

# **Improvisation Based on Yoga Listening Practices and Philosophies**

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This research is based on my journal entries, improvised audio recordings, literary studies and artistic philosophy. While much of the content reflects my personal experiences, artistic perspectives and visions, I used DeepL translation during the writing process to improve the phrasing of my own ideas and enrich the vocabulary of the research. This use is limited to improving the expression of ideas, and all content and ideas are entirely my own.

## **Abstract**

This research endeavours to reveal the transformative potential of artistic creativity by combining musical improvisation and yoga-based embodied listening practices. The study incorporates three listening practices: humming and self-observation, listening only with the right ear, and listening to the space within the heart. The effects of these experiments are documented in a journal and recorded as audio files. In addition to improvisation as a musical practice and embodied listening, this research also considers how yoga, - which has become an important part of Indian culture over the centuries with its roots in Vedic culture - can shape artistic identity through its philosophical understanding of sound, and its perspectives on the human body as a cosmos.

The research emphasizes subjects such as the healing power of humming, chakra energy, collective consciousness, energetic centers of consciousness in the human body and their potential role in transforming the artist's identity. The thoughts and experiences in this research are personal, but the content of this article has been written based on these experiences as an attempt to present visions for global musicians to transition their musicianship into a more universal form, and to pose multifaceted questions to the reader.

This paper draws attention to different improvisation techniques makam terminology and explores existing literature to open innovative doors based on holistic experience. The findings reveal the vibrant and energetic connections between the effects of music and vibrations on human life and the body, and the various philosophies that nourish the artist's identity and expression.

This thesis encourages improvisation as a form of existence to establish deep spiritual connections with experiences from the past and present. Highlighting dimensions of music that are unnoticeable due to existing industrial structures and education models, the most importantly, esoteric knowledge of the body, inviting the reader to be open-minded for all sonic possibilities.

**Keywords:** Improvisation, Embodied Listening, Yoga, Artistic Identity, Anahata, Esoteric Knowledge, Kemane, Kamancha.

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Furthermore, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the wise individuals who have enlightened the world by developing the philosophies and ideas about life in many cultures and offering unique approaches to humanity's place in the universe, as well as to all ancient and current scholars who have carried, developed, and researched this knowledge up to the present day.

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## I WAS A SOUND BEFORE I WAS BORN

*I was a sound before I was born  
I am a sound in all my forms in my earthly existence.  
And when my earthly life is over  
I will continue to be sound, that is, to vibrate.  
What vibration I am and what vibration I will be is in my hands  
What vibration I want to leave on the earth  
And  
What vibration I want to take away from the earth?*

*All the frequencies I want to be can awaken within me.  
Life is internal. Anything that does not awaken in me cannot be reflected outside.  
Maybe it is, maybe it is not.*

*Ben doğmadan önce bir sestim  
Ben doğmadan önce bir sestim  
Dünyasal varlığım içinde bütün hallerimle bir ses olmaya devam ediyorum  
Dünyasal yaşamım sona erdiğinde de ses olmaya, yani titreşmeye devam edeceğim  
Nasıl bir titreşim olduğum ve nasıl bir titreşim olacağım benim elimde  
Yeryüzüne bırakmak istediğim  
Ve  
Yeryüzünden alıp gitmek istediğim titreşim nedir?*

*Olmak istediğim frekansların hepsi içimde uyanabilir.  
Yaşam içseldir. İçimde uyanmayan hiçbirşey dışarıya yansıyamaz.  
Belki öyledir, belki değildir.*

Melisa Yıldırım, 19.10.2024/Helsinki - 11:35pm

\* A poem I wrote on a spontaneous day when the spiritual, mental and physical effects of the practices continued. This poem became the theme of my master concert.

## 1. Introduction

In this thesis, I will address the effects of my experiences in embodied listening practices from yoga culture on my musical improvisations. I aim to explore how I use these listening practices and existing understandings I have discovered as a method in my musical performances, especially in concert preparation processes. I share my own thoughts behind this working method.

Listening is an active state in which one is consciously or unconsciously constantly involved. The cultures and habits in our environment have an effect on our listening perceptions. Embodied listening is about paying full attention to our bodies while listening to the sounds and silence around us. Personally, meditations shape my artistic identity and expressions in my improvised music practice. My interest in Yoga, Zen, Buddhist philosophies developed my holistic approach about music and thus my methods of preparation for my concerts. I believe that these experiences have strengthened my bond with sound and life as an improviser. The meditative contemplative techniques in the eastern philosophies I mentioned have taught me to observe that I can detach myself from particular human ideas and even cultures. In this way, I have learned to be an improviser not only in music but also in life. Especially through yogic thinking, I had the opportunity to understand, internalize and embody the following; everything is temporary, everything is fluid. '*Neti Neti*' in ancient Jnana yoga practice seems to be the mantra of my life for now," which in Sanskrit means "not this, not that", or "neither this, nor that" (Keshavan, Bhargav, 2024)

During my master's studies at the Sibelius Academy, I encountered Pauline Oliveros' work in preparation for the '13 Encounters' improvisational doctoral concert of Livia Schweizer, a PhD researcher. I was amazed to discover that Oliveros was also inspired by similar cultures and philosophies. Their work encouraged me to focus on listening practices and sonic meditations. Seeing the use of text scores in this process made me return to my poetry and writing process, which I had paused for a long time. She reminded me of the power of words and imagination. I am very interested in the effectiveness of listening on consciousness in terms of body and environment (Oliveros, 2005).

Improvisation has various names and techniques in different cultures and geographies. I am strongly familiar with an improvisation technique that belongs to Anatolian and Ottoman makam music culture. In the musical environment I come from, improvisation is often called '*Taksim*' (Liontou-Mochament, 2023). In common perception, improvisation in music is an

instantaneous production in which we are free. However, we produce improvised music based on our existing instrument technique, musical and sensory experiences. In this research, I build beyond these to include some of the sonic listening practices found in Vedic culture, which connects to my own practice methods, and esoteric thoughts about body from this culture.

"The people of the Vedic faith popularised their philosophy in a way that appealed to intuition, sound and the sense of hearing, instead of creating great temples, statues and icons." (Ercan, 2016, Sesin Gücü Sözü'n Büyüsü.(The Power of Sound The Magic of the Word), p. 40. (My translation from Turkish))

I can see that there is something therapeutic about the embodied practices and ways of thinking in the texts of this ancient culture, especially for a musician in the music industry. Some of these practices can be useful for reducing stress and nurturing creativity. During my research, I came across many definitions of yoga, some of which I included in my literature review. The most common meaning attached to it is 'unity'. Dr. Taneja mention that yoga means the union of individual consciousness with higher consciousness and has eight stages. Its primary goal is self-realization. It is a way of life that demonstrates understanding of one's own nature, physical, spiritual, social well-being and holistic harmony with the environment. So, this is in contrast to our competitive, ecologically destructive, socially and emotionally unsettled civilization of today (Taneja, 2014). Bora Ercan, a well-known yoga instructor and author in Türkiye, posed the question. "Is yoga a religion, an art, a therapy, a sport?" (Ercan, 2021, p. 24). Although yoga seems to be somehow included in these categories, none of these are actually sufficient to understand and explain yoga. Even though yoga techniques and approaches are used and inspired by these categories, yoga is actually a thing in itself. I personally feel closer to accepting yoga as such. "Yoga is personal " (Ercan, 2021, p. 26-27). Yoga's free, individual development oriented philosophical approaches made me more aware of sound, listening phenomena and my body.

This thesis is motivated by personal experiences and study. As part of the research process, I took online jnana yoga courses for 42 hours from Bora Ercan. Jnana yoga is a yoga practice known as the path of knowledge or self-realisation. During these courses when I came across centuries-old of experiential knowledge on inner and outer sound practices in Vedic culture in Indian region and the mental and subtle effects of these sound practices, I realised that such experiences, practices do not exist enough in today's modern world. At least in the

cultures I met throughout my career and in the music conservatory training I have received, I have almost never encountered listening techniques.

It was fascinating for me to encounter the practices of the deep-rooted aural culture that existed in the Indian culture thousands of years ago. For example, in any simple bodily yoga practices today, we use listening aspects such as breath sound, focusing on the meditative music in the environment, yogic chanting and OM. Listening to the teacher guiding the practice, these things may be call the ‘*soundscapes of yoga.*’ (Gerety, 2020, p. 502,( cited from Schafer(1993)[1997])) This fascination has guided me throughout my research presented here. "Sound in yoga also encompasses internal, silent and embodied realms of vibration, with practitioners listening to their own breath, tuning in to inner sound, or meditating on the flow of sonic energy within subtle body." (Gerety, 2020, p. 502).

### **1.1 Research Questions**

- To what extent can practices and philosophies of embodied listening shape my musical improvisation?
- How do sound and sonic experiences influence one's artistic identity?

### **1.2. Structure of the written work**

This research includes the following:

- Introduction
- Research questions
- My personal background
- Philosophical explanations
- Analysis of data from my Listening Practices diary

It adheres to academic research methods up to sections 1 and 6.

Section 7, Listening Practices, includes listening practices and humming exercises concretised from yoga culture. Daily notes and improvisation recordings are also included. The presentation of my embodied experiences and their effects on my artistic identity was shared at the Etnosoi festival in the form of a solo electroacoustic performance. This section also includes notes taken before and after the concert.

In this research, the Listening Practices experiments were completed first, followed by the academic writing and research stages.

### **1.3. Artist Statement and Personal Background**

Since I aim to introduce the developmental processes of my artistic identity and to delve into the depths of my musical experience and understanding, I find it necessary to include some professional timelines from my personal background and to make my artistic statement in this research project.

I am an improviser, composer, musician and multi-instrumentalist. I was born in Istanbul, Turkiye.

The first music I heard were my grandmother's lullabies, which was also my first experience of microtonal folk music connection. I always loved dancing and falling asleep to her sound.

In 2010, I enrolled in the High School Instrument Department of the Turkish Music State Conservatory of the Istanbul Technical University (ITU TMDK), where I was introduced to my professional instrument 'kemane', I studied classical Turkish music, Turkish folk music and western music. After graduating from high school, I continued my education in the Bachelor's degree program at the ITU TMDK Instrument Department in 2014. During my education at this university, besides learning to play kemane, I studied musicology, art history, music philosophy, music sociology, sociology and history of science and technology.

In 2016, I won the first award in the 'Teke Region Folk Instruments Competition' organised by Mehmet Akif Ersoy University Turkish Music State Conservatory in the Youth Kemane category.

In 2018, I finished my Bachelor's degree ITU TMDK with distinction. My Bachelor's thesis was on 'Analysis and Performance of Zeybek Samples in Different Unit Times and Sequences of Turkish Folk Music' (Yıldırım, 2018). After graduation, I moved to London and developed my international career there.

I was introduced to philosophy during adolescence. My questioning and reflections on life and the meaning of being human, my various life experiences over time, and the answers I found and could not find, somehow pushed me to think about music, sound and improvisation. Who was I without music, and what was I making music for? My answers to these questions were superficial. At least, the existing standard music system and its market did not give me answers to my questions in a constructive way. The answers were full of

short-term gratification, emotionally draining and competitive. As an instrumentalist, I was a slave to the music I played. My interest in philosophy taught me to question everything around me - ideas, situations, and even my own assumptions. In the west, questioning techniques are mostly based on the so-called Socratic method. It is worth pointing out the limited framing of this term. According to a recent argument, Socrates and many other philosophers of the time benefitted greatly from Aspasia, who has been largely ignored throughout history because of her gender (Ljubičić, 2024). The deductive approach to questioning has influenced my way of thinking in life, and as a woman, I like to maintain awareness of Socrates' influences (Carey, Mullan, 2004). Philosophy has helped me to question philosophy itself and its (gendered) role in society.

Music was all around me as I had already started playing instruments and receiving music education at a young age. I think it was one of the best chances in my life to have encountered various educators who are professionals in their field, who, besides being musicians, taught me to be full of love and spirituality and how to perceive music in this way.

I am a person who focuses on self-awareness and self-mastery in life, I care about understanding and developing myself first. Although this is a laborious path, it definitely affects my music. Especially in music, I find the field of improvisation important in terms of overcoming mental boundaries. For this reason, I have been deepening my projects and academic life on the subject of improvisation for a long time.

I am passionate about understanding the impact of frequencies, sounds and listening on the human body and life.

I love listening to the birds, and watching the colours of the world.

## **2. Philosophical Statement**

Life today is filled with many tasks and responsibilities. From the moment we are born until the moment we die, we are constantly entangled in social, economic and belief systems that are predetermined for us. The existing world order, which systematically limits human abilities and imagination, is sickening and full of chaos for human beings, who are a part of nature and the universe. We, who do not have time to question and understand our place in the universe and the world. In the hustle and bustle of daily life with predetermined knowledges and orders, unfortunately we do not have time to stop for a moment to simply

understand our emotions and our body. We live in the illusion that time can be bought with money and medicines. I don't know how this cramped, rule-filled, hurried system that uses the human body as a machine will come to an end everywhere for everyone, but I believe that every person can rediscover and remember their self-mastery.

I have always considered it important to be skeptical and agnostic about the state of knowledge. Everyone understands the world in a different way and this diversity is life itself. Epistemologically, I believe that many types of knowledge can be accessed through subjective experiences and artistic practices. In this research, I observe and analyze the multi-layered senses of my bodily and my intellectual reasoning. Despite the western domination in ancient Greek philosophers and knowledge today, thanks to music I encountered the knowledge of various cultures and eastern thinkers. It was an exciting new beginning for me. On this journey, it was interesting for me to see sound-human-body-nature-cosmos ideas in yoga, and I have started to sow the first seeds for this research over time.

Yoga and some of its listening practices, which are the focus of this thesis, are one of the tools, that contribute to my self-cultivation. I endeavour to understand my body, and my existence in the universe as a consciousness. Yoga offers various techniques for understanding and mastering the inner and outer universe, and these techniques have progressed through thousands of years of study and research before christ. Yoga teaches being an observer, at least this is the side I experienced. Jnana Yoga, (one of the varieties of yoga) offers various stages to reach the absolute knowledge of the universe, and according to this type of yoga one has to reach the knowledge of oneself, because one is unity itself. I feel lucky that yoga has touched my life, it has influenced the way I look at sounds and music. I feel close to the idea that human is knowledge and the universe itself, I can even say that I have experienced this through bodily listening practices.

Every living being comes into the world with inner knowledge and we always have the ability to discover and intuit it when we want to. No matter how much attention and work it took to understand this, I believe that cultures and thoughts should be transcended by observing them. Beyond social truths, cultures and traditional thoughts, I feel that there is serenity and unity. Observation of serenity and unity brings lightness to these aspects . Cultures and traditions are human productions, they can contain wonderful touches and deep philosophies, but they can also contain divisive and destructive effects, unfortunately most of us are fanatical about our own thoughts. Although it is not the subject of this thesis, I would

like to mention that I inevitably encounter this kind of fanaticism in the music environment. Everyone is convinced that their tradition and nation is the most special, but at the same time the most beautiful words about unity are used on stage and in various projects. How far can a mentally segregated musician, who accepts diversity only on particular terms, understand the sounds beyond predetermined thoughts and towards the unity of the universe? (Lipe, 2002). In my opinion, musicians have the potential to heal society like healers. But doesn't categorising this healing according to nation and tradition create some contradictions? To what extent do these make us consistent in our work and discourses? So, the healer must first learn to heal their mind. I would say that at least yoga and some disciplines like it have helped me to understand and observe these contradictions in my work environment.

Yoga is also a part of a culture, I am aware of this. According to my experience, it has points that show beyond cultural ideologies. For me, yoga teaches one to abandon oneself and one's habitual life experiences. This is the reason why I brought together improvisation in music and yogic listening. I believe that improvisation is both one of the most advanced and one of the most basic techniques of music. At the advanced level of improvisation, each creative person has their own life and musical perspectives frame of artistic identity. In order to improvise, mental flexibility and physical comfort are required. And most importantly, in my opinion, the improviser must have strengthened their self-intuition and self-awareness. With improvisation, we can both use culture, conventional musical ideas and techniques and at the same time be the observer and subject of sounds and silence. For this reason, I care about being close to my body and inner world more than my personal musical endeavors with yoga and meditation. When improvising, I use parts of yogic listening techniques and musical techniques. This reminds me that I am a whole in life. When I play my instrument, I do not think about representing a nation, culture or anything. I am only interested in the sounds, their effects on my body and silence between sounds, and the experience of that moment. I move away from the responsibilities of my existing identities. I am almost independent of myself.

My thinking is closely linked with recent work on embodiment. We experience everything in our lives with our body and senses, and in art, productions emerge with embodied wisdom. Expanding interest in feminist, postmodern, post structural, and psychoanalytic theory have also affected discussions of embodiment (Leavy, 2022). It is possible to use the body in certain positions with various techniques while playing an instrument and accordingly to experience the sound of the environment and the instrument, to provide well-being to the mind and all organs by reducing the tension of the body, to listen to the physical and energy

bodies of the body mentioned in yoga and to try to perceive them, all with the participation of the body. Feminist theorist and professor Elizabeth Grosz, influenced by Michael Foucault and Susan Bordo, divides the body into 'inscriptive' and 'lived' bodies. The inscriptive body is the place where social meanings are created and resisted. The lived body, on the other hand, is the knowledge that people experience, and in this respect it is connected to phenomenology (Leavy, 2022, p. 211). In my own work, the lived, phenomenological body is at the heart of my experience and interest. It is not difficult to observe the devaluation of human life's multiplicity, nature and embodiments in the world we live in. Accordingly, it is not an unexpected result to see that the productions of artists and musicians are standardized and devalued within our unbalanced life dynamics. At the moment, most of the effort and concern of artists is to gain followers on digital platforms, compete with our colleagues to get grants, and even to shape our creativity according to the application forms. So, how far can an artist who is circling around in such a system progress in understanding the knowledge of their own abilities and nature? Can the artist develop their own methods and meanings? Or do we live for years with conventional training around traditional truths without opening space for ourselves and without asking questions? How creative can such a way of life make us? Are we using our art to heal and understand ourselves? How much do we listen to our own body and environment? When was the last time we played music with joy and curiosity? We need to ask such questions and discover our answers.

Musicians are constantly taught to play classical or folk music repertoire, to develop techniques on our instruments. There is nothing wrong with this, but is this the meaning of all the sounds around us? (Amerius-Sargeant, 2023). In many ancient cultures, especially music and sounds were used for healing (Lipe, 2002) (Solanki, Zafar, Rastogi, 2013). Today, however, the healing power of music seems to be neglected in our modern lives. We can heal people and nature with various frequencies, and various frequencies can impair our health (Calamassi, Pomponi, 2019). To go even further, perhaps various frequencies and vibrations can change and manipulate our perception of reality.

Unfortunately, compressing music into conventional cultural structures and popular markets creates a vicious circle. It distracts from exploring one's sonic imagination. I believe that the bodily listening practices and reflections on improvisation in this research will inspire and add a new perspective to the identity of being an artist.

### 3. Literature Review

In this literature review I introduce the key interests framing my research: improvisation, deep listening, yoga, Nada yoga, and research into well-being.

#### 3.1 Improvisation

I start with improvisation, on which there is extensive literature, although most of the research papers have investigated the theme of improvisation in jazz. The general opinion about improvisation is that it is a musical style that emerges spontaneously without prior preparation, but as Berliner states, in fact, everything the jazz improviser performs has a lifetime of preparation, experience and knowledge (Berliner, 1994). Marina Liontou-Mochament writes about different cultural explanations of improvisation within classical Ottoman music, saying "Every music culture has its own terminology when referring to improvised practice, which by the way does not translate to improvisation." (Liontou-Mochament, 2023, p. 20). This suggests that within cultural musics a range of terminologies describe different approaches to improvisation practices, which contain a larger range of options than typical in western musical improvisation. The type of improvisation closest to my tradition is called *Taksim*, which is "Instrumental performance generated form of makam improvisation, with its first origins tracing back to the 17th century." (Liontou-Mochament, 2023, p.10) or *Açış*, *doğaçlama*, *uzun hava* within Anatolian folk music context. This kind of musical expression has musical rules or conventional melodic timbres depending on various makams. In fact, in the context of Anatolian folk music, these show different sonic characters depending on the regions. As I have found in my own musical experiences, explaining improvisation practices in cultural constructs and their specific vocabulary can be complex, also demonstrated in two recent studies (Liontou-Mochament, 2023, Rohana 2021). In my experience, within these musical cultures, the practice of improvisation is important to demonstrate the mastery of the performer. In music education there is no technical teaching method, but it is learned by listening to master musicians from various old recordings with the musicians own effort. Nizar Rohana, who focused *taqsīm* in Arabic culture in his research, mentioned that although it has an important place in his culture, sufficient methods for teaching *taqsīm* in modern music education have not been developed. Musicians and students always have to acquire knowledge through their own efforts and experiences (Rohana, 2021).

### 3.2 Deep Listening

The concept of 'Deep Listening' as developed by Pauline Oliveros, makes a connection between improvisation and listening practices. This has enabled me to address the holistic, energetic effects of improvisation and sound on the body and consciousness as contrasts. In this regard, I am close to Oliveros' way of thinking of according to which "creative music improvisation communicates collective musical intelligence as an energy field. Whether an individual soloist or ensemble is improvising, there is a mining of musical information stored deeply in the collective consciousness of humanity. [...] The improviser who trusts his or her body consciousness feels that the music is happening without thought or control. It just flows." (Oliveros, 2008, p. 292-293). Such holistic thinking that links energy fields, consciousness, improvisation, embodiment is close to my own understanding of improvisation. In this kind of holistic thoughts deep listening is one of the important foundations for improvised music. Deep listening practices are another form of meditation, focusing on the continuity of space/time with sound and silence through sonic meditations. Deep listening includes attention, concentration, breath, body and environment. It is intended to develop and expand sound consciousness and awareness outside of daily habitual listening (Oliveros, 2005).

### 3.3 Yoga

Yoga practices include similar features to those discussed above regarding deep listening. For this reason, I found research into the branch of yoga called 'nada yoga' beneficial to my work. While the word *Yoga*, which is mostly used in the sense of unity, comes from the Sanskrit root *Yuj*, the word *Nada* comes from the word *Nad*, which means sound. It is also the flow, so, the flow of consciousness if we think in yoga context. One definition that is central to my thinking about yoga is by Khrishnamacharya;

"The definition of yogas as given Yoga sutras 1.2 is *yoga-citta-nirodhahi*:

The ability to direct the mind exclusively towards an object and sustain that direction without any distractions. The object could be external or internal, and could be any area of interest or concept or even beyond the senses." (Khrishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram, cited in Jain, 2017, p. 161). Listening is important in this practice for more sensation of subtle sounds. Nada

Yoga, is an ancient Indian sound therapy.<sup>1</sup> In this therapy there is an important key to understanding the vibrational unity of life and the universe, the inner and outer perception of the cosmos. This type of yoga practices, which has its own unique techniques, includes breathing exercises, embodied listening and mantras (Mishra, Tiwari, Chauhan, Nayak, 2022).

While I did not encounter artistic works about yogic listening practices during my research period, experiments and observations on the neuroscientific and psychological effects of yoga and nada yoga were particularly striking, and useful for my own explorations.<sup>2</sup>

In a research project based solely on nada yoga meditations, Electro-phonetic Imaging (EPI) was studied with 15 healthy volunteer subjects. EPI is a technique that allows capturing images of photons emitted from the participants' bodies and observes subtle, physiological and psycho-physiological activities. After 45 minutes of these practices, immediate energy-enhancing effects were observed in the root, solar plexus, heart, throat chakras and average chakra energy levels. In the same paper, conceptual information about the sounds in the Nada Yoga system are analyzed into two categories: External sound (Ahata Nada) and Internal sound (Anahata Nada). I have never encountered the distinction and definition of sound as internal and external both in my own musical experiences and in music education. In Anahata Nada, the sound is 'Om', which is considered universal, a silent vibration heard without any external tools. This demonstrates the spiritual nature of nada yoga. (Veerabrahmachar, Bista, Bokde, Jasti, Bhargav, Bista, 2023)

### **3.4 Well-being**

Such work often connects closely to issues of well-being. For example, Dr. Bhatia observed stress and anxiety reducing effect of humming sound performance lasting about 9 seconds on human brain cortices was observed at theta bands (Bhatia, 2023). This positive effects on the brain supports memory, cognition and mental clarity. In another similar experiment, a humming (simple Bhramari Pranayama) study was conducted on 23 volunteers with a single-

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<sup>1</sup> "Nada" in Indian Tradition'', Singh, Jaidev Published in: Journal of the Indian Musicological Society 1980-03, Vol.11 (1), p.37

<sup>2</sup> Music and Sound in "Yoga", MUSALGAONKAR, VIMALA Published in: Journal of the Indian Musicological Society 1980-03, Vol.11 (1), p.44. I was unable to access the digital copies of two articles published in 1980 by the Journal of Indian Musicology Society that I found on nada yoga during the literature search, and it was not possible to access the hard copies in some university archives. As can be understood from the titles of these articles, 'nada', i.e. sound yoga, is included.

channel Holter device, The effect on heart rate was examined, the stress-reducing aspects of the activity were observed, and it was stated that humming study performed regularly daily can strengthen and activate the parasympathetic system (Trivedi, Sharma, Saboo, Kathirvel, Konat, Zapadia, Prajapati, Benani, Patel, Shah, 2023). Also, after 12 weeks of nada yoga music therapy applied to ovarian cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy, valuable positive changes in symptom managements and emotional relaxation effects were observed (Malik, Sehrawat, Chaturvedi, Kumari, Barnwal, Kalra, Gupta, 2024).

### 3.5 Esoteric Knowledge and Cosmology

I benefited from Gerety's written work an old translated Upanishadic quotation about embodied deep listening technique, which I added to my personal listening practice in this research. This practice provides interesting insights into the cosmology of ancient Indian culture and beliefs. "Other bodily techniques can deepen listening further, as the Maitrayaniya Upaniṣad attests: 'By fixing (yoga) the thumbs on the ears, practitioners listen to the sound in the space within the heart. ' (6.22 trans. After van Buitenen 1962) (Gerety, 2020, p. 504). Cosmology is also fundamental to the Chandogya Upanishad, which has inspired my work as well. Within this text, the relationship of the heart to the cosmos is proposed as follows: "As vast as this space here all around us, is that space within heart" [*sic*] (Gerety, 2021, p. 227). By this ancient text, there is no separation between human body and the cosmos, the heart channels are anatomically connected to the sun's rays, and the heart includes the sun itself (Gerety, 2021). The heart is the fourth chakra in the seven-chakra system which is called Anahata. In several ancient cultures, the heart is considered not only as an anatomical organ, but also as an energetic center of consciousness (Beshara, 2013). I find it necessary to include here a short explanatory video by Joseph Campbell, renowned for his research and presentations on mythology and comparative religion, regarding Anahata<sup>3</sup>.

Today's yoga courses tend towards body exercises and sequences alone (The Psychophysiology of Yoga, Laura Schmalzl, Pamela Jeter and Sat Bir Singh Khalsa, p. 441). However, these older definitions and intellectual approaches show that yoga is not only a physical exercise offered in today's modern consumer culture for health and looking good. Rather, there is a metaphysical view of sounds/vibrations in the physical and energy body of an individual.

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<sup>3</sup> Kundalini Yoga: The God Syllable "AUM" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5nX1AvKipqg>

I also drew on more abstract thinking about listening phenomena, such as Gallagher's personal argument for the way we listen and perceive sound, according to which "... maybe sound doesn't have to mean anything. Maybe meaning is as much something we bring to sound as something sound brings to us." (Gallagher, 2013, p. 42). This openness to meaning and sound existing as sound alone, before meaning, is also central to my work.

#### **4. Art-based Autoethnographic Research**

This research is practice-based, founded in artistic work. There are many types of artistic research and countless possibilities. Artistic practices are mostly individual. The main point of this research method is that it is open to innovative thinking, surprises, and discoveries (Leavy, 2022). Throughout my life, I have used art and creativity to express myself, which is why I believe that art-based research methods are the most suitable way to express myself without limitations. As an artist, I have been accustomed to experiencing knowledge through the body, emotions, and intuition for many years. Therefore, I thought it was necessary to use autoethnography to best explain my personal creative processes and reflect my listening experiences in this research study. Autoethnography validates bodily knowledge and poetry (Johnson, LeMaster, 2020). Thanks to this method, I have found the opportunity to deepen my understanding of artistic thought processes and my identity. I also see this research as part of my own transformation process.

In yogic listening practices, I wanted to express my moments of inner reflection not only with a journal, but also with improvised sound recordings and poems. I believe that the poems I write can offer readers insights into my experiences. For this reason, I shared one of my poems with the audience during my improvisation master concert as a text score. By sharing notes from my daily life and the essence of my inspirations, I wanted to open an intimate window about myself to readers. In short, I desired this research to not only have an academic meaning, but also to establish an emotional connection with those interested in the subject and to spark contemplations.

##### **4.1. Data generation**

For this research, I worked on 3 different listening techniques for a total of 25 days. Sometimes I took a few days or weeks break between practices. I added writings from my diary containing my reflections and contemplations on the practices, sometimes observing and analyzing my body and the lifeworld around me from an external perspective, as an outsider, which is present in jnana yoga practices (Konecki, 2022). After each listening

practice, I recorded some short instrumental improvisations. Some days I made drawings and wrote some poems. Except for the first listening practice, after the second and third practices, I played short instrumental improvisations and recorded them with the voice recorder on my Iphone 14 Pro. There is a total of 18 audio recordings.

#### **4.2. Data collection and analysis**

I conducted a series of listening experiments which can be understood as three stages of the research. Each one was a development of the previous one. In the first stage of experimenting I worked with humming and self-observation. In the second, I listened with my right ear alone, and I followed the listening with improvisations. In the third, and developed from my literature review (Gerety 2021), I experimented with listening with closed ears (thumb pressure), listening to my heart; I also improvised after this.

Only after all three stages, I analysed my diary, in which I reflected on my listening practices, and then analysed the recordings of my improvisations. However, even during the data collection process, I realised after listening exercises that I was using musical improvisation as a state of consciousness flow. I added my findings and thoughts regarding physical, environmental and spatial awareness to my notes. The summary analysis of my experiences and notes in the diary is as follows:

- Daily notes of the first stage:

1<sup>st</sup> Day: Before the listening practice, I observed my room and my body. The listening itself lasted 5 minutes.

2<sup>nd</sup> Day: I practised with a mind free of thoughts as soon as I woke up in the morning. While observing my surroundings, I took care not to describe what I observed with words. Focusing on Chidakasha increased my concentration. The listening itself lasted 5 minutes.

3<sup>rd</sup> Day: After 20 minutes of physical yoga exercises, I began my nada yoga practice. I became an observer of my body. The listening itself lasted 5 minutes.

4<sup>th</sup> Day: I felt physically and mentally balanced in the morning. I conversed with nature. I observed the thoughts in my mind. The preparation phase was easier. The listening itself lasted 5 minutes.

5<sup>th</sup> Day: My muscles felt relaxed after a warm shower. Before the main practice, I simply closed my ears and observed the silence and sounds within me. The listening itself lasted 5 minutes.

6<sup>th</sup> Day: I resumed the practice after a long break. I focused on my body. The listening itself lasted 5 minutes.

In my initial experiences with this listening experiment, I often mention feeling distant from the sea, water, the unknown, and my intuition. There are moments in the final stages of the practice where I note that my ears feel reborn and refreshed each time. During the preparation phase, I noticed that I tried to observe my room and surroundings and to be an observer. I focused on hearing the sounds within my body, but I mention the difficulty of standing upright and trying to relax my arms at the end of the practice; there are physically challenging aspects to this work. Trying to pay attention to the silence between breaths is helpful in increasing my concentration on listening. I mention that it is difficult to focus because of intense thoughts that come to mind. In other words, there are days when I struggle to control and calm my mind, but as I get used to the practice, I have become more successful in slowing down my thoughts. During these listening exercises, I sometimes experienced irregular breathing. I have mentioned several times on different days that I saw a purple colour in the middle of my forehead. This may be the colour of the crown chakra. This exercise, humming with my ears closed, increased my awareness my body's vitality. I focused on observing the points where my own voice vibrations reached the furthest and closest parts of my body. As I got used to the practice, I experienced a surprising moment that left me in awe, where I witnessed themes of the universe, emptiness, timelessness, and the harmonics of my own voice from within my body. I mentioned that I saw sound and electric waves. After taking a few days off from practice, my body wanted to do this work again, so I listened to my body's needs and repeated it, and I realized that I loved this practice. I would like to point out that the awareness I gained through this practice brings me happiness.

- Daily notes and improvisation recordings on second stage:

1<sup>st</sup> Day: I did kumbhaka 5 times with Jalandra Bandha. The listening itself lasted 8-10 minutes.

2<sup>nd</sup> Day: I prepared my body by taking deep breaths with my eyes closed. I did kumbhaka 5 times with Jalandra Bandha. The listening itself lasted 10 minutes.

3<sup>rd</sup> Day: I performed 5 rounds of kumbhaka with Jalandra Bandha. The listening itself lasted 10 minutes.

4<sup>th</sup> Day: I performed 5 rounds of kumbhaka with Jalandra Bandha. The listening itself lasted 15 minutes.

5<sup>th</sup> Day: Before the listening practice, I stretched and relaxed my body with 20 minutes of physical yoga exercises. I did 5 rounds of kumbhaka with Jalandra Bandha. The duration of the listening itself is unknown.

6<sup>th</sup> Day: I did 20 minutes of breathing exercises after practice. I did 5 kumbakas with Jalandra Bandha. The listening itself lasted 15 minutes.

7<sup>th</sup> Day: I did 5 kumbakas with Jalandra Bandha. The listening itself lasted 15 minutes.

8<sup>th</sup> Day: I did 5 kumbakas with Jalandra Bandha. The duration of the listening itself is unknown.

9<sup>th</sup> Day: I did 5 kumbakas with Jalandra Bandha. The listening itself lasted 16 minutes.

10<sup>th</sup> Day: I did 5 kumbakas with Jalandra Bandha. The listening itself lasted 15 minutes.

11<sup>th</sup> Day: After taking several long and deep breaths, I did 5 kumbhakas with Jalandra Bandha. The listening itself lasted 17 minutes.

12<sup>th</sup> Day: I did 5-6 kumbakas with Jalandra Bandha. The listening itself lasted 18 minutes.

13<sup>th</sup> Day: I did my daily 20-minute breathing exercise. I did 5-6 kumbakas with Jalandra Bandha. The second phase lasted 15 minutes. 14<sup>th</sup> Day: I did physical movements to stretch my muscles. I performed 5-6 kumbakas with Jalandra Bandha. The listening itself lasted 15 minutes.

15<sup>th</sup> Day: I did 5 kumbakas with Jalandra Bandha. The duration of the listening itself is unknown.

In my journal, I mention that I focused on observing the subtle reflections of sounds within my body during this practice. The practice has a soothing effect on the fatigue of daily life. In the improvisational recordings of this practice, I observed that I was focused on whatever was happening in the moment and accepted the flow. Listening without thinking about what is happening seems to be the main point.

I made short, monophonic, atonal and slightly melodic improvisational recordings that included harmonics. Sometimes I used the Lavta instrument. After experiencing the practice on the third day, on the fourth day, in the early morning, between sleep and wakefulness, I woke up to a deep OM sound coming from my heart and chest. I heard my chakra sound. All the vibrations were peaceful and continuous, and I felt myself being healed. In Jnana yoga course, it was said that chakra sounds would begin to be heard after 15 days of practice, but this happened earlier than predicted, at an unexpected moment. It was the first time I had ever experienced something like this in my life. I heard the inner sound or Anahata, mentioned in the Nada yoga system. In the days that followed, I noticed that I began to observe the sounds and shift my thoughts from an individual perspective to a broader one. As the days passed, I started to think about the vibrations of the sun, moon, and stars and how to hear them. I have notes about the vibrations within me and around me. I am talking about feeling inner balance and peace. Some days, I find it difficult to focus on listening because of intense thoughts in my mind or the hustle and bustle of daily life. As my observations and experiences deepened, I began to discover a lively and intriguing side to the practice. Listening exercises are relaxing when I have had very busy days, but I have analyzed that listening to my surroundings, my body and my senses has improved when I have not had such busy days.

- Daily notes and improvisational recordings on the third stage:

This listening exercise requires focusing on a single organ and space, which made it very challenging to do for a long time. In this practice, I tried to focus on listening to my heart by remaining silent. While doing this practice, I realized that by silence, I sometimes meant calming the mind. I equate silence with stillness. During my recordings, I still tried to focus on my heart, but when my mind tried to control my improvisation, my fingers, and the sounds, it became difficult to focus on my heart.

### **4.3. Ethical Issues**

This artistic research is a personal solo project and experience. Only personal data has been included in this research, no other person has participated in the research process. I hold the copyright to all my personal improvisational sound recordings, journal entries and poems. The research was conducted in accordance with the basic principles outlined in TENK 2023 RI, namely reliability, honesty, respect, and accountability.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.uniarts.fi/en/general-info/research-ethics-and-integrity-at-uniarts-helsinki/>

## 5. Discussion

This study invested in the following questions;

To what extent can practices and philosophies of embodied listening shapes my musical improvisation?

How do sound and sonic experiences influence one's artistic identity?

In this study, I examined the contribution of concrete listening practices in yoga culture to my musical improvisation and performance. Throughout the study, I focused on understanding the philosophical visions of sound, consciousness, and the universe behind these listening practices and their impact on my artistic identity. I will discuss the information I have gained from my experiences and the literature I have reviewed in this section.

Musical improvisation, although it appears to be a form of music that develops spontaneously on stage, is actually directly linked to the artist's lifelong instrumental practice and various repertoire and performance experiences. Many musicians engage in continuous technical work and strive to gain experience on stage in order to be able to perform effective improvisations, and it is even thought that these are necessary. The listening practices of improvisers who progress solely through these technical structures are generally based on listening to improvisation recordings by renowned master musicians and drawing inspiration from them. Traditionally, many people learn improvisation in this way. This is also the most basic known level of improvisation. For example, in Classical Ottoman and Anatolian folk music, where I received my training, learning improvisation from recordings of master musicians is the most essential listening practice. A musician who begins to improvise in a manner appropriate to the makam and scale using their own phrases is considered a master. In other words, you can prove that you are a master when you adhere to the musical rules of the culture, blend them with your own emotions, and reflect them in elegant musical expressions. Based on my personal experience, I can say that listening to the recordings of master musicians for days and even years and internalizing them is an important concrete listening practice.

However, although improvisation plays an important role in mastering music, there is unfortunately no comprehensive listening method that involves establishing holistic relationships based on listening to the environment, the body, and sounds at various levels, in addition to this familiar listening practice. Interestingly, improvisation and these dimensions

were never brought together in the conservatory education model in which I was trained, and these areas were not given enough importance. As a result, in many existing studies on modal improvisation, I have observed that, apart from notation analyses, the researcher has not invested enough in the concept of listening, either their own or that of the artist under review. Unlike the traditional listening and improvisation practices I mentioned, I find it necessary to focus on the concepts of intuitiveness, emptiness, silence, and energetic flow, and to nourish the concept of artistic identity from a holistic perspective with various insights. Because I see a direct relationship between all these concepts. I believe that listening and improvisation have various stages, even energetic stages, and I can say that I have experienced some of these stages during my research process.

In the human body, the energy field of consciousness is mostly identified with the mind or brain. In many ancient cultures I have encountered, the heart is one of the most important centers of listening and one of the energy field of consciousness (Beshara, 2013). In the texts of the Vedic culture to which yoga belongs, there are cosmological ideas that connect the heart, or Anahata (the 4th chakra, energy center), to the universe. Because the heart contains the universe and, consequently, the sun, there is mention of the heart's interaction with the sun's rays (Gerety, 2021). The Anahata sound is an internal sound that cannot be created through external tools and is referred to as OM, the silent vibration of the universe (Veerabrahmachar, Bista, Bokde, Jasti, Bhargav, Bista, 2023). As researcher Joseph Campbell stated, there is duality in the formation of external sounds because they are produced by two things touching each other. The Anahata sound is actually a non-dual sound; it is not formed by the interaction of two tools. During the days when I was practicing the third listening exercise, I woke up to the sound of Anahata mentioned above. When I thought about the idea mentioned in the Upanishads that the anatomical heart channels are connected to the sun's rays, I guessed that I might have heard this sound with the first rays of the sun in the morning, when my dominant mental consciousness was not so strong. It was like a powerful resonance. Even if I don't hear it right now, still this silent vibration is there. Since I did not know how or from which chakra I would hear this chakra sound because there are seven chakras, I was not prepared with any technological equipment. I must admit that I did not think of recording it or capturing that moment to prove it at all, as my focus was solely on my own embodied experience. Therefore, I am aware that the statements in this part of the research may be limited in terms of proof and perception for most readers. However, I will attempt to share the effects of this experience on my artistic identity and perception of life.

I believe that everyone can hear the sound of their own universe and that the human body energetically contains the entire universe. The Anahata chakra is associated with universal unity, wholeness, love and peace. It is believed that an imbalance in the energy field of this chakra can increase feelings of greed, separation from unity, competition and restlessness. When I heard Anahata, I felt a sense of wholeness, flow of life and love that I cannot describe. After experiencing this and awakening, I unfortunately had to rejoin the hustle and bustle of life. Over time, I had to make an effort not to get caught up in the judgements and doubts of my mind, which was unfamiliar with such subtle energetic sensations and feelings. As I remember this moment, I realize that the universe is a great musical space. As a result, when I began to understand that every human being carries the vibration and wholeness of the universe within their heart, I can say that my views as an artist on issues such as equality, unity and flow became stronger and deeper. An artist who experiences and frequently remembers the outline can experience the concept of universal unity physically.

Scientific research using Electro-phonetic Imaging (EPI) techniques has shown that the energies of the chakras can be measured. Perhaps in the future, the experiences, vibrations, and heart-based embodied listening exercises described in this thesis will inspire those interested in the intuitive realm of sound, and perhaps through them, the Anahata sound can be recorded and measured using technological tools. I believe that yoga's embodied listening and philosophical perspectives can serve as a useful guide for artists in overcoming existential crises, emotional barriers such as anxiety and fear in creation and improvisation. I think that artists today need spiritual balance as well as physical fitness, and I believe that yoga practices are a natural remedy for balancing both. Through physical listening exercises, improvisers can become observers of themselves, their environment, and the moment, rather than controllers of their emotions and minds. This moment is very individual and, at the same time, as Oliveros mentioned, if one trusts their body awareness, they can connect with the collective consciousness. In addition, I believe that improvisers can heal and transform the collective consciousness. The energetic and intuitive aspects of improvisation are connected to the improviser's personal life practices.

With the embodied meditation and humming bee exercise I do at the beginning of my concerts (including my master concert), I aim to remind the audience of the wholeness of their bodies and the environment they are in, as well as the unity of collective energy, thereby reducing intense mental activity in daily life and increasing bodily intuition. From this point on, I would like to mention some of the personal visions and ideals that my research has

contributed to. As shown in my literature review, various neuropsychological studies have proven that humming exercises reduce stress, provide mental clarity, and relax the parasympathetic nervous system (Bhatia, 2023) (Trivedi, Sharma, Saboo, Kathirvel, Konat, Zapadia, Prajapati, Benani, Patel, Shah, 2023). Based on this, I believe that incorporating these exercises into artistic and general education models in the world will have a positive impact on human life. In my opinion, this exercise may be one of the simplest and most effective ways to remind us that the universe is a vibrational form of life and to teach this to people of all ages in an embodied way. I believe it is essential to discuss the effects of sound, frequency, and vibration, improvisational exercises, and esoteric ideas from cultures like yoga, as well as the knowledge of indigenous cultures with cosmological insights, starting with early artistic and musical education. This can inspire artists and give them a deep understanding of the value of their work. Perhaps, Anahata consciousness-based perspectives could even be studied and taught in art-based community engagement projects.

Lastly, I would like to point out that this research covers only a very small part of the listening practices and philosophy of the yoga culture, which has deep roots dating back thousands of years and developed through oral and written traditions. Thanks to this research, I have been able to better explore the depth and broad spectrum of this culture.

## **6. CONCLUSIONS**

Improvisation is a creative and multifaceted field that reflects the artist's emotions and intuition. When improvisation is combined with the listening practices of yoga, sounds become an esoteric language that enables individuals to discover their gifts of internal and exterior sensing. As discussed in this research, when the process of musical improvisation is combined with various branches of yoga and its philosophical perspectives, it creates a space that allows the artist to question their identity. In some instances, it can offer therapeutic directions for self-mastery, which involves contemplations and understanding of life holistically.

The importance and meaning attributed to music, sounds, improvisation and listening varies across cultures and spiritual practices. I suggest, on the basis of my research presented above, that it can be beneficial to incorporate some practices from cultures where listening and sound therapy are strong, such as yoga, nada yoga, into artistic education methods. As mentioned in the discussion section of this thesis, I would like to emphasize that when in-depth methodological studies are conducted on this subject in future work, it will be

necessary to carefully consider specific historical heritages and deeply contemplate philosophical and cosmological visions of the given cultures.

Also, here the conclusions that I found important in my diary and during the analysis of my improvisation recordings as follows:

- Listening practices help to let go of mental control.
- When improvising with listening practices, it is necessary to let go of control of the mind, otherwise one may stray from bodily listening.
- To understand the essence of listening, it is necessary to become still.
- Sound and silence are intertwined at all times.
- The colour of the crown chakra (purple) can be seen.
- The chakra sound (Anahata) is something that can be heard and felt as an internal resonance.

Yogic listening practices, along with related meditations and breathing exercises, increase observations of the body, mind, space and consciousness, thereby supporting the addition of esoteric, aesthetic and poetic meanings to one's existential thoughts and questions.

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## 7. Appendix: Listening Practices

Before starting this section, there are some points I would like to explain and warn the reader.

Bora Ercan advised me to add the 1st phase in the 2nd practice. Later, since I did not know what this was, I searched for videos, I learnt how to do Jalandhara Bandha<sup>5</sup> from the YouTube video of Çetin Çetintaş, another yoga instructor from Türkiye<sup>6</sup>. Then I did the practice of hearing from the right side for 15 days, which is the main practice of Nada Yoga, as the 2nd phase.

According to the teacher Bora Ercan in the Jnana yoga class, when hearing with the right ear is practiced for 15 days, subtle chakra sounds can be heard. I wanted to experience this practice because I wondered if I could hear it or not.

The experiences I wrote after these practices are personal from my daily life and mind. If a person wants to experience these hearing practices in the way I have written in this thesis, I recommend that they do not read my daily experiences. Experiences, feelings and observations are individual. Perhaps what you read may condition your senses to experience and hear them, so you should be careful not to manipulate your own experience. While I experienced a very short and small part of the practices here online with my classmates during the Jnana yoga class, we only shared our own experience with a few short sentences at the end of the practice. In the meantime, I better understood that each experience is very personal in reality. I did not read the reflections of the experience I wrote at length in my diary from someone else's diary, so there was no other example of experience to compare with my own experience. Our human mind can inevitably make comparisons, which can create a situation that is open to manipulating our own unique experiences. It would be healthier for you to read the experiences I have written here after completing your own practice process and taking your personal notes. If you have an irresistible passion and childlike curiosity to read my diary, give yourself enough time to forget most of what you know after reading it. 😊

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<sup>5</sup> In Jalandhara bandha, after exhaling, the elbows are locked, the chin is lowered, the throat is locked and the energy is kept inside.

<sup>6</sup> [https://youtu.be/I8NABGGq\\_6U?feature=shared](https://youtu.be/I8NABGGq_6U?feature=shared)

## **7.1. Preliminary listening practice in Nada Yoga, First Experiment.**

### **Phase 1: Preparation**

Sit with Nadanusandhana asana. That is, cover the ears with your thumbs. Back and head straight. Relax the whole body and mind. Now be completely at peace. Now you just be with the meditation practice itself.

**Phase 2:** Breathe deeply and produce a humming sound as you exhale. Keep the teeth slightly apart and close the mouth. The sound should be like a bee buzzing. Feel the vibration in your head and throat. Do this for 30 seconds. Try this humming sound for up to 5 minutes. Keep the mind completely on the sound and its vibration.

### **Practice Day 1 :14.09.2024/Helsinki - 10:37pm**

I wanted to be on my yoga mat on the floor to keep my back and head upright. While sitting on my mat, in preparation, I carefully examined my room, the walls, the flower pot by the window, the jumbled and crooked postures of my books, my instruments in the corner. I realised that although they had been there for a long time, I no longer noticed and saw them, somehow ignored them. Then I brought my attention to my body. I tried to sense and observe the space my body occupied in the room. I observed the veins in my hands, the tension in my toes. I touched my skin with my hands and became aware of it. I tried to stretch my feet and neck slightly. When I felt comfortable, I started a 5-minute stopwatch on my phone.

I covered my ears with my thumbs and stopped for a short while, then I made a bee buzzing sound, my teeth apart and my mouth closed. I tried to feel it in my throat and head. Sometimes when I finished the bee sound, I didn't breathe immediately. I listened to the sound inside my body. I felt like I was under the sea, under the water. At that moment I felt that inside me was an ocean. Now I think that we don't know the life under the oceans and we don't know the life inside our body very well...

For a moment my back ached from standing upright, my arms felt heavy and I found it difficult to keep my ears closed and sit still. For a moment I thought that the exercise, however simple it seemed, was difficult. Although I felt physical pain, I was determined to continue and complete it correctly until I heard the sound of the clock. I felt my body swaying slightly from side to side like a balanced pendulum. Sometimes I became unbalanced in my breathing because I was breathing too deeply for what I needed.

For this reason, I had difficulty hearing the silence of the voice inside me when I calmly stopped breathing. I still continued to hear and feel the subtle, inaudible sound inside me, in my internal organs.

When I heard the final tone on the stopwatch, I turned off the alarm and continued to wait with my eyes closed. My ears felt like they were reborn. I could hear the sounds in my room, outside my body, with a clear and clean perception. A freshness came to the sensation of my ears. I felt relaxation in the muscles and bones of my face. The fatigue in my arms soon passed.

*Denizdeki, sudaki damlaların, hücrelerin yaşamlarını bilmiyorum.  
İçimdeki hücrelerin yaşamını bilmiyorum.  
Onları sezemeyecek kadar uzaktayım.  
Yeniden anımsayacağım,  
İçimdeki ve dışımdaki okyanusla yeniden titreşeceğim.  
Bu bütünlüğü duyumsayabiliyorum  
fakat henüz bilmiyorum.*

*I do not know the life of the drops, the cells in the sea, in the water.*

*I do not know the life of the cells within me.*

*I am too far away to sense them.*

*I will remember again,*

*I will vibrate again with the ocean within and without me.*

*I can sense this unity,*

*but I do not know it yet.*

## **Day 2 :15.09.2024/Helsinki - 10:17am**

This morning, I wanted to practice as soon as I woke up before my mind started to fill with thoughts. I just went to the bathroom and then sat on the chair at my desk in my room.

I adjusted the chair to a comfortable position. This time, while examining my surroundings during the preparation phase of the practice, I was careful not to think about or describe my surroundings with words. I just wanted to be in an observer position, I didn't want to tire my mind by starting to make definitions. It was a little difficult, but not impossible.

After looking around me neutrally, I closed my ears for a while. I started to hear the creaking of my bones and fingers, the flow of blood inside me. It was like a humming sound.

Sitting upright is a painful and difficult position for me. I had difficulty balancing my breathing again. Then I leaned my back slightly on the chair. My body was more relaxed towards the end of the practice. When I brought my attention to the *chittakasha*<sup>7</sup> I learned in class, I noticed that my concentration increased even more. I focused on the vibration in my throat. My breathing was more normal, and this time I was able to pay attention to the silence inside me while holding my breath in between. I saw a slight purple color in the middle of my forehead. When the alarm went off, I turned it off. I continued to keep my ears closed a little longer. My attention was still inside my body. Then I lowered my arms, closed my eyes and focused on hearing the surroundings. Since my window was open, I heard the distant hum of cars and lives passing by outside, these were the most dominant sounds entering the room. I feel my awareness of my surroundings increase. Feeling my own vibration woke me up clearly, the sensation in my ears is more attentive and pure.

### **Practice Day 3: 16.09.2024/Helsinki - 11:00am**

This morning, after doing 20 minutes of physical yoga practice, I did the nada yoga exercises.

I sat on my desk chair. I leaned my back for support. I observed my surroundings, my room and my body as an observer for a short while, but during this preparation phase, I realized that there were thoughts that suddenly came to my mind and made my preparation difficult. I gave myself a little more time. My thoughts decreased. I started to focus on the practice mentally.

This time I realized that my body was more relaxed. I started to breathe more calmly and in the natural flow of my body. My focus was on the inside of my body, in other words my internal organs. Although my ears could not hear it, I felt and remembered that there was a sound in my intestines, pancreas and heart. But I did not hear them exactly, I just guessed. I perceived the resonance of my skull during the vibration of the humming sound. During the silence, I felt the inner bodily life and cycle. I focused. During the silences, I held my breath for a few seconds without stressing my body in order not to hear the sound of my breath.

When the alarm went off, I turned it off and continued to close my ears with my thumbs and focus on the inside of my body. My body seemed to be in a timeless space. I was just an

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<sup>7</sup> The focusing on the middle of the two eyebrows.

observer and my mass existed. My internal organs, fluids and the space between my organs were standing still between my bones. I feel that there is a universe inside me.

When I opened my ears and waited with my eyes closed, I realized that my senses were renewed and I started to hear the environment with refreshed ears.

I think this exercise reduces and relaxes the intense environmental sensation of the ear.

During this time, I tried to sense and perceive the most distant sound inside and outside me. I tried to sense that the most distant sound inside me could be coming from the lower part of my abdomen, and with this sound, I tried to sense the sound outside my apartment that was farthest away. Then, I focused on the sounds coming from my upstairs neighbor as the external sound.

There seemed to be a 'linear' connection connecting the sound inside and outside me.

#### **Practice Day 4: 17.09.2024/Helsinki - 09:26am**

I woke up very refreshed and balanced today. My body was in the moment. After taking care of my chores around the house, I went out to the balcony; it was a sunny day. I talked to nature. I do this some mornings. I expressed my gratitude for the life inside and outside me. After breakfast, I decided to do this nada yoga practice. Since I woke up spiritually balanced and strong today, the preparation phase was not very difficult. From the moment I woke up, I was aware of the being inside me and even the flies around me. I talked to them about their freedom and tried my best to convince them to come out, but it didn't work.

It was their free choice to stay inside after all. We think that only birds can fly freely, but flies have wings. They are ugly enough that we want to think they are free because we see them in the category of 'insects'.

Anyway, I settled into my chair in my room. I looked around comfortably and at the fog I saw from the window of my room. I was highly aware of my physical existence, of the moment. There was almost a balance between the universe inside me and my mind.

My mind was producing thoughts that were not related to the moment, I just noticed this. I saw the book and other objects on the edge of the window. I covered my ears with my thumbs and focused on my inner voice that made me feel inside and under the sea. This was a stage that did not even last 1 minute. Then I immediately started the 5-minute stopwatch.

My voice is loud and clear today. I took slow, balanced breaths. I realized that my body had gotten used to the practice compared to the previous days. I might be getting used to it. I felt the vibration of my voice all the way to my throat, rib cage, skull and pupils. Although meaningless thoughts came to my mind from time to time, I noticed the ones related to the rush of my daily life and moved away from them.

In today's practice I did very little waiting. I mostly perceived bodily sound and vibration. I started to hear the harmonics of my own voice from within. It was incredible! I witnessed the harmonics of my own voice from within!

This made me think about the harmonics of the words we use and their reflection on our aura and the physical effects of this. The harmonics were not progressing in a monotonous ascending manner, the harmonics were intertwined but in scattered areas. They were reflecting from scattered areas. They were shining or I saw and perceived them shining with insight. I don't know. Like fireworks.

My neck and arms ached at times, I changed my positions slightly. There is a part of me that wants to end the practice immediately when I get tired, but I resist it and continue patiently. Then I finished the sound part, I waited with my ears closed for a while. At that moment, I noticed a slight purple reflection around my forehead and eyes again. I already see these kinds of purple reflections when I improvise carefully, that is, when I play kamancha. This is not a new situation for me. But it is amazing to see it every time.

Then I opened my eyes and ears, I started to hear the sounds of the environment and see its colors. I realize how intense and even tiring the sound outside can be.

#### **Practice Day 5: 18.09.2024/Helsinki - 10:07am**

Today, in my room, I did the preparation phase, that is, the work of noticing my surroundings, shorter than the previous days. My body felt comfortable because I had taken a shower. I closed my ear for a moment and listened to my inner voice. I was in a peaceful and timeless perception, then I started the stopwatch and started the bee sound.

I took normal calm breaths. It was easier to do the practice today, I realised that even though my arms were tired, I was not contracting muscles that were not needed. I sat upright throughout the practice but today I felt the need to lean back. I tried to feel and observe the farthest places in my body where my sound vibrations last reached.

I realised that at the farthest place the vibrations reach, they melt into silence. I understand that silence is not the opposite or negative of sound as I thought. I realise that this dualistic thought is not true. I have sensed this dualism in my perception with today's practice. Silence somehow continues to exist with much lower frequencies. For me, silence is like tiny little fragments of sound scattered far away. It can be a space with a wide distribution that is still within the whole. So, it contains the element of emptiness.

Towards the end of the practice I got tired again, I saw a slight purple colour for a short time. When the time was up, I returned to the external environment where my body was. Each time I feel that my ears and mind are renewed for a while. It's a fresh feeling.

### **Practice Day 6: after a few days break .. / Helsinki - 8:40am**

I woke up this morning feeling balanced, joyful and full of life. I went out on the balcony and breathed in the fresh, clean air and spoke to life, expressing my wishes and gratitude. Then I felt an inner desire to feel the silence inside me and the vibration of my voice again and decided to do the practice again after a long break. I understand that my body liked doing this practice. I sat in my chair in my room, looked outside, looked out of the window and noticed the light of the sun reflecting on the houses. I relaxed my body and sat up straight, leaning back.

I closed my ears and listened to the silence and then set the stopwatch for 5 minutes.

My humming bee sounded clearer and louder than my previous experiences. I realised the strength of the vibration in my rib cage. Sometimes I stopped breathing briefly. I experienced the state of being in space, that is, feeling in a space without gravity.

Timelessness. During the practice I realised that my body was embodying this work and that I was getting deeper and deeper. The practice makes my body experience the state of being in a rose moment.

In the meantime, I tried to focus on a point by doing ekagrata. I focused on my eyes. I wanted to focus on chidakasha with my eyes closed, then I saw waves like electricity, sound waves as I lowered my eyes to the normal position. The waves were intertwined. It was a momentary image. I felt the vibration of my eye sockets and my skull, my brain. When I experienced arm pain again, I relaxed my slightly tense arms.

When the time was up, I opened my eyes slightly and turned off the timer. Then I closed my eyes again, brought my senses from my inner focus to the outside. I noticed the sounds of the neighbors above me in the room. I tried to sense the farthest and closest sounds, including the city sounds outside my window.

I observe that my listening, hearing skills, and awareness are developing. This awareness makes me feel happy.

My mind, my ears are like being reborn every time.

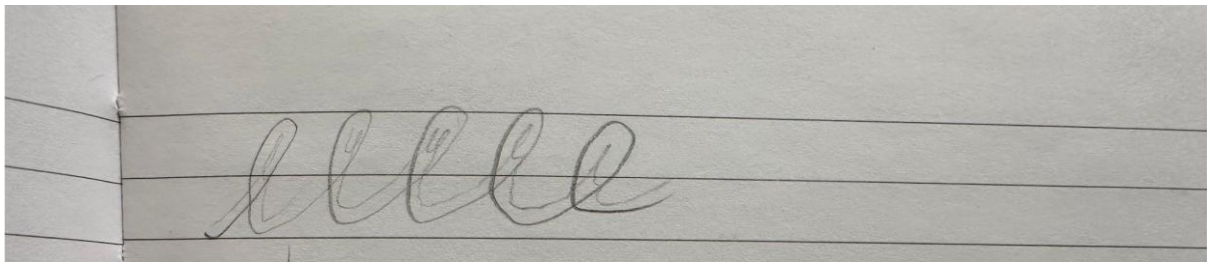


Figure 1. Electricity of mind

## **7.2. Hearing exercise with the right ear, Second Experiment.**

**Phase 1:** Keeping the energy inside with Jalandhra Bandha. Sit upright on a pillow with knees on the floor, take a few deep breaths in and out to calm the body. When you exhale completely, lower the head to the throat and lock the throat, put the hands on the leg and lock the arms at the elbows. Keep the energy inside with Kumbaka<sup>8</sup>, unlock the body when you need to breathe. It is enough to do 5 times in the beginning.

**Phase 2:** Close the left ear. Be in a comfortable sitting position. Hear with the right ear, experience the right ear. For 15 days, observe your perception of sounds.

### **Practice Day 1: 2.10.2024/Helsinki - 11:30am**

I sat on a bed with my knees on the floor. I did kumbaka with Jalandhara Bandha 5 times. My body relaxed. I brought my attention inward and to my body. My focus increased. After finishing the practice, I focused on hearing from the right ear. I observed the sounds in my

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<sup>8</sup> It is a breath-holding technique.

fountain from the astral dimension as a second person at the same time. I heard the bottom sound of the room, the voices of my housemates sometimes. Then I observed the reflection of the sounds coming from my right ear to the left ear and to the heart.

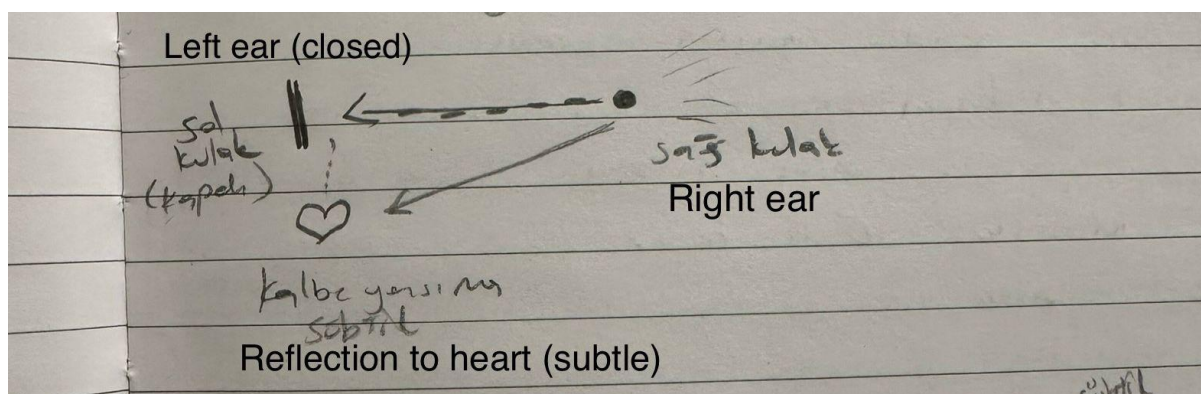


Figure 2. Reflection inside

The sounds heard outside have a subtle reflection inside.

Because my mind is used to focusing its attention on the right ear, when I opened my left ear, the sensory focus on the right side continued. I did this second stage for about 8-10 minutes. Even though my left ear was open, I improvised a monophonic and rhythmic improvisation by focusing on the right side. I gave my full attention to the distribution of the single sound.

Recording 1. One sound - The sound reflected out of me

### **Practice Day 2: 3.10.2024/Helsinki - 4:20pm**

I took deep breaths with my eyes closed on the mat for a while. When I felt ready, I did phase 1. When I emptied the breath completely and locked the body and throat, time seemed to stop inside me. After a few kumbakas I saw a slightly dark purple color. Then the Jalandhara Bandha part was over. I did the right ear listening phase for about 10 minutes. I heard the sounds in the house, the bottom sound of the ventilation in my room. Sometimes my thoughts about my daily life intensified. I reduced my thoughts. I returned to the moment.

It is strange to hear only from the right ear. I wonder how many dimensional signals it sends to the brain. A different experience. I felt the sounds coming from the right ear reflected in my heart and the subtle energy of my chakras. It was peaceful. It is strange that I felt it in this way, so it is a very new experience that I am not used to. Maybe I can hear my chakras?

It's really like a work that directs attention to my inner voice, to life. When I stopped practicing, I recorded my second short improvisation. I heard the sounds very clearly and clearly as if my left and right ears were renewed. The sounds seem to be reflected from my body to my instrument. The vibration of my body and my instrument create a resonance together. It's like they are integrated. I am getting closer to myself.

\*During the recording I mostly tried to hear the kamancha sounds with my right ear.

Recording 2. Short Melodic

### **Practice Day 3: 4.10.2024/Helsinki - 11:45pm**

I came home late because I had a busy day today. It was a tiring day. Therefore, I had to do my listening practice late at night with a tired body. Nevertheless, doing Jalandhara Bandha with 5 kumbakas was relaxing for my body. Then I completed the right ear hearing practice for about 10 minutes. I focused on the sounds inside and outside the room. I heard the sound of water in the pipes passing through the walls, and sometimes the sounds of my housemates walking around the house. I focused on the sounds inside and outside the room. I heard the sound of water in the pipes passing through the walls. At some point, the sounds coming from my right ear again make me feel the area where my internal organs are located. It makes it easier for me to observe in a different depth in three dimensions.

When the practice was completed, I took my kamancha out of the case and accepted the atonal sound of my instrument as I accepted my current fatigue. I did not tune it. The sounds coming out of it today were unique and authentic to today. I listened to the harmonies and dissonances of the sounds. I enjoyed accepting the flow and the sounds. It was relaxing.

Recording 3. Atonal with bending under bridge.

### **\*Practice Day 4: 5.10.2024/Helsinki - 3:15pm**

Today, in the morning, between sleep and wakefulness, I heard an OM sound coming from deep inside my heart and chest. It was a continuous vibration. I was trying to harmonize with my voice to the vibration of that frequency. The vibration was in my whole body, it was peaceful and continuous, I feel that it was healing me. It was the first time in my life that I experienced such a thing. Then I think I went back to the deeper state. Maybe my subconscious somehow made me hear the sound of my chakra. I don't know how to describe it. Today I did 5 kumbakas and Jalandhara Bandha in an easy way. In the meantime I focused

on the sensation of both ears. Then when the 1st stage was over, I tried to hear through the right ear for 15 minutes. But my mind was on the inner sensation I experienced in the morning. I may have started hearing subtle sounds.

I heard the sound of cars and engines passing outside.

When I remember my morning experience, my eyes fill with joy. I feel that the external sounds coming from the right ear are reflected in my heart. I observe this from a different dimension.

*I wonder if the left ear being active manipulates our inner voice/sound?* Maybe that is why it is important to hear through the right ear. Inner and outer sensation are intertwined.

Yet as I remembered my experience this morning, I found it difficult to focus on hearing from the right.

Recording 4. -

#### **Practice Day 5: 6.10.2024/Helsinki - 9:20pm**

Before today's practice, I did physical yoga exercises for 20 minutes because I needed to stretch my muscles and bones. Then I tried to do phase 1. I had a little difficulty this time when I was doing kumbaka 5 times. My body got very hot. Then I closed my left ear. While I wanted to focus on my right ear, I heard intense sounds like buzzing and muscle movements in my left ear. This made it difficult for me to focus only on my right hearings. In time, this humming passed and I focused completely on the external sounds and silence coming from my right ear. I observed my sitting in the center of the room, the emptiness and depth of the room as an outside observer. While observing the sounds coming in through my right ear, I focused on the depths of my heart. Suddenly my focus shifted to this.

Around my room and my body were the sounds of water, the sounds of other people moving, the sounds of chairs, the sounds of water flowing rapidly from the tap. I perceived and understood the similarities of the sounds inside and outside me.

After this practice, when I touch my instrument and make a sound, it is as if I hear the sounds for the first time and in a fresh way. I realize that my hearing is renewed, the sounds are reflected more clearly to my ears.

Recording 5. –

### **Practice Day 6: 7.10.2024/Helsinki - ?**

Before this practice I did a breathing exercise from my personal programme and then I started phase 1. I did Kumbaka 5 times, towards the end my body temperature increased a lot. I moved on to phase 2.

My roommate's conversation in Vietnamese was the most dominant sound in the house for a while, then I heard the sound of plates from the kitchen. Then the sounds decreased and the environment became quiet for a while. I focused on hearing subtle sounds in the immediate vicinity of my ear. I heard the harmonics of the ventilation sound in my room. Every sound around me has its own harmonics. These harmonics are present in the languages we speak, in our vocal cords and even in the sound of crockery. I am surrounded by small sound frequencies. I feel and observe. The vibration of my body also contains my harmonics within and around me. I and everything is 'sound', music. I feel a balance and peace within me.

This practice lasted 15 minutes. Then I contributed to the sounds at home with the harmonics of my instrument. Could it be that even if I pick up my instrument, the sounds that exist in itself continue to vibrate and exist in an abstract dimension?

Recording 6. Harmonics and Languages

### **Practice Day 7: 8.10.2024/Helsinki - 10:27pm**

The last two sandbanks were very comfortable, in the last two sandbanks it was a bit difficult to hold the breath and lock the body. Then I noticed that my body temperature increased again. When the 1st phase was over, I switched to the 2nd phase. As I kept my left ear closed, I heard some long ringing sounds that were not very close. I did not observe myself sitting in the middle of the room and the frequencies around me, I tried to feel them. At some point I heard long sounds with bass character from a distance. I noticed the bottom sound and hum of the room itself. The rustling sounds in my left ear...

At some point, my attention focused on the inside of my body. I tried to sense the vibrations in my internal organs. I observed the depth of the room. Every time I do this practice, my eyes are closed. I always try to observe myself inside the room but outside myself. I tried to hear the farthest possible sound outside the house and perceive my sensation. With my right ear, it is as if I perceive the environment, myself and sounds in several dimensions. Sounds that I don't hear around me.

It lasted 15 minutes.

The thoughts in my mind before these stages; I am surrounded by sounds that I am aware of or not. It somehow affects the presence of my body, my observations, my thoughts. My thoughts emit frequencies. I realize that everything is made up of vibrations, that vibrations are everything around me. My life is shaped by vibrations, vibrations that I do not hear clearly but that my energy body recognizes. *If our lives are affected by vibrations that we are aware of and vibrations that we are not aware of, can we really say that we make our decisions with our free will?*

Recording 7. Is there free will?

### **Practice Day 8: 9.10.2024/Helsinki - 10:42pm**

I did kumbaka with Jalandhara Bandha five times. Today it was easier for my body to do kumbaka. After covering my left ear, I listened to the sound of rain hitting the glass, which was dominant in my room. I had a lot of cold thoughts in my mind today. I had a hard time pushing them away, so there were moments when it was difficult to pay attention to listening. Nevertheless, I tried to focus on the sound of rain. These lines came to me;

*Yağmur ve benim aramda bir fark yok.  
Bütün varlığım bir damla  
Okyanusa, nehre karışmayı bekliyorum.  
Yıldızların arasında kayboluyorum.  
Neden bekliyorum?  
Beklemeye gerek yok.  
Su herşeyin bilgisini taşır  
Ben suyum, ben bilgiyim.  
Bütün hücrelerim suyun damlası.  
Okyanus benim.  
Okyanusun kulağından içeri yansıyan yağmur damlası sesleri.*

*There is no difference between me and the rain.  
My whole being is a drop  
I'm just waiting to get into the ocean, into the river.  
I get lost among the stars.  
Why am I waiting?  
No need to wait.  
Water carries the knowledge of everything  
I am water, I am knowledge.*

*All my cells are drops of water.*

*I am the ocean.*

*The sounds of raindrops reflected in the ocean's ear.*

Even if briefly, my awareness perceived all sounds in my room and around my body equally. Nothing is neither inside nor outside me. At the same time, everything is inside and outside me. Although I could not focus on today's practice as I wanted, I recorded a short improvisation with renewed ears. It is an improvisation that could not find its way today like my thoughts.

Recording 8. Rain and Strings

### **Practice Day 9: 10.10.2024/Helsinki - 10:25pm**

I completed the first phase easily. In phase 2, when I closed my left ear, I heard thin distant sounds on the side of my left ear. It sounded like ringing, but it was not disturbing. I had difficulty focusing on my right ear for a while, and every once in a while I noticed my repetitive thoughts and brought myself back to the moment. Gradually my focus on hearing from the right ear increased, sometimes I noticed sounds from my left ear that sounded like under the sea. As my focus increased, practicing listening in my right ear began to create a meditative state. My mind was completely silent. My ear only wanted to hear the moment outside my body. If my left arm hadn't been tired from trying to keep my left ear closed, I would have wanted to listen with the right ear for even longer. I think I'm going to meditate normally for a while. I want to close my eyes and focusing the moment. I want to stay in the listening state for a while longer today. Today the practice lasted 16 minutes. I stopped because I was tired. Still, I couldn't resist the desire to practice more listening and I practised listening with the right ear for 5 more minutes. I heard a harmonic, like a faint and indistinct ringing sound from far away. I'm not sure. It is very interesting to have a 'desire' 'desire' to listen and enjoy it. I feel an inner satisfaction for doing this practice. Observing the sounds of my neighbors, my house, my room by hearing them with the right ear...

It is full of life and arouses curiosity. I wanted to record with my lavta (lute) instrument. Even though I have played this instrument for a long time, I still feel 'curious and passionate' about discovering its sounds like the effect of today's practice. I guess that's why I felt like using the lavta in today's improvisation 😊

Recording 9. Curious and Passionate

### **Practice Day 10: 11.10.2024/Helsinki - 3:34pm**

I did phase 1 comfortably today. It brought my body to the moment. My body temperature increased a lot with Kumbaka. I did 5 kumbaka. In phase 2, I notice that my hearing from the right ear has expanded. I know that my left ear is usually more active. I have observed that my right ear has improved. Environmental and water sounds, children's voices, the noise of the environment itself. I started to hear all of them more clearly and as a whole. As I do these hearing practices, my daily stress and mental intensity decreases. It helps to let go of control. The practice lasted for 15 minutes today. Although I drifted into my thoughts, I let them go. I played an improvisation without control, guided by my body and fingers.

Recording 10. No control, fingers are in charge

### **Practice Day 11: 12.10.2024/Helsinki - ?**

After taking long and deep breaths, I started phase 1. In the 1st and 2nd kumbakas I usually hold my breath very comfortably. Time, my body stops completely. My mind and body become timeless in the environment. In the 4th and 5th kumbakas, it became a little more difficult to hold my breath and lock my movement energy. I immediately felt the need to unlock the body and breathe, which I did.

When I moved into phase 2, I heard the muscle movements in my left ear for a while and I found it difficult to stop hearing it. This gave me an uncomfortable feeling, because it made it difficult to focus on my right ear. Then I started to hear very subtle sounds in my left ear, like crystal. Even though I don't realise it, even though I don't use my vocal cords, there are sounds and frequencies that my body produces. My left ear taught me this. So it teaches me something about the sensations I am uncomfortable with. At the 9th minute I realized that my mind was lost in the sounds of thoughts. I observed the thoughts. They were similar thoughts that kept going round and round. *What's the point of thinking them now?* Then the thought transitions became unimportant. They became less and less. In my right ear, the sounds, feelings and situations flowed into my heart.

*Kalbim bir krallık.*

*Sesler birbiri ile çatışmadan, yarışmadan birleştiğinde çok derin bir bütünlüğün içinde akışta kalıyorum.*

*Hava, sıvı ve ateşten sesler*

*Elementler içimde dengelendikçe sesleri kabul ediyorum.*

*Kalbim bir krallık.*

*Duyularım bu krallığa neyi taşıyıp armağan ederse bedenim ve yaşamım ona dönüşür.*

*Kalbim, topraktan bedenimi, ısıtır veya soğutur.*

*veya dengeler.*

*Bedenim topraktan gelen bir enstruman.*

*My heart is a kingdom.*

*When the sounds merge without clashing or competing with each other, I flow in a very deep wholeness.*

*Sounds of air, liquid and fire.*

*As the elements are balanced within me*

*I accept the sounds.*

*My heart is a kingdom.*

*Whatever my senses carry and gift to this kingdom, my body and life transforms into it.*

*My heart heats or cools my body from the earth.*

*or balances it.*

*My body is an instrument from the earth.*

-This practice lasted about 17 minutes.

Recording 11. Noises mixing in the environment

### **Practice Day 12: 13.10.2024/Helsinki - 10:21pm**

I've done kumbaka five or six times. My body temperature's gone up. I had a busy day, so I tried to focus on the moment, which was difficult at first. Then it relaxed my mind. Phase 2 lasted about 18 minutes. Towards the end of the practice, my attention to my right ear increased more. My thoughts decreased. From my left side I again heard very thin sounds like signals, crystalline sounds. The muffled sounds coming from my left ear still make me feel like my body is water, ocean, sea. I feel like I'm underwater. My attention to the inside increases. The movements of my cells, organs... Nevertheless, for a moment it crossed my mind that when I don't have an extremely busy day, I better understand the contribution of the listening exercise to my body, consciousness and perception of my environment. My focus is very easily on small and large frequencies. When I spend a day outside where I socialise a lot, I feel like I can't do justice to the practice. Nevertheless, in the end, I realised that the improvisation I played in today's practice brought sensory attention and renewal to my ears.

*"ses denizinde kaybolmak"*

*Dışarıda sonbahar renkleri*

*Göz alıcı bir yarım ay*

*Evin içinde ses denizinde kaybolurken*

*yıldız ve ayla birleşiyorum.*

*Kaybolmaktan korkmuyorum.  
Bu deniz kendimi bana hatırlatıyor.  
Yarım ay, yüzen bulutlar, turuncu  
ve kırmızı yapraklar, ayak sesleri, dostça bir sohbet, görünen o ki  
dışarıdaki sesler hala hücrelerimin içindeydi. Hala onlarlaydım.  
Sesin her halini seviyorum  
Her halimi seviyorum.  
Hayal kırıklıklarım, göz yaşlarım, mide gurultum, sevinç ve başarılarımın hepsi  
bu sesin, bu odanın, denizin içinde.  
Dışarıda sonbahar renkleri  
göz alıcı bir yarım ay  
Evin içinde ses denizinde kayboluyorum.  
ev içinde ev  
hepsini bırakıyorum.*

*"getting lost in the sea of sound"*

*Autumn colors outside  
A glamorous half moon  
Lost in a sea of sound inside the house  
I merge with the star and the moon.  
I am not afraid of getting lost.  
This sea reminds me of myself.  
Half moon, floating clouds, orange  
and red leaves, footsteps, friendly conversation, it seems  
the sounds outside were still inside my cells. I was still with them.  
I love sound in all its forms  
I love everything about me.  
All my disappointments, tears, stomach rumbling, joys and successes.  
in this voice, in this room, in the sea.  
The autumn colors outside  
a glamorous half moon  
I get lost in the sea of sound inside the house.  
house within a house  
I'm leaving it all.*

Recording 12. To get lost in the sea of sounds

### **Practice Day 13: 14.10.2024/Helsinki - ?**

Before the 1st phase, I did breathing exercise which is my daily routine. Since I had a mentally intense and tiring day, my body was more relaxed and my mind focused on the moment more easily with breathing exercise. I did kumbaka and Jalandhara Bandha 5-6 times and my body temperature increased a lot. In the last kumbaka, my attention was more on my body. The 1st phase was comfortable.

It was easy to start the 2nd phase with full focus. I experienced a deep state of meditation. I followed the traces of sounds that passed through my right ear and entered my body. Inside and outside I was completely balanced and equal. I realized that the focus of the sounds went straight to my heart. The telephone conversation in a different language coming from the other room of the house was the most dominant sound in the house. It was not disturbing or distracting. I heard small sounds coming from the walls of my room. In my next room, sound and life continue with a different perception. The practice lasted 15 minutes. I was fully in the moment and I wanted to continue the listening practice with my whole being. Again, I experienced a practice day with high concentration.

While improvising, I better noticed the vibration of the fish skin on my instrument. Although I was not sure about some of the sounds coming out of my instrument, I easily moved away from thoughts that judged the sounds. The fish changed form, my thought changed form. The fluidity of vibrations. There is no resistance in this.

"The vibration in the fish skin"

Recording 13. The vibration in the fish skin

### **Practice Day 14: 15.10.2024/Helsinki - ?**

I started phase 1 by sitting easily with my knees on the floor and trying to relax all my muscles. I took a few deep breaths. I did 5-6 kumbakas with Jalandhara Bandha. I was completely focused on the practice itself.

I felt calm and highly concentrated. I moved on to stage 2 and this took 15 minutes. I realized that I was becoming the practice itself. It is much easier to listen and be in the moment. I deeply perceived the silence among the sounds around me and the silence closest and farthest away from these sounds. Sound and silence are together every moment. With my mind and consciousness, I observed the matrix around me through sensation. My surroundings are

covered with long, short, small, large frequencies. I seem to feel the vibrations inside my body. I am very used to this practice. While improvising, I reflected the fluidity and distribution of the sounds inside and outside me.

I did not control my fingers.

I realize that I myself am the sound. I myself have become the sound.

Recording 14. Free fingers and fluid sounds

### **Practice Day 15: 16.10.2024/Helsinki - 2:46pm**

Today is a sunny day. The sun came out for the first time after days of cloudy weather. Before starting phase 1, I had a question in my mind. What does the sun sound like? How do I hear the sun vibrating?

Phase 1 progressed normally, kumbaka was a little difficult towards the end. My body was comfortable and my mind was in the environment. I went to the 2nd stage immediately. I listened to the surroundings with my right ear for a long time. The sounds coming from the kitchen were dominant. At one point I heard the sounds of emails coming one after the other. The fact that I had forgotten to switch off the device annoyed and angered me. My mind, remembering the feeling of being angry, reminded me of other things I was angry about. A chain of angry thoughts formed. I noticed this. I observed it. It's interesting how the mind remembers and exaggerates emotions. Obviously the mind is also a mechanism that feeds on this.

I projected my perception outside my body. I could hear the sound of cars outside the window as if they were close by. Then I wanted to feel the vibration of the sun. My attention was there.

The sun also has a vibration. It surrounds the earth, its environment and space. The layers of the earth have various vibrations, all different but together at the same time. Even though the layers are separated from each other, the vibration is at the same time inside and outside the world, vibration, vibration waves.

If I think of the body as a world, the vibration within the body is like the separation of the layers of bone and muscle. Everything continues to exist with its own unique vibrations even if it is divided into small or large layers.

The vibration of the sun, moon, stars is reflected on the earth. Although the layers filter it, it is preserved. The human body also has a filter. Even if we do not hear some sounds, they are

there. They continue to vibrate and affect each other. I saw and felt visions like this. Then for a moment I faintly noticed the purple light flowing in front of my mind. I turned my eyes to my mind, to my brain. There was a flow of electricity. A collection of vibrations and frequencies. Geometrical shapes of waves passing momentarily. Intertwined like thin threads. Then I heard a very subtle frequency passage through my closed left ear, like the sound of a telephone vibrating. Now I understand better that this practice is the practice of listening and hearing ourselves. I tried to play this frequency passage with the lute. The round in the centre of the lute reminds me of the universe, sometimes the sun. I made such a mental merging. That may be why I chose to play it in this recording.

This frequency transition could be the sound of the sun.

This frequency shift could be the energetic waves of my thoughts in my mind.

Bright lights, vibration, electricity.

Recording 15. Sun and Body



Figure 3. Vibration of sun and my mind

### **7.3. The space within the Heart, Third Experiment.**

I came across this yogic practice of deep listening while researching the literature.

**Phase 1:** “Other bodily techniques can deepen listening further, as the Maitrayaniya Upaniṣad attests: ‘By fixing (yoga) the thumbs on the ears, practitioners listen to the sound in the space within the heart.’ (6.22 trans. After van Buitenen 1962) (Gerety, 2021, p. 504)

#### **Practice Day 1: 28.10.2024/Helsinki - 9:10pm**

Before starting this practice, I did my daily breathing exercise for 20 minutes. Then I sat on my mat. From my experience from the 1st practice, I knew that it would be difficult to keep the ears closed with the thumbs for a long time, so I wanted to do this practice for only 5 minutes.

I brought all my focus to the sound in the space inside my heart. My mind sometimes started to think different things, even if only slightly. I persistently brought all my attention to the space inside my heart.

For the first time in a long time I realized that I was remembering my heart, the place of my heart. I realized that in the rush of the day I had forgotten my internal organs, my inner world. Like everyone else.

I am just becoming familiar with the sound in the space inside my heart. It was really difficult to focus my mind and all my senses on it. At one point I wanted to run away from the practice, to get out of it immediately. Even though I wanted to do that, I insisted on completing the practice and listening to the space in my heart. I remembered the moving blood inside my heart. This practice made me feel emotional. I guess I wanted to leave the practice because I wanted to escape my emotions. The emptiness inside my heart seemed to be trying to communicate with me in the same way. We both just realized each other. I don't know. The first attempt of this practice felt like a meeting, a first encounter. I sensed something like that.

My heart is a marvelous place, a pearl hidden in the void. I want to do this practice more often, even though I find it difficult. It was a mnemonic encounter. I thank myself, my heart. After my drawing, I wanted to stay in silence, as if I was continuing to hear my heart in silence. Therefore, I recorded the silence around me.

Recording 16. Silence and Ether



Figure 4. Space within heart

### **Practice Day 2: 29.10.2024/Helsinki - 10:13am**

Before the practice, I did breathing exercises cross-legged on my mat for 10 minutes. Then I started the practice. Focusing on the sound of the emptiness in my heart was not as difficult at first as yesterday. Sometimes my mind thought of different things. Still, I brought my focus back. It was very interesting to focus on the emptiness inside one of my organs. I thought about it. I marveled at the emptiness inside my heart, inside my body. When my arms started to get tired, I wanted to run away from the practice again. My back and arm muscles started to ache. Still, I kept practicing. Focusing on the emptiness inside my heart also gave me a childlike feeling. Natural and newfound. Fragile and pure. Thin muscles, and my heart connected to these muscles, sustaining me. It's truly awe-inspiring. I knew this before, of course, but I've never experienced the focusing and deepening part in my life. I did a short improvisation focusing on the center of my heart, but I realized that I was checking my fingers for the right sounds. I don't want to check because as I started to check, my focus moved away from my heart.

Recording 17. Concentrate on the heart

### **Practice Day 3: 30.10.2024/Helsinki - 4:55pm**

Before the main practice, I did 20 minutes of back and neck stretching yoga and then 20 minutes of breathing exercises. Then I sat on the mat. I set the time for 5 minutes. but I realised that I was taking deep breaths without realising it and I was thinking about some details before my concert. Because of the deep breathing, my body temperature increased so much that I could not stand still. Even though I completed the practice, I couldn't focus on the sound of the emptiness in my heart as I wanted to because of my heat. I didn't get much benefit from my first listening practice today, so now I will do a 5-minute listening practice again.

**5:06pm**

I realised that one should not take deep breaths in and out during this practice. Now my breathing was normal, my body temperature was normal. I focused on my heart in a much better way. Focusing on the sound of the emptiness inside my heart gives me a deep feeling of being. I haven't heard anything subtle yet, I don't know if I will or when. The short visit of my thoughts was not disturbing this time. When I opened my ears, they seemed refreshed,

rested. I don't want to record an improvisation for this practice. I feel the desire to stay in the silence and meditate a little.

#### **Practice Day 4: 31.10.2024/Helsinki - 4:10pm**

My mind is used to travelling between past and future possibilities. My heart feels in the moment. While my internal organs and heart live in the moment, my mind is always going somewhere. There is no time in my heart. After my 20-minute breathing exercise, I practiced listening while sitting upright in my chair. It was more comfortable than sitting cross-legged on the mat. I focused on the sound inside my heart more easily. I heard my strong heartbeat, the sound of my blood flow, the sounds and humming inside my body. Every once in a while I was thinking about my concert tomorrow. But still, being in the moment was much more comfortable today. My sitting position was comfortable. When I was doing the breathing exercise, I felt that my energy was matched with the universe. Maybe that's why focusing on and listening to my heart is in a deep state right now. Since I leaned back, my arms did not get tired. When the 5-minute time was up, I continued to feel and hear my heart with my eyes closed but my ears open. Then, although the time was up, I returned to the practice by closing my ears for a short time. I continued to listen to my heart with my ears closed with my thumbs for about 3 more minutes. I may be deepening in practice. When I opened my ears, my ears were renewed. I played long and minimal sounds on my recording. This kind of practice and playing prepares me for my concert tomorrow. I like to improvise before my concert performances as a simple and minimal exercise.

‘New fresh sensation’

Recording 18. Fresh new sense

#### 7.4. Master Concert Day, Etnosoi! Festival 2024 and Reflections



Figure 4. Humming and meditation with audience.

**1.11.2024/Helsinki, Vuotalo – 1:47pm**

It's my concert day. I wanted to come to the concert venue early to rest and practice deep listening. At the same time, I want to feel the stage and the environment early. I settled in my room behind the stage. I laid the yoga mat I brought on the floor and lay down on the floor to rest for a while. Then I did a breathing exercise for ten minutes. I wanted to reduce the stress of the running and traffic process on the way to the concert hall. Then I did my first listening practice. The first of the exercises I worked on, 5 minutes humming bee sound, ears closed with thumbs. I felt the vibration in my skull very strongly. It was easy at first to close my ears with my arms in the air. In the last minutes, my arms started to feel heavy and my neck started to tighten. I tried to relax. However, I realised that my body was used to this bodily listening practice even though I had done it a long time ago. When the time was up, I noticed that my ears were relaxed and getting used to the environment. I wanted to go to the 2nd

listening practice immediately. but when I realized that my arms were tired, I did not force my body. I stopped. Now I am just waiting for Soundcheck.



Figure 5. Humming and meditation with audience



Figure 6. Solo electroacoustic improvisation performance

### **Last notes - 2.11.2024/Helsinki - 10:10pm**

Yesterday, while waiting for the soundcheck, I decided to do the 2nd practice after 15-20 minutes. I did it for about 13 minutes. I couldn't complete the 15 minutes because the door of my room was knocked while I was practicing. Since the other group's soundcheck ended early, it was my turn. I had to go to set up on stage. The only thing I remember when I was doing the 2nd listening practice yesterday was the subbass sounds coming from outside the room. Unfortunately, I didn't have time to take notes and do the 3rd listening practice after finishing the practice. Because after the sound checks, I had to go out to eat. Then I went on stage immediately afterwards, so I didn't have time to do all my practice.

In the concert, I experienced for the first time how to use effects with midi controller via Ableton programme. My concert was completely improvised. I really lost track of time on stage. I was very surprised when I accidentally checked the time on my phone on stage. I was

very little nervous on stage and my control over the effects was very comfortable. I didn't expect to be so relaxed, I was completely in the moment and focused on every note I pressed and played. I realized that I was completely listening to the sounds coming out of my instrument and the effects.

With this stage experience, I was convinced that a meditative fully improvised concert with electronic elements requires deep listening practices. I think that if I had not experienced deep listening, taking time for myself and deep thinking during my working process, it would have been a concert that I had difficulty feeling and playing. I know this from some of my past similar experiences.

Time flowed like water. Even though I finished the concert, I still had the desire to play and continue. I guess I have never experienced these feelings and experiences in a solo concert environment before. It was a new and still curious feeling. The sound and light mix in the hall was great. A mystical atmosphere was created, which I had requested from the lighting designer the day before the concert.

At the beginning of the concert, I made the decay and feedback values 100% with long bow sounds and looped them. Then I went to the front of the stage and played the first music of the concert with the audience and at the same time I did a meditative humming bee practice, which is a deep listening practice. I guided the audience with sequences such as sitting comfortably, closing their eyes, etc. They made a humming bee sound for a while. I told them to continue and then I wanted to create a physical awareness by telling them to feel the vibration they produced in their chest and lungs. Then I asked them to bring their attention to the person sitting next to them and at this stage I made a perceptual orientation that just as we ourselves are a vibration, the person next to us is just a vibration, regardless of their identity and gender.

I wanted to share points from my personal point of view, from the essence of my artistic and vital thoughts. Afterwards, I asked them to stop vibrating but still keep their eyes closed. Afterwards, I read my poem, which was the text score of the concert, in Turkish. I advised them to bring their attention to the silence between the words and beyond my words and to feel it. Meanwhile, the English translation was projected on the projection behind me. When they opened their eyes, they saw the translation. In the meantime, I took my seat to start improvisation. Sometimes I felt that I had difficulty in leading the meditation because I felt

little excitement. This could also be because I had to speak English. Sometimes I speak fluently and sometimes I stumble. Anyway.

At the end of the concert, I received positive feedback on each stage. I am very happy that I played like myself on stage and that I improved myself with deep listening exercises. I improvised for 1 hour and I didn't know how the time passed. I want to continue with this kind of concert concept. I am looking forward to the jury's feedback session.

By the way, I had asked the festival to add some cushions on the floor to create a meditative atmosphere. They helped me with this and only put cushions on my right side. Some listeners sat on the floor and meditated there during the concert. I think this added a different atmosphere to the concert. Because I thought that a concert with meditative and deep listening practices should not have a traditional sitting style. I am happy that this was done, even if only a little bit.