Applying skills, concepts and techniques from the study of Acting to Musical Performance: A practice-based, autoethnographic approach for Classical Guitar

Elizabeth Ellen Myers

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<u>Abstract</u>

While musicians aim to construct and communicate musical character in performance, the practice of acting requires a more literal onstage embodiment of characters and stories. This research investigates how techniques and concepts from the study of dramatic acting were incorporated into the preparation and performance of a classical guitar recital. Throughout the research project, I undertook acting training alongside guitar lessons and documented the learning processes in reflective journals. This data was interrogated using qualitative practice-led and autoethnographic methods in order to determine the impact of acting lessons on performance. Through practice and performance of Phillip Houghton's *Ophelia … A Haunted Sonata*, I examined the impact of acting studies on this piece and other works for classical guitar which demonstrate an overtly programmatic element. I also discuss the use of acting studies in non-programmatic repertoire, thereby comparing the impact on a wider cross-section of music performance experiences. My performance experiences were enhanced by applying Stanislavski-based acting techniques to both programmatic and non-programmatic musical works. From this, I generalise my findings in terms of what musicians can learn from these insights, supported by the existing literature in music performance, acting and the field of cross-disciplinary performance studies.

Declaration by author

This thesis is composed of my original work, and contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference has been made in the text. I have clearly stated the contribution by others to jointly-authored works that I have included in my thesis.

I have clearly stated the contribution of others to my thesis as a whole, including statistical assistance, survey design, data analysis, significant technical procedures, professional editorial advice, financial support and any other original research work used or reported in my thesis. The content of my thesis is the result of work I have carried out since the commencement of my higher degree by research candidature and does not include a substantial part of work that has been submitted to qualify for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution. I have clearly stated which parts of my thesis, if any, have been submitted to qualify for another award.

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Publications during candidature

No publications.

Publications included in this thesis

No publications included.

Contributions by others to the thesis

No contributions by others.

Statement of parts of the thesis submitted to qualify for the award of another degree

None.

Research Involving Human or Animal Subjects

Ethical Clearance for this project was approved by the School of Music (Appendix I), as the research deals with insights and interactions with tutors and peers. While the discussion of results are based on my personal reflections from the paradigm of autoethnogrpahy, the reflective writings throughout are based in part on lessons with tutors and group rehearsals in acting classes which were also occasionally recorded.

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Keywords

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ANZSRC code: 190407, Music Performance, 100%

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1. <u>The Project</u>

Rationale

The Master of Philosophy in Music Performance thesis is the result of practice-based research with outputs in both a practical recital examination and a written exegesis. This document is the exegesis of this research project which draws on my own artistic process of undertaking acting classes alongside music tuition, deliberately applying acting techniques to musical performances and investigating the impact on the recital and other practical experiences. Through this I endeavour to fill a gap in the current literature by approaching the topic from the paradigm of autoethnography and artistic research. Although there have been similar academic studies and also examples of professional musicians incorporating acting into performances, the body of literature in this particular field remains relatively small, thus this document does not include a formal literature review. Rather, literature in other relevant areas of performance and interpretation is reviewed as further context and is also embedded throughout the exegesis to support my insights.

40 hours of solo guitar lessons and chamber music coaching and approximately 130 hours of acting classes were undertaken between July 2015 and January 2018. In a broad sense, guitar lessons focused on technique and repertoire, and beginning acting classes introduced concepts of physical technique, character analysis and performing. Reflective journals documented lessons, classes and solo practice sessions. Coding was applied to early journal entries in order to specify particular themes relevant to the discussion of using acting training as a musician. Through this, these themes also formed part of the context as I looked to the existing literature for further research. In the lessons, I worked on a variety of programmatic, non-programmatic, solo and ensemble works which were later performed. The variety of styles demonstrate the use of acting concepts in different musical contexts.

Context Review

My own personal experiences as an early-career performer form part of the background to this particular project, while studies being carried out by others in the contemporary artistic industry and academic research provide a more general context. The context also incorporates existing academic literature in this area and professional examples of musicians who have engaged in similar performances. Examples of professional

performers who have described benefits of cross-disciplinary work in both programmatic and non-programmatic works connect to my initial studies in the background to the research project.

Background

Early in my undergraduate studies, I identified as a somewhat introverted personality, prone to nervousness and inhibition when performing. To overcome this in order to make the most of performances, I challenged myself to find ways of feeling more comfortable on stage. At the recommendation of my guitar teacher I took private acting studies and as a result, became very interested in the commonalities and differences I noticed between musicians and actors. I continued to take one-on-one sessions, open class courses and even attended one audition (for the role of Miss Brahms in a community theatre stage adaptation of *Are You Being Served?* I did not get the part). Through this tuition, I encountered concepts of character analysis based on the methods of Konstantin Stanislavski (1863 – 1938), physical movement and Alexander Technique and improvisation. I also noticed improvements including comfort on stage, management of nerves and less physical tension. These elements of performing are common among not only musicians and actors, but also the public speakers and sportspeople I met in classes who similarly deal with audiences. Artistically, I also noticed a difference in how I approached aspects of musical expression, in terms of how I create and express musical character in repertoire. As a result, I was compelled to turn my experience into research through the MPhil thesis as a synthesis of my practice, methods and the existing academic thought in this topic.

Concurrent to guitar tuition leading up to the recital, I also took acting studies in classes, reflecting on and applying concepts learned there to my musical practice – in particular, concepts based on influential Konstantin Stanislavski acting methods. Reflective writing in journals allowed me to document what I did and what I thought during classes and practice. I chose to prepare works from a variety of musical styles which reflect my performance interests and what I hope to pursue in future performances: highly programmatic works, non-programmatic solo music and ensemble music.

Works which are programmatic or which overtly combine music and drama exist in a plethora of forms, including opera, melodrama, musicals and works that feature a narrator. The combination of music and drama exists in a plethora of forms and genres including

opera, melodrama, and musicals. Examples of contemporary collaborations between musicians and theatre-makers are becoming an increasingly popular feature in concert hall programming. Karin Schaupp has appeared in *Lotte's Gift* (David Williamson, 2007)*, Don Juan* (Tama Matheson, 2016) and commissioned works for spoken word and music. In *Adventures in Words and Music* (2016), Schaupp speaks of her experience of beginning acting lessons "as bit of fun", then noticing differences in her announcements on stage and the "unexpected" effect on her playing. In 2010 Iain Burnside was to accompany singing students of the Guildhall School of Music in performances of George Butterworth's Soldier Songs, later deciding to direct the concert as a theatre performance rather than a traditional recital. He describes this show as "about expanding the skills of 12 all-singing, all-dancing students: lowering their inhibitions, opening their eyes – and improving their bodies (it's remarkable how the prospect of undressing on stage boosts gym membership)" (Par. 5). Burnside discusses the benefits of music students' experience with acting, including how their awareness and engagement with their physicality and environment was increased, while also offering them new perspectives for interpretation - the hope "that singing Butterworth in uniform, rifles in hand, will bring a different conviction to performances they'll give later in life, in white tie and tails at the Wigmore Hall" (2010). Other examples in Australian concert programming include Anna Goldsworthy's dramatized memoir in *Piano Lessons* (2011) and Julia Hastings in *Fame, Fortune & Lies* (2016). A notable composition in the field of classical guitar is Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco's *Platero y Yó* (1960), for guitarist and narrator.

Academic Context

While there are previous studies on the use of acting methods by musicians, the volume and depth of this research is limited. Ford (2013) compared the contrasting preparation and performance experiences of music and acting students who took part in storytelling and circus projects. Acting pedagogue Rea (2015) also spearheaded these projects and led the students, focusing on how acting benefits the projection of 'personality' in a performance. In these studies, music students express how they perceive the benefit of this kind of work that is not typical of traditional conservatoire training. These students often used their instruments in acting exercises and transitioned Stanislavksi concepts into musical applications (Rea 2015, 203). The students taking part in his study reinforced his view that that while the performance mode of the instrumentalist is seen to be one of introversion, inward looking and hiding behind an instrument, the actor is compelled to extroversion, projecting outward to an audience.

> You can't very well have an introverted storyteller, nor an introverted commedia dell'arte troupe, but an introverted solo violinist or string quartet is widely accepted. For the classical musician, accuracy of interpretation generally takes precedence over personality. (200) *

Rea also refers to previous studies that have shown musicians generally tend to be introverted personalities (Kemp, qtd. in Rea, 196). While I saw myself in this way initially, this is certainly not the case for all musicians. Rea describes certain assumptions that most musicians are extra-introverted and physically awkward or inhibited. I do not see this as the case and it is my view that a program of acting techniques is particularly useful for music students, early-career performers and those struggling with inhibition, but of interest to performers in all disciplines and levels.

A number of relevant concepts pertaining to practice, performance and interpretation appeared during the early stages of reflective journaling and coding. The academic literature on these concepts is presented below in the categories of Practice and Performing; Body and Instrument; Audience; Interpretation and Text.

- **Practice and Performing**

Both the literature and my own experience suggest that during practice, young musicians have a tendency to favour focusing on excellence, accuracy over creating the emotion and atmosphere seen in performances. Ford compared the habits of music and acting students with *Approaches to performance: a comparison of music and acting students' concepts of preparation, audience and performance* (2013). In this study, the groups of students gave contrasting accounts of their perceptions of performing and audiences, which therefore inform contrasting practice habits. Their concepts of performance appeared to be shaped by their training. On the subject of preparation for the act of performing, the responses from acting students described teacher-led strategies and practice, whereas the music students made it clear that they were more varied in their preparation and likely to develop their own strategies. These strategies were "not embedded in everyday, long term practice" (160) unlike technical warm-ups, scales and repertoire, and the students tended to respond negatively when discussing nerves. Some students described long-term strategies and techniques for combating performance anxiety including meditation and relaxation, which can be seen in music performance literature such as Williamon (2004) and Schaupp (1997), although many students were left to navigate these concepts in their own time. In acting pedagogy, teacher-led improvisation plays an extremely important role

in practice, character development and in performances. Oswald (2005) also gives examples to singers on how to use improvisation. Instrumentalists in Ford's study described experiencing difficulty in making spontaneous musical decisions during performance. This reflects my experience in studying classical music from a young age to university, where improvisation was not made a part of regular practice routines. Control of technique and repertoire is prioritised in recital exams or competitions, and the canon of western classical repertoire traditionally does not require it.

- **Body and Instrument**

As outlined below, codes emerged related to somatic, technical and physical issues related to the performer are seen in the journals, therefore literature related to physicality became relevant. In my solo acting tuition the use of Alexander Technique was important. Its use by musicians is well-researched, with research confirming that training "[improves] respiratory function; minimize increases in heart rate and blood pressure under stress; improve bodily use; and enhance the quality of musical performance" (Valentine, in Williamon 2004). Singers, particularly those in opera and musical theatre, are taught body awareness, movement exercises (stretches, tai chi, yoga, acting and mime games), breathing and vocal practice separate from music, with no singing involved. Clark (2004), presents a guide on *Singing, Acting, and Movement in Opera: A Guide to Singer-getics* for opera singers. Along with exercises in areas such as yoga, Feldenkrais method, and Alexander Technique, singers are also given advice how to act out emotions and build characters. When singing an art song text, a singer is usually communicating a kind of implicit character or narrative (or an explicit character, as in opera or musical theatre). Oswald (2005) writes in *Acting for Singers: Creating Believable Singing Characters* that believability and expressive singing is the key to "unlock the audience's empathy". Rea (2014) suggests that it would be useful for music students to be trained in physical theatre in a similar way to actors and cites numerous studies on how audiences' perception of musical performers is greatly influenced by what they see on stage. He further suggests that the musician's physicality, body language and visual codes go on to be an important factor for commercial success on live concert and CD album visual platforms (198). Rea also considers how the classical music students in his study are often used to "hiding" behind an instrument and thus feel more rigid with their bodies than the actors (207). Meanwhile, Cook writes facetiously that in the past, performers appeared to be encouraged by composers to act as invisible vessels for their creations:

> Maybe it is not irrelevant that organists, unlike most other performers, are generally invisible to their audiences. At all events, with this image of the self-effacing performer whose highest aspiration—like that of high-class servants—should be invisibility (2015, 15).

Nijs, Lesaffre and Leman examine the concept of *The Musical Instrument as a Natural Extension of the Musician* (2013) and present the concept that in optimal performance mode the instrument becomes "transparent" and thus an extension of the musician's body. They write that the musical instrument influences both the construction and communication of musical meaning, thus I have found it useful to practice "communication" away from my guitar, such as technical work vocal and breathing exercises I undertook in acting classes. This extends to the interpretive "construction" work that goes into developing on-stage characters, emotions, relationships and stories for performance. The concept of the body and instrument as one unit to attain peak performance is influenced by Csikszentmihalyi's Flow Theory (1975), which appears to be used similarly between both music (see Newsome, 2013) and theatre (see Konijn, 2000). Mstislav Rostoprovich's perception of his cello in discussion with the psychologist Vladimir Zinchenko now becomes pertinent:

> Some time ago I lost my sense of the border between us … And actually, I feel it now in this manner, much like a singer seems to feel his vocal chords. Indeed I give no report to myself on how I speak. Just so, I play music involuntarily. The cello is my tool no more (qtd. in Zinchenko 1996, 295).

This project has prompted me to consider how my body movement impacts on the audience's understanding of the music I am communicating. I often think of my movement in regard to technical control and reducing tension rather while playing, rather than what can be conveyed through body language. When I do think of how I look to an audience I become very self-conscious and uncomfortable, but I hope to replace the term 'self-consciousness' with 'self-awareness'. In acting training, students are encouraged to embrace free, spontaneous movement. As the discussion will later show, the way I approached physical movement was influenced by concepts from acting tuition.

- **Audience**

Godlovitch (1993) provides a list of criteria for what makes the playing of music a "performance", rather than any other "goal-directed activity" (371). Among some of the minimal requirements are the spacio-temporal environments, adhering to the structural form of the score (when required in Western art music) and, in particular, the ritual nature of the event must be considered (372). Audiences are ready to receive performers and if

the performer interprets their attention as judgement (as is common in assessed examinations in music institutions), this can be a great source of anxiety. Gordon addresses issues of audience interaction in his manual for *Mastering the Art of Musical Performance* (2006). The discussion of audience interaction happens after the section on "Stage Fright" – as though musicians are more used to concepts of performance anxiety before actually performing. He writes that when preparing for performances,

> Consider for a moment the fact that in virtually all performance activities the goal is to communicate with other human beings in some way. This connection is obvious in the concert hall or opera house, but is also very much present in recording, writing, editing, and teaching. Preparing for a performance must include becoming sensitive to the dynamics of interacting with other human beings. You must open up your sensory receptors to tap a continuing flow of information about how people react, feel, think, to the point of sensing not only what has happened, but also what is about to happen. Such sensitivity does not presuppose that you can or even want to control such interactions, but being aware of human reaction brings another valuable spectrum to your performance, and as a result your work will acquire new dimensions. (155)

If the goal of performance is to 'communicate', the act of simply communicating words or a story to an audience can be practiced and refined through acting. This project has prompted me to consider the comparison of pedagogical traditions of performing for audiences to music and actors. Ford (2013) notes that musicians are generally taught about playing to audiences in traditional training, yet it is something distinct and separate from everyday practice.

> Although the distinction is often made between practising a piece of repertoire and using specific strategies to prepare for public performance, it is notable that many of these strategies are for managing anxiety rather than enhancing the relationship with an audience (155).

Having read this in early research and then going on to acting classes, I felt it was notable how much I needed to be reminded by tutors that my technique, voice, movement and their emotional nuances are as important for the audience in performance as for myself in rehearsal and this stood in contrast to my own musical upbringing.

- **Interpretation and Text**

The categories of interpretation and text reflect issues to do with the emotional content, character and meaning of musical ideas in texts written by composers. The journals show that words such as "dialogue", "embodiment", "character" are commonly used in reference

to playing music. Instrumental music, of course, does not literally do any of this whereas acting does. Cook (2015) notes that there is an "obvious parallel between this and the development of theatre studies—or at least a certain strain within theatre studies, for no academic discipline is monolithic" (24). Adorno writes of his wife once asking him, "how actors, who are mostly of questionable intelligence and always uneducated, can represent people and deliver lines that convey the most difficult of ideas" and answers that "it is a prerequisite for an actor not to "understand", but rather to imitate blindly". He adds to his answer, to "perhaps include in the theory of musical reproduction" (qtd in Cook 2015, 19).

Since I have now considered the ways in which actors interpret scripts, perhaps this is somewhat simplistic. Schools of acting pedagogy have unique approaches to breaking down, analysing texts and characters. A notable example can be seen between students of Stanislavski, Lee Strasberg, whose "Method" allows the actor utmost control over interpretation, and Stella Adler's approach that the actor must research the text in order to serve it. There have been many more branches of acting since, and analytical fields of research in the interpretation of drama (Bernstein 1998; Elam 2002; Merlin 2004), with the term "page to stage" studies coined by Melrose (1994, 215). Cook (2001), when considering the debate on whether the composer or performer is the main agent of a performed work, argues that the communication of ideas is important:

> Music is embraced within a communicative chain. Music goes from heart to heart, as Beethoven had it, but—as Schoenberg glossed it—unless you are fortunate enough to be able to read what Beethoven wrote for yourself, it has to go via the performer (13).

Rink discusses the dichotomy between discourses of the "normative and interpretative" (in Davidson, 39) in music performance studies. The normative processes Rink refers to are those that rely on standard, adequate musical structures rather than individual interpretation. Rink also agrees with previous research that cognitive psychology can explain to some extent why some performances are more enjoyable that others, but argues that performance studies "have all but robbed performers of their musical personae and artistic prerogatives, transforming them into museum curators, laboratory subjects, theorists and analysts, at the expense of their identities as musicians" (qtd. in Davidson, 41). Goehr (1992) suggests that in the ontological nature music it is not at any one time a solely physical, mental or ideal object to the composer, performer or listener, and that the musician's score and performance then do not exist separately (3). The aesthetic appreciation of the art is based in relation to one and the other, as it is with the actor's

script and performance. Worthen (2003) writes that "[a] dramatic performance is not determined by the text of the play: it strikes a much more interactive, performative relation between writing and the spaces, places, and behaviors that give it meaning, force, as theatrical action" (24).

Cook writes that performance becomes the dissolution of distinction between score and performance (16). It appears natural to draw parallels between the two fields of music and theatre, Cook (2001) even argues that musicians are better off thinking of scores as "scripts" rather than "texts" (1). Traditional musicology, relating to traditional analysis of musical elements such as harmony, rhythm, structure etc. is important but, as Cook notes, "views music as writing rather than music as performance" (2015, 1). Schenker, in his treatise Free Composition (2001) reflects this emphasis the importance of a composition's structure when performing:

> *The performance of a musical work of art can be based only upon a perception of that work's organic coherence. Interpretation cannot be acquired through gymnastics or dancing; one can transcend 'motive', 'theme', 'phrase', and 'bar line' and achieve true musical punctuation only by comprehending the background, middle-ground, and foreground. As punctuation in speech transcends syllables and words, so true punctuation in music strives toward more distant goals … The player who is aware of the coherence of a work will find interpretive means which allow the coherence to be heard… Consequently, the concept of background, middle-ground, and foreground is of decisive and practical importance for performance. (8)*

Adhering strictly to structural law or to other stylistic traditions above all else can limit modern performance options (Cook 2015, 3). Rothstein (1995) in the realm of theatre studies writes that "it is one thing to be convinced that something is true analytically [and] quite another to decide how—or even whether—to disclose such information to one's listeners in a performance" (238). It is much more common to see ancient theatrical plays (Shakespeare, Euripedes for example) adapted for the contemporary world and thus reinterpreted. Hardwick (2000) outlines a number of issues translators, dramaturges and performers face when challenged to "revive" or "recover" Greek dramas. Schenker's statement that "Interpretation cannot be acquired through gymnastics" is also contentious in that a theme appearing throughout this study, and similarly expressed by others, is that a performance influences interpretation and an interpretation influences a performance.

Encounters with these themes in the areas of practice and performing, body and instrument, audience and interpretation and text through practice during the early stages of the project went on to underpin the aims of the research.

Aims

The background and context of the field of music and acting may be synthesised into the following aims for my original contribution:

1. To reflect on how techniques, skills and concepts I have encountered in the study of acting influence my own performances in a variety of settings: of a highly programmatic work, non-programmatic works and ensemble environments.
2. To incorporate these techniques in recital.
3. To reflect on these experiences, considering what musicians can learn from actors and developing strategies for future performances.

These aims inform the following research plan, rationale and methodology.

2. Research Plan

Framework

Borgdorff (2012) sets out the following criteria for research in the arts:

- Intent
- Originality
- Knowledge and Understanding
- Questions
- Context
- Process
- Documentation
- Insights
- Dissemination

Summarising these components in relation to my work provides a framework or outline to the exegesis. The intent of the project in a broad sense is to contribute to knowledge and understanding of how musicians can use acting studies in their performances. More specifically, the intent follows the aims of this project:

1. To reflect on how techniques, skills and concepts I have encountered in the study of acting influence my own performances in a variety of settings: of a highly programmatic work, non-programmatic works and ensemble environments.

2. To incorporate these techniques in recital.

3. To reflect on these experiences, considering what musicians can learn from actors and developing strategies for future performances.

The context for my project is formed by my own previous experience as a performer, professional examples of musicians who have worked in the field of combining music and drama in performance, and existing academic literature in the area. I follow a process of combined methodologies in qualitative and artistic research practices, documented through reflective writing and performances. The insights are discussed with reference to the context, the results of my practice and the impact of acting on my musical interpretation and performance. Dissemination of the MPhil thesis takes form in both the practical recital and the exegesis.

Research Questions

The aims of the thesis inform following research questions:

1. How have techniques, skills and concepts from the study of acting influenced the musical performances of programmatic, non-programmatic and ensemble works?
2. How were these skills incorporated into a recital performance?
3. Which elements were most useful? What can musicians learn from applying acting studies to a variety of musical performances?

Methodology

This project falls under the paradigm of artistic research and artistic methods and autoethnography were used to answer the research questions. Between the beginning of the MPhil program in 2015 and the end of 2017, I undertook 80 hours of guitar and 130 hours of acting tuition approximately. In 2016 I took 8 months of leave to study in a specialised guitar performance program in Seville, Spain. Concepts from acting studies were actively implemented in my guitar practice and performances (even during this leave). Reflections were made during practice, after lessons and following performances and recorded in journals (See Appendix II). Ethical Clearance for this project was approved by the School of Music (Appendix I), as the research deals with insights and interactions with tutors and peers. While the discussion of results are based on my personal reflections from the paradigm of autoethnogrpahy, the reflective writings throughout are based in part on lessons with tutors and group rehearsals in acting classes which were also occasionally recorded.

Autoethnography, Journaling and Reflective Practice

> In practice-based research, composers and performers are uncovering the ways in which their personal lives and cultural experiences intertwine in the creation and interpretation of musical works (Bartleet & Ellis, 2009, 7).

In artistic research, autoethnography offers researchers the opportunity to analyse and reflect in a more personal writing style than 'traditional' research outputs. This lends itself appropriately to this practice-based project. Existing models of autoethnography demonstrate thorough documentation of data. Qualitative data will be collected and documented in journaling anecdotal evidence. Taking notes and continuously asking research questions during practice and following performances becomes reflexive research. This occurs in autoethnography and practice-base research when the practitioner-researcher is "aware of the researcher's role in the practice of research and the way this is influenced by the object of the research, enabling the researcher to

acknowledge the way in which he or she affects both the research processes and outcomes" (Haynes 2012, 72).

Qualitative data recorded primarily in reflective journal entries. These journals provide evidence in notebooks from guitar practice session and acting tuition. Post-performance reflections following significant recitals are also recorded in the journals. The handwritten notes are presented in Appendix 4.1. with preliminary themes alongside. These will be useful for analysing visual and physical elements of performing. Journaling is an important tool in the paradigm of Reflective Practice. Donald Schön is credited with bringing the concept of Reflective Practice to wider awareness among   professionals and researchers across many disciplines. It is the ability to use self-reflection for continuous learning and improvement of one's practice.   Mezirow's definition (1990) of a reflective action shows that it must be a critical, thoughtful process, rather than habitual, to be used as a tool for learning:

> *Reflective Action, understood as action predicated on a critical assessment of assumptions, may also be an integral part of decision making. Thoughtful action is reflexive but is not the same thing as acting reflectively to critically examine the justification for one's beliefs. Reflection in thoughtful action involves a pause to reassess by asking: What am I doing wrong? The pause may be only a split second in the decision-making process. Reflection may thus be integral to deciding how best to perform immediately, reflection becomes an integral element of thoughtful action.* (6)

Meizrow also presents a visual model for reflection (Table 2), which has been useful in the reflective journal process.
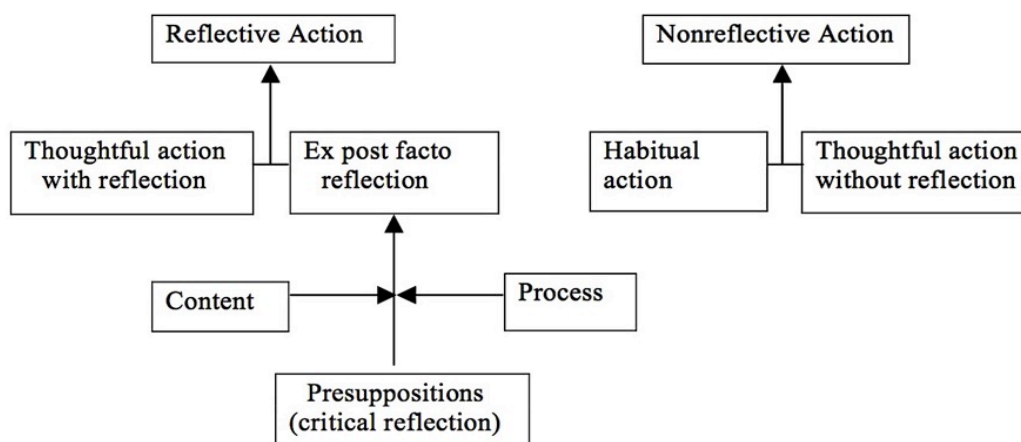
Mezirow's model for Reflection (1990)

The term reflexivity is understood as the researcher's ability to respond and adapt to changes during their research – a concept musicians can relate to, as rehearsing and

practising is generally an activity in changing and refining performances. Jane Davidson (2004) uses the example of examining performances as a presentation (a recital or concert) rather than the experimentation and reflection that occurs during rehearsal:

> In the western art tradition performance is typically a more presentational than a reflexive activity. I would argue that performance is rather more analogous to the skills and knowledge-base necessary for a written examination … What I am suggesting is that the presentational style of an examination or a performance is oppositional to the reflective processes and experimental style involved when a portfolio of critical coursework is created – a more acceptable analogy for the rehearsal process (134).

This concept reflects my strategies for addressing the research question and determining the benefits of how I can incorporate acting techniques into my musical practice. My practice journals "*reflect on the content, process, and premises of problem solving*" (Mezirow, 1990) by recording experiments with technique, interpretation and musical elements such as rhythm, harmony, melody, tone; my own feelings and observations; and insights from teachers, peers and audiences.

Aggett's 2010 practice-based study on using reflective journaling in singers' preparation for performance resonates with my own experience. I identify with her descriptions of early journal entries as "haphazard … but as time progressed the writing became more structured" (190). At first, I felt self-conscious and careful of the delicate balance between being, as put by Fox, Martin & Green on the subject of Doing Practitioner Research (2007), "self-aware and self-indulgent" (189) in my writing. I felt averse toward including descriptions of my personal feelings and emotional state. Sharing intimate thoughts in an academic context feels almost obscene. However, with encouragement from Bartleet & Ellis (2009) who observe that autoethnography is a tool for "revealing vulnerabilities in front of colleagues" (5), I became more comfortable in recording thoughts and feelings as they occurred, spontaneously and naturally. For these to be useful in research, it is not enough to just document; critical and analytical strategies are also applied. The journal entries from introductory acting courses and tuition are less critical, showing mostly documentary evidence. This may be due to my limited experience in this area, leading to habitual action and less inclination to question nuances of the practice. Acting sessions were always very busy, practical, and in these sessions it was often hard to stop to write down observations. Appendix 4.1 documents the notes from these sessions.

Coding

Coding was used to organise the early reflective writings in this project. Saldaña describes a code as "most often a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (2009, 3). The cyclical, reflexive nature of coding is well-suited to the personal style of journal-writing. Through this process I was able to define certain important concepts related to the application of acting skills to music performance and then to develop themes for discussion, observing commonalities and phenomena in the data. Appendix II shows journal entries from the project with an added column for codes. Saldaña notes that it is important to remember that "coding is not a precise science, it is an interpretative act" and that "all coding is a judgement call since we bring our subjectivities, our personalities, our predispositions [and] our quirks to the process" (18).

I have considered the following questions while formulating codes, using Saldaña's coding manual (2009) as an example:

- What was I trying to do? Did I accomplish this?
- How did I do this? What strategies did I use?
- How does this relate to the research question – what was the impact on my performance?

What I perceive to be a more important theme or appropriate word for a particular code may not be the same for someone else, or will have a different connotation. This should not be considered a shortcoming of coding and qualitative research methods, but rather as something that reflects the flexibility of qualitative research itself. As the project progressed and the themes and outcomes became clearer, coding and thematic analysis were used less. The themes opened up concepts in the areas of practice and performing, body and instrument, audience and interpretation and text. The existing literature from these areas provided an academic context (see previous chapter) and shaped my approach to later performances and practice using acting techniques as a musician.

3. Discussion

This section synthesizes previous knowledge from the background, context and methodology with my experience in practice-led, artistic research. I will discuss the impacts of acting on music performance in two contexts: music that has an explicit programmatic element, and music that does not feature a programmatic, extra-musical influence. This shows that learning acting as a musician can impact a variety of musical styles and experiences, rather than only those in an explicit music-drama combination genre.

Applying acting skills to interpreting and performing programmatic repertoire

John Everett Millais, *Ophelia* (1852)

Phillip Houghton's *Ophelia… A Haunted Sonata* is inspired by the composer's *"compassion and empathy"* for the character of Ophelia in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and by the iconic painting *Ophelia* by John Everett Millais from 1852. Houghton writes in the program notes of his final 2010 edition that with this piece he aims:

to convey Ophelia's pain and suffering and the sadness of her tragedy … where it all cries out as a yearning for healing and peace. It is also about death … of Ophelia, slowly sinking into the cold palm of the unknown [sic] (2010).

The composer's manuscript begins with Queen Gertrude's description of Ophelia's death:

> *There is a willow grows askaunt the brook,*
> *That shows his hoary leaves in the glassy stream,*
> *Therewith fantastic garlands did she make*
> *Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples*
> *That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,*
> *But our cull-cold maids do dead men's fingers call them.*
> *There on the pendant boughs her crownet weeds*
> *Clamb'ring to hang, an envious sliver broke,*
> *When down her weedy trophies and herself*
> *Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide,*
> *And mermaid-like awhile they bore her up,*
> *Which time she chanted snatches of old lauds,*
> *As one incapable of her own distress,*
> *Or like a creature native and indued*
> *Unto that element. But long it could not be*
> *Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,*
> *Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay*
> *To muddy death.* (Shakespeare, *Hamlet* Act 4 Scene 7)

The composer does not explicitly ask the performer to play the piece together with Shakespeare's text. I intended to find evidence of other guitarists who had included it as a prelude to the piece but I was not able to find recorded examples of this, though I learned through anecdotal evidence that Karin Schaupp had studied and performed the text in a 2010 performance (which included other pieces for guitarist-narrator). In my thesis performance, I performed the quotation along with the music with the intent that this and the interpretive character work I had done in preparation heighten the affect of the piece on the audience.

The acting tuition I took during the project was based primarily on Stanislavski principles of acting. Stanislavski is widely regarded as one of the first acting practitioners to focus on actor training that allowed actors to 'unlock' a character and find meaning in a text, rather than focusing only on physical movement and vocal technique. Stanislavski's System uses the concept of "Given Circumstances" as a key first step to text analysis. Given Circumstances involves the actor asking questions such as:

- Who?
- Where?
- When?

- Why?
- Reason?
- How?

And answering these based on "clues" in the text. Uta Hagen, first a student of Stanislavski and later an influential acting teacher herself, refined the fundamental Stanislavski questions into "The Six Steps" in *A Challenge for the Actor* (1991, 134):

1. Who am I?
   - What is my present state of being?
   - How do I perceive myself?
   - What am I wearing?
2. What are the circumstances?
   - What time is it? (The year, the season, the day? At what times does my selected life begin?)
   - Where am I? (in what city, neighbourhood, building, and room do I find myself? Or in what landscape?)
   - What surrounds me? (The immediate landscape? The weather? The condition of the place and the nature of the objects in it?)
   - What are the immediate circumstances? (What has just happened, is happening? What do I expect of plan to happen later on?)
3. What are my relationships?
   - How do is stand in the relationship to the circumstances, the place, the objects, and the *other people* related to my circumstances?
4. What do I want?
   - What is my main objective? My immediate need or objective? What do I want the other person to do?
5. What is my obstacle?
   - What is in the way of what I want? How do I overcome it?
6. What do I do to get what I want?
   - How can I achieve my objective? What's my behaviour?
   - What are my actions?

Using the Six Steps, I have constructed the character of Gertrude in the scene in which the monologue takes place. Some of these answers are based on information in the script (i.e. what has just happened) and some are decisions (i.e. what year it is, Gertrude's age, what is she wearing, what time of day, etc.). The following table shows this character analysis that I worked on in the context of my acting tuition:

Uta Hagen's *Six Steps*	Gertrude in Act 4, Scene 7 Shakespeare's *Hamlet*
1. Who am I?	- Queen Gertrude of Denmark - I am distressed over recent events (deaths of my husband the King, then Polonius and Ophelia). - I am 41 years old and wearing clothes that reflect my high status.

2. What are the circumstances?	• It is late afternoon, 1500 AD, middle of Springtime in Denmark. The flowers have bloomed but it is still cool, especially later in the day.
	• I am walking into the court in my castle where I find Laertes.
	• The events are taking place shortly after Ophelia's death, probably only hours. Enough time for Gertrude to receive the news and think about how to break it to Laertes and the audience. She received an urgent letter with the news of Ophelia's death. She seems to know a lot of detail but we assume she was not there – perhaps she has made this up in order to spare Laertes sad or gruesome information and comfort him. His father, Polonius, has only just died earlier that day.
3. What are my relationships?	• Protective, loving mother of Hamlet.
	• I was the wife of the murdered King, now with Claudius. Possible co-conspirator?
	• I feel pity for Ophelia. I was aware of Ophelia's growing madness before she died.
4. What do I want?	• My immediate objective in this scene is to inform Laertes of his sister's death, minimising his upset and trying not to add to my own grieving.
	• My objective throughout the entire play is to protect my son Hamlet.
5. What is my obstacle?	• If Laertes blames Hamlet, he may set out to kill him.
6. What do I do to get what I want?	• I describe Ophelia's death with beautiful imagery. This is a comfort to Laertes, but also distracts him from the likely reason for Ophelia's madness and death (that Hamlet rebuffed her).

This work in constructing my character, her surroundings and motivation becomes integral to the communication of the monologue in performance. The following table is an analysis of my character (Ophelia, through the 'voice' of my guitar). I consider the 'scene' to be Houghton's piece; beginning with Movement 1 (*Fear and the Angel*) as signs of Ophelia's madness, Movement 2 (*Suffering and Madness*) as her 'breaking point', Movement 3 (*Chant of the Flower Moon*) as her escape to gather flowers in a daze, Movement 4 (*Water*) as her climbing the willow by the brook and falling in, and finishing with Movement 5 (*Death*) as her ultimate demise.

Uta Hagen's *Six Steps*	Ophelia in Houghton's *Ophelia … A Haunted Sonata* (2010)
1. Who am I?	• Ophelia
	• I have been seen as a fragile, tragic girl but a growing mental instability is causing self-destruction.
	• I have wandered out in simple clothing, unkempt and no grooming or finery
2. What are the circumstances?	• It is late afternoon, 1500 AD, middle of Springtime in Denmark. The flowers have bloomed but it is still cool, especially later in the day.

	• My father, Polonius, has only just died earlier in the day (Movement 2). • I have been rejected by Hamlet, with whom I have been in love for some time. • After struggling with my growing madness, the pain of the most recent circumstances has caused me to snap and I have wandered out to gather flowers – something girls do.
3. What are my relationships?	• I am the daughter of Polonius and sister of Laertes. • Hamlet has told me he loves me and I believe him.
4. What do I want?	• To be loyal to my family. • To be loved by Hamlet. • To find peace with this dilemma.
5. What is my obstacle?	• Although I want to be loyal to my family, if Laertes blames Hamlet for our father's death, he may set out to kill him.
6. What do I do to get what I want?	• Ultimately, I only find peace, resolution at my death.

The questions were answered with reference to the circumstances and information provided in the story of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, but also in regard to some of Houghton's compositional devices. First we can refer to Houghton's program notes in the published manuscript of his 2010 edition:

The mythic stereotype of the beautiful, lonely maiden who goes mad and kills herself is as old as myth itself. The most famous example in literature is the legend of Ophelia, which was establish by Shakespeare when he included Queen Gertrude's description of Ophelia and her death in 'Hamlet' (Act IV). Another powerful influence on me – and also psired by Shakespeare's magnificent text – was the painting 'Ophelia' (1852) by Pre-Raphaelite artist John Millais. It shows Ophelia drowning in a river, surrounded by a garland of wildflowers … a strangely calm, otherworldly scene.

Looking beyond the "beautiful maiden" aspect of the legend, I was drawn to the person who was Ophelia and to what she symbolised: the struggle, at an intimate spiritual and psychological level, of what it means to be human. In thin light, the music may be seen to be a journey through an emotional/spiritual "landscape" – through the forest of the mind/ocean of the heart.

Ophelia took her own life, after pain – through lack of love and identity – drove her to madness. Strip away the myth and we see not "mad Lady Ophelia" but someone who suffered depression and mental illness – dislocation within, and a dislocation from the world and nature … a tragic figure who led an inauthentic life. I felt compassion and empathy for Ophelia, and this was my starting point … the only point … into the "black light".

Ophelia gave in to her loss and loneliness … 'am I but a dream of a shadow?' she may have cried, clawing at reality. In the music, I have tried to convey Ophelia's pain and suffering and the sadness of her tragedy … where it all cries out as a

yearning for healing and peace. It is also about death … of Ophelia, slowly sinking into the cold palm of the unknown (Houghton, 2010).

The title of each movement can then be interpreted with this information and what we already know about Ophelia in the narrative of *Hamlet* in mind. This then informs musical performance decisions. The first, *Fear and the Angel,* may be interpreted as a reference to her dilemma – contrasting images of fear and an angel. The direction given to the first note indicates an instability and impulsiveness:

Figure 1: *Ophelia* Mvt 1, bars 1-4[1]

Houghton gives the direction "with a constant "ticking clock" quaver pulse". I prefer to think of this "ticking clock pulse" as Ophelia's anxious pacing around a room in the castle. The first section represents the "fear" represented by shocking accents and "growls":

Figure 2: *Ophelia* Mvt 1, bars 14-16

This gesture indicates instability and madness, in contrast to the "angel" in the second half beginning at bar 50.

Figure 3: *Ophelia* Mvt 1, bars 49-56

The melody changes to a more tender, lyrical style, while the "creepy" pacing pulse of the first section continues underneath.

The second movement is titled *Suffering and Madness*, given the expressive marking "angry and wailing" in the opening chords. The speed of the roll of a chord will have a different emotive affect. The first is indicated to be played "broad and drawn-out" and fortissimo. I interpret this as the grief and rage Ophelia feels at learning of her father's death. The motif in bar 2 repeats in bar 5 but becomes slower, perhaps as she accepts what has happened. The tempo gradually changes to *grave* in bar 7, suggesting a duller ache or sobbing. The harmony also becomes more stable, with an E flat major chord. The consonances and dissonances from bar 18 to the apex at 23 end could be her fighting the dilemma – grieving her father while still in love with Hamlet.

The third movement, *Chant of the flower-moon*, clearly places Ophelia among the flowers in the forest, with the expressive markings "innocence" and "singing". To depict innocence, *vibrato* must be used sparingly. More energetic *vibrato* suggests a more dramatic mood, whereas singing a nursery rhyme or simple song would not require a strong *vibrato*. Warm tone colours and limited *rubato* at the beginning may depict a safe, stable environment. As the piece grows more "richer, more emotional" at bar 13, this may be expressed by a greater dynamic level and more *vibrato* on the accented melodic notes.

The movement ends with a *ritardando* and *attaca* into the next movement, *Water*. A challenge when performing this piece presented itself in not breaking the atmosphere between movements, particularly between *Flower Moon* and *Water*. Here I imagined my surroundings as Ophelia, reaching for flowers at the top of the tree, then thrust out of this dream-like state when a branch breaks. Not beginning the fourth movement until I felt as though I had "dived in", as Houghton directs, worked to create a believable transition.

The fourth movement has the highest level of energy among the five movements, with constant semiquaver movement at 160 quaver-beats per minute. In the Ophelia narrative, this is when I have decided that this is when she is climbing the willow tree next to the flowing river. Phrasing the semiquaver figures in dynamic 'waves' suggests the movement of the water, and using a warmer, rounded tone will further evoke this. To contrast these tone colours, a piercing *ponticello* may be used to represent the ice-cold water, or even a pained scream. Sudden changes of meter (bars 32, 42 – 45) remind us of Ophelia's mentally unstable state.

Figure 4: *Ophelia* Mvt 4, bars 39 - 50

This mood grows and heightens until the apex at 54.

Figure 5: *Ophelia* Mvt 4, bars 53 - 65

Bar 54 is to be played as *"waves of fire! ... like shattering diamonds"* – perhaps her breaking point at which she throws herself into the water at bar 61. Rolled chords diminishing in dynamic and tempo until the last bar of the movement.

The final movement, *Death*, begins with three open-string G notes:

Figure 6: *Ophelia* Mvt 5, bars 1 - 2

With such a seemingly simple musical gesture, the atmosphere created by the performer is paramount to communicate the given direction "surrendered … opened to the universe". For this, I was reminded of a particular acting exercise based on Stanislavski's concept of the "Magic If". In this game, a ball is placed in middle of the room by the exercise leader. The objective is to walk up to the ball and pick it up with eyes closed. In the next progression of the game, the exercise leader takes the ball and says that it now represents something of huge importance to the player (their career, a loved one's health, a treasured heirloom). In this situation, the leader holds power of that item. If they are not able to pick up the object with their eyes closed, they will never have it. "The Magic If" invites the player to use their imagination, asking the question "what would I if I were in this circumstance?" However, the ball is still a ball and not a career, a loved one or an heirloom, yet the stakes are raised, heightening the dramatic tension. This kind of 'belief' in the opening three Gs is required to maintain the tension. Here I believed I was whoever found Ophelia in the river to achieve pathos. Actors using Stanislavski's System and Method Acting similarly use the technique of "emotional memory", in which actors recall their emotions and reactions in similar real-life situations to import strong feelings to a character.

In performing the Shakespeare text as a 'prelude' to Houghton's *Ophelia,* I endeavoured to use the monologue as the context for the action that follows in the music. In acting classes I worked on the text as Gertrude, informing the audience that Ophelia had died (knowing that they knew her well and felt sympathy for her). The first time I worked on the monologue with a tutor was in a private lesson. We worked on mostly technical, vocal aspects of performing Shakespeare and discussing some of the difficult language. I later performed the piece in a two-day Shakespeare workshop, where I was standing, using hand gestures, painting a picture of the scene with my voice and body. The following journal examples may also be seen in complete in Appendix II.

27 Feb 2016
Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble workshop: "Speaking Shakespeare with Your Own Voice"
• In 'Speaking Shakespare in Your Own Voice'   • Chose the Gertrude monologue describing Ophelia's death. Already know the words well and want to perform it in concert.   • Thought that monologue should be like solo music performance!

- Making Ophelia's death sound beautiful to ease the audience's pain. The audience = Laertes.
- Using sounds of consonants and vowels to evoke imagery. Hands to 'paint the picture'

The teacher asked me to repeat the monologue while thinking of a real life event, using emotional memory. I had a painful memory in mind, then performed it again. At the end, the teacher and audience perceived the performance as much more affective and moving. The teacher gave the advice which I then took while playing Houghton's *Ophelia*, that "the personal story is for you, what comes out is for the audience". It was also worth interesting in the way the actors "use" the audience during monologues. If Hamlet is asking "to be or not to be?" his objective is to get the answer from them.

I performed the monologue again in a different class, two weeks before the recital. The following journal entry shows how my interpretation changed as I thought more about the musical performance:

NIDA Acting Techniques
4 November 2017
- My chosen speech – Gertrude's Ophelia death monologue   - Standing, felt a bit uncomfortable using my hands. Imagining myself at the recital … Have to pick up guitar after!

The following practice journal entry also demonstrates that when actually implemented in a musical performance it felt unnatural to me during rehearsals and lessons, as I knew that my recital would be an otherwise 'normal' concert. In the context of the concert program and the audience I anticipated, it was more appropriate and I felt more comfortable to be sitting down, with the guitar and ready to play straight into the music.

Practice journal entry
5 November 2017
- Rehearsing in front of mirror and then playing the piece on guitar. Not sure about standing and moving back to guitar. Logistically more difficult, maybe a bit awkward-looking in that space.   - Only piece like this so it seems very out of place.   - Now reciting monologue from seat with guitar, I feel more confident like this.

I reworked my interpretation in a more theatrically-abstract approach; giving Gertrude's monologue from the 'voice' of my guitar, who then goes on to retell the story from Ophelia's perspective through the music. While I did not inform the audience of this

interpretation, I felt it was more believable and natural in the context of that particular performance, demonstrated in the following reflection:

Post-Concert Reflection
Libby Myers and Rosa Guitar Trio – Masters Recital
UQ Art Museum 18 November 2017
- Feeling good after concert! Big build-up, good audience despite bad weather. Great location and acoustic. Warmed up with vocal exercises, stretching and slow, loud playing. Staying calm and relaxed.   - Began with *Ophelia*. Gave quick introduction, information about composer and piece. Slightly nervous while speaking, could have made more eye contact. Fidgeted with music stand a bit.   - Told audience "I will begin with Shakespeare's monologue by Queen Gertrude after Ophelia has died". Delivered monologue and was able to imagine atmosphere of the music while speaking. From memory but had script in front of me on music stand. It felt like part of the same piece, like the first/preliminary movement.   - Still had some inhibition in first movement, even though it is relatively easier than others. Other movements had better flow. I felt I used my body better in later movements.   - Lots of rain on the windows outside, very serene, natural environment – I felt I could play to my surroundings! Performing for Something to consider for next time.

It was interesting that I began to think of my audience and surroundings more as a result of advice from acting classes.

Applying skills to non-programmatic repertoire

I continued to use the interpretation concepts as mentioned in the discussion of *Ophelia* in performing non-programmatic repertoire. These examples also demonstrate how practicing acting shaped my thinking towards musical performance overall. The following example shows how imagination, character-creation and emotional memory affected my practice:

Practice Journal Reflection – 25/4/2016
Rodrigo - *En Los Trigales*:   - Fingers less warmed up for this piece, less accurate than Tansman. Still new in comparison. Yesterday the other way around!   - Also less energy – losing the character   - Looked into details of composition – composer, style, year   - composed 1938 – middle of Spanish Civil War   - Engagement, character immediately easier! More articulated   - Visualisation, imagery with emotions that come with idea of war. Imagining characters; soldiers, civilians, mothers, farmers

Here, imagining a story about the Spanish Civil War to navigate Rodrigo's *En Los Trigales* made communicating character clearer, reflexively adding more articulation to make the music more life-like. Similarly, in the following example, using the acting principle of "actioning" in script analysis made interpretation more interesting. In Stanislavski training, "actions" are the verbs assigned to tasks within a script, used by characters as a subtext to achieve his or her objectives. For example, a line may be said with the action to "accuse", to "flatter", to "manipulate", etc.

Practice Journal Reflection – 18/4/2017
Da Milano: • Renaissance music is not a style I totally understand but I am still enjoying learning the Fantasia and Ricecar. • Because these pieces are improvisations on simple motifs, I am playing them how I "feel" the gestures, as if I were the improviser. Doing this before and in addition to the technical work seems to work for me better. • Thinking about the improviser: what makes them play and repeat something? Why are they compelled, motivated? Like a character, all actions are in order to attain an objective. • Try playing the themes with different actions: a theme played "to entertain", "to move", "to provoke", "to seduce", "to embrace" • Feels more alive!

Playing the repeated themes with different actions or intentions "feels more alive" as I am giving human qualities to musical ideas.

According to Otswald (2005), audiences attending plays or films enter prepared to suspend disbelief (5). Ford's study showed that both music and acting students tended to "present" rather than "interact" with the audiences, depending on whether they constructed the audience as "judgemental" (160). This was among the factors that contribute to students' performance anxiety. Perhaps this is due in part to tertiary requirements of examined recitals. In this case it may be helpful to consider an audience in a similar way to theatregoers – a group of people ready to suspend their disbelief. The following journal entry shows a reflection made after a competition performance:

Post-Competition Reflection – 15/8/2016
• Felt very prepared in my interpretation • Gave what I felt was very personal interpretation. Before the competition day, what I was doing was very much like emotional memory. I made mood boards, wrote in a journal, came up with a character. On the day I got very much "into character" with the mood/emotion/atmosphere. I also did lots of stretching, breathing to feel more body-

connected.
- I was happy with the performance – took risks and judges later told me they enjoyed it and were moved by it. I did not get through to next round.
- I was surprised by how emotional I got when the results came out! Maybe I was too invested in the character, made myself vulnerable to the audience.

Here I can see that even though I was aware of the 'judgmental' audience of a competition jury, I still enhanced my performance experience by risk-taking and making myself emotionally vulnerable in the 'character'. In the future it is worth considering that general audiences attend concerts to suspend disbelief.

Applying acting techniques to non-programmatic repertoire has also had an effect on my performances in chamber music or large ensemble settings. Adding to the previous examples concepts of interpretation and performing for audiences, I have new insights into my onstage communication and connection with other musicians. Concepts from warm-up games in acting courses encouraged me to better mentally engage in an ensemble environment. This may be just as important as musically engaging with others on stage. Games involve players building and maintaining a level of energy between other players and improvisation. In one of these games, the group stands in a circle. A category is chosen ("cities", for example) and one player bounces a tennis ball to another, with each player naming an item in the category once they catch the ball ("London", "Paris", "Texas"). Once the ball has been thrown to everyone in the circle, it starts again with the same order, but faster. A second (or third) ball with another category is added and has to be thrown in another order to be remembered. The game runs better when communication and contact is direct and efficient. In a simpler, though more abstract game, the group stands together in a circle with arms outstretched. No one speaks or moves until the collective 'energy' of the group compels everyone to step toward the centre and clap loudly at the same time. This game encourages a non-verbal, energy-driven communication in a similar way to playing music.

Actors also use improvisation games as exercises in supporting other players. The golden rule of improvisation is "yes, and … ". It is important to support your partners, not to "block" them and if another players falters, it is the responsibility of others on stage to step up and help, or else risk a drop in the dramatic energy. This concept is important to remember in a musical ensemble performance. When another musician makes a mistake, maintain the

energy. Improvisation also forced me to be less inhibited as less focus on being note-perfect allowed me to feel more emotionally relaxed and ready to accept spontaneity.

The pedagogy of improvisation in music contrasts greatly with that in acting. Acting places much greater emphasis in using improvisation and spontaneity in training, rehearsal and character development. Otswald and Clark also guide singers through improvisation exercises through their operatic scenes. For musicians, improvisation is only embedded into the training of jazz and popular musicians. What may be the most important aspect of these exercises for actors is that occur as a group. I have rarely warmed up in such enjoyable ways as this in choirs, orchestras or ensembles. I am continuing to implement these skills in ensemble music and aiming to promote engagement, rapport and energy between musicians.

I took part in a 2016 performance of Joaquin Rodrigo's Concerto *"Andaluz"* for four guitars and orchestra, detailed in the following journal excerpt.

Post-Concert Reflection - 28/7/2016
Rodrigo *Concierto Andaluz* with Brisbane Philharmonic, Karin Schaupp, Rosa Guitar Trio
- Performance of Rodrigo's *Concierto Andaluz for Four Guitars*. Soloists Rosa Guitar Trio and Karin Schaupp. With Brisbane Philharmonic Orchestra and Michael Keen conductor.   - On the day I did technical warm up, scales and sections from concerto   - Acting warm-up techniques were useful. I warmed up my whole body as I did in the recent NIDA course and before the St Ignatius concert. Focused on "opening the channels" for flow, energy, etc.   - The performance went really well! Had nerves but calmed down quickly. I felt especially calm and relaxed for the trio's encore performance of Gnattali's *Suite Retratos*   - Besides the technical control and controlling my nerves, I felt that we really musically, emotionally connected on stage. Building relationships on stage, or coming on stage already with a relationship to other players and orchestra. Audience doesn't want to see people uncomfortable with each other on stage! I felt very comfortable, enjoyed myself and communicated

I felt it was important to make the audience feel as though they were watching musicians with real relationships communicating with one another. While I perform with the other guitarists regularly and know them well, I had only met the conductor for the few rehearsals before the concert and knew almost no one in the orchestra. Actors are taught to portray fictional relationships as truthful interactions. Similarly, in acting studies I was experiencing what it is like to work on a script and character on my own, then come

together with other actors in scene work. This requires some flexibility, empathy and intuition that I found actors well-equipped at using. Personally, I also gained confidence in applying intuition and spontaneity in ensemble environments, having experienced improvisation exercises and games with groups of actors.

Other games from acting classes taught concepts which I was able to apply to music performances. These are set out in the following table for clarity of how they can be explicitly used in music performances:

Game	Application in Acting	Application in Music
"Zap" clapping the energy from person to person, changing directions	Actors have to maintain the energy happening on stage, receiving it and passing it on.	An ensemble also has to communicate without speaking. In the performance of *Concierto Andaluz*, there was communication between all performers on stage (conductor, soloists and orchestra), passing on the energy and maintaining it over the course of a long work.
Walking around the room, throwing a ball without speaking. Gradually gaining speed and adding more balls. Use eye contact, body language to communicate who you will throw the ball to. You must also communicate that you are ready to receive it.	Supporting each other; when someone drops the energy someone else needs to pick it up.	Consider the giving and receiving of energy from person to person, and not giving it until they are ready to receive it. This occurs when communicating Spontaneity in musical decisions such as rubato and articulation (particularly in the jazz-influenced choro music in the trio), requires a similar combined focus to give and receive communication.

Ball placed in middle of a large circle. Objective is to walk to the ball, pick it up but with eyes closed.	Focus on physicality and space.	Reflecting on this game, I had a feeling of helplessness as I closed my eyes and walked blindly around the room. I had to close my eyes, focus on the goal and let go of any feelings of inhibition that would hold me back or cause me to second-guess.
Variation: Exercise leader takes the ball and it now represents something of huge importance (your career, a loved one's health, a treasured heirloom). Believe that that they hold power of that item.	The variation raises the stakes and requires imagination, belief. Raising the emotional stakes of the objective heightens the audience reaction.	This is one of my personal challenges when walking out on stage for a performance. This exercise exposed feelings of helplessness and self-doubt on stage in front of an audience.

4. Conclusion

This section addresses the final research question "what can musicians learn from actors?" and provides suggestions for application in musical practice. It is possible that other young musicians will also benefit from studying these concepts, undertaking group tuition and working away from their instruments. My performance of *Ophelia* was qualitatively enhanced through character analysis and concepts based on the Stanislavski system. Learning to use these away from the guitar has offered perspectives on how I can create character and atmosphere in highly programmatic works.

Performing less programmatic repertoire and working in ensembles was similarly enhanced by incorporating exercises for confidence-building and spontaneity learned in group acting classes. The studies by Rea and Ford suggest that traditional conservatoire training is limited in preparing students for actual performing. My experience also connects with this notion, wherein I am used to developing my technique, warming-up and interpretation in solo practice, leading to problems performing in front of audiences.

Most of the acting courses I attended were designed for beginners, with one course for apprentices of a semi-professional theatre company. In each of these courses, technique was taught and practiced as a group. Actors took part in improvisation games and exercises designed to encourage spontaneity, removing fear of mistakes. The groups would also come together for breathing, vocal, physical exercises before scene-work. The goal was not for mastering or controlling the dramatic repertoire, but for relaxation. I felt this physical relaxation alongside a psychological one, which led to natural movement and reactions during the scene-work. The warm up exercises were similar in my individual tuition, although designed to focus on my own particular tensions and challenges, and as I continue to gain experience in this field, the exercises have become easier and take less time. Applying these principles to my guitar practice has resulted in reduced physical tension, greater freedom of expression and confidence when on stage. While I still encounter challenges in my playing, I am now equipped with more ways to identify and solve my problems, as may other musicians who apply this study.

Broader Benefits

As a musician I have also learned a great deal from working alongside other artistic disciplines. Rea suggests that it "could be productive for other conservatoires to consider a similar process" to his collaborative approach with music and drama students (209).

Bennett (2016) examines the characteristics of industries, education and training, skills and attributes for a successful career among practitioners in a variety of artistic disciplines. These observations are grouped into the themes of cultural practice; artistic product; business administration; funding and technology (92). These themes are common across all the art forms mentioned in the study, therefore "the commonalities of arts practice suggest that musicians could find opportunities within the wider cultural industries" (99). Bennett calls for greater efficiency of inter-arts training in career development skills and building relationships as lifelong learners. This has been the practice for some time at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (Sloboda, 2011). Since undertaking my research project and experiencing the impact of this type of training, it is my opinion that it is now timely to adopt these concepts in Australian performing arts education. Bennett also observes that musicians leave courses with a high level of performance skill but little idea of business, administration and entrepreneurship (97). Sloboda & Ford (2012) agree that traditionally, music conservatoire training favours the upholding of a particular stylistic tradition, rather than preparing students for the challenges of professional life (8). I have also found that simply journaling my experiences and engaging in self-reflection are beneficial to my practice routine. Musicians engaging with the research of Schön's and others on Reflective Practice may similarly become comfortable with self-reflection and reflexivity for their practice and later professional life.

Exceptions and Limitations

As I undertook work intended to fill the gap in academic thought of an autobiographical study of deliberately applying acting techniques to my performances, it means I am limited to the experience of one person. While I have experienced benefits from this approach, this may not be useful to all musicians. Many musicians may already be extroverted performers, comfortable with audiences or have imaginative musical interpretations. Further, some students may find certain acting techniques, particularly emotional memory, psychologically distressing. It was not uncommon for actors to be brought to tears in classes. Konijn writes that actors who rely on remembering their own experience in rehearsal and performance (rather than only rehearsal, saving the controlled emotion for the audience) "experienced problems, even trauma, because they can no longer separate fiction from reality. In some fairly extreme cases, some actors have required psychiatric treatment" (163).

I previously described how I was initially hesitant when the actors in the Shakespeare workshop asked me to share the painful event I used as the stimulus for emotional memory. Eventually I became more open and continued to use emotional techniques in musical performances. The reflection written after playing in a competition in which I did not proceed to the final round shows that while I was happy with my performance, I was "surprised by how emotional I got when the results came out! Maybe I was too invested in the character, made myself vulnerable to the audience".

Rea acknowledges other limitations in training musicians alongside actors. Firstly, that some musicians may not benefit from acting tuition due to their beliefs and principles.

> While the process has strong benefits for most musicians … it is important to acknowledge that it is not necessarily right for everyone. Musicians with a highly introverted personality (Kemp, 1996) may feel threatened when invited to make leaps out of their comfort zone. For example, in the Circus project one enthusiastic musician suddnely withdrew when he became worried the sexually suggestive content in one of the acts would compromise his strongly Christian principles (206).

One should note, however, that this is not unique to only musicians. There were also actors in courses I attended who held similar concerns and in these cases, teachers must be sensitive to the beliefs of their students. He also writes that it was logistically challenging in the practicalities of bringing together musicians and actors from a teaching point of view. In these artistic industries, both the teachers and students come with their own performance, rehearsal and technical practice commitments which made organising collaborative projects challenging (206). In order to gain as much experience as was feasible in my schedule, I took part in different forms and environments of acting tuition. Individual tuition was scheduled on mutually agreed times between the tutor and myself. I enrolled in intensive courses that were 8 – 10 hour long days in five-day blocks (or sometimes longer 2-day blocks). The advantage of these intensives was that I was immersed in the material and committed for the full duration of the course, scheduling other commitments in order to attend. This would be difficult to maintain this type of study with the recital, chamber music rehearsal, competition and teaching engagements of an average musician. I also attended a number of weekend courses were taught over an 8-week term. This gave me more time to internalise concepts learned in previous classes and prepare scene work during the week, but in some instances over these longer period I was obligated to prioritise musical performance commitments above acting classes. Group classes were very rewarding though usually as the only 'non-actor' in the group, I felt

"behind" the others and needed extra help from the tutor. If other musicians were to similarly take part in acting alongside music performance, it would be up to the individual to decide what type of study fits with their schedule and abilities. Having participated as an individual in this project, for something similar to be implemented in a larger group it would require the commitment of students and teachers, open to exploring new concepts while maintaining musical standards at the same time.

I have experienced the benefits of thinking about musical practice in different ways and hope that this project will spur more interest in this field. I believe there are avenues for further research, particularly how other musicians may apply this work, and what happens as I continue to delve deeper into acting and cross-discipline performances. I hope that openness to the concepts outlined in this thesis will encourage musicians to embrace more imaginative, creative approaches to interpretation and exciting performances.

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6. Appendix

I. Approval form for Experiments on Humans

THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

SCHOOL OF MUSIC

Approval Form for Experiments on Humans
Including Behavioural Research

Chief Investigator:	Elizabeth Myers
Project Title:	The application of techniques, concepts and skills from the study of acting to musical interpretation and performance
Supervisors:	Dr Liam Viney
Discipline:	MPhil
Project Number:	SoM-ETH/16-03/EM
Duration:	Two (2) years

Comments

Please edit your project information sheet and consent form as per my edits in track changes in the document "Elizabeth_Myers_SoM Information and Consent Sheet_MB" prior to commencing your data collection.

Name of Responsible Panel: School of Music Ethical Review Panel

This project complies with the provisions contained in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* and complies with the regulations governing experimentation on humans.

Name of School of Music Ethics Review Coordinator

Dr Mary Broughton

Date: 2 March 2016

II. Reflective Journal

Reflective Journal entries on acting and musical practice 2015 -2016

*Transcribed from handwritten notes

EM = Elizabeth Myers (researcher)

AT = Acting tutor

MT = Music tutor

Session	Journal	Codes
*28/7/2015 Lesson with acting tutor	• 3rd session with AT • Discussed Italo Calvino *6 Memos* • Start with loosening/freeing body • Imagination freely – allow it go to unpredictable, bizarre places – 'that's how scripts get unlocked' • Breathing, voice • Mind/body/breath/voice all functioning simultaneously – responding to imagination • Don't ask "how am I seen?" – ask in character "what do I see?" • Intellectual side in analysis of scripts – irrelevant to visible work on stage or set • Started with text: slow read technique. Sounds, vowels, syllables create images • Saying by line/phrase by phrase. Enter the writer's mind as he/she made a world of relevance and importance to the character	Body Freeing Unpredictable Imagination Scripts Breathing Voice Responding Seeing Analysis Stage Text Technique Sounds Images Writer Character
*6/8/2015 Lesson with guitar tutor	• Worked on repertoire, Sainz de La Maza *(Rondena)* **EM:** I play this better when not practicing as if it is for a performance/presentation. It's better when I sit and noodle around. Feeling relaxed, pretending it's background music **GT:** Have to do this opposite! The practice is disciplined and performance feels easy-going, light	Performance Pretending Relaxed Discipline
*17/9/15 Guitar practice	• Early morning practice • Without AT1's warm-up • Have been using actor's warm-up (Alexander techniques) in previous practices sessions – feeling physically very free, less tension • Feeling much stiffer later in the day after 3hrs of rehearsals	Physicality Free Tension

22/9/15
 	
Lesson with guitar tutor
	• Repertoire: De Falla *Homenaje*
	  Must heighten imagery!
	
	• Repertoire: Tansman *Variations*
	  Clear, contrasting characters for each variation. At times too much the same.
		Imagery
		
		Character

1/10/15 Guitar practice	• Repertoire: Tansman *Variations* • Creating clear images and responses for each variation • Variations need clear distinctions between each "character" or "story", focusing on coming up with that • Feels forced!	Imagery Clarity Forcing
24/10/15 Guitar practice	• Piazzolla – *Evasion* • Struggling to make sense of / connect to slow middle section. • Feels tragic, melancholy in melody/harmony • Slow but still needs pulse and movement, rubato • Argentinian Tango groove! • Tango club, brothel, tragic •	Connect Harmony Rhythm Style/genre/history Imagery
"Beginning Acting" QUT, 3-day intensive course 30/10/15 – 1/11/15 Post-performance reflection	• Uta Hagen Steps • Stanislavsky • Strasbourg Method – "use only when inspiration fails you" • • At the end of 3rd day I had to immediately perform in concert with community guitar ensemble • Anxious about being able to play after having to rush from Kelvin Grove to Maleny, quickly change, play solos and ensembles in concert without long warm up • Actually felt very emotionally, physically relaxed! Immersed/connected in performance, focused	Methods Ensemble Nerves Warm up Relaxation Connection
13/11/15 Post-recital reflection	• Felt that my performances had emotion, tried to feel "immersed" (connected, not self-conscious) • Difficult to feel this way during performance. I was nervous as I didn't have long to prepare new, difficult repertoire. Felt self-conscious because of small audience, exam setting • Some technical and memory slips • Achieved overall grade of 7! Well-received by audience •	Connection Self-consciousness Nerves Repertoire choice Technique Memory Audience
17/11/15 Post-	• Regularly perform 1hr concerts at State Library of Queensland and RBWH – public, free	

performance reflection	• Can feel self-conscious, silly – playing classical arrangements of cheesy songs, clichés like Spanish Romance, Classical Gas and Stairway to Heaven • What acting techniques will help me here? • I'm sure I use them but hard to pinpoint which ones •	Self-consciousness Repertoire choice
*30/12/2015 Guitar practice	Repertoire: *Rondena* • Revisiting this pieces after a month or more of not playing it • I had written directions on the score for particular scenes, images ("seaside village … mother … old man … bullfighter") and also emotion, character ("tragic … joy, festive") • Found imagery instructions less useful, effective when revisiting • Emotive directions more useful, effective	Learning Score Imagery Emotion Character
*31/12/15 Guitar practice session	Repertoire: *Ophelia* • Story of the piece (from program notes, score directions) very much in performer's mind when playing • This practice session I chose to ignore the story for a while and focus on technique, phrasing, colour • When adding the character back in it felt easier, less forced	Composer Technique Musical elements Practice method
*10/1/2016 Guitar practice session	Repertoire: *A Closed World of Fine Feeling and Grand Design* – Koehne • Have been preparing this piece for a competition • Previously played this with very melancholy, longing, introspective character. I had a very clear narrative for myself throughout. • I liked it and teacher liked it. Now I feel very happy in new relationship – very hard to tap into tragic emotional content again! • Consider Stanislavsky emotional memory? • Memory is there but hard to feel convinced myself. Record??	Audience/setting Clear Character Personal experiences Stanislavsky
*11/1/2016 – 15/1/2016 NIDA "Acting Techniques" Intensive course MetroArts	Day 1: no notes Day 2: • Improv • Observing walking, body movements and exaggeration • Ball memory game – group energy and cooperation • "Beat change" – Beat is the bit / section / part. A unit of action, a pulse. Sometimes one line or pages long. From character's viewpoint, not writer's. It is a new piece of information/character/event that character has no control over. Changes what the actor is doing.	Improvisation Body Exaggeration Memory Energy Beat Pulse Control Actor

	• Worked on scenes: I was Kate in Sewell *The Sick Room*. Who? Where? When? Objective. Day 3: • Vocal • Games ("Mafia" game → about objectives) • Character improv from *Sick Room* • Not about actor feeling emotion – it's about the audience feeling. • Sometimes more interesting to watch actor struggle with emotions rather than throw them all around	Objective Voice Games Improvisation Emotion Audience Actor
27/2/2016 Speaking Shakespeare in Your Own Voice: Queensland Shakespeare Ensemble workshop	• In 'Speaking Shakespare in Your Own Voice' • Chose the Gertrude monologue describing Ophelia's death. Already know the words well and want to perform it in concert. • Thought that monologue should be like solo music performance! • Making Ophelia's death sound beautiful to ease the audience's pain. The audience = Laertes. • Using sounds of consonants and vowels to evoke imagery. Hands to 'paint the picture' • Teacher asked me to think of a real life event – emotional memory. Had a memory in mind and then performed it again. • Audience was more moved second time, even before I explained what had happened. • Asked me to share memory I thought of – felt uncomfortable at first but the actors were very open with their own stories and feelings, good environment for it. • Teacher: "The personal story is for you – what comes out is for the audience" • "Use your audience in monologues – 'to be or not to be?' Do they have the answer?"	
*21/4/2016 Guitar practice session	• "Checking in" → from QSE course Have been busy preparing competition pieces, concerto, ensemble concerts taking priority in practice, as well as working during the week Aiming to allocate 20 min to Ophelia for thesis work Ophelia Mvt 4 • Starting with mostly metronome work, securing notes, focus = left hand accuracy • Still warming up technically at this point. Less focus on producing dynamic range (though composer is very specific about this. Should I incorporate this into note-learning stage?) • Still aiming to use generally predictable expressive phrasing at this stage • Feeling distracted, thinking about large amt of work I have oto do today = playing becoming directed, mechanical, <u>inaccurate</u> • Thoughts wander to feeling own emotions, own stuff (ie nice memories from last few days, also more worrying things to do with the future and	Warm up Acting Personal experiences Technique Accuracy Learning Musical elements – phrasing Personal Accuracy Personal experiences

	relationships) • That's not what the composer is thinking! • Thoughts part of day's warming up? Thinking about this next practice session. Feeling mechanical when trying to give composer what he wants •	Composer Connection
*25/4/2016 Guitar practice session	Tansman - Theme and Variations – 60 min Rodrigo - En Los Trigales – 25 min Sculthorpe- From Kakadu Mvt 2, Mvt 4 Tansman: • really enjoying beautiful harmony in the piece • Fingers feeling more accurate • Difficult to get "movement" feeling, rubato in 4th variation → aiming for lilt, flow, free … sounds like dancing. Not stagnant • Imagine ballet dancer: slow, graceful, "reaching" movements • Rhythm, movement now feels better. Still lacking consistency in energetic line (melody) • Fixed with metronome work, but now lost a little of the engagement with piece • This is OK in practice but not for performance! • Visualisation, imagery ok but just imagining how a dancer looks, moves doesn't conjure up particular emotions • Does help the musical elements though En Los Trigales: • Fingers less warmed up for this piece, less accurate than Tansman. Still new in comparison. Yesterday the other way around! • Also less energy – losing the character • Looked into details of composition – composer, style, year • composed 1938 – beginning of Spanish Civil War • Engagement, character immediately easier! • Visualisation, imagery with emotions that come with idea of war. Imagining characters; soldiers, civilians, mothers, farmers From Kakadu: • Tone in Mvt 4 not working. Too tinny, thin – sounds strained and tight. Like a voice not warmed up? • Think of Alexander vocal warm up concepts → more open-throated tone on guitar! Easier, more relaxed	Musical elements – harmony Musical elements - rhythm Visualisation Imagery Engagement Practice Performance Accuracy Learning Engagement Composition Engagement Imagery Character Musical elements – tone Alexander Technique Voice Relaxation
*27/4/2016	Tansman *Variations*	

Guitar practice session	• Working on voicings, legato, technical accuracy • Play how a pianist would play • Thought: how does an actor perform their character if they think "I know I'm not really this person"?	Composition Technique Accuracy Acting / Pretending
*1/5/2016 Guitar master class	Played *From Kakadu* Mvts 1 + 2 I • Loud, driving throughout until p section • Think of maracas on semi-quavers • Large, grandeur of land → "not personal" • m finger tone (nail is broken, why tone is funny) • p IMMEDIATELY on liberamente first note II • Comodo = comfortable. Needs to sound more comfortable • Rhythm. Do not approximate! • Sweet, folky	Imagining Landscape / Personality Musical elements – tone Feeling (personfic) Musical elements – rhythm Character
*2/5/2016 Guitar practice session	Ophelia Mvt 1 • Metronome bars 1 – 7. Accuracy (forgot colour changes) • Focus only dynamics – found <u>voice</u> and character Mvt 2 • Right hand fingerings – I think these aren't working for me but Houghton is v. specific Technical implications of musical ideas – have to practice accuracy of colour and dynamic changes Why are they there?	Accuracy Musical elements – dynamics Voice Character Technique Composer Practice Technique Question
*3/5/2016 Guitar practice session	Trigales • Colour →make sudden + deliberate contrasts • Dynamics → ^^ • Rhythm • Speed, technique, accuracy • Emotion v. Character v. Landscape … Tansman • Tech warm up (slow and loud). Thinking of body & guitar as single source of sound • Focus on dynamics + tempo/pulse/flow • Letting what's written affect me – enjoying the music!!	Musical elements – tone, dynamics, rhythm Technique Emotion Body Musical elements Affect
NIDA Open course	Day 1	

Acting Essentials 9/7/2016 – 10/7/2016	• Smaller group than other course – 7 people • Started with Shopping List game – "This is Helen, she went to the shops to buy hat. My name is Libby and I went to the shops to buy a lollipop …" etc. For remembering names and physical actions • Ball game – catch ball, call name of next person and throw it to them. Remember order. More balls added in, so must be engaged with the person throwing you the ball and have attention of next person. • Physical warm up. Isolating each joint, muscle group and warming it up • Vocal/breathing warm up. Breathing really difficult for me, not used to it. Felt good doing face/breath warm ups focusing on not getting tense in neck. Problem area for me. • Improvisation game "Liar" – • Game – "This is a pencil. A What? A pencil. A what? A pencil. A What? A Pencil! Oh a pencil." And continue dialogue on to next person. Another object added in at the same time, so must receive and pass on at the same time! Good for group work, more engaging exercises • AB contextless scenes. Using Stanislavski questions to give meaning • Actions = tactics to attain objectives. Write actions next to words on script to describe what's going on in essence • My partner for these scenes was a little difficult to work with …. Very slow, tentative. Reading scripts, not really reacting to actions/words/dialogue. Required me to give lots of direction in rehearsals. Just an exercise though.	Group Game Memory Game Memory Engagement Physical Warm up Breath Voice Tense Improvisation Game Game Dialogue Group Engagement Stanislavsky Meaning Actions Direction Exercise
22/6/2016 Post-Concert reflection Concert at St Ignatius Church	PROS: • Enjoyed the silences. I felt I held the atmosphere well – especially in Kakadu • Overall technical control was pretty good • Tone quality and colour contrast CONS: • Slight memory lapse in Tansman final variation • Needed more bass in Bach • Creeping tension. In Bach this happened towards end of fast Prelude which caused a left hand slip. In Kakadu this affected right hand more and some of the high notes sounded "choked" • Most nervous when speaking to audience!! Before the concert I did a full-body warm up similar to how we warmed up in NIDA course. This really helped! I felt very connected, aware of my body. Feels like meditation?	Atmosphere Technique Tone Colour Memory Tension Speaking Audience Warm up Connection Meditation

18/42017 Practice reflection	Da Milano • Renaissance music is not a style I totally understand but I am still enjoying learning the Fantasia and Ricecar. • Because these pieces are improvisations on simple motifs, I am playing them how I "feel" the gestures, as if I were the improviser. Doing this before and in addition to the technical work seems to work for me better. • Thinking about the improviser: what makes them play and repeat something? Why are they compelled, motivated? Like a character, all actions are in order to attain an objective. • Try playing the themes with different actions or intentions: a theme played "to entertain", "to move", "to provoke", "to seduce", "to embrace" • Feels more alive!	Style Improvisation Motivate Character Action
NIDA Acting Techniques Saturdays September – November	• Starting sessions with warm ups. Eventually warming up at home before class. • Games: ball games and memory • Scene: *Tender* by Nicki Bloom • My chosen speech – Gertrude's Ophelia death monologue • Standing, felt a bit uncomfortable using my hands. Imagining myself at the recital … Have to pick up guitar after!	
Practice journal 4/11/2017	• Rehearsing in front of mirror and then playing the piece on guitar. Not sure about standing and moving back to guitar. Logistically more difficult, maybe a bit awkward-looking in that space. • Only piece like this so it seems very out of place. • Now reciting monologue from seat with guitar, I feel more confident like this.	
Post-Concert reflection Recital 18/11/2017	• Feeling good after concert! Big build-up, good audience despite bad weather. Great location and acoustic. Warmed up with vocal exercises, stretching and slow, loud playing. Staying calm and relaxed. • Began with *Ophelia*. Gave quick introduction, information about composer and piece. Slightly nervous while speaking, could have made more eye contact. Fidgeted with music stand somewhat. • Told audience "I will begin with Shakespeare's monologue by Queen Gertrude after Ophelia has died". Delivered monologue and was able to imagine atmosphere of the music while speaking. From memory but had script in front of me on music stand. It felt like part of the same piece, like the first/preliminary movement. • Still had some inhibition in first movement, even though it is relatively easier than others. Other movements had better flow. I felt I used my body better in later movements. • Lots of rain on the windows outside, very serene, natural environment – I felt I could play to my surroundings! Performing for Something to consider for next time.	