

Reflection

My view/ A comment on the implementation of microtonality in the various works

(What worked and what didn't work in the various works.) *Magalhaes' open way of thinking can also come here.*)

Bauck

Several harmonics can be performed in different positions on the string, and sometimes even on other strings. To optimize my performance, I developed a **system** that worked best for me, recognizing that a taller pianist may approach it differently.

To ensure the best possible outcome, Bauck and I tested the system on the same piano model as the one used in the concert. We worked like this in several rounds; me sending recordings, or we met in my office. The close collaboration during the process undoubtedly benefited the work and the performance, allowing for a more nuanced and refined approach to microtonality.

Magalhaes

From **Magalhaes**, I received sketches and a video demonstrating several of the very original techniques (Magalhaes is a pianist herself). I practiced with the preparation objects I had available, and asked her to come to Oslo in May 2021 to have a workshop with me. She brought some equipment, and showed me how her sounds could be solved, but the rest was up to me. She had very a clear image of the sounds and character she wanted, but still gave me a lot of freedom; I could even choose completely different sounds, if I thought it would work better within the given character.

The score was therefore more like a guide; if a very good sound would appear, I could stay with that sound longer, and the piano preparations did not belong to specific pitches, but to certain flexible ranges (as a solution to the various piano beam constructions etc.). This forced me to listen with own ears to each instrument and prepare the sound where I and the instrument "wanted to speak".

When I performed three of Michelle's solo works at the Ultima Festival in 2023, I had to move the magnets and blu-tacks meticulously between the pieces. **(see picture)** The second piece is indeed very beautiful, but is very short, and it is inconvenient and unfortunate that it requires quite a lot of time for preparation (after the first piece). The third piece was not originally written for piano, but we chose to include it for this concert, and Magalhaes had instructed that I could play it simply using the preparation from the piece before pieces, which I found both surprising but also innovative for me, as I chose to make a half-improvisatory version of it, that I felt fitted the context.

- A comment on the choice of microtonal pitches

(need a reference)

Gerard Grisey spent years finding the ideal tuning for his work Vortex Temporum. Probably because I suggested the composers in the project to look for practical solutions concerning tuning, in fact several of the composers chose to use the Vortex tuning.

....Still, I'm questioning the choice of microtonal pitches in these works:

Did they skip some of the inventive listening process that Grisey so thoroughly went through, simply for the benefit of more practical concert programming?

I am also questioning the postmodern (and later) tradition - however historically necessary it may have been, or still may be - of borrowing material that I suspect many composers of lacking any deep experience with, and thus not letting the work reach it's full potential. As a performer, I sometimes, rather unconsciously, wonder whether developing an "own" material was too time-consuming or not for the composer...

- When sound itself is of no importance

At the time of this collaboration with **Haugen**, my research was focused on 'exploring new timbral possibilities for the piano through microtonality', so I was somewhat reluctant to spend a lot of time working on a rather radical tuning suggested by a composer who was telling me that the sound in his piece was of no importance at all. I think the mentioned reluctance had something to do with the way I was listening when I was performing the piece. Since the pitches were originally chosen through the sound analysis of Keller's speech, they were not actually intended to resonate as music, nor to create certain reactions between overtones, so there is offered no richness or clear character to the sound.

As explained here, Haugen had used pitches of Keller's voice, and transcribed the voice for the piano. In terms of performance, I was at first struggling to find out how I could contribute to the piece, as the composer had already meticulously worked out the "Keller-based scale" and the rhythms.

The practice then became to listen carefully to Keller's speech, and see how I could mimic the actual speech in terms of timing and intensity.

I offered the composer some sound-related possibilities, a few of which he made use of (such as f.ex. the spoon sound mentioned in the Process chapter). After the premier, I wondered if he (himself being an artistic research fellow at the academy), would consider making a pure instrumental version of the work, that I could record on CD, but this was not an option, he said. Quite understandably, since he, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, had claimed that sound was of less importance to this work. I was for a while slightly disappointed, mostly because I had hoped to offer him some microtonal alternatives that he would find relevant to his piece. Though I of course knew about his background from the fine arts, and his video and sound installations, I had still expected that we together would work more with timbre, and not just implementing a scale that his computer had served us, as he was going to write for my microtonal piano project. I however soon realized a couple of things: Perhaps was this my standard or my "normal" way of thinking and collaborating, which in fact could have created unfruitful limitations to his work, if I had insisted on doing it "my way". We had also agreed to help each other; he was to write for my project, but my performance was also a part of his project work. When all is said and done, I believe our art eventually met somewhere in the middle, and Herzokino has become a valuable piece in my microtonal piano repertoire list.

I had a wish from the very beginning, in my project, to commission works coming from different esthetics, and to work with composers having different backgrounds. The piece was really very well received, and I was happy that my project also could include a more conceptual work such as this, where the use of microtonality had a clear raison d'être.