

For a 'Dramaturgy of the Piano Recital' –
an investigation of interdisciplinary strategies
for live classical piano performances

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Abstract

This research investigates interdisciplinary strategies for live classical piano performances. The questions which initiated this research emerged from my practice as a classical pianist, and they are concerned, in particular, with the space of the performance, the formalities of the concert etiquette, and the format of the presentations themselves. Although the conventions of the concert hall and the respective idea of *music alone* have been widely established since the mid-nineteenth century, the understanding of music as an intrinsically multimedia experience has been increasingly explored in contemporary academic and artistic works. This research aims to contribute to this context by exploring the idea of dramaturgy in the development of interdisciplinary piano performances as comprehensive art works, and by offering alternative ways to engage audiences in classical music performances. To this end, experimental piano performances have been devised to investigate the topics: (1) interdisciplinary dialogues within musical performances; (2) alternative strategies for the space of the performance and for the engagement of audiences; (3) application of concepts of dramaturgy and narrative to interdisciplinary piano performance. Theoretical and practical works in the fields of music performance, theatre and dance have been examined in order to contextualise this study. Findings have been drawn from a reflection-in-action process, which was supported by audience feedback and included considerations on my experience as author and performer, and discussions on the literature review. The outcome of this research shows that interdisciplinary works can demonstrate innovative strategies, introducing new audiences to classical music - to contemporary classical repertoires in particular - and offering fresher ways of engagement to experienced spectators. Ultimately, this research contribution to the classical music field consists of offering new insights for the format of live music performances, new parameters for the classical pianist's practice, and the introduction of the concept of an artform recital.

to my parents
(aos meus pais)

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Preface - Motivation and Early Explorations

I had been building my career as a solo recitalist when I started to question some conventions involved in classical music performances, especially regarding the lack of visuals in the performance space, the formalities of concert etiquette, and the format of the presentations themselves. That questioning continued to grow during my experience as member of the Brazilian Music group PianOrquestra, in the early years of my professional music career¹.

We were five musicians playing one piano simultaneously, exploring extended piano techniques in compositions influenced by Popular Brazilian Music. Gradually, we realised that our shows had great potential in terms of visuals, due to amount of movements that we performed, and to the playfulness of the objects that we utilised in the piano preparations. We then decided to take advantage of this aspect, and integrate choreography, lighting and video in our performances. I became fascinated by the creative potential held by those dialogues between the arts, and was intrigued by the impact our shows had on the audience. A situation that specially marked me, was when the group was on the tour bus coming back from the show, and our new technician could not calm his enthusiasm, saying that he 'could not take the silly grin off his face', being in awe after witnessing the show. I was then fascinated by this possibility of creating a 'magical world' through music performance. I began to enquire how the incorporation of visual elements in my solo piano recitals could potentially help to create these unique and enchanting experiences, for me and for the audience together.

From reflecting on my practice and the social context of my life, I conjectured that projects which cut across artistic disciplines may have a particular relevance to contemporary life; especially considering the simultaneous stimuli that we constantly receive in the tumult of modern urban culture. Furthermore, I have realized that my understanding of a musical piece usually includes both aspects – the musical realisation and a strong visualisation of the work. That perception increased as I became more interested in attending contemporary dance concerts² – I felt a strong identification with the aesthetic of those works, as if realising that, often, I do not only hear, I also see music.

I started to further develop this side of my creative process during my MA in Contemporary Arts and Music at Oxford Brookes University (2011-2012). In the projects designed during

¹ I was a member of PianOrquestra ensemble from 2003 to 2007 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. More information about the group at <http://www.pianorquestra.com>. (Accessed 30 August 2017).

² Some groups that were particularly influential to me in that period are: Companhia de Dança Deborah Colker (Brazil), Grupo Corpo (Brazil), Momix Dance Company (USA).

that period, I explored dialogues between piano performance and installation, and I approached questions of audience engagement with physical immersion of the spectator in those performances/installations. Additionally, I sometimes offered possibilities for audience members to do different activities during my live piano performances. For my final project, I presented three piano recitals as an installation in a park, in order to explore the music experience in relation to the environment³. After the course, I continued investigating the role of co-presence and visual engagement in live music experiences, through works combining live piano performance and video⁴. Those explorations often received warm responses, sometimes with audience members saying they felt near to a spiritual experience, or were greatly impacted by the augmented sense of presence of the performer due to the visuals.

Those explorations fuelled my passion for the subject, and gave me the initial insights which allowed me to frame the research questions that would guide this PhD investigation.



Fig. 1. *PianOrquestra* – video, lighting and choreography while playing piano extended techniques. Brazil (DVD release tour), 2006. Photo source: PianOrquestra website.

³ Documentation of some of those works can be found at <https://kesiadecote.wordpress.com/works-piano-and-beyond/>

⁴ In the project *Hide and Focus* (June 2013) I played the piano hidden behind curtains at the back of the audience, whilst a video capture of my performance was being live projected. Documentation available at: <https://kesiadecote.wordpress.com/works-piano-and-beyond/hide-and-focus-debussy-on-screen/>. In the music event *A Stammtisch with Erik Satie, John Cage and Oxford Improvisers* (April 2014), I took part in a remote musical collaboration, when my performance was live broadcasted from Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) to Oxford (UK), as solo and in ensemble participation. Events page: <https://www.facebook.com/events/1387394441534214/> (Accessed 30 August 2017).



Fig. 2. Cuyana in threads - piano performance and threads coming from the piano to encourage audience participation. Work presented as part of MA in Contemporary Arts and Music, Oxford Brookes University, December 2011. Photo: personal archive.



Fig. 3. A Musical Box – final work for MA in Contemporary Arts and Music, Oxford Brookes University. South Park, Oxford (UK), September 2012. Photo: personal archive.



Fig. 4. Hide & Focus - piano performance with hidden pianist and live video projection. Presented at Playground Arts Platform, Oxford, June 2013. Photo: still from video documentation (personal archive).

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We have eyes as well as ears, and it is our business while we are alive to use them.
(John Cage, 1957)

Introduction

This research investigates interdisciplinary strategies applied to piano recitals, aiming to offer alternative ways to engage audiences with live classical music performance⁵. The ultimate aim of this study is the development of a dramaturgy for piano performances, i.e., the understanding of creative processes that can support a cohesive weaving of the elements in an interdisciplinary piano recital, in order that the work emerges as a comprehensive art work⁶.

According to Weber, the term 'recital' has been related to solo or small ensemble full length concerts since the mid-nineteenth century. Liszt's performances in the mid 1800s are considered the earliest examples of piano concerts termed as 'recitals', and have established the grounds for the format as we know nowadays: a one-person performance for the entire event, who would also interpret works by other composers (Weber, n.d.).

As a type of classical music concert, the piano recital usually implies a series of conventions which, in Small's point of view, indicates the nature of a ritual, 'an event taking place within our society, at a particular time and in a particular place, involving a particular group of people' (Small 1987, 8). Small describes some elements that characterise the 'ritual' of the classical music concert: (1) the dedicated place where classical music performances usually take place is the concert hall, which should be ideally soundproof, and should provide an ante-room for the audience, as a transitional area between the outside world and the space of the performance; (2) the stage should provide as little visual interest as possible, and the audience seats are to be arranged in rows facing it; (3) regarding to the concert etiquette, the audience is expected to be in total silence and seated as immobile as possible during the performance, and the performers usually assume a formal behaviour – they frequently wear formal outfits, enter through a separate door and 'rarely if ever speak to the audience from the platform' (Small 1987, 8-11).

However, those conventions were not the norm until mid-nineteenth century. Cressman describes the concert hall as a product of the nineteenth-century ideals of absolute music

⁵ In this research, I am using the term 'classical music' as the common synonym for concert music from the Western European tradition.

⁶ Here, when utilizing the term 'comprehensive', I am flirting with the ideas from the concept *Gesamtkunstwerk*, regarding to the combination of the arts to the same artistic end (Sadie, 1994). However, the scope and length of this research would not comprise a more in depth discussion on that concept. Thus, that reference is taken here only in the realms of inspiration, where its more immediate definition can motivate a search for cohesive interdisciplinary practices.

and devout listening (2012, 98), which were then ‘translated into designs that encouraged listeners to listening attentively’ (idem, 11). Specifically addressing the question of concert etiquette, Weber points out that as late as in the 1860s, the audiences at both the Parisian café-concert and the London music hall ‘could eat, drink, talk, or interact with what happened on stage’ (Weber 2008, 294).

Similarly, in more recent times, from the mid-twentieth century to current practices, the codes of the ‘ritual of the concert hall’ have been increasingly questioned, as observed by Cox and Warner:

contemporary musical practices and technologies have problematised [that] traditional mode of auditory apprehension and have necessitated a new discourse around listening (Cox and Warner 2004, 65).

Among those most recent initiatives, the London-based Nonclassical project, organised by composer Gabriel Prokofiev, has been promoting concerts in the style of club nights, in pubs and alternative venues. They encourage the audience to have an informal attitude, similarly to the usualness of jazz clubs and popular music events, as stated in the website of the project:

The success of the night partly stems from the fact that it presents classical as if it were rock or electronic music. Bands play through the pub’s PA, everyone has a pint in their hand (...). Classical music can be part of everyone’s lives and this night is part of rediscovering its relevance⁷.

In addition to discussions about concert etiquette, there have been a growing number of works exploring innovative proposals for the format of the concert itself⁸. Pianist/artist Tomoko Mukaiyama has been ‘investigating the concept of performance and the limits of the concert hall’ in piano performances that integrate disciplines such as installation, video, fashion, and dance⁹.

In the academic context, there is a relevant body of research works tackling issues of interdisciplinarity in music performance, with a significant number of studies directed at instrumental performance techniques and composition¹⁰. Within this context, my research

⁷ <https://www.nonclassical.co.uk/about-us/> (Accessed 29 March 2017).

⁸ For other examples of such initiatives, see Sound Unbound (Barbican, London).

⁹ <https://tomoko.nl> (Accessed 29 March 2017). Some of Mukaiyama’s pieces will be discussed along the chapters of this thesis, as key references for this research.

¹⁰ As examples of academic events that reflect the growing interest in interdisciplinarity within the music field, in the first year of this research I attended ICMEM - The International Conference on the

interest lies in the piano recital as a work itself: I propose to explore a sense of narrative throughout the unfolding of the performance as a tool to build the dramaturgy of piano recitals which integrate elements from various disciplines. This investigation focuses on strategies to shape the context of performances of pre-written repertoires, as a reflection of my practice as a musician-interpreter. This study ultimately aims to develop the concept of an artform recital, i.e., a piano recital that is designed as a comprehensive work of art, and a more immersive experience. The main contribution to knowledge of this research consists of the generation of new insights for the presentation of classical music and innovative strategies for the engagement of audiences.

The questions devised to guide this research are:

- Question 1: Can audience engagement with live classical music be enhanced by bringing other elements, such as visuals, into dialogue with music performance?
- Question 2: How can one offer other possibilities to experience a classical music performance to a contemporary audience?
- Question 3: What strategies can be explored to re-shape a piano recital/performance into a more comprehensive and physically immersive artistic experience?

As practice-based research, experimental projects were developed to address the research questions, and to examine specific questions that have arisen during the investigative process¹¹. In the next section, I will briefly introduce the main lines of the methodology, whereas further discussions on specific methods are addressed in the main text, alongside each of the research projects.

Notes on Methodology

The practice-based nature of this research implies the process described by Schön as 'reflection-in-action', which involves thinking about what we are doing, 'sometimes even while doing it' (1983, 50). According to Schön, in the reflection-in-action process, the researcher, while trying to assess a certain question, is also trying to make sense of the understandings which are implicit in the practice and which may emerge from it. This

Multimodal Experience of Music 2015 (Sheffield, UK), which approached the multimodality of music experiences under a variety of disciplines such as psychology, computer science, and music performance. In the second year of research, I presented a paper at MuSA - International Symposium on Music and Sonic Art: Practices and Theories 2016 (Karlsruhe, Germany), which featured advance interdisciplinary researches in Music and Sonic Art. In that same year, I presented a paper at XXVI Brazilian Association for Research of Musical Performance Conference, 2016 (Belo Horizonte, Brazil), which had discussions on interdisciplinary involving music, as the focus of that year edition.

¹¹ A full list and detailed description of the projects developed in this research can be found in the Portfolio of Works, supplied in separate volume.

process then leads to criticism, restructuring of the problem and embodiment in further actions (idem, 50).

As a common feature of practice-based artistic research, findings often emerge which are not anticipated at the beginning of the investigation. To this effect, Schön adds that, 'when intuitive performance leads to surprises (...), we may respond by reflecting-in-action' (1983, 56). Moreover, Barrett highlights the ever-changing characteristic of methodologies in artistic research, where strategies may emerge and be adjusted according to specific demands from the practice (2010, 4-5).

In this research, the process of reflection and practice generally follows an ever continuous dynamic of one process leading to another: investigations into the literature inspire the development of practical work, then practical work inspires questions that lead to further investigation into the literature and development of new practical work.

From the practical work, reflections are drawn from my own experience as author and often performer, and are supported by audience feedback. The audiences of the projects consisted of peer art researchers at PhD Seminars, and of external audience at public performance sessions. Peers' feedback, which was collected during forums of discussions at the end of the sessions, brought additional analytical insights to the creative processes. External audiences would leave anonymous written responses in questionnaires or comment books, or, less often, would engage in informal conversations immediately after the performances. Written feedback revealed a more detailed account of the spectator's experience: while the questionnaires were useful to assess specific topics, comment books allowed unexpected aspects to emerge. On the other hand, direct conversations offered opportunities to receive more spontaneous reactions and to observe the immediate impact of the works. Additionally, reports on the projects were presented in academic events, which fostered further discussions on the creative and reflective processes¹².

This reflexive approach to the practice is grounded in accordance with Barrett's assertion that 'knowledge is generated through action and reflection' (2010, 5). Here, action (music performance) and reflections are ultimately applied towards the generation of new understandings of alternative ways to present piano music to contemporary audiences.

¹² A list of the academic events in which I presented papers during this research can be found in Appendix 2.

According to Barrett, lived experiences, subjective and personal concerns are usual motivations in creative arts research. Within this context, real world problems are determinant driven forces for the generation of knowledge (Barrett 2010, 5). In this regard, the questioning which initiated my research emerged from my practice as a classical pianist, as highlighted in the preface of this thesis.

Outline

In the chapters of this thesis I will be discussing in detail the topics investigated by this research, supported by case studies of practical works and reflections on literature review. Chapter 1 addresses the first research question, examining explorations of interdisciplinary dialogues in music performances. Chapter 2 examines the second research question, by discussing alternative proposals for the audience experience and explorations of the space of performance. Chapter 3 approaches research question three with reflections on dramaturgy and narrativity as strategies for the structure of interdisciplinary piano performances. In the conclusion, I summarise the main findings of the research and draw final considerations regarding the contribution of this research to the generation of new concepts and insights to the field of classical music performance.

Chapter 1

Interdisciplinary Dialogues in Piano Performances

This chapter comments on investigations regarding the integration of elements from other artistic disciplines into music performances, in order to address the research question:

- Can audience engagement with live classical music be enhanced by bringing other elements into dialogue with music performance?

DEFINITION: *interdisciplinarity, multimedia*

Here, I situate my research within the concept of 'interdisciplinarity', which embraces the intention to synthesize knowledge and methods from different disciplines (Stember, 1991).

For this study's aims, I am applying an interchangeability of meaning between the terms *multimedia* and *interdisciplinarity*. According to Levinson, there is an inextricability between the terms *medium* and *art form*:

(...) by a *medium* I mean a developed way of using given materials or dimensions, with certain entrenched properties, practices, and possibilities. 'Medium' in this sense is closer to 'art form' than to 'kind of stuff' (Levinson 1984, 7).

Therefore, if I understand *art form* as an *artistic discipline*, consequently *medium* will be similarly understood as *artistic discipline*, for the purposes of this research.

Furthermore, I will utilise Cook's criteria, specifying that for a work to be seen as multimedia, its components must present a degree of independence (Cook 2004, 263). I.e., although music can be considered a multimodal experience in its essence, for a music performance to be classified as multimedia (or, interdisciplinary, with regard to this research) the various elements involved such as movement, visuals, etc., must present such counterpoint with the sound, that their interaction becomes a source of meaning (Cook 2004, 263).

CONTEXTUALIZATION: *interdisciplinarity in music*

Live music has been majorly experienced as an interdisciplinary practice throughout human history, from, for example, the combination of sight and sound in ancient dances and rituals, to the traditions of opera and ballet, and until the contemporary live visuals of club culture (Daniels et al. 2010, 7). Cook speaks about the essentially multimodal aspect of the music experience, emphasizing that music *is* never alone (Cook 2004, 265).

Among the elements that usually accompany music, Cook highlights the textual element – the *word* - as the most ‘irrepressible partner of music’, either as *in* the musical material, or attached as record-sleeve essays, radio talks, or programme notes (Cook 2004, 266). Godøy, on the other hand, discusses the intrinsic relationship between body movements and musical experience emerging as the result of the traditional correspondence between the production of a sound and a body movement (Godøy 2010, 55-56).

However, attempts to separate the sonic from the visual experience can be traced from, at least, Pythagoras’ experiments with his *Acousmatic* disciples (6th century BC)¹³. In the nineteenth century, the idea of *music alone* was developed with the elevation of instrumental music to the level of supreme art, which needed attentive listening. Concert-halls were then purpose-built to host that new absorbing experience, with designs which directed the attention towards the stage and minimized distracting elements (Johnson 1995, 270). Subsequently, with the introduction of the radio and the gramophone, the musical experience could be ultimately detached from the visual element of the live presence of the performers (Thompson, Graham, and Russo 2005, 203).

Nevertheless, as Cook observes, even those practices related to the idea of autonomous musical work ‘have not entirely excluded the role of senses other than the auditory in the experience of music’ (Cook 2004, 265). Cook highlights the presence of the textual element in the absolute music movement itself through the tradition of programme notes, and the role of the visual in the concert-hall where, for example, there is a predilection for the seats on the left side of the auditorium in piano concerts (Cook 2004, 265-266). Also in the music records, the textual and visual elements are present in the form of album-covers and sleeves (Cook 2004, 265-266). In those instances, however, although the multimodal aspect still exists, it was removed from the centre to the margins of the musical experience (Cook 2004, 266).

Among searches for more deliberately interdisciplinary approaches within live musical performance (and particularly instrumental practice, for the scope of this research), the twentieth century witnessed a growing interest in experimental processes for multimedia collaborations. One of the landmark works was John Cage’s *Theater Piece No. 1* (1952)¹⁴,

¹³ It is accounted that Pythagoras lectured to his students, then named the *akusmatikoi*, whilst hidden behind a screen, so as they would not be distracted by his physical presence and could focus on the content of his words (Emmerson, S. and D. Smalley. n.d.)

¹⁴ *Theater Piece 1* happened at Black Mountain College, and the event is generally accounted as featuring audience seats arranged in four concentric circles, and, simultaneously: John Cage lecturing from a ladder, Richard and Olson reading from other ladders, Cunningham dancing, Rauschenberg

which presented varied artistic expressions co-existing in an event, rather than interfering with each other (Osmond-Smith 2004, 349).

Currently, interdisciplinary ways to devise or present live classical music have been diversely explored. These explorations range, for example from original musical works, such as Stefan Prins' *Piano Hero I and II*¹⁵, where the structure of the piece itself is multimedia, to concerts where music and other artistic media are juxtaposed, as in the MusicArt London Series¹⁶.

In the projects developed for this study I explored a variety of elements combined in the piano performance, not integrated by juxtaposition or as part of the musical score, but interwoven, in order that the whole event be perceived as a single piece. Referring to Cook's models of multimedia, the relationships among the elements were often of complementation (contrariety), and occasionally of contradiction. Cooks points out that, in the complementation model, the elements present a recognisable degree of difference, but the conflict between them is avoided, so 'each medium makes good what would otherwise be a lack in the other' (2004, 119). In the contradictory model, the elements collide or contradict each other, so meaning may emerge from that conflict (idem, 102-104).

The elements explored in the projects for this topic of research were:

- text projection;
- audio recordings;
- installation [environment];
- storytelling [readings];
- lighting;
- literature;
- theatre;
- dance/choreography.

In the remains of this chapter I will reflect on these experimental projects, whilst drawing on selected reference works.

(whose white pictures were hanging from the ceiling) playing records in a phonograph, and David Tudor playing a prepared piano and a radio (Harris 2007, 226-228). This piece became a reference for subsequent multimedia practices such as the *Fluxus* movement (Toop 2004, 463).

¹⁵ http://www.stefanprins.be/eng/composesInstrument/comp_2011_01_pianohero.html, and http://www.stefanprins.be/eng/composesInstrument/comp_2011_02_pianohero2.html. (Accessed 25 July 2017).

¹⁶ <http://musicart.london/index.html#about>. (Accessed 25 July 2017).

CASE STUDY 1: *for her* – installation [environment], text projection, audio recordings.

The project *for her* was a project aiming to investigate the use of a piano recital as a tool for raising awareness about a social issue, in this case the human trafficking and sexual exploitation of girls and young women. The project presented the following structural elements:

- Musical content: music programme featuring piano pieces with references to girls or women in their titles;
- Installation [environment]: dolls placed on the stage area and among the audience;
- Thematic material (data and short stories of girls and young women victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation) exposed by projected texts or audio recordings.

This work is described in detail in the Portfolio of Works volume. Here, I will focus on the elements that established the interdisciplinary aspect of the project: the approach of the space as an art installation, and the projected texts and audio recordings carrying the thematic material.



Fig. 5. *for her* - stage setting. 23/07/2015, Wesley Memorial Church, Oxford, UK. Photo: Pier Corona.

- Installation [environment] - defamiliarization technique

For the project *for her*, I felt it necessary to break the familiarity of the physical setting of a piano recital, so new channels could be opened for the experience of the social message within the artistic work. As Crawford points out, 'worn-out and devalued combinations of motifs and devices have to be broken up and recombined in order to generate new perception' (Crawford 1984, 211).

An artist who has been investigating alternative ways to prepare the environment of her music performances is pianist Tomoko Mukaiyama. For example, in her installation/performance *Amsterdam x Tokyo* (2000), the room of the piano recital had

goldfish in plastic bags hanging from the ceiling, and was set with strong lights and smoke. Mukaiyama aimed to confront the audience with questions about ephemerality, and encouraged reflection on the conflict between the simultaneous experience of high technology and old memories¹⁷.

In the process of development of the project *for her*, I came across Shklovsky's *defamiliarization* (or *estrangement*) technique. The *defamiliarization* technique is understood as the necessity to make strange objects that were once familiar, and to complicate forms, in order to 'make perception long and laborious' (Shklovsky 1990, 6). In *for her*, the dolls worked as the elements of *defamiliarization*: they were displaced from their usual context – a child's room. Concomitantly, the usual familiarity (through conventions) of the recital room was disturbed by the presence of the dolls.



Fig 6. *for her* – audience. 23/07/2015, Wesley Memorial Church, Oxford, UK. Photo: Stu Allsopp

- Findings: building up a horizon of expectations

Some audience members commented that the environment composed of dolls and the children's voice soundscape induced a feeling of strangeness and created a sense of expectation about what was going to happen in the space. The entrance of the performer in a white outfit enhanced those first impressions, and helped to build a horizon of expectations which could be identified as the first step towards the construction of the experience of the work (Bennett 1997, 99).

Together the dolls, the soundscape and the performer's white dress created an environment suggesting images of childhood, and connotations of purity and innocence. However, as the theme of child trafficking and prostitution was being presented, those initial impressions were challenged – the horizon of expectations was then frustrated (Bennett 1997, 140). As a

¹⁷ <http://tomoko.nl/works/amsterdam-x-tokyo/>. (Accessed 19 September 2017).

consequence of that twist in the perception, the impact of the communication of the social message could be enhanced.



Fig. 7. *for her*. 23/07/2015, Wesley Memorial Church, Oxford, UK. Photo: Stu Allsopp

- Projected texts and audio recordings – unity in an interdisciplinary work

Among artists who have used projected texts and/or audio recordings within music performance, Alicia J. Turner, in her work *Breathe (Everything is gonna be ok)* alternated and sometimes overlapped violin performance with projections of texts and/or audio recordings describing a panic crisis she had experienced, which was the thematic basis of that work¹⁸.

In *for her*, although the projection of texts in the first versions of the project was an efficient strategy to bring the theme objectively, it carried the risk of resembling a didactic work. The use of audio recordings in the following versions proved to be more artistically appropriate in interweaving strands of the theme into the performance. Additionally, the recordings had greater impact and were also more efficient in engaging the audience. Some audience members commented that they decided not to read the projected texts in the first version of the project, therefore the social message was missed in their experience.

In considering the challenges of combining the varied material of the interdisciplinary proposal in a cohesive way, in Turner's work, the autobiographical character of the texts and the authorial music may have contributed to integrate the varied media in a balanced way. In *for her*, my challenge was to present a work which could be experienced as a unity, whilst combining material from varied authors and sources.

¹⁸ I attended the performance of *Breathe (Everything is gonna be ok)* on 15 November 2016, at CP Theater, London, UK.

- Findings: building up a sense of narrative and transitions

The performance followed a process of gradual intensification: the projected texts or audio recordings with information about human trafficking and victim's stories were increasing in length, while the musical material was presenting increasing dissonance. According to the audience feedback, that intensifying dynamic evoked a sense of narrative, which supported their engagement, and held the interest on the unfolding theme throughout the performance.

This project also focussed attention on the transitional material as the crucial element to craft unity, thus encouraging further investigation on those elements in the building up of the dramaturgy in an interdisciplinary piano recital.

CASE STUDY 2: *from night to day* – elements of storytelling

The project *from night to day* was a piano recital inspired by the theme of the night, exploring elements of storytelling.

The structural elements of the project were:

- Musical content: repertoire of pieces with references to elements of the night - stars, night itself, dreams – either stated in their titles, or emerging from my personal interpretation;
- Readings of short texts before the performance of each piece of music. The texts included programme notes, comments from the composers, excerpts of stories and short poems;
- Environment: cushions around the piano and a standing lamp to light the performance space.

A more detailed description about the project can be found in the Portfolio of Works. In this chapter, I will comment on the exploration of elements of storytelling – environment with cushions and lamp, and readings - in the piano recital.

- Environment – ‘a space within a space’: findings on intimacy

This project was first performed at the Sound of Oxford Festival (06/12/2014), in a programme which included musical numbers from a diversity of styles - from electronic to world music, including folk and French songs¹⁹. I then decided to explore an alternative

¹⁹ <https://www.facebook.com/events/370745799762940> (Accessed 06 September 2017).

stage setting, with the intention of contrasting from the numbers that preceded it in the festival. Here, the environment setting, differently from the previous project *for her*, aimed to create an intimate ‘niche’ for my piano performance with the cushions and the domestic lamp.

Among examples of classical music events providing cushions for the audience to sit on, the *Cushion Concerts Series* (Oxford, UK) targets an audience of children and families. These concerts aim to introduce their audiences to different instruments and classical music; thus the informal environment is part of a didactic proposal²⁰. In a considerably different context, Matthew Barley’s *Overnight Meditation* performance (Barbican, London, UK, October 2015) welcomed the audience to make themselves comfortable on the cushions and poufs provided, to the point of potentially falling asleep during the performance which lasted from 11pm to 6am. That performance was part of the Sound Unbound Festival, which aimed to break the traditional etiquette of the concert hall, as ‘to release classical music from its traditional confines’²¹.

For the first performance of my project *from night to day* in the Sound of Oxford Festival, I assumed my audience would mainly consist of art educated young adults. However, I considered the risk of my classical contemporary programme to sound out of place in the midst of such diverse musical acts. Within that context, the arrangement of the space would become a crucial tool in breaking the flow of the sequence of acts and to make my performance to physically stand out from the preceding ones. As pointed out by Small, the space plays an important role in the listening experience:

It is not only the sounds themselves that carry meaning. The setting where the performance is taking place will impose relationships between the participants and create meanings even before a note of music has been sounded (Small 2001, 344).

I could then perceive empirically that the environment was determinant on the audience experience, and it indeed affected their engagement with the work: ‘this work wasn’t just about music, there was a whole atmosphere, as if we were ‘taken to another world’ (anonymous audience member).

²⁰ I experienced the Cushion Concerts Series as audience on 08 February 2015, at Jacqueline Dupré Music Room, Oxford, UK.

²¹ I observed the first 30 minutes of the Overnight Meditation performance as audience on 31 October 2015. <http://www.barbican.org.uk/soundunbound/about.html>. (Accessed 21 November 2015).

According to the audience feedback, the alternative performance space position, the cushions and the lighting reinforced the sense of intimacy, 'of a space within a space' (anon. audience member). That feeling of informality and warmth was effective to engage the audience in a closer way, with some audience members commenting about feeling 'at home, among friends' (anon. audience member).

- Readings: findings on framing the listening to help the novice spectator and flowing the performance

The texts selected to be read in between the pieces of music were intended to build the thematic framework of the programme. This collaboration between spoken word – especially words from literature - and music has a vast precedent. As one example, pianist Shani Diluka's project *Road 66*²² proposed to evoke impressions from North-American landscape and culture in a piano recital accompanied by an actor reading excerpts of Jack Kerouac's book *On the Road*.

In *from night to day*, I similarly aimed for my readings to carry a poetic characteristic, with the texts working more as linking elements rather than informative. They were then found particularly helpful in the engagement of a less experienced audience, by creating a context for the music and inspiring imageries to support the listening: 'I usually find it difficult to follow classical music, because I have no musical background. But the texts were helpful to guide my listening and made it easier for me to enjoy the music' (anonymous audience member).

Despite the overall positive outcomes in terms of engagement of the audiences, the reading element was highlighted as needing further development. A lack of confidence was noticed in some moments of my reading (perhaps because English is not my first language), which did not match with the sense of comfort of the environment and the confident piano playing. I could then reason that, in the naivety of early developments of interdisciplinary projects, I had focused on choosing the elements and devising the structure, but had neglected the performative aspect of reading aloud, which should be crafted as a skill in itself (as mastered by the actor in Diluka's *Road 66* recital), with potential to add and detract meaning by its own expressivity.

²² I attended Shani Diluka's *Road 66* piano recital on 28 March 2015, part of It is All About Piano Festival, Institut Français, London, 2015 <http://institut-francais.org.uk/itsallaboutpiano/2015-edition/events/route-66/>. (Accessed 21 November 2015).



Fig. 8. *from night to day* - readings alternated with piano performance. Sound of Oxford Festival, St. Clements Family Centre, Oxford, UK, 06/12/2014. Photo: Pier Corona

CASE STUDY 3: *night* – lighting

night, was a piano recital with a specific stage lighting, which was designed to create a scene for each piece of music in a programme inspired by the theme of the night.

The structural elements of the work were:

- Music programme similar to the previous project, where each piece is related to an element of the night;
- Lighting setting a scene for each piece of music, exploring the elements: blackout, patterns (mirror ball), colours and intensity.

The detailed description of this project can be found in the Portfolio of Works. Here, I would like to focus on discussing the proposal to combine the lighting element with the musical performance.

- Lighting

Traditionally, classical music concerts usually feature less variety in the lighting than events of popular music. Generally, classical music lighting is designed to allow musicians to read their music scores and the audience to see the performers in action²³. However, dialogues between music and light has been a recurrent theme of interest within the classical music world, with experiments dating back from at least the eighteenth century with Castel's *clavecin oculaire* – a light organ that produced simultaneously sound and a correspondent colour in light²⁴.

²³ <http://www.onstagelighting.co.uk/lighting-design/lighting-an-orchestra-choir-concert/>. (Accessed 28 November 2015).

²⁴ <http://homepage.tinet.ie/%7Emusima/visualmusic/visualmusic.htm> (Accessed 27 July 2017).

More recently, Swiss-based composer George Hass has been experimenting with the possibilities of darkness in his compositions. In his orchestral work *in vain* (2000), Hass specifies the light's intensity on the score, which ranges from concert lights to total darkness²⁵. In my experience of this work as an audience member, I found that the darkness heightened my perception and the lighting dynamic stimulated mental imageries during the listening in a very vivid manner²⁶.

On the other hand, sometimes music and lights are conceived separately, as in the case of the light art show designed by architect Alessia Milo in response to Babajanian's *Piano Trio* (1952), which was projected to accompany a performance by pianist Professor Elaine Chew and ensemble²⁷. From my experience as a spectator, the correspondence between visuals and music was not immediately perceived in terms of adding meaning and/or expressivity to the music experience. However, it framed the physical context, what was helpful to enhance the focus of my listening.

In *night*, the lighting element differs from the light-organ where there was an intention of direct correspondence between sound and coloured light, also this was not part of the musical score as in Hass compositions. The creative process may then bear similarities with Milo's lights for Babajanian's *Piano Trio*, following a dynamic of *complementation* between music and visuals. However, a point of difference is that in *night* the visual ideas emerged from my engagement with the repertoire, as the music performer myself. Thus, the creative processes of visual design and musical interpretation could be more integrated, with the decisions on musical interpretative elements such as tempo, gestures, phrasing, and levels of dynamic, directly translated into colours, shapes, and intensities.

Later on, Scriabin included a light-organ in the instrumentation of his symphonic *Prometheus* (1910), as a reflection of his interest in synaesthesia. Synaesthesia, an experience in which a stimulus to one sense may trigger sensations in another sense (for example: seeing a colour when a particular sound is heard), is a broad and well examined topic, which the extent of this research will not comprise a longer discussion on. Also, this research is more focused on outcomes from crossmodal collaborations originated from an intuitive and personal creative process, rather than examining mapped patterns such as synaesthesia.

²⁵ <http://www.universaledition.com/Georg-Friedrich-Haas/composers-and-works/composer/278/work/7566>. (Accessed 29 November 2015).

²⁶ I attended a performance of Hass' *in vain* by the London Sinfonietta Orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall, London, on 27 April 2017.

²⁷ I attended this concert accompanied by visuals on 22 October 2015, as part of Inside Out Festival 2015, Queen Mary University of London, UK. <http://www.insideoutfestival.org.uk/2015/events/some-things-rich-and-strange/>. (Accessed 29 November 2015).



Fig. 9. *night* - scene: Stars. 09/03/2015. Photo: Pier Corona

- Findings: immersing the audience from/in the night

In the project *night*, I aimed to create an ambience related to the theme, and immerse the audience in it. This effect of immersion started even before the event itself, in the audience's journey to the concert: the venue of the performance is located in a slightly hidden area in Oxford Brookes University campus, so the audience had to search for the location in the evening, when it was already dark. As there is no waiting room, they had to come directly from the outside darkness into the performance/audience area, where the lights were already subdued.

The role of the pre-performance elements in the experience of the work has already been observed by Bennett, who pointed out that 'in the circumstance of the theatre visit, the spectator takes on his/her role before the performance *per se* begins' (1997, 125). Also, Bennett points out the light set of the auditorium pre-show as a tool to 'prepare the audience for interpretive activity' (idem, 135).

In *night*, that initial dynamic of a journey from the 'outdoor' to 'indoor' night, had indeed an expressive effect, as related in the audience feedback:

I was the first person to arrive, it was very dark... I was surprised about the place in darkness, but soon the atmosphere changed with the beautiful music and the audience! (anonymous audience member)

Due to the closeness between the surrounding audience to the piano, the lighting could spread over both performance and audience areas (except during the first scene). That

effect of ‘light envelopment’ was appreciated as helpful to enhance the enjoyment²⁸: ‘the lights helped to create the atmosphere’ (anonymous audience member).

Also, the settings were mentioned as an interesting tool to bring new insights for a more experienced spectator: ‘it created the space to engage with the music in a different way’ (anonymous audience member, well acquainted with classical music).

One common problematic of proposals which bring visuals for music, however, is the risk of narrowing the possibilities of interpretation²⁹. One way to deal with this matter in *night*, was to avoid an illustrative aspect in the design of the lighting, aiming to keep a level of openness to varied readings. The visual could then help to instigate imagery whilst still allowing space for individual interpretations, as commented by an audience member: ‘I liked that the lights were not forced or wilful. It didn’t seem to illustrate the music, which I think made it interesting, providing a subtle counterpoint’ (anonymous audience member).



Fig. 10. *night* - scene: Dawn. 09/03/2015. Still from video documentation

- Notes from the performer’s experience

From the point of view as the pianist-performer, I felt that the space created by the lighting helped me to become immersed in the music and, moreover, I felt the separation between performer and audience was subtly being blurred since we were all enveloped by the same

²⁸ A majority of positive responses to the project *night* came spectators with either none or little experience in classical music, and aged under 35 years.

²⁹ Mae Tinee, critic at *Chicago Tribune*, wrote in a review on Disney’s *Fantasia* release (a work that would become a classical reference in the concept of visuals for classical music): ‘Granted that music and dreams always go together. BUT – every listener wants to dream his own dreams’. (Tinee, M. ‘Fantasia’; Great Music Buried in Orgy of Color and Sound, Movie and Music Critics Find. In *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Thursday, February 20, 1941. <http://archives.chicagotribune.com/1941/02/20/page/13/article/fantasia-great-music-buried-in-orgy-of-color-and-sound-movie-and-music-critics-find>. (Accessed 27/01/2017)

environment. I especially felt that the quality of ‘immersiveness’ of this work had an impact on the shaping of my performance: by setting the physical mood, the lights influenced my breathing, phrasing and interpretation, and I was inspired to shape the performance of the programme as a whole, instead of just a sequence of pieces.

CASE STUDY 4: **casa** – literature and autobiography, and theatrical elements

casa – reflections on house & home, was a piano performance inspired by Gaston Bachelard’s book *The Poetics of Space*, and with an autobiographical aspect. The structural elements of this project were:

- Music programme featuring pieces written by living Brazilian composers;
- Literature: quotations from the book *The Poetics of Space*, printed in booklets with the music programme;
- Autobiography: personal elements explored in the creative process, and revealed through props during the performance;
- Theatrical elements: ideas from the *immersive theatre* category (elimination of separation between stage and audience, and a mobile audience), props, scenes (theatrical actions alternated with music performance), and practical lights (reading, desk and standing lamps) operated by the pianist, as performance actions.

A more detailed description of this work can be found in the Portfolio of Works. The use of space and potential mobility of the audience will be addressed in Chapter 2 - Studies on Audience and Space, while the literature and autobiographical elements will be further examined in the Chapter 3 – Dramaturgy and Narrativity. Here in this chapter, I would like to focus on addressing the theatrical elements of props, scenes, and practical lights³⁰, in combination with music performance.

- Theatrical elements 1 – prop and scenes: findings on creating a context for the music experience

A reference for my research into the idea of structuring a piano performance as a theatrical work is pianist/inventor/composer Sarah Nicolls’ music/theatre show *Moments of*

³⁰ In the theatre terminology, practical lights are light sources that are visible within the scene. Examples of practical lights are: lamps, television sets, illuminated signs, etc. (Birn 2006, Chapter 1).

Weightlessness (UK, 2014-2016)³¹. *Moments of Weightlessness* has an autobiographical character, exploring a dialogue between Sarah Nicolls' experiences of motherhood and of creation of a new musical instrument. Nicolls structures her show by interweaving recordings of her own testimony with music and theatrical performance, which include the pianist moving the piano across the stage and playing it in different positions, also doing actions inspired by her everyday tasks such as 'feeding the baby', 'taking a nap', and 'doing the laundry'.

In *casa*, the creative process started with readings from the book *The Poetics of Space*, which inspired reflections about certain moments of my life. This process was combined with research into piano repertoire which would reflect these thoughts. Subsequently, during my piano practice, I started to experiment with gestural interactions using objects and pieces of furniture. Those objects, as well as some other physical structures, became basic elements in the shaping of the performance:

- Wardrobe, boxes, drawers, corners, attic and cellar (which were keywords extracted from the book) became signposts for scenes;
- Three musical boxes underlined the autobiographical aspect of the project (they represented phases of my life) and became references in the script for my actions in the performance³².

The structure of the performance in scenes with actions and props, as well as the literary reference, were mostly appreciated as helpful to enhance the experience of the music:

[The quotations] helped to set the music into a context that was both in the geography of 'casa' and also helped the listener to understand the reasons you had chosen each piece (anonymous audience member).

The movement of the performer between the pianos and objects created spaces between the pieces for me to absorb each piece and to reflect on the quotes and the connections between the pieces and the theme (anon. audience member).

[The extra-musical elements] created the context and made me listen to music as not an abstraction, but filled it with a certain visual images, directed my mind in a way (anon. audience member).

³¹ I experienced *Moments of Weightlessness* as audience on 10 December 2014, at Brighton Dome, Brighton, UK, and on 28 November 2015 at the North Wall Theatre, Oxford, UK.

³² For a more detailed description of the structure of the scenes of *casa*, see Chapter 3, table 3.

- Theatrical elements 2 - practical lights: findings in bringing a 'homely' flavour

For the lighting dynamics during the performance, I utilised domestic lamps which I switched on and off, as part of each scene of the performance. The idea of experimenting with lighting strategies other than those from the technical theatre machinery came from a conversation with Oxford-based director Naomi Everall. We discussed how the use of practical lights, such as lamps and torches, could be very effective and enriching for the dynamics of the show, giving many possibilities of actions for the performer.

The domestic lamps were helpful in creating the motivation of a 'homely' environment and to prompt a mood of warmth and intimacy, which was indeed perceived by the audience:

the lighting arose some memories of my own childhood, of how I perceived the objects in our house when I was little. It made me a bit homesick, as I live now in Oxford, while originally come from Armenia (anon. audience member).

As compositional elements, the practical lights helped to build a dynamic for the performance, and contributed to create a distinct context for the audience's experience: 'I thought the use of lighting was very atmospheric too and very effective in creating different points of focus' (anon. audience member).

- The performer's point of view: new challenges for the pianist as a performer

casa brought challenges that I had seldom come across before in my training as a classical pianist. The movements from one piano to another required me to step out from the pianist's position, traditionally seated at the piano stool. It was then necessary to become more aware of my whole body, and to explore a much larger repertoire of movements and gestures. This inspired me to further explore the expressivity of my body movements as a pianist/performer, and to search ways to make it a deliberately meaningful part of the structure of future works.



Fig. 11. *casa* - musical boxes, practical lights. 21/01/2016, Oxford Brookes Drama Studio. Photo: Stu Allsopp

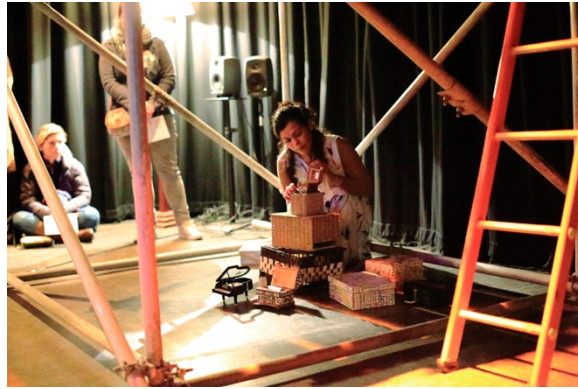


Fig. 12. *casa* - theatrical actions. 22/01/2016, Oxford Brookes Drama Studio. Photo: Stu Allsopp

CASE STUDY 5: *myths & visions* - dance

myths & visions was a solo piano performance interwoven with dance, and presenting elements of a promenade concert.

The structural elements of this project included:

- Music programme featuring a repertoire of pieces for piano extended techniques;
- Elements of dance;
- Audience participation (guided walks in specific moments and swapping of seats).

Additional theatrical elements such as props and lighting were also explored in the structure of the work. These theatrical features, as well as the audience participation element, are being discussed elsewhere in this thesis. In this section I will focus on addressing the dance element in the *myths & visions* project³³.

- Elements of dance: gestures from the piano playing to generate choreography

Traditionally, music making has been intrinsically related to a body activity, as music has been long performed and perceived through gestures (Godøy 2010, 55, Godøy and Leman 2010, 127). As a result, Godøy points out that 'images of body movements are integral to musical experience' (2010, 56).

It has been demonstrated that gestures of instrumental practice effectively communicate information about musical structure and expressive intention (Vines et al. 2004, 1-2).

Moreover, Brower points out the essential role of the bodily experience in the generation of

³³ A detailed description of this project can be found in the Portfolio of Works.

musical meaning: the transferring of 'features of our bodily experience of the physical world onto music' results in musical concepts such as the ones related to space, time, force and motion (2000, 327).

Musical gestures³⁴ have also been explored in collaborations with dance (Newland 2010; Carvalho 2008; Vila Verde 2012) - which constitutes the focus of this section of my research. *Danza Ricercata*³⁵, a collaboration between choreographer Tânia Carvalho and pianist Joana Gama, presented a choreography for the pianist while she plays the piano. According to the programme notes, Tânia Carvalho took advantage of the movements that emerged from the pianist's interpretation, and exaggerated them so the emotional impact would be heightened³⁶.

On a creative process that followed an opposite direction, pianist Teresa Vila Verde reports that, in the development of her solo piano/body performance *The Sound of my Body*, the starting point was the creation of a choreography of movement which would then generate sound on the piano³⁷.

In *myths & visions*, the aim was to explore the gestures of the piano playing itself as starting point for the generation of the choreography. Also, the literary references of the musical pieces were utilised as source of inspiration in the research of gestures. Additionally, those references were helpful in evoking imagery as inspiration for the development of additional compositional elements, lighting and visual effects, for the scenes of the show. The movement director, Joëlle Pappas, guided the development of the choreography following a natural approach: the basis of the work was the exploration of the inherent expressivity of my body as a pianist, in a process of acknowledging the expressive force of the musical gestures. Then, additional movements were gradually developed as transition between the musical pieces, so the performance would unfold in an organic flow. As Pappas has commented:

we are trying to enhance what she is doing naturally, and to keep a sense of character... we are not making a dance piece, we are purifying her movements, the transitions, I see my role as choreographing her silences, choreographing her transitions rather than the actual

³⁴ According to Godøy and Leman, musical gesture is 'an action pattern that produces music, is encoded in music, or is made in response to music' (2010, 19).

³⁵ <http://www.taniacarvalho.org/danza-ricercata> (Accessed 19 July 2017)

³⁶ http://www.teatroviriato.com/fotos/editor2/desdobavel_newage_new_time_web.pdf. (Accessed 19 July 2017).

³⁷ <http://teresavilaverde.blogspot.co.uk/2011/12/sound-of-my-body.html> (Accessed 20 July 2017).

performance. The eye focus is something that we have been playing quite a lot... (Joëlle Pappas, in work-in-progress session, 21/11/2016)

The gestures in *myths & visions* were not developed with an intention of carrying any specific meanings. They aimed to be structural elements in the artistic text, as a more encompassing embodied interpretation of the music score, and to build a coherent link in between the musical pieces. However, if meaning was not the end, it was often part of the origin of the gesture, sometimes as a literary inspiration, sometimes as an element of technique that seemed appropriate for a specific moment.



Fig. 13. *myths & visions* - amplified musical gestures. Oxford Brookes University, 22/06/2017. Photo: Stu Allsopp



Fig. 14. *myths & visions* - transitional gestures. Oxford Brookes University, 23/06/2017. Still from video documentation



Fig. 15. *myths & visions* - musical gestures generating choreography. Oxford Brookes University, 23/06/2017. Still from video documentation

- Findings: movements, as music experience

The element of the choreographic movements in *myths & visions* were largely enjoyed as enriching the music experience. Some audience members commented that the gestures heightened the auditory aspect:

We could see your hands on that side, and for me, that made a lot to the sound (anon. audience member).

The movements complemented the sound (anon. audience member).

It was more than music, it was about sound... because the sound is always there, but with your gestures you made it present (anon. audience member).

The movements, as well as the other theatrical elements, were also mentioned as adding interest that enhanced the experience of the music:

Your dance movements linked us in to the unusual use of the back of the piano and I found this bewitching. The lights added considerably, guiding us through the process. All enhanced the music (anon. audience member).

The contemporary dance movements gave a very unusual mood [and] created a heightened focus which helped me to engage with the music (anon. audience member).

Your body language and dance linked us to the essence of the music (anon. audience member).

Especially for an audience member who was not experienced with contemporary music, the interdisciplinary nature of this project was helpful for her engagement with that unfamiliar musical repertoire:

This was new music for me. The 'extra' elements certainly helped me to engage with the music – especially the movement. I think without it, I would have struggled with the strangeness of the music, and probably have concluded that 'it wasn't for me'. Instead, I'm left with a curiosity about what sounds can be made with a piano (anon. audience member).

Also, the movements were seen as a natural part of the musical experience, rather than a separate element. That was a particularly positive aspect, considering that the original proposal of the project consisted in drawing the gestures from the music, in order to enrich the musical experience itself:

It didn't feel as if you were dramatizing anything... if felt that you were engaging with the music in a more holistic way (anon. audience member).

A live performance always involves the physicality, and it is crucial to delineate the music experience. You are amplifying it (anon. audience member).

- Notes from the performer's experience: gestures from/become musical practice

From the performer's point of view, the dance element affected my musical performance, primarily in a kind of feedback process, as previously observed by King:

(...) it is possible to conceive pianist's physical and musical aspects of a performance as existing along one and the same continuum: physical movements influence the expression of musical ideas and vice-versa (King 2006, 160).

In ***myths & visions***, firstly the gestures originated from the musical practice; secondly, they were explored and further developed as performative elements in themselves; finally, those performative movements shaped the musical gestures, in a reflexive process, thus influencing the breathing, timing and phrasing of musical structures.

My musical interpretation was also influenced by the transitional gestures: since they anticipated the mood of the following scene, each piece of music was directly relying on those gestures to set the tone, breathing and timing. That dynamic generated a flow within the performance that helped to suggest a sense of narrative, which will be the topic of discussion in chapter 3.

SUMMARY

This chapter examined proposals of interdisciplinary collaborations in classical music performances. From the interdisciplinary solo piano performances developed for this investigation, the following findings can be highlighted:

- The alternative approaches to the space of performance (installation/environment) were effective tools to optimize the engagement of the audiences:
 - the strategy of *defamiliarization* was helpful to build a horizon of expectations (i.e. a sense of anticipation),
 - the exploitation of the elements of informality and intimacy in the layout of the space contributed to the heightening of an affective aspect in those musical events,

- the element of 'immersion' (as a result of the extrapolation of the boundaries of the stage) allowed new possibilities for the live music experience.
- The dialogues between piano performance and elements from other disciplines (installation/environment, projections, audio recordings, storytelling, literary references, lighting, theatrical elements – props, actions, spatial concepts, and dance) had a positive effect on the engagement of both new and experienced audiences:
 - For audiences less experienced with classical music, the interdisciplinary proposals created a context for the music and stimulated imageries to guide their listening;
 - For the spectator more experienced with classical music, those proposals offered fresher ways for their live music experience.
- Transitions are key elements to build unity within the varied elements of an interdisciplinary piano recital. The role of transitions in the dramaturgy will be further discussed in Chapter 3.
- A potential risk of interdisciplinary proposals in music performances is the narrowing of possibilities of interpretation. A recommendation to keep the work subjected to a broad scope of meanings (when there is such intention) is to craft the interdisciplinary collaboration under an abstract approach, i.e. avoid giving the extra-musical elements an illustrative aspect.
- The most effective project of this research in enhancing the music experience (*myths & visions*) had the interdisciplinary elements as original material crafted from the musical practice (choreographic movements were drawn from musical gestures and compositional references).
- From the pianist/performer point of view, interdisciplinary proposals represent challenges to paradigms of my practice as a classical musician, and may require further training in complementary skills (e.g.: storytelling, theatre and dance). Moreover, the quality of 'immersiveness' has the potential to influence the musical interpretation, by affecting the mood and helping to shape the performance of the musical repertoire as a whole.

The next chapter will focus on investigating alternative proposals for the relationships between audience, performer, work, social context, and space of performance.

Chapter 2

Studies on Audiences and Space

The investigations described in this chapter were designed to address the research question:

- How can one bring other possibilities to experience a classical piano performance to our contemporary audience?

The acts of performing and listening to classical music have been examined in Christopher Small's publication *Musicking*, where he raises questions about the relationships fostered by the context of the concert hall. Small opens his text describing a usual audience behaviour in a hypothetical classical music concert:

In a concert hall, two thousand people settle in their seats, and an intense silence falls. A hundred musicians bring their instruments to the ready. The conductor raises his baton, and after a few moments the symphony begins. As the orchestra plays, each member of the audience sits alone, listening to the work of the great, dead, composer (Small 1998, 1).

These codes of actions and behaviours in the symphony concert had been pointed out in previous Small's studies as the elements of the ritual of the concert hall, already discussed in the introduction of this thesis.

In the projects described in this chapter, I aimed to explore alternatives to those conventions regarding the live classical music experience. I inquired into the role of the audience in the making of a performance experience, which has been pointed out by Burland and Pitts:

However extensive the preparation that goes into a music event (...), it is the audience, through the quantity of their attendance and the quality of their response, who make each performance distinctive (Burland and Pitts 2014, 2).

Referring to Small's remark that 'performance spaces affect greatly the relationships that are created among those that are inside them' (Small 1998, 199), aspects of the impact of the physical settings in the experience were also examined.

In order to develop the projects for this study, I have drawn inspiration from theatre and dance productions. I will further discuss some specific works in the next sections of this chapter, as references to my research.

In the rest of this chapter I will be discussing the six projects that I developed to investigate issues such as:

- The social versus the private aspect of the live music experience (audience-audience, audience-social context relationships). Project: ***Silent Concert***;
- The relationships between performer, audience, and musical work/programme. Projects: ***Les Jours, My piano in the midst of the turmoil, One-to-one Chopin [we are present]***;
- The relationships between performer, audience, and the space of performance. Projects: ***casa – reflections on house & home, myths & visions***.

I. The social versus the private aspect of the live music experience (audience-audience, audience-social context relationships)

Christopher Small introduced the term *musicking*, arguing that music is above else ‘an activity, something that people do’ (Small 1998, 2). In this kind of approach, the relational aspect of a music performance is highlighted, by understanding that the act of *musicking* sets a series of interconnections in the time and place which it happens (idem, 13).

The responsibility in the making of the live musical experience is shared between performers, audience members and other stakeholders, as pointed out by Burland and Pitts:

Live music is a unique form of musical experience spontaneously co-created by musicians and their audience. These experiences are produced through the interaction between musicians, audiences and the environment, and the experience itself cannot be separated from the music (Burland and Pitts 2014, 10).

That process of sharing in the making of music may produce a dynamic of emotional identification among the participants, as if animating ‘imagined communities’ by ‘the aggregation of those participating in or attending to a musical or sonic event’ (DeNora cited in Born 2015, 35).

If, on one hand, the collective aspect of the listening experience has been highlighted in studies such as the ones mentioned above, on the other hand there are claims in favour of the dissocialised experience of classical music. Pianist Glenn Gould notoriously defended the private listening over the socialised form:

as far as I'm concerned, music is something that ought to be listened to in private. (...) I think that music ought to lead the listener – and, indeed, the performer – to a state of contemplation, and I don't think it's really possible to attain *that* condition with 2.999 other souls sitting all around (Gould in Mach 1980, 102).

This controversy raises the questions:

- is live classical music a social experience, since there is a situation of shared space and timeframe between the participants?

or

- is it essentially a private experience, given the character of introspection that the traditional context of live classical music usually suggests?

In order to address those questions, I developed the project ***Silent Concert***.

CASE STUDY 1: ***Silent Concert*** – dislocating the experience to highlight some aspects of live classical music.

Silence Concert was a piano recital performed by guest pianist Josie Lindsay-Clark, and both pianist and audience could only listen through wired headphones³⁸.

This project was designed to examine if, by listening to the performance through headphones, the audience members would perceive that musical performance as a private listening experience, or if the social context would nevertheless be determinant in their experience.



Fig. 16. *Silent Concert*, 23/11/2015. Still from video documentation

³⁸ The full description of the project can be found in the Portfolio of Works.

- Contextualization: applying *direct mediatization* to highlight the individual versus collective aspect of a piano recital experience

The use of individual headphones in a social music event may have resemblances to the *silent discos* - dance events where the music is transmitted by headphones to the participants. In the *silent discos*, a *direct mediatization* emerges, as defined by Hjarvard as 'the conversion of a traditionally non-mediated activity to a mediated one' (Hjarvard cited in Barnett 2016, 37). When applying the concept *direct mediatization* to the **Silent Concert** project, it is noticed that, here, the traditional activity remained the same: listening to live music. However, the spectator received it mediated through headphones.

In a study with led by Barnett (Indiana University, 2016), participants of a *silent disco* evening reported the paradoxical effect of individuality and collectiveness in their experience, as feeling both alone and together with the other participants (Barnett 2016, 40). This aspect was similarly commented in the audience feedback from **Silent Concert**. One audience member highlighted the sense of individuality in the experience: 'it took me somewhere else, because I was on my own' (anonymous audience member). On the other hand, another participant commented about the simultaneous sense of collectiveness and isolation: 'were sharing the experience of enjoying the music, but still separated in our own worlds' (anon. audience member). That paradoxical effect came to a resolution with the applause at the end, when the audience commented that they could finally feel that they were part of a collective experience.

- Findings 1: dislocating the conventions to highlight the etiquette of live classical music

Regarding the conventions for audience behaviour, the ritual aspect was shown to be culturally ingrained in that specific group in the **Silent Concert** project: despite the fact they were wearing headphones and would not disturb the performance by either talking or moving, the formal and quiet attitude was maintained the whole time. A member of the audience commented: 'I was very obedient, because of the etiquette, because of the building. I was surprised how easily I was obedient to the rules...' (anon. audience member).

This project also highlighted the exclusivity aspect of the ritual of the classical music concert, particularly when a latecomer arrived. That spectator related a sense of exclusion: 'I came late, but I could not ask what was going on (...). I felt like a voyeur' (anon. audience member). The sense of exclusiveness was reinforced by the fact that there were no more headphones available for that person, this led to a perception that the event was 'a shared thing, but only some people were allowed in, through [a limited number of] headphones' (anon. audience member).

- Findings 2: dislocating the physical aspect to highlight the physical co-presence element

Besides the communal dimension, the physical co-presence with performers is another key element in the audience experience of a live performance (Barker in Radbourne, Glow and Johanson 2013, 20). Physical co-presence is explained as the act of seeing what one is hearing (Radbourne, Johanson and Glow in Burland and Pitts 2014, 65).

In the *Silent Concert* project, the sense of physical co-presence was disrupted by the mediation of the headphones. An audience member related that the headphones provoked such a detachment from the pianist that it required 'an effect of self-will to keep connected with Josie' (anon. audience member). Another person experienced the same effect and commented: 'I had to focus more on Josie's fingers, to remind myself that it was live' (anon. audience member).

The impact caused by the unsettling of the sense of liveness of the performance led me to reflect on questions about the relationship between performer and audience, and its role in the music experience. To further investigate that point, I developed a series of one-to-one piano performances, to be discussed in the next section of this study.

II. One-to-one performances – investigating the relationships between performer, audience, and musical work/programme

The sense of interaction with performers is listed as one of the key elements in the experience of liveness (Barker in Radbourne, Johanson and Glow 2013, 20), and the sense of intimacy with the performers has been reported by spectators as beneficial to their engagement in classical music events (Pitts 2005, 5).

The relationship between performer, audience, and the eventual enhancement of the sense of intimacy, has been particularly explored through One-to-One performances. In One-to-One performances, the shared responsibility between performer and audience in the making of the work is highlighted. Firstly, that responsibility includes willingness to embrace the proposal, as pointed out by theatre critic Lyn Gardner: 'there has to be mutual trust and mutual responsibility. If it's going to work, it has to be a collaboration between me and the other person' (Gardner 2009). Secondly, the structure of the work may depend on the active participation of the audience, since 'the spectator is often invited to collaborate (to greater or lesser degrees) with the performer so that the two people create a shared experience'

(Zerihan 2009, 3). Additionally, in most cases, One-to-One are site specific performances (idem).

An example of a One-to-One work in the field of piano performance is Tomoko Mukaiyama's project *For you* (2003), a series of fifteen-minutes piano recitals to audiences of one person at a time. Those recitals took place in a theatre and, apart from the shorter duration and the singular audience, 'the concert does not differ from ordinary concerts'³⁹. Mukaiyama's project raised a sense of privilege on its audience and an awareness of the responsibility of its role as the listener.

In the projects developed in my research to examine the One-to-One format in piano performances, I aimed to explore strategies for a more tangible participation by the spectator in the making of the work, in addition to the investigation of the inherent closer personal engagement. Also, I proposed to approach the site of the performance as a structural element of the work.

CASE STUDY 2: *Les Jours*

This project was a series of participatory performances to audiences of one person at a time, when I performed Michal Pisaro's piece *Les Jours* (2012). As a proposal for audience participation, the spectator could put the sections of the musical piece in the order that they wished me to play. Then, the chair for the audience was positioned at the crook of the piano, with their back to the pianist and facing a pastoral landscape through a window⁴⁰.



Fig. 17. *Les Jours*. 24/04/2016. Still from video documentation.

³⁹ <https://tomoko.nl/works/for-you/> (Accessed 08 April 2017)

⁴⁰ The full description of the project can be found in the Portfolio of Works.

- Contextualization: audience participation – giving the spectator a voice on the structure of the work

A work that was an inspiration for this experiment in audience participation was the interactive theatre play *Woyzeck*⁴¹. That work proposed to 'hand control of the story over to the audience'⁴², by asking the participants to make choices about how the story should follow from one scene to another.

Woyzeck comes from a tradition in participatory practices in contemporary theatre, which Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the oppressed* is one of the most cited references. Boal states the goal for a spectator who has a determinant role on the action itself, as 'he himself assumes the protagonic role, changes the dramatic action, tries out solutions, discusses plans for change' (Boal 1979, 98).

As a pioneer in works that challenge the role of the audience, John Cage's ideas had played a major influence in the avant-garde art movements from the 1950s/1960s, and particularly with his silent piece *4'33"*. According to Rodenbeck, Cage's *4'33"* relied on 'the auditory capacities of his audience to "play" the piece' (Rodenbeck 2011, 250). *4'33"* is also accounted as the prime example of an 'open work' - a work which the author leaves the final structure of the piece subjected to the performer's decision (Eco 1989, 3).

In that sense, Michael Pisaro's *Les Jours* is an open work. However, in this project, the decision on its final structure was passed on from the performer to the spectator.

- Findings: intimacy, participation, and auditory immersion/visual expansion

In contrast to the usual distance between the classical musician and the spectator, the closeness of the one-to-one performance made it stand out as a unique experience: 'this is the closest I will come to a stage!' (anon. audience member). The intimacy led some participants to feel comfortable to the extent of walking in the room while listening, or lying on the floor. A sense of privilege was also commented - 'a lovely warmth and cosy feeling of being played to' (anon. audience member).

⁴¹ *Woyzeck* was devised by theatre director and researcher Russell Anderson. I experienced *Woyzeck* as audience in 2014 at Oxford Brookes University.

⁴² <https://www.facebook.com/events/1506362416289595/> (Accessed on 09 April 2017)



Fig. 18. Les Jours. 24/04/2016. Still from video documentation.

Some audience members felt more strongly engaged in the participatory element and enjoyed the opportunity to make decisions about the structure of the piece: ‘because I chose the order, I felt somewhat responsible for the piece, as a kind of minor-part author’ (anon. audience member). Some audience members with no formal musical training were willing to engage and enjoyed the chance element by shuffling the sections of the music score. However, the participatory aspect did not make a greater impact in the experience of some other spectators, as one person reported: ‘I personally didn’t find the order particularly relevant’ (anon. audience member). I would understand that those spectators did not engage with the participatory proposal because they were not pre-disposed at the time, especially considering that one-to-one works implies a shared responsibility between performer and audience (as commented earlier in this chapter).

The spatial setting was also highlighted in the audience feedback. The position of the spectator’s chair allowed their heads to be nearly inside the box of the piano, enriching the listening to the resonances and allowing a sense of immersion. The view of the landscape through the window had the effect of complementing the spaciousness of the musical work:

The closeness to the instrument brought out different qualities and tones much more strongly, and in a way relates the music with the landscape view from the window (anon. audience member).

I loved sitting so close to the piano – it really felt like immersion in the music with its surrounding me. Looking out on such a beautiful view was also the perfect complement to the music (anon. audience member).

The poignant music was perfectly framed by a crimson red sunset through a maze of trees (anon. audience member).

The sounds from the outside environment also added to the experience: ‘Outside the birds, the clouds, the light moved and changed – inside the beautiful notes floated around’ (anon. audience member). This combination of the physical setting with the stimuli from the surroundings was an effective tool to highlight the spatial aspect of that specific piece of music. Pisaro comments about the increasing openness to ‘environmental sound’ in his work⁴³. *Les Jours*, in particular, features sparse musical events, linked by the resonance of the piano carried on by the continuous sustain pedal, which allowed the integration of the environmental sounds into the listening experience.

From the performer point-of-view, it was interesting to notice that the spectator and me were looking in the same direction, sharing the same sight, which is unusual in a piano recital. There was then a sense of blending of roles, as if both performer and audience became spectators of the landscape across the window.

CASE STUDY 3: *My piano in the midst of the turmoil*

My piano in the midst of the turmoil was a series of one-to-one participatory performances realised in public circulation areas, where only the pianist and the spectator could listen through headphones. For the music programme, the spectator could choose from a selection of one-minute pieces written by contemporary British composers⁴⁴.



Fig. 19. *My piano in the midst of the turmoil*. TDE Research Student Conference, 18/05/2016. Photo: Amy Groeneveld.

⁴³ <http://erstwords.blogspot.co.uk/2009/09/wandelweiser.html> (Accessed 24 April 2017).

⁴⁴ The full description of the project can be found in the Portfolio of Works.



Fig. 20. *My piano in the midst of the turmoil*. Graduate College Annual Event, 03/06/2016. Still from video documentation.

- Contextualization: headphones to enhance immersion and intimacy

A work that has been a reference for my reflections on the outcomes of this project is Simon McBurney's theatre play *The Encounter*. Simon McBurney performs that work using a microphone linked to several audio effects, and the audience listens with individual headphones. Gareth Fry, the sound designer of that production, says that they 'developed a technique that uses technology to create intimacy, isolation and a little bit of magic' (Fry, in Complicite et al. 2016).

From my experience as audience⁴⁵, I found that the use of headphones created a sense of greater intimacy between actor and audience. Despite being amongst hundreds of other spectators in the theatre, it felt as if the actor was speaking to each one of us, individually, directly into our ears. McBurney pointed out his intention of wanting 'people to experience being both alone and together simultaneously' (McBurney 2016).

Although in ***My piano in the midst of the turmoil*** the audience was singular, instead of a collective as in *The Encounter*, it similarly tackled the elements of heightening intimacy and immersion, and the sense of isolation despite being in the middle of a social context.

- Findings: Immersion, exclusivity, and the spectator as a co-producer of the work

One of the highlighted elements in the audience feedback was the immersion in the music despite the busy social environment where the performance happened. A spectator shared the sense of strangeness at the beginning, for being in the middle of a context where people were socializing, but then he gradually immersed in the music: 'It was a little bit strange at the beginning, but then my soul started to feel the music' (anon. audience member). As a

⁴⁵ I experienced *The Encounter* as audience, firstly remotely during a week of online streaming in March 2016, then live in a performance at Oxford Playhouse Theatre on 26 May 2016.

result of that immersion, there was a sense of detachment from the social context: 'I felt like my perception of the room was perhaps a little removed. I felt distance, but not in a negative way. Perhaps like an observer, not a part of the room' (anon. audience member). As the performer, I experienced the same dynamics of finding it difficult to disengage from the environment at first, then progressively allowing myself to be enveloped by the music.

Additionally, a sense of exclusivity was remarked: 'Yes, exclusivity. I felt special!' (anon. audience member). However, that sense of privilege caused some social discomfort to some spectators, as they questioned why I did not play without headphones, therefore democratizing the experience to all the people in the room at once. In those moments I had to clarify the proposal of the project, which was to offer alternative ways of experiencing a classical piano performance, and the social versus private experience that was the specific topic of this particular investigation.

An external observer commented that pianist and spectator formed a unit, a performance to be watched in itself: the image of two people sat beside each other, connected by headphones linked to a piano, in silence and immersed in something not available for the rest of the people in that space. That outcome could be seen as a process of blurring the boundaries between performer's and spectator's roles (Hogarth and Bramley in Reason and Lindelof 2016, 137). In that moment, the spectator/participant became a producer of the work as well, firstly to him/herself when selecting the programme, and secondly to the external audience when becoming part of a scene to be seen.

CASE STUDY 4: ***One-to-one Chopin [we are present]***

One-to-one Chopin [we are present] was a series of piano performances where I played Chopin's *Prelude in E minor Op. 28 n. 4* to audiences of one person. The spectator's chair was positioned facing the pianist, and both pianist and spectator listened to the performance through headphones. During the performance of the piece, I attempted to keep eye contact with the spectator as much as they would allow me⁴⁶.

- Contextualization: artist and audience are present by looking into each other's eyes

This project was inspired by Marina Abramovic's piece *The Artist is Present* (Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2010). That work consisted of Marina Abramovic sitting on a chair in

⁴⁶ The full description of the project can be found in the Portfolio of Works.

the atrium of the museum every day, for the entire duration of the exhibition. The audience was invited to sit opposite her, one person at a time, and exchange eye contact, in silence, for any length of time. The interaction between the spectator and the artist through the intense gaze became so effective that a number of participants – and the artist herself – cried during the experience. That work rapidly attracted a huge audience and became a landmark in the field of performance art. Jarosi (in Brown 2014, 156) points out that, by engaging visually with her singular spectators very intently, Marina Abramovic shifts the spectatorship relationship, becoming an audience herself. Furthermore, Abramovic herself notes that, eventually, a triple audience dynamic emerged through a cumulative process, from the artist-spectator aspect to the fact that now artist and singular spectator are being observed by the people surrounding the performance space: ‘you’re in a very interesting situation because you’re observed by the group (the people waiting to sit), you’re observed by me, and you’re observing me – so it’s like triple observation’ (Abramovic, 2010).

Inspired by that work, I developed ***One-to-one Chopin*** aiming to explore an unusual type of interaction between pianist and spectator. Usually, there is a barrier between the pianist and the audience, even in the most intimate settings, which is the piano itself. Rarely the spectator can see the face of the pianist from the front, during the performance. I intended to examine how that closer and visually more direct engagement would affect the experience of a piece of music that is generally well known by the public.



Fig. 21. *One-to-one Chopin*. 18/07/2016. Still from video documentation

- Findings: intimacy as a distraction factor

Some participants noted that the setting created intimacy and intensified the experience of that well-known piece. An audience member commented that: ‘the direct contact, being so close, was intense, but in a good way’ (anon. audience member).

However, other participants recurrently remarked a feeling of discomfort with the exchange of eye contact. Some of the audience members related to have enjoyed the closeness and

to be able to see the activity of the fingers from such a short distance, however the gaze into each other's eyes became a factor of distraction. Another participant recalled a sense of a romantic situation:

It was funny, this combination of a romantic music and the gaze, plus the headphones that made the moment just for the two of us, it intensified the intimacy. It had the quality of creating a soundtrack for this situation [between two people] (anon. audience member).

If on one hand the exchange of eye-contact with the pianist in ***One-to-one Chopin*** raised controversial reactions, on the other hand, in Marina Abramovic's *The Artist is Present*, the intense gaze into the artist's eyes was the element that made the work so remarkable. Besides the emotional reactions whilst looking into Abramovic's eyes, some participants were willing to go through the long queue several times so they could experience the work again.

By scrutinizing the works in more detail, I can find some crucial differences that may have contributed to such opposing reactions to apparently similar proposals: in *The Artist is Present*, the reciprocal eye contact was the element which made the work, and the audience was plainly explained about it previously. Then, in ***One-to-one Chopin***, the gazing was an accessory aspect, since the essence of the work was the piano performance, and the spectator was not fully warned about it – when they sat on the chair in front of me, I just informed that I would be playing Chopin's *Prelude*, and that they could use the headphones to listen to it.

It can be then concluded that in *The Artist is Present*, the spectator was looking for the eye-contact, whilst in ***One-to-one Chopin***, that element came as a surprise. In both works, the artists proposed an invitation for the spectator 'to be present' with them but, as a result of the lack of appropriate preparation of the audience, in ***One-to-one Chopin***, that invitation had the effect of intimidation, and even of a challenge, as commented: 'I felt you were challenging me, not in a bad way, a challenge to the space, 'can you be here with me without being uncomfortable?' (anon. audience member).

III. The space of performance – mobile audiences and relationships between performer, audience, and space

In *Theatre of Cruelty*, Artaud speaks about extending the spectacle by eliminating the stage and breaking down the barriers between performers and audience. Artaud suggests placing the spectator 'in the middle of the action' and physically enveloping him/her, so 'a direct communication will be re-established between the spectator and the spectacle, between the actor and the spectator' (1958, in Artaud 1970, 96).

Those ideas have been particularly explored in productions classified as *immersive theatre*, an expression that, according to Anderson, involves placing the audience 'within the story-world. Rather than having a separated stage and auditorium, everything is the 'stage', and the audience is placed there alongside the actors' (Anderson, 2015).

In the sections below, I further reference some immersive/ promenade theatre productions that I have experienced as audience, and which have been references for the development of projects for this research. For my investigations on alternative use of the space of performance, and to propose alternative possibilities for the audience's experience, I developed the projects ***casa – reflections on house and home***, and ***myths & visions***, which will be considered in the next sections of this chapter.

CASE STUDY 5: ***casa – reflections on house & home***

casa – reflections on house & home had characteristics of a promenade performance. I greeted the spectators one-by-one at the door and the audience entered straight into the playing space, which had no distinction between stage and audience area. There was no seating for the audience, who were informed that they were free to walk and explore the space during the performance as they wished⁴⁷.

⁴⁷ The full description of the project can be found in the Portfolio of Works.



Fig. 22. *casa* - greeting the audience. 21/01/2016. Photo: Stu Allsopp

- Contextualization: the audience's role in the dynamics of promenade performances

The act of dissolving the boundaries of the performance space and bringing spectators near to the action also has the potential to create a sense of uncertainty and even discomfort in the audience. A common situation consists on the spectators' 'attempts to *avoid* the performers', as if coming to an agreement in terms of 'polite distances of watching' (Doyle, cited in Papaioannou 2014, 166). However, in opposition to that 'agreed politeness' about distance between performance and spectators, Papaioannou also notices an eventual 'subversive' audience behaviour, which on occasions seems to test the boundaries of the theatrical normality (Papaioannou 2014, 166).

I have observed that 'audience politeness' problematic as audience on dance-film production *Bridging the Void*⁴⁸, performed by dance company *Experience* (Old Fire Station, Oxford, UK, 21 March 2015). The work was performed in a 'black box' style theatre with no seats for the audience, with three dancers interacting with a film which was projected on a wall-size screen. Despite a prior invitation to explore the space freely, the spectators eventually placed themselves surrounding the performance area.

A situation where the audience showed a more challenging position in relation to the performance space was Mitchener's performance *Industrialising Intimacy*⁴⁹, which I attended on 01 June 2015, in Oxford, UK. That contemporary music theatre piece was then performed at OVADA, an arts venue situated in a disused warehouse. The work demanded an extensive use of the space by the performer, who walked, run, stood still and crawled through the room. The standing spectators distributed themselves reasonably evenly in the space and just avoided to be in the performer's way when she was running towards them.

⁴⁸ <http://www.experientaldance.com/portfolio-item/bridging-the-void/> (Accessed 22 September 2017).

⁴⁹ <http://www.soundandmusic.org/projects/touring-industrialising-intimacy-elaine-mitchener>. (Accessed 22 September 2017).

By comparing those works from my experience as an audience member, I had a sense that the bolder audience of Mitchener's performance fulfilled more effectively the spatial proposal of the work. Papaioannou had already observed that crucial role of the audience in such contexts, observing that, the intensity of the performance is enriched not only due to proximity of the audience to the action, but also the spectators' own dynamic of *avoiding* the performers (Papaioannou 2014, 166). The spectators then become 'a part of the choreographic landscape', and emerge as 'a renewed theatrical force' (idem).

- Findings: challenging paradigms on performer-audience relationship, other perspectives for the experience, and reflections on the space layout

In *casa*, the personal interaction between the pianist and the spectators individually was pointed out as the first element to make an impact and set a welcoming tone for the engagement with the work:

I found myself at ease from the beginning. Partly because of your warmth and openness in welcoming your guests, and also by the intimate nature of the arrangement of the studio, light and furniture, space to be in (anon. audience).

The exploration of space, especially the possibility to experience the work from different perspectives, was also highlighted: 'I enjoyed being able to move around so as to view the events from different angles, and the acoustics from different points made for a deeper level of experience' (anon. audience).

However, some spectators chose to stand still for the whole duration of the performance, which became a point of controversy: if on one hand it fitted within the proposal to give freedom for the spectator to choose their own way to experience the work, on the other hand it frustrated the proposal of having a mobile audience. That situation was only possible because the layout of the space allowed that panoramic view from some points in the room.



Fig. 23. *casa* - closeness with the audience. 21/01/2016. Photo: Stu Allsopp

From the performer's point of view, some paradigms of my practice as a classical pianist were challenged by the personal relationship with the spectators, the elimination of barriers between performance area and audience, and the mobile audience element. The fact that I welcomed the audience prevented me from having a period of isolation before the performance, which usually is helpful for concentration. Another challenge to my focus resulted from the closeness and the fact that some spectators were moving around while I was playing technically demanding passages.

However, the personalized communication with each spectator helped to engage with them in a distinct way: I was directing my performance to individuals, not to an anonymous crowd. Additionally, there was a greater sense of integration from the lack of distinction between performance and audience spaces, and from the fact that the audience was moving – I did not feel I was performing alone, instead, we were all performing, although different tasks.

Nevertheless, there was a negative feedback from a member of the audience who thought that, although it was interesting to have the option to move, there was a sense of being lost: 'I knew I was free to walk but, ... to where?' (anon. audience member).

Thus, I reflected on the need to have strategies to optimize the engagement of the audience within these non-conventional ideas. From my experience as an audience member in some promenade theatre productions, I noted the helpful strategy of having ushers to encourage and facilitate the movement of the audience.

CASE STUDY 6: *myths & visions*

myths & visions was a piano performance which further explored elements of a promenade concert, with the audience being guided by ushers to walk through designated journeys at specific moments in the performance⁵⁰.

- Contextualization

From my experience as an audience member, one reference of an orchestrated change of spatial perspective was *Husbands & Sons*⁵¹ (National Theatre and Royal Exchange Theatre, London, UK). In that production, three dramas are staged simultaneously, with three family

⁵⁰ The full description of the project can be found in the Portfolio of Works.

⁵¹ I experienced *Husbands and Sons* as an audience member on 04 February 2016, at the National Theatre, London. <https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/shows/husbands-sons> (Accessed 12 July 2017).

units set across the plain floor stage. The audience seated in the closest area to the performance swapped seats to the opposite side of the stage during the interval. Since I was seated in that area, I experienced that changing seats enriched my experience of the complexity of the drama. It allowed me to build a new perception and relationship with the staged families' stories.

Other experiences of more active spatial engagement as audience include promenade theatre performances such as *Handle with Care*⁵² and *I do*⁵³, both productions by the London-based theatre company Dante or Die.

Handle with Care was staged in a self-storage building, and the usher guided the audience through corridors and in and out of the unit rooms, following the the stages of the performance. The usher also varied the dynamics in her guidance: in some moments, she just gently encouraged us to move, in other moments she walked or even ran ahead to the next location. Those changes contributed to my embodiment of the passage of time of the story, which was a central aspect of that work. In *I do*, the audience was divided into several groups identified by colour badges, each group being assigned to an usher. The play was performed in several rooms of an hotel, through which the groups were led by their respective ushers.

In these Dante or Die productions, I perceived the ushers as having a distinct role: while in *I do* the usher had a geographical guide role, in *Handle with Care*, the variety of dynamic in her guidance was a crucial tool for my experience of that story – it became part of the performance itself.

A proposal in which the audience was more independent in realising their tasks was the production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Oxford-based company Creation Theatre⁵⁴. The audience was split in groups, which we signed into whilst booking tickets. Each group met at a different location, and the performance was developed in the style of a treasure hunt through different locations of the city centre. In this production, the audience's role

⁵² I experienced *Handle with Care* as an audience member on 04 June 2016, at Urban Locker, London. http://danteordie.com/handle_with_care.html (Accessed 11 July 2017).

⁵³ I experienced *I do* as an audience member on 17 July 2016, at Malmaison Hotel, Reading, UK. http://danteordie.com/i_do.html (Accessed 11 July 2017).

⁵⁴ I experienced Creation Theatre's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Oxford City Centre (various locations), in 22 July 2016. <https://www.creationtheatre.co.uk/shows/a-midsummer-night-s-dream> (Accessed 12 July 2017).

within the scenes fluctuated between being mostly like 'a fly on the wall', with moments of a more acknowledged presence and even some dialogue with the actors.

These works were an important source of inspiration for the development of the plans for the audience in *myths & visions*. The physical moving from the promenades and from the swapping of seats would allow the embodiment of the idea of an imaginary journey of the performance. Additionally, in practical terms, the changing of seats inspired by *Husbands & Sons* would be helpful to give the audience a varied perspective and solve the usual problematic of piano concerts, where the audience tends to prefer the seats on the left of the auditorium (Cook 2004, 265). I was also interested in exploring the outdoors to indoors element, as presented in Creation's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. However, from the experience of my previous projects, I reasoned that if I wanted the audience to move, it would be helpful to offer them guidance, similarly to the ushers in Dante or Die's productions.

- Findings

A stronger link with the audience was a highlight in this project, as commented in the audience feedback: 'There was a strong engagement with the performer, much stronger than in a standard classical music concert' (anon. audience member). The building up of that closer relationship was also helped by my one-to-one contact with the spectators by email before the performance, for the tickets bookings and instructions.

Additionally, initially gathering at a specific meeting point had a welcoming effect, as the interaction among themselves gave the audience a sense of community: 'The gathering at the beginning was really nice, because we got to chat to each other, to know each other and the different connections to you' (anon. audience member).



Fig. 24. *myths & visions* - audience gathering before the performance. 22/06/2017. Photo: Stu Allsopp



Fig. 25. *myths & visions* - outdoors beginning. 23/06/2017. Photo: Stu Allsopp

The journeys taken by the audience stimulated a sense of discovery and ongoing element of surprise: 'I felt transported onto a journey, from beginning before sound to a discovery; many surprises and breath held between sounds' (anon. audience member). The moving from outdoors to indoors evoked different sensations, from excitement of witnessing 'the wild creature of the woods discovering this strange shiny instrument', to a sense of spirituality of being led 'into the darkened candlelit space inside' (anon. audience members).

The swapping of seats halfway through the performance was highlighted as offering the spectators new perspectives and heightened the sense of being part of the performance: 'I really enjoyed travelling through the space and changing places, perspectives and hearing anew. I felt part of your piece, which I am sure was your intention' (anon. audience member).



Fig. 26. *myths & visions* - audience swapping seats. 21/06/2017. Photo by Stu Allsopp

From the creator and performer's point of view, the management of the relationship with the audience was as much part of the work as the performance itself. From the exchange of messages prior to the concert, including assembling the groups, and the use of my gaze to engage them during the performance, I searched for ways to turn the spectators into participants. However, I was aware of the great level of ingrained conventions that the audience would bring to a classical music event. Therefore, it was necessary to consider

precise strategies to allow the audience to fulfil their proposed role, yet not resulting as an imposition that would distract from the experience.

Although *myths & visions* was in essence a solo performance, there was a heightened sense of an intimate group experience. Performer and audience, in their specific roles, actively contributed to the making of the work.

SUMMARY

This chapter has discussed alternative proposals of engagement of audiences in classical piano performances, which were explored in six projects developed for this study.

Some of the findings to be highlighted are:

- The social context plays an important role in the live music experience. The sense of being part of a community affects the experience of the participants. The sense of being part of a unique event can be helpful to strengthen the engagement and generate meaning.
- The performer – audience relationship is a key factor in the experience of live music. A more personal interaction and the establishment of more intimate settings can be helpful to enhance the experience, especially by evoking a sense of uniqueness and privilege.
- Participatory strategies, such as giving the audience a voice on the structure of the work or proposing actions, are valuable means to enrich the engagement.
- The space of the performance affects the listening experience. Exploitation of unusual settings can be an efficient tool to reach new audiences and to offer new perspectives to experienced spectators. In particular, proposals of mobile audiences can be effective strategies to allow different ways of engagement and to allow further embodiment of the work.
- When there are proposals for the audience which may bring challenges to the traditional conventions of spectatorship, it is useful to design strategies to facilitate their engagement. Lack of information and uncertainties can lead to misunderstandings and discomforts which may detract from the artistic experience.
- For the performer, alternative ways of relating to the audience can represent challenges to paradigms of classical musician training, and, particularly, may require changes in strategies for concentration. However, a more personal interaction can

evoke a heightened sense of affection and integration with the audience, which can contribute to the collective aspect (performer-audience/participants) in the making of even a solo performance.

The next chapter will consider the third research question, regarding the shaping of the piano recital as a whole experience, proposing to use narrative as a tool to develop the dramaturgy of interdisciplinary piano performances.

Chapter 3

Dramaturgy and Narrativity – structuring interdisciplinary piano performances

Research question: *What strategies can be explored in order to re-shape a piano recital/performance into a more comprehensive and immersive artistic experience?*

In the previous chapters, I have discussed the exploration of elements from other artistic disciplines within the piano recital, and alternative strategies to engage audiences.

Considering the variety of elements that were being explored in the projects of this research, the remaining (and challenging) question was: how to bring all those elements together cohesively, so the final interdisciplinary piano performance can be experienced as a whole, instead of a patchwork or a simplistic juxtaposition of elements? The search for strategies to develop this unity within an interdisciplinary piano performance has inevitably culminated in reflections on *Dramaturgy*, which will be the focus of this chapter.

DEFINITION: *Dramaturgy*

Dramaturgy is defined as ‘the composition, structure or fabric of a play or a performance’ (Turner and Behrndt 2008, 3), or else, ‘the architecture of the theatrical event, involved in the confluence of components in a work, and how they are constructed to generate meaning for the audience’ (Versényi 2003, 386). According to Barba, *dramaturgy* works in the ‘weaving of the performance’s different elements’ (Barba 1985, 75).

Applying those concepts to the context of piano performances, the *dramaturgy of the piano recital* would then concern the composition (or structure, or fabric) of the piano performance event; the weaving and confluence of the elements involved in a piano recital.

Having established the definition of *dramaturgy* and applied it to the world of the piano recital, the subsequent question concerns *how* to weave those elements into a cohesive whole, i.e., which tools/strategies to use in order to build the dramaturgy/architecture of the performance.

Attempts to address that question have not reached a definite answer, even in the field of theatre itself. In that realm, Van Kerkhoven cites the ‘older’/ ‘traditional’ dramaturgy as ‘starting from a concept’, and following ‘a well-defined direction in which [the director and the dramaturg] want the performance to go’ (1994, 17-18), as opposed to the ‘new dramaturgy’,

which encompasses ‘process-oriented’ dynamics, where the meaning, the intentions, the form and the substance of a play arise during the working process (idem, 18)⁵⁵.

Although there may be controversies about the methods involved in the ‘new dramaturgy’, a common understanding is the view of the work as an invitation to an experience. As stated by Danan, ‘the whole show: a route through an experience’ (in Trencsényi and Cochrane 2014, 7). That said, Danan urges for a dramaturgy that, while ‘providing a framework for interpretation’, also ‘[creates] *the conditions for the experience*’ (idem, 8).

Narrativity as a tool to build Dramaturgy in piano performances

Traditionally, the concerns of putting together a piano recital are centred in choosing the repertoire. A historical proposal is one of the most usual parameters used to select a repertoire for a piano recital, with programmes either featuring pieces from a determined period, or showcasing pieces from different periods following a chronological order. There are also programmes dedicated entirely to a single composer, and programmes aiming to draw analogies between musical forms and/or styles.

Scholar Edward Said has pointed out the importance of the programme of a piano recital, from the perspective of attracting audiences to the *in-situ* experience: ‘One looks for programs that appear to say something – that highlight aspects of the piano literature or of performance in unexpected ways’ (Said 2008, 15). Said cites the narrative aspect of some programs, which move historically through the periods of music, or through musical forms, tonalities or styles.

In the piano performances developed for my research, besides the *a priori* concern about programming the repertoire, I had also to consider the other elements involved in the structures of the projects, as a result of their interdisciplinary proposal. In order to build the dramaturgy of those projects, I often explored a sense of narrative as a tool to weave the elements cohesively throughout the unfolding of the performance. Differently from the narratives mentioned by Said – historical or on musical structures, here I explored what Ryan identifies as ‘narrativity’.

⁵⁵ Trencsényi and Cochrane cite the emergence of a range of new terms within this ‘new dramaturgy’: ‘dance dramaturgy, visual dramaturgy, new media dramaturgy, mediaturgy’ and so on (2014, xi). This research, by proposing the investigation of *a dramaturgy for the piano recital*, aspires to contribute even more to that prolific flourishing of new terms, which hopefully reflects an enriching of creative practices in the performing arts world.

Specifically commenting on non-verbal fields of expression such as music, picture and dance, Ryan points out that those forms ‘can have narrativity without being narratives in a literal sense’. In these cases, ‘having narrativity’ would involve being able to evoke a narrative script in the mind of the audience (Ryan 2004, 9).

The basis for the building of the dramaturgy in the projects of this research (which involved the development of the narrativity, i.e., the sense of narrative) included:

- themes;
- literature;
- autobiography;
- musical material itself and gestures inherent to the musical performance.

In the following discussion, I will comment on the development of the dramaturgy of five projects in this research. The discussion will include contextualization within appropriate reference, the examination of the starting points for the creative processes of each of those projects, and subsequent development of narrativity within the structures of those performances. I will also draw reflections on the findings from the development and presentation of those projects, based on audience feedback, analysis of documentation, and my own reflections as creator and performer.

1. THEMES as basis for the dramaturgy and starting point for narratives

The idea of relating music to a subject such as a character, a scene or a phenomenon, has been largely explored, especially under the concept of ‘program music’⁵⁶. An example among numerous thematic piano recitals, multimedia concert *From the Gardens of Spain*, performed by pianist Yeakaterina Lebedeva and guests⁵⁷, presented all elements under the umbrella of Spanish culture: solo piano pieces composed by Spanish composers, Spanish traditional lullabies sang by a jazz-singer, projections of paintings by a Spanish artist, and the participation of a flamenco dancer. From my experience as audience, the interaction of the elements in this production emerged as what Cook calls ‘conformant’, where each element ‘is congruent with each of the others; it embodies the same spiritual content’ (Cook

⁵⁶ Scruton, in the dictionary Grove Music Online, simplifies the polemic around the concept of programme music by summarising the definition: ‘programme music is music with a programme. (...) is music that seeks to be understood in terms of its programme; it derives its movement and its logic from the subject it attempts to describe’ (Scruton, 2001).

⁵⁷ I attended the multimedia concert *From the Gardens of Spain* on 02 December 2016, at Dugdale Centre, London, UK. <https://www.facebook.com/events/1635987553389154> (Accessed 10 July 2017).

2004, 100). In other words, I perceived as if all the elements were carrying the same information, resulting in a cumulative material rather than generating new possibilities of meanings by a more varied dynamic of interaction.

In my research, the multimedia proposal was developed in complementation or contradiction processes⁵⁸. Similarly to Lebedeva's multimedia concert, the themes would work as umbrellas to encompass the varied elements. However, in the projects of my research, there was an intention of constructing a recognizable 'whole' as a result of the integration of the multimedia components, which eventually emerged through a sense of narrative in the unravelling of the performance.

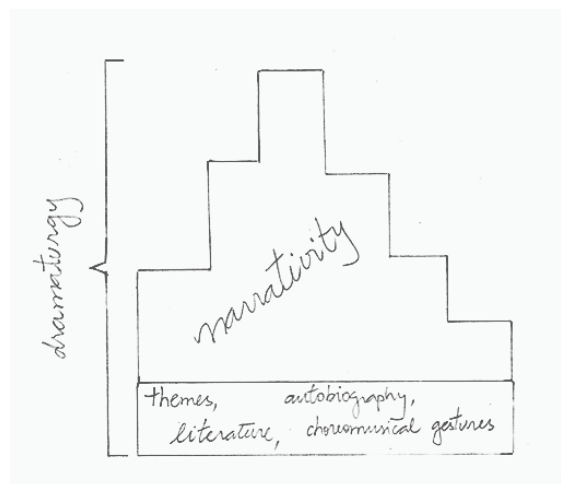


Fig. 27. Diagram for the development of Dramaturgy: *narrativity* to build up the structure of the works of this research

The themes, in my research, first motivated the search for interdisciplinary elements to compose the projects. Subsequently, these selected elements were integrated in the dramaturgy of the performance, either in a process of feeding back to the theme, however in a *defamiliarised* way, or following a linear process of generating a sequence of events from the thematic idea:

- Radial process (project **for her**): all elements converging towards the theme;
- Linear process (projects **from night to day** and **night**): the elements emerging as in sequence, from the theme.

⁵⁸ For definition of complementation and contradiction models of multimedia, see Chapter 1, page 8.

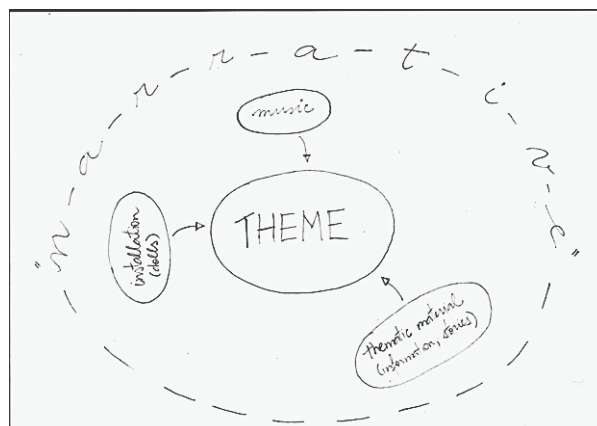


Fig. 28. Dramaturgy of *for her*: a radial process

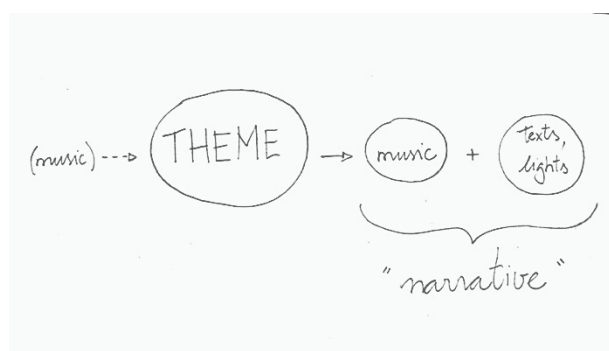


Fig. 29. Dramaturgy of *from night to day*, and *night*: a linear process

- CASE STUDY: *for her*

for her was the first project developed in this research and, as an early work, it was experimental around the theme of human trafficking and the exploitation of girls and young women.

From a disquietude stirred up by the social issue, the elements were selected to integrate my piano performance: piano music titled after women, dolls to compose the environment, and information and stories of victims to address the theme. When presented together in the performance, these elements referred back to the theme, but, in a *defamiliarized* way: since they were coming from different sources of reference, a complex process of interaction was created.

Commenting on non-linear structures among the multiple possibilities of dramaturgy that may emerge in contemporary performance practices, Turner and Behrndt pointed out that 'the combination of narratives, tracks, or 'strata' produces new meanings that are not inherent in any of the elements if viewed singly' (2008, 32). In that way, an overarching narrative could then emerge in *for her* from the combination of several individual narratives:

the stories of the victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation. Additionally, the building up of a sense of narrative was helped by the dynamic of gradual intensification in the script of the performance⁵⁹.

- CASE STUDY: *from night to day* and *night*

In the projects under the theme of night (*from night to day* and *night*), the starting point was the music itself. From my initial practice of the first pieces of the repertoire, I was inspired to search for other musical works reflecting the same theme, building up a programme about night. The theme would also inspire the exploration of elements from other disciplines, becoming then the basis to develop the whole of the interdisciplinary performance.

In those projects, the narrativity was developed in a kind of linear process: the theme worked as a starting point for a sequence of scenes, each one related to an image from the night and to a piece of music in the programme:

Table 1. script of performance: *from night to day*

Music	Scene	Reading
Villa-Lobos – <i>The three Maries</i>	Stars	'Once there were 3 little girls who romped and played in the countryside of Brazil. They were always merry and the best of friends. That this trinity might serve as eternal symbol of union for humanity, Destiny has preserved them as stars in the heavens' (from programme notes on musical score).
Linda Catlin-Smith – <i>A nocturne</i>	Night time	... and 'we are staring down night itself' (from email correspondence with the composer).
Debussy - <i>Le fées sont d'exquises danseuses [The fairies are exquisite dancers]</i>	Sweet dreams	'A little fairy comes at night Her eyes are blue, her hair is brown, With silver spots upon her wings, And from the moon she flutters down' (excerpt from Thomas Hood's poem <i>The Dream Fairy</i>).
Takemitsu - <i>Rain tree sketch</i>	Transition between night and day	'It's called a rain tree because, when there's a shower at night, drops of water fall from its foliage until past noon the next day, as if the tree was raining. Other trees dry off quickly, but this one stores water in its closed packed leaves, no longer than fingertips. Isn't it a clever tree?' (excerpt from Kenzaburo Oe's novel <i>The Clever Rain Tree</i>).
Malcolm Atkins – <i>Aya on the beach</i>	Early morning	and, finally, she found out that 'what will survive of us is love' (from music score original subtitle).

⁵⁹ See the section dedicated to the findings of this project in Chapter 1, page 12.

Table 2. script of performance: *night*

Music	Scene	Lights
Beethoven – <i>Moonlight Sonata</i> (1 st mov)	Moonlight	Single spot, Light Blue filter (front on)
Villa-Lobos – <i>The three Maries</i>	Stars	Mirror ball [open], Light Blue spot on piano 20%
John Cage - <i>Dream</i>	Dream	Green 40%; Red 40%; Mid-dark Blue 45%, Rear orange 30%, Pink 70%
Orlando Gough – <i>Staring into the Abyss</i>	Nightmare	Dark Blue spot piano (break up gobo soft); Green 30%, Red 40%, Pink 50%
Debussy - <i>Le fées sont d'exquises danseuses</i>	Sweet dreams	Blue gobo 100%, Green 40%, Pink 80%
Takemitsu - <i>Rain tree sketch</i>	Dawn	Fade time 1min30sec [on top of previous state]: 1. Red 100%, 2. Rear orange 100%, Green wash 100%

A sense of narrative could then evolve from that process, helped by the transitional elements as crucial tools to allow the flow of the performance:

- In ***from night to day***, the readings had a poetic and playful characteristic, and were short in their lengths. They were perceived as links between one piece of music and another, rather than didactic/informative elements. This gave the performance a fluid dynamic and evoked a sense of narrative;
- In ***night***, the transitions of lighting in between the scenes were subtle and gradual, and I tried to reflect that aspect in my body language, by pacing my breathing and using gentle arms movements in between the pieces. The flow of the programme and the subtle transitions perhaps influenced the audience not to clap through the performance, only at the end of the programme. That fluidity in the performance, and the role of the lighting to create unity within the programme, had a positive effect on the audience experience: 'I liked the way that [the lighting] brought the different pieces together as one long piece without the distraction of applause between each' (anonymous audience member).

- Notes on transitions

From those early projects, I noticed that the transitions are the key elements to build the dramaturgy of the work, i.e., the tool to make the varied elements to converge together and make sense as a whole. According to Turner and Behrndt:

it is the 'links' or the 'bridges' between events that are, in fact, key to understanding the 'inner logic' of the piece. Transitions are not just a question of moving from one moment to another; it is in these transitions that the dramaturgy of the performance is discovered (Turner and Behrndt 2008, 33).

2. LITERATURE and/or AUTOBIOGRAPHY as basis for the dramaturgy

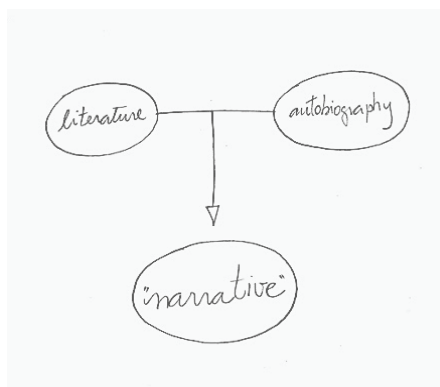
The creative process of my next project developed from my reading of Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space*, where the author comments on how spaces can speak about intimacy and shape our memories and dreams. These readings led me to a process of introspection, as if personal memories were being triggered and were influencing my decisions. Being aware of that aspect, I decided to explore the autobiography as the tool to build the dramaturgy of ***casa***.

A reference of an interdisciplinary piano performance with an autobiographical aspect is Sarah Nicolls' *Moments of Weightlessness* music/theatre show. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Sarah Nicolls combines her experiences of motherhood with the invention of a new piano. All the elements of Sarah Nicolls's show are directly autobiographical: the narration is composed of her own recorded testimonies, the props and actions make reference to her everyday tasks as a mother and pianist, and the music is by her own authorship.

- CASE STUDY: ***casa***

In ***casa***, the autobiographical element had more of a background role, since I was working with material by other authors - quotations by Bachelard, and music written by Brazilian composers. My autobiography then provided the basis for the development of the narrativity of the script, which was referenced in a veiled way during the performance through elements with symbolic connotations: musical boxes represented different phases of my life, the walks across the room represented journeys in specific moments of my story, and some musical textures were interpreted as resonances of some personal longings.

The dramaturgy of ***casa*** was then anchored on the combination of elements from literature and from my autobiography: the elements from the literature provided the signposts for the form, while the autobiographical features gave the content for the narrative aspect of the performance. The script was structured in scenes according to the literary keywords, and those were each related to a quotation, a piece of music, and theatrical actions.

Fig. 30. Dramaturgy of *casa*: a combined processTable 3. script of performance: *casa*

Keyword/ Scene	Quotation	Music	Action	Autobiographical motivation
Memories	'Life begins well, it begins enclosed, protected, all warm in the bosom of the house' (p. 7).	<i>Tátil</i> [Tactile] by Valéria Bonafé	Switch bedside table lamp on; play musical box 1	Beginnings, first memories
Echoes	'... the old house, for those who know how to listen, is a sort of geometry of echoes' (p. 60).	<i>Ressonâncias</i> [Resonances] by Marisa Rezende	Open wardrobe; switch reading lamp on; look at family photos; play recording of family members' voices	Childhood
Corners	'When we recall the hours we have spent in our corners, we remember above all silence, the silence of our thoughts' (p. 137).	<i>Nenhum, Nenhuma</i> [None, None], by Gustavo Penha	Play and walk with musical box 2; switch on standing lamps at the corners of the room	Leaving family house to pursue education and career
The attic	'... even when the attic room is lost and gone there remains the fact that we once loved a garret, once lived in an attic' (p. 10).	<i>Ludvan ven Beethovenig</i> , for two toy pianos and one player, by Daniel Moreira	Take the reading lamp from the wardrobe to a set of boxes; play a stacking nesting-doll-like game with the set of boxes; play the 3 musical boxes at once; climb the scaffolding and turn on the lamp on the toy pianos	Excitement of new discoveries
The cellar	'... the dark entity of the house... When we dream there, we are in harmony with the	<i>gosto de terra</i> [it tastes like earth], for piano and live electronics, by Daniel Puig	Switch off all the lamps	Threats of the journey to adulthood

	irrationality of the depths' (p. 18).			
Love, Intimacy, Dream	'[the house] bespeaks intimacy...' (p. 72). 'The house shelters daydreaming, the house protects the dreamer, the house allows one to dream in peace' (p. 6).	<i>El sueño... el vuelo</i> [The dream... the flight], by Silvia Berg	Place the musical box 1 on the grand piano and turn a music stand light on it; Spot light fade on the piano during the music until 100% brightness	Achievements, gaining new horizons, but treasuring roots and memories.

The sense of narrative had an impact on the audience's engagement with the programme: it offered a framework for the listening, and added an emotional aspect to some spectators' experience.

By the end of the performance I felt as if I had been on a journey. An internal journey both through the spaces of 'casa' and the emotional colours that are attached to different aspects of "casa" (anon. audience member).

[There was] the sense of a story, but not necessarily a linear one (anon. audience member).

I became quite nostalgic and my thoughts dwelt on my childhood home and the security provided by my parents, and the house (anon. audience member).

- From the performer's experience: notes on musical and theatrical performance

The literary references of **casa** influenced my musical interpretation directly: the reflections on the quotations inspired gestures and encouraged me to create mental images, which influenced my choices of tempo, dynamics and phrasings in my playing. Additionally, the autobiographical aspect required a process of introspection which helped me to define the overall tone for the project and affected the way that I approached the musical pieces. The triggering of memories from the autobiographical creative process also added another emotional layer which, if on one hand can be inspiring for musical expressivity, on the other hand can represent a challenge in terms of keeping the emotions under control to be able to deliver the performance successfully.

Reflecting on the findings regarding the transitions from the previous projects, I could verify empirically that the building up of the dramaturgy of **casa** would rely heavily on the transitions between the pieces of music. Thus, I endeavoured to link the last instrumental gesture of each piece to the subsequent theatrical gesture. That quality of continuity was

helpful to allow the flow of narrativity of the performance, and it eventually inspired me to inquiry into the potential of the musical gestures themselves to generate a dramaturgy in future projects.

3. CHOREOMUSICAL GESTURES as basis of the dramaturgy

In this section of this research, I am interested in investigating a dramaturgy for music performances based on the unfolding of a choreomusical⁶⁰ discourse, particularly focusing on cases where the musical gesture originates a choreography.

Focusing on the musical gestures particularly related to the instrumental practice, Newland comes to the term 'instrumental gesture', which 'refers to those specifically corporeal features comprising musical performance that arise as a consequence of physical manipulation to an instrument', also including 'physical behaviours framing the act of performance, such as bowing (...)' (2014, 151).

Newland continues by highlighting the choreographic potential of musicians' body movement, and examines it empirically through the performance *Woman=Music=Desire* (2010). In this work, Newland's piano playing gestures were observed and subsequently re-enacted by dancers, in order to investigate how musical expressivity may reveal itself through corporeity, and how it might be perceived by non-instrumentalists through the kinaesthetic empathy process (Newland 2014, 154-161)⁶¹.

The cross-fertilization of music and dance has been also explored in choreographer Xavier Le Roy's work. In *Le Sacre du Printemps* (2007), Le Roy draws from the conductor movements and re-performs them as choreography of its own. A question of interchangeability between the two means of expression then emerges: 'the gestures (...) that are meant to prompt musicians to play appear at the same time to be produced by the music they are supposed to produce'⁶².

⁶⁰ Here I am borrowing the term 'choreomusical', which was coined by Paul Hodgins to refer to music and dance/music and movement relationships (Hodgins 1992).

⁶¹ Newland speaks of 'kinaesthetic empathy', drawing from the idea of 'intercorporeality' – 'a kind of shared 'bodyliness' that marks each experience as social' (Newland 2016, 118).

⁶² <http://www.xavierleroy.com/page.php?sp=a0f7e349ea6cabcd6b97cfb20f2582d9c062cba9&lg=en>. (Accessed 04 August 2017)

Choreographer Tânia Carvalho's piece *Danza Ricercata* (already mentioned in chapter 1) also presented a process of intersection between instrumental gesture and choreography. However, in that work, both actual choreographic and musical gestures were performed live by the pianist alone. Having the pianist's gestures as starting point, Carvalho characterised each piece of Ligeti's cycle *Musica Ricercata* individually, and the persona acted by the pianist was the link between the pieces⁶³. From my point of view as a spectator⁶⁴, the choreography of that persona emerged mostly as a commentary on the music. The choreographic gestures, although integrated throughout the piano performance, were perceived as not intrinsically connected with the musical gestures, which resulted in an effective addition of another layer of meaning to the experience of the work.

Inspired by the works above, I similarly aimed to draw from the musical gestures to generate choreography in my project *myths & visions*. However, I was inclined to develop the choreographic texture under the realm of the musical experience. In this way, the pianist's body would still be the carrier of the dramaturgy, but, rather than through commentary gestures, through movements as a *more comprehensive* embodiment of the musical performance.

- CASE STUDY: *myths & visions*

As already commented in Chapter 1, the creative process of *myths & visions* primarily explored my instrumental gestures (i.e. the gestures of my piano playing) to generate the dramaturgy, particularly taking advantage of the possibilities of the piano extended techniques. Also, the references of the musical compositions – characters of myths and legends, imaginary landscapes and illusory elements – provided motivation for some qualities in the movements. The transitions were crafted in order to give continuity within the programme. To this end, I searched to shape the ending of one piece and carry the transition to the next piece in my breathing and gestures.

⁶³ Carvalho (2008) interviewed by Duarte, *Jornalismo Porto Net* [online news website], 22 Dec. Available at <https://jpn.up.pt/2008/12/22/danza-ricercata-entre-a-musica-classica-e-a-danca/> (Accessed 08 November 2016).

⁶⁴ I watched the video documentation of *Danza Ricercata* in November 2016, from restrict online archive, access kindly given by the author Tânia Carvalho.

Table 4. script of performance: *myths & visions*

Performance starts outside, with piano and voice improvisation. The pianist then leads the audience into the theatre with her body language and singing.				
Opening choreography when indoors: after audience is settled in their seats, pianist runs to stage. She stops, then dances around the piano, jumps on stool, then sits down to play first piece.				
	<u>Music</u>	<u>Piano Extended Technique</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Gesture/ Quality</u>
P a r t I M y t h s	<i>The Voice of Lir</i> , by Henry Cowell	Tonal clusters (forearm and hand clusters, released chords)	Irish myth: 'for everything that has been created there is an unexpressed and concealed counterpart which is the other half of Lir's plan of creation' ⁶⁵ .	Earthy, half hidden. Low posture, unrolling upper body gradually, breathing to release arm gestures for clusters in low versus high registers. Transition to next piece: pull stool further away from the piano, approach keyboard and look to inside the piano with a happier attitude.
	<i>Aeolian Harp</i> , by Henry Cowell	Silent keyboard and plucking/ strumming of strings	A musical instrument played by the wind, named for Aeolus – Greek god of the wind ⁶⁶ .	Lighter mood, 'airy'/ gracious arm movements, Open chest, 'fairy like/ 'puppetry' finger movements, as if crafting the sound through the air. Transition: roll down to under keyboard to lock pedal down. Unroll revealing the transformation of the character to a darker/ anguished quality. Walk to the other end of the piano: distorted upper body posture and movements (witch like).
	<i>The Banshee</i> , by Henry Cowell	Piano string, to be played from the crook of the piano.	Irish mythology: a female spirit in who heralds the death of a member of one of the prominent Gaelic families, usually by shrieking or keening. In later versions, the banshee might appear before the death and warn the family by wailing ⁶⁷ .	Immersion of body inside the piano, lower body in connection with upper body movements. Tactile quality in interaction with piano. Last gesture: allow upper body to rest as if hanging from the piano. Transition: get pieces of rubber from under the piano, see them playfully. Dance/walk to keyboard in swinging mood, steps inspired by Brazilian folklore – 'puxada de rede' [fishermen's net pulling] and female Afro-Brazilian deities' dances. Humming and dancing (balance step) while preparing the piano.

⁶⁵ From score notes (Cowell, 1922).⁶⁶ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aeolian_harp (Accessed 19 July 2016).⁶⁷ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Banshee> (Accessed 19 July 2016).

	<i>Bacchanale</i> , by John Cage	Prepared piano: insertion of weather strippings and screws in between strings.	From Bacchanalia, Roman festivals of Bacchus, the Greco-Roman god of wine, freedom, intoxication and ecstasy. At the beginning, they were attended just by women ⁶⁸ .	Frantic mood with a feeling of going towards exhaustion, distortions/ flexible body/ different angles and levels while playing (dance while playing), gestures emulating women percussionists' attitude.
Transition: Pianist blows the candles out and plays the singing bowl behind the piano. Audience follows the ushers in single lines travelling in opposite direction around the piano to swap sides in the auditorium.				
P a r t I V i s i o n s	<i>inside silence</i> , by Sara Carvalho	Prepared piano: insertion of a rosined line between in, and a singing bowl and a metal rod on, the piano strings; Toy piano.	'a musical theatrical journey on drifting ice'. The singing bowl symbolizes water, while the piano preparation and the gradual transformation of timbres until the toy piano represents the different landscapes of that journey ⁶⁹ .	Swinging arms, side torso contortions (mental image of wind), arms in spiral position. 'Brighter' mood – upper body more upright, sit at edge of stool during second section (mental images of underground lakes). Flowing-like walk from piano to toy piano, varying speeds. 'Dignity' posture when playing the toy piano. Transition: spin on toy piano stool (mental image: turning to a new landscape), get mallet from the floor and 'scan' it over the strings to bring the attention to the reflection inside the piano lid.
	<i>Miragem [Mirage]</i> , by Marisa Rezende	Mallets on strings	Explorations of distortions on the piano sonority, as paraphrasing the title (...) ⁷⁰ .	Shadow effects on the wall behind the piano. Last gesture of right hand sweeping outwards from the piano strings: unfold gradually hand – wrist – elbow - arm, for effect of expansion. Transition: softening of chest, reflective gazing at hands, close the keyboard lid slowly as sits down.
	<i>A flower</i> , by John Cage	Closed piano (percussion on keyboard lid) and voice	'[Here] Cage questions the assumption that the first thing one does in playing a piano part is to open the cover over the keyboard. Meanwhile, (...) the	Engage back muscles on the percussive playing (mental image of female percussionists); soft gaze tracing back some significant locations of the performance.

⁶⁸ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bacchanalia> (Accessed 19 July 2016).

⁶⁹ From the composer's programme notes (Carvalho, 2012).

⁷⁰ Rezende (2015) Interviewed by Dinara Pessoa, *Continente* [online magazine], Issue 112, 26 Feb., pp.8-11. Available at https://issuu.com/revistacontinente/docs/112_-_abr_10_-_brasilia (Accessed 08 August 2017).

			musical effect of the vocalise is mysterious, and it has a sense of timelessness and purity (...) ⁷¹ .	Last scene: stands and walks towards the pianist's own shadow cast on the upstage wall, and stands still facing it.
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In the process of building the dramaturgy, a challenge emerged of how to weave seamlessly the texture of the work, so to develop a cohesive unfolding of this multifaceted performance. If the title *myths & visions* offered inspiration for some compositional elements, it still did not represent a background material to anchor a narrative, as the themes, literature, and autobiography of previous projects did. Here, instead of being invited to search for meanings, the spectator was being invited to have an experience⁷² (Danan, in Trencsényi and Cochrane 2014, 6-7).

The question of the cohesive weaving of the performance could be then addressed with the understanding that the focus on the musicality of the body represents one of the characteristics of contemporary dance. According to Tomazzoni, 'dance does not need a message, a story, even a soundtrack. The body in movement establishes its own dramaturgy' (2005)⁷³. In this way, the role of the character of the pianist/performer was clarified: she was herself the unifying link throughout the text. An embodied and multifaceted bearer of the narrativity of the work: 'the *thread* is more you and your relationship with the piano' (anonymous feedback on work-in-progress).

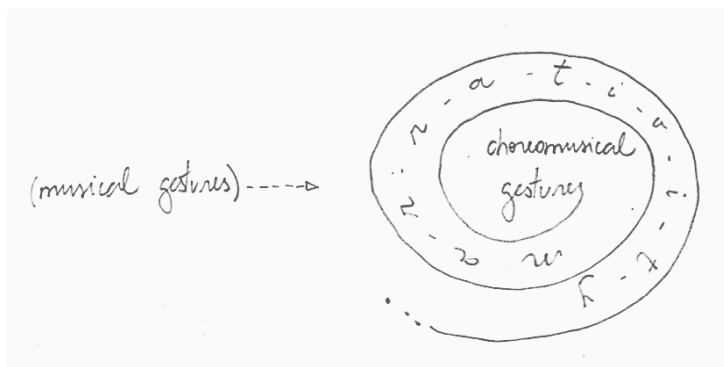


Fig. 31. Dramaturgy of *myths & visions*: an embodied process

⁷¹ Description by Joseph Stevenson on <http://www.allmusic.com/composition/a-flower-for-voice-closed-piano-mc0002372263> (Accessed 08 August 2017).

⁷² That aspect of invitation to an experience without demands of communication of specific meanings was reinforced by the decision to hand out printed programmes only at the end of the performance. In that way, the spectator could engage with the actual performance in a more embodied way, without being induced to try to 'understand' the piece according to any programme information.

⁷³ Translated by the author, from the original Portuguese text: 'A dança não precisa de mensagem, de história e mesmo de trilha sonora. O corpo em movimento estabelece sua própria dramaturgia'.

- From the culmination of a practice-based research journey: notes on embodiment, 'immersiveness', and 'comprehensiveness'

The physicality in the performance of **myths & visions** played a prominent role in the audience experience. The comments recurrently revealed imageries of personification of the piano, and a sense of narrative often emerged from their readings on the pianist-piano relationship:

The way you interacted with the space and with the piano, I felt I was like an outsider, watching you having this intense conversation with the piano (anonymous feedback on work-in-progress).

(...) you seemed to be having a conversation with the piano. The way you jumped on the stool, it was like it was the first time you've seen this 'creature' which you were not sure what it was (anon. feedback on work-in-progress).

(...) you managed to make the piano itself a part of the performance rather than an instrument on which you were performing (anon. feedback on final performance).

You seem one with the instrument, a seamless love story unfolding in beautiful playing and acting (anon. feedback on final performance).

Also, **myths & visions** helped to consolidate, in a tangible way, the findings regarding the transitions as crucial elements in the dramaturgy. Here, the weaving of the fabric of the performance was embodied in the pianist's choreomusical gestures, which allowed the work to be perceived as a cohesive whole:

By weaving together the interludes between the music, including before the actual beginning, with body movement, dance and vocals you created a performance that had a shape of its own that can never be achieved in normal concert conditions (anon. audience member).

The gaps told the story as much as the notes did (anon. audience member).

It felt organic, very natural. And the filling of the spaces in between the music worked well, because those could be very awkward moments, when the energy could go down and people switch off [from the performance frame of mind]. But here you kept the interest all the time, there was a narrative line developing all the way through (anon. audience member).

If on one hand the sense of narrative and cohesiveness of the performance tackles the aspect of developing 'a more comprehensive piano recital' (as one of the topics of the

research question focus of this chapter), on the other hand, the search to offer a more 'immersive artistic experience' can be here addressed by the more focused bodily aspect of this project. Wöllner and Honagen comment that, when watching dancers, audiences empathise and 'internally co-experience their movements' (in Wöllner, ed., 2017, 238.4/895). In this way, the experience of watching a more embodied piano performance (or else, a choreomusical performance) may have effected a similarly more embodied experience on the spectator. Those aspects may have helped to build a greater rapport with the performer (as a reference to the kinaesthetic empathy process, mentioned earlier in this chapter), and altogether enhanced the sense of 'being part of the piece'⁷⁴.

From my experience as the pianist/performer, *myths & visions* demonstrated that the idea of a piano recital as a more comprehensive and physically immersive artistic experience would intrinsically require the pianist as a more comprehensive performer. This pianist/performer is now urged to engage in a more comprehensive musical practice, which goes beyond the exclusive engagement with the musical score: now, she is required to engage further with her performative body, and to craft the recital as an artform in itself. In this way, the development of the dramaturgy of this 'artform recital' would also include: engagement with the audience prior to the event (so as to build up the horizon of expectations), a detailed design of the pre-show elements (so as to set the tone for the experience), the shaping of the performance as a whole (particularly with a seamless weaving of the elements), and a deeper embodiment of the work itself.

As a project that represented the culmination of this practice-based PhD research, *myths & visions* had a distinct impact on the audience, according to the unanimously positive and enthusiastic feedback. Thus, it demonstrated that the development of a piano performance under a dramaturgical approach can be an effective strategy to create conditions for unique and relevant experiences:

It is definitely not a piano recital, it is a performance (anon. feedback on work-in-progress).

The performance felt very complete with all situations linked and drawing us on a journey (anon. feedback on final performance).

⁷⁴ See audience feedback in Chapter 2, Section III, Case Study 6, page 47.

SUMMARY

This chapter addressed the research question: *What strategies can be explored in order to re-shape the piano recital into a more comprehensive and immersive artistic experience?*

To this end, experimental projects were developed to investigate the proposal of shaping interdisciplinary piano performances under a dramaturgical approach. Often, narrativity (i.e., the quality to evoke a sense of narrative) was explored as a strategy to build the dramaturgy of those projects. Different elements were explored as basis for the development of those dramaturgies, and as starting points for the unfolding of the narrativity: themes, literary references, autobiography, and choreomusical gestures.

Highlighted findings from those studies include:

- It was demonstrated that *narrativity* can be an effective tool to support the building of the dramaturgy of *more comprehensive*, yet cohesive, interdisciplinary piano performances.
- It was empirically consolidated that *transitions* are the key for the development of a cohesive dramaturgy, as 'the bridge between events' so the performance can make sense as a whole. Also, the links in between the musical pieces can provide a quality of continuity to a performance, which can help a sense of narrative to emerge.
- For some spectators, a sense of narrative can be helpful in providing a framework for the listening, and occasionally to enhance an emotional engagement in the experience,
- The performative body of the pianist is itself a highly effective carrier of the dramaturgy. Musical gestures have great potential as generators of meaning and expressivity, and can stimulate a more embodied, thus *more immersive*, experience by the audience.
- The development of a piano performance under a dramaturgical approach brings new parameters to the pianist's musical practice. The pianist is now required to embrace a comprehensive musical practice that includes deeper engagement with her performative body, the establishment of a stronger relationship with the audience (which should be crafted from prior to the event), and the shaping of the performance itself as a whole - yet in detailed attention to each one of its elements.

Conclusion

This research has investigated interdisciplinary strategies for classical piano performances, aiming to offer alternative ways for the experience of live classical music. The motivation for these investigations was a questioning about the conventions within live classical music performances, particularly concerning the place of performance (especially the layouts of the stage and the usual lack of visuals), the etiquette of behaviour for musicians and audience, and the format of the recital as an event in itself.

Three research questions were then devised to guide this study:

- Can audience engagement with live classical music be enhanced by bringing other elements, such as visuals, into dialogue with music performance?
* *(focus on the interdisciplinary elements in piano performance)*
- How can one offer other possibilities to experience a classical music performance to a contemporary audience?
* *(focus on the social conventions within a musical performance)*
- What strategies can be explored to re-shape a piano recital/performance into a more comprehensive and physically immersive artistic experience?
* *(focus on the format of the piano recital itself)*

Since these questions initially emerged from reflections on my own practice as a classical pianist, practice-based research was considered the most appropriate approach to carry on the investigations⁷⁵. Experimental piano performance projects were developed and presented to examine the questions, and reflections were drawn from the audience feedback and from my experience as author/performer.

The projects devised to address the first research question (*can audience engagement with live classical music be enhanced by bringing other elements, such as visuals, into dialogue with music performance?*) explored integration of elements in piano recitals, such as installation/environment, projections, audio recordings, storytelling, literature, lighting, theatre, and dance. In chapter 1, it was demonstrated that **interdisciplinary proposals can**

⁷⁵ See Introduction citing Barrett's remark on the nature of the artistic research process, which 'involves learner-centred activity driven by real-world problems or challenges in which the learner is actively engaged in finding a solution' (Barrett 2010, 5).

enhance the engagement of audiences: on one hand, they can create a context for the music and stimulate imageries to guide a non-experienced spectator's listening; on the other hand, they can offer fresher ways for the engagement of a more experienced audience.

From the projects discussed in chapter 1, it was observed that **the space of the performance plays a determinant role in the music experience**. The alternative approaches to the physical context explored in this research included elements of *defamiliarisation*, intimacy, and immersion by the extrapolation and/or elimination the boundaries of stage area. It was then verified that the deliberate preparation of the physical context can contribute to a stronger engagement of audiences by stimulating the building up of horizons of expectations (i.e., a sense of anticipation). Also, the establishment of a sense of intimacy can enhance an affective aspect in the music experience.

The alternative explorations of the space of performance represented an intersection between the first and the second research questions (*how can one offer other possibilities to experience a classical music performance to a contemporary audience?*). From the experimentations on the physical context as discussed in Chapter 1, reflections were drawn about the set of relationships (audience-performer-work-space) involved in the experience of live classical music. In order to further examine that topic, chapter 2 discussed proposals with challenges to those relationships, including recitals transmitted through headphones (strategy termed as *direct mediatization*), one-to-one performances, and promenade concerts.

The practical investigations confirmed, empirically, that **social relationships play a central part in the live music experience**. In this respect, research into the literature pointed out that 'the most meaningful experiences for audience members relate to a combination of social, personal and situational factors [which refers to the venue, environment, interactions with other audience members/performers], but that the latter have a more powerful impact on individual's engagement (...)' (Burland and Pitts 2014, 176). In practice, the role of the performer-audience interaction was examined through the establishment of a stronger pianist-spectator relationship, via a more personal communication, and more intimate settings. Meanwhile, the audience-audience relationship was examined by either dislocating the collective aspect of the experience through the use of headphones, or by offering conditions for distinct interactions among the participants during the promenade concerts.

Furthermore, the practical studies attested that **distinctive experiences for audiences in piano recitals can emerge from an enhanced sense of being part of the event in a**

unique way. That sense of uniqueness benefited, here, from a closer performer-audience connection. As Danan says: 'the more securely a (...) performance can establish a strong relationship with the spectator, the greater the chance of it 'making sense' to him (...)' (in Trencsényi and Cochrane 2014, 7). Additionally, a heightened sense of being part of a 'community' with the other audience members (particularly during the walks of the promenade concerts) added to the specialness of the experience of these piano performances. This heightened identification among the participants was not anticipated, and could emerge only due to the practice-based characteristic of this research. As pointed out by Barrett, the often subjective motivation of practice-based art researches has the capacity to reveal 'new social and other realities', which are not yet evidenced by other methods of enquiry (2010, 4).

Having examined interdisciplinary dialogues in piano recitals and alternative strategies for engagement of audiences - particularly relating to experiments on space and social contexts - this thesis then discussed the topics of dramaturgy and narrativity as structural approaches for interdisciplinary piano performances. This discussion addresses the third research question (*what strategies can be explored to re-shape the piano recital/performance into a more comprehensive and physically immersive experience?*), as an enquiry on how to weave cohesively all the elements involved in an interdisciplinary piano performance, so the final work would be experienced as a whole.

Themes, literature, autobiography, and choreomusical gestures were explored as starting points for the creative processes of the dramaturgies of the projects of this research. New understandings (such as those detailed below) were gained about the process models that emerged in the development of these dramaturgies: radial, linear, combined, and embodied processes. It was found throughout the research that **transitions are key elements in the dramaturgy of an interdisciplinary performance**. The links between events are the elements which ultimately bring unity to the multifaceted fabric of an interdisciplinary performance, and what ultimately allow a sense of narrative to flow.

It was particularly demonstrated in chapter 3 that **narrativity (i.e., the quality of evoking a sense of narrative) can be an effective tool to support the dramaturgy of an interdisciplinary performance**, since it can provide a basis for a cohesive weaving of the elements. Additionally, a sense of narrative can offer a framework for the listening, which can be helpful for the engagement of audiences, especially spectators less experienced with classical music.

The programmes performed in the projects gradually featured more pieces written by contemporary composers. Although this was not an initial agenda of the research, it opened the question for further studies, whether contemporary works may allow more possibilities of alternative visual approaches than pieces from the traditional canon. Nevertheless, it was noticed that contemporary repertoires may particularly benefit from alternative strategies of engagement, since some audiences may find it more difficult to relate to contemporary music⁷⁶.

From the practical investigations, new topics emerged regarding challenges to the paradigms of the classical piano practice. Barrett points out this feature of bringing out original learning from the action as an advantage of practice-based research projects, highlighting that 'artistic research (...) involves the revealing or production of *new* knowledge not anticipated by the curriculum' (2010, 5).

The practice revealed (as detailed in chapter 1) that **interdisciplinary proposals for piano performance may bring new challenges and demand further training in other skills besides the musical training** (the projects of this research demanded new learning in storytelling, lighting, theatre and dance). Additionally, in chapter 2 it was demonstrated that **non-conventional interactions with the audience may represent a challenge to focus**. In the projects of this research, the usual isolation before the concert was disrupted by personal interaction with the audience, and the usual distance between stage and audience was eliminated, which may require new strategies for concentration before and during the performance. On the other hand, **a closer connection with the audience can bring a positive contribution by heightening an affective aspect in the performance and a sense of a collectiveness even in a solo performance**. Moreover, as discussed in chapters 1 and 3, it was experienced that **performing a programme under a dramaturgical approach may influence the musical interpretation** by affecting the mood, the shaping of musical gestures, breathing, and phrasings.

These new parameters for the pianist reveal a call for a more comprehensive musical practice, which acknowledges (besides the *a priori* engagement with the musical work):

- the social aspect of the musical practice: relationships audience-performer, audience-audience
- the space of performance and its potential to shape the music experience

⁷⁶ See audience feedback in Chapter 1, page 25.

- the body of the pianist as a performative body, which carries, through its gestures, potentials for dramaturgical structure, musical expressivity and meaning.

The reflections on this more comprehensive musical practice which is now required from a more comprehensive pianist/performer, points toward a new understanding of **the recital as an artform in itself**. As an artform, the recital should now be approached as an artistic compositional practice, being conceived as a whole artwork, yet thoroughly encompassing the craft of all elements – from the interaction with the audience to the programming, and the design of the interdisciplinary elements and their weaving by the dramaturgy.

This concept of the artform recital constitutes the core of the contribution to knowledge of this research. Drawing from reflections on the practical investigations and on existing works in the fields of classical music performance, theatre and dance – and, especially, in their intersections, this work aims to offer new insights into interdisciplinary proposals for classical music performance practice.

As specific contributions to knowledge, this work offers:

- new learnings about the integration of elements from other artistic and social disciplines with piano performances;
- empirically examined understandings about audiences in music performance situations, and new insights concerning to their engagement;
- a proposal of a dramaturgical approach to the generation of interdisciplinary piano recitals, and new understandings about the varied models of creative processes that may emerge during the development of such dramaturgies;
- a series of new works presented to audiences in the UK, Portugal and Brazil, which supports the reflections presented in this thesis (documentation supplied in the Portfolio of Works). Papers based on some of these works have been presented in six academic conferences and published as conference proceedings, a journal article and a book chapter (list in Appendix 2).

This thesis ultimately represents a period of intense engagement in the piano practice, a privilege to deeply explore my artistic passion through meticulous academic lenses. I hope this research constitutes an opening of possibilities of answers to Luciano Berio's call towards a different way to think music performance for this, and for the upcoming generations:

I think it's about time to change, to enlarge the perspective of performance, to bring out the implicit dramaturgy of music and make a recital become a musical form in itself. This is a task a younger generation will undertake, I hope (Berio, interviewed by Muller 1997, 20).

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APPENDIX 1

List of Works created during the research

1. ***for her – for each one of our girls*** (piano recital with a social thematic)
 Work-in-progress presented on 03 November and 15 December 2014, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, UK.
 Performances: CARU | Arts re Search Conference, 07 June 2015, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, UK; PERFORMA Conference, 11 June 2015, Universidade de Aveiro, Aveiro, Portugal; Lunchtime Concert, 23 July 2015, Wesley Memorial Church, Oxford, UK; Série Música de Primeira, 03 September 2015, Primeira Igreja Batista do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

2. ***from night to day*** (piano recital and elements of storytelling)
 Performances: Sound of Oxford Festival, 06 December 2014, St. Clements Family Centre, Oxford, UK; PhD Seminars, 09 February 2015, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, UK

3. ***night – a performance for piano and light*** (piano recital and lights)
 Performances: 09 & 10 March 2015, Oxford Brookes Drama Studio, Oxford, UK

4. ***house-dream*** (work-in-progress) (multiple-piano performance and interaction with audience)
 Work-in-progress performed at *Where's the Art - CARU 2nd Anniversary Party*, 27 September 2015, Modern Art Oxford, Oxford, UK

5. ***casa – reflections on house & home*** (promenade multiple-piano performance with theatrical elements)
 Performances: 21 & 22 January 2016, Oxford Brookes Drama Studio, Oxford, UK

6. ***Silent Concert*** (piano recital with headphones). Guest pianist: Josie Lindsay-Clark
 Headington Hill Hall, 23 November 2015, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, UK

7. ***Les Jours*** (one-to-one participatory piano performances)
 Performances: 24 April 2016. Extra-session with guest pianist Jessica Ryan-Phillips on 10 June 2016. Headington Hill Hall, Oxford, UK

8. ***My piano in the midst of the turmoil*** (one-to-one participatory piano performances)
Performances: 18 May, 03 and 04 June 2016, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, UK

9. ***One-to-one Chopin [we are present]*** (one-to-one piano performances)
Performances: 18 July 2016, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, UK

10. ***myths & visions – a piano [& body] performance*** (promenade piano and body performance)
Performances: 21, 22 and 23 June 2017, Oxford Brookes Drama Studio, Oxford, UK

APPENDIX 2

List of publications and presentations in academic events

PUBLICATIONS

Article

For her – an exploration of the piano recital as a tool for raising social issues awareness. *IMPAR – Initiatives, Meetings and Publications on Artistic Research*, Vol. 1 (forthcoming 2017) (Aveiro: Universidade de Aveiro).

Chapter

Casa and other works: Explorations on the performance space and interdisciplinary strategies for the piano recital, in *Music and Sound Art: Practices and Theories*, eds. John Dack and Mine Dogantan-Dack. (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, forthcoming 2018).

Conference Proceeding

'casa' – reflections on house & home: explorations of narrative, space and audience in a piano performance, in *annals of XXVI Congresso da Anppom (Brazilian Association for Research of Musical Performance Conference)*. Belo Horizonte, Brazil, 22 – 26 August 2016. Available at:

<http://www.anppom.com.br/congressos/index.php/26anppom/bh2016/schedConf/presentations>.

PRESENTATIONS in Academic Events

38th International Conference on the Fantastic in the Arts. Orlando, USA, 22-26 March 2017. *Myths and visions – an extended piano performance about imaginary worlds and images.*

XXVI Congresso da Anppom (Brazilian Association for Research of Musical Performance Conference). Belo Horizonte, Brazil, 22 – 26 August 2016. Paper presentation: '*casa*' – *reflections on house & home: explorations of narrative, space and audience in a piano performance*, published in the conference's annals.

(<http://www.anppom.com.br/congressos/index.php/26anppom/bh2016/schedConf/presentations>).

Seventh International Symposium on Music/Sonic Art: Practices and Theories.

Hochschule für Musik, Karlsruhe, Germany, 30 June – 3 July 2016. Paper presentation: *'Casa and other works: Explorations on the performance space and interdisciplinary strategies for the piano recital'*.

Graduate College Competition 2016, Oxford Brookes University, 3 June 2016.

Performance: *My piano in the midst of the turmoil* – awarded Special Commendation.

Oxford Brookes TDE Faculty Conference. Oxford Brookes University, 18 May 2016.

Member of organising committee, and Performance: *My Piano in the mist of the turmoil*.

PERFORMA – Conference on Musical Performance. Universidade de Aveiro, Portugal, 11 - 13 June 2015. Lecture-recital: *'For her – an exploration of the piano recital as a tool for raising social issues awareness'*.

CARU | Arts re Search Conference 2015. Oxford Brookes University, 07 June 2015.

Presentation of Research Report and Performance of project *for her*.

Oxford Brookes TDE Faculty Conference. Oxford Brookes University, 20 May 2015.

Paper presentation: *'Piano and etc. - an investigation on interdisciplinary strategies for the piano recital'*.

Art and Conflict Symposium. University of Oxford, Wolfson College, UK, 02 - 03 May 2015

Volunteer staff.