

Reflection

Background of the collaborations

(why I chose the partners I chose)

Bauck

Several years ago, I was visiting and reading the project site pianoharmonics.com constructed by the composers [Martin Rane Bauck](#) and Johan Svensson and the pianist Jonas Olsson. I found it interesting, so I asked Bauck if he would write a piece for my project. It was also convenient that we lived in the same city, and could have a close collaboration.

Later on, Martin showed me a piece called '[marsyas and apollo](#)'^[1], written as an etude for [piano harmonics](#), and I was overwhelmed by how its powerful stinging harmonics all together created a very distinct sonic landscape. He said he would base the new work, written for piano quartet, on the material from the etude.

Buene

Some years ago, when I was working at a music high school in Oslo, [Eivind Buene](#) once visited the school to give a lecture to the students where he talked about his compositional motivation, how he composes and so on. Then I got to know his works [Blue Mountain \(2014\)](#) and [Schubert Lounge](#), where both works are inspired by existing works; respectively by Gustav Mahler and by Franz Schubert.

Listening to Buene's works and himself demonstrating music historical references/quotes as an origin for several of his compositions, and the following compositional processes, was for me yet another eye-opener. It made me view and appreciate classical music in ways that were new to me. Furthermore, all this got intertwined, through Buene's sound world, with my continuously growing interest in contemporary music and its richness in [timbre](#).

Maybe, I thought, this was similar to my first listening experience of [Grisey's Vortex Temporum](#): Though not very obvious, Grisey's intertwines material derived from a few extracts of Ravel with his own timbre-oriented structures and language.

(To Grisey: Vortex Temporum 'Myclopedia')

I see Grisey as one of few composers fully capable of efficiently integrating microtonality in their works; Grisey using both harmonic and disharmonic spectra without focusing on drones or scales. Furthermore, [Vortex Temporum](#) is a work that demands a very attentive listening, as if there are many dimensions within the sound itself. The 2nd bell-like movement also has some of the depictive nostalgia I admittedly have a soft spot for, which one can trace in [Buene's work](#).

I later got to know about Buene's research project, 'Again and Again and Again: Music as site, situation and repetition'[1] and also that the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra were planning to perform Buene's work [Standing Stones \(2010\)](#) which contains musical materials and samples (from the last 80 years) from various recordings of Brahms' Piano Concerto no. 2. The piano of the orchestra pianist is required to have two of its pitches lowered by a quartertone, and as I was fascinated by Buene's music, and also just had started my research fellowship on microtonal piano, I asked if I could play that part.

So on May 3rd in 2018 I performed the part in the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra (and also tuned/tuned back the two pitches) at the concert in Oslo Concert Hall, conducted by Eivind Aadland, where [Standing Stones](#) was programmed together with Brahms' Piano Concerto no. 2 and also another work by Buene.

Harada

I have known Professor Harada since she taught me music theory when I was still a student at Toho Gakuen School of Music in Tokyo. After I came to Norway, I got talking about Harada with a fellow performer who told me that Harada had mentioned about a quarter-tone piano on her SNS, so I asked Harada about her interest in the microtonal piano project, and she responded as follows:

“Piano, microtones, tuning - so this is a project that I expect will probably go into unheard territory. In the time of computers, when everything can be done, why do you dare to use ‘microtones by tuning or auditory judgment’, and why do ‘humans perform’? I always think about the essence of music creation in this regard.”

I asked her to write a piece for this project because she understood the very essence of this project.

Haugen

In 2019, Haugen was a colleague of mine at the time ([PhD in 2022](#)).

Haugen's artistic background was centered around sculpture, sound, and video installation, and his creative approach prioritized the conceptual framework over the choice of material, media, or mode of expression. I found Haugen's artistic practice to be novel and unfamiliar, akin to encountering an unexplored terrain. Haugen expressed his intention to create a piece that would encompass both of our research interests, prompting myself to request a musical composition from him.

Magalhaes

I was very attracted to the very colourful piano sounds in Magalhães' composition '[In My Volcano Grows The Grass for prepared piano](#)' (2017-2018). I asked her to write a solo piece for my project, and there came 3 pieces of various lengths.

(To Gamelan 'Myclopedia')

- **Gamelan (Magalhães)**

Many places in '[In My Volcano Grows The Grass for prepared piano](#)' (2017-2018) reminded me of gamelan music, and she later told me that she was inspired by gamelan, and especially the so-called male and female pair of instruments, where the musicians play the same music, but their instruments are tuned slightly differently (the female instrument being slightly larger and slightly lower in pitch), together creating the characteristic vibration and sound.

A childhood memory came back to me like a flashing light: I had heard the music of the Japanese band called THE BOOM, and had been captivated by the sound of the instruments they used (which I later realized was gamelan instruments). The internet was still not very developed at that time, but I managed to find out that the origin of this music was the Balinese gamelan. It was too far away, but in the end of 2022, I took the opportunity to go to Bali, and I could listen to lots of gamelan music, including taking lessons from a highly professional gamelan musician.

Mæland

I had previously participated in workshops on how to find the microtones in his 2012 opera *Ad Undas : Solaris korrigert* as a practice pianist for the singing soloists as well as playing the orchestra piano, so I became aware of microtones through him and his work. I had hoped that one day he would write a piece for me.

I decided that the only situation was to collaborate with a composer (my husband) at home in the Covid disaster period, so I asked him to write a piece. I told him the following microtonal sounds that I found interesting and the Okinawan scales that we had actually visited and listened to (which he had already used in some of his existing pieces).

I introduced the different sounds in *No verão, as noites*, by Sheena Ringo to Mæland, and said I in particular liked;

1. the sound of the of piano and synthesiser playing simultaneously: the roundness of the sound and the character caused by tiny differences in tuning.
2. the timbre changes in the voice
3. the jazzy blue notes, and glissando produced by the singing and playing technique.

Ness

I first played Ness's work in 2014. Since then, I have had numerous opportunities to perform many of his works before and after becoming the resident pianist for Ensemble Ernst. Each time, I am struck by the variety of microtones used on instruments other than the piano, the playful sound and the impressive orchestration. Ness's works also have a strong visual quality for me, making it easy to imagine images from the sounds. As a result, I commissioned an ensemble piece from him as my first choice. More details can be found on my [identity page](#).