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**BODY, MIMESIS AND IMAGE: A GESTURE-BASED  
APPROACH TO INTERPRETATION IN CONTEMPORARY  
GUITAR PERFORMING PRACTICE**

DIEGO SEBASTIÁN CASTRO MAGAS

A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Huddersfield

August 2016

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## Abstract

This thesis addresses interpretative issues arising from notated music, particularly recent guitar music typifying progressive notational and aesthetic trends, from a perspective based on the concepts of *mimesis* and *gesture*. Drawing on Adorno's theory of musical reproduction, scholarship on musical gesture and recent models of performers' relationship to notation, I propose interpretative strategies aiming at the vindication of the role of the body in the discussion of musical works, while also examining the performing conventions challenged by recent developments in guitar notation. Artistic practice is fundamental to this thesis as it accounts for the exploration of various interpretative strategies and choices derived from the application of the aforementioned concepts. An accompanying folio of videos and recordings documents the impact of these theoretical concepts upon my performing practice. The starting point is a discussion of the performing issues of Brian Ferneyhough's *Kurze Schatten II*, a peak of complexity in the guitar literature, and the relationship between musical gesture and the metaphorical domains to which this work alludes. Subsequently, the interpretative strategies proposed here are applied to aesthetic models differing from that of Ferneyhough as well as to music appealing to multi-parametric notation – here considered as a strand deriving from Ferneyhough's aesthetics – requiring a paradigm shift in its interpretative approach.

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# Introduction

## 0.1 Beginnings

As a 'classically trained' guitarist, my main stimulus in undertaking this PhD was to propose a critical approach to the conventions of guitar performance practice, in particular relation to recent notated repertoire of radical aesthetics – which is where my artistic interests chiefly lie. The conventions I aim to challenge primarily concern the denigration of corporeality in the discussion of musical works, and the consequent limited consideration of the performer's imagination in the interpretative process. Even in dealing with the most recent music, I feel very often that the pervading influence of the Cartesian division of mind and body still prevails for many people involved in these practices.

As for the particularities of my approach, I consider my early practice of martial arts to be a direct antecedent to my current performing practice. When I was a child – between 9 and 13 years old, just before I started classical guitar training at 14 – Kung Fu was my first encounter with a practice which demanded the integration of body and mind in the accomplishment of tasks. Therefore, when I come across a concept such as 'mimesis' in the context of Frankfurt School writers (Adorno 1997, 2006; Benjamin 1999a), my understanding of it is referred back to the embodied experience of mimicking animals in Kung Fu practice: a way not only to exercise the body for self-defence but a preparation for a mimetic understanding of the world.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For a more extended comparison between the practice of martial arts and performance practice of music of radical aesthetics, see Buckley 2015.

In Adorno's aesthetics, the concept of mimesis belongs to 'the opposing dialectical pair *mimesis*  $\Leftrightarrow$  *ratio*, the mimetic and the rationalising impulses' (Paddison 2010, p. 139). Mimesis informs expression, which is to be held in tension with a further (rational) aspect, that of construction and logic. Sound, in this regard, belongs to the latter aspect: 'in interpretation, listening is the rational, the measure by which to check' (Adorno 2006, p. 65). Under these terms, on the other hand, it could be argued that the physical tends to the mimetic and the irrational.

Also, for me, any kind of authentic understanding has to be dialectical – that is, contradictory in its nature – given the various dichotomies surrounding our existence such as mind-body, subject-object, time-space and so on. Hence, my approach to performance aims at a dialectic understanding of its practice, which does not mean a balance of mimesis and rationality but the 'oscillation'<sup>2</sup> between the two – the one being mediated through the other. From a performer's perspective, I argue, such oscillation happens between the physical and the sonic, thus within the realm of gesture.

Moreover, if I had to identify one musical event that has propelled this research project, it would be my encounter with Brian Ferneyhough's *Kurze Schatten II* (1983–89). I came across this challenging score – a peak of radically complex notation in contemporary guitar literature – in 2006, and embarked upon my first attempts to unveil its various levels of complexity. I spent months trying to decipher the rhythmic figures of the first page only with uncertain success. At that point in time, however, I discovered that Ferneyhough had more recently written a guitar duo – *No Time (at all)* (2004) –

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<sup>2</sup> Term coined by Max Paddison (2010, p. 139).

considerably easier to perform technically, and I decided to focus on that piece first, leaving *Kurze Schatten II* for the future.

Therefore, *Kurze Schatten II* was at the top of my 'must-include' pieces for this research project, as a pending challenge in many respects. It was not only the challenge of realizing its complex notated tasks but also those of interpretation, starting with the title. This refers to a sequence of texts of the same name by Walter Benjamin, and Ferneyhough parallels seven short pieces of music with the seven short pieces of text from Benjamin's sequence. My approach was to explore these texts, looking for correspondences that might impact my interpretative choices on matters that musical notation leaves open. I soon found evidence of various degrees of similarities, some of them probably more subjective than others, all of which shaped my personal responses to the musical text.

In addition, Benjamin's writings led me to the work of Theodor Adorno; the two were friends and colleagues, both associated with what came to be known as the Frankfurt School of critical theory. In particular, my attention was drawn to a book that Adorno never wrote as such but for which he took consistent notes and wrote a draft – material that was published in an English translation in 2006 as *Towards a Theory of Musical Reproduction*. Here, Adorno links his concept of 'true reproduction' to the 'X-ray image', the task of which is to render visible 'all that lies hidden beneath the surface of the perceptible sound' in musical performance. In this theory, Adorno gives centrality to the concept of mimesis (which I first encountered in two short essays by Benjamin), as he refers to the 'mimetic root' of all music:

This root is captured by musical interpretation. Interpreting music is not referred to without reason as *music-making* – accomplishing imitative acts. Would interpretation then accordingly be the imitation of the text – its ‘image’? Perhaps this is the philosophical sense of the X-ray image – to imitate all that is hidden. (Adorno 2006, p. 4)

Immediately, I realized that these words pointed to the core of the approach I was intending with *Kurze Schatten II*. When considering Benjamin’s texts as a potential source likely to exert some degree of impact upon my interpretative choices, I am looking for hidden relationships between different manifestations of the work by attempting to imitate not only the musical symbols but the images evoked in Benjamin’s texts. In addition, physical gesture is a fundamental component of expression in various passages in *Kurze Schatten II*. Therefore, since this dimension has been influential upon recent generations of composers, I explored such a paradigm in guitar music after *Kurze Schatten II*, focusing particularly upon defining the limits of interpretation in extended and highly rationalized notational contexts.

Although it is tempting to explore a term like ‘New Complexity’ as the main subject in a research project that finds its motivation in the music of Brian Ferneyhough, this thesis does not take such an approach. Beyond the problematics of this term as a questionable aesthetic category or ‘school of composition’,<sup>3</sup> the focus of my concerns is more on an approach to performance rather than on applying aesthetic categorisations. Nevertheless, Ferneyhough’s work is highly relevant as it prompted me to consider

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<sup>3</sup> The term was coined in the early 1980s, and consolidated in the article ‘Four Facets of the “New Complexity”’ (Toop 1988); that article’s author, Richard Toop, had also written on Ferneyhough extensively by that time. The composers included in the article – namely Michael Finnissy, James Dillon, Chris Dench and Richard Barrett – rejected the label as a compositional school under the influence of Ferneyhough, recognizing instead a tradition coming from Xenakis and others. Also, according to Pace (2015, pp. 32–33), the result was at first somewhat to marginalize from this debate figures whose work was more obviously related to that of Ferneyhough (e.g. Hübler or Mahnkopf), lending the term something of a British focus or bias.

matters such as the ‘psychologisation’ of notation or the aforementioned aspects of physicality. Therefore, I have also examined – with differing degrees of focus – the guitar pieces of composers such as Klaus K. Hübler (who studied under Ferneyhough) as well as of other composers associated with the so-called New Complexity (James Dillon, Michael Finnissy and Richard Barrett) and younger composers also now associated with the aesthetic of ‘complex music’, such as Wieland Hoban and Aaron Cassidy. In the case of Cassidy, his work for solo electric guitar *The Pleats of Matter*, a work that can be considered the epitome of ‘physicality as musical material’, led to me to play the electric guitar for the very first time in my life.

In addition to the particular compositional strand of ‘complex’ music,<sup>4</sup> which occupies a central but not exclusive place in this thesis, I explored the main concepts shaping my approach to guitar performance in relation to other contemporary repertoire representing radical aesthetics: in particular, two guitar works by Christopher Fox and Bryn Harrison, both of which employ repetition as their main compositional technique. Also, I included the works of two colleagues in the University of Huddersfield’s Centre for Research in New Music (CeReNeM), Matthew Sergeant and Marc Codina, whose aesthetics can be linked to complex and experimental music respectively, broadly speaking. This repertoire selection was grounded both in my purely aesthetic interests and also in my geographical location during the completion of this thesis; that is, the music included in this thesis belongs to British composers or composers resident in the UK, making it possible to meet them personally and work with each of them.

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<sup>4</sup> Here understood as the most radical music which presents ‘extreme degrees of both density and detailing, fusion of highly rationalized materials, notated challenges, and organization with an extreme physicality and almost irrationality of results’ (Cox 2002, p. 70).



## 0.2 Objectives

Prior to and as part of the study of selected works for solo guitar, the following questions will be addressed:

- What is the relationship between the idea of a work of music (as an ontological category of being) and its sensual manifestations – how are these mediated through gesture: sound, body and meaning?
- What is the relationship between Adorno's theoretical model of performance and contemporary performance practice, in particular relation to recent notions of gesture and embodiment?
- How might extramusical allusions within a work shape the performer's interpretative choices at both the sonic and physical levels?
- What are the limits of interpretation, in works which are centred on extreme notions of physical gesture conveyed through multi-parametric notation?

These questions are to be addressed by considering Adorno's concepts of 'mimesis' and 'image' (from his theory of musical reproduction) as well as notions of gesture and the body, thereby proposing a set of interpretative strategies designed to create analogical bridges between the various forms of manifestation of the work of music and the performance act. Consequently, a gesture-based approach is a response to the

role of the score as ‘an entire cultural artefact’,<sup>5</sup> aiming at a critical engagement of the performer with her interpretative choices in performance practice.

### **0.3 Methodology and chapter structure**

As a piece of practice-as-research, this thesis merges critical analysis and performance practice. In order to achieve the aforementioned objectives, my critical analysis deals with literature concerning Adorno’s theory of performance, with recent models approaching the performer’s relationship to notation in contemporary performance and with scholarship on musical gesture and the philosophy of cognitive sciences. The performance practice strand, meanwhile, documents my interpretative choices undertaken in relation to relevant case studies as a response to suggestions from the aforementioned literature. The outputs of these processes are documented through a portfolio of audio and video recordings, consisting of the CD *Shrouded Mirrors*,<sup>6</sup> video examples of excerpts from the works in question (especially when the argument requires attention to the physical element of the performance) and videos of full performances (of works not included on the CD). These materials are attached to the printed version of this thesis (CD with audio and DVD with videos), and the video portfolio can additionally be accessed online, at the following URL: <http://thesisvideos.diegocastromagas.com/index.html#/videos>. The contents of that portfolio are detailed in the Appendices section of this thesis.

The first chapter considers various concepts from Adorno’s *Towards a Theory of Musical Reproduction* – especially those of mimesis and image – in relation to their origin

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<sup>5</sup> See Ferneyhough 1998, p. 272.

<sup>6</sup> Released by Huddersfield Contemporary Records, HCR 10 CD, November 2015.

in Benjamin's writings, as well as scholarship on musical gesture and models exploring the performer's relationship to the score in contemporary performance (some of them based in philosophies of cognitive science). Arguing against recent criticism of Adorno's theory as a disembodied model (Gritten 2014), I put forward Adorno's concepts on performance as indeed related to embodiment (following a suggestion contained in Paddison 2010), summarizing my concerns through a set of proposed interpretative strategies.

The second chapter is a case study, approaching Brian Ferneyhough's *Kurze Schatten II* in interpretation and performance. Benjamin's eponymous text-sequence is explored in search of correspondences, approaching the question of how extramusical allusions can impact interpretation and performance. A set of interpretative choices is exposed in response to Ferneyhough's notation under these suggestions, which, in practice, are explored by manipulating the functionalities of musical gestures in play. The review of previous articles on this piece, the study of the sketches and manuscripts of the work held at the Paul Sacher Foundation and an interview and rehearsal with the composer complete the actions undertaken regarding this case study.

In the third chapter, I discuss a series of recent guitar pieces by applying the interpretative strategies proposed in Chapter 1. Here, the central concept is mimesis (as discussed in Chapter 1), whose application to interpretation and performing practice is discussed in particular relation to recent guitar repertoire from British and UK-resident composers, including Marc Codina, James Dillon, Michael Finnissy, Christopher Fox, Bryn Harrison and Matthew Sergeant.

The fourth chapter focuses on the paradigm of physicality as musical material, and on concomitant developments in musical notation. One main case study is explored: Aaron Cassidy's *The Pleats of Matter* (2005–7) for solo electric guitar and electronics, which I premiered at the Electric Spring festival in Huddersfield in February 2015. I identify milestones for the approach to the interpretative and performing issues arising from Cassidy's notation in the solo acoustic guitar piece *Reisswerck* (1987) by Klaus K. Hübler, which I examine as a pioneering example of multi-parametric notation for the instrument, and in Richard Barrett's *transmission* (1996–99) for electric guitar and electronics. Also, I discuss Wieland Hoban's approach to guitar notation in the more recent piece *Knokler I* (2009). The question of the limits of interpretation in such an extended notational model as Cassidy's is discussed by exposing the range of interpretative choices and the different strategies of prioritization that this approach to notation requires from the performer. This case study necessitated learning a new instrument – an application of the cognitive strategies outlined in Chapter 1 – in which I had the opportunity to undertake lessons under the guidance of the electric guitarist Daryl Buckley, dedicatee of Cassidy's piece. Video documentation of different stages of the learning processes and outcomes are exposed. Also, the first chapter from Deleuze's *The Fold* – which gives Cassidy's work its title – is discussed as an extramusical allusion potentially enriching the understanding and realization of the piece.

The Conclusion summarizes my understanding of the interpretative possibilities this thesis has derived from the key concepts of body, gesture, mimesis and image. I close by outlining possible future directions in which this research might expand.

# Chapter 1

## Body, mimesis, image and gesture: shaping interpretative strategies

### 1.0 Introduction

This chapter considers the main aspects of the theory of performance outlined in Adorno's *Towards a Theory of Musical Reproduction* (Adorno 2006), as it offers some valuable insights and suggestions in relation to my conception of performance: the case of musical interpretation as the reproduction of an Idea (as an ontological category of being) instead of just imagined sounds.

*Towards a Theory of Musical Reproduction* (hereafter *TTMR*) comprises a collection of fragments and notes intended for a complete study on musical performance, which ultimately was never published as such. The main sections of the book are two sets of notes and a continuous draft, which provide a deep range of Adorno's thoughts on performance despite the fact that none of them constitutes a final text intended for publication. As Pace (2007, p. 63) asserts, 'Adorno's sketches are frequently more deeply thought-through and penetrating than many other writers' finalised publications.'

Within Adorno's constellation of concepts relating to performance, I put forward his ideas concerning the problem of musical meaning as well as his concepts of mimesis and image, which I examine in relation to their origin in Walter Benjamin's writings. I also place these concepts in the context of recent scholarship on gesture as well as of recent

non-Cartesian models of cognition, in order to outline a set of interpretative strategies to be applied in the subsequent sections of this thesis.

## **1.1 Name**

In discussing a theory of performance, the problem of musical meaning is central, as it mediates all the stages in the so-called 'communicative chain' between conception, notation, performance and reception. I describe it as a 'problem' because ambiguity is the hallmark of music's fundamental paradox as 'the carrier of meaning of something aconceptual' (Adorno 2006, p. 188). Adorno approaches the issue by comparing music and language in both their resemblances and differences. One of the corollaries of Adorno's considerations on the problem of musical meaning is that of music's non-intentionality:

The language of music is quite different from the language of intentionality. It contains a theological dimension. What it has to say is simultaneously revealed and concealed. Its Idea is the divine Name which has been given shape. It is demythologized prayer, rid of efficacious magic. It is the human attempt, doomed as ever, to name the Name, not to communicate meanings. (Adorno 1998, p. 2)

In order to understand these statements more fully, especially concerning the emphasis on the 'name', it is useful to refer to the work of one of Adorno's friends and influences, Walter Benjamin. In the essay 'On Language as Such and on the Language of Man', written in 1916, the young Benjamin asserts that the task of language is not to communicate content but to express itself as a 'spiritual essence', in which men just take part. In relation to the Biblical Genesis, Benjamin (1996, pp. 67–73) interprets the Fall of Paradise as an essential rupture in the relationship between man and nature. The

paradisiacal state only knew one language: the language of immediate knowledge and pure name, which is to say, a language where there exists no distinction between the mental and linguistic entity of the things: pure language. The 'name language' of man served to allow man's communion with the *creative* word of God, the 'divine Name': the 'human name' completes the creative work of God. Nevertheless, man's expulsion from Paradise marks the birth of the *human word*. Benjamin indicates (1996, p. 71) that 'in stepping outside the purer language of name, man makes language a means, and therefore also, at one point at any rate, a *mere sign*'.

Adorno begins his fragment on music and language by stating that 'music resembles a language'. In doing so, Adorno insists that music is socially meaningful – that is, 'more than merely a self-referential abstract acoustic phenomenon' (Leppert, in Adorno 2002, p. 85). Like language, music is a 'temporal sequence of articulated sounds which are more than just sounds'. Unlike language, 'music creates no semiotic system'. Sounds say something, but their meanings are at the same time 'revealed and concealed' – and what has been said cannot be detached from the music itself. Adorno states:

Music points to true language in the sense that content is apparent in it, but it does so at the cost of unambiguous meaning, which has migrated to the languages of intentionality. (Adorno 1998, p. 3)

Music becomes meaningful as it defines the thought process by which content is defined from inside, and not because its particular elements express something symbolically: 'It is by distancing itself from language that its resemblance to language finds its fulfilment' (Adorno 1998, p. 6). Thus, music is likely to point towards the language of the Name, 'the absolute unity of object and sign' (Adorno 2002, p. 140), by distancing

itself from intentional language. It is this distinction between 'naming the Name' and 'communicating meaning' which should be understood from a performer's perspective: although music does communicate meaning – however ambiguous – its aim is 'to name the Name'. And whereas for intentional language interpretation means understanding, 'to interpret music means to make music' (Adorno 1998, p. 3) – thus, a concrete and material practice. At the same time, musical interpretation is a practice at the heart of utopia as it seeks to name the unnameable. It is to this extent that the epistemology of the Benjaminian 'name' – a key concept for the theory of knowledge in play in Benjamin's *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* – could lead to a better understanding of its use by Adorno.

In relation to the connection between ideas and phenomena, Benjamin (1998, pp. 34–35) argues that the idea belongs to a fundamentally different world from that which it apprehends: ideas are related to phenomena just in their representation and the significance of phenomena for ideas is confined to their conceptual elements. As ideas are timeless constellations, and by virtue of the elements being seen as points in such constellations, phenomena are subdivided and at the same time redeemed (that is, a Platonic 'redemption'). It is the function of concepts to elicit those elements from phenomena and make them clearly evident at the extremes. The concept has its roots in the extreme:

Just as a mother is seen to begin to live in the fullness of her power only when the circle of her children, inspired by the feeling of her proximity, closes around her, so do ideas come to life only when extremes are assembled around them. Ideas – or, to use Goethe's term, ideals – are the Faustian 'Mothers'. They remain obscure so long as phenomena do not declare their faith to them and gather round them. (Benjamin 1998, p. 35)



Thus, the significance of phenomena for ideas is confined to their conceptual elements, the task of which is to group phenomena together. Benjamin implies that ideas are not among the given elements of the world of phenomena, raising questions as to the manner in which ideas are in fact given in the world. Benjamin approaches the question by means of the relation of ideas to truth – he advocates that intellectual vision does not enter the form of existence peculiar to truth, as truth is devoid of all intention:

Truth does not enter into relationships, particularly intentional ones. The object of knowledge, determined as it is by the intention inherent in the concept, is not the truth. Truth is an intentionless state of being, made up of ideas. The proper approach to it is not therefore one of intention and knowledge, but rather a total immersion and absorption in it. Truth is the death of intention. (pp. 35–36)

Benjamin argues (p. 29) that the object of knowledge, determined by the intention of concept, is possession. Its very object is determined by the fact that it must be taken possession of in the consciousness. But for the thing possessed, representation is secondary; it does not have prior existence as something representing itself. Truth is self-representation, and is therefore immanent in it as form – that is Benjamin's paradox of intention. Subsequently, Benjamin argues that truth is the power itself that determines the essence of reality: 'the state of being, beyond all phenomenality, to which alone this power belongs, is that of name. This determines the manner in which ideas are given' (p. 36). Thus, ideas are given in the world as name. Here, Benjamin refers to a primordial form of perception, unimpaired by cognitive meaning. In recognizing the origin of Adorno's claim that music's idea is 'the divine Name which has been given shape' in Benjamin's epistemology, music is proposed as a non-intentional language in two ways. Firstly – as meaning – music is riddle-like; it says something that the listener understands

and yet doesn't. Like all art, music cannot be 'pinned down as to what it says, and yet it speaks' (Adorno 2002, p. 122). Secondly – as representation – for the true language of name that music aspires to, its form is that of self-representation, thus intentionless. However, representation is intentional and secondary for the thing to be represented, thus a consequence of a primordial failure. In other words, representation and meaning in musical interpretation are not aims but a failure of the utopian/absolute unity of object and sign implied in the Name. Thus, true interpretation is always impossible as a primary form of representation: 'True interpretation is a strictly predefined idea, but one that, for the sake of art's music fundamental antinomy, must remain essentially unrealizable' (Adorno 2006, p. 55). The distance from the *thing-in-itself* through the intention of possession implied in musical interpretation, forces it to become reproduction.

Hence, within the mediation between notation and performance, it could be argued that musical notation expresses itself, whereas the task of performance is to mimic its self-representation. In other words, performance implies intentional representation within phenomena whereas notation is intentionless: self-representation in the world of ideas. Thus, insofar as in musical interpretation there are choices – different phenomena that fulfil the same musical symbol – it can be said that the more the performer's self-representation is implied in the interpretative process (mimicking the self-representation of the idea), the more 'true reproduction' there is. Mimesis is thus a central concept for music performance, as Adorno recognizes in *TTMR*.

## 1.2 Mimesis

In Adorno's aesthetics, mimesis belongs to the dialectical pair *ratio*  $\Leftrightarrow$  *mimesis*, where the former relates to aspects of construction/logic and the latter relates to aspects of expression and what the music 'resembles' (Adorno, cited in Paddison 2010, p. 140).

In his introduction to *TTMR*, the translator Wieland Hoban (also a remarkable composer, whose music is discussed later in this thesis) offers a list of the most 'slippery words' used by Adorno, in order to enable a fluent reading of the translation. Among these words, *Darstellung* is a fundamental term in dealing with performance: it means both 'presentation' and 'representation'. Adorno often uses the word while referring to the act and practice of performance, where a piece is presented to the public; but he also means to bring out, according to Hoban, the implicit *representation* of musical meaning in the act of presentation: 'it thus implies both the mimetic (an imitation and reproduction of the work) and the semiotic (the realization and transmission of music-immanent meaning)' (Adorno 2006, p. xix).

Adorno refers to these two aspects of interpretation in a note in which his wife, Gretel Adorno, asked him how it can be that actors, 'who are mostly of questionable intelligence and always uneducated', can deliver lines that convey the most difficult ideas.

Adorno's reply was:

Every poetic work contains not only the meaningful-significative element, but also the melodic-mimic aspect, tone, speech melody and manner; and it is a substantial criterion for success how deeply the former is immersed in the latter, i.e. whether the mimetic, 'magical' aspect is able to invoke, to *force* the meaningful one, to such a degree that a tone of voice or gesture itself becomes the allegorical representation of an idea. The actor's ability is mimic in the true sense: he actually imitates the melodic gestural aspect of language. And the more perfectly he

achieves this, the more perfectly the idea enters the representation, not least because – and especially when – he does not understand it. The opposite approach would be the explanatory one: but to explain the intention means to kill it rather than invoking it. One could almost say that it is the prerequisite for an actor not to ‘understand’, but rather to imitate blindly. (Adorno 2006, p. 159)

This fragment is relevant for musical interpretation in *TTMR* to the extent that Adorno claims for the close relationship between mime and music as well as between music-making and acting (2006, p. 158), while the polemical statement that it is even better if the actor does not understand the part to play but rather imitates blindly, implies a primary focus on the mimetic aspects of interpretation. Adorno insists on ‘the unity of function between music, mime and dance in the cultic practices that gave rise to the temporal arts’ (p. 169). Music contains a mimic element, and ‘regardless of what share the imitation of nature’s sounds may have had in its origin, it has no doubt always stimulated imitation through gestures at the level of their magical use’ (p. 169). And this magical connotation can be traced, again, in Benjamin.

Benjamin wrote two short essays on the concept of mimesis in 1933: ‘Doctrine of the Similar’ and ‘On the Mimetic Faculty’. There he argues that, although nature produces similarities (e.g. mimicry), the very greatest capacity for the generation of similarities belongs to human beings, which is codetermined by their mimetic faculty. This faculty is supposed to be stronger in ancients and primitive people: ‘Our gift for seeing similarity is nothing but a weak rudiment of the once powerful compulsion to become similar and also to behave mimetically’ (Benjamin 1999a, p. 698). Language, Benjamin insists, may be seen as the highest level of mimetic behaviour and the most complete archive of similarities, of

which he distinguishes two types: *sensuous* similarity and *nonsensuous* similarity.

Benjamin regards these two as the components of reading:

The schoolboy reads his ABC book, and the astrologer reads the future in the stars. In the first clause, reading is not separated out into its two components. Quite the opposite in the second, though, which clarifies the process at both its levels: the astrologer reads the constellation from the stars in the sky: simultaneously, he reads the future or fate from it. (p. 697)

The mimetic element in language, according to Benjamin, does not develop in isolation from its other, the semiotic aspect. Rather, the mimetic element can manifest itself only through a kind of bearer: the semiotic element. Thus, the nexus of meaning of words or sentences is the bearer through which, like a flash, similarity appears. The perception of nonsensuous similarity 'is in every case bound to a flashing up. It offers itself to the eye as fleetingly and transitorily as a constellation of stars'. The perception of similarities is thus related to a kind of ancient reading:

'To read what was never written.' Such reading is the most ancient: reading prior to all languages, from entrails, the stars, or dances. Later the mediating link of a new kind of reading, of runes and hieroglyphs, came into use. It seems fair to suppose that these were the stages by which the mimetic gift, formerly the foundation of occult practices, gained admittance to writing and language. In this way, language may be seen as the highest level of mimetic behaviour and the most complete archive of nonsensuous similarity: a medium into which the earlier powers of mimetic production and comprehension have passed without residue, to the point where they have liquidated those of magic. (p. 722)

Adorno puts forward musical notation as the rationalization of magic (2006, p. 170), which turns his interest toward the origins of musical notation. Adorno explores Hugo Riemann's *Manual of Music History* (1923) with regard to ancient musical notation. Riemann claims that neumatic notation, itself of Greek origin, was developed from

cheironomy, the imitation of 'the hand-movements of the choral conductor of antiquity, who directed the melodic movement and the corresponding movements of the choir' (Riemann, cited in Adorno 2006, p. 174). Fleischer presumes that cheironomy (the gestural-optic imitation of music) persisted for centuries until finally, at the start of the 8<sup>th</sup> century, 'the Anglo-Saxon or Irishman Ceolfrid made the first attempt to develop melodic symbols – to be written above the texts – from the beating indications of cheironomy, thus becoming the inventor of neumatic notation' (Fleischer, cited in Adorno 2006, p. 175). That is, through the cheironomic element, mimesis is at the originary core of musical notation. However ambiguous, neumatic notation invokes music in its immediacy, which through its merging with letter-notation as effected by Guido d'Arezzo, according to Riemann, 'ultimately gave rise to modern notation' (cited in Adorno 2006, p. 178). Thus, the task of musical writing is, according to Adorno, 'the synthesis between unambiguity and immediacy' (p. 178). However, this synthesis was never achieved, and musical reproduction persists as a fundamental problem: 'even the most precise score retains, as an image, an element of neumatic ambiguity, and even the most precise specification retains an element of that significative rigidity which threatens to kill the very thing it has resolved to save' (ibid.). And the problem of neumatic notation persists to our own day.

Adorno distinguishes three elements in notation, which he terms the *mensural*, the *neumatic* and the *idiomatic*. By *mensural* is understood all that is given unambiguously through symbols: 'mensural notation as an expression of the duration of the notes' (Adorno 2006, p. 62) – that is, a rational element related to everything that can be measured, the notation of the relations between the parameters that can be

unambiguously given (and, thus, close and subject to analysis). As for the *neumatic*, '[it] is referred to as mimic, mimetic or gestural, the structural element to be interpolated from the symbols' (p. 67). And the *idiomatic* refers to 'the music-lingual element, i.e. that which must be reached through the musical language given in each case' (p. 62). That is, it is the element that contains a component of freedom in interpretation defining the personal style of the performer: 'a *gestural* element that is *fundamentally* beyond the sphere of notation', 'in general the idea of speaking the instrument's language', which is in turn 'the legitimate place for the performer's subjectivity' (p. 55).

Therefore, the relationship between these three elements defines guidelines towards true reproduction, leading to one of the main statements in *TTMR*: 'the task of musical interpretation is to transform the idiomatic into the neumatic by means of the mensural. "The origin is the goal." Thesis of my book' (Adorno 2006, p. 67). In other words, the neumatic element in notation is that which contains the otherwise suppressed mimetic element – hence, true reproduction is:

neither the irrational-idiomatic (critique of the minstrel) nor the analytically pure kind, but rather that restoration of the mimetic element which passes through analysis. The neumatic is really the instruction for this. (p. 81)

This relates to the basic problem of the reproduction theory, which Adorno poses as: 'whether one should let the music's structure communicate itself, allowing only the appearance to appear – or transfer the structure into the appearance' (p. 160). Adorno's hypothesis is the latter, which is also to say that '[to] transfer the structure into the appearance' means to approach the neumatic as the transformation of the idiomatic through the mensural, whereas the former option – just to allow 'the appearance to

appear' – implies the transformation of the mensural into the idiomatic, without necessarily approaching the neumatic element, thus (although *culinary*) *senseless*.

The centrality of Adorno's concept of mimesis in *TTMR* implies 'such a rich and interactive notion of mimesis that surpasses the function of mere imitation'. Max Paddison (2010, pp. 126–7) suggests that Adorno's notion of a 'mimetic impulse' carries with it the idea of an embodied, biological and physiological impulse. That is, mimesis is a mode of 'identifying with' rather than mere 'imitation of' or 'representation of' something external to it. Mimesis functions as an embodied impulse in relation to its opposite – what Adorno calls the rational elements of musical construction. In his *Aesthetic Theory* (1970), Adorno offers a very Benjaminian definition of mimesis, which he suggests can be understood as 'the nonconceptual affinity of the subjectively produced with its unposited other' (Adorno 1997, p. 54). According to Paddison, mimesis may be regarded as a pre-rational mode of behaviour, with an affinity towards the sensuous and embodied, non-conceptual re-enactment of cognitive processes. Thus, music itself oscillates between its own internal rationalised/constructional moments and its unrationalised/mimetic moments, raising a further important distinction: 'that between the mimetic aspects of musical works [...] and the mimetic dimension of musical performance' (Paddison 2010, p. 136).

Musical notation is thus regarded as a 'model for imitation' (Adorno 2006, p. 81) instead of simply a 'sign system'. My claim is that notation, as the model that Adorno advocates, requires the performer to embrace the two components of reading that Benjamin distinguishes as *sensuous* and *nonsensuous* similarity. Sensuous similarity can be



seen as related to ‘an essentially *positivistic* view of the role of notation – the score telling the performer what to do’ (Pace 2009, p. 152) – and nonsensuous similarity can be understood as the capacity to establish ties with extramusical ideas to which a score alludes, informing interpretative decisions. In other words, sensuous similarity could be seen as the mimicking of musical symbols and nonsensuous similarity as the mimicking of an (extramusical) idea, that the work of music is likely to portray beyond the score itself.

The interpretative strategy proposed by Ian Pace – drawing upon structuralist thinking, in which the score ‘delineates the range of possible performance activities by telling the performer what *not* to do’ (Pace 2009, pp. 152–3) – seems still to deal with sensuous similarity. My take on nonsensuous similarity – as the similarity that appears between different realms, the musical and the extramusical, allowing the extramusical to exert an impact upon interpretative choices through the nexus of meaning – aims at an application of Adorno’s concept of mimesis as an embodied and physiological impulse (a mode of identifying with instead of representing something external to it) in relation to the *image* of the score. Consequently, the concept of the image is dialectical, as it embraces the extreme poles of the *sensuous* and the *nonsensuous*.

### **1.3 Dialectical image**

Adorno regards the *image* of musical writing as the graphic trace of the construction, hence, ‘the dialectical counterpart of the expression’ (Adorno 2006, p. 185). The image, in purely acoustic terms, always refers to the totality, and this pictorial character of musical writing (which does not refer merely to the visual representation of sound but to the

spatialization of the flow of time) at once masks the gestural element. Moreover, Adorno claims that *true reproduction* is the X-ray image of the work: 'its task is to render visible all the relations, all aspects of content, contrast, and construction that lie hidden beneath the surface of the perceptible sound' (Adorno 2006, p. 1). And what remains hidden is musical *sense*. Adorno's concept of sense relates to music's 'subcutanea', against what he calls the 'culinary' element of musical interpretation as the mere surface of the perceptible sound (pp. 99–100). That is to say, *sense* is the 'music-immanent logic and structure and, consequently, coherent expression' (Hoban, in Adorno 2006, p. xxi) of the work. It defines, in other words, form and content: the thought process that makes music meaningful from inside, not because of expressing something from outside, symbolically. Adorno insists that sense, as which is to be represented in musical interpretation, entails the fundamental paradox of the musical text as a 'sign system designed for the non-intentional' (2006, p. 181). Thus, however, *sense* is not absorbed within the phenomenon:

the possibility of its representation – as also of its self-representation – consists exclusively in the phenomena. But this means: within their context. Fulfilling the sense of music means nothing other than rendering all aspects of the context visible. (Adorno 2006, pp. 3–4)

Adorno claims that if sense is not realized in the appearance, this latter 'becomes mere sound material and thus senseless' (p. 161).<sup>7</sup> That is, without the latent structure of the subcutaneous, 'the overall sound, as polished as it might be, becomes gibberish'. And, as functional meanings can be given to musical symbols according to their relation to the three elements of musical notation (mensural, neumatic and idiomatic), the neumatic appears

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<sup>7</sup> *Senseless*, in this context, refers to 'how a particular performance or school of interpretation renders the musical surface with great expertise, but in a way that lacks any sense' (Hoban, in Adorno 2006, p. xxi).

as that element closer to Adorno's notion of *sense*, according to a basic rule stated in his notes:

To realize what has been recognized and imagined, and not be driven by the idiom or the sound, whether instrumental or vocal. But even here we must differentiate. For there are many connections between the musical *sense*, i.e. the neumatic element, and instrumental technique. (Adorno 2006, p. 74)

Therefore, the neumatic element and the concept of sense are both made of mimetic elements, making up the *X-ray image* of the work. In the aforementioned example of the actor, in asserting that 'a tone of voice or gesture itself becomes the allegorical representation of an idea', Adorno is implying 'a mimetic, gestural and embodied relation to the part he is playing, which is also to say the actor has an "image" of what he is mimicking' (Paddison 2010, p. 137). Subsequently, Adorno claims that 'interpretation concerns the presentation of the dialectical image of the composition' (Adorno 2006, p. 49). That is to say, that it is the work as image that the performer seeks to mimic beyond the score itself, fluctuating itself between the rational pole of construction (image) and the mimetic pole of expression (X-ray image). Adorno insists (p. 63) that the mimic nature of music can be divided into expression and construction, and the reconciliation between these two is the purpose of true reproduction: the transformation of construction into expression and expression into construction.

As Paddison asserts, Adorno's concept of mimesis also takes on the character of translation, particularly influenced by Benjamin's essays on the subject ('On Language as Such and on the Language of Man', written in 1916, and 'The Task of the Translator', written in 1923). Benjamin's conception of language as a spiritual essence of the world

gives us a valuable concept: that of the language of things. According to Benjamin (1996, pp. 69–72), the consequence of man’s rupture with nature in the Fall of Paradise is nature’s double muteness. In the paradisiacal state, the language of things was already mute, but blissful in its ability to communicate its essence to its namers through an immediate and material community. However, after the Fall it suffered a second muteness, which is that of a deep sadness. As in all mourning, there is the deepest inclination to speechlessness, which is more than an inability to communicate. Nature’s second muteness is the deepest melancholy of not being named from the blessed Name but from the hundred languages of man, unable to communicate its own essence through name.

According to Benjamin, such a state is likely to be overcome by means of translation: the language of things can pass into the language of knowledge and name through translation. That is: so many languages, so many translations. It is this conception that reveals the potential of art, as Benjamin indicates:

It is very conceivable that the language of sculpture or painting is founded on certain kinds of thing-languages, that in them we find a translation of the language of things into an infinitely higher language, which may still be of the same sphere. We are concerned here with nameless, non-acoustic languages, languages issuing from matter; here we should recall the material community of things in their communication. (Benjamin 1996, p. 73)

Therefore, we are dealing with languages issuing from nature: ‘communication in words [is] only a particular case of human language’ (Benjamin 1996, p. 62). Insofar as language is not the mere gift of speech of humankind, but the essence of the empirical world itself,

all languages have something in common: the essence of pure language. Subsequently, Benjamin states in 1923 in 'The Task of the Translator':

It is the task of the translator to release in his own language that pure language which is exiled among alien tongues, to liberate the language imprisoned in a work in his re-creation of that work. (Benjamin 1996, p. 261)

In every language there is imprisoned a seed of pure language, which in its sum with the other words for the same thing in other languages is likely to bring us near the original language of the Name. This is Benjamin's paradox of translation: a translation is likely to be superior to its original as a gesture towards the original language. Benjamin (1996, p. 260) compares the coalition of all languages with a vessel, in that original and translation must be recognizable as fragments of a broken vessel. Insofar as a vessel is not broken into similar and symmetrical fragments but on the contrary, such comparison implies that these fragments must match one another in the smallest details of their diversity, that is, not as an imitation of one another. This aspect points towards the issue of avoiding literalness and imitation of sense in translation, a matter on which Benjamin posits another useful comparison:

Just as a tangent touches a circle lightly and at but one point – establishing, with this touch rather than with the point, the law according to which it is to continue on its straight path to infinity – a translation touches the original lightly and only at the infinitely small point of the sense, thereupon pursuing its own course according to the laws of fidelity in the freedom of linguistic flux. (Benjamin 1996, p. 261)

The cellist, composer and theorist Frank Cox has written extensively about performance practices of complex music. In his 2002 article 'Notes toward a performance practice for complex music', Cox's starting point is a critique of what he calls the High-

Modernist Model of Performance Practice (HMMPP), a model that has dominated what he refers to as 'official new music' since the Cold War. As an 'ideal type',<sup>8</sup> Cox considers HMMPP synonymous with 'morally responsible' performance practice that aims at an absolute correspondence between notation, performance and ideal perception. Despite several positive aspects (e.g. the demand for the highest technical standards), HMMPP is threatened by recent developments in notation because of its aim at a 'transparent' and 'noise-free' relationship between conception, notation, realization and perception. Cox proposes recasting the assumed direct (one-to-one) correspondence between the domains of this chain by translation:

Each domain in this chain should be seen as qualitatively different from the others: each has its own independent structuring, imperatives and history, and could be treated as a separate 'language'. Following this analogy, the translation between domains (as with human languages) must begin by acknowledging their fundamental differences, then attempt to create analogical bridges (which are necessarily unstable). (Cox 2002, p. 103)

Translation is central for Cox's model, as he argues that 'the creative strife among all [domains in the communicative chain] is necessary for revealing at least a portion of what [a work of musical art] "is"' (p. 132).

Meanwhile, in Adorno's *TTMR*, translation points towards an idealist conception: 'The idea of musical reproduction is the copy of a non-existent original', confining the dialectical *image* to be a virtual *original*:

The purpose of interpretation is not to discover a work's intention, to feel its way into it and breathe life into it, but rather to liquidate the intention of the text on the basis of an insight into the individual intentions of the musical symbols, and

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<sup>8</sup> Cox uses the term according to Max Weber's notion of 'ideal types', i.e. extreme 'model' manifestations of certain clusters of approaches and ideas, which should not be assumed to correspond perfectly with reality (Cox 2002, p. 72).

then to sublimate it through the restitution of a virtual original that is imitated. Ideal interpretation offers the music itself, in complete similarity, not an indication of its meaning. (Adorno 2006, p. 183)

Here, we deal with the musical text as a non-intentional text: 'the dignity of the musical text lies in its non-intentionality. It signifies the ideal of sound, not its meaning' (p. 4). Therefore, interpretation must pursue the idea of the copy of the non-existent original from 'both poles of the text: from the symbol and from the image' (p. 183). And it is to this extent that the performer's imagination (or *Imagination*)<sup>9</sup> takes on the character of translation: 'interpretation is the appropriate translation of musical sense into phenomena' (p. 133). Which, in the best of cases, means that 'a crack opens into the metaphysics' (pp. 132–3).

Recent critics of Adorno's model remark an apparently disembodied conception with regard to performance:

His concept of performing lacks redemptive power, this being deliberately held back away from the body and kept in reserve for cognition and the higher faculties of civilised thought. (Gritten 2014, p. 86)

However, although Adorno's remarks on 'playing corporeally' resist a fetishization of the physical, the body has a main role:

Interpretation still encompasses legitimate and necessary elements which cannot be purely subsumed by the matter itself, and which come from the performer. Thus all genuine presentation has a certain sense of hewing the sound out of the piano, of playing corporeally, as it were, inside the piano [...]. It only turns into something undesirable if it becomes undisciplined, an end in itself. (Adorno 2006, pp. 113–4)

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<sup>9</sup> In the translator's introduction to *TTMR*, Hoban points out that the German word *Imagination* (translated to English as the same), in the context of the book, has a different background from its standard usage: 'Adorno speaks of the artist's intention in and envisioning of a work, that is to say what the artist *imagines*. It thus refers not to a general creativity' (Hoban, in Adorno 2006, p. xx).

Cox's term 'analogical bridges', designating those between different domains in the communicative chain related through translation, suggests the idea of 'corporal thinking' between notation and performance. Recent developments in notation 'not only demand the development of new skills, but open the possibility of a new sort of "corporal thinking" transcending means/end-oriented training (for example, of traditional virtuosity)' (Cox 2002, p. 129). The components of the physical body and physical motion – so often denigrated in Western philosophy – force the attention onto the human element of music making. Therefore, firstly, 'it is admitted that an essential part of any piece of music is the corporal knowledge necessary to realize it' and, secondly, when 'corporal thinking is admitted to be essential to art music', the ontology of the work of music is enlarged (p. 132). Also, Cox's critique of HMMPP deals with the 'spiritual' elements of interpretation:

Those more 'spiritual' aspects of interpretation such as 'intuitive/energetic striving' and what one might call the metaphorical domain of interpretation (such as an understanding of the composer's basic intentions, and the expressive world and/or underlying metaphors of the piece), must be allowed a central place in any valid theory of performance practice, although they should never be allowed to usurp responsible realization of the notated tasks. (p. 104)

These 'spiritual' or metaphorical aspects, I argue, require the exploration of the sensuous and nonsensuous. Within these mediations, it could be argued that musical gesture is the most useful tool for dealing with both extremes of the dialectical image.



## 1.4 Gesture

Several musicologists (Métois 1997; Middleton 1993; Coker 1972; Todd 1995) have thought of musical gesture as the combined sensations of physical movement and sound. Hatten regards gesture as a mental entity that can be evoked from musical sound, defining gesture as 'any energetic shaping through time that may be interpreted as significant' (2004, p. 95). Also, Hatten (cited in Jensenius, Wanderley, Godøy & Leman 2010, p. 18) asserts that 'gesture draws upon the close interaction (and intermodality) of a range of human perceptual and motor systems to synthesize the energetic shaping through time into significant events with unique expressive force'. Delalande (cited at *ibid.*) claims gesture as the intersection of observable actions and mental images, whereas Gritten and King (2006, p. xx) state:

A gesture is a movement or change in state that becomes marked as significant by an agent. This is to say that for movement or sound to be(come) gesture, it must be taken intentionally by an interpreter, who may or may not be involved in the actual sound production of a performance, in such a manner as to donate it with the trappings of human significance.

The latter definition implies that movement becomes gesture only if it is understood as such by the perceiver. Kendon (2004, p. 15) argues that gestures have to be carried out consciously as they are intentional; Hatten (2006, cited in Jensenius et al. 2010, p. 18), on the other hand, argues that musical gestures may be performed unconsciously but still valid as gestures if they are observed as significant by the perceiver. Leaving this controversy aside, the definitions presented so far use the term gesture covering a range from body movement to the metaphorical sense emerging from musical

sound. Gesture is, thus, a term whose main advantage is that it surpasses the Cartesian divide between physics and the mind (Jensenius et al. 2010, p. 13), as well as that it could be argued to fluctuate between construction and expression – therefore, covering the range from nonsensuous to sensuous.

According to Leman and Godøy (2010, p. 5), the study of musical gestures presents a primary and a secondary focus. The first is concerned with the human body and its movement in space, that is, its *extension*. The secondary focus is on *intention*, namely how human movement in space is imagined or anticipated. This second focus introduces a subjective aspect that many researchers prefer to avoid, since the primary focus can be easily measured using video recordings and all manner of physiological sensors, whereas intention is something that exists inside the minds of people, thus more vague and subject to interpretation.

Based on works by Gibet (1987), Cadoz (1988), Delalande (1988), and Wanderley and Depalle (2004), there are four main functional categories of musical gestures:

- Sound-producing gestures: those that effectively produce sound. They can be further subdivided into gestures of *excitation* and *modification* (e.g. the traditional usage of right and left hands on stringed instruments, respectively).
- Sound-facilitating gestures: support the sound-producing gestures in various ways. Also called ancillary gestures, such gestures can be subdivided into support, phrasing and entrained gestures.

- Communicative gestures: those intended mainly for communication (also called semiotic gestures). They can be subdivided into *performer-performer* and *performer-perceiver* types.
- Sound-accompanying gestures: not involved in sound production as such but follow the music. They can be sound-tracing, i.e. following the contour of sonic elements or they can mimic the sound-producing gestures.

Godøy (2010, p. 110) summarizes these categories into two main ones: *sound-producing* gestures and *sound-accompanying* gestures – the former category means the body movements necessary for producing sound (including sound-facilitating gestures), whereas the latter corresponds to all body movements that may be made to music but not involved in sound production (including communicative gestures, also called ‘semiotic gestures’).

In the context of this thesis, the aim is to explore the functionalities of sound-producing gestures in contemporary guitar performance, exploring the analogical bridges between mental and physical entities through body motion and sound, and the limits between sound-producing gestures and communicative gestures. In practice, this approach raises the question of the musical gesture’s place of origin, in order to approach it in the learning process – that is, whether the gesture is situated inside and/or outside the performer and the body.

Adorno’s *dialectical image* – with its extremes of *image* and *X-ray image* – refers to the outside and inside of sound. Accordingly, it could be argued that an approach to both

internalist and externalist models of cognition should be implied for its account in performance. And, in what is for me a crucial passage in *TTMR*, Adorno insists on the origin of music's projection as corporeal:

For music is the projection of the spirit's imagination into the non-intentionality that reconciles it by reminding it of its own corporeal origin. (Adorno 2006, p. 186)

It could be argued that the notion of the 'spirit's imagination' is projected from within the body through gesture. And its approach, in terms of cognition and the learning process, raises the question of where these processes take place.

## **1.5 Performer as embodied mind, body as environment**

A recent study dealing with performance of complex piano music (Antoniadis 2014) argues for the externalization of musical structures to facilitate cognition. Such a claim builds on Mark Rowlands' *environmentalism* (Rowlands 1999), a rejection of both Cartesianism and internalism within the philosophy of cognitive sciences. In environmentalism, a radical view of Occam's razor – a modern formulation of which is *don't work hard, work smart* – is channelled toward cognitive processes: they are not located exclusively inside the skin of cognizing organisms because such processes are, in part, made up of physical or bodily manipulation of structures in the environments of such organisms. The cognitive process is best understood as a combination of internal processes and the bodily manipulation of structures existing in the environment – bearers or containers of information. When a given task requires the processing of information, this process can, at least in part, be achieved through the manipulation of external information-bearing structures; thus, the

need for the manipulation of internal information-bearing structures is correspondingly reduced (Rowlands 1999, pp. 61–63).

Antoniadis makes his point by comparing the piano methods of Karl Leimer and Walter Giesecking (1972) and of György Sándor (1981). The former method prioritizes self-listening of the performer, with a strong prerequisite: memorization at the first stage of the learning process. That is, according to Antoniadis, the learning process starts with ‘the head’, without body and instrument (Cartesianism), and occurs exclusively ‘in the head’ (internalism) – meaning that ‘the body, the notes and the instrument are only means to an end’ (2014, p. 18). With Sándor, on the other hand, the process of learning and of performing appears as a dynamic system, with its parts (the performer as embodied mind, the instrument and the notation) interacting in time. Therefore, the performer operates within a self-organized feedback circle:

the feedback from the instrument, which invites specific corporeal adaptations; the feedback from the body itself as environmental information towards energy-saving through the appropriate muscular coordination and through exploitation of gravity; and the feedback of the notation itself, as interface, which is to be translated and transformed through Sándor’s code. (Antoniadis 2014, pp. 20–21)

The novelty in Antoniadis’s environmentalist take is that he considers the body – alongside the instrument and the score – as an environmental structure. Hence, the score connects to the body, gravity and instrument as long as the performer possesses the ‘code’ for a given set of representational symbols. The concept of ‘code’ relates to Sándor’s motion patterns, corresponding to visual patterns in the score:

The user of the code can (after years of proper training) achieve a direct translation of notation in gesture, without learning the notes by heart or understanding/analyzing the musical relations, but only through a process of

pattern identification and pattern completion. In this sense gestures, instruments, and scores become intertwined in a performer-specific interactive schema. (p. 20)

In the world of the classical guitar, it could be argued that Eduardo Fernández's *Technique, Mechanism, Learning: An Investigation into Becoming a Guitarist* (2001) advocates an internalist approach to guitar technique:

When we play the guitar, we are not playing the physical instrument. This is really an optical illusion; what we are doing is putting into use the mechanism we have learned. We are really playing the mental guitar we have built inside us. (Fernández 2001, p. 10)

Fernández distinguishes two different activities of learning: learning mechanism and learning technique. *Mechanism* is defined as 'an interdependent structure of reflexes, learnt by means of acquisition and memorization of kinaesthetic feel, which makes possible for us to play the guitar' (p. 10) – which could be argued to correspond to the notion of *body schema* in research on gesture: motor patterns we have learned and require no mental effort (e.g. walking or grasping a glass of water) – automatic motor programs to interact with our environment (Leman & Godøy 2010, pp. 8–9). Fernández proposes the exploration of *kinaesthetic feel* as the perceptual localization on where the muscle effort should be realized in order to acquire mechanism. On the other hand, Fernández distinguishes *technique* as the process of mastering a musical task by means of using the elements of mechanism in relation to a musical structure. In other words, the process by which muscular reflexes become significant, thus gesture.

In relation to learning technique, Fernández introduces the notion of *operators* as those 'elements of mechanism that act physically and significantly on the passage to make

it what it technically is' (Fernández 2001, p. 47). Although 'element of mechanism' and 'operator' are not interchangeable terms, several elements of mechanism are likely to come under the category of an operator, such as: longitudinal and transversal shifts, changes in presentation, contraction and distension situations. Other factors that commonly act as operators are: working in very high positions (namely, placing finger 1 beyond the twelfth fret), working in very low positions (associated with a considerable change in the presentation of the left hand), certain types of slurs, certain one-finger transversal shifts, and so on.

As for the process of working on those operators, whereas Fernández postulates a notion of graduality in the manipulation of operators – creating several versions of the passage, dealing with difficulty very gradually – my aim is to focus on the rationalization of muscular coordination. A micro-figure in the first movement of Brian Ferneyhough's *Kurze Schatten II* serves to illustrate this point.

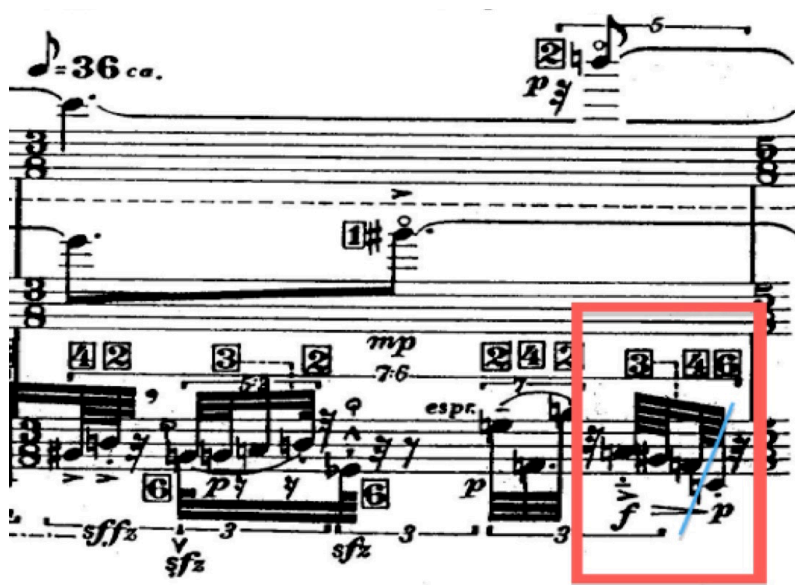
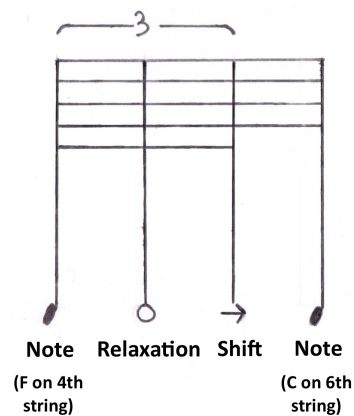


Figure 1.1: Brian Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, b. 8

The operator in the last ‘micro-figure’ in Fig. 1.1 – the last four notes, A–G#–F–C, within the red rectangle – is physical: the longitudinal shift of five frets between the last two notes, F (on the 4<sup>th</sup> string) and C (on the 6<sup>th</sup> string). That is, the A, G# and F are played in first position, and the C in sixth position. And, whereas Fernández would approach this passage by playing a first version with no shift but using the same fingering – thus shifting one, two, three ... up to five positions – I propose to deal with it by focusing on muscular coordination in time: in other words, on what happens in between the two notes involved in shifting.



**Figure 1.2:** Shift between F on 4<sup>th</sup> string and C on 6<sup>th</sup> string from a guitarist’s perspective

Fig. 1.2 shows that a shift between two notes (as seen from inside) implies four actions and not, as perceived from outside, two actions. In this particular case these actions are: 1) the note F on the 4<sup>th</sup> string (whose kinaesthetic feel is located just under the first joint of finger 4, in my fingering); 2) relaxation (which means that the kinaesthetic



feel is now located in the forearm, close to the elbow, as in the standard posture); 3) the shift itself (whose kinaesthetic feel is located in the shoulder, moving from left to right); and 4) the note C on the 6<sup>th</sup> string (whose kinaesthetic feel is located just under the first joint of finger 3, in my fingering). As for the notation of this shift on the score, the use of a simple diagonal line has been my practice (see the blue diagonal line in Fig. 1.1).

This example of muscular coordination in time, here verbally described from *inside* the guitarist (through the localization of the muscle effort at each point in time), accounts for the internal transfer of muscular energy in time in relation to the shift. As in Sándor's *code*, after years of proper training in this kind of muscular coordination in time, notation and its operators can be directly translated into gesture by dealing not with mental but physical representations: or better put, musical symbols as embodied representations that make the body an environmental structure to manipulate.

## **1.6 Conclusions**

In the previous sections of this chapter, I put forward concepts concerning musical interpretation from different sources in relation to my own concerns. My initial point is making the case of performance as the reproduction of the *idea* (as an ontological category of being) instead of just imagined sounds. And I have made claims which will define a set of interpretative strategies that I wish to apply to diverse case studies in the subsequent chapters of this thesis. These strategies revolve around five main aspects and claims, correlated to the five sections of this chapter:

1. *Self-representation*: Drawing upon Benjamin's paradox of intention, truth is self-representation devoid of all intention, whereas the intention of possession implied in representation is secondary for the thing represented. Hence, it could be argued that musical notation expresses itself, whereas I propose the case for performance to mimic such self-representation instead of representing it. That is, mimesis as an impulse can be seen as 'a mode of "identifying with" rather than necessarily "imitation of" or "representation of" something external to itself'. 'Identifying with' implies the component of self-representation in performer's relationship to the score which stands close to the hermeneutic task: 'to understand is *to understand oneself in front of the text*. It is not a question of imposing upon the text our finite capacity of understanding, but of exposing ourselves to the text and receiving from it an enlarged self' (Ricoeur 1981, p. 143). Music's aim is not to convey meaning but to name the Name, 'the absolute unity of object and sign', and it becomes meaningful as a consequence of a failure in this aim. In performance, the intention of possessing the thing reconciles itself in non-intentionality.
2. *Sensuous and nonsensuous similarity*: My claim is that notation, as the model for mimesis that Adorno advocates, requires the performer to embrace the two components of reading that Benjamin distinguishes as *sensuous* and *nonsensuous* similarity. And, whereas sensuous similarity can

tell the performer *what* to do or what *not* to do (Pace 2009, pp. 152–3), nonsensuous similarity can tell the performer *how* to do, by establishing ties between interpretative decisions and extramusical ideas through the nexus of meaning.

3. *Corporal translation*: In relation to Cox's concept of corporal thinking and Benjamin's translation, the body adds an extra layer to the ontology of the work of music – but it does so, I argue, just to the extent that it is analogous to the metaphorical domains of the work. The mimetic impulse, in this regard, plays the fundamental role of opening the body into metaphysics. Analogical bridges from notation to performance, I argue, are made of gestures.
4. *Sound-producing ⇔ communicative gestures*: My claim is that a gesture-based approach is likely to approach the dialectical pair *mimesis* ⇔ *construction* by exploring the limits of the gestural functionalities of notated tasks – that is, the limits between the categories of sound-producing gestures and communicative gestures. When these categories overlap, I claim, similarity appears.
5. *Body as environment*: If the origin of gesture is found in the body, the exploration of *kinaesthetic feel* and muscular coordination can be regarded as the manipulation of meaning in itself. Thereby, meaning can be manipulated as an environmental structure.

The main terms used are body, mimesis, image and gesture – enacting somehow the communicative chain from a performer’s perspective. Thus, the body (as embodied mind) is regarded as the origin of gestural communication, surrounding the dialectics of mimesis (expression) and image (construction). And, since gesture can be seen as the concept *par excellence* in the mediations from notation (Idea) to performance (phenomena), I understand this as a gesture-based approach.

Finally, it is pertinent to recall Adorno’s statement that music objectifies the earlier powers of mimetic production and, thus, magic has become gesture:

There is no doubt that music as language achieves – as no other art does – a pure objectification of the mimetic impulse, free of any concreteness or denotation: nothing but the gesture, codified and placed above the physical world, yet at once sensual. The art of the inner sense imitates the gesture of the spirit. (Adorno 2006, p. 170)

Consequently, the aim of interpretation is to pursue the mimesis of the virtual original, the ‘gesture of the spirit’: Idea. The gesture-based approach outlined here ultimately aims to reflect this statement.

## Chapter 2

### Brian Ferneyhough's *Kurze Schatten II*: Benjamin's thought-images and the mimetic dimension of performance through a gesture-based approach

#### 2.0 Introduction

Brian Ferneyhough's seminal contribution to the solo guitar repertoire, *Kurze Schatten II* (1983–89), takes its title from a sequence of texts written by Walter Benjamin in 1933. Ferneyhough's work contains seven movements, paralleling the seven pieces of text from Benjamin's sequence. Accordingly, the main aim of this chapter is to account for the interpretative strategies that may arise from the perspective of the correspondence between the music-immanent demands of the score and Benjamin's text-sequence. Although the composer claims that his music has nothing in common with programme music,<sup>10</sup> my contention is that there are nonetheless various similarities between his work and Benjamin's, and that these are capable of enriching the perception of *Kurze Schatten II* in both interpretation and performance. In pursuing this belief, the present chapter also builds the case for my claim that the performer is likely to approach a work under the light of both sensuous and nonsensuous similarities.<sup>11</sup> Also, complementing such an approach, this chapter gives an account of the composer's sketches and manuscripts (Ferneyhough, n.d. [2]), which I consulted at the Paul Sacher Foundation, and of a meeting I held with the composer in order to rehearse and discuss the work (Ferneyhough 2013).

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<sup>10</sup> Ferneyhough (1998, p. 245) indicates about his music: 'there is a tight web of analogical correspondences, it's true, but no "story line" being followed outside the musical action of unfolding and revealing itself'.

<sup>11</sup> See Chapter 1, section 1.2.

## 2.1 Thought-images

### 2.1.1 Benjamin's *Short Shadows*

In an essay on his solo guitar piece, Ferneyhough states: 'There is no *Kurze Schatten I*: the title is taken from an essay by the German cultural philosopher Walter Benjamin' (Ferneyhough 1998, p. 139). That claim is both true and false, as the situation can be read in two different ways: there is no earlier musical composition entitled *Kurze Schatten I*, but, on the other hand, there is indeed a 'Kurze Schatten I'. Benjamin published two aphoristic sequences under the title *Kurze Schatten* ('Short Shadows'), the first in 1929 in the *Neue Schweizer Rundschau* and the second in 1933 in the *Kölnische Zeitung*. The former has eight, the latter seven pieces of text; both may be regarded as belonging to the often neglected literary genre of *Denkbilder* ('thought-images')<sup>12</sup> – Benjamin's reformulation of the Baroque emblem (see Kirst 1994), which retains its tripartite structure of a *lemma* or title, an icon or image (verbally described in this case), and an epigram or conclusive thought.

The only thought-image in common between *Short Shadows (I)* and *Short Shadows (II)* – as the two text-sequences are generally designated<sup>13</sup> – is the eponymous one (itself titled 'Short shadows') which ends both sequences:

*Short shadows.* Toward noon, shadows are no more than the sharp, black edges at the feet of things, preparing to retreat silently, unnoticed, into their burrow, into their secret. Then, in its compressed, cowering fullness, comes the hour of Zarathustra – the thinker in the 'noon of life', in the 'summer garden'. For it is

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<sup>12</sup> According to Richter (2007), the *Denkbild* 'is a poetic mode of writing, a brief snapshot-in-prose that stages the interrelation of literary, philosophical, political and cultural insights', mostly employed by four major German-Jewish philosophers associated with what came to be known as the Frankfurt School of critical theory.

<sup>13</sup> This is the nomenclature adopted, for example, by the editors of Benjamin 1999a.

knowledge that gives objects their sharpest outline, like the sun at its zenith.  
(Benjamin 1999a, p. 702)

The allusion to Zarathustra brings Nietzsche into play. In a recent study concerning the relationship between Nietzsche and Benjamin, McFarland (2013) views *Short Shadows* as a sort of collaboration between both authors. The concluding, eponymous thought-image makes mention of a 'summer garden' and 'noon of life', phrases from the first stanza of Nietzsche's poem 'Aus hohen Bergen' ('From High Mountains'), the 'aftersong' to the book *Beyond Good and Evil*:

O noon of life! O celebratory time!  
O summer garden!  
Restlessly happy standing and looking and waiting –  
I stay for my friends, day and night prepared,  
Where are you, friends? Come! It's time! It's time!  
(Nietzsche, quoted in McFarland 2013, p. 169)

According to McFarland (2013, pp. 169–70), the poet is prepared to welcome his friends to the pinnacle he has discovered, in the remoteness of 'high mountains'. But as the poem continues, the arrival of these friends provokes from the poet a series of rhetorical questions characterizing their antipathetic reaction to his new state. These former friends find no 'summer garden' but a glacial waste, and they fail to recognize the poet. Poet and friends have separated. It is this misrecognition and rejection on the part of the poet's former allies that the poem as a whole then inverts. The poet's transformation requires him to find new allies, so the opening stanza returns toward the end but slightly amended:

O noon of life! A second youthfulness!  
O summer garden!

Restlessly happy standing and looking and waiting –  
I stay for my friends, day and night prepared,  
For *new* friends! Come! It's time! It's time!

(Nietzsche, quoted in McFarland 2013, p. 171)

Here, the poem arrives at a provisional end, but there is a coda: two final stanzas sing a new song. Lament becomes festival at the arrival of the new friend, the 'noon-time friend': Zarathustra. In Nietzsche's poem, two almost identical calls emerge from the high mountains, but the friends addressed by these two solicitations differ. According to McFarland, the repetition of Benjamin's *Short Shadows* manifests this transformation as well; the 1929 sequence can thus be read as citing Nietzsche's first stanza while the 1933 repetition cites the latter. Moreover, the years between 1929 and 1933 had pushed Benjamin into exile – a situation that, for a writer, proves more than a mere geographical notion and demands new strategies and alliances of thought. As McFarland proposes, in *Short Shadows (II)* Benjamin and Nietzsche communicate 'under the sign of exile'.

The noon motif in Nietzsche, as the time of revelation, refers to the limits of knowledge and language as explored in the last aphorism in *Beyond Good and Evil*, which Nietzsche dedicates to his own thoughts:

And I only have colors for your *afternoon*, my written and painted thoughts, perhaps many colors, many colorful affections and fifty yellows and browns and greens and reds: – but nobody will guess from this how you looked in your morning, you sudden sparks and wonders of my solitude, you, my old, beloved — *wicked* thoughts! (Nietzsche 2002, p. 177)

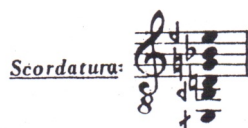
Ferneyhough's affinity with Benjamin (and, implicitly, Nietzsche) resides not only in the exploration of the limits of language and knowledge, but is expressed as well in an



affinity with the fragmentary – the fragment (such as Nietzsche’s aphorism or Benjamin’s thought-image) as a primary form of expression.

### 2.1.2 Ferneyhough’s *Kurze Schatten II*

Written between 1983 and 1989 for the Swedish guitarist Magnus Andersson, *Kurze Schatten II* is published as a facsimile of the composer’s manuscript, with no performance notes. It comprises seven movements: three pairs of slow and fast movements – as was the common convention in the Baroque suite – and a concluding fantasia. After the title, the required micro- and semitonal scordatura is simply indicated pictorially (Fig. 2.1).



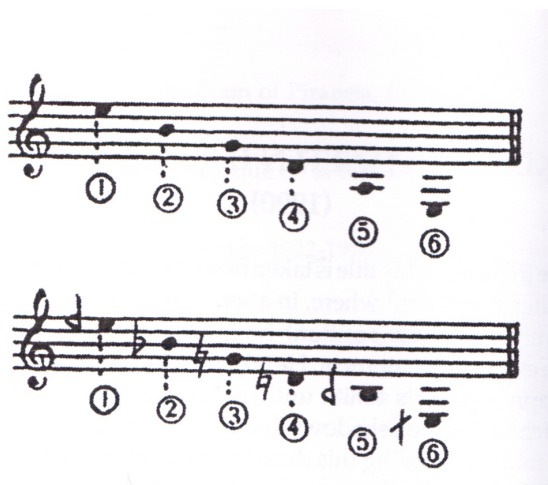
**Figure 2.1:** Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, initial scordatura

In a programme note for the piece, the composer states that Benjamin’s powerful image of the sun approaching its zenith provided the initial impetus for this seven-movement work, and moreover that it captures the way in which he sought

to inscribe [his own] musical language into the rigorous limits of the historically and physically delimited ‘text’ of the guitar. In effect, each movement stages a densely woven confrontation between temporal and formal modes of compression, the result of which aspires to an evocation of the sort of simultaneous total presence and mysteriously veiled withdrawal to which Benjamin alludes. (Ferneyhough, n.d.)

The scordatura – in which the middle (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>) strings remain in normal tuning while the border strings use semi- and microtonal detunings (see Fig. 2.2) – could be

argued to represent Benjamin’s metaphor of shadows. Remember the beginning of the thought-image: ‘toward noon, shadows are no more than the sharp, black edges at the feet of things, preparing to retreat silently, unnoticed, into their burrow, into their secret’. Accordingly, the four detuned strings are, physically and sonically, those from the edges: the ‘black edges’ at the feet of things. The middle strings – like objects at midday, perfectly united with their own shadow – remain themselves.



**Figure 2.2:** Normal guitar tuning (upper stove), and initial scordatura for *Kurze Schatten II* (bottom stove)

From this initial state, the quarter-tone strings return to their ‘normal’ tuning across the large-scale form of the work: the shadows prepare their silent withdrawal. After each pair of movements, one string is retuned to its usual pitch, albeit with one significant exception: the 2<sup>nd</sup> string retains the B $\flat$  scordatura. Indeed, the piece ends with a 2<sup>nd</sup>-string ‘solo’ (see Fig. 2.3 and [video example 2.1](#)) whose last note is a B $\flat$  natural harmonic: ‘a pyrrhic victory, perhaps, for the defamiliarization principle over the ineluctable encroachment, from panel to panel, of “normal” guitar sonority’ (Ferneyhough

1998, p. 152). But also, insofar as B  $\flat$  is B in German musical nomenclature, it could also be seen as a signature of Benjamin.

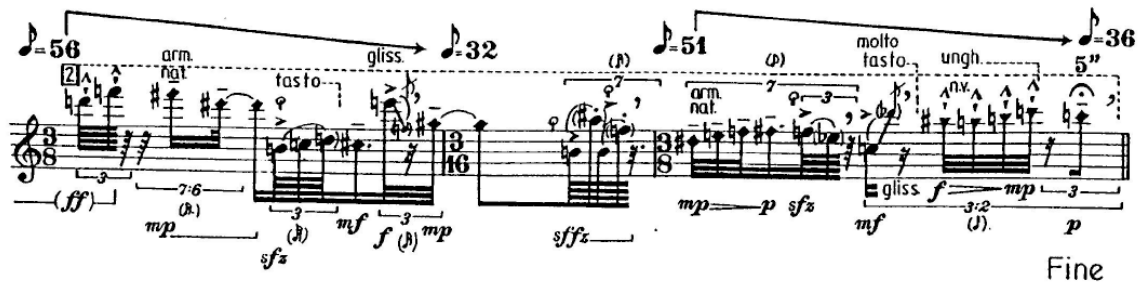


Figure 2.3: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 7<sup>th</sup> movement, bb. 34–36

The writing in *Kurze Schatten II* has been described as ‘heavily gestural throughout’ (Fitch 2013, p. 88), as the score energetically shapes musical and physical gesture through complex notated tasks. As Schick (1994, p. 147) states in relation to physical gesture and his approach to Ferneyhough’s solo percussion piece *Bone Alphabet* (1991), ‘score study prompts in me a wish to move in concert with the musical ideas’. As for the guitar solo piece, my claim is that the guitarist is likely to move in concert with the musical ideas – a movement shaped by the similarities between the score and Benjamin’s texts.

### 2.1.3 Manuscripts and sketches at the Paul Sacher Foundation

The composer’s sketches for *Kurze Schatten II*, deposited at the Paul Sacher Foundation, are able to provide information regarding compositional processes, fingerings missed in the published version and some other small differences, which will be referred to when pertinent as I survey each movement in detail in section 2.2 of this chapter.

Among these sketches, a manuscript of the first movement dated 1983 reveals that the first projected title of the piece was *Emblems* – reaffirming the Benjamin connection.<sup>14</sup> There is also a manuscript, dated 1984, of the eventual first three movements, where I found the only proper Benjamin quotation in the sketches: *Die Ideen verhalten sich zu den Dingen wie die Sternbilder zu den Sternen* ('Ideas are to objects as constellations are to stars'); this quotation, as well as Benjamin's concern with emblems, relates to the book *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*, on which I will comment further in section 2.2.7 of this chapter.

Further, a note found among the sketches provides a general consideration on the relationship between movements:

The three slow movements are united by a common concern with polyphony, layered textures, whilst the three fast movements have analogue forms, being sets of variations upon identical material. These various correspondences should be borne in mind by the performer. (Ferneyhough, n.d. [2])

#### **2.1.4 Benjamin's texts**

It could be said that the relationship between the movements in Ferneyhough's *Kurze Schatten II* is analogous to the correspondence between Benjamin's thought-images. The slow movements are concerned with polyphony and layered textures, and the corresponding thought-images are concerned with abstract topics: knowledge, language, distance. By contrast, the fast movements concerned with variations find their parallel in more concrete images, for instance evoking prostitution and gambling and the bourgeois room from the nineteenth century. Fig. 2.4 draws on Benjamin's *Short Shadows (II)*

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<sup>14</sup> Cf. Ferneyhough 1998, p. 246, on the piano piece *Lemma-Icon-Epigram* (which also dates from the early 1980s).

(Benjamin 1999a, pp. 699–702) and Ferneyhough’s essay on the solo guitar piece (Ferneyhough 1998, pp. 139–152) to summarize the topics of both Benjamin’s text-sequence and Ferneyhough’s piece.

	Benjamin	Ferneyhough
I	‘Secret signs’: Deals with the concept of epiphany through the image of ancient carpet patterns.	Concentrates on the problem of working with two distinct types of polyphonic structures – one made of two staves of natural harmonics, the other made of four independent categories of micro-figure that succeed each other with such rapidity that occasional overlappings are encountered.
II	‘A saying of Casanova’s’: On the dialectical function of money in prostitution – it buys pleasure while at the same time becoming the expression of shame (further developed in <i>The Arcades Project</i> [Benjamin 1999b], convolute O, ‘Prostitution and Gambling’).	The potential distinction between performance tempo and density of material. In six panels of six measures each, the tempo decreases while density increases.
III	‘The tree and language’: Invokes the image of a tree and explores ideas about language, knowledge and names.	The perception of time-flow and distribution in a highly symmetrical scheme, the first half of the movement alternating long bars of sound and short bars of rest/silence, the pattern recurring in retrograde in the second half, where short bars of sonic events alternates with long bars of silence and <i>tenuto</i> .
IV	‘Gambling’: Evokes the passion of gamblers and their ‘cold blood’ in the face of losses through an image of a real gambler in Parisian clubs (further developed in Benjamin 1999b, convolute O, ‘Prostitution and Gambling’).	Waltz in ABA form, in which the left-hand agility is seen as an independent variable in the context of notated material that frequently goes against what would be natural for the performer.
V	‘Distance and images’: Explores the idea of knowledge through images, ignoring the facts happening at the distance beyond the image.	A chordal proliferation principle aiming to explore articulation and the great colouristic potential of the instrument – a <i>Charakterstück</i> , in Ferneyhough’s terms.
VI	‘To live without leaving traces’: A comment on traceability and experience, further developed in the essay ‘Experience and Poverty’ (Benjamin 1999a, pp. 731–6).	It concentrates on pitch and the gradual replacement of normally produced pitches by natural harmonics – something of a scherzo in its nature.
VII	‘Short shadows’: Evokes the idea of the <i>Augenblick</i> – the moment of revelation – through the image of the sun approaching its zenith.	The exploration of the expressive potential of the instrument in a structure of six sections of six measures each in which a surrealistically miniaturized time frames attempts at using every conventional device of traditional guitar usage.

**Figure 2.4:** Topics of each text/movement in Benjamin, *Short Shadows (II)* and Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*

Although the only correspondence which the composer acknowledges between Benjamin's texts and his score is that of the image of the sun and the objects in 'Short shadows' (as a single piece of text), what follows might be understood as a hermeneutical exercise of the liberty of a reader: each movement will be addressed individually, approaching its music-immanent demands in connection to Benjamin's corresponding thought-image, while at the same time embracing the content of the composer's sketches and insights from my rehearsal with the composer.

## **2.2 *Kurze Schatten II: performing approaches***

### **2.2.1 Movement I: melodies as epiphanies**

In the first movement, as Ferneyhough indicates (1998, p. 140), there are two distinct types of polyphonic structure: one is composed of two independent layers of natural harmonics, the other incorporates miniature figures that succeed one another. As Andersson suggests (1988, p. 129), these 'micro-figures' should be played as differentiatedly as possible, so that the perception of a global surface is avoided and a space created which is rich in diverse temporal and spatial layers. In addition, one of the main challenges is to avoid damping the natural harmonics – a significant risk due to the physical closeness with the strings in which the flurry of activity of the micro-figures occurs. In this respect, Geoffrey Morris proposes a re-angling of the left-hand fingers, although many times 'the natural harmonics would not resonate for the length notated even without the bottom stave' (Morris 1996, p. 42).

# Kurze Schatten II

1

Scordatura:

BRIAN FERNEYHOUGH

$\text{♩} = 44 \text{ ca.}$

Figure 2.5a: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 1<sup>st</sup> movement, bb. 1–2

$\square = 2 \text{ cm}$

Figure 2.5b: Spaced re-notation of Fig. 2.5a (rhythms only)

My own approach to the rhythmic complexity – aggravated by polyphony and the independence of the three staves – was to re-rotate the rhythms only in spaced notation (see Fig. 2.5), in order to approach what Adorno would term the image of the score.

Nevertheless, this image revealed some minor mistakes in the printed score, such as the positioning of the harmonic on the 5<sup>th</sup> string in the middle stave of the second bar.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, the notation of pitch in *Kurze Schatten II* obeys the tablature principle, where the notated pitches are not the real sounds but are notated as if the guitar were tuned normally. For that reason, almost every note has a string assigned, or it is possible to deduce it from its context. However, it could be argued that such a tablature principle in notation is the carrier of more content than merely pitch, by also conveying gestural/choreographical information. Let us take as an example the micro-figure in bar 3 (see red rectangle in Fig. 2.6 – [video example 2.2](#)).

Almost all of the eleven pitches making up this micro-figure are to be played on the 4<sup>th</sup> string, with the exception of the initial note G, which is to be played on the 3<sup>rd</sup> string. Thus, a distance of thirteen frets is covered between the E natural in fret 14 and the E flat in fret 1: a large portion of the guitar fingerboard.<sup>16</sup> This fingering produces at least three longitudinal shifts for the left hand.

Longitudinal shifts are often an issue in guitar performance, as they tend to be points where physical tension increases, deserving a careful treatment in favour of continuity and accuracy. Hence, there is a tendency to avoid them, whereas a good fingering in the use of different combinations of stopped and open strings should permit such shifts to be hidden. Listening to two published recordings of this piece,<sup>17</sup> it is clear that this passage is no exception. Taking advantage of the semitonally detuned 2<sup>nd</sup> string, it is possible to play this passage – respecting the pitches – on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> strings,

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<sup>15</sup> For a related discovery in movement III, see end of section 2.2.3 below.

<sup>16</sup> Normally, there are nineteen frets in total.

<sup>17</sup> Magnus Andersson, Disques Montaigne MO 782029 (CD); Geoffrey Morris, Etcetera KTC 1206 (CD).



the fingering of which is likely to produce just one shift (or even better, hiding that shift in the hemidemisemi-quaver rest). Such an arrangement seems to be highly beneficial, securing the passage from possible mistakes, easing the flow and saving energy. But, on the other hand, it can be argued that such a fingering ignores the actual gestural content, that is to say, the leaps implicit in the notation.

A similar request is found in bar 2 (see blue rectangle in Fig. 2.6): the last G# could be played on the 4<sup>th</sup> string, keeping the left hand in fourth position, but it is asked to be played on the 3<sup>rd</sup> string, demanding a shift towards first position. Besides, there is a *diminuendo*, which somehow contradicts the physical nature of the shift itself.

Considering the velocity of the micro-figures cited above, the original fingerings demand very quick, flutter-like leaps; a tendency to ‘force’ the physical gesture – to make it more violent or abrupt – albeit sometimes attenuated by musical indications of contrary notions (e.g. *diminuendo*, *sostenuto*). This seems to be the kind of gestural behaviour that the composer is deliberately asking of the left hand through these particular string allocations.

It is to this extent that the Benjamin thought-image which corresponds with this piece, ‘Secret signs’, is very likely to be related to this interpretation:

*Secret signs.* A word of Schuler’s has been preserved for us. Every piece of knowledge, he said, contains a dash of nonsense, just as in ancient carpet patterns or ornamental friezes it was always possible to find somewhere or other a minute deviation from the regular pattern. In other words, what is decisive is not the progression from one piece of knowledge to the next, but the leap implicit in any one piece of knowledge. This is the inconspicuous mark of authenticity which distinguishes it from every kind of standard product that has been mass-produced. (Benjamin 1999a, p. 699)

Ferneyhough himself terms the 'leap' between pieces of knowledge as epiphany,<sup>18</sup> that is, the moment of revelation. A literal translation of this thought-image could be that of avoiding the notion of progression in physical motions in performance, especially in transversal and longitudinal shifts in both hands. Such a decision, which especially should be a concern in passages with longer temporal intervals between events, affects not only the visual information of performance; the fact of playing those events (harmonics and micro-figures) with no preparation considerably affects the potential expressive of the whole performance. It would tend towards a certain abrupt-making of the gestural realization, which, on the other hand, perfectly matches the tendency of the string allocations to increase the presence of leaps and could be understood as matching with the general context of 'rupture', as suggested in the Benjamin–Nietzsche connection.

However, this criterion could have an important exception. As Ferneyhough states (1998, p. 141), in this piece 'there are four independently variable categories of micro-figures', which are found exactly in the first four miniature figures in the lowest stave in bars 1–3 (Castellani 2009). Thereafter, the third category of micro-figure always presents indications such as *espressivo* and *molto espressivo*, sometimes with *vibrato*. In fact, in the composer's sketches some of these micro-figures are referred to as 'melodies'. Accordingly, I contend that these figures should be played more *sul tasto*, which does indeed allow a more *espressivo* tone production, according to classical guitar tradition. [Video example 2.3](#) shows the micro-figure within the blue rectangle in Fig. 2.6 played first with a neutral timbre (close to what may be understood as a common contemporary

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<sup>18</sup> Also, Ferneyhough (2013) referred to Morton Feldman's piece *Turfan Fragments* as using the same image of ancient carpet patterns.



The remaining material (the staves of harmonics, and micro-figures of types 1, 2 and 4, including notes plucked normally, *pizzicati* and ‘Bartók’ *pizzicati*) could be played, unless specified otherwise, in a standard position for the right hand between the sound-hole and bridge. In these terms, there are interpretative choices for this piece to explore: [video example 2.5](#) shows bars 1–4 played with no major timbral differentiation (which is a common option in recordings of the piece to date). As for a purely physical aspect, [video example 2.6](#) shows the same passage played with progressive motions between all the events, as a sort of traditional approach to physicality. Finally, [video example 2.7](#) exemplifies my interpretative choices for the first page of the piece (see Fig. 2.6) – applicable to the whole movement – in which timbral differentiation is employed in micro-figures of type 3 (melodies). Physical gesture tends to non-progressive/sudden motions, unless preparing micro-figures of type 3, which should be prepared as progressively as possible, aiming at projecting them as ‘epiphanies’ indeed.

### **2.2.2 Movement II: supporting gestures**

‘The second movement’s “topic” is the potential distinction between performance tempo and perceived density of material’ (Ferneyhough 1998, p. 141). In fact, the piece is clearly organized in six ‘panels’ of six bars each, in which the marked tempo for the crotchet decreases as follows: 90 > 83 > 76 > 71 > 67.5 > 63.5 > (60). On the other hand, as the piece progresses, the notated rhythmic values of each panel become shorter and new pitch constellations are added in each cycle. In Ferneyhough’s terms, the result of this tempo-density opposition is, for the ear, to confuse the two toward the middle of the

movement. Figs 2.7 and 2.8 show the first and last panels respectively, using a spaced re-notation of the rhythms. Thus, it seems clear that the tendency to increase the density of material at the rhythmic level dominates toward the end of the movement.

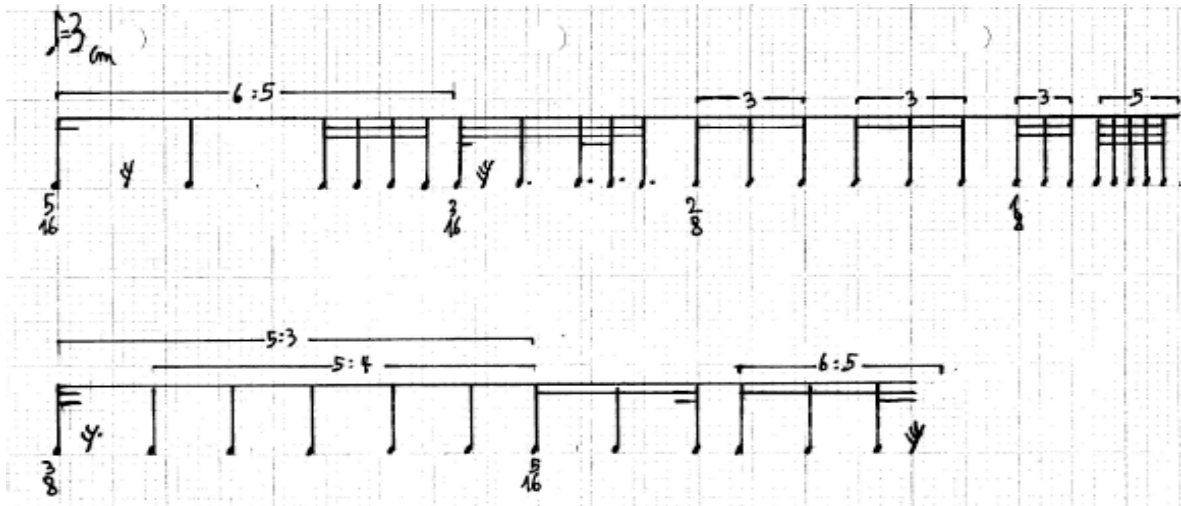


Figure 2.7: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, rhythmic re-notation of first panel, bb. 1–6

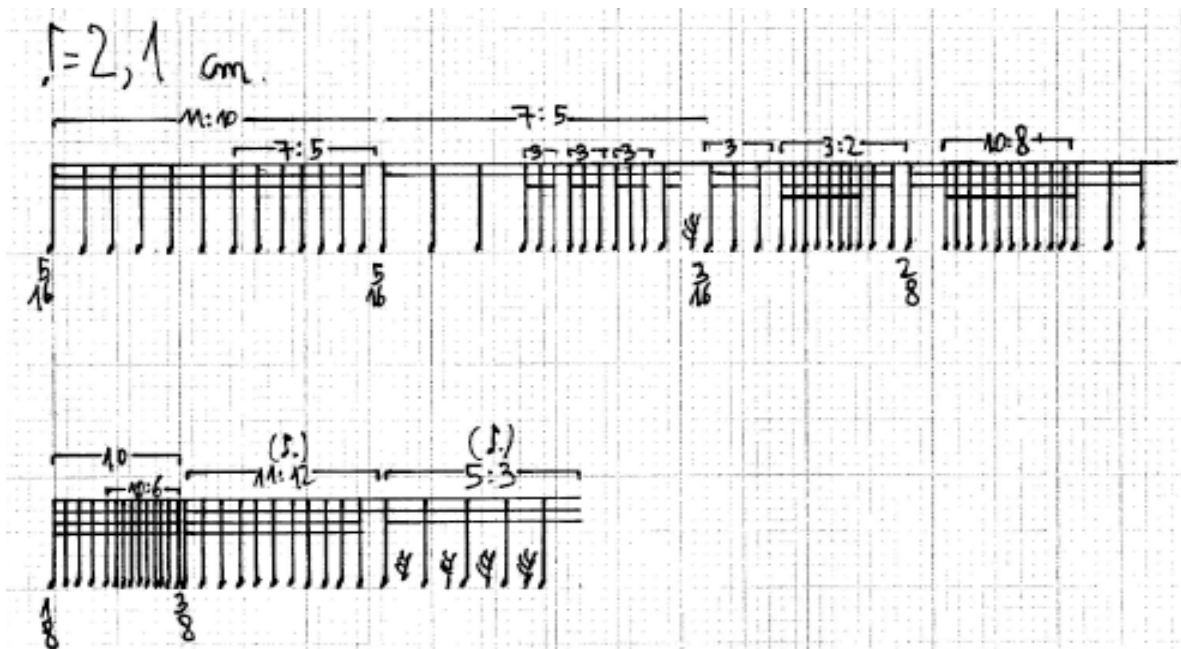


Figure 2.8: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, rhythmic re-notation of sixth panel, bb. 30–36

Moreover, Benjamin's corresponding thought-image poses an opposite tendency as well:

*A saying of Casanova's. 'She knew', Casanova says of a procuress, 'that I would not have the strength to leave without giving her something.' A strange statement. What strength was needed to cheat the procuress of her reward? Or, more precisely, what is the weakness on which she can always rely? It is the shame. The procuress is venal – in contrast to the customer employing her services, who is ashamed. Filled with shame, he seeks a hiding place and finds one in the most hidden places of all: in money. Insolence throws the first coin down on the table. Shame follows it up with a hundred, in order to cloak it. (Benjamin 1999a, p. 699)*

Benjamin himself develops this text in *The Arcades Project*, referring to this opposition as 'the dialectical function of money in prostitution. It buys pleasure and, at the same time, becomes the expression of shame' (Benjamin 1999b, p. 492). A literal interpretation could be that money represents musical material (its density) and that shame represents the performance tempo; then, it is *insolence* that increases the former whilst *shame* decreases the latter. Besides stating a possible stimulus for imagination, this relationship highlights the importance of realizing both aspects in performance. Thus, on the one hand, a correct realization of rhythmic notated tasks and tempi seems to meet the requirement of the increasing density of material. On the other hand, however, such a realization does not in itself ensure the perception of the decreasing of performance tempo. It is to this extent that the use of gestures supporting the rhythmic structure, specifically for the vector of performance tempo, seems to be indispensable.

Elaine King's study of supporting gestures (King 2006) explores how breathing supports pianists in relation to tempo, music-structural gestures and physical gestures in performance practice. After an experiment with three pianists, one of the conclusions was that:

Physical movements regularly appeared to convey information about the tempo and phrasing of the music. For instance, body sway, elbow circles, wrist pulsations

and head tilts were observed in accordance with the main beats in a bar. (King 2006, p. 159)

Similar supporting gestures could be observed in a guitarist; and it is to this extent that, according to a performer's own body vocabulary, supporting gestures should be allowed according to the nature of the materials. In rehearsal, the composer states:

What interests me really is what do we hear belonging together. The second page [half] is slightly easier even though is faster, because it has more conventional phrasing. But the first page needs a little bit more of prioritizing of individual lines ... so we hear these actual musical phrases rather than just densities. (Ferneyhough 2013)

Thereby, it could be said that the 'actual phrases' of the first half require more supporting gestures, whereas the 'densities' in the second half reduce the activity to just sound-producing gestures. In order to illustrate this, [video example 2.8](#) shows the first panel ('phrases'; see Fig. 2.9) attempting to play with no supporting gestures – sound-producing gestures only. [Video example 2.9](#) shows the same panel, but played freely, allowing supporting gestures. Finally, [video example 2.10](#) exemplifies the last panel ('densities'; see Fig. 2.10), in which gestural activity tends to reduce to sound-producing gestures only.

2

Figure 2.9: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, first panel, bb. 1–6

Figure 2.10: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, sixth panel, bb. 29–36



### 2.2.3 Movement III: mental polyphony

In the third thought-image of *Short Shadows (III)*, 'The tree and language', Benjamin suggests the existence of a vast language, beyond speech:

I climbed up an embankment and lay down under a tree. The tree was a poplar or an alder. Why have I not remembered which? Because while I was gazing up into the foliage, following its movements with my eyes, I suddenly found that, within me, language was so gripped by it that momentarily the age-old marriage with the tree was suddenly re-enacted once again in my presence. (Benjamin 1999a, pp. 699–700)

In my view, it is in the fact that the speaker of this text does not remember the name of the tree that the similarity with Ferneyhough's correlated piece appears. According to the composer, 'the third piece deals with various perceptions of time-flow and distribution, as seen in the context of a highly-symmetrical formal scheme' (Ferneyhough 1998, p. 142). In fact, it consists of a series of fourteen bars of different lengths in its first half, which runs in retrograde back to its starting point in the second half. This metric organization alternates a bar of sound or event with a bar of complete silence or else an internal subdivision into *tenuto* and silence. The relationship is reversed in the retrograde version, so that the bars previously containing music are now essentially silent and *vice versa*. In the first half, the sound events dominate – with rest bars reduced to an essentially punctuating function – while in the second half, 'aphoristically brief and disconnected sonic interjections are inserted into disproportionately lengthy fields of silence' (Ferneyhough 1998, p. 143). That is, there is a sort of conventional phrasing with short interruptions in the first half, which transforms into its unconventional opposite in the second half.

The upper staff for percussion on the top body of the instrument establishes five degrees of register: from 'dark to light' (Ferneyhough 2013), which means that the guitarist must obtain those distinctions by tapping on the instrument with the fingertips at different points. Fig. 2.11 shows the central bars (bars 11–19), in which the point of retrogradation is between bars 14 and 15.

The image displays four systems of musical notation for the 3rd movement of 'Kurze Schatten II' by Ferneyhough. Each system consists of a single staff with complex rhythmic and dynamic markings. The systems are labeled with measure numbers: the first system starts at measure 46, the second at 42, the third at 56, and the fourth at 66. The notation includes various dynamics such as *ppp*, *f*, *sfz*, *pp*, *p*, *mf*, *mp*, *ff*, and *fff*. There are also performance instructions like *legato*, *rapido*, *timbre gliss.*, *gliss.*, *tasto*, *non troppo*, *ben*, *vibr. molto*, *leggiero*, *non vibr.*, *fff metallico*, and *pizz.*. The score is highly detailed with many slurs, accents, and specific fingering or tapping indications.

Figure 2.11: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, bb. 11–19

According to the composer, the function of the long intervals of silence/inactivity in the second half of the piece is that of:

deflecting the superfluous residual impetus emerging from the previous event; some have to do with mentally preparing the scene for the eventual sudden emergence of the next event, assessing and gradating the invisible topography of the ascending or descending slope at the end of which it emerges into that part of the piece's environment directly apperceptible by the listener. (Ferneyhough 1998, p. 144)

Referred to as a 'psychologisation' of the performance act (Fitch 2013, p. 88),<sup>19</sup> these long silences bring into play Ferneyhough's idea of mental polyphony: 'a polyphony, as it were, located almost entirely in the mind (and its physical extensions) of the performer' (Ferneyhough 1998, p. 144).

In rehearsal, the composer states: 'we need to make these phrases [in the first half] as natural as we possibly can, to fill the space. But when it becomes unnatural [in the second half] is more of a problem' (Ferneyhough 2013). The problem has to do with the fact that the more 'conventional' phrases from the first half become miniatures in the second. As we can observe in the percussion stave in bar 15, the physical task of tapping at different points on the instrument in such a rapid micro-figure enhances the functionality of the following long bar of silence as a space for deflection of the physical/psychological energy expended in such a condensed event.

Therefore, the correspondence between the piece of music and the thought-image can be approached in performance by understanding that the mimicking of the rest bars is not really stillness but the embodiment of the deflection of energy of previous events and

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<sup>19</sup> Also, Fitch observes: 'One is reminded of Gilles Deleuze's observation regarding a painting by Francis Bacon, that the contorted figure is doing nothing but sitting still: no external forces act on it, but the deformation – like Bacon's famous screams – originates from within the body.' (ibid.)

expectation/preparation of coming events, somehow evidencing the existence of a 'language' inside the skin of the performer. [Video example 2.11](#) shows the central bars of the piece (see Fig. 2.14).

As for the manuscripts and sketches at the Paul Sacher Foundation, I found one relevant mistake. Bar 11 was notated in three different staves, whereas it was published in two. Apparently, there was a mistake in the transcription: the problem arises between the lower staves – one made of harmonics, the other of pizzicatos – as the placing is not accurate at the beginning. The B harmonic should be placed after the A  $\flat$  *pizz.*; also, the double harmonic A–F $\sharp$  should be placed after the double *pizz.* A $\sharp$ –B. See red rectangles in Fig. 2.11.

#### **2.2.4 Movement IV: a waltz**

The fourth movement is perhaps one of the most evident pictorial correspondences between thought-image and score. The thought-image is entitled 'Gambling', and in it Benjamin explores the passion of gambling and describes an image of a real gambler in the clubs of post-Napoleonic Paris: the 7th Prince de Ligne,<sup>20</sup> an 'irreproachable Knight of Fortune' who was celebrated for the 'cold blood' he displayed in the face of huge losses:

Day in, day out, he behaved in the same way. His right hand, which constantly wagered vast stakes on the tables, hung slackly. His left hand, however, was immobile, held horizontally across his right breast beneath his jacket. Later it became known, through his valet, that there were three scars on his chest – the precise imprint of the nails of the three fingers that had lain there so motionlessly. (Benjamin 1999a, p. 700)

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<sup>20</sup> Charles-Joseph, Prince de Ligne (1735–1814), Belgian military officer, diplomat and man of letters, was a favourite at many European courts. His memoirs and his correspondence with figures such as Rousseau and Voltaire established him as an important literary voice in Belgium.

The three scars on the gambler's chest are paralleled by the strong trace of triplicity in the corresponding piece; the composer regards it as 'a sort of generic waltz, even to the extent of having a clear ABA format and [...] the uneven subdivision into 1 beat and 2 beats which a waltz accompaniment typically provides' (Ferneyhough 1998, p. 144).<sup>21</sup> The first section of the piece even remains in 3/8 metre throughout. Ferneyhough states that his most significant pre-compositional decision was to work it out not in terms of individual pitches but in terms of left-hand finger positions; thus, this movement can be seen as a study in left-hand agility viewed as an independent variable:

I made a large table of all guitar finger positions [...] and all possible combinations of four fingers over any combination of the six strings. I then planned a permuted sequence [...], which I spread out over the entire metric/rhythmic structure of the piece with a view to fixing which combination of strings, placing of fingers and fret position would be available at any given moment. What particularly led me to this approach was the creation of polyphonic continuity while constraining players to realize the notated material in ways which frequently go counter to their instinctive feel for what would be natural. (Ferneyhough 1998, pp. 146–7)

Benjamin's image seems to be the aesthetic motivation for writing a study based on the notion of triplicity, in which left-hand agility is seen as an independent parameter: it is the same hand that the gambler holds beneath his jacket auto-imprinting the three scars. The physical demands of notated materials force the performer to use several sound-facilitating gestures, which involve the elbow, whole left arm and trunk in order to facilitate the task of the fingers. Regarding this type of gestures as part of the *idiomatic* element, its collision with the *mensural* element becomes an expressive element as

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<sup>21</sup> He continues: 'Further operations take this idea much further, by reversing that relationship, changing its proportions (for example into 2 and 3 subdivisions of a 3/8 measure) or by self-replicational "nesting" of such values one within another.' (ibid.)

noticeable at a physical level. For example, the opening phrase implies a subdivision of 1 and 2 beats, in which the 2 beats are in turn subdivided in three. The opening two chords require not only shifting in between them but also different presentations and the extension of some fingers. The D harmonic on the second beat requires some stressing plus a small *tenuto* in order to allow a re-angle of the left arm, as the three following chords (under the 12:7 tuplet) threaten to damp the D harmonic (besides the fact that each chord requires a different arm presentation). However, it remains very difficult to succeed in not damping the 4<sup>th</sup> string.

The image shows a musical score for a guitar piece, labeled '62 ca.' and '4'. The score is written on a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It features a complex rhythmic structure with various dynamics and performance instructions. Key elements include:
 

- A starting dynamic of *fff* (fortississimo).
- A first measure with a 3-beat subdivision, marked with a circled '3'.
- A second measure with a 12:7 tuplet, marked with a circled '12:7' and 's.f.' (sforzando).
- A third measure with a 7-beat subdivision, marked with a circled '7' and 'norm.' (normal).
- A fourth measure with a 3:2 subdivision, marked with a circled '3:2' and 'vibr. intensivo' (vibrato intensivo).
- A fifth measure with a 3:2 subdivision, marked with a circled '3:2' and 'vibr. intensivo'.
- Dynamics range from *fff* to *pp* (pianissimo).
- Performance instructions include 'arm. nat.' (armature natural), 'ben marc.' (ben marcato), and 'norm.'.

Figure 2.12: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 4<sup>th</sup> movement, bb. 1–2

The inherent tension between the idiomatic and mensural elements, the rendition of which produces inevitable mistakes in the realization, reflects the love for gambling described in Benjamin’s text: ‘this love contains its own reward, to the point where they [gamblers] even love their losses because this enables them to demonstrate their capacity for self-sacrifice’. This attitude, as the attempt not to compromise the mensural element and to accept failure, can be seen as a correspondence with the text. See a performance of the opening section – Fig. 2.13, [video example 2.12](#).

4

11

Figure 2.13: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 4<sup>th</sup> movement, bb. 1–10

In rehearsal, Ferneyhough referred to this piece as a homage to Arnold Schoenberg (Ferneyhough 2013), evoking the image of Pierrot in a Vienna park, thus defining a strong link to the tradition of Viennese waltzes. Therefore, in order to explore a waltz trope, sound-producing gestures seem to comply with supporting the main beats in the first section in 3/8, supporting the rhythmic structure, whereas I decided to use ‘reverberation’

(body motion that continues in the juncture between phrases). Fragmentary melodies often emerge from the chord-pervaded texture, in which many times the convention that accompaniment is softer (and less elaborated) than melody is reversed. Timbral differentiation can help to improve individuation here.

This feature anticipates the second section (see Fig. 2.14), where the two-stave notation reveals a melody/accompaniment relationship stood on its head: the melody, on the bottom stave, is less elaborated and (gesturally) less dense than the upper-stave ‘accompaniment’. The distinction is very difficult to achieve in performance, as the dynamics of the melody are mostly lower than those of the accompaniment stave. My approach is to devise an extreme timbral differentiation, which implies playing the bottom stave (melody) more *sul tasto* (on the sound-hole) – tending more to parallel angles of attack – whereas the accompaniment is played closer to the bridge, tending to more perpendicular angles of attack. Thus, on a physical level, right-hand agility becomes another independent variable, actually mimicking the counter-intuitive behaviour of the left hand – somehow embodying a correspondence with the auto-lacerative image of the gambler’s left hand.

In order to appreciate these, [video example 2.13](#) shows a performance of the relevant passage (bars 20–23) with no timbral differentiation, whereas [video example 2.14](#) shows my final interpretative choice – extreme timbral differentiation producing a new choreography for the right hand.



The image displays two systems of musical notation for a guitar piece. The first system (bb. 20-23) features a treble clef staff with a tempo marking of 78 and a 'rigido' instruction. It includes dynamic markings such as *mp*, *p*, *mp*, *mp*, *pp*, *p*, and *mf*. Performance instructions include 'ben marc', 'sempre simile', and 'flessibile'. Fingerings and articulations are indicated with numbers in circles and brackets, along with slurs and accents. The second system continues the piece with dynamics like *pp*, *mp*, *p*, *mp*, *p*, and *ppp*. It includes a note about vibrato: '(\*) From sign to next double bar: lower part "vibr," but "non vibr." whenever note sounding in upper part.' The score is annotated with Roman numerals (I, V, VII, VIII, IX) and various musical symbols like 'pizz.' and '3:2'.

Figure 2.14: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 4<sup>th</sup> movement, bb. 20–23

### 2.2.5 Movement V: aura of harmonic entities

The fifth piece explores the great colouristic potential of the instrument, based on a chordal proliferation principle. As Ferneyhough states:

Essentially, it is based on just one chord in section one, then two chords in section two, three in three and so on. One hears very clearly, I think, that a textural or timbral difference coincides, for the most part, with a sudden change in the available harmonic repertoire. Again like the second piece, there is a constantly accelerating rate of change in one dimension, against a static or reducing level of complexity in another, since most textures emerge from the simple arpeggiation of various types of vertically defined harmonic entities. Above all, the piece has to do with articulation and tone color. It is a rather quiet and withdrawn statement, and I employ a number of playing techniques which exploit the lower dynamic reaches of the guitar. (Ferneyhough 1998, p. 148)

That is, chords increase while textural complexity decreases or remains static. Moreover, again like the second thought-image of the sequence, it seems possible to find a dualism that has its parallel in the realm of Benjamin's corresponding text. 'Distance and images' poses an opposition between images and knowledge: 'I wonder whether enjoyment of the world of images isn't fed by a sullen defiance of knowledge' (Benjamin 1999a, p. 701). This text describes a first person, a dreamer, who gives himself to the images, ignoring the facts happening in the distance. If he sees that before him lies the sea, 'smooth as a mirror in the bay', he is ignoring that, in the distance, 'the ocean rises and falls in thousands and thousands of waves every moment'. Images – as seen from up close – will give him peace and eternity, giving the lie to his dreams. The dream appears at its most perfect when he succeeds in:

removing the sting from movement itself – in translating the gust of wind into a rustling, and the flitting and darting of the birds above his head into a migratory flock. To command nature herself to stand still in this way in the name of faded images is the dreamer's delight. But to utter a call that will freeze it anew is the gift of poets. (ibid.)

It could be argued that the thirteen chords or 'harmonic entities' from this piece could be linked to 'images' as seen mostly from a distance. Thus, there is a certain predominance of the lower dynamic reaches of the instrument – also given in the use of *tambora*, bi-tones and a special effect that Ferneyhough likens to an 'aura of the chord' (Ferneyhough 1998, p. 148) – e.g. the irregular tamboras in bars 1 and 3 (see Fig. 2.15).

As the composer stated in rehearsal, 'each measure is a situation, and everything that occurs in that measure is related in some way; so you have to think in terms of the large shape of the measure, and then just move on' (Ferneyhough 2013). Also, he pointed

out that this piece has to be ‘thrown away’ – to be played ‘without effort’. In my view, this attitude poses a link with the fatuity of the dreamer’s images in Benjamin’s text, and it gives a clue to its character – this piece has been referred to as a *Characterstück* (Ferneyhough 1998, p. 149).

Since the work’s slow movements are concerned with polyphony, it could be argued that this movement is concerned with a sort of ‘polyphony of distances’, manifested in the various treatments given to the chords and dynamics, tone colour and articulation. The exertion of control over the material becomes problematic, especially when there are fast motions that must fit into a context of low dynamics, besides aiming at a sense of ‘no effort’ in such tasks. A gradual preparation of events should be favoured, whenever possible, according to distance and time span; but always with minimum possible effort, as the dynamics are mostly low. The first section of the piece, drawing upon the opening chord, shows these main features in Fig. 2.15 – see a performance of the same passage in [video example 2.15](#).

Figure 2.15: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 5<sup>th</sup> movement, bb. 1–4

Moreover, the pitch notation in this movement – that is, left-hand fingerings – is not exhaustive. For instance, in bar 25 (see Fig. 2.16 and [video example 2.16](#)) the B in the middle of the staff could be played as an open 2<sup>nd</sup> string (therefore sounding as B flat); however, as seen in the manuscripts and sketches at the Paul Sacher Foundation, it has to be played on the 4<sup>th</sup> string (which sounds as written). Similarly, in bar 27, the D<sup>b</sup> in the upper line has to be played on the 3<sup>rd</sup> string (and not on the 2<sup>nd</sup> string, which would result in a wrong pitch, a semitone lower).

Figure 2.16: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 5<sup>th</sup> movement, bb. 25–30

### 2.2.6 Movement VI: (un)traceable harmonics

The last quick movement of the cycle is, according to its composer, ‘something of a scherzo in its nature’. As Ferneyhough (1998, p. 149) states, ‘here, I wanted to concentrate on pitch as one of the key vectors, the other being the gradual replacement of normally-produced pitches by natural harmonics’. Unlike in the other pieces in the

cycle, the choice of strings is made by the performer, giving her the option to determine a fingering allowing continuity and facility or one resulting in natural harmonics of high resolution and sustain but with a lesser degree of agility and economy of movement. It is to this extent that absolute pitch will vary from performer to performer.

The correlated thought-image is 'To live without leaving traces'. This text expresses a concern with the notions of experience and traceability by comparing two architectonic situations: a bourgeois room of the 1880s and the rooms of the new (1930s) architects and their glass-culture. Brecht's phrase 'Erase the traces!' is quite the opposite of the bourgeois room, in which 'there is no spot on which the owner has not left his mark' (Benjamin 1999a, p. 701); the interior forces the inhabitant to adopt the greatest possible number of habits. On the other hand, it is hard to leave traces in the rooms made by the new architects with their glass and steel. This thought-image is further developed in Benjamin's essay 'Experience and Poverty' (Benjamin 1999a, pp. 731–6), which portrays the poverty of modern times, the poverty of experience. People who aim for glass buildings are the spokesmen of a new poverty: 'They have "devoured" everything, both "culture and people", and they have had such a surfeit that it has exhausted them' (p. 735). Besides, 'objects made of glass have no "aura". Glass is, in general, the enemy of secrets' (ibid.). As such, it seems logical that the sixth movement in Ferneyhough's cycle 'might be regarded as the one most closely approaching traditional norms of contemporary guitar common usage' (Ferneyhough 1998, p. 150).

My response to these notions is to avoid timbral differentiation, whereas in the rhythmic aspect the contrary is the case: the subtle differentiation manifested by the

notated rhythms evinces the origin of this movement in a rhythmic grid, as seen in the sketches, on which pitches were added later. As for timbre, the right hand mainly keeps its position throughout, slightly *sul ponticello* and plucking with the fingernails perpendicular in order to produce harmonics with clarity – perhaps also producing a ‘thinner’ tone colour which could be more related to ‘glass’, rather than a ‘wider’ sound produced through an angled attack or played more *sul tasto*. See [video example 2.17](#), a performance of bars 1–12 (Fig. 2.17).

PRESTISSIMO (E♭) GIENO 6 17

not (E♭) than 58

The musical score consists of five systems of music. The first system is marked 'PRESTISSIMO (E♭) GIENO 6' and includes a handwritten note 'not (E♭) than 58'. It features complex rhythmic patterns with various time signatures and dynamic markings such as *mp*, *poco*, *p*, *f*, and *ff*. The second system continues the rhythmic complexity with markings like *mf*, *p*, *sfz*, *pp*, and *f*. The third system includes markings like *mfz*, *p*, *mp*, *ff*, and *sfz p*. The fourth system is marked with *mf*, *mp*, *poco*, *pp*, *mp*, *ppp*, *mp*, *fff*, and *pp*. The fifth system is marked 'XI dolce' and includes markings like *ppp*, *mp*, *mfz*, *ff*, *mf*, *p*, *fff*, and *sub.*

Figure 2.17: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 6<sup>th</sup> movement, bb. 1–12

In the rehearsal, Ferneyhough indicates that the only exception to this kind of timbre production is when a *legato* line appears: the right hand should be re-angled so as to produce a ‘warmer’ sound – although with less clarity in the harmonics. See a performance of bars 74–78 at [video example 2.18](#) (Fig. 2.18).

The image displays three staves of musical notation for the 6th movement of 'Kurze Schatten II'. The first staff (measures 72-78) features dynamics of *mp*, *mf*, *p*, *poco*, and *mp*, with a 12-measure bracket. The second staff (measures 79-81) includes dynamics of *p*, *sfz*, *p*, *sfz*, *sfz*, *p*, *sfz*, and *sfz*, with various performance markings such as '(P.)', 'arm.', 'norm.', 'non vib.', '(L.F.)', 'norm.', 'sim.', and 'arm.'. The third staff (measures 82-84) includes dynamics of *sfz*, *fff*, *f*, *fff*, and *mf*, with markings like '(P.)', 'norm.', 'secco', and 'sempre non vibr. al fine'. The notation includes complex rhythmic patterns, slurs, and dynamic hairpins.

Figure 2.18: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 6<sup>th</sup> movement, bb. 72–81

In the sketches at the Paul Sacher Foundation, there is the indication *Prestissimo leggero*, and the metronome indication ‘♩ = not less than 58’. These indications point towards an image of continuity (and, most likely, harmonics with no high resolution). However, these indications are absent from the published score. As for fingerings not included in the published version, in bar 17 there is an important clue to the composer’s intentions: the three F#s in the triplets in that bar are allocated to different strings – the

1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> strings respectively. This produces very noticeable shifts, an effect that I therefore adopted as much as possible in repeated notes in this movement. See Fig. 2.19 for the relevant passage.

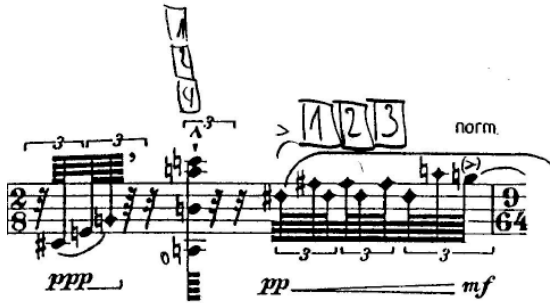


Figure 2.19: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 6<sup>th</sup> movement, b. 17

### 2.2.7 Movement VII: Benjamin's allegory

The seventh movement, perhaps more than any other in the cycle, appeals to the so-called 'fragment form' through six sections containing six bars each, each bar being made of small gestural fragments. As Fitch indicates (2013, p. 89), the seventh movement is prescient of Ferneyhough's later guitar writing, specifically *Les Froissements d'Ailes de Gabriel* for guitar and chamber ensemble (made of 124 fragments, this piece serves as both the second scene of *Shadowtime* and a free-standing guitar concerto) and *No Time (at all)* for guitar duo, which re-uses material from *Les Froissements*. Also, the composer states:

Like a sort of wind-up toy, the argument staggers back and forth across the whole gamut of the instrument's expressive potential in a surrealistically miniaturized time frame, and practically every conventional device of traditional usage may be encountered somewhere in this movement in epigrammatic guise. (Ferneyhough 1998, p. 150)



In my view, the use of the fragment-form establishes a connection to the Benjamin quotation from the composer's sketches cited above: 'Ideas are to objects as constellations are to stars.' This derives from *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (translated into English as *The Origin of German Tragic Drama* [Benjamin 1998]), which is precisely the book that drew Ferneyhough's attention in relation to Baroque emblems in the solo piano work *Lemma-Icon-Epigram* (see Ferneyhough 1998, p. 246). In the *Ursprung's* 'Epistemo-Critical Prologue', Benjamin approaches the German Baroque *Trauerspiel* by means of a distantiating between the concepts of the symbolic and the allegorical, as two different means of representation.

According to a recent study of Benjamin's concept of allegory (Caygill 2010, p. 248), Benjamin pursues, against the philosophical 'system' that captures truth through an act of symbolic representation, an allegorical method that assembles fragments: which 'juxtaposes the distinct and the disparate', seeking to construct constellations out of the material of the past. The first movement of the allegorical is that of fragmentation – the ruination of contexts of meanings – with the ruin as an emblem of the destructive character of allegory. For Benjamin, the classical trope of such fragmentation is the spatialization in time: temporal meanings are frozen, objects and actions piled up according to structures that are indifferent to their natural meaning.<sup>22</sup>

It could be argued that Ferneyhough's use of the fragment-form corresponds with Benjamin's allegorical method, which also implies a concern with history. According to Benjamin, what distinguishes the allegorical mode of expression from the symbol is its

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<sup>22</sup> This recalls the 'frozen rhetoric' that Ferneyhough pursues in relation to *Lemma-Icon-Epigram*. See again Ferneyhough 1998, p. 246.

‘strange combination of nature and history’: it is the general definition of allegory as the presentation of the meaning of history as nature. Thus, the measure of time for the experience of the allegorical is history and not the ‘eternal instant’ of the symbol (Ross 2015, pp. 56–60).

The composer states that he aimed to ‘inscribe [his] musical language into the rigorous limits of the historically and physically delimited “text” of the guitar’ – hence the aim of ‘compacting into a brief space of time as many diverse playing techniques as were compatible with musical coherence’ (Ferneyhough 1998, p. 139). Magnus Andersson, the dedicatee of *Kurze Schatten II*, had requested the composer to write for the guitar by 1979 and they met in 1980, in order to discuss the physiognomy of the instrument and its clichés (Andersson 1988, p. 128). And it seems that Ferneyhough is approaching the idea of guitar clichés he made from this collaboration, restored through his own (allegorical) notational means. Allegory, according to Benjamin, is not the *conventional* representation of some expression, but an *expression* of convention (Benjamin 1998, p. 175). And many guitar clichés in *Kurze Schatten II* succeed in this, such as the *rasgueado* technique appearing mostly in movement VII (although also in movements III and V) – carefully fingered in the flamenco manner – whose appearance of insignificance and indifference in the overall context makes it sound not as a cliché but with an aura of its original context. And the more I play this piece in public, the more I receive comments on fragmentary resemblances with sources as diverse as Villa-Lobos and Albéniz, besides the Baroque connections.

In conversation with the composer, after rehearsing the piece and as I mentioned my interest in Benjamin's texts, Ferneyhough indicated:

The thing to remember, as with a lot of things with Benjamin, it's history and innovation – everything you do here is really based upon history, but at the wrong speed. And that's why I'm making use of all these suggestions, addressing in some way the configuration of history – in sound, not just the configuration on the fingerboard – and we have to project that into it, that's the auratic quality. (Ferneyhough 2013)

Therefore, the task of looking for a text-to-text correspondence seems out of place here. Instead, and following the performance indication for this piece 'As if performing (whilst unconscious) several pieces simultaneously', the interpretative response to the correspondence with Benjamin's allegory is that of individuation: fragments need to be highly individuated in order to suggest the diversity of their possible origins in the guitar's history.

[Video example 2.19](#) shows the first section of the piece, where these features are noticeable (see Fig. 2.20). As an example of individuation, the line on the bottom stave (the open A and the two triplets) in bar 4 is usually played as in [video example 2.20](#), with no timbral differentiation in the triplets; however, the s.p. (*sul ponticello*) indication applies to the note A only. My choice, instead, is to individuate the triplets as a melodic contour, by applying timbral differentiation and some vibrato (see [video example 2.21](#)).

7

As if performing (whilst unconscious)  
several pieces simultaneously

Figure 2.20: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 7<sup>th</sup> movement, bb. 1–7

As for other ‘apparent’ guitar clichés, [video example 2.22](#) shows a passage that has been said to have traces of flamenco and of Japanese *koto*, whereas [video example 2.23](#) has been compared to Albéniz’s *Asturias*.

The relevant fragment of my meeting with Ferneyhough can be seen in [video example 2.24](#), in which the composer alludes the performance of his piano piece *Lemma-Icon-Epigram*—earlier that day in Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival 2013.

## 2.3 Conclusions

It can be said that the level of correspondence between Benjamin's texts and Ferneyhough's score is far more than just the title and the organization in seven 'pieces'. The allusion to the Baroque convention of pairing slow and fast movements, besides alluding to the period from which the *Trauerspiel* and emblems that so interested Benjamin also derive, is not unlike the organization of Benjamin's sequence of thought-images. That is, similar topics characterize the odd and even numbers respectively. The odd-numbered texts – related to various topics of knowledge and its limits – are paralleled with slow movements concerned with various forms of polyphony: a 'polyphony of successivity' (Ferneyhough 1998, p. 140) in the first movement, 'mind polyphony' (p. 144) in the third, and a polyphony of colours in the fifth. Meanwhile the fast movements – concerned with variations – somehow recall historical forms: the second movement carries the trace of Renaissance divisions, the fourth movement is a waltz and the sixth a sort of 'scherzo'. Somehow apart from the others, movement VII explores the 'fragment form' by assembling gestural fragments that attempt to explore the major conventions of guitar playing techniques, while at the same time it is related to the slow movements to the extent that they also explore fragment-form (especially movements I and III).

As with the Nietzsche–Benjamin collaboration characterised in section 2.1.1 as 'under the sign of exile', and the taste for the fragment as a preferred form, it could be argued that Benjamin's search for new alliances is paralleled in Ferneyhough's biography. It is well known that Ferneyhough has chosen to live abroad, a choice that he partly

explains when discussing his attraction to Walter Benjamin in the programme note accompanying the Paris production of *Shadowtime* in 2004:

All my life, I have sought to remain outside society, whereas it is the object of my unceasing attention. I removed myself from my social class to go to London, then I left London to go abroad, then I left Germany to go to America, and most recently I left the University of San Diego for Stanford University. Most of these changes occurred at a time when I felt myself to have become too engaged in the social mechanism in which I found myself; so I cut loose and left. If I cannot reconcile life and art so as to make something greater, then I am guilty in my own way, like everyone else. (Ferneyhough, quoted in Fitch 2013, p. 24)

The years of the composition of *Kurze Schatten II*, 1983 to 1989, witnessed Ferneyhough's move from Germany to America; thus, the guitar piece could be a good reflection of Ferneyhough's way of thinking on these respects.

Crucially, in addition to the text-to-text correspondences between both sequences (Ferneyhough's and Benjamin's) named *Kurze Schatten II*, the challenge for the performer is to mimic an idea, Benjamin's allegory, as that 'dialectical exchange between the extremities of nature and history' (Ross 2015, p. 57). Accordingly, a re-evaluation of conventions in guitar playing informs the tension inherent in the process of transforming the *idiomatic* element into the *neumatic* by means of the *mensural*. Allegory devalues sensuous form and points beyond itself, requiring one to embrace nonsensuous similarity beyond musical symbols. Thus, allegorical expression is 'nothing but self-delusion' (Benjamin 1998, p. 233), as meaning does not emanate from the object but from the allegorist. The quotation 'Ideas are to objects as constellations are to stars' in Ferneyhough's sketches shows the limitation of the *image* of musical writing, urging the approach instead to its *X-ray image*.

## Chapter 3

### Performing mimesis

#### 3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I discuss the performing issues arising from the application of the interpretative strategies outlined in Chapter 1 to various examples of recent British guitar music of radical aesthetics, taking *mimesis* as a central concept.

As Ian Pace (2009, p. 191) asserts, ‘interpretative strategies need to be continually re-examined when learning a new piece or re-learning an old one’, which means that interpretative approaches necessarily change – between the same work, different works, different performers and so on. These strategies operate as an oscillation between mimetic and rational aspects, where mimesis is a central concept as both *origin* and *goal*. That is, in Adorno’s theory of performance, mimesis is an origin as ‘a pre-rational, or not-yet-rationalised, mode of behaviour’ (Paddison 2010, p. 136), which is then mediated through the *image* (the graphic trace of construction and logic), and finally *presented* as the *dialectical image* of the work of music (the rendition of the *mimesis* ⇔ *ratio* dialectical pair) by the performer. As discussed in Chapter 1 (section 1.2), these stages are traceable in the performer’s rendition of the *idiomatic*, *mensural* and *neumatic* aspects of notation. A modern formulation of these stages may be encountered in Ferneyhough’s performance notes to the piano piece *Lemma-Icon-Epigram*, which famously reads:

An adequate interpretation of this work presupposes three distinct learning processes: (1) an overview of the (deliberately relatively direct) gestural patterning

without regard to exactitude of detail in respect of rhythm; (2) a 'de-learning' in which the global structures are abandoned in favour of a concentration upon the rhythmic and expressive import of each individual note (as if the composition were an example of 'punctualistic' music); (3) the progressive reconstruction of the various gestural units established at the outset on the basis of experience gained during the above two stages of preparation. (Ferneyhough 1982)

In my view, the correlation of these stages of the learning process to Adorno's concepts is indeed valid, as Ferneyhough's first stage ('overview of the gestural patterning') correlates to the rendition of the *idiomatic/mimetic* aspects of notation; the second stage relates with the *mensural* aspect of notation (that is, the *image* of the work, as the graphical trace of construction and logic); and the third stage presupposes the rendition of the *neumatic*, as the performer's *presentation (Darstellung)* of the *dialectical image* of the work: the dialectical relation between the first two stages.

As discussed in Chapter 1 (section 1.2), mimesis embraces not only the aspect of the imitation/reproduction of the score but also a 'mode of identifying with' the work. Thus, mimesis relates to dialectical thinking, as Adorno discusses his approach to dialectics in relation to Hegel's notion of self-consciousness:

We can only appropriate objects for ourselves, as Hegel would say, we can only move to 'the native land of truth', to the extent that we identify ourselves with those objects, that is, we make them equal to us; we turn the unknown into something that is, somehow, already known. (Adorno 2013, p. 371; my translation)<sup>23</sup>

It is this 'dialectical' concept of mimesis that will be discussed in this chapter, and documented in the interpretative choices I have made in relation to various musical

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<sup>23</sup> The source is in Spanish: 'Solo podemos apropiarnos de objetos, para decirlo con Hegel, solo podemos trasladarnos al "reino nativo de la verdad", en la medida en que los identificamos, esto es, los identificamos con nosotros, es decir, los hacemos iguales a nosotros, hacemos de lo desconocido algo que nos resulta en un cierto sentido ya conocido'. An English edition of Adorno's *An Introduction to Dialectics* is forthcoming in 2017 from Polity Press.



examples impacting upon both levels of sound and the physical actions required to produce sound, that is, gesture.

Recent studies on performance claim an equivalence between performing practices for complex music and Frankfurt School critical theory:

Composers and performers of complex music have perhaps developed this way of thinking more radically than any others, transforming it into the performance equivalent of Frankfurt-School critical theory. (Cook 2013, p. 281)

Cook asserts such a relationship when discussing the constant re-evaluation of 'what it is to play your instrument' in the 'culture of complexity'. Although the concept of mimesis comes from the so-called Frankfurt School, I argue for its application in varied aesthetic and notational models. Thereby, the examples I offer in this chapter range from complex to experimental music, as well as from traditional to alternative approaches to notation, embracing both descriptive and prescriptive agencies of musical writing. In all these cases, a re-evaluation of what is to play the guitar and the role of the performer's body is considered at the interstices of mimesis and gesture.

### **3.1 Nuance and jump**

In this section, I examine two guitar pieces – James Dillon's *Shrouded Mirrors* and Michael Finnissy's *Nasiye* – whose composers have been associated with the so-called 'New Complexity', after being included in Richard Toop's influential article (Toop 1988) under that designation. During the completion of this PhD, I played both works (in performances documented in the portfolio of this thesis) at the 2014 Huddersfield Contemporary Music

Festival, an occasion on which I was able to meet both composers to discuss their respective pieces. In this section, I account for both my approach and the discussion with the composers on their works.

### **3.1.1 James Dillon's *Shrouded Mirrors***

*Shrouded Mirrors* (1987) is, according to the composer, 'a two-part invention where each part is a slightly distorted version of the other. Technically demanding, the linearity and forward thrust of the work is unrelenting as each part pursues its own reflection' (Dillon 2015). Similar to Dillon's solo violin piece *Del Cuarto Elemento*, written in 1988, this solo guitar piece evokes the title of a poem by Borges – in this case *Los espejos velados* ('Shrouded Mirrors'), which reads:

As a boy, when looking into large mirrors, I felt the same horror of ghostly duplication or multiplication of the real world. The unceasing, infallible activity of mirrors, the way they dogged all my actions, their cosmic mimicry – until it grew dark – were supernatural. One of my persistent pleas to God and my guardian angel was not to let me dream of mirrors. (Borges 1964, p. 27)

The metaphorical context set by mirrors can be seen as being enacted in the employment of imitative polyphony (however distorted) as well as in the allusion to guitar music from the past. Figs 3.1 and 3.2 show passages alluding to the early Romantic guitar tradition by means of tonal materials (see [video example 3.1](#) and [video example 3.2](#)).

101

103

105

4 sub. = 48

cresc. sempre

Figure 3.1: James Dillon, *Shrouded Mirrors*, bb. 101–7

119

121

cresc. sempre

Figure 3.2: Dillon, *Shrouded Mirrors*, bb. 119–122

In addition, the *tremolo* passage in Fig. 3.3 evokes the influence of Arabic music on the Spanish guitar tradition ([video example 3.3](#)), perhaps paralleling Borges's reference to Islam in the same poem:

Islam holds that on the Day of Judgement, against which there is no appeal, anyone who has perpetrated the image of a living thing will rise again with his works and will be commanded to bring them to life. He will fail and with his image he will be delivered into the flames of hell. (ibid.)

The image shows a musical score for two staves. The first staff begins at measure 83 and ends at measure 90. It contains several measures with complex rhythmic patterns, including a 5/8 time signature and a 3/2 time signature. The second staff begins at measure 87 and ends at measure 90. It also features complex rhythmic patterns, including a 9/8 time signature and a 3/8 time signature. The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *sub.*, *f*, *mp*, *non trem.*, and *Poco rit.*

Figure 3.3: Dillon, *Shrouded Mirrors*, bb. 83–90

In an interview given in 1987, Dillon talks about his intellectual formation and, specifically, how his attitude to language was influenced by his early studies of Judaeo-Christian hermetic and numerological traditions wedded to the basics of linguistics:

I discovered at this time that I could, by determining the ‘frame’, take a whole series of circular routes for example from Chomsky’s structural linguistics to symbolism to Kaballah back to the [Hebraic] frames of Chomsky: the continuum fascinated me. (Dillon, in Alexander 1995, p. 67)

Dillon’s fascination with continuum and change as structural/functional ground is reflected in his musical practice, which he has formulated more recently as his interest ‘in the smallest musical transition – the musical nuance itself’ (Dillon, in Klippel 2015, p. 45).

Alexander states:

Such a viewpoint has been implicit in his thinking from the early 1970s, and reinforced by his continuing absorption with Pre-Socratic thought and schemes of

cosmology and cosmogony: flux, alchemic transmutation and by implication Man's ever-changing and fugitive states of mood, creativity and intellectual renewal. Not surprisingly, the composer questions post-Renaissance concepts of progress and the alleged ascent via rationalism, increased technology to the exclusion of our spiritual development. (1995, p. 74)

Dillon's music stresses variety over repetition as a clear reflection of this way of thinking. Also, the composer's interest in 'the smallest musical transition' exerts its impact on his explorations in the field of timbre, which is a parameter fully explored in *Shrouded Mirrors*. The opening bars of the work – see Fig. 3.4 – display a timbral transition from *sul ponticello* to *sul tasto*, and then back to standard position, and these same opening bars serve to illustrate the impact of my application of the concept of mimesis upon this piece.

## SHROUDED MIRRORS

James Dillon

The musical score for the opening of *Shrouded Mirrors* is presented in two staves. The first staff begins with a circled '1' and a tempo marking of  $\text{♩} = 72$  Tempo giusto. The music is marked *sul pont.* and features a series of chords and melodic lines with various slurs and accents. The second staff continues the piece, marked *sul tasto.* and includes a *sub. = 48* marking, indicating a change in tempo or a specific performance instruction. The score concludes with a *suff. sub. pp* marking. The overall structure is complex, with multiple slurs and accents indicating intricate phrasing and dynamics.

Figure 3.4: Dillon, *Shrouded Mirrors*, bb. 1–7

My approach has been to mimic not only the score itself (by playing the notes) but Dillon's idea of the *continuum* expounded above – to be precise, the idea of performing sound-producing and sound-facilitating gestures as a choreography of constant motion. [Video example 3.4](#) and [video example 3.5](#) show the same opening bars of the piece, but

first played in a version with suppressed motion (that is, suppressing sound-facilitating gestures) and then allowing sound-facilitating gestures aiming at constant motion. In addition, [video example 3.6](#) exemplifies a slow passage in which this physical idea is more noticeable – see Fig. 3.5.

The image shows a handwritten musical score for two staves, measures 14-19. The notation includes notes, rests, and dynamic markings. Key annotations include:
 

- Measure 14: *ff (sub. dim.)*, *p*, *9:8*
- Measure 15: *ff*
- Measure 16: *sub. = 48*, *gliss.*, *p*
- Measure 17: *gato*, *p*, *mp*, *frem. mp. pass.*, *4.u.*
- Measure 18: *ord.*, *sub. = 72 (tempo giusto)*, *p*
- Measure 19: *p*, *5*

 There are also some scribbled-out notes and markings throughout the score.

Figure 3.5: Dillon, *Shrouded Mirrors*, bb. 14–19

In my meeting with the composer, Dillon remarks his interest and high consideration for the task of the performer and interpretation. He argues that, although there is a very specific text, at some point this is not the composer’s but the performer’s business – even to the extent of claiming that the performer holds a deeper relationship with the piece as it is not only tactile or intellectual but the piece goes inside the performer (whereas the composer relates to it through writing). Thus, the performer need not be so literal with the text, and actually she must appropriate the piece (see the relevant excerpt from our meeting in [video example 3.7](#)). My take on this appropriation has been that of allowing certain elasticity in the individuation of various passages/gestures, especially when they allude to past traditions (see video examples 3.1

and 3.2). In this vein, Fig. 3.6 shows an idiomatic passage – with strong gestural links to tradition – in which this elasticity is in play (see [video example 3.8](#)).



Figure 3.6: Dillon, *Shrouded Mirrors*, bb. 53–57

As to large-scale form, the piece is organized in sections portraying four different tempi:  $\text{♩} = 72$ , 63, 56 and 48. It could be argued that the range of flexibility between these broad sections must allow a clear differentiation of tempi, without, however, going against gestural individuation. To illustrate the latter point: when we discussed the piece, the composer gave me his permission to play the last section of the piece (starting in bar 107) at  $\text{♩} = 56$ , instead of the notated  $\text{♩} = 48$ . The reason for this tempo change is mostly the passage in bars 108–112 (Fig. 3.7), as this *apagado* section works better slightly faster. In addition, he clarified the performance direction in this passage – whose ambiguity attracts polemic elsewhere (Klippel 2015, p. 233) – the intention being for the performer to tap with the left hand while at the same time softly plucking with the flesh of the right hand, producing a *quasi pizzicato* sound but with a percussive component.

105

9:8

4 sub. = 48

10:8

apagado

108

5

3:2

11:8

apagado

110

5

5

5

5

Figure 3.7: Dillon, *Shrouded Mirrors*, bb. 105–112

### 3.1.2 Michael Finnissy's *Nasiye*

Finnissy's *Nasiye*, written in 1982 for Gerald Garcia and revised (its definitive version) in 2002 for Australian guitarist Geoffrey Morris, takes its title from a Kurdish folk dance. A Unesco LP of Kurdish music was the original source for this piece; the composer states this piece to be a 'reflection' of that material, instead of an attempt to reproduce an actual Kurdish folk dance (Finnissy, in Klippel 2015, p. 212). Finnissy wrote several pieces using Kurdish titles: *Yalli* for solo cello in 1981 and *Cirit* for solo clarinet in 1982, among others. In conversation with the composer, Ian Pace asks if the composer was trying to say something about the political situation of Kurdish people in these pieces, to which Finnissy replies:

No, that would be patronising. I'm not sufficiently aware of Kurdish politics to attempt to articulate them in music – though 'oppression' and 'tyranny' are



common enough here to register correspondences. The use of any folk material is to redress imbalance and neglect, the idea that folk music is 'trivial' or 'irrelevant'. (Finnissy, in Brougham, Fox and Pace 1997, p. 29)

The definitive, 2002 version of *Nasiye*, which is the version here discussed, is written with no bars and displays a series of materials resembling a sort of musical *cut-up* in the first part, until it finally arrives at something: the *Andante* in system 39 with the tempo indication  $\text{♩}=66$ , a sort of (Kurdish?) dance as the last section of the piece. That is, the piece has forty-eight systems, where there is a long first section of thirty-eight systems (*cut-up*) and the final *Andante* section (*dance*) occupying the last ten systems.

The pitch materials in the first part evidence two main features or sources: atonal and modal. Fig. 3.8 shows the opening systems, in which the interaction of atonal and modal materials is evident. The opening section, 'fast, reckless, impassioned' (with a marked tempo of  $\text{♩}= 152\text{--}200$ ), displays atonal material, whereas the 'much slower, meditative' section starting in system 5,  $\text{♩}= 96\text{--}104$ , is the first example of modal material. As a general criterion for interpretation, Finnissy indicates that atonal materials are to be played more rigidly – in an almost expressionistic way – whereas modal materials are to be played more freely, as a sort of 'parody of folk music' (Finnissy 2014). [Video example 3.9](#) exemplifies these features by playing the first four systems of the piece.

Figure 3.8: Michael Finnissy, *Nasiye*, opening sections, systems 1–7

In addition to these materials, there are some other elements that complete the materials used in the first thirty-eight systems. A characteristic element is the interjection of brief *leggiero e velocissimo* passages, whose first appearance is in system 4 – see the red rectangle in Fig. 3.8. Finnissy (2014) indicates that some elasticity/flexibility for these passages should be allowed – albeit within the generally more rigid character of the atonal material – according to the fingerings and their quality of ‘mysterious whisperings’ (*quasi bisbigliando*), making up a gesture resembling ‘a caress of the guitar’ (ibid.). Hence, the

composer approved my choice of playing these passages with left-hand slurs, resulting in a rather asymmetrical articulation while also softening the sonic outcome.

Another element is the *sotto voce* passages, appearing for the first time in system 21 (see Fig. 3.9). The writing of this two-part polyphony suggests rhythmic flexibility – a timbral differentiation *sul tasto* was my choice in order to individuate these materials more radically – and differs notably from the notation of the same pitches in the 1982 version, which was highly rhythmically precise (see Fig. 3.10). Hence, the twenty years separating the two versions of *Nasiye* reveal a tendency towards a more recent indeterminacy in Finnissy’s approach to notating such a passage. See the excerpt played in [video example 3.10](#), regarding which the composer explains: ‘it’s like moving through some dark forest, and you don’t really know where you are going’ (Finnissy 2014).

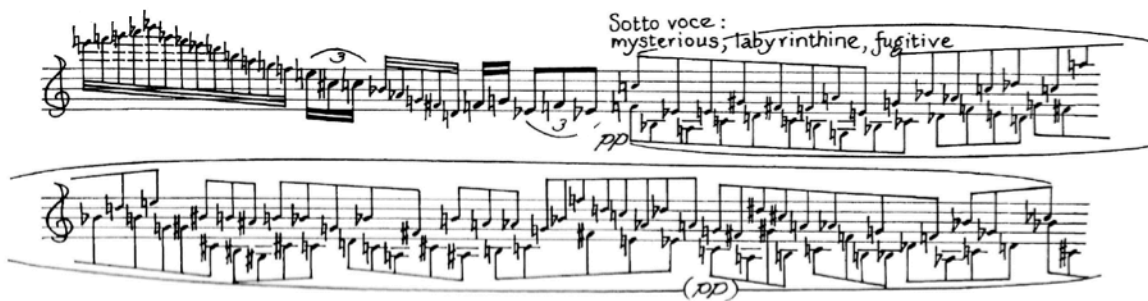


Figure 3.9: Finnissy, *Nasíye*, *Sotto voce*, systems 21–2

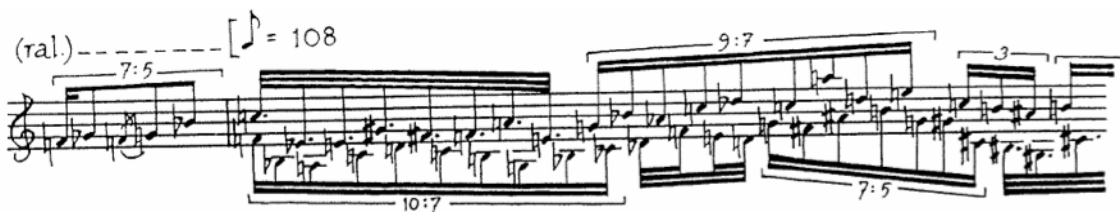


Figure 3.10: Finnissy, *Nasíye* (1982 version), system 27

Notational indeterminacy is also present in the *Capriccioso: quasi cadenza (meno mosso)* starting in system 27 (see Fig. 3.11; [video example 3.11](#)) – this is clearly related to modal materials, thus played more freely. From this passage to the end, there are no more dynamic indications, and Finnissy (2014) gives a simple reason for this: he could not decide, so left dynamics entirely up to the performer.



Figure 3.11: Finnissy, *Nasiye*, *Capriccioso*, systems 27–9

According to Finnissy (2014), the first section (comprising the first thirty-eight systems) refers compositionally to William Burroughs' 'cut-up' technique: that is, the technique of cutting a narrative (whether an original, quotation or parody of some already written material) into parts, almost randomly, and then splicing them together in a different/wrong order (Finnissy 2014) – see the relevant excerpt from my meeting with the composer in [video example 3.12](#). Therefore, 'there is no transition, but big jumps from one thing to another' (Finnissy 2014), meaning that all accents, stylistic and mood changes are indeed jumps, and not nuances – thus, an accent in a soft or *mezzo forte* context

should not be matched to its context: it has to sound like ‘somebody breaking a window’ (Finnissy 2014).

The mood of this first *cut-up* section is something of ‘a song-like quality’, or as Finnissy puts it, ‘an epic ballad’ in which it is possible to feel the jumping in time from, for example, ‘1950s Darmstadt to fourteenth-century Spain’ (Finnissy 2014) – see [video example 3.13](#). And once the *cut-up* section finally arrives at something, the last nine systems showcase a music which mood is that of a dance, something like a ‘sarabande’ – thus, here the notated rhythms (as well as maintaining a steady pulse) are more significant (Finnissy 2014).

Finnissy’s approach to notation – particularly in the 2002 version, which prescribes less determinate actions but triggers mood changes very well – allow easily the application of a concept of mimesis as a ‘mode of identifying with’ given the numerous parameters left to the entire discretion of the performer. Personally, my choice was to attempt to mimic the folk-music element in terms of sound, by means of timbral differentiation and some kind of longitudinal vibrato. [Video example 3.14](#) displays the first bars of the dance/*Andante* section played the first time normally; the second time with a timbral differentiation (alluding to the sound used by folk-music guitarists); and the third time adding a layer of up-down vibrato, aiming at types of pitch deviation proper to certain folk musics. A longer excerpt of the dance section is showcased in [video example 3.15](#), which corresponds to Fig. 3.12.



Figure 3.12: Finnissy, *Nasiye*, *Andante*, systems 39–40

## 3.2 Repetition and representation

This section brings together Bryn Harrison’s *M.C.E.* (2010) and Christopher Fox’s *Chile* (1991), given their common concern with repetition as main compositional technique, however differently approached in both cases. In particular, I examine the role of mimesis and gesture within these aesthetic contexts as seen through my interpretative choices while playing these pieces.

### 3.2.1 Bryn Harrison’s *M.C.E.*

Harrison’s piece takes its name from the initials of the Dutch graphic artist Maurits Cornelius Escher (1898–1972), who famously explored themes of the infinite and the regenerative in his work. In the programme notes, the composer alludes Escher’s lithography *Klimmen en dalen* (Ascending and Descending) made in 1960, which explores the illusion of the Penrose staircase; a staircase that appears to be continually ascending without getting any higher. Harrison also indicates:

Much of my own music is concerned with the perpetually cyclical through which musical patterns that might be slotted together into sequences containing small

degrees of variation. The piece is in three main sections which offer different perspectives and degrees of magnification on the self-similar material. (Harrison 2010)

The materials employed are highly idiomatic – evidencing the composer’s familiarity with the instrument – displayed in the form of arpeggios whose choreographical elements are shared across movements. Movements I and IIa share the same constellation of notes/fingerings, whilst movements IIb and III share another group of fingerings, respectively – hence, the large-scale form is a sort of mirror. However, absolute pitch content varies, as movement I is to be played employing a *capo* on fret 4, movement(s) IIa–b on fret 2, and movement III with open strings. This descending (large-scale) gesture is paralleled in the descending tempos for each movement, which are ♩ = 96, ♩ = 72 and ♩ = 48 for movements I, II(a–b) and III, respectively. There is only one dynamic indication, the *pianissimo* at the very beginning of movement I, which applies to the entire work. Also, the direction *legato, sempre sostenuto* means that notes and fingerings should be sustained as long as possible, resulting in a highly polyphonic outcome: each resonating string is potentially one voice, whose duration is rather unpredictable given the small degrees of variation in the perpetual repetition of the same pitch patterns. Therefore, notation is entirely prescriptive. In addition, rhythms are notated as demisemiquavers only, in movements I and III, and various kinds of triplets in a two-part polyphony in movements IIa–b (which really sounds as a polyphony of more parts, as many strings are resonating at any given moment). These features may be appreciated in Figs 3.13 and 3.14 – the opening passages of movement I and movement IIa, respectively.

Figure 3.13: Bryn Harrison, *M.C.E.*, movement I

Figure 3.14: Harrison, *M.C.E.*, movement IIa

In approaching this highly prescriptive notation, one is reminded of Philip Thomas's term 'prompt for action', in which multi-layered and complex notation – in the



experimental music tradition – ‘can create a situation in which the performer is reacting to a number of elements resulting in a sonic event which is the sum of but also other than notation’s appearance’ (Thomas 2009, p. 86). If the function of notation is to make the performer move, as Cardew stated (cited at *ibid.*), then, in my view, it is in physical movement that the mimetic element is likely to appear.

One of the main challenges with which the guitarist is confronted in producing the sounds prescribed in Harrison’s *M.C.E.* is the balance between treble and bass strings, as well as that between open and depressed notes. Besides the necessary compensations, the temporal experience of the performer is marked by a mental process in which it seems hard to count the repetitions of patterns, so self-similar however not identic. It is to this extent that one is likely to become very self-conscious of sound-producing gestures – and especially of sound facilitating gestures (also called *ancillary* gestures) in the left hand, in which different arm presentations facilitates the task of the fingers. Similar to some guitar performing schools in which ancillary gestures are avoided based on the principle of economy of movement, [video example 3.16](#) shows my playing of the opening passages of movement I, suppressing ancillary gestures – similar to experiments on these gestures made in clarinettists, which has shown that ‘ancillary gestures are common in performances although not essential’ (Wanderley & Vines 2006, p. 185). [Video example 3.17](#) shows my playing of the same passages but allowing ancillary gestures, which is finally my interpretative choice because of two reasons: the choreography that implies the use of these gestures facilitates not only the production of sound but also my recognition of the notated patterns as gestures instead of just group of notes, thus improving sight-

reading. And, as also happens in the rhythmic notation of movement IIa – see [video example 3.18](#) – *ancillary* gestures become *communicative* gestures, as a layer contributing to the representation of the work’s idea on a physical level: the perpetual/cyclic repetition of the (almost) same, as in Escher’s lithograph, ascending without getting any higher.

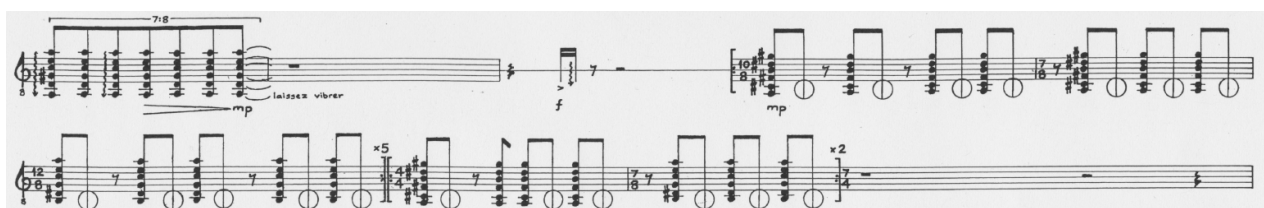
### 3.2.2 Christopher Fox’s *Chile*

*Chile*, written in 1991, is a companion piece to Fox’s ensemble work *The Science of Freedom* (1990); both works use a rhythmic vocabulary based on Latin-American popular music. Neither work employs direct quotation, but the additive principle underlying many Latin-American dance rhythms informs their rhythmic writing. In the performance notes to the score-manuscript, Fox indicates:

In *Chile* my music also has (for me at least) a specifically South American political significance, hence its title. The recurrent playing technique in the piece – the alternate sounding and muting of the strings – and the music’s fluctuation between more or less repetition – between phrases that move forward and those that close in themselves – are intended as metaphors for the alternation of democratic freedom and its suppression in the lives of the people of Chile (and so many others in other countries within the USA’s sphere of influence). (Fox 1991)

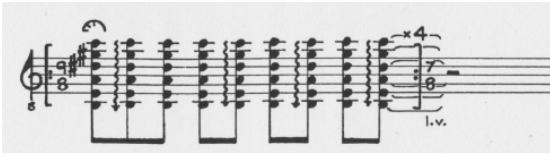
*Chile* is made up exclusively of chords, which do not resemble South American music in harmony, although they do in the all-pervading strumming technique. Fox uses a white circle as a symbol meaning the action of ‘muting the strings by slapping strings over sound-hole with fist (the click of fingernails on string should be part of the resultant sound)’ (Fox 1991). The ‘click’ that Fox is asking for is in fact the element that characterizes this strumming as South American. The verb ‘to click’ in Spanish is

*chasquear*, and this technique is actually called *chasquido* in Chilean guitar-playing techniques. However, there is one significant difference: *chasquido* means not only slapping the strings against the sound-hole of the guitar but also strumming and muting at the same time by twisting the wrist. [Video example 3.19](#) shows the ‘click only’ technique, whilst [video example 3.20](#) shows the *chasquido* technique – both examples applied to the passage in Fig. 3.15.



**Figure 3.15:** Christopher Fox, *Chile*, bb. 10–18

My first interpretative choice, then, was to apply the *chasquido* technique, which functions at the same time as a ‘mode of identifying with’ – in this particular case – Chilean playing techniques (as a Chilean performer myself) while also working better as a physical metaphor of suppression (the ‘suppression of democratic freedom’ alluded to by the composer in the performance notes), insofar as this muting technique not only suppresses the resonance of the previous chord but also suppresses itself, as a sort of failed strumming. In addition, in sonic terms, *chasquido* adds another noise layer to the click while also opens the possibility to explore extra sounds. In Chilean strumming, mastering the *chasquido* technique implies the possible production of harmonics by applying the technique on specific points of the strings. [Video example 3.21](#) shows a passage from *Chile* in which the repetition of one chord allows the application of this effect – see Fig. 3.16.



**Figure 3.16:** Fox, *Chile*, b. 39

The last section of the piece, the fifth and last page of the score, displays a similar music but played from now on ‘with the flesh of the knuckles’. This indication suggests that the same hand position should be employed; however, the results are painful as the skin of the knuckles between the second and third joints is quite sensitive. Thus, I tried an alternative using the flesh of the palm, producing a similar sonic result – see Fig. 3.17, [video example 3.22](#).



**Figure 3.17:** Fox, *Chile*, bb. 148–151

Nevertheless, it seems reasonable to maintain the same hand position employed throughout the piece, which, in addition, resembles the hand-sign of the ‘raised fist’ – a symbol of solidarity and support for oppressed people, which is at the core of the composer’s stated intentions.



**Figure 3.18:** ‘Raised fist’; considered, among other significations, as a symbol of solidarity and support as well as an anti-Fascist sign during the Spanish Civil War.

My choice, therefore, was to enact the raised fist in this last section (see [video example 3.23](#)). However, asking the composer about this technique, he informed me that Magnus Anderson – dedicatee of the piece – showed him the technique as a possibility for strumming. My idea of the raised fist, then, is the pure result of my imagination; thus it is part of my mimetic understanding of the score.

A full performance of this piece is in the portfolio of video performances.

### **3.3 Embodying distortion and perception**

In this section, I bring together the guitar pieces of two of my CeReNeM fellows: Matthew Sergeant and Marc Codina. In Sergeant’s *bet maryam* (2011), almost unplayable physical tasks are meant to veil/distort a given material; while, in Codina’s *Frame for [guitar]* (2013), an alternative approach to notation prescribes more the ideal perception of the elements in play than the actions meant to produce them.

#### **3.3.1 Matthew Sergeant’s *bet maryam***

The title *bet maryam* is the name of a rock-hewn church, the smallest of eleven such churches situated on the Lalibela World Heritage Site in Ethiopia. Within the church, one

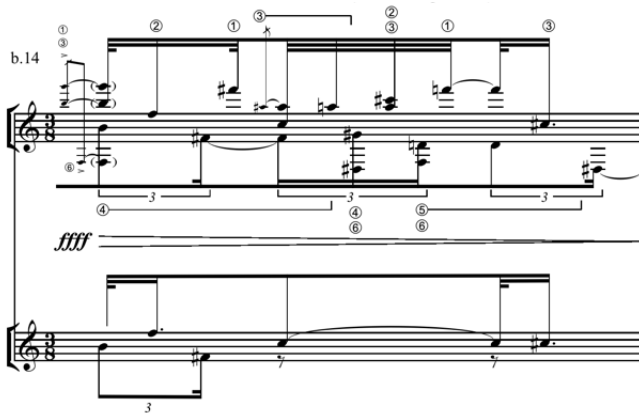


The cantus is presented in various compositional employments: firstly, it is presented linearly, as a two-part counterpoint accompanied by its own inversion, and secondly, it is compressed into a series of strummed chords. Both states are noticeable in Fig. 3.21: bars 3–7 for the linear presentation ( $\text{♩} = 42$ ) and bars 9–12 for the hexachordal presentation ( $\text{♩} = 136$ ).

Figure 3.21: Sergeant, *bet maryam*, bb. 1–14

In relation to the linear presentation, the composer indicates: ‘two observations are permissible at this juncture: first, that the cantus in itself is playable (indeed, intended to be played) in a single, fixed hand position (IV); second, that in doing so, the material interfaces with the twelve-note field implicit within the scordatura’ (Sergeant 2015). It

could be argued, also, that *tempo* contributes to its playability – see [video example 3.24](#). This linear state of the material is then corrupted and distorted by ‘a process of randomly generated data [...] drawn from available pitches in hand positions I and XIV – positions physically removed from that occupied by the cantus itself’ (Sergeant 2015) – see Fig. 3.22.



**Figure 3.22:** Sergeant, *bet maryam*, b. 14: distorted cantus (upper stave) against undistorted cantus (lower stave)

This process of distortion is rendered ‘within the rhizome of physicality/material’ (Sergeant 2015), that is, here physicality and the notated tempos pose the extremes of playability and unplayability (hence, idiomaticity and unidiomaticity, at the same time), as a new state of the material.

From a performer’s perspective, the more extreme/unplayable passages pose the problem of recognizability. As can be heard in a previous performance of *bet maryam*,<sup>24</sup> the more physically demanding passages (in which the composer’s indication is ‘panicked’)

<sup>24</sup> Tom McKinney’s performance of *bet maryam*, retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-qP7DLsryRg> (last accessed 10 August 2016).



are likely not only to veil but to lose the cantus by prioritising the tempo indication; however, the cantus *is* within the distorted version (Fig. 3.22).

Besides the augmented density of the material and the fast tempi, the piece's other extreme notated demands include several extreme and sometimes irrational shifts in the left hand. I realized that the notated shift between fret 5 on the 1<sup>st</sup> string and fret 16 on the 3<sup>rd</sup> string could be made easier to play by allocating the second note to fret 12 of the 2<sup>nd</sup> string (producing the same pitch, in this scordatura): thus, instead of having a shift of eleven frets, I play a shift of just six frets' distance. And, most importantly, this task – which in purely pitch terms could easily be played in the same string and position, without any shift (to be precise, in frets 5 and 8 on the 1<sup>st</sup> string) – maintains its gestural identity.

Therefore – and also considering that the original score, despite the scordatura, is notated at actual pitch – I re-notated the whole piece in order to take a second look at the original's fingerings and to minimize the amount of missed notes in performance, hence improving the intelligibility of the hidden cantus. See an example of my re-notation in Fig. 3.23, which is performed in [video example 3.25](#).

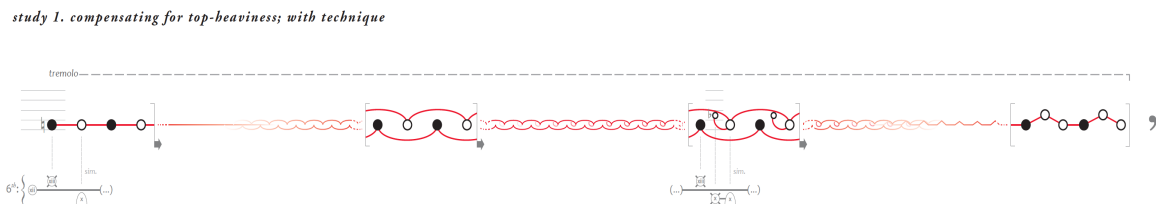
**Figure 3.23:** *Sergeant, bet maryam*, re-notated version, bb. 14–17

For me, the application of the concept of mimesis as both the imitation of the score and a ‘mode of identifying with’, starts in this piece with the process of re-notation. By re-allocating some of the original fingerings, I am adding a layer of my own. In addition, I mimic the fluctuation between playable/idiomatic and unplayable/unidiomatic passages not only in the inherent physicality of the tasks but also in other degrees of differentiation such as the timbral differentiation of these states, which I individuate as closer and further away from traditional guitar sound.

### 3.3.2 Marc Codina's *Frame for [guitar]*

The last example I offer presents an alternative notational model. Marc Codina's *Frame for [guitar]* (2013) belongs to Codina's *Frame Series* for solo players (other pieces in the series are for bass clarinet, flute, string instrument and piano). The guitar piece comprises three short studies, and the alternative model of notation consists in the fact that the score describes the way in which sounds are to be perceived by means of a red line(s) in between notes, while the actions to make that happen are partially prescribed, as well as their durations in time.

Study 1, which has the additional title 'compensating for top-heaviness with technique', is to be played on the 6<sup>th</sup> string only. Here, the red line represents what Codina terms the 'perceptual (stream) grouping' of the sounds in play – see Fig. 3.24 below:



**Figure 3.24:** Marc Codina, *Frame for [guitar]*, study 1, first line

The first line of study 1 displays four states of the given material. There are three notes in play in this study, notated in circles: 1) the black circle prescribes tapping fret 13 (pitch F) on the 6<sup>th</sup> string; 2) the white circle prescribes plucking the same string but behind the stopping finger at fret 12 (pitch F); and 3) the smaller white circle above the previous ones prescribes tapping the 6<sup>th</sup> string at fret 10 (A<sup>b</sup>), then pulling off behind the

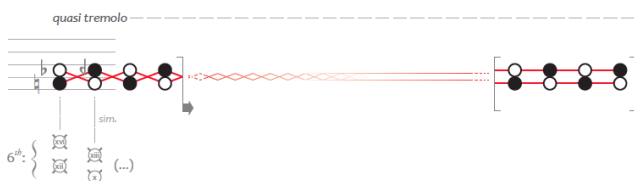
stopping finger at fret 12. The general direction is *tremolo*, and these notes are connected by the red line, which individuates the four different states: 1) in the first state, the two notes (the F pitches, to be played above and behind an stopping finger) are to be perceived as one layer/line, 2) in the second state, the same notes are to be perceived as two different layers; 3) in the third state, the third pitch (the A ♭ ) adds to the upper layer of the previous state; and 4) in the fourth state, these three notes are now to be perceived as one single layer/line.

Notation does not prescribe how to differentiate these states, leaving it entirely to discretion of the performer. Here, the challenge is indeed to mimic the notated perceptual grouping of the notes, which I approached as follows:

1. My choice was to perform the black circle with the right hand (middle finger, to be precise) and the white circles (and stopping finger at fret 12) with the left hand. (While it could be done differently, this allocation of hands allows better control for me.) In the first state, then, the challenge is to balance the two extremes of the string (above and behind the stopping finger), the F unison *tremolando*.
2. In state two, I varied the articulation of the black circle by tapping *on* the fret itself.
3. In the third state, I just added the third pitch, maintaining the previous state.

4. In the fourth state, the black circle returns to the first type of articulation; in addition a crescendo helps to forge the acoustic image of one single line/layer.

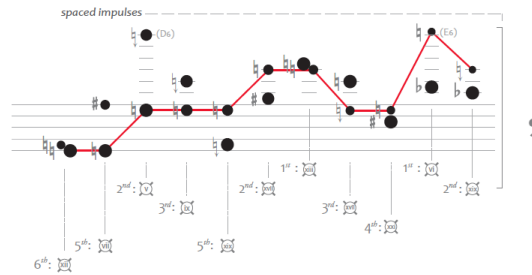
Thus, the acoustic image of the first line of this study is finally a *crescendo*. A *diminuendo*, in turn, comes in the second line of the study (see Fig. 3.25), in which the hands perform tappings (the right hand at frets 16 and 13, the left at frets 12 and 10) within a general direction of *quasi tremolo*, that is, slower than the first line. See the performance of study 1 in [video example 3.26](#).



**Figure 3.25:** Codina, *Frame for [guitar]*, study 1, second line

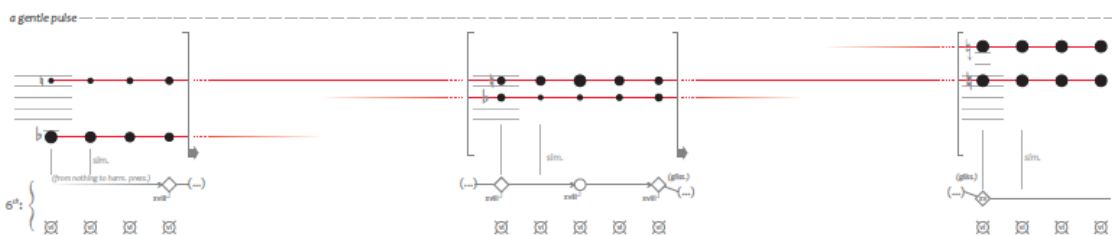
Study 2, titled ‘pressure considerations toward a vertical (un)balance’, again displays in two parts (or lines). The first line (see Fig. 3.26) is concerned with the perception of the repetition of the pitch E as sonic component in several tapping attacks – however, the pitch E sometimes comes from the side of the string above the stopping finger (bigger black circles), other times from the side behind the stopping finger (smaller black circles) – within a context of slow, *spaced impulses*.

*study 2. pressure considerations towards a vertical (un)balance*



**Figure 3.26:** Codina, *Frame for [guitar]*, study 2, first line

The second line, moreover, deals with the repetition of tapping attacks of the left hand at fret 6 – in a *gentle pulse*, slightly faster than the first line – in which the vibration of the string is altered by various positions of the right hand by sitting on different nodes with harmonic pressure (see Fig. 3.27). These modifications enhance the production of harmonics – a B $\flat$  in fret 18 in the second state, and a D in fret 15 in the third state – by gradually sliding between both states. See a performance of study 2 in [video example 3.27](#).

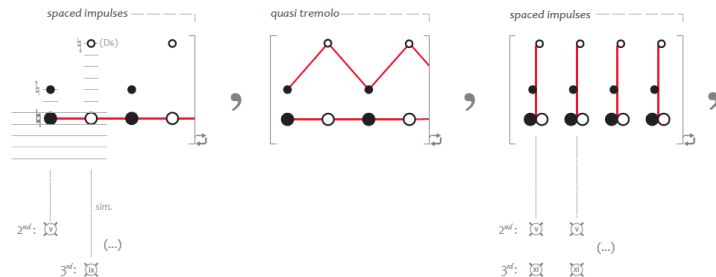


**Figure 3.27:** Codina, *Frame for [guitar]*, study 2, second line

Finally, study 3, ‘proximity unveils; common fate conceals back again’, revolves around the tapping of the pitch E on various strings (and the resulting pitches behind the tapping finger). In the first half, the black circle prescribes the E on the 2<sup>nd</sup> string (resulting

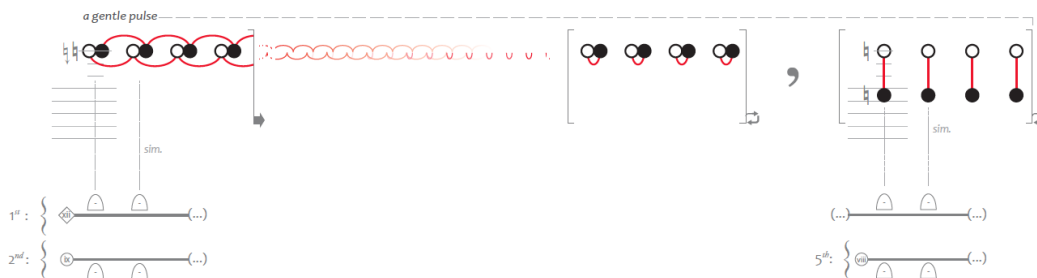
a high D behind it), whereas the white circle indicates an E on the 3<sup>rd</sup> string (resulting in a C behind it), in various degrees of proximity in time as well as different perceptual lines. Thus, a first state describes a single line made of *spaced impulses*; the second state two lines *quasi tremolando*, and the third state separate chords. See Fig. 3.28 below:

*study 3. proximity unveils; common fate conceals back again*



**Figure 3.28:** Codina, *Frame for [guitar]*, study 3, first line

In the second line (Fig. 3.29), in turn, simultaneous E pitches (above fret 12 on the 1<sup>st</sup> string and behind fret 9 on the 2<sup>nd</sup> string) are to be perceived as two layers, gradually becoming one. The last state, finally, shows separate chords of Es in which the 2<sup>nd</sup> string is replaced by the 5<sup>th</sup> string (plucked behind fret 8). See my performance of study 3 in [video example 3.28](#).



**Figure 3.29:** Codina, *Frame for [guitar]*, study 3, second line

Consequently, here, the task of the performer is to mimic the ideal perception of these sounds by *producing* them, in a notational model that leaves the physical individuation of the tasks up to the performer.

### 3.4 Conclusions

Having explored six recent British solo guitar works of radical aesthetics,<sup>25</sup> it could be argued that the application of the concept of mimesis as both an imitation of the musical symbols and a mode of identification (framing the room for performer's contribution of ontological layers not necessarily specified in the notation) surpasses the aesthetic range of so-called complex music.

In the first section, the solo guitar pieces of Dillon and Finnissy show two compositional approaches focused respectively on nuance and jump, as features of the way in which materials are compositionally employed. However, both require strategies of stylisation and elasticity/flexibility according to these features, noticeable not only in the sonic but also the physical outcome of the performance – that is, giving room to the *mimetic-idiomatic* element.

The second section, focusing on Harrison and Fox, demonstrates different approaches in two works employing repetition as main compositional mean. In Harrison, ancillary gestures become communicative gestures, in my view, whereas in Fox the gestural individuation of the strumming technique (as well as other forms of interruption) renders the imitation of the main idea of the work, imbued with political significance.

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<sup>25</sup> In the case of Marc Codina, who is from Barcelona, the piece was composed while he was living in the UK.



The third section, finally, shows the two most recent pieces embodying different approaches to notation. In *Sergeant*, almost unplayable tasks are meant to veil a given material, wherein a minimization of risk was found to improve the identifiability of such a distorting process – whereas in *Codina*, where the *mensural* element does not mask the *idiomatic* aspect implied in notation, physicality aims at mimicking sonic perception through a notational paradigm which facilitates the High Modernist idea of one-to-one translation.

## Chapter 4

### A matter of pleats: gestural/muscular polyphony in Aaron Cassidy's *The Pleats of Matter* for solo electric guitar

#### 4.0 Introduction

This chapter approaches the interpretative issues arising from the performer's relationship to a model of extended/multi-parametric notation in which physicality appears as the main musical material, as demonstrated in Aaron Cassidy's *The Pleats of Matter* (2005–7; hereafter *TPoM*) for solo electric guitar and electronics. In Cassidy's aesthetics, 'it is the way in which a sound is produced that becomes the central musical material' (Cassidy 2012, p. 2) – that is, 'the physical gestures are not means towards an aural end but instead are already musical materials in their own right' (Cassidy 2008, p. 22). Cassidy's work has been linked to so-called 'radical complexity' (Cox 2002, p. 75) – similar to Mahnkopf's term 'complexist complexity' (Mahnkopf 2002, p. 56) – contexts in which both authors regard the figure of Klaus K. Hübler as crucial in opening the gate for new material domains by means of notational resources (Cox 2002, p. 75; Mahnkopf 2002, p. 58). Hence, Hübler's so-called 'decoupling technique' is examined, whereby I argue that Hübler's *Reisswerck* (1987) for solo classical guitar can be regarded as an antecedent to Cassidy's guitar writing – that is, an antecedent to the interpretative/performative approach to notation rather than the aesthetics as such. Also, I highlight Wieland Hoban's approach to guitar notation in his work *Knokler I* (2009) as another accomplishment in

musical notation, under the influence of Hübler, in which similar interpretative strategies are in play. However, and most directly, Richard Barrett's *transmission* (1996–99) for electric guitar and electronics serves as a direct milestone for *TPoM*, and it is discussed accordingly.

The learning process for Cassidy's work implied not only the approach to a new notational paradigm but a new instrument: it is not only the fact that the playing techniques employed in *TPoM* are radically new and far from conventional guitar writing – this was the first piece I had ever played on the electric guitar. Thanks to the support of the University of Huddersfield's Researcher Development Fund, I took lessons with Daryl Buckley, the Australian guitarist who has engendered this repertoire as dedicatee of both *TPoM* and *transmission*.

Finally, I discuss the interpretative issues/limits arising from the *TPoM* notational model, putting in context the interpretative/performative strategies in relation to the metaphorical domains that this piece invokes with direct reference to Gilles Deleuze's book *The Fold*.

#### **4.1 The 'decoupling' technique**

Cassidy states that, in virtually all his work since 1999, 'the various physical, bodily interfaces with instruments are "decoupled", separated into layers of independent movements and actions which are combined in a variety of unpredictable ways' (Cassidy 2012, p. 1). The 'decoupling' label is applied, according to Sergeant (2013, p. 70), to 'a very broad compositional space occupied by a number of composers, each with their own

wildly divergent aesthetic and conceptual infrastructures (such as composers Aaron Cassidy, Frank Cox, Klaus K. Hübler and Claus-Steffen Mahnkopf, amongst many others)'. The decoupling technique is thus related to terms such as 'radically complex' music (Cox 2002, p. 75) or 'complexist complexity' (Mahnkopf 2002, p. 56), indicating contexts in which there is consensus that Hübler's contribution was foundational for the exploration of new and radical domains of material. Cox states:

The radical challenges opened up by Hübler are firstly that of the application of rational methods and imperatives to those (non-pitch/rhythm) domains traditionally considered 'irrational', and secondly that a thoroughgoing musical logic unfolded in the 'irrational' domain simultaneously de-rationalizes the supposedly impregnable domain of pure rationality, for example, disentwining the highly rationalized ensemble of components contributing to a high-culture conception of 'good tone'. If one fully accepts these challenges, one can no longer write a note or rhythm on a piece of paper and naïvely expect an undistorted, one-to-one translation between what was heard in the head and an anonymously 'perfect' instrumental realization. (2002, pp. 75–6)

Therefore, Hübler's notational model inherently challenges the High Modernist approach to notation and performance, against its 'naïve' tendency toward exactitude.

According to Hübler, when writing for a particular instrument, two aspects are crucial: 1) the imagination of the composer is needed in order to shuttle back and forth between the idea (concept) and the materiality (the instrument and its practice) in a dialectical manner; and 2) the instrument requires a high degree of penetration into the purely physiological aspects of its treatment, to the point that each compositional decision must be conveyed down to the smallest detail; hence, there must be a permanent tension between the instrument and the intention (2002, p. 244). As for the first aspect, it can be seen as a reaction to the 'serialist' tendency to consider the specific technical possibilities

of the instrument as an undesirable obstacle to the realization of the constructive concept (ibid., p. 233), while also naively rejecting traditional techniques and performance styles. The second aspect, moreover, naturally requires extended notational models, such as the use of tablature notation.

As an example, see Fig. 4.1 ([video example 4.1](#)), the opening bars of Hübler's *Reißwerck* (1987).

*für Magnus Andersson*  
**Reißwerck**

Klaus K. Hübler, 1987

The musical score is presented in two systems. The first system begins with a treble clef and a 3/8 time signature. It features a complex rhythmic structure with various time signatures indicated by brackets: 9:5, 6:4, 5:4, and 5:3. Above the staff, circled numbers 4, 3, 2, 6, and 4 indicate specific rhythmic or structural units. Dynamic markings include *p*, *mf*, and *p*. The second system continues the piece, starting with a 3/16 time signature. It includes dynamic markings such as *f*, *p*, *f*, *p*, *f*, *[pp]*, *mf*, *f*, and *pp*. Circled numbers 6, 5, 1, 4, 6, and 3 are placed below the staff. The score concludes with a 3/16 time signature and dynamic markings *mp*, *p*, *[pp]*, and *mf*. Circled numbers 1, 4, and 2 are positioned above the staff, while 2, 4, 5, 3, 6, 5, and 1 are below. Further circled numbers 5, 4, 2, 4, 3, 3, 6, and 3 are placed above the staff, and 5, 5, 3, and 5 are below. The notation includes various note values, rests, and articulation marks.

Figure 4.1: Klaus K. Hübler, *Reißwerck*, bb. 1–4

Consistent with the composer's statement that 'one of the most fertile manners of expanding the sound material [...] lies in the field of polyphonic production' (2002, p. 233), this short solo guitar piece displays a two-part writing in which the two sides of the strings (that is, above and behind the stopping fingers of the left hand) seem to be treated as different parameters. Also, some techniques are to be produced through the coordination of both hands (such as harmonics and normal plucked sounds) while others are to be produced exclusively by one hand (e.g. fingertip attacks – using a tapping technique – are performed by the left hand only, whereas *pizzicato non-appuyé* is to be played by the right hand only). Fig. 4.2 and [video example 4.2](#) show an evident separation of the action of the two hands: the upper line displays the left-hand fingertip attacks, the bottom line the *pizzicato non-appuyé* (a right-hand *pizzicato* with half pressure).

The image shows a musical score for guitar, labeled Figure 4.2. It consists of two staves. The upper staff is for the left hand, showing a sequence of chords and notes with dynamic markings *p*, *f*, *mf*, *f*, *ff*, and *mf*. Above the staff, there are brackets indicating fingering patterns: a triplet of 3, a 7:4, and a 7:5. The lower staff is for the right hand, showing a sequence of chords and notes with dynamic markings *f p*, *f p*, *f p*, *f p*, and *f p*. Below the staff, there are brackets indicating fingering patterns: 8:9, 3, 7:5, and 7:5. The word "meccanico" is written below the lower staff.

Figure 4.2: Hübler, *Reisswerck*, b. 7

This particular passage is, in my view, one of the few antecedents (if not the only one) of the ‘parametricisation’ of the two hands in *TPoM*.

In a round-table discussion between composers and performers on Klaus K. Hübler, moderated on the blog *The Rambler* (Rutherford-Johnson 2010), the composer Evan Johnson asserts: ‘For me, no doubt unfairly, Hübler *is* the idea of treating the right and left hand of a string player separately’ (Johnson, in Rutherford-Johnson 2010). For Johnson, among the few composers who rigorously pursue the consequences of Hübler’s approach to string writing, and its applications to other instrumental families, are Aaron Cassidy and Wieland Hoban.

Another example of parametric polyphony in guitar literature, coming from Hübler’s tradition and subsequent to *TPoM*, is that of Wieland Hoban and his approach to notation in *Knokler I*.<sup>26</sup> In this piece, as in Hoban’s other instrumental writing, parametric polyphony is notated on several staves. Fig. 4.3 and [video example 4.3](#) show the first page of the piece and its six staves – two for the left and four for the right hand.

The piece employs standard notation in the first (bottom) stave, as in the opening bars 1 to 6. The highlighted passage in Fig 4.3, bar 8, displays the two parameters in play for the left hand: the bottom stave indicates ‘glissandi’ of the first finger (and the consequent position changes) while the next stave indicates a (rhythmically) independent figuration of the four left-hand fingers (where the four spaces in between lines in the stave means fingers 1 to 4, from bottom up). [Video example 4.4](#) shows the specific bar as

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<sup>26</sup> The title is *Knokler I* because the piece is incomplete; the composer will complete the second and third sections during 2016.

a case of ‘reassembly’ of each parameter, that is, first playing the bottom stave only, then the second stave and then putting both together.

The image shows a musical score for 'Knokler I' by Wieland Hoban, measures 1-8. The score is written for guitar and is organized into two systems. The first system (measures 1-4) features a tempo marking of quarter note = 60. The second system (measures 5-8) includes a red box highlighting a specific passage in the left hand. The score includes staves for Right Hand (RH), Left Hand (LH), and a diagrammatic representation of the guitar's strings (1-6). The RH staves show plucking positions and fingerings (p-i-m-a-e). The LH staves show the left hand's fingering and articulation. The string diagram shows the strings numbered 1 to 6.

Figure 4.3: Wieland Hoban, *Knokler I*, bb. 1–8

As for the right-hand parameters, Fig. 4.4 and [video example 4.5](#) show them in action. Here, the third stave from the bottom indicates the right hand’s plucking position (determining plucking positions starting from the end of the fingerboard to sound-hole and bridge); the fourth and sixth from the bottom indicate fingers *p-i-m-a-e* (thumb, index, middle, ring and pinky fingers, respectively); and the fifth stave up shows the strings (1 to 6).



Figure 4.4: Hoban, *Knokler I*, bb. 16–26

The symbols on the fifth staff in bar 18, the half-circles on top of the note-heads, indicate plucking with the fingernail (whereas, in the absence of that symbol, flesh should be employed). Thus, Hoban’s notational model individuates both physical actions and sonic outcomes (particularly timbre) with high precision; however, the notated tasks pose challenges that make difficult a ‘one-to-one translation’ of the text (such as the ‘Bartók’ *pizzicati* and *arpeggios* in bar 25, in which the notated velocity interferes with the intelligibility of the *arpeggios*).

Another composer whose work is related to the ‘decoupling’ idea is Richard Barrett, who indicates:

I found Hübler's obsessively thorough dismembering of instrumental technique pretty startling when I first came across it, and it was something I felt it necessary to define my way of looking at things in relation to, but at the same time it's important to note that the ideas weren't without precedent – firstly in the domain of improvisational performance, as I've already mentioned, but also in the work of composers like Holliger (two examples: *First String Quartet* (1973), and *Studie über Mehrklänge* (1979), the latter being written in tablature throughout), Lachenmann (obviously), Kagel (the cello parts of *Match*) and even Berio (the harp and trombone *Sequenzas*). One thing that most of those examples have in common, which in the end I feel closer to (and indeed which I feel has greater potential in a more general sense), is a concern not just with the disassembly of instrumental technique but also then its reassembly into new configurations, 'new instruments'. (Barrett, in Rutherford-Johnson 2010)

According to Barrett, Hübler was probably the first to notate the decoupling idea – which Barrett also terms the 'disassembly/reassembly' idea – but it was from the work of some improvisers that Barrett considers this idea to have derived, over a much longer history; to be precise, 'the work of people like Malcolm Goldstein or Barry Guy or Evan Parker' (ibid.). Barrett's interest in improvising musicians is evident in his electric guitar piece *transmission* (1996–99), the central thread of the larger work *DARK MATTER* (completed in 2003), in which one of the points of departure was:

an attempt to reconceive the electric guitar itself, neither as an expanded (or impoverished, depending on one's point of view) version of its 'classical' forebear, nor as a medium for effecting a fashion-conscious fusion with its familiar contemporary vocabulary. *transmission* uses a 'hybrid' instrument equipped with both 'electric' and 'acoustic' outputs, and uses playing techniques related to both of the above traditions as well as (probably most importantly) what Derek Bailey calls 'non-idiomatic improvisation' (to which I would prefer the term 'radically idiomatic'). Each of the six sections embodies a different angle of view on the instrument itself (as well as on the aforementioned compositional material, which in the end comes to the same thing); each also uses a different relationship between the instrument and its electronic 'environment', which in each case involves notated parts for one or more footpedals, affecting such dimensions as pitch-shifting and timbral modulation as well as volume. (Barrett 1999)

Bailey's 'non-idiomatic improvisation', his formulation of the term 'free improvisation' (see Barrett 2014, p. 62), seems to be an indeed 'idiomatic', even physical, trace in *transmission*. The uneven-numbered sections in *transmission* are to be played with fingernails and 'acoustic' outputs,<sup>27</sup> whereas even-numbered sections are to be played with plectrum and involve more 'electric' sounds – and free improvisation proper, most notably in *transmission IV*<sup>28</sup> (and to a lesser extent in short/interjected bars in *transmission V*). Thus, *transmission* illustrates the idea that 'including improvisatory features in a notated composition has the intention, or the effect, of "freeing" performers from the "tyranny" of precise notation' (ibid.).

Barrett's *transmission* comes into play in this chapter as it is a direct antecedent for Cassidy's *TPoM*. Cassidy indicates that the title of his electric guitar work is a deferential reference to Barrett's *DARK MATTER*, and more specifically to *transmission*. Similarities between both pieces include the instrument: in both works an electric guitar with two outputs (magnetic and piezo) as well as the use of pedals (notated in the same way) is required; however, in *TPoM* there is no volume pedal, while the use of the tremolo bar (which in *TPoM* is fundamental) is in *transmission* just occasional. As for the use of tablature notation, the upper stave in *transmission* – see Fig. 4.5 – individuates the pitches employed in relation to their allocation on the fingerboard and strings; however, the notation is not as prescriptive as in Cassidy's score.

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<sup>27</sup> The instrument requires a piezo pickup.

<sup>28</sup> Barrett also refers to this piece as an example of 'seeded improvisation' (see Barrett 2014, pp. 64–5).

# transmission

Richard Barrett  
1996-99

I. Fingernails only. Maximum differentiation within "acoustic" timbre.  
Barlines are a guide to pacing and phrasing but should not be interpreted as pauses.

[81]

\*\*ie. stopped and plucked with RH.

Acoustic output to processor; acoustic output and processor output to reverb (reverb time ~3s); both outputs + reverb to PA.

Figure 4.5: Richard Barrett, *transmission*, bb. 1-6

A final remark, prior to discussing *TPoM*, is that 'physicality' occupies an important place in Barrett's aesthetics, as the composer states:

I'm interested in a music which exposes the physical means and processes of producing sound and makes this exposure part of its sonic/structural/expressive vocabulary. (Barrett, in Rutherford-Johnson 2010)

*transmission* was originally in my plans to be included in the portfolio of this thesis, but although I learnt the notes in the lessons I took with Daryl Buckley, the opportunity did not arise to meet Barrett in order to sort out the electronics of the work, which are problematic to the extent that the electronic part requires a performer able to improvise; the only two versions to date – Daryl Buckley’s recording and performances and Seth Josel’s performances – have involved the composer himself on electronics. Barrett’s intentions are to update most of the electronics by programming new MAX patches, and my performance of *transmission* will therefore be a future continuation of the activities begun under the umbrella of this PhD.

As for the physical component of *transmission*, many of the chords are highly problematic because Barrett used a small guitar in his compositional explorations (apparently a short-scale guitar, for smaller hands), and not particularly because of aiming at difficulty or unplayability as an end in itself. Barrett states:

composing for acoustic instruments is (filtered through notation, with all the limitations as well as opportunities it offers) a vision of how I’d play those instruments myself, if I could: that’s the kind of engagement with sound and physicality I’m trying to aim at. (Barrett, in Rutherford-Johnson 2010)

In Cassidy’s aesthetics too – and in particular in *TPoM* – physicality is an expressive end in itself.

## **4.2 Cassidy’s *The Pleats of Matter***

*The Pleats of Matter*, for solo electric guitar with three outputs and electronic processing, takes its title from the first chapter of Deleuze’s *The Fold*, an investigation of the Baroque,

Leibniz, and the monad. Cassidy indicates:

It is a work that explores the nature of folds, bends, and pleats, and their concomitant implications of surplus, enveloping, collapsing, and obfuscation. It is a work in which overflowing trajectories of material and process collide, overlap, collapse, and slide, where strata melt and rupture and deform, and where form and shape are only the final by-product of lines folding into one another, of shapes subsumed by other shapes, of forms twisted within other forms. (Cassidy 2015)

The work was begun in 2005 and completed in 2007, and it is dedicated to the Australian guitarist Daryl Buckley. An injury prevented Buckley from premiering the piece, which was finally performed for the first time almost ten years after Cassidy began composing it, when I gave its premiere on 20 February 2015 at the Electric Spring Festival at the University of Huddersfield (see full performance in portfolio of full performances).

The programme note for the piece reads:

The guitar itself, or at least the physical, sound-producing manipulation of the instrument, is a folding: the interaction between finger and string and fret, the bending and wrapping of strings with the nut and bridge and tuning pegs, the folding and slackening from the tremolo bar ... In this work, these folds are all made independent, not so much layered as merely simultaneous and entangled. The two hands traverse the fretboard independently, freed from their conventional roles and geographies. Either hand might at any moment be plucking, strumming, depressing a string, scraping, sliding, or bending, and moreover, these actions are as likely to appear behind or above an already-depressed fret as below. Joining this interface between finger and fret and string are the actions of the tremolo bar (or 'whammy' bar), itself bent and folded by both hands and the occasional elbow, two footpedals that bend and shape and twist pitch and timbre, and a further array of amplification and processing modifications on two additional electronic strands. (Cassidy 2007)

As mentioned above, the score displays an extended tablature notation, which indicates precise physical actions of each hand (notated on a separate six-line staff indicating the six strings of the instrument), a tremolo bar (to be played by both hands and

the right elbow) and two external pedals (one processing effects, the other a pitch pedal).

The notation is entirely prescriptive, focusing upon sound-producing actions (including the sound-modifying actions of tremolo bar and pedals) rather than the sonic results.

#### **4.2.1 Gesture types**

The main sound-producing actions in the piece are plucking, depressing, striking and scraping the strings with both hands; displayed in combination with glissando, bends, trills, tremolos and vibrato (and several sound-modifying actions from the tremolo bar and pedals). All possible combinations of these strata – carefully mapped out – imbue each gesture, each prescribed movement, with a set of musical data defining its musical identity ‘in such a way that the gestural action is itself already a musical object’ (Cassidy & Castro 2015).

One of the main actions is the finger percussion attack. The right hand in the two opening bars displays a few versions for this kind of attack, in combination with glissandos and trills – see the red rectangle in Fig. 4.6. Here, the first attack remarks an already strong musical identity, and not from guitar playing traditions but from piano: it is a piano *staccato*. As discussed with the composer, this gestural type operates exactly like a piano staccato on the physical level – that is, the dynamic direction affects the distance of preparation (the louder the attack, the longer the distance). However, sonically, it notably differs as the open string resonates in the guitar once one lifts the finger after the attack (unlike on a piano), as can be heard in [video example 4.6](#).

*molto accel.*

♩ = 66 → ♩ = 108

[wild, frenetic, maniacal; disconcertingly sudden]

**I - VI: + ca. 2**  
 (before performance, all 6 strings should be tightened as far as is possible/reasonable (see performance notes))

rh

VI

I:

lh

VI

I:

tremolo bar

pitch-shift pedal

effects pedal

2.5"

17

32

7

32

13

16

[off]

[full]

[off]

[full]

1

**Figure 4.6:** Aaron Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, bb. 1–2

The blue rectangle in the same Fig. 4.6 highlights the left hand and its finger-depressing actions, behind and above the frets – see [video example 4.7](#). The tremolo bar action, in coordination with some finger actions, is within the yellow rectangle. [Video example 4.8](#) shows the right-arm actions – that is, right-hand and tremolo-bar staves –



whose muscular coordination turns more complex after adding the layer the elbow actions. The localization of the muscle effort in the finger-percussion attacks is more complex in comparison to guitarists' common muscular reflexes; I propose the shoulder as the origin of the muscle effort (especially in a loud dynamic), whereas shifting places the muscular focus on the elbow, and finger joints are fixed in order to resist the intensity of actions – besides which, the action of the elbow in contact with the tremolo bar with the same arm notably complexifies the muscular coordination. Finally, as an example of reassembly of the above-mentioned parameters and actions, [video example 4.9](#) puts them all together, adding the entrance of effects in the second bar (green rectangle in Fig. 4.6).

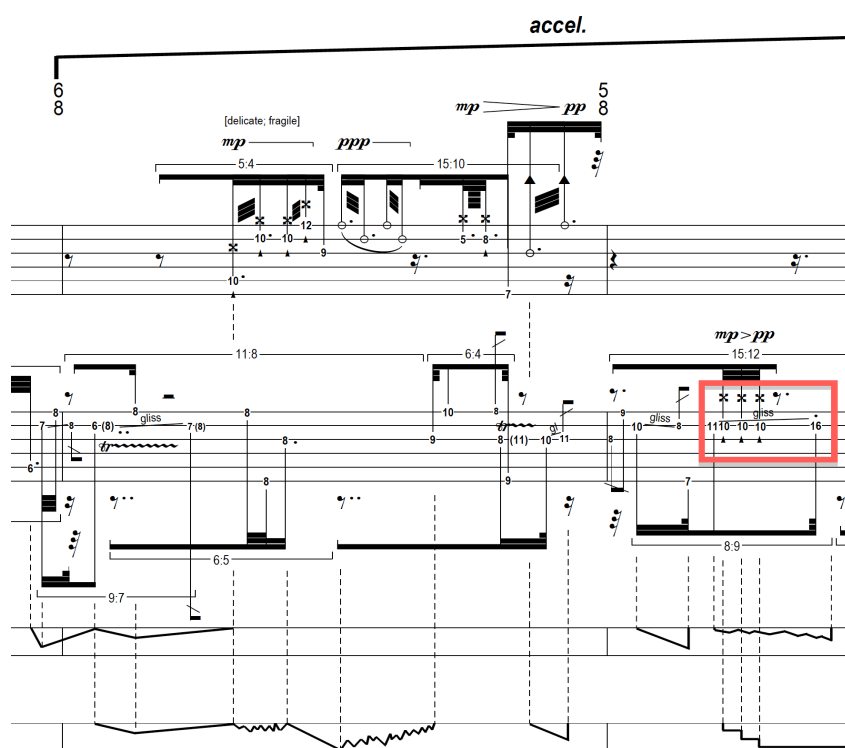


Figure 4.7: Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, bb. 13–14

Fig. 4.7 shows a passage around bars 13–14, in which the right hand displays more gestural types derived from finger percussion such as *tremolandos* in separate strings (also

performed with plucked strings, the last time behind the left hand). The left hand displays some actions of depressing fingers and trills and, most importantly – and highlighted in the red rectangle – a case of polyphony on one single string: one finger performs a glissando from fret 11 to 16 while another finger plays three staccato attacks, behind the glissando finger, on fret 10. (See [video example 4.10](#).) This case of a two-part polyphony on one single string, however, is not the most extreme case.

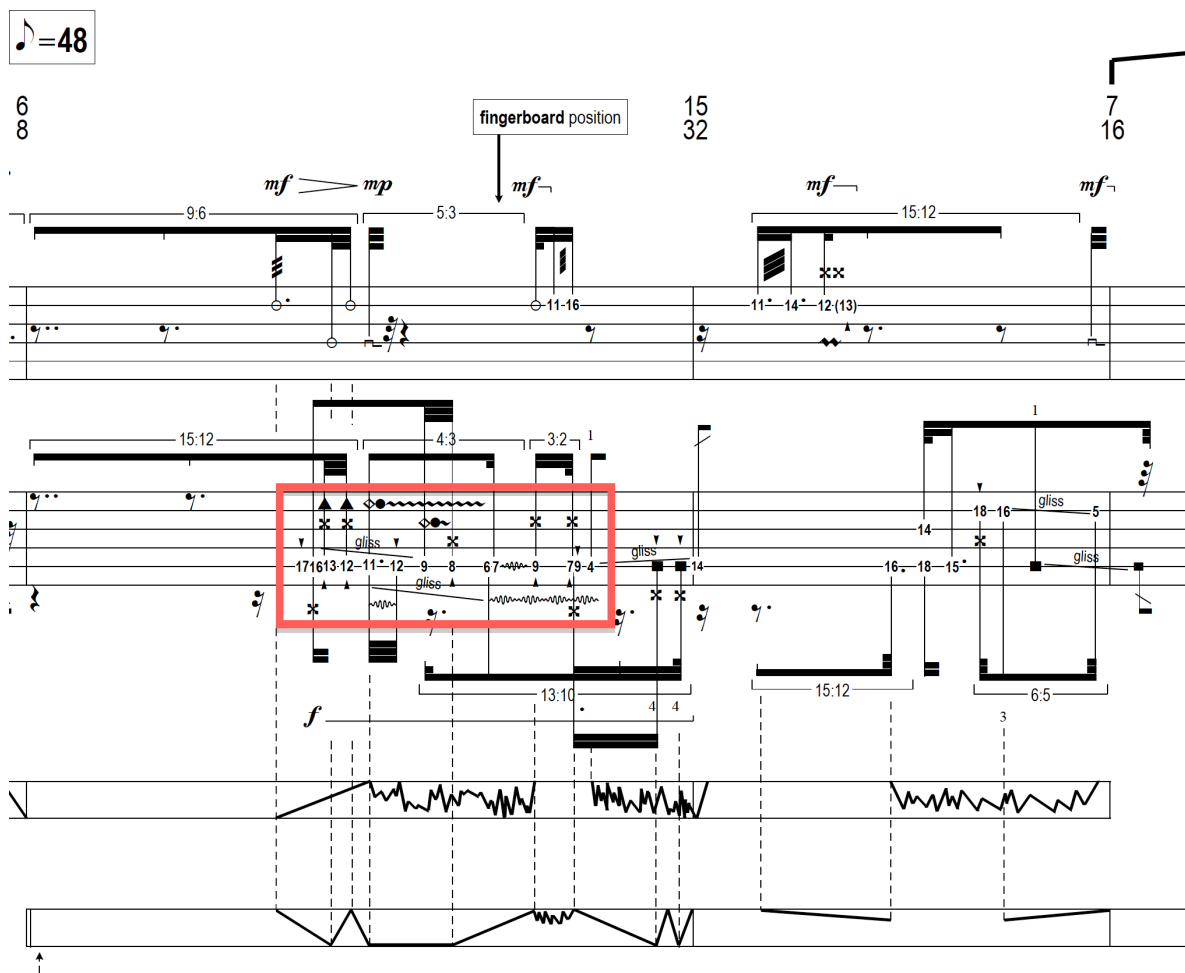


Figure 4.8: Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, bb. 28–9

The highlighted passage within the red rectangle in Fig 4.8 shows the most extreme case of polyphony on a single string, in which the actions on the 5<sup>th</sup> string display

a three-part polyphony (i.e. above, behind and between two depressing fingers). However, it remains more a ‘polyphony of actions’ rather than a polyphony of sounds, as the tempi and effects processing distort the sonic results – see [video example 4.11](#).

Another muscular parameter that becomes a gestural type (although, strictly speaking, a type of sound-facilitating gesture) is that of joint rotations: most notably, in bar 118, the right hand performs a series of wrist rotations as prompted by the material (note the red arrows in Fig. 4.9) – see [video example 4.12](#). The left hand in the same passage, in addition, plays above the fretboard – [video example 4.13](#). Putting together both hands, the result is the overall passage in [video example 4.14](#).

The image shows a musical score for guitar, specifically measures 118-9 of Cassidy's 'The Pleats of Matter'. The score is written for guitar and features a tempo change from 96 to 72 bpm, marked 'rall.'. It includes dynamic markings such as *ff*, *mp*, *f*, *mf*, *p*, and *mp > p*. The score is annotated with red arrows pointing to specific techniques, and includes performance instructions like 'absolutely maniacal! explosive, uncontrolled, flailing!' and 'with LH above fretboard!'. The score shows complex rhythmic patterns and fretboard positions for both hands.

Figure 4.9: Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, bb. 118–9

As for sound-modifying gestures, besides the action of the foot pedals the possibilities derived from the use of the tremolo bar are fully explored in Cassidy’s electric

guitar writing. In addition to the way in which the use of the elbow complicates the overall muscular coordination (as seen in Fig. 4.6), the alternation of right- and left-hand actions on the tremolo bar adds a new, choreographical dimension, as shown in Fig. 4.10 ([video example 4.15](#)).

♩ = 96

[constrained, clear individual gestures; becoming increasingly flamboyant]

5/8  $p < mp$   $mf > p$   $p < f$   $mp < ff$  4/8  $mf$   $ppp$  19/32  $f > ppp$

↑

Figure 4.10: Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, bb. 50–52

In another example of its use, the tremolo bar can act as a textural background, on which brief interjections of gestural units overlap, as is noticeable in Fig. 4.11 ([video example 4.16](#)).

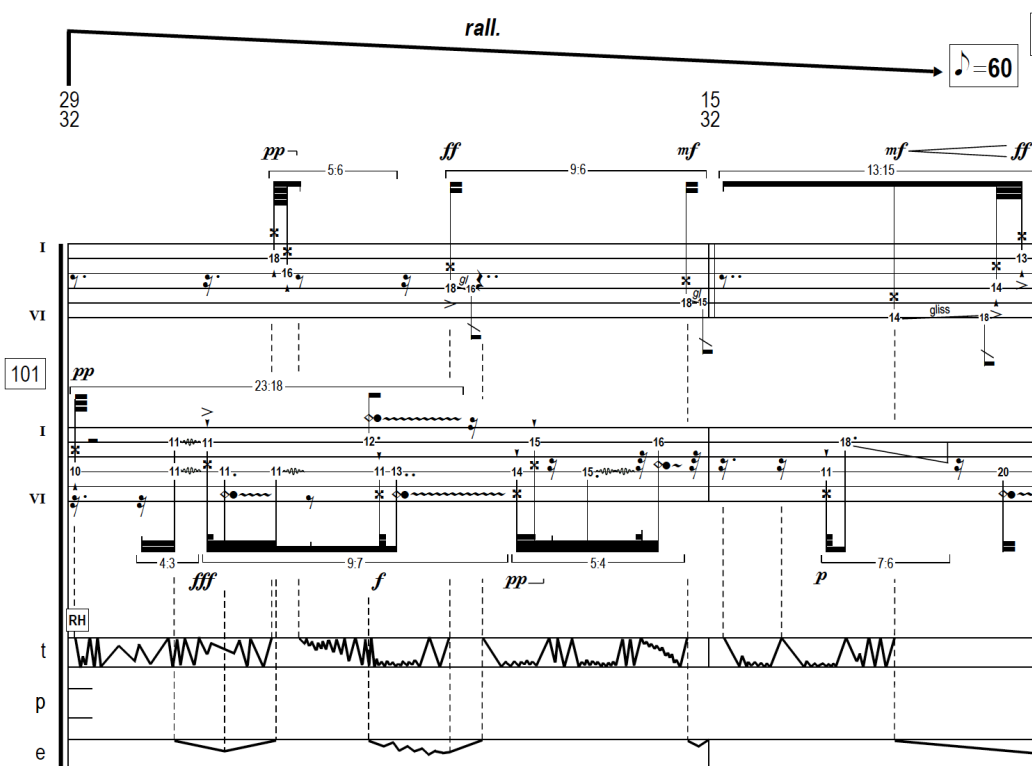


Figure 4.11: Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, bb. 101–2

#### 4.2.2 Physicality

In an interview that Daryl Buckley conducted with Aaron Cassidy in October 2012, when questioned on his prioritisation of movement and on what Buckley terms Cassidy’s ‘negative approach to sound’ – that is, the degree of indeterminacy of the sonic results – it emerged that Cassidy’s mother (who was his first music teacher) trained him in piano and in Dalcroze’s method of eurhythmics, a method that teaches concepts of musical structure and expression to children by means of movement:

From an early age, movement for Cassidy did not constitute a separate response to sound, but was cognitively merged with the sonic events. Movement was sound, and *vice versa*. Cassidy has freely acknowledged that his subsequent compositional

focus on a gestural language bears the marks of this early learning synthesis. (Buckley 2015, p. 21)

As a performer of Cassidy's music, my experience has been that his approach to notation and physicality is indeed effective in 'psychologizing' the performance act.<sup>29</sup> And this aspect seems to be an actual component of Cassidy's aesthetic intentions, as he indicates in *TPoM*:

So for example, if I had something really simple like a maximal say UP–DOWN ... and we took the guitar fingerboard; if I have the entire space that is available that movement generates one particular kind of energy, but when I think about that movement in a small space, in a constricted space. It's an energy. And so the gesture is different if it happens at the top of the fingerboard or the bottom of the fingerboard because of how it relates to the center of the body, changing those energies. (Cassidy, in Buckley 2015, p. 23)

There are several examples of this dispersion of energies, as approached through pure physicality. Hands crossing, many times, can be seen as operating in that way: disturbing the performer's sensation of a centre of gravity and dispersing her energies. For example, in Fig. 4.12 ([video example 4.17](#)) the highlighted rectangles show how occasionally the right hand crosses to play at 'fingerboard position', destabilizing the guitarist's centre of gravity.

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<sup>29</sup> This concept is commonly encountered in discussions of the notation/performance interface in Ferneyhough's music (see for example Fitch's comment quoted in Chapter 2, section 2.2.3). The word appears in Ferneyhough's own writings, such as in the 'Performance Notes' in the score of the piano piece *Lemma-Icon-Epigram* (Ferneyhough 1982). See also, for example, Ferneyhough 1998, p. 7.

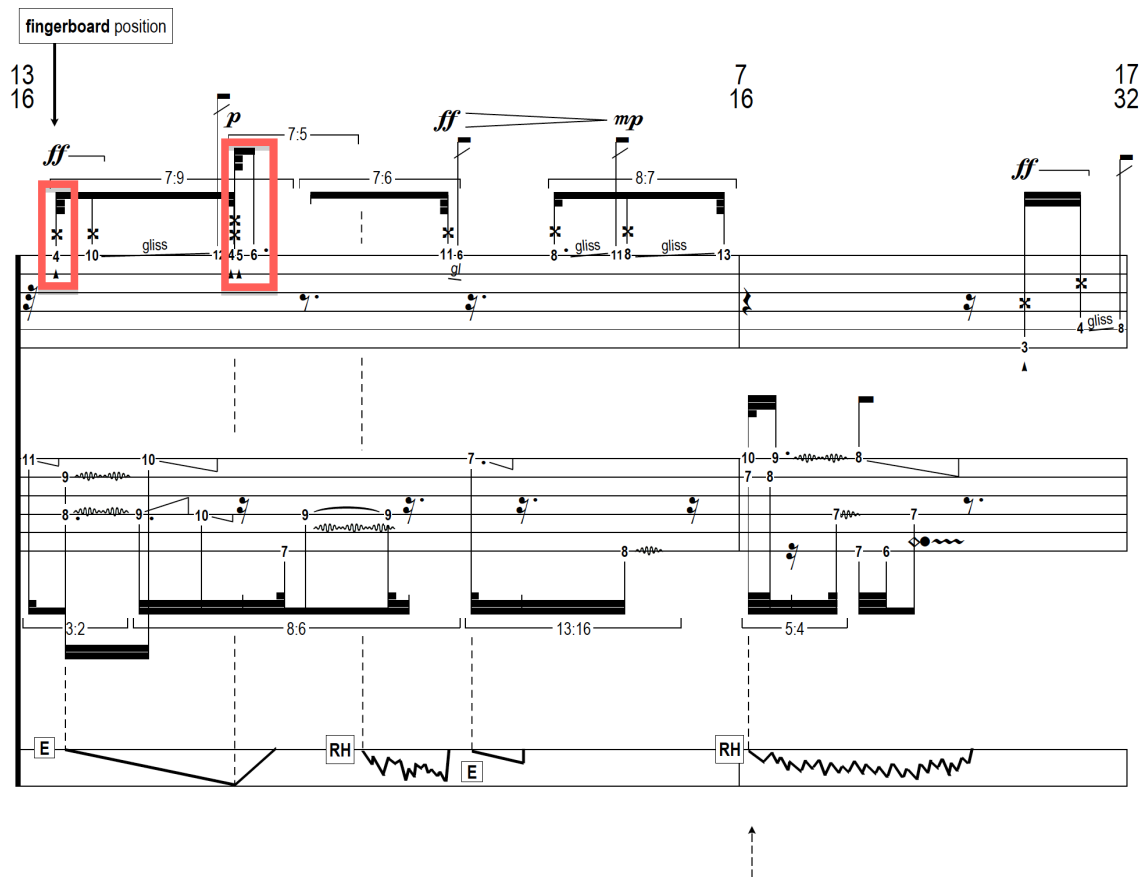


Figure 4.12: Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, bb. 41–2

In a similar vein, Fig. 4.13 displays a fragment in which the ‘dispersion/decentralization’ principle is in play to an even larger extent: the passage remains in a crossed hand position, and both hands in rather extreme positions. The frets available for the right hand range from frets 4 to 8, while the left-hand actions occur between frets 15 and 18. Also, both hands are confined to some particular and limited kinds of gesture types. The right hand performs ‘finger percussion *tremoli*’ and ‘glissandi’ only, whereas the left hand performs a range of pitch bends, plucked strings and to a lesser extent percussion attacks. In addition, the right hand avoids the two upper strings, while the left hand avoids the two central strings.

All these limitations define the expressivity of these physical actions as marked by the abstract delimitation of fret space (and dispersion of energies), and not necessarily as sounds. As Cassidy puts it: ‘these are notes not as “sounds” but rather as “folds”’ (Cassidy & Castro 2015). See [video example 4.18](#).

27  
32

[focused and precise]

*mp*  $\rightrightarrows$  *pp* *mp*

4  
8

v: +.33

7:9 10:9 5:4 3:2

13:10 9:10

9:8 3:2 7:6 4:3

*pp*  $\rightrightarrows$  *mp*

>> M6

Figure 4.13: Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, b. 86

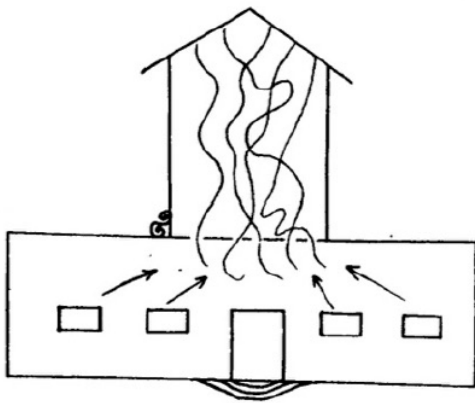
Subsequently, Cassidy refers to these (physical) processes of delimitation and collision of energies as his own definition of musical ‘material’:



In other words, 'material' is very rarely present as such, or at least, musical material is never present as an object, as a defined and delimited event or entity. Instead, material is the *result* of forces, flows and energies – movements of fingers, strings, elbows and feet – that push against boundary spaces on the instrument that are themselves in flux. The collisions and tensions between these 'movement spaces' and topographical 'boundary spaces' force a *folding*. (Cassidy & Castro 2015)

#### 4.2.3 Metaphorical domains: the fold and electronic processing

In *The Fold* – described as 'an investigation of the Baroque, Leibniz, and the monad' – Deleuze (1993) claims that the Baroque is an operative function endlessly producing folds, folds that go to an infinity which is composed of two directions: *pleats of matter* and *folds in the Soul*. Those are represented in the allegory of the Baroque home (see Fig. 4.14).



**Figure 4.14:** *The Baroque home (allegory)* in Deleuze's *The Fold*, in which the upper floor is 'a closed, private room, draped with a 'cloth diversified by folds', whereas in the lower floor there are 'common rooms with 'a few small openings: the five senses' (Deleuze 1993, p. 5).

These two levels are connected by springs or ropes that move when matter triggers vibrations at the lower extreme of the ropes through the windows (the five senses) at lower level. As Deleuze states:

Leibniz constructs a great Baroque montage that moves between the lower floor, pierced with windows, and the upper floor, blind and closed, but on the other hand resonating as if it were a musical salon translating the visible movements below into sounds up above. (1993, p. 4)

Accordingly, it could be argued that Cassidy's approach to electronic processing can be regarded as an allegory of the two levels of the Baroque house. The highly prescriptive notation of physical motions contrasts the actual sonic indeterminacy, which Cassidy puts forward as 'a series of gaps – or indeed *folds* – that separate prescribed actions from their potential sounding results' (Cassidy & Castro 2015) through the electronic processing. However, it is the electric guitar itself, as an instrument, which displays a massive chasm between sound-producing actions and sounding results. This ability of separating the physical from the aural comes from the various layers of electronic manipulation that the common performing practice of this instrument portrays as its essence. And Cassidy aims to put this forward, as he indicates:

This work aims first to push the lacunae of this separation to their limits, and second to envelop and embrace these gaps as being part of the essential and fundamental character of the instrument. (ibid.)

Another factor contributing to the sonic indeterminacy of *TPoM* is a 'dramatic and unpredictable scordatura' (ibid.) set up at the beginning. The indication to the performer is to tighten the six strings as far as possible (a process which is checked not according to the sound/tuning of each string but its tension, which can be tested by pressing/pushing the string and feeling its resistance on a purely physical level) before coming on stage. In addition, subsequent modifications to the tuning of individual strings are given as fractions of a full tuning peg (e.g. a half turn, a quarter turn and so on) throughout the

work. Thus, the resulting pitch material will vary in each performance, depending on the scordatura at the beginning.

As a sort of inversion of this opening scordatura, in bar 34 there is a massive detuning in which all the strings are to be loosened at the performer's discretion, the result of which can be seen in Fig. 4.15 ([video example 4.19](#)).

$\text{♩} = 120$  [leap back to strings! do not pause to reset or stabilize before continuing]

13 16 6.4 6.4 19.12 2 8 I: +.50

normal position

I VI

*mf* *p* *p > pp* *pp*

35 11.7 4.3 7.9 8.6 7.8 4.5

t p e

5<sup>4</sup>

^ M2

Figure 4.15: Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, b. 35

The timbral character of the work is unprescribed: the performance notes indicate that the effects design is left entirely to the discretion of the performer. Each of the three

output sources – electromagnetic pickup, piezo pickup, and a small condenser mic placed close to the fingerboard – are processed independently, and the score specifies only the process through which a performer ought to choose the range of processed sounds for the work.

The full performance of the work, included in the portfolio of full performances, showcases the version I worked on with the composer doing the electronics (mostly using an MAX/MSP interface). As such, and given that this was my actual first piece played on the instrument, the electronic processing was mostly developed by the composer. The video examples for this chapter were prepared later (in June 2016), using a multieffects pedal Boss M-8, and therefore, these examples suggest somehow the possible version that may arise from the original performance notes and what could be termed a more traditional electronic processing (although I tried to prioritise the ‘acoustic’ properties of sonic manipulation in order to highlight the sonic results of the physical actions). [Video example 4.20](#) shows a short passage – Fig. 4.16 – in which two effects are displayed (indicated by numbers 3 and 4 within diamonds), using the above-mentioned effects pedal, although without distorting the sonic result of the physical action.

Musical score for Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, bb. 23–5. The score is in 6/8 time with a tempo of quarter note = 84. It features two staves: a top staff with a treble clef and a bottom staff with a bass clef. The top staff includes dynamic markings such as *f*, *p*, *ff-pp*, and *ff-pp < f*. Fingerboard positions are indicated by arrows and numbers: "normal position" (6, 8, 19, 32) and "fingerboard position" (5, 16, 27, 32). A "suddenly explosive!" marking is present above the 5-16 measure. A right-hand (RH) waveform is shown below the bottom staff. A control panel at the bottom left includes a "M2" dropdown, a "3<sup>1</sup>" diamond, a table with percentages, and an "m2" button.

1.	50%	»	75%
2.	100%	»	25%
3.	75%	»	25%

**Figure 4.16:** Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, bb. 23–5

The physical/aural distantiation of the electric guitar and the electronic processing involved in my learning process of this work can be seen in the following video examples. Video examples 4.21, 4.22 and 4.23 show the same opening bars, from 1 to 11. However, [4.21](#) and [4.22](#) (recorded in a lesson with Daryl Buckley in Manchester, September 2014), showcase my initial steps on the work in the first (borrowed) instrument I used in learning the work, playing the aforementioned bars, first unplugged, and then using the electromagnetic pickup. [Video example 4.23](#), in turn, shows a rehearsal with the composer at the University of Huddersfield, two weeks prior to the premiere, using full electronic processing.

### 4.3 Conclusions

The violinist Mieko Kanno, who has famously discussed the challenges of prescriptive notation, writes on the performing issues of Cassidy's piece for 'indeterminate solo string instrument', *The Crutch of Memory*:

The work draws the performer's attention to a delicate balance between the parameters in the process of putting-together like an ensemble of musicians, and to a continuous shift and fluctuation of expressive power between them (Kanno 2007, p. 252)

Cassidy's aesthetics and approach to parametric polyphony call upon the *expressivity* of putting together (or re-assembling) parameters, which I claim in particular relation to *TPoM* as a *muscular polyphony*, or *muscular origami*. Deleuze refers to *origami* as 'the model for the sciences of matter' (Deleuze 1993, p. 6), resonating with the origin of this piece in which Cassidy used an exact replica of an electric guitar made of cardboard as a physical reference during the compositional process. From my perspective, notation, as highly prescribed as it is, operates as a sort of multidimensional *origami* template, mapping the performer's body in highly individuated muscular terms. Therefore, the learning process becomes the exploration of a muscular template, which is folded in time.

From a gesture-based perspective, in *TPoM*, sound-producing gestures *are* communicative gestures. Video examples 4.6 to 4.22 illustrate this more acoustically, perhaps, as the electronic processing of these examples has been done in such a way that physical actions are more connected to sonic results, in a traditional manner – whereas in the versions I worked on with the composer (video example 4.23 and full performance in portfolio) the physical/aural relationship is more dislocated.

This physical/sonic separation results in an interpretative approach in which the dichotomy of the inside and the outside is pushed to a boundary. As Cassidy states, in *TPoM* 'the form – the material shape – of any given moment, gesture, or phrase is, in effect, a Baroque pleat. It is, though I hesitate to use this term, a "monad"' (Cassidy 2015). Deleuze claims the monad as 'the autonomy of the inside', and it is this conception which has exerted some impact upon my understanding of the performing practices of this work by requiring a particular emphasis upon the autonomy of gesture's *inside* – that is, the muscular coordination in time. The example given in Chapter 1, section 1.5 – as a view of the *inside* of a physical gesture, in which muscular coordination reveals that what is seen as two actions from the outside is really four actions from the inside – is sublated into expression in itself in *TPoM*. And, the 'operators' in play under these terms are not only all kinds of (longitudinal and transversal) shifts, but also all kinds of joint rotations, complexified through the sound-modifying gestures from tremolo bar and pedals.

Many of the gesture types in *TPoM* refer to piano-performing traditions, which reminds me (as a Chilean performer myself) of one of Claudio Arrau's claims regarding technique. According to Arrau – who was a disciple of Martin Krause, in turn a disciple of Liszt – the most important thing for Liszt was the relaxation of all the muscles and joints. Arrau (in Bragg 1984) claims: 'If you keep your body relaxed, the body is in contact with the depths of your soul.' As Deleuze's concept of the fold is concerned with the body/soul continuity (Deleuze 1993, pp. 11–12), the emphasis on muscular relaxation seems especially important in a work so 'physical' as *TPoM*. Thereby, the exploration of the muscular localization of effort and coordination in time with relaxation, comes along with

gravity – not as often referred to in guitar performing schools as in piano performing schools (Sándor 1981) – enriching and complexifying the acquisition of the guitarist's 'code',<sup>30</sup> as the correspondence between motion patterns in the performance and visual patterns in the score.

Kanno states:

By prioritising performative actions over determinate sonic results, Cassidy highlights the 'playfulness' of musical performance. This can be seen as a departure from the tendency toward exactitude in Modernist music (to which, at first glance, Cassidy's piece might be thought to belong) and a step towards a culture in which the individual interpretation/rendition of a work by the performer forms a crucial part of its artistic definition. (2007, p. 252)

Thus, Kanno confirms Cox's critique of the High Modernist Model of performance in relation to 'radically complex' music, and particularly Hübler's achievements.

In particular relation to *TPoM*, the performer's interpretation/rendition of the work is the by-product of the exploration of a 'code' – the ability to read a complex/muscular *origami* in time – and the degree of separation/dislocation of this physical level with its sonic outcome. That is, my claim is that in Cassidy's aesthetics the main *image* (as that the performer seeks to imitate, as Adorno's dialectical image, beyond the score as such) is that of a *decentred* world. Besides the *decentralization* between action and sound – and the aimed-for *decentralization* of the performer's gravity and dispersion of energies as an expressive element of physical gesture – these Baroque pleats evoke Baroque allegory. I am referring to Walter Benjamin's concept of Baroque allegory, which Deleuze mentions in the last section of *The Fold*. As discussed in Chapter 2, in

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<sup>30</sup> See Sándor's concept of 'code' in Chapter 1, section 1.5.



Benjamin's book on German Baroque drama the concept of allegory is vindicated, not as a failed symbol, but an entirely different power of figuration. As Deleuze puts it, in the relation between the concept and its object, whereas the symbol combines the eternal and the momentary nearly at the centre of the world, 'allegory uncovers nature and history, according to the order of time. It produces a history from nature and transforms history into nature in a world that no longer has its center' (Deleuze 1993, p. 125). In *TPoM*, gesture types account for 'idiomatic' writing of past music for other musical instruments in an allegorical fashion, making the *pleats* not only as gaps between physical actions and sounding results, but the gap between the now and the past in the memory of certain Western art music traditions.

## Conclusion

Over the period of time during which research for this PhD was undertaken, my approach to the interpretation and performance of contemporary guitar music has changed. The interpretative strategies developed and presented here – arising as they do from the encounter between concepts from Adorno’s theory of musical reproduction and recent models of the performer’s relationship to notation, cognition and gesture – have informed my understanding of the analogical bridges between notation and performance as mediated through the body. In both of the musical works that constitute the outer limits of this research project – *Kurze Schatten II* in Chapter 2 and *The Pleats of Matter* in Chapter 4, both related to so-called complex music – the idea that music exists not only in the exclusive realm of sound is implicit. In connection with this realization I have emphasised the concept of *mimesis*, deriving from Frankfurt School theory, as a valuable concept for performing practice, one whose impact can be exerted in the domain of the physical. The theoretical constructs of this research as they relate to the very real interpretative decisions and approaches to this repertoire are summarised here.

The relationship between the Idea of a work of music (as an ontological category of being) and its sensual manifestations reflects the fluctuation between music’s *mimetic* and *constructional* aspects. Mimesis partly refers to music’s imitation of itself, free of any denotation: that is, its *self-representation* (Chapter 1, sections 1.1 & 1.6). Hence, the first interpretative strategy proposed here is the performer’s task of imitating such self-representation by representing herself in the performance act. As Benjamin asserts, ‘all

language communicates itself *in itself*' (1996, p.64): thus, music expresses itself in itself. That is music's Idea – the conclusion that music can express to itself only itself, and is no longer a language able to communicate. As Caygill states, 'the "Idea" is an expression that is not dependent upon communication' (2010, p. 243), and is thus an extreme case of separation. Benjamin's concept of *allegory* explores various ways in which 'expression and communication fall out of alignment with each other' (ibid.), which I found mediated through gesture and the body, especially, in *Kurze Schatten II* – as a compositional concern – and in Cassidy's *The Pleats of Matter*. Besides those particular pieces, I attempt to approach such separation by means of *corporal translation* (Chapter 1, sections 1.3 & 1.6), posing the ideal of transforming sound-producing gestures into communicative gestures in themselves (Chapter 1, sections 1.1 & 1.4). These strategies point in the same direction: the autonomy of physicality as the inside of performance, portraying its own rationalizations, structure and logic.

The aforementioned interpretative strategies – informed by Benjamin's *translation* and Adorno's *mimesis* – deal with the work of music as Idea (and its implicit expressive-communicative separation). Against recent critics of Adorno's theory of musical reproduction as a disembodied model (Gritten 2014), I hope to have demonstrated – both in theory and practice – that this central concept of mimesis is indeed embodied, being both *origin* and *goal* in the learning processes. In that vein, I compare Adorno's elements of notation (*idiomatic*, *mensural* and *neumatic*) to Ferneyhough's three stages of learning in performance notes to *Lemma-Icon-Epigram* (Chapter 3, section 3.0), whilst also advocating the idea of the body as an environmental structure to be manipulated

(Chapter 1, sections 1.5 & 1.6). These approaches to notation, however, pursue a strategy of interpretation in which music is not understood as an entirely self-referential system. Strategies approaching Benjamin's idea of *nonsensuous similarity* outlined in Chapter 1 (sections 1.2 & 1.6), and applied in chapters 2, 3 and 4, deal with non-musical allusions as potential semiotic sources, shaping and individuating music-immanent aspects by allowing the determination of particular interpretative choices, even in notational contexts with a high level of determination, such as those of parametric polyphony.

If in musical interpretation sound is the *rational* and physical the *mimetic* (as I stated in the Introduction), in *The Pleats of Matter* – an extreme model of physicality as musical material – it is the other way round: physical gesture *is* the rational, making up the music-immanent aspects of construction and logic. Here, music's coherent expression is exclusively dependent upon physicality, making the choreographical aspect of performance indeed primary, whereas it could be argued to be secondary in more traditional approaches to notation.

My approach to contemporary guitar performance, outlined in the various interpretative strategies named above, is developed compositionally in Cassidy's notational paradigm – that is, the 'physicalization of sound'. In works in which the physiological parameters are not as fundamental as in *The Pleats of Matter* or some moments of *Kurze Schatten II*, the result of applying a concept such as mimesis has been to physicalize of sound – or, at least, to vindicate the parameter of bodily motion as a tool for rendering musical sense (although without usurping what Cox would term 'a responsible realization of the notated tasks'). Moreover, when such a parameter is a

compositional concern and sound is somehow secondary in the notation, the goal of transforming sound-producing gestures into communicative gestures becomes less of a problem as the analogical bridges from notation to performance are already (compositionally) designed.

This PhD marks the beginning of investigations into the interstices of mimesis and gesture in contemporary guitar performance. Future work might develop these ideas by employing an approach to analysis based in technological tools. As for artistic practice itself, I feel tempted to explore the notion of gravity in contemporary guitar technique. Although gravity is not particularly determinant in classical guitar technique, as it is for other instruments such as the piano,<sup>31</sup> some playing techniques employed in the most radical contemporary repertoire such as Cassidy's *TPoM* required its employment, in a sort of 'pianistic' approach to the instrument. Such a requirement, coupled with the aesthetic role of the body, drew my attention towards Japanese *butoh* dance, a context in which the figure of Noguchi Taiso is highly influential:

A basic idea of Noguchi Taiso is that our body is not a skeleton with muscles and flesh on it, but a kind of water bag in which our bones and viscera are floating. He also places great emphasis on the significance of the weight of our body, saying 'Listen to the god of weight,' and appreciates the most efficient movements with minimum muscle tension and instant tension release. He wrote that: 'Muscles exist not for resisting and governing gravity. Muscles are the ears for listening to the words of God – Gravity.' (Kasai 1999, p. 309)

The image of the body as a water bag with bones floating on it was helpful when I was working on some of the most 'physical' pieces/passages included in this project, and it is an approach I aim to consolidate in my future work and my technique.

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<sup>31</sup> See Sándor 1981.

Finally, given that the body is increasingly regarded as an aesthetic concern in recent compositional strands, I hope that both the performance approaches outlined in this thesis and the accompanying performances in the portfolio contribute to demonstrate the significance of gesture and the body as efficient tools in rendering mimesis – that is, musical sense.

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## Appendix A

### CD: *Shrouded Mirrors*

- Track 1. **Matthew Sergeant:** *bet maryam* (2011) [5'23'']
- Bryn Harrison:** *M.C.E.* (2010)
- Track 2. I [4'06'']
- Track 3. IIa [3'01'']
- Track 4. IIb [3'03'']
- Track 5. III [6'09'']
- Track 6. **Michael Finnissy:** *Nasiye* (1982, rev. 2002) [11'01'']
- Track 7. **James Dillon:** *Shrouded Mirrors* (1987) [9'07'']
- Brian Ferneyhough:** *Kurze Schatten II* (1983–89)
- Track 8. I [2'18'']
- Track 9. II [1'17'']
- Track 10. III [2'10'']
- Track 12. IV [2'53'']
- Track 11. V [2'06'']
- Track 13. VI [3'04'']
- Track 14. VII [3'49'']
- Track 15. **Wieland Hoban:** *Knokler I* (2009) [5'17'']

Released by Huddersfield Contemporary Records, HCR 10  
Recorded in St Paul's Hall, Huddersfield, 17–20 August 2015  
Recording engineer: Cato Langnes

## Appendix B

### DVD: Short video examples referenced in thesis

#### In Chapter 2:

Video example 2.1: Brian Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 7<sup>th</sup> movement, bb. 34–36

Video example 2.2: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 7<sup>th</sup> movement, excerpt from b. 3

Video example 2.3: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 7<sup>th</sup> movement, excerpt from b. 2, played twice

Video example 2.4: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 7<sup>th</sup> movement, excerpt from b. 6

Video example 2.5: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 7<sup>th</sup> movement, bb. 1–4 (suppressing ancillary gestures)

Video example 2.6: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 7<sup>th</sup> movement, bb. 1–4 (allowing ancillary gestures)

Video example 2.7: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 7<sup>th</sup> movement, bb. 1–8 (suppressing and allowing ancillary gestures)

Video example 2.8: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, bb. 1–6 (suppressing ancillary gestures)

Video example 2.9: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, bb. 1–6 (allowing ancillary gestures)

Video example 2.10: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 2<sup>nd</sup> movement, bb. 28–36

Video example 2.11: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 3<sup>rd</sup> movement, bb. 11–18

Video example 2.12: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 4<sup>th</sup> movement, bb. 1–10

Video example 2.13: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 4<sup>th</sup> movement, bb. 20–23 (no timbral differentiation)

Video example 2.14: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 4<sup>th</sup> movement, bb. 20–23 (with timbral differentiation)

Video example 2.15: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 5<sup>th</sup> movement, bars 1–4

Video example 2.16: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 5<sup>th</sup> movement, bar 25–30

Video example 2.17: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 6<sup>th</sup> movement, bars 1–12

Video example 2.18: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 6<sup>th</sup> movement, bb. 74–78

Video example 2.19: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 7<sup>th</sup> movement, bb. 1–7

Video example 2.20: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 7<sup>th</sup> movement, b. 3 (no timbral differentiation)

Video example 2.21: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 7<sup>th</sup> movement, b. 3 (with timbral differentiation)

Video example 2.22: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 7<sup>th</sup> movement, bb. 22–24

Video example 2.23: Ferneyhough, *Kurze Schatten II*, 5<sup>th</sup> movement, b. 24

### In Chapter 3:

- Video example 3.1: James Dillon, *Shrouded Mirrors*, bb. 102–106
- Video example 3.2: Dillon, *Shrouded Mirrors*, bb. 119–120
- Video example 3.3: Dillon, *Shrouded Mirrors*, bb. 83–87
- Video example 3.4: Dillon, *Shrouded Mirrors*, bb. 1–7 (suppressing ancillary gestures)
- Video example 3.5: Dillon, *Shrouded Mirrors*, bb. 1–7 (allowing ancillary gestures)
- Video example 3.6: Dillon, *Shrouded Mirrors*, bb. 14–18
- Video example 3.7: Excerpt from rehearsal with James Dillon at his home in London, November 2014
- Video example 3.8: Dillon, *Shrouded Mirrors*, bb. 53–56
- Video example 3.9: Michael Finnissy, *Nasiye*, systems 1–7
- Video example 3.10: Finnissy, *Nasiye*, systems 21–22
- Video example 3.11: Finnissy, *Nasiye*, systems 27–28
- Video example 3.12: Excerpt from rehearsal with Michael Finnissy, University of Huddersfield, November 2014
- Video example 3.13: Excerpt from rehearsal with Michael Finnissy, University of Huddersfield, November 2014
- Video example 3.14: Finnissy, *Nasiye*, system 39
- Video example 3.15: Finnissy, *Nasiye*, systems 39–41
- Video example 3.16: Bryn Harrison, *M.C.E.*, movement I, systems 1–2
- Video example 3.17: Harrison, *M.C.E.*, movement I, systems 1–4
- Video example 3.18: Harrison, *M.C.E.*, movement IIa, systems 1–3
- Video example 3.19: Christopher Fox, *Chile*, bb. 13–17 ('click' strummimg)
- Video example 3.20: Fox, *Chile*, bb. 13–17 (*chasqueado* strummimg)
- Video example 3.21: Fox, *Chile*, b. 39
- Video example 3.22: Fox, *Chile*, b. 150 (with palm)
- Video example 3.23: Fox, *Chile*, b. 150 (with fist)
- Video example 3.24: Matthew Sergeant, *bet maryam*, bb. 3–6
- Video example 3.25: Sergeant, *bet maryam*, bb. 14–16
- Video example 3.26: Marc Codina, *Frame [for guitar]*, study 1
- Video example 3.27: Codina, *Frame [for guitar]*, study 2
- Video example 3.28: Codina, *Frame [for guitar]*, study 3

### In Chapter 4:

- Video example 4.1: Klaus K. Hübler, *Reisswerck*, bb. 1–4
- Video example 4.2: Hübler, *Reisswerck*, b. 7
- Video example 4.3: Wieland Hoban, *Knokler I*, bb. 1–8
- Video example 4.4: Hoban, *Knokler I*, b. 8
- Video example 4.5: Hoban, *Knokler I*, bb. 16–26
- Video example 4.6: Aaron Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, bb. 1–2 (right hand alone)
- Video example 4.7: Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, bb. 1–2 (left hand alone)

Video example 4.8: Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, bb. 1–2 (right hand/arm including tremolo bar)  
Video example 4.9: Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, bb. 1–2 (right and left hands + effects)  
Video example 4.10: Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, bb. 13–14  
Video example 4.11: Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, bb. 28–29  
Video example 4.12: Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, bb. 118–9 (right hand alone)  
Video example 4.13: Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, bb. 118–9 (left hand alone)  
Video example 4.14: Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, bb. 118–9 (all together)  
Video example 4.15: Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, bb. 50–52  
Video example 4.16: Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, bb. 101–2  
Video example 4.17: Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, bb. 41–2  
Video example 4.18: Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, b. 56  
Video example 4.19: Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, b. 35  
Video example 4.20: Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, bb. 23–5  
Video example 4.21: Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, bb. 1–11 (unplugged)  
Video example 4.22: Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, bb. 1–11 (plugged)  
Video example 4.23: Cassidy, *The Pleats of Matter*, bb. 1–11 (with effects)



## Appendix C

### DVD: Videos of full performances

(works not included on the CD *Shrouded Mirrors*)

Video 1. **Christopher Fox:** *Chile* (1991) [11'18''], recorded at Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, Phipps Hall, University of Huddersfield, 26 November 2015

Video 2. **Aaron Cassidy:** *The Pleats of Matter* (2005–7) [11'16''], recorded at the Electric Spring Festival, Phipps Hall, University of Huddersfield, 20 February 2015