

TURNING AN ETHICAL PROBLEM INTO A CREATIVE CHALLENGE

In her essay *Perspectives on Ethics in Performance Practice*, professor Camilla Eeg-Tverbak (Eeg-Tvebak, 2022) refers to a quote by philosopher Løgstrup:

‘[T]he demand is implied by the very fact that a person belongs to the world in which the other person has his or her life, and therefore holds something of that person’s life in his or her hands, it is therefore a demand to take care of that person’s life. But nothing is thereby said about how this caring is to be done’.

I consulted Professor Arne Johan Vetlesen at the Department of Philosophy, Classics, History, and Ideas at the University of Oslo. In a conversation he helped me untangle the ethical aspects and responsibilities in this complex story. One aspect is the attention to privacy regarding events that took place eighty years ago. On the other hand remaining silent might potentially be a censorship of historic information that hold national and international value. As a balanced measurement we started removing information that was of private nature, such as name, precise information about family status, address, workplace, and social life. We also hired actors to represent the voices of the different sources, the spouse, and other witnesses from his early years in Norway. Similar practices can be observed in the artistic research project *Kammer* by Merete Røstad (Munchmuseet, 2017).

In all the photographs of Z that are used in the presentation (except from childhood) his eyes are masked. While our measurements were made according to the family to keep his identity hidden, these actions may make him look as if he is a suspect, guilty of crimes we do not know if he had committed. The measurements we took are not waterproof. Should someone be determined to find the real identity behind *Music from Siberia*, it would not be impossible, even if there were 600 persons in the Polish camp in 1945. Again and again, we asked ourselves; should we stop the development of the performance, to not reveal information that Z’s family wished to keep secret?

THE MODALITY OF SOUND

Our performance depended on sound technological devices in the room; there were loudspeakers placed in the four corners of the tower hall. The sounds emerging from these were related to recordings of “*Du bist die Ruh*” by Schubert. Our voices were amplified and transmitted through the same speakers, as well as sounds from the video clips in the intro and of the highlighting and censoring of the text. We also used the sound of the markers as ways of constructing a dramatic curve during the performance, with the sound of the markers composed into rhythmic patterns that floated under the verbal attacks on the audience during the third act.

Professionals involved in sound and design bring in different listening cultures. Designing [the, with, against] sound [for] are active forces in the design process (Delle Monache, Misdariis, & Özcan, Semantic models of sound-driven design: Designing with listening in mind, 2022).