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Collaboration as Compositional Process; a Transdisciplinary Perspective.

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Declaration

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to investigate the process of creating four non-vocal and two operatic works. In order to meet this aim, collaboration and transdisciplinarity were identified as common features in each of the works. Collaboration occurred with musicians and artists from other disciplines. The theory of transdisciplinarity has been applied to understand how my music might combine with the various elements within a work to form an autonomous synthesis.

Collaboration and transdisciplinarity are contextualised in respect to my works and the works of other selected 20th and 21st century composers. How I perceive opera and its dramatic source is examined in works by composers from the 18th to 20th centuries. I created all of the compositions for the theatre and therefore certain aspects of acting techniques also form part of this research, particularly the ideas of Artaud, Brook and Stanislavsky.

A series of six case studies reveals the nature of collaboration and working relationships in each creative process. They also consider where the works could be seen from a transdisciplinary perspective. I interrogate my compositional process and its products through practice-based research, to these ends. Results reveal different forms of collaboration with instrumentalists, non-musician performers and directors. Collaboration in workshops is seen to enable the connection between elements in the works to take place towards a sense of transdisciplinarity.

This research has enabled me to reflect on and analyse my creative process, provide a context from which I may look back at my previous work and indicate how I may wish to continue making work in the future.

Introduction

This thesis comprises: four non-vocal works; two operas; and an exegesis of their process through practice-led research.[1] All of these works were created with other artists through a process of collaboration. The works are for a mixture of musician and non-musician performers.[2] Throughout history composers such as Händel, Verdi and Britten have worked within the theatre,[3] and I see myself following in this tradition. I will examine the work of selected 20th and 21st century composers with regard to the role of collaboration as compositional process and from a transdisciplinary perspective. I will also draw on examples of operas from the 18th to the 20th century to contextualise my understanding of opera as it applies to my works.

The nature of collaboration and different forms of working relationships will be explored to uncover how artists work together and how collaboration aids artists working in the theatre where creative decisions may not be limited to one artistic discipline. In this collaborative context, creating work as a composer does not restrict me to writing notes, but means that the composer has a potential role in creating all aspects of a work.[4]

The scores for each of the works, while containing as much of the information needed for a musician to prepare the music as necessary, do not contain the complete information to realise a performance. In some instances scores contain information about how non-musician performers relate to composed music (in terms of cues or points of synchronisation between performers). The aspects of the performance which are not contained in the score can be seen in each of the videos, hence the two components (score and video) are necessary to appreciate the complete works. These

[1] Recordings of these works can be viewed at: http://www.lukestyles.com/Luke_Styles_Composer/phd.html

[2] With the exception of *The Photocopier,* which began as a piece for musician and physical performer and through collaboration evolved to become a work for solo percussionist.

[3] Handel - 'Handel as a Man of the Theatre' (Trowell 1961, p. 17)

Verdi - 'When *Falstaff* was staged in Rome in 1893, a committee of musicians came to pay homage to their country's "greatest composer." "No, no, don't say great composer," Verdi interrupted; "I am a man of the theatre."' (Van 1998, p. 30)

Britten - 'In the thirty-year span of his career he wrote sixteen original works for the stage, together with a couple of adaptions' (Diana 2011, p. 9)

[4] In a collaborative theatre environment 'We can talk of the actor as creator, the stage manager as deviser, the director as performer.' (Lavender 2001, p. 217) Artists and collaborators are not restricted to one role when collaborating.

evolved through the workshop and production process often through collaboration and this will be addressed in the case studies. Details of lighting, costume, staging and performance space will change for subsequent productions depending on the artists involved in realising them and therefore such details are not part of the scores. The nature of the works as more than the sum of their individual parts (e.g. more than the information contained in a score) reflects what could be seen as transdisciplinarity, a quality that arises when the elements of a work are interdependent in such a way that they constitute autonomous work.[5]

In Chapter 1 I will define collaboration and different forms of working relationships, and transdisciplinarity as it applies to my work. I will look at similar examples in selected works by other artists and this will further contextualise my own work and how the practice of other artists relates to my own. Each of my works have been created for the theatre and I will contextualise how I perceive a theatrical space and music's relationship to it. I will then turn to define what is most important in my understanding of opera and its dramatic sources as it applies to *Macbeth* and *Unborn In America*.

In Chapter 2 I will undertake a series of case studies: Firstly the four non-vocal works will be considered (*Handspun, The Photocopier* and two parts of *Play (after Beckett): On a Bench* and *You Choose a Bat*) followed by the two operas (*Macbeth* and *Unborn In America*). Each of my non-vocal works involves a central collaboration with one other creative artist and each opera involves a similar collaboration with a director/librettist. Collaboration with musicians/singers has also been part of making my works and the range of working relationships experienced in this process will be explored. The four non-vocal works enabled me to create theatre works for musician and non-musician performers before composing the larger operatic works. The collaboration in the non-vocal works with Peter Cant and Ted Huffman prepared me for the collaboration with these same director/librettists on the operas. I will conclude with a summary of what has been investigated and the process for creating my works.

[5] There may be a number of different disciplines combined in a work and it is their combination rather than their separation that is of interest in perceiving a work's transdisciplinarity. Music and composition will not be viewed as independent of the other elements in a work. 'The recognition of the existence of different levels of reality governed by different types of logic is inherent in the transdisciplinary attitude. Any attempt to reduce reality to a single level governed by a single form of logic does not lie within the scope of Transdisciplinarity.' (Nicolescu 1994)

Chapter 1: Contextual Considerations

1.1 Collaboration

I perceive the process of collaboration in my works as starting from a position where '[…] participants see themselves engaged in a joint task' (John-Steiner 2000, p. 13). In my practice a joint task indicates that the collaborators are engaged in making the entire work, not just individualised parameters of it. I recognise different forms of working relationship that build on this initial premise for collaboration as well as acknowledging that not all shared creative practice is automatically collaborative.

Through a series of case studies into his own works, Sam Hayden looked at collaboration from the position of a 'composer seeking to engage with the generic challenges of collaboration within current institutional and aesthetic contexts.' (Hayden & Windsor 2007, p. 32) As a result of this Hayden and his co-author Windsor identify three forms of relationship between composers and performers of music:

> DIRECTIVE: here the notation has the traditional function as instructions for the musicians provided by the composer. The traditional hierarchy of the composer and performer(s) is maintained and the composer aims to completely determine the performance through the score.
> INTERACTIVE: here the composer is involved more directly in negotiation with musicians and/or technicians. The process is more interactive, discursive and reflective, with more input from collaborators than in the directive category, but ultimately, the composer is still the author.
> COLLABORATIVE: here the development of the music is achieved by a group through a collective decision-making process. There is no singular author or hierarchy of roles. (Hayden & Windsor 2007, p. 33)

The relationship I have with performers in the realisation of my works is a mixture of all of the above three relationships. During the early stages of creating a work an interactive and collaborative relationship with performers (particularly musicians) takes place, where ideas are being suggested and I am making decisions about these ideas in a creative, often experimental environment.[6] There are also occasions when I leave initial decisions about how to develop aspects of the music (such as dynamics, repetitions or

[6] Here the term experimental is used to describe the exploration of creative ideas, such as sounds or types of movement. Experimental does not refer here to the environment, such as the rehearsal or performance venue itself being experimental or non-traditional, such as a car park or hot air balloon.

tempi) up to the performers and then together with them (and other collaborators) we decide what should be set in the score. A score may therefore include the multiple musical decisions that have been reached as a process of collaboration and composing alone, but not every aspect of a final performance involving multiple non-musical elements.

During rehearsals the relationship with performers moves towards a directive and interactive one. There will still be a dialogue with performers about how to interpret and perform the work, as interpretation needs to come from the performer, but as a collaborator who can view the work outside of performing it, I am in a position to see and hear aspects of a performance that may be missed by the performers in the act of performance. It is therefore important to take on a directive relationship with performers at this stage in order to continue to shape the work that has been made collaboratively, ensuring that overall cohesion of the work remains, whilst performers are occupied with the act of performing.

Alan Taylor (2013) has proposed a hierarchy of decision-making and division of labour in imaginative tasks between people working together, to uncover different forms of working relationships.

Table 1. Forms of working relationship[7]

		Hierarchy in decision-making	
		Yes	No
Division of labour (separation of tasks) in imaginative work.	Yes	**Hierarchical working.** Tasks are divided between the participants. One or more participants decide on the contributions made.	**Co-operative working.** Tasks are divided between the participants, but decision-making is shared.
	No	**Consultative working.** The participants contribute to the same task or tasks. One or more people decide on the contributions.	**Collaborative working.** The participants share both the tasks themselves and the decisions on the contributions.

Within this table, the most common form of working relationship that occurred with the

[7] (Taylor 2013)

other central artist in my works could be described as ‘Co-operative working’, in the sense that there was no hierarchy between us; decisions about the work were shared yet there was a division of labour in some imaginative tasks. For example in *Handspun* I composed the music and the aerialist/choreographer Ilona Jantti choreographed the movement, but we came together to agree on the suitability of both these and other aspects of the work. There were other stages of the various working relationships that involved a large amount of shared imaginative work prior to composing. These instances were both non-hierarchical and shared, and made this aspect of working ‘Collaborative working’ (according to Table 1). These instances often involved work on the scenario and libretto for the operas, the creation of a structure, and decisions about the physical elements (ropes, a photocopier, the relationship between an actor and a musician) in the non-vocal works. They also involved discussions about the type of music that might occur in the works. These stages of collaborative working, where artists were engaged in a conception of many aspects of the work, may lead to what could be perceived as transdisciplinarity in them.

Having another artist to create work with enables me to see the creative process that I am a part of reflected and interpreted by another artist. Ideas are reacted to and engaged with differently by collaborators as part of the process of making work, and it is enriched when these multiple voices join together.

> Social interaction involves two or more people talking or in exchange, cooperation adds the constraint of shared purpose, and working together often provides coordination of effort. But collaboration involves an intricate blending of skills, temperaments, effort and sometimes personalities to realize a shared vision of something new and useful. (Moran & John-Steiner, Vera 2004, p. 11)

The above raises certain aspects of collaboration which are part of my process, in particular the role of ‘people talking or in exchange’, the ‘blending of skills’ and the ‘shared vision of something new’. Discovering new perspectives on ideas and artistic practice is also important. ‘With adults who collaborate, it isn’t that they are stretched to the edges of their development; rather, they are stretched to see ideas in different contexts and from different perspectives.’ (Hunter & Fontaine 2005, p. 33) My collaborative partnerships have each begun with a collection of key ideas; there is a dialogue/exchange around these ideas; collaborators respond to this by creating in their individual fields and then come together to use this work as the point from which to

create together, going beyond individual conceptions of an idea or individual creativity.

In drawing their conclusions about collaborations in a number of case studies Hayden and Windsor state:

> The most successful artistic collaborations described here occurred when the creative process arose from within the group and was not a pre-determined ideology. A successful collaboration was not guaranteed by having good personal connections among those involved, but this was no disadvantage. A shared aesthetic goal seemed important: incompatible aesthetics can impede successful collaboration by promoting conflicts in working methods and artistic aims. However, an artistic collaboration did not have to be democratic to be successful, and neither did a more collective and non-hierarchical way of working guarantee success. (Hayden & Windsor 2007, p. 38)

These findings resonate with my own work; my collaborations have begun without a fixed end result in mind; rather the work emerges through the collaboration. Each of my collaborations has benefited from very good personal communication. Where there has been some friction that was left unresolved then it has resulted in a tangible weakness in performance. Though the positive role of tension has also been part of my practice and is identified by Moran and John-Steiner (2004, p. 17) as one of 'the three characteristics of true collaboration […] complementarity, tension, and emergence – that occur in real-life creative collaborations.' tension and the ability to work through conflict have often led to identifying and solving artistic problems within a work.

What I have learnt to be important in a successful collaboration and in choosing the right collaborators is to have an honest discussion and understanding about what the type of working relationship may be, with an awareness that this might change. '[…] the performer may say that he or she is happy with having only technical input, but may act in a way that reflects a dissatisfaction with such a limited technical role.' (Hayden & Windsor 2007, p. 30) When a performer in particular has underestimated the level of creative involvement they expect to have or when I have expected more creative input from a performer than I have received, then this is where difficulties in my working relationships have sometimes emerged. In addition to discussions, knowing when to bring performers into the creative process significantly determines the type of working relationship I want or can expect from performers.[8]

[8] This tends to break down simply; if I want or expect a full collaborative (along the lines of Taylor,

After seeing another artist's work and feeling an impulse to collaborate with them, dialogue through talking has been my method for choosing my collaborators and discovering how we want to make work together. 'All writers know from their own experience as writers that ideas are engendered and transformed in conversation, in collaboration, with those around us, with books we read, with stories we hear.' (Ronald & Roskelly 2001, p. 264) The ideas that my collaborators and I bring to a first meeting immediately begin to undergo a transformation as they are discussed. Each collaborator brings new perspectives to an idea (as outlined above) and brainstorming is often part of a dialogue. Collaborators 'get their ideas for a murder mystery or a critical essay on poetry from a habit of informal brainstorming conversation that draws on experiences and information they've each been absorbing.' (Hunter & Fontaine 2005, p. 20) Brainstorming allows the possible approaches to an idea to be voiced freely and then scrutinised together. It allows collaborators to freely draw on their different knowledge bases and experiences as artists. What emerges through this process are a number of mutually agreed possible ways of progressing. These are then explored together and individually. Dialogues continue throughout the collaborative process and give the collaborators a context to fall back on when determining if what they are creating is what they both agreed they wanted to make, whether the work has become something different (in a positive or negative sense), or whether they should return to their original ideas to keep the work consistent and provide it with clear direction.

I have outlined: different forms of working relationships; the function of tension; and brainstorming and dialogue as they may relate to my work. I will now address transdisciplinarity.

1.2 A transdisciplinary perspective

The theory of transdisciplinarity reflects my compositional method. It is a theory that readdresses the division of elements in a work where I see none. I regard it as an extension of intermediality[9] for which the theatre can be a space to enable intermedial

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Hayden and Windsor) working relationship with a performer then I include them (or they include me) at the outset of the process. If I see the relationship as directive with a hierarchical way of working, then I include them as late as possible. What I have tended to favour in my work has been a middle ground of interactive (Hayden & Windsor 2007) working, in which the performer is involved at the workshop stage, but not in the earlier phases of the creative process.

[9] 'We put forward the proposition that intermediality in theatre and performance is about the process of

and transdisciplinary properties in a work to arise. Transdisciplinarity offers me a useful perspective to iterate the connections between the elements in my works.

As elements other than sound influence my compositional decision-making, music loses 'the illusion of autonomy':

> As the prefix 'trans' indicates, *transdisciplinarity* concerns that which *is* at once *between* the disciplines, *across* the different disciplines, and *beyond* all discipline. Its goal is *the understanding of the present world*, of which one of the imperatives is the unity of knowledge. (Nicolescu 1998)

To a certain extent knowledge of extra-musical elements can be gained before a collaboration has begun (through research), but even if prior knowledge exists collaborators will gain specific knowledge about the elements involved in a work through working together. This may require collaborators to go beyond what they already know of their own disciplines and those of their collaborators. Nicolescu suggests that transdisciplinary work is aided by disciplinary knowledge and also that transdisciplinarity enriches disciplinary knowledge:

> The discovery of these dynamics necessarily passes through disciplinary knowledge. While not a new discipline or a new superdiscipline, transdisciplinarity is nourished by disciplinary research; in turn, disciplinary research is clarified by transdisciplinary knowledge in a new, fertile way. In this sense, disciplinary and transdisciplinary research are not antagonistic but complementary. (Nicolescu 1998)

In my works disciplinary knowledge was shared and transdisciplinary knowledge established through talking, demonstration and by starting to make work together. This transdisciplinary knowledge in turn enriched disciplinary knowledge when collaborators made work alone. The better my collaborators and I understood what we each were doing or could do, the greater the possibility was for creating autonomous transdisciplinary work, free from disciplinary limitations.

As well as gaining and sharing knowledge to create a transdisciplinary work, this knowledge and the elements of a work need to be able to combine.

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how something that appears fixed becomes different, and our conceptual framework reflects the processes of change.' (Chapple & Kattenbelt, 2006, p. 12)

> […] transdisciplinary connections do not appear as a posteriori consequence, from previous developments occurred within the specificity of a discipline; rather the necessity of combining elements of heterogeneous knowledge is a constitutive part of its very conditions of composition. These conditions are both reflected in the different epistemological realms that the work traverses i.e. physical, neurophysiological, sonic and visual art problems and in the divergent backgrounds of the involved actors (Matthias et al., 2008 quoted in Mongini 2013, p. 1)

It is not only as a result of different performers performing together that a work could be described as transdisciplinary. Neither can a work which makes use of music, for instance a dance work where music is treated as an accompaniment, be seen as transdisciplinary, even if music is integral to the work, i.e. where the music is intrinsic for the dancers to feel a common sense of pulse. Transdisciplinarity is perceived when the creation of the elements in a work has occurred out of a relationship to each other and a necessity of combination.

There is something inherently transdisciplinary about creating works for the theatre, in the compositional process, performance and reception of them. Hence by positing my works as works for the theatre there is an inherent potential for a transdisciplinary perspective to be applied to them. 'Another way of looking at music theatre is to regard it as the result of the overlapping of several systems of expression that causes those systems to merge into a new supersystem.' (Salzman 2008, p. 320) Here we see a connection between the idea of 'music theatre'[10] and transdisciplinarity, albeit a word which Salzman does not use. As we have seen, transdisciplinarity 'concerns that which *is* at once *between* the disciplines, *across* the different disciplines, and *beyond* all discipline' and this is echoed by Salzman in his 'overlapping of several systems of expression'.

My practice involves collaborators engaged in the joint task of making an entire work, not individualised parameters of it. This understanding of who is making the work may suggest a transdisciplinary approach, as it requires cohesion of disciplinary knowledge. This cohesion is echoed when collaborators talk of a third voice emerging through

[10] 'In short, "music theatre" has come to have two opposing uses: one inclusive, the other particular and exclusive. The inclusive meaning of the term can encompass the entire universe of performance in which music and theatre play complementary and potentially equal roles.' (Salzman 2008, p. 5) This is the meaning that informs my work.

collaboration and the synthesis of collective ideas and skills into a new entity.

> As a result of scaffolding, of writers working together to build a process and, in turn, create a piece of writing, the voices of the individual writers blend into a third. […] it is evidence that true collaboration occurs 'when the product is so well integrated that it seems to be the creation of one mind'(Yancey & Spooner 1998). This shared voice is evidence of synergy - the ability 'to accomplish things together that neither [writer] could have accomplished alone' (Reither & Vipond 1989 quoted in Hunter & Fontaine 2005, p. 33)

In the following section I contextualise my own experience of collaboration and transdisciplinarity by other artists.

1.3 A theatrical context

In order to create works for the theatre it has been important for me to have an idea of where theatre can take place. 'I can take any empty stage and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged.' (Brook 2008, p. 11) This minimalist view as to the necessities 'for an act of theatre to be engaged' is the one that I have adopted in my work. The performance space for each work began as an empty space and from this starting point my collaborators and I could perceive what was necessary to add to this 'empty space' in order to construct the theatrical acts of the works. 'This is the empty space for which Brook has become famous. One starts from emptiness and absence and adds essential elements.' (Lavender 2001, p. 70)

A look at some of the techniques and ideas of the theatre will further contextualise how my work is made. 'In the theatre, a line is a sound, a movement is music, and the gesture which emerges from a sound is like a key word in a sentence.' (Artaud et al. 2004, p. 152) This approach to recognising musical potential in a movement, line or a gesture is part of how I perceive the transdisciplinary connections between the elements in my works and how I connect my composing to the non-musical elements in my works.

Two techniques used by actors have become part of my compositional practice and language when working with performers. Firstly the idea of the target, 'For the actor, all "doing" has to be done *to* something. The actor can do nothing without the target.' (Donnellan 2005, p. 17) Secondly the objective;

> What do you want? What's your desire? What do you want to achieve? Who do I want to influence and persuade? Such a desire or a drive or an impulse is what Stanislavsky called a 'goal' or a 'task (*zadacha*), a word which then became translated in *An Actor Prepares* as the somewhat more scientific sounding OBJECTIVE. (Merlin 2014, p. 73)

Developing a language with performers and collaborators in which I can speak of the target or objective as something in the music that a performer can use to construct their performance has helped to build connections between the elements in a work, inviting a transdisciplinary perspective. The creation of targets and objectives has been a part of composing, wherein, for example, a phrase may be played or a bar repeated in such a way as to aim for an increasing level of tension. This tension is then the target or objective of the music in performance (and probably the same target or objective for the other elements at play in this hypothetical moment). The use of cues is similar to targets/objectives in that they may indicate a point in the performance that the performers are aiming at. Cues are different though, as they are a practical means of co-ordination, rather than aiming at the more subjective notion of tone, intention or emotion.

The targets and objectives for a performer (particularly the non-musician performers) in my works may come from the music, a text, the performer's imagination or any other part of the work. The specific targets/objectives are not intended to be recognised by the audience in performance but they have been a useful technique for composing and rehearsing the works. Through the collaborative and production process of my works and due to my involvement in both these stages as a composer, a connection to the music for the discovery of a performer's targets and objectives is something I have encouraged.

Each of the following works (apart from Varèse's *Astronomer)* are ones that I have seen live, been involved in or produced during the course of writing this thesis. They have directly fed into my own compositional process and influenced the way in which I have created my own works. It is because of the tangible connection to these works through the live experience of them as well as their relevance to my own work that I choose to focus on them in this chapter. My perception of each of these works as theatre means that only through a live experience of them can I appreciate their complete theatricality, whereas a recorded performance would conceal live aspects such as the performance space and the audience.

1.4 *Jong*

Jong by Lotta Wennäkoski[11] shares both similarities and differences with my work and collaborative process, particularly with my work *Handspun*. Both works are for musicians and circus performers, in *Jong* a juggler, in *Handspun* an aerialist. They involve musician and non-musician performers, and because of this, allude to the possibility of collaboration between a composer and other artists.

Both *Jong* and *Handspun* were programmed in the same concert (May 10th 2014 at the Helsinki Music Centre as part of Cirko Festival, Finland[12]), a decision by the festival organisers that points towards similarities between our two works. Following the concert I spoke to Wennäkoski about *Jong*, and I was interested in finding out how she collaborated with the juggler. She told me that the juggler first created a complete choreography and that she then composed to this. He videoed the choreography for her and she then set a tempo to his choreography (which can be heard consistently throughout the work, as a kind of click track, for the juggler, with fluctuations on the *Tempo Primo* of crotchet equals 92 – 96 throughout). This provided Wennäkoski with a predetermined duration and a visual *cantus firmus* for the work that Wennäkoski was able to decorate in her composing or treat as a kind of palimpsest, wherein the orchestral composition is written over the juggler's choreography.

This method of composing to a pre-determined choreography seems to negate many aspects of collaboration that I have identified as part of my process. The title page of the score states that *Jong* is 'music for juggler and chamber orchestra (the juggler's part is optional and free)' (Wennäkoski 2012) (see Fig. 1.1). This immediately points to a difference in our works away from transdisciplinarity, primarily because elements of *Jong* can be separated from one another and are perceived by the composer separately. If the music for *Jong* can be detached from the choreography then I would claim *Jong* consists of two elements (an orchestral work and choreography for juggler), which can be performed together or separately, and as such these two elements are not one

[11] 'Lotta Wennäkoski (b.1970) is a leading figure of her generation. She began her musical training as a violinist with notable studies (violin and folk music) at the Béla Bartók Conservatory in Budapest (1989–90) before joining the Department of Music Theory at the Sibelius Academy (1990–94).' (Howell 2012, p. 5)

[12] For more information see: http://www.cirko.fi/en/ohjelma/jong-handspun

(transdisciplinary) work but are two highly complementary separate works. This is similar to the works of Cage and Cunningham.[13]

As in my works, *Jong* indicates points of synchronisation between the performers through the score. In my works this is done through words (and will be addressed in more detail during the proceeding case studies), whereas in *Jong* the juggler has a part in the score, on its own stave and at times with notation. This gives a specified level of control over the juggler's part and synchronisation with the orchestra. There is interaction between the juggler and the orchestra, for instance when the juggler leads fermatas at bar 8 (see Fig. 1.2) or when he controls the orchestra by playing the triangle at bar 279 (see Fig. 1.3), which indicates the end point of an orchestral gesture that the orchestra and conductor are waiting to be cued for. The end of the work involves a high degree of rhythmic synchronisation between the juggler and the orchestra (bars 350 – end, see Fig. 1.4) where rhythmic unison is indicated between the orchestra and juggler.

The sound of juggling allows Wennäkoski to occasionally treat the juggler as an extra percussionist (this is most apparent when juggling balls as opposed to clubs or rings. The sound of juggling creates a regular pulse, the tempo of which varies with the size of the arch of the balls and the number of balls being juggled). The sound of the juggler is a definite and considered part of the composition, both when it is notated and when Wennäkoski knows the sounds that will be made by the juggler and has factored this into the orchestration and composition of the work. Despite this connection of sounds, the lack of collaboration in *Jong* is evident in the score, wherein Wennäkoski locks the juggler and an existing choreography into an absolutely determined and fixed composition.

[13] 'Cage's lack of interest in timekeeping or other musical conventions suited Cunningham just fine. As Cage adopted chance operations in his music, tossing coins to determine the pitch, volume and duration of sounds, Cunningham realized he could also use a coin toss to order sequences of steps and numbers of dancers, and revolutionize his field. And why expect the music to follow the dance? Both elements could be created separately and brought together at the performance.' (Kaufman 2012)

1.5 *Remember Me: A Desk Opera*

Another work that offers the potential for collaboration between musicians with non-musician artists is Claudia Molitor's *Remember Me: A Desk Opera*, and specifically the production of this work as part of the 2013 Spitalfield's Winter Festival.[14] As an opera, this work involved singing, acting, text, lighting, design and a set. Typically opera presents itself as a highly collaborative medium due to the number of different artists of various specialities required to produce a performance. These can include but are not limited to composers, librettists, directors, conductors, designers, movement directors, singers, instrumentalists, stage managers and producers.

Remember Me is not an opera on a grand or even modest scale; it is a small-scale work, an opera in miniature, involving one performer, the composer herself.

> In 2008 I inherited a writing desk from my grandmother. Upon opening it and exploring the contents, I realised that the inside of this desk was the only physical space that she could have truly called her own. Fascinated by this notion, immersed in Andrea Cavarero's writings on the female voice, baffled by the amount of opera being written in the 21st century, re-reading Dido and Eurydice' respective myths and listening to Gluck and Purcell's operas, I set out to explore new ways to engage with the idea of Opera. (Molitor 2012)

This description on the origins of the work is followed by a further insight into how the composer views composing and performing. 'To me, composing and performing is, in part, a delving into a complex web of memories. My own, of which I have some understanding, and each listener's memories, of which I have little if any understanding, but yet rely on and seek to engage with.' (Molitor 2013) Both these statements from the composer show the work and her compositional process to be somewhat biographical. The work is credited in the following way:

> Concept, Composer, Text and Performer – Claudia Molitor
> Co-Director – Dan Ayling
> Set Designer – James Johnson
> Production Manager and Operator – Jack McConchie (Molitor 2012)

[14] For more information see: http://www.spitalfieldsmusic.org.uk/news/2013/10/on-the-blog-claudia-molitor-s-remember-me/

From these credits we can see that there are three individuals with whom the composer could have collaborated. What this also reveals is that Molitor takes on the key creative roles. The work therefore appears to be the result of one individual rather than that of collaborators engaged in a joint task, although it cannot be ruled out that the co-director, set designer, production manager and operator may have had creative input in the creation of the work. This is not a work that starts with a personal story and is then transformed into something new through collaboration. It is not my view that collaboration is absent in this work (as that is near impossible in opera), rather that the composer is collaborating with herself in different guises. This is a role that I also undertake in *Play (after Beckett)* where I am both composer and writer of words collaborating with myself in the first instance of making the work, but later collaborating with others as the work moves to workshops and production.

Molitor is not alone in conceiving of an opera and writing the words and music herself. Wagner set an enduring precedent for this method of working and more recently Michel van der Aa was both composer and director of his opera *Sunken Garden*. Where *Remember Me* suffers is from not employing another performer to perform the work. In her role as performer, Molitor does not give the work the stage presence that it could have benefited from. Her performance style referenced the controlled and crafted movements of Robert Wilson without the skill or control to make this effective. The work does appear to synthesise its various elements (music, text, set) in an interconnected and interdependent way. This leads to a sense of transdisciplinarity in the work from an audience member's perspective, but not as an obvious result of collaboration with other artists.

1.6 *Astronomer*

The ambitious dream of composer Edgard Varèse involving collaboration with multiple artists. 'Carpentier states that as early as 1929 the composer was dreaming of a circus […] inspired by Barnum & Bailey as his preferred means of staging his mystery.' (MacDonald 2003, p. 233) Similarly to Wennäkoski's *Jong* and my own *Handspun*, this is a work in which a composer has turned to circus performers.[15] This work, which has

[15] It is my experience in the U.K. that circus performers present a set of skills and a performance style, which appears unfamiliar to a theatre and a music audience. Contemporary circus does not, through the weight of history or musical association, imply a musical genre or style, it is freer from musical

been called different things such as *The One All Alone, L'Astronome* (Astronomer) or *Espace,* was never completed, although Varèse does talk about the music which he had composed and orchestrated for the project, but which is either lost, destroyed or remains undiscovered. Varèse imagined the work would encompass a number of media, particularly physical performers, circus performers and non-verbal performers. The lead figure of the work was his arrow-maker '[…] to be played by an acrobat doing somersaults, cartwheels and grotesque dances […]' (Varèse 1972, p. 266-7 quoted in MacDonald 2003, p. 219) One of Varèse's main collaborators on *Astronomer* was the theatre maker Antonin Artaud and the two worked together on the concept and scenario of the work. Prior to collaborating with Artaud, Varèse had worked on the project with Louise Varèse, Alejo Carpentier, the Surrealist Robert Densnos and the Dadaist Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes. In the collaboration between Artaud and Varèse both appear to have been interested in a non-verbal theatre of music and movement, which is a common factor in my non-vocal works.

Artaud seems to have proposed a relationship between music and text that implies a transdisciplinary perspective where '[…] Artaud's aesthetic of the scenario, in which the text hardly exists before a performance and is essentially to be developed by the actors as moving hieroglyphs' (MacDonald 2003, p. 240) This scenario could present more open points of connection with music before a text is spoken than after it.[16] If Artaud was suggesting that the actors develop their performance, possibly including speaking text in response to the music and instructions in his scenario, then this motivation for the actor's performance (through improvisation) strengthens the transdisciplinary connections between music and the other elements of the work as the

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connotations than contemporary dance or ballet. It is partly because of this that circus allows a wide range of music to connect with it. The combination of the unfamiliar, the new and the genre-less (in terms of implied music) are some of the factors that experientially also make collaborations with circus performers attractive partnerships for composers other than myself. Circus had been used before Varèse by Satie in *Parade* and Busoni intended his one-act operas *Arlecchino* and *Turandot* for puppet theatre presentation.

[16] 'There are significant similarities between music and language, suggesting at least a common origin. For example, many subtle aspects of language are mediated by regions of the right hemisphere which also mediate the performance and experience of music. Furthermore these right hemisphere regions are the homologues of areas in the left hemisphere that are involved with language production and comprehension – they are in the "same" position on the other side of the brain.' (McGilchrist 2010, p. 102) It is my feeling that if language and music are comprehended by different hemispheres of the brain, and at times language is comprehended by both, then a new level of complexity is introduced to the brain, by language, that may not be introduced in a performance that does not use language.

actor's performance is a response to the music.[17]

Varèse talks about how the orchestra will relate to the other elements of the performance. He envisaged the role of the orchestra as a 'mediator between the audience and what is taking place on stage.' (MacDonald 2003, p. 229) This is an example of Varèse relating the function of music/orchestra to the audience and other aspects of the performance. I propose that the establishment of this type of relationship between elements in *Astronomer* and some of the working methods of Varèse and Artaud, if practised now, could be seen as transdisciplinary, for they were conceiving of one autonomous and connected work. I also propose that the work done on *Astronomer* (particularly on the scenario) was collaborative, between artists engaged in a joint task.

1.7 *Bow Down*

An existing work for actors and musicians that can contextualise my work is *Bow Down*[18] by composer Harrison Birtwistle. I attended a performance of the work, produced by The Opera Group, as part of the Norfolk and Norwich Festival in May 2012.[19] *Bow Down* has informed my work because of the way divisions between actors and musicians are dissolved, the aspects of transdisciplinarity I observed in the work, the way the score suggests targets to performers as well as providing practical coordination instructions, the physicality of the work and the use of a performance space.

'It has been suggested that the actors in *Bow Down* "are just as much musicians as the musicians are actors", and that there is only "a relatively slight difference in emphasis" (Adlington 2000) between the two.' (Beard 2012, p. 302) The performance I saw did not separate performers into actors and musicians, and the score promotes equality

[17] This idea invites similarities with methods of Artaud's contemporary Stanislavsky and his Method of Physical Actions and Active Analysis where improvisation and a focus on physicality is used to develop an actor's sense of character and deeper connection to a text before a playwright's words become part of the rehearsal process. (Merlin 2014, p. 185-201)

[18] '*Bow Down* was devised and first performed in the Cottesloe Theatre by members of the National Theatre of Great Britain on 5 July 1977, as part of the John Player Centenary Festival. […] The source material of *Bow Down* was the ancient and traditional ballad of *The Two Sisters* which exists in numerous and varied versions throughout Northern Britain, Scandinavia and America.' (Birtwistle & Harrison 1983)

[19] For more information see: http://www.nnfestival.org.uk/festival/archive_event/bow-down

between performers. The actors are asked to play instruments and the musicians are on stage (rather than hidden in a pit). The musicians (and actors) do not sit stationary through the performance but are required to move on stage. This requires a sharing of skills by performers and leads in part to 'the blurring of generic boundaries, crossover and hybrid performances, intertextuality, immediacy, hypermediality and a self-conscious reflexivity that displays the devices of performance in performance.'(Chapple & Kattenbelt 2006, p. 11). This corresponds with my understanding of transdisciplinarity. To do this the performers need to master the relevant skills to make their performance convincing and Birtwistle does not impede this by demanding a level of instrumental proficiency from the actors that is too specialised. For the musicians, it is partly the role of the director to help them feel confident on stage and use their bodies and voices without exposing a potential lack of experience. In the production I saw, the director was Frederic Wake-Walker and the musicians all performed confidently on stage.

'Most of the singing is performed by actors 3 and 7. Nevertheless, the musicians are given more complex music to play and a distinction is therefore retained between actors and musicians. What is called into question, however, is the distinction between "music" and "action".' (Beard 2012, p. 303) Birtwistle allows the musicians to excel as musicians, whilst at the same time the singing by the actors and their use of percussion instruments strengthens the ties between them, dissolving the distinctions between these two types of performers and contributing to the work's transdisciplinarity. Transdisciplinarity may be perceived differently in my works (this will be explored in the case studies); when musicians were required to perform as actors, in my work *The Photocopier* and Molitor's *Remember Me*, the performances suffered because of the lack of ability of the musicians to utilise a different set of performing skills, which they had not developed.

The score of *Bow Down* is full of directions to the performers that instruct them what to do during a section of music. An example from page 2 (Fig. 1.5) of the score reads; 'As he passes each of the CHORUS they change from breathing to singing. When he passes CHORUS 7 she becomes the DARK SISTER' (Birtwistle & Harrison 1983, p. 2) This is a mix of practical coordination instructions and directorial instructions about how to perform (character). This mix of the practical and the interpretive provides a source for

the performer's 'target' but it still leaves room for a performer's interpretation and the role of a director in a production. These directions are linked to specific durations of music, and the compositional process (from which one result is the score) therefore includes a documentation and specification of many aspects of the performance. This is another example of text's role in perceiving transdisciplinarity.

The Opera Group production of *Bow Down* placed great emphasis on the body and the performance space. 'One cannot separate body and mind, nor the senses from the intellect, particularly in a field where the unendingly repeated jading of our organs calls for sudden shocks to revive our understanding.' (Artaud et al. 2004, p. 122) The production embraced the connections between all elements in the performance with the body being the central point for this connection (rather than objects or a set, in fact objects that were used were part of the performer's body, i.e. instruments or clothes). *Bow Down* 'posits a wider, inclusive category that emphasises the common basis of all acts of performance in the human body.' (Adlington 2000 quoted in Beard 2012, p. 303) The centrality of the body is partly indicated in the score, as we have seen, and comes from the means to create the work, these being actors and musicians that sing, play instruments and move in a space. This space is an 'empty space' and its emptiness enhances our focus on the bodies in this space. 'Following Peter Brook's notion of the "empty space", which was indebted to Artaud and to Barrault's concept of the "barren stage", *Bow Down* was conceived and originally performed on an empty stage upon which the performers create their own environment.' (Beard 2012, p. 296) The clarity and focus that the 'empty space' brings to the people in the performance space and their actions, aids the connection of the elements in the work, which is part of transdisciplinary theory.

Bow Down is easy to transport to different locations and the performance I saw took place in a clearing in a forest, having previously been on tour at the Brighton Festival where it was performed in a disused warehouse. This change of space makes the location a framing device for the performance bringing with it its own aesthetic, which in the performance I saw felt entirely cohesive with the work. The use of an 'empty space' and limited essential elements to create a performance are important features of my non-vocal works that we will turn to in the case studies. We will now turn to the operatic context for my work.

1.8 An operatic context

My understanding of opera is built on my understanding of theatre, detailed above, where the people on stage primarily sing instead of speak. Because of this what I perceive as operatic material is developed through my understanding of the individuals that sing. I perceive an operatic potential in characters and scenarios that invite the incredible, untrue and improbable.[20] It is through this that a singer in the theatre engages my interest rather causing me to question why the individual is singing and not speaking. I recognise these points in the following definition of opera.

> Opera is a type of theatre in which most or all of the characters sing most or all of the time. In that very obvious sense it is not realistic, and has, through most of its 400-year history, often been thought exotic and strange. (Abbate & Parker 2012, p. 1)

I perceive the operatic voice as a stylised form of communication. The difference to the speech sounds that usually come out of human beings and the technique involved to produce the operatic voice are contributing factors to what I perceive as stylised. Simultaneously a person singing, albeit with the operatic voice, can suggest the un-stylised, via the fact that the sound comes from another human being and that as people we can all sing. We can therefore project ourselves into the position of an opera singer, even though the technique required to sing in such a way is not developed in everyone. It is still another person using the same anatomy to perform something extraordinary (and stylised). When an opera singer is performing actions they can emphasise this tension between the stylised and un-stylised, for instance if the characters or scenarios are familiar. This is a tension that I perceive in *verismo*. 'Carl Dahlhaus has argued within careful limits that outer realism can come into opera, although he also quotes very fairly Busoni's opposite view that the whole concept of *verismo* is "untenable"' (Donington 1990, p. 151). I do not find *verismo* untenable, but I do not think it is where opera's greatest strength lies, even in an accepted *verismo* opera such as *Carmen*, I propose that the inherent operatic tension comes from the extremity of the characters and situations which are not based in realism. The fiery gypsy Carmen is not the same as the housewife Nora.

[20] "'[…] people performing actions while singing" can make sense only in the realm of "the incredible, the untrue, the improbable."' (Dahlhaus 1982, trans. Whittall, p. 10 quoted in Donington 1990, p. 151).

In situating my preference for opera's dramatic source to arise from 'the incredible, the untrue, the improbable', I am more drawn to operatic material that will emphasise and make plausible the stylised aspect of the operatic voice. This preference is something I recognise in the setting and characters of many operas. I will detail some examples below.

In Mozart's *The Magic Flute* the audience is in a fairy-tale masonic-Egyptian world consisting of a Queen of the Night, the Bird-catcher Papageno and Sarastro the High Priest of the Sun, among other unusual characters. From the start of the opera the audience is confronted with incredible and improbable action: Prince Tamino is rescued from a serpent by three ladies who serve the Queen of the Night. As an audience member this improbable opening action functions to immediately engage my attention in a life or death scenario with sympathy for the fantastical characters, where singing rather than speaking appears most appropriate.

In Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* the setting is real, a forest, but the characters that sing are a combination of humans and animals. Some of the human characters include a Priest, a Forester, the Forester's Wife and a Schoolmaster and these are contrasted with the more improbable animal characters such as the Vixen, the Fox, the Frog Child and the Grasshopper Child. This combination of both human and animal characters that sing establishes a commonality between these two different character groups. Seeing both human and animal characters gives the audience an insight to the thoughts and actions of these two groups[21] that is not possible in the real world. Singing acts to make it dramatically plausible.

Wagner's creation of his own mythology in the four operas of *The Ring of the Nibelung* is derived largely from Teutonic[22] sources and by its very nature mythology contains aspects of the unreal and incredible. '[…] in the case of *The Ring*, the gods and the other supernatural beings whom Wagner drew from Teutonic mythology are for many people

[21] We can not hear the sung or spoken thoughts/conversations of animals, and rarely are human conversations sung outside of the theatre

[22] 'Teutonic is not a racial, but a *linguistic* term: it signifies the peoples whose languages belong to one particular group of the Indo-European family: Icelandic, Norwegian, Swedish, Danish, Frisian, Dutch, Flemish, German – and English.' (Cooke 1979, p. 11)

obscure and puzzling figures.' (Cooke 1979, p. 11) Whether or not the beings are obscure, puzzling or intelligible, their fantastical nature is part of what makes them suitable operatic material from my perspective. The world of *The Ring* sits outside of a human reality just as the operatic voice sits outside of our everyday vocal experience.

> The chief trouble is that the actions of these characters are not immediately intelligible in ordinary human terms. When Wotan, for example, gets two labourers to build him a castle, to help him establish his mastery of the world, the payment he offers them is his own sister-in-law; and the world he seeks to master is a curious one anyway, made up of gods, giants, water-nymphs, and dwarfs, with at first no human beings in sight at all. The castle Valhalla functions as a pure symbol of world-power, without any recognizable human reality in the drama to correspond to it. (Cooke 1979, p. 11)

In the late 1940s and early 1950s science fiction was of interest to Benjamin Britten. Britten planned an opera for young people with the librettist William Plomer called *Tyco the Vegan.*

> Britten refers to a Prologue to the projected children's opera, the subject-matter of which tapped into the growing public fascination for outer space and the possibilities of space travel prevalent in the early 1950s […] Plomer's seven-page draft of the Prologue, all that apparently survived of the project, is at BPL[23]. *Tyco the Vegan* had replaced an earlier scheme to base a children's opera on Beatrix Potter's *The Tale of Mr Toad.* (Reed et al. 2008, p. 48)

On discovering this uncompleted project of Britten's I went to the BPL in Snape and read the prologue mentioned above, with the hope of refashioning it for my own science fiction youth opera, *Tycho's Dream*, listed in the Appendix. I did not use the prologue but I did incorporate the figure of Tycho Brahe[24] (the same historical figure who Britten refers to as Tyco), the science fiction setting and a journey to the moon (which was part of Britten's *Tyco*) into my own *Tycho's Dream.* In both Britten's *Tyco the Vegan* and my own *Tycho's Dream* the operatic material consists of incredible settings and the improbability of non-human and historical figures mixing together with young people of the present day.

I perceive the theatre as a place of suspended disbelief and the central role of music and

[23] BPL stands for the Britten Pears Library.
[24] Tycho Brahe was a Danish astronomer 1546 – 1601.

singing in opera are part of the suspension of disbelief where a theatrical world that is different from the world outside the theatre is created. Characters and settings that are implausible contribute to the need for an audience's suspended disbelief. This does not exclude human emotions and real world ideas from entering into opera, rather, the means for presenting them should suit an operatic form, which we have seen favours the improbable, incredible and untrue.

Opera is a form that can allow a transdisciplinary perspective to arise, as the very nature of the form involves multiple disciplines, which have the potential to combine and connect.

> Dance, music and poetry alone are each limited; where they reach their limits they feel their lack of freedom so long as they fail to hold their hand out to the other corresponding art forms in an unconditional acknowledgement of love. Grasping the outstretched hand already lifts them over the boundary; yet to embrace fully, to merge fully with the sister, to step over the set boundary and lose oneself there leads to the total collapse of the boundary; and if all boundaries thus fall then both art forms and boundaries disappear leaving only art, collective, limitless art itself. (Wagner 2013, p. 28)

The above quote encompasses the instinctive feelings I have always held as a composer. I see that the theory of transdisciplinarity reflects these instinctive feelings and I have therefore applied it when analysing my thesis works and processes. The reflection of transdisciplinary theory in the aim of dissolving the boundaries between elements in an opera stated by Wagner is also part of my aim in composing operas and has necessitated the collaborative work with other artists involved in the joint task of making each of the works in this thesis.

Long before the coining of transdisciplinarity, Carl Maria von Weber demonstrates an intuitive understanding of it: '[…] a work of art complete in itself, in which all the related parts and contributions are blended together and thus disappear, and somehow, in disappearing, form a new world' (Donington 1990, p. 78). This concept of opera has existed for a long time and I propose that within it the blending together of art forms and disappearance of barriers between them has similarities with an autonomous transdisciplinary work.

> *the error in the art-genre of opera consists herein:*
>
> that a Means of expression (Music) has been made the end, while the End of expression (the Drama) has been made a means,
>
> I do it nowise in the idle dream of having discovered something new, but with the object of posting the Error so plain that every one may see it, (Wagner 2008, pxxxii-xxxiii)

As with Wagner I am not stating this to show new clarity in operatic thought but to demonstrate the continuity of approach to both my non-vocal and opera work as it applies to collaboration and transdisciplinarity. What Wagner and Weber express and what I understand in creating my thesis works is: that the composition of music as part of drama needs to employ methods and understanding about how music and the other elements in a work (drama) can synthesise to become one thing, and that this is encompassed within transdisciplinary theory.

In this chapter we have addressed collaboration and transdisciplinarity as it applies to my works. We have contextualised theatre and opera and looked at examples of works by other composers, which relate to my own practice. We will now turn to a series of six case studies to examine the role that collaboration has played in my compositional process and to take a transdisciplinary perspective on these works.

Fig. 1.1 *Jong* title page

Fig. 1.2 *Jong* bar 8

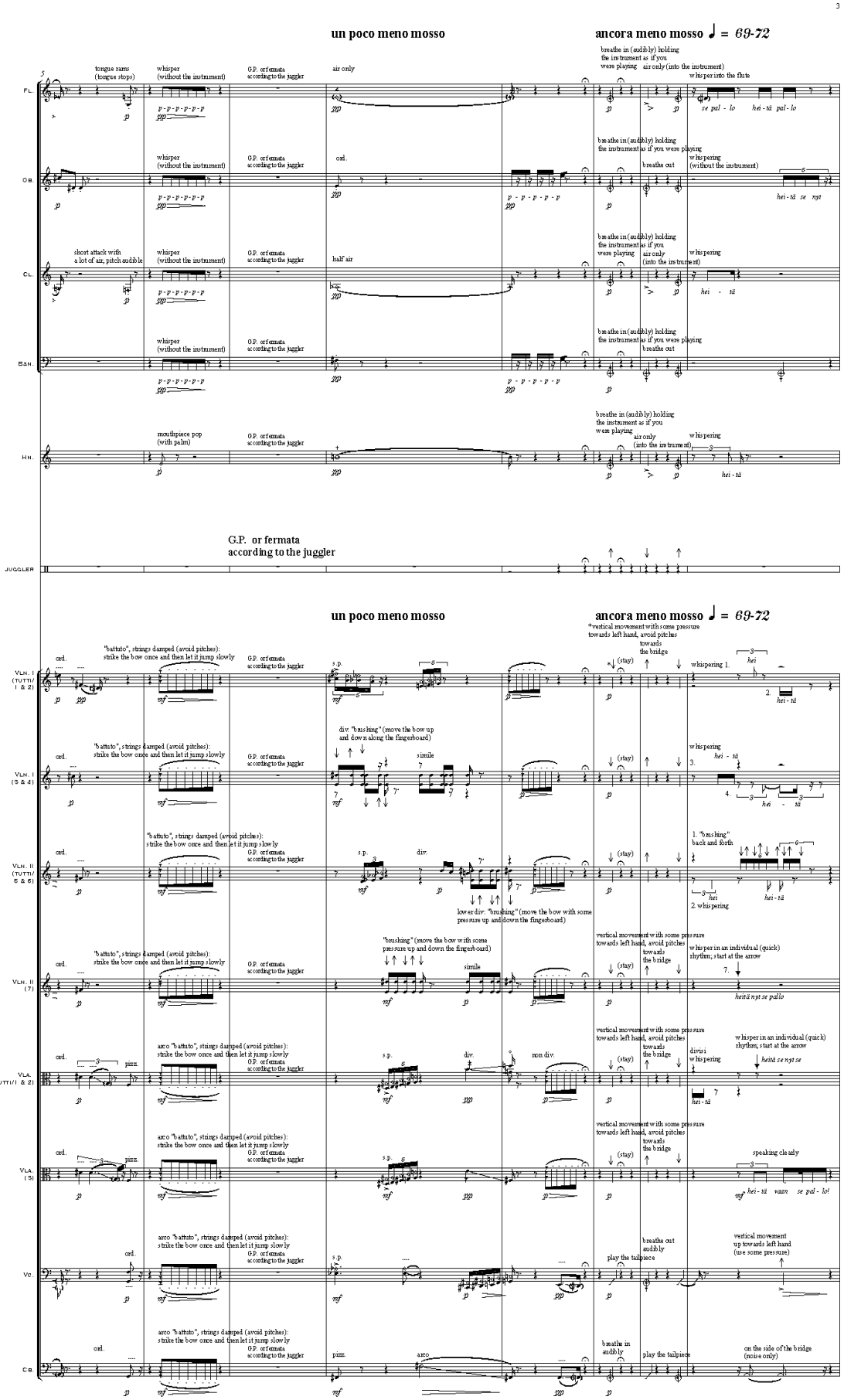


Fig. 1.3 *Jong* bar 279

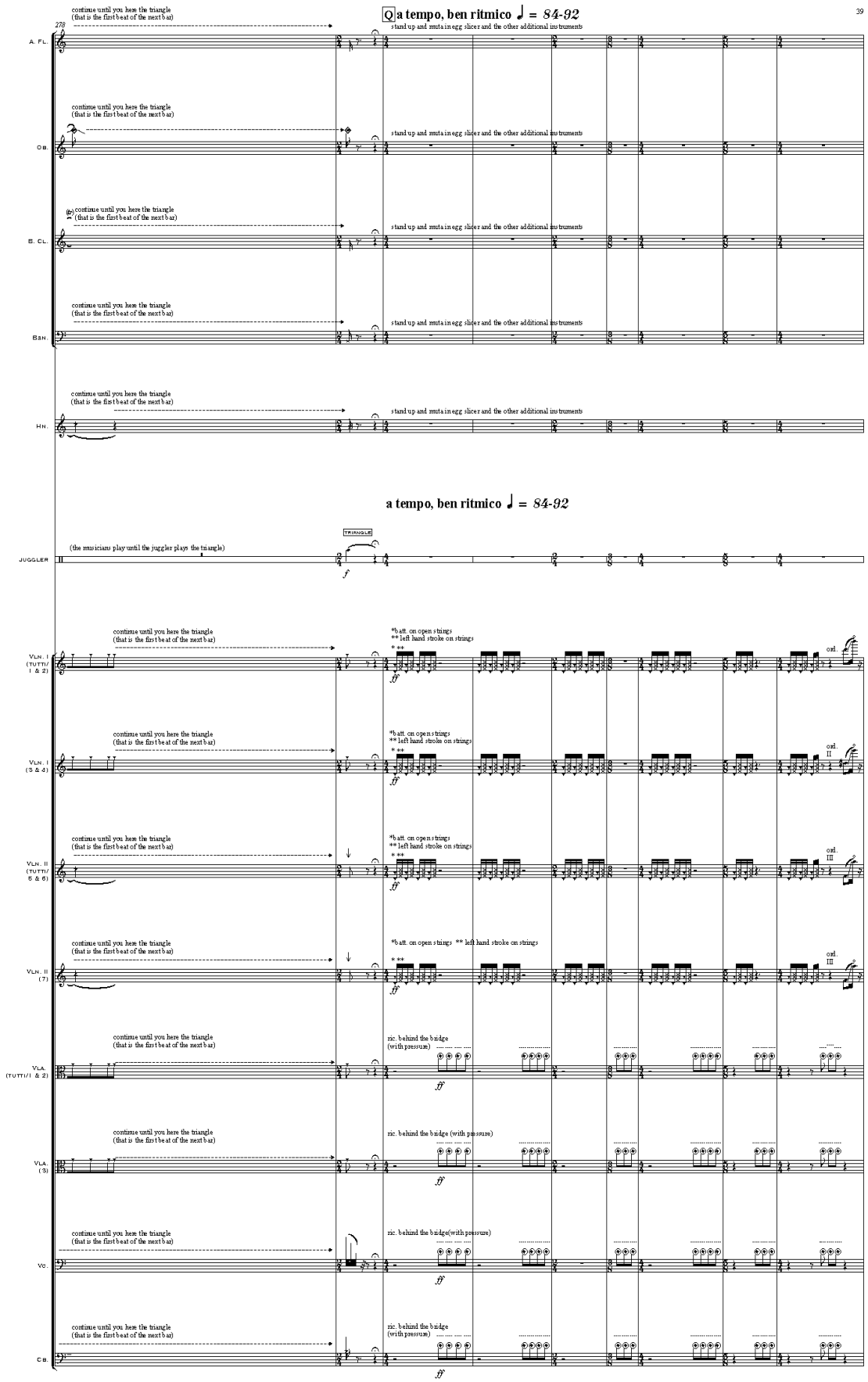


Fig. 1.4 *Jong* bar 350 - end

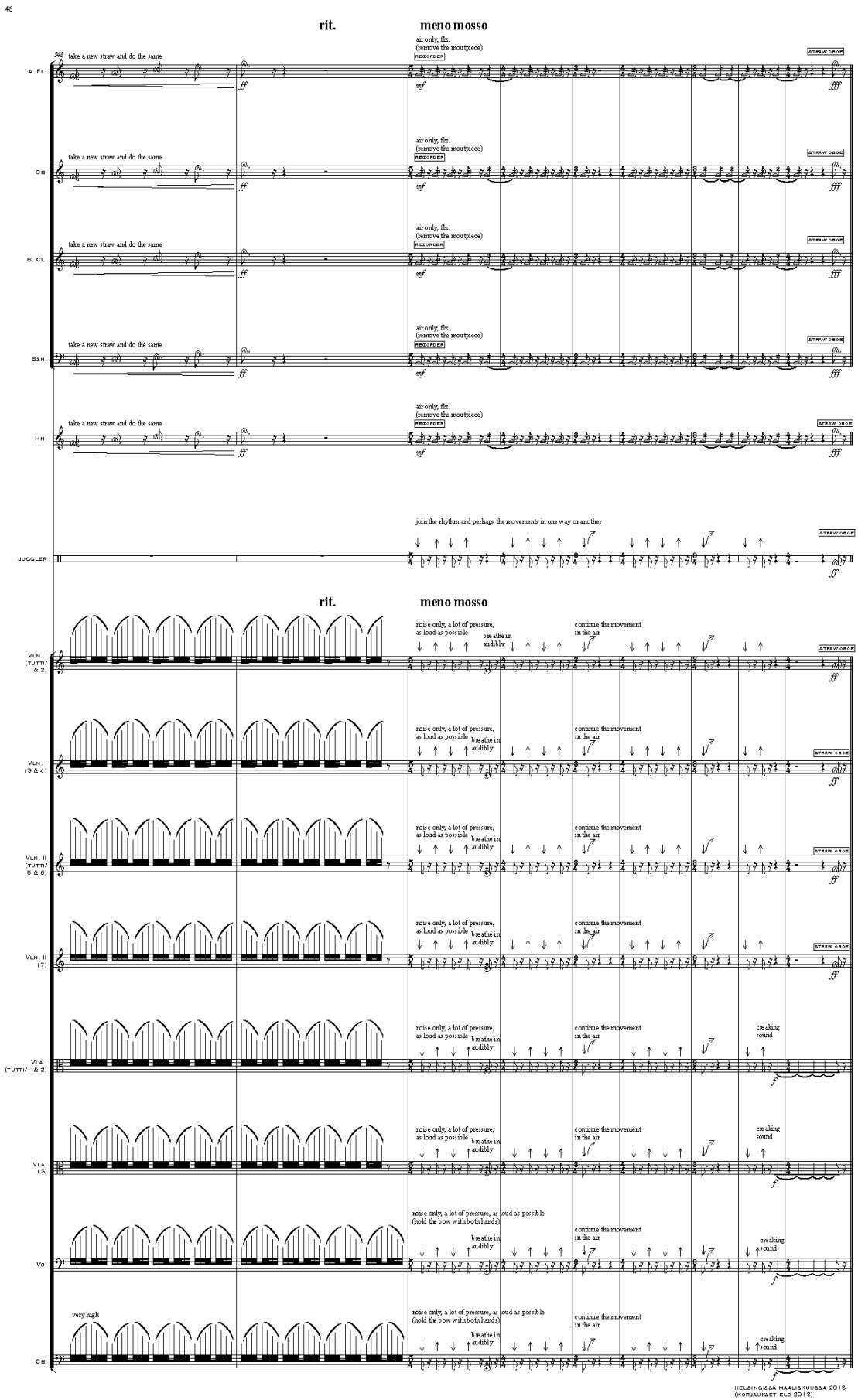
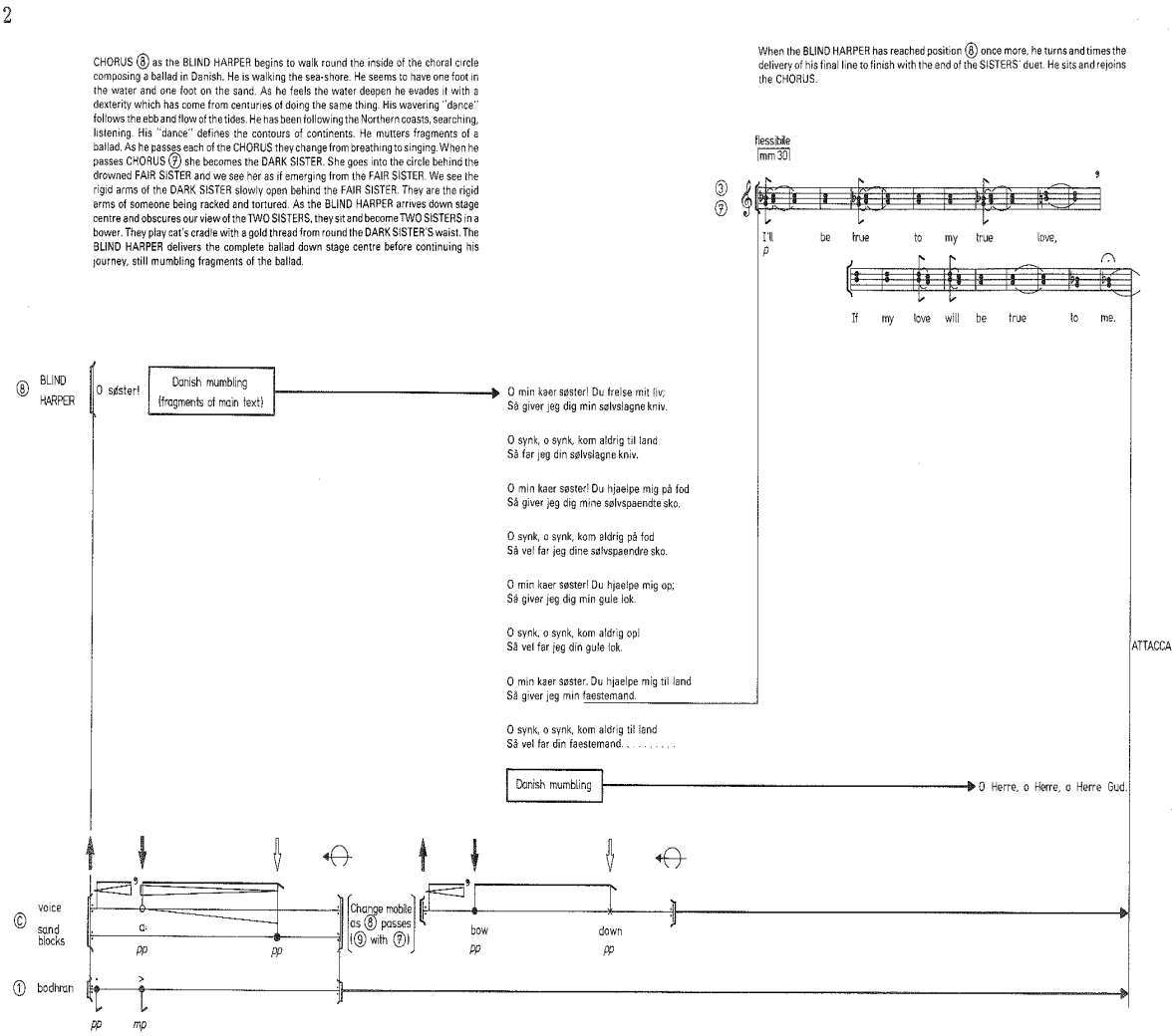


Fig. 1.5 *Bow Down* page 2



Chapter 2: Case Studies

The following case studies aim to reveal different aspects of collaboration in my compositional process and how the works might be viewed from a transdisciplinary perspective. The nature of the collaborations and how a transdisciplinarity might be perceived will be measured against factors I have identified as important to me in the previous chapter.

Four non-vocal works and two operas have been selected as the clearest examples of my research objectives, from a larger body of compositions composed during the research period. They are grouped together with key collaborators: Ilona Jantti on *Handspun*, Ted Huffman on *The Photocopier* and *Macbeth*, Peter Cant on *Play (after Beckett)* and *Unborn In America*. The additional three operas written in this time are included in Appendix 1, particularly because of the collaboration process in their creation and the aspects of transdisciplinarity perceptible in them. Commission and performance details for each work are contained in Appendix 2. Examples that support my research objectives will be drawn out of each work, rather than an analysis of every note. Some examples will highlight similarities in my approach but emphasis will be given to the differences between the works.

2.1 *Handspun*

Handspun is a work that is performed by a cellist and an aerialist. The aerialist should not only be a skilled circus performer but also a trained dancer, as the work is best described as a contemporary aerial ballet.

> 'Aerial' ballets were all the rage in late-Victorian London. It mattered little that they were more circus acts than actual ballets; their female stars, swinging from either a trapeze or sturdy ropes, were worshipped on a par with the greatest ballerinas. (Poesio 2012)

The work lasts for between 22 and 25 minutes on average, with considerable flexibility in the tempo markings to allow for the cellist and aerialist to speed up or slow down in relation to the speed of the music or movement of the other performer. This is one reflection of the interconnected relationship between the two live performers.

The audience (viewer of the online video) is presented with a stage picture where

both performers are visible (the cellist is not hidden in a pit) and two ropes hang in the space. Four ropes are used in the work; each has a different length and/or angle of rigging. The difference between the ropes made us work on them differently and resulted in different music and movement being made for performance on each rope. We will see later how these ropes come to determine the structure of the work and what the difference in material may be on them.

Handspun was the second work that I created together with Ilona Jantti (choreographer and aerialist). We had already established a creative language[25] and levels of trust and understanding in each other's abilities and our partnership. We received the commission in the autumn of 2011 for a premiere in February 2012, so had limited time to make the work. We began by talking to one another about the type of work we wanted to make. Unlike our previous work I wanted *Handspun* to involve a composed score and a performer that was not myself. Ilona wanted to work solely with ropes, and in particular, a diagonally rigged rope that would divide the performance space in half.

This first stage of collaboration (talking) set the broad parameters for the work and the decisions made at this point would in some way inform the further stages of collaboration and individual work. Following talking, Ilona created some material (a series of movements) on the diagonal rope and a rope that hung vertically from above, the long rope. This material was filmed and sent to me electronically and Ilona and I then discussed the material. I responded to this material by composing music that could be played together with these two types of ropes. I recorded this music with the cellist, who was the same performer in the first production and many of the subsequent productions of *Handspun*. Importantly none of this material (physical or sound) was thought of as fixed at this stage; it was the response to our discussions and to what the other had made. We consciously made more material than we envisaged would end up in the premiere of the work so that we could craft this material into a shape that we were satisfied with or, if appropriate, discard entirely.

[25] This refers to a way of speaking to one another in the collaborative and creative environment wherein we know to a certain extent how our ideas expressed in words might turn into a performance. We also know that when we are talking about the work we are speaking as co-creators in addition to being aware of the requirements of our individual creative contributions.

Following this work Ilona, the cellist and I came together in a rehearsal space for what can be called workshopping. This is a creative time for working together, without the pressures of a rehearsal period, which requires one to perfect a finished work. It gave us the freedom to be together to test and experiment with ideas at a stage when the work was still being created. The time we had for our workshops was four days.

We proceeded by working with the material live that we had shared electronically to see how it might fit together. This led to decisions about the length, tempo and amount of material we needed in each section of the work. This involved me deleting bars of music, changing the tempo of passages or recomposing sections of music, in the room, which the cellist was then immediately able to play for Ilona and myself to hear. Equally, Ilona was able to amend her movements in response to our discussions and what she was hearing, in the moment. As the only non-performer in the room I was able to judge how the elements of the work were working together and suggest changes or new ideas from this vantage.

Our work continued like this over the four days at the end of which we had created a draft work of four sections. This corresponded to the four types of rope in the work (long, short, floor, diagonal) reflected in the subtitles in the score of *Handspun*. We then worked individually refining music and movement, based on the collaborative work done together.

The long rope is the first rope to be used in the work and its position and individual qualities, due to its weight and length, can be seen by the viewer. These were characteristics which influenced the movement and music created for it.

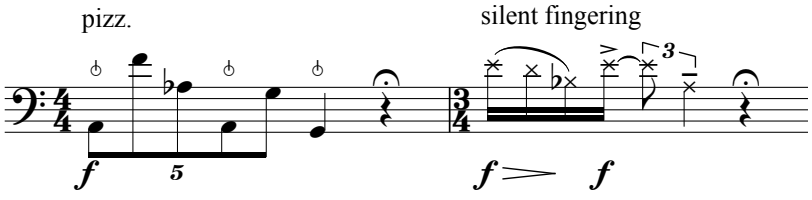
The aerialist begins *Handspun* by playfully swinging the long rope around the space and out over the audience. The aerialist twists the rope around her arms and body in varying ways as a burst of activity. She rocks and sways with and into the rope, mimicking the rope's own swung movements. She swings in different circle patterns, just above the ground at the bottom of the rope. She uses the rope to create a vertical line along her body and eventually she hoists herself onto the rope and sits on it before she starts climbing it. When climbing the rope there is swinging, a range of shapes are

made with the body, there is dropping and bouncing, hanging upside down, twisting and gentle rocking at the end of the section. All of these movements informed my compositional decisions and create a connection between music and movement in my compositional process. This connection contributes to the transdisciplinarity in *Handspun*. The resulting musical relationship to this section is of percussive music and hence this section is subtitled *Percussive/Long Rope* (bar 1 - 40). The predominant colours in *Percussive/Long Rope* are Bartók pizzicato, finger tapping, col legno glissandi and arco sul ponticello. The arco sounds in *Percussive/Long Rope* are coloured in non-normale parts of the cello.

The gripping and climbing of the rope that is continually part of the work contributed to an enhanced textural and physical tangibility of the cello sounds (fingers tapping, strings snapping). It is also worth noting here that although the aerialist is predominantly silent, her subtle foot sounds (stamping) and the sounds of sliding down the ropes (particularly on the diagonal rope) are musical contributions of their own.[26] These sounds are not notated like the cello music, but their place in the sound world and timbral blend with the cello has been considered in the creation of the work.

At the start of the work, the grasping of the rope and the potential unfamiliarity of aerial performance to an audience is acknowledged by the time the aerialist takes in touching the rope, and this led to the composition of pauses in bars 1 - 3, 6, 14 and 17. The length of these pauses is to be judged by the cellist to establish a connection between the aerialist's movement and the cellist's music. As aerialist, music and audience become more engaged with the rope, the pauses become less frequent and the musical phrases become longer (e.g. bar 19 - 21 or 25 - 32).

Fig. 2.1 *Handspun* bar 1 and 2



The thematic material in bar 1 dominates the *Percussive/Long Rope* section of the work.

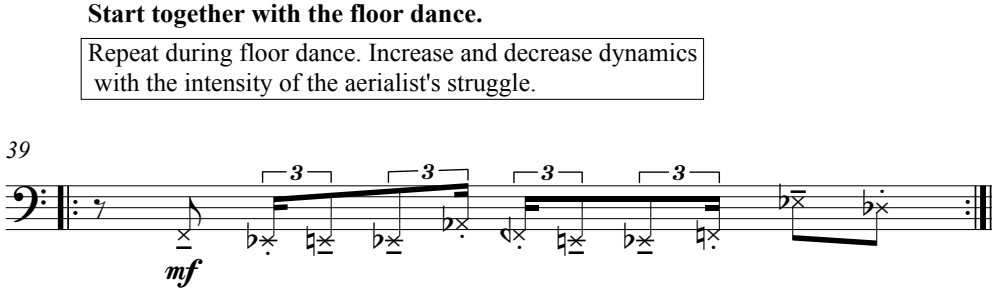
[26] This is similar, though not as pronounced, as the consideration of the juggler's sounds in the orchestration of *Jong*, which was discussed in Chapter 1.

We return to this idea frequently, often before developing other material. Bar 2 contains the start of an idea that is developed first in bar 7 (and connected to the trill in bars 4/5) which develops into ever increasing phrase lengths (bars 9 - 12, 19 - 20, 25 - 34). The clarity of individual pitches in this material is masked by the colour of silent fingering, sul ponticello and the speed of the rhythm. This same material becomes clearer during the *Active/Short Rope* section, when much of the material is repeated using a different cello technique (types of arco playing). These extended sections of music that develop from the bar 2 theme drew on a connection to the longer periods of rope climbing. They are not intended to always accompany these moments and often occur when the aerialist is still, but they were composed with these extended physical phrases in mind and offer an example for transdisciplinarity to be perceived.

The arco ricochet and arco col legno ricochet glissando material at bars 14/15 and 18/19 are an example of synchronisation (similar to cues discussed in Chapter 1) and arose to connect to the dropping and sliding down the rope by the aerialist. At bars 22/23 this same cello technique is no longer synchronised with a movement but is a development of this sound just as movements are being developed by the aerialist.

The second rope to be used is the floor rope. The types of movement on this rope include a bouncing tug of war, standing and laying down, a strong sense of rhythmic movement as well as a type of struggle, as if the aerialist is trying to bounce away from the rope. The floor rope music is contained in bars 39 and 40 and is an example of repetition as a compositional device for connecting to a range of movements and to move the music into the background as accompaniment to the aerialist's movements.

Fig. 2.2 *Handspun* bar 39



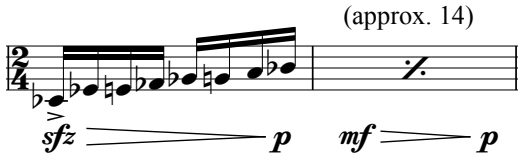
The overall rhythmic movement of the aerialist suggested a groove-like repeated rhythm (bar 39), which I constructed from semiquaver triplet groups framed by quavers. The

second aspect that arose through a connection to the grasping and tugging on the rope was the percussive silent fingering technique. The tapping is predominantly in the lower part of the cello register and has an association with a pizzicato double bass or even slap electric bass sound, qualities which enhance the groove and dance aspects of the movement which I perceived in this section.

The *Active/Short Rope* section of *Handspun* is closely related to the *Percussive/Long Rope* section, both in music and movement, and is an example of musical and physical variation through the progression of the work. This section begins with musical material from the beginning of the work, with short statements of material followed by pauses and/or silences from bar 41 - 56. With every statement of material (from bar 41 - 66) a musical idea is developed in varying phase lengths. The two main sources of material that are developed come from bars 2 and 9/10. Development is often achieved through a direct repetition of *Percussive/Long Rope* material, now articulated in a much clearer way as it is played arco and normale. Other techniques for development of the material include a re-ordering of the pitches, inverting the octaves and subtly varying the rhythm of the material.

The movement in this section consisted of a similar throwing of the rope round the space as at the beginning of the work. The aerialist climbs and descends the rope a number of times as in *Percussive/Long Rope*, creating shapes and spinning around the rope. At one point the aerialist descends the rope using her toes (a new movement), in a manner that resembles creeping. This is synchronised with a variation on the bar 39 floor rope material, at bars 85 - 87 which, through its *pianissimo* dynamic, sul tasto then alla punta playing technique and repeated triplet rhythm giving a dance like dotted rhythm effect, is my compositional connection to the playful creeping movements. When the aerialist reaches the bottom of the rope she hangs with the rope twisted round her neck and held in her mouth. This is a new image and is both a calm moment and one that possesses an inbuilt degree of tension and risk. Again, this is synchronised with new musical material that is more lyrical and expressive than the preceding bars.

Fig. 2.3 *Handspun* bar 103 and 104



New musical material is also introduced into *Active/Short Rope* in the form of scales (bar 89, 94, 100, 103). Each of these scales has either 6 or 8 notes; they are predominately comprised of minor and major seconds though each has one major or minor third in them, with the exception of bar 100 which has two. These scales are repeated at the discretion of the cellist whose task it is to use these scales and the number of repetitions to increase the tension of the performance (an example of a target/objective for the cellist), together with the aerialist (whose target/objective is also a sense of tension or struggle), as she climbs the rope again and again. This compositional choice aimed at connecting to the struggle/tension and repetition by the aerialist. It is a moment that forces the cellist to connect her performance to the actions of the aerialist, and through this we can perceive a transdisciplinary aspect of the work.

The section ends with a final statement of one of the more prominent developments of the bar 2 material (seen also in bar 96) and with this repetition the section ends. The work then turns to a rope that is physically very different from the others, the diagonal rope, and thus invites a new direction in the music.

The two main properties of the diagonal rope were its length (it is the longest of the four ropes) and its position in the performance space. As a result of this the diagonal rope has a slow rocking movement to it when the aerialist is on it. The rope is rigged differently to the other ropes so that we do not see its ends; nor does the aerialist interact with the end(s) of the rope as she has done with the other three.

The way the aerialist moves on the diagonal rope is slower than in other sections of the work. The aerialist slowly climbs, in a crawling-like fashion up the rope, and then either swings or slides back down the rope. As she hangs from different points on the rope the audience may perceive the hanging as noticeably different and varied from when she has hung from the short and long ropes, owing to its diagonal rigging. There is less urgency in the aerialist's movements in this section and a calmness pervades her

material, especially in the stillness of her hanging positions and steadiness of her slides down the rope that conclude the work.

The feeling of calm and the longer length of physical phrases (as opposed to short bursts of energy) that I perceived in this section, resulted in the composition of music of a sustained and melodic quality. This is reflected in the *Handspun* score with the section subtitled *Sustained and Melodic/Diagonal Rope*. The tempo is slowed and longer note values used, particularly at the opening of the section bar 121 - 142.

A significantly new musical element of *Sustained and Melodic/Diagonal Rope* is the use of double stops, and with these comes a true sense of vertical harmony. This harmony initially takes the form of a balanced interval of a perfect 5th, the intervals rise in tension as they become minor 6ths, major 7ths, a compound minor 9th and in bar 137/138 a compound tri-tone (C/F#). This movement from a balanced perfect 5th to the final double stop of a minor 9th in bar 140 occurs as the aerialist mounts and ascends the rope and the change of intervals is intended to connect to this movement.

Another new musical element in *Sustained and Melodic/Diagonal Rope* is the use of harmonics. These (as with the double stops) correspond to the sustained nature of this section and occur frequently as long notes between bars 145 - 167. The harmonics are less resonant than the other playing techniques in this section and were also chosen to connect to the hanging from the rope that the aerialist performs throughout this section. There are two points where this connection is made explicit and a harmonic is intended to synchronise with hanging (bar 145 and 160).

In this case study we have looked at the nature of the collaboration that took place and how this enabled the music and movement of *Handspun* to be created together. This was crucial for the possibility of transdisciplinarity to emerge in the work and we have seen a number of examples of how music and movement are intended to connect. We will now turn to two works I created with Ted Huffman, which demonstrate a different collaborative process and transdisciplinary perspective.

2.2 *The Photocopier*

The Photocopier is a work for a percussionist who plays a photocopier. From my experience of composing and then working on the productions of my operas, I wanted my collaborator on this new work to be a director. I imagined a process of; working with a director on conceiving a performance, composing alone and then working together in workshops and rehearsals. I felt this drew on elements of my collaboration on *Handspun* and I wanted to work with director Ted Huffman on *The Photocopier* to aid our collaboration on *Macbeth*.

Ted and I saw *The Photocopier* as a way to explore how music and movement could work together, without a text. This would be an extension of our discussions about how music worked as theatre in an operatic context, though importantly in *The Photocopier* it would be without singers, narrative or characters, elements that were significant considerations in creating *Macbeth*. We thought that by creating a work like this, we would become more aware of the relationship between instrumental music and movement. We felt that this understanding would then support the work on *Macbeth*. *The Photocopier* would be limited in its means of performance but aim to be as engaging and as theatrically rich as possible within these limitations.

The collaboration began with significant time spent talking about how musicians and other performers could be together in a theatrical context, meaning how they might be together in a performance but not necessarily in a theatre. Our interest was in an everyday environment, and creating a theatrical experience within this everyday setting. By constructing a performance in an everyday environment we thought the setting would acquire a new theatrical dimension.

We eventually settled on an office setting, and to define this further we chose to construct the work around a specific office object: a photocopier. We felt that a photocopier had a strong visual appeal. As an object it is complex in its shape, it possesses multiple compartments that can be opened and it also presented the possibility of being taken out of the office and still retain a link to the everyday. This meant that the work could be performed in offices, concert halls or theatres. The theatricality of the photocopier also enhanced the already theatrical act of playing an instrument.

The next stage in creating the work involved composition. To do this I needed to

purchase an instrument (a photocopier) and find which sounds I was interested in using. My interest in the sounds of the photocopier was strongly linked to my interest in what it looks like to play a photocopier at different points on the machine by a percussionist. Simultaneously I was imagining an interaction by a second performer with the photocopier at a different point to where it was being played as an instrument and this also informed my compositional decisions.[27]

I narrowed down the large range of possible sounds that I could find from the instrument, through my own experimentation and workshopping with two different percussionists. My choices will be largely visible to the viewer on the online video of the work. They include: the back, the front, the right hand side (where two different pitches, a low and a high pitch, could be made), the left hand side above the paper-feeder, on top of the lid, the paper-feeder and the paper-drawers. The instrument was played with brushes, sticks and soft mallets, and these three types of beater divide the work into three sections. In addition to playing the instrument with beaters, I experimented with and included in the work playing the instrument by opening and closing parts of it or pressing its buttons, allowing the photocopier to play itself.

Finding the sounds for the work involved a process of collaboration, as these decisions were also decisions about the visual image created by playing the photocopier at different points on the instrument and in different ways. This indicates an aspect of transdisciplinarity in the work where sound, the stage picture[28] and the overall theatricality of the work became interconnected. These decisions also led to the work's structure, pacing, sonic and physical variation, various musical parameters (fast, slow, high or low in pitch, loud or soft) and the interaction between percussionist and photocopier. If the work were performed on a different photocopier the sounds would look and sound different, but what would remain would be a variation in sound, the area of the instrument being played and the physicality of how to play it. The work can be re-produced on a different instrument in a different place and still be *The Photocopier*. The work would cease to be *The Photocopier* if the music were played on another

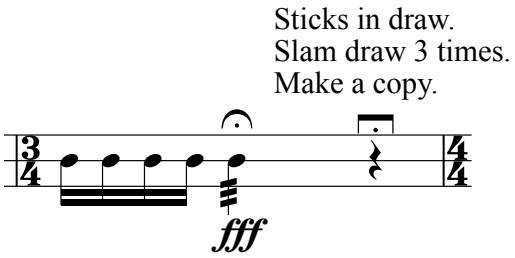
[27] At this stage in the collaboration Ted and I imagined that the second non-musician performer would also interact with the photocopier simultaneously to it being played. An evolving consideration through the collaboration was for the two different performers to interact with the photocopier in different ways.

[28] Meaning how the performer(s) and instrument would look together on stage, or if not on a stage then to the audience watching.

instrument (a snare drum for instance) and lost its physical and visual elements.

Ted and I both wanted the work to have moments where a performer would use the photocopier in a traditional way: opening and closing parts of it, loading paper and making copies of things, at the same time as it being played as an instrument. Through the first two workshops we saw that the percussionist alone could do this in two ways, without the need of an extra physical performer. By playing on the paper-feeder (rehearsal figure A, bar 23 - 28) at the same time as the back of the instrument, a musical and a practical (via the paper-feeder) interaction with the machine was suggested. The audience cannot see the back of the photocopier and the sound is similar to a small bass drum. Playing on the paper-feeder on the other hand can be seen and is a part of the instrument that has a practical function for photocopying. Playing on both of these areas simultaneously suggests the abstract musical and the everyday. Other moments that used the functional parts of the photocopier in the work came between sections. For example at the start of the work when the percussionist switches the machine on, at the end of the brushes section when the lid is slammed shut, at the end of the sticks section when the sticks are put in the paper-drawer (it is slammed 3 times and then the percussionist uses the photocopier to do some photocopying) and finally at the end of the work when the paper-feeder is closed. Each of these instances are musical and physical moments that are inseparable from one another and as such give a transdisciplinary perspective to the work.

Fig. 2.4 *The Photocopier* end of the sticks section, bar 107



Through workshops we realised that the work did not need an additional physical performer, so greater emphasis was placed on the physicality and theatricality of the percussionist. Unfortunately the percussionist's skills and experience in this regard were not equal to his musical skills and as a result the physical performance he gave was very stiff. Nonetheless, the shortcomings of the percussionist's physical performance were outweighed by the fact that a second physical performer proved distracting and led to an

unwanted doubling of what was already being achieved by the percussionist alone.

The photocopier itself also contributed to the physical aspects of the work and we consciously set out to enhance the theatricality of the object. This occurs particularly at the start where the photocopier is very exposed with the paper-feeder extended, the paper-drawer open, the compartments that access the inside of the machine open and the lid open. In this production (not specified in the score), the percussionist starts the work by turning the photocopier on and takes a more than natural amount of time to do this. This also meant that a light in the photocopier came on with an accompanying noise before bar 1 of the work, acting as an upbeat by the photocopier to the start of the music being played on it.

In deciding on the order and structure of the music Ted and I built a subtle choreography between the percussionist and the photocopier, which can be seen on the online video. The percussionist moves from behind the instrument to the front of it in bar 75 (meaning the percussionist has his back to the audience); at the end of the sticks section (bar 107) before rehearsal figure F, the percussionist violently slams and opens the paper-drawer three times whilst simultaneously halfway closing the paper-feeder. This choreographed movement then turns to the everyday action of making a number of photocopies with the machine, and during this part of the work the percussionist assumes the body language of anyone using a photocopier (perhaps even an office worker) rather than a musician playing a photocopier. Once the copies are made the percussionist resumes the physicality needed to perform the music and moves side on at the back of the machine, facing the audience once again but at a slightly different angle from the start of the work. The work ends with a final act of choreography and using the photocopier to make sound, by shutting the paper-feeder completely.

The Photocopier is part of this thesis because of the role of collaboration in composition and the connection between music, physicality and visual elements that combine to offer a transdisciplinary perspective. Seeing how the work could best achieve its aims became possible through a workshop process in which collaborators were not precious about material or ideas, but stayed focused on how best to create the type of work they wished to make together. By seeing how the music I had composed looked, we began to realise that our physical aims for the work were being met by the percussionist and the photocopier. By starting with a large amount of music and editing this during

workshops we could together judge what the duration and structure of the work needed to be. The photocopier is unlike any other instrument in these case studies; it has the potential to be immediately theatrical, to act as a symbol of the everyday and to be both instrument and prop for the performer.

2.3 *Macbeth* and collaboration with Ted Huffman

Macbeth[29] was composed as the final opera during my time as Glyndebourne's young composer in residence. It is a 75-minute opera, with an all male cast of 12 singers and a chamber orchestra of 12 musicians. The libretto is an edited version of Shakespeare's play. The way in which *Macbeth* was made was unique among the four operas I wrote for Glyndebourne as it afforded the largest range of working relationships with various artists to emerge including a close collaboration with the librettist and director Ted Huffman. The working relationships that had the greatest impact on my compositional process were formed during four week-long workshop periods during October 2013, March 2014, August 2014 and March 2015. These then fed into the rehearsal and production period, June 2015 – August 2015.

Ted and I used workshops on *Macbeth* and *The Photocopier* to test many of our ideas and to edit the material we had created. In *The Photocopier* workshops we collaborated with the physical performer Zack Winokur to discover that we did not need an extra physical performer in the work and we benefited from an outsider coming to view the work without the emotion invested in having built the work up to this stage. This was something we also benefited from in workshopping *Macbeth* when different singers and a conductor would enter the workshop process and bring a fresh perspective to the work.

The first two *Macbeth* workshop periods involved the largest amount of experimentation with ways to set the text, characterisation, which scenes from Shakespeare's play we wanted to turn into an opera and, in turn, the structure of the work. The final two workshops shifted their focus towards testing the shape of the opera. By the end of the final workshop we were able to do a run through of the whole opera. The chance for us to hear the complete opera five months ahead of the first

[29] Ted Huffman and I worked from *The RSC Shakespeare, Macbeth* (Shakespeare 2009)

rehearsal is something very rare in contemporary opera, yet no conductor or director of a new production of *Madame Butterfly* would prepare for their first rehearsal without having heard or seen the opera.

The rehearsal and production process for *Macbeth* began at the end of June 2015 and ran until the premiere on the 25 August 2015. This is a slightly longer rehearsal period than may usually be the case for a 75 minute opera, but the cast were drawn from the Glyndebourne chorus and rehearsals were therefore scheduled around the cast's main-stage commitments. This meant that it was not until the end of the production process that we had many two or three session days.[30] The rehearsal and production process was of a traditional model, unlike our workshop period. Rehearsals began with two weeks of music calls (conductor led rehearsals) and then switched to production rehearsal (director led). In the final week the orchestra joined for four rehearsals and the conductor assumed leadership once more for these. My role as a collaborator was largely reduced during the rehearsal and production phases of creating *Macbeth*.

The librettist and director Ted Huffman and I engaged in the joint task of making an opera out of Shakespeare's play *Macbeth*. Though there were many other artists involved in realising the opera, Ted was the only person I felt I collaborated with (following the definitions of collaboration in Chapter 1) and with whom I assumed the responsibility for the creative decisions in the work. Our working relationship changed from workshops to production and I will outline some of these stages. I will also look at the working relationships with other artists and the impact these had on the music I composed.

Before the first workshops, Ted and I spent two weeks in Glyndebourne and numerous café and Skype meetings discussing why we wanted to make an opera and what kind of opera we were interested in making. This was the first stage of our collaboration, talking and brainstorming. We both wanted to make an opera that dealt with extremities, the incredible and the improbable. This led us to investigate making an opera of the movie *Jaws* but copyright issues hindered this idea. Instead the events of *Macbeth* as well as the distance that Shakespeare's language presents to our own modern speech contained the essence of the extreme, incredible and improbable that we were seeking

[30] A session is a 3hr call and a three-session day would usually be 9-12pm, 2-5pm, 6-9pm.

and we therefore began work on *Macbeth* as our opera.

The workshops generally followed a pattern of one day working with singers and a repetiteur followed by a day composing and editing text. The musicians (usually four in each workshop) and I developed a consultative and interactive working relationship. In terms of the singers, they would sing what I had written and then suggest specific pitch or register changes so that either a section would be more idiomatic to sing or might better express the vocal quality I had intended. I would ultimately decide on these contributions but the working relationship was such that anyone could contribute an idea. The repetiteur would also make similar vocal suggestions as well as notation suggestions. This heavily influenced the notation of the recitativo in the battle scenes at the beginning and end of the opera.

In the glossary to the full score I give a note on singing style.

> The piece makes use of a mixture of recitativo and arioso singing styles. The singers should move freely between these approaches to singing as the music and the drama suggests it. In **scenes 1-3** during recitativo singing, the singers should be pushing ahead of the beat, giving the music a constant forward motion and urgency. In **scenes 13-16** the recitativo style is given an increased level of freedom for the performer. The use of noteheads without stems indicates that the singer should sing in a natural speech rhythm within the bars and tempo of the music, but not tied to a specified rhythm, this is a time space notation.

My use of recitativo permeates the entire opera and was some of the first music I composed and tested in the first workshop. The immediacy and clarity of text Ted and I felt through this vocal style allowed us to achieve the sense of urgency and panic that we were aiming for in both battle sections[31] of the opera. Although the composition of recitativo in scene 1 was instinctive, when Ted heard it he commented that it reminded him of the free movement between recitativo and arioso vocal styles in late Renaissance and early Baroque opera, such as those by Monteverdi and his student Cavalli. We decided that if I continued to use this recitativo/arioso approach and supported it with an accompaniment of the text that was derived from the Baroque (such as ritornelli[32] and

[31] First battle scenes 1-3, second battle scenes 13-16.

[32] Every scene of the opera is framed by a percussion ritornello. This structural device developed to link the opera to the Baroque and to a film style such as Quentin Tarantino's in *Reservoir Dogs* or *Pulp Fiction* where quick cuts to music break up the scenes.

recitativo accompagnato which will be discussed below), we might achieve a connection with older musical styles blended with my contemporary voice, just as we planned the production to take an old text and set it in a contemporary military context with an acting style informed by film. This collaborative decision between Ted and myself shaped the direction of the opera.

Ted and I regularly spoke about the acting style we wanted from the singers. This informed the music I wrote and could suggest a transdisciplinary perspective, as the performance by the singers was imagined by myself and Ted and then realised in part through composition and in part through direction and performance. Our references were Quentin Tarantino (as mention in footnote 33) and *House of Cards* (Spacey et al. 2013). From *House of Cards* we were interested in the blend of naturalism and the improbable, such as the direct to camera soliloquies of Frank Underwood, which informed the soliloquies in our opera. We also viewed the relationship between Frank and Claire Underwood as similar to that between Macbeth and Lady Macbeth.

Fig. 2.5 *Macbeth* opening recitativo

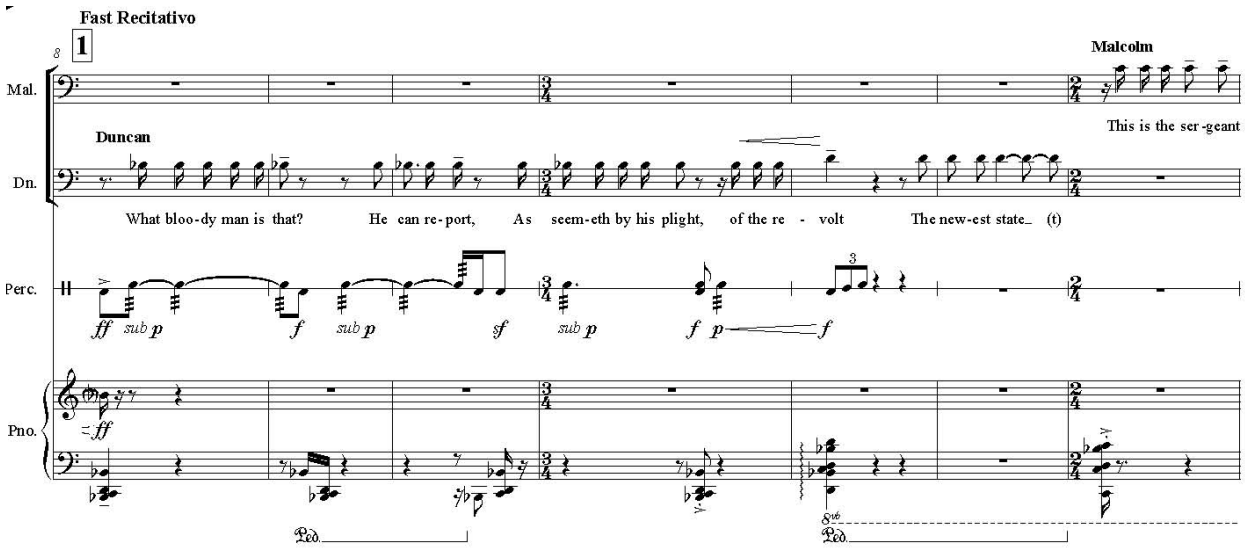
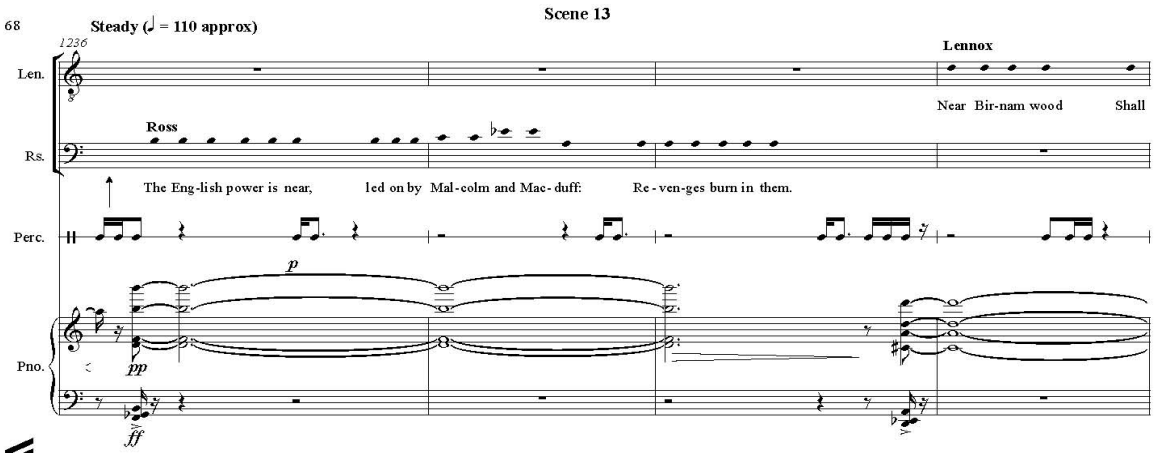


Figure 2.10 shows the opening bars of recitativo in the opera. In workshops the singers and repetiteur experimented with how close they could bring singing and piano punctuation together without covering or halting the flow of the text. This consultative way of working with musicians led me to notate this section as it appears in Fig. 2.10. It is one example, of which there are many throughout the battle scenes, of a dramatic aim (urgency, direct communication) set in music, refined through consultative working and then fixed in the score.

In the second battle scenes of the opera I took a different approach to the recitativo. Ted and I wanted the intensity and urgency to have increased, beyond the level of the opening battle scenes. The orchestra (particularly the percussion) as well as the singers contributed to this, and a different use of recitativo also emerged in the workshops. At first I composed recitativo that was similar to the opening scenes. This sounded like we were returning dramatically to the opening of the opera as opposed to moving on from it. I was asking the singers to be freer with the rhythm and to continually move ahead of the beat, but also to co-ordinate with the piano punctuation as in the opening scenes. This was not working as well as I had hoped. In the final workshop the conductor, Jeremy Bines, was part of the group and he suggested that I might try removing the stems from my note-heads and using arrows and spacing to indicate points of co-ordination with the piano but otherwise to leave the singers a considerable amount of freedom with the rhythm (towards natural speech rhythms).

Fig. 2.6 *Macbeth* second battle scenes



The result of this consultative and interactive working with the conductor and then the singers as they tested the new notation of this recitativo achieved what Ted and I were looking for. The music felt as if it had returned to the world of the battlefield though now different, possibly more intense and urgent.

The accompaniment to the recitativo is also different in these scenes (13-16). As can be seen in Fig. 2.11, the piano has held chords. In the full score these are orchestrated across the strings and wind. I perceive this style of accompaniment as my own version of a Handelian or Mozartian recitativo accompagnato. My choice to accompany the recitativo in this way came from the earlier collaborative work with Ted on the dramatic character of these scenes, their similarity and difference from the first battle scenes and

the desire to suggest an earlier form of composition. Once I had composed this music and we heard it in the workshops Ted and I worked in a co-operative way to decide if what I had composed was working in line with our broader dramatic aims for the opera at this point. This resulted in re-composing details of the recitativo but keeping the new rhythmic approach and form of accompaniment.

The recitativo accompagnato occurs in the scenes with the Rebels (Lennox, Ross, Malcolm, Macduff. Scenes 13 and 15) while Macbeth's scenes (14 and 16) are accompanied in a more recitativo secco style, similar to the opening battle scenes, with percussion and piano punctuation. This also reflects the decision to distinguish between the different groups poised for battle. Sustained notes do gradually appear in Macbeth's scenes and there is a merging of the recitativo accompagnato and secco styles as first Fleance and then the Rebels encounter Macbeth in scene 16. This compositional choice reflects the merging of the two groups into open conflict.

On the days without musicians, during the workshop weeks, Ted and I would continue to work collaboratively and co-operatively. Before becoming a director Ted was a professional baritone, so his input into my vocal writing comes from an informed practical position. We would often begin these days by collaborating on the text, editing the text from the previous day's workshop and, based on this, looking ahead to see what we needed in other scenes. This collaborative libretto editing process would then lead into co-operative working where Ted would work alone on the text and I would re-compose sections of music based on this editing and the previous days workshops. Ted would usually have a new scene for me to write music for in the afternoon and I would start composing. Either that evening or early the next morning I would play him the new music I had composed and we would work co-operatively on deciding its suitability. A process of consultative and interactive working with the musicians and Ted would then take place in the next day's workshop, as outlined above.

Our opera of *Macbeth* developed from a condensed version of Shakespeare's play to an opera, which sought to make radical choices about what to cut from the play, in part, to distinguish it from the play. The two most radical choices we made were to the ending, which sees Macbeth as the victor, and the removal of supernatural characters and events. How we came to make these decisions is reflected in our collaboration and the

workshop process.

Fig. 2.7 *Macbeth* witches 1

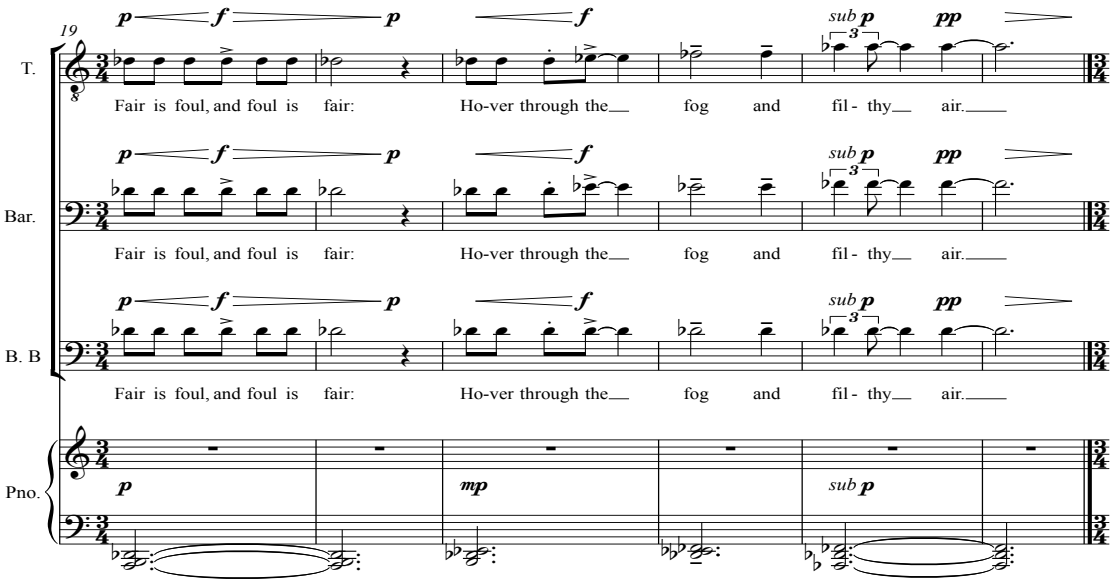


Fig. 2.12 shows the end of the first scene I composed for the first workshop in October 2013. As can be seen this is a setting of the witches' text from the play (I.i.12-13). At this early stage the witches represented the extreme, the incredible and the improbable that I was attracted to in *Macbeth* and that is fundamental to my understanding of opera. My aim to reflect these characteristics in the music resulted in the high tessitura of the setting and the three witches merging into one ensemble voice. The text also contributes towards these characteristics.

In workshops we experimented with different settings of this text and what emerged through collaboration was ensemble singing as the most favoured witch trait. As the work developed Ted and I decided to start the opera in the middle of a battle scene and to cut the witches' text from the opera entirely. I still wanted to keep the witches in the opera, but as an influencing presence rather than characters with text. We cut the witches' text because we felt we did not have time to handle this aspect of the play in our 75-minute opera, but we still wanted to include the influence of the supernatural, at this stage.

Fig. 2.8 *Macbeth* witches 2

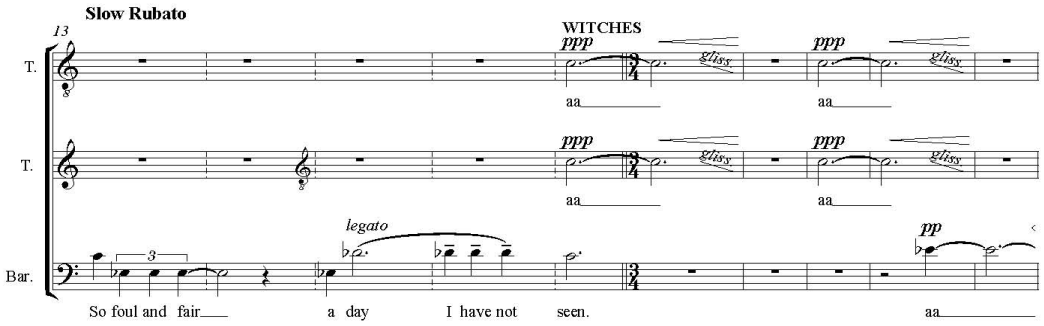
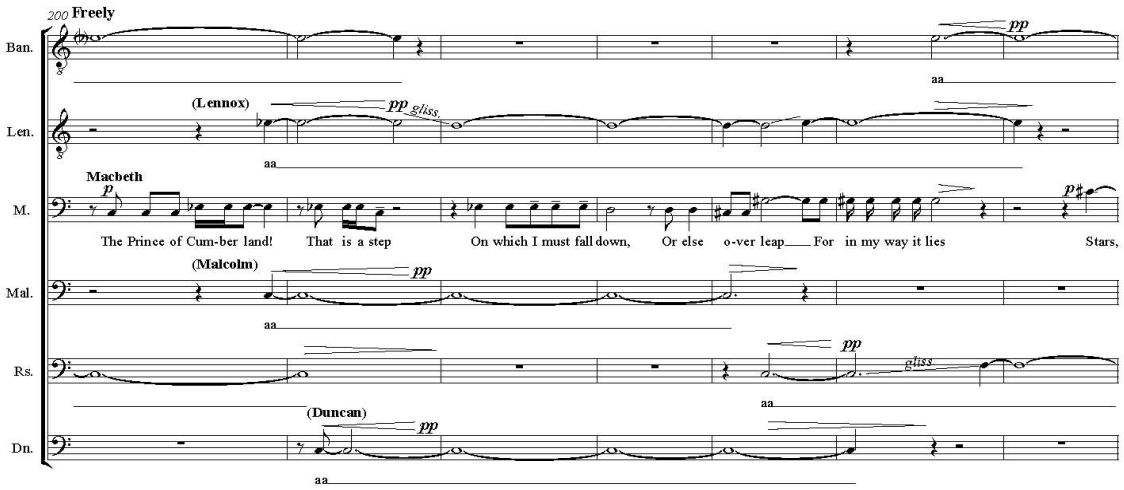


Fig. 2.13 shows a developmental stage of the witches' music from the workshops. At this point in the play the witches have appeared (I.iii.1-38), followed by Macbeth's line in Fig 2.13 (I.iii.39) and they then remain in the scene with Macbeth and Banquo. In Fig. 2.13 the witches enter only after Macbeth's line and they sing wordlessly on an A vowel. The ensemble quality that we identified as a witch trait remains and glissandi have been added to heighten the strangeness of the witches. In this excerpt it looks like Macbeth becomes a witch; this is because we had three singers in the workshop who sang multiple roles. The witches are present in this scene and they are an influencing factor on Macbeth and Banquo but their characters and plot function are not developed through a setting of their text from the play.

Part of the collaboration between Ted and myself was to jointly conceive of what the production would look like and how the singers would act. We decided to set the opera in a 21st Century combat zone[33] (e.g. Iraq, Afghanistan, Ukraine). To explore this setting, the characters and to create narrative clarity within 75 minutes, we felt that we needed to limit ourselves to the real-time events of the play. We therefore cut the supernatural elements of the play from our opera. Despite this we wanted to retain the sense of the improbable and strange that the supernatural elements brought. Our solution to this was to include a selection of Macbeth's soliloquies in the opera.

[33] This setting also brought us to the survival ending for Macbeth in our opera. Our production framed Macbeth as a modern military tyrant and in our opinion such figures do not always receive justice as it befalls Macbeth in Shakespeare's play.

Fig. 2.9 *Macbeth* soliloquy



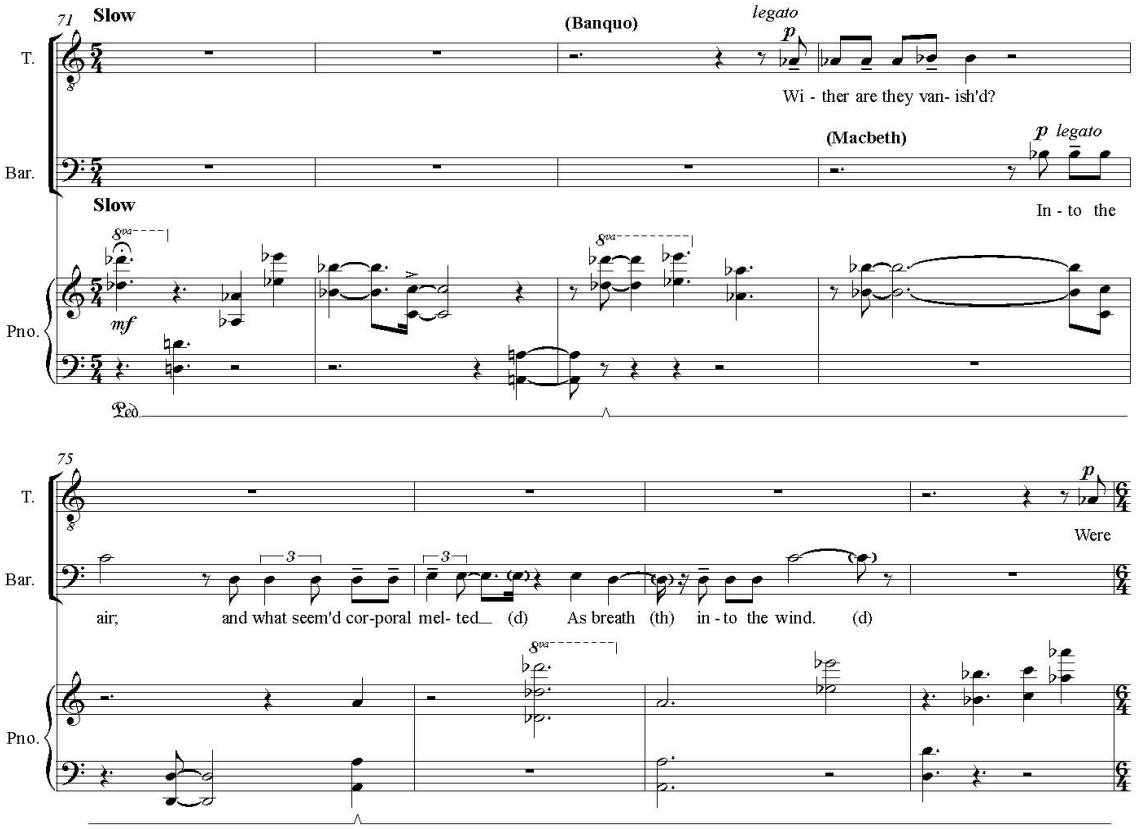
As can be seen in Fig. 2.14 the ensemble singing, the wordlessness and the glissandi have all been retained as elements of the supernatural to accompany Macbeth in his soliloquies. The soliloquies are a cappella moments in the opera. Time seems to be suspended when the soliloquies occur and Macbeth steps out of the real-time of the scene and sings to the audience, accompanied vocally by those in the scene who no longer sing as their character. This way of performing the soliloquies also contributed to the strangeness and the improbability of these moments; something that we experienced in the original witch music, was part of the reason for choosing to make an opera out of *Macbeth* and is part of my understanding of opera. The soliloquies are also occasions where transdisciplinarity might be perceived because music and the performance mode on stage were conceived together as being necessary to create the soliloquy moments.

The process of developing the witch music, cutting them as characters but recognising the need for the improbable and strange that their music contributed influenced another of our choices for the opera. We decided that an all male cast would give us both an extreme sound world and an improbable scenario (we don't live in an all male society), which also supported our military setting. Hence the roles of Lady Macbeth (tenor) and Lady Macduff (bass-baritone) are men playing women. The other factor in this decision was a link to the Shakespearian practice of young men playing female roles.

For an early workshop I had composed music for the moment after the witches vanish in Act 1 Scene 3 of the play. This moment is followed by dialogue between Macbeth and Banquo (I.iii.81-91) where I observed seeds of Macbeth's ambition and the

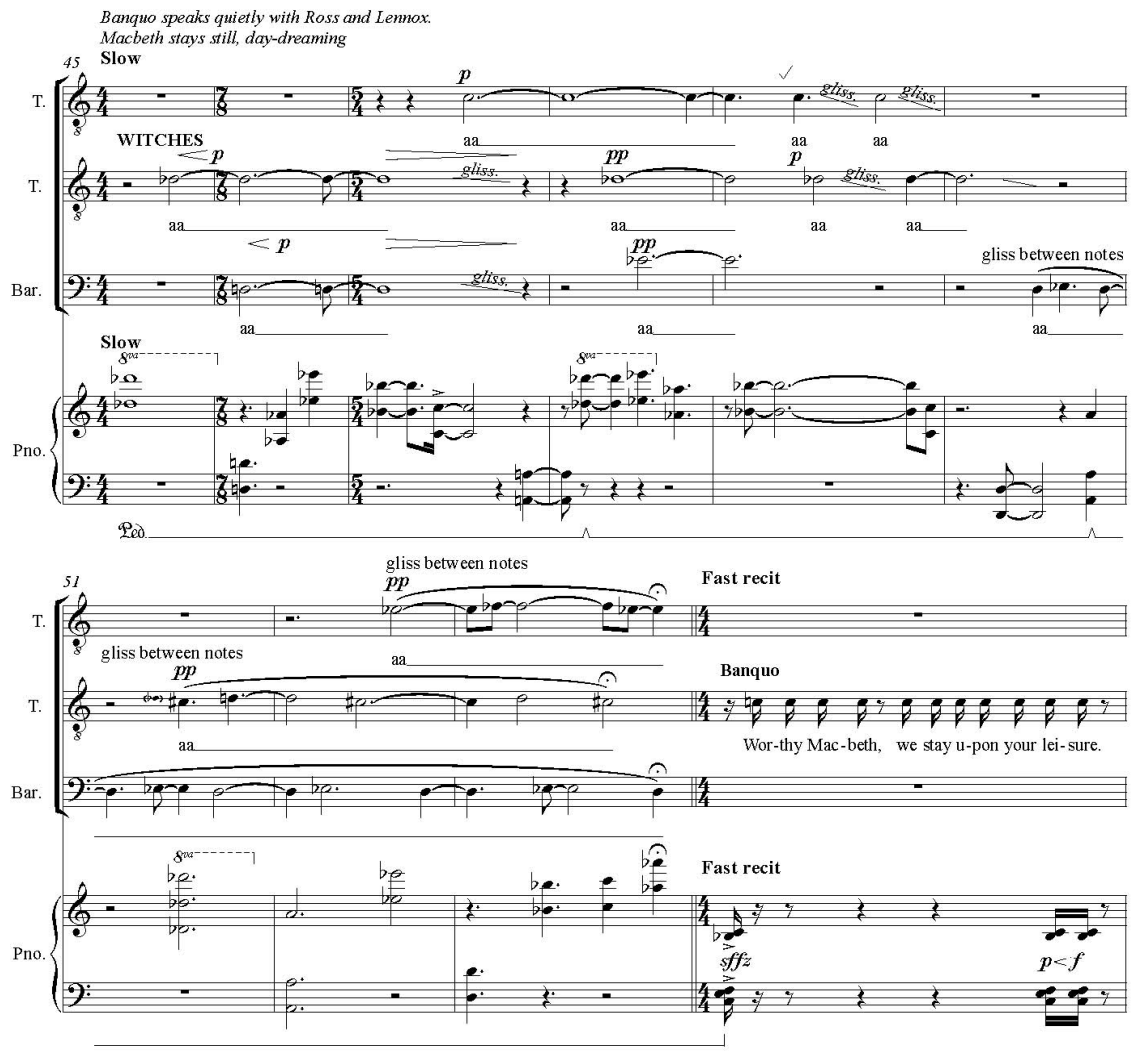
centrality of Banquo in the action. The music I composed for this workshop was new material at this point in the opera, setting a mood that aimed to be distinct from the recitativo and witch music that preceded it. It is in a slower tempo, it uses octaves over a large range with a prominence of perfect fourth, perfect fifth, second and seventh intervals between the octaves. Once this sound world is established in the first 3 bars the text between Macbeth and Banquo is set over the top of it, as can be seen in Fig. 2.15.

Fig. 2.10 *Macbeth* ambition and Banquo



In our collaborative discussions between days with musicians, Ted and I both agreed that we liked this music and that it functioned well to change the tempo and mood of the scene at this point. As has been described above, our collaboration was moving towards cutting the supernatural, which made the inclusion of any text that mentions the supernatural, such as Banquo's 'Wither are they vanished?' (I.iii.82) problematic. For a subsequent workshop I shortened this music and instead of Macbeth and Banquo's text, I transformed it into a moment for the presence of the witches singing wordlessly. Though I retained the change in tempo and mood that Ted and I felt this music brought and that the opera needed at this point.

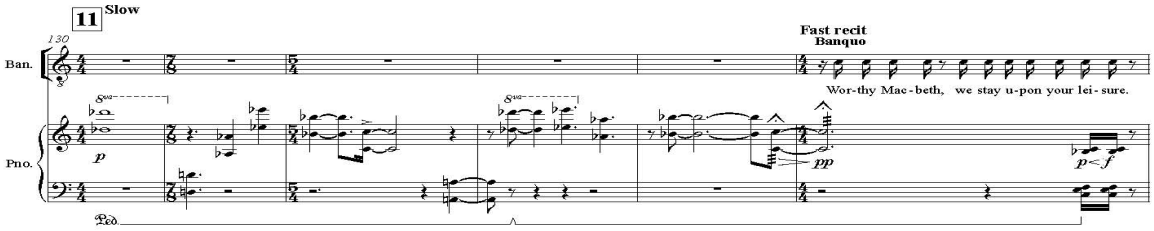
Fig. 2.11 *Macbeth* witches 3



As can be assumed from the transformation of the witch music, this was also an interim stage for this music. Both Ted and I wanted to keep this music in the opera and my further composing had integrated the characteristics of it (described above) into other music that I associated with Macbeth's ambition and Banquo's character. So to cut the first appearance of this music altogether would have rendered the development of it later in the opera as no longer a development but the appearance of new material, where it should not function as new material. Ted and I still felt the change of tempo and mood was necessary in this scene and the duality of Macbeth's ambition and Banquo's character could and should still be associated with this music. In another example of composition and staging being created together (suggesting a transdisciplinary perspective at this point) we decided that at this moment Macbeth would be on stage lost in thought (evolving his ambition) whilst Banquo speaks to the rest of the soldiers. Banquo then attracts Macbeth's attention with 'Worthy Macbeth, we stay upon your

leisure.' (I.iii.161). This music (Fig. 2.17) had developed through workshops and collaboration to become an instrumental moment, which had many of its original functions (ambition/association with Banquo) but accommodated the removal of the supernatural and would now gain much of its dramatic associations through staging.

Fig. 2.12 *Macbeth* ambition and Banquo 2



Following the workshops, the rehearsal and production process assumed a traditional model. There was some further consultative working with the cast on small details specific to their voices but largely the working relationship with the cast was hierarchical and directive from this point onwards, with communication often going through the conductor or repetiteur. Ted's work with the cast and production team was based on our collaboration up to this point, but our working relationship during rehearsals and production assumed a more consultative form where I would contribute ideas to the staging and production but ultimately Ted would make the decisions. In terms of the orchestra, which joined shortly before the opera premiered, there was little opportunity for collaboration. Despite this I was able to work with the percussionists and harpist in a consultative and interactive way in advance of the rehearsals. This was facilitated via email, or meeting with the musicians in Glyndebourne. This work involved finding the best percussion instruments and beaters to use for the music I had written and with the harpist we worked together on some pedaling, enharmonic doubling and harmonics issues.

The premiere of the opera reflected much of the collaborative work that Ted and I undertook in workshops and led to an opera with transdisciplinary aspects. The main obstacles to a better performance were the split commitments of the cast at Glyndebourne and the change to a traditional (non-collaborative) working method during rehearsals and production.

2.4 *Play (after Beckett)*

Play (after Beckett) is a set of four duos for musicians and actors. The two duos we will be looking at are *You Choose a Bat* for percussion and actor and *On a Bench* for cello and actor. The word duo is used to imply that each performer plays an equal part in the performance of the work. The two performers are interdependent and neither the musician's nor the actor's performance could exist on its own and still be the same work. This contributes to the work's transdisciplinarity and is the same premise on which a duo for flute and oboe is based, where it would be inconceivable to play the flute part alone and still be playing the same work.

My idea for *Play (after Beckett)* began in 2005 and the first two works of the set belong to this time. *You Choose a Bat* and *On a Bench* have been composed during this course of study and the production in April 2014 of them will be discussed here.

The nature of the collaboration for the 2014 production was essentially the same in both duos and because of this the collaborative process for the two works will be discussed together. Unlike *Handspun*, this collaboration began with solitary creativity by the composer. To begin with I wrote a text for the actor. This is a set of instructions, which acts as both a guide for the actor's performance and provided a structure for my composing. It is not intended that the details of the text be recognised by the audience. I imagined how an actor would perform these instructions and my imagination of this intersected with my musical imagination at the point of composition.

I thought that the actor would need a context for their performance in addition to the composed music and that the actor could use the text as a starting point for their performance, even if that starting point were to choose to abandon my text. If the actor did not feel able to identify with the text and discover an affective objective (in the Stanislavsky sense, discussed in Chapter 1) then I would encourage them to 'Change the OBJECTIVE – sharpen your verb, raise the stakes, CONCENTRATE YOUR ATTENTION on what the scene's really about' (Merlin 2014, p. 90) and if this means abandoning my text then I would encourage it. The idea of a target for an actor was discussed in Chapter 1 also, 'For the actor, all "doing" has to be done to something. The actor can do nothing without the target.' (Donnellan 2005, p. 17) In both duos Donnellan's targets or Stanislavsky's objectives could be found by an actor in the text/instructions; they could also be objects (bats, benches, clothing), emotions, the

musician, the music or something invented by the actor. An example of multiple targets in the text for *On a Bench* is 'You are sitting on a block very happy and content, as if listening to music.'

The text is not intended to define or control the performance and it should be treated as a guide, leaving room for interpretation by collaborators in the construction of a performance. The text provides its own provocations by asking an actor to decide what 'happy' could mean in the context of this work/performance, and how to perform as if 'listening to music' when music is part of the performance. These questions should lead an actor and director to look to the music of the work for answers as it is through the relationship to the relatively fixed element of the work, the composition, that the actor may find how to contextualise and perform emotions (such as 'happy') and actions such as 'sitting on a block' or 'listening to music'.

The text for both works can be read as a series of instructions for everyday activities. These include directions from *You Choose a Bat* such as:

> You stay still trying to decide if you have or have not forgotten something.
> You can't figure out which direction you need to go in […]

And from *On a Bench*:

> […]distract yourself by fiddling with your shoes.
> […] you return home to your kitchen. There you find unsorted kitchen items.
> You slowly but purposefully begin to sort these items into their proper place.

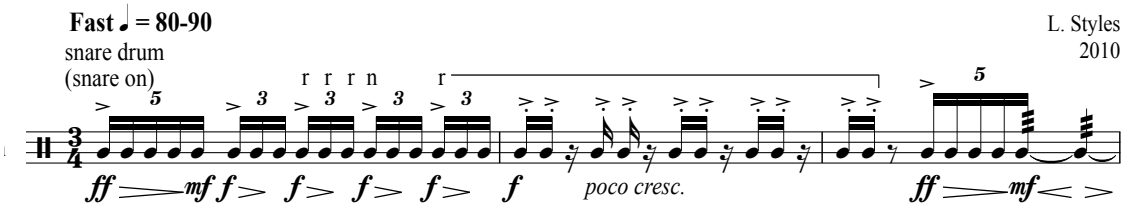
The use of everyday tasks for the actor to perform were chosen so that their performance would require the actor to make sense of seemingly unrelated tasks, yet tasks that the audience would recognise and may have even carried out themselves that same day. They were also chosen so as to be representative of largely un-stylised physicality, in contrast to the highly stylised physicality of *Handspun*. The everyday and familiar in the actor's performance should also stand in contrast to the highly specialised phenomena of performing music. Creating a work with these seemingly contrasting ingredients is part of my desire to develop a theatre out of the sublimity of everyday activities. I observe precedents for this in the works of Samuel Beckett, particularly *Act Without Words* (Beckett 1958) and *Malone Dies* (Beckett 1959) hence

the title of this complete work being *Play (after Beckett)*.

2.4.1 *You Choose a Bat*

The first image that I imagined in *You Choose a Bat* was of the actor looking at three different bats and trying to decide which one to take. Considering this image as part my compositional decision-making, I composed a large section of music (bar 1 - 68) in which the indecisiveness of the actor would take place. The music is for snare drum, large cymbal, wood block and small tom-tom in this section. It consists of rhythms that are grouped in twos, threes or a combination of both; these three categories of rhythm intersected with the idea of three bats in my compositional imagination. In bar 1 there is a quintuplet, which is a combination of a two and a three rhythm; there are also four quaver beats of semiquaver triplets. These four beats show triplet rhythms in two groups of two. Bar 2 - 3 has five occurrences of two semiquavers, an example of a two group within a total grouping of two plus three equalling five. This type of play with twos and threes continues throughout this section (and it permeates the whole work) with smaller sections such as bar 14 - 22 developing sextuplet patterns, bar 24 - 36 repeating and developing groups of four semiquavers, semiquaver triplets and two semiquavers, bars 38/39 and 41 - 45 developing patterns of twos, bars 46 - 53 repeating a bar of two groupings with a triplet in the middle, and bar 54 - 67 incorporating more sextuplets and quintuplets.

Fig. 2.13 *You Choose a Bat* bars 1 - 3



The end of this first section is signified by the repeating bar 68. This is an audible signal (a cue) for the actor to choose a bat. Through the development of the work with collaborators we decided that only one bat was necessary and this moment stood for choosing the one bat on stage. This choice also meant that the opening section became about the indecision of choosing to take the bat rather than which bat to take. The idea of a decision by the actor resulted in a compositional decision to focus on the two groupings (binary rhythms). Hence from bar 69 - 73 these rhythms dominate. A

hesitation by the actor ('You stay still […]') resulted in another repeated bar (72). This is, however, a stasis with activity within it. The music is not changing (instead repeating) but moving relatively quickly, a link to the quick succession of thoughts passing through the actor's mind whilst physically still.

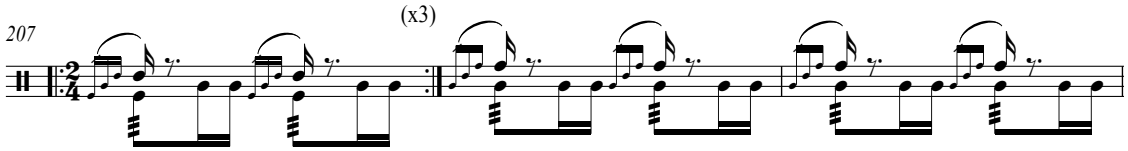
A contrasting section of the work occurs between bars 112 - 145. My conception of the performance at this point was one of stillness and calm, during which the actor would appear lost in thought. This image resulted in the decision to stay within a slower tempo and to change the timbre of the music to predominantly metallic sounds (cymbal and triangle) played with brushes. This section uses longer note values, sustained notes often with tremolos and the overall dynamic is now softer than the louder music that preceded it.

This sense of calm is broken and contrasted at bar 146 with the return of loud music, in the original fast(er) tempo, played on wood and skin instruments. This sudden change in the music is an example of synchronisation between performers, with the actor snapping out of the lull she has fallen into. The faster, louder music connects to the fast energetic physical movement by the actor at this point. The use of imagined physicality to make compositional choices, the construction of an actor's performance which connects to the music and the synchronisation between performers all contributes towards a perception of transdisciplinarity in the performance.

I had originally conceived that at the end of the work the actor would abandon the bat and sit down defeated unable to find a purpose to their actions. Through the collaboration process this changed to an increase in determination by the actor to do something, even if this something is never seen by the audience. This reading of the work came from a connection by the actor and director to the intensity of the music. From bar 159 until the end the music remains fast and builds in rhythmic complexity, hence the collaborators interpreted this feeling and crafted a performance in which the actor also built in her intensity of intention and complexity of thought. Occasionally the flow of the music is broken by pauses (bars 181, 186, 195, 201); these became moments for the performers to suggest a reordering of their thoughts ahead of another attempt to say something through music and action. This also presented a point of connection and synchronisation between the performers. The final attempt to say something from bar 202 – end, involves another use of repetition, a rhythm which is itself a combination of

two and three groupings, suggesting a summary of what has been expressed in the work before a final push, both musically and physically, to the end.

Fig. 2.14 *You Choose a Bat* bar 207 and 208



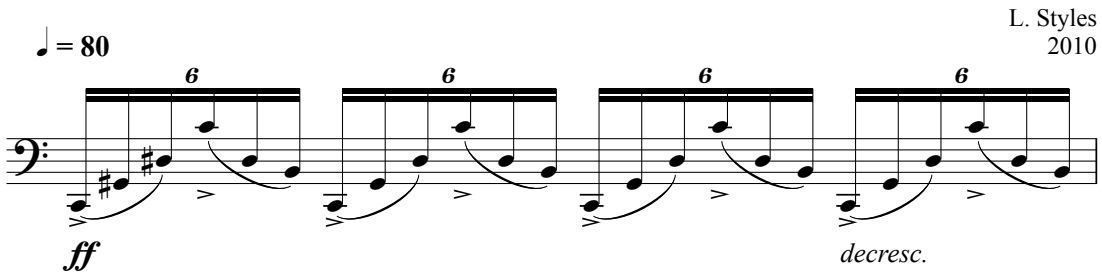
2.4.2 *On a Bench*

On a Bench begins with an indication for variation from both performers. The text indicates to the actor to aim for a state of happiness, making decisions to try and increase this happiness (a variation of the feeling), leading to a questioning of whether they are happier as a result of these changes or not (a parallel to variation changing a first idea into something different i.e. development). The cellist also performs variation through the music.

The motivation for this initial happiness is not given and the questions about where this happiness might lie became a part of the collaboration with the actor and director. The target for this happiness ranged from the music to an invented backstory by the actor. The continued enquiry into this happiness by the actor kept the performance evolving in rehearsal and performance. This was a similar process that Peter and I used when working on *Unborn In America*, in particular treating the instrumental music or shape of the vocal line as a motivation for the singer's performance.

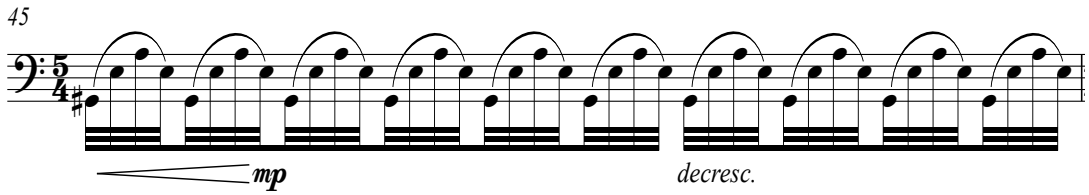
The idea of happiness was considered when composing the opening arpeggiated G# major/minor triad (the B# is spelt as a C and a B is also present) in first inversion over a semiquaver sextuplet of the work. The repetition of this figure is disrupted from bar 6 as it starts to undergo a process of variation in its rhythm, the order of ascending and descending notes within the sextuplet and changes of harmony (the addition of an A in bar 6 and the removal of the B, the minor 3rd in bar 10). Rhythmic and harmonic variation as well as repetition continues until bar 44 where the performance changes.

Fig. 2.15 *On a Bench* bar 1



The idea of a change and a decision to do something different is indicated in the text with 'These mixed feelings bother you so you try and distract yourself by fiddling with your shoes.' The music I composed for this point in the work also changes. Bar 45 sees a change of harmony to the notes G#, E, A (A major/minor with no 3rd and a major 7th or E major with a 4th) and a change of rhythm away from groupings of threes within a sextuplet to groupings of four within eight demisemiquavers. The overall feeling of fast music remains and in fact increases through the use of demisemiquavers, and could be seen as connected to the feeling of being bothered, indicated in the text.

Fig. 2.16 *On a Bench* bar 45

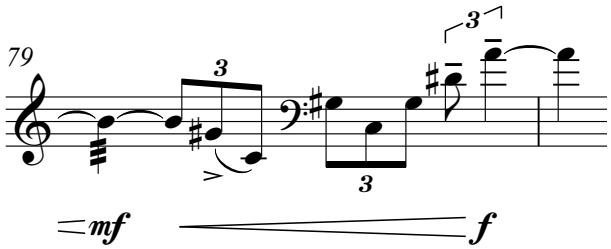


The music from bar 49 - 68 is different from what precedes it and takes place whilst the actor continues to work with her shoes gathering an increasing disdain towards them. This action contrasts the attempt 'to regain the happiness you previously had' (indicated to the actor in the text) and with which the actor started the work. The premise of moving between two emotional states and categories of activity (shoes and trying to regain happiness) led to the compositional decision to also present two categories of music at this point. These are long notes and tremolos, which can both be considered new material and also the continued use of semiquaver triplets and sextuplets with an arpeggiated shape. There is repetition in this section, largely of sextuplet ideas, a link to similar music when the actor was instructed to perform 'trying to regain the happiness you previously had'. Although the text instructions and music both present two ideas in the section (bar 49 - 68), these two ideas do not immediately imply the other. Playing with shoes does not imply long notes and tremolos, nor does the happiness or the

attempt to regain it demand fast sextuplets and major arpeggios. These two categories of sound and physical performance are not composed to align exactly (unlike a cue). A broad section is indicated (bar 44 - 68) with an extract from the text at bar 44 in the score, but within these bars playing with shoes can and should occur during sextuplets, just as trying to regain happiness may occur together with long notes and tremolos. What is intended is that within this space of time, largely two ideas will be performed by the actor and musician, one of these will seem new and the other linked to the start of the work.

From bar 71 - 81 I imagined the actor's performance as largely still, as she tries to 'remember why you were so happy'. This led to the composition of a more lyrical music, which only occurs once in the work. The music then does its own sort of remembering as it plays arpeggiated triplet material now slowed to quavers and broken up by long notes, tremolos and pauses. At bar 79 there is the closest suggestion of a full sextuplet figure from the start of the work (with three quaver triplet groups in succession), though here it has a much larger range than at the start of the work and harmonically encompasses augmented (G#/C), diminished (D#/A) and perfect (G#/D#) 5ths. Though by starting this progression of 5ths from a B there is a strong sense of G# minor which links closely with the start of the work. Each of these musical factors works towards the performance of 'remember[ing] why you were so happy' at this point in the work.

Fig. 2.17 *On a Bench* bar 79



Play (after Beckett) provided a different approach to collaboration, composition and offers a different transdisciplinary perspective than the other works. By writing a text, which acted as a set of instructions or guide for an actor and then composing the music for each work, the collaboration became about how to use and interpret these two documents as the starting point for a performance. The working methods of actors and directors, which can be seen partly as finding targets for the actor and building a context

and a framework for a performance, was one that I could work together on with my collaborators even though composition had been completed in advance of this process. These two duos offer a transdisciplinary perspective because an imagined performance by an actor informed the composition of the music. Transdisciplinarity also arises through a text or set of instructions that the actor, director and I interpreted in terms of a performance by an actor (connecting their performance to the text and the music) and a musician (connecting their performance to the score and the actor).

2.5 *Unborn In America* and collaboration with Peter Cant

On *Unborn In America* and *Play (after Beckett)* my primary collaborator was writer and director Peter Cant. Our work together on both projects overlapped and involved various forms of working relationships with singers, actors, musicians and designers. For *Play (after Beckett)* our collaboration began with discussions between myself and Peter about the work as a whole and then about each duo. We would discuss both what the duos might be about and what each of them might mean. I was more interested in examining how music and action might connect from moment to moment (part of what may now be perceived as transdisciplinary in the duos), rather than a greater significance of the music and movement.

Peter and I agreed on this approach and our conversations continued along the lines of understanding the nature of the music and how an always changing and evolving physical performance could become interconnected to the prescribed and notated music. We discussed the appearance of the performance space and how lighting would frame the performers and become a third element in the performance. This type of collaboration was repeated by Peter and myself when it came to working on the libretto and envisaging the production of *Unborn In America*.

These discussions continued into the rehearsal room where our collaboration widened to include the actor and the musicians. Peter would work directly with the actor, eliciting a performance from her that was born of our discussions and the interpretation of the work that she brought with her. This created a trio of collaborators (myself, Peter and the actor) in which the actor's targets and overall progression through each duo was examined and created with reference to the text/instructions and the music. In addition to this trio of collaborators, the musicians were called upon to give a degree of creative input by reacting to the actor with slight changes and variation in the music's tempo,

lengths of pauses, dynamics and occasionally repeating sections or bars of music. This did not involve a sharing of the imaginative tasks, but it did require the musicians to go beyond their interpretation of the music and to interpret a wider set of elements that included an actor, objects and lighting as part of their performance. Similarly the lighting designer adjusted his performance of the lighting (in rehearsals and performance) to enhance and reflect the creative decisions of the performing duo and the trio of collaborators.

These forms of collaboration lasted throughout the rehearsal period, with the performance never becoming fixed in the same way as the compositional elements. This reflected the desired aim to keep the work evolving and the performance slightly different each time. This aim was born of a view that the works only come into existence through their performance and the methods of the collaborators who were continually looking to discover connections between sound and a physical performance, and questioning where these connections might lie and how they might be performed.

The methods for collaborating we learnt from *Play (after Beckett)* were carried over to *Unborn In America,* an opera that was developed and composed from 2011 up to its premiere in January 2015. I consider the work a cabaret opera. What this might mean will be discussed below. The opera lasts for one hour; it has a cast of four singers and a band of four musicians. The libretto was written by Peter Cant, who also directed the opera. *Unborn In America* was produced by my own company Ensemble Amorpha,[34] (see footnote 26) and similar to *Macbeth* the opera evolved through a series of workshops. Unlike Glyndebourne, Ensemble Amorpha is a small organisation and the number of workshops we could afford was modest in comparison to those Glyndebourne provided. I did however raise sufficient funds for a workshop day in December 2013, February 2014 and April 2014 and two workshop days in July 2014.

The first scene of the opera was composed in 2011, when the opera was titled *A Fetus In America.* The first scene (Scene 1: The Petri Dish, in the full score) premiered in summer 2011 at the Tête à Tête: The Opera Festival. This first scene was subsequently performed a number of times[35] before the composition of the rest of the opera and the

[34] For more information see http://www.ensembleamorpha.com/index.php?/projects/a-fetus-in-america/
[35] 16, 17, 18 February 2012 at The Royal Opera House Covent Garden as part of Exposure Opera. 26 March 2013 at the Soho Theatre London.

first workshop in December 2013. The collaboration with Peter and the forms of working relationship with musicians will be considered in terms of their impact on composing the opera.

In late 2010 Peter Cant showed me a libretto he had written for the first scene of an opera called *A Fetus In America* and asked if I would like to compose music for this first scene and work with him to create a complete opera. I agreed, and from this moment Peter and I began collaborating on the libretto of what was to become *Unborn In America*. Peter and I spent time, whilst I was composing the first scene and then subsequently from September 2011 until rehearsals in December 2014, collaborating on the scenario and libretto of the opera. This involved both of us contributing ideas about narrative, setting, character and text. We shared the decisions on the suitability of the contributions to the opera. When we had an agreed scenario and clear idea of what each scene would contain a co-operative form of working arose between Peter and myself, wherein Peter alone would write the libretto but the decision making about the suitability of the text would be shared between the two of us. At times this way of working would become more collaborative, for instance I might suggest specific words or lines of text and together we would decide on the suitability of my contributions.

Unlike *Macbeth*, the libretto for *Unborn In America* was completed in a relatively final draft before I composed the music for scene 2 onwards. This libretto draft was completed a number of months before the first workshop in December 2013. The libretto was not considered fixed at this stage and Peter and I continued our combination of co-operative and collaborative working on the libretto throughout the workshop, rehearsal and production periods. In workshops this could involve changing entire lines or cutting sections of the libretto whereas by the production stage any changes to the text that Peter and I made were limited to a handful of words.

During the rehearsal for the premiere of the first scene in 2011, the workshops, rehearsal and production periods, Peter and I developed a consultative form of working on the music. Peter is not a musician so was less experienced to suggest specific changes to the music. Instead Peter was able to contribute valuable ideas that determined the development of the music concerning the dramatic effect of what I had written and whether my setting of the text felt like the character's voice emerging that we both wanted to hear. This form of feedback and consultative working took place

between the workshops and rehearsals (as opposed to between and during the *Macbeth* workshops) when Peter and I had the chance to reflect on what we had heard. This form of working continued through the production process (unlike on *Macbeth*) and Peter and I would meet and discuss the day's rehearsal and make changes to the score, libretto or production. This continued mix of consultative, co-operative and collaborative working was facilitated by the fact that Peter was the director and I was the conductor for the rehearsals and production of the 2015 premiere. Other musician and non-musician artists joined the cast, band and production team forming new working relationships between us, but unlike *Macbeth*, Peter and I were both engaged in the joint task of making the production as director and conductor in addition to our roles as librettist and composer engaged in the joint task of writing the opera.

One scene that underwent change through the workshop process was Scene 5: Dream. For the two workshop days that we had in July 2014 I had a complete draft of the opera, which gave Peter and myself (and the cast) a chance to hear the whole work, albeit in draft form, before rehearsals began in January 2015. Most of this draft remained in the final work apart from the instrumental sections of scene 5.

Fig. 2.18 *Unborn* scene 5 draft

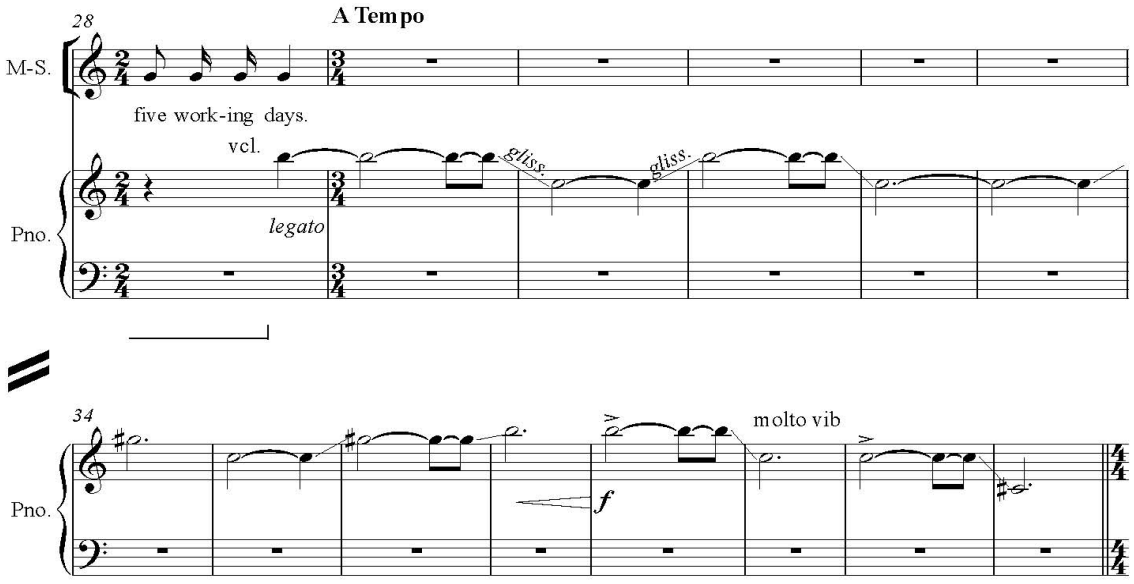
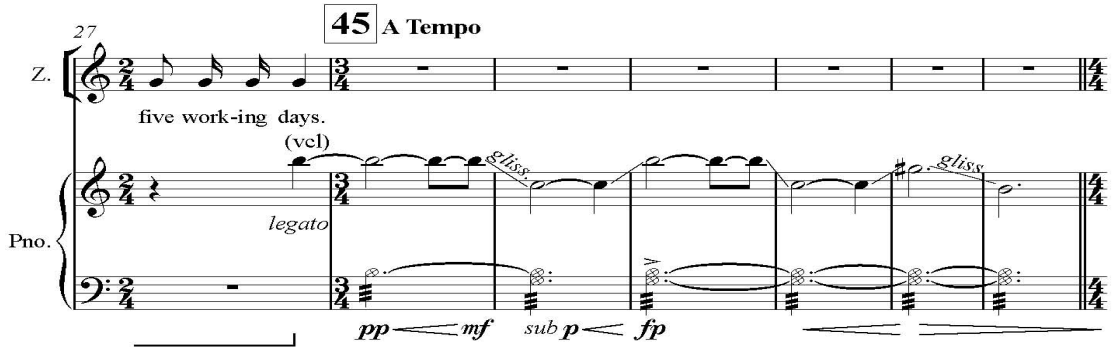


Fig. 2.20 shows the second instrumental section I had composed for scene 5, where in a dream state Ziggy recalls being FedExed to China. Peter was worried that our production budget would not give him sufficient means to fill this amount of time with engaging visual material. Peter thought that this moment could include a smoke

machine and various lighting states to suggest both Ziggy's dream and her arrival in China. In the final production we did have a smoke machine, but Peter was right, we did not have the lights or the technical time available to create the effect that he envisaged. I suggested that Peter could use the time that this music took to create a dance as Ziggy is FedExed, but Peter disagreed that this would be possible on the grounds of the costume changes that the cast needed to undergo for the rest of the scene. As a result of these decisions I cut this music down from 13 to 6 bars in length, as well as shortening the other instrumental sections in this scene.

Fig. 2.19 *Unborn* scene 5 final



In my revised interlude (Fig. 2.21) the use of the upper cello register and glissandi are retained, but the duration of the music is shortened. I have also added a percussion part (bells and flexatone), which is constantly active through the use of tremolos and changing dynamics. This percussive activity was added to address the feeling expressed by Peter that the music I had originally composed seemed to slow down the flow of the scene in a negative way. The changes I made were the result of consultative work with Peter and are one example of our joint creative endeavour throughout the opera making process.

As director of Ensemble Amorpha I had overall responsibility for the production. To help me produce the opera I employed the freelance producer Rosalind Wynn. Rosalind's key roles covered logistics and finance. Together Peter and I auditioned the cast and chose the set, costume designers and lighting designers. Our involvement as co-creators and collaborators on every aspect of the production, from scenario to performance, invites a transdisciplinary perspective to be seen in the opera. Peter and I were able to take our joint understanding and vision of the work and realise this not only through text, music and staging but also through working with designers on the

look of the opera, how we rehearsed performers and how I conducted each performance.

An advantage of Ensemble Amorpha producing the opera was that I had control over whom I worked with. Friendship is not a prerequisite for good collaboration, but feelings of trust are helpful.[36] For the workshops and the production I hired singers and instrumentalists who I knew or were recommended to me by people already involved in the project. Some of these people were good friends and all of them I trusted. As a result the working relationships we formed were easily established and varied. The work with singers and repetiteurs was interactive, consultative, co-operative and occasionally because of trust and friendship bordered on the collaborative. The singers and repetiteurs made suggestions about vocal register and timbre, with decision making being shared between participants to see what worked best (co-operative working). On other occasions I would be presented with a number of different ways of singing a phrase, each of which had its merits but ultimately I would choose one (consultative/interactive working). Peter and I worked closely with a number of singers, particularly Jessica Walker who played Ziggy (the lead role) in every performance, on developing their characters. It was this work that could be described as collaborative. The singers would suggest ideas about what their character might do or want (objectives and targets), as would Peter and I. These discussions, often in workshops, would then lead to developments or changes in the score and libretto. This form of collaboration with singers could also indicate a transdisciplinary perspective in the opera, as the singers' idea of character was integrated into the libretto and score and then rehearsed and performed with the same singers, Peter and myself; all of us with a shared goal of performance in mind.

The rehearsals and production of the opera followed a traditional structure of music calls, production rehearsals and music calls with the band shortly before the first performance. As described above, the working relationship with Peter did not change during this phase as it did on *Macbeth* with Ted. The working relationship with singers, two of whom had also been involved in the workshops, also remained interactive, consultative, co-operative and at times collaborative. Divisions between singers, director and conductor were less pronounced than those I experienced on Glyndebourne

[36] 'You might also conclude that a personal relationship and a feeling of trust are essential to any successful collaborative writing team. That's not to say that writing pairs are always "best friends".' (Hunter & Fontaine 2005, p. 22)

productions and I believe this facilitated these forms of working relationships. Performances were constructed together between participants with hierarchy in decision-making taking on a fluid form based often on time constraints. Where we had ample time a collaborative form of working could emerge, and where time was limited, Peter or I would make decisions (consultative/interactive working).

The band joined for three rehearsals before the premiere of the opera. Two of the musicians (cellist and oboist) had performed the first scene in 2011 and were familiar with the style of the work. Due to time constraints and the added pressure that this brings to a rehearsal the working relationship I had with the band was primarily hierarchical and directive. The exception to this was the pianist, who had been the repetiteur and worked consultatively/interactively with Peter, the singers and myself on various aspects of the opera. I also worked in a consultative/interactive way with the percussionist on issues such as hand percussion techniques and which beaters to use to achieve the sounds I wanted.

Unborn In America is a cabaret opera for a number of reasons: the opera is set in a cabaret bar throughout; and the opera combines sung text with spoken text, which in the first scene comes over the sound system introducing Ziggy's cabaret act, and appears through the opera as commentary on the action to the audience, similar to narration. The sung text takes on a song form at times and two of these instances, *Momma's song* and *I don't need you Madonna*, will be examined below. A cabaret may satirise political issues and this is something *Unborn In America* does. It satirises abortion, the tea-party and other right-wing American establishments, prostitution, drug abuse and stem cell research. The opera makes musical reference to jazz, blues and other cabaret composers/librettists such as Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht. The press who reviewed the opera observed these references and the political content.

> The composer's idiom for what he calls a cabaret opera frequently favours bluesy pastiche, and he accompanies his game quartet of singers with a light orchestration that's reminiscent of Stravinsky's A Soldier's Tale. (Valencia 2015)

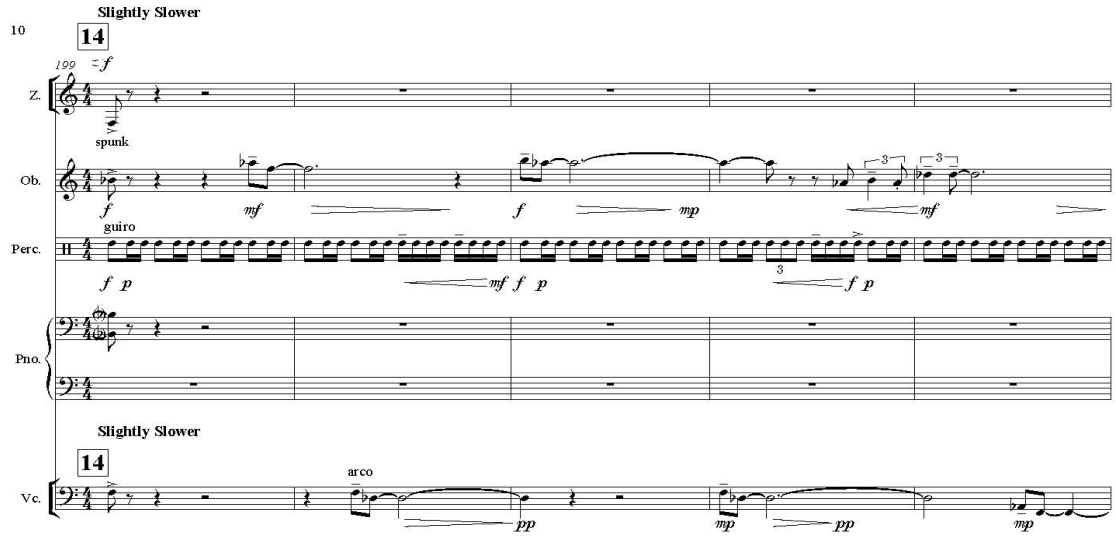
> […] the little band under composer-conductor Luke Styles' direction reinforces the impression, establishing an anarchic tone in which the influences of Alban Berg and Kurt Weill fuse merrily. (Church 2015)

> Unborn In America is brave in its scope and takes a chance. Librettist / director Peter Cant and composer / conductor Luke Styles don't short change their audience and present a show that is gutsy and pinged with political rhetoric without being preachy. (Biafra 2015)

> The piece could be seen as a reactionary cabaret opera, flailing against or amidst the flying detritus of a post neo liberal Regan and Clinton administration, where American life, in all its infantile forms, is celebrated through a mass of popular culture icons, artists and daytime TV chat shows. […] The bluesy type cabaret music composed by Luke Styles, coupled with an intentionally gimmicky libretto by director Peter Cant [minus the violence, the referrentialism is entirely Quentin Tarantino] provides a conflict between a nostalgia for a Kurt Weillian epoch whose artistic works served a socially useful purpose, with a more brazen, infantile and yet depraved world Ziggy eventually finds herself in. (Healey 2015)

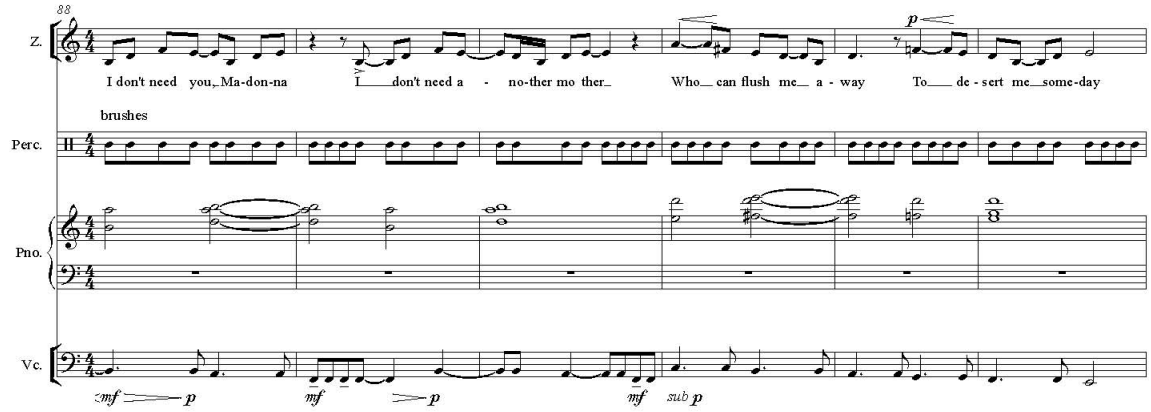
The use of harmony, rhythm and instrumentation to suggest a cabaret sound world will first be examined in scene 1. The choice of percussion instruments alludes to a Latin American dance aesthetic (something I associate with cabaret), particularly through my use of bongos (first heard at bar 17) but also the shakers (bar 90) and the guiro (bar 199). This link to dance is strengthened by the rhythmic quality of repetition and an emphasis on the strong beats of a bar in some dance music. I often composed repeated rhythmic ideas for the instruments mentioned above with emphasis on the strong beats of the bar (1 and 3 in 4/4), as can be seen in Fig. 2.22.

Fig. 2.20 *Unborn* scene 1



The low tom-tom, the snare drum and the cymbal are instruments that can form part of a jazz drum-kit. My use of these instruments further strengthens the link to cabaret music and particularly jazz. In scene 5 Ziggy sings what could be seen as a slow blues. The tempo marking (at bar 83) is slow swing and the percussionist plays swung quavers using brushes on a snare drum creating a recognisable jazz/blues atmosphere.

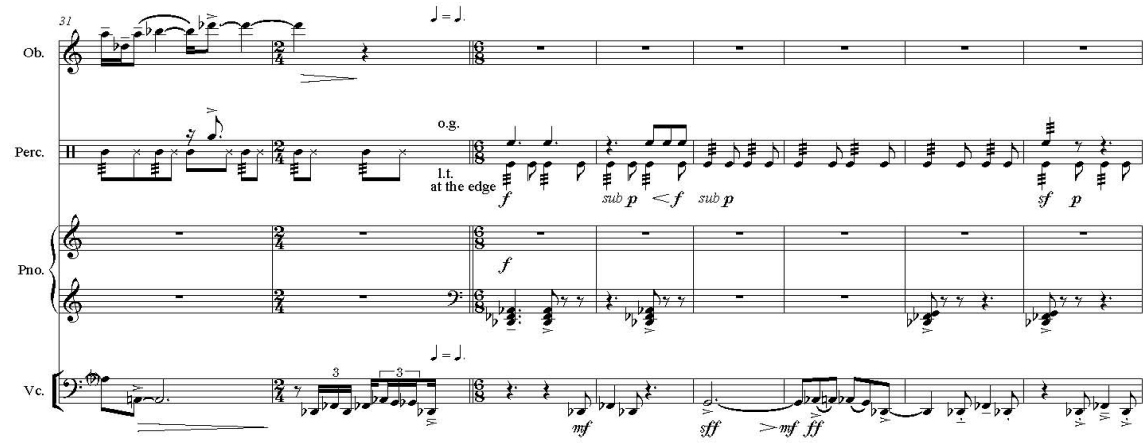
Fig. 2.21 *Unborn, I don't need you Madonna*



In terms of harmony that fits with my notion of cabaret music, permutations of the blues scale[37] occur throughout the opera. An initial hint of the blues scale appears in the cello in bar 5 with a repeated minor 3rd. A permutation of the blues scale[38] on Db then occurs in the cello between bars 32-38 (Fig. 2.24). The association between the blues scale and the cello is continued throughout the opera.

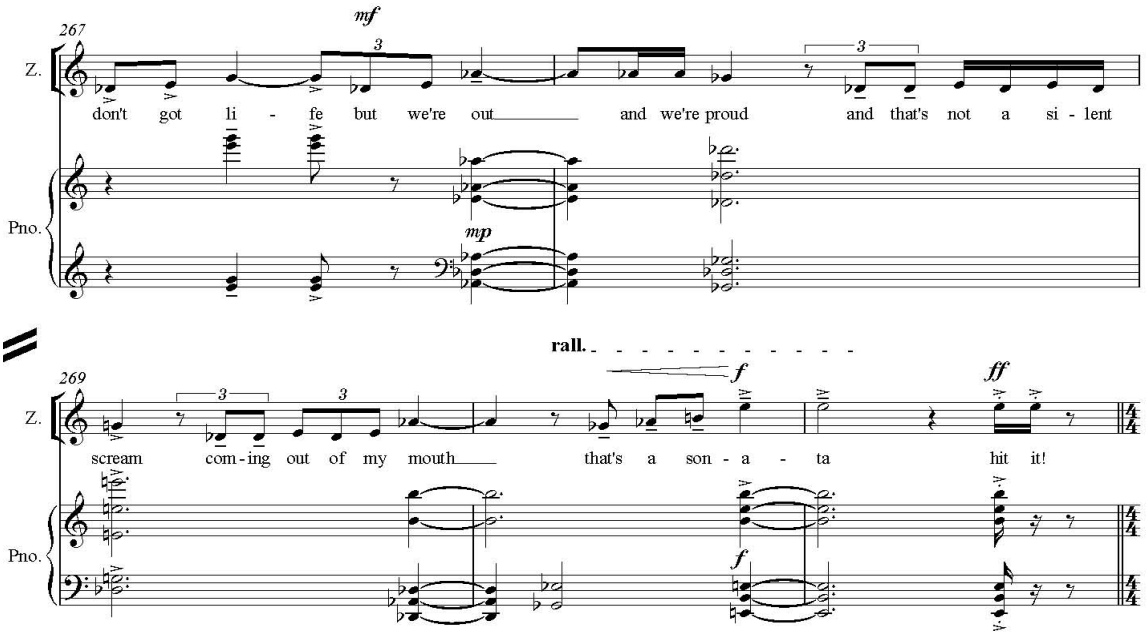
[37] Standard = minor 3rd, major 2nd, minor 2nd, minor 2nd, minor 3rd, major 2nd.
[38] Permutation = minor 3rd, major 2nd, minor 2nd, minor 2nd, minor 2nd, (major 3rd).

Fig. 2.22 *Unborn* blues scale 1



The end of the first scene makes use of the blues scale on Db in its standard intervallic order. Ziggy sings the final words of the scene using this scale as the finale of her cabaret act (Fig. 2.25).

Fig. 2.23 *Unborn* blues scale 2

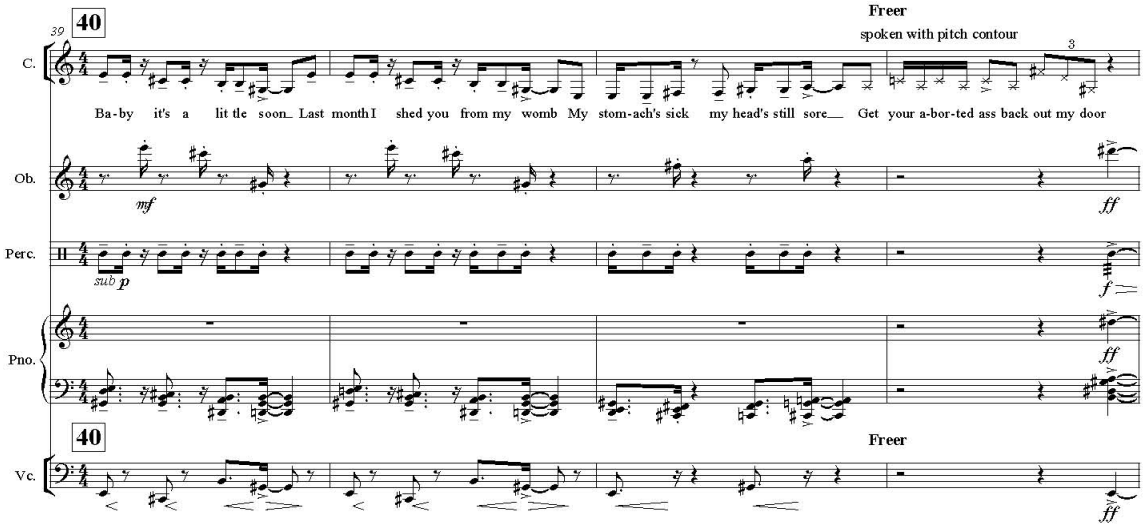


In the final 5 bars of the scene (Fig. 2.25) the Db blues scale that Ziggy sings is harmonised in a way that makes use of conventions (functional harmony) alluding to cabaret music, but subverts them in my own way indicating that this will be an opera that is an original work, not pastiche, although it will manipulate existing genres. The harmonisation of the voice aims towards E. Bar 267 starts with E minor in the piano (supporting the minor 3rd G in the voice) followed by Ab (V) to Gb (IV), then Db

diminished (I) functioning as the tonic. At the end of bar 269 the tonic is turned into a dominant seventh chord on Db (V7) and the flattened 7th (Cb spelt B) then becomes the root of the chord in beat two, B major, though spelt with a Gb and Eb in the bass. This B major functions as a dominant (V) into the tonic E (I) without a 3rd in beat four of bar 270, a sudden perfect cadence accompanying the word sonata, a deliberate joke.

In scene 4 of the opera Ziggy confront her mother and *Momma's song* (scene 4, bar 38-66) is one of the occurrences of songs or numbers in the opera that can help contextualise my use of the term cabaret opera.

Fig. 2.24 ***Unborn, Momma's song***



The first four bars of the song show the use of repetition in defining the music as a song and as such part of a cabaret tradition. The pitch and the rhythm are repeated in each part in bars 39/40. What changes in these two bars is the text. In bar 41 the music has the same feel as the previous two bars through the dotted rhythms in the cello, percussion and oboe. In the voice and percussion the syncopation in bar 41 is a repetition of beats 3 and 4 in bars 39/40. In bar 42 Momma breaks into a freer pitched speech, which is then punctuated by the ensemble in beat 4. Momma's break into pitched speech is an instruction to Ziggy and after Ziggy's reply Momma returns to her song. This trait of interrupting a song with speech is something I recognise in a cabaret tradition and informed the opera.

Harmonically the music could be seen as relating to a jazz song idiom through the use of the blues scale. This occurs, as it did previously on the pitch Db (discussed above), but this time it is spelt as a C# and can be seen in all parts (apart form the percussion).

The repeated rhythms and use of the blues scale in the cello and oboe give their music the feel of a riff or groove, another technique that can be used in accompanying instruments in a jazz context. When Momma breaks into pitched speech in bar 42 she also departs the blues scale into A minor, emphasising the feeling of stepping out of the song to speak before returning to sing on the blues scale in bar 43.

The voice is supported in the song by a doubling of its pitches an octave lower in the piano (the cello does this as well either one or two octaves lower and the oboe reinforces the voice's pitch either one or two octaves higher). This support of the voice is also something you might find in a jazz song. The piano does not only support the voice but it also adds notes to the harmony such as seconds which act as a dissonance against the voice and notes that harmonise the vocal part outside of the blues scale, e.g. D#, A and D in beat 3 of bar 39. The punctuating chord in bar 42 from the ensemble is E Major with an added 4^{th} (A). This chord prepares and supports Ziggy for her next phrase (G#/B/G#) over an E in the cello, which is the pitch that Momma needs for her next entry.

Fig. 2.23 was shown above to demonstrate my use of the snare drum and brushes playing swung quavers to create a recognisable jazz/blues atmosphere. Fig. 2.23 is also another song or number, sung by Ziggy, which I call *I don't need you Madonna*. The factors which I identify to perceive it as a song and contribute to the opera's cabaret qualities are similar to those in *Momma's song*. Fig. 2.23 shows the use of repeated rhythms; swung quavers in the percussion, dotted crotchet followed by a quaver or tied crotchet to quaver followed by quaver rhythms in the cello and quaver and syncopated rhythms in the voice (Ziggy).

The regularity and similarity of Ziggy's phrases also contributes to the feeling of this music as a song. She starts with a four beat phrase, with syncopation across beats two and three. This is then followed by three six beat phrases, each of which contains two syncopations. The phrase's lengths, the syncopation and the swung quavers are all factors of Ziggy's vocal line which contribute to its recognisability and, in turn, position it as a song within the opera.

Harmonically the blues scale is used again to relate the music to a jazz/blues song idiom

and with it a sense of cabaret. In this instance a blues scale on B is used and Ziggy does not move from this in Fig. 4. The cello also plays the B blues until bar 91 where the music descends from C to E on the E Phrygian mode. Unlike in *Momma's song* the piano only plays notes from the B blues, emphasising 7ths (B/A) until bar 91 where the emphasis of 7ths is continued but the piano also outlines E Phrygian (with the exception of the F# in bar 91), this creates a feeling of the second half of Fig. 4 in E and a tonic – dominant relationship between B (i) and E (iv7), especially with the final piano chord of E minor 7 in bar 93. In bar 94 (not shown in Fig. 4) the cello moves to an F which functions as the dominant (bV) of B which we return to at bar 99, thus completing a slightly subverted recognisable chord progression of i-iv7-bV-i.

As discussed previously, qualities central to my understanding of opera are '"the incredible, the untrue, the improbable."' (Donington 1990) *Unborn In America* posseses these qualities in abundance and its operatic potential was clear in the libretto Peter first showed me. The central character Ziggy is a singing dancing foetus, her bar-tender is a zygote and her dancers in scene 2 are other foetuses who are dressed as the abortion drugs mifepristone and prostaglandin. None of these characters are ones that audience members are likely to encounter in their daily lives, and the notion of them performing a cabaret opera is something incredible, untrue and improbable. The political issues that are raised in the opera are real as are the emotional journeys of the characters (e.g. love, rejection, redemption). The improbable characters and events of the opera, together with the relatable experiences of the characters and political themes, contribute to what I perceive as both opera and cabaret in the work.

2.6 Summary

I have examined the role of collaboration in the compositional process of each of the thesis works. This has presented a range of different forms of working relationship with artists in every scenario. I have also looked at how music is connected to the other aspects of each work and through this a transdisciplinary perspective has been offered on the works.

Conclusion

This conclusion has two aims: to look back at the research I have undertaken and forward to the new ideas and areas of interest that this research may suggest. My research has been both practice based and practice led. The performances of the scores demonstrate original compositional works and collaborations, this is practice based. My research into the creation of these works focusing primarily on the nature of collaboration has been practice led.

This research has confirmed that one of my aims in making work has been how to connect various elements into an autonomous work (and that this is an aspect of transdisciplinarity). As I look forward I have begun to think about the complex relationship between elements and not simply how or if these elements are connected to form transdisciplinary work. This complexity extends beyond the arts into other disciplines.

> Where are these quanta of space? They are not in a space because they are themselves the space. Space is created by the linking of these individual quanta of gravity. Once again the world seems to be less about objects than about interactive relationships. (Rovelli 2015, p. 41)

Even in the seeming emptiness of space there are 'interactive relationships'. This underlines the immense complexity of relationships between elements in a work, such as *Jong*, in which beyond questions of transdisciplinarity there is a complex relationship between a juggler and an orchestra at the heart of the work. As I look forward and consider that elements will relate to each other, and will link together, even if they are not consciously connected, my research can move beyond transdisciplinarity. I intended to see how my understanding of transdisciplinarity might combine with the idea of interactive relationships. In future work I imagine that it would be possible to have an awareness of the elements that are connected consciously and those that are not, but will be related to one another by the fact of their co-existence. With this knowledge I could be more critical of the process and different forms of connection between elements in my future work. These could be connections of a transdisciplinary nature, 'interactive relationships' and yet to be discovered connections. Perhaps an acknowledgement of the inevitable relationship between elements could simply reinforce the view of music as theatre which I take and that is echoed in Wagner's 'limitless art' or Brook's 'empty stage'.

In examining the collaborations in each of my works I am now more aware of the different forms of collaborative relationships that exist, and how my role within each of these has varied. The necessity of collaboration in creating the thesis works shows me the importance of the creativity of the artists from different disciplines that I have worked with in order for these works to come into existence. I cannot foresee the creation of a work with musicians and non-musicians without some form of collaboration taking place, even if it is limited to talking with co-creators. My research has also given me insight into the limited 'collaborative' or 'co-operative' relationships I have had with the instrumentalists in the works of this thesis. As I look forward to try and undertake a more inclusive form of 'collaborative' or 'co-operative' working with instrumentalists in the future, I am more aware of what different collaborations entail and what I would expect from instrumentalists. My research leads me to ask whether it is possible or reasonable to expect an instrumentalist to go beyond what their training may have prepared them for and to be an equal collaborator along the lines of those investigated in this research. I could imagine initiating a collaboration with instrumentalists in a similar way to collaborations with singers, but I would like a collaboration with instrumentalists to go further than working together to solve technical issues or composing idiomatically.

> It is the moral duty of a performer to choose what he thinks is the musically superior version, whatever the composer's clearly marked intention - it is also the moral responsibility of a pianist to try to convince himself that the composer knew what he was doing. (Rosen 1994, p22)

This statement by pianist/academic Charles Rosen reflects some of my expectations of performers. As collaborators and performers I would expect instrumentalists to treat me as an equal, not as a superior artist handing down a musical gospel, or someone who is dispensable once the music is written or learnt. I would wish for a collaborative relationship with instrumentalists in which musical (or in the case of my works, theatrical) 'superiority' is the goal.

The research into the collaborative relationships I have had with non-musicians, in particular the directors and choreographers, has shown these to have enabled a fruitful exchange of ideas; they have allowed me to co-create the many visual and physical aspects of a work which are production specific and not contained in the scores, led to what may be seen as transdisciplinarity in the works and a healthy degree of joint criticism and scrutiny of work. As a result of my research into forms of collaborative

relationships and the collaborations of others I have been able to understand my own collaborations better and see where they could be more collaborative. It is my intention to continue collaborating with non-musicians in my future work and to establish different, more inclusive, collaborations with instrumentalists.

> In analysing music or writing its history, we meet the same difficulty, and it is compounded by another. For whom is it interesting? To paraphrase a famous remark of Barnett Newman, musicology is for musicians what ornithology is for the birds. (Rosen 1994, p72)

This research has helped me understand my compositional process in new ways and has opened up new directions and questions for my future work. As a result of my research I have seen how collaborative partnerships and working relationships have allowed my compositional process to continue through workshop, production and rehearsal stages, enabling me to continue to compose (edit) and be a part of the creative process right up to the first performance. This experience has facilitated detailed focus on the connection between music and the other elements in a work and led me to see my works from a transdisciplinary perspective. As I consider future works and research I will be conscious of and reach beyond transdisciplinary connections in my works, initiate new forms of collaborative relationships whilst always valuing collaboration as a corner stone of my compositional process.

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Appendix 1: Operas

A video or audio recording and full scores for each opera can be accessed via: http://lukestyles.com/Luke_Styles_Composer/operas.html

Lovers Walk
Youth Opera in Four Parts. Libretto: Stephen Plaice.
Instrumentation: Young Soloists: 4S, 1Mez, 2T, 1Bar, 1B. Youth Chorus – 1Cl(Bcl), 1Trp (Picc, Flg), 1Vcl, 1Pn1.
Duration: 50 mins
Composition Date: 2012
Details: Commissioned by Glyndebourne Youth Opera. Premiered October 14th 2012 at the Birley Centre Eastbourne with a subsequent performance at Glyndebourne 20th October 2012.

Wakening Shadow
Chamber Opera in Seven Scenes. Libretto: The Chester Miracle Play, Josef Brodsky, T.S. Eliot, Lord Byron, T.S. Eliot, Percy Bysshe Shelly.
Instrumentation: Soloists: 2S, 1Mez, 1Ct, 3T, 1Bar, 1B-Bar. – 1Fl(Picc, Alt) 1Ob(Cor), 1Cl(Bcl), 1Hn, 1Trp, 1Trb, 1Perc, 1Hrp, 1Pn, 2Vl, 1Va, 1Vcl, 1Db.
Duration: 65 mins
Composition Date: 2013
Details: Commissioned by Glyndebourne. Orchestration of Benjamin Britten's Canticles II, IV, V and composition of four original scenes. Premiered at Glyndebourne August 12th 2013 with subsequent performances at Glyndebourne August 14th, 16th, 17th 2013. Conducted by Vladimir Jurowski with Glyndebourne singers and the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

Tycho's Dream
Youth Opera. Libretto: Peter Cant
Instrumentation: Soloists: 1S, 1B-Bar. Young Soloists: 6S, 3Mez, 2T, 2Bar. – 3Fl(I Picc), 3Cl(III Bcl), 3Perc, 1Pn(Harpsichord, Celesta).
Duration: 55 mins
Composition Date: 2014
Details: Commissioned by Glyndebourne Youth Opera. Premiered at Glyndebourne November 7th 2014 with a subsequent performance at Glyndebourne November 8th 2014. Shortlisted for a 2015 British Composers Award.

Appendix 2: Non-vocal works details

Handspun

Handspun was commissioned by the Royal Opera House Covent Garden in 2011 for their *Exposure Dance* series in February 2012. It premiered as part of this series and was performed three times, 23rd, 24th and 25th of February 2012, in the Linbury Studio. In the Chaper 2 case study I looked at the process behind the first production of *Handspun*.

Since its premiere *Handspun* has gone on to have several more productions; September 14th and 15th 2013 at Sirkuslandsbyen, Torshovparken Oslo, Norway, May 10th 2014 at the Helsinki Music Centre as part of Cirko Festival, Finland, October 7th 2014 in Trutnov, Czech Republic, November 28th and 29th 2014 at Jackson's Lane Theatre, London, February 11th and 12th 2015 at Dansens Hus, Stockholm as part of Subcase Nordic Circus Fair, March 20th 2015 at the Kokkolan Festival, Finland, September 13th 2015, Finish Radio Symphony Orchestra Chamber Series, Helsinki, Finland, March 18th and 19th 2016 Oulu Music Festival, Finland.

The Photocopier

The Photocopier was commissioned from the London Sinfonietta, under their Blue Touch Paper Scheme, that included a year of research and development time with a collaborator before a presentation of work-in-progress. *The Photocopier* was premiered January 24th 2014 at St Martin in the Fields, by the London Sinfonietta.

Play (after Beckett)

The duos of *Play (after Beckett)* are self-motivated works that sprung from a desire to create a duo for a musician and a silent actor. Since composing the two later duos there have been two performance/production opportunities for *On a Bench* (17/18/19th of June 2010 at Shunt, London Bridge and 6th of April 2014 at Kings Place, London) and one for *You Choose a Bat* (6th of April 2014 at Kings Place, London).