

IN

the creation of an immersive music performance
How can immersive performance concepts be used to create a
better connection between a musician and his audience?

Master research paper Jonathan Bonny (3083950)
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Classical percussion (master specialization ensemble percussion)
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Abstract

Name: Jonathan Bonny

Main subject: Classical percussion (master specialization ensemble percussion)

Research supervisors: Gerard Bouwhuis, Fedor Teunisse

Title of research: IN – the creation of an immersive music performance

Research question: How can immersive performance concepts be used to create a better connection between a musician and his audience?

Summary of the results:

In my research, I reflected on several aspects of a concert and how I want to communicate with my audience. Throughout the research I realised that finding ways to immerse an audience is easier said than done. My belief in immersion as a tool to guide listeners towards a certain atmosphere, attitude or interpretation is nevertheless still as strong as before. More than ever, I am convinced that this is the way for me to perform. This is particularly the case for contemporary music where inexperienced listeners might appreciate some guidance. This paper aims to inform (performing) readers of the possible (positive and negative) consequences of creating an immersive performance.

Creating an immersive performance is difficult. It takes a lot of time, something musicians often don't have. In addition to learning the music, the performer needs time to brainstorm about the kind of immersion that supports the musical idea and does not distract from it. The line between the two is very thin. Once the immersion concept is established it often takes a lot of preparation to execute it. To bring elaborate ideas to fruition musicians will need the help of technicians, engineers, other artists etc. This explains why immersive performances are often organised by ensembles that rely on a bigger production team and budget. The danger here lies in the fact that those teams are often too far removed from the actual content of the music. Realising this made me think about other ways to connect with an audience. I concluded that besides immersion, also attitude and mindset are very powerful tools to decrease the distance between a performer and the audience. Low-tech solutions like literally performing very close to or surrounded by them are very effective to emotionally connect with the audience. The process of finding your own ways to communicate the composer's message is in any case worth exploring. This should in my opinion go further than the actual musical interpretation. At the end of every chapter I applied the theory set out in the section to my own immersive performance 'IN' which I will present on June 20th 2017.

Because of the reflective character of the topic I chose to write my dissertation in the form of an essay. Although I based my paper on scientific research where possible, most of the arguments are subjective and often based on my own experiences and creative ideas. My goal is not to present 'the ultimate truth' but to inspire myself and other musicians to create a personal (contemporary) performing identity.

Short biography:

Jonathan Bonny (°1992, Bruges) studied classical percussion at the School of Arts in Ghent, the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki and the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague. He is actively building towards a music culture that knows no distinction between genres and he's consistently looking for innovative ways to present contemporary arts to a bigger audience. He co-founded Headliner (adventurous music collective), Kunstenfestival PLAN B (contemporary arts festival) and IHEART (band). Jonathan performed with many great ensembles and his compositions were performed by ensembles like Spectra, Lunapark, Casco Phil, the Royal Belgian Navy and DeCompagnie. He won several prizes.

Introduction

In this research paper I investigate the possibilities, motives, risks and limits of immersive contemporary music performances. After each chapter I applied the theory to my own immersive (graduation) project 'IN'. My aim is to make both the audience and myself forget about any traditional concert situation in a way that creates the best possible environment for the particular music that is played. I strongly believe that creating such (physical, virtual, emotional...) space is a powerful tool to collapse the distance between performer and audience. By combining knowledge about this subject with my own experiences (as a musician, composer and curator) and personality, I believe I am able to create a strong performing identity. I also hope to inspire other players to reflect on the contextualisation of their concerts and to see the relevance of strong performing concepts in today's cultural field. This paper mainly focuses on contemporary music, since that is the field I am the most active in.

Could immersive performance concepts be used to create a better connection between a musician and his audience, and how?

What is a concert?

What elements does a (traditional) concert situation consist of?

Before attempting to create innovative performance contexts for contemporary music myself, I needed to have a closer look at what (traditional) concert situations actually are. What makes a certain situation a concert, what are the different aspects and how do they relate to one another. Are street musicians or background jazz combos playing concerts? And what about the work of sound artists or player piano recitals?

After consulting several online dictionaries (www.dictionary.com, www.oxforddictionaries.com and www.dictionary.cambridge.org on september 7th 2016) and adding my own opinion to the information, I will consider for this research every performance that suits the following description a concert.

*A **delimited** action to keep an **audience** interested, provide them enjoyment or move them with live music, done by one or more **musicians**.*

I added the word delimited to be able to talk about place and time. Obviously a concert has to take place somewhere in this world ([or in space](#)). Not only the impact of the geographical location, but also the way concert halls or other venues can be manipulated to serve the music, will be discussed in the first chapter of this research. A concert needs to have a start and an ending, but that doesn't mean it necessarily has to feel that way. Both can be vague, open or affected by other factors. This time-aspect will also be discussed in chapter one.

“If a tree falls in a forest and nobody is around to hear it, does it make a sound?” is a well-known philosophical thought experiment that raises questions regarding observation and knowledge of reality. Thinking about that question made me doubt my above description of a concert, in particular of the necessity of an audience. Do we - musicians - really need others to witness the culmination of our talents, interpretations and ideas to be able to speak of a concert? After imagining myself playing a solo-recital in front of an empty concert hall, I decided to stick with my definition. If music is a language (which I am convinced it is), musicians are senders in need of receivers to communicate with. In this comparison the concert could be seen as an organised situation for this full communication process. Without the receivers there is no point in sending out a message. The traditional behavior of the audience, and possible ways to manipulate it will be reviewed in chapter two.

The third and final chapter will be the most self-reflecting one. It looks into the question what happens to me (and performers in general) when playing an immersive concert? How can one achieve the aimed connection with the audience and how to deal with it without losing attention for the music and its original concept. Can a musician ever manage to create a completely honest identity as a performer whilst staying loyal to the composer? A concert doesn't always have to be beautiful. Besides beauty, music knows a lot of pain, anger, fear, humor, awkwardness, emptiness, senselessness or even meaninglessness. I consider it my role as a musician to express whatever the composer's message is as clear as possible. Most of this can not be found in the creator's notes only, but needs research, creativity, imagination and (life) experience from the performer. Because I am both a performer and a composer, it's very important to me to make sure all necessary respect is there. Especially when I'm planning on adding extra-musical (immersive) aspects to the performance, I need to make sure the composer is fine with that.

Finding new and personal ways to communicate the composer's message to audiences and trying to make them really understand and/or feel it with you is an important part of this research. At the end of every chapter, I describe the process of creating 'IN', my own immersive performance that will be presented in June 2017, related to the insights I gained researching.

IN - concert concept

My graduation project, called 'IN', will be the practical result of this research on immersion. It will be premiered at The Royal Conservatoire in The Hague in June 2017. The overall concept is immersion in order to connect with my audience. The goal is to explore that idea and make my audience and colleague musicians aware of the power it has. Own experiences (like 'Headliner_'; a series of concerts I played with my trio in which the audience was invited to read books, play board games or playstations and/or lay down) convinced me of the fact that immersion also affects me as a performer. It often takes some stress away because together with the audience you get immersed in the environment you have created (which takes the focus away from technical challenges or wrong notes). I want to make people (including myself) forget that they are in a concert (in the traditional sense) and try to make them experience the music more from the inside.

PART 1: IN (45')

This is the solo and "hardcore percussion" part of the performance. The first piece I choose is Kate Moore's [Puur, Miniatuur 1](#), because I believe it perfectly fits my concept: the player is literally inside the instrument. After that I want to play [Interieur, I](#) by Lachenmann and find a way to make this piece a bit more accessible by amplifying it so that I get some control over the audience's focus. With this piece I will also oppose the concept of 'interior' to that of 'exterior' in terms of spatialization. To close this first part, I commissioned a piece for marimba and tape by Ruben De Gheselle.

PART 2: MUSIC FOR BARS (30')

'Music for Bars' is a flashmob project by The Hague based composer Brendan Faegre. The original production is a 60-minute amplification of sonic, physical and social elements of the bar, featuring three percussionists (Slagwerk Den Haag) and three dancers (Poetic Disasters Club) who explore and break the boundaries of "normal".

PART 3: POST-ROQUE (30')

This finale will consist of [Vivaldi's RV443](#) with baroque orchestra and three new own compositions with my [IHEART](#) band. This is easy-listening music, which means that the additional immersive aspects could demand more attention.

Chapter 1: Delimitation of place and time

I believe performance locations have a considerable impact on how the audience perceives music. Therefore, a performer should -when possible- be able to choose a location that fits the music or find ways to use a given place and transform it in (an) appropriate concert space(s) or at least be aware of the surroundings. Any place is a potential concert space, and having this in mind all the time is a typical characteristic for an immersive performer (see chapter 3). This is a first and important step to immerse an audience in whatever atmosphere the interpretation desires. This obviously doesn't mean that musicians shouldn't take advantage of well-equipped concert venues anymore in order to create immersive environments. This chapter is a plea for being aware of location, place and space and consequently making any performance somewhat site-specific.

The Changing Significance of Venue

Because people want to be more actively engaged in performance and because our inherited performance spaces are often stuck in traditional concert settings, the conception, design and reconfiguration of venues are important to reshape the relationship between performer and audience. In formal theatre venues the placement of audience, lighting and conventions about respect and silences make the psychological distance between performer and audience bigger, even though the audience may be emotionally moved by the performance. This challenges artists to think more broadly and creatively about where audiences encounter art. As a result artists choose to create and present art in a wider range of settings that both animate the art and capture the imagination of audiences in new ways. Brown cites the rise of site-specific festivals, experiments with temporary or pop-up productions and the use of outdoor space for music performances. More artists are choosing to curate the settings for their work as an integral part of the production. (Brown, 2012)

Performance location, place, space and site-specificity

Even though Nick Kayes book *Site-Specific Art: Performance, Place and Documentation* (2000) doesn't tell the least about music but focuses more on visual and performance art, the information is relevant and inspiring for this research. The book is concerned with practices which, as the writer describes in the introduction, articulate exchanges between the work of art and the places in which its meanings are defined. Still in the introduction, Kaye refers to *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), a book in which the French philosopher and scientist Michel de Certeau reflects on the relationship between place and space. De Certeau reads 'place' as an ordered and ordering system realised in 'spatial practices'. Defined by its internal stability, a place is an exclusive and self-regulating system of rules, an instantaneous configuration of positions. A place is the order (of whatever kind) in accordance with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence. It thus excludes the possibility of two things being in the same location (de Certeau 1984: 117). De Certeau notes straightforwardly that spatial practices may give multiple expressions to the stability and orderliness of place.

Spatial practices do not reproduce fragments of a given order, but operate as ordering activities, whether that activity be walking, reading, listening or viewing. Space, as a practiced place, admits of unpredictability. Rather than mirror the orderliness of place, space might be subject not only to transformation, but ambiguity (Kaye 2000: 5).

As mentioned before, a concert could happen at any place: big or small concert halls, shopping malls, forests, abandoned factory buildings, living rooms or even a swimming pool. All have own characteristics and atmosphere defined by their architecture, the elements they exist of and their specific orders. It's very interesting for a performer to analyse those elements and try to link them to the music and your interpretation. This way it transforms in an exclusive concert space for the performer to play and for the audience to get immersed in.

In the world of theatre, the awareness of performance space is a lot bigger than in music. [Brith Gof](#) is a performance company that is internationally acknowledged as a leading experimental performance company developing innovative ways of working across different media in the nineties. Using explicitly 'hybrid' practices, and seeking to provoke a series of dialogues and confrontations between performance and location, Brith Gof construct their site-specific work through exploring unresolved relationships between various channels of address, creating a 'field of activities' (McLucas et al. 1885:17) rather than linear structures. Confronted with multiple, and often interpenetrating narratives and voices, their audiences are invited to encounter the site in which these works are realised as re-framed and overlaid by narratives which challenge and draw on the place of their presentation. Rather than focusing on the dramatic script, its work is part of an ecology of ideas, aesthetics and practices which foregrounds the location of performance, the physical body of the performer, and relationships with audience. This amplifies a fundamental exchange between site and performance, where, McLucas suggests, the installation of 'ghost' architectures seeks to engage with and activate narratives and properties of a 'host' site. In this context, McLucas observes, the site may offer particular and unavoidable history, particular use (a cinema, a slaughterhouse), particular formality (shape, proportion, height...) and/or particular political, cultural or social context (Kaye 1996: 213).

Performance space may be delineated, cordoned off, set aside: marks, surfaces, structures, both planned and improvised. Activity may be confined to and conditioned by a particular area, volume or architectural feature. Or space may be organised through the displacement of the spectators by arrangements of seating: chairs randomly scattered over the area with the performers moving in and around the spectators; laid out in lines, alleys or even blocks or round the edge of an open square. All of which may mediate the nature and quality of activity. (Pearson, 2001: 22)



Performance space for a Birth of Gof production, picture taken from their website

Where site-specificity arises in a disturbance of the opposition between 'virtual' and 'real' spaces, in dialectical relationships between the work and its site, or in a questioning of the art object's material integrity, so the very possibility of establishing a work's proper location is called into question. Indeed, here, site-specificity is linked not only to a transitive definition of site but, more broadly, to shifts in visual art toward the conceptual and performative contexts in which the idea of the work is defined. For Miwon Kwon, writer of *One Place After Another: Notes on Site Specificity* (1997), this development is reflected in certain paradigmatic concepts of site where, Kwon proposes, 'in advanced art practices of the past thirty years the operative definition of the site has been transformed from a physical location -grounded, fixed, actual- to a discursive vector -ungrounded, fluid, virtual' (Kaye 2000: 183).

Kwon (1997) describes two different conditions within which site-specific and site-oriented art have been "circulating" in recent years. First, since the late 1980s, there have been increasing numbers of *traveling* site-specific art works, despite the claim that to move the work is to destroy the work. Concurrently, re-fabrications of site-specific works, particularly from the minimalist and post-minimalist eras, are becoming more common in the art world. The increasing trend of relocating or reproducing once unique site-bound works had raised new questions concerning the authenticity and originality of such works. Secondly, now that site-specific practices have become familiar (even commonplace) in the mainstream art world, artists are traveling more than ever to fulfill institutional/cultural critique projects in site. The extent of this mobilization of the *artist* radically redefines the commodity status of the art work, the nature of artistic authorship, and the art-site relationship (Kwon, 1997: 31).

Naturally similar approaches have by now reached the world of music theatre, opera and (contemporary) classical music concerts. In a previous research (*Meer dan een concert, onderzoek naar de intermedialisering van het hedendaags-klassieke concertgebeuren aan de hand van de programmaties van toonaangevende Vlaamse concertthuizen en muziekensembles* (2015)) I concluded that intermedial performances have a big attraction to the audiences of today. Concert houses and music collectives want to give their audiences an immersive experience and this is often realised by creating innovative concert spaces. It is important to remember that this creative input should always support the musical composition, in order to bring the audience closer to the music. (Bonny, 2015: 17).

In his article '[Muziek in het museum](#)' (Rekto Verso: 2013), Dutch historian and philosopher Floris Sollevelt states that music is moving outside concert halls, to alternative venues and outdoor locations, to internet and lately also more to museum halls. Considering the latter, he points out that the opposite is true as well: musea are entering the concert halls. Many ensembles and collectives are now creating concert experiences in which scenography has an important role. This way they break with the traditional concert format.

A great example of today is the immersive opera [Boys of Paradise](#) (by workshOPERA and Tête à tête, with music by Vahan Salorian) that premiered in London in 2015. It's a contemporary opera that reflects the dangers of gay clubbing in a non-preachy way. The audience is invited in a gay club to follow a trio of friends called Twink, Cub and Fag Hag – a comment on the prevalent (and surprisingly detailed) Grindr-fuelled world of labelling. Through the course of the opera the audience is taken through different locations of the fictional club, Paradaezia. People go to the toilets to powder their noses, they “come up” on the dance floor, stumble into a dark room and eventually find themselves in the VIP lounge. The show is immersive so the action takes place all around the visitors. They take shots with the cast, explore the club and get offered powders and pills on the dance floor, where they also have the opportunity to grind against a scantily opera singer or three. The audience would never have the same connection with this specific environment (most of them haven't been in gay clubs) if they wouldn't be drawn into it like that. Obviously this potentially improves the understanding of the story, appreciation of the music and identification with the cast.



[Boys of Paradise](#)

Delimitation and manipulation of place

Reading and understanding the content of any performance could be strongly influenced by the location in which the work is being presented. Perception might also be twofold if it switches the focus from the exterior phenomena of the presented piece performed to the interior emotion or imagination evoked by it. (Schacher, 2008: 3)

As a performer you always have the possibility to create your personal performance space. Within the (chosen or given) location, there are still plenty of opportunities to create immersive environments. It's a good idea to delimit the place and thus decide from what point you want your audience to be immersed: you can create intimate spaces around the performer(s) on stage or huge spaces that start at the entrance of a large festival. The bigger the place, the more difficult it gets. The delimitation can be physical (entrance door, fences, decor), manipulated (for instance with lighting or visuals) or a combination.

Delimitation of duration and time

In many concerts, the stage (or performance place) is empty when the audience enters the room. Musicians wait for everyone to be seated before they take place (usually in a very serious and almost sacred mode). When they enter the room the performance begins. For better immersive experiences however, it's probably a good idea to synchronise performance place and time. From the moment visitors enter the performance place, they should imagine themselves in the performance. Of course there are many ways to start immersive performances: specific atmospheres could be created beforehand with lighting and/or decor or the performers could already be present or even playing. You can also choose for a concert format in which the public can enter and leave the performance place any time. In my opinion, the (traditional) concert is over when performers bow during the last applause. Often, and unfortunately, this is the first time you see a musician without the (serious) performance mask. Of course I realise this has to do with relief and finally being able to loose the concentration, but also here I am looking for ways to end performances and thank an audience still in the spirit of the concert.

As most musicians know, the performance time also has an impact on the overall experience (for both audience and performer). A sunday morning concert feels completely different than a saturday afternoon or a friday night one. When you're aiming for an immersive experience, it's wise to think about how the performance time relates to your performance concept and if it doesn't, think about ways to manipulate this (also here: lights can do magic!).

IN - place and time

I decided to divide the concert in three sections, each with their own immersive atmosphere (corresponding to the music of that part).

The first part of 'IN' (also called 'IN') ideally takes place in a blackbox hall (in the case of the premiere: the backstage of the Kees van Baaren hall of The Hague's Royal Conservatoire). In 'anonymous' places like that, there are many possibilities for creating the atmospheres. Often they also have the advantage of being well-equipped with light and sound system. For this part I will have built a big tubular steel scaffolding for the audience to sit on. Obviously this relates to the instrument Kate Moore made (see picture below) for her composition *PUUR, Miniatuur I* in collaboration with choreographer Neel Verdoorn. This piece outlines a barren environment where dancer and musician from their own center are looking for extremes. In a dialogue they collide two worlds and they create a new, abstract and self-contained universe. For me it makes a lot of sense to confront my audience directly with the harsh physical material the piece is musically and visually built on. As a performer I will be inside the audience most of the time, which also makes it easier to connect. Another advantage of this setting is that it creates many possibilities to oppose the 'interior' (of a composition, performance space, speaker and/or instrument set-up, scaffolding...) to the exterior.



PUUR, Miniatuur I (Neel Verdoorn, Kate Moore) by Juan Martinez and Andreas Kuck ©Robert Benschop

The second piece *Intérieur I*, by the German composer Helmut Lachenmann is an important piece in the core percussion repertoire. For many (especially inexperienced) people the aesthetics are quite difficult to understand. Nevertheless it's a super interesting and important composition and making it accessible for a bigger audience is a good challenge within this research, or even better: a good opportunity to support my faith in immersive concert experiences, especially when it comes to (difficult) contemporary music. The big set-up (marimba, vibraphone, timpani, 2 tam-tams, tom-toms, ...) is incorporated in the scaffolding and screens that show the scores are surrounding the audience. The interior (me playing inside the set-up) and exterior (the score) are strongly connected because of the performer's focus and the public is literally going to be in the middle of that. The instruments are amplified at some points in the music (not always to make people well-aware of the inside versus outside). The third piece of this first part is a new composition for marimba and tape, written by the Ghent-based composer Ruben De Gheselle. The starting point for this music is the confrontation of the composer with his audience, and also the tape will give some clear hints of that idea.

The second part, *Music for Bars*, is a concept that composer Brendan Faegre worked on together with Slagwerk Den Haag and Club Guy & Roni's Poetic Disasters Club. It's a 60-minute amplification and manipulation of sonic, physical and social elements of a bar, so obviously it needs to take place in a bar-like environment. The audience of 'IN' will think they are having a break, but things will start to get weird pretty soon.

Dancers and percussionists react on and interact with the foyer space and crowd and eventually present some fixed compositions (Gesprek by Louis Andriessen and Martijn Padding, Music for the Pub-lic by Brendan Faegre) and choreographies. Even though it's quite an aggressive way of performing. The audience has more freedom in how to react to the performers. Social rules and conventions in a bar or foyer environment are completely different than those within a traditional concert hall, which is an important aspect of this experiment.



Music for Bars at Bar Botanique (Amsterdam) ©Laura Lee Huisman

Chapter 2: The audience: traditional behavior and immersion

Traditional audience behavior

Bernard Holland states in his article 'Concertgoers, Please Clap, Talk or Shout at Any Time' (NY Times, jan. 8, 2008) that concertgoers have become part police officer, part public offender. *"We prosecute the shuffled foot or rattled program, the errant whisper or misplaced cough. We tense at the end of a movement, fearful that one of the unwashed will begin to clap, bringing shame on us all."*

The article's introduction provides a brief description of concert behaviour in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, using examples and quotes from Kenneth Hamilton's *'After The Golden Age'*. It shows that great composers like Liszt and Chopin would have been insulted had listeners not clapped between movements or even while the musicians are playing. Beethoven himself said that it's not silence, but applause that artists really want. Elias Canetti compares modern concerts in his 1960 book *"Crowds and Power"* with the Roman Catholic Mass. *"Worshippers accept instructions from an executive operating from a raised platform at the front. They speak when spoken to and otherwise shut up."* Hamilton attributes a lot of this recently acquired holiness to the recording age, but Holland thinks it has more to do with Germanic arts taking itself deadly seriously. *"Every Mozart sonata is like Wagner's Parsifal, and listeners should get down on their knees."*

Of all concerts I have seen, only a few invited or encouraged the audience to behave differently than they/we are traditionally used to. I find it hard to believe that it is a coincidence that these are the performances that stay in my mind the longest and -generally spoken- leave the deepest impression on me. I'm convinced that in order to engage a great deal of today's people with the music, it is a must for a performer to spend some thoughts about the audience's behaviour and a possible break with tradition. Especially so in the case of contemporary music, where audiences might not know what to expect or might appreciate some guidance in how to listen.

Conductor Michael Tilson Thomas talks in his article *'When Audiences Distract The Performers'* about another aspect of the audience behaviour, one that we can't compare with concerts centuries ago. He describes true stories like the one in which a mother and her seven-year-old daughter were banned from a concert of the New World Symphony because the little girl was distracting the conductor with her Ipad or how he got in trouble with the press for lobbing handfuls of cough drops at a phlegmy audience during a performance of Mahler's 9th Symphony with the Chicago Symphony and how in 2012 New York Philharmonic conductor Alan Gilbert famously stopped a performance after an Iphone marimba ringtone interrupted the last movement. The disgraced patron, a lifelong classical music lover who didn't realize an alarm had been set on his new Iphone, was mortified after being excoriated both in public and in the national media.

I think plenty advantages come with 'loosening up the atmosphere' or creating an immersive environment during a concert. Not only is the (hopefully partly younger and inexperienced) audience going to feel more at ease, I believe the musicians will also benefit from the situation. Because of the efforts and thoughts made beforehand to connect with an audience, it will become easier for a musician to find a musical or emotional connection while performing. Of course it requires a different preparation and performing attitude, but in my opinion the unique concert experiences are definitely worth it. I think that good musicians have the capacity to 'claim' silence when they feel it's needed, but should be also able to have an open, alert, spontaneous and accepting attitude towards the audience. Because if everyone stays home out of terror of disrupting the music, there won't be live classical music any more.

Of course I realise the importance of tradition in culture, which is still strongly present in concerts of orchestras like The Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra and national opera or ballet companies. But I do think it's important for younger orchestras, ensembles or solo performers to aim actively for an innovative and original performing identity. In this quest it's probably a good idea to reflect on how you want audiences to experience the performance.

Traditional audience behavior	Other ways
Audience arrives 30 to 5 minutes before the concert and waits until the staff opens the doors of the performance space to enter.	Performers could create an intro atmosphere that is in line with the performance. This can be achieved with specific lighting, music/soundscape or visuals. This way the performance starts from the moment people enter the performance space: the audience feels immediately more immersed than in a traditional concert situation. There could be a more casual atmosphere in which people are allowed to go in and out at any time.
People get seated (preferably not directly next to strangers) after entering the performance space and keep on talking until the audience light goes out and musicians (or conductor in case of an orchestra) arrive on the stage.	Alternative positioning of the audience immediately changes their focus. Freedom of navigation and position (sitting/standing/lying) makes it possible for people to experience music in different ways. People could be sitting close to or in between the performers. Performers could be already present and welcoming their audience (or even giving them drinks).
Audience tries to behave as silent as possible throughout the concert (no talking, preferably no coughing and definitely no cell phones) during the playing. They are supposed to clap after every composition (not in between movements!).	It would be nice if an audience was more honest. If they don't have to feel stopped when they want to clap, laugh or yell at anytime. On the contrary: they also shouldn't feel forced to applaud (or even stand up) when they didn't like it.

In case of big traditional orchestral or opera productions it's encouraged to wear appropriate clothing.	People should wear what they want. Or performers could think about an original dress code that is somehow relevant for the performance.
After the last piece the public presents their biggest applause and possibly a standing ovation (it can be awkward not to do it when everyone else is).	Here too: it would be nice if an audience was more honest. If they don't have to feel stopped when they want to clap, laugh or yell at anytime. On the contrary: they also shouldn't feel forced to applaud (or even stand up) when they didn't like it.
People leave the concert space after musicians left the stage, they possibly have a drink and chat in the foyer.	There could be a closer connection between the performer(s) and audience. A direct dialogue -possibly even during the performance.

Immersion

'Immersive art' is a relatively new term that originates from the discourses of contemporary computer art according to Peter Sloterdijk (2006: 58-63). It means to engage with one's immersion in artificial environments and most likely assisted by technical equipment. Through new technologies humans are finally taken seriously as beings for whom it is natural to immerse themselves - and not only in water - but in elements and environments generally. Especially for younger audiences (having grown up with nothing but computers and smartphones) immersive performances could be a natural way to connect with music.

Sloterdijk states that architects, and particularly interior architects, are the designers of immersion since they are the ones producing embedding situations. He points out that it has become more and more important for people to immerse themselves in interiors that fit them and makes them feel at home. I believe that artists are designers of immersion as well. We generally like our audiences to be immersed in our musical message, and this paper wants to provide some tools to help expand this idea.

As illustrated in my previous research (Bonny, 2015) immersive performances are often multimedial. One of the basic assumptions of multimedia is synaesthesia, the fact that we can blend two or more sensory experiences, but according to Jan Schacher (2008) this rarely exceeds what has been a standard of immersion since the introduction of sound in cinema: the audiovisual form. Schacher states that the merging of seeing and hearing in a synaesthetic manner often fails in live cinema. I think the same statement applies to multimedial concerts. *'Music is simply added to image, or there is nothing more than a hierarchical and illustrative relationship between the two.'* One of the reasons is the fundamental difference between the senses.

On a physiological level hearing and seeing do not share the same mechanisms. We perceive the pressure wave in air as sound and the light particles or waves falling onto our retina as images. These phenomena occur in different media and oscillate at different orders of magnitude. The filtering by the perception process further differentiates the two. Seeing is acted out by looking, which is a reading process on a single perception point roaming across the scene in front of the viewer. Contrary to that hearing or listening is a massively parallel activity, where several streams of content are perceived at the same time (polyphony) and the acoustic elements are combined to form the perception of timbre and overall sound (Schacher, 2008: 2).

In the interview I took with her, Kathinka Pasveer (wife of Stockhausen) points out that the visual aspect of a performance is a lot stronger than the auditive. Because of that we should always be careful to not over-stimulate the audience's eyes at moments we need them to focus on the sound. A transcription of the full interview is attached at the end of this paper.

Early installation art and immersion

In the 1950s, artists such as Pollock began to question the line between the art object and its context. In the world of contemporary music, *Poème Symphonique* could be considered one of the first fully immersive environments to combine electronic music, projections and architecture for the purpose of creating a total work of art. This collaborative work between Edgard Varèse, Le Corbusier and Iannis Xenakis was exhibited at the 1958 Brussels World Fair and consisted of 400 loudspeakers, projected film, coloured lights and architecture. In the following decades, many artists have been transforming spaces: first in an attempt to reproduce existing environments (1960s), later to explore and fulfill the human desire to experience constructed realities (1970s). With the incorporating of digital technology in their work, possibilities for installation artists to create environments that enable audiences to experience alternative realities, became endless. (Bonnie Mitchell, 2010)

The objects in an installation art space take on new meaning and the context of the elements defines the interpretation of the piece. We must remember that the elements in the installation space are not art objects in themselves; the participant's experience is the work of art. (Mitchell, 2010: 4)

Immersive theater

In her study on video games (Arsenault and Picard, 2007), Elena Gorfinkel brings to mind the fact that immersion is not a characteristic but rather an effect which a work may produce on the participant. This distinction partly explains to what extent it is impossible to establish a strict separation between immersion and critical distance. Oliver Grau (2003) states that the relationship between immersion and critical distance depends on numerous parameters and the participant's immersion is dependent on his willingness. In this section I will discuss the model for immersive theatre as proposed by Catherine Bouko in her article *Interactivity and immersion in a media-based performance* (2014).

No matter how immersive a performance may aim to be, it will always be possible to maintain one's critical distance, thereby negating the immersion. (Oliver Grau, 2003:13).

Immersive theater places the participant at the heart of a work. The medium's visibility is exploited and this by itself is already an important aspect of this theatrical language: at particular moments, the audience may be absorbed to the point of confusing the created environment for everyday reality. At other times, the immersant becomes aware of the artificial nature of the world into which he is plunged and adopts a position external to the work. Exactly this game of coming and going constructs and deconstructs physical and mental immersion and constitutes the specificity of immersive theater.

Elena Gorfinkel's model of immersive theatre is centered upon three steps. They can be summed up and explained briefly in the following manner:

1. *Physical integration vs. breaking down formality*

The boundaries between the real and the imaginary are physically disturbed; the fluctuation between the two is no longer structured by physical separation. At this stage, it can't yet be called immersion: it's not enough just to break the frontal division between the stage and the audience in order to achieve immersion.

2. *Sensory and dramaturgical immersion*

The immersant is sensorial and physically plunged into an imaginary world to which he belongs; interactivity can then appear. Far from being a side effect whose purpose could be resumed as breaking the spectator's classical appeal, the immersant's sensory appeal constitutes an experience which places his body at the heart of the dramaturgy. The immersant's body experiences first-hand the fluctuation between what is real and what is imaginary.

3. *Immersion and spatio temporal indeterminacy*

The third step takes the form of absolute immersion: the immersant experiences confusion between the real and the imaginary universe. Even when the immersant stops cooperating, he is unable to distinguish between the real and imaginary worlds. Obviously such moments of immersion are temporary and very difficult to attain.

In the article, Bouko also talks about personalisation, a more common dramaturgical strategy. She distinguishes three ways in which the immersive experience can be personalised, without going as far as to give the immersant the role of a collaborator. In the first one (introspective dramaturgy), immersive theater develops a 'polychronic narrative'. Polychronic narration is not a complete absence of sequence or lack of definite sequence, but instead it exploits indefiniteness to multiply the ways in which the events can be chained together. This type of narration enables the immersant to effectively move around through a series of pre-written events. However the immersant can only set his own pace to a certain extent; These polychronic moments are separated by pre-arranged actions where the

producers of the performance take back the control of the experience. These moments are necessary for the story to advance. In the second way (first-person dramaturgy) the immersant is incorporated into the fictional world as the character he embodies but his social identity is also mentioned in the play. This dramaturgy places the participant at the heart of the experience, but from the individual's point of view and from the one of the character he is playing. The third technique to personalise the immersive experience aids the process of individualisation while at the same time limiting the immersant's freedom. The article refers to this technique as 'the aesthetics of fear' and it's based on the fact that anxiety and apprehension are central to many of the effects and affects evoked by participatory performance (Helen Freshwater, 2009: 65). Forms of anxiety can be caused by leading immersants into a dark area (sensory disturbance) or by a face-to-face contact between performer and audience.

The techniques used in both installation art and theatre are perfectly applicable within the world of classical (and contemporary) music, and in my opinion very relevant to consider for every performer (and not only production teams or artistic directors). We are faced with excess capacity, changing demographics and new technologies, which causes many musicians struggling to find and maintain audiences. Conventional ways of doing so (marketing, outreach, incentives) are failing. Audiences nowadays care more about the setting, not just the performance itself, challenging venue owners and artistic directors to move beyond the production and curate the setting also as part of their offerings. The attention for the context of the artwork (in this case: the music) could be as valuable as it already is for many decades in installation art and theater. By placing music very consciously in a new context, one as personal as the performer's interpretation, new levels of understanding could be achieved for both the performer and the audience. This paper aims to inspire musicians to create immersive environments in order to make the message of the composer and the interpretation of the performer(s) clearer. (Markusen, Brown: 2013).

Incorporated and additional immersion

In my previous research about intermediality (Bonny: 2015) I made a distinction between incorporated or additional intermediality. I now choose to apply this distinction when speaking about immersion. In incorporated immersion, the immersive elements are part of the creation. This means (in the case of music) that a composer decided to add extra-musical elements to the music (spatialisation, instructions about lights/amplification/decor/movement etc). These elements are an inherent part of the composition. Additional immersion means that someone other than the creator (musician, programmer, director) decides to add extra-musical elements to the performance. This could happen for instance in an attempt to make the composer's message clearer, to make the music appealing for a bigger audience or to fit in a bigger whole like a dance/theater production or a conceptual festival.

Collapsing the Distance between Performer and Audience

Research has shown that contemporary performing art audiences desire to be more engaged and interactive with the artists (Conner, 2008). As in spectator sports, the roles of performers and viewers in performing arts are strictly delineated and segregated by how the performances spaces are structured (see previous chapter). Interaction between performers and audiences has been severely limited by artistic conventions and technological progression has reinforced the experiential distance. Lynne Conner states in her essay '*In and Out of the Dark* (2008)' that the introduction of lighting into the performing arts has made it much more difficult for an audience to interact with performers, since they're usually put into complete darkness. An ideological shift accompanied this process. According to Lawrence Levine (1988), art became sacralized in this period. It needed to be treated with awe and respect, insulating elites from the masses. People were only supposed to clap at appropriate times and otherwise remain mute.

I saw many performances in which an effort was done to decrease the distance between performer and audience, but almost all of them were dance or theatre productions. Also here I find myself concluding that the classical music scene is a bit behind on the trends. The new Pierre Boulez hall in Berlin is already considered revolutionary because of the absence of a stage. This probably has to do with the many conventions musicians are educated with and the average age of a classical music concert audience. I can imagine that older people find it less important to be immersed in a concert since they probably value tradition more and can't deal with the amount of impulses young people grow up with nowadays. Below are some examples out of my own experience.



Tryst - Chloé Geers ©Rudy Carlier

Music for Bars (Slagwerk Den Haag, Poetic Disasters Club)	This flashmob performance really demands the performers (3 percussionists and 3 dancers) to interact with the audience. They have to talk to them in order to get their musical material (words to produce rhythmically in a composition). Movements and sounds of the audience are imitated, which makes everyone involved aware of this non-traditional relationship between performers and audience.
Tryst (Chloé Geers)	In this small dance production, the solo performer suddenly reached me (sat in the audience) her hand. She led me to the stage where she danced with me for over 15 minutes in front of the audience. Without planning or expecting, I was not watching – I became part of the performance. Obviously I was the one to experience the highest level of immersion. Still the audience is surprised and more involved because of the situation. They know it could have been anyone.
Naked Lunch (Slagwerk Den Haag, Club Guy & Roni)	At the end of this dance performance, the audience is invited to come dance with the dancers. Instruction videos with the moves were part of the marketing plan and the energy was elevated in a way that people felt comfortable enough to go for it.
Many other performances	Artist talks to the audience after the performance which is always a very nice way to get to know more about the content, context, performers and makers.



Naked Lunch at Nederlandse Dansdagen - Club Guy & Roni ©Jochem Jurgens

IN - immersing the audience

I really want to treat the audience of 'IN' like friends that come over for dinner, only it's not food but music I'll be sharing. I will have prepared home-made lemonade and pour it myself when the people enter the performance space. This idea is based on an experience of my teacher who was asked to help at the bar during a break of a concert he played. He still remembers this performance as one of the ones in which he really got to connect with the audience, because of the face-to-face communication. The effort put in things like this seems to me like a much more human and sincere way to thank someone for being there.

For *Intérieur* (Lachenmann) the audience will sit in a large circle (2 rows) around the (amplified) set-up. Together with a sound engineer, and based on a thorough analysis of the piece, I will make a sound projecting plan to play with the audience's focus. Because the piece is all about sounds, I think it's a good idea to keep them fresh and surprising, and amplification could be a great help for that. By switching the sound projection between inside (acoustic sounds of the instruments) and outside (amplified and projected through the speakers surrounding the audience), I'm not only trying to keep their attention, I'm also playing with the overall concept of 'IN'. The idea of inside vs. outside: sometimes the sound is inside the audience and at times it's the other way around. In the process of creating the sound projection plan, it's important to keep in mind that this idea should not distract from the actual sounds. I don't want the audience to be confused and only think about the direction of the sound. I'm looking for ways to keep them intrigued and focused.

Chapter 3: The immersive performer

The perception of the performance is not the same for the performer and audience. A musician is conscious of internal processes and of cognitive control over technical aspects of executing a piece. While playing his instrument, a musician also needs to be aware of the overall flow and impact of the presentation. It is important for a performer to cultivate an inward and an outward perspective of the actions and to be able to adjust according to changes in both domains. When working in the audiovisual field, artists have to develop a sensibility for the fundamental difference between the senses. Striking a balance between the visual and auditive aspect is a crucial challenge. Some domains (temporal contrasts, level of abstraction) need to be addressed differently for the eyes and the ears. Apart from the purely physical impact of volume or luminosity, the relationship and balance between these intrinsic attributes is what makes performance fuse for the senses. We need to find elements in one domain that relate to the other sense on a more abstract, maybe even emotional level in order to achieve a sense of coherence. Of course many different approaches to performing are possible. Depending on the field artists are working in (music, dance, video art...) or even just the sub genre (classical music, jazz, early music), complete different performing attitudes can be distinguished. Some tend to be less body conscious and really focus on the execution of their work without giving great importance to the visual expression they project with their physical presence. Musicians tend to be more stage conscious and might even bring over-emphasized gestures to their performance. Both the lack of presence and the distracting use of showmanship influence the way a piece or performance is perceived. (Schacher, 2008).

Most musicians (classical, jazz, pop...) perform on a stage that is raised above the audience or otherwise distanced from them spatially and psychologically. Christopher Small (1998) brilliantly depicts this scene in his account of classical musicians entering the stage. (Markusen & Brown, 2013).

All public behavior sends a message about the relationship of those who are exhibiting it to those who watch it. It seems to me that the message of these musicians' onstage behavior is that of their professional exclusivity, of their belonging to a world that the non-musicians who sit beyond the edge of the stage cannot enter... They will address not a listeners in the course of the performance; we shall not hear their natural voices but only the ritual voices of their instruments as they play... (Small, 1998).

The attitude of an artist towards his audience (often acknowledge only during the final conventional act of applause) is cultivated by schooling. The distance between performers and audiences can not be reduced to artist training, behaviour and technology. It is rooted in Euro-American political economy and institutions that restrict the definitions of art and artist and who they serve. The way artists get trained and promoted is inherited from royalist traditions where wealthy people chose and employed artists to make compose, perform music, sculpt and paint. Later, built on new industrial wealth, institutions (museums, opera houses and concert halls) evolved to reach more of the populace. This allowed them to experience art, but only as passive attendees, often far from the stage. (Markusen & Brown, 2013).

The performer's voice in the composer's message

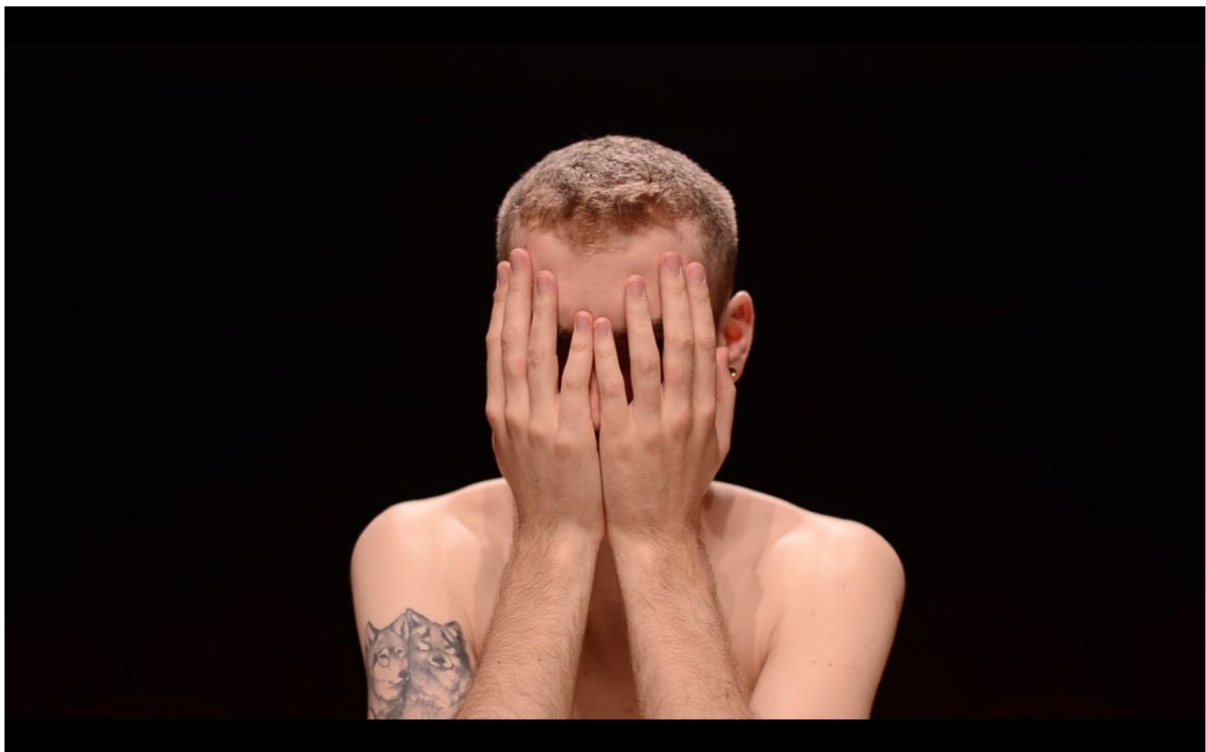
One of the biggest risks in creating an immersive performance definitely is losing the attention for the content. Good compositions have strong ideas and concepts, and in order to project those to an audience it's a must for musicians to aim for a good understanding. In the following section will reflect on my own take on the current contemporary music scene. The paragraphs below are merely opinions, based on my personal experiences as a musician, composer, curator and organiser, and therefore subject to change.

As a musician the ultimate challenge lies in finding the balance between the composer's intention and your own interpretation. For older music (like baroque or classical styles) many conventions are generally applied, often they are based on theories like harmony and counterpoint and/or traditions. In the scene of contemporary music I experienced two different scenarios. In the best case the performers get to work with the composer (preferably already during the creation process). If they are lucky, the composer has good social skills and abilities to combine his musical intentions with the strengths and specific characteristics of the musicians he or she is working with. Such collaboration could definitely elevate the final result. In the other scenario, performers don't get to (or don't chose to) work with the composer for whatever reason. Dealing with a composer who doesn't manage to communicate his desires (and unfortunately, that's not an exception) can be an advantage. In that case, there is an enormous freedom for performers to interpret and possibly add immersive elements to the piece or performance. My advice for such situations would be to look first for references (research the composer's style or recordings of other compositions) and combine that knowledge with one's own creativity and skills. Obviously not every composer has the same take on music and the same opinions about what is important. Whereas some composers really expect their music to be performed extremely precise (cf. Stockhausen), others demand much more freedom and input from the performer (cf. Cage). Absence of the composer (especially in the case of new music) sometimes causes (uninformed) performers to completely miss the point of the piece. As a big defender of new music, this is something I try to avoid by all means.

As I write music myself, I have also dealt with similar situations from a composer's point of view. This makes me very aware of how difficult it is for them to be clear on what exactly the message is and how to communicate that to the performers. In order to inspire musicians, I believe it is always a good idea to explain the context of the piece. A composer should be able to answer whatever question a musician has about the music. Then again, a musician should be open-minded enough to deal with answers like "because I think it is nice", when that is the case. For me as a composer it is very important to allow musicians to show their personality within the pre-structured frame of the work. The message is yours, but it won't ever come across if the messenger (the musician) doesn't believe it.

Only after making sure the respect for the composer's message and the performer's individuality are there, room for additional immersion arises. For me as an eager musician, the urge to take on this challenge of creating an immersive performance being fully aware of the above restrictions has grown exponentially over the past few years.

My own big turning point in terms of becoming an immersive performer was my version of Vinko Globokar's Corporel. It's a composition for an almost naked percussionist and his own body. Because of the intimacy of the piece, it felt completely wrong for me to perform it from a distance (as it is usually done) on a stage. I needed to be close to my audience in order to make them feel the emotional rollercoaster I go through while playing the piece. I came up with the idea to sit in the middle of the audience (facing the same direction), and make sure everyone is sitting as close to me as possible. I put a large mirror in front of me which added an extra layer of confrontation (not only for me, but also for the audience with me and for the audience with themselves). The mirror makes it very hard for them to look away or take mental distance from me, it catches their focus. Corporel was the first piece of the program, and I decided to already sit there before the audience started entering. My breathing (a direct link to the first bar of the piece) was amplified and created a natural intro soundscape with which the audience felt immediately immersed in the atmosphere of the piece. There was only little audience light. The people took place in an extremely silent and careful way, because they were immediately surprised by the intimacy of my actions. This moment was so strong for me, that I now try to find likewise approaches for every contemporary piece I'm playing.



Promo shot for my version of Corporel ©Arn Van Wijmeersch

IN - performing attitude

My goal for 'IN' is to perform with a much more relaxed attitude than classical musicians (including myself) generally do. I want to have the feeling that I'm sharing an experience with the audience, instead of demonstrating something important. I'm planning on using my voice during the performance by directly speaking to the audience: giving them some information about the pieces or overall concept, maybe telling them something about myself or asking how they are. I want them to be well aware of the fact that we're part of the same experience.

Conclusions

In this research, I reflected on several aspects of a concert and how I want to communicate with my audience. By immersing both them and myself in an environment that supports the music and the overall performance, I strongly believe that the (psychological and physical) distance between both parties can be reduced. Throughout the research I realised that finding ways to immerse an audience is easier said than done. My belief in immersion as a tool to guide listeners towards a certain atmosphere, attitude or interpretation is nevertheless still as strong as before. More than ever, I am convinced that this is the way for me to perform. This is particularly the case for contemporary music where inexperienced listeners might appreciate some guidance.

An immersive performer is very aware of and sensitive for the location of the performance and is always looking for opportunities to create performance spaces in function of the program. The use of spatialization, lighting and amplification are some of the most common ways to do this. The performance time could have a considerable influence on how the audience perceives the music as well. Within today's cultural field it is very relevant to look for ways to immerse your audience or make them participate, because more artists are choosing to curate the settings for their work as an integral part of the production and research has shown that this is what today's audiences want.

Creating an immersive performance is difficult. It takes a lot of time, something musicians often don't have. In addition to learning the music, the performer needs time to brainstorm about the kind of immersion that supports the musical idea (the composer's message) and does not distract from it. The line between the two is very thin. Once the immersion concept is established it often takes a lot of preparation to execute it. To bring elaborate ideas to fruition musicians will need the help of technicians, engineers, other artists etc. This explains why immersive performances are often organised by ensembles that rely on a bigger production team and budget. The danger here lies in the fact that those teams are often too far removed from the actual content of the music. Realising this made me think about other ways to connect with an audience.

My main conclusion is that besides immersion, also attitude and mindset are very powerful tools to decrease the distance between a performer and the audience. At this point I realise that an immersive performer relates to the given concert situation on a different level. He acts as curator of the given elements such as time, space and audiences. This means combining several jobs (musician, curator, artistic leader) and this is not something you can expect from a performer in every concert situation. Nevertheless, the process of finding your own ways to communicate the composer's message is in any case worth exploring. This should in my opinion go further than the actual musical interpretation. Low-tech solutions like literally performing surrounded by them or directly talking to them are very effective to emotionally connect.

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Addendum

Kathinka Pasveer about immersion in Kathinka's Gesang

In march 2017, six master students of the The Hague Royal Conservatoire's percussion department and flutist Karin De Flyt have been working on Stockhausen's 'Kathinka's Gesang'. All rehearsals during this intensive week were led by Kathinka Pasveer. She's an internationally renowned flute player and the wife of Stockhausen. She was the inspiration for this composition and many of his other works. She worked and lived with the composer for many years, which probably makes her the greatest expert of his music.

Kathinka's Gesang as Luzifer's Requiem is the second scene of Stockhausen's dramatic music work Samsdag aus Lich. Luzifer's Requiem was originally designed to be a work for percussion and supplementary "magic instruments", but with the addition of an integral flute part, it gained the additional aptly-chosen prefix Kathinka's Gesang. The flautist, costumed as a black cat, performs the Exercises while navigating around 2 large mandala-diagrams with musical figures of each of the Exercises on them. The 6 percussionists each have 1 or 2 pitched metal plates which together form the Nuclear tones of the Lucifer formula. During each Exercise, a different combination of percussionists (arranged around the auditorium) strike their sound plates, creating a combined melody of 2 to 12 tones. A whistle is also blown once for each sound plate strike in different timbres and rhythms.

In addition to these primary tones the 6 percussionists make a certain number of sounds with "magic instruments" - unconventional home-made instruments strapped to their costumes. These magic instruments are basically small percussion objects being struck, rubbed, scraped, shaken, buzzed, etc... The attacks of the magic sounds weave with the flute part and otherwise follow the general behavior of the current Exercise (tremolo, irregular duration, etc...). During the "Release of the Senses" each sound plate is struck in a repeating sequence matching the final measure of the LUCIFER formula, along with whistling, humming and 7 magic sounds each. At the end they drop their sound plates into LUCIFER's grave and then fly away (or walk).

(taken from: <http://stockhausenspace.blogspot.be/2014/12/opus-52-kathinkas-gesang.html>)

Interview

J: I decided there's two forms of immersion. The one is where the immersion is composed (incorporated immersion), the other one is when you have a piece written and you (as a performer) decide to make it immersive (additional immersion). I realised yesterday that Kathinka's *Gesang* is actually a very immersive piece since we have the percussionists surrounding the audience and I wanted to ask you what you think about that. How important is this immersive element of the percussionists surrounding the audience to you?

K: Very important!

J: So you think the piece is not the piece if you only hear it?

K: Yeah, also. The recording is also nice but it is something different if you experience the spatialisation, the sound around you. That's something typical for Stockhausen. In everyday life we have sounds above us, behind us, everywhere... and in concert halls we only have mono-stereo sound? He (Stockhausen) always wanted spatialisation, sound around us, so of course you get this feeling of being more part of the music, not like an outsider. He also said, when you see interpreters, it should always be 'artful'. So the people feel as in some kind of ritual. Not just sitting on your chair and something is always the same. But you have the feeling, what's this? So always movement, always costumes, always lighting – to get the people more involved in the ritual. Everything should be a ritual.

J: What happened this week is that our sound engineer made it (our performance of Kathinka's *Gesang*) even more immersive with his decision to move the sound through the speakers.

K: Ha! That was my decision, because I came here and I didn't hear it. I see something but I don't hear it and if you are not touched by the sound... They said "the hall will be small", but it doesn't matter, it has nothing to do with small. So I have to hear the sound as if I were a percussionist and that's what sound projection is about. It's not about making it loud, it's about making it audible so everyone in the hall has the same experience. So if you are doing (imitates a percussion sound) I should have the feeling that it's here. And if you just see something and don't hear it, I don't feel immersed, I feel just 'ok, maybe it's like a gag?'. It (amplification) is very important, always! Stockhausen writes it in his score and that's not for nothing. It doesn't matter how large the hall is. Of course when a hall is larger you have to amplify more. In a small hall, still you have to amplify small things.

J: So you think Stockhausen was one of the first ones to experiment with this elements of immersion/immersing the audience?

K: I think so! He started, the first piece is, uh, well he composed the first four-track work in history (which was '*Gesang der Jünglinge*', for the first time people were surrounded by loudspeakers. But also in the early 50s he made like '*Kreuzspiel*'. He made a special set-up for the instruments, they were all two meters high to have a totally different experience of a concert. Then he started with '*Gruppen*' with the orchestra around the public, or '*Carré*' with

four (orchestras). So I think he was one of the motors behind this. Then he started with moving instrumentalist. At first, everyone feels stupid and laughed about it and now every composer is composing for moving musicians. So I think he was one of the first to push this, because it's much nicer.

J: In general he (Stockhausen) has been quite specific about these immersive elements in scores, instructions. Do you think he'd mind performers to chose to add different or new things when they believe it can make the performance even more immersive. Do different thing with lights or movements...

K: Well, if he (Stockhausen) has prescribed something, that should be realised. But of course, like in the operas, there's a lot of freedom for lighting, for adding videos... Of course that's possible. For instance Renée (Jonker J.B.) said: can't we leave out the sound plates and produce them electronically or something? I said no, this is composed/fixed in the score, you should not ever change the score. But of course you can make the surroundings of this Kathinka's Gesang performance magic. Could be fantastic. Of course this is a concert stage, and the mandalas are not so nice, so of course you can make it even more special, with lighting...

J: Because at the time he wrote it, the possibilities were...

K: not so much no.

J: yeah, less than today, now there's much more technology...

K: Yes, BUT the danger of visual things is... Because the eyes are much stronger than the ears. If the visuals get too strong, you don't listen anymore. If the visual helps the listening, that's wonderful but if they're adding some film to the music, than they (the audience) are just watching and not listening. If it helps the listening, that's fine.

J: Ok, that's it. Thank you very much!

K: Thank you!



Interview with Kathinka Pasveer (10/03/2017, The Hague)