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**PERFORMANCE ART:
AN EXPLORATION OF LIVING SCULPTURE, PERFORMING
SCULPTURE, AND PERFORMATIVITY AND THE
DEVELOPMENT OF AN EXPERIMENTAL APPROACH TO MUSIC
COMPOSITION**

AMIR KONJANI

PhD 2019

**PERFORMANCE ART:
AN EXPLORATION OF LIVING SCULPTURE, PERFORMING
SCULPTURE, AND PERFORMATIVITY AND THE
DEVELOPMENT OF AN EXPERIMENTAL APPROACH TO
MUSIC COMPOSITION**

AMIR SADEGHI KONJANI

**A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
of the
Manchester Metropolitan University for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

**Awarded for a Collaborative Programme of Research at the
Royal Northern College of Music by the Manchester Metropolitan
University**

October 2019

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Chapter 1. Abstract

This research is a practice-led investigation consisting of a portfolio of compositions and an accompanying critical and reflective commentary.

My compositional approach seeks to combine features of traditional compositional practice with an embodied approach more typical of contemporary and historical performance art. It is through my composition and subsequent critical reflection that I explore key concepts in my work: how approaches typical of post-dramatic theatre can be enacted in musical composition; the tension between a performative interpretation of artistic practice framed as ‘showing/doing’ (as described by Richard Schechner¹) and the revealed and veiled performance practice associated with instrumental and vocal performance; and my approach to ‘breaking the fourth wall’ in the context of musical performance through the blurring of concert, theatrical, and installation environments and through the juxtaposition of elusive artistic practice and the more prosaic features that support this work (i.e. drawing attention to the lighting and sound engineers as a part of the performance alongside the more rarefied artistic practice).

The main body of the commentary is divided into two sections. The first section provides a context for the analysis by expanding on the themes in relation to the work of other composers and artists. The second section describes the composition process, the rehearsals which took place, and my experience of producing the pieces. This part discusses seven contrasting works that make up the main portfolio.

There are various performances, film arts, film of the process of making my instruments (living sculptures) and trailers presented as additional works (appendices).

The pieces are presented chronologically on the accompanying three DVDs, which should help to illustrate the development of the work. The first two DVDs include the submitted seven pieces (i.e. The Main Portfolio) and the third DVD covers the appendices of promotional and extra materials.

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mI0ybTG4lz0&t=1172s> (accessed 17 June 2019)

Chapter 2. Introduction

My approach to composition is focussed on activating social and musical concepts so that they become new sounds and theatre and on developing the appropriate techniques to facilitate this. I create situations and question how conceptual practice can be enacted to push personal aesthetic and social boundaries. These social and musical concepts are rooted in experimental music theatre, theatre (which develops a performative aesthetic in which the content of the performance is placed in a special relationship with the material situation of the performance and the stage²), and performance-art practice (particularly ideas relating to the visual feature of music, including ‘showing/doing’³); performing sculpture, kinetic art, and living sculpture; and breaking the fourth wall. These are all contextualised within an aesthetic framework that explores ‘the poetics of performance’ (by using metaphors, displacements, and superimposing contradictory materials embedded within my composition, for example).

The primary themes of my research stem from my experience as a composer-director of theatrical pieces such as *Doll Aged* (for trumpet solo) and my performance art work *Bone* (for ten flutes, cello, piano and two performers/actors). *Doll Aged* requires the performer to get into a large tub filled with water.

The sound of the trumpet is modulated by a mute made out of a doll’s head, as well as through interactions with the water and the layering of extended techniques (such as multiphonics, half valves etc). In this piece, the performer has control over the constraint of sound by using the angle of the trumpet in relation to the surface of the water, which changes the effect. During my PhD, I developed this piece by recontextualising this theatrical scenario into an orchestral concerto (see chapter four). The performance of *Bone* was my first attempt to design a spatialised performance with tubes and springs. I used an upright piano and connected PVC tubes to the strings of piano with springs. I asked a performer to use chicken claws with polished nails to symbolise the price of chicken in Iran (the Iranian president had appeared on national TV stressing untruthfully that the prices had not changed in his local supermarket⁴, so this piece was intended as a protest).

² Thies Lehmann, Hans. Routledge. New York. 2006.

³ Schechner, Richard. *Performance studies*. Routledge. London and New York. 2013

⁴ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/iran/9401491/Chickens-facing-censorship-in-Iran.html>

These spatialising techniques have been developed while I have been studying for my PhD in pieces for cello and harp and have led to more ambitious spatialisation projects.

The inherent theatricality of my work is enhanced by embedding ‘performativity’ elements in the pieces. I treat the word ‘performativity’ as a broad trope referencing instrumental theatre, performance art, and, in particular, connecting to Austin’s treatment of the phrase ‘performative utterance’, meaning ‘to say something is to do something’,⁵ to describe utterances such as ‘I apologise’ and ‘I take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife’. Performative utterances are sentences which not only describe a given reality but also change the social reality they are describing. So I intend to try and create an atmospheric space or an artistic–imaginary city (redefining the concert experience) and then I design some behaviours, acting, or even writing a script to change the space reality that I’ve designed.

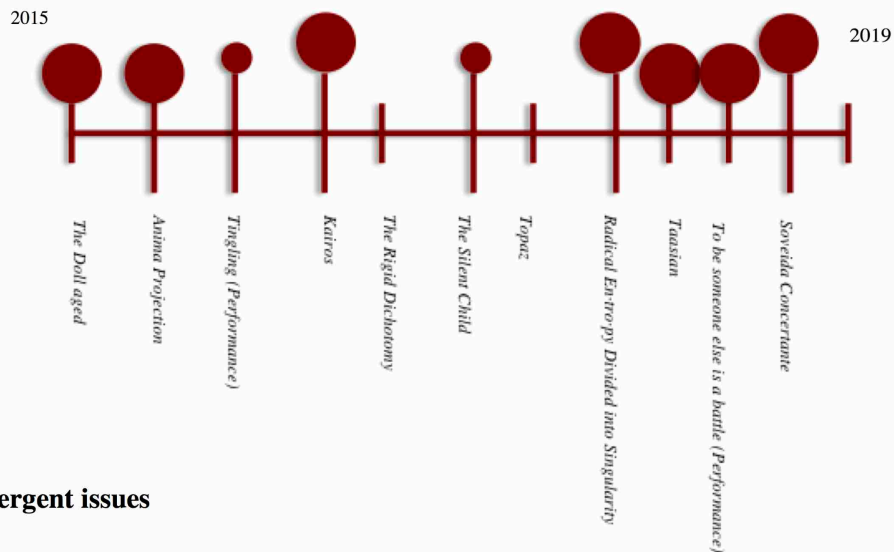
As my practice connects with ‘classical’ music (broadly defined), performance art, and visual art and places the holistic artistic situation at the heart of my practice, the kind of performance spaces that are used are of central importance. I’m drawn to contextualising radical and more traditional performance in conventional concert spaces, ‘blank canvas’ spaces (perhaps with the aspiration of gallery spaces), and more idiosyncratic spaces to explore how this affects the inherent aesthetic juxtapositions in my work. To date, this has been primarily informed by the history of theatre and performance art and contemporary compositional practice.

In order to explore my key research questions, I have written/made pieces that include chamber music, orchestral music with soloists, installations, and film scores; designed instruments and instrumental preparations, clothing, animation and art films; created situations that blend/implied all of this together. These pieces were composed in Manchester, London and Tehran between 2015 and 2019.

All pieces have been submitted either with score, video or both formats. But I have selected seven contrasting pieces from all submitted material to cover and reply to the emergent issues/questions during my study and research. The seven pieces have been represented in the next chapters based on the completion date.

⁵ Austin, J. L. (John Langshaw) (1975). *How to do things with words*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Below, the timeline represents all pieces in chronological order. The circles show my selected pieces which have been discussed in this commentary.



Emergent issues

There are three practical and research questions, which serve as useful discussion points:

1. To what extent should I be concerned with the visibility of the conceptual framework in my composition despite operating in a predominantly abstract context?
2. How can I show how the outcome of an experimental piece that confronts and collides and combines experimental performance practice within a conventional concert scenarios (i.e. orchestral practice)?
3. How might I apply the notion of ‘showing/doing’ as the means to foreground my conceptual ideas?

In Cage’s *Water Music* (1952), the performer, in addition to playing the piano, has to operate a radio, play whistles, pour water from one container into another, and deal out a deck of cards. All these actions consist of physical movements that have acoustic results.⁶ The difference between ‘object performance’ (i.e. creating sounds from everyday objects) and an instrumental performance (i.e. playing known musical instruments) can be examined from different perspectives. The first dichotomy between these two types of performance would be that of displacement, which would cause the defamiliarisation (for the audience) of the object being used in the performance. Thus, objects used in the performance would

⁶ Kaduri Yael. *The Oxford handbook of sound and image in western music*. Oxford University Press, NY 2016

adopt a new metaphoric meaning and the audience would, later, re-associate the objects used with their newly acquired meaning, reminding them of the metaphor.

Schechner stresses the following:

Showing doing is performing. When you decide to show your doing, you are performing. Or you decide to look at someone else's doing as a showing. I can even look at my cat's doing; even the cat is not herself performing in her consciousness she is performing for me.⁷

I have researched the history of performance art and the various practitioners and movements that shaped the medium which we call 'performance art'. The Futurists are the precursors here regarding poetry, text, painting, architecture, etc., and in the music world, the futurist manifesto, drafted in 1913 by Luigi Russolo and Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, is one of the key points to chase. He invented 'machines that scream' – a collection of homemade instruments he called *Intonarumori*. They were a shambling group of mysterious boxes and conical horns mounted with hand-cranked and mechanical workings to create his new vocabulary of sounds (The music score in Figure 1a on the left of the next page shows Russolo's music notation for the instruments shown in Figure 1b):

1. Roars, Thunderings, Explosions, Hissing roars, Bangs, Booms
2. Whistling, Hissing, Puffing
3. Whispers, Murmurs, Mumbling, Muttering, Gurgling
4. Noises obtained by beating on metals, woods, skins, stones, pottery, etc.⁸

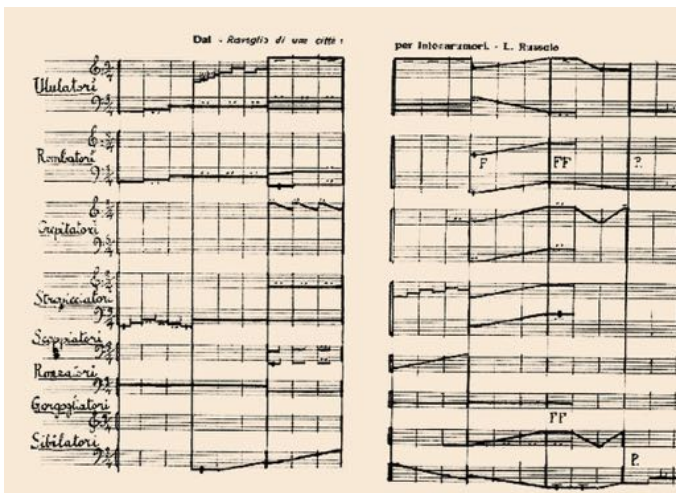


Figure 1a

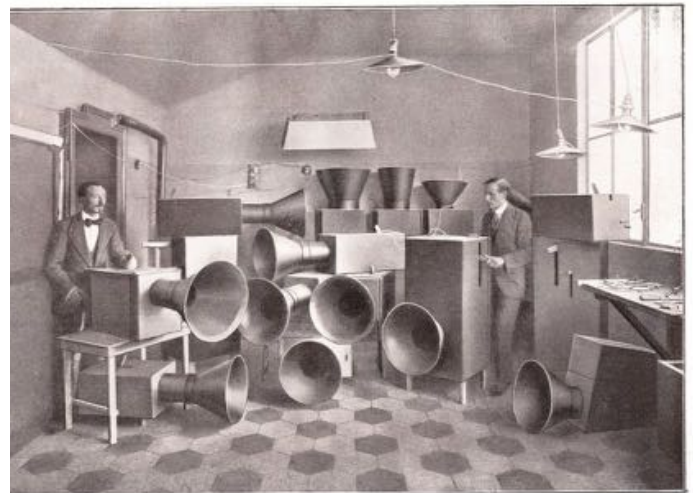


Figure 1b

⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mI0ybTG4lz0>

⁸ Russolo, Luigi. *The Art of Noise*. A Great Bear Pamphlet. 1967.

In his manifesto, Russolo made the following observations:

Nowadays musical art aims at the shrillest, strangest and most dissonant amalgams of sound. Thus we are approaching noise-sound. This revolution of music is paralleled by the increasing proliferation of machinery sharing in human labor. We must break at all cost from this restrictive circle of pure sounds and conquer the infinite variety of noise-sounds. In the pounding atmosphere of great cities as well as in the formerly silent countryside, machines create today such a large number of varied noises that pure sound, with its littleness and its monotony, now fails to arouse any emotion.⁹

He had difficulties in resolving some of the technical issues that arose when using his instruments, and he mentioned this in his conclusion:

We must replace the limited variety of timbres of orchestral instruments by the infinite variety of timbres of noises obtained through special mechanisms. The technical difficulties presented by the construction of these instruments are not grave. As soon as we will have found the mechanical principle which produces a certain noise, we will be able to graduate its pitch according to the laws of acoustics. For instance, if the instrument employs a rotating movement, we will speed it up or slow it down. When not dealing with a rotating instrument we will increase or decrease the size or the tension of the sound-making parts.¹⁰

I was inspired by Russolo's idea of activating the creation of 'noise making'.

As shown in Figure 2, his instruments had a handle to turn to make the noise and this action showed the 'doing' –making the noise for the audience. This is unlike laptop/electronic music, (and acousmatic music); I think it is still difficult to present to the audience the processors and software that we are used as a real-time, live electronic piece. Russolo's concept was the first source for my spatialisation idea.

⁹ IBID. pp.55-60.

¹⁰ Russolo, Luigi. *The Art of Noise*. A Great Bear Pamphlet. 1967.



Figure 2 Russolo's instrument.

Moreover, I've carried out research about artists who create radical performances, such as Chris Burden with his 1971 performance piece *Shoot*; Vito Acconci's *Seedbed*, from the same year; and Marina Abramović's *Rhythm 10* (which includes conceptually the literal possibility of violation).¹¹ These works often showed the influences of the cultural and political events around them. I cannot separate my creative practice from my own upbringing and formative experiences when growing up in Tehran at a time of considerable social and political upheaval.

I lived two different lives: one inside my home and one outside it (in the school and the street, etc.). Metaphors were needed to cope with my life outside my home. For example, at school, when we used to read the well-known Iranian poems of Khayyam or Hafez, all the words forbidden in Islam had been translated in a particular way. Shiraz wasn't translated as meaning alcoholic wine but a sugary, delicious drink. And the word 'beloved' was translated as 'God'!

Political behaviour was an essential part of our thinking because of the authoritarian character of Islamic leadership after the revolution. Life inside the home was needed as preparation for life outside it or sometimes for recovery from the situation outside. This frequently involved the 'putting on' and 'taking off' of masks/personas.

I and many of my friends and family in Tehran did not agree with the religious totalitarian views so prevalent at the time. As an artist living under authoritarian rule, I continuously strove to embed socio-political elements into my artwork, and because of my inside/outside

¹¹ Marina Abramović. *Rhythm 10*". Media Art Net. Retrieved 2011.

live(s) in Iran, the balance between the veiled and the visible is important in my work, and this experience has inspired my interest in political matters.

Interestingly, for me, classical music (genre) its style, and the rules behind the tradition have some similarities to living under authoritarian rule. For example, it is traditional in classical music for a soloist to appear on the stage first, followed by the conductor. But imagine if a soloist appears fully clothed in a bathtub full of water!

Breaking the taboos and pushing the boundaries are similar (for me) in terms of breaking down the walls and trying to change the rules. One of the ways that I could do this in my artistic world was by embedding conceptual elements. I tried to explore some of my works in relation to concert music (in essence, historical and contemporary 'classical music'). I remain engaged with these conceptual ideas through orchestral music.

When I am drafting more experimental compositions, I discovered that my first attempt at embedding a given concept into a performance was frequently either unsuccessful or was not delivered to me (as an audience) in a way that I intended.

Either the venue or the institute that had commissioned the work would impose a limitation for moral, social, political, or safety issues (some real but others imagined). For example, within a couple of days of the performance of my piece at LSO St Luke's, the Barbican's Sound Unbound deemed the use of chicken claws, which had previously been authorised (literally claws from chickens that had been humanely killed according to UK and European standards for food) unsuitable for fear that it might cause offence. I was told by the head of the Sound Unbound festival to either change the concept or use artificial chicken claws because of possible allegations of animal cruelty.

As Marina Abramović pointed out in her interview with the *Guardian* in 2010, in the performance-art medium, we are supposed to use real materials and preferably not lie – like theatre and cinema do by using visual effects, etc.

Theatre is fake ... The knife is not real, the blood is not real, and the emotions are not real. Performance is just the opposite: the knife is real, the blood is real, and the emotions are real.¹²

¹² <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/oct/03/interview-marina-abramovic-performance-artist>

There are clearly examples where this is not the case. And I believe that instead of using fake objects we might find alternative materials. I chose not to use artificial chicken claws but I could use metaphors instead.

Using objects that have a metaphorical meaning is not lying, in my opinion; for example, using a doll's head as a doll's head or a mute is different from using a doll's head to represent a 'beheaded woman'! The intention really needs to be realised and actualised by the performer in such a way that no one even thinks that he/she is exaggerating/acting or faking it.

In the end, I replaced the performer with an umbrella, but those in charge at the Barbican were insistent that since they'd gone to the trouble of acquiring artificial chicken claws, I was obliged to use them.

The art of 'defamiliarisation' was a feature of my work. Defamiliarisation, or *ostranenie*, is a technique used to present familiar events in unfamiliar ways in order to enhance the perception of the familiar.¹³

Viktor Shklovsky invented the term as a means to 'distinguish poetic from practical language on the basis of the former's perceptibility',¹⁴ and the purpose of defamiliarisation in art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. This involves striving to make stage objects/props unfamiliar to increase the discovery value and the length of the perception process because the latter is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. This distinction between artistic language and everyday language, for Shklovsky, may apply to other artistic forms and fields.¹⁵

Shklovsky's defamiliarisation can also be compared to Jacques Derrida's concept of difference. The use of defamiliarisation results in both differing and deferring, since the use of the technique alters one's perception of a concept (to defer) and forces one to think about the concept in different, often more complex, terms (to differ).¹⁶ In my cello concertino *Anima Projection*, I wanted to use a compositional concept I call shadowing and experiment with extending the performance environment of a cello. Additionally, the set-up and the visual part of this piece could be perceived as surprising objects. The visual energy of unsettling the cello's status quo is designed to encourage a curiosity about the sonic

¹³ Shklovsky, Viktor (2017). Berlina, Alexandra (ed.). *Viktor Shklovsky: A Reader*. Translated by Berlina, Alexandra. Bloomsbury.

¹⁴ Crawford, Lawrence. Viktor Shklovskij: *Difference in Defamiliarization*. *Comparative Literature* 36 (1984): 209-20

¹⁵ Shklovsky, Viktor (2017). Berlina, Alexandra (ed.). *Viktor Shklovsky: A Reader*. Translated by Berlina, Alexandra. Bloomsbury.

¹⁶ Derrida, Jacques. *Margins of Philosophy*. The University of Chicago Press. 1982

potential of the instrument before a note is struck. (I intended to defamiliarise them in both ways: visually and sonically.)

I worked and experimented closely with the cello player before the first rehearsal for three weeks and I established a performing/mobile installation as a preparation for the cello. The strings on the cello are attached to other springs and large plastic tubes, which results in the former generating one group of sounds and the latter re-projecting them.

I found that 'showing doing' might tell a story behind a concept but is not likely to. This is likely to be further obscured by the defamiliarisation. When an audience is made to feel that a certain atmosphere is unfamiliar (defamiliarisation), the process of introducing the concept, as well as showing the process of the compositional development, will be 'showing doing'. For example, when members of the audience see the trumpeter inside a large tub filled with water, they might be curious enough to ask the reason for placing them there because of displacement and the unfamiliar situation. During the performance, the performer produces the effects by using the trumpet bell, which is partly tangential to the surface of the water. This process, during or after the performance, gives the audience a sense of security, and 'familiarisation' (making the concept familiar to the audience) could be 'showing doing'.

Lastly, I think that one of the creative aspects of contemporary art could involve choosing the objects and subjects and placing them and displacing them to find a new meaning. John Berger writes in his book *Ways of Seeing* that how we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe. We never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves.¹⁷ Situation making does exactly the same thing, in my opinion. A situation maker juxtaposes and superimposes different meanings/objects/subjects to recreate meanings.

¹⁷ Berger, John. *Ways of Seeing* (Penguin Modern Classics). Penguin books. Ltd

Chapter 3. *Anima Projection* – concertino for prepared cello and ensemble

This was the first piece I completed at the Royal Northern College of Music. It was written for prepared cello and ensemble; Clark Rundell was the conductor and Eliza Carew played the cello, and it was premiered at the Tansy Davies In Focus Festival in October 2016.

My initial research plan was to develop ideas related to ‘living sculpture’ and ‘performing sculpture’ and transfer them to my orchestral layout and composition. There are process-led examples by several artists/composers which are particularly relevant to this piece.

Alexander Calder, according to Ann Coxon, turned sculpture from a static medium into one that moves and is therefore experienced through time as a kind of ‘performance’; the ‘changeability brings you into a present moment’.¹⁸ The aim of these ‘performing sculptures’ is to draw the audience in.¹⁹ There is an essence of so-called ‘entertaining himself’²⁰ during sculpture performances, and the audience is invited into the space to be entertained by the sculpture. A mobile (mobile object) in motion leaves an invisible wake behind it, or rather, each element leaves an individual wake behind its individual self.²¹

Calder called the mobiles a ‘ballet objects’ [i]n that it is a description of aspects of the body, in that its motion is intermittent rather than mechanically continuous, in that one feels impelled to set it in motion in order for it to ‘perform’ the role of filling out and inhabiting its own spatiality, the mobile locates its sculptural meaning as a kind of actor.²²

I was very taken with the idea of ‘performing sculptures’, and these formed the beginning of my process, as a situation maker, of ‘creating a situation’ for the cello soloist in my concertino who would be both entertained and distracted by the particular installation used in this work. That is to say, the natural destabilising of the instrument is resistant in the context of standard cello performance practice and therefore affects the performance practice and the sound.

An example of the natural destabilising just mentioned can be found in Nam June Paik’s work *TV Bra for Living Sculpture* (1969), which comprises two miniature television

¹⁸ Coxon, Ann. Alexander Calder: *Performing Sculpture*. Yale University Press, NY 2015

¹⁹ Hudson, Mrk. Art Critic, November 2015.

²⁰ Calder, Alexander, Alexander Calder at Tate Modern on The Art Channel online video clip.youtube. The Art Channel. Nov 20, 2015.

²¹ Coxon, Ann. Alexander Calder: *Performing Sculpture*. Yale University Press, NY 2015.

²² Calder, Alexander, Alexander Calder at Tate Modern on The Art Channel online video clip.youtube.

screens attached to the vinyl straps of a brassiere worn by Paik's collaborator Charlotte Moorman as she performs on the cello. The work is a protest which conflates the use of technology with the exchange value of fashion.

According to Paik,

If Louis Pasteur and Augustin Bon Joseph de Robespierre are right that we can resist poison only through certain built-in poison, then some specific frustrations caused by cybernetic life, require accordingly cybernetic shock and catharsis. My everyday work with videotape and the cathode-ray tube convinces me of this.²³

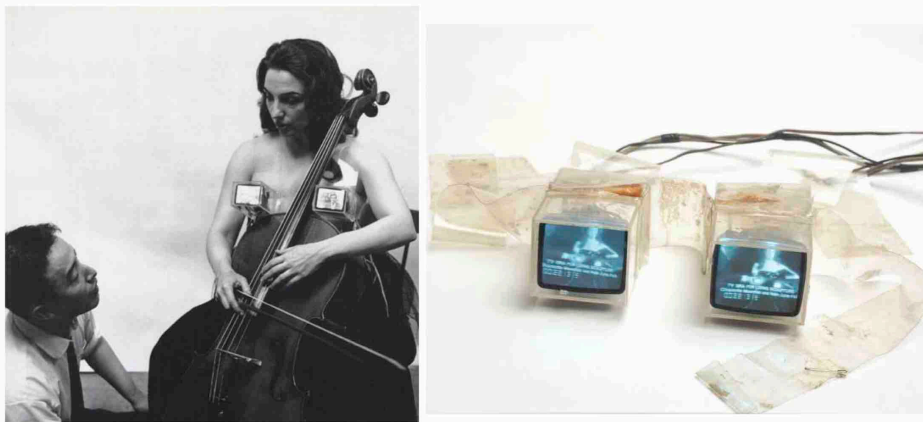


Figure 3 *TV Bra for Living Sculpture* (Charlotte Moorman)

Paik's work inspired me to think about defamiliarisation and the 'distancing effect' in my piece. The cellist might be able to accomplish this distancing effect (in this case, my response to Paik's cybernetic shock as 'built-in poison'), which affects the audience so that they can immerse themselves in empathetic emotions aroused by the music rather than being conscious of the sounds being produced by my solo cellist.

In Calder's *Black Widow* sculpture (1948), there is a gentle oscillation. For works such as this one, he cut sheet metal into various shapes and assembled these elements in a chain-linked system so that the flat metal pieces move in response to currents of air; there is also a projection that is shown through a shadow. The objects are very much to do with his interest in dance in performance and their gentle oscillation are kind of choreography of

²³ Stiles, Kristine. Selz, Peter. *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art*. University of California press 1996

movements²⁴. There is a big movement as the entire object spins, but there are subsidiary movements within the object, which has been designed very carefully so that none of the elements touch each another. And the shadows on the walls around the mobile become a sort of secondary work of art.²⁵ The boundary between understanding and not understanding a process of mobility is, for me, the most interesting feature of his piece because it helps to slow us down and we can then understand that the different parts of the mobile are behaving (moving), turning, and reacting. This kind of art intends to hold our attention, and whenever you can ‘step out of time’ and engage with a great work of art is a gift from that artist.²⁶



Figure 4 *Black Widow* sculpture (1948).

I intended to compare the shadowing effect in Calder’s ‘performing sculpture’ with projecting sounds (and the illusion of projecting sounds) in a performance of my work. To do this I needed to examine how the sound waves would be experienced and how elements could be added (apart from air) which would intervene between the instrument and the ears of the listener. I had to examine how to create an illusion of the sound moving and being

²⁴ Coxon, Ann. Alexander Calder: *Performing Sculpture*. Yale University Press, NY 2015

²⁵ <https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-1010/art-between-wars/american-art-wwii/v/motion>

²⁶ Coxon, Ann. Alexander Calder: *Performing Sculpture*. Yale University Press, NY 2015

projected from different places at different times from the same performer. In his *Music as a Gradual Process* manifesto, Steve Reich stated that he wanted to ‘hear the process happening throughout the sounding music’.²⁷ Dominic Murcott, in his PhD thesis, pointed out that Reich’s *Pendulum Music* feels incomplete as a purely audio experience.²⁸ In the piece, different lengths of cable are used to suspend microphones over speakers, creating an overlapping series of feedback squeals. In Reich’s piece, the visual music created as a result of the process of the swinging microphones²⁹ and ‘showing doing’ can be part of the piece. (The process happening throughout the sounding music is the equivalent of the Calder through literal shadows becoming sonic shadows. A separate element is the visibility of this process -the Reich).

Anima Projection started by questioning what constitutes a single ‘sound’ in an instrumental performance, since even the simplest performance act creates complex sounds. I established a performance mechanism, which I call shadowing, in which a single performance act creates two or more related but different sounds separated by timbre and time. The springs and tubes generate one group of sounds and they are intended to re-project through four large plastic tubes with X-ray film membrane glued onto them. These sounds then create air-like ‘shadow’ sounds, which are slightly delayed and distorted. The starting point for the piece and the experiments related to it generates the material for the work and the relationships and musical behaviour within the ensemble (see Figure 5).

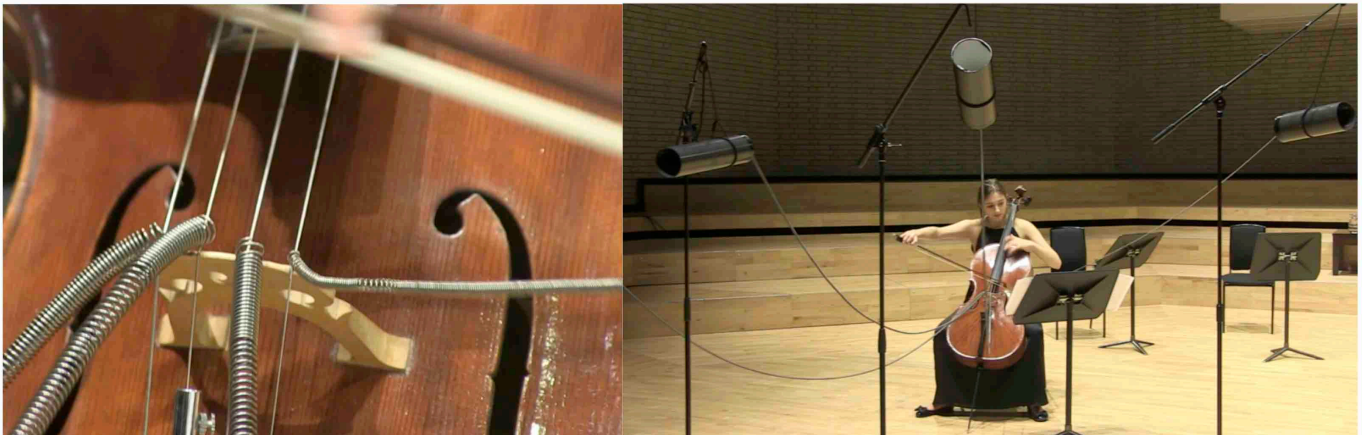


Figure 5 The cello strings are attached to springs and large plastic tubes.

²⁷ Russell Hartenberger. *Performance practice in the music of Steve Reich*. Cambridge University, 2016.

²⁸ Murcott, Dominic. PhD Commentary on Composition Portfolio, 2007.

²⁹ Reich, Steve. (1974). "*Pendulum Music*." In *writing about music* (pp.10-14)

The inspiration for the title came from my reading of the psychoanalyst Carl Jung.

The relationship between conventional and non-conventional performance practice and instrumental projection in my composition is treated as a metaphor for Jung's ideas about 'shadow personality archetypes' within one's personality. Jung developed elements of the 'collective unconscious'.³⁰ He understood archetypes like 'anima', 'animus', and 'shadow' as universal, archaic patterns that derive from the collective unconscious. Interestingly, the shadow archetype in Jungian psychology includes everything outside the light of consciousness. According to Jung, 'Everyone carries a shadow and the less it is embodied in the individual's conscious life, the blacker and denser it is.'³¹

I needed to specify my reasons for combining the conventional orchestra with unfamiliar objects (tubes and springs) for some submitted works, specifically the cello concertino. Juxtaposing my own elaborate and idiosyncratic performing cello sculpture alongside a traditional chamber ensemble serves to highlight both the spectacle of the new instrument and the inherent spectacle of traditional instruments – seen in a new light in this unusual setting. In his book *Lines* and his paper *Up, Across, and Along*, Tim Ingold stated that, as James Gibson argued in his groundbreaking work on the ecology of visual perception, we perceive the world along a 'path of observation'.

Proceeding on our way things fall into and out of sight, as new vistas open up and others are closed off. By way of these modulations in the array of reflected light reaching the eyes, the structure of our environment is progressively disclosed. It is no different, in principle, with the senses of touch and hearing, for together with vision these are but aspects of a total system of bodily orientation'.³²

A system of bodily orientation could be introduced by different concepts in performance design, and I intended to suggest that the audience and the soloists I worked with (by choice) should be 'travellers' (as an aspect of bodily orientation), not tourists.

My players therefore engage all their senses as part of being 'travelers' with regard to their bodily orientation, but is this intended to affect me as a member of the audience when I experience it? I was trying to hunt down the moment when I felt I could add visual-sonic behaviour to my piece. I intended to set out my conceptual ideas about social and political statements within a musical context. In other words, the concept had to be planted within the music. *Anima Projection* is drawn on the (open) C string, especially in the cello solo

³⁰ Odajnyk, Walter. *Archetype and Character*. Palgrave Macmillan UK

³¹ Jung, C.G. (1938). Carl Gustave Jung, *Psychology and Religion: East and West*. Routledge. p.131

³² Ingold, Tim. *Up, Across and Along*. University of Aberdeen, Scotland. UK

part and regarding the direct relationship between the imaginary ‘spatialisation line’ and the melodic lines.

As can be seen in Figure 4 below, four tubes project shadows in four different directions. Each line represents one spring, which is connected to the cello string. During the composition process, I made dots on the tube lines (springs) to navigate the direction of the sounds through the tubes. This way of navigating each sound’s projection (spatialisation) was important in helping me to develop the themes in the cello parts. For example, the pattern of dots shown in Figure 6 is just one set of many patterns of dots that I used.

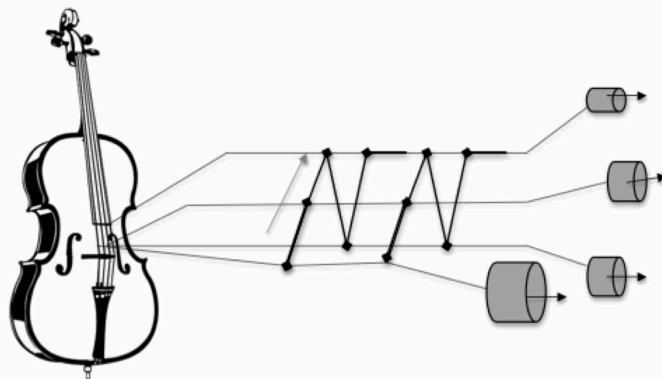


Figure 6 Spatialisation.

During my experimental dotting approach, I discovered that I could use the dots as music Braille codes and that they could be used when harmonising the concertino (this was a coincidence that simply allowed me to find some other methods alongside my more usual compositional approach’, and I intend to employ this idea when harmonising future works).

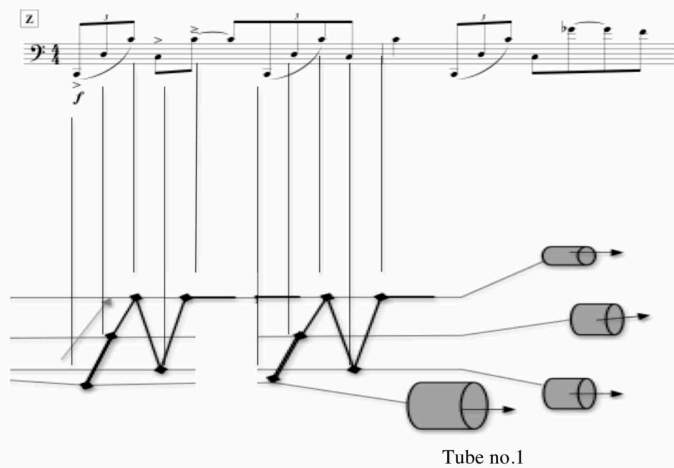


Figure 8 shows that from bar 168 (Z), my composition is based on the spatialisation idea. The first pitch is written in a range where the cellist plays the C string, which is connected to the left tube (tube no. 1). The second pitch relates to the D string, and so on. I transferred some of the dots on the lines of some bars to Braille codes. As with the variation made by the preparations to standard cello performance practice, my 'standard' harmonic vocabulary was made while being affected/filtered by the Braille codes derived from the cello spatialisation.

The diagram illustrates the connection between musical notation and Braille codes. At the top, a musical score shows a sequence of notes with dynamic markings *ff* and *f*. Below the score, the text "The dots as music Braille codes" is followed by a diagram of a cello's strings and tubes. The strings are labeled B, A, C, B, C, B, and the tubes are labeled 8, B, C, B. The diagram shows how the dots on the musical staff correspond to the physical layout of the instrument. Below this, a table titled "Music Braille Code" provides the Braille symbols for various notes and octaves.

Music Braille Code						
a	b	c	d	e	f	g
h	i	j	k	l	m	n
o	p	q	r	s	t	u

Second: Sixth:

Third: Seventh:

Fourth: Octave:

Fifth:

Figure 8 my composition is based on the spatialisation idea.

For example, in bar 197 (EE in Figure 9 below), I used the harmonic series on B natural followed by the harmonic series on A natural. It is not used consistently and sometimes not totally vertically (because there is a slight delay). Figure 9 also shows how the first violin takes over the 20th partials of A (C sharp). In bar 199, the oboe and the second violin play B sharp (C natural), which form a section of the partials on my chart.

I occasionally used the dot code for the intervals. For instance, I placed two dots next to each other in bar 197 (EE), which then led me to write the ninth (the second) for the cello solo.

Figure 9 the harmonic series on B natural followed by the harmonic series on A natural. The structure of *Anima Projection* is also based on my shadowing idea. The structure consists of various patches, each of which is represented as a shadow of a newly introduced patch. For example, at Cue T (Figure 10), three different patches have been superimposed/juxtaposed as a shadow of each other.

Figure 10 three different patches have been superimposed/juxtaposed as a shadow of each other.

As shown below, I superimposed four patches in bar 204 (GG) in the Coda section. I expanded the second theme of the cello solo part (at Cue H, Figure 11) and simply wrote it for the brass section to thicken the texture of the Coda.

Cello Solo

H Sostenuto con anima $\text{♩} = 85$

arco

f

203

GG

Fl.

Ob.

CL.

Bsn.

Hn.

B. Tpt.

Tbn.

Timp.

Perc.

Hr.

Pno.

Vc.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

C.

D.B.

Figure 11 Anima Projections.

I tried to switch the location of the ‘Cadenza’ and ‘Development’. The string ostinato from Cue P (see Figure 12) is used to ‘shadow’ the soloist’s cadenza.

The figure consists of two parts. The upper part is a horizontal timeline representing the structure of a musical piece. It is divided into sections: Exposition 1, Exposition 2, Solo trill, Development, Solo trill, Recapitulation, Cadenza, Solo trill, and Coda. Two red rounded rectangular boxes are placed over the 'Development' and 'Cadenza' sections. A blue arrow points from the 'Cadenza' box to the 'Development' box above the timeline. Another blue arrow points from the 'Development' box to the 'Cadenza' box below the timeline. Below the timeline is a musical score for various instruments: Vc. (Violoncello), Vln. I (Violino I), Vln. II (Violino II), Vla. (Viola), Vcl. (Violoncello), and D.B. (Double Bass). A box labeled 'P' is positioned above the Vc. staff, indicating the start of a cue. The score shows musical notation for each instrument, with dynamics like *mf*, *p*, *f*, and *ff* indicated.

Figure 11 the location of the ‘Cadenza’ and ‘Development’.

Although I intended to present a complex visual display, which would then translate sounds through tubes, the shadowing, which slightly modified the sounds emanating from the solo instrument, still needed further work. The effects created by the tubes were dependent on the seating position of the audience. For instance, a more tangible effect was evident when sitting facing one of the tubes. When using this idea in future pieces, I will allow members of the audience to walk through and around the spaces between the tubes. This will enable them to hear a more definite delayed sound and to experience the shadowing effect to a greater extent. To achieve an all-encompassing effect for an audience at big concert halls, I would want to amplify the tubes accompanying the orchestra, or I may investigate ways of clarifying the performativity of shadowing by using springs and tubes.

Generally the compositional process is an activation of the core concept (here the ideas of shadowing, and having a core personality and a shadow personality). Compositionally I believe the piece was a success but sonically I needed to improve my concept; for example, I used my Kraken cello for the cello concertino but hadn't realised that I needed to amplify the tubes because of the venue and/or the ensemble. So, even at the first attempt, at the RNCM, the piece was aurally disappointing in terms of what I wanted to deliver to the audience.

Consequently, sometimes I should have reconsidered how the performative features of my work increased the risk factors (i.e. the cello soloist had to be prepared to cope with connecting the springs on stage. If one of the springs got loose during her performance, I needed to have rehearsed with the performer/s the process of fixing and moving during the performance). Those making decisions about the project might have thought that this was necessary, but I think that this would have been part of the artwork and therefore would have altered my intentions for it in some way.

Chapter 4. *Tingling Performance*

The idea behind *Tingling Performance* was to create an environment and activate defamiliarisation/alienation where a tension of resonances between performers takes place in front of the audience. I've composed for four solo players (oboe, clarinet, trumpet, and cello), three actors, a percussion player, and a string quartet.

I designed a three-floor structure through which the audience could walk and move. Each performative space was referred to as a zone, where events of variable lengths continuously occurred. The audience could choose the angle and viewing position (place of their preference). The piece was performed in Tehran in July 2016. Two performers and four solo players were on the ground floor, a conductor, sound painting (which is the live composing sign language created in 1974 by New York composer Walter Thompson³³) and one performer were on the first floor, and a percussion player and a quartet ensemble were on the ground floor.

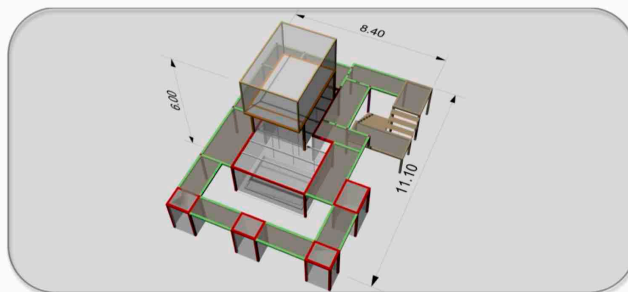


Figure 12 Three-floor structure.

The performance was designed to disrupt the natural synchronicity between sound and image and the normal methods of communication between performers and an audience. The idea in the work is to trick audiences' perception into creating a new, surreal sonic reality.

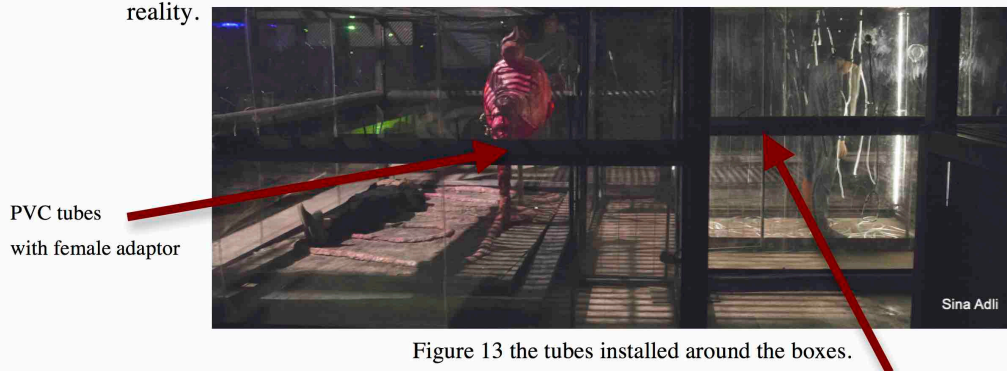


Figure 13 the tubes installed around the boxes.

³³ <https://www.cerenoran.com/what-is-soundpainting>

As Shown on Figure 14, the audience was asked to connect their stethoscopes – they had the option of using stethoscopes without diaphragms – to the tubes installed around the boxes. The boxes were made of a quasi-transparent fabric.

The seven Perspex boxes indicated the position of a performative event of a single performer. As can be seen in Figure 23, around each box there were PVC tubes. Inside the tubes, I had designed some speakers, which connected to the sound mixer and performers' microphones. There were many female adaptors coming out of the PVC tubes for connecting to the audience's stethoscopes.

The audience can connect their stethoscopes to the tubes.

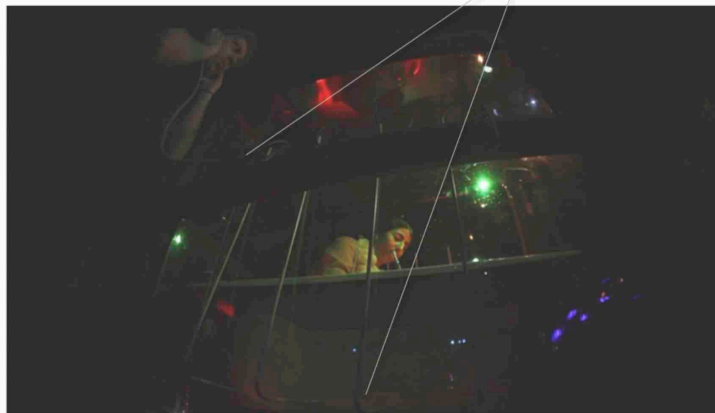


Figure 14 ©Sina Adli 2017.

Apart from a quintet on the upper floor, each performer could move inside their box and they were asked to live inside their zones and ignore the other performers' zones.

The light bulb inside each box was dimmed or was made brighter and was conducted/controlled by a conductor to cue the musicians and performers. The light bulbs not only attracted the audience to pay attention to the different boxes/zones (to move towards the boxes) but were also part of the lighting design.

Zone no. 1: Keep a Civil Tongue

This zone was situated on the first floor. This piece was inspired by misleading political rhetoric. A cow's tongue was used as a metaphor for dialogue and language in the piece. The actress in Zone 1 planted a tree sapling in a cow's tongue. She then planted flags on

different parts of the tongue. She shot arrows from a tube, thereby suggesting the use of weaponry and force. The interior of her Perspex box was covered with glassy plastic covers and she shot arrows at members of the audience who were gathered around the box. The arrows became impaled on the plastic covers behind the Perspex. The audience reacted to the arrows fired in their direction. We did not remove any of the arrows shot into the Perspex walls during the 40 performances. As a result, the build-up of arrows became a metaphor for human shadows and shooting triggers. Moreover, every single arrow represented the position of the individuals who had stood around the Perspex box.

I wrote the actress's script in Farsi and translated it as follows:

Do not enter transformation hastily
 Do not enter transformation hastily
 It would be cooked!
 A cooked transformation would lose its spiritual literature.
 When the war started... it went to The Front.
 The war of Others' Transformation with cooked transformation.

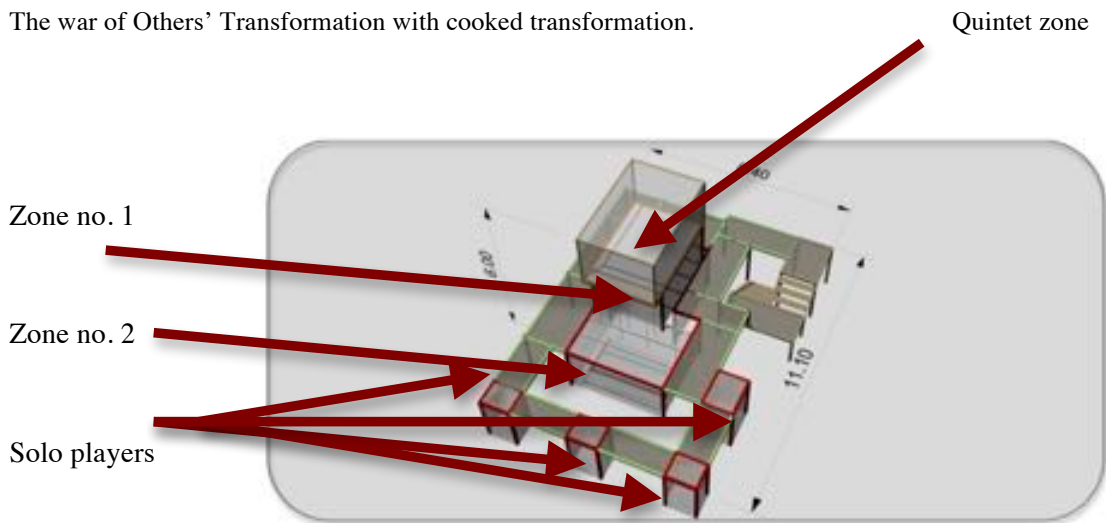


Figure 15 The zones.

Zone no. 2

This zone was on the ground floor and inside it there was a male performer. The man questioned some preconditions and some metaphors. For instance, if the horizon is not straight and aligned, then the vertical line will not exist perpendicularly. The man fears the time when the horizon is not level. He has difficulty digesting the implications of some remarks. Consequently, there is a fear of the perpendicular becoming misplaced.

The actor walked onto the swinging floor in his zone/box. The horizon of the moving floor was constantly changing. The horizon and the vertical lines were in fact metaphors for

imaginary threats and enemies. Some leaders convey their fear of these imaginary subjects as a real threat to justify their dictatorship. I wrote the actor's script in Farsi and translated it as follows:

I've always been scared if horizon would stay crooked

When it'd stay crooked, I mean the horizon,

So would the verticality.

Verticality divided by horizon

And well... digesting horizon.

Digesting verticality of horizon.

Such a prolixity if we don't consider the equality of one side of the stomach and the other side.

But it really depends (matters) where you stand on the verticality of horizon.

Here, Here? More here?

Sometimes the reputation (frequency) and the process of verticality of horizon is too motionless which turns into habit.

The habit would not let digestion digest anymore.

A lot of things would not digest

Some sentences words even an alphabet

Like digesting a full stop in sentences

Or digesting the neighbor's trash.

In time of war, he went to the front line vertically and came back horizontally. (He went to the front line alive and came back dead.)

"Getting information from others brings fear of awareness

Informed Others, the so called Others in small

And Others in Augmented, which are actually not too big,

Just take a glance at the others in small and certainly stand vertical on Others in Grand.

...and maybe..

The mistake arises when we assume verticality is what stands vertical on horizon...

Firstly, verticality is never vertical. Verticality is a lie! And on the other hand, why doesn't a horizon stand vertical on verticality?

But maybe we can still say junk that verticality, is that fear of horizon falling crooked.....

When the war started, verticality went to The front."

“Where were we?

This...this digestion of a full stop or the reputation of horizon...

Anyway, digesting a full stop in one word might be easier

but would take longer to excrete.

The shorter, well, the longer...

Short, long “. ... (Showing the measures by hand till the next dialogue)

“Somehow, the priority exists in this fear whether the horizon would stay crooked.

But the angle of keeping it silent depends on the curve of awareness angle divided by a neighbor’s Others’ trash.

About the others in Grand... You ‘re already acknowledged...

It’s a bit crooked!

Means if we don’t have others in Grand, well, there will be no fear in verticality of horizon then.”

Man: Horizon!

“And the fraction on the verticality of horizon...

And standing on the fraction of verticality of horizon!

.....fraction...ffffff...rrrrrrrrr.....aaaaa.....cccccc.....ttttt.....iiiiiiiiiii.....
ooooooooo.....nnnnnnn

And standing up on the fraction in transformation of horizon from one state to another Transformation.

From one state to another state

State of Transformation to another state of transformation (cooked)

From one state to another state

..... State to state.....”

Anyway, we have two kinds of mirror, related to the fear of crooked verticality of horizon.

1. The mirror of horizon image
2. The mirror of verticality image divided by horizon.

The fear of reflection perpendicular related to the image of verticality divided by horizon is highly common among Others in small and diminished.

Others in diminished find their needs in the existence of Others in Augmented.

And this kind of apparent obviousness is crooked by itself!

Actually, mirror is crooked, Horizon is crooked, crippled is the bride on foot.³⁴

³⁴ Translated by: Ghazal Aliary

Chapter 5. *Kairos* – concertino for trumpet and orchestra

Peter Brook, in his book *The Empty Space*, states:

Again with Shakespeare, we hear or read the same advice – ‘Play what is written’. But what is written? Certain ciphers on paper. Shakespeare’s words are records of the words that he wanted to be spoken, words issuing as sounds from people’s mouths, with pitch, pause, rhythm and gesture as part of their meaning. A word does not start, as a word – it is an end product which begins as an impulse, stimulated by attitude and behaviours, which dictates the need for expression. Some writers attempt to nail down their meaning and intentions in stage directions and explanations, yet we cannot help being struck by the fact that the best dramatists explain themselves the least.³⁵

After considering Brook’s notion, I examined what might be written in a music performance score, apart from sound ciphers/codes and notes. I deliberated on how I might choreograph the cueing of a player to produce something accurately and specifically from a mere sign on the music or elsewhere (possibly the conductor). My solo trumpet piece, *The Doll Aged*, written between 2015 and 2016, inspired me to write *Kairos*, my trumpet concertino. *The Doll Aged* is scored for a trumpeter submerged in a bathtub filled with water who is using the plastic head of a doll as a muting device.

This compositional/performance idea was inspired by my research into the violent political situation related to ISIS and my reading of the biographical history of Sigmund Freud. The work portrays metaphors such as the beheading of people and a child emerging from the vagina during birth (both happening simultaneously). As can be seen from the graphic score, part of which is shown in Figure 16, I tried to cue the choreography of the performer and to use extended techniques.

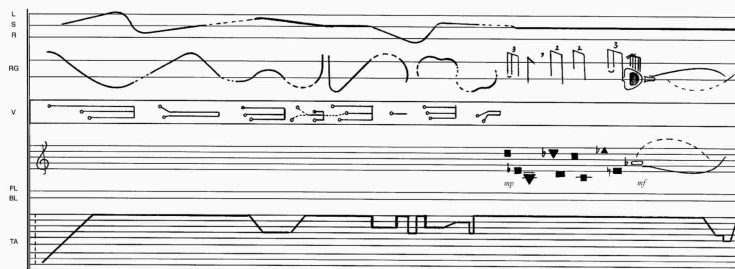


Figure 16 *The Doll Aged*

³⁵ Brook, Peter. *The Empty Space*. Hans-Thies Lehmann, Postdramatic Theatre (Routledge, 2006).1968.P.15

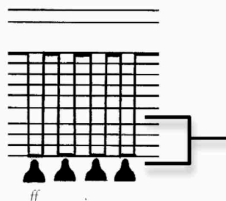
The Doll Aged was notated with several neutral (and unusual) clef staves, which denote varying aspects of the performance (Figure 17). This instructed physical actions as part of performance. The first three lines suggest the choreography of the soloist's head: left (L), straight (S), and right (R). Together, the fourth and fifth lines (RG) represent the rhythmic gestures of pitched material and spoken sound poetry, and indicate phrasing. The box between the rhythmic lines and the treble staff (V) indicates valve depression (e.g. half-valve) and clicking sounds. Valves are represented vertically, with valve 1 at the top.

The treble staff represents the pitches and dynamics, which are to be paired with directions from the other staves. The two lines below the treble staff indicate the height at which the doll's head should be held: face level (FL) or bell level (BL). The last section (TA), represents the relationship between the trumpet and the water.

The first six lines represent the angle of the trumpet in relation to the surface of the water.

The next four lines indicate the degree to which the trumpet is submerged in the water.

Each of these lines is described in detail below:

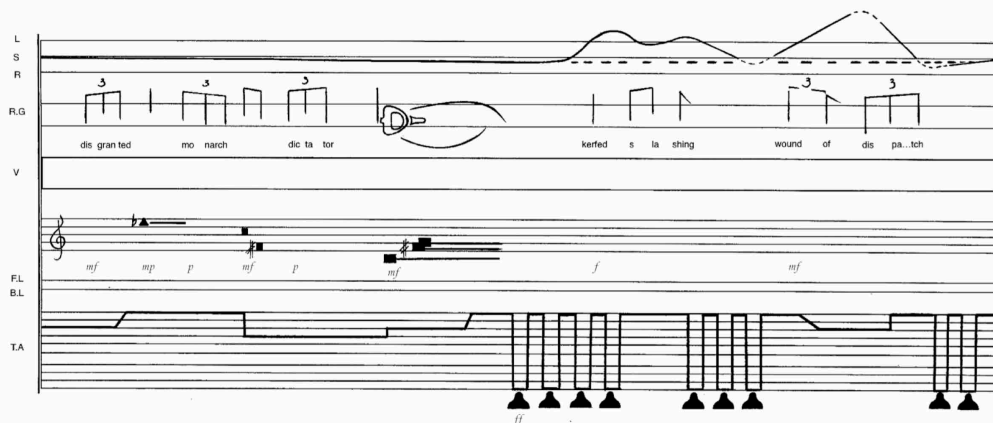


For the first line, the trumpet bell is partly tangent to the surface of the water.

The Second line indicates that the bell is partly under the water.

For the third line, the bell opening is more less flush with the surface of the water, such that it creates bubbles and a heartbeat-like sound.

Lastly, for the fourth line, the bell is completely submerged, creating louder bubbles/pops that cover the trumpet sound.



The musical score consists of several staves labeled on the left: L, S, R, RG, V, FL, B.L., and TA. The L, S, R staves show a wavy line representing head choreography. The RG staves contain rhythmic notation with lyrics: "dis gran ted mo narch dic ta tor kerfed s ta shing wound of dis pa..tch". The V staff is empty. The FL and B.L. staves show dynamics: *mf*, *mp*, *p*, *mf*, *p*, *mf*, *f*, *mf*. The TA staff shows valve depression with vertical lines and triangles, and a *ff* dynamic marking.

Figure 17 several unusual clef staves

There are some interesting connections between this idea and the ideas of some other composers such as Aaron Cassidy³⁶, David Rosenboom who have tried this discipline (which I found out during my composition process or and sometimes even after the performance).

David Rosenboom has composed a piece called *Zones of Coherence* (2003), which has been described as follows.

The score's cover sketch, viewed horizontally, depicts a mountainous horizon line viewed from the composer's back yard, suggestions of foliage, and a configuration time-space created by the most commonly used flight paths and landing spots for the birds in this ecosystem.³⁷

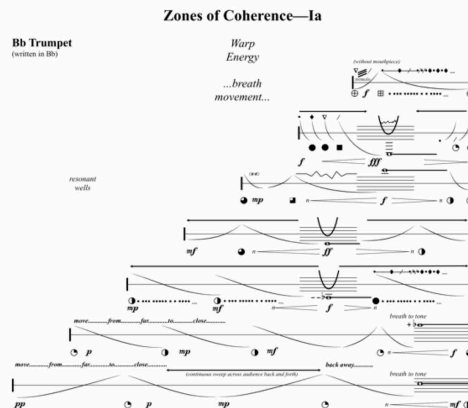


Figure 18 David Rosenboom's piece: *Zones of Coherence*.

I decided not to use the choreography details for the trumpet concertino for practical reasons, including a lack of rehearsal time with the RNCM orchestra (there were only two 20-minute rehearsals for a piece approximately 16 minutes long). This was not an issue at the rehearsal with the RNCM orchestra, but I also needed to consider the timing of rehearsals properly, and I preferred to try my 'situation making' – that is, the situation of a trumpeter in a bathtub – on this occasion.

The orchestration is based on conventional instrumentation. I've used prolongation techniques in the piece (although I tried to use them in a different way to the methods used in the theories previously mentioned).

³⁶ <http://www.aaroncassidy.com/music/smile.htm>

³⁷ <https://davidrosenboom.com/compositions-20012010>

Music theorist Joseph Straus has attempted to define more rigorously what it is about atonality that precludes prolongational hearing. His own definition of prolongation is the sense of continuation of a musical object, particularly when not literally present prolongation is a cognitive act of the listener.³⁸ As you can see below in Figure 19, I tried to activate prolongation for the French horn parts from bar number 22 (D) with different length and crescendos. They imitate each other and create pulses to keep up the momentum. To me, this simple technique could suggest a different prolonged effect, which I call ‘spatialised prolongation’. Two groups of players (1–3 horn players and 2–4 horn players) produce a left or right prolonged gesture underneath a bold melody, which is played by the solo trumpeter.

The image shows a musical score for French horn parts. It includes staves for Horn 1-3, Horn 2-4, Trumpet, Trombone, and Tuba. The score features various dynamics such as *f* (forte) and *p* (piano), and includes a large crescendo hairpin at the bottom. The time signature is 4/4, and the key signature has one flat.

Figure 19 prolongations for the French horn parts

Another way in which I tried to activate the prolongation was by using grace notes. As you can see below (Figure 20 and 21), the trumpet solo part has many grace notes to produce prolonged pulses with the mute. The mute is either the plunger mute or the doll’s head, and the sign 0-----+ suggests the player – the transition between the mute being on and off – and sometimes he/she can rotate the doll’s head to produce different effects.

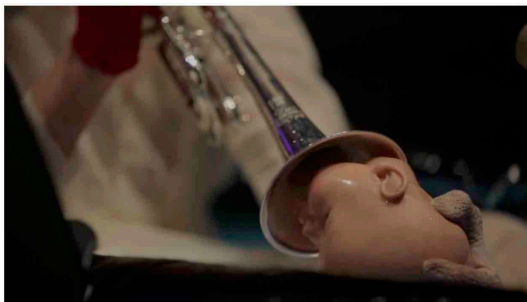


Figure 20 Doll head mute.

The image shows a musical score for a trumpet solo part. It includes staves for measures 152, 154, 157, and 160. The score features various dynamics such as *f* (forte) and *p* (piano), and includes a large crescendo hairpin. The time signature is 4/4, and the key signature has one flat.

Figure 21 grace notes to produce prolonged pulses.

³⁸ Schachter, Carl and Hedi Siegel, eds. *Schenker Studies*, 2006.

I used a 'water phone' to create the shadow of the solo trumpet part; for example, In Figure 22, we have the main motif of a trumpet part, superimposed with the effects of the water phone.

Figure 22 the main motif of a trumpet part, superimposed with the effects of the water phone.

There is another bold example of shadowing in the last bar of the piece (as shown in Figure 23): when the submerged trumpet produces bubbles, the water phone creates a 'shadow' with its bubbling sound that acts as a background for the noises the trumpet makes. I tried to finish *Kairos* in a way, which meant that the visual element and the composition pattern related to each other. I asked the trumpeter to submerge his trumpet in the water and the percussion player to imitate the shadows of the bubble noise with a water phone.

Figure 23 Waterphone produces a shadow to change colour.

Peter Brook categorised and engaged with different fields of theatre:

The Deadly Theatre, the Holy Theatre, the Rough Theatre and the Immediate Theatre. Deadly Theatre is where the director, actors and other creative contributors make a production that falls back on clichés instead of reinventing the production through the script. A play performed by leading artists in the best of classical theatres could be considered excruciatingly boring. The theatre has often been called a whore, meaning its art is impure or in another sense the whore takes the money and then short changes on the pleasure.³⁹

I intended to exploit the elements of ‘Deadly Theatre’ by finding the musical equivalent and juxtaposing a different kind of theatre within this. This will challenge conventional space in an orchestra but will not undermine ‘conventional’ performances; rather, it will investigate a new way of producing a theatrical end result without compromising the original intention.

I designed, and had built for me in Tehran, a portable bathtub, which I brought back to the UK with me. This incorporated the choreography, which needs to be directly correlated with the musical and theatrical elements. The performance shown in the submitted DVD took place in May 2017 at the RNCM. (BBC World News filmed it and produced a documentary, which will be shown in 2020).

³⁹ Brook, Peter. *The Empty Space*. McGibbon and Kee 1968.

Chapter 6. Film score projects

I received two commissions from different companies and both of them had a social subject.

Writing commercial film scores helped me to consider the ‘act of receiving’. It is not easy to comprehend the true notion of being a spectator, because a composer-performer can’t constantly imagine this when working.

It won’t be possible in recorded performances to have a constant exchange between the audience and the players. Writing the film scores gave me an opportunity to compare the difference between ‘conditioning the audience’ in my performances and not having access to the audience as a composer-performer. In other words, there is no concert set-up showing doing and all equipment will be part of the storytelling that takes place on the screen.

Chapter 7. *The Silent Child*

The Silent Child won the Academy Award (Oscar) for Best Live Action Short Film at the 90th Academy Awards. Directed by Chris Overton, the film explores the relationship between a social worker and her profoundly deaf and mute pupil born to a hearing and speaking middle-class suburban English family. Issues around deafness, special needs, and a reluctance to acknowledge society’s pressing needs are addressed in the film. This project produced two outcomes for me:

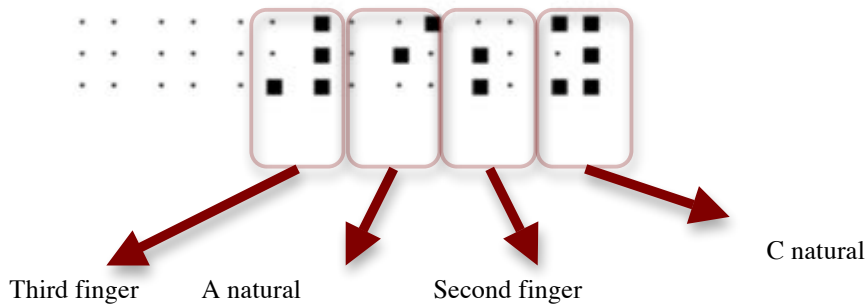
1. Commercial music
2. Political action/gesture.

I always send sketches to directors to help them identify what they want. In my experience, most directors know very little about the language of music so we need to create terms to enable us to understand each other. For this project, I knew that our mantra would be ‘our disability is diversity’ so I started to use my Braille idea. I tried to assign the name of the characters and lines in the script to the Braille code and transferred the dots to sounds. I needed to deliver the story of Libby, a profoundly deaf four-year-old girl who lives a silent life until a social worker teaches her how to communicate through sign language.

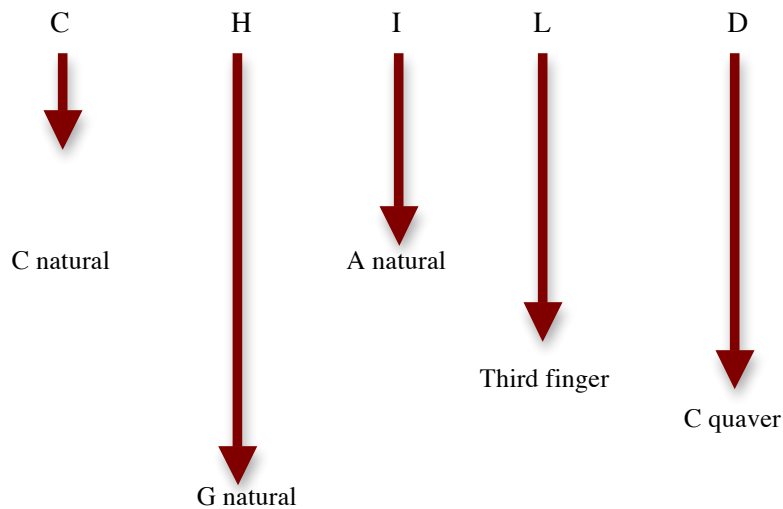
I converted the name Libby to Braille:



Libby in Braille music language is as follows, and I used A natural and C natural only for the main theme of the film:



I was inspired by the title The Silent Child, especially the word ‘child’ when I converted the music to Braille. As you can see below, I used the music notes C, G, A and C quaver for my composition and ignored ‘Third finger’.



The name Joanne was translated to B quaver, D natural, A, C natural, and D quaver. The name Sue was translated to A natural, D quaver, and E natural. Lastly, the harmonies that came from the words ‘The Silent Child’ were translated to Braille; I didn’t want to find a chord and instead used the pitches B, D, E, A, C, and G as a cluster.

Moreover, I didn't mention what I was doing to our director. Usually, directors approve the outcome when the composer superimposes the music onto the film footage. The process is not their priority. Although this concept was not used for the whole film score, there were some areas in the score where this technique proved helpful for me.

I intended to document my politically motivated vetoing of the Oscars, despite writing the score to a winning short film, as a performance piece in itself that would be emblematic of the practice at the core of this work. I planned to avoid the auspicious ceremony in protest at Donald Trump's travel ban on six countries, but I wanted to travel to the US. I applied for the visa and went to the American Embassy for an interview.

Sadly, I saw that my fellow countrymen and women had to queue and were spoken to very disrespectfully. The embassy staff treated me with respect, which I appreciated, but I had the same passport as my fellow countrymen and felt deeply sorry that this kindness had not been extended to them. This was not the whole story after the interview. I was sent an email from Washington and was asked for the username and passwords to my Facebook and Instagram accounts, a complete list of all the addresses I'd stayed at during the previous five years, the name of my girlfriend, and telephone numbers for members of my family. This email was very thought-provoking, and I thought I would apply for this visa but when I received it I would carry out my protest and wouldn't go to the Oscars ceremony. I subsequently received the urgent visa after completing the strange forms, and there is a line in my visa which reads: 'Presidential proclamation waived'!

Perhaps this signals an ephemeral performance that I will do in 10 years time that I intend to do! And this sentence is itself my artistic work and I'm still proud of making a situation which might be even more important in the future!

Chapter 8. *Radical Entropy Divided into Singularity*

The piece *Radical Entropy Divided into Singularity* is for string quartet over a 66-metre graphic score. It is based on László Moholy-Nagy's concept of the 'whole man' – a belief about sectors of human development. He was a Hungarian painter and photographer who was highly influenced by constructivism and was a strong advocate of the integration of technology and industry into the arts.⁴⁰

A human being is developed by the crystallization of the whole of his experience. Instead of extending our realm of action, as primitive man was forced to do since he combined in one person hunter, craftsman, builder, and physician we concern ourselves with a single specific vocation, leaving other capacities unused.⁴¹

However, circumstances often dictate that we become specialists rather than 'whole people'. Moholy-Nagy's idea closely resembles the transitional promotion of the 'new man'.⁴²

Moholy-Nagy stresses that a contemporary artist today needs to be a 'whole man': 'The primitive man combined in one person hunter, craftsman, builder, physician, etc.; today we concern ourselves only with one definite occupation, leaving unused all other faculties.'⁴³ With this notion in mind, this piece was created using an interdisciplinary approach. The entire piece was 'handmade' and was designed without using any software.

It was inspired by mathematical poetry: singularity in mathematics and politics. Every government creates a set of formulas through which it governs and directs the society in ways it desires. There are essential elements (policies, religious values, etc.) in these formulas that governments dictate must be accepted and used by society. A rationale is found in mathematics where the predefined functions of variables govern the range and domain. Consider a rational function such as $f(x) = 1/x$, in which x is our variable. The function returns real values as long as the variable x is not zero. As x approaches zero, the function tends to lead to infinity, returning extremely large values. Government-imposed functions have a similar trend; they are functional as long as the variables are the ones

⁴⁰ Schjeldatil, Peter (8 March 1970). *Moholy Nagy Champion of a Doomed and Heroic Cause*. The New York Times. Retrieved

⁴¹ Moholy-Nagy, László. *The new vision and abstract of an artist*. Wittenborn, Schultz, inc. New York 1947.

⁴² Patterson, David. *John Cage Music, Philosophy, and Intention 1933-1950*, Routledge 1st Edition.

⁴³ IBID.

desired. In countries like Iran and China, words such as Telegram, Twitter, You Tube, porn, and even Facebook are the variables that are not desired in the domain, and their presence triggers the act of censorship. The governments of these two countries impose large costs/penalties when people tend to set their life variables to fit with these singularities. A distinctive feature of totalitarian governments is an ‘elaborate ideology, a set of ideas that gives meaning and direction to the whole society’.

I designed a formula for each instrument and then used other invaluable objects to dismantle the same formula. Using a graphic score with ‘defamiliarised signs and notation’ for the players activated this concept.

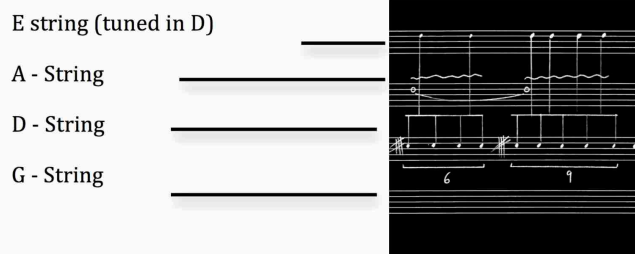
Radical Entropy Divided into Singularity is based on four superimposed parts along with a ‘non-exact timing’ technique. Fibonacci musical relationships and shapes from nature, extended techniques, and unusual scordatura for the cello part are represented on the graphic score.

1.Scordatura

The Cello and the second violin need to be tuned in a different way and transposition is required.



2.At different points in the piece, each string part is represented by more than one staff, each staff indicates the string which needs to be played. For example in this violin part, the bow needs to be played and crossed between the three strings: the E string (tuned in D for the scordatura)



As can be seen in Figure 24, the cello phrase produces different effects with its tuned strings. It has a deeper sound because the strings are tuned to a lower pitch, plus an effect is caused by the springs that I connected to the cello strings.

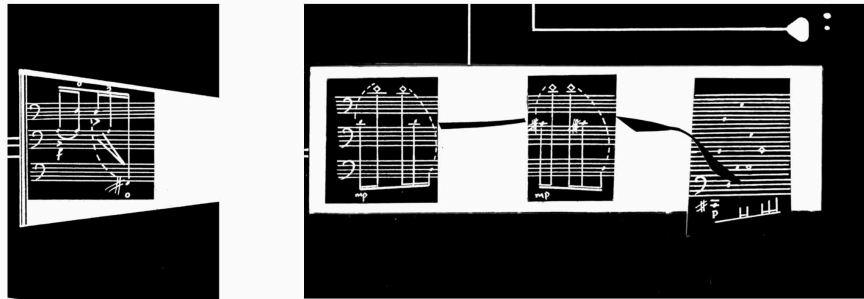


Figure 24 the strings are tuned to a lower pitch.

Four hourglasses (with iron filings inside) are given to the players. Each sand clock regulates the players' performances based on estimated timings. Three magnets installed on the sand clock divide the time allotted to each player. Players may also use the magnets to estimate their timing when playing the 'mobile' gestures.

The graphic scores are represented as a carpet laid out on the stage. The players perform in tandem; they put their feet on the graphic score and play (to show the 'performativity of the score'). As you can see in Figure 28, the musical score for this performance is represented graphically on a large carpet that is laid out in the centre of the room. Each musician plays the section of music under their feet as they step from one note to another, walking through the score. While I indicate the dynamics specifically for each line in my score, the enunciation of each player's part will be variable. Members of the audience will also receive different dynamics based on how far away they are from the individual performers and whether they are facing the audience or standing at an angle.

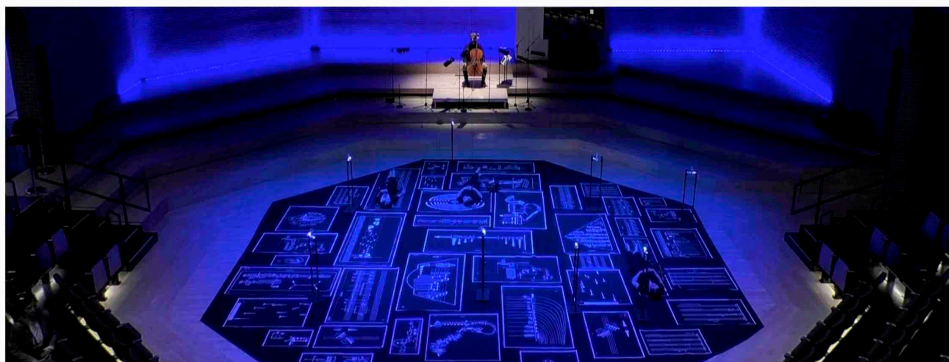


Figure 25, the musical score for this performance.

Another reason why I intended to create this 66-metre-long carpet was that I felt inspired by the tradition of Iranian carpet-making, which includes authentic styles originating from each region. The different weaves (warp and weft), textures, and patterns could be symbolised in the graphic score as I did here. Also, these vary among the regions of Iran according to local traditions and customs.

According to Doris Leslie Blau In [*sic*] Persia, each region, and sub-region, has its own unique design iconography that has been handed down from one generation to the next ensuring that each is distinct and special despite a basic commonality of construction. The type of material used, the method of tying knots and the density of knots per inch, combined with specific design schemes all give a unique cultural fingerprint to each carpet or rug.⁴⁴

For example in Figure 26, Tabriz Rugs feature medallions, hunting scenes, flowers, and gardens Other prayer and pictorial rugs are interpreted in a curvilinear manner.



Figure 26, Tabriz Rugs feature medallions, hunting scenes.

⁴⁴ http://factsanddetails.com/central-asia/Central_Asian_Topics/sub8_8g/entry-4539.html



Figure 27 popular composition of Isfahan carpet.

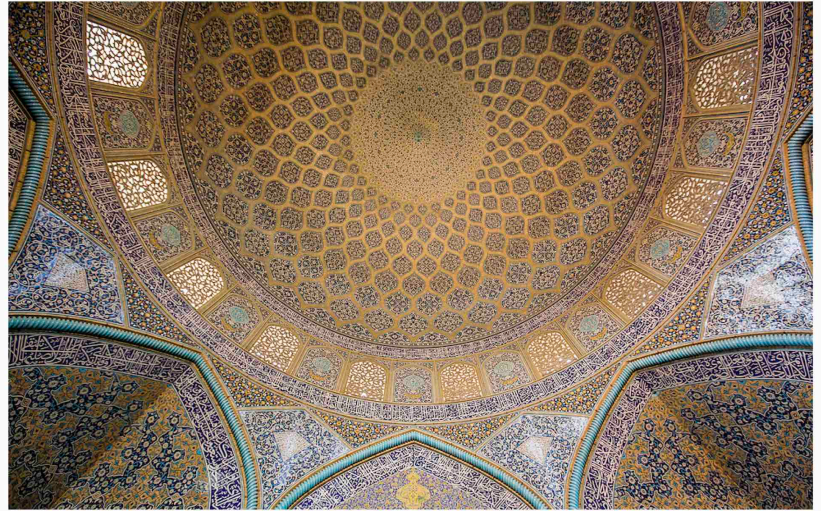


Figure 28 the famous mosque of Shah Lutf Allah in Isfahan.

Or the most popular composition of Isfahan carpet (As shown in Figure 27) is based on a circular central medallion (derived from the famous mosque of Shah Lutf Allah in Isfahan-as shown in Figure 28) set against an elegantly sculpted field decorated with intricately purling vine palmette and floral motifs.⁴⁵

I was very taken with this kind of regional concept, and I divided the regions of my carpet into three layers. As you can see in Figure 29, there are four zones:

The first is to the left: violin 1; the second is to the right: violin 2; the third is in the middle: viola; and the fourth is behind the carpet: cello (Kraken cello)

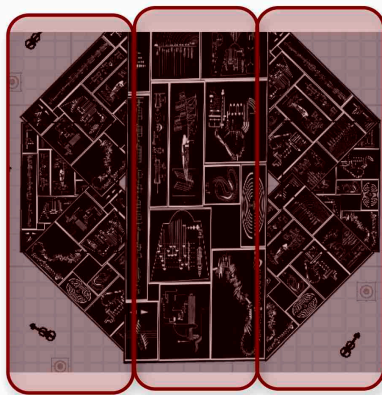


Figure 29 Regions of my carpet into three layers.

⁴⁵ http://factsanddetails.com/central-asia/Central_Asian_Topics/sub8_8g/entry-4539.html

Another technique that I used for my quartet is aleatoricism. Studying the second symphony and string quartet of Witold Lutosławski inspired me to try this technique in my quartet. For his string quartet, Lutosławski produced only four instrumental parts, refusing to bind them in a full score because he was concerned that this would imply that he wanted notes in vertical alignment to coincide, as is the case with conventionally notated classical ensemble music. So I did the same; the players were asked to sight read from the carpet and they needed to loop their ad lib parts. As you can see in Figure 30, there were some gestures that the players need to repeat.

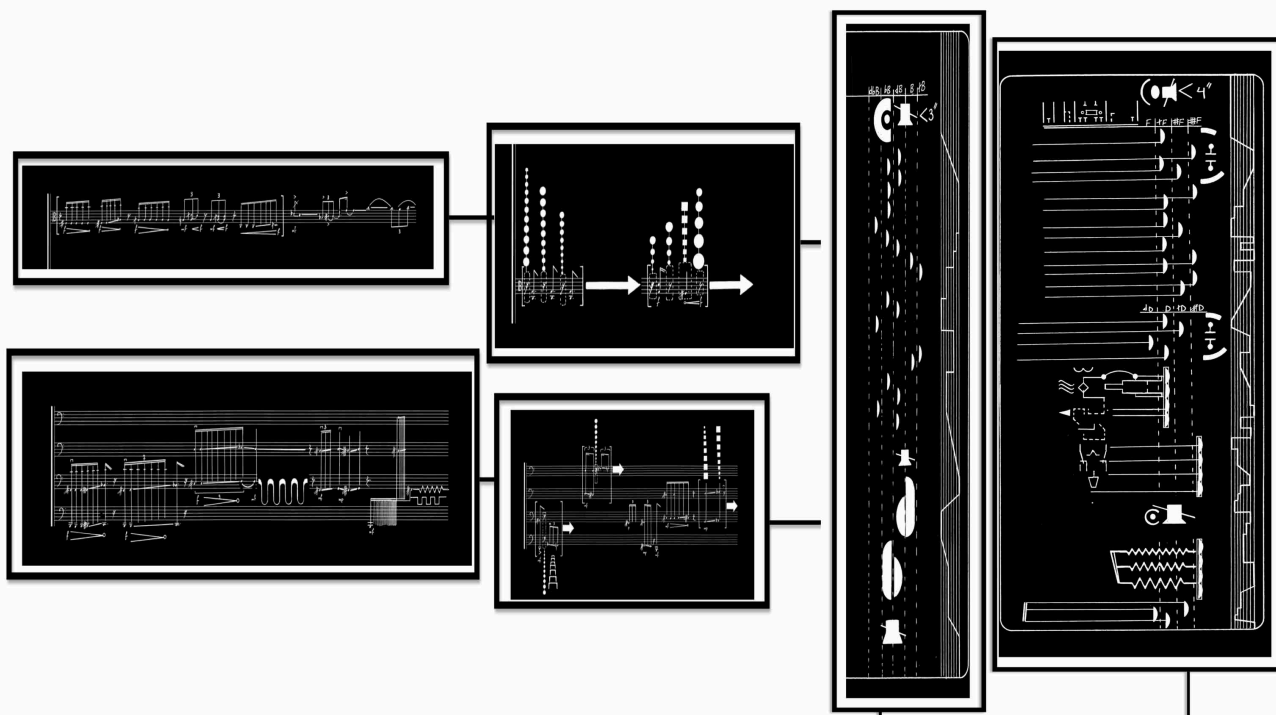


Figure 30 mobile gestures.

I added two signs to make sure the players won't forget to make changes when they repeat the loops. As shown in Figure 31, the circles and the squares represent when the phrase in the bracket is repeated to add to its length. For example, the first time the length is that of a crotchet, the second time the length of the indicated note is equal to a crotchet+ (hemi-demi-semi quaver). If the squares are gradually getting smaller, that means the length should be performed for a shorter time than the previous performance of it.

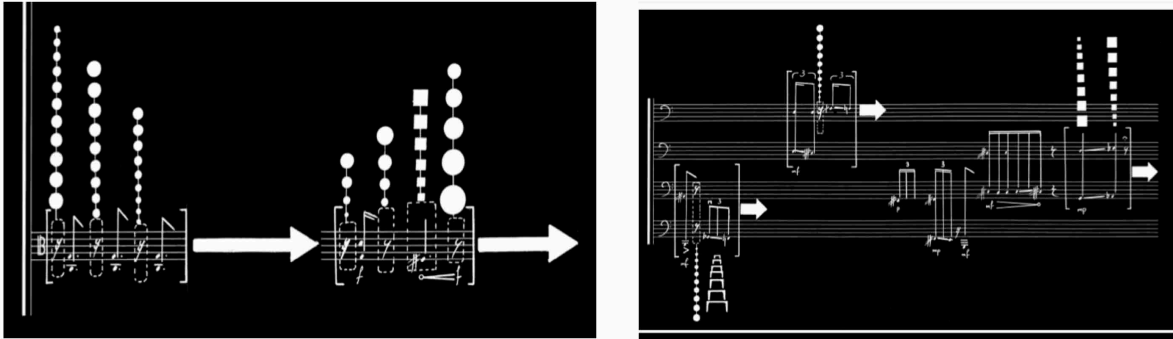


Figure 31 the circles and the squares represent when the phrase in the bracket is repeated to add to its length.

There were various scales that inspired me to write the quartet. I have mentioned one example in Figure 32 that is recognisable in this piece. I have composed some phrases in ‘dastgah Segah’ –Segah mode – (for violins one and two). The original Persian scale can be seen in figure 35.

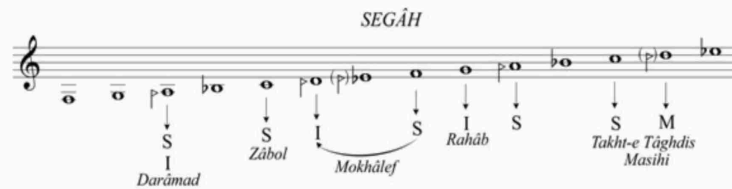


Figure 32 Segah Scale.

I was also influenced by the Iranian rhythmic element of *Zange Shotor* and composed two mobile phrases for the violin parts as shown in Figure 33.

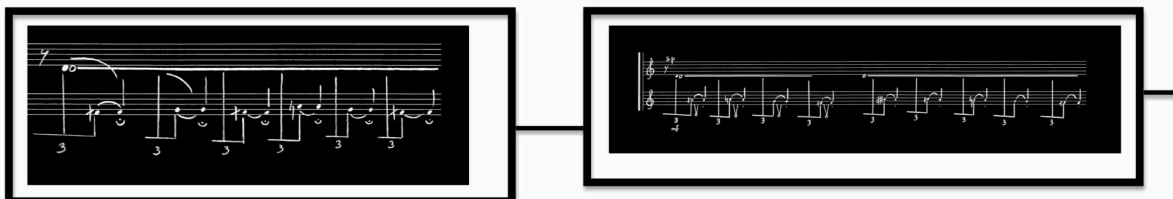


Figure 33 by the Iranian rhythmic element of *Zange Shotor* in my quartet.

Chapter 9. LSO performance: *To Be Someone Else is a Battle*

This project was designed as a culmination of much of my PhD work, as this involves my Soveida harp, Kraken cellos, ensemble, performance art, and art films all in one place. The programme included four new pieces and my quartet piece that was performed in the RNCM concert hall during the competition for the Gold Medal in 2017.

I started to design the performance based on the concert hall architecture by situation making and studying *The Paradox of Choice* by Barry Schwartz. His research addresses morality, decision-making and the inter-relationships between science and society⁴⁶.

In a TED talk, Barry Schwartz said: We've been told, the more choice people have, the more freedom they have. And the more freedom they have, the more welfare they have!

This freedom of many choices means that we have to make a decision again and again and our life is a matter of choice. All these choices have two negative effects on people:

1. It produces paralysis rather than liberation. With so many options to choose from, people find it very difficult to choose anything at all.
2. Even if we manage to overcome the paralysis and make a choice; we will end up less satisfied with the result than if we had fewer options to choose from. The more options there are, the easier it is to regret anything disappointing about the option that you choose.⁴⁷

Interestingly, John Cage had an idea in an interview with Miroslav Sebestik in 1991 about being a tourist which resonates with me a lot:

When I hear what we call music, it seems to me that someone is talking. And talking about his feelings, or about his ideas of relationships. But when I hear traffic, the sound of traffic — here on Sixth Avenue, for instance — I don't have the feeling that anyone is talking. I have the feeling that sound is acting. And I love the activity of sound... I don't need sound to talk to me. What I'm proposing, to myself and other people, is what I often call the tourist attitude — that you act as though you've never

⁴⁶ Schwartz, Barry. *The Paradox of Choice: Why More Is Less*, Ecco, 2004

⁴⁷ https://www.ted.com/talks/barry_schwartz_on_the_paradox_of_choice?language=en

been there before. So that you're not supposed to know anything about it. If you really get down to brass tacks, we have never been anywhere before.⁴⁸

I've designed this performance based on 'choicelessness' and otherness. The audience will walk through and discover/select their point of view and perception. I intended to design the structure for my audience, who might perceive two different feelings:

1. The feeling of missing something and having less satisfaction with the result of their choice, as there are some performances that will be happening simultaneously in the concert hall and they cannot be in two different perception points at the same time. (As shown in figure 34) 'In fact, they choose to miss other happenings!'

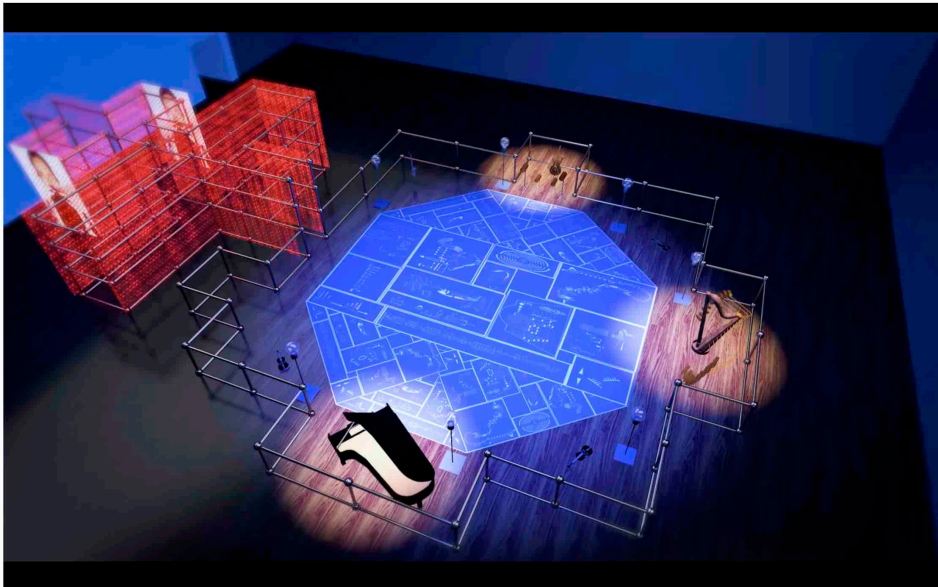


Figure 34 LSO Performance design.

2- when they come out of the performance, they might not expect to share the same perception with others. (Figure 38) This is similar to going on a trip, where there are so many places to go to and discover but not everything can be explored in equal measure or at all. Richard Schechner in his book *Performance Studies* talks about transportation and transformations. He says: 'Liminal rituals are transformation, permanently changing who

⁴⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pcHnL7aS64Y&t=2s>

people are.’ Sometimes nothing more than brief communities experience or a several-hours-long playing of a role are transportations.⁴⁹

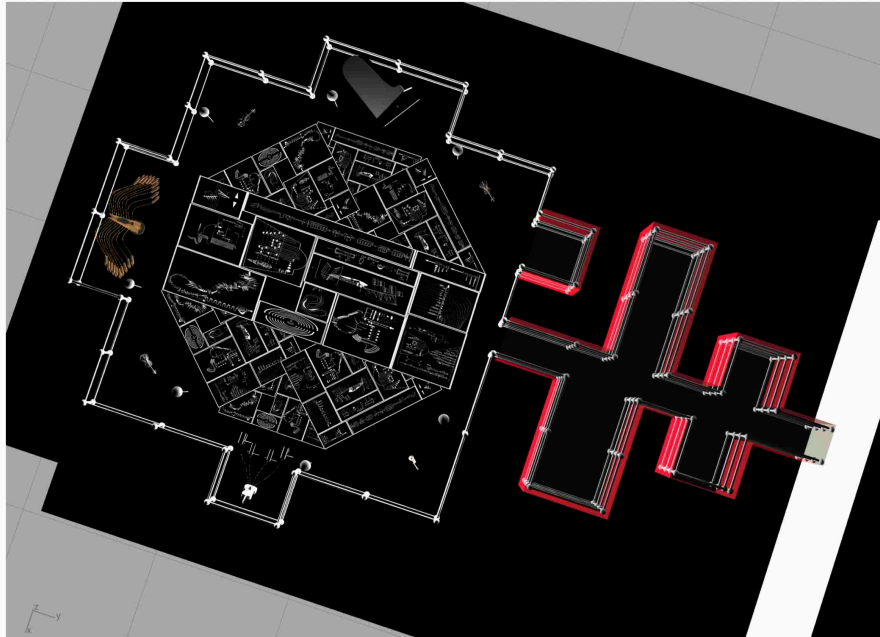


Figure 35 designing a trip/plan, where there are different places to go to and discover.

I found out as a composer and situation maker that I have a duty to plan my ritual rather than just composing and thinking of the content. Therefore, as a result of this, the whole programme was designed based on the following:

- a. The opening: how to interrupt my audience from their normal life and entice them into the performance as a journey.
- b. The instrumentation
- c. Situation making
- d. Composition.
- e. Displacement and interference.

⁴⁹ Schechner, Richard. *Performance studies*. Routledge. London and New York. 2013

a. Opening

I tried to integrate the audience's arrival into the actual performance, and therefore I added a 15-minute arrival time to gather the audience. Two cellos and a performer made looping/mobile gestures. The two cellos played the same piece, called *Taasian*, which had been premiered at RNCM with one cello; I revised it for two cellos so that they shadowed each other. They had the freedom to select one line from the score. This technique was similar to that of many 20th century composers who have inspired me over the years. For example, Henry Cowell used specially devised notations to introduce variability into the performance of a work, sometimes instructing the performers to improvise a short passage or play *ad libitum*.⁵⁰ Or Karlheinz Stockhausen's *Klavierstück XI (1956)*, which features 19 elements to be performed in a sequence to be determined in each case by the performer.⁵¹

b. Instrumentation

The instrumentation consists of a combination of conventional instruments and unconventional instruments/living sculptures. I introduced two Kraken cellos and a Soveida-Lever harp (Figure 39). I felt that it might be possible to utilise the same mechanism within a single instrument so that different parts of its body would resonate with others. So I designed the Soveida harp, which was inspired by images of lilies, rib cages, and an ancient Persian form of the harp called a Chang.

One advantage of this design was that I could make each string/lever create a separate note so that one could play Bb and B natural at the same time in different octaves. The harp projects most of its notes through its wide tentacles, spatialising the field of sound to produce a kind of stereo.

⁵⁰ Griffiths, Paul. "Aleatory". *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second edition, edited by Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell. London: Macmillan Publishers.

⁵¹ Boehmer, Konrad. 1967. *Zur Theorie der offenen form in der neuen Musik*. Darmstadt: Edition Tonos. (Second printing 1988.)

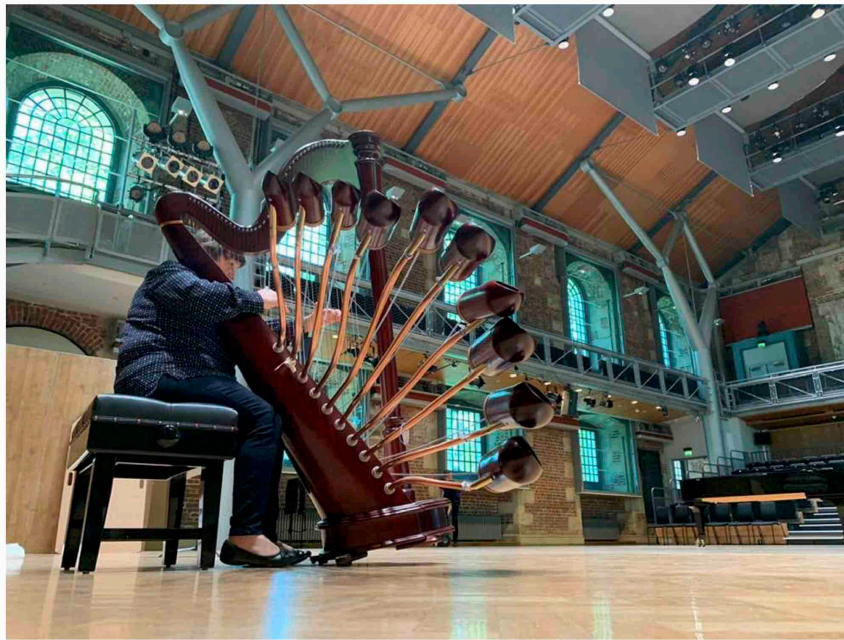


Figure 36 Soveida harp at LSO St Luke's.

For example, using the bisbigliando technique on this Soveida harp not only provides the usual special effect but also the audience can also hear the left–right stereophonic effect properly.



Figure 37 left–right stereophonic effect.

This exciting and worthwhile cross-cultural collaboration received funding from Iran Heritage, Jerwood Arts, the London Symphony Orchestra, and the Royal Northern College of Music. St Luke's hall had four speakers and we needed to amplify the harp sound with

20 tentacles. I asked the sound engineer to provide four microphones plus two omni microphones, and each directional microphone was connected to different speakers around the concert hall, and therefore we could get a sense of spatialisation. The arrangement of the microphones is shown below.

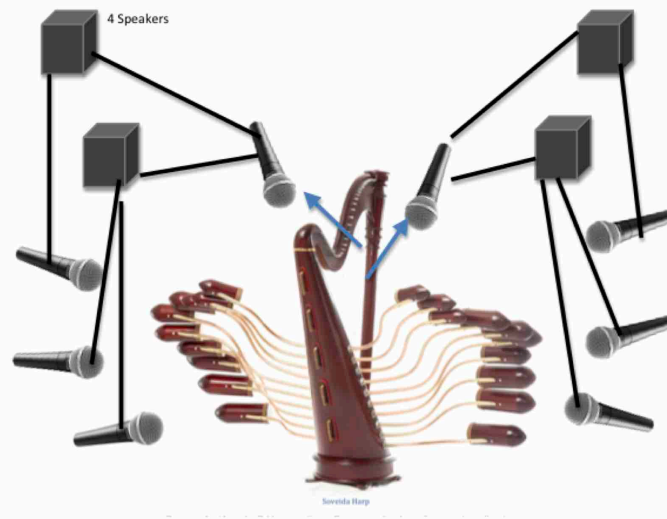


Figure 38 The arrangement of the microphones.

For example, and as shown in Figure 39, simple broken chords from the Soveida harp were projected from different speakers; this spatialisation effect provided a different experience for the audience.



Figure 39 Score of Soveida harp concertino.

c. 'Situation making'

From the 1950s, Pierre Boulez experimented with what he called 'controlled chance', and he developed his views on aleatoric music; he described it as 'the investigation of a relative world, a permanent "discovering" rather like the state of "permanent revolution"'.

His use of chance is very different from that in the works of, for example, Cage. While in Cage's music the performers are often given the freedom to create completely unforeseen sounds, with the object of removing the composer's intention from the music, in Boulez's music they may only choose between possibilities that have been written out in detail by the composer. This method, when applied to the successional order of sections, is often described as 'mobile form', a technique innovated by the composer Earle Brown and inspired by the mobile sculptures of Alexander Calder to whom Brown and Cage introduced Boulez when he was visiting New York in 1952.

For example in *Éclat* (1965), the conductor triggers the order in which each player joins the ensemble; in *Domaines* (1961–1968), it is the soloist who dictates the order in which the sections are played by his movement around the stage.⁵²

Pierre Boulez's musical directing method might be a way to demonstrate the 'play and react' element of what is written and what is not written in live performances. In some scores, an upturned hand is *forte* and a downturned one is *piano*, and there are two dynamic lines in the score for notes and phrases. This activates indeterminacy for the performance as well as adding a new element for the audience. These aspects are dependent on the audience seeing the conductor from the front, thus suggesting that performances in non-conventional spaces would also be part of the research.

I believe that making a situation for performer/s connects, in part, to the mentioned ideas although with some deviation. The difference is in our equipment, firstly the music and secondly the situation of the performer. (That is to say, regarding the former, this concept is embedded musically, and the latter refers to the limitations and situation of the performer.) I have been inspired by the play and react technique, and I thought it would be very useful to do some research about the 'sound painting' techniques of Walter Thompson to find a play and react technique which is compatible with the core of my works.

⁵² Nichols, Roger. "*Pierre Boulez obituary*". The Guardian. Archived from the original on 6 January 2016. Retrieved 6 January 2016

Soundpainting is the universal multidisciplinary live composing sign language for musicians, actors, dancers, and visual Artists. Presently (2019) the language comprises more than 1500 gestures that are signed by the Soundpainter (composer) to indicate the type of material desired of the performers.⁵³

For example, the gesture shown in Figure 40 below' means hit (the player must play one pitch very aggressively. If the player is playing from the score and conductor shows this sign, it means that she/he must hit a pitch and go back to the piece that she/he was playing.)



Figure 40 the hit Gesture. LSO Performance conducted by Amir Konjani.

⁵³ <http://www.soundpainting.com/soundpainting/>

This gesture shown in Figure 41 means 'the volume fader'. As a conductor, I could easily improvise with and activate crescendo/decrescendo.

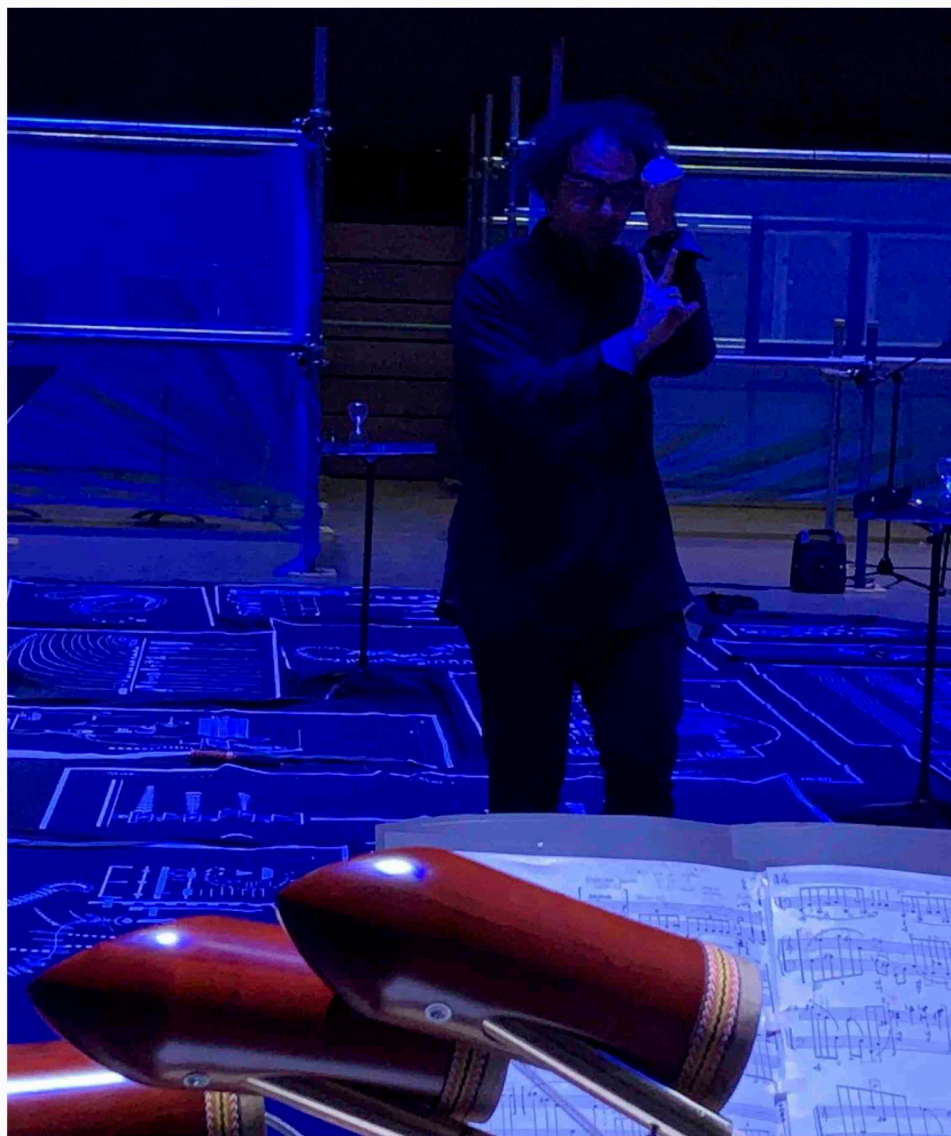


Figure 41 'the volume fader'.

d. Composition

Apart from instrumentation and situation making, there were more ideas for the content and composition. There were three types of composition for this performance.

1. Conventional music scores

Conventional writing was at the core of the harp concertino from the beginning. This was because I wanted to focus on orchestration and the effects of the Soveida harp, and maintaining a balance between them was a real challenge. I'd been working with the harpist Sioned Williams for more than a year to write this piece, including the new extended techniques. During the composing process, Sioned had two heart attacks, which provided a new emotional challenge in our collaborative journey. I had to choose either to continue my collaboration or to look for a new harpist. This was the first challenge, and then there was the question of Sioned's stamina and ability to perform with her debilitating illness (GSD V, which is also called McArdle Disease). I decided to start the piece with a challenging part and complicated rhythms, then make it gradually easier; I was thinking about using bridges to exclude the harp to allow time for Sioned to change the levers and to provide a little respite for her.

The most difficult part of writing for the harp was calculating the time needed between changing the levers. For example, there were some moments when Sioned needed to change 10 levers, and this shaped the form of the piece; as shown in Figure 42, I created some bridges between each levering set-up.

The image displays a page of a musical score for a concertino. The score is arranged in a system with seven staves: B. Cl., Hp., Pno., Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., and Vc. The B. Cl. staff is the top staff and contains a red arrow pointing to a measure. Above this measure, there is a box containing the text "8 Times Depends on our concert set up Lower Middle". The Hp. staff has a section marked "C 2 Sharp" and "Percussive effect with prepared strings Unpitched". The Pno. staff has a section marked "mp". The Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., and Vc. staves have various dynamics and markings, including "p", "mp", and "ppp". The score is written in a standard musical notation with clefs, notes, rests, and dynamic markings.

Figure 42 the bridge between the levering set-up.

As can be seen below, there are some charts, and the harp player needed to change the levers in about 10 seconds. It was possible that Sioned wouldn't have enough time to correct her levering if she made a mistake (at least for some bars).

BAR 1	2 E b D h C h B b A h G# F h	2A ^{nat.} G ^{sharp}
LEVER 1	3 E h D h C# B b A h G h F h	3E ^{nat.} C ^{sharp} A ^{nat.}
	4 E h D h C h B b A h G h F h	4E ^{nat.} A ^{nat.}
	5 E b D h C h B b A b G h F h	
BAR 3	2 E b D h C h B h A h G# F h	2B ^{nat.}
LEVER 2	3 E h D h C# B b A h G h F h	
	4 E b D h C h B b A h G h F#	4E ^{flat} F ^{sharp}
	5 E b D h C h B b A b G h F h	
BAR 4	2 E b D h C h B h A h G# F h	
LEVER 3	3 E h D h C# B b A b G h F#	3A ^{flat} 3F ^{sharp}
	4 E b D h C h B b A h G h F#	
	5 E b D h C h B b A b G h F h	
BAR 5	2 E b D h C h B h A h G# F h	
LEVER 4	3 E h D h C# B b A h G h F#	3A ^{nat.}
	4 E b D h C h B b A h G h F h	4F ^{nat.}
	5 E b D h C h B b A b G h F h	
BAR 6	2 E b D h C h B h A h G h F h	2G ^{nat.}
LEVER 5	3 E h D h C# B b A h G h F#	3G ^{sharp}
	4 E b D h C h B b A h G h F h	
	5 E b D h C h B b A b G h F h	
BAR 6	2 E b D h C h B h A b G h F h	2A ^{flat}
LEVER 6	3 E h D h C# B b A h G h F#	
	4 E b D h C h B b A h G h F h	4E ^{nat.} 4G ^{sharp}
	5 E b D h C h B b A b G h F h	
BAR 8	2 E b D h C h B h A b G h F h	
LEVER 7	3 E b D h C h B b A h G h F#	3E ^{flat} 3O ^{nat.} 3G ^{nat.}
	4 E b D h C h B b A h G h F h	4E ^{flat} 4G ^{nat.}
	5 E b D h C h B b A b G h F h	

Figure 43 levering chart for the harp player.

2. Aleatoric system

I was very taken by the aleatoric music when I was studying Lutoslawski's pieces.

Although my approach is musically different to Lutoslawski's aleatoric style (because the foundation of 'To Be Someone Else is a Battle' is based on performance design) the starting point of my composition was inspired by his fourth symphony.

I composed separate materials for each player. For example, as shown in Figure 44, the piano part has 10 numbers, the harp part has the same and the quartet has five mobile lines.

The image shows a musical score for piano and harp. The piano part is on the left, and the harp part is on the right. The piano part consists of ten numbered staves (1-10) with complex rhythmic patterns and dynamics markings. The harp part also consists of ten numbered staves (1-10) with similar rhythmic patterns and dynamics markings. The harp part includes a section labeled 'Mobile lines' with five numbered staves (1-5) showing different harmonic and melodic possibilities. The score is written in a complex, aleatoric style with many accidentals and dynamic markings.

Figure 44 mobile lines.

The rule was that the players could select their numbers with ad lib tempo, as an aleatoric technique, and I could conduct them sometimes. If a line didn't work I would cue the player to fade out. There were some cues that I needed to arrange with the actress involved, and I developed my composition techniques and real-time composition using sound painting.

There are two solo parts for the clarinet player and violin 1. When they performed, I cued other players separately to perform one of their lines as an aleatoric gesture. My rules for the mobile/aleatoric aspects were very simple: the performer could simply choose his/her line and play it in a loop. Each time I asked a player to make some changes, either the tempo (the length of line) or the dynamics would be changed.

In tandem with the lines being played in a loop, I could interfere and cue the player with my sound-painting techniques to change their line based on the happenings (based on what was happening in the hall), audience feedback, and the actress's script.

3. Activating 'showing doing'

By directing the performers live and sharing the cues with the audience, I tried to apply the 'showing doing' within my directing-conducting. In other words, an external element of the music was activating and navigating the sound in this piece. I should mention two examples of work by other artists that are related to my work: *Meeting the Universe Halfway* by Matthew Sergeant is about a 'something' that allows 'a something else' to be viewed – a 'something' that allows 'something else' to matter⁵⁴.

Matthew Sergeant created three musical apparatuses for *Meeting the Universe Halfway* that take the form of simple gravity-powered instruments that sonify chaotic systems. With all the apparatuses, the human operator's input is only very tenuously linked to its sonic output. In a sense, the matter from which his apparatuses are made is what is really in control of their sound. As such, these apparatuses are active in the sound-making process. These new contraptions are used alongside 'conventional' instruments (saxophone, flute, electric guitar, cello) throughout the piece and by the same players.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ <http://www.matthewsergeant.com/meeting-the-universe-halfway/>

⁵⁵ <http://www.matthewsergeant.com/the-apparatus-project>

Another piece, which inspired me, was Dominic Murcott's *The Harmonic Canon*, featuring one half-tonne double bell and an array of unusual metal percussion instruments and played by two virtuosic percussionists. Created in collaboration with sculptor Marcus Vergette and the American percussion ensemble arx duo, *The Harmonic Canon* is both the name of the piece and the double bell that was custom-made for it. Comprising two bells tuned a semitone apart, the bell was created using finite element analysis, a type of structural analysis that determines the vibration patterns of the bell, manipulating its harmonic series to create a complex series of frequencies that make up a note. The result is a sound world that straddles consonance and dissonance, murky and clear sounds, and pure and distorted sounds. Parts of the bells are in tune with each other, while others are out of tune, creating a unique 'beating' between the bells.⁵⁶

I had the same idea: 'something' allows 'something else' to matter. Sound painting and unusual conducting gestures, walking through the performers, and giving them a sign/cue were part of the piece as 'something', or I could call it 'showing doing'. I had organised cue signs for the sound engineer, lighting operator, and video operator. More importantly, the audience could see my signs when I intended to cue them, and I tried to embody my cues as part of music performance.

e. Displacement and interference

During the First World War, Oskar Schlemmer began to conceive of the human body as a new artistic medium. He saw ballet and pantomime as free from the historical baggage of theatre and opera and thus was able to present his ideas about choreographed geometry and the human as a dancer, transformed by costume and moving in space. Schlemmer saw the modern world as driven by two main currents: the mechanised (humans as machines and the body as a mechanism) and the primordial impulses (the depths of creative urges). He claimed that the choreographed geometry of dance offered a synthesis and that the Dionysian and emotional origins of dance become strict and Apollonian in its final form. I was inspired by Schlemmer's idea and designed a skirt for the performer of this piece (actress) to limit her movements.

⁵⁶ <https://www.nonclassical.co.uk/news/2019/4/2/k7300xda0lmbkgaz96w8skor42wluj>

As you can see below in Figure 45, I filled the skirt with feathers. There were computer fans and lighting inside it too. The actress turned the fans on for the last scene.



Figure 45 the skirt filled with feathers.

As shown in Figure 46, I used some displaced elements – the ribs of an umbrella connected to artificial nails instead of chicken claws on a rolling table.



Figure 46 the ribs of an umbrella connected to artificial nails.

I asked the performer to polish the nails. This is the ‘something’ that allows ‘a something else’ to be viewed – a ‘something’ that allows that ‘something else’ to matter.

Interestingly, this action has a different meaning in Iran. Polishing nails as shown in Figure 47 (chicken claws instead of the arms of an umbrella) is perceived as meaning that chicken is getting more expensive ... which it is!

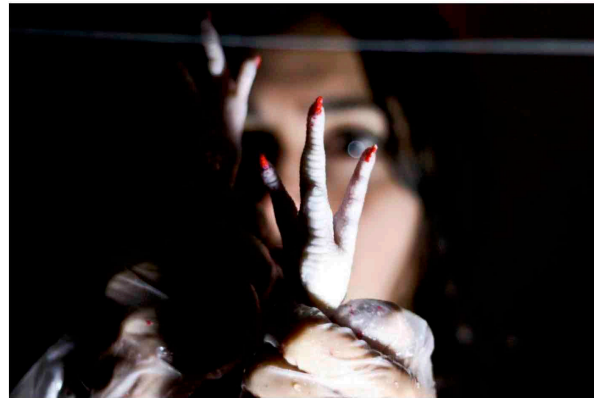


Figure 47 chicken claws.

Another displacement was the concept which was superimposed for the few last minutes of my LSO performance. As can be seen in Figure 48, I asked a visually impaired friend to be in a zone with his Braille machine and to make sounds. During the performance, he stood up, held up a mirror, and faced the audience, and they were face to face with a blind person holding a mirror; they saw their face in the mirror of a blind man who cannot see the world.



Figure 48 The visually impaired stood up, held up a mirror, and faced the audience.

Even if the audience wasn't sure that they were looking at a visually impaired person, my friend's body language and the way he moved demonstrated that he was indeed visually impaired.



As shown below in Figure 49, the actress was instructed to move within two boxes; the interior of her Perspex box was covered with glassy plastic covers and she shot arrows at the members of the audience who were gathered around the box.

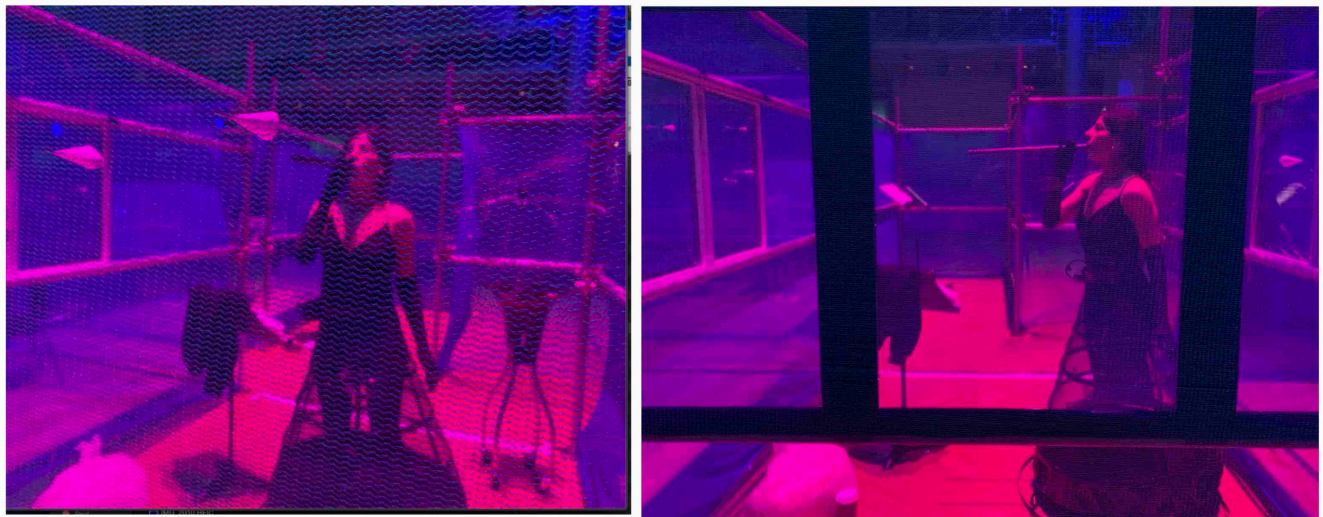


Figure 49 she shot arrows at the members of the audience who were gathered around the box. (©Photos by Maryam Nazari 2019).

Chapter 10. Conclusion

All of the decisions made during the composition process exist in tension with the intuitive/deliberate and the emergent aspects of it. This duality partly comes from my background and the country where I was brought up and is partly caused by pushing boundaries.

There are some compositional ideas that I intentionally used in different compositions and ensembles, such as using a percussive, repetitive cluster chord with a different dramatic element. For example, I used the same motif in two pieces: the first one was used in the trumpet concertino. When the orchestra performs the barbaric–percussive chord, the trumpeter creates louder bubbles/pops aggressively (from bar 246), but in the second piece – the harp concertino – I asked a performer who is visually impaired to walk through the performance set-up holding a rectangular mirror at the level of his midriff, as described at the end of the last section.



The reason why I used this idea is that I’ve tried to use the ‘body art’ concept, because historically ‘body art’ is also a subcategory of performance art. There are many performance artists who have used or abused their own body to make their particular statements or demonstrations. (For example, Valie Export wore a perforated black box on

her torso, into which she fitted her bare chest. Passers-by were invited to put their hands in the box and feel her breasts.)

As Shown in Figure 48, touch Cinema marks the beginning of what Valie Export calls *Expanded Cinema*, which breaks the commercial chain of the cinematographic industry by displacing the filmic object onto a stage or into the street.⁵⁷



Figure 50 Valie Export: Touch Cinema.

Shaw-Miller says:

Through the inheritance of the work and ideas of John Cage and the Fluxus aesthetic, the performance, or concert occasion, is to be viewed as a complex field of activities – visual, textual, and sonorous – one that, among other things, understands the concept of music as a discourse. That is, the performance exists as a conceptual constellation, orbiting sound but including the scaffolding that is necessary for the sound to exist (instruments, institutions, traditions, conventions, and so on).⁵⁸

⁵⁷ <http://www.newmedia-art.org/cgi-bin/show-oeu.asp?ID=150000000043135&lg=GBR>

⁵⁸ Cage, John. '45' for a Speaker' (1954), in *Silence: Lectures and Writings by John Cage* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), 148.

The foundation of all the pieces that I am submitting is performance art, and they all use an experimental approach. I found that ‘conditioning’ an audience is very important even from the beginning of a composition. The creation and utilisation of the Soveida harp forms part of my most recent achievement during my study at the RNCM, and I intend to develop it and compose for it more in the future.

As Brook says,

Everything about the theatre – not just its space – ‘helps to condition an audience’. He observes that there is almost always ‘an elaborate set of references conditioning us (on what to do and how to behave) before the performance begins’ and this typically goes on even after the end of the performance until we leave that space.⁵⁹

Apart from that, what I discovered during these four years has a deviation, which was inspired by performance art and all the isms I’ve mentioned before. I believe that situation making itself could be one of the essential discoveries of young composers.

Consciously and unconsciously, during my PhD journey, I tried to condition audience perceptions and sometimes it was essential for me to notate this conditioning effect. Most of the music scores I’ve written, such as of the *Doll Aged* piece (trumpet solo), *Taasian* (cello solo), *To be someone else is a battle*, *Topaz*, the *Rigid dichotomy*, *Kairos*, *Anima projection*, were all influenced by situation making. And without adding the factors of aleatoric/happenings and audience perception discovery, the form, harmony and orchestration would have had different outcomes and consequently would have been less interesting for me.

As long as the commissioner gives a composer enough flexibility to push the boundaries outside the box, “showing doing” as showing the “process of composing”, or showing “the direction of art delivery”. This could fuel the composition and sustain the momentum of composition. (For example a simple technique of bisbigliando with normal harp is less effective in my opinion, in comparison with the Soveida harp stereo bisbigliando sound projection).

⁵⁹ Brook, Peter. *The Empty Space: A Book About the Theatre: Deadly, Holy, Rough, Immediate*. London: Penguin. p. 11

When we look back, we find situation art (situations are used to unlock new opportunities and perspectives and to try to achieve change for people and places through extraordinary art experiences that grow out of a place) and site-specific performance but also all of the other fields which could be added to the composer's skill set.

I believe this kind of situation making might even have the potential to be a field to investigate as an element of composition courses in universities and conservatoires. I'm currently working on a curriculum in this area with the aim of it being approved to teach at Trinity Laban in London.

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Chapter 12. Appendices

Appendix I-Amir Konjani, Complete list of compositions. (2015- 2019)

The following list documents, in chronological order, all of my works composed within the period of this research (July 2014 – Jun 2019) and not the contents of the accompanying portfolio (see Appendix II).

Title: *The Doll aged*

Composed: July 2014-2016

Instrumentation: Trumpet Solo

Duration: 13'

First Performance: US-CalArts

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sg4Nbf97rc>

Title: *Anima Projection*

Composed: 2015

Instrumentation: Kraken Cello (prepared cello) and Ensemble.

Duration: 10'

First Performance: Manchester-RNCM

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7pJtN6msj74>

Title: *Tingling Performance*

Composed: 2015

Instrumentation: 15 performers. (Performance/Performance art)

Duration: 10'

First Performance: Manchester-RNCM

Extracts: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bp_J_wKTqKA&feature=youtu.be

Title: *Tingling (Art film 1)*

Composed: 2016-2019

Duration: 5'

First Performance: Manchester-RNCM

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4wK6nOjDxm4&feature=youtu.be>

Title: *Kairos*

Composed: 2016

Instrumentation: RNCM Brand new Orchestra. (Full Orchestra)

Duration: 16'

First Performance: Manchester-RNCM

Unlisted link to watch:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a38vDhKIfsE&feature=youtu.be>

Title: *Topaz* (RNCM Gold medal)

Composed: 2016

Instrumentation: Piano Trio.

Duration: 8'

First Performance: Manchester-RNCM

Unlisted link to watch:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NfaYFqrMqI0&feature=youtu.be>

Title: *Rigid Dichotomy*

Composed: 2016

Instrumentation: Bass Clarinet, Soprano Sax, Alto Sax, Trumpet in C, Trombone, Percussion, Piano, Double Bass.

Duration: 10'

First Performance: Manchester-RNCM

Unlisted link to watch:

<https://soundcloud.com/amir-konjani/the-rigid-dichotomyclark-rundell>

Title: *The Silent Child* (OSCAR winner movie)

Composed: 2017

Instrumentation: Clarinet, piano and string ensemble.

Duration: 20'

First Performance: **The Academy Awards-US**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QmQUWGuKxi4&t=91s>

Unlisted link to watch:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sk9hekuj-Lc&feature=youtu.be>

Title: *Radical entropy (Quartet over 66-meter Carpet)*

Composed: 2018

Instrumentation: string quartet

Duration: 10'

First Performance: Manchester-RNCM

Unlisted link to watch:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6L_JVgKBFpQ&feature=youtu.be

Title: *Tassian*

Composed: 2018

Instrumentation: Kraken Cello.

Duration: 9'

First Performance: Manchester-RNCM

Link to watch:

<https://vimeo.com/256567065>

Title: *To Be Someone Else is a Battle*

Composed: 2019

Duration: 10'

First Performance: LSO St Luke's hall

Unlisted link to watch:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uAf98OCRh0U>

Title: *Soveida Concertante*

Composed: 2019

Instrumentation: Soveida harp and ensemble.

Duration: 11'

First Performance: Manchester-RNCM

Unlisted link to watch:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uAf98OCRh0U>

Appendix II

Contents and order of accompanying portfolio of composition (seven pieces)

a. The Doll aged

b. Anima Projection

c. Kairos

d. Radical entropy (Quartet over 66-meter Carpet)

e. To Be Someone Else is a Battle (Performance)

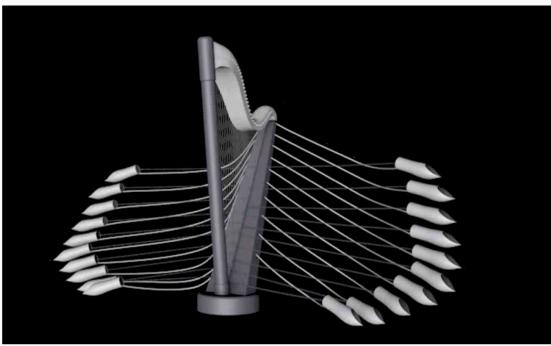
1-Tassian (curtain-raiser)

2- To Be Someone Else is a Battle (Sound painting and aleatoric parts)

f. Soveida Concertante

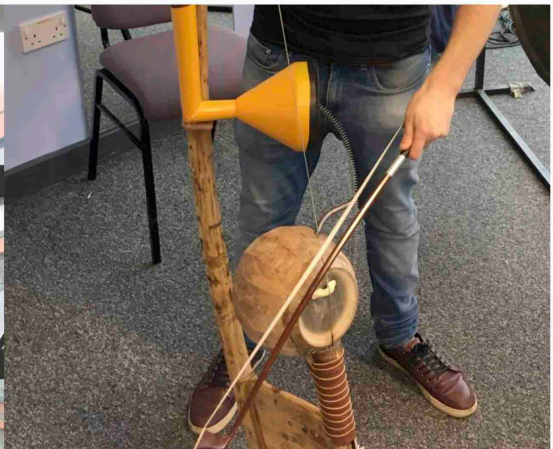
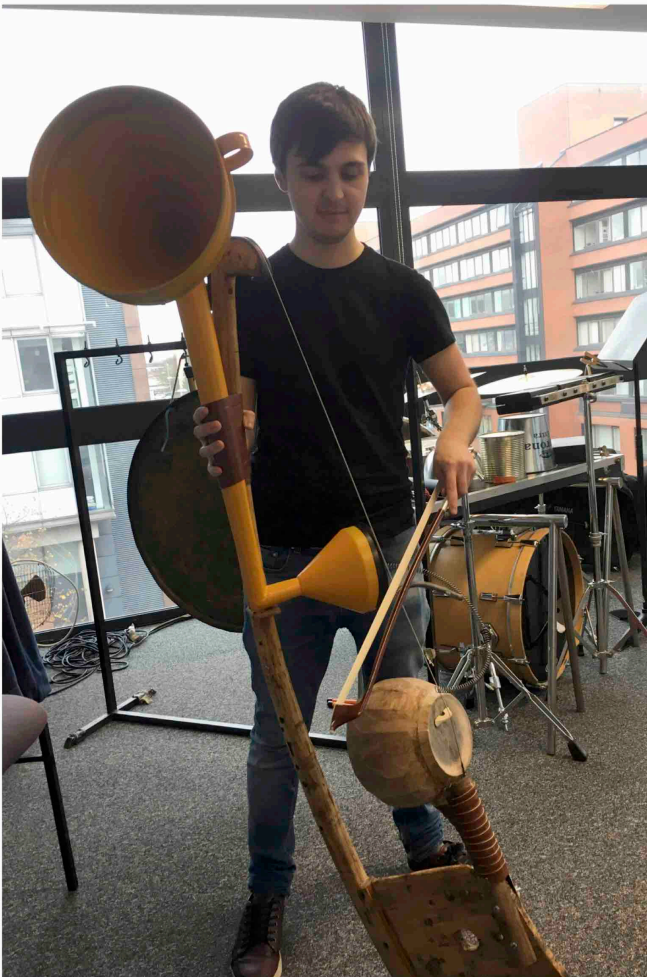
Appendix III -Photos of the designed instruments (The building process)







Rigid Dichotomy- Performing sculpture:



Appendix IV - Scripts in Farsi (Tingling Performance)



توضیح اصطلاحات و فضای ۲ اتاق

-اتاق معده در طبقه همکف یا رَجَم شماره ۲

-طبقه بالا یا رَجَم شماره ۳

در رَجَم شماره ۲ در واقع از چند اصطلاح استفاده میشود

افق: در فلسفه، از آسمان بر فراز زمین، مجموعه‌ای دانسته میشود از چیزها که گرد همدیگر آمده اند، گونه‌ای کلی یا منطقی مفهوم یا نظام توانمندی آگاهی. افق شکل تازه‌ای از وجود است، وجودی پر شیار، بار دار یا در بر دارنده کلیت

آشکارگی: راز معنا. صحبت از پاسخ برای انسان هیچ چیز هراس آور تر از نبودن پاسخ نیست

هم انگاری: به معنی اتحاد و در فلسفه هنر به معنی انطباق، هنر جکستاپوز می‌باشد

در رَجَم شماره ۳ به نام همسایه، زنی به اجرا می‌پردازد که از ۳ المان صحبت می‌کند

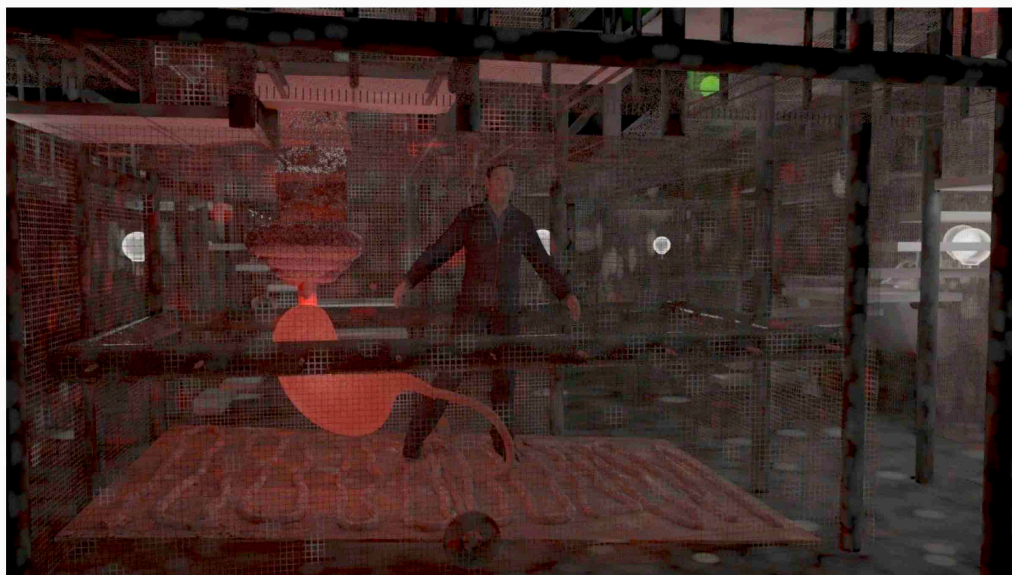
الف. دیگران بزرگ : جامعه ، فرهنگ، زبان، و آنچه از دور میاید و قابل دسترس نیست و تماشاچیان

ب. دیگران کوچک: هر آن چیزی که قابل دسترس است، اجرا کننده میتواند ببیند و لمس کند. حتا بخشی از بدن اجرا کنند که آن را مستقل از خود بدانند

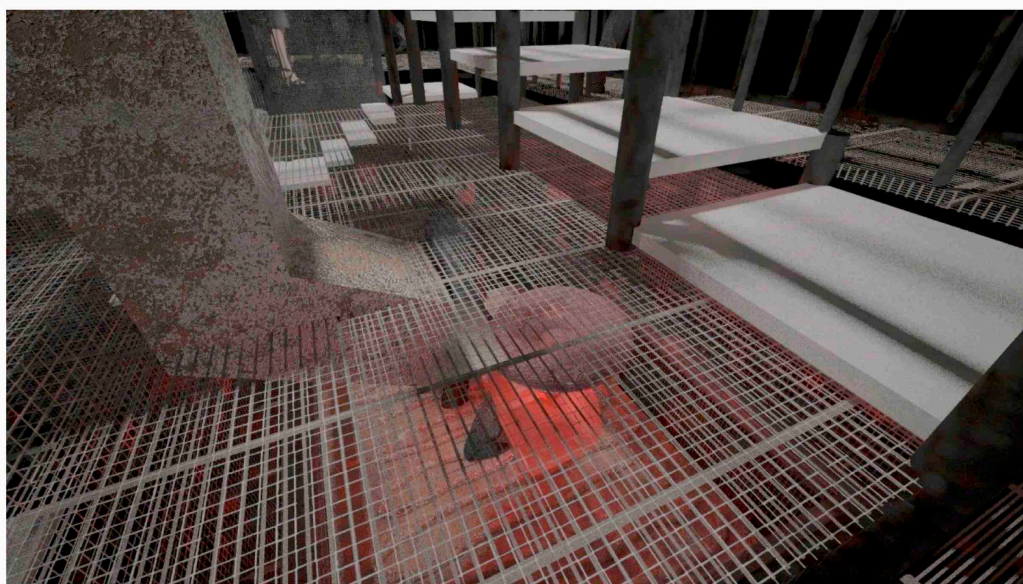
ج. ارتباط با دیگران: که به نام "آشغال" از آن یاد میشود در متن

رحم شماره دو

این رحم در آن پرفرمی اجرا دارد که مشغول عمل هضم می‌باشد. در واقع در وسعت اتاق یک معده قرار دارد و روی زمین سطح نا میزانی که بازیگر با تکان دادن سطح به حرکت معده و روده‌ای که روی آن سطح می‌باشد کمک می‌کند.



در همسایگی این اتاق، در طبقه بالایی، یک زن ساکن است که اشغال‌هایش از طریق شوتینگ به داخل اتاق پائین آمده و داخل معده می‌افتد و بدین گونه دو بازیگر با هم در ارتباط خواهند بود.





همانطور که در داخل اتاق مشخص است، دور تا دور اتاق لوله‌هایی قرار دارند تا تماشاچی آنها را به سر گوشه‌های پرشکی خود نصب کند و روی سقف این اتاق هم فضایی برای ایستادن تماشاچی تعبیه شده است.





در واقع، تماشایی از چندین جهت حق انتخاب خواهد داشت به طور مثال، اگر یک تماشایی روی سقف این اتاق بایستد هم طبقه پائین و هم طبقه همسطح خود را کامل می بیند و در طبقه سوم که نوازندگان قرار دارند نیز، دید او باز خواهد بود.



اتاق روده و معده

! همیشه ترس من این بوده که افق کج بایسته



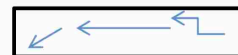
وقتی که کج بایسته افق،



! عمود هم کج می‌ایسته



. عمود بخش بر افق



! و خب.. هضم افق



. هضم عمود افق



. روده درازیه آگه به برابری یک طرف معده با طرف دیگه معده فکر نکنیم

. اما واقعا بستگی داره که کجای عمود افق ایستاده باشی

!گاهی تکرار و پرداخت عمود افق، اون قدر ساکنه که عادت میشه

عادت دیگه نمیذاره که هضم بشه
خیلی چیزا هضم نمیشن
بعضی جملات...کلمات...حتا به حرف
مثلا هضم نقطه توی جملات
و یا هضم اشغال همسایه

-صدای اشغال انداختن همسایه بالایی در مجرای بالایی معده میاید-

کجا بودیم؟

...همین...هضم نقطه یا همون تکرار افق

به هر حال

هضم نقطه توی یک کلمه شاید راحت تر باشه

..اما مدت زمان تخلیه رو بالا میبره

.هر چه کوتاه تر، خب..بلند تر

یه جورهایی اولویت توی ترس از اینکه افق کج بایستند ه اما

.زاویه مسکوت کردنش بستگی داره به انحنای زاویه آگاهی، بخش برآشغال دیگران همسایه

!به دیگران بزرگ که خودتون...مستحضر هستین...یکم کجه

!یعنی اگه دیگران نداشته باشیم که ترس از عمود افق وجود نداره

!ما دیگرانی داریم که بین تصویر و آینه، این همانی ایجاد می‌کنن

.ما دیگرانی داریم که ترس از خود عمود افق رو خویشتن عمود افق تلقی می‌کنن

این همانی خویشتن و تصویر

یا این همانی آشغال همسایه با تصویر این همانی آشغال همسایه

. یا ادراک آشغال همسایه با آینه تصویر این همانی ادراک آشغال همسایه

. به هر حال ما دو نوع آینه داریم در ارتباط با ترس از کجی عمود افق

آینه تصویر افق- ۱

آینه تصویر عمود بخش بر افق- ۲

در واقع، اجتناب از آشکارگی آینه از جایی شروع می‌شود که گرفتگی مجرای عمود افق،
هضم رو پس بزنه

وقتی هضم، هضم نشه

. خارش در سطوح عمود افق، از کار می‌وفته

. خارش در واقع، آگاهی بخش بر عدم آگاهی

آگه شما ترس از آگاهی رو با ترس از عدم آگاهی همزمان مصرف کنین، ذهن شما به خارش
!نمیفته

!و یا از خارش می‌وفته

و چون اسیدهای متفاوتی برای هضم لازمه

. من مجبورم به تنهایی، به تک تک خارش‌های پیش نیامده، رسیدگی کنم

زن:

دیگران بودن مثل یه جنگه!

-دیگران کوچیک

-دیگران بزرگ

دیگران بزرگ در دسترس نمی‌باشد.

و دیگران کوچیک، ... مستقل از اطراف... قابل لمس
و اغلب اوقات "بیش از حد طولانی" (زیانش را در می‌آورد و
نمادی از لیس زدن را نشان می‌دهد)

نوعی احساس عادی بودن...

اما... اما وای به حال دیگران بزرگ!

وقتی که جنگ شد... رفت جبهه، همین دیگران کوچیک.

جنگ دیگران و دیگران. (با نیشخند)

دیگران و... دیگران ها.

و دیگران و... دیگران... تر ها.

پخسش... بییب

پخسش... بییب

پخسش... بییب

دیگران بودن مثل یه جنگه!

در اینجا ناتوان بالاست، همچون ازدواج با دختری جوان!

نماد تاثیر متقابل

خطی است که پیش رفته

راهی میانه دارد، همراه با گرایشی نا خود خواسته.

همچون اندیشه‌ای که در حال، به روشنی در آمده.

دیگران در حال به روشنی در آمده.

انجام...، در عوض.
انجام، در عوض سازگاری نهفته!
سر گرم کردن سازگاری نهفته با زبان.
جنگ (زبان) با زبان. (زبان‌ها رو با زبانش نشان می‌دهد)
لکنت ---- با ----- .
پخشش.... بیپ... (زبان میزند و تکرار می‌کند)
پخشش.... بیپ... (تکرار می‌کند و کم کم صدایش کم میشود)

مگس بر متر مکعب! واحد شمارش دیگران،
جهان بدون مکعب، و یا جهان بدون مگس، دیگران نداره!
و یا دیگران بدون دیگران واحد شمارش نداره
در اینجا ..
ناتوان بالاست،
همچون ازدواج با دختری جوان!

نماد تاثیر متقابل
خطی است که پیش رفته
راهی میانه دارد، همراه با گرایشی نا خود خواسته.
همچون اندیشه‌ای که در حال، به روشنی در آمده.
دیگران در حال به روشنی در آمده.

با شتاب وارد دگرگونی نشوید،
می‌پزد
دگرگونی پخته ادبیات معنویت را از دست می‌دهد.
فکر کنید
این چاه، دیگ است...
چی... نه... هاهاها
دیو نه.... دیگگگگگگ
و سپاسگزاری بر پخت اندیشه را آگاه می‌کند.
دیگران بودن مثل یه جنگه!

Appendix V – Accompanying DVDs, Track details

DVD 1

1. *The Doll aged*
2. *Anima Projection*
3. *Kairos*
- 4 *Radical entropy* (Quartet over 66-meter Carpet)
5. *Taasian* (Solo Cello)

DVD 2

1. *To be someone else is a battle* (performance)
 - a. *Tassian* for two cellos (curtain-raiser)
 - b. *To be someone else is a battle* (sound painting)
- 2- *Soveida concertante*

DVD 3

1. *Rigid Dichotomy* (Performance)
2. *Topaz*
3. *Tingling* Performance
4. *The Silent Child* movie
5. *The Silent Child* wins best live action short film. (Oscar ceremony)
6. Soveida harp-building process
7. LSO proposal-3D
8. LSO video art no.1
9. The building process-Living Sculpture
10. Animation no.1 for LSO performance
11. *Tingling* (adverts)
12. Animation no.2 for LSO performance
13. LSO performance design
14. LSO video art 3

