# Composer and performer roles in contemporary music: an autoethnographic study

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**Abstract**

In 20th and 21st century contemporary classical music the instrumentalist has played a vital role in developing the art form. However, the input of the performer into the preparation of new works is not one which has been clearly documented. This project is a practice-led approach that articulates the contribution of the contemporary music performer in more detail. As an entry point into an autoethnographic project, I will discuss two case-studies (*émoi* by Evan Johnson and *luminous by* Kristian Ireland) as examples of my practice with contemporary music scores, and in response to these, compose my own compositions. The written thesis is contextualised by a CD of contemporary repertoire for solo flute (VALE) and recordings of two of my own compositions, as well as supporting recordings and score examples.

From a methodological perspective, this project seeks to articulate the concepts and practices that lie behind my work with a contemporary score, leading to a reassessment of the performer, composer and score paradigm.

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Acknowledgements

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To Tristan Rhys Williams: a special thanks for the impeccable suggestions of books, art and the ever-supportive conversations in the past two years.

For Ann and Matthew.

### 0.1 Introduction – context and current practice

Compositions for solo flute have a prominent place in the 20th and 21st century repertoire. Composers such as Salvatore Sciarrino, Luigi Nono, Karlheinz Stockhausen, Brian Ferneyhough and Kaija Saariaho, among others, have created pivotal works for the instrument. Many new works for flute have been composed using extended techniques, which require an exchange between the performer and composer. In this case, the performer's specific technique or approach to the instrument can be a fundamental part of a new solo work. In the majority of these instances, there is a collaborative process between performer and composer of some shape or form, although documentation of this is often scant. Clearly the performer's contribution is not always apparent from looking at the score, nor has the performer made any real effort to collate this form of knowledge exchange. The issue becomes ever more nuanced if we note that we are only speaking here of the pre-compositional process, and not identifying the preparatory work made by a performer for a performance. How does a performer navigate a score that focuses on specialised notations and techniques?

There are then key questions that need to be asked about the performer's work process and input into contemporary classical music. For example, what lengths does the performer go to in the process of preparing a new work for performance? And within this process, what type of exchange occurs between the score and the performer? My project takes up these questions – to discuss the interaction between the score and performer after the notated component of the work has been completed - and considers what the input (or even the impact) is of the performer on the work in these stages. Following on from these questions, I will also examine if there are discernible changes in the performer's practice or, no less, in the score itself. The aim of this project is to address these questions, and give an insight into the performer's role in contemporary classical music, in particular, the preparation of a new work. To respond to these questions, I will be focussed on my own practice in this study, and the performer-centric viewpoint of working with contemporary scores.

### 0.2 Research questions and objectives

My research seeks to pose the following primary questions:

- How does a performer approach compositions in which the visual complexity and technical impingements of the score obfuscate a standardised performance practice?

- From the performer's perspective, is the claim of an authorship in the conveyance of new music a valid one?

In turn, I will realise the following objectives:

- to illustrate how the performer's understanding, translation and eventual performance of the score can be a form of compositional practice

- to indicate in practice how contemporary music, as a cultural activity, is moving away from the conventional music categories of performer and composer

I have chosen two case studies (Evan Johnson's *émoi* for solo bass flute and Kristian Ireland's *luminous* for solo alto flute) and a disc of recordings as the basis for my thesis. These will illustrate my own particular approach to reading, filtering and describing the instructions in the score. As a context, they give an indication of my current practice and its aims.

Throughout the research, the case studies, and their recordings, are a constant point of reference. The case studies are also symbolic of a system of hierarchies and practical contingencies that I work within (and against) in my practice, which in turn evokes a more nuanced understanding, or a thematisation, of the practice, and its written form. Consequently, I am often in the position of challenging the score's function from a performer's perspective, and questioning aspects of authorship when the performance

practice I have developed is placed alongside the score. My recordings and scores are also an indispensable element of the project: they are a key demonstration or example of the practice discussed in the thesis, and they also offer further insight into my ethos as an artist. In these opening stages of the writing I want to continue to build upon the importance of the score and recordings as anchor points for what lies ahead.

### 0.3 Source documents: scores

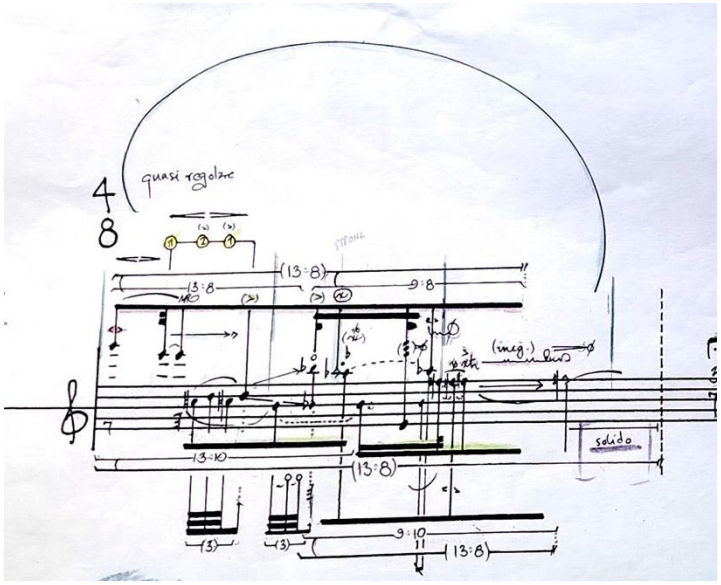


**Figure 0.1**: Evan Johnson, *émoi*, b.2

At first glance, the notation of *émoi* seems impenetrable, and there is a clear sense of visual stylisation or calligraphy in the way that the information is conveyed to the performer (Fig. 0.1). This is a clear example of the notation I am examining: it goes beyond a conventional score. If we view this extract from the perspective of preparing for a performance, *émoi* deliberately places the performer in a problematic situation, and questions the typically more neutral function of the score (to transmit instructions to create an accurate representation of the work in performance). What we have here is a more specialised affair, and one which is subject to interpretation on the performer's part.

In this case, what is the aim of such a beautiful, but problematic approach to notation? And what should the outcome actually be here? It is clear that even from these early stages I quickly become engaged with the density of the notation. A more detailed outline of my approach will follow later in the thesis, but I can say now that *émoi* is an immersive project. It is also an initiation into a new form of creative engagement with a score, and involves a detailed understanding of the piece. Furthermore, taking on *émoi* asks for a level of technical flexibility, and as importantly, an augmented level of conceptual planning in order to be able to interweave the various strands of the piece together. In these conditions, the interpretative becomes a creative dimension, and engages with strategies to bring aspects of the notation into the pragmatic realm; and as the thesis progresses, this creative aspect of my work gathers pace.

In this short introductory exposition of how I approach a case study, I have established important observations going forward – that contemporary scores rely upon a specialist understanding of contemporary music, as well as:

- a command of (or the [re]invention of) a particular performance technique, or range of novel playing techniques; and
- having a degree of compositional acumen to understand or manage particular notational strategies devised by the composer.

A series of more subjective and performance-related questions then follow on from these points, such as : “how do I realise a work in a manner that it ‘succeeds’ to be an accurate version of the score?” and “what can ‘an accurate version’ be in these circumstances?”. Answering these questions requires a performer to rethink their practice, and to make creative choices within a score. Part of my task is then to make the case for my interventions and mediations, and to produce an accurate description of this process.

**0.4 Source documents: VALE**

VALE was a recording project which took place over the duration of the research. It consists of six works by different composers, reflecting a curation of technical as well as a musical themes that emerged from my repertoire and performances in the period 2015 – 2019. The album takes its title from a work of the same name by the composer, Richard Barrett.

Evan Johnson – *émoi* for solo bass flute (2010)
Esaias Järnegard - *PSALM* for contrabass flute and voice (2011)
Fabrice Fitch – *Agricola IX* for solo flute and string instruments (2013)
Richard Barrett – *VALE* for solo flute (2005-11)
John Croft – *Deux méditations d'une furie* for voice and bass flute (2013)
Brice Pauset – *Eurydice* for solo flute (1998)

My initial plans for VALE, which later became absorbed into other themes, was to approach the repertoire on the disc from an organological perspective of instrumental design: that the flute, as a classical instrument, is monodic. I wanted to employ a more idiomatic aspect of the instrument to meet the range of expectations that we find in the contemporary repertoire. Whilst my conception of the disc started from a historical standpoint as a instrumentalist, my thinking beyond this point encounters propositions that exceed merely playing the score. For example, I discuss issues of contemporary music in the medium of recording, as well as the more pressing tasks concerned with the performance practice itself. This leads me to assert an important distinction with regard to VALE: I will build a case that the disc is not just a form of documentation of arts practice, it is also an exegesis for the critical and technical explorations in my writing.

To bring all of this to bear here requires me to draw upon three narrative structures. Firstly, with short interventions, I punctuate my discussion with score extracts from VALE and my own journal entries; secondly, extracts from external commentators who have engaged with the disc for publications (namely their writings from reviews and liner notes); thirdly, a more cogent analysis that consolidates the disc into three thematic points:

i. VALE is a curation of musical identities and discontinuities in my practice, these discontinuities indicate a creative interaction between the score and performance

ii. Each recording is a picture-in-sound of practice

iii. VALE seeks to convey a level of detail from a performer's perspective

### 0.4.1 Curation

i. VALE is a curation of musical identities and discontinuities in my practice, these discontinuities indicate a creative interaction between the score and performance.

I invite the reader to consider the diary entry below that I have made about VALE. From this starting point, one can begin to consider the performer's role as a chimeric one. When I practice and perform I have internalised aspects of a composition in order to project a work in performance. Within this there are a multitude of mannerisms, or stances[1] that I adopt - not only the notes and rhythms on the page.

> The music in VALE is often unstable, and any sense of equilibrium is often disturbed by a volatility. We hear frequent gasps of breath; misfiring of pitches and articulations; tones are stretched and compressed, raised and lowered… Shapes of sound emerge to be phrase-like (perhaps speech-like, or clipped in delivery) and often dissolving back into the sound of the instrument. VALE is a corpus of sorts – it is the sound of a compartmentalised body or machine that carries across resonances and punctuations in lines of sound.
>
> (Craig, 2017)

[1] A stance in this case refers to a combination of technical, musical and predominately outward positions that stem from the instructions in the score.

This is perhaps a problematic reflection in the context of an academic thesis, but my description does communicate to the reader what is very clear to me when I review all of the works on VALE. Each composition has a particular series of postures, or stances. These are a chain of actions, proportions and physical responses to the score (for example, a particular approach to breathing, articulation or a series of very specific performance directions). I consider these stances as a physical choreography, and an underlying structure of each work. As a result of these specific chains of actions or techniques, each composition then has a physical signature, and elicits a distinct somatic complexity or grain in its sound. As a continuation of my theory of compositions existing as a physical stance, there is in turn a sense of dramaturgy taking place across the disc, which, is clearly not only to do with the musical content of the scores. That is because each piece combines the performer and instrument in a very particular configuration, and this comes into relief when the works are placed together on the disc, as a curation of musical situations and problematics.

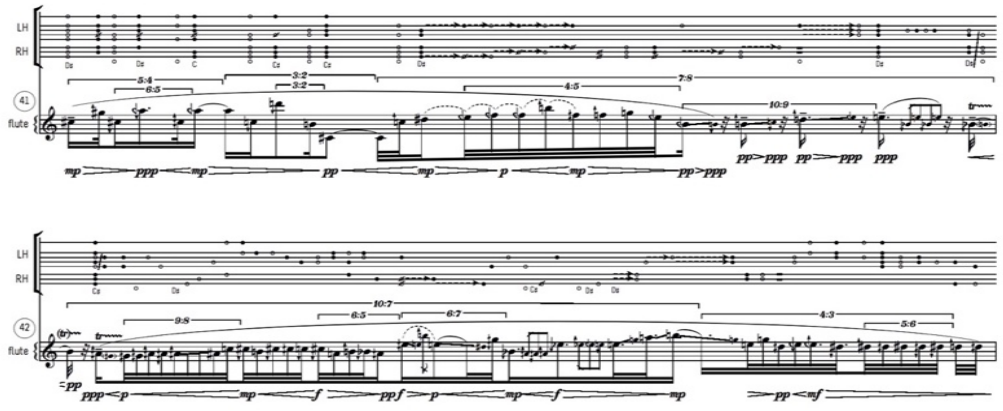


**Figure 0.2**: An example of the flute writing (and fingerings) from Richard Barrett's, VALE, b.41-42

> VALE – linearity and the line are intrinsic to my conception of this piece. Barrett proposes that the entire composition is performed by circular breathing, without any obvious breaks in the musical line (Fig. 0.2).
>
> (Craig, 2017)

To elucidate the suggestion of a creative interaction between myself and the score and elements of agency coming through in VALE, I need to first evoke a more binary relationship between the scores and the recordings, and relate this to my professional experience as a performer and recording artist.

When a performer makes any recording it often entails dealing with a certain answerability to the score – performers are expected to bring a degree of finitude that is a culmination of their work. This suggests that making a recording should be the encapsulation of a work, and a sense of conclusion, or a definitive statement, to the performer's engagement with the score. In addition to this point, when dealing with a contemporary score there is a further emphasis of an 'authoritative exactitude'– that the myriad of detail is also projected into the recording, in all of its fecundity. My aim is not to evaluate the general merits or otherwise of these points, but I am using these to contextualise how and why I have allowed *creative discontinuities* to appear between the score and my recordings.

I term discontinuities as the expressive fluctuations I adopt from within the score, which in creative terms prolongs the life of the work while it is in my hands – I look to avoid the generic, to enhance the individuality of the piece, and continually foster my practice with it[2]. These additions, or subtractions in the recordings differ from what we see in the score, often producing results that are technically more cohesive or encapsulate the visual message that the notation tries to convey. My ethos of creative discontinuity exposes a latent tension in my work between the objectivity of the score and the subjectivity of my performances. One could simplify this as being the binary opposite of accuracy, but to apply this simplification consistently is missing the point. Instead I am positing here evidence of an important creative and technical intervention in the score. The more specific nature of these deviations and the reasoning behind them is demonstrably clear in the case studies, but at this stage, establishing the ground for these contradictions is an important matter and a contextual facet to be understood when approaching VALE.

[2] For example my choice of, tempi, pitching, and in some cases, of pitches can fluctuate when the notation is not consistently concise.

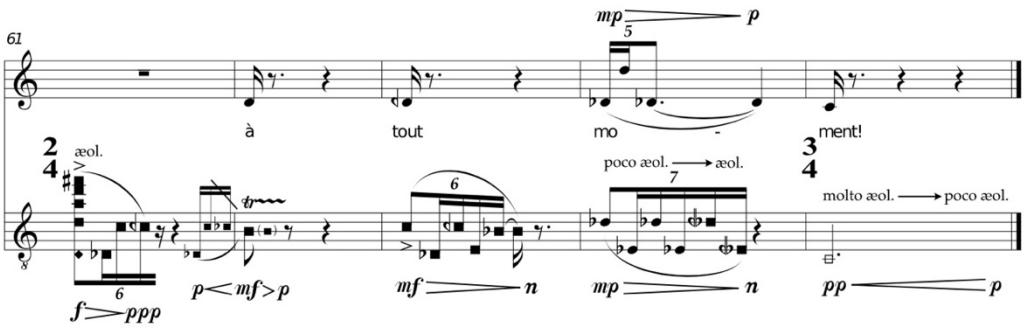


**Figure 0.3**: John Croft, *Deux Malédictions d'une furie*, b. 61-65

> *Deux Méditations d'une furie* (Fig. 0.3) explores the contouring of both the voice and bass flute within aspects of harmonicity. A melodic line is stretched, broken, harmonised or faltering, and the challenge as a performer is how to sustain the pitches whilst shaping the instability of the multiphonics in a linear way.
>
> (Craig, 2017)

### 0.4.2 Auscultation

ii) Each recording is a picture-in-sound of practice, an auscultation.

> An auscultative longing is set up: the dynamic of imaginative reconstruction by the listener plays the shadow role of the performative reconstruction of these pieces given by Richard Craig. Granted, a listener in this case has the privilege of hearing much farther into detail than would have been possible in live performance.
>
> (Greenstone, 2018, p. 95-97)

Each piece in VALE makes use of extended techniques, and this assemblage of compositions marks a clear departure from standardised approaches to the instrument. Not

only does VALE infer a change of position or an evolution in the instrument from a composer's perspective, but it rings a change from a performer's focus too. A fundamental aspect of my interaction with the instrument - how I respond, listen and control the instrument - has been radically changed. Perhaps the best way to convey this to the reader is to consider extended techniques as a form of (re)sensitisation to the instrument, that arrived in my practice through these works, as part of an intensive period of testing, listening and observation. Greenstone's quote above perhaps encapsulates this process of exploration more keenly – metaphorically, there has indeed been an auscultatory tapping, sufflation, palpation and a type of diagnostic listening underway to arrive at a particular sound for a piece, and all of this requires a particular technical posturing to be emitted as it should. As we can see through my interjections into the score, VALE has opened up a greater phenomenological awareness of the instrument, and my own body as an instrument. Aided by Greenstone's enlightened use of 'auscultation' (to listen as one would to a body, or as a means of diagnosis), this level of auditory and somatic awareness has become a watchword for the playing on the disc.

> Articulation, head resonance, the use of the throat (voice), lips and air direction and pressure develop the actual mechanics of flute playing into this aforementioned material. Through this precise but defamiliarizing twisting of the body, Craig moves fluidly through subtle whispers and whistles, clicks, coloured breaths and multiphonics that one realises lie as a latent potential in the flute-with-body relationship. What appears to carry most rhetorical significance is the instrumentalisation of the breath, inhales and exhales that consume and insufflate the eccentrically hermetic *émoi*.
>
> (Greenstone, 2018, p. 95-97)

Whilst VALE is presented as a sound recording, the medium naturally sets a limitation for the listener – one cannot see how physically invested I am. Embarking upon a purely auscultatory exercise invites the listener to consider the variety of abstraction or reorganisation that takes place between instrument and performer. In this way the listener

is in a sense behind an acousmatic veil which prevents them from seeing how, in a demonstrative way, the music is being performed – what physically, spatially, is taking place, and how? It is then from this auscultatory standpoint, a musical cartography, that the listener can become sensitised to the performer's world of spaces, distances and levels of immediacy that takes place in VALE. Not revealing the physical strikes me as an advantage to the medium, and is of benefit – the listener must engage in constructing an imaginary physiology and instrumentalist.

> The CD recording, as an object, stands in productive tension with the pieces gathered into this collection. But it is not the pieces as such that challenge the practice of recording… but the physical exigencies of the interpreting and performing bodies (which then have a heavy hand in the room of giving shape to what the piece 'as such' is).
>
> (Greenstone, 2018, p. 95-97)

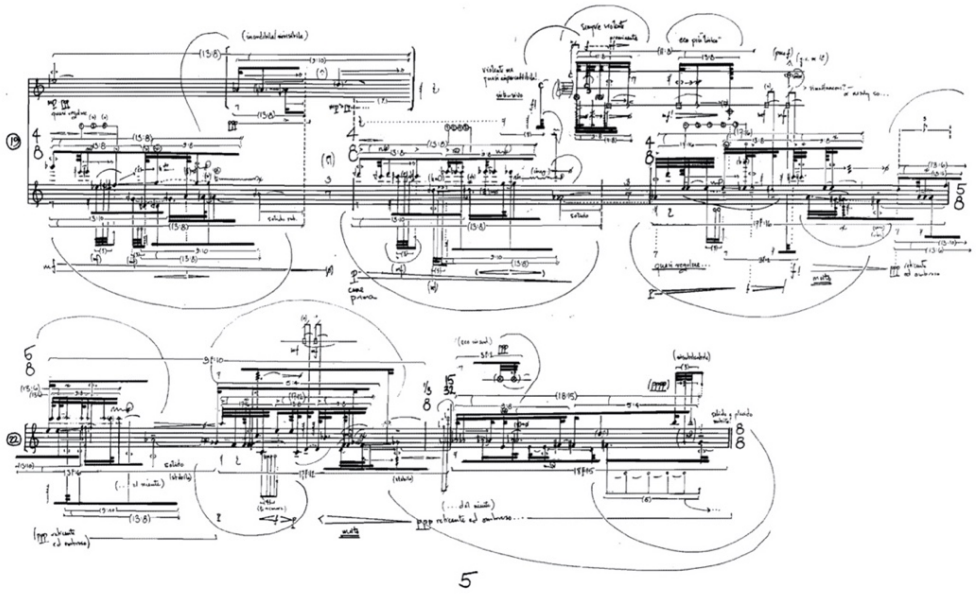

**Figure 0.4**: Examples of the density of the notation in Evan Johnson's, *émoi*, b.19 - 23

> Johnson's *émoi* (Fig. 0.4) has several lines of information and these must be distilled down to one performer. As I can see by the score, there is whistling, and vocal interventions to the flute and even sounds from the mouth as if there is someone, or something, attempting to speak.
>
> (Craig, 2017)

### 0.4.3 Realism

VALE is a series of portraits (performances), involved recategorizing aspects of conveying realism in recording.

My own physical proximity to the instrument allows me a particular insight into the repertoire and the techniques composers use, and in the spirit of my autoethnographic approach it brings a responsibility to render this externally. To establish an interpretative depth to the recordings, or convey to the outside a level of intimacy with the repertoire is achieved in part by the apparatus: namely, the number of microphones, and their proximity to the keys/mouth. This can harness the natural spatialization that occurs in the instrument. However, my commitment to a detailing, or a realism, entailed auditioning the recordings from an aesthetic viewpoint, and to question what was contingent or consequential in the recording. More precisely, aside from the pitches and rhythms, to consider what other artefacts in my playing give a sense of identity and musical integrity to each piece?

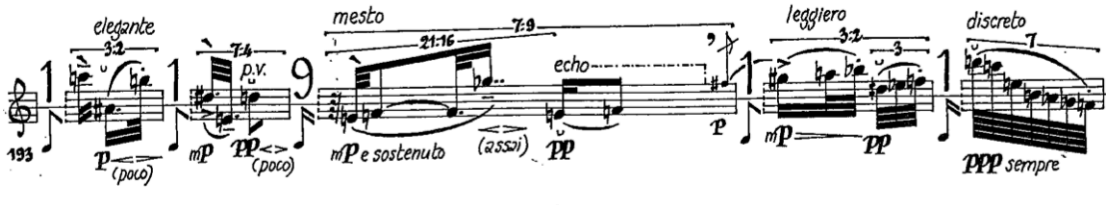


**Figure 0.5**: Brice Pauset, a 'syntactic approach' to melody *Eurydice* b.193 - 197

> Pauset's *Eurydice* (Fig. 0.5) has a more syntactic approach to melody: linguistic inflections to the phrase structure; there are microtonal shadings, hiatuses and gradations of emphasis and weight in a phrase.
>
> (Craig, 2017)

All of the recordings include what at first I thought of as a *by-product* of my efforts – as well as the prescribed information from the score, we had the mechanics of the instrument, the coincidental sounds around tone production, or percussive resonances from my body, mouth, and even the way in which I breathe. They are sounds which exist around the performance of a piece, but have a secondary meaning (for example, the breath, or the striking of a key - they suggest a demonstrative action or movement), whilst also remaining contingent to the types of attack and gestures that the score suggests. These extraneous sounds are often removed from commercial recordings in favour of offering a sterile portrayal of the work without portraying the physical effort.

They key point here is rather than classify the aura of other sounds around my performance (such as the breathing, the noise keywork or the articulation) as secondary parts to the performance, they are included in these recordings to convey a vital realism about the piece to the listener. The compositions on VALE retain the traces of my physical engagement with my practice – each work has been worn into shape, leaving traces on the surface. The 'auscultatory tapping, sufflation, palpation' I noted earlier, is etched into a live performance. Another interpretation of this, using the metaphor of an ecosystem between the instrument, myself, and the score has been noted by the composer John Hails in his liner notes for VALE:

> one becomes aware not of the limitations of the flute but of its expansion into a vibrant sonic biosphere. We listen, not just to the flute, but to the flautist; singing, whistling, humming are added to his palette and become integrated with the sound of the instrument
>
> (Hails, 2017, p. 1)


**Figure 0.6**: Fabrice Fitch, *Agricola IX* b.13 - 18

> Agricola IX (Fig. 0.6) restricts itself to a very narrow pitch bandwidth in which there is a compressed melodic theme unfolding for the duration of the piece. The flute part often feels like a vocal line, and stretched over several bars without a taking a breath
>
> (Craig, 2017)

There are already several aspects to VALE that offer a lot for us to consider – there are changes in aesthetic approaches, proposals as to how to convey a realism and also aspects of artistic integrity within these categories - all of which started from an initial idea about linearity and a contemporary approach to working with a monodic instrument. The latter is still intact: however, the theme is now more concerned with the overspill of musical information (or musical instruction) from the scores and how to capture these here. In this sense VALE was a technical and aesthetic evolution in my practice. And the variety of sounds which the flute and the instrumentalist can make together opens up a novel conception as how to listen to the album and my practice.

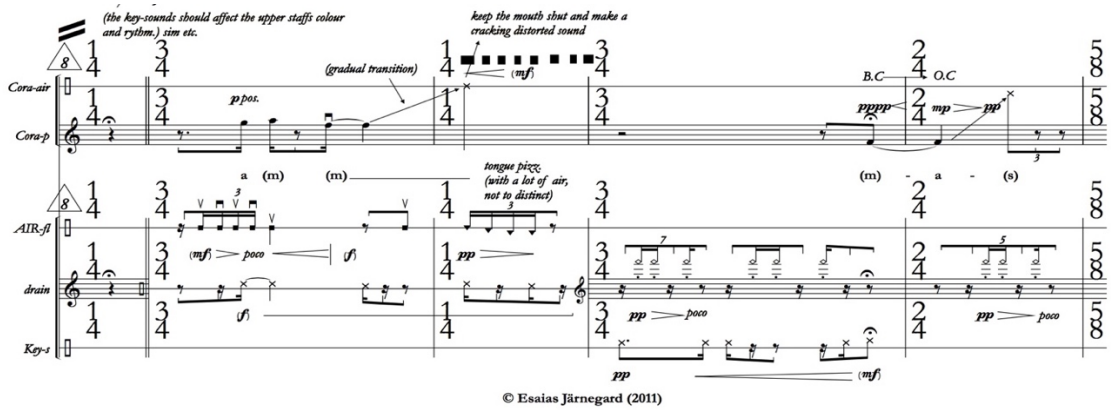


**Figure 0.7**: Esaias Järnegard, PSALM, b. 8 - 12

> PSALM (Fig: 0.7) PSALM creates a discourse between the contrabass flute and solo voice, although both instruments are fused by sharing the vocalisation, and harmonic material
>
> (Craig, 2017)

To look to the project ahead now, there is one final point that I want to make with regard to my sources (the scores and VALE). That is the notion of *surplus.* At every turn there are multiple meanings and approaches to this repertoire. Equally, the emergence of the works on VALE required drawing upon ideas outside of the musical domain. Surplus then, and transcending any normal disciplinary boundaries, becomes an inherent aspect of the work I am presenting. And as such, the density and volume of the information, whether it be from the scores or the CD, already begins to point toward the lack of definition of composer or performer descriptors when discussing their respective roles.

## 1.0 Methodology and theoretical approaches

Autoethnography is the overarching methodological approach to this project, and I have developed theoretical sub-disciplines within this ethnographical framework. My reading took theoretical standpoints from outside my discipline to shape concepts and design analytical approaches to my research. My research has involved a cross-disciplinary approach, introducing theory and new methodologies into my practice. The main emphasis of both the critical and analytical aspects in my work has been to develop and build my own thinking as the project progresses, and in a similar way to my theoretical exemplars, to establish questioning and wariness of the *status quo ante*. As I open up my research, I access philosophers and geographers such as Philip Agre *Computation and Human Experience* (1997), Havi Carel *The Phenomenology of illness* (2016) and Doreen Massey *For Space* (2005), and I also engage with the writings of Tim Ingold and Norman Denzin. In more creative terms I look to the philosopher Michel Serres, literary theorist and semiotician Roland Barthes, artist Brian Eno and poet Seamus Heaney. Above all, the methodologies, theoretical considerations and artistic insight I adopt are from those who are emphatically engaged with *a practice* of some sort, or consider their discipline as such. They also encourage a critical approach and challenge the inherited basis, or expectations, of their own discipline, whether it be philosophy, geography, anthropology, writing or semiotics. Each thinker I engage with has a distinct approach to problematisation, and those that I cite often resort to autoethnography in order to express the problematics of the subject, and vocalise their own suspicion of inherited theoretical trends. I find these written accounts provocative. Their approach has informed my project as they seek to understand, critique or exemplify 'doing' or new forms of 'making' as a solution or explication of disciplinary obstacles. From this brief overview of the theoretical consciousness at work in my research, we can see how I have cultivated a range of reporting voices within my own autoethnographical stance as opposed to finding a single cohesive methodology or theory. Describing this practice presented a challenge. The techniques I needed to convey the work required a diverse vocabulary, as well as a range of new perspectives and metaphors. To fully convey a sense of reality and cogence to the practice, it has been vital to draw upon several other voices and approaches in my research (Denzin, 2013).

## 1.1 Autoethnography

> A project in sensory ethnography might well produce a contribution to interdisciplinary theory-building, an applied intervention and an artwork. As such, it would have the potential to communicate to a range of different audiences, using different media, and creating different sensory strategies through which to invoke the experience of one person or persons to others.
>
> (Pink, 2015, p. 22)

Pink illustrates here how autoethnography is a self-generative process that can inform interrogative structures and stages interventions. This involves the researcher in a process of self-awareness and re-organisation of habitual work processes or attitudes. For the purpose of conveying my work here, and to illuminate practices which are tacitly engaged, but out-of-sight from my typical viewpoint, an autoethnographical enquiry is also a contextualisation. It provides insight into larger cultural issues and interdisciplinary aspects, and caters for the more finely grained performance practices that can be found within my work. Autoethnography is then not only addressing the pragmatic aspects of performance, but also engaging with an interrogative and political structure, which becomes a co-constituent in my case studies. Before I begin to discuss how I have approached autoethnography, some biographical detail is needed to ground my own assumptions with regards to my role as a performer, my training, and up until this point, what has influenced my work.

My initial degree focused on classical music performance and only after a more intensive post-graduate study into extended techniques did I fully engage with contemporary music through ensembles and performing solo repertoire. Commissioning new solo repertoire has also given me considerable insight as to how the collaborative process takes shape, as well as the relational dynamics between composers and performers. If I am to identify particular influences as a basis of my autoethnographical profile, I can identify three key experiences from my training, my career, and my aesthetic interests as a musician.

Firstly, my training instilled a sense of exactitude to my performance work, and also a clear delineation (from a music history perspective) between the role of a performer and composer. Secondly, from my career thus far, I have understood that collaboration in contemporary music, as a creative partnership between performers and composer, is much more porous than it seems, and not as defined as my initial classical training would have it. Thirdly, from an aesthetic perspective, I observe and listen to improvisers such as Axel Dörner, Evan Parker and John Butcher. As individual musicians and examples of performers/composers, these musicians have purposed an individual approach to their instrument, and (to my mind) a compositional way of thinking about performance which goes beyond the performer and composer dynamic.

From this brief biographical introduction, we note that there is a tension between my current persona as a performer, and the structures around the profession (such as my relation to the score and composer). As far as is possible I will use the scores and the critical reading of other works as a means to temper my perceptions of the power structures in contemporary music, my role in this structure, and the more immediate and transitory aspects of creativity in performance and practice. Granting a voice to all of these concerns and having the recourse to switch personae or change narrative voice is a particular strength of an autoethnographical approach. I have pinpointed three distinct themes that begin to define my use of autoethnography.

### 1.1.1 Self-reporting – developing an awareness

Alongside the research questions and objectives, my own aim for this project was to create a depth to the practice, and tacitly to the writing in which both media were interlinked. This required a self-awareness which has come about through the method of autoethnography, and is developed as the project continues. Put another way, as I develop my own written voice and approach to analysis, writing becomes a dynamic and generative aspect to my project and conceptualisations. While writing can be an abstraction of practice, I aim to establish a level of co-dependency between writing and practice, with the task of writing to become as exacting as my performance and recording practice. Denzin (2013) and Plath

(1987) identify the link between the practice and writing as being a 'consubstantial' element to research (Denzin, 2013, p. 45). In the book *Interpretative Authoethnography* (2013), Denzin refers to a citation from Michel de Montaigne's *Essais* (1958)[3]. Here Montaigne describes how he renders himself in text, while simultaneously giving substance to the transitory and a sense of interiority.

> In modelling this figure upon myself, I have had to fashion and compose myself so often to bring myself out, that the model itself has to some extent grown firm and taken shape. Painting myself for others, I have painted my inward self with colours clearer that my original ones. I have no more made my book than my book has made me - a book consubstantial with its author, concerned with my own self, an integral part of my life.
>
> (Montaigne, 1958, p. 504)

The consubstantial is then the outward rendering of a space or personality; to build or shape a situation, range of choices and actions, which in their totality brings practice into the realms of being tangible to the reader. And, as the consubstantial takes its course, there is a necessary consolidation of the writer's ideas, and in the case of musical practice it has meant moving towards a crystallisation of the work.

### 1.1.2 Autoethnography as a democratisation of practice

> Autoethnographic texts…democratise the representational sphere of culture by locating the particular experiences of individuals in tension with dominant expressions of discursive power.
>
> (Neumann 1996, p. 189)

How my work as a performer is contextualised culturally is an important facet to charting the investigative direction and outcomes in my thesis. Already, we can discern a latent tension from the language used in my introduction ('paradigms', 'democratisation', 'inherited ideas',

[3] Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592), *Essais* (1570-1592)

'territories', 'stances', 'resistances' and 'hierarchies'). From this we can see that there is a political aspect to my writing, and that this narrative is one that potentially connects my work to a larger community of artists and a span of concerns. If we look at the quotation above, and consider the observations about discursive power so far: the method of autoethnography can potentially unravel the relationships and causes of the political tension that I propose are situated in my discipline. As the thesis proceeds, the narrative of a political tension does take root in a more concrete way in my practice (I will take time in my conclusion to unpack this more carefully). However, for the time being I want to introduce the idea of a democratisation and how initially this takes its form at this early juncture.

We can take democratisation to mean an articulation of a verbal response, as I do here, as an initial momentum against particular 'dominant expressions of discursive power' (Neumann 1996, p. 189). However, from an artistic perspective, I consider democratisation as being a demonstrable act. It can also be a prompt to *make* artistic work that in itself locates and responds to the discursive traits in question. It is through compositions, performances and recordings that I exemplify the problematics, as well as instantiate a response to the aforementioned discursive powers.

One theme I have locate at the heart of my thesis is that of the performer and composer exchange, but here I look to a relocation of my discussion of composition by engaging with composition. It is then through attempting to compose my own music that there is naturally a change of voice to my argument - from thinking and reporting as a performer, to adopting a composer's approach. By dint of autoethnography I can experiment with a politicisation of my own discourse and practice, and as such generate a creative output in answer to this too. Taking on this role was a means of obtaining a more objective viewpoint about composers and the practice of composition. Again, with autoethnography as a structure, such an intervention and change in persona is integral to presenting a balanced approach in the project.

### 1.1.3 Challenging established practices

When outlining my sub-categories of method, the task of challenging established practice is perhaps the most problematic. The initial difficulty here is to raise my awareness of the

habitual voice or engrained practices, and after establishing this awareness, maintaining a vigilance as to the evolution of my work as an ongoing process throughout my research. While such an intense scrutiny may seem inhibitive or stand in the way of a more organic approach to making and performance, it is a vital observational technique that creatively engineers interventions, and evokes a degree of self-provocation. Furthermore, if positioned correctly, this type of awareness yields more holistic insights to my music practice. In doing so it raises my awareness that my research does not exist in isolation from others in my field, and that through my own analyses of my practice, my results can be examples or offer solutions to peers and other communities of practitioners and researchers.

Challenging my current practice is then rooted in reflective questioning that examines standardised approaches to transcribing experiences, and just as important, knowing how to modulate my questioning to fit the subject. I can give a more concrete example of this in a brief comparison of my two case studies. If we look at the way in which I approach case study one – *émoi* - and case study two – *luminous* – they illustrate one such discursive change of voice. Case study one takes a more musicologically orientated position, something which is familiar to me due to my own experience as a music student and academic. In case study one, I use the relative safety of a well-established performer, composer and score argument to navigate the processes of musical practice, via an intermingling of theory and pragmatism. If we look to case study two, there is a change of voice. The latter takes us toward a more experimental approach, and one which relies more on a phenomenological understanding of performance. Here I replace the performer, composer and score template with a more somatically orientated agenda, one that is governed by the performer, and in which my observations guide the composition and the narrative of the writing. In the case of *luminous*, I need to articulate an embodied form of knowledge, and attempt to characterise the writing to adequately document what occurs in my practice.

Regardless of my approach, both case studies have considerable challenges to address, but for the sake of my point above, *how* I answered each case study indicates my awareness of contexts, the typical approaches, and how to address the specific challenges of the pieces. It is through a deliberate change of voice (or, an intervention to enforce or expand my comprehension of the topic) that I can intercept and challenge habitual lines of enquiry.

As a chain of events, these methodological and theoretical manoeuvrings are an attempt to overwrite the more pedestrian aspects of practice with new ideas and theory. Regardless of how the data arrives to us (via a binary comparison of the score versus the performance in *émoi*, or through more experimental phenomenological approach in *luminous*) it is the type of intervention, or lens, that I adopt which is an important part of detecting and counteracting established practices.

### 1.2 Massey – For Space

In the book 'For Space' the geographer and social scientist Doreen Massey proposes the concept of space, or a space, as a domain that is specific to its constituents and their relation to each other. I adopt Massey's thesis, as a new interpretation of my practice as a type of space. It is one of my main theoretical commitments, and it brings to bear a consideration of how Massey's concept of space can be constructed (whether it be defined as a creative, political or communal domain) and so I undertook the challenge to conceptualise and map out my practice as per Massey's criteria. The point of this theoretical exercise was to outline explicitly what connects my research to other aspects of a wider music practice, and examine the way my conceptions of space, and the numerous relationships inferred by this, interact with Massey's theory. As a start toward a much more complicated and longer project, the case studies become the basis of my project of spatialization: they exist as examples of a pre-determined environment or a space, where I consider myself to be situated at the moment, as well as illustrating its constituents.

Why is Massey's concept of space so necessary a method in an already defined discipline? We have established already that seeing and exposing the implicit, or habitual, in practice is an imperative to an autoethnographical study. Massey enters into my study as an interlocutor, and it is through Massey that I am beholden to outline that which I accept as the *status quo*, and to reassess its importance or meaning. If we look more closely at Massey's concept of space and spatialization briefly here, I can illustrate the key points of the concept, and how it plays a discrete part in the first two-thirds of the thesis, coming to prominence in the conclusion, where I bring the theory and my own work into focus. In the first two-thirds of the study I outline for the reader examples of how each case study, my

own composition, and the performances I report, have their own agendas, representations of power, and an inner criteria, based on a physical, relational, and an aesthetic underpinning. And, in the conclusion I bring the initial groundwork of my thesis to engage more critically with Massey's theoretical framework, and examine the criteria and my projections of their discursive power. Massey's classification of space consists of three points, and I use these as a way of laying the groundwork for a more in-depth analysis later in my conclusion.

### 1.2.1 Defining space as interrelations

Any space, at its core, has a series of interrelations (in this instance the relations between the composer, performer and the score, being the main protagonists), and we need to recognise that any space is a product of these interactions (Massey, 2005 p. 8). Massey's original context is however the geopolitical, and addressing how globalisation has made it necessary to redraw and understand our ideas of space (this is later taken up and developed by Sarah Pink in her book *Doing Sensory Autoethnography* [2015])[4]. In the context of my work as a performer the business of collaborating and interpretation requires an area, imagined or otherwise, in which to have a form of dialogue, whether it be in person or digitally. The composer, the performer, and the score, assert an identity within this 'space', and as such create a series of relationships which I respond to, or comment upon. The broader concept of a community also enters into this definition with the proposal that space is 'co-constitutive' (Massey, 2005, p. 32): that is to say that we have constituted space between practitioners in the profession (it could be online or across several platforms), which can be informed by, or informs my work. From this simple description we can see that to constitute such a space, and the discipline which I speak of, there must be some form of organisation, or politicisation, of exchanges or modes of communication within that space (Massey, 2005, p. 8).

[4] Pink (2013), notes 'Doreen Massey's reformulation of the relationship between place and space, which brings out attention to the politics of space as 'open', offers a way to understand the situatedness of the ethnographer in relations to social relations and power structures'. p.30

### 1.2.2 Multiplicity

As an intrinsically non-linear, heterogenous, and multi-narrative domain, space can contain a plurality of identities, and by necessity, numerous approaches to modes of description and exchange (Massey, 2005, p. 163). For example, Massey characterises space as a multi-narrative domain - its temporality being a non-linear construct. This means that agents or narratives can flex back to the historical as well as speak of the now, simultaneously being in the here-and-now. Refining this awareness and how I communicate it will become integral to the research as I progress. Another overarching condition of space is that there is naturally a criss-crossing of terms, influences, and a simultaneity of themes (both musical and otherwise) that my work takes, and this feeds into the cross-disciplinary considerations that lie ahead.

Moving now towards an initial temporal and narrative framing of my thesis, here I am projecting a multiplicity of voices and concerns of the project; there is a layering of interrelations, historical practices, individualism, co-constituents and political structures: these all figure as my 'contemporaneous plurality' (Massey, 2005, p. 31), that have a 'sphere in which distinct trajectories co-exist' (Massey, 2005, p. 31). Massey's vision of space is one that is an entangled and an inter-related network, which in turn cannot exist without some form of location, conceptually speaking or otherwise: 'without space, no multiplicity; without multiplicity, no space' (Massey, 2005, p. 31).

### 1.2.3 A space to be constructed

'Space as always under construction' (Massey 2005 p.32). If I am to indicate a future for this study and my work at this stage in the thesis, it can be seen through Massey's vision of construction. Thinking *constructively*, as in the practical aspects of making, there is clearly an implicit compositional aspect to my work as a whole which falls into the category of a space, or community. A performance, piece of writing, or a composition can then be categorised as part of an ongoing constructive dialogue, either in response to, or a provocation of, the conceptual space in which it exists. The constructive aspect of my work and reworking of its parameters (via re-interpretation of scores, new performances, or

composing) is an attempt to define some aspect of materiality and tangible accretion of knowledge, which can be built upon, and feed into my evolution as an artist. I evoke Massey here with a certain anticipation too: the definition of space as we have heard it, and that of making a space, is essentially a creative and reflective project, and as such it sets the scene for a series of imaginative interpretations of my work. Populating this space as I do, it has the potential for a deeper critical engagement, and to highlight latent tensions or narratives which I have not yet encountered. Clearly I have interpreted a vitalism in Massey's theory of space, which while mindful of the inherited nature of practice and the historical ties, is absolutely invested in a potential future of construction and reconstruction. The point being here to make the case for a change in ontology of the performer, the composer and the score.

### 1.3 Toward a practice of composition

The practice of composition is used in my thesis as a dialectical tool – it is a method that responds to the challenges of the case studies through the practice of making my own work. As a format of response, it can creatively extend the concepts I outline in the case studies, by considering myself, the instrumentalist, as an instrument. Featuring composition here as a non-textual commentary to practice, my pieces reply to the composers through my persona of the performer (taking up materials or extending themes from the case studies). As I outlined earlier, I am taking on the role of the composer and attempting to work the other side of the debate - composing and composition provides an opportunity to relate and demonstrate the following over-arching hypotheses in my research:

i. that the intensive work I undertake in the learning of scores leaves a trace in a performer's practice, which shows itself in my own compositional output

ii. that conceptual ideas from the case studies are folded into my compositional designs, or shape a performance practices for my own music

### 1.3.1 Composition as a design process

> We might rather consider composition as a design process, and study its dynamics and decisions in the spirit of critical technical practice.
>
> (Impett, 2016)

As part of a seminar at the Orpheus Institute, convened by Jonathan Impett in November 2016, I presented a paper that integrated the theory of Philip Agre's *Critical Technical Practice* into the beginnings of my own compositional practice. The paper was my first attempt to situate my compositions using Agre's critique of accepted design processes. To be more precise, I assumed a particular viewpoint: that technology, or any technical practice (namely music composition) can house unnoticed assumptions and dogmas within its design. To break free from this repetitive aspect of producing work, one needs to adopt a reflective account of a technical practice (the hands-on making of work), as well as employing a system of thought that engages with the analytical (what am I attempting to articulate? and does it succeed within the parameters I have set myself?).

As a research methodology I looked to composition as a critical design process that involved a clear delineation of the *thinking* and *doing*, bringing into focus what we know about the case studies and how they have fed into my compositional designs in a technical and critical way.

## 1.4 Additional theoretical considerations

> The fact is that by using a mechanical contrivance, a violinist or an organist can express something poignantly human that cannot be expressed without the mechanical contrivance. To achieve such expression of course the violinist or organist has to have interiorised the technology, made the tool or machine a second nature, a psychological part of himself or herself.
>
> (Ingold, 2016, p.147)

The extract above is from Ingold's *Lines: a brief history* (2016). Ingold is concerned here with the comportment of skill, as a form of technology. Whilst we are familiar with technology with regard to computers, electronics and circuitry, from the perspective of the anthropologist, technology takes a much wider meaning (Ingold, 2000, p. 298). Ingold suggests that human learning and adaption is a form technology which becomes embedded into practical tasks that we perform, and thus it becomes a bespoke skill (or technology). Engaging with Ingold's theory led me to considering the parallel development of skills involved in my case studies, and how these can make an imprint upon the corporeal act of music-making. In this case, Ingold uses writing as an example of such an adaptation: that is to say that the instrument (a pen), and the person who has developed the skill of using a pen to write, is harnessing and creating a type of technology within themselves. In my case, whether it be composing or playing, there is also a way in which I can be modified by the skills, tasks or tools I engage with. Again, looking to Ingold:

> As with any skill, the art of handwriting emerges through a continuous process of bodily modification with the context of the novices' engagement with other persons and diverse objects in their environment'
>
> (Ingold, 2000, p.402)

Ingold adds to this that:

> We should not forget that there can be no inscription without incorporation – without, in other words, the building of habitual patterns of posture and gesture into the bodily *modus operandi* of the skilled practitioner. Just like speech, in short, writing is an achievement of the whole human organism-person in his or her environment.
>
> (Ingold, 2000, p.403)

Ingold's insight has brought a fresh concept of technology into my thinking, of how the human experience of learning and adapting to tasks can be considered as a form of technology. This, as a theoretical basis, has been an underlying premise of my project, and also feeds into the more daily concerns of practice and its adaptation of the body (for

example in case study 2 [*luminous*] and the way in which I develop and integrate new techniques into my practice).

### 1.4.1 Havi Carel

The *Phenomenology of Illness* contains first-person accounts and conceptions of bodily-confidence versus realisations of physical limitations. Carel looks to the phenomenological aspects of illness as a distinct mode of being that contextualises and intervenes into human experience, and through her analysis (which is informed by philosophers Heidegger, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty) Carel articulates illness as an opaqueness in our everyday experience. Based on my phenomenological experience around the breath and breathing in *luminous*, Carel serves as an example in delineating the physical boundaries and establishing a vocabulary to speak about the body. Bearing in mind the gravity of Carel's research, I carefully negotiate a similar level of detail in description when discussing the body and its limitations. This is achieved using a particular framework that Carel outlines (and I approach this in more detail in case study two). My approach to phenomenology is as much a question of voice as it is a philosophical endeavour, and as much as possible, I am equipping the textual representation of experiences with a vocabulary that has an accuracy as well as descriptive power which is implicitly connected to the physical exigences of my case study.

### 1.4.2 Roland Barthes

Susan Sontag noted that:

> 'It was not a question of knowledge (he [Barthes] couldn't have known much about some of the subjects he wrote about) but of alertness, a fastidious transcription of what *could* be thought about something, once it swam into the stream of attention. There was always some fine net of classification into which the phenomenon could be tipped.
>
> (Sontag, 1980)

I look to Barthes as a protean artistic researcher who made use of reflexivity to report the conditions of making, and aspects of the work-in-progress. The book *Preparation of the Novel* (Barthes, 2011) was originally intended as a personal journal by Barthes to record his own attempts in writing a novel. It later became repurposed as a series of lectures delivered at the *College de France* and used as teaching material. In this collection of notes, *aides-mémoires* and fragments, Barthes documents his own practice towards writing a novel, annotating what fuels his process with an array of seemingly intermediary and often whimsical concerns as a writer. Whilst these appear insignificant in the context of writing a novel, the transcriptions of his own processes, and the frustration or *jouissance* of making work are points of note to all practice-led projects. The notes also contain a series of insights into the creative process, addressing ideas of artistic appropriation, reading/interpretation, inspiration and authorship. As Sontag notes, his skill as a thinker and writer is that of 'fastidious transcription' (Sontag, 1980): an example of this can be found below - Barthes refers to practicing Schumann on the piano, and recalls a passage of the Schumann as a series of imaginary consecutive blows to his (or an imaginary) body:

> what I hear are blows: I hear what beats in the body, what beats the body, or better: I hear this body that beats
>
> (Barthes, 1985, p. 299)

Barthes practices a sincerity and inclusiveness in his writing – he momentarily expels the kudos of the exclusive or the expert, and instead cultivates a sensuality and wide-eyed absorption in his subjects. This openness, combined with his powers as a semiotician, writer and philosopher, encouraged me to embark upon a similar exploration and a cultivation of my own viewpoints as a means to question and elucidate my own practice.

In this introductory chapter we have heard about the main methodological and theoretical texts underpinning my thesis. Also, I have outlined the purpose of VALE as a context to my practice and an overarching example of my practical work.

## 2.0 Case studies

The case studies are a meeting point for several important aspects of the thesis: from these two works we can see how I engage with the scores, and gain a sense of the context as to what exactly I mean by *my practice*. Both case studies have instigated a bespoke response from me, and the notation and concepts about performance that I discuss answer what I see as the particular aims or aesthetic function of each work. Alongside developing a specialised practice, the case studies are also my close reading of the compositions, and within this I inevitably project my own interpretations of the music. To facilitate for the reader how I go about this close reading, I have developed more generic ideas or approaches that have until this point have been woven into, or are part of, the general descriptor that is called 'performance practice'. In terms of vocabulary, the following is intended to offer clarity as to the depth of my engagement, and how it is applied to the case study. For example, when writing about Evan Johnson's *émoi*, when I discuss 'reading', it is often not only reading as to glean some sort of understanding from the music, but also reading *without* the instrument (to gather information, to understand, conceptualise, and to make connections other elements of the score). I attach similar definitions to the remaining categories below.

**Reading** – to engaged with the score as if it were a form of text. I attempt to rationalise the notation, and attribute values to the symbolic nature of the piece, as it appears in the score. As such, this is conveyed as a primarily silent practice, without the instrument. It is also a conceptual projection of the composition, with the removal of instrument being an important part of this. In reading, I am trying to figuratively 'hear' the composition as the score suggests.

**Practice** – this refers to how I continuously distil the technical information of the scores and my interaction with them. I seek to resolve/mediate technical difficulties and integrate the conceptual ideas of new techniques in the score through looking closely at practice. By examining these aspects, often through problematisation, I begin to mediate my interpretation.

**Performance** – An overall picture of the piece which has become consolidated; a formalised series of postures and evolving demonstrations of the score. This is more readily shown in my study as a recording, or commentary upon a performance. I use a discursive approach to describe performance situations and any strategies that arise to reinforce this idea.

### 2.1 Case study 1: *émoi* by Evan Johnson

Taking my interpretation and performance of Evan Johnson's *émoi* (2010) for solo bass flute as a point of departure, this section will outline my approaches to issues that are found in *émoi*. Through my own negotiation of the challenges in *émoi* I propose that a form of composition emerges from within my practice, within the boundaries of the case study.

As well as discussing my own work in this case study, there is an overarching context that sets an example as to what is facing performers of contemporary music today. With each notated work there is a particular compositional language and technical vocabulary for the musician to master. This is often conveyed to the performer through a bespoke system of notation. The notation, which incorporates a range of symbols over and above the typical approaches to scoring, also includes pages of preparatory instructions that require the performer to engage with an additional level of thought, over and above merely playing a work. From this perspective, the contemporary score engages with aspects of visual representation, as well as a departure from what we would expect from the instrument and instrumentalist. It becomes clear that *émoi* was an immersive experience for me, and an usual approach in notation by Johnson, which required a translation of the score. In my case, I make a series of performative choices and strategies, engaging with conceptual and pragmatic solutions to the score, as well as placing my own decisions over the musical material and its efficacy. Such a reflective experience also brings about a global change in my practice, and in this chapter I will outline the challenges as they appear in the score.

To contextualise how contemporary music practice looks today, I will establish some initial observations from Umberto Eco's *The Open Work* (1962) about the performer's input into a

composition, and in more creative terms, I then look to Roland Barthes and his reflections about creative practice. These, alongside my own proposals, also draw upon the writings of the composer Brian Ferneyhough, and my private correspondence with Evan Johnson – all of which are used to bring *émoi* into a broader discussion of music practice.

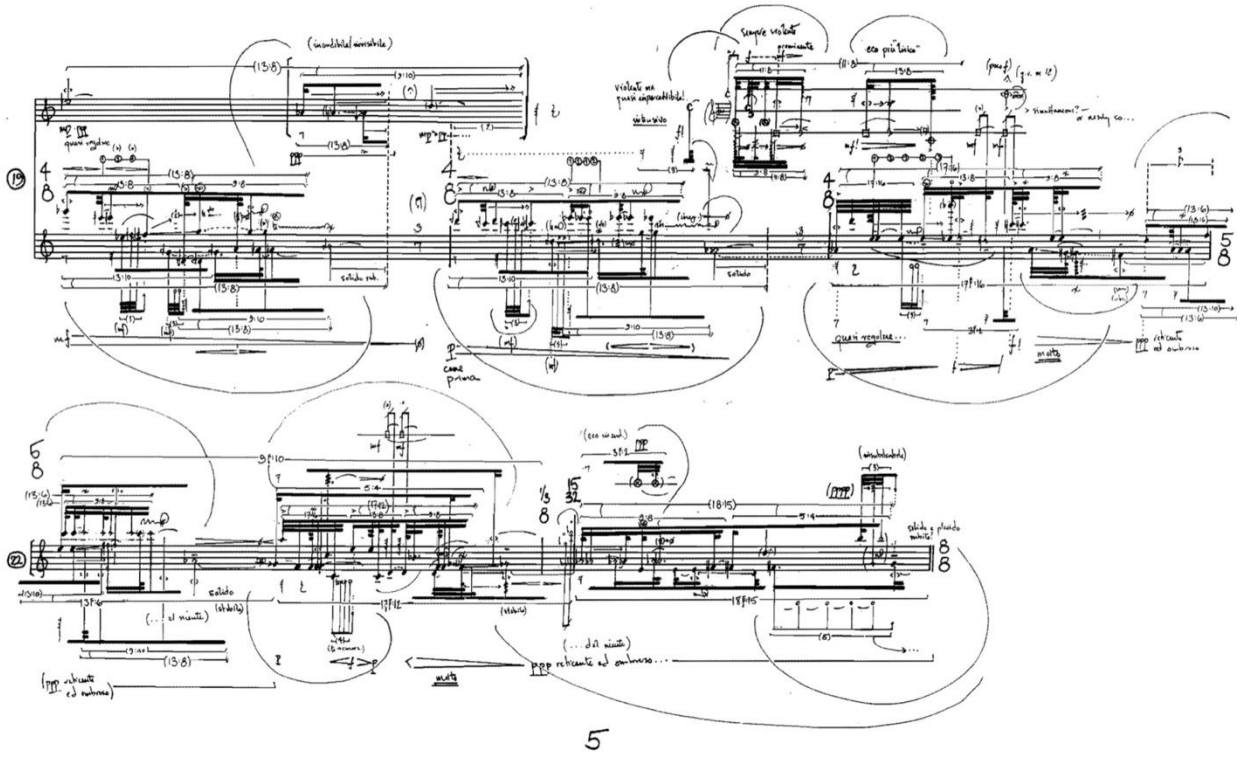

**Figure 2.0**: Evan Johnson, émoi, b.19 - 23

*émoi* for solo bass flute was commissioned by the BMI for Claire Chase in 2010 and premiered in 2013 by the same performer (Fig: 1.0). It is first and foremost a striking depiction of instrumental virtuosity, containing twenty-three pages of handwritten score and a substantial set of explanatory notes. However, *émoi* makes little recourse to contemporary or extended techniques for the flute, but rather it weaves a variety of corporeal sounds such as discreet vocal noises, whistles and formants, into a more or less classical approach to flute playing, using a very particular visual language. The work explores the use of notation (marked at *pianissimo* or less), and the vocal actions undertaken by the performer to convey a particular type of performance practice. *émoi* is very much rooted in the conventions of instrumental performance practice, if restricted to precise physical and aesthetic boundaries

within this category. In addition to the instrumental instructions as they are notated in the score, the performer's presence, or guise on stage, somehow has to embody a form of veiled drama that is implicit in a physical portrayal of the work to the audience. The composer himself notes that:

> In an ideal performance, and an ideal venue, the space between the performer(s) and the audience is both sucked away through the intimacy of the material and expanded, and rendered opaque, by the constant awareness that things are going on in the performance that are inaccessible.
>
> (Johnson, 2015)

For any score to capture the above information, there has to be considerable degree of interpretation on the part of the performer.

*émoi* arrives at a particular juncture of contemporary music practice, the beginnings of which were noted in Umberto Eco's *The Open Work* (1962). Eco describes in the opening chapter how the unfolding structure and content of certain compositions by Berio, Pousseur, Stockhausen and Boulez can be left to the performer to decide[5]. While Eco observes this shift in the performer and composer relationship, he avoids examining the implications that such a seemingly straight-forward task brings for the performer and their practice, no less than for the composer. Almost sixty-years later, contemporary music performance practice (both in terms of the notation and performance) has changed considerably, to the point that there is now an emphasis on a performer's technique or individual approach, which can in itself serve as a vehicle for new work. My discussion of *émoi* is thus aimed at contributing to a contemporary music practice that engages with a creative facet in a performer's identity,

[5] At the time this was one of several strategies by composers to experiment with form and structure. For example, Boulez's third piano sonata is the example that Eco gives, in which the first part of the work involves choosing and organising the order of ten pre-determined sketches.

and not only an interpretation of a piece of music or decision making from pre-determined routes.

### 2.1.1 Score overview

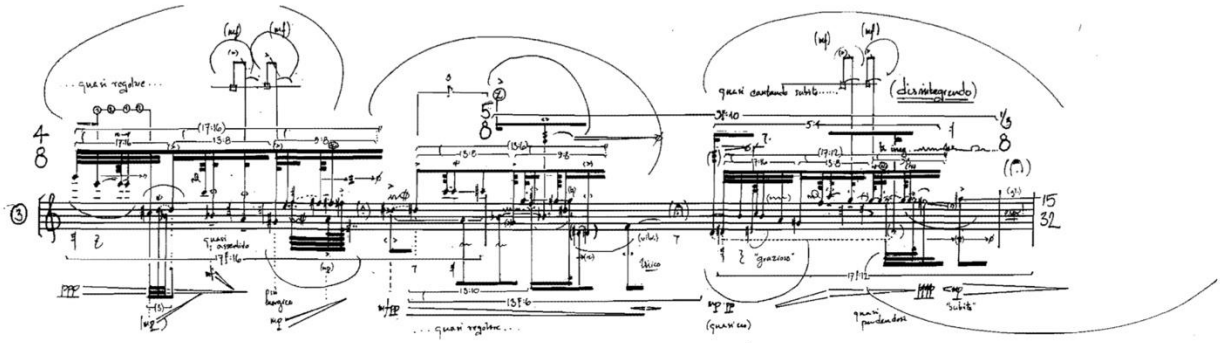

**Figure 2.1**: Evan Johnson, *émoi,* b.3 - 5

Even from a cursory reading of *émoi* I am faced with a provocation – the density, scale, and level of detail go far beyond what one would typically see in a work for solo instrumentalist (Fig. 1.1). We could say that *émoi* as it stands is 'impossible' to perform. This is a word often used to describe such a score, but this label perhaps reveals in part an underlying expectation as to what a score should do, and by default, what the role of the performer is – that the performer is merely an executant of the composer's bidding. Even if for a moment we examine the label of unplayability with regard to *émoi* from a purely objective position we can say, yes, it is impossible to perform elements of *émoi* for the following practical reasons:

i. the bass flute is a monodic instrument and not technically capable of performing simultaneous contrapuntal lines or a form of consistent chordal writing;

ii. the filigree nature of the writing means that it is impossible to realise exactly, within the durations dictated, what the composer intends

But, as I have indicated, my proposal is that the performative difficulty in *émoi* can be a creative facet, but that this only emerges from further questioning into the notation and considering how, and where, within the score, I am to place my mark. It we look more closely at the score and its preface, we see that the notational complexity has a particular musical and psychological purpose. The intricacy of the writing is in fact a through-conceived element that works with a very tenuous balance between instrumental limitations and a compositional idealism. This raises the question of the practical purpose of this notation. Below, Johnson offers an indication as to what *émoi* tries to evoke to the performer, and concedes that there is a specific expressive quality nested within the score, and an implicit failure to replicate exactly what is notated:

> every possible attempt should be made to convey all the material on the page, even though it is of course impossible to succeed in doing so. Suggesting multiple lines, subtly and almost inaudibly, with the voice, where it is not otherwise engaged (or in audible conflict with its other simultaneous allegiances; using parametric information from one line to inflect the pitches and rhythms of other(s).
>
> (Johnson, 2010, p. 3)

So, even with 'every possible attempt' we now know that 'it is impossible to succeed' (Johnson, 2010) in performing *émoi* as it stands on the page. It is an aesthetic stance of Johnson's which is consistent throughout *émoi*, however, from the standpoint of a performer, what then should we be aiming for? I explore both of these points later, but for the moment, we see that the discipline of the score is not a fixed ideal, but rather a basis upon which to create a version of the work.

### 2.1.2 'to make so it cannot be done'

For the viewer, looking at *émoi* we are overrun by detail, there are several strata of information to process. If we read the score *émoi* as we typically would with other scores (with a view to obtaining key information about performing the piece) the position taken by *émoi* is one of intransigence - the notation is hyperbolized or compressed in its scale and

density. Also, in a more general way, there is a visual noise from the score which prevents an initial understanding as to which pitch or rhythm one should play. The following definition, which is part of a programme note by Johnson, offers this definition of the title of the piece, gives us a clearer perspective as to why the score is as problematic as it seems.

> *émoi* (esmai, confusion, agitation...) - dismay, "the most profound form of being disturbed in the dimension of movement" (Lacan); ex-magere, to deprive of powers, of strength, of energy; to make so it cannot be done. Et moi.
>
> (Johnson, 2010, p. 1)

> All of this is a way of approaching the two main concerns of this work, as of my work in general: the relationship of local musical material to unsuitable durational contexts, the inhibition, dismay, the deprivation of forced repetition, restatement, being bled into silence by durational pressure; and the instability of the exuberantly excessive notation's relationship to instrument and to instrumentalist, the removal of mastery, a profound form of being disturbed. And *moi:* the performer and her instrument, the breath and throat that articulate everything.
>
> (Johnson, 2010, p. 3)

Looking at *émoi* as per the psychoanalytical term that it has been named after, it is clear that the notation has been designed to counter an instrumental mastery or any pre-conceived performance practices I may have. Clearly there is a psychologizing of the notation underway here. Instead of the score elucidating the information we need as clearly as possible, there is a relentless bombardment of information that overloads the performer with distractions and confusion. Any entry points into the score are thus obscured score by this myriad of detail, and even basic information such as pitch and rhythm are subject to other layers of information being superimposed upon them. As a result, how a performer typically relates to a composition becomes dissolved, as does any pre-conceived instrumental identity or skill. From this standpoint, the historical role of the score, which was that of a common language of transfer between the composer and the performer, has in this

case become manipulated to tap into a different type of relationship, and concomitantly, a particular aspect, or voice in the way that I carry across the performance to the listener. With such a collapse in agency being spelled out for me (let's not forget the quote which is now the centre of this argument 'to make so it cannot be done'…), where does one start? Or, can one even begin? [6]

In the following account of the obstacles I have identified, many are only partly resolved, and *émoi* is an ongoing challenge in my work. As such, the following points are an epilogue of sorts regarding my practices and reflections after several performances. They discuss how *émoi* connects with aspects of musicianship and aesthetic proposals in my practice, and in the spirit with the crux of this discussion - the intricacy of the score - I do so in a similarly circuitous route.

### 2.1.3 An Inner Ear

My work initially with *émoi* was without the instrument, projecting the score as an internal proposition, with the intention of creating a basic framework and more general observations of the material and its behaviour.

> You have to hear everything before you play. You have to have in your inner ear exactly what it is you want to sound like…It is really an extraordinary activity, it's a kind of schizophrenic activity, if it is done well.
>
> (Fleisher, 2010, p. 171)

As the Fleisher quote indicates, this practice is in fact a projection of the score without the instrument, and a method that validates an inner conception of a work. By working without the instrument, there is then an emphasis on my conceptualisation of the sound and a visual awareness of the gestural movement of the music, as per the image suggested on the page. Put another way, it involved me engaging with the score without the incumbrance of the

[6] The 'unplayablity' of *émoi* too becomes a preventative measure – few performers will engage with a score like this and answer the challenges it poses.

flute. By being guided by only by visual of the score, incidental aspects of pulse and gesture became focal points; an overarching muscularity, a pulsation, the breath, these are all part of a performance practice, if in a silent way. In approaching the score in this way, I am not so far from Roland Barthes's essay *Rasch* (1975) in which he anticipated the corporeal in music. And with this in mind, I develop a method of reading the score: my first iteration of *émoi* then first takes shape through the body, and begins an initial foregrounding of actions and gestures that follow the motion of the score. Yes, it is an imaginary projection (almost a freehand sketch of everything that is *not* the instrument) but nevertheless it is part of the physical action involved in the piece. This illusory form of practice, and how it rubs against the inevitably difficult work with the instrument, represents an insertion of an essential reflective account of the music. Reading the score as I do, this quote from Ingold brings together the process in a succinct way, and not dissimilar to the metaphorical reading a of text:

> Scanning the page, his cognitive task is rather to reassemble the fragments he finds there into larger wholes - letters into words, words into sentences and sentences into the complete composition. Reading *across* the page rather than *along* its lines, he joins *up* the components distributed on the surface through a hierarchy of levels of integration
>
> (Ingold, 2016, p. 94)[7]

### 2.1.4 Drift and capturing detail

My cultivation of Fleischer's *inner ear* approach also allowed a series of connections as an emphasis of form. The visual opulence of *émoi* becomes the rhetorical basis from which I start my work with the piece. As such, this is an intervention into the score in which an initial awareness of the problems, as well as the potential, of contemporary music notation can be developed. At this point I am around the periphery of *émoi*, looking in from the side-lines, and it is an approach that has a particular lightness or fluidity, even a carelessness, to reading. It is then by approaching the graphicity of the score in the way I do, I can constitute

[7] Ingold's italics

an initial mapping and a memory of the score. My approach is then much more in sync with taking stock of a visual aesthetic flow of notation. Again, this more fluid aspect of practice is an attribute that appears in another work by Barthes *The Pleasure of Text* (1975). Barthes notes a similar lightness in reading, which entails a visual 'drift':

> *Drifting* occurs *when I do not respect the whole*, and whenever, by dint of seeming driven by language's illusions, seductions and intimidations, like a cork on the waves (Barthes, 1975 p.18)[8]

Using my own sense of visual drift allows an interpretative space to be inserted into the score – in this zone there is a lessening of the overbearing precision inferred by the score. Through repeated readings of this sort, from the outside of the score, I begin to designate *émoi* with an overall gestalt as I see it, and from this basis I can form a more pragmatic understanding of the piece as a whole.

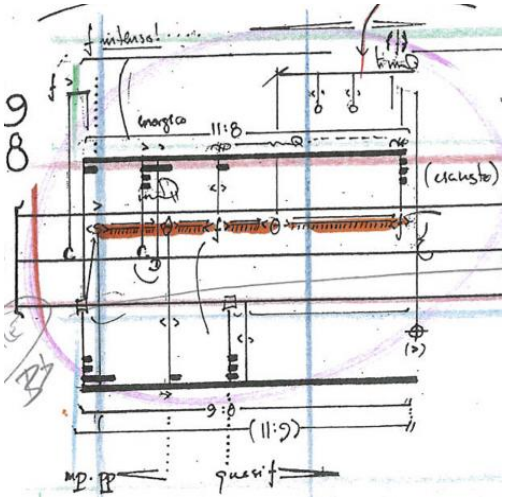


**Figure 2.2:** Evan Johnson, *émoi,* b. 54

> Throughout much of the score, multiple rhythmic-melodic layers are in force simultaneously, so that multiple pitches must, ostensibly, be played at the same time…it is also the job of the performer in these passages to project

[8] Barthes' italics

> (not in any overtly theatrical or satirical manner, but through the choice of playing techniques and through the force of the attempt to succeed) the situation, i.e., that there is material not being played, that there is too much for the performer to deal with in these passages.
>
> (Johnson, 2010, p. 3)

Clearly, from the aesthetic perspective *émoi* has been orchestrated very carefully indeed. To have such an array of material before us that is stylistically reproduced to represent, or bring about, a powerlessness or a depletion in the performer's approach is unusual. As a means to analyse this however, I take a more decisive approach to the score itself, and I use a visual filter to organise and isolate materials – a coloured grid.

Firstly, my grid spatialises and delineates material that was previously outside of my peripheral vision, and organises materials into a designated space (Fig. 1.2). Secondly, I am containing the material of the score into regions. Material which was previously unfettered and designed to overspill or disrupt other aspects of the work is now contained within my own framework. Through this type of partial fragmentation to the score, I make it possible to begin to *select* and apply various components to my performance. The grid becomes a survey of sorts – I can access the total amount of information that *émoi* engages with, whether it be the density or a redundant space around the notation, and from this point, I can discern how I might select or filter aspects of the material.

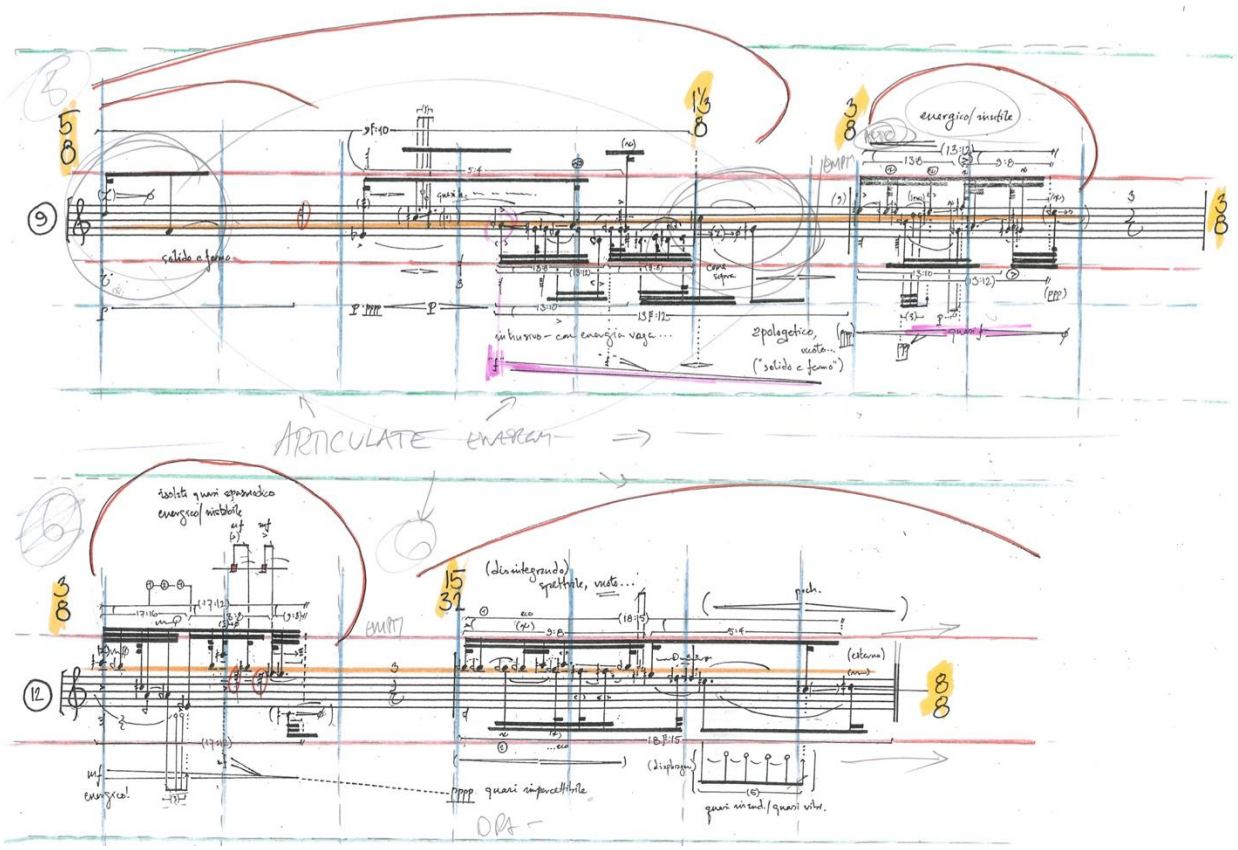


**Figure 2.3**: Evan Johnson, *émoi,* b. 9 - 13

Using the grid system has also opened up another consideration as to what defines the complexity of *émoi*. At its most complex, *émoi* has up to four layers of information from which to play. Within these layers we have information regarding metre, dynamics, phrase marks and vocal/extra-musical directions, all of which are now colour coded, thanks to my grid overlaid onto the score. Even if we think of contemporary classical repertoire of the flute it typically uses one or two lines of information – *émoi* expands into four lines. From a standpoint of musicianship, even the accepted task of reading the score becomes a huge challenge for the flute player – I have now to attend to a vertical axis, as well as the horizontal, and control the detailing of four part contrapuntal writing (Fig. 1.3). The reader can discern from all of this that the task ahead is only partially realisable, and a degree of prioritisation on my part is necessary. A major aspect of negotiating *émoi* is then prioritisation of the musical material, and some cases, a choice of pitches, in the score. The problematisation of the score is not in doubt here, and situations such as this occur

throughout *émoi*, but there is another aspect to this notation that points toward a different interplay between the flute and performer in *émoi.*

As I have noted above, I am engaged in a completely new way of thinking about the instrument, and in turn, I can exercise my capacity to shape my involvement within the composition to a greater degree than before. If we step away from *émoi* for a moment and look to other composers of similarly rich and demanding scores, of which this piece is a descendent, we can gain a sense of context to *émoi*. Labelled as the 'New Complexity' composers (a title which has since been refuted by the composers), the predecessors of *émoi* whom have engaged with similarly finely wrought scores are Richard Barrett, Brian Ferneyhough, Chris Dench and Michael Finnissy, among others. It is not possible here to look more closely at their work and ethos, however as individuals they explored a compositional and notational practice that is based on a 'hypothetical perfect performance' (Toop, 1988, p. 5) and one that 'stretch[es]' the performer (Toop, 1998, p. 5).

The score in this case is a map to the ideal performance of a work, and with the hypothetical in mind, the notation reflects this hypothetically perfect performance. Within this dynamic, there is also an anticipated 'level of indeterminacy': according to Richard Barrett, in Toop's *Four Aspects of New Complexity* (1989) 'the crux of it is, I would rather set down the musical ideas as they are, and accept a certain amount of indeterminacy…'. Brian Ferneyhough develops this last point further. His postulation of this sort of notation hints at the excess of detail being 'an extension of choice' that falls to the performer:

> the goal here, I think, is, therefore, a notation which demands of the performer the formulation of a conscious selection-procedure in respect of the order in which the units of interpretational information contained in the score are surveyed and, as an extension of this choice, a determination of the combination of elements (strata) which are to be assigned preferential status at any given stage of the realisation process. The choice made here colours in the most fundamental manner the rehearsal hierarchy of which, in performance, the composition itself is a token.

(Ferneyhough, 1995, p.4)

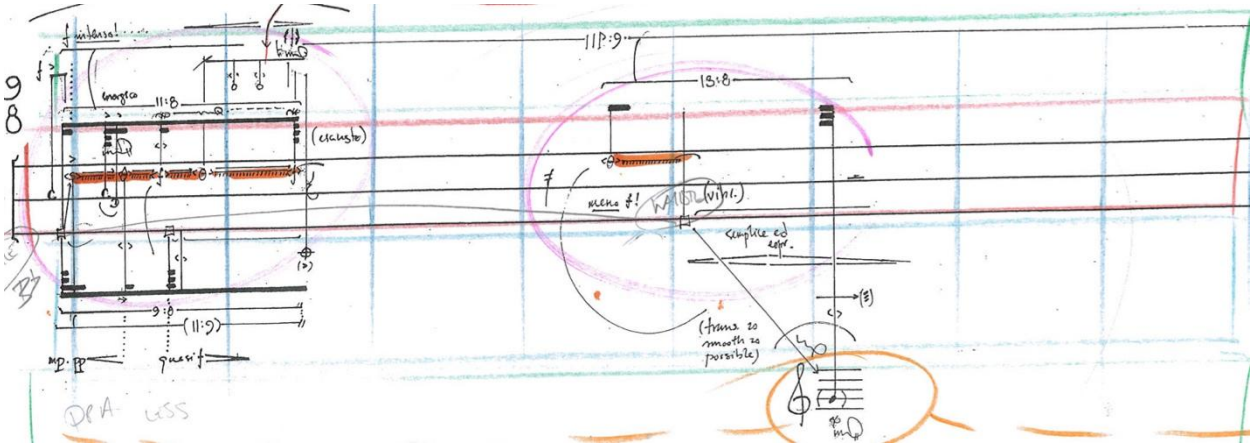

**Figure 2.4:** Evan Johnson, *émoi,* b.54

### 2.1.5 Metre

*'émoi* is 'a collection of only six rhythmic passages of a few bars length are juxtaposed and repeated throughout' (Johnson, 2010, p. 2)**.** While time signatures are employed in *émoi*, Johnson uses a form of space-time notation, and the latter is how I negotiated measuring the bars and the rhythms of *émoi*. The music is therefore ordered in a visual-spatial way, with the eighth-note value being the duration of a bar, and the performer navigates the notation within this unit (Fig. 1.4). While this is a point of reference for the performer from which to work (the eighth note per bar value), the use of the spatial-notation does not necessarily help us with the intricate rhythms we see nested within the bars of *émoi*. In the impasse that appears between this point of reference and a labyrinthine nest of irrational rhythms, I propose the synthesis of a pulse that is an amalgamation of two actions:

i. a sense of relative durational values as per the time-space of the bar; and

ii. the individuation of metre, viz. the performer's response as dictated by their ability to tackle this particular figuration.

If we return to Brian Ferneyhough, who has worked with a similar approach to notation and pulse, he notes the potential conflict between the pulse that the score implies, and in turn the musician's response as far as they can technically realise it, being a valid approach. Ferneyhough terms this as the 'somatic condition in relation to the idea of pulse'.

> It's a dual relationship: if we postulate a metric structure and we project against it musical objects we have one specific frame of reference; it must be borne in mind, however, that there is a parallel, more subtle frame at work i.e. the relationship established between the body's somatic condition and the mediating metric lattice.
>
> (Ferneyhough, 1995, p. 43)

The thorny issue of measuring rhythm in *émoi* is then intrinsically coupled to aspects of a spatial organisation in the score, and a compression or expansion in a graphic way, as well as a latent use of formalised time signatures. In my own experiments, having tried to prioritise an informed regularity of the metre that takes on and recalibrates itself as per the density of the notation, my attempts were frequently problematised - objectively speaking, they were failures. Again, we have a potential selection process or prioritisation to consider. The more complex the action looks, the more friction between the technical operation of reading and playing, and as a result, the loss focus on any one or several parameters. All of these reflections put the notion of a pulse into the unsettling category of equivocal for the individual musician. Put another way, communicating a pulse in *émoi* seems to be caught between outwardly maintaining a physiologically charged notational scheme, and basic necessity of reference to a pulse for the performer. Moving forward from this is then an informed approach of both the somatic and the metric, as Ferneyhough suggests above.

Thinking ahead then to a performance, *émoi* involves a judicious sharing of the metrical and somatic intricacies to be divided between a) the objective alignment with the quaver pulse in the score and b) the subjective response to a gesture of content, or musical figure.

If we bring all of this to bear against Johnson's own words on the subject, he says that 'every possible attempt should be made to convey all the material on the page, even though it is of course impossible to succeed in doing so' (Johnson, 2010, p. 3). This suggests in any case that the aim is not to perform passages of metric complexity accurately in the *traditional sense*, since, in practice, we know that not all is as it seems in *émoi*. We do need to factor in certain a conceptual aspect to *émoi* in this instance, but to do so as a rule of thumb perhaps misses the point, when thinking about the inverse ideas of success connects *émoi* and performative failure. Rather, our task is to bring about a performance of the piece that is informed by both parameters, the metric and the somatic. This is where there is an intersection between the schemes behind the notation and performer with the instrument, and thus a sense of authenticity to *émoi* as a embodied rhythmical gesture.

### 2.1.6 'Musica Practica'

To conclude my discussion of pulse and concepts of rhythmicity in *émoi* it is necessary to say something about how in the longer term these rhythmical signatures become rooted in practice. Repetition has naturally been an important part of my own sequencing of rhythmical signatures in *émoi*, and it is through a repetition of this tension between the somatic and the metric that a consolidation of some sorts comes into my own practice. Enthomusicologist Martin Clayton below outlines the innate tendency to find a pulse, or cycle to an activity, musical or otherwise:

> musical entrainment is recursive: individuals perceive and generate hierarchical temporal structures; they coordinate their actions within groups; and groups of people coordinate to form larger groups. It is also diverse: it can involve matching periods as well as hierarchical and polyrhythmic relationships, it is out of phase as

> often as it is in phase; and it can fall almost anywhere on the symmetrical-asymmetrical continuum.
>
> (Clayton, 2012, p. 52)

If we review Johnson's overview of the composition as being 'a collection of only six rhythmic passages of a few bars length that are juxtaposed and repeated throughout' (Johnson, 2010, p. 2) there is clearly a recursive structure embedded within the work itself. And, whilst the passages in the score (at times) have a clear gestural identity on the page, it is only through an iterative practice that includes my informed approach to the pulse that they become clearer and established in my practice. Alongside the audible and instrumental actions, there is an additional hidden periodicity at play: the cycles and synchronisation of respiratory and articulative patterns, and their correlates of musculatures and physical pulses. This is a physical dimension that becomes entrained when performing *émoi*. I am suggesting here that it is through entrainment there is an additional dimension, outside of the aural result. The 'collection of only six rhythmic passages of a few bars length' (Johnson, 2010, p. 3) cross over to the performer's body to create their embodied counterpart. To be more precise *émoi*'s six rhythmic passages are not only the notated rhythms, but have a physical correlation - a series of physical canons; breathing patterns; articulations; vocal actions and embouchure adjustments that also repeat and loop themselves in a performance of *émoi.*

In another of Barthes' essay's about music (*Musica Practica* in *Image-Music-Text,* 1977*)*, Barthes hones in aspects of pulse occurring from performance; for Barthes there is an underlying muscularity, a pulsation, the breath, these are all part of a musical language or form of communication:

> A muscular music…a music which is not played 'by heart': seated at the keyboard or the music stand, the body controls, conducts, having itself to transcribe what it reads, making sound and meaning, the body as inscriber and not just transmitter, simple receiver
>
> (Barthes, 1977, p.149)

If we think back to my opening example in this case study as to how I developed my own approach to *émoi* (through the gestural impetus, or pulses I replayed from the notation), we can see how *émoi* took shape through the body first, as then as an instrumental practice.

> The pulsional incidents, the language lined with flesh, a text where we can hear the grain of the throat, the patina of consonants, the voluptuousness of vowels, a whole carnal stereophony: the articulation of the body.
>
> (Barthes, 1975, p. 66)

Through experimentation and my realisations in working with both representations of pulse (the strict use of the quaver value in the bar as Johnson outlines, versus the aperiodicity of the denser material), it is clear that the nature of rhythm and metre is a much more nuanced process. My final word regarding the question of pulse is then not to subscribe to quantised rhythms *per se*, but in a more general way understand *émoi* as a grouping of trajectories and configurations of energy quotients that are, as Ferneyhough points out, 'between the body's somatic condition and the mediating metric lattice' (Ferneyhough, 1995, p. 43). It is through a synthesis of a pulse that one can consolidate a highly individual sense of pulse in *émoi*. It becomes an entrained and embodied form of time.

### 2.1.7 Expression and the grain

My translation of *émoi* has engaged me in a reciprocal act: as I act upon *émoi* it also acts upon me, (Briggs, 2015). That is to say that the visual *éclat* of *émoi* has a particular force upon my practice creatively, and paradoxically it is the perplexity of this situation, (in the sense that the graphics of the score must meet the practical enactment) which has become a spur for my practice.

I have often looked to Barthes in my writing for his candour and his examples of transcriptions of practice. In the quote below, Barthes speaks as a voyeur, or a witness to a work of art, and in this extract his admiration for it (which could be a text, a painting or a piece of music) becomes a creative momentum which he could 'rewrite' in order to 'participate in it'. For Barthes, his admiration of a work manifests itself as an urge to

reannotate, and in doing so, somehow including himself in its fabric 'as if it were lost because I didn't write it myself' (Barthes, 2011, p. 132).

> Every beautiful work, or even every impressive work, functions as a desired work, albeit one that's incomplete and as if it were lost because I didn't write it myself; in order to recover the work, I have to rewrite it; to write is to want to rewrite: I want to add myself actively to something that's beautiful but that I lack, that I require
>
> (Barthes, 1978-1979, p.132)

I propose that a similar fascination has occurred in my approach to *émoi*: from my initial gaze that admired the technical severity and visual beauty, to the point that ever since this initial gaze, I have been actively writing myself into the narrative of *émoi*. It is ironic too that the force of my response to the score has perhaps brought me somewhat closer to the piece as Johnson intended it to be. The composer notes:

> there's often a particular kind of heavy intensity I'm after that results from the combination of extreme effort and concentration from the performer and (more often than not) extreme quiet: it charges the air, but it also withholds things from the audience
>
> (Johnson, 2016)

*émoi* inhabits a distinct musical world – it is one in which the grain or a remote pulse from a body can be heard, surrounded by a charging of the air. My research has thus uncovered a particular form of expression that has taken shape in my practice; rather than this being an enlargement of phrasing, timbre and dynamic, there is instead a syntactical refinement of articulations, utterances and transparencies of gestures.

> the geno-text…is carried not by dramatic inflections, subtle stresses, sympathetic accents, but by the grain of the voice, which is an erotic mixture of timbre and language, and can there also be, along with diction, the substance of an art: the art of guiding one's body.
>
> (Barthes, 1975 p. 66)

**2.2 Cast study 2:** *luminous by Kristian Ireland*

> Craig brought the concert and this year's festival to an end with Kristian Ireland's *luminous* for amplified alto flute. Over the course of its half-hour duration I almost wondered whether my heart was going to come to a stop. Articulated with a Feldman-like single-minded patience, it unfolds from extremely quiet pitches emanating via ex- and inhalations, resulting in softly-clashing dyads (out) followed by infinitesimal whispers (in). It was as though Craig were putting down individual aural breadcrumbs to be discovered – or, to switch analogies, like reciting a story or poem one halting word (or even syllable) at a time. Later on, Ireland allows the material to become more extended, which in such a small-scale environment as this (another fitting analogy: as though everything had been shrunken down to microscopic size), such minor extensions felt like major elaborations, almost rudely exuberant despite their unwavering fastidiousness. Whatever it all meant – whatever it all was – I very much liked being in its enigmatic, challenging, disquieting, ravishing company. In the same way as a star umpteen light years away, it dazzled.
>
> (Cummings, 2017)

The extract above is from the new music blog 5:4 responding to a performance of Kristian Ireland's *luminous* for solo alto flute in a concert I gave in 2017 at the ALBA music festival, Edinburgh, Scotland. *luminous* is a work which stands apart from other compositions for flute: it is circa twenty-eight minutes in length without pause, and incorporates a new performance technique that foregrounds the breath. As a focus for my PhD, *luminous* proposes a series of challenges as a subject, more specifically, the information I need to access in my research is not in the score, but relates to the control of physical processes, in the piece. Specifically, the breath, and breath control.

In the first case study, we considered the visual power of *émoi* and how the score exerts an influence over the performer – in *émoi* the score gives an *exoteric* account of the piece that we can see and respond to. From this perspective it was possible to draw clear comparisons between practice and my working methods. However, in *luminous* we have a very different proposal: *luminous* is an example of the *esoteric* in my research[9], which means accessing information that is not explicit from the score and instead looking to embodied processes in its performance. At present, the score has little explicit information as to how to perform the technical aspects of the work, and this is because much of the specific knowledge about *luminous* is mapped from, and by, performer-specific rationales. *luminous* was written for me and uses a new technique that I have developed: my ingressive technique colours the sounds of breathing (in particular the intake of air) as musical material. The writing in this section is in two parts. The first part is conceived as a set of technical notes to accompany the score of *luminous* and a description of the ingressive technique, and then I will move to more detailed aspects as to how I negotiated form and tempo in such a large scale work. Following on from this, I will show how the flautist can use the breath as a reference point in the large-scale and medium-scale organisation of a longform piece. With these technical considerations in place, the second part of the case study addresses interpretative approaches to the score of *luminous,* and from these, I will draw conclusions as to the role of the instrumentalist, and how he or she might negotiate, or thematise a performance. In the case of the latter, I look to the 'lived experience' of illness as a thematisation of *luminous* (Carel, 2016, p. 2).

[9] From the Greek esōterikos, from esōterō, comparative of esō 'within', from es, eis 'into'. Dixon's classification, which I have borrowed here was similar in his paper 'Composition and Adorno's Rhetoric of the New' (2013)

### 2.2.1 Ingressive playing technique

> The modes of playing in the work are distinctly part of Craig's technical approach to the instrument. Alternating ingressive and egressive resonance (sound via inhalation/exhalation), and microtonal multiphonics with flexible voicings. In luminous, the natural aspects of these materials are allowed to sound and expand as wholly as possible. In sequence, they connect closely and form longer resonant threads... The ingressive/egressive sound and multiphonic voices are extensions of the breathing process…The form (approximating the Golden Section) and time scale of the work are intentionally expansive. The first 13 minutes, or so, rather than imagined as real time: it suggests a moment that is stretched out and prolonged, as an impression or as a loop in the memory.
>
> (Ireland, 2012-14)

*luminous* is a performer-led project in which my breathing technique becomes integrated into a longform work for solo flute. My aim in developing the technique was to integrate the breath as a thematised aspect of musical practice, and in a peripheral way, also address a latent interest in my research: how linearity (monody, or a melodic line) is developed in a contemporary context.

The technique of *ingressive* breathing sonifies the inhalation of air through the flute, to produce a multiphonic chord. When performed in combination with standard tone production this creates the impression of a continuous sound, similar to that of a violin bow, as opposed

to circular breathing.[10] In the score extract given in Fig. 2.0, the movement of air is shown through the arrows: arrows to the right show exhalation of air, arrows to the left inhalation. Ireland also focuses his attention on the harmonic material noted as 'microtonal multiphonics' (Ireland, 2012-2014) in the programme note. These chords are also a particular characteristic of the *ingressive* playing technique—the inbreath in this case can be adapted to perform two notes simultaneously. To give an example how this new technique compares to the conventional playing method, here is a short explanation of how my ingressive technique functions:

> In normal production, the sound of the flute is created by focussing a stream of air across the lip plate, which then strikes the edge of embouchure hole. When the air meets the edge of the embouchure hole, it is diverted into the flute, thus causing the body of the instrument resonate according to the fingerings we use. Conversely, my new method draws air across the flute, across the embouchure, bypassing the body of the instrument as the resonator, and into the cavity of the mouth. In this case the sound is produced in the mouth, and with the help of a multiphonic fingerings (see appendix), creates a narrow bandwidth of pitches.
>
> (Craig, 2015-2018)

[10] The analogy of the violin bow being mapped onto the ingressive technique was a prevalent aspect of my thinking during my experimentation with this technique. As a musical gesture, the analogy of the bow has a much closer link to the origins of the technique than circular (or continuous) breathing.

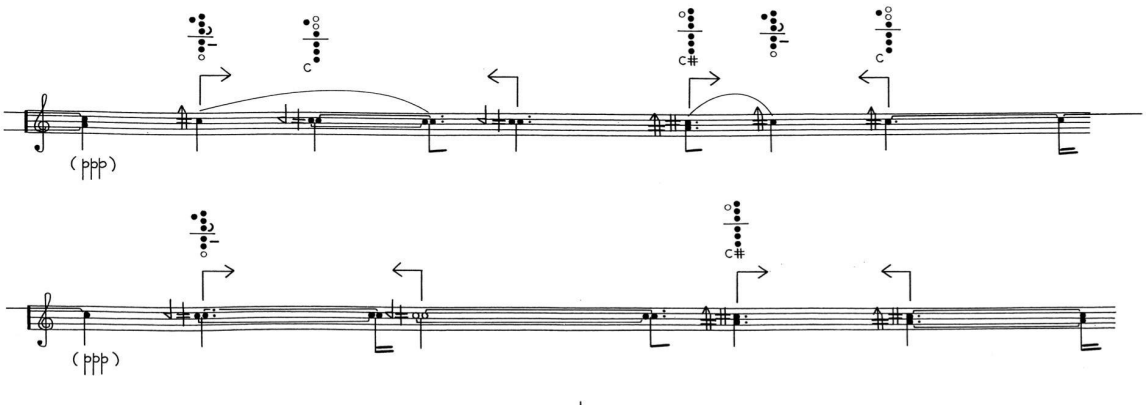

**Figure 2.5**. Kristian Ireland, *luminous,* pg 1

Ingressive breathing is a counterintuitive approach to making sound on the flute: not only do we have a departure from the standard instrumental tone, but also that the inbreath, (which is typically redundant in musical terms), becomes engaged as a pitched and instrumentalised sound, and notated as such in the score. In this way, our understanding of the flute as an instrument also undergoes a change. The flute now acts as a filter for the sound: the air passes over the headjoint, into the mouth, and the pitches we hear are in fact produced and controlled by the vowel shape in the mouth, not the instrument. My new technique colours the previously transparent action of the inbreath, and aspects of breathing, which are typically an intimate aspect of performance practice. This technique is used for two-thirds of *luminous* and so this portion of the case study is focussed on the 'technological' aspects of my research, that is to say the development and integration of my new approaches to the performance technique and working with the instrument.

### 2.2.2 The breath as musical material

Other works in the twentieth century have taken the breath as an extra-musical or dramatic device. Heinz Holliger's *Cardiophonie* for solo woodwind performer, for example, uses extreme technical virtuosity, bordering on improvisation, and induces accelerated

breathing patterns, thus increasing the heartbeat of the musician, which is them amplified for the audience. Similarly, both Vinko Globokar's *Res/As/Ex/Ins-pirer* for brass soloist and Mauricio Kagel's *Atem* reach for a more theatrical use of the breath and the human voice in their nascent states: here the breath erupts into cries, shrieks, or hiatuses, interspersed with instrumental writing. The breath, to Kagel and Globokar, seems more of a grammatical tool in the overall structure of works conceived as instrumental theatre or music theatre, and a rhetorical device that accompanies other actions. It is a type of breath that plays on pre-emptive or cadential moments that we associate with speech. Where *luminous* stands out in this context is in its single-minded focus on the breath as a conjoining of the player and the instrument, using the organic qualities of the performer's breathing and the organic pacing of the inbreath and outbreath. In *luminous* use of the breath offers a more detailed examination of respiration, and its rhythmical and syntactic nuances. From a performer-specific point of view, *luminous* also facilitates an introspection, whilst also externalising the inflections of the breath and breathing over the approximately twenty-eight minutes of the piece.

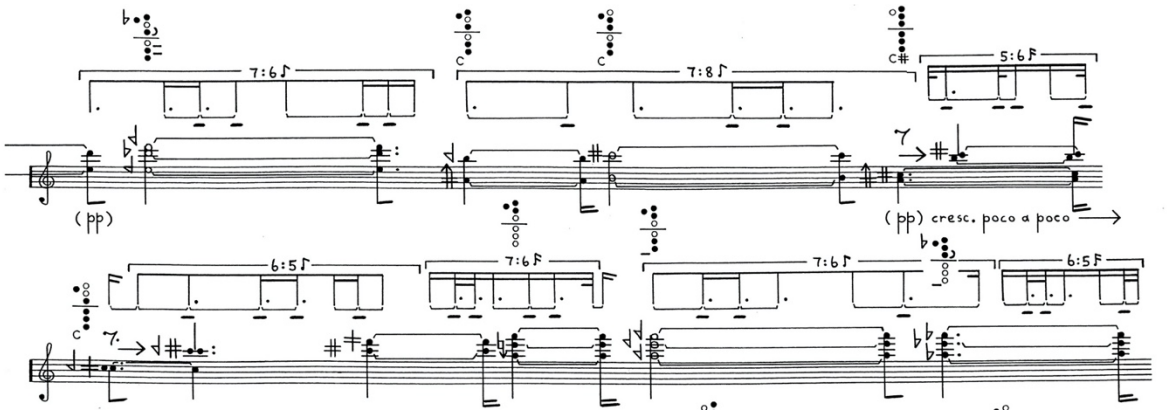


**Figure 2.6**: Kristian Ireland, *luminous,* pg. 16

Performing over such a long duration is when the challenges in *luminous* come into view, and the work is a context in which we need to question basic of principles of musicianship and instrumental performance practice. When preparing and performing *luminous* I am required to find solutions to temporal questions that the score throws up, such as maintaining a sense of pulse, an understanding of musical form, and also tone production (see Fig. 2.1). Leading on from this, these questions need to be squared against the

duration of the piece and the demands of my own technical approach to the work. The task of the flautist then becomes reorienting a practice that negotiates a broader conceptualisation of pulse, and takes experimental approaches to the conception of musical structure. In turn, *luminous* led me to rethink certain essential categories of instrumental playing, and to question accepted ideas of instrumental mastery as manifested in the classical music tradition. To begin our discussion of the more practical issues, there are two which present themselves: a) the duration of *luminous* is an unusual proposal for the flautist—there are no breaks in the twenty-eight minutes of the piece. b) the necessity to pace oneself and navigate the large-form structure of the work that is based on a performer's analysis of the structure.

### 2.2.3 A somatic score

One might expect (often correctly) that a contemporary music score involves a degree of contrary conceptual (and visual) ideas that build upon or elaborate an instrumental virtuosity. To distil my observations into a more direct form, I have visualised what an alternate approach to Ireland's piece might look like (Fig. 2.2). Here is a diagram to convey how I see the type of breathing and also the density of the musical material in *luminous*.

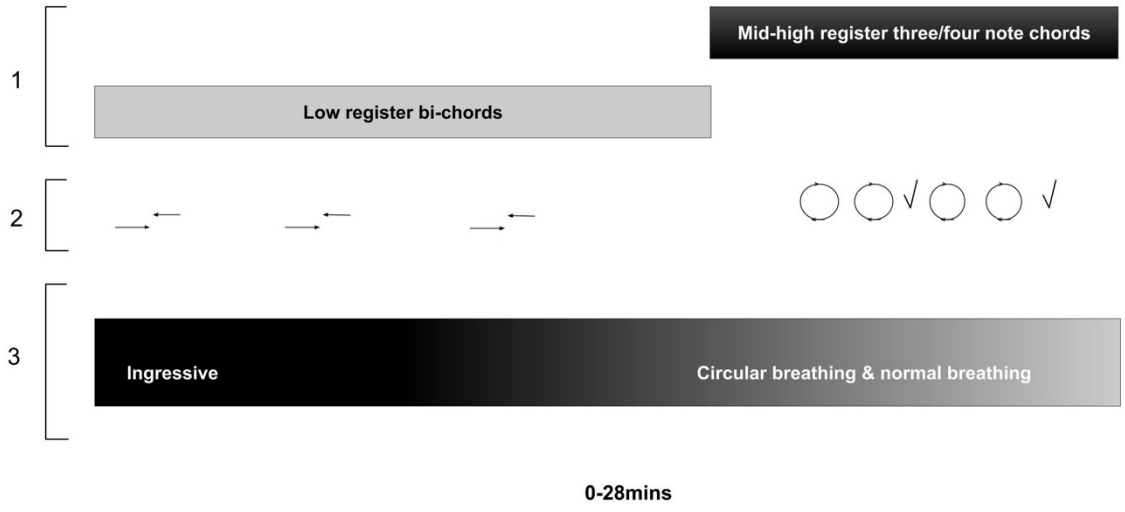

**Figure 2.7**: A performer realisation of the parameters of Kristian Ireland's, *luminous*

As a schematic for the flautist, the above involves the main components, or parameters of *luminous* as an overview of the musical materials and temporal questions I might face. They are:

(1) the harmonic material, its register, and the technical difficulty it presents
(2) the breathing patterns and techniques used throughout the piece, and
(3) indications of a physical saturation from the tasks (or a fatigue) which can be gleaned through the combination of lines (2) and (3).

The black/darker shadings physically demanding, or requiring a particularly strenuous posture or stance, whereas the lighter shades (grey in colour) indicates a relatively relaxed level of physical engagement. This basic outline suggests how the piece can be mapped as an event focussed around a series of quotients and physical processes.

### 2.2.4 Reorientation of the pulse – cycles and patterns

A metricised idea of pulse is a cornerstone of classical music performance practice. However, in this instance, we need to consider other points of reference to gain some sort of over-arching understanding of *luminous*. I propose that the breath, or more specifically my ingressive breathing technique, becomes our temporal focus, and that we calibrate our own sense of pulse according a series of breathing cycles, or distinct periods of breathing. I am thus turning my attention to breathing as a form of measurement by which to decide particular criteria of *luminous* as a performance practice. How then does this informed sense of pulse orientate itself against the objectivity of the notation?

### (i) Cycles

Classical performers navigate rhythm using a particular unit of a pulse, from which they perform rhythmic notation. This pulse or unit of time is given by the score, and intended to be a constant source of reference in a performance (I labelled this as a form of objective pulse earlier in *émoi*). As such, the principle relies on the fact that we are able to remain detached to a certain degree from the music we are attempting to play, and that with this detachment we are able to observe and correct ourselves as per the score's notation. My opinion is a similar position to Ferneyhough's on this matter when he notes the importance of 'mediating lattice[s]' (Ferneyhough, 1995, p. 43): I propose that it is incorrect to maintain that a performer's conception of time in these circumstances is completely immune to the musical situation and the technical demands placed in front of him or her. And, furthermore, to believe that our own internal sense of pulse is reliable enough to correct us is problematic. There is a slippage of our internal clock in these circumstances where longer durations and relatively uniform musical material is used, and so the accepted idea of maintaining a pulse needs to be re-assessed here. In the case of *luminous* it entails looking to the esoteric for an answer - the corporeality of the piece, or how the skill of a particular technique lends itself to be used as a rhythmical marker. In this case, I consider the pulse not as a metricised aspect of performance, but as a constituent of two discreet, and often involuntary actions, harnessed here as sonic material - the outbreath and the inbreath.

### (ii) Patterns

My focus of this part of the chapter as I have said, is in the first two thirds of the piece, and serves as an overarching viewpoint of the way I breathe.

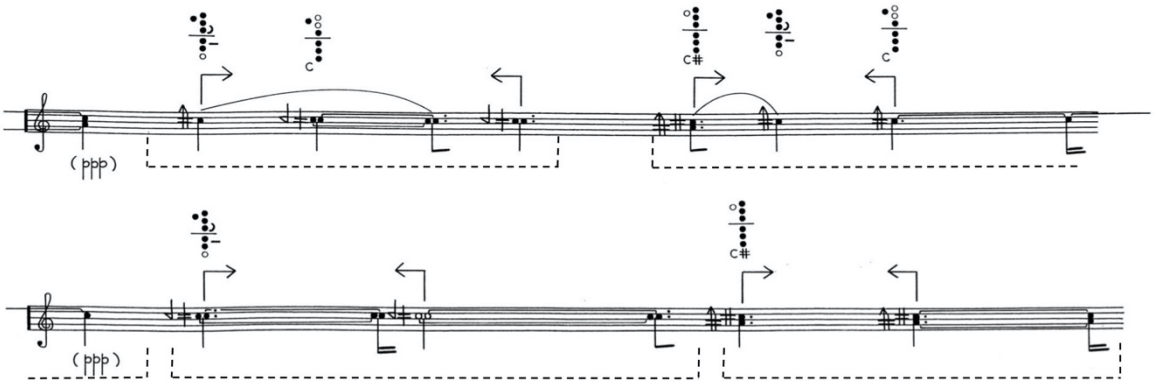

**Figure 2.8:** Kristian Ireland, *luminous,* pg 1

Above (Fig. 2.3) I have marked how ingressive breathing can be grouped as a temporal indicator – by using ingressive breathing, a complete cycle of a breath (inhalation and exhalation) stands as a temporal unit by which to measure the piece, and conceptually speaking, a means to bar the measures. Within these rhythmic cells, there will naturally be fluctuations in the regularity of this pulse, but it is also important that we note that the harmonic material in itself is not consistent or predictable (as we will see later in this chapter). To summarise, we arrive at a question of prioritisation: on the one hand we are faced with the rhythmical precision that the notation suggests, on the other hand this has be measured alongside the actual reality of creating and sustaining the pitches that Ireland notates. We have heard of the synergy between the score and the practical abilities of the performer in my discussion of *émoi*. But here there is an even more subjective tool that can be used to navigate the pulse, and unsurprisingly, this approach is aligned with the physical profile of the piece. I am supplanting the notion that this work can be succinctly measured as per the quaver in the score (although this certainly exists as an *aide-memoire* for me), and instead proposing that a pulse (a the sum total of a breathing cycle) is a new unit of time, according to my breathing technique. As an exercise in metric equivalence, the temporal structure I apply is determined by my own patterns of breathing. This is where entrainment and a sense of technology (Ingold, 2000), as it were, combine in *luminous*.

### 2.2.5 The exoteric

I would like to focus now on the aspects of the multiphonic writing, in combination with ingressive breathing, which I propose are an expressive trope in the piece. Undoubtedly, *luminous* is a physically demanding work, and as I progress through the piece in performance it is an increasingly unstable and unpredictable process. This is partly due to the multiphonics, which become progressively more problematic for the player to sustain, and so the acoustic instability is an audible signature to the performance. However, these symptoms of instability should be regarded not as a compositional misjudgement on Ireland's part, but as a materiality to the piece, and an aspect which is contingent to the duration of *luminous*, and the demands *luminous* makes on my body.

> In a performance scenario the maintaining of my attention and the postures involved in the piece accrue a physical fatigue, and as such, test my levels of endurance. We can see clues of what, thematically speaking, *luminous* was intended to be in Ireland's programme note when he suggests that the piece is a 'moment that is stretched out and prolonged, as an impression or as a loop in the memory…(Ireland, 2015-18)

Ireland's compositional process has produced a series of 'stretched out, prolonged and looped' phrases (Ireland, 2014). This compositional procedure also has an impact upon on my performance, as well as the material in the piece. The metaphor of a looped memory, which here naturally becomes eroded, or fades, proposes a decline that occurs through a process of repetition. As the material is looped throughout *luminous*, my ability to maintain the necessary stamina lessens. It is a depletion, through repetition, in tandem with a sense of physical decline, that we see and hear the challenges that *luminous* brings out as a form of physical entropy (Iddon, 2006, p. 93). It is a dissipation of physical energy and focus that intervenes into the visual stability that *luminous* suggests as a score, and a somatic trope.

### 2.2.6 Verisimilitude and validity

In searching for an equivalence, outside of musical terminology, that evokes descriptions of the body in a mode of decline, or physical fatigue, I looked to the philosopher Havi Carel and her writings about the phenomenology of illness. When discussing similar states of decline, Carel notes the way in which the body can be limited or depleted when illness takes hold, and in doing so, our prospective self (our capabilities, or, as important here, our plans for the future) are being folded back into the physical realities of the situation (Carel, 2016, p. 65). Using this metaphor with regard to the difficulties I have outlined *luminous*, there is a similar push and pull between my projection as to how I plan my performance of *luminous* to unfold when faced with the physical reality of my intent. Therefore, there is a 'collapse back into my actual physical being' (2016, Carel, p. 95) . It seems however that this process, whether it is intended or not by Ireland, is part of my performance *luminous*. At the outset of *Phenomenology of Illness*, Carel (2016), draws upon S. Kay Toombs's analysis of bodily decline and illness, and how it acts upon our perception of everyday experience. From Carel's overview, the following three points reflect my experience with *luminous*:

i. Loss of continuity

   The breath, and its blending into everyday experience and performance practice, was disturbed in my work with *luminous*. Breathing is now a much more conscious musical gesture that requires careful thought in the context of this piece. By using my new technique of breathing in *luminous* I have created a self-observational process from a previously involuntary action, in which 'normal flow' is conspicuous and alludes to a heightened sense of self-awareness and interiority.

ii. Loss of transparency

   Carel notes that a loss of transparency is a 'dramatic resistance in the exchange between body and environment' (2016, Carel, p. 58) and, more specifically in my case, a jolting removal of a sense of mastery with the instrument and my bodily-management of this. The discombobulation of my everyday instrumental practice results in a coarseness of experience, which can be heard in the technical tropes of the piece. In this case aspects of 'mastery,' in the musical sense, are channelled

into a moment-by-moment account and an inability to plan too far ahead, due to the length of the piece and the precarious nature of the multiphonics. Carel points out that with this loss of transparency (of mastery, or fluency of skill in everyday life), there is also a loss of spontaneity (2016, Carel, p. 41–43). In this instance, a singularity of expression and focus takes hold in *luminous* through the numerous technical and physical restrictions.

iii. Inconsistency, from a lack of 'faith'

This constitutes a retrospective note in my practice, from an inductive perspective in relation to my previous experiences before *luminous*. I now have a deeper understanding of practice (or *habitus*) before this intervention took place. My plans or ability to foresee and adjust to oncoming challenges in *luminous* fold back into what is physically possible. My practice was fractured or displaced when first engaging with *luminous*; 'the ability to project oneself,' a self-certainty, or selfhood, is questioned in these circumstances, when confronted with a composition of this duration and somatic complexity. Carel (2016, p. 95) writes: 'The limitless sense of myself, of my open horizons, as extending beyond myself and into the world collapses back onto my actual physical being; it becomes an act of conscious planning to see how far I can, or dare, project myself onto the world.'

### 2.2.7 Interventions

As an experience which accompanies our daily existence in an unconscious way, we can note breathing, similar to other body functions, as something which is typically transparent to us. Breathing is an inconspicuous aspect of our experience. It is only when we push ourselves to go beyond a particular physical, or even a psychological threshold, that breathing and the breath moves to the foreground of our awareness. In this way, that which was transparent is now opaque, or contains a conspicuousness (Carel, 2016, p. 58) illuminating that which was not present before in our understanding of lived-experience. In this light, I propose that *luminous* is such a physical and psychological threshold, and by musically thematising the breath, the process contained within *luminous* is to me a similar phenomenological category as illness. And, that this aspect of awareness, and its threshold

becomes an external conduit of the internal disruption, or malaise, experienced by the body in this composition.

Framed in this way, *luminous* is certainly an interruption in terms of my research, with the 'transparency' of my everyday artistic practice (or musicianship) being tested to an unusual degree. The piece has caused a radical shift in my embodiment, a sensitisation even, and there are analogous theoretical, musical and philosophical aspects of *luminous* that shape the piece and my concepts of performance.

> The limitless sense of self, my open horizons as extending beyond myself and into the world collapses back into my actual physical being; it becomes an act of conscious planning to how I can, or dare, project myself onto the world
>
> (Carel, 2016, p. 95)

Posing this as an autoethnographical exercise, there is a similarly radical aspect of subjectivity in place here, as a performance-as-text. The interventions into my quotidian, as Carel notes, are an opportunity to 'look for the philosophically revealing' (Carel, 2016, p. 93) and it is here that I use the disturbance that intervention offers in understanding practice. Trying to articulate this duly sharpens the philosophical tools that I require to articulate experience.

### 2.2.8 Pathophilia

Carel's adept formulations of the lived-experience of illness highlights the mental and physical absorption that the sensation of bodily decline can have, and, in a musical situation, that this could be externalised to the outside. *luminous* is 'a breathtakingly intense experience' (Carel, 2016, p. 3), and one which 'requires serious effort and continuous work' (Carel, 2016, p. 3) which highlights the level of attention required to tasks which previously escaped our attention. Clearly, to bring all of these ideas together as a practice – to join the breath, the score, and my observations – requires a thematization to touch upon the

immense sensorial complexity of this experience. I think that a first step towards establishing this can be found via the breath, and how it can shape several aspects of our experience, which thus reconnects us with my initial description of my ingressive breathing technique below.

As the sole performer of *luminous* I propose that there is a profound interconnectedness between the flute and the player that goes beyond what we typically consider to be an instrumental virtuosity, that goes hand-in-hand with a textual mode of reporting, showing and understanding practice (one that that Denzin and Montaigne allude to in my introduction). This is because *luminous* bestows a particular temporal and expressive quality in performance not located as a musical description in the sense that we are familiar with, but rather the composition/arrangement of my body into particular postures and stances that are expressive vehicle for the work. I have developed an ethnography of *luminous* that can communicates to me, as well as those around me, important aspects of my understanding of its performance. Furthermore, I suggest that the flute and performer now have a different relationship as a result of this work: that the normal distinctions between instrument and instrumentalist are now blurred, and that *luminous* embodies a new a type of instrumentalization; I would venture so far as to say a type of meta-instrument. We have a point of convergence in which the qualities of the performer and the instrument interact as a form of underlying dramaturgy. As merging of technologies (namely my techniques, as well as the distinct mechanisms of the instrument) this proposal opens up a new way of considering how the performer can be more central to the conception of a composition, and also the instrumentation.

> my descriptive focus falls to the sound of discreet rasps, crepitations and the sense of apnea from the inward action of the ingressive technique. It is a sound content which is also anatomically orientated, whilst remaining inconclusive as to where exactly it is located. In *luminous* we have the apparatus of the voice and the mechanics of sound production seemingly engaged a reverse manner.
>
> (Craig, 2015-2018)

There is an instinctive concern that surrounds the metaphor of Illness which I have tried to temper here. In gathering the range of philosophical approaches to illness together, Carel also notes the potentially affirming aspect of illness in human experience. That we can wear illness as 'a potentially edifying, positive, purifying and instructive' process (Carel, 2016, p. 12). As an instructive resource, Carel's philosophical perspective has been an instructive and regenerative process for me and my practice. Notwithstanding the challenge of capturing my experience as a text in a way which connects the reader to *luminous*. And, to that end there is an aspect of pathophilia to *luminous* – the experience and reflections led to a vastly different approach to performance and also to considering skill and mastery that integrates both the instrumentalist and the instrument. It is in this manner that I consider *luminous* to be a performance of the body and the flute. There is a larger gesture or choreography in which the complicated and nuanced process of bodily perception and musical performance theoretically, and discursively, co-exist.

### 2.2.9 Conclusion

To bring this discussion back into the context of music performance practice and my research, what does *luminous* bring to the framework of my project? I have shown that this practice is not an example of a sophistication or a cultivation of the instrumental in the sense of a mastery, virtuosity, or *panache*. (The latter sort of result are those which we typically see from the epiphenomenon of the score). Instead I have shown how a somatically led approach can inform a score which leaves interpretative space for the musician to do so. This approach, as a future consideration, can be far-reaching in creative terms for the composer and performer relationship. The crucial difference to the skills I have described here is that there is an *obeisance* to the body and its demands, and not to the score. In this sense *luminous* embodied an expressive syntax: the personified mannerisms, and discreet embodiments, the temporality synchronicity, and a set of symptoms even, that inform a type of musical mono-drama. As such, a performance of this ilk cannot solely be considered the import of the score, nor the exclusively the conception of the composer – it rests on the musician having gone through a similar process of realisation as I have in order to access a latent dramaturgy of the work.

The concept of illness as a metaphor, and also the focus of the body as a musical timepiece, throws up radical ideas in notating practice, as well as the distinction between the habitual and the disrupted lived-experience. In turn, it also entailed assigning a vocabulary and taxonomy by which to relate to the complexities of *luminous.* As a change of approach, this new vocabulary, and philosophical outlook, facilitates a questioning into both instrumental practice, and by association, my autoethnographical approach in my project.

To summarise: the process of notating practice as a performance or performances in writing will always be an abstraction, or involve a conceptualisation of practice. This in turn requires the generative properties of metaphor for my experience to come forward in writing. In this case it has begun a pursuit of a more controversial and existential dimension to an art work. And to negotiate it we are able to suspend established concepts in our practice, such as the pulse, or the dominant aspects of the visual (as per the score), as a momentary pause to the exacting nature of scores. In doing so we can look to methods of measuring and understanding practice that use complexification and detailing as a means of clarity.

> Vulnerability, limitation and finitude are fundamental features of human life not in its physiological objective mode, or as abstract knowledge, but also in its experience, subjective mode, as informing our ways of being in the world.
>
> (Carel, 2016, p. 63)

**3.0 Composition - A Critical Technical Practice[11]**

My compositional process (from planning, reflection, through to execution) engages with my hypotheses about performance practices and scores. Composing in this framework is thus a logical extension of the practices I have discussed and involves a creative reflection upon

[11] The title and theme of this chapter comes from a Jonathan Impett's reading of Agre's theory

my work. There are two original compositions in my portfolio: *Hortulus Animae and Blodeuwedd*.

Composing enables me to amplify and tease apart particular concepts that occurred in the writing and performances of *émoi* and *luminous*. In this sense, composing is a self-exploratory exercise which can focus in on specific technical or creative points which were not clear before. Composition is also an effort to examine the discipline that I am critical of from another perspective. By proposing to compose my own work, there is also the opportunity to contextualise and integrate cross-disciplinary aspects of thought. For example, by composing a work, I suggest that I am also constructing a particular creative space. If we recall Massey's theory of space - that the delineation of space is a series of interrelations - we can see that I have been the *recipient* of compositions, and realised the composer's work from a score. For me to then consciously switch roles from performer to that of a composer requires a change of machinery and theoretical skills, not to mention reframing the above narrative. In this way I am looking at composition as a means to interrogate my intuitions as to what I think composition is, or could consist of, technically and critically, in my case.

Although my use of composition has been presented as an organisational facet, it is not entirely without its own poetic license either. In and around the technical tasks I set of making a new work, I incorporate particular literary sources (writers, folklore and mythical allegories) and a certain degree of symbolism of my own making. In this way, my approach to instrumentation, textures, aesthetics, structures and temporality, either raw of fully formed, in its critical or technical means, has to be fleshed out if I am to compose. There was also a sense of artistic freedom that I experience in composing for myself, in my own music. For, having been completely engaged in another artist's work as an instrumentalist, to then reconsider what I would compose as a response has been an important step for my own artistic development. Finally, we can also see the urge to compose in this project as a practical indication of the depth to which I entered into a composer's world; how I respond to the process of composition as a personal a creative statement. But, as importantly, it is commenting on the professional milieu of my career through a demonstration: that the observations and changes that are underway in my case studies are best understood through practice, in my own compositional activity.

### 3.0.1 Architects or gardeners?

> Today's composers are more frequently 'gardeners' than 'architects' and, further, that the 'composer as architect' metaphor was a transitory historical blip.
>
> (Eno, 2011)

My experience in composing previous to this research has been limited, and to an extent, inhibited by my intensive work with scores. My inhibition is related to the scores I have encountered: there is a level of detail and a notational ideology that do not necessarily wish to replicate. Rather, I want to approach composition as a broader concept of making in a musical context, and specifically open how it is represented and embodied in performance. In looking for examples of similar attitudes elsewhere in music and art, I encountered the composer and artist Brian Eno. The quotation above is from a public lecture Eno gave, and this initiated what was for me a reframing of composition. Eno goes on to provide a more detailed proposal of composition as an experimental design process:

> I think like many people, I had assumed that music was produced, or created in the way that you imagine symphony composers make music, which is by having a complete idea in their head in every detail and then somehow writing out ways by which other people could reproduce that. In the same way as one imagines an architect working. You know, designing the building, in all its details, and then having that constructed.
>
> (Eno, 2011)

Eno's perspective of the status of composing is clearly one which is non-conformist to the more conventional notions of a composer, and this is confirmed when he says the following, in more general artistic terms, how work may be generated:

> Changing the idea of the composer from somebody who stood at the top of a process and dictated precisely how it was carried out, to somebody who stood at the bottom of a process who carefully planted some rather well-selected seeds, hopefully, and watched them turn into something.
>
> (Eno, 2011)

My interpretation of this, as a classically-trained musician, is that Eno confirms what we have seen traces of in my case studies, and puts my practice and relationship with composers into a particular dynamic. That to be a composer is a cultivation (or a professionalisation) of a particular type of vernacular, or technical language. And that this vernacular is to design music for others to execute. In this sphere, understanding how to control of the actions of the performer are conveyed in the imperative, often finite and conclusive. Continuing with Eno's further observation, noted below, he proposes a different approach to composition, which, when taken into my current practice as a performer, it galvanised me to pursue my own project of composing:

> one is making a kind of music in the way that one might make a garden. One is carefully constructing seeds, or finding seeds, carefully planting them and then letting them have their life. And that life isn't necessarily exactly what you'd envisaged for them. It's characteristic of the kind of work that I do that I'm really not aware of how the final result is going to look or sound. So in fact, I'm deliberately constructing systems that will put me in the same position as any other member of the audience. I want to be surprised by it as well.
>
> (Eno, 2011)

From the perspective of sowing seeds of a composition, Eno suggests a more demonstrable, or hands-on approach to composing that seeds elements of compositions in which the more distinct aspects of control and finitude are secondary. Conceptually speaking, he is proposing to germinate a set of controls, variables, and interactions of chance elements when composing. Engaging with Eno's ethos, I then looked for a more succinct theoretical critique of 'making' in the writings of Philip Agre, in his book *Computation and Human Experience*.

### 3.0.2 A Critical Technical Practice

> Each disciplines practitioners carry on what Schön would call "reflective conversations" with their customary materials, and all of their professional interactions with one another...[a] shared background of sustained practical engagement with a more or less standard set of tools, sites and hassles.
>
> (Agre, 1997, p.10)

In *Computation and Human Experience* (1997) Agre outlines the tendencies of particular forms of 'making', alongside the polarities (seen and unseen) that practitioners experience from within a discipline. Agre frames the core experience and tendencies of making as two distinct categories (these are the critical and the technical) in an attempt to depict a conscious folding together of these categories in AI programming and modelling. His approach to the critical and the technical might loosely be described as a more philosophical understanding as to why something takes on the shape and function that it does (a critical understanding). The technical being the how and what: how does this object function and what machinery does it require to function as it does?

**What is the 'Critical'?**

The critical, in Agre's mind, is work that hopes 'to dig below the surface of things' (Agre 1997, p. xii); it is an analytical approach which seeks to dislodge or examine accepted theoretical components of a system, or a work, and determine if its internal reasoning, or justification, is valid. Agre notes too that the 'critical' approach' is 'situating a problematic in an intellectual tradition' (Agre, 1997, p. xiii) and that we are shaping, or 'narrating (their) materials in a way that exhibits the adequacy of certain categories' (Agre ,1997, p xiii). In other words, in taking the critical approach, we can manipulate, or use external theory, to offer an explanation of a well-established technical practice in my discipline. There is also a

danger to be aware of when speaking of the critical too, however: that is the creation of an endless cycle of philosophical and theoretical arguments that never actually reach a practicable outcome. Agre is aware of this danger, and more invested in working towards an advocacy of critical thinking as being incorporated with a purely technical (practice-based) work:

> The point, therefore, is not to invoke Heideggerian philosophy, for example as an exogenous authority that supplants technical methods. The point, instead, is to expand technical practical practice in such a way that the relevance of philosophical critique becomes evident as a technical matter.
>
> (Agre, 1997, p. xii)

Agre makes another perceptive comment regarding the critical practice: that it typically closes with 'a statement of moral purpose' (Agre, 1997, p. xiii). That is to say, when going about the 'digging' underneath or around a topic, that the critical yields some sort of wider philosophical meaning and application to their work. Thus, making, is not only about creating a functional object, but a 'statement of moral purpose'. This is perhaps the most frequently posed and problematic question made to an artist: how does a piece of work interface, respond, critique or explain itself? With this in mind, I am utilising a critical and technical approach in my composing to pose these questions, and to take the theory as means to articulate how I make as well as add a statement of moral purpose to my work.

**What is the 'Technical'?**

Those of us practicing, performing, or making a body of artistic work, be it as composer or performer, are in Agre's terms, technicians. Whether it be with instruments, computers, clay or stone, our emphasis is on how the materials - or forms of human technology, as referred to in my introduction - are part of the making and of prime importance. The technology in this case is then as I outlined earlier – it is the soft variety: my technique with an instrument, or in another sense, the sculptor's manipulation of stone; how I physically prepare and initiate sound in the instrument to begin a phrase, or the painter's preparation of a canvas

or paints. These are technologies, they have a pattern, they are habitual to an artist, and as such produce a signature, object or performance than can be categorised as specific to that person. Agre identifies this as a procedural tendency:

> 'they are focussed on machinery in a broad sense, be it hardware, software, or mathematics…they confine themselves to demonstrating these claims in a way that others can replicate' (Agre, 1997, p. xiii)

Although Agre never ventures into giving specific examples of purely critical or technical work, it is clear that this approach has a wide application. Categorisation of the critical is thus a predominately theoretically-based approach, and the technical being something that is practice-led. Whilst the reality of my research is not as clear-cut as this (practice is not organised in binary sense), we have a promising start to understanding composition as a critical and technical practice, using Agre's vocabulary as a grounding to delineating types of knowledge and their functions. Although Agre comes from a technological community, the tendencies he outlines are clearly present in creative communities too. As far as possible I will develop these as a starting point, and using this approach, explore how they can reposition persons, objects and practices involved in a practice.

### 3.0.3 'Tools, sites and hassles'

One overarching critique to take from Agre's *Critical Technical Practice* is the observation of a lack of engagement with thought outside a specific field of study. Meaning that a community of practitioners has a 'shared background of sustained practical engagement with a more or less standard set of tools, sites and hassles' (Agre, 1997, p.10). This perception is also applicable to my project: that the professional interactions of composers and performers, and the roles that have been defined through historical interactions, lend themselves to a developing a resource of tried and tested methods to solve recurring predicaments. In doing so, we lean on, and replicate results, self-perpetuating the dynamics of interactions, and reinforcing unchallenged disciplinary boundaries using a standard problem-solving language. Despite our awareness of the diversity within the field of contemporary music at large, or other arts practices, a certain hegemony still remains in the power structures of the discipline between composer and performer. In an abstract way,

Agre condenses this observation into another more technologically-minded, and wry observation:

> Technical communities are strikingly uniform in their sociologies and methods, considering the heterogeneity of their metaphors (Agre, 1997, p. 34).

Within our *technical community* of the composer and performer, there is still relatively little critical engagement about the practices and work that is made: we are largely confined by the bifurcation of creative roles. Furthermore, there is a cyclical nature to the practice and production of contemporary music. Composers plan a work, and the practitioners naturally 'try to make sense of the resulting patterns of promise and trouble' (Agre, 1997, p. 38). And, in a tried and tested way, the performers offer *revised* ideas, but they do not necessarily bring new practices or a new solution. Whilst between ourselves we can partially bridge gaps of knowledge within our disciplines through sharing information, I propose that the practice of composition and performance as it stands is still an insular format of planning and execution, which, from the perspective of the composer and performer, are still self-confined to role-play.

Why is this the case? Because our approach is mediated by a particular hierarchical 'worldview' or 'discourse' (Agre, 1997, p. 32). This can be seen running through my case studies, and in a more political sense, my choice of theoretical sources and writing. A case in point can be seen if we consider that my analyses and explanations of the case studies so far (the forced erasures, additions, reformatting, commentary and rationalisations to bring a work to performance). Historically defined aspects of parameters and relationships within the practice are challenged, but nevertheless, the worldview of composer and performer still has a 'near immunity' from 'the pressure(s) of practice experience' (Agre, 1997, p. 38). Going forward however, Agre points toward a more optimistic dimension to a practice which has this cyclical aspect, and the following point is one which I have instilled in my theoretical outlook in this project:

> If it is guided by critical reflection on its practices and presuppositions, however, it at least has a chance of continuing its self-awareness, renewing itself through interdisciplinary dialogue. (Agre, 1997, p. 10)

Staying in the established safe zones of performers, composers, scores, and the current modes of collaboration, is thus not necessarily going to allow the discipline to develop. And this is why Agre has informed my approach to composition: I try to frame my compositional designs and reflections with this worldview in mind, and to follow a critical and technical agenda that is a means to and to try to prevent: 'a series of steadily more elaborate versions of the same theme' (Agre, 1997, p. 38).

### 3.1.1 An introduction to *Hortulus Animae* for flutes and fixed media

In the two preceding case studies, I describe an evolution of practices through an engagement with and manipulation of the score. The concepts and practices emerging from the case studies have a momentum that spills over to composition. Composition is then my response to the surplus that has been opened in my practice. Incorporating Agre's *Critical and Technical Practice* into my approach I am articulating my performance research through composition, and using the process of composition as an interlocutor for my performance practices. If performance comes about through my internalisation of the score, composition is then an externalisation, or as Ingold suggests, that we are making 'the tool or machine a second nature, a psychological part of himself or herself.' (Ingold, 2016, p. 147). Tacitly, my self-purposing lends itself to consolidating a subjective, critical voice from inside my own discipline that can comment upon both the performer and composer perspective.

There are two compositions from this process that I will present as responses to the case studies: *Hortulus Animae (i)* (2015-18) and *Blodeuwedd* (2019) for flute and fixed media. Both works take particular nodes of thought (which are products of my own interpretations) from the case studies. The general title for the grouping of these works is *Hortulus Animae*[12]. Both works are fixed in structure and duration, whilst incorporating elements of improvisation that embellish the fixed materials in my tape parts. The compositional process started in

[12] *The Garden of the Soul*. This title refers the highly ornate prayer books in the 16th century and as a title this idea embodies a self-reflection and elements of self-sufficiency which simply appeal to my sensibilities as an artist. https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/hortulus-animae

January 2015, and a key aspect of my thought at this time was the dramaturgical aspect of the music and my outward posture - how my compositions should be presented in a performance situation. I came to consider this aspect of my composition as a form of disposition: in both pieces there is delineation of a performance space, which is symbolic as well as having a demonstrative effect upon the sound and what the audience sees.[13]

Two consistent themes have emerged in the two pieces, they are:

i. the musical *dramaturgical* aspect of the pieces being a palpable aspect of the music

ii. a thematic technical and critical use of musical 'scenarios' that emerge as being part of the compositional material

### 3.1.2 Dispositions

Below (Fig. 3.0) is a notebook sketch from 2015. At this time, the title *Hortulus Animae* and the 'theatre' of the work were foremost in my planning. This was an example of the first and clearest indication of a musical 'disposition'. When performing these pieces I am kneeling, eyes-averted from the audience, and I have smaller sound-sources (speakers), around me. As such, I consider that these compositions are, as far as I perceive them, events that try to place themselves outside of the traditional concert space and repertory.

[13] Disposition to me means the arrangement of the room, sound sources in the room, as it would in electro-acoustic music when speaking of the placement of speakers in the space

**Figure 3.0:** Initial sketch for *Hortulus Animae*

Both *Hortulus Animae* (i) and *Blodeuwedd* utilise fixed media - a tape track constructed from materials that I have either improvised on the flute, or are pre-recorded objects, later re-arranged as a tape part. The diffusion of the tape is via four small battery-powered speakers, connected to a MP3 player. As a mode of disposition (an arrangement of the space, as well as my location in that space), the small speakers function as a form of physical barrier to the outside. I consider the small speakers as a zone, or outlying marker for my own private performance space. And, that this delineation of the space around me (the speakers) also have a narrative use in the music. The speakers maintain a form of pre-designed structure to the pieces are in a dialogue with me. Another distinct aspect to these two works, which stands in relief to my case studies is that I have avoided using a score, and instead I use the tape part as a means to cueing pitches, actions, and to determine a pulse or temporal orientation.

I have imbued these small objects with symbolic and practical usage, and by the same token, they are also a form of practical limitation to the compositions, which I have woven into part of the works. The dynamic level of the speakers is limited, and in this way, they limit the timbral scope of the music, thus reinforcing the impression that they seem to be solely for the performer that they encompass. The audience can sonically (and visually) perceive the intimacy of *Hortulus Animae*. There are then self-limitations in place in my music – the lack of dynamic power to project to an audience, the self-limitation of space, and also, my posture

within this space. These characteristics have remained as compositional parameters to *Hortulus Animae*; they reflect a highly subjective and personal musical context that the case studies have evoked in my practice.

### 3.1.3 *Hortulus Animae (i)*

*Hortulus Animae (i)* was composed for the 'Listen to the Voice of Fire' festival in Aberystwyth, premiered in July 2018. In this work I am responding to Michel Serres' book *Musique* (2011). *Musique* reinvigorates the topic of music as a philosophical subject, and the first part of the book (which is the most relevant to my composition), is based on an allegory that re-engages with the character of Orpheus. In the opening chapter, Serres describes Orpheus, whom we know already from the legend of Eurydice, at the beginning of his training as a musician. At this point, the noise of the world renders Orpheus silent: he is depicted here as 'muet'.

> Orphée ne parlait, ne chantait, ni ne composait de musique. Désireux de se délivrer de l'enfer détonant alentour, il cherchait un lieu silencieux, insonorisé, rarissime, où il n'entendrait plus les bruits ordurier de moteurs et tuners qui, en l'assourdissant, l'avaient rendu muet
>
> (Serres, 2015, p. 9.

> Orpheus did not speak, sing, or compose music. Wishing to free himself from the explosive hell around him, he sought for a completely silent insulated space [insonorisé], where he would no longer hear the jarring noise of engines and tuners deafened him and rendered him mute. (translation my own)

From Serres' narrative we can recognise the familiar tropes to do with the artist and finding a creative a voice, but more specifically, I see two distinct modes in Serre' engagement with Orpheus that were important to my work. Serres articulates sound with such distinctive metaphors that refine music and an understanding of sound - Orpheus is not initially capable of composing, but rather, Orpheus is a musician in an apprenticeship with sound.

> Il chercha, peu a peu, avant d'entrer en langue, à écouter, en silence….du corps propre, les sons rauques de sa glotte, les battements de son coeur, le rythme et le tempo de son pouls, ceux de sa respiration, ainsi que les acouphènes, bourdonnements et tintements insensés de l'oreille
>
> (Serres, 2015, p. 11)

> He sought, little by little, before entering into language, to listen, in silence ...to his own body, the hoarse sounds of his glottis, the beating of his heart, the rhythm and tempo of his pulse, those of his breathing, as well as the senseless buzzing, ringing and chiming of the ear (translation my own)

It is Serres' categorisation of sound, and Orpheus's apprenticeship in composition (which here is voiced as a sensitisation), that I take as an inference as to how I have positioned myself in this chapter, and how a relationship between sound and composition can take place. There is a transgressive unsophistication to how Serres (through Orpheus) evokes the rawness of sonic materials that would eventually be a composition. Specifically it is Serres' power of the metaphorical that ultimately colours and renews a sense of discovery in my own worldview. In a similar way that Serres' descriptions of Orpheus' interactions with sound, I have used a hermeticism and self-reflexivity as Orpheus hears through his body. Orpheus takes his own measure of sound and its sources, and then from there he builds upon an embodied knowledge and understanding of sound. This method of composition becomes a creative reconstruction of this interiority:

> Le corps entend, oui, -- comprend-il? -- ces combinasons contingentes de sons insénses, d'accord vagues, de cacophonies criardes, qui rechutent, parfois, tout aussitoit dans le bruit de fond
>
> (Serres, 2011, p. 19)

> The body hears, yes, - does it understand? - these contingent combinations of mindless sounds, vague chords, garish cacophonies, which sometimes relapse, all at once in the background noise (translation my own).

It is also worth noting that Serres' weaving of levels of sound and material states of music is ultimately a contemporary one. The depictions presented by Serres describe a primitive force that surrounds Orpheus, which spurs an imaginative relationship between our understanding of the processing sound and a temporality. In this instance, for example, there are aspects of live sound processing: the granulation of sound:

> Bien avant de verser vers des mots, des phrases, ou les lois, ces milliards de grains particulaires peuvent bifurquer, en rythme, vers des tons, des notes, vers une musique primitive
>
> (Serres, 2011, p.19)

> Well before pouring into words, phrases, or laws, these billions of particle grains can bifurcate, in rhythm, into tones, notes, towards a primitive music (translation my own)

> ...et plus finement, l'étrange musique, d'un crystal apériodique, et des chromosomes le chromatisme subtil
>
> (Serres, 2011, p. 19)

> …and even more delicately, the strange music of an aperiodic crystal: a subtle chromatic harmony of chromosomes (translation my own).

Serres' allegory, aside from being an imaginative and creatively stimulating text, foregrounds the emergent and the materiality of sound as something Orpheus must shape. This is an account of an autodidactic form of composition, incorporating aspects of organology in the way that the world, or even Orpheus' body, becomes repurposed as an instrument, or an antenna, for sound. In this way, there is a transmutation of the erstwhile raw sound into music, evoking descriptions of anatomies and organic structures and their sonic potential. In Serres' text, the elements of sound become components of music which are imbued with a potential. Moving on from the Orphic allegory, these are some of the underlying characteristics that I have gleaned from *Musique* and applied to compositional approach:

i) sound as a raw material and not purely an instrumental construct
ii) a de-professionalisation of composition (or the composer)
iii) the sensitisation (diagnostically and perceptually) toward sound, its sources and space

Serres' work thus reanimates of the identity of the composer. This is subtly declassifies the term 'composer' and offers a challenge for the way they function as an initiate with sound, and from this point of contact, develop an autodidactic process for organising aspects of sound.

### 3.1.4 *Hortulus Animae (i)* a technical overview

My approach to *Hortulus (i)* is defined by a further series of technical limitations specific to this piece that I set myself during its composition. These are:

i. limited use of the c flute and using no extended techniques
ii. the tape part only consists only of found objects; and
iii. the organisation of the piece to use a binary approach (a call and response format).

The limitations I outline above begin to frame my first work as a technical exercise, exploring the tools and my approaches to composition (from using the small speakers, through to the organisation of the tape part, and deciding how the flute would be involved in this piece).

I decided not to notate my arrangements, but instead, I used software which I could have a visual awareness of the sound, building a model of the piece in a graphic way. In this way I placed a constant listening and testing in the centre of my understanding. It is a method recalls Brian Eno's model, outlined in his essay/lecture on *The Studio as Compositional Tool*, he mentions a similar working practice:

> You can begin to think in terms of putting something on, putting something else on, trying this on top of it, and so on, then taking some of the original things off, or taking

> a mixture of things off, and seeing what you're left with — actually constructing a piece in the studio.
>
> In a compositional sense this takes the making of music away from any traditional way that composers worked, as far as I'm concerned, and one becomes empirical in a way that the classical composer never was. You're working directly with sound, and there's no transmission loss between you and the sound — you handle it. It puts the composer in the identical position of the painter — he's working directly with a material, working directly onto a substance, and he always retains the options to chop and change, to paint a bit out, add a piece, etc.
>
> (Eno, 1979)

Developing *Hortulus (i)* within this structure avoided what I feel is an abstraction of notation, and reverted to a more a simplified, intuitive process of layering and testing. Rather than using a score, I resorted to using waveform as a means to visually represent pacing and silence as a simplified graphic. As a result, the instrumental writing is somewhat constricted in *Hortulus (i).* There is less of a distinction of a solo line, and the piece merges the two mediums: acoustic flute and the pre-recorded tape track. Furthermore, the sounds, I can make without the instrument as a performer, are very much part of the sonic texture of the work as a whole.

### 3.1.5 Instrumentation

*Hortulus (i)* became a work of seven minutes duration, and it can be divided into three parts. Within these three sections I can distinguish particular motives, or a simple layering of sound which can be identified for the listener:

i. a solo tape part (recordings of tuning forks).
ii. the introduction of the performer whistling one tone; and
iii. a short duo with the flute and tape part.

Upon reflection *Hortulus (i)* functioned as a preparatory work for my research. The overall structure has a simplicity, and it focuses in on a limited range of musical material. From my central position inside of the work I can identify a sense of inhibition (mirrored in the posture I take), and a resistance to develop the piece in a rhetorical way. A sense of 'development', or how the material changes, or diversifies itself, is instead situated through a process of combination and recombination of elements, and not exclusively through a musical narrative. My practice of composing, in this case, seems to replace a musical narrative with more technical exploration of a modular approach to the possibilities of orchestration. It is in this way that I propose that *Hortulus (i)* moves around a binary relationship that explores combinations between the materials I have made, and while involving the c flute, the instrument is in fact used sparingly in *Hortulus Animae (i).* The flute only appears once for under two minutes in a seven-minutes work, performing a short melodic line towards the close (which consists of only five pitches). As such the flute is used in a monodic way in this composition.

My creative impetus behind the arrangement of the tape part, I looked to Serres' descriptions of music as a prompt, or evocation. It was essentially the otherworldliness of Serres' visual descriptions that suggest an aperiodic sense of pulse and harmonic sequences which could use microtonal tunings '*l'étrange musique, d'un cristal apériodique'* and the idea of a '*chromatisme subtil'* (Serres, 2011, p. 19). My response in musical terms was an attempt to capture the otherworldliness that he describes. Working in this vein, I used sound objects (tuning forks of varying pitches), which were pre-recorded and used as the main musical element to the tape part in *Hortulus (i).*

### 3.1.6 Additional instruments – tuning forks

The tuning forks have an almost electronic aura, and their sound is devoid of the usual fluctuations that other instruments have, so I sought to harnessing their clarity of attack as a way of introducing 'otherness' to the work. As a more expressive, if not vocal modality, I used layers of pre-recorded material with the tuning forks, and, *en masse*, through stacking the recordings, I created oscillations or 'beats' within the tape part. There is then a variety

of rhythmical *pulsing* that we hear in the tape part for *Hortulus (i)* which is achieved by the way that the pitches interact with each other as a result of the layering. In each of the three sections of the piece, there is a pulsing, or a suggestion of rhythm created through microtonal intonation and their clashes in my recordings, alluding to a type of vibrato, or oscillation in the sound.

The tuning forks made these sounds through being struck either against each other or individually, and then being placed on a surface and transmitting sound through a material or surface. There were three variations of playing the tuning forks which I used in the tape part.

i. Striking a pair of forks together to creates a bell-like 'peal' (which is incisive and has a long decay). By holding the forks in close proximity to each other during the decaying phase, they interact with each other's pitch, causing a pulsing.

ii. Striking one individually, and then placing it onto a wooden surface for conduction. This produces an initial more rounded attack, and then another softer attack, consistent in pitch and in decay. All of this is heard only *through* a surface or material.

iii. Striking one and then lightly touching the fork on a wooden surface to create a 'buzzing' sound.

### 3.1.7 Scoring and archiving

The question of recording or defining *Hortulus (i)* in a visual form came after the first performance. The score, as I see it, is a complement to the performance and part of an archiving process, and not adopted here as a means to disseminate or encourage others to perform the piece. The function of this score became more of an attempt to develop an image of *Hortulus* that encourages a level of scrutiny, but is as much a visual enrichment to the performance. I class this as a form of translation, from a performance aspect into

aesthetic object. My focus here was not upon making a true representation of the piece, but instead preparing a creative transcription (Fig. 3.1).

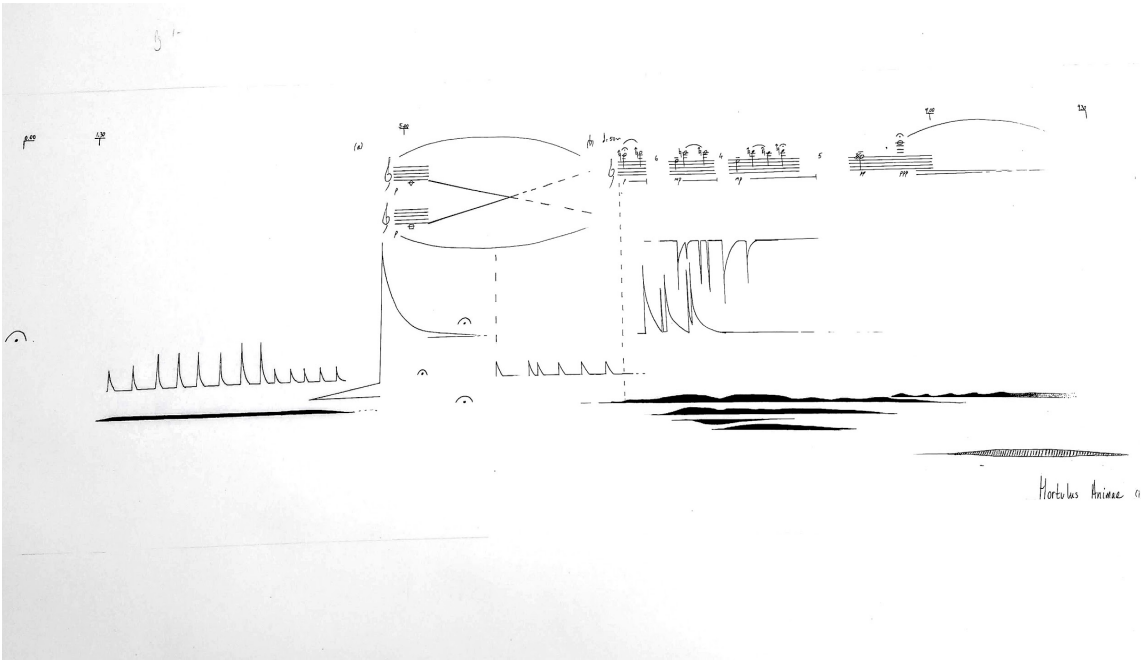

**Figure 3.1:** A 'score' for *Hortulus Animae (i)*, 2018

### 3.2 *Blodeuwedd* for flute and fixed media

*Blodeuwedd* is a work with a narrative source - the title comes from Welsh folklore and the underlying theme is that of the transformative aspect of the legend. The legend recounts a being who has been constructed from the elements (from flowers of broom, meadowsweet and oak) but has the ability to change shape at will. My focus is here is then to do with the transgressive force associated with the legend; the propensity of a self-modulating form that moves through numerous other identities, whilst being one and the same person.

My choice of instrument in *Blodeuwedd* was the bass flute, which from an instrumental perspective lends itself to a particular vocal quality in the sound, and a tonal flexibility in its approach to pitching and glissandi. Furthermore, it is an instrument that due to its size, and

capacity, lends itself to capturing resonance, and projecting percussive and vocal sonorities which are used frequently in my work.

### 3.2.1 Loops and improvisations

There are two main sets of source material in *Blodeuwedd*. The first set is a series of improvisations from May 2016, and the second from a recording session in 2019. The 2016 recordings were a series of improvisations using live electronics. I extemporised an initial fragment of music and then preceded to layer gestures within this time frame on top of this, based on the motivic themes and sounds that were influenced by the music in the score of *émoi*. One of these improvisations from 2016 serves as the underlying structure of *Blodeuwedd*. The technology which I used to capture the initial improvisation was a MAX/MSP patch is called KARMA (Fig. 3.2). Using the KARMA software was as a means to initiate a looping (a type of musical canon, which was also used in *émoi* ). Using this software in this way implied a constant 'ground', a repetition and layering of material, and also a way for a monodic instrument to create a texture of several moving parts. From a structural perspective, the use of electronics imposes a structural component to the improvisation and KARMA allowed me to adapt, in real-time, the content and pacing of my playing while improvising. The possibility of deleting, or multiplying material, in an improvisational situation, based on the material that I fed into the system has been an underlying theme in my approach to the score of *émoi* in which duplication, or juxtaposition of materials was my 'compositional' approach to Johnson's score.

In my first freehand analysis of what rules or governing ideas I would have for these improvisations, I noted the following parallels with *émoi* in my performance in my own shorthand notes about the improvisations:

> The flute is monophonic, but the score of *émoi*, from a visual point of view, suggests otherwise. What other way could I approach the challenge of monody? Considering how the breath, generally speaking, is a limitation both of the performer – how can the breath be woven together (in a live situation) as a continuous element this piece?

The extra-musical sounds in *émoi* have a short duration, and generally percussive. How can a longer sense of phrasing be achieved in my performance?

(Craig, 2019)

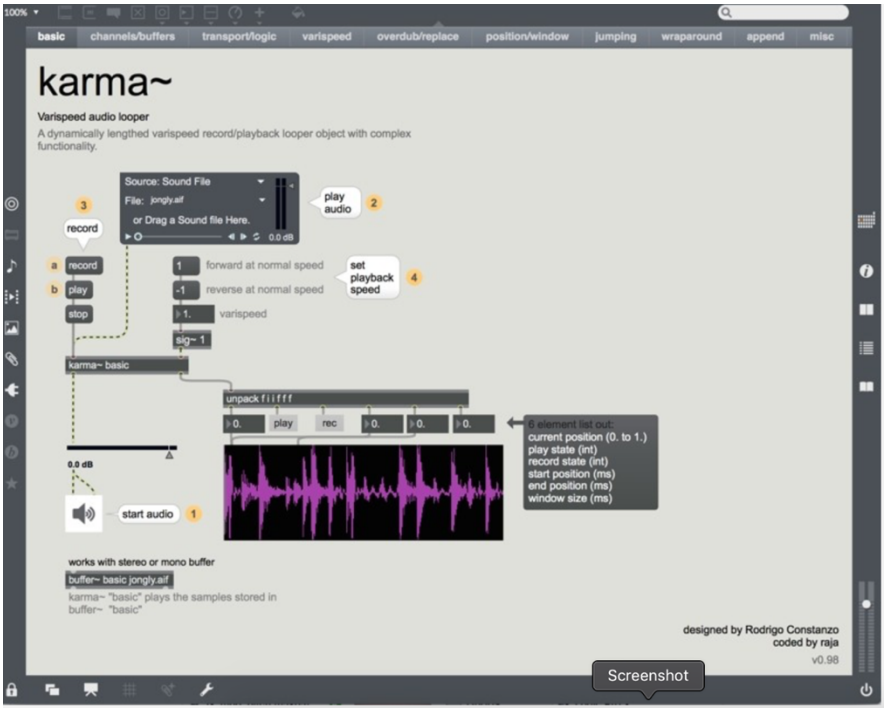


**Figure 3.2**: Screenshot of *karma~* software, 2015

In January 2019, when I was reviewing materials for a new work, I revisited the improvisations from 2016 and pinpointed one improvisation in particular as having the potential to be involved in my composition of *Blodeuwedd*. The next stage was to consider how to shape the improvised version of *émoi* from 2016, but with a live element of bass flute and the new pre-recorded elements.

### 3.2.2 *Hortulus (i)* and *Blodeuwedd*

A brief overview of both pieces indicates that there is a creative identity behind the composing of *Blodeuwedd* in comparison to *Hortulus (i)*. This reflection is compounded if we consider that much of the materials - through the gestures and sounds I have outlined and improvised with, and the material of the tape part – are a mixture of myself and aspects of *émoi* that are joined in *Blodeuwedd*. If we consider how the interchange between the instrument and myself has been approached in my case studies, my compositions have experimented with a fluidity between instrument and instrumentalist and source materials. From a methodological perspective, there is an emphasis in my compositions to design a work that is an extension, of themes in the case studies. *Hortulus Animae (i)* develops the typical idea of a 'solo' piece: here the performer, and the instrument, are engaged in a type of orchestration (of improvisations and pre-recorded sounds) from different periods in the research, and focus on making working models of the concepts I have discussed. There is naturally a historicity in my practice here - the past (the improvisations of 2015), the near-present (2019), and the live part are all featured in this piece as a narrative layering of elements in my research. A more detailed consideration of how this connects to my approach to spatialization of practice it will be explored in the closing chapter and my discussion of Massey's *For Space* (2005).

In this new territory, I find my compositional work is one which bridges the divide of performer and composer. I have already mentioned how the underlying concept of *Blodeuwedd* is that of a shape-shifting theme, and this seems to have bled across into my own identity as a performer and composer. To contextualise *Blodeuwedd* and *Hortulus (i)* in a broader way: these compositions propose that they resist categorisations as freestanding works intended for the concert scene, and nor are they exclusively research works. Rather than profile these works as independent compositions, they are intimately connected to the research, and exist as models of a new practice of composition.

### 3.2.3 ‘earthy root and airy imagination’

The creative impetus for *Blodeuwedd* drew on a range of traditional music and poetic texts (the poetry of Seamus Heaney in particular) as a rich exchange of metaphors that informed my own music.

As we heard, *Blodeuwedd* has involved a technique of layering, and a reconsideration of past materials and their incorporation into present. The archiving, and reinvigoration of the materials represent the way *Blodeuwedd* symbolises the cyclical nature of my performance work, and a retrieval of information and practice. We already know that I have positioned autoethnography as a major part of my research, and so the themes of working around my own thematic constructions have become an aspect of creative as well as my technical approach to *Blodeuwedd*.

### 3.2.4 Waulking

Aspects of Scottish folk singing influenced the musical landscape of *Blodeuwedd*, in particular the material which I added in 2019. Waulking, (or fuling) is a work song that was intended to cleanse and strengthen fabric. It is performed by a group of women assembled around a newly woven cloth which is softened through a rhythmical drubbing of the hands and elbows to beat the fabric (Fig. 3.3). The cloth is also is circulated amongst the group while they sing and stretch the cloth, in a clockwise motion. In my observations of archive footage, I was drawn to how the group handled the cloth: I noted the womens’ hands and their position to each other; how they would work with the material, and the resultant sounds of these actions, as well as the musical content of the song. I also became aware of aperiodic claps of hands, and the dull blows of hands and making contact with the table. The sound of the cloth being rubbed and drawn against the wood of the table, and the general sense of circularity, which I noted from the song, has seeped into my composition. An eyewitness account of waulking comes from the folklorist Alexander Carmichael notes that:

Five minor processes are involved in waulking. There is the first process of Thickening the cloth; second the process of Cleaning the cloth, third, the process of Folding it; fourth the process of giving it Tension; and after these the rite of Consecrating the cloth…During the work the women sing lively, stirring, emphatic songs. One sings a verse, all join in the chorus…The women keep time with their arms and feet (Carmichael,1992, p. 353)


**Figure 3.3:** Picture of a performance of a Waulking song

My musical interpretation, without it being a direct transcription of the original recording, was to incorporate rhythmical aspects of a waulking song into *Blodeuwedd*, and, alongside these metrical characteristics, to emulate the use of my voice in the way the performers use it. In *Blodeuwedd*, there are moments of similarity in the way that my compound rhythms are featured in the tape part, and there is a further cyclical suggestion which connects to the core idea of looping in my music.

The strongest impression I have from the waulking song is the reflection of a communal act of music making that is woven into a task, and the variety of sound and vocalisations, even a spatialization that happens within the group. Furthermore, the scenography of this musical

situation strikes me as an intimate one, whilst performing a socially binding practice. The distinction I want to point out here is that composition in the case of the waulking song is as much a social arrangement, or disposition within that space, and that the physical activity behind this disposition produces a musical situation. As such, this observation opens up more provocative thoughts as to how I approach making my own music, composing in a more general way, and working with aspects of a performative space (Massey).

### 3.2.5 The poetry of Seamus Heaney

> Nature as text, and more precisely earthy nature as text, is a recurrent theme in the poetry of Seamus Heaney, especially at the beginning of his literary career.
>
> (2009, Padilla , p.22)

> His poetic penetration underneath layers of earth and language, his *archaeo-poetry*, as we have termed elsewhere, represents a committed attempt at finding his own roots and poetic muse
>
> (2009, Padilla, p. 23)

The above quote is a reference to poet Seamus Heaney's work and the way in which earth, as a layering of time, and his connection to this, are a large part of Heaney's early output. I want to relate how two poems from early collections of Heaney have been in the periphery of my reading during this project. Connotations of the earth as metaphorical form of the past, the layering of time, as well as its upheaval; of excavating through layers of time and experience, is a theme that runs through Heaney's early work. Earth becomes a metaphorical medium that has been shaped by time in Heaney's early poetry (in particular collections such as *North* and *Death of a Naturalist)* and there is a focus on 'earth' as the binding agent of Heaney's past: it is a source of memories to be retrieved, concealment, and a latent psychic energy. Below is an extract from *Digging* (1964), from the collection, *Death of a Naturalist (1966).*

*Digging*

Bends low, comes up twenty years away
Stooping in rhythm through potato drills
Where he was digging

(Heaney, 1964)

Heaney's poetry begins an unpicking of these layers of memory, and it is often conveyed in an archaeological parlance in his early work. It has been termed by some scholars as a form of 'archaeo-poetry' (2009, Padilla, p. 23). Here we have an extract from the collection *Death of Naturalist* which is a short example of this earthiness and illustrates how Heaney is metaphorically working down through layers of time, and in doing so, implying a rhythm of labour. In the way that Serres introduced a narrative that moved into a musical form, Heaney was much more of a general influence, however, he colours thematic proposals, offers a metaphorical language, and helps to verbalise my own intuitions as to the work I make and its direction. My own attempts at a type of archeo-poetry can be seen in my programme note for *Blodeuwedd* (Fig. 3.4 is a visual reference to the following extract):

Nocturnal perambulations;
Mouthfuls of earth,
Leaves, strands of bark and torn petals;

An ever-changing form 'like a joyless eye
That finds no object worth its constancy'

(Craig, 2019)

**Figure 3.4**: A still from Pasolini's *Teorema* is here as a visual representation of my own text 'mouthfuls of earth'.

In a later collection *North* Heaney dedicates several verses to a similar poetic archaeology. In particular, the poem *Bog Queen* gives voice to a long-deceased body, preserved in a bog. Heaney portrays a sense of tactility to her body, clues as to why her body is in the bog, and the layers of time above her head, and the passing of time. Whilst the narrative of the *Bog Queen* is not explicitly orchestrated in *Blodeuwedd*, the association Heaney makes here of a temporal excavation (time as a material) and its subsequent layers, can be assigned to elements of *Blodeuwedd*.

Bog Queen

I lay waiting…
Between turf-face and demesne wall
Between heathery levels
And glass-toothed stone

My body was braille
For the creeping influences:
Dawn suns groped over my head
And cooled at my feet.

Through my fibres and skins
The seeps of winter
Digested me,
The illiterate roots
Pondered and died
In the cavings
Of stomach and socket
I lay in waiting

(Heaney, 1975)

In an oblique way, I have joined my themes of folk-music, folklore and poetry in my creative positioning of my composing. In this way, *Blodeuwedd* tries to engage with a cyclical impetus in my practice and a sense of the past and new performance practices. These other materials (Heaney and Waulking) were instructive and timely discoveries for my compositional work from a thematic perspective, and they offered me a sense of nuance to my own approach to constructing the piece.

### 3.3 Interlocution and the generative metaphor

A more technical discussion of Blodeuwedd can be focussed around the use of improvisation from 2016 and integrating it with new material entailed some editing of the material. By dividing the improvisation into three sections I developed an underlying structure of *Blodeuwedd*. Between each section I created gaps in the original texture of the improvisation. In these gaps I composed solo instrumental sections and inserted new pre-recorded materials from 2019. Despite these incisions into the structure of my improvisation, the ordering of themes and events remained intact (Fig. 3.5).

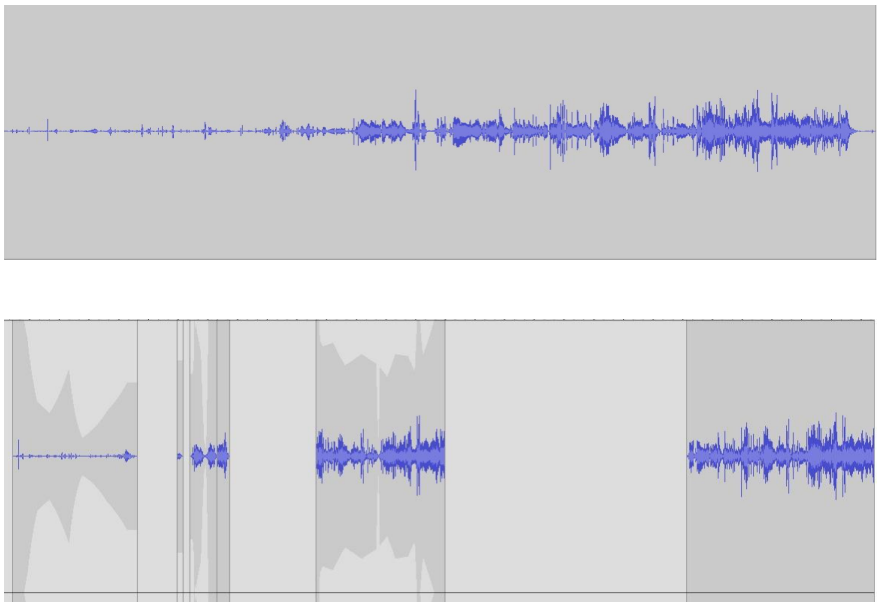

**Figure 3.5**: Waveform of my initial improvisation (top row), in comparison with enlarged gaps to accommodate the new materials in *Blodeuwedd*

The new pre-recorded materials from 2019 consist of my own singing, humming, whistling, and also of percussive improvisations on wood surfaces (also performed by scraping on wood, knocking, clapping and tapping with my hands). This type of material (percussive or vocalised), experiments with an autobiographical approach to composition - that the work is a self-generated palette of sound. As such *Blodeuwedd* takes my proposal of instrumentalization of a performer as well as instrument into the centre of the piece. This more personalised approach to the material (the sounds of my breathing, and the vocal and percussive sounds from the body) thus complements and draws on foregrounding the materials we know from *émoi* if within my own framework of a composition. I look then to these new materials as aspects of orientation within *Blodeuwedd* (the breath, pulse, vocal actions that have existed in the case studies and focalised my practice), and highlighting these as temporal aspects of my performance.

> A critical technical practice rethinks its own premises, revalues its own methods, and reconsiders its own concepts as a routine part of its daily work.
>
> (Agre,1997, p. 24)

With the details of my compositions now in place, there is the opportunity to bring a partial conclusion to the compositional aspect of my study. My incorporation of composition into my research is one that allows important non-linear associations from several different influences to converge, whilst also being consistent with systems of thought that emerged from the case studies. In the parlance of Agre, through modelling these pieces as I have, there are now particular themes, or demonstrations we can isolate as examples or experiments in composition that tell a particular story or frame a particular problem. As well as creative freedom in my work, composition has been an interlocutor into my own proposals about performance practices and composing. To close this chapter, it is important to point out how thinking about composition as a conceptual and technical tool has developed my research.

To establish what is clear then, it is that:

i. Composition has, in this case, qualified itself as an of practice (Agre) that speaks of, or comments upon, my performances

ii. The schematic, or design aspects of my performance studies, have brought out a range of thematic extensions and considerations to composition that hitherto were not present

iii. As a technical exercise, composition encourages a creative synthesis of interdisciplinary thought and an externalisation of creative systems

iiii. Composition stimulates world-building and rule-making processes in my practice into an outward, audible and visual stance

Here I have been discussing building my own compositional output and discussing the process which has opened up a new perspective on performance too. To utilise Agre's theory was a deliberate adoption of a metaphor to try to convey a sense of process to my composing. We could say that it has been trying to establish, from Agre's technical and

critical standpoint, a move away from an engrained understanding, enabling a more concise labelling of work. In doing so, I believe that it has identified and autonomy, or initial demarcation of my own creative voice that was not clear in my performance activities with composers (Agre, 1997). From having the clear antipodes of thought thanks to Agre's technical and critical practice, it has involved the more established persona of a performer to inform the process of making a compositional practice. Both polarities had to be wound into a text, and also into the practical work. Composition has also brought about a fresh autoethnographical aspect to my project, and a clarity to my position as a performer and/or composer, as well as a depth by which to relate to and comment upon the prevailing discursive powers of my research:

> a generative metaphor is often a liberating experience, giving concise expression to a previously diffuse sense of being oppressed by inarticulate false assumptions
>
> (Agre, 1997, p. 35)

**4.0 Conclusions: Autoethnography**

In my structuring of the thesis we can see a clear delineation between composer and a performer, and an indication of practices shared between the two identities. In this final chapter, I will try to draw together these aspects and gathering together the work as a presentation of contemporary music practice that is beyond the binary of performer and composer.

This conclusion is divided into two parts: the first dedicates itself to an overview of the key points that have emerged from a methodological, practical and creative perspective. In particular I will discuss my problematisations of the score; the creative momentum in my practice; and observations the performer/instrument relationship. Following on from this, the second part will attempt to interpret the entire project via Massey, drawing out an explication

of my practice through Massey's three precepts that constitute space, or a spatialization of practice.

My research methodology, as well as having a structural role to play in the project, had an influence over my approach to the written documentation. Working with autoethnography not only helped design my project, but also termed how I could intervene in my performances and compositions. Furthermore, it posed questions as to how the voicing of the work would be best conveyed: how should practice be defined in, or as, a text? With this in mind, it would be worthwhile then to revisit sections of the project and examine these aspects in detail.

In the introduction to my thesis, I proposed to develop my own approach to autoethnography. Gradually, through my familiarisation with the method, and also the type of information that it yields, the autoethnographic method became an important auto-didactic process in my project. However, it was not without its challenges. The tension between the practice and the written representation of my work, and to what extent writing can adequately convey the complexity of practice, has been constant reflection throughout this research. Conveying a realism, and a coherent picture of my practice, has thus been an evolving consideration in my research. To focus on how I modulated my approach, we can review the two case studies again, but this time looking at the approaches I took from an autoethnographic perspective. Both of these studies highlight the tension I speak of, and my adaptation in the way that I communicated these as text.

> 'Verisimilitude…evokes a feeling that the experience is described is true, coherent, believable and connect the reader to the writers world'
>
> (Denzin, 2013, p. 70)

### 4.0.1 Verisimilitude and *émoi*

In trying to describe my work I encountered the limits or difficulties in conveying my practice, and the way in which one approach does not suit all practice-based scenarios. An example of this was in my two case studies, where I modulate between different approaches in autoethnography. One of which is based on the epiphenomenon of the score (how I respond

to the score), and the other when I place the focus of my attention on the body, and a phenomenological approach.

To covey to the reader how I was approaching and understanding *émoi*, I referred to the score as being similar in a similar position to a text. I looked to Roland Barthes' descriptions of reading texts and how he engaged with texts as a basis for my reporting the visual input of *émoi*. In the *Pleasure of the Text* (1975), Barthes observed how the 'illusions, seductions and intimidations' (Barthes, 1975, p.18) of a text influenced how he read (or, bring a change of focus in his attention), and also that a text which he admired became a creative vehicle for his own work. Barthes' discussions of reading offered different modes of reading (and types of concentration) most notable his attention being subject to drifting, or that the text controlled his momentum when reading. My interactions with *émoi* proved to be a similar experience. Taking this as a starting point – that how I looked at, or how I could adapt the way I saw *émoi* – was a method to manage the visual complexities and navigate *émoi*. It was my attempts to verbalise my own process of working with *émoi* that Barthes' observations became so influential – he speaks of being drawn into, or pulled along by the text. As Barthes said, he is drawn to an elusive aspect to a text, as I was also drawn to the aesthetic beauty of the score. Going further still, for Barthes this momentum would also initiate a process in which he would want to imitate or insert himself into a work. While on the one hand Barthes' notes being drawn into a text, on the other he is also planning as to how he could insert his voice, or align his own practice, inside/alongside such a text. Similarly, I feel that in *émoi* there is an element of momentum to the musical notation that continually suggests that I present my own solution, or voice, into the piece, to the point that I add details, erase, or reorganise the score in order to perform the music.

In this instance, and using these metaphors, how I place myself (as Barthes does with his subject, into the centre of someone else's work) is a means of engaging with the score, and conveys this process to the reader. These similar aspects taking place in the score of *émoi* (the absorption, 'intimidations and illusions' that Barthes recounts from his own experience) are thus my degree of equivalence, and I approach conveying *émoi* in a similar way, through Barthes' and my own recollections. In this situation, negotiating the aesthetic beauty *and* the musical content of *émoi* was not only an artistic project, but also attempting to communicate

a degree of verisimilitude for the reader to understand the process. Barthes sums this process up in a more succinct way:

> Every beautiful work, or even every impressive work, functions as a desired work, albeit one that's incomplete and as it were lost because I didn't write it myself; in order to recover the work, I have to rewrite it; to write is to want to rewrite: I want to add myself actively to something that's beautiful but that I lack, that I require.
>
> (Barthes, 2011 p.132)

### 4.0.2 Verisimilitude and *luminous*

> The goal is to produce an interruption, a performance text, that challenges conventional taken for granted assumptions (Denzin, 2013, p. 65).

The basis of my account of *luminous* is informed through a description of instrumental technique and the breath. This means looking to orientate a discussion about the work through a phenomenological account and not the score. I discussed a new performance technique in this case study which I developed (ingressive breathing technique) and how this became integrated into my reporting of *luminous.* It was from this starting point that my attempts to describe my performance technique and the breath as musical material generated a series of other observations and performance stratagems. As an approach, this case study poses a distinct challenge as a performance text; to clarify and notate my work in a phenomenological register. In order to convey and untangle my experience in *luminous* I focussed on notating interventions (interactions with texts or otherwise) in my writing. As a technique, this approach was distinct in the latter half of the chapter when I connected my observations of breathing to the philosopher Havi Carel and her own thematisation of breathing as a multi-modal phenomenological indicator of experience. It is through a thematisation (or a Husserlian bracketing of an event or circumstance) that the surface of experience (the habitual) becomes visible, and as a result, the thematised (the breath), becomes part of my phenomenological approach.

My writing on *luminous* thus adopted a language of that speaks of a transparency (the normal, unconscious aspect of the breath and breathing) and a sudden opacity of experience when *luminous* enters into my practice and thematises the breath. The theme I use to convey this, which is taken from Carel's work, focuses on the phenomenology of illness as a set of physical outliers or boundaries. These markers became a pivot point for my internalised understanding as to how I use the breath, how *luminous* gave me an awareness of the breath, and in musical terms how this was communicated outwardly, in performance. Through autoethnography I approach the disturbances in my practice that *luminous* incurred, and connected to a physical equivalence in the way that I conveyed this. In doing so, this led to my adoption of new vocabulary and ways in which to describe practice. Thinking along the lines of a pathology, I continue to discuss performance in this case study with reference to the performer as being an instrument, having an anatomy (or, in musicological terms, an organology), through which the outward symptoms (a breakdown or recovery) are measured. This is a powerful metaphor to use, playing on the deep existential concern we all have and feel when we are faced with illness. But, as a theme, and to my mind a valid projection of my experience, this approach joins the body and the instrument as one entity, through the observation of the breath.

It was a challenge to try to navigate such a 'radically subjective' theme (Carel, 2016, p. 40). My approach also tested my conception of practice, use of metaphor, and also the validity of my research as a performance text (Denzin, 2013). However, in a similar way to Denzin's point that writing should make it possible for the reader to connect to the writers world (Denzin, 2013), my depiction requires that the reader ask themselves about their own perception of physical limitations in order to engage with my work. And, in the case of such a specialised theme and technique, the thematised action became a conduit of equivalence by which to reinforce my approach and descriptions to *luminous*. As a radically subjective approach, the intervention not only challenges my practice but also the reader's conception of what a piece of music could be or symbolise.

My project of verisimilitude as part of autoethnography was to create texts that contained a vividness, moving toward a circumstance in which the text could exist alongside the vivacity of the performances, being part of the artistic work, and an additional layer to the practice.

By addressing the surplus, or creating an accretion of information, I am attempting to create a depth, in textual form, of my performance practices. In my introduction, I shared Denzin's observation that research (both practice-based and in written forms) can be co-constructive (consubstantial), and thus consolidating both the practice and theoretical elements of an artists' output. Reviewing this statement now, after most of the research has been conducted, it is then the case that how I have approached writing, and attempting to convey a voice has involved taking steps beyond merely description. And, that obliquely, writing has become another sense of composition that has taken place within my identity.

> In modelling this figure upon myself, I have had to fashion and compose myself so often to bring myself out, that the model itself has to some extent grown firm and taken shape. Painting myself for others, I have painted my inward self with colours clearer that my original ones. I have no more made my book than my book has made me - a book consubstantial with its author, concerned with my own self, an integral part of my life.
>
> (Montaigne, 1958, p. 504)

### 4.1 Problematisation of the score

I situated the scores in my opening as a source of data for the research, and we can see how my key points here stem from, or analyse situations that the scores presented. It is also clear that the scores have taken me into new areas of practice and instrumentation. Moving then to a broader perspective, and looking not at performance practices but to aspects of design in the score (the traditional framework of a score and notation in particular), I want to try to identify design traits in the score which have evoked the responses we have heard about. In doing so, I am seeking to establish a clearer understanding of the contradictions which are upheld by contemporary score, and base a terminology that helps to describe sscores that elicit such stark responses in performance practice.

#### 4.1.1 Skeumorphism

> an object or a feature that copies the design of a similar object made from another material but does not usually have the practical purpose that the original does.

(Oxford online dictionary) [14]

We have seen that the scores explored in the case studies are designed to use a bespoke notation that projects a composer's specific approach to a work. And with *émoi* and *luminous* we see how my responses and preparations involve an immersive experience, beyond that which one might expect from a music score. That is to say that it is not only the performance practice that is unusual, but more explicitly *émoi's* and *luminous*' format, or visual import as a score. At this point, I think that we can say in both cases that we are not dealing with a merely instrumental music – the pieces exceed the standard approaches to the instrument – they are, as previous commentators have said, 'biosphere[s]' (Hails, 2017, p. 1) of the performer and instrument, and not merely that of a piece for solo bass flute. These scores, as visual representations of a piece use a classical design format, while the resulting practice and sonic result generates a very different kind of music. If I take *émoi* as an example of a skeumorphic design we can say the following about the piece: that while the score presents itself in the format of a traditional notational practice, and outwardly adopts calligraphies that signal this, and that this is adds a mimentic quality to the score. To be more precise, the extracts I have presented from *émoi* and also *luminous* exhibit an amalgamation of traditional and contemporary notation techniques, through the interweaving of the standardised classical music notation (using the familiarity of the stave and associated symbols) co-existing alongside a notational strategy that seeks to change how a performer approaches the music (for example, in *émoi* this becomes an attempt to disarm the performer). This aspect of design is pushed even further when the it freely contradicts what we understand as the limits of the instrument and the instrumentalist (in both cases, there are registers, combinations and multi-voiced chords). All of these contradictory aspects are contained within the traditional staff and stave notation system. In this way, I posit that these scores are drawing upon skeumorphic design – that the score has been adapted to project another agenda, whilst retaining design aspects of more traditional approaches to scoring.

### 4.1.2 Historical affectations

[14] https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/skeuomorph?q=skeuomorph

*émoi* is a good example of how to identify skeumorphism, since the score clearly involves a level of visual and historical affectation. This was pointed out more explicitly in my correspondence with Johnson:

> [in the] unmeasured preludes [Louis Couperin, 1626-1661] lets his figuration run rampant everywhere like weeds. That's one source of the attitude towards notation as ornament that I've been after for the past several years, of which *émoi* is a particularly dramatic example.
>
> (Johnson, 2015)

In the opening pages of text that accompany the score to *émoi* we have lists of performance techniques, the ornamentation, rhythm, and even advice as to how to physically project the work to an audience. To all intents this preamble is a contemporary treatise outlining how to approach the additional information within the notation in *émoi.* There are also aspects of familiarity to the performer. If we consider how the notation in *émoi* has an allegiance to a historical period, it emboldens the visual appearance of the music with a recognisable insignia. There is a graphic connection in Johnson's music to that era of the French baroque music and notation, and so *émoi* moves into a particular calligraphy and musical ethos, symbolically speaking. Even if we look to the score as a physical object and how it is made (Johnson composes by hand, on A3 paper, and with a particular visual reference in mind) the score even attempts a demonstrable resistance in being classed a contemporary object. So far, the analogy between *émoi* and Couperin is that of shared ethos, notation system, and even sharing a manufacturing method that going as far as adopting rules of ornamentation from that period[15]. Clearly, we can appreciate the visual similarities as to how Couperin and Johnson used notation, but the differences appear in the resulting practice, as well as the sound from the score, which are far from synonymous with each other. There are tell-tale signs of a historical musical tradition, but from my description of the *émoi*, this design approach illustrates a very different understanding of the instrument and the score as a precise picture of the piece. We are, in fact, a long way from Couperin, and instead engaged in a parametrically designed and labyrinthine conceptualisation of the performer-led score. My point here is that there is a stark 'iconicity' (Knappet, 2002) that *émoi* adopts

[15] The ornamentation in *émoi* borrows from, or is similar to that used by the French Baroque in circa 1600-1700

by engaging by using a derivative of a traditional system of notation. This is confirmed when I asked Johnson to elaborate his compositional process, Johnson stated:

> a good portion of the impulses that I've tried to work through in my compositional process over the past several years find their source or at least their analogue in the Baroque, and particularly the French Baroque, and particularly the keyboard music of Johann Jakob Froberger [1616-1667] and Louis Couperin. It's a sense of exuberance—"opulence" is a good word—and of excess, of the sublime uncontrollable, that I find extremely appealing and inspiring.
>
> (Johnson, 2015)

As a performer of *émoi* I have already set out the mechanisms as to why the notation behaves as it does. But my emphasis here is on the score being an *object* which has been designed to carry a message about the piece and not a photorealism; the notation holds a multitude of ideas, actions and ornamentations, but is encased in a traditional structure which can barely contain the density and volume of information. As a format or design trait, the notation in *émoi* is thus an example of a pre-organised tension, a skeuomorphic one.

> [it] depends in large part upon the degree of likeness, and hence consumption success is reliant upon the skill invested in production. Moreover, the prototypical act of consumption also needs to be skilfully mimicked.
>
> (Knappet, 2002, p. 110)

The likeness (or iconicity) actually houses layers of other information that build a performance practice that seeks to cause a behavioural response from the performer, as well as to play the score. In this design process, there is certainly a 'footprint' (Knappet, 2002, p. 109). of a classical music score, but we are in fact embroiled in several other aspects of performance and music-making.

The label of skeuomorphic, helps us then to initially locate what contemporary music's intentions can be: to greater or lesser degrees, contemporary music notation can evoking

an affectation or psychic aspect to the score, which it cannot fully evoke in the pitches or rhythms of the bar (we can see from score examples in VALE the variety of notational practices). Through seeing this change in notational approaches as a type of skeumorphism, it clarifies for the initiate how the performer is now at the centre of a series of projections as to what a piece is, or could contain as a performance. For, if we understand that there is a deliberate aspect of design, or visual affectation to the score, we also understand that it is a subjective project underway by the composer. And, thinking of skeumorphism as a deliberate aspect of design in contemporary music, a footprint of a piece (Knappet, 2002), if you will, it can gift the performer with a greater understanding of their own agency and how it can operate within the proposed design of a piece.

> As a footprint is, like a shadow, a good example of an indexical sign, the implication is that the skeuomorph refers indexically to the prototypical form it represents.
>
> (Knappet, 2002, p. 109)

### 4.2 Composition and reconstruction of practice

Developing a critical analysis, based on theory, or my own analysis, has been at the core of my arguments in my project. However, by thinking more constructively about research design, and the implementation of a composition, there has also been a constructive, or reconstructive, momentum in my work. In comparison to the critical approach I took to the case studies which often deconstructs the work and practice, my compositions are an important element which reconstitute and consolidate. If we look to the gesture of composing a response in respect to my work, there was the need to assemble a new performative space, to define a voice (and its technical components), and operational parameters. In Agre's terms, we can say composing was an example of a generative project within the PhD. By taking on Agre's perspective it was a plan to bring research and composition together in this study, as a form of intervention for my world view in terms of the composer and performer exchange. Composition functions as another form of 'intervention' here too, and it has

become a creative momentum in my work, and a voice which has not been articulated clearly before in my practice.

The future or purpose of a creative and technical awareness' potential outside of this research is difficult to pinpoint so far, but my approach to a creative and technical practice provoked a much broader reconsideration of what composition could entail for me. Agre's theory has situated composition as an interrogative research method, and one that has started to formulate responses and solutions to the problematics of performing from scores. This is of course a subjective response, and not a de-classification of other forms of composition that exists outside of a critical and technical approach, rather, composition in this context, encapsulates a response from this study, and illustrates more keenly the tensions that I discuss in my writing. There is then a positive forward momentum in constructing a creative space, or a 'counterhistory' (Agre, 1997, p. xiv): a practice that forms a new approach, redistributes, or enables commentary to the distinctions between performer and composer. That is to say that the compositions in my research are an emergent model or a situation, in which I design a composition that is a form of experimental design for my practice, encapsulating perspectives from the performer perspective.

> Autoethnographic texts…democratise the representational sphere of culture by locating the particular experiences of individuals in tension with dominant expressions of discursive power.
>
> (Neumann, 1996, p. 189)

### 4.3 The performer as instrument

> Contextualising a performance practice for *luminous* is not then a 'mannered sophistication' of instrumental practice (as in virtuosity or a resistance). It is rather an awareness of a physical dimension to the composition: in other words, for the musician to be able to act as a corpus for the music.
>
> (Craig, 2015-18)

At the close of case study two, I had reached the proposal that the flute, and how I adapted my practice to the instrument to perform repertoire, had reached a level in which the integration of both could be seamless (through a joining of the instrument and the musician). To discuss this further, we can return to the album VALE, which was introduced at the beginning of the thesis, and to the words of a reviewer:

> Articulation, head resonance, the use of the throat (voice), lips and air direction and pressure develop the actual mechanics of flute playing into this aforementioned material. Through this precise but defamiliarizing twisting of the body, Craig moves fluidly through subtle whispers and whistles, clicks, coloured breaths and multiphonics that one realises lie as a latent potential in the flute-with-body relationship…'
>
> (Greenstone, 2018)

Greenstone, commenting on my recording of *émoi* here has annotated for us the extent to which the integration of instrument and instrumentalist has taken place when presented with recordings. The 'defamiliarizing twisting of the body', and the 'flute-with-body' relationship (Greenstone, 2018), Greenstone speaks of is that of similar approach of my work with *luminous,* if from a different perspective. More precisely, both the performances in VALE and the case studies exhibit at their core a distinctly 'thematised' and physical grounding. The performances, and the repertoire, communicate a music of physical postures or physical processes (the breath, the voice, or extended breathing techniques); and with this a particular physical tautness, and self-awareness of the body that this brings about. This is the 'rhetorical' as Greene notes it in the preceding quotation.

My proposal of classifying the flute and my own body together as one instrument is descriptively in place, whilst there is also another level of understanding to negotiate - the organological. In the respective chapters on *émoi* and *luminous* I had already sketched *around* a viewpoint by which to consider the body in an organological way (as in a musical instrument), and as one that, through my realisations of the transparencies and opacities

(via Carel's thematisation) that there are expressive tropes which have a physical signature. If we look to Greenstone again, clearly there is an aspect of this physical and instrumental synthesis that has come through to the sound of VALE.

> All of these pieces address in some way live-ness, the musical poetics of distance and near- ness, and the materiality of the performing bodies as instrumentally musically significative aspects of the inner rhetorics of each piece. This grinds against the grain of a medium- specific approach to recording (as in pieces that would only be possible through the mechanics of recording). An auscultative longing is set up: the dynamic of imaginative reconstruction by the listener plays the shadow role of the performative reconstruction of these pieces given by Richard Craig
>
> (Greenstone, 2018)

**4.4 Why space, and why a spatialization?**

> Not for space in preference to something else; rather it is an argument for the recognition of particular characteristics of space and for a politics that can respond to them.
>
> (Massey, 2005, p. 43)

I have proposed that I review the practice in my thesis in a spatialised way as a means to gather together the various strands of my work. Doing so is a recognition of the diversity of my practice, its context and the field of study, as well as the exterior inputs into my project, and the politics which I operate within. Space, as a format, brings together a new found form of recognition and diversity in understanding my own practice, and I have looked to Doreen Massey to develop the concept of practice in a space.

At the outset of my thesis I introduced Massey and alluded to the project of a spatialization of my work from a conceptual perspective. In the course of the research I have located, discussed relationships, and built upon what Massey would insist as being the inherently political aspects of any space. In these final pages of the project I will share my thinking and actions within the construct of Massey's proposals. In *For Space* (2005), Massey proposes a series of interrogatory ideas and proposals as to what space could be, or how it should be recognised. Moving forward, I intend to use these proposals to challenge my own sense of spatialization. As an initial approach to this, there are three distinct categories from Massey which I shall reflect upon and frame with the information we have about my practice. Rather than attempting to neatly divide all of my work into these three categories, there is a necessary combination and reflection upon varying aspects of space as Massey would see it, and it is this method - through a spatialised thinking - that aspects of the practice which at first I was not aware of, or could not articulate clearly, can now come forward.

### 4.4.1 Spatialization of practice

> space as a product of interrelations; as constituted through interactions
>
> (Massey, 2005, p. 31)

Engaging imaginatively with this proposal of space is a final methodological as well as theoretical investiture into an intervention of my practice. That is to say, this final process of filtering allows the proposal of space to draw together the various strands of thought and question what I perceive my practice to be, and opens up established structures up to a new interpretation. Bringing Massey into my research, and engaging with her concept of space is also engaging with a vital aspect of artistic research – that to construct a space or domain is to make 'the imaginative structure which enables in the first place an opening up...' (Massey, 2005, p. 32). How then to consider a domain, or to the proposal of a space, involves a broadening of horizons, a construction, and a clarification of its boundaries. In

doing so there is a necessary testing of the intuitive aspects of my work, or to be more precise: the political aspects of my practice which I perceived to be in place from the outset, and the ordering (the temporality or layering) of such a narrative.

> Not just the spatial is political…but rather that thinking the spatial in a particular way can shake up the manner in which certain political questions are formulated and, that these can be an essential element in the imaginative structure which enables in the first place an opening up to the very sphere of the political.
>
> (Massey 2005, p. 32)

> Rather than accepting and working with already constituted entities/identities, this politics lays its stress upon the relational constructedness of things...it is wary therefore about claims to authenticity based on notions of unchanging identity.
>
> (Massey, 2005, p. 33)

The way in which the discipline of new music operates today, as I have experienced it, is formed around the incompatibility of information shared between both sides of the creative sphere, of composers and performers. The case studies were a prime example of these interrelations that defined this terrain, and as such they were an indication of the 'relational constructedness' (Massey, 2005, p. 33) of my own worldview in contemporary music practice. What we can take from my work, is that there are radical ideas emerging from new compositions for instrumentalists to perform, but it is clear that musicians are technically and creatively under-equipped to approach this sort of work. I propose the source of this disjoin is in large part the type of communication between the composer and performer, or, the type of knowledge exchange between the two. More explicitly, the mode of information exchanged, and how that information is presented to either side, has been the rub in my work in this project and potentially an issue across the discipline.

It could be framed as the following problem: we have on the one hand the performer's intuitively guided *embodied knowledge*: this is a demonstrative, engrained and fluent instrumental practice. Metaphorically speaking it is a transparent skill and understanding of an instrument and a physical connection to it that is rarely articulated. This type of knowledge

is arrived at by performer through years of training and rehearsal of co-ordination, a constant physical feedback, tied to our instrument and the musical opportunities that we were afforded (in ensembles, through repertoire and so forth). It is not a surprise then that when faced with complexity, that we instinctively look for familiar routes, or the path of least resistance when faced with a new work. On the other hand, the composer experiences this embodied information about an instrument in an abstract and opaque way. It is conveyed to the composer as a *technological* medium (unless the composer is an instrumentalist). This is because the performer's *embodied knowledge* has to be communicated instead through a series of schemata and treatises. The instrumentalist's *embodied* and transparent skill is presented to the composer as a dense, and rule-based opaque *technology* to be studied and applied. An advanced understanding of the instrument for a composer thus is an abstraction of the instrument, and a translation of this into a notational schemata. Herein lies the tension between the composer and performer, which exerts itself in the notational strategies we have seen here. 'Space does not exist prior to identities/entities and their relations' (Massey, 2005, p. 33).

To paint a picture of the constructedness in my discipline undeniably involves a complicated mixture of my past training as a classical performer versus the progress and experimentations of composers and new, learned, instrumental skills. Already we can acknowledge how my practice has been shaped, but we are also able to appreciate that there is a sense of *narrative*, or *trajectories* unfolding across the thesis, which leads us to Massey's second proposal for space:

> The terms [story and trajectory] are thus temporal in their stress, though I would argue, their necessary spatialization (the positioning in relation to other trajectories or stories, for instance) is inseparable from and intrinsic to their character.
>
> (Massey, 2005, p. 37)

**The multiplicity of practice**

A major challenge for my thesis (whilst also a fascinating challenge of Massey's proposal) is the potential of depicting a multiplicity within a space, or communicating a sense of

simultaneity when thinking and writing about practice. This temporal and spatial layering entails being able to tap into, or foreground, networks, relationships, and reorganise how I approach my practice. In essence, I have attempted to build narrative which was set in motion from the outset (the album VALE being one example of this). More discrete episodes of narrative or trajectories can be seen in the way I present my identity too – through the interchangeability to the roles I have played. I started this project as a performer, but I now consider myself as a composer too. There is then an oscillation between the skills and considerations of both identities according to the tasks.

> Space as the dimension of multiple trajectories, as a simultaneity of stories-so-far. Space as the dimension of a multiplicity of durations.
>
> (Massey, 2005, p. 60)

My broader understanding of Massey's proposal of the narrative of space was based on the understanding that there is indeed 'a simultaneity of stories-so-far' in my work, but also a necessary challenge to a 'flatness' (Massey), or blinkered understanding of my role as a musician, and tacitly, to challenge the default approach to problematisation and deconstruction that hangs over my analyses of the case studies. Massey calls out this tendency of deconstruction as a horizontality of thought. Whilst thinking in the linear way is an easier and more graspable perception, it leads to a certain reproducibility, or predictability in the results:

> There are real reasons for being attentive to the routes of thought's imagination. There is for instance, a residual but persistent 'horizontality' about the approach of deconstruction, which makes it difficult for it to handle (or, rather, to provoke an imagination of) spatiality which is fully integral with space-time
>
> (Massey, 2005, p.111)

In the multi-narrative domain of practice, the 'single universal story' is a limitation, and the more problematic, but essential multi-narrative takes in several view points and approaches into one problem (Massey, 2005).

Within the several narratives that I have set out in this research, I have attempted to weave the voices that capture 'the dimension of multiple trajectories, and a simultaneity of stories-so-far' (Massey, 2005, p. 60). The proliferation of these reporting voices, which is also part of the autoethnographical methodology I use, can intertwine the types of narrative I adopt (the phenomenological, the musicological, the autobiographical, the compositional) as allegiances that contain my stories-so-far. They all have a suggestive power to the research here. Whether it is conclusive or aberrant in my thesis, the proposal of multiplicity provides a provocative challenge to the art and to the writing, as well as temporal and spatial depth of understanding. It has been part of sustained constructive aspect in my work, as well as a methodological commitment to communicate the research as I do:

> A space, then, which is neither a container for always-ready constituted identities nor a completed closure of holism. This is a space of loose ends and missing links.
>
> (Massey 2005, p.36)

It remains to introduce Massey's final qualification of a space. This is one that is in a permanent regenerative/constructive state. And, that the (self)contained, or local, can, and should, become spatialised.

**A space that is 'always under construction'** (Massey, 2005, p. 32)

The analogy of spatialization as an ongoing construction has a clear logical connection in this thesis, in particular to my compositions. We have already discussed my methodological reasoning for composition, however in Massey's terms, composition is the ideal format for the third proposal of a constituent of space. For Massey the spatial and temporal have a vital role to play in marking out space; as such, compositional practice embodies these aspects of simultaneity, narratives and a constructed open-endedness that Massey uses to categorise space. However, rather than claiming a direct analogy, I am more focussed on the imaginative task which is the outward-lookingness of space – that there is a sphere of

possibility (Massey, 2005) or a composition, as a new site of work, a point in which to develop a new narrative of practice.

Thinking then of this last proposal of space principally as an example of practice, and not necessarily an explication, composition momentarily projects a spatiality, temporality, identity and also, a sense of fluidity to all of these. Ultimately it is a forward looking creative and future-building aspect of this project:

> That thinking of time and space together does not mean that they are identical...rather it means that the imagination of one will have repercussions (not always followed through) for the imagination of the other.
>
> (Massey 2005, p. 48)

Considering then composition as a continued sense of spatialization, in my research it is one which specifically poses questions as to the key ideas of what constitutes space – interrelations, and in tackling composition as I do, it entailed a rethinking of the status-quo of my study (performer, composer and score), and in what way my work speaks to or rejects aspects of composition as I have experienced them in the case study. Forming a creative and critical space such as this requires me to consolidate the identities and narratives in a temporal and constructive way, within the compositions themselves, and by extension this touches upon the practice as a whole. A construction of a compositional narrative/space, is then a synthesis of my work as a musical gesture. As a consolidation of a space, of the practices I have generated and knowledge that I take forward, this final aspect of spatialization points me toward a new form of musicianship which encompasses the theoretical, practical and textual points I have made. My compositions are examples of an understanding and also a negotiation of a particular domain of practice in which narratives of histories and counterhistories co-exist:

> Conceiving of space as a static slice of time, as representative of a closed system and so forth are all ways of taming it. They enable us to ignore its real import; the coeval multiplicity of other trajectories and the necessary outward-lookingness of a spatialised subjectivity.
>
> (Massey, 2005, p. 128)

### 4.5 Closing – a new musicianship

Reflecting on how my findings could be applicable to other members of the music community has led me to consider the role of the instrumentalist more closely. By applying Massey's theories to my practice, I have brought about an elaboration of a theoretical and practice-based identity from an autoethnographical standpoint. I see this as an autocratic dimension manifestation in my work, and whilst not completely solving the matters between composers and performers, I propose alternatives and provocations to the definition of performance practices. This points toward a new type of skill base for a musician, and an approach that could be at the heart of a reconsideration of reconsidering methods of training for a new generation of musicians

To bring the discussion back to aims of the project, I want to revisit my initial research questions, and address these now in light of the ground I have covered.

- How does a performer approach compositions in which the visual complexity, or technical impingements of the score, obfuscate a standardised performance practice?

Looking to this question now, it is clear from my work with scores, that visual complexity does interrupt and obscure any sense of standardisation in performance practice. And, as we have seen, the notation of the score is a topic of much discussion in this study. Clearly composers are devising scores and notational devices that to seek to reboot performance practices, and then attempts to install these into a work, and implicitly into a new practice. Going further still, not only does notation try to capture a particular a sonic detailing in a specific visual way, but also that notation goes as far as contradicting the boundaries of the instrument itself, and dictating how the performer might behave on stage.

However, despite the problematisation of these parameters, we can also see from my efforts that the challenge this information provides, and the effect of profiling the musician is a creative jolt to performance practice. This then highlights an inflexibility in aspects of

instrumental performance practice. Clearly, I have been spurred on new facets of my playing and thinking due to this research, and we have only to look at the compositions and case studies for proof of this. My advancement is then thanks to the obscurities and conceptual challenges – they have become nodes of development and started an ongoing process of investigation into my practice. If other musicians are willing to pursue this challenge, and are also willing to examine long-held conceptions about instrumental practice and, as we have seen, adopt new ways to working with the rhythm and score reading, this could yield a heightened sensibility as to what performance can be. We can respond creatively to these challenges, and the challenges that my musicianship has faced in this project has led to testing the preconceptions of the binary identities of composer and performer.

- From the performer's perspective, is the claim of an authorship in the conveyance of new music a valid one?

Yes. In the case studies I have demarcated the boundaries of my claim to authorship through exploring the tensions that occurred in my preparation and performance of the works. Whilst I say there is an authorship to be claimed by the musician, I consider this a *species* of authorship. Yes, the composer can claim the mantle of being the author, and is responsible for the initial conception of the work. In certain circumstances, there are gaps in the score in the composer's understanding or conceptualisation of the instrument and instrumentalist, and that this creates the conditions for a piece that can be fully conceptualised by the performer. Furthermore, we should note that there is a profound physical import to factor into a performance of contemporary music which has been outlined in this thesis.

### 4.5.1 Revisiting the objectives of the research:

> A critical technical practice rethinks its own premises, re-evalues its own methods, and reconsiders its own concepts as a routine part of its daily work. It is concerned not with destruction but with reinvention. Its critical tools must be refined and focussed: not hammers but scalpels, not a rubbishing of someone else but a hermeneutics and a dialectics of ourselves.

(Agre, 1997, p. 24)

- To illustrate how the performer's understanding, translation and eventual comportment of the score can be a form of compositional practice

- To indicate in practice how contemporary music, as a cultural activity, is moving away from the classical music categories of composer and performer

The concept of a redefinition (as in my identity taking shape as performer/composer) has been a significant technical development, as well as critical dialectic in this work. There has also been a personal transgression involved to get to this point. I needed to question the foundations of my performance practice and to take radical new approaches into my work. I see it as a logical comportment of skills from my initial standpoint as a performer, to that of a performer/composer, which as I continued in the thesis, became a more consistent and enmeshed dialogue within my practice. The differences, as I knew, were effectively a 'horizonal' approach to the problems and concerns I described earlier in the research, and from this point, methodologically speaking, as well as creatively, it became clear that a combination of both aspects (performing and composing) was a necessary and vital part of my own discourse going forward. It is in this way that a singular identity (the performer that started the PhD) has now moved into a more fluid interpretation of identity.

Based on this study, the categories of performer and composer are indeed changing, and in light of my work, broader research is needed to quantify the extent of this change. However, at this point I can hypothesise that my research could contribute towards the cultivation of a new kind of musicianship in which the distinction between performer and composer becomes obsolete, and instead we cultivate a musicianship that realises the 'coeval multiplicity of other trajectories and the necessary outward-lookingness of a spatialised subjectivity' (Massey, 2005, p. 128) within the practice.

For those instrumentalists who actively seek out contemporary music: they are already familiar with accruing a virtuosity or mastery to meet the demands of a score, but I suggest that there is more work to be done in breaching instrumental dogmas within broader aspects of our practice. Above all, we need to set about a sensitisation and re-acquaintance of practice with our instrument, on our own terms. The task of then articulating what this new form of musicianship should look like will need the generative metaphors and attitudes of spatial and temporal flexibility I have used. My project has thus initially sketched out an approach to a form of musicianship that integrates the creative work of thinking, playing, composing and writing within a critical and imaginative construction of a creative space. The singular distinctions of performer and composer are no longer sufficient for the breadth and necessity of the work ahead.

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## Appendix A

CD: VALE

| | |
|---|---|
| Track 1 | Evan Johnson – *émoi* (2010) for solo bass flute [11.49] |
| Track 2 | Esaias Järnegard – PSALM (2011) for voice and contrabass flute [6.22] |
| Track 3 | Fabrice Fitch – *Agricola IX* (2013) for flute and string trio [9.00] |
| Track 4 | Richard Barrett – VALE for solo flute [13.06] |
| Track 5 | John Croft – *Deux méditations d'une furie* (2011-2013) for soprano and bass flute [10.12] |
| | *I. Par cette vie infirme et vacillante* |
| | *II. Ô Phosphoresence* |
| Track 6 | Brice Pauset – *Eurydice* (1998) for solo flute [10.21] |

## Appendix B: Recordings (not included in VALE)

Kristian Ireland - *luminous* for solo alto flute

Richard Craig - *Hortulus Animae (i)* for flute and fixed media

Richard Craig - *Blodeuwedd* for flute and fixed media

Video of recording session (Hortulus (i)

## Appendice C

### Scores

| | |
|---|---|
| Richard Barrett | VALE for solo flute |
| John Croft | *Deux Méditations* for bass flute and voice |
| Fabrice Fitch | *Agricola IX* for flute and string trio |
| Evan Johnson | *Émoi* for solo bass flute |
| Esaias Järnegard | PSALM for contrabass flute and voice |