses for not setting out on the journey, such as the Nightingale who is

too attached to her rose; the Duck who claims she must always stay close to the water and the Finch who blames her lack of strength and courage. Hoopoe replies that the birds' arguments only hinder them from embarking on their spiritual path, and eventually manages to convince them to travel despite their objections. This opening of the poem is represented by the Prologue of the performance which contains only electroacoustic music and pre-recorded voices and is played as the audience enters the Black Box studio.

Hence, the performance space is already active when the audience enters; the video projections show curtains that move slowly, and mumbling voices can be heard from the loudspeakers. *A hundred thousand veils of darkness and light hang between that Beloved and us* (Attar, 2017, p. 44). It was our intention to make clear already at the outset of the performance that spoken words as well as electroacoustic sounds form part of the work. After a while, Katarina's and my pre-recorded voices can be heard in form of the birds' questions and Hoopoe's answers.

The first valley

In the poem, the first valley *La vallée du Désir* is described as a place that will *plague you at every turn... stir and transform your senses*, offering *no room for pride or self-importance*. A place where *the wandering parrot changes into a common fly* (Attar, 2017, p. 253).

The dancer's choreography
The overall choreographic concept of the first valley, worked out by Åsa already in 2019 for LSV, remained the same throughout the entire process. The dancer's choreography takes place on the same spot of the floor, where she begins curled up, a metaphoric image of an egg from which isolated body parts of a bird – beak, claw, wing – unfold and go back again in alternately explosive and slow movements. The movements successively develop into turns and twists until the dancer reaches a position where she stands on her toes with raised arms.

Developing the recorder part
Musically, the first valley of LSV, composed for soprano recorder has a searching character. The score looks deceptively simple, but requires a careful shaping of phrases and attention to keeping the pitch. In this movement, I would not be able to perform any choreography while playing. However, in this staged context, I wanted to be able to shift focus from the instrument–score interaction to a choreomusical interaction between music–body–environment. I understand the first valley as an unfamiliar and barren world, a truly difficult place to be. I wanted to convey this musically which made me look for a resistance in the very playing, linked to the content of the text. *Stand empty-handed, and the cleansing of your heart begins* (Attar, 2017, p. 253). I was inspired by the idea of being empty-handed, deprived of the opportunity to express or act with

my full register. The choreography's metaphoric image of an egg also inspired me to think of a primitive, dry and still undeveloped sound world; here the birds are just in the very beginning of their journey.

Much of the material in this valley came about through my experimentation with physical gestures. Throughout the movement I use a variety of extended techniques and sound effects: 1) *Blowing into the labium of the recorder.* This technique offers a rich dynamic range on the recorder and a type of sound quality that is not as sensitive to bodily movements as traditional playing. 2) *Various suppressed, muted and dry articulations* (used, for example, in bars 15–22, Figure 21. 3) *Tapping with two finger rings on the body of the recorder.* This technique produces a percussive sound reminiscent of the pecking of a woodpecker, see Figure 20, bar 31. 4) *Soft multiphonics* (see Figure 21, bars 14 and 25). The technique is created by closing the hole under the foot of the recorder. 5) *Striking the instrument with a ring.* This technique is used in the three accented notes in bar 24 (see Figure 21), and corresponds to the soft trills in bar 23 of the LSV (see Figure 22). 6) *Audible inhalations and exhalations.* The valley starts with three audible breaths which also represent the beginning of the interaction between the two performers. These first breaths are inspired by a type of Sufi breathing that takes the form of a very long inhalation followed by a short energetic exhalation.

Figure 19. *Les sept vallées*, La vallée de la Quête, bars 29–31.

Figure 20. *The Conference of the Birds*, La vallée du Désir, bars 30–31.

Figure 21. *The Conference of the Birds*, La vallée du Désir, bars 13–25. The lower staff in the score marks the electroacoustic part.

Figure 22. *Les sept vallées*, La vallée de la Quête, bars 8–24.

As the excerpts from LSV and CTB above show, the overall musical structure of the new version of the first valley remains largely the same as in the LSV. But by changing the playing techniques, the musical character of the new score is transformed into something radically different that better corresponds to my own reading and interpretation of the text.

Developing the choreomusical interaction

The dancer's choreography, initially developed for LSV turned out to work really well also with CTB and we continued to refine the choreomuscial interaction together with Katarina. Positioned centre stage in a curled-up position, Katarina is not able to see much of me. As a way to facilitate the choreomusical interaction, I am sitting on a stool close to the edge of the stage, with my back towards the audience.

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My choreography in this valley is developed on the basis of my natural playing gestures. Åsa observed that the extended playing techniques *per se* generate a choreographic expression and suggested that I just "show them" to the audience. I did not need to change much in my way of playing but began to perform the movements more consciously. The musical material holds in itself a natural flexibility, and the timing worked well along with the choreography in which I turn my body either to the left or the right side, enabling the audience behind me to see how the different sounds are produced. Similarly to Katarina's choreography, I move in a more explosive manner when turning outwards and in a slower tempo when turning back. It is also a pattern that resembles the shape of the initial breaths.

Figure 23. Rehearsal of the first valley.

Figure 24. Rehearsal of the first valley.

The two performers act individually but their respective materials are closely intertwined. The choreomusical interaction is structured around impulses, often initiated by the musician, which the dancer reacts to. This *cause–effect* relationship is carried out with a certain delay, consciously performed, to underline the physical distance between us.[62] In this valley, we strived to convey an expression of being on your guard in an unfamiliar world, but also of coming forward, and at the end, standing ready for the next challenge (the next valley).

Developing the electroacoustic part

Hence, when Kent and I began to work with the electroacoustic part of this valley, the overall concept for the choreomusical interaction was already worked out. Based on our choreomusical experimentation, I had very concrete ideas of what would work and Kent asked me to create a graphic score including suggestions for form, length, structure, and sound qualities. It turned out to be an efficient method. The graphic score served as a material that Kent in turn could interpret, resulting in a very sparse electronic part based upon manipulated recorder sounds, wind, the sounds of birds' wings, and percussive effects. The electroacoustic music follows the timing and impulses of the recorder part and creates the necessary resonance and space for both performers' choreography. It was now clear that what we needed was not a general electroacoustic ambience, as we had thought earlier on, but in fact an electroacoustic music that follows the choreomusical interplay on a much more detailed level.

Video and staging

The two main projectors create a light formation consisting of a large light triangle, in which Katarina is positioned, and a smaller, dark triangle, where I am seated. In this first valley, we wanted to focus on the two performers' interaction; the video frames the scene and creates a feeling of a different world, the only movement being the flutter of a thin fabric. The choreography together with the breathing that also constitutes a part of Katarina's choreography, gives something of a ritual and circular character to the movement. It has also a textual implication, that of a birth, a beginning of something new. Without really knowing it, the two characters are like one united body already here. Their twists and turns are connected: when one turns, the other follows in the same direction. The distance between the performers has to do with the text; they travel together, but each of the birds experiences an individual journey. To me, the choreomusical material now forms a logical beginning of the journey for both performers; the two birds in this first valley represent two different stages of spiritual development, the yet unexperienced (the Wayfarer) versus the sage and more experienced (Hoopoe).

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[62] A concept Åsa and I developed already in the *Fragmente*-project.

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The second valley

In this valley, *La vallée de l'Amour* the birds *drown in fire … because a true lover is one with fire* (Attar, 2017, p. 262). This is an important step in the spiritual journey, an anticipation of the divine love and the fire of Simorgh into which the birds throw themselves in the end of the poem.

Here, right and wrong are mates,
because in love two becomes one.

In this valley, love is fire, mind is smoke.
When love arrives, reason flees.

(Attar, 2017, pp. 262–263)

<u>Developing the music</u>
I have always associated the second movement of LSV, composed for soprano recorder, with a less complicated side of love: a young budding love full of curiosity and energy. In CTB, I therefore wanted to emphasise what I read as a dramatic and unpredictable tone in the poem where reason flies like an uncontrollable fire. Early on, we had the idea not to include the dancer in this movement but instead establish the relation between the musician and the video scenography.

I wanted to maintain the energy and rhythmical base of LSV and at the same time introduce other qualities to the music; the fire can have many faces such as flames, ardour, sparks, coal, flares and smoke. In the first section of the music, my transformation of the score was inspired by the embedded duality in the poem; *love is fire – mind is smoke*. Smoke would come out as a kind of thinner response to fire. This image gave the idea to shift between what is already there in LSV and sections of micro-intervals within a less expansive register (marked with blue dashes). The energy is maintained but the micro tonality gives a kind of oblique and irregular character to the music. The microtones are selected based on what works idiomatically on the instrument in order to keep the natural ease of the flute's semiquaver figures.
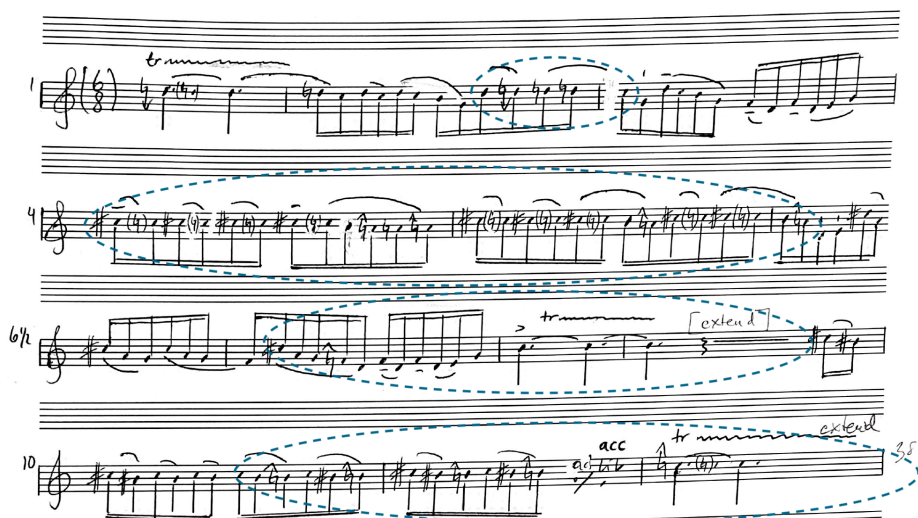
Figure 25. *The Conference of the Birds,* La vallée de l'Amour, bars 1–11.

Based on a very rough graphical first sketch of the score, Kent developed an electroacoustic part mainly consisting of manipulated recorder sounds and sounds of burning and crackling wood. Passages notated as slow vibrato in LSV, such as those in bars 21–22 and 27–28 (Figure 26), are in CTB transformed into irregular material that the player can extend according to the situation (bars 20 and 25–26, Figure 27), which also allows the electroacoustic part to resonate in the room.

Figure 26. *Les sept vallées,* La vallée de l'Amour, bars 21–26.

Figure 27. *The Conference of the Birds,* La vallée de l'Amour, bars 16–26.

The stretched-out timing of the musical phrases is even more developed in the second section of the valley; a passage of more improvisational character without equivalent in LSV, from which I also go back to play a short coda from the first section of the valley. In the second section, I use unsynchronised movements in fingers and air flow, a technique that I, in this context, associate with crackling wood from which sparks can arise and flame up (bar 45, Figure 28).
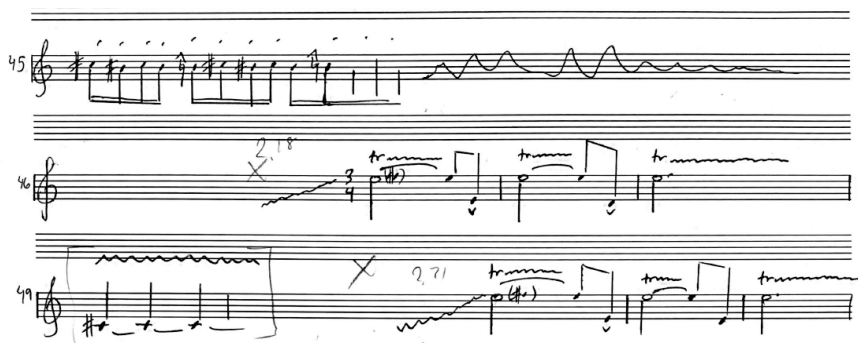
Figure 28. *The Conference of the Birds,* La vallée de l'Amour, bars 45–52.

The changes I made in this valley have been developed to a great extent with the affordances and idiomaticity of the recorder as a base. They are also strongly linked to my interpretation of the poem. Hoopoe's Latin name, *Upupa epops* is just like its English name, an onomatopoetic imitation of its cry. I found it close in character to the sound of my flute and have therefore interwoven Hoopoe's cry in my part (bar 57, Figure 29). As the birds' guide throughout the journey towards the divine love, it makes sense that it is in La vallée de l'amour her natural voice is heard.

Love is the business of the experienced.
Love is the business of the free.

(Attar, 2017, p. 264)

Figure 29. *The Conference of the Birds,* La vallée de l'Amour, bars 57–58.

Video as a choreomusical co-player
The video scenography is omnipresent in the performance and, as mentioned above, takes part in the choreomusical interplay. The development of the second valley is a particularly clear example of how we elaborated the dynamic relation between all the artforms. In the second valley, we wanted to establish a relation between the video scenography and Hoopoe's figure. I would stand at the right side of the stage, a position from where I would be able to follow the pace of the moving images in the video.

Once in place in Studio Acusticum we experienced that Lene's first suggested images of fire and the music together created no tension, the materials rather deprived each other of their impact. Instead, Lene began elaborating a material based on the shootings we carried out in early 2020. She created a video choreography of bird-like wing figurations based on Åsa's dancing arms in a

grey-white colour scale, which immediately generated a both contrasting and strong relation between the music/musician and the video. In fact, this change had further implications for the performance as a whole, since our costume designer Jara then suggested that I move my "home position" to the centre front of the stage, instead of at the side. It was interesting how that change made Hoopoe's character more distinct, not only in the second valley but in the performance as a whole. As a result of Hoopoe's central position in the second valley, the bird-like wings in the video appear to be hers and, together with Hoopoe's costume design, form an extended three-dimensional figure. This in turn inspired us to work further on developing my choreography on a micro level, even in the valleys where I "only" play.

Only later did I realise that the very active, and sometimes explosive recorder part together with the gracefully slower moving white-grey-coloured bird shapes in the video, in a way relates to Attar's fire–smoke metaphor. Hence, the duality Attar expresses in the poem is represented in the auditive material by a relation between ordinary tones and microtones as well as by the two sections of the movement. The same duality is also embodied as a choreomusical interaction between the video scenography and the music/the musician. Early on, I wrote in my project diary that I wanted to create a two-part material for the recorder, but the video scenography contributes to an even more expanded and at the same time united form in which Hoopoe manifests herself in a choreomusical whole.

The third valley

In *La vallée de la Connaissance* you will experience *boundless myriad roads unfurling in every direction* (Attar, 2017, p. 272).

<u>The choreomusical interplay</u>
The dancer's choreography plays with gestures of a variety of birds which appear and disappear behind the hanging cloths or the projection screens. The dancer begins at the back of the stage and uses a successively larger area of the performance space. Before she disappears in the end of the valley, she has moved around the entire stage. *We each travel our own path; no two birds journey the same* (Attar, 2017, p. 272). According to the choreographic overall concept, the dancer develops her freedom (her spiritual development) successively and stepwise and has in this valley not yet "permission" to use her arms. The choreography is instead based on the torso, legs, feet, head and facial expression.

The interaction between the performers has a clear cause–effect relation where impulses are given by both performers. During Åsa's and my choreomusical elaborations, I noticed it was easier for Åsa to relate her movements and her timing to the music when it offered clear phrases and

contrasts, such as long notes followed by quick shifts in character, multiphonics, trills and quick short figures. I began to adapt the musical material with this insight in my mind. The second valley of LSV composed for alto recorder, already contains many of these contrasting effects. However, I took hold of what I regarded as the many possible paths in the score, some longer and some shorter, and made them develop in different directions. Just like in the other movements, the new material was developed through improvisations and found its final form through the choreomusical interplay. The musical timing is flexible already in LSV which worked really well for our choreomusical context.
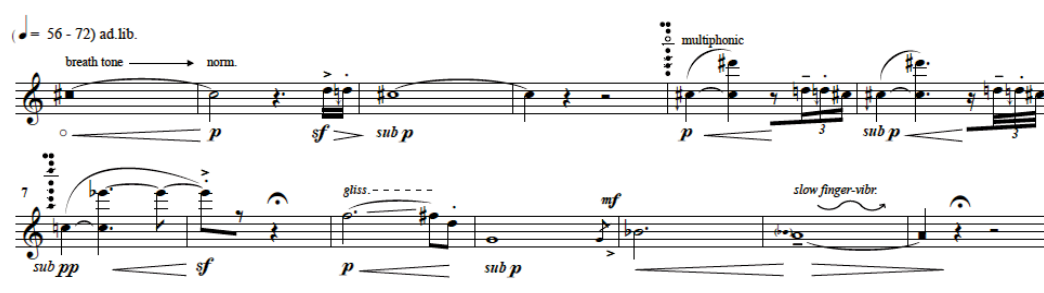
Figure 30. *Les sept vallées,* La vallée de la Connaissance, bars 1–13.

Figure 31. *The Conference of the Birds,* La vallée de la Connaissance, bars 1–14.

The flexible and the rather improvisational choreomusical interplay Åsa and I had developed for a long time needed to be more fixed when Katarina joined the project. Nevertheless, apart from the very beginning of the valley, the dancer's choreography was rather loose until late in the process. The choreomusical interaction was worked out as a continuous process of merging the materials together, wherein also my choreography came to develop little by little. It is the sound of the recorder that entices the hesitating birds to come out of their hiding places, and Åsa wanted me to continuously push Katarina's many characters through the valley not only with my sound but also physically. Towards the end of the valley, I have also moved around the entire stage. When I am finally the only one left, just like Katarina, I use the hanging cloths to hide behind and reappear from.

A recurrent difficulty in the process was that the musician–dancer interaction in some of the valleys was developed long before the electroacoustic part was completed. To eventually balance the choreomusical structure was something of a trial-and-error process from which we also gained insights. When Kent's first sketch of the third valley came, it felt too overloaded and active in relation to the interaction between musician and dancer. The "free" spaces in the recorder part were already "occupied" by the dancer's impulses. Inspired of Jila Mossaed's poem, I asked Kent to instead create a sparse electroacoustic music, based on night forest sounds that could go on as one long coherent file independent of our interaction.

Djupt i skogens mörker
Rinner vinet
ur
månens navel

Varje löv
en törstig tunga
och skogen i extas

(Mossaed, 2020, pp. 74–75)

However, as the rehearsals progressed, I experienced the electroacoustic part as too passive, also in relation to the more incorporated role of the electroacoustic parts in the other valleys. To further support the choreomusical interplay, additional details were developed along the way and through the collaborative elaborations. What I particularly wanted to emphasise more in the musical material was the multiphonics. The roads of *La vallée de la Connaissance* split constantly into a multitude of paths. In my (and perhaps also in Madeleine's) interpretation, the multiphonics are connected to the splits in the poem. *Here, knowledge splits into unnumbered insights* (Attar, 2017, p. 272). Successively adding various details to the choreomusical interplay was a way to strengthen the performers' characters, and in the end, bring forth artistic nerve in the performance situation.

The fourth valley

Attar describes the fourth valley *La vallée de la Plénitude* with wide brush strokes: *From this valley's air of self-sufficiency surges a storm that ravages whole countries in one blow. Here, the seven seas are but a puddle, the seven planets are just a spark… If the sky crashes down and the stars fall*

like rain, here, nothing more than a single leaf has floated from a tree. If everything is erased, from the moonfish to the moon, here, it's as if an ant has injured its leg in a well (Attar, 2017, pp. 280–281).[63] For the title of this valley, Leili Anvar employs the French word "plénitude" (Eng: fullness) as the translation of the Persian term "esteghnâ" which usually refers to God's self-sufficiency, but as Anvar comments, the root of the word also refers to richness. In short, it implicates that the self-sufficient divine exists in all and everything, also in the human soul. Without this fundamental understanding of the very existence, it is not possible to continue the journey (Anvar, 2014, p. 285).

Developing the music
The fourth valley of LSV composed for alto recorder is a movement based on fast semiquavers or triplets, multiphonics, glissandi, flutter-tongue effects and sections in which the performer both plays and sings. There is also a slow passage, a two-part section (recorder and voice), in the middle of the movement before the quick tempo resumes. The choreomusical concept in the fourth valley was initially (as worked out to LSV) based on the contrast between the recorder's fast notes and a choreography mainly carried out in slow-motion. Although the dancer would move slowly, the choreography was inspired by something that in fact moves fast forward during a considerable time such as migratory birds or a long-distance train.

When working on the fourth valley's new recorder part, I knew I needed long phrases, and I wanted to hold on to the fast notes in the LSV score. I applied a new compositional technique by cutting the flute part of LSV into short phrases, mixing them and placing them separately on a sheet of white paper. I then improvised around the material until I had a new organic form consisting of a combination of new material and the already composed segments. Through this patchwork technique I developed a completely new musical form based on the idea of lengthening the phrases in order to provide space for the dancer's choreography. It was natural to apply different methods of approaching the flute part in the different valleys; the methods themselves were always inspired by and somehow related to the text.

Quand souffle le vent glacial de L'Indifférence, qui ravage un pays entier en un instant (Anvar, 2014, p. 285). As an inspiration for the electroacoustic part, I particularly focused on the icy wind, a tempest that would ravage whole countries in a blow; based on the pre-recorded voices and manipulated sounds from the flute part, the electroacoustic music in this valley would represent a kind of verbal storm mixing all languages and voices together. At an early stage, Kent and I decided that the text of the poem should be introduced from the fourth valley onwards. Little by little, the recorded voices, together with quotes from the poem read by Katarina and me, gained an increasing importance in the work. Once established, the recorded and cited

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[63] Placed in the very centre of the seven stages towards Simorgh, *La vallée de la Plénitude* signifies for Attar the detachment of all ordinary requirements. The absence of desire means also a richness; the soul is independent, saturated with the presence of the divine.

elements of the text constitute a salient foundation in the work (though not in the fifth valley). In the fourth valley, the electroacoustic "wind of voices" interrupts at times the flute for a moment, even though manipulated semiquavers from the flute part then often also can be heard. Kent created the wind of voices by mixing the recordings made by Hernandez (English), Jeanelle (French), Jeppsson (Swedish) and Mossaed (Persian) with manipulated recorder sounds.

The slower two part-section in LSV is in the CTB score replaced with a passage placed at the very end of the valley in which only Mossaed's voice is accompanied by a long glissando in the flute that ends up in an extended drone. When Mossaed stops reading, the drone is taken over by the electroacoustic part, upon which I read passages live from the fourth valley in English and French. Mossaed's reading in Persian often serves as a bridge between the artforms and occurs in what I would refer to as specially charged places of the work.

Hence the valley includes different layers of text. In fact, the fourth valley also begins with spoken text. Before the flute's fast notes and the electroacoustic wind begin, I have added some isolated "calls" in the flute part, a kind of divination of what to come. My idea was to let the electroacoustic part react between the flute's calls. However, none of the sounds Kent and I tried out felt really right. Instead, I decided to let Katarina pose questions. When Katarina's Wayfarer-figure comes running into the stage and calls out her questions, she sets words to the birds' many doubts along the entire journey. Her questions are answered by Hoopoe, as throughout the poem, but here through the sound of the flute. The dialogue supports the direct relation between the birds but also between the materials in the performance.

Figure 32: *The Conference of the Birds*, La vallée de la Plénitude, bars 1–5.

<u>The choreography and choreomusical interplay</u>
The dancer's choreography eventually came to develop into something very different from what I first described: equipped with a bag pack and a wing, Katarina's bird figure is in this valley in a clearly more developed stage. In fact, the dancer's spiritual evolution is in the performance also connected to the costumes. In the first and third valleys, Katarina wears only a bodysuit and leggings whereas here she is equipped with a pilot-like garment, a small backpack and, attached to that, a wing. When the flute's fast notes begin, the dancer slides with the help of the backpack on the floor along the back side of the stage. Her wing is still folded and kept tight to the body. When Katarina eventually rises, spins and turns, in different places of the stage, her wing unfolds

in such a way that her character can be associated with dervish dancers. My position, at the music stand, allows Katarina to move around and use the full stage space.

Clearly taking part in the choreomusical interplay, the video in the fourth valley consists of a kind of industrially inspired rotating wheel; a train also appears and moves in the opposite direction of Katarina's first slide on the floor. Hence, the initial choreographic metaphor of a train came to take a more concrete form in the video material.

The fifth valley

The fifth valley *La vallée de l'Unicité* has a central role in the poem. Here, the birds understand that they need to lose themselves in order to become one with everything. To understand oneself as a part of a whole is to get a foretaste of being finally united with what Attar refers to as the Great Ocean. To convey this unity and diversified whole, we aimed to find a new way of intertwining the artistic expressions.

This is not a place for uniformity;
here you find unity in diversity.

Since all is one, there is no two.
There is no me apart from you.

(Attar, 2017, pp. 290–291)

The musical material of LSV is based on playing techniques where the performer holds the tenor recorder as a traverso flute and alternates between blowing into the finger holes and the labium. This creates an overall windy sound. Together with finger articulations, trills, glissandi and frequent pauses, the fifth valley of LSV has a flexible, dynamic and yet throughout soft character. The choreomusical interaction concept that Åsa and I worked on the most in relation to LSV was to let the musician "play" the movements of the dancer so that the two would be experienced as a unit.

Developing the choreomusical strategy
Initially I did not feel any need to make changes in the flute part nor to add any electroacoustic music. The fifth valley of LSV was already flexible and open in its form and could easily work within a choreomusical context. Only by amplifying the recorder, much could be done in terms of working with sound qualities and spatialisation. The difficulty lay rather in developing a

choreomusical strategy and form in relation to the content of the text. Another difficulty was to make all the musical nuances come through in this staged multidisciplinary format.

We worked out ways to concretely allow the dancer's movements to help emphasise the characteristics of the different gestural-sonic objects. For example, impulsive objects from the flute, such as repeated finger-taps, were taken over, enlarged and extended by the dancer's steps on the floor (marked in blue).

Figure 33. *The Conference of the Birds,* La Vallée de l'Unicité bars 32–33.

Similarly, a sustained windy sonic object, initiated by the flute, could be taken over both visually and aurally by the dancer by having her pull a foot across the floor.
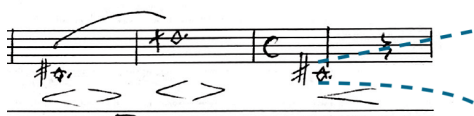
Figure 34. *The Conference of the Birds,* La Vallée de l'Unicité bars 22–24.

During a rehearsal, Åsa began to make additional sounds with a newspaper; obviously the newspaper only worked as an example of a rustling material. Handling the newspaper in various ways entailed interesting choreographic expressions and, at the same time, offered a wider palette of sounds, that could be produced as a part of the choreomusical interplay. But altogether, just as the flute, the dancer's sounds would need to be amplified in order to take active part in the creation of the music. With the sounds of both performers amplified, we would achieve a new type of choreomusical relation and intertwined whole.

Costumes and stage
The valleys were not developed in a strict chronological order (from valley 1–7), as they are presented here. During the creative process, all artforms affected each other continuously. One example is the bird's wing that Katarina uses in this valley, initially created as a way for her to make additional sounds, and eventually assuming a role in the choreography of both the fourth and the fifth valleys while also working as a projection surface. Our costume designer Jara's sketches and collection of photos and images were inspiring, including old photos of humans' first attempts to fly, early airplanes, and diverse wing constructions, photos and images of birds, design clothes, mosaic patterns and much more. However, it was in relation to the choreomusical work of the fifth valley that we decided to create a bird's wing of paper for Katarina to dance and play with, an object that could be left on stage after the fifth valley. Eventually, we realised that,

for practical reasons, the wing had to be in place and become a part of the choreography already in the fourth valley, as described above. Jara found a strong fabric resembling the type of fabric used in parachutes holding a rustling quality. A difficult circumstance was of course that Jara (who lives in Reykjavik) could not come to Sweden during the COVID-19 pandemic, so we worked out the concept for the fifth valley long before it could be worked out properly.

In November 2021, we could finally gather in Piteå and begin to work with a first prototype of the wing and try out the amplification. Katarina's sounds are amplified with an omnidirectional microphone standing close to her on the floor. The choreomusical duet came to develop into an intertwined material between the performers but takes place at a long distance. Hoopoe is sitting on the floor, embedded in the white projection area on the left side of the stage, and the Wayfarer has her position on the right side of the stage in front of the black projection screen.

Encouraged by Hoopoe and her flute, the Wayfarer discovers during this valley her capability of using her wings to fly and to connect with the world. This connection is underlined also visually; the wing's light colour and flexible quality also serves as a projection surface. With their white costumes, the two performers constitute (the Wayfarer's wing is reminiscent of Hoopoe's long white skirt), a unity, with the entire stage space through the video projections. The video material that Lene has made use of here is a further development of the material used in the second valley – the birds are now in a more developed stage of their path.

Figure 35. Katarina and the wing in the fifth valley (rehearsal). Photo: Kråkkullen Produktion/Anders Westergren.

<u>Making music together</u>

All elements are interdependent in this valley: the choreography and timing of the movements, the features and possibilities of the wing, the phrasing of the flute part. It took a while to get to the point where we could coordinate the concept of extended gestural-sonic objects as compound units of both sound and movement and start "making music" together.

During one of our elaborations with the first prototype of the wing, I suggested that Katarina would carry out a loop of gestures. A similar loop is also used in the sixth valley (further described below) and creates a choreomusical relationship that gives stability and autonomy to both performers. Whereas the flute part does not repeat anything, the choreography repeats a given pattern which gives a kind of kaleidoscopic, continuously shifting, choreomusical relation. Sometimes deviations were made from that movement pattern, but as a basis Katarina carries out a loop of gestures, sitting on the floor. She produces sounds with the wing but also creates other gestural-sonic objects by clapping her hand on her chest, running her fingers on the floor and taking deep audible breaths. When our elaborations continued, we decided to include an improvisation for both performers towards the end of the valley, something we had not used in any of the other valleys. Here we relate more freely to our respective materials, and Katarina also frees herself from the wing, leaving it on the stage as a shell.

Hence, instead of preparing a new flute part as I did in the other valleys, I developed the musical material of the fifth valley together with Katarina and Åsa, which affected not only the sounding elements but also the overall timing and rhythmical structure of the movement. Through the choreomusical process the movement expanded and developed, resulting, to a higher degree than in the other movements, in a freer musical form that becomes different in each performance. However, it was decided that Hoopoe begins the movement alone – the Wayfarer joining only in bar 18 – in order to establish the musical material as such before the choreomusical duet begins. The figure below shows an example of how the choreomusical composition can take form.

Figure 36. *Les sept vallées,* La vallée de l'Unité bars 14–26.

In the other valleys, I have the double role of being choreographed (on either a micro or macro level) while also playing. However, in this valley we have created an inverse relation between us as it is Katarina who carries out the double role; her sounding choreography creates a duet with the

flute. Playing with the concept of gestural-sonic object in this way also serves to make the audience more aware of the multimodal qualities of gesture. It might also emphasise the kind of small-scale choreography I carry out, as the extended playing techniques used in this movement (various windy sounds, in- and exhales, soft finger-taps) imply a movement pattern in my performing body.

The sixth valley

Everything you thought you understood in the fifth valley is now gone, *when you arrive here in wonderment, you arrive already lost and will be yet more lost… Though there is no night here, nor day, you ache night and day, yearn and burn* (Attar, 2017, p. 298).

<u>Developing the flute part</u>
The sixth valley of LSV, composed for sopranino recorder, is an energetic movement full of fast glissandi, flutter-tongue effects and sharp accents, a character I wanted to hold on to. To balance the sixth valley in relation to how the other valleys had come to develop, it needed to expand considerably, but I was lost in where to start and how to move on. I made an attempt to compose with pen and paper, which I soon realised was not the right way to go. It was clearly through the playing itself, through the affordances of the instruments, and through my embodied knowledge as musician, that I could develop new material. I wanted to achieve a sense of real physical stress. Eventually I found a way forward by improvising around one short excerpt of LSV at a time. This resulted in a new flute part in which the sixth valley of LSV lies as a basic structure (in its original order) and where new material has been inserted between the phrases including new rhythmical structures, an expanded register and new elements of audible inhales and text fragments.

Figure 37. *The Conference of the Birds,* La Vallée de la Perplexité bars 1–14.

Text as musical material

When selecting text excerpts to cite in performance I took the liberty to sometimes adapt the text so that it would fit better into the musical flow. *Sharp as a sword* is taken from a longer sentence in Wolpé's translation *Here, every sight is as sharp as a sword* (Attar, 2017, p. 298) which both connects to the sharp sound of the sopranino recorder and to the birds' bewildered state in this valley. The crispy quality of *Frozen fire sizzles from pain* is also close in character to the musical phrasing in the movement. This expression is a reduced version of the poem's longer phrase:

Here, there is fire, but it is frozen;
There is ice, but it sizzles from pain.

(Attar, 2017, p. 298)

The two performers' characters are also supported and underlined by the added dialogues. Also here, I have reduced the text of Wolpé's translation:

If they ask you; Are you drunk or no?
Do you exist or no?
...
You will respond: I know nothing,
...
I am neither devout nor faithless.
I don't know who I am.

(Attar, 2017, p. 298)

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I have here transformed the text material into more isolated phrases, to more closely resemble the character of the gestural-sonic objects in the score:

Hoopoe: *Are you drunk?*
Wayfarer: *I don't know!*
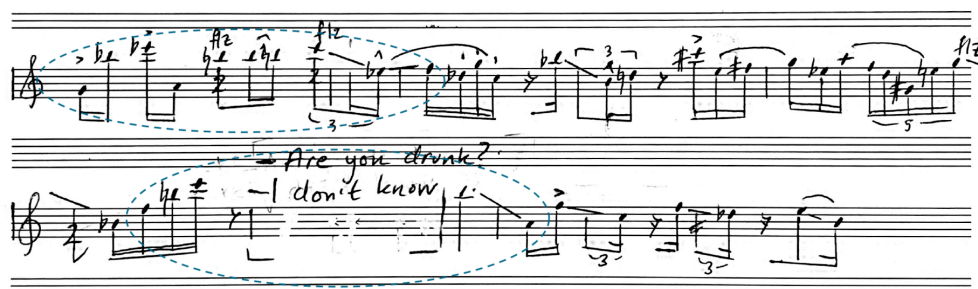...
Hoopoe: *Do you exist?*
Wayfarer: *I know nothing!*

Figure 38. *The Conference of the Birds,* La Vallée de la Perplexité bars 45–49.

In other places, I have used the exact translation, for example further into the movement where the music becomes more and more intense and complex until it reaches its peak. On the way to that specific point, I have replaced the flute by a phrase in French from Anvar's translation before the flute again takes over even more intensely.

Je ne sais rien, vraiment, de l'amour qui me tient
Mon cœur est plein d'amour et pourtant il est vide.

(Anvar, 2014, p. 301)

There is an embedded difficulty in switching between playing and speaking, and this of course also has an impact on the musical time flow and the choreomusical composition. The oscillation between playing and speaking offered me expanded means of expression and these shifts had to be worked out with the same care as the playing itself. To shift between playing, producing audible inhales and speaking created just the kind of physical effort I was aiming for. Also, the dancer's choreography is meant to bring about a physical effort and stress. However, these citations and dialogues also convey a certain playfulness and humorous aspect that we strove to bring forth in the performance.

Developing the choreomusical interaction
Independently of my work with the recorder part, Åsa and Katarina worked out a choreographic loop consisting of 28 movements based on bird parts – wing, beak, claw, head – and directions

through the body and the performance space. Åsa was of course familiar with the music of LSV but it was interesting how easily the two materials merged when we finally put them together. Despite the different media the two materials had a common temporality and pulse.
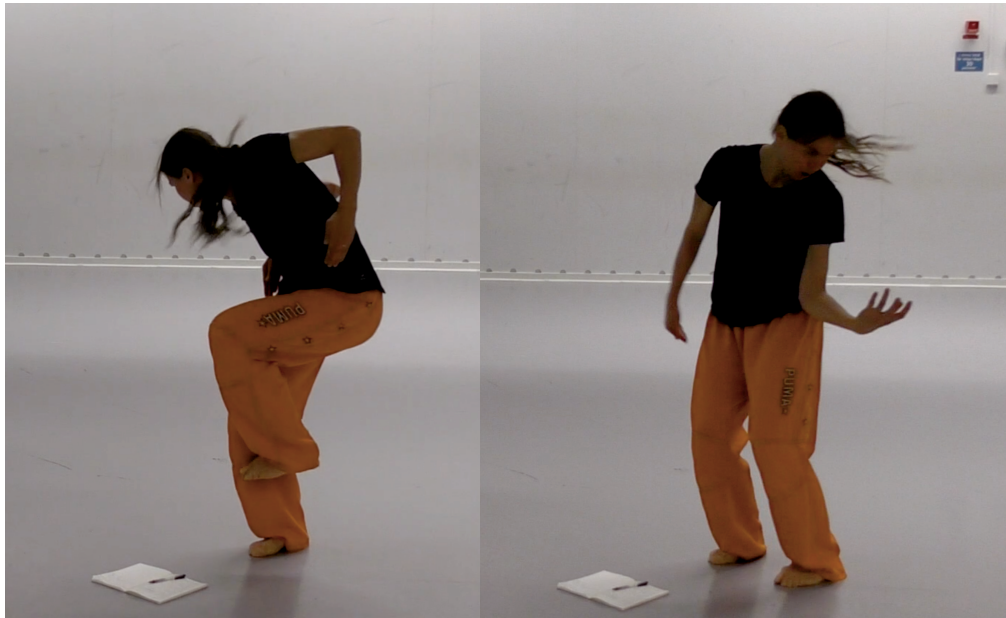

Figure 39. Katarina performs the loop of 28 movements (rehearsal).

In order not to lose energy, Katarina continues to move even during our spoken dialogues, her loop of gestures performed at an accelerating pace. Åsa liked the idea of having Katarina dance to the melodies of the different languages, which serves as an additional choreomusical layer. Little by little, we learnt to adjust the timing according to each situation; even though the material is given, there is also a natural and embedded flexibility in it. On site in Studio Acusticum's Black Box it was not a problem that Katarina came to have her position behind me as the choreomusical interplay then had found its organic form.

In the middle of the valley, the music reaches its climax and the electroacoustic part (which has been introduced little by little earlier in the movement) takes over. This B section of only electroacoustic music corresponds to the slower section that ends the movement in LSV. Kent has in this B section made the recorded voices develop during a longer time, and, in contrast to the fourth valley, the text and the melodies of the different languages come through more clearly.[64] Here, Kent's solution to emphasise the musicalisation of voices and languages also opened up the possibility for me to carry out a purely choreographic scene which also works as a transition into the next valley.

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[64] Lehmann (2006) gives several examples of how creators such as Brook, Goebbels, Cage and Cunningham have dealt with language material: either as an opportunity for an "independent musicality" transmitted by performers of different origins, or as technically manipulated "musical-architectonic constructions" (pp. 91–92).

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Lene's video material in the sixth valley is based on individual body parts that become smaller and smaller and multiply into thousands; finally, the separate parts cannot be perceived but the material associates instead to an Islamic mosaic pattern. The transition between the sixth and seventh valley and further into the Epilogue was a crucial and difficult part to shape. All the materials needed to be balanced together in an overarching form and at the same time be shaped according to an individual logic. This was a work that only could be done in close collaboration between all participating artists in place in the Black Box studio. It was easy to get stuck in each and every detail within the separate valleys. But in fact, what we needed to do here was rather to zoom out and look at the material from a distance. Kent and Lene suggested a form in which the transitions between the sixth and the seventh valley, as well as between the seventh valley and the Epilogue, were partly blurred through an overlapping of the electroacoustic music.

The seventh valley

In the seventh valley, the self disappears into the universe or as it is described here, in the Great Ocean. The Wayfarers are no longer confined by linear time; instead, they exist in both the past and the future. *Lose yourself in this ocean. Find solace in your lost state, and calming oblivion will embrace your heart* (Attar, 2017, p. 306).

Developing the flute part

When working with the flute part of the seventh valley, I inserted boxes of more improvisatory character into the original musical material (LSV). Of the huge number of birds that once began the journey in Attar's poem, only thirty birds reach the seventh valley. I imagined that the new material I inserted represented some of the birds' individual meetings with the ocean. Some birds glide in smoothly into the surface of the water whereas other birds experience it as a more difficult confrontation. The seventh valley of LSV, composed for tenor recorder, is based on long soft phrases including microtones, trills and glissandi. In contrast to the music of LSV, the added material allowed me to move while playing which was something we took advantage of when developing my choreography.

Figure 40. *The Conference of the Birds,* La Vallée de la Dénuement et de l'Anéantissement, bars 11–17.

<u>Developing the choreography</u>

Already from the B section of the sixth valley, the choreography is formed as if an external force swipes over the birds; they are not in full control of their own actions here. They begin the transition to the seventh valley in which they move in wave-like movements back and forth using the entire depth of the stage. *The Ocean's currents will become yours, too – its shining beauty, yours. You will be and not be. How can that be? It's beyond mind's comprehension* (Attar, 2017, p. 307). When the birds experience the ocean with its currents that toss and break, they can do nothing but go with them. Katarina's choreography contains, apart from the wave-like movements, also reminiscences of the previous valleys, as fragments of memories of the entire journey.

The electroacoustic music, based on manipulated recorder sounds from the same valley, overlaps my playing by filling out the gaps between the phrases. The structure of the musical material made it possible for us to develop a rather movable choreography for me in which I move back and forth over the entire stage, sometimes in parallel with Katarina, sometimes on my own; at times during playing and at times without playing.

<u>The electroacoustic bridge</u>

Shaping the ending was a question of both interpreting a difficult part of the poem and fulfilling the overarching form of the performance. In line with Kent's and Lene's suggestion, it was especially the electroacoustic music that came to bind together the last parts – from the B section of the sixth valley to the Epilogue. As it was first composed, the seventh valley did not include any text. To connect the last parts, Kent created an extra layer of the recorded voices that goes all the way from the B section of the sixth valley, through the entire seventh valley and further into the Epilogue. In that way the poem and the different voices in English, French, Persian and Swedish came to have an even more salient role in the performance as a whole. This in turn made it more logical to also begin the performance with excerpts from the poem. Even though we had discussed different alternatives of how to frame the seven valleys and the voice recordings were already done, the Prologue and the Epilogue were to a great extent shaped in collaboration with all participating artists in place in Studio Acusticum's Black Box.

Epilogue

Beyond the seventh valley, the birds see Simorgh and at the same time they see themselves in a reflection. The birds understand that they have travelled in themselves and through themselves and that they *are* Simorgh. In Persian, "si" means thirty and "morgh" means birds – thirty birds, Simorgh was within them all along.

In the performance's transition between the seventh valley and the Epilogue, Hoopoe leaves her flute as well as her role as the journey's guide and joins instead the Wayfarer(s). *No one has ever made this journey and returned, for upon arrival, the Wayfarer becomes lost and absorbed* (Attar, 2017, p. 252). In that very moment, Hoopoe becomes fully equal to the other birds; they all become one with the ocean's currents in a simultaneously performed choreography. I join Katarina in the same loop of 28 choreographic movements established in her material already in the sixth valley, but now they are carried out in a slower tempo. We perform the loop in a slow ritardando while also using some of the movements to back towards the backdrop. The shift from playing while carrying out a choreography to "only" perform choreography required, in the same way as shifting between playing and quoting the poem, a certain effort and change of focus. I experienced that this last and unexpected shift had a strong effect on the performance and for me it also represents a close connection to Attar's poem.

Figure 41. From the Epilogue's loop of choreographic movements (rehearsal). Photo: Kråkkullen Produktion/Anders Westergren.

The electroacoustic material and the recorded voices

For a long time, it was unclear what role the text and the recorded voices would have in the performance, but along the creative process they gained an increasingly prominent role in the work, better balanced with the other artforms. The different languages and the qualities of the voices and the fact that Katarina and I also quoted text live were a prerequisite for being able to use so much text and for creating a variation in the material. The final form of both the Epilogue

and the Prologue was shaped late in the process and in place in Studio Acusticum. The content and role of these two framing parts stood in relation to the work's overarching form. The additional layer of electroacoustic material that Kent added in the late phase of the project came to serve an important function in binding together the last parts and blurring their borders. The energy coming from the electroacoustic music in the sixth valley and onwards functioned, I felt, as an external force leading the birds towards the ultimate unification.

During the Epilogue, the voices in the electroacoustic part slowly fade out, and only sparse fragments of flute sounds and the performers' own breathings remain until the end. We have interpreted the poem as possessing an embedded circularity, which is emphasised in the performance by the breaths that mark both the beginning and the end of the journey.

Their souls rose free of all they'd been before;
The last and all its action were no more.
Their life came from that close, insistent sun.
And its vivid rays they shone as one.

(Attar, 2011, p. 234)

Final reflections

To conclude this chapter, I will reflect upon how the different elements and artforms of *The Conference of the Birds* have come together into a coherent whole. The concept of performing *Les sept vallées* in a staged context led, as has been shown, to a long experimental path, in the course of which a great number of artistic decisions have been made. One decision led to the next and thus we have gradually realised this transformation from a solo work to a staged performance.

A solo work performed by a single musician lacks nothing; everything is complete, weighted and balanced. But as soon as you add something – in this case a dancer – everything changes. A new balance must be established. A dancer relates to the space in a different way. What weight do we give to the room? The new conditions required the musical gesture to involve the embodied choreomusical interaction in time and space, something we had to relate to without losing the inherent qualities of the original work. This insight was sometimes overwhelming but at the same time an incredibly inspiring challenge.

I experience the different materials in *The Conference of the Birds* as inseparable; how this is manifested differs, as has been shown, from valley to valley. In several of the valleys, I found that

Katarina and I developed a choreomusical shared voice (see Chapter III, p. 106). For example: in the first valley, in which the musical timing is entirely derived from my physical gestures and Katarina's response to my actions; the music is the gestures, and the gestures embody the music. In the improvised dialogue of the fifth valley, which developed over a few months, Katarina and I "made music" together through the extended techniques of the tenor recorder, the sound of bodily movements and the rustling of the wings. In the fourth and sixth valleys, a similar relationship between the music and the textual material emerges; here, the text functions as a kind of extension of the musical material with which Katarina continues to dance and interact.

The video scenography contributes integrated layers that enrich the connections, as in the second valley where Hoopoe appears in an enlarged form with projected wings and the choreographic effects that arise between Katarina's slides on the floor together with the rotating wheels and train movements of the video scenography in the fourth valley.

The close interrelation between music, dance, visual arts and poetry in *The Conference of the Birds* exemplifies how the communicative and embodied qualities of chamber music can be transferred to a staged context. It is a field that offers endless possibilities. From my perspective as a musician and co-composer, it has been a multilayered process throughout that has been anchored in the exploration of the gestural-sonic object, regarded as a compound unit of gesture and sound. In this expanded context – in combination with choreographic, visual, literary and spatial perspectives – the gestural-sonic object opened up to new layers of meaning and expression.

As has been shown, the working process has entailed a flattening of hierarchies and has allowed me to contribute creatively through the entire process from the conceptualisation, via the compositional process, to the actual performance situation. As an artistic work, *The Conference of the Birds* exists only in the moment of performance, and it is when all the elements come together that a scenic and musical poetry can arise and offer moments of emergence. This added value can never be achieved in isolation, it involves – like the essence of Attar's poem – the paradox of unity and diversity.

PART IV

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Reflecting on the PhD project as a whole, my initial study exploring Lipparella's performance of *Champs d'étoiles* offered an exciting starting point for my journey as an artistic researcher; rather than directly adding anything new to my practice, this introspection opened up new perspectives which in turn paved the way for artistic possibilities.

As shown, the concept of musical gesture became central to these explorations, and the theory of embodied cognition provided an understanding of the knowledge inherent in musical performance and that something as complex as musical interaction cannot be reduced to the verbal. At the same time, the constant effort to try to articulate experiences related to the various artistic explorations carried out within the project was not futile; it nourished the practice. The theoretical framework of the thesis and the phenomenology have also added valuable elements and emphasised the relevance of my artistic practice in a wider context. It confirmed an experience that I had not previously been able to put into words.

This fourth and final part of the thesis contains two chapters. Chapter VII answers and highlights the research questions from different thematic artistic and analytical perspectives that have been central to the project. In Chapter VIII I discuss the conclusions that have been drawn and also look ahead to the broad interdisciplinary field that the doctoral project has opened up.

Chapter VII Final Discussion

No one has ever made this journey and returned,

for upon arrival, the Wayfarer becomes

lost and absorbed.

Introduction

At the core of this PhD project is chamber music, which is being explored through my practice as a recorder player and member of the Lipparella ensemble, in collaboration with artists from disciplines such as composition, dance, theatre and visual art. In Chapters III, IV, V and VI respectively, an artistic work and its process of creation are presented, emphasising different musical, physical, spatial and collaborative aspects. The overall project builds on a range of research methods, such as qualitative and quantitative data analysis and interviews, but the central outcome of the project is the creation of artistic knowledge, both performative and material.

In addition to drawing inspiration from a variety of artistic works and research projects within the fields of performing arts and contemporary music performance, related methods, research areas and paradigms, such as embodied cognition (4EC, see Chapter II, p. 15), the study of musical gestures, and phenomenology have served as lenses and tools for the research project, pointing out directions for further exploration.

The major artistic challenge and goal of my PhD project has been to transfer the communicative and bodily qualities inherent in chamber music playing to a staged context. Through a series of productions, in collaboration with the participating artists, I have explored methods of creating a common understanding, a shared creativity, and of building knowledge across disciplines. I further discuss how the different stagings have affected the musical interpretations and the roles of the participating artists. These themes are addressed within the framework of my research questions, which are formulated as follows:

– How can I understand and transfer the communicative and embodied qualities inherent in chamber music playing to staged interdisciplinary contexts?
– How can the concept of the gestural-sonic object, and the multimodal understanding of human perception which it implies, constitute both an analytical tool and a source for artistic experimentation?
– How can musical interpretation be applied in the creation of staged interdisciplinary performances?

The journey

The overall project can be seen as a journey – a journey with challenges, dead ends and struggles, but also insights, personal development and release of creativity. I have often drawn a parallel to the journey of the birds in Attar's *The Conference of the Birds*, noting how each valley has somehow resonated with my own experiences along the way, which is why each chapter begins with an extract from this text.

The journey, which I could never have made alone, has moved both inwards and outwards. Like the birds in the poem, when they realise after the long journey that what they have been searching for is to be found in the depths of themselves, something fundamental has changed in how I view my own artistry. It is with a stronger confidence and openness that I realise I am only at the beginning of a journey that will continue. The journey metaphor also refers to the overall PhD project – the dynamic process of in-depth exploration – which rather than going from one point to another expanded from a central point.

This long creative, in many ways complex, process has, as I see it, been carried out without ever leaving the core of chamber music practice, and the interactive foundation of the musical gesture. During the journey I have drawn inspiration from many different sources and works, but it was above all the choreomusical practice that enabled a new tool for interpretation and collaborative work across artistic boundaries. It offered to me new embodied and performative perspectives on the artistic experience and how it takes shape in relation to the whole performance space – although still based on chamber music and still involving the interpretation of a score. This very journey and these artistic works form the central response to the research questions.

In the continuation of this chapter, I weave together reflections on these artistic experiences with analytical perspectives drawn from the theoretical framework of the thesis presented in Chapter II. The first perspective concerns the choreomusical approach, the very basis of the journey.

Gestures, bodies and musical performance: choreomusical approaches

As has been shown, the working processes with both *Fragmente²* and *The Conference of the Birds* have been mutually explorative. What makes our process different from many others is that the collaboration has taken place between a musician (not a composer) and a choreographer-dancer at the same time as the musician (in the case of *The Conference of the Birds*) has had the opportunity to adapt the score in relation to the choreomusical design of the performance. Although we aimed for an essentially contrapuntal choreomusical relationship, there are layers in both *Fragmente²* and *The Conference of the Birds* that lean towards visualisation: both are based on a "one-to-one" relationship (one musician and one dancer), always closely related to the structures found in the musical scores. In *Fragmente²*, a musical fragment generally corresponds to a choreographic fragment and the different valleys in *The Conference of the Birds* are developed as choreomusical units based on the musical structure. Furthermore, the tempi and overall characters adapted to the already existing musical material. Within these frameworks – thus guided by the scores – we have endeavoured to develop the choreomusical relationship as a fine-meshed counterpoint between what we consider as two equal parts, trying to make the artforms mutually reinforcing so that the music supports the perception of the dance and vice versa.

The method we applied in *Fragmente²*, to divide musical and choreographic materials into *musical* and *choreographic objects* opened the door for a detailed choreomusical compositional work. Focusing on accentuation, pause, intonation, duration and direction in communication between the performers, the multimodality and bidirectionality of gestural-sonic objects and gestural images have been fundamental in coupling sound and gesture as compound units. This in-depth collaborative work, which we continued to explore further in *The Conference of the Birds,* turned both the musician and the dancer into choreomusical performers and blurred the boundaries between the two; in my experience, it can at times even be difficult to determine where one medium ends and another begins.[65]

Performing musicians read each other and inter-react according to what is happening in the moment. This reasoning is in line with the paradigm of embodied cognition whose proponents argue that "knowledge does not emerge from passive perception, but from the need to act in an environment" (Leman 2007, p. 43). Thus, to achieve a similar shared understanding in a choreomusical context, requires not only that both performers know each other's parts and share an understanding of each other's actions, but also to act and attune to the other performer in the

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[65] E.g., in the first movement of *The Conference of the Birds* "La vallée du Désir", in which the extended techniques on the soprano recorder generated the basis for my choreography and "La vallée de l'Unicité", in which the dancer's choreography and interaction with the amplified bird wing also gives rise to her musical presence in an improvised duet with the musician (See Chapter VII, p. 140).

live performance situation. However, both the situations and the methods differ between music and dance. In a classical musical performance, the musicians are seated or standing by their music stands and are normally able to see each other. The musicians' movements while performing are not regarded as part of the artistic work and the fact that they do not represent anyone else than themselves, makes it possible to use gesture-types such as ancillary, communicative, sound accompanying, empathic and so on in a spontaneous way and as natural element of the live performance. This works differently in a through-composed choreomusical work, such as those discussed here, where the performers' gestural spaces (Smalley, 2007) are choreographed, leaving no room for such spontaneous actions.

The difference I experienced between performing *Fragmente* (2017) together with Åsa, where I was positioned by my music stand, and *Fragmente²* was significant. In the 2017 version, I was completely focused on Åsa's and my interaction, but apart from that, my role on the stage was no different from a traditional concert performance. I could move freely and look at Åsa in a spontaneous way from my fixed position by the music stand. However, in *Fragmente²*, I act as a fully choreographed *figure*. As two interacting figures, Åsa and I relate to more shared parameters such as metaphorical images, structures of forces and spatial directions. Consequently, we contribute more clearly to the same narrative which I believe is crucial to achieving a profound choreomusical relationship. However, this requires the performers to have a mutual in-depth understanding of the elasticity of the other's part (to notice and react to each other's sounds, gestures and phrasing), just as in a musical performance.

Another prerequisite for the intertwined choreomusical relationship in *Fragmente²* was that I played the music from memory. In the more extensive work *The Conference of the Birds*, I alternate between playing from memory and being fully choreographed in some of the valleys and reading from the score in other valleys. My interaction with the dancer is adapted accordingly and generates a wide range of choreomusical relationships. The music connected to the valleys in which I read the score are fast and more rhythmically based, whereas the other valleys have a musical structure that is more fluid, enabling a more plastic cause–effect interaction between the performers. Moreover, as *The Conference of the Birds* also includes an electroacoustic part, composed by Kent and me in collaboration, and Lene's video scenography – materials based on pre-recorded gestures, sounds and movements – they thus become, in addition to the two performers, technologically mediated actors in the work.

Dramaturgical methods for staging musical works

Common to all staged works presented in this thesis is that they have been developed during long processes where the artists and artforms have mutually inspired each other. Overall, I see two

dramaturgical approaches of the participating artists to working with shared spaces and developing the interaction between sound, bodily actions, visual and technical materials:

– a first approach where the different art expressions coexist within the framework of an overall thematic formal concept (*What is the word*). Here, the dramaturgical whole has been shaped by seamless transitions of light design, musical improvisation and directional focus between the selected works (play, poem, composition), which develop sequentially during the performance.
– a second approach where the artforms merge into a new coherent whole (*Fragmente²* and *The Conference of the Birds*). The collaborative process is based on the original scores, but they have been modified according to the needs and demands that arose during the process. In these cases, the encounter with the other artform(s) has resulted in the original compositions Shinohara's *Fragmente* and Isaksson's *Les sept vallées* expanding both temporally and spatially.

However, all works are in line with an aesthetic that has been observed as a contemporary trend in the performing arts, moving towards the abolition of traditional genre boundaries and typologies (Nikolić, 2020). As described in Chapter II, the recently proposed concept of Composed Theatre embraces both the "theatricalisation of music" and the "musicalisation of theatre" (Roesner, 2013, p. 11). Composed Theatre thus incorporates among several other genres, Kagel's instrumental theatre, established already in the 1960s, a concept where composers are also directors and musicians take on the role of actors when performing. The artistic outcomes result from highly collaborative and explorative processes where equal importance is given to the sounds produced and the physical actions performed by the instrumentalists. In 1961, Kagel comments on this during one of his lectures "you need musicians who are also actors, not only musicians" (Mikawa, 2015, p. 81).

In Torrence (2019), one of the main methods of approaching what can be understood as the "core" of her personal extended performance practice, was to work initially without any instrument at all. This conception of "body" was the primary material and could include the use of the voice for both singing and speaking (Torrence, 2019, n.p. Flattening hierarchies). One example is the full-length work *Institute for Post-Human Performance Practice*, which includes a cardboard installation built by Trond Reinholdtsen and herself, a 35-minute film featuring both of them, and finally a live musical performance. Although Torrence rarely appears as a musician on stage in this work, she always plays the "role" of a musician, and the work draws on her actual skills as a percussionist. The process of creating the work required her engagement as a designer, visual artist, videographer, writer, actor, storyteller, co-director and performer, thus going far beyond the traditional role of a musician. However, she points out that "the fact that I am actually a percussionist, in my opinion, adds another dimension of 'meaning' to the work, much in the same way that a dimension of meaning is added when a real pianist plays *4'33"* (1952)"

(Torrence, 2019, n.p. Flattening hierarchies).[66] Similarly, Karl Dunér realised that a performance of *Quad*, carried out by us musicians in Lipparella, would create a particular tension and meaning in the performance.

As discussed in Chapter II, the broad field of Composed Theatre generates works that are not driven by character relations or dramatic narration, as is often the case in traditional drama, but by "the structural and semantic relations of a complex array of intermedial 'voices'" (Roesner, 2013, p. 332). For many practitioners, Composed Theatre means thinking of theatre as a score and exploring the connections. The scores – or precursors of scores, referred to by David Roesner as "proto-scores" – serve as a basis for "creating and shaping events in relation to a rhythmic unfolding of time and in specific functional abstract relation to each other" (Roesner, pp. 331–332). It is in this context that the term "polyphony" has been applied, with added qualifiers such as "performative polyphony" or "intermedial polyphony", a transference of compositional structure that allows both the independence of its parts and a structural linkage (Roesner, p. 332).

Inspired by Composed Theatre, director Jörgen Dahlqvist and composer Kent Olofsson apply, in Teatr Weimar's work, what they call a "vertical dramaturgy" as a term for particularly important interactive "trigger-points" that drive the performance forward within such intermedial polyphony.[67] In his thesis, Kent Olofsson (2018) discusses this compositional practice, and he notes:

> An action followed by a reaction is never just an isolated event, this is always connected to a larger trajectory of something else: a dramatic situation, a visual process or a musical sequence. When the actions and reactions move between actors, musical gestures and visual elements this becomes a merged trajectory: the vertical dramaturgy contributes with interacting layers to the overall structure of the performance. (p. 225)

Similarly, *Fragmente²* and *The Conference of the Birds* show an intricate web of such interactive structures as described above; between the acting figures, sounds and movements and other materials – including metaphorically based – which constitutes an interesting twist here: While musical scores have provided the Composed Theatre with means towards more abstraction, form and structure (in contrast to the more traditional theatre based on a narrative), the process

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[66] Cage's *4'33"* was composed in 1952 for any instrument or combinations of instruments. The score instructs performers not to play their instruments during the three movements.
[67] An example of vertical dramaturgy taken from Lipparella's and Teatr Weimar's joint project in R1 are the opening of "You have seen hell" in the R1, where all the lights go up as a response to the first phrase of the movement (see the Research Calalogue exposition).

of creating *Fragmente²* [68] can be said to represent an inversion of such a process. [69] Through our jointly developed metaphors, we have used abstract music and abstract dance to *create* a narrative – albeit a hidden one. This method was a way for us to create meaning and structure in the choreomusical interaction, a way to merge our practices and communicate across disciplines.

In *The Conference of the Birds*, the dramaturgical and compositional interactions involve not only the musician and the dancer, but also lighting, video projections, music and other theatrical components. While most of the intricate choreomusical interaction was developed in dance studios, the interplay between the video scenography, lighting, costumes and music spatialisation could only be worked out in detail on site in Studio Acuticum's Black Box. Therefore, it was not until the very last phase of the project, with all technology and participating artists in place, that we were able to accomplish the dramaturgic and compositional whole and connect all the parts. One of the most difficult passages was the transition between the seventh valley and the Epilogue (where the birds finally realise that what they have been searching for is within themselves and they become one with the Great Ocean). During one of the last rehearsal days before the premiere, we got too caught up in choreomusical details and could not really come forward. The solution turned out to be to integrate the video and the electroacoustic elements more clearly into the intermedial polyphony. As we were all gathered with access to all technology, Kent and Lene were able to work with their materials in relation to our immediate needs. The transition could be affected by changes in the electroacoustic part and the video scenography. [70] Much later, Kent described to me the feeling he had here, as many times before in similar intermedia works, when all the elements come together in the right way: "it's as if the whole scene is breathing". As Roesner (2013, p. 333) states, Composed Theatre works tend to be perceived as a "mono medium", and Kent's comment reveals, they can almost be seen as a composite body that lives and breathes.

The *Fragmente²* creation took the form of a process of decomposing – deconstructing – the materials into musical and choreographic objects, followed by a reconstruction to its choreomusical form concept. The creation of *The Conference of the Birds* showed similar

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[68] In *Fragmente²*, the parts were initially composed independently, and the interaction and the dramaturgic ground have been developed later in the process. This process is described more in detail in the RUUKKU-exposition.

[69] Roesner (2013) takes *Cryptic* created by Cathie Boyd as such an exception and example of such inverted process that has taken place within Composed Theatre. The visual, performative and technical overlays of the musical structure "consist of a kind of visual representation of the 'emotional journey' she and her musicians associate with the music – not necessarily the composer's emotional journey […] This then becomes the (hidden) narrative trajectory and subtext of the piece" (p. 334).

[70] Kent let Nina Jeppson's reading of *Min mor är öknen* create a seamless bridge between these parts. The last part of the Epilogue is musically a long diminuendo that leads to the sounds of waves mixed with the performers' audible breathing as we slowly move backwards in a simultaneous choreography. Our costumes are used as projection surfaces and contribute to the impression of a gradually blurring boundary between our bodies and the projected ocean waves covering the stage. This final scene was difficult to solve scenically and represents in its final form an interdisciplinary embodiment of the abstraction *to become lost and absorbed*.

characteristics; *Les sept vallées* was first deconstructed and then reconstructed into the choreomusical staged work. But these processes in no way overshadow the original works; the concert form and the staged context are two different worlds, each requiring its own dramatic strategy. However, in these projects, hierarchies have been broken down and roles have been blurred. As I see it, it is in these cases primarily the role of the musician that has been expanded and strengthened not least because the musician has been responsible for the musical adaptation from the original score, which in the case of *The Conference of the Birds* was extensive.

Radical interpretation as a result of a hybrid practice

In the pursuit of preserving the European "classical" music heritage, institutions and higher music education have long been nurturing a culture of restrictive and standardised ideals of interpretation, also connected to a certain type of virtuosity, centred on perfection. In a co-written paper Skoogh & Frisk (2019) discuss and refers to an experience Skoogh had as a professional classical pianist when performing Rachmaninoff's third piano concerto. Already during the rehearsals, an anxiety of making artistic decisions emerged. She started to fear every new musical moment or solo entrance. After the concert performance, she made the following reflection:

> *If I could have chosen between being myself at the moment of performing the Rachmaninov concerto or switching to be the flawless cyborg version of me, I would without a doubt have chosen the cyborg [...] Somehow, I have always tried to destroy myself and create a neutral performer [...] I have sought to melt together two conflicting performance values that constituted my inner "perfect performance" into a cyborg me. This affected my performance experience negatively, but I was "saved" by the reception of my performance, the interaction with the audience, in a way that should not be possible according to demands of perfection in the classical music industry.* (Skoogh & Frisk, 2019, p. 9)

Taking Skoogh's experience as an example, Frisk & Skoogh point to the risk that "the classical music performer is reduced to a vessel for the artwork, caught between the need of originality, perfection and fear of failing" (2019, pp. 9–10). There are many similar examples of how classically trained artists experience the institutional framework and its traditions as a set of limitations, and how artistic experimentation has provided alternative approaches. As a classically trained string player, Hubrich (2016) believes that both the interpretation and appreciation of music is often bound to restrictive expectations and conventions, leading to a "limited scope for individual creativity" (Hubrich, 2016, p. 338). Cyrino's (2019) collaborative artistic research sought ways of "working around a dominant characteristics of Western musical practices: a fragmented specialisation or a specialised fragmentation" (2019, pp 67–68). In the Parse Journal, pianist Mine Doğantan-Dack comments on the unified interpretive tradition of the well-known

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classical piano repertoire referring to an earlier seminar where she and Daniel Leech-Wilkingson argued that "[c]reativity in classical music performance, like freedom of speech, is welcomed so long as nobody is deeply upset: the most successful performers are those who represent the score as it is usually portrayed, but just a little more vividly" (Doğantan-Dack, 2015, p. 36). Leech-Wilkinson's online book *Challenging Performance* (2020), proposes new ways of performing and thinking about classical scores. The book aims, as he puts it, "to offer young professional musicians a way out of the straightjacket that norms attempt to impose, licensing much more varied performance in theory and offering models of how it can be achieved in practice" (Leech-Wilkinson, 2020, n.p. Introduction and examples). A more creative approach to playing canonical (and non-canonical) scores, he argues, will also lead to musicians' well-being and benefit the audience's fascination, revelation and pleasure. All of these attempts at renewal in the interpretation and performance of classical music can be understood as part of the concept of radical interpretation, as discussed above in Chapter II, p. 45. In the present thesis, this concept is extended and used as a means also in the composition and creation of staged, cross-disciplinary performances.

The concept of radical interpretation has also been used as a creative tool by composers to reinterpret classical works or to develop works from their own catalogue as well as in the context of staged interdisciplinary performances (Hultqvist, 2011; Gorton & Östersjö, 2020). The multi-step process of the *Toccata Orpheus/Go To Hell* project described in Chapter II, page 45, shows many similarities with the creative process of *Les sept vallées/The Conference of the Birds*. Moreover, the staging of both works has been based on the encounter between musical composition/performance and choreography, without the participation of the composer of the original work. To accommodate the choreomusical concept of *The Conference of the Birds* and expand the work in time and space, additional material was needed. As described in the Chapter VI, part of that process involved me improvising over the existing score (*Les sept vallées*) in a way somewhat similar to how Östersjö (2008) describes the composer Kent Olofsson's radical readings of his own work, the chamber oratorio *The Bells*. Östersjö (2008) compares Olofsson's creative process with "a performer improvising on or ornamenting a pre-existing work" (p. 210). However, in Olofsson's work with *The Bells* – his own score – the embodied relation between performer and instrument in the improvised or interpretative process, is largely missing, or transformed to a process of inner hearing. My improvisations were strongly influenced by the affordances I found in each individual instrument (sopranino, soprano, alto and tenor recorders), as well as in the choreomusical context and my interpretation of Attar's poem. All these factors created very special conditions for the creative work.

The second valley, for example, whose fast and energetic character in *Les sept vallées* I wanted to retain in *The Conference of the Birds*, is described by Attar with words like love and fire, but there is also a duality in the text that I wanted to capture musically, like right–wrong and fire–smoke. These contradictions inspired me to work with two layers and create a kind of mirror structure to

the material that was already there. This structure took shape through my improvisations as short phrases of microtonality between the original phrases. I also added a new section to the original score and changed the musical form to a kind of A– B– A form.

In the fourth valley, another very energetic movement, I was inspired by Attar's image of the valley as "a storm that ravages whole countries in a blow". I also knew that Åsa had an idea that the dancer's choreography in this valley should be based on long lines. I simply started by cutting the score into small pieces and spreading them out. Thereafter I experimented with improvising transitions between the fragments and gradually developed a new musical form that featured longer phrases.

The improvisations also served as a way of bringing together physical and musical gestures, as in the first valley where the extended techniques of tapping the body of the instrument with finger rings or producing a low multiphonic by closing the end hole of the instrument with the knee, formed the basis of my choreography. Another way to add material was to insert text fragments of spoken texts; these fragments were incorporated to be perform live by both dancer Katarina Eriksson and me, but they also formed part of the electroacoustic music.

Yet the seven valleys – as structured in Isaksson's score – are still very present and the quality of small-scale chamber music is still there as a core. But the new interpretation is radical in all its parts, expanded by the spatial and visual perspectives as well as by the incorporation of the narrative and by choreographic and electroacoustic materials. Considering all these perspectives, we can speak of *The Conference of the Birds* as a radical interpretation of *Les sept vallées* carried out in a hybrid genre situated between instrumental music theatre and choreomusical practice.

Choreomusical practice as phenomenological perspective variation

The experience of performing *Fragmente*[2] is, from my perspective, a foundational activity in which my actions integrate hand and tool, body and world. To interpret the score, my actions must be felt as flowing gestures; in other words, they must become *habitual*. Phenomenologically, this situation is described as something that modifies our perception. For Heidegger, tools are ready-to-hand (*zuhanden*) incorporated into our intentional actions.[71] When I play, I am not thinking of how my fingers move up and down the body of the instrument. Instead, I am involved with all the possible relationships the act of performance

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[71] For example, when I use the hammer, the habit hides the hammer and allows me focus on the work rather than the tool itself, but such process also changes how we perceive the world.

affords; auditory, physical and spatial perceptions, the interaction with the musical language, style, instrument, co-performers, audience, imagination, musical creativity and so forth. In studying a new piece, I do need to zoom in and work on technical and musical details and may need to focus on fingerings and new playing techniques. As I get to know the work, my attention is instead directed towards the music itself and my interaction with the environment. Similarly, the dancer must break down the choreography into concrete sub-movements, sequences and spatial directions and interactive structures before it can be fully performed (see Chapter II, p. 18 and the RUUKKU-exposition).

By constantly shifting our attention between different perspectives on the musical and choreographic material in *Fragmente²*, Åsa and I were able to observe and work with different aspects and qualities of choreomusical interaction.[72] In *Fragmente²* my performative habits are combined with several new elements, including metaphorical images, kinaesthetic experience, extended musical gestures, and a new perception of the body–instrument interaction. My poetic reflections on the performance of *Fragmente²* reveal this perspective variation as a constant shifting of focus between habitual and less habitual experiences.[73] Below are some excerpts from the poems that capture this (otherwise hidden) subjective perspective of embodied and interactive experiences during performance:

The series of multiphonics in Fragment 9 gives the music an austere character; the extended technique (that I am used to) requires a powerful and controlled airstream:

multiphonics move between different levels
I hold them in a firm grip

In Fragment 13, I shift the focus from the music to the performance of my own choreography. I "hear" the choreographic instruction of how to move my head within me. I also reflect on the physical sensation of lying on the cold floor:

A quick look, then slowly down
My back is cold and heavy

In the same fragment, I later shift my focus to the choreomusical interaction: while the dancer spins round on the floor, I play a series of quarter tones. I also link this sequence to the earlier Fragment 6, where I also play quarter tones (the metaphor of Fragment 6 is balancing like a tightrope walker on a wire):

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[72] Our artistic process and the different perspectives are described in Chapter V and in the RUUKKU-exposition, where our graphical model of phenomenological perspective variation is also presented.
[73] Some of my poetic reflections are presented in Chapter V, pp. 104–106. However, they are all collected in the RUUKKU-exposition on the page "Perspective variation", column C.

When the doll dances counter-clockwise
quarter tones balance on a tightrope

In Fragment 13, as I lie on the floor playing, I reflect on the unfamiliar contact between the body and the instrument:

The weight of the flute felt against my lip
Another balance
air runs out

These reflections refer to a state when the performance challenged my performative habits. With repeated performances, the performative elements that were once new to me will sink to the level of body schema and become integrated in my habitus. As De Souza (2017) writes "Habit, ... is not fixed but dynamic" (p. 23). Interestingly, my perception of *The Conference of the Birds* was different in that I already in the process of reworking *Les sept vallées* adopted a multimodal approach in relation to what was already in the score, but also in relation to what could possibly go in there. The choreomusical context I had been engaged in for some time through *Fragmente*[2], made me think about sound, body movement, and instrumental affordances in a way that was new to me.

Therefore, what I call the non-habitual elements of *Fragmente*[2] became less apparent in *The Conference of the Birds,* as the musical and choreographic materials were, from my subjective perspective, even more integrated into the work itself. The most striking example is the first valley where my extended playing techniques form the basis for the choreography itself and the musical interpretation cannot exist without the bodily choreography. Thus, from my subjective perspective, this first valley, "La vallée du Désir", allowed me to experience yet another phenomenological perspective variation of choreomusical performance.

Spatial and scenographic perspectives

Since spaces respond sonically to our presence, humans have probably always interacted sonically with the acoustics of natural and constructed spaces. Western art music has evolved in relation to the spaces in which it was performed. In the 16th century, Italian composer Giovanni Gabrieli placed groups of instrumentalists and singers in different locations of St. Mark's Basilica in Venice to create a distinctive effect that immersed the listener in the music. In the case of chamber music, the term itself defines the space where this music can best be experienced: the intimate chamber. The works presented in this thesis have all undergone a transformation – from

a chamber music context to a staged context. The transformations have all evoked an awareness of spatial perspectives, imagined, physical and relational. Space and spatialities in these cases have not only determined how the music will sound in the physical space in relation to the size of the room, acoustics, the distance of the performers from each other and the audience but have also emerged as dynamic and ever-changing realities within the works.

British composer Rebecca Saunders views space itself as "a living, breathing organism" and has explored the physicality of musical performance in a number of musical and interdisciplinary works. In an interview for the Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival she talks about *Chroma*, a work that was first premiered in the Tate Modern turbine hall. The work consists of different modules, soloists and ensembles positioned in different parts of the space, collaged according to a timeline. Along the years, *Chroma* has been rewritten for each new performance space, and she explains:

> *Chroma* explores three different key issues: the architecture of the space, the density of the collage in the given acoustic, and the nearness or distance to the different music being performed. So firstly, it's about entering into a dialogue with an architectural space, exploring and emphasising the particular characteristics of the space. [...] Considering how dense the collage can be in the given acoustic is also critical. How many different 'sound surfaces' – which is the terminology I like to use for the separately written trios, solos or the mechanical sound sources – how many can you hear simultaneously but so that each retains its individual essence? I have to know the space well to be able to construct a new collage. Often I write new sound surfaces to expand the collage, or may even reduce the amount of modules I use. (Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, 2010)

The stagings that have taken place within the framework of this PhD project are similar to *Chroma* in that existing works have been adapted to new locations. As with Saunders, the compositional work has involved a process of incorporating the entire performance space. Saunders' almost sculptural approach to composition means that she renegotiates every single detail of her work to achieve the best possible result in the given location. In the cases discussed in this thesis, it has been the integration of and encounter with other artforms that has been the starting point and the very condition for incorporating the entire performance space in the performance.

In several parts of this thesis Smalley's (2007) proposed taxonomy of spatial perception has provided a tool for discussing how different space forms intersect and overlap in performance. In Lipparella's performance *Okända rum* (2014), Kent took advantage of the extreme spatial and acoustic characteristics in the R1 reactor hall and spread out the musicians in the large space. We musicians experienced that the scattered positions had a major impact on the relationship between the three space forms and how we listened, communicated and responded to the music. Ever since, our performances of *Champs d'étoiles* have been characterised by the ensemble's own explorations of allowing the music to interact with both the acoustic and physical space itself.

Apart from purely musical performance contexts, Smalley's space form model has been useful also to better understand interactive processes across artistic disciplinary boundaries. In this context, spatial perspectives are discussed as perceived both in actual environments and in an imaginary and metaphorical sense. As discussed in Chapter V, apart from the concrete performance space, *Fragmente² builds on the performers jointly created imagined space for each fragment e.g., a cube, a flower bed, a park, an operating theatre, the infinite universe. The different characteristics of these spaces had a major impact on how we acted and interacted in gestural and ensemble spaces. A choreographed arm movement will embody different qualities depending on if it is directed to my co-performer right behind me, to the corner of the room, or to something imagined far beyond my visible horizon. Paired with choreographic elements, the spatial characteristics had a similar impact on the musical interpretation and affected parameters such as phrasing, timing, sound quality and articulation.

An aspect of performing in a staged context that I discuss in Chapter V in relation to *Fragmente²* but which is equally evident in *The Conference of the Birds* and *Quad* is that, unlike in a musical performance, I can never step outside my role as an acting *figure*. All my actions, placements, moments and gazes are theatrical elements composed to fit into the artistic whole. The expanded dimension of cognition often highlights how, in the hands of a professional performer, the instrument disappears to some extent and the performer's focus is instead on making music. Something interesting happened in *Quad*, where we all performed without our instruments; here perception was turned towards the body: the feeling of the weight of the steps, the slight forward lean of the upper body, and how our synchronised steps interacted with the space, the illuminated square and its charged centre. Just as in *Quad*, Beckett's poem *What is the word* enabled us to activate an awareness of new dimensions of performance, that in the end enriched also our performance of Lindwall's musical work. The gaps inside the music created a sense of recurring three-dimensional spatiality in the work. In the documentary film *Vad heter det*, Louise describes them as "a large space – a void...a 'now' that is of great dimension". Although we never formulated it that way, it is easy to see the similarities between our staged performance and the aesthetics of instrumental theatre. Not least through Tomas Boman's and my work with the film, it was clear that we as an ensemble, in line with Heile's (2016) description of instrumental theatre, actually rediscovered the physicality of music making, achieved a new type of bodily presence and engaged more actively in the entire performance space.

While *What is the word* was performed in an art exhibition hall with excellent conditions for acoustic baroque instruments, the choice to use a black box theatre for *The Conference of the Birds* precluded the possibility of playing acoustically but on the other hand facilitated the use of advanced video, sound and lighting technology. The technologies offered many possibilities, not least in creating the seven valleys and enabling effective shifts between them. *The Conference of*

the Birds is based on a web of interconnections and interactions and thus contains multiple layers of spatiality, some of which are highlighted below:

The *first* spatial layer corresponds to the poem's seven valleys as described by Attar, where all the four elements, wind/air, water, earth and fire are represented. Each valley required us to enter into a dialogue with Attar's text at both an individual and a collective level, to interpret it and decide what to emphasise and how to transform it into our respective artforms (music, choreography, video staging, costume).

The *second* spatial layer has to do with the adaptation of the score, which was about creating space for physical gestures and displacements in the performance space. The amplification of the recorder together with the electroacoustic part acted as a resonance – an extended voice – necessary to match the size of the performance space and the interaction with the video scenography.

The *third* layer of spatiality has to do with the usage of the physical space, the choreomusical interaction between the two performers and the video scenography. We strove for a varied use of the stage, horizontally and vertically.

A *fourth* spatial layer concerns the sounds distributed via twelve loudspeakers around the stage and the audience space, allowing us to shape the soundscape to the desired spatiality, both as rooted in performers' gestures and created by technologies.

The *fifth* spatiality concerns the journey itself and the transformation of the birds. After the birds' first hesitation to embark on the journey at all, and all the trials and challenges along the journey, the birds finally arrive to a state of diversity in unity. Attar uses the metaphor of the birds arriving as drops that are absorbed by the ocean. In our performance, there is a long arc spanning from the Prologue's initial voices coming from the loudspeakers and the first valley – a barren landscape in which the birds are physically distanced from each other – to the Epilogue where the dancer Katarina Eriksson and I perform a synchronised choreography. Our costumes are used as projection surfaces that gradually blur the boundary between our bodies and the projected ocean waves covering the stage. This final scene represents an embodiment of the abstraction "to become lost and absorbed" as in the Attar quote in the beginning of this chapter.

Chapter VIII An expanded practice

Conclusion

Through this PhD project I have demonstrated the possibility of exploiting the embodied knowledge, creativity and interactive skills of chamber musicians in extended interdisciplinary contexts. Musical gestures have been approached through methods developed within the project's choreomusical and experimental music theatre practices. In this way, each artistic project can be seen as an iteration with a unique conceptualisation, within a larger methodological framework. Here, the gestures have been explored at the "object-level",[74] shaped by different artistic means and in different artforms; as musical, verbal and choreographic gestures, which eventually formed part of a composite whole, embodied in time and space through performance.

In Chapter VII I describe how, in the artistic projects of my PhD, I have challenged socio-cultural practices in classical music performance, applying an expanded understanding of gesture through interdisciplinary collaboration across the performing arts. The more detailed answer to the first research question, which concerns how the communicative and embodied qualities of chamber music performance can be understood and transferred to staged interdisciplinary contexts, is thus found in the different parts of that chapter.

The second question, which refers to the notion of the gestural-sonic object, can be seen as a version of the first question in higher resolution. Across the thesis projects, I have experienced how the gestural-sonic object has emerged as a central perspective, both as a platform for interdisciplinary collaboration and, in some projects, also as an analytical tool, hereby responding to the second question. It was above all through the choreomusical practice, developed in the making of *Fragmente*[2], that the analytical approach to gestural and sonic objects became an integral method in the artistic work. This practice also became a fundamental building block in the subsequent creation of *The Conference of the Birds*. As can be seen throughout PART III, the artistic implications of applying these perspectives on interdisciplinary collaboration enabled the development of what I call a choreomusical shared voice, as can be observed first and foremost in

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[74] "Object"– here in Schaeffer's (2017) sense of a coherent and meaning-making musical unit.

my work with the choreographer Åsa Unander-Scharin,[75] and the chamber-music like inter-reaction that emerged in our development of *Fragmente²*.

Hence, the second research question is most clearly addressed in these projects, but I would also like to emphasise how the multimodal and gesture-based artistic practice, developed across the PhD project, questions the customary notion of a sharp division between the arts. The closer I have explored the relationship between different artforms, the more their boundaries dissolve: in some phases the different artforms have been treated as autonomous, while in other situations the project provides examples of methods and practices where artistic roles and boundaries have been blurred. As a response to the third research question, I point to the artistic results that show two types of staged forms, both developed in line with the concept of Composed Theatre. In the first staged form, the different artistic disciplines and materials have been maintained independently and presented side-by-side, in a sequential form (*What is the word*). In the second form, the disciplines are merged and interact in an intermedial polyphony, and artistic materials, such as musical scores, are approached through radical interpretation (*Fragmente²* and *The Conference of the Birds*).

Such radical interpretations also challenge traditional notions of authorship. An important turning point in this development was Åsa's and my work with *Fragmente²*. While the composer's intentions for performance are largely maintained, this composition for solo recorder performance is turned into material in a choreographed composition, by Åsa and myself. But the central point here is the nature of our collaboration, which in itself was a prerequisite for the making of this radical interpretation of the score, through an object-based compositional process. This integrative collaboration entailed an enhanced mutual dependence, in the sharing of skills and practices. Eventually, this process generated a different experience on my behalf as a performer, since typically, the task of the performer of a notated musical work which forms part of a choreographed piece is rather that of executing the score and not of co-composing a staged performance.

However, the adaption of Madeleine Isaksson's *Les sept vallées* can be seen as the key example of radical interpretation in the PhD project, in which the composer generously allowed me complete freedom. The work developed into a kind of translation process based on my interpretation of Attar's text, my improvisations and our joint choreomusical elaborations. Drawing on my embodied knowledge as a performer and the affordances of each instrument, the improvisations on the recorder generated new material tailored for the staged context. My collaboration with Kent, in developing the electroacoustic part in *The Conference of the Birds*, was a creative process largely guided by my artistic visions and drawing on my experiences of the choreomusical interactions with the choreographer and dancer. Kent's own experience of Composed Theatre, as well as our experiences from earlier collaborations, were perhaps a

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[75] Mirrored also in my similarly extensive work with the composer Kent Olofsson.

prerequisite for our unusual method, through which the traditional hierarchy between performer and composer was dissolved. The radical interpretations of *Fragmente* and *Les sept vallées* were, as has been shown, a result of the open-ended, creative and intuitive artistic processes and the many "unexpected and accidental explosions" that took place in them (Fleishman, 2012, p. 34). However, the radical interpretations *as such* were never the goal but rather emerged through the collaborative process. Radical interpretation hereby became, as it were, both a method and an object of study, and eventually also a result of the research process.

As has been shown, the various artistic projects in my PhD project have been carried out on the basis of a variety of creative forms of co-operation. As discussed in Chapter VII, the interaction between the director Karl Dunér and all participating performers was an important factor in how *What is the word* challenged the roles and habitus (Gorton and Östersjö, 2016) as practitioners in unexpected ways, and also revealed commonalities between the artforms. I have pointed to the family mode of collaboration that the members of Lipparella have developed over the years, which also includes a complementary pattern (John-Steiner, 2000). Lipparella's various collaborations with composers have often been of a complementary nature, wherein the individual musicians contribute instrument-specific knowledge to the compositional process. An example of such interactions is found in Chapter III, p. 51, in the description of the collaboration between the theorbo player in Lipparella, Peter and Kent. However, as described above in my own collaboration with Kent, the interaction between composer and performer can turn to more integrative modes, and hereby contribute new knowledge. Here, I experienced a shift from complementary to an integrative pattern of risk-taking, dialogue and expansion of methods, as can also be observed in my work with Åsa.

Largely due to restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, there were relatively few occasions when all participating artists were all physically in the same room during the creation of *The Conference of the Birds*. Instead, building on the different specialised competences of the artists, the collaboration was typically of a complementary nature, and most of the time carried out in smaller, often dyadic constellations that developed their particular dynamics. The benefit of working in these smaller groups was the ability to carry out more in-depth laboratory work, focusing on specific interactions and artistic materials.

The multimodal approach and the interdisciplinary encounters that have taken place throughout the PhD project have required of me to focus my attention not only on the music, but also on the rich spectrum of relationships between the different elements involved: music *and* dance, music *and* language, music *and* image. Drawing on the theory of embodied cognition, such multimodal musical engagement brings us back to the concept of *mousike*, which refers to a combination of poetry, song, dance and instrumental music (see Chapter II, p. 32). In ancient Greece, the Muses represented a plurality, expressive of the cross-disciplinary nature of their orally based fusion of music, theatre and poetry (Sborgi Lawson, 2023). As such, the concept of

mousike provides a counter-image to the conventional concert practice of Western art music, offering a more multifaceted perspective on musical engagement and possible musician roles.

It is my hope that this PhD project can contribute to the field of experimental performing arts and encourage instrumentalists and other artistic practitioners to look beyond educational conventions, institutional structures and the expectations of others and actively engage with interdisciplinary collaboration, nurturing a curiosity on how our individual capacities can be enhanced through the encounter with artistic Others, both individual artists and the artforms that they embrace.

Outlook: creating space for the ineffable

As I write this final part of my thesis, I am thinking about where I am right now and how the PhD project has influenced my personal artistic development and musicianship. What impact will it have on future projects? Will it affect my artistic direction?

As described in Chapter I, since the beginning of my life as a professional musician, I have alternated my activities between concert performances and interdisciplinary projects. Now, having completed the artistic projects that form part of my PhD, I see how I have developed methods to contribute a stronger artistic agency in relation to interdisciplinary collaborations. I have explored choreography, theatre, dramaturgy, poetry and composition, not as separate disciplines, but in relation to my practice as a musician. Through the different projects I have adopted different perspectives, moving between the inside and the outside, between the known and the unknown. While expanding my artistic practice in a significant way, I have also deepened aspects of my own field; the practices mirror each other.

It has been a transformative journey that has provided me with tools to become freer and more creative in a broader sense and in collaboration with others. This does not mean that I have drastically changed my artistic direction. What I see is a shift in position: where I am now, I have a better understanding of the parts as well as the whole and from here I will continue to seek and develop interconnections between the artforms alongside my purely music projects.

Across the past year, and while still writing this thesis, I have also participated in a number of new interdisciplinary projects and collaborations. For example, a performative reading based on fragments of a lost ancient Greek drama, *The Myrmidons*. At an early stage of the excavations of the ancient city of Oxyrhynchos in Upper Egypt, which have been going on since the late 19th century, a huge ancient rubbish dump containing more than 400,000 papyrus scrolls was discovered. The interpretation of all these fragments, began in the 1930s and has resulted in more

than 80 volumes in the *Oxyrhynchos Papyri* series. Among the fragments found, four are considered to belong to Aeschylus' lost breakthrough piece *The Myrmidons*. These fragments formed the basis for Karl Dunér's art exhibition *PARABOLER* at Galleri Duerr in Stockholm in spring 2023.

In connection with the exhibition, a performative reading of these found fragments and other texts that can be linked to *The Myrmidons* was carried out. The material was translated and composed into a fragmentary play consisting of a combination of full sentences, single words and even individual syllables by Jan Stolpe and Lars-Håkan Svensson (Ellerströms, 2023). Our barely half-hour-long performative reading of this play was realised with two actors, Rasmus Luthander and Johan Holmberg, Karl Dunér as narrator and myself as musician. The music, mainly improvised, also included a couple of compositions, one of them being Louis Andriessen's *Ende* (1981), a short character piece played on two recorders simultaneously; a natural link to the aulos, an instrument characteristic of ancient Greek tragedies.

In contrast to the projects presented in this thesis, the whole process of creating *The Myrmidons* was very short and the performance was only given once. Given the fragmentary structure, and its play with loss of information, the performance rested on the shared cultural background and trust in the imagination of the performers and the audience. By creating an intuitive dialogue between the music and these fragments of an ancient dramaturgy, which sometimes took the form of single phonetic sounds, audience and performers could experience the emergence of an ancient drama, long hidden in oblivion.

Another recent collaboration with director and artist Karl Dunér was the staged project *Ping och skallarna* (Ping and the Skulls) performed at the Orion theatre in Stockholm during spring 2024 in collaboration with actor Philip Zandén, puppeteer Tomas Lundquist, violinist Anna Lindal, clavichordist Mats Persson and myself on recorders. The performance (described by a reviewer as a *Gesamtkunstverk*) included monologues by Samuel Beckett, sound sculptures, puppetry and music. The music in the performance was a combination of composed and improvised material, including Mats Persson's "translation" of three sentences from Beckett's extreme minimalistic and repetitive text *Ping* (1966), which served as a musical basis for a semi-improvisation of one of the performance's four tableaux.

As in Lipparella's performance of Beckett's poem *What is the word*, we experienced the musicality of Beckett's style. Here, we played with letting the text become music and the music become text. The theatre critic Lars Ring described *Ping och Skallarna* as a broadening of the concept of theatre and wrote "Not all art is loud and boisterous. Some of it seeks the subtle, that which whispers and seeks context – creating space for the almost ineffable. That which can be sensed" (Ring, 2024, my translation).

Violinist Anna Lindal and I have also initiated an upcoming semi-staged concert project *Musik, kaos & skönhet* (Music, Chaos & Beauty), which will feature several previously composed but not yet performed chamber music works by Christer Lindwall. The project stems from our joint work on the staged performance *What is the word*. Lindwall's intricate music often draws on non-musical references such as visual art, physics and philosophy, which we in *Musik, kaos & skönhet* will highlight in different ways. The duo for violin and recorder *Die Menschen sind Engel und leben im Himmel* (2013) is inspired by a photomontage by the dadaist Raoul Hausmann. Lindwall's *entanglement* for solo violin (2022–23) is based on the concept of entanglement in quantum physics. In *Architecture of difference* for two violins and reciter (2019–20), Lindwall explores repetition, mimesis and identity by also using textual quotations from different authors. It will be performed by violinists Anna and Eva Lindal and myself as reciter. In this project we are also collaborating with the translator and poet John Swedenmark, as well as the film company Andersö & Boman, which will follow and document the work process as a basis for a documentary film.

As an invited musician to both *The Myrmidons* and *Ping och skallarna*, I, together with the other musicians, had great freedom to shape the musical material, and in both projects, improvisation was used as a central element. Improvisation is a new artistic field for me, which I laid the basis for when I expanded and reworked the recorder part of *Les sept vallées*. As a musical form, improvisation implies a different kind of authorship. The improvisations in these projects have also required me to engage more directly with the overall form and the theatrical dramaturgy.

Initiated by Anna Lindal and me, *Musik, kaos & skönhet* is a project where our creativity and artistic roles are challenged in another way, exploring ways to highlight in a scenic form the interconnecting links between music visual arts, physics, and philosophy. Hence, besides my musician role I am also responsible for the conceptualisation and recitation part of Lindwall's *Architecture of difference*, and perhaps also for the reading of additional texts. As the creative process will be more extended over time, documented and further communicated through the film production, it is from my perspective a project that is more closely related to the investigative practice of the thesis.

New exploratory journeys have thus already begun. It is my intention to continue to move between different formats and collaborations. Through my PhD project, I have developed a deeper understanding of how new approaches and methods can enable longitudinal and elaborate projects that transcend artistic boundaries and seek new knowledge. The driving force is a continuous search for what can only be sensed and to continue to create space for the ineffable.

Appendix

List of Attar quotes at beginning of Chapters I–VII:

Chapter I: Attar, 2017, p. 259
Chapter II: Attar, 2017, pp. 272–273
Chapter III: Attar, 2017, p. 256
Chapter IV: Attar, 2017, p. 284
Chapter V: Attar, 2017, p. 291
Chapter VI: Attar, 2017, p. 252
Chapter VII: Attar, 2017, p. 252

List of Merleau-Ponty quotes in the essay in Chapter IV:

We are in the world through our body (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 206).
I am conscious of the world through the medium of my body (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 82).
The body is our general medium for having a world (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 146).
The real has to be described, not constructed or formed (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. x).
my body is at once phenomenal body and objective body (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p. 136).
It is through my body that I understand other people (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 186).
space is the evidence of "where" (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p.173).
Is not to see always to see from somewhere? (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 67).
Forgetfulness is therefore an act. I keep the memory at arm's length (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p.162).
I have my actual present seen as the future of that past (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 69).
this primary here from which all the there's will come (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p.175).
A second visibility (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p. 153).
It is this ek-stase of experience which causes all perception to be perception of something (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 70).
the visible in the tangible and [...] the tangible in the visible (Merleau-Ponty, 1968, p. 134).
Every technique is a "technique of the body" (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p.168).
The body is to be compared, not to a physical object, but rather to a work of art (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 150)
It is a nexus of living meanings (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 151).
I detach myself from my experience and pass to the *idea* (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 71).
I think that the painter must be penetrated by the universe and not want to penetrate it….I expect to be inwardly submerged, buried. Perhaps I paint to break out. (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 167).
Intentionality (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 54).
The world is what we perceive (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. XVI)
I live in it from the inside; I am immersed in it. (Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p. 178)

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